

BusinessLine

WEDNESDAY, MAY 10, 2017

Hard choices

Protectionist policies will not help achieve a durable turnaround in the steel industry

To get the Indian economy firing on all cylinders, a turnaround in core sectors such as steel, power and energy is absolutely critical. The Centre's efforts to overhaul the steel industry through a refreshed National Steel Policy 2017 are thus understandable. With an eye on the fact that steel production generates a GDP multiplier of 1.4 and employment multiplier of 6.8, the new policy lays down lofty targets for the steel sector by 2030-31 — more than doubling capacity from 122 million tonnes to 300 million tonnes, lifting per capita steel use from 61 kg to 160 kg, producing high-end products and reducing import dependence. To help the industry attain these goals, the policy even suggests support mechanisms on offtake, costs and logistics. But unless the global competitiveness of Indian steel is improved, without any external crutches, these targets will be hard to meet.

The policy document attempts to analyse the constraints holding back the Indian steel sector, and comes up with some solutions. To prop up domestic steel demand, the Centre will encourage the use of steel-intensive structures in its 'Housing for All' programme, and highway and railway projects, and attract foreign investments into infrastructure, ship-building and automobiles. All government tenders for steel have been mandated to give preference to domestic steel. To ensure availability of raw materials, transparent auctions of iron ore and coal mines, washeries and pelletisation plants and overseas mine acquisitions have been suggested. R&D on value-added products is to be undertaken on a mission mode. However, the actual willingness of the steel industry to take up massive expansion projects, and that of user industries to procure this steel, will hinge solely on commercial considerations. Here, there are several roadblocks. Presently, the global steel industry is burdened with massive over-capacity, with China alone looking to mothball over 150 million tonnes. This has triggered a price war between low-cost producers in China, Japan and Korea. The fact that the Indian steel industry is fragmented, with many small players using unviable technology, renders them uncompetitive.

Yes, the Government has been using minimum import prices, anti-dumping duty and compulsory BIS certification to shield domestic steel-makers from global pricing pressures. But for them to ratchet up exports, as the policy suggests, they will have to compete in the global marketplace. An industry used to protectionism will find it difficult to do so. Besides, ensuring high realisations for domestic steel-makers will unnecessarily peg up costs for engineering, construction, automobiles and defence, which are critical to the Make in India programme. The Centre should focus on reducing costs and removing raw material constraints for domestic steel-makers, rather than artificially propping up demand or supply. In the current global context, the capacity build-out is best taken in calibrated doses.

FROM THE VIEWSROOM

More than GDP and weapons

Global power's about the reach of culture and media

It's projected that China and India will take the lead over the US on a purchasing-power-parity basis by year 2050. The predictions are not as clear for defence spending, but it appears India will eventually be third, after the US and China, on this count. However, the US is projected to be far and away the leader of the pack as far as the entertainment and media (E&M) industry are concerned.

Now, there are many ways to determine what makes a superpower: GDP and military might are the two obvious criteria. But the more palpable and impactful surely has to be E&M. There are no balance sheets involved nor victories to be touted up. All it takes is to sign up and stream, wherever in the world you are.

Or even simply browse: for information, for music, for movies, for games, to dispel loneliness, to express yourself...

Reports from PwC's studies suggest that smartphone penetration has surged dramatically both in the developed and the developing world, leading to what is interestingly called "the democratisation of content". News, entertainment, information, communication, time-pass...there's all this and more available to anybody with a smartphone, with only the apps determining the extent of the hegemony.

Yes, hegemony. Because the world is now bowing before the technology monster. And this master is unequivocally led by the US. Anything on the internet is US-oriented... heck, even the spelling is American! So, never mind if Indonesia makes a dramatic rise up the GDP scale, and Brazil, Russia, Mexico, Japan, Germany scramble for a rank, it's only the economy, silly. When it comes to what makes humanity's heart tick, there's no business like show business and that's where the US tops the charts. Unless, of course, Mandarin grabs the world. But here Hindi has a head start. So what does that mean? Soft power is the real thing.

