

योजना आयोग  
भारत सरकार  
**Planning Commission**  
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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Communication, IT & Information Division  
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*"No matter how carefully you plan your goals, they will never be more than pipe dreams unless you pursue them with gusto"*

*W. Clement stone*

## Polity

- **House uproar over Sena MPs:** The episode relating to a Shiv Sena MP's alleged bid to force a fasting Muslim worker to eat at New Maharashtra Sadan here last week sparked uproar in the Lok Sabha as well as the Rajya Sabha and outside Parliament today, with Opposition MPs cutting across party lines condemning it and demanding action against the Sena MPs involved in the incident. Besides reports in the print media on the incident, TV channels also broadcast video footage that showed the Sena MP Rajan Vichare trying to shove a piece of roti into the mouth of a catering supervisor Arshad Zubair who was fasting during the ongoing month of Ramadan. Mr Vichare was reportedly accompanied by a group of Sena MPs. They were incensed over the "poor" quality of food, water and accommodation at the Sadan, their state guesthouse in the national capital. The Sena MPs and leaders today sought to deny the incident, stressing on the point that they were neither aware of the religious identity of the catering supervisor nor his fasting. The BJP-led NDA government also refrained from criticizing the Sena MPs or the incident, describing the reports on the incident as "unsubstantiated" whose veracity should be first ascertained. The government also maintained that the episode should not be given communal colour. Opposition members in both Houses raised the issue and demanded action against the Sena MPs. The two Houses were also forced into brief adjournments due to the uproar, even as the Sena, a key BJP ally, staunchly countered the Opposition members. (The Statesman).

## Economy

- **RBI working on an exit route for businesses facing bankruptcy:** The Reserve Bank of India is working on norms to enable entrepreneurs exit insolvent businesses. India does not have a good bankruptcy code like Chapter 11 in the US. According to RBI Executive Director B Mahapatra, "We have been thinking about how to create a regulatory structure (as) we do not have a good bankruptcy system. We are thinking about a structure so that people can voluntarily withdraw from unattractive businesses." He was speaking at the National Seminar on 'Managing Stressed Assets' organised by Assocham here. Mahapatra said in the Indian context bankruptcy has a stigma attached to it. "Nobody wants to be called a bankrupt person... Indian philosophy is that we do not like failures," he said, adding that the work on providing an enabling framework for "voluntary withdrawal" by entrepreneurs has just begun and is only at the stage of conceptualisation. There is a talk of providing legal provision in the Companies Act. But the RBI would like to work on examining the regulatory framework for the "voluntary withdrawal" by the entrepreneurs. Referring to the problem of non-performing assets, Mahapatra said the concentration of the bad assets is mostly in the public sector banks, while the new private sector banks have shown much better performance. He said the RBI has now provided a system of incentives and disincentives for following the rules of the game for Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR). (Business Line).

## Planning

- **New PPP framework to aid infra development:** The government is working on developing a sophisticated and flexible framework to make public private partnership (PPP) models more effective, which in turn would boost infrastructure development in the country, finance secretary Arvind Mayaram said on Tuesday. "What we need to do is to have a more sophisticated PPP framework, which we are working on now...which means a framework which looks at PPPs in a manner where there is flexibility to factor in the changes in the circumstances that run over a period of 25-30 years," Mayaram said at function organized by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industries. Finance minister Arun Jaitley, while presenting the Union budget, had proposed setting up of an institution 3P India - to provide support to mainstream PPPs with a corpus of Rs 500 crore. Mayaram pointed out that there was an urgent need for de-stressing the PPP model, especially in case of infrastructure development where it facing various hurdles. "There is a strong case to see whether we can look at developing a framework which is going to decide what stress is, who is responsible for stress, what is causing the stress and how we deal with them... we would meet to now look at what a stress is and how it can be defined," he said. Mayaram also stressed that the government alone cannot bear the entire responsibility and that risk should be shared between the private sector and the government. "It will be a unique and powerful institution which will rejuvenate the entire universe of PPP which seems to be slowing down at the moment," he added. (Hindustan Times).

