

PERSPECTIVE

# Ease of business needs single-window system

**It will be beneficial if there is only one portal from where an individual can apply for the business and from there the application travels to the respective departments following a sequential order**



NAVREET RANA

In 2017, India jumped to the 100th position on the World Bank's 'Ease of Doing Business' (EoDB) list. The upsurge from the 130th ranking is an incredible feat pertaining to the economic reforms in the country.

Recalling what Ease of Doing Business is, it is an index published by the World Bank which measures the regulatory environment available to initiate, operate, control and eventually sustain any business. It is calculated as an average of 11 sub-indices, the first and foremost amongst them is the 'Ease of Starting Business'. This particular index is significant as any business can survive only if it can be started with the same ease. It becomes even more necessary to focus on this particular index because India still ranks 156 for the index Ease of Starting Business (EoSB). Although reforms like merging the applications for the Permanent Account Number (PAN) and the Tax Account Number (TAN) have been made in context of EoSB and improvements have also been seen in the online application and filing system, there is still a necessity to emphasise on improving the sub-index drastically.

Now, since EoSB is measured as an average of its sub-indices, any index that has a low ranking has a tendency to pull the mean towards the lower extreme. Similar is the fate of EoSB index. Since it has a low ranking, it has the capacity to pull the rating of EoDB towards the weaker edge.

Putting forth an instance of starting up of a new restaurant in the Indian capital, Delhi, let's find out, how 'easy' a procedure it is. The reason to choose the restaurant business is based on the facts that the Indian food and beverage service industry is growing at an unprecedented rate and is expected to contribute about 2.1 per cent of the total GDP of India by 2021.

Furthermore, as per the findings of the 2018-19 edition of India Food Report, the food service retail market in India is estimated to be worth ₹3,40,201 crore in 2017 and is growing at a compound annual growth rate of 10 per cent. By 2020, the market is estimated to reach the size of ₹4,52,733 crore. The organised share of the market is valued at ₹1,17,307 crore while the unorganised market share is estimated to reach 59 per cent in 2021 from 67 per cent in 2016.

The large metro-cities of Delhi and Mumbai are estimated to have over one-fifth of the organised FS market, each contributing equally.

In the light of the above mentioned statistics showcasing ahead the permissions required to open a restaurant in Delhi:

- 1) FSSAI-Food Safety and Standards Authority Licence: It's a 14-digit registration number obtained from the authority certifying the safety standards.
- 2) Liquor licence: From local Excise Commissioner. It requires a NOC from the State Fire Service and location plays a decisive role in obtaining this licence.
- 3) Health/Trade Licence: This licence is provided by the local municipal authorities or the Health Department.
- 4) Eating House Licence: Police Commissioner authorised. This licence ensures necessities like CCTV cameras, site plan, NOC from the landlord.
- 5) Shop and Establishment Act; 6) GST registration; 7) Fire Department; 8) Lift licence; Electricity Department.
- 9) Music Licence: This licence is obtained from Phonographic Performance Limited. One can apply on their website for the authorisation.
- 10) Certificate of Environmental Clearance: From Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change.
- 11) Signage Licence: In order to advertise the restaurant, the licence is obtained from the local civic authorities.

Now, let us compare the procedure of opening a restaurant in Delhi with that of Auckland (New Zealand). (New Zealand ranking first on the EoDB list as well as on GoBD lists makes it an obvious and ideal choice for comparison.) The first and principal finding is that the above list of licences and permissions has not been obtained from a Government web portal or information centre. In fact, it has been procured from a private website that promotes the growth of food business and shares relevant information pertaining to it.

On the other hand, the website of Auckland council has comprehensive information on every possible business irrespective of the scale of the food business. It comprises detailed guides and stepwise procedures about permissions, fees and timeline. The website is also equipped with the ready to use templates of business plans. One can choose a suitable plan based on a business model, and follow the steps thereafter. The council is also open to customisation of business plans for some extra cost and time. Even the primary businesses, purely agriculture-based food business like dairy and meat follow a business plan. It gives a sense of how organised the entire food sector is. Additionally, these plans are available on the website in multiple languages, including Hindi. This focuses on ease and availability of documents to all. The website and documents are self-explanatory and depict the procedures pictorially in the form of flowcharts and time diagrams.

Given the number of licences and permissions required to open a restaurant in Delhi it can be concluded that the safety and regulatory measures are kept under the check and are well placed but they are multifarious in nature. They do not follow a single window mechanism.

Taking into account the federal system that India follows, an absolute comparison between Auckland and Delhi on EoDB is difficult but other notions like having a single point of information over the internet and the availability of handbooks of the same at Government offices can certainly be adopted irrespective of the form of Government (federal or unitary) and thus making restaurant business an easy affair.