Sandhya Rao Editorial Consultant



Focus on humans rather than robots

In an era of jobless growth, automation is fraught with problems. A push to small rather than large businesses is called for

ARUN MAIRA

The Prime Minister wants every note given to Cabinet for approval to have a paragraph stating what implication the proposal will have for job creation, said Minister of Commerce and Industry Nirmala Sitharaman, in an interview. This is very good news. Because without faster and more widespread creation of livelihoods and jobs for its huge youth population, the country will be faced with large social and political problems, signs of which are already visible.

So far, though the Indian economy has grown well in terms of GDP, it has been a laggard in terms of job creation. It generates only two-thirds as many jobs with every unit of growth vis-a-vis the global average. Therefore, increasing GDP will not be enough: the pattern of growth of the economy must be changed to create more jobs. Policymakers' mindsets will have to be changed.

A question of livelihood

A headline measure of the growth of the economy must be the numbers of jobs and livelihoods it generates, not merely the GDP. India's manufacturing sector, which can create more jobs, comprises only 16 per cent of India's GDP, whereas China's is 35 per cent. The goal of the Government's manufacturing policy has been stated as an increase in manufacturing to 25 per cent of GDP. The 12th Plan had pointed out that the goal of manufacturing policy should be the numbers of jobs that will be generated, not manufacturing GDP. Investments in several large, capital-intensive

plants can increase manufacturing's share of GDP without increasing employment much. Thus, the problem of 'job-less' high growth will continue. Unfortunately, the goal of the manufacturing policy continues to be touted as 25 per cent of GDP, even by Sitharaman. Goals and measurements focus strategies. Therefore, job creation must be the principal goal.

Rapid advances in digital, computational and communication technologies are displacing human labour and even human minds in manufacturing, service, and knowledge industries. Therefore, along with the need to embrace 'Industry 4.0' technologies to remain competitive, policymakers around the world are even more concerned about the 'future of work' and jobs. Another reason to focus on jobs and livelihoods rather than the size of sectors is that technologies have changed the shapes of enterprises and entire industries — such as banking, retail, travel and manufacturing. Production engineering and maintenance services, which were hitherto integral to 'manufacturing' enterprises, are now provided to them by external 'service' enterprises. Therefore, it is harder to measure what is manufacturing and what is not, and it should not matter so long as the enterprise generates more jobs.

Automation, by definition, will displace human effort. By deploying more technology, enterprises will become more 'productive', measured as output per unit of employment. Jobs within the enterprise will reduce. Therefore, more jobs and livelihoods must be created outside these enterprises to fulfil society's needs for more wide-

spread employment. Automobile assemblers argue that for every person they employ in their increasingly automated factories, a dozen jobs are generated elsewhere. Similarly, companies such as Uber and Airbnb, who employ very few people themselves, stimulate many livelihoods for people in tiny enterprises and in 'self-employed' jobs. Using less capital and less technology and more human effort than large enterprises, small enterprises have always been more 'productive' generators of jobs. Advances in technology and changing shapes of enterprises are likely to make them even more necessary for job creation than large enterprises. Therefore, to accelerate job creation, policymakers should focus much more on enablers of small enterprises and their requirements for 'ease-of-doing-business' than on demands of large investors.

The worry wort

Some economists are concerned that India's 'informal' sector, which is over 90 per cent of the economy, is too large. They advocate more rapid 'formalisation' of enterprises. Their ideas are derived from the past, and conform with the form of presently large enterprises. A mindset that large size is good and small is bad will curb the growth of jobs and livelihoods. Small, even village-based, manufacturing and service enterprises connected into larger networks can be very competitive. Rather than promoting large factories, policymakers should focus more on energising small enterprises and on strengthening clusters and networks. They must consider what new form 'formalisation' should take rather than imple-



The technology tool Cannot be allowed to rule PHOTO:CREO MICHAL BEDNAREK/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

menting policies to fit informal enterprises into old models of formalisation. This is the challenge for policymakers with the emergence of new, networked models of businesses and enterprises, in which the units are tinier — as with Airbnb and with Uber's self-employed, single person enterprises.