## Editorial

- **Selecting justice:** Amid growing concerns about political pressure on the appointment or extension of judges, the government has indicated that it intends to move quicker on creating a judicial appointments commission. This immediately follows the revelation of a series of events from 2005 which, although the facts continue to be disputed, nevertheless raise serious concerns. Former Supreme Court judge, and current chairman of the Press Council of India, Markandey Katju recently said that a judge of the Madras High Court was granted an extension although a report by the Intelligence Bureau had said that he was corrupt. Mr Katju said that the collegium that appoints judges, then headed by the erstwhile chief justice of India, R C Lahoti, had given in to pressure from the government. Mr Katju said that the ex-prime minister, Manmohan Singh, was put under pressure from a coalition partner - who could only be the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) from Tamil Nadu - to protect the judge, and a senior minister pressured the collegium on behalf of the government. Then law minister, H R Bhardwaj, subsequently claimed that extensions to the judge were solely the collegium's decision. It has now emerged, in a report by *The Times of India*, that the Prime Minister's Office had, in fact, lobbied in favour of making the judge in question a permanent member of the Madras High Court bench. On one level, this is a reminder of the bad old days of coalition politics under the United Progressive Alliance (UPA). The DMK proved itself to be a difficult and bullying ally, and often used its pivotal numbers in the parliamentary coalition to dubious ends. (The Economic Times)

# RBI working on an exit route for businesses facing bankruptcy

New structure will allow people to voluntarily withdraw from unattractive businesses

## OUR BUREAU

New Delhi, July 23

The Reserve Bank of India is working on norms to enable entrepreneurs exit insolvent businesses. India does not have a good bankruptcy code like Chapter 11 in the US.

According to RBI Executive Director B Mahapatra, "We have been thinking about how to create a regulatory structure (as) we do not have a good bankruptcy system. We are thinking about a structure so that people can vol-

untarily withdraw from unattractive businesses."

He was speaking at the National Seminar on 'Managing Stressed Assets' organised by ASSOCHAM here. Mahapatra said in the Indian context bankruptcy has a stigma attached to it.

"Nobody wants to be called a bankrupt person... Indian philosophy is that we do not like failures," he said, adding that the work on providing an enabling framework for "voluntary withdrawal" by entrepreneurs has just begun and is

only at the stage of conceptualisation. There is a talk of providing legal provision in the Companies Act. But the RBI would like to work on examining the regulatory framework for the "voluntary withdrawal" by the entrepreneurs.

## Bad loans

Referring to the problem of non-performing assets, Mahapatra said the concentration of the bad assets is mostly in the public sector banks, while the new private sector banks have shown much better performance.

He said the RBI has now provided a system of incentives and disin-

centives for following the rules of the game for Corporate Debt Restructuring (CDR). It has been done since the entire process of CDR was being seen with suspicion.

"Only consolation about the NPAs is that the bad asset is now largely concentrated in the infrastructure sector (roads, power) where the assets still exist and there is no siphoning off," he added.

On its part, the RBI has established a Credit Central Repository of Information on the large banks. It ensures that if a large borrower defaults with one bank, the information about the same is passed on to the other banks on quarterly basis.

# Gender pay gap in IT sector is 29%

**BS REPORTER**

Chennai, 23 July

The gender pay gap in the information technology (IT) sector is as high as 29 per cent, according to Monster Salary Index (MSI). While a male employee in the sector receives a gross salary of ₹359.25 per hour, a woman receives ₹254.04 per hour. This disparity possibly emerges from the fact that men get promoted to supervisory positions more often than women.

Reacting to the report, industry experts said there was a need to create equal opportunities for all employees, irrespective of their gender. Women contribute significantly to the industry.

MSI was an initiative by Monster India in collaboration with Paycheck.in (managed by WageIndicator Foundation). Indian Institute of Management, Ahmedabad, is a research partner in the initiative.

