

## Course correction – Shock resignation: on Urjit Patel quitting as RBI chief

### Urjit Patel stepping down as RBI Governor is a major embarrassment for the government

The Reserve Bank of India Governor Urjit Patel has cited personal reasons for resigning with immediate effect, but anyone who has followed the events of the last couple of months will know it was anything but that. It was a period during which the Centre and the RBI were engaged in an unseemly tussle over a clutch of issues that had a bearing on the RBI's autonomy, something that Mr. Patel had sought to preserve. As his predecessor Raghuram Rajan pointed out, when a public servant resigns, it is a sign of protest. Mr. Patel's decision clearly caught everyone by surprise as it came following perceptions of a thaw in relations between the Centre and the RBI, after an agreement was hammered out at a board meeting last month on some of the contentious issues, including a controversial proposal to use the central bank's reserves for fiscal purposes. But clearly, the larger issue that divided the Centre and the RBI — which related to autonomy and the independent functioning of the Governor — was never fully resolved. Mr. Patel's resignation is a serious embarrassment to the NDA government, which has scrambled to make statements expressing surprise at his action and praising him for his work. As attempts to signal that it had nothing to do with Mr. Patel stepping down and to reinforce that he did indeed quit for personal reasons, these remarks were largely unconvincing.

Mr. Patel's resignation is bound to raise questions about the Centre's ability to work with independent-minded economists, coming as it does following the departures of former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, who was at odds with the Centre on many issues, and the sudden resignations of Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya and Chief Economic Adviser Arvind Subramanian. It is true that Mr. Patel's reclusive and non-communicative style may not have endeared him to some bankers, but his eminence as an economist and his understanding of macro-economic issues is undisputed. Governments have sparred with the RBI before on the issue of autonomy, but the NDA government went one step further by starting consultations under Section 7 of the RBI Act, which gives the Centre the power to direct the RBI to act in specific ways. The immediate priority now is for the Centre to fill the breach without wasting time. Global investors and the markets are already on edge, and they will be keenly watching, along with the ratings agencies, how the Centre handles this self-created crisis. The incoming Governor is bound to be judged, among other things, by perceptions about his independence. The RBI cannot be treated as if it is just another government department. And the Centre will now need to demonstrate that a post-Patel **central bank** will continue to enjoy operational autonomy. Anything less will not go down well with both investors and the markets.

#### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **Resignation** - the act of leaving a job permanently
- **Chief** - highest in authority, position, or rank
- **Step down** - to leave an official position or job
- **Embarrassment** - a feeling of being nervous or ashamed because of what people know or think about you
- **Cite** - to mention something as proof for a theory or as a reason why something has happened
- **Unseemly** - unseemly behaviour is embarrassing or upsets people because it is not suitable in a particular situation
- **Tussle** - a disagreement between two people who are both trying to get or to achieve something
- **Clutch of** - a small group of people or things

- **Had a bearing on something** - to be relevant/not relevant to something, or to have an influence/no influence on it
- **Autonomy** - the power to make your own decisions
- **Sought** - to ask for something, or to try to get something
- **Preserve** - to keep an idea, quality, or situation from changing or being lost
- **Predecessor** - the person who had a job or official position before someone else
- **Protest** - a strong complaint or disagreement
- **Catch someone by surprise** - to happen unexpectedly
- **Perception** - a particular way of understanding or thinking about something
- **Thaw** - to become more friendly
- **Hammer out** - to reach a decision or agreement after discussing it or arguing about it for a long time
- **Contentious** - causing disagreement between people or groups
- **Controversial** - a controversial subject, opinion, or decision is one that people disagree about or do not approve of
- **Embarrassment** - a feeling of being nervous or ashamed because of what people know or think about you
- **Scramble** - to hurry or try very hard to get something, often competing with other people
- **Reinforce** - to make an idea, belief, or feeling stronger
- **Unconvincing** - not capable of persuading you that something is true or right
- **Former** - used for describing someone or something that had a particular job, title, status etc in the past, but not now
- **At odds with** - disagreeing with someone
- **Reclusive** - living alone and avoiding other people
- **Endear** - to make someone liked by someone else
- **Eminence** - importance because of impressive achievements, character, or status
- **Macro-economic** - relating to the economic system of a whole country or large region
- **Undisputed** - agreed or accepted by everyone
- **Spar** - to argue
- **Consultation** - discussion between people or groups before they make a decision
- **Breach** - a failure to follow a law or rule
- **On edge** - nervous and unable to relax because you are worried
- **Crisis** - an urgent, difficult, or dangerous situation
- **Perception** - a particular way of understanding or thinking about something