Uncertainty worries investors and employers. It worries employees too. Employers want flexibility to adjust the sizes of their workforces to stay afloat amidst uncertainty. Employees need an assurance of security to take care of their families with changes in their employment. Employers must be innovative and adopt new technologies to be competitive. Employees should be assisted to learn new skills to remain employable. Employers demand reforms to labour markets to give them greater freedom to fire workers. Unions want labour market reforms to strengthen social protection. Social security, provided by the state or employers, is required to maintain

the social contract between providers of capital and providers of human inputs.

Human dilemma

Robots and computers, according to technology forecasters, will soon be able to do everything human beings can. What then will human beings do in this technological paradise? And how will they earn to pay for all the goods, services, and even entertainment, that technology will produce for them? Machines can improve the supply: but how will demand be increased? Better livelihoods with adequate incomes for human beings along with good social security are already big challenges for India's leaders, even before 'Industry 4.0'. They should stay more focused on developing strategies for livelihoods and social security than on an Industry 4.0 technology strategy.

The writer was a member of the Planning Commission. Via The Billion Press

A French lesson for the US media

The overhyped, irresponsible coverage of Clinton's hacked emails, in contrast to Macron's, possibly cost her the election

DAVID LEONHARDT

The hacked emails from Emmanuel Macron's French campaign appear to be spectacularly mundane, according to people who have read them. They include briefings on issues, personal exchanges and discussions of the weather. No doubt they also include some embarrassing thoughts, but so far they are notably lacking in scandal. Does this description remind you of anything?

Ah, yes. Last year, Russian agents stole thousands of emails from Hillary Clinton's campaign and published them via WikiLeaks.

The dominant feature of the emails was their ordinariness. They contained no evidence of lawbreaking, major hypocrisy or tawdry scandal. Even the worst revelation — a Democratic official and CNN contributor fed a town hall question to the campaign in advance — qualified as small beer. Ronald Reagan's 1980 campaign engaged in much more consequential debate skulduggery. The Clinton emails were instead full of staff members jockeying for position, agonizing over strategy, complaining about their bosses and offering advice to those same bosses.

The sublime and the ridiculous Imagine for a moment that your inbox, or your boss', was released to

the world. I'll guess that it would not be free of embarrassment. Despite the mundane quality of the Clinton emails, the media covered them as a profound revelation. The tone often suggested a big investigative scoop. But this was no scoop. It was material stolen by a hostile foreign government, posted for all to see, and it was only occasionally revealing. It deserved some coverage, but far less.

I say this as someone who likes journalism so much that I've never had another full-time job. I also say it with reverence for the many journalists doing good, hard work that, as Thomas Jefferson explained, is vital to democracy. With a president who lies all the time, often about the media, journalism becomes all the more important. And because it's so important, those of us practising it need to be open to reflection and criticism.

The overhyped coverage of the hacked emails was the media's worst mistake in 2016 — one sure to be repeated if not properly understood. Television was the biggest offender, but print media was hardly blameless. The sensationalism exacerbated a second problem with the coverage: the obsession with Clinton's private email server.

I disagree with people who say that the server was a non-story. Clinton violated government policy and was not fully honest. The FBI conducted an investigation,



Helpless In the face of a full-on attack AP

whatever you think of it. All of that adds up to a real news story.

Over the top

The question is scale. In the fall, Gallup asked Americans what they were hearing about the candidates. The answers about Donald Trump were all over the place: immigration, his speeches and his criticism of Barack Obama, among other things. When people described what they were hearing about Clinton, by contrast, one subject towered over every other: email.