Sanjay Modi, managing director (India/West Asia/Southeast Asia/Hong Kong), Monster.com, said, "Among many other aspects that the report has highlighted - the revelation is the enormous gender gap in

## No gender bias in IT sector, says Nasscom president

There is no gender differentiation in the IT-BPM industry and it is keen on creating an environment to encourage more women to take up and grow in their career in the sector, said R Chandrashekhar, president of Nasscom. He was responding to a statistics of Monster Salary Index that there is a gender pay gap in the IT industry.

**BS REPORTER**

IT sector, which employs only 30 per cent women. It is surprising to see that the most modern sector of India is not only predisposed to a certain gender but is also paying lesser to women employees than their male counterparts with a grave pay gap of 29 per cent."

For full reports, visit [www.business-standard.com](http://www.business-standard.com)

# Govt developing flexible model to boost infrastructure: Mayaram

Nitin Gadkari says no road projects without 80% land acquisition

BS REPORTER

New Delhi, 23 July

3P India, the proposed public-private institution of the Union government, will look into issues relating to regulation, finance structure and management of contracts, Finance Secretary Arvind Mayaram said here on Wednesday. He added the framework for the public-private partnership (PPP) has to be formulated in such a manner to allow flexibility because contracts are spread over 20-25 years.

3P India would help build capacity, both within the government and the private sector, he said at India PPP summit organised by industry body Ficci. As of March 31, 2013, 693 projects with an investment of ₹1,61,400 crore had been completed, while 794 projects with investment of ₹4,68,900 crore were at the implementation stage and another 1,076 projects worth ₹5,92,100 crore were in the pipeline.

The finance secretary also called for the definition of a "stressed" project, reasons behind projects getting stuck, and a methodology for stress assessment and risk apportionment.

3P India will look at issues related to regulation, financing structures, stress in projects, management of contracts over a period of time, and issues related to capacity building in public as well as private sec-



Finance Secretary Arvind Mayaram at the India PPP summit 2014 in New Delhi on Wednesday

PHOTO: PTI

tor, Mayaram said.

In his Budget speech, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had proposed the setting up of an institution to provide support to mainstream PPPs called 3P India with a corpus of ₹500 crore. "It will be a unique and powerful institution, which will rejuvenate the entire universe of PPP, which seems to be slowing down at the moment," said Mayaram.

In the road and highways sector, after bidding out many projects, the government is finding it hard to attract private

players. Many bid-out projects have now been stuck due to various issues related to environment and forest clearances, land acquisition, among others.

According to a report by Ernst & Young, the private sector's share in infrastructure projects has increased from 22 per cent in the 10th five-year Plan to 37 per cent in the 11th Plan and is expected to rise to 48 per cent in the 12th Plan.

PPP in India witnessed tremendous growth in the last decade because of the thrust provided by the government to infrastructure development in the 10th and 11th five-year Plan, the report added.

In the same summit, road, transport and shipping minister Nitin Gadkari said he would sort all issues related to stuck road projects by August 15 and no road projects would be bid out without acquiring 80 per cent of the land.

About 300 projects are being readied with all clearances, which will be bid out in next five to 10 years, the minister said. "DPR (detailed project reports) for these projects will be prepared in advance. Time is the most important concept in infrastructure and business. Delays cost the country ₹15 crore a day. Files are kept pending for three months to one-and-a-half-years. I have asked highways officials to fast-track decision and requested the prime minister to issue directions to all officials."

COAL PROJECTS

# Environment ministry eases clearance rule

Agrees to coal ministry idea of doing away with individual mine examination and to, instead, consider clusters in the case of Coal India

SOMESH JHA  
New Delhi, 23 July

The Union environment ministry has decided to consider group clearances for adjacent mines of Coal India Limited (CIL), the near-monopolist in the sector, rather than considering individual project proposals. There would be only one public hearing, a prime necessity for environment clearance, for the identified cluster, instead of examining one mine at a time.

The request to do it this way had come from the coal ministry, which was keen to raise production and sidestep environmental objections.