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## Course correction – **Opening shot: on India's Adelaide Test win**

### **India wins its first maiden Test of a series in Australia, firing hopes of a larger turnaround**

When R. Ashwin dismissed Josh Hazlewood and Virat Kohli roared in delight at the Adelaide Oval on Monday evening, they firmly threw down the gauntlet to hosts Australia. India's 31-run victory over Australia in the gripping first Test of the four-match series is significant on two counts. So far on India's much anticipated Test tours of Australia, maiden clashes have mostly been lost, with the occasional draw wrested by the visitors. The struggle dates back to India's inaugural Test in Australia, played in 1947. Lala Amarnath led the squad, and in the first game at Brisbane the Indians were blown away by Don Bradman's brilliance. The master scored 185 and the hosts won by an innings and 226 runs. That result set a debilitating pattern and subsequent visits ended up with two grim realities — the inability to crack the first Test jinx, and the larger failure to win a series Down Under. With this Adelaide Test firmly in their grip, Kohli and his talented squad have demolished one bogey. The larger goal now should be to

rectify the other glaring anomaly: the failure to swing a Test series in Australia, a tour which inevitably demands the very best from visiting teams. The current visit is India's 12th Test tour of Australia; during its previous sojourns, only in three series were draws secured. The rest were lost.

India arrived in **Australia** last month ranked number one in Tests, but painfully conscious of having lost Tests outside the subcontinent. The last tours of South Africa and England were fresh in memory. As the current tour across Australia's vast landmass, clocking air-miles and playing hours, the Twenty20 series was shared 1-1. In Tests, India sensed the edge, a direct consequence of Australia's inherent abilities as well as the turmoil within its ranks following the ball-tampering controversy at the Cape Town Test in March. The subsequent bans on Steve Smith, David Warner and Cameron Bancroft enfeebled Australia, and the few threats it held hinged on its pace-attack and on spinner Nathan Lyon. When the Adelaide Test commenced and India was in no time reduced to 41 for four, the ghosts of losses past seemed to stir the rest awake. India overcame Australia's diminished strength with Cheteshwar Pujara's glorious 123; the niggardly spells, potency and craft displayed by Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Shami, Jasprit Bumrah and Ashwin; the better batting on view in the second innings as reflected in Ajinkya Rahane's knock. Yet, the series is alive and there are three remaining Tests at Perth, Melbourne and Sydney. Surely the performance over the last five days, which also masked a rare batting failure from Kohli with just 3 and 34 in the two innings, should hold India in good stead.

### **Meanings of Difficult Words :**

- **Maiden** - being the first of its type
- **Turnaround** - an important change in a situation that causes it to improve
- **Roar** - to say something in a loud voice
- **Delight** - a feeling of great happiness and pleasure
- **Throw down the gauntlet** - to invite someone to fight or compete with you
- **Gripping** - very exciting and interesting
- **Significant** - very important
- **Anticipate** - to be excited about something enjoyable that is going to happen soon
- **Date back to** - to be made or begun at a particular time in the past
- **Inaugural** - an inaugural event is the first of a series
- **Squad** - a sports team
- **Blow away** - to defeat someone completely and easily
- **Debilitating** - making someone physically or mentally weak
- **Subsequent** - happening or coming after something else
- **Grim** - grim news, situations, or events are unpleasant and make you feel upset and worried
- **Jinx** - a force that brings bad luck that often affects someone or something
- **Demolish** - to defeat someone easily in a game or competition
- **Glaring** - a glaring mistake is very obvious
- **Anomaly** - something unusual, unexpected, or different from what normally happens
- **Inevitably** - used for saying that something is certain to happen
- **Sojourn** - a period of time when you stay in a place that is not your home
- **Conscious** - noticing that something exists or is happening and realizing that it is important
- **Subcontinent** - a large area of land that forms part of a continent, especially the part of Asia that contains the countries of India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh
- **Landmass** - a continent or large area of land surrounded by sea
- **Consequence** - a result or effect of something
- **Inherent** - an inherent quality is a basic or essential feature that gives something its character
- **Turmoil** - a state of excitement or uncontrolled activity