That's a pretty harsh indictment of the coverage (and Gallup's research was done well before James Comey wrote his infamous letter). It is a sign that Clinton's private server and the hacked emails crowded out everything else, in-

cluding her plans for reducing inequality, addressing climate change and conducting a more hawkish foreign policy than Obama. It's a sign that the media failed to distinguish a subject that sounded important — secret emails! — from subjects that were in reality more important.

Last weekend, France's mainstream media showed how to exercise better judgment. Late Friday, two days before the election, hacktens released the Macron campaign emails. French media laws are stricter than American laws, and government officials argued against publication of the hacked information. But only the campaigns themselves were legally barred from making statements during the final weekend. Publica-

tions could have reported on the substance of the emails.

They largely did not. "It was a manipulation attempt — people trying to manipulate our voting process," Gilles van Kote, deputy chief editor of *Le Monde*, told me. French journalists rightly did not focus on what seemed like big news, because the emails surely did. They evaluated what truly was major news. Material released by a hostile foreign government, with the aim of confusing voters and evidently without significant new information, failed to qualify. Van Kote said reporters are continuing to read the emails to see if they warrant future stories.

The two cases obviously are not identical. (And van Kote wasn't criticizing American journalism; the criticisms are mine.) But they are similar enough to say that the French media exercised better, more sober judgment than the American media.

This issue isn't going away. Our digital world ensures that the private information of public figures, and not-so-public ones, will be released again in the future. The media cannot always ignore that information, tempting as it may seem. But it also should not pretend that the only two options are neglect and sensationalism.

There is a middle ground, one where journalistic judgment should prioritise news over the whiff of news. NYT

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters by email to bleditor@thehindu.co.in or by post to 'Letters to the Editor', The Hindu Business Line, Kasturi Buildings, 859-860, Anna Salai, Chennai 600002.

Aadhaar and PAN link-up

According to the recent amendments made in the income-tax laws, the Aadhaar and PAN cards must be linked, else the PAN will be cancelled. Applicable from July 1, this rule is aimed at curbing tax evasion and fraud. It is a good step. To ensure linking, some steps have been outlined to be followed in the income tax e-filing portal. But those unfamiliar with computers would find the process difficult. A helpline would be useful. Also, we need more time.

Srinivasan Umashankar
Nagpur

Prepare for drought

It is pathetic that we are still dependent on the monsoon for agriculture. We have failed to construct dams, conserve water in a scientific manner and making other arrangements to provide water for farming. Sensitising people to using water prudently,

encouraging and educating farmers for alternative employment, storing foodgrains appropriately so they don't rot are some measures that could save us from a drought-like situation. NGOs, government agencies, and retired bureaucrats should be engaged in this activity which must be taken up on a priority basis.

Veena Shenoy
Thane, Maharashtra

Hardly progressive

The dress regulations prescribed by NEET are bizarre. It is ridiculous that the authorities resorted to crude and insensitive ways to prevent cheating in the exams. More appalling is that an 18-year-old had to go through the ignominy of being forced to take off her innerwear when its hook triggered a metal alert. And we call ourselves a developing country.

N J Ravi Chandar
Bengaluru

Ready for take-over

This refers to 'We must approach NPAs differently' by R Viswanathan (May 9). While it is necessary to seriously examine the eligibility of the applicants for huge bank loans it is also necessary to study the total corporate structure with special focus on factors such as demand for the products of the company, financial structure, and experience and efficiency of the management before sanctioning the loan. Continued surveillance of the performance of the company is a must. In the case of huge defaults with no significant attempt to redeem them, take-over of the management must be considered.

TR Anandan
Coimbatore

Arrogant

It is painful to watch Justice CS Karnan playing cheap games. Degrading the highest judicial body

in the land is intolerable and arrogant. There seems to be no limit to his antics. Misusing his position deserves punishment. It is better he is dismissed from service.