"It will be prudent to adopt a cluster approach for mines situated close by, so that the cumulative impact of mining on the environment could be documented and that only one public hearing for this cluster is held," the ministry said after holding discussions in its Expert Appraisal Committee meeting on the proposal. It has said the cluster classification should be based on multiple factors.

CIL mines which already have clearance, the coal min-



CIL mines that already have clearances could be re-arranged into clusters for future clearances

PHOTO: BLOOMBERG



## GREEN NOD

- At present, each mine in the coalfield requires separate environment approval
- Now, one public hearing will be held for each cluster
- Move comes after coal

ministry raised the matter with environment ministry

- 94 clusters of CIL identified by coal ministry
- Move to expedite environment clearance process

istry had also said, could be re-arranged into clusters for future clearances and earlier okays could be "treated as group environment clearance". The ministry has identified 94 such clus-

ters in various CIL units.

The coal ministry was clear that the aim was to boost production. It said while granting clearance to cluster mines, the pollution parameters in the area

could be laid down by the environment ministry, instead of "restricting the production limit of the cluster mines...it would facilitate enhancement of production of the cluster/mines by taking additional pollution mitigating measures to offset the impact of additional production on the environment."

Also, a clamp on production in one unit could be allowed to be compensated by enhancing production from the other mines, keeping the overall production limit of the cluster within the limit set while giving a green nod.

The coal ministry has often blamed delay in environment clearances as the reason for shortfall in coal production across the country.

The production target for CIL has been fixed at 507 million tonnes (mt) for 2014-15. It had produced 462 mt in 2013-14, about 20 mt below the target.

Pressure for this also comes from the power ministry. In June, the country's power shortage was estimated at an average of 5,295 Mw. To ensure adequate availability of coal for the power sector, the coal ministry has asked CIL to step up output.

# 'Road projects only after land acquisition'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To fast track highway projects, the Government has decided to go for awarding road projects only after completing 80 per cent land acquisition. The Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways has also decided to create a shelf of 300 projects with all clearances in place before announcing bids in the coming five years.

"We have taken a decision that without 80 per cent land acquisition, we will not float tenders for highways projects," said Nitin Gadkari, Minister for Roads, Transport and Highways (MoRTH), speaking at a PPP summit organised by Ficci. Blaming the previous

**The Ministry of Roads, Transport and Highways has also decided to create a shelf of 300 projects with all clearances in place before announcing bids in the coming five years**

UPA regime for award of projects "without acquiring even 10 per cent of the required land" and causing hardships for

road sector, Gadkari said that "a shelf of 300 projects are being created with all regulatory clearances to be bid out in next five to ten years."

Identifying delays in disposing of the files as another major bottleneck for the sector's tardy growth, Gadkari said he has urged the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to direct all officials to fast track decisions.

"Time is the most important concept in infrastructure and business and delays cost the country to the tune of Rs 15 crore a day. Files are kept pending for three months to one-and-half-year. I have asked Highways officials to fast track decision and requested the Prime Minister to issue direc-

tions to all officials," he said.

Delays in decision-making have resulted in cost-overruns and projects are pending for environment clearance, land acquisition, transfer of defence land and railway clearances for rail over bridge for up to three years, he said.

"We are introducing a new culture in the Road Ministry to reward those excelling and punish those with poor or defective work besides creation of a Bank of Ideas and Innovation by August 9 to fast-track projects," Gadkari added.

Gadkari under instructions from Prime Minister Narendra Modi will host monthly meetings to ensure clearances are there for projects.



# Non-food credit growth stays anaemic at 13.9%

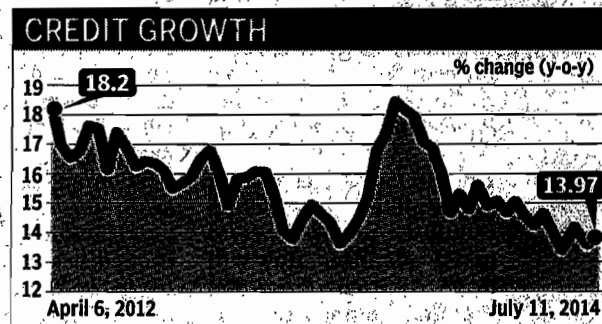
**By the Bureau**

**Mumbai, July 23:** The non-food credit growth continues to be anaemic and increased 13.96% year-on-year to ₹60,07,685 crore for the fortnight ended July 11, according to data released by the RBI on Wednesday.