- **Tampering** - to touch something that you should not touch, and to change it in some way, often because you want to spoil it
- **Enfeebled** - no longer strong or effective
- **Hing on** - if one thing hinges on another, the first thing depends on the second thing or is very influenced by it
- **Diminished** - reduced in amount, size, or importance
- **Glorious** - very beautiful in a way that makes you feel happy
- **Niggardly** - slight in amount, quality, or effort
- **Potency** - strength, influence, or effectiveness
- **Good stead** - to be useful or helpful to someone

### Course correction – RE-EXAMINE THE BILL

#### Concerns about the triple talaq Bill must not be dismissed as an attempt to sabotage it

The winter session of Parliament saw more political positioning than appraisal of a legislation to make instant triple talaq a criminal offence. With the Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Bill pending in the Rajya Sabha, the best option would be to refer it to a select committee to help bring about a **consensus** on how to address the problem of talaq-e-biddat, as there is no serious opposition to the principle that it is morally **abhorrent** and legally impermissible. The **core** question is whether resorting to an illegal and **arbitrary** form of divorce should necessarily lead to a prison term for the offending husband. A three year prison term, besides a fine, also raises the issue of **proportionality**. The Opposition has raised three concerns: whether a civil wrong, mainly a breach of a marriage contract in an arbitrary manner, **ought** to be treated as a crime; whether it is not a contradiction of sorts for the law to jail a husband for pronouncing instant talaq and also **mandate** that he pay a **subsistence** allowance to the wife; and whether making it a **cognizable** and non bailable offence would lead to it being misused against Muslim men. Further, some see an internal **contradiction** in the way the law is **sought** to be framed. On the one hand it says instant triple talaq in any form is **void**, thereby declaring that the marriage continues to **subsist**; but it also talks of issues such as the **custody** of children and maintenance, which would arise only after a divorce. These are valid concerns and cannot be dismissed by the BJP as arguments aimed to **sabotage** the Bill.

The Bill is now in the Rajya Sabha, where the BJP and its allies do not have a majority. Some of its key allies, such as the AIADMK, the Telugu Desam Party and the Biju Janata Dal, are against the penal provision. The through in the Lok Sabha, but has taken the position that referring it to a parliamentary committee may help remove some **lacunae**. **Initially** the party appeared to question the prescription of a jail term, but it has raised a new question. It wants to know whether the government would take care of the **sustenance** of the woman concerned if her husband is jailed for uttering triple talaq. The **dilemma** before the Congress is that it cannot be seen as reprising the role it had played over 30 years ago in the Shah Bano episode, when it brought in legislation to **scupper** a Supreme Court verdict in favour of a Muslim woman's claim for maintenance. However, **hasty** legislation passed in the commotion of a divided House may not help the cause. A sound legal frame work to deal with all issues arising from instant talaq ought to be **crafted** after deeper consideration.

#### WORD LIST

- **Consensus** : (general agreement)  
Synonym : accord, consent, harmony, unanimity, unity, concord
- **Abhorrent**: (disgusting)  
Synonym : despicable, loathsome, repulsive, detestable, offensive.
- **Core** : (centre, gist)

- Synonym : basis, body, bottom line, crux, essence, focus, foundation, importance, origin, root, substance, thrust.
- **Arbitrary** : (whimsical, chance)  
Synonym : capricious, discretionary, erratic, frivolous, inconsistent, irrational, irresponsible, random, subjective, unreasonable, wilful.
  - **Proportionality** : (as in ratio, as in symmetry) (percentage, relation of part to whole)  
Synonym : proportion, quota, rate, scale, arrangement, correlation, equation, fraction
  - **Ought** : (burden)  
Synonym : concern, need, tax, care, commitment, committal, custody, duty, obligation, onus, responsibility, right, task, trust.
  - **Mandate** : (authority, order)  
Synonym : authorization, command, decree, directive, injunction, instruction, sanction.
  - **Subsistence** : (Provisions for survival)  
Synonym : livelihood, ration, sustenance, affluence, aliment, alimentation, capital, earnings.
  - **Cognizable** : (as in perceptible, as in perceivable)(noticeable, obvious)  
Synonym : appreciable, audible, detectable, discernible, distinct, distinguishable, observable, palpable
  - **Contradiction** : (variance to something)  
Synonym : conflict, difference, disagreement, discrepancy, dispute, inconsistency, confutation, defiance, denial
  - **Sought** : (wanted)  
Synonym : desired, hunted, needed, long for
  - **Void** : (empty)  
Synonym : abandoned, bare, barren, clear, deprived, drained, free, lacking, scant
  - **Subsist** : (keep going, living)  
Synonym : get along, get by, scrape by, be, breathe, continue, last, live, endure
  - **Custody** : (supervision, charge of something)  
Synonym : care, guardianship, protection, aegis, auspices, management, observation, preservation, salvation, safekeeping
  - **Sabotage** : (damage, incapacitate)  
Synonym : destruction, disruption, subversion, treachery, treason, vandalism
  - **Lacunae** (Lacuna): (pause)  
Synonym : break, cavity, depression, gap, hiatus, interim, interval, space
  - **Initially** : (at first)  
Synonym : originally, at the beginning first
  - **Sustenance** : (necessities for existence)  
Synonym : livelihood, nourishment, nutrition, subsistence, aliment
  - **Dilemma** : (crisis)  
Synonym : difficulty, embarrassment, impasse, mess, plight, predicament, problem, puzzle, quandary
  - **Scupper**: (a hole in a ship's side to carry water overboard from the deck)  
(an outlet in the side of a building for draining water)
  - **Hasty** : (speedy; without much thought)  
Synonym : abrupt, careless, expeditious, hurried, ill-advised, impulsive, quick, rapid, reckless, sudden swift, urgent.
  - **Crafted** : (conceive, dream up)  
Synonym : arrange, come up with, concoct, construct, craft, create, design, discover, forge, formulate, hatch, invent, mastermind, prepare, workout