VS Ganeshan
Bengaluru

AAP's not done yet

The plot to finish off the Aam Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal is as sure as eggs are eggs. The unsubstantiated corruption charges and the notices issued by the I-T department reek of a clumsily hatched conspiracy. The alleged discrepancies found in the AAP's fund declarations before banks and the Election Commission and on websites have been blown out of all proportion. Similar details in respect of other parties are not brought to public attention, for whatever reason.

The media vie with each other to claim credit for this and demonstrate their loyalty to the BJP. The

'bribe bombs' have been dropped to demoralise Kejriwal and ruin AAP's credibility. The BJP has not yet forgiven Kejriwal for winning the Delhi Assembly election, daring to contest against Narendra Modi in Varanasi and using certain epithets against the PM. He is also feared as a possible contender for the country's top job.

Blame Kejriwal for anything, but not for corruption; even his worst enemies would agree on his incorruptibility. It is true that electoral setbacks in Punjab, Goa and the MCD, and internal divisions have put down the party. But AAP has not ceased to represent value-based politics. It appeals to those who still believe that politics should not be entirely detached from idealism. From its EVM tampering demonstration in the Delhi Assembly, it is clear that it has not lost its fighting spirit.

G David Milton
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Why NPAs pile up

Blame it on inadequate credit risk assessment

BALA VENKATESH

As a veteran in the global banking and capital markets space, I despair at the ongoing saga of NPAs and their ensuing impact on capital adequacy and balance sheet strength and, of course, the latest ordinance. I see various experts' suggestions, including from the Ministry of Finance and from the Chief Economic Advisor, on matters ranging from strict operating guidelines for banks' management, to creation of a "bad" bank entity that would absorb all the NPAs, thereby lowering the capital requirements of the public sector banks. Further, the RBI too has come out with guidelines on how it would evaluate bank performance — this list goes on.

assessment tools that, say, a rating agency that does corporate bond analysis has — reviewing companies' operating capabilities and performance, not merely the debt servicing cover.

Further, the inability to convert the debt into some form of equity, with voting rights hinders banks' ability to achieve a financial turnaround of the companies they lend to.

In the absence of a sophisticated bond market, ventures across all industries and credit applications go through the same screening process. And when loans approach NPA status, the first mode of action is to restructure the loan — all that this accomplishes is to postpone the problem at hand. To make matters worse, very few companies hire investment bankers for their expertise in optimising the capital structure of a firm and in seeking the right sources of capital. Instead, companies and promoters see themselves as self-experts in corporate finance and reduce investment bankers to the role of funding brokers.

In the US, we have seen first-hand or handled portfolio turnarounds where profitability has increased 15-20 fold, where bank balance sheet risks have been optimised through a combination of financial risk and credit risk frameworks and rigorous balancing with growth targets established by bank CEOs. In India, the first step would be to scale down lending, rigorously analyse and segment the borrower portfolio with actionable steps, cure the current pipeline and then template from historical performance all future lending activity. A larger objective for the finance ministry would be to bring this same rigour to other channels of capital and funding that are being created through specialised funds.

The writer is a US-based banking and capital markets expert



India's groundwater future is at stake

With recharge rates slackening and extraction rising sharply, a change in irrigation and cropping methods is called for

ESHA ZAVERI

INDIA IN TRANSITION

Since the 1960s, India's groundwater irrigation has increased dramatically, playing an important role in its economy and people's lives — supporting livelihoods of over 26 crore farmers and agricultural labourers who grow over a third of India's foodgrains. These benefits, however, have come at the cost of increased pressure on groundwater reserves.

India is the world's largest user of groundwater and, since the 1980s, its groundwater levels have been dropping. The severity of the problem is particularly acute in the northwest, where levels have plunged from 8m below ground to 16m, so that water needs to be pumped from even greater depths. Worse yet, much of this is non-renewable since recharge rates are less than extraction rates and replenishing this resource can take thousands of years.