In FY14, credit growth had earlier hit a high of 18.20% y-o-y in the fortnight ended September 18. Credit demand had risen in August and September as the RBI took extraordinary liquidity tightening steps in July to stem the slide of the rupee which had hit a lifetime low of ₹68.825 in August.

RBI's tightening measures had pushed up interest rates on the commercial papers (CPs) making them costlier and made companies turn to banks for their funding needs.

Bankers expect credit demand to pick up in Q3FY15



following a number of clearances of projects by the Cabinet Committee on Investments (CCI) in April.

“On capex, while the political and policy environment is conducive, the financing of capex will still take time. The impact on bank lending is still not in this financial year even for brownfield expansion,” said YES Bank’s CFO Rajat Monga.

Former finance minister P Chidambaram had said that

the CCI has cleared 36 projects with an investment of ₹1.83 lakh crore in a bid to restart the investment cycle.

Meanwhile, credit growth outpaced deposit growth and grew 13.24% y-o-y to ₹79,96,060 crore. Time deposits grew 13.51% y-o-y to ₹72,75,600 crore against ₹64,09,886 crore in the previous year while demand deposits rose 10.71% to ₹7,20,458 crore from ₹6,50,751 crore in the year-ago period.

# New app to help wade through highways

**Timsy Jaipuria**  
New Delhi, July 23

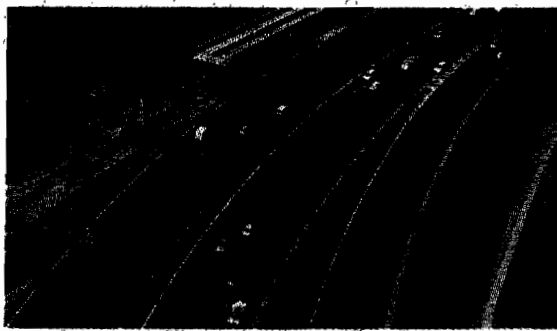
**T**HE next time one travels on a highway there's no fear of getting lost in the maze of routes. The government is set to launch a new app and portal that will help travellers navigate through highways in a way that would be completely different from the clutch of applications that netizens currently use.

Apart from providing the best route to reach one's desired destination, the app will also provide a map of toll plazas on the route with

exact fees to be paid at each plaza along with information of diversions on highways and details of concessionaire for each stretch. The new app can be downloaded for free and will be available on all major mobile platforms.

Already the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) had launched such a service few months back but that provided limited information. "This app has been im-

proved and will navigate commuters to not just national highways but also



through other state highways and roads. One can also check whether a toll plaza is operating legally and how

much they should pay at each toll plaza, nearby hospital, police station, eating joints etc," the official added.

The app will soon be launched formally by the road, transport, highway and shipping minister Nitin Gadkari.

"It is common for commuters to get cheated at toll plazas which are managed by locals and toll operators

who do not provide exact information. This app will help to overcome such hassles and bridge the gap between the government and the commuters," the official added.

Once the app becomes accessible, offenses like overcharging, misbehaviour by toll operators, long wait at toll plazas and many other irritants are likely to be addressed.

Moreover, though it's mandatory that a big hoarding at every plaza must display the applicable toll charges for each type of vehicle, private developers often fail to put them up.

## May review Land Acquisition Act: Gadkari

**New Delhi, July 23:** In a significant development, the government on Wednesday expressed its willingness to review certain provisions of the Land Acquisition Act which was projected as one of the landmark laws brought out by the UPA.

The Act has faced criticism from various quarters in-

cluding some states.

