

# BHARAT SCHOOL OF BANKING

## THE HINDU EDITORIAL FOR ENGLISH COMPREHENSION SET 4

### A brief history of the past 70 years

One of the outcomes of the recently concluded Assembly elections is that India is set to have the same party ruling at the Centre and in many of the States. While this may have had some advantages in the past, such as for the **decisive** ending of stagnation after a century of colonial rule, a dispersion of power is desirable for our democracy. India after all is not some small European country. Not only is it set to become the world's largest country in a matter of decades but it is also an economy challenged by poverty. There is also great cultural and religious diversity here. A governance equal to this configuration is vital.

### At an ominous juncture

Therefore, the Bharatiya Janata Party's choice of a mahant as Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh is **ominous** from this point of view. The politics that it represents needs to be challenged, but the question is how this is to be achieved. In the Westminster model of government that we follow, dispersion of power requires a strong opposition at the Centre. It is the absence of any real opposition to the Congress for three decades after 1947 that is responsible for India's slow progress despite its quite **spectacular** beginning under Jawaharlal Nehru. Political parties become **complacent** when they face no opposition. It has been pointed out that it is States which witnessed political competition that have made the most progress. The examples usually cited are Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and Tamil Nadu.

Thus with the BJP in power open-endedly, we may find a faster pace of development, but may find ourselves under a more authoritarian governance. It is also **conceivable** that despite economic **buoyancy** the minorities may feel alienated by the politics of Hindutva even though some of the associated **rhetoric** has been toned down of late. To **avert** both these possibilities it is important that the BJP remains challenged by a strong opposition at the Centre.

Right now this can be imagined as coming from the Congress alone for it is the only other national party though in reduced circumstances. But this cannot be guaranteed. To effectively be the opposition, India's grand old party would have to not just rethink its strategy but reflect seriously on what it stands for today. Why have the people of U.P. chosen to vote into government a party that has not a great deal to show in terms of countrywide economic indicators? The economy has slowed and is nowhere near achieving the double-digit growth promised during the general election of 2014. Inflation is lower but far from **tamed**, with the price of dal, the poor man's protein, reaching close to ₹200 per kg on occasion. To top it all, there was the demonetisation, which by all grassroots accounts led to a dip in output.

Yet the BJP has walked away with the prize of power in India's largest State by far. Accounts such as that the BJP has merely "tapped into its vote bank" imply an irreversible slide, which is hopelessly **pessimistic**. They fail to acknowledge that the BJP has been voted out in U.P. in the past, most significantly at the first opportunity after the **demolition** of the Babri Masjid. It has returned to power only after a spell in the **wilderness**, after the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party had been given a chance to deliver broad-based development.

The midnight reminder While the Congress's leadership has said little publicly on its defeat in U.P., some of its spokespersons exhibited a thoughtfulness on television soon after when they spoke of a need to reflect deeply on the inability of the party to come up with a winning formula, so to speak. If the party ever gets down to such an exercise seriously, it need do nothing more than study Nehru's conduct as Prime Minister. And they could make no better a start than to listen to his public address at midnight on August 14, 1947. There, between the **weary** voice and measured **cadence**, members of today's Congress party would find a purpose worth reclaiming. Nehru had spoken of independence as essentially an opportunity for "end(ing of) poverty and **ignorance** and disease and inequality of opportunity." There is clarity in this, for Nehru could see that without it Independence would amount to no more than replacing a colonial **autocracy** with a native one.

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It is interesting that while even "prosperity" makes an appearance later in the speech 'secularism' is altogether missing from it. Does this mean that Nehru was somehow lacking in commitment to it? Not even his most **ardent** critics would dare propose this. Or can it be said that Nehru could afford to not foreground secularism in a way that the Congress must today as the climate has changed considerably since? Hardly. Nehru was speaking even as communal violence **enacted** a deathly dance around him. And his subsequent actions speak not only for where he stood **vis-à-vis** the question of the role of religion in the **nascent** republic but also of the role of the government in ensuring the safety of India's Muslims post Partition. Eyewitness accounts speak of him as a man possessed **haranguing** roving gangs of Hindus seeking revenge on Delhi's streets in August 1947.

Some years later he was to ensure the re-codification of Hindu personal law with a view to **redressing** the balance against women. Petitions seeking justice in marriage that have reached the Supreme Court from Christian and Muslim women suggest that he **erred** in not giving the same treatment to all religions. But he had stopped with this. Unlike the Congress after Indira Gandhi, he did not allow his commitment to safeguarding the rights of India's minorities to be exchanged for any empowerment of the **clergy**. This was to come much later and was to take a particularly **jarring** form in some States where, from the women's rights to freedom of expression for artists, the Congress has shown itself anxious to appease clergymen from the minorities.

Nothing, however, can match the cynical calculations of Rajiv Gandhi, in response to the Shah Bano case and the Ram temple agitation, which appeased the most reactionary sections of Muslims and Hindus, respectively. With it the path was cleared for the rise of the BJP. It is entirely in the hands of the Congress to return to being a party that keeps religion out of politics except of course to ensure that an individual's right to worship, without **trampling** on the rights of others, is preserved. The ideal is summed up perfectly by Nehru who had ended his speech with: "All of us, to whatever religion we may belong, are equally the children of India with equal rights, privileges and obligations."