This won't last

Using up such "fossil" groundwater is unsustainable. Moreover, the future of monsoon rainfall remains uncertain; while some climate models predict an increase, others forecast a weakening monsoon, although changes in monsoon variability are already underway and will continue into the future. Historical records show the number of dry spells and the intensity of wet spells have risen over the past 50 years. As climate change alters the monsoon, the large stresses on India's groundwater resources may increase.

Groundwater stress is more than just a hydrologic issue, as usage of the resource is shaped by human behaviour and economic policy. Diverting water to drier areas, for example, can encourage demand for water-intensive crops and further expand irrigation — leading to more stress on the

physical system, the environment, and the people it supports.

Understanding how and why people use water, therefore, is an important priority. Given the complex dynamics of both human agricultural and economic decisions, not to mention physical water and crop systems, what will India's groundwater future look like?

To answer this question, I took part in an integrated economic-hydrology assessment of non-renewable groundwater use in rural India (along with colleagues from the University of New Hampshire and Pennsylvania State University). Importantly, an integrated approach can shed light on the role that adaptation responses and policy measures can play going forward.

One such initiative proposed by the Government is to physically transfer 178 billion cubic metres of water across river basin boundaries each year by building 12,500 km of water conveyance networks. This "national river linking project" — the largest of its kind in the world — aims to expand irrigated agriculture by moving water from "water surplus" to "water deficit" basins. The first of the planned canals linking the Kaveri and Godavari rivers was completed on September 16, 2015.

It keeps falling

Using our modelling framework, we were able to evaluate the efficacy of this proposed infrastructure on alleviating groundwater stress. We first used detailed crop and weather data since 1970 to quantify how, in response to historical monsoon variability, farmers altered the dry- and wet-season irrigated areas of six primary crops grown in India.

Assuming these responses to monsoon variability continued into the future, we projected future changes in irrigated crop areas based on a suite of monsoon rainfall projections and inputted these into a hydrological model.



Red alert India is the world's largest user of groundwater

We were then able to model the demand for irrigation water and assess how much of this demand would have to come from sustainable irrigation supplied by groundwater recharge and surface water vs. unsustainable or non-renewable groundwater.

The analyses (published in *Environmental Research Letters*) reveal that even in some areas that experience projected increases in monsoon rainfall, the expansion of irrigated agriculture will lead to more non-renewable groundwater extractions. This means groundwater levels will continue to drop over the next 30 years in these areas. In extreme cases, a complete loss of non-renewable groundwater irrigation can reduce national annual crop production by as much as 25 per cent.

Our results also point to the large variation in future groundwater levels across India. Under future climate change, notably, some districts will do better and may even be able to rely solely on sustainable water supplies allowing groundwater levels to recover. Others will see slower rates of

groundwater decline and yet others will experience declines for the first time. But most of Punjab and Haryana, northern areas of Rajasthan and Gujarat, and parts of Uttar Pradesh and Tamil Nadu will face continued groundwater level declines. As the levels become deeper, rising pumping costs can make extraction prohibitive and directly impact welfare.

Previous research (Sekhri, 2014) has shown that poverty is higher in places where falling groundwater reserves necessitate the use of expensive pumps. Other research (Fishman, Jain and Kishore, 2015) has demonstrated that in regions where wells have run dry, well-off farmers adapt by migrating to cities, but the poor fare worse.

All about implementation

This brings us back to the policy proposal: could a \$120-billion river-linking project help? Our model suggests that it all depends on how this project is carried out. The project has the potential to alleviate 12-24 per cent of mid-century (2040-2050) non-renewable groundwater demand, depend-

ing on the climate model used, although the impact varies substantially across India.

But in simulations without new large reservoirs along canals, water transfers alone will alleviate very little non-renewable groundwater demand; without storage, water transfers in the wet season will not be available for dry-season irrigation. Historically, constructions of large water-holding dams and reservoirs have been contentious in India. While the exact plans for dam construction under the river-linking project have not yet been made public, it is clear that without a large increase in reservoir capacity, the proposed project will not alleviate groundwater stress.