"We can review the Land Acquisition Act... if there is cooperation from your side," rural development minister Nitin Gadkari told the Lok Sabha, adding that certain provisions could be re-considered.

However, he emphasised that the whole effort should not result in delaying road

projects. He was replying to the discussion on demands for grants for ministry of road transport and highways.

According to the minister, there would be no compromise on the compensation amount to be given to people displaced by land acquisition, the minister noted. **PTI**

# \$15-18B WORLD BANK AID FOR INDIA

## FROM MY DISCUSSIONS WITH MODI AND JAITLEY, IT IS CLEAR THAT THEY ARE COMMITTED TO GROWTH: KIM

**STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE**  
Kolkata, 25 July

The World Bank will provide \$15-18 billion credit to India over the next three years. It will bring increased financial and knowledge resources to help India return to the path of sustained high growth needed to bring prosperity to millions, especially the poor living in the lower income states.

World Bank Group president Jim Yong Kim made this renewed commitment during his first meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi today.

"From my discussions with the Prime Minister Modi and minister Jaitley, it is clear that they are committed to increasing India's economic growth, Mr Kim said. I assured them that the World Bank Group will bring to bear all possible knowl-

edge and financing to help them in this task. A large proportion of the world's poor live in India and we will give all our support to the government as it strives to create jobs and build prosperity for its people," a World Bank statement said quoting Mr Kim.

Mr Kim is on a three-day visit to India to learn more about the new government's priorities. India is the largest client for the World Bank, which committed a total of \$6.4 billion to the country during its last fiscal year (July 2013 to June 2014).

Discussions with the Prime Minister and other officials focused on the government's plans to re-ignite growth by investing in infrastructure to create jobs; providing quality education and skills training to eight million young people who enter the labour force each

### RENEWED COMMITMENT

- 1 Mr Kim is on a three-day visit to India to learn more about the new government's development priorities
- 2 Talks with the Prime Minister, and other senior officials focused on the government's plans to revive growth
- 3 International Development Association donors will provide \$3.4 billion over the next three years as transitional support

*A large proportion of the world's poor live in India and we will give all our support to the government as it strives to create jobs and build prosperity for its people*

**JIM YONG KIM**  
WORLD BANK GROUP PRESIDENT

year; and better equipping the 10 million people who leave rural areas for towns and cities each year for jobs.

economic potential, said Mr Kim. They have identified infrastructure development and job-oriented skill development as the deep drivers of growth.

"The World Bank Group is ready to support these development initiatives with financing, as well as knowledge and capacity building, that is informed by global experience" Mr Kim said.

The World Bank chief also apprised the government of the recent collaborative efforts between the Government of India and the World Bank Group to ensure that India continues to receive high levels of financial assistance from its various units.

Recognising that India still needs to lift around 270 million people out of poverty, International Development Association (IDA) donors have agreed to pro-

vide \$3.4 billion over the next three years as transitional support.

The International Bank for Reconstruction & Development (IBRD) has also recently increased the single borrower limit for India to \$20 billion from \$17.5 billion, the statement said.

This, along with the Government of India's agreement to purchase Special Private Placement Bonds (SPPBs) of up to \$4.3 billion, will create additional opportunities for continued assistance to India as it strives to revive growth.

In addition, the World Bank's private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) has mobilised its \$1 billion offshore rupee bond programme, aimed at strengthening India's capital markets and attracting foreign investments.

# Suresh Prabhu to head panel to review gas price

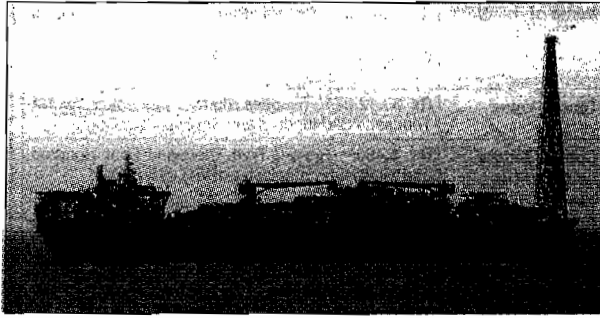
AMITAV RANJAN

NEW DELHI, JULY 23

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi has chosen former power minister Suresh Prabhu to review the previous UPA government's decision to raise the price of natural gas that would have led to a cascading effect on power tariff, urea costs and retail price of piped cooking gas.