The Congress's second moment after the national movement was to come in 1991 when it averted a default on India's international obligations. Led by P.V. Narasimha Rao, it **steered** the country away from a diminution of its political stature that was assured were it to **renege** on them. There was also some **contingent** restructuring of the economy. One need only glance at post-Communist Russia to see how the Rao-Manmohan Singh duo managed the transition with some finesse. It is only later, under the UPA, that the Congress got identified with not only dynastic privilege but also allowing economic inequality to spin out of control. Now the concerns of the corporate sector, including a **hankering** for recognition by the U.S., came to be privileged over that of the ordinary Indian. The government came to be seen as distant, and instances of the **ingenious** use of the state apparatus to a mass private wealth under a liberalised policy **regime** came to light. Examples of the latter range from telecom to aviation.

With this the path already cleared for the BJP was widened. By the time of the elections in U.P. Narendra Modi had repositioned himself as the deliverer of broad-based development, a role that historically belonged to the Congress. It was this very role that Nehru had in mind when on the eve of Independence he spoke of prosperity being "indivisible". It is still not too late for the Congress leadership to **internalise** this. Above all, in the coarser language of today, Nehru had "walked the talk". Economic inequality declined as a result of his policies and the man himself died owning far less than he had inherited.

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### QUESTIONS BASED ON ABOVE GIVEN PARAGRAPH

#### SYNONYMS

**1. OMINOUS**

- a. Misfortune    b. Energetic    c. Clear    d. Ambiguous    e. Perverted

**2. CADENCE**

- a. Mull    b. Happiness    c. Isolate    d. Contemplate    e. Invigorate

**3. CLERGY**

- a. Calculate    b. Glaze    c. religious leader    d. Reform    e. None of these

#### ANTONYMS

**4. hankering**

- a. Maneuver    b. Correct    c. Encounter    d. aversion    e. Breech

**5. erred**

- a. Cheerful    b. Inferior    c. Cruel    d. Rancor    e. be right

**6. Contingent**

- a. Agreeable    b. Lustrous    c. Allayed    d. Independent    Noneofthese

**7. choose the word that can be substituted for the given word**

A LONG,ANGRY SPEECH OF CRITICISM OR ACCUSATION

- a. Abatement    d. Tirade  
b. Vehemence    e. Convergence  
c. Rent

8. Having a strong dislike of or opposition to something

- a. Grim    b. Farina  
c. Averse    e. Revere  
d. Dingy

9. Best meaning for this phrase **come in handy**

- a. to be usefull  
b. met an accident  
c. a tough situation  
d. to disregard an important order  
e. none of these

10. **Choose the word which is incorrectly spelt**

- a. Apparatus    d. Misconception  
b. Privilige    e. Corporate  
c. Statistician

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### Error spotting:

11. By placing yellow tape around the crime scene(1)/the police is trying(2)/to avert contamination(3)/of the evidence(4)/none(5)

- a. 1                  b. 2                  c. 3                  d. 4                  e. 5

12. The dogs' owner continue(1)/to aver their pet(2)/is not the one who is(3)/constantly going potty in my front yard(4)/no error(5)

- a. 1                  b. 2                  c. 3                  4. d                  5. e

### QUESTIONS:

13. Which of the following leader once had position of narendra modi in mind of the people of india on the eve of independence/

- a. J. nehru    d. Gandhi  
b. Sardar patel    e. None of these  
c. Rajendra Prasad

14. The tone of the passage is

- a. Argument against a mandate  
b. Explorative in chronicle order  
c. Argumentative against political decision  
d. Criticizing a decision  
e. None of these

15.

15. Why does the auther think bjp partys joice of the mahant as cm of up an omimous sign?

- a. Because of cultural and religious diversity issue  
b. A mahant may not be good politician  
c. A mahant may not be a good controlling authority  
d. It may create turmoil in up politics  
e. None of these

16. In the Westminster model of government that we follow dispersion of power ----- a strong opposition at the centre

- a) promises                  b) reveals                  c) veils                  d) requires                  e) jolts

17. While the congress leadership has said little publicity on its defeat in U.P. some of its spokespersons ----- thoughtfulfulness on television soon after when they spoke of a need to reflect deeply on the \_\_\_\_\_ of the party to come up with a winning formula so to speak.

- a) Reckoned, plebian  
b) Found, qualms  
c) Assessed, prophecy  
d) Exhibited, inability  
e) Beveled, proclivity

18. By the time of the elections in U.P. Narendra Modi as repositioned himself as the \_\_\_\_\_ of broad based development, a role that historically belonged to the congress.

- a) Harangue  
b) Deliverer  
c) Rhetoric  
d) Function  
e) Symptom

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ANSWER:

- 1) A      2)B      3)C      4)D      5)E      6)D      7)D      8)C      9)A      10)B      11)B(are)      12)  
B(his)      13)A      14)B      15)A
- 16) D      17) D      18)B