There may be more cost-effective and sustainable ways to alleviate groundwater demand, such as more efficient irrigation, growing less water-intensive crops in the dry season and transitioning away from irrigation-intensive systems where there is little water.

In addition, India needs better policies that directly help smallholders and labourers to adapt and adjust to risks associated with groundwater depletion and a more variable future climate. A recent report submitted by a committee led by Mihir Shah titled 'A 21st Century Institutional Architecture for India's Water Reforms' is a clarion call for a paradigm shift in water resource management. This is no small task. But for a resource that will shape the course of India's economic, social, and political future, we would do well to heed Victor Hugo's adage: "All the forces in the world are not so powerful as an idea whose time has come."

The writer is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Center on Food Security and the Environment and Department of Earth System Science at Stanford University. This article is by special arrangement with the Center for the Advanced Study of India, University of Pennsylvania.

5 THINGS to WATCH OUT for TODAY

■ **Today** is the last day for declaring tax payments and deposits under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana. Earlier, the date for making deposits as part of the tax amnesty scheme was extended till April 30. The scheme offers an opportunity for people to declare their unaccounted wealth in a confidential manner.

■ **Almost 30 lakh** Delhi Metro passengers will have to shell out higher fares from today with the DMRC Board accepting the recommendation of the fare fixation committee. The new scheme will see the minimum fare rising up to ₹10 from ₹8.

■ **Niti Aayog** Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya will meet Uttar Pradesh authorities today to draw up a plan for extending help to the Yogi Adityanath government to boost the State's economy. This is the first time a delegation of Niti Aayog, whose chairman is Prime Minister Modi, will visit a State. Panagariya, will lead a 25-member team to UP.

■ **Canadian** singing sensation Justin Bieber is set to perform in Mumbai today. The 23-year-old Grammy winning singer will be performing in the city as part of his Purpose World Tour.

■ **The Supreme** Court will take its first step towards becoming a paperless, digital court today when Prime Minister Modi inaugurates the digital filing system. This will be the first step towards introduction of digital filing and will mark the movement towards a paperless Supreme Court. The function will be held at Vigyan Bhavan.

A THOUSAND WORDS



Family ties Palaeoanthropologist Lee Rogers Berger holds a replica of the skull of Õneoo, a new skeleton fossil finding of the Homo Naledi Hominin species, in Maropeng near Johannesburg in South Africa. Primitive hominids may have lived in Africa at the same time as humans, say researchers, in new findings that could change the understanding of human evolution. AP/IGULSHAN KHAN

BusinessLine TWENTY YEARS AGO TODAY

MAY 10, 1997

Budget through as LS passes Finance Bill

The Lok Sabha today passed the Finance Bill 1997 after the Finance Minister, Mr. P. Chidambaram, put up a spirited defence of the deep cuts proposed in the 1997-98 Budget in income-tax and customs as also the voluntary disclosure scheme giving immunity to tax evaders "if they come clean and come on board". Mr. Chidambaram said that none of the political parties which met him raised any serious objections, except one party which said that the peak rate of duty should remain 40 per cent and that it should not be reduced.

National Iranian Oil to be allotted shares in MRL

National Iranian Oil Company (NIOC), one of the original joint venture partners of Madras Refineries Ltd., is to be allotted shares in the oil PSU in order to restore the Iranian company's holding to the original level. MOC's stake had come down from 13 per cent to a little less than 10 per cent when it did not subscribe to MRL's rights issue of 1994. The MRL Chairman and Managing Director, Mr. S.N. Mathur said that, following NIOC's willingness to restore its stake to the original level, an agreement was being processed to allot shares to the Iranian oil major. The agreement would be signed soon, probably by the end of this month, he said.

Industrial growth slowdown temporary: FICCI study

The slowdown in industrial growth will bottom out only by the end of the current fiscal year and in the first quarter of 1998-99 and industry will grow at a rate between 10.5 and 11.5 per cent, a survey conducted by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry has said. The survey, covering 175 large, medium and small corporates, has indicated that the present slowdown is a temporary phenomenon.