Following Modi's directive, the petroleum ministry has moved a proposal to set up "a group of eminent persons" to assist the government in formulating "an appropriate view", which includes the freedom to suggest an "alternative formula/pricing guidelines".

"As discussed, the group could consist of Suresh Prabhu, Pratap Bhanu Mehta



and Bibek Debroy, if they are agreeable," says the proposal awaiting petroleum minister Dharmendra Pradhan's approval. Mehta is president and chief executive of Centre for Policy Research while Debroy is a faculty member in the same centre.

An "indicative" terms of reference for the committee includes "revisiting the Natural Gas Pricing Guidelines of 2014 (NGPG 2014) and the

Rangarajan formula and the possibility of applying the same in its present form or with modifications".

"Observations made by Parliamentary Standing Committee would also need to be considered," it emphasises.

Rangarajan's formula would have more than doubled gas price to around \$8.8 per million British thermal unit, raising power cost by over Rs 2 per unit, urea pro-

duction cost by Rs 6,228 per tonne and piped gas by Rs 8.50 per kg.

Both Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance and the Standing Committee on Petroleum made adverse comments on the formula approved by the UPA in June 2013. It has been challenged in the Supreme Court and an FIR is pending in Delhi's Anti-Corruption Bureau on the issue.

The proposal says the committee would have to consider pricing regimes in other countries, production sharing contracts signed between exploration firms and the government, impact of price revision on power, fertiliser, economy and the gas demand-supply scenario, and price impact on the exploration activities.

It moots "extensive consultations with stakeholders so that their concerns can be addressed" within the legal stipulations as well analyse the possibility of a uniform gas pricing regime in the country.

The committee would be given time until August 31 to submit its report "so that the government has sufficient time for taking a view of its recommendations and to take a decision before September 30". Within this timeline, the committee would have to invite public comments through the web as there was not enough time.

Last month, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs deferred the implementation of Rangarajan price formula by three months for a comprehensive review keeping public interest in mind.

# Govt firm on food security concerns; unlikely to relent

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU  
NEW DELHI, JULY 23

INDIA is unlikely to support the trade facilitation agreement if the developed countries don't address its concerns on food security issues at the Geneva meeting on Thursday, even as it appears isolated on the issue.

The deadline for ratifying the World Trade Organization trade facilitation agreement (TFA) is July 31 and it has to be ratified by all 160 member nations of the WTO to be implemented from 2015. On Tuesday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had met finance minister Arun Jaitley and commerce minister Nirmala Sitharaman to finalise India's position on the issue.

Amid the scheduled meeting of the general council on Thursday, farmers' organisations urged the government to stand firm on linking the food security proposal with the TFA in WTO. Yudhvir Singh, leader of Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU), said in a statement that "in the backdrop of rising costs and extremely volatile global market prices, and to fulfil the constitutional obligation of food security to its people, and ensure the livelihood security of producers, the government needs to sustain and increase domestic agricultural

## JULY 31 DEADLINE

- Deadline for ratifying the World Trade Organization trade facilitation agreement is July 31
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- Amid the scheduled meeting of the general council on Thursday, farmers' organisations urged the government to stand firm on linking the food security proposal with the TFA

production through price support, procurement and other measures to achieve self-sufficiency in food production, across different food grains".

Expressing concern over the issue, the organisations including Alliance for Sustainable and Holistic Agriculture, BJP Kisan Morcha and All India Kisan Sabha said that the government should not buckle under any international pressure and block the ratification of TFA unless other elements of the Bali package including permanent solution on the food security proposal and the LDC package are advanced.

India is the most vocal nation among the group of developing nations, raising concerns about the deal on trade facilitation, which was struck by WTO member nations in Bali last year.