## Course correction – TOWARDS STABILITY

### Nepal must hasten the process of government formation

A month after the Left Alliance secured a **decisive** victory in Nepal's parliamentary elections, a government is yet to be formed in Kathmandu. The Alliance was **forged** just before the elections between the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) and the Communist Party of Nepal (Maoist Centre). The transfer of power from the Nepali Congress to the UML led **coalition** was delayed **initially** due to **procedural** issues. The Upper House, or the National Assembly, needed to be indirectly elected by the **provincial** assemblies. The parties had disagreed on the means of this indirect election, with the NC advocating a **proportional** representation single transferable vote system, and the UML seeking a majority vote. After President Bidhya Devi Bhandari **ratified** a long pending **ordinance** that allowed elections based on the single transferable vote in late December 2017, this issue appeared to have been **resolved**. But there are other procedural issues to be sorted out. In **consultation** with the Left Alliance, the caretaker government has to first appoint governors to the seven provinces. Then, the process of choosing their capitals, in order to **convene** the Assemblies, can be completed. Tentative proposals on new capitals had given rise to protests in several towns, and the main political parties are unwilling to take a clear position on the issue. The caretaker NC government does not seem to be particularly keen on resolving this, and a proposal has been floated to allow the provincial assemblies to convene in Kathmandu first. In the absence of a **consensus**, this may be best.

The clear and decisive choice by the electorate in the polls has put the responsibility of operationalizing the **intricate** provincial model on the Left Alliance. Once the process of nominations to the National Assembly is complete – with 33% of the overall representation in Parliament reserved for women – the election of the Prime Minister will follow. It is a **foregone** conclusion that UML leader K.P.Oli will be elected: the party got close to the majority mark on its own in the first part the post seats. Ten years since the end of the civil war and the convening of the Constituent Assembly, the promise of economic development has been **belied**. This is one of the reasons behind agitations called by democratic and republican forces seeking a new CA. Nepal's economy continues to be highly dependent on **remittances** from Nepali **migrants** as the **agrarian** sector and industrial growth, especially in the hydro-energy sector, have **stagnated**. For too long, political posturing and the game of thrones involving the major parties, the UML, the NC and the Maoists, in Kathmandu have become **pursuits** in themselves. With the Left Alliance promising a greater degree of **cohesion** and winning a clear victory, the sooner the process of election of a new Prime Minister is **accomplished**, the faster Nepal can get on with the business of governance.