EASY

ACROSS

01. Three-wheeler (8)
04. The maple (4)
08. Block of notepaper (3)
09. One standing in competition (5)
10. Demented (3)
11. Replaced one's clothing (7)
12. Running loop on rope (5)
13. Rounded, plumpish (4-7)
17. Old European coin (5)
18. Fetched with one (7)
20. Passenger vehicle (3)
21. Woodwind instruments (5)
22. Country named after Vespucci (1,1,1)
23. Slacken off (4)
24. Pins bowled at (8)

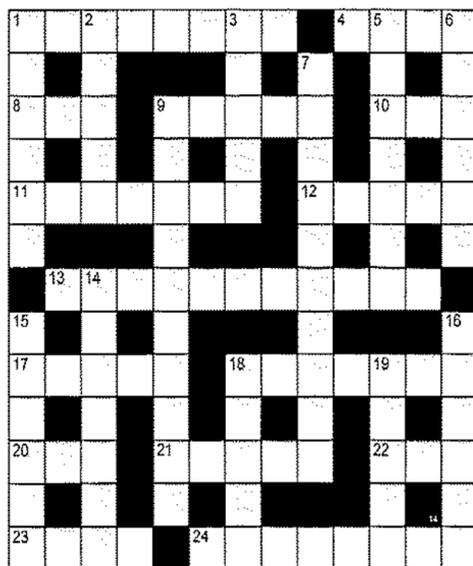
DOWN

01. Subjects to write about, discuss (6)
02. The subcontinent (5)
03. Leaden-coloured (5)
05. Write music (7)
06. Steering gear (6)
07. Defamatory (10)
09. The governing of (10)
14. Condone, pardons (7)
15. May be eaten (6)
16. Waifs, stragglers (6)
18. Stream (5)
19. Thin porridge (5)

SOLUTION: BL Two-way Crossword 845

ACROSS 1. Cosmetics 5. Dig 7. Moon 8. Advanced 10. Romances 11. Pity 13. Cutter 15. Turn up 18. Chow 19. Kentucky 22. Nebulous 23. Able 24. Dye 25. Greenland
DOWN 1. Cambric 2. Storm 3. Indeed 4. Slay 5. Diction 6. Giddy 9. Anger 12. Putty 14. Trouble 16. Pay heed 17. Refuse 18. Caned 20. Cobra 21. Plug

BL TWO-WAY CROSSWORD 846



NOT SO EASY

ACROSS

01. Make sound attempt to pedal a three-wheeler (8)
04. An acre planted out with maple (4)
08. Run quietly with something to protect one's leg (3)
09. Be in competition with a character in a Sheridan play (5)
10. Crazed by murder, assassin demands heads (3)
11. Altered the way one turned notes into coins (7)
12. Running loop shortly returns to end of line (5)
13. Fleshy cowl levered into position (4-7)
17. Old penny cut a different way if coin was gold or silver (5)
18. Fetched by British Rail the way it should be (7)
20. Coach not quite over twenty-one (3)
21. Instruments to be so adjusted after The Ring starts (5)
22. Saul didn't finish his turn with Sam as Uncle (1,1,1)
23. Sea-serpent holds it to relax the pressure (4)

24. Beer and such pins as one takes with easy enjoyment (8)

DOWN

01. Things to be discussed right away from hot latitudes (6)
02. The nation is at home to assistance offered up (5)
03. Looks like lead with six in the hat (5)
05. Write the notes and set them in type (7)
06. The right part of a cow used to change course (6)
07. Saying it's libel, a loss under review (10)
09. Got in a muddle with rule, such being the order (10)
14. Allows one not to proffer them as an apology (7)
15. May be lied to, and thus could be eaten (6)
16. Wanders off with a salver among the saints (6)
18. Volume is about right where running water is concerned (5)
19. Kettle urgently brought back if there's any porridge in it (5)