#### WORD LIST

- **Decisive** : (definite)  
Synonym: conclusive, critical, crucial, definite, determined, fateful, forceful, influential, momentous, resolute, significant.
- **Forged** : (fake)  
Synonym: counterfeit, spurious, supposititious
- **Coalition** : (allied group, association)  
Synonym: affiliation, alliance, amalgam, amalgamation, block, combination, combine, compact, conduction, consolidation, conspiracy, faction, federation, merging, party, unification.
- **Initially** : (at first)  
Synonym: originally, first, at the beginning

- **Procedural** :
  1. Relating to an established or official way of doing something.  
Example : "The developers had complied with all the relevant procedural requirements"
  2. A television series, film or novel characterised by detailed, realistic treatment of professional procedures, especially police procedures.  
Example : "the procedural about police officers going undercover will debut later this month"
- **Provincial** : (countrified; limited)  
Synonym: local, rural, bucolic, country, homespun, narrow, pastoral, petty, rustic, sectarian
- **Proportional** : (equivalent, proportionate)  
Synonym: commensurate, corresponding, reciprocal, comparative, correlative, equal, even, relative, symmetrical
- **Ratify** : (affirm, authorize)  
Synonym : approve, confirm, endorse, establish, okay, sign, uphold, accredit, authenticate, bind, bless, certify
- **Ordinance** : (law, rule)  
Synonym : authorization, cannon, code, command, decree, dictum, direction, edict, enactment, fiat, mandate, order, precept, prescript, regulation, ruling.
- **Resolve** : (make up one's mind; find solution)  
Synonym: agree, answer, clear up, conclude, deal with, decide, determine, fix, settle, workout, undertake, analyse
- **Consultation** : (asking, conference)  
Synonym: appointment, conference, deliberation, dialogue, discussion, examination, hearing, interview, meeting, session
- **Convene** : (bring together; meet)  
Synonym: assemble, gather, open, summon, call, congregate, muster, come together
- **Consensus** : (general agreement)  
Synonym: accord, consent, harmony, unanimity, unity, concord
- **Intricate** : (complicated, elaborate)  
Synonym: baroque, complex, difficult, sophisticated, tangled, tortuous, tricky
- **Foregone** : (predestined)  
Synonym: destined, certain, inescapable, inevitable, predictable
- **Belie** : (disprove, deceive)  
Synonym: contradict, negate, repudiate, confute, contravene, controvert, deny, disagree, explode, oppose
- **Remittances** : (as in alimony, allowance, compensation, discharge)  
(money paid in support of a former spouse)  
Synonym: keep, livelihood, living, maintenance, provision, subsistence, sustenance, upkeep
- **Migrant** : (Person who moves to a foreign place)  
Synonym : emigrant, evacuee, expatriate, immigrant, traveller, gypsy.
- **Agrarian** : (concerning land, farming)  
Synonym : agricultural, rural, natural, peasant, rustic
- **Stagnate** : (deteriorate by lack of action)  
Synonym : fester, hibernate, languish, stall, stand still, constipate, decay, decline, idle
- **Pursuit** : (chase, search)  
Synonym : hunt, enquiry, quest, following, pursual, stalk, tracking, trail.

- **Cohesion** : (union)  
Synonym : coherence, adherence, attachment
- **Accomplished** : (skilled in activity)  
Synonym : adept, consummate, gifted, polished, proficient, skilful, talented, cultivated, savvy

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### SOME IMPORTANT IDIOM AND PHRASES

- **Take to task**  
**Example** – I failed to impress the foreign clients so my boss took me to task in front of everyone.  
**Meaning** – To scold someone.
- **The worse for wear**  
**Example** – The radio is really worse for the wear. Send it to the repair centre.  
**Meaning** – In a poor condition.
- **A lion's share**  
**Example** – The lion's share of the company's profit goes to the charitable trust.  
**Meaning** – The biggest part of something.
- **To turn one's back on**  
**Example** – I can't turn my back on what I have done. It was my responsibility to take care of everything.  
**Meaning** – To deny or reject or abandon.
- **To bite the dust**  
**Example** – The soldier was too young to bite the dust.  
**Meaning** – To break/fail/die/give out.
- **Bolt from the blue**  
**Example** – I had met my uncle last week. He was so energetic and fit. Today his death news came as a bolt from the blue.  
**Meaning** – A sudden and unexpected event.
- **To draw a blank**  
**Example** – I tried to remember the address. But I could only draw a blank.  
**Meaning** – To fail to remember something./ To get no response.
- **To go against the tide**  
**Example** – It's not easy to go against the tide in defence of our principles.  
**Meaning** – To do the opposite of what other people are doing.
- **To pick a hole in my coat**  
**Example** – My boss is waiting for a chance to pick a hole in my coat.  
**Meaning** – To find a mistake in something someone has done or said.
- **On tenterhooks**  
**Example** – People were on tenterhooks when the possibility of an earthquake was announced.  
**Meaning** – Waiting nervously for the outcome.

☞ "Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out. – Robert Collier" ☞