It will be beneficial if there is only one portal from where an individual can apply for the business and from there the application travels to the respective departments following a sequential order. The individual would be able to track his application and the system should be time bound. It will unquestionably be an upswing for the food businesses to be transparent and simplified. The use of this portal will surely ease the way food business is kicked off in India.

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# India arc in Moon's southern policy

Seoul may have shown restraint in openly endorsing the concept 'Indo-Pacific' as it has been carefully treading its foreign policy between China-led and US-led regional environments. This has, however, not discouraged the Moon administration from positioning South Korean interests more intently in the Indo-Pacific region. South Korean President's three-day visit to India from July 8 rationalises the 'newness' of his new southern policy



JAGANNATH PANDA

If South Korean President Moon Jae-In's new northern policy" is intended to build consensus on how to bring peace and stability in northeast Asia while promoting Seoul's economic interests in the Greater Eurasia region, his "new southern policy" is flagged to build a partnership of economic interests in Indo-Pacific.

Moon's visit to India from July 8-11 and then to Singapore from July 11-13 rationalises the "newness" of his new southern policy. This newness is more about offering a new context to Seoul's foreign relations approach to the countries in Asia, primarily focusing on ASEAN and India. The new southern policy is a compound and complex foreign policy approach that India needs to comprehend appropriately. First, it is about expanding Seoul's economic outreach in ASEAN and India, which are physically more in South Korea's southernmost part in Asia. Second, it emphasises the vitality of ASEAN and India in Korean foreign and economic diplomacy which explains the comfort factor that South Korea enjoys towards the most important regional mechanism and the second largest economy in Asia respectively. Third, it illustrates a "no conflicting" approach that Seoul enjoys with both ASEAN and India largely, compared with its

relationship with China and Japan. Fourth, it explains a limited but expanded regional vision linking to Indo-Pacific. On the whole, this policy approach is aimed to position South Korea's interests more intently in the Southeast Asian region, including in South Asia.

Officially, Seoul might have shown restraint in openly endorsing the concept "Indo-Pacific". It has been carefully treading its foreign policy between a China-led and US-led regional environment. This has, however, not discouraged the Moon administration from positioning South Korea's interests more intently in the Indo-Pacific region. In fact, South Korea has always shown a keen interest to engage with ASEAN, the core of Indo-Pacific. But the aim to engage with India under the New Southern Policy is a carefully orchestrated and an "exclusive" foreign policy strategy that Seoul has brought to expand its economic outreach in South Asia. South Korea's earlier foreign policy approaches such as "Sunshine Policy", "New Asia Initiative" and "Northeast Asia Peace Initiative" (NAPCI) had always factored New Delhi as an important factor but did not engage purposefully, pointing out that New Delhi did not have the arc to influence politics in Asia. South Korea visualised engaging

with India more bilaterally than regionally. New Delhi too did not factor South Korea prominently in its Look East policy, which was more limited to ASEAN until recently.

South Korea's relationship with ASEAN has witnessed steady progress in the last two decades. In 1989, Seoul became ASEAN's sectoral dialogue partner and in 1991 a full dialogue partner. Free Trade Area (FTA) between ASEAN and South Korea was completed in 2010. As a result, ASEAN has become South Korea's second-largest trading partner, with trade worth more than \$120 billion. Moreover, despite its overarching problems, Seoul has continuously been expanding its economic outreach relationship with China and Japan, which are ASEAN's two prominent dialogue partners.

Why has Seoul factored India exclusively in its New Southern Policy? Undoubtedly, it is New Delhi's growing importance and influence in East Asia and also in Asian as well as global affairs. But there are more shades to this approach.

First, South Korea's cautious but consciously expanding foreign policy context explains this stance. The "Northeast Asia Plus Community" foreign policy approach is intended to have a pragmatic and balanced outreach programme in both

the northern and southern aspects of Asia, which are South Korea's two critical geographic ends. In the New Northern Policy, Seoul puts peace and security ahead of economic diplomacy; whereas in the New Southern Policy it emphasises more on the economic diplomacy. Both ASEAN and India enhance Seoul's Indo-Pacific presence in some ways. Besides, the new policy approach allows South Korea to reposition its Asia policy more prominently than before.

Second, India's importance has grown substantially in South Korea's foreign policy prism as a key player in the Indo-Pacific region. Seoul is aware of India's centrality in Japan's "Free and Open Indo-Pacific" strategy and the United States' importance of India in its Indo-Pacific strategy. South Korea does not really want to openly endorse India as a partner in this Indo-Pacific configuration. At the same time, it does not want to put forward an impression that it underrates India as a power in the region, hence seeking a strategic partnership, though more bilaterally. Taiwan's "New Southbound policy", which equally factors both ASEAN and India as two central components, encourages South Korea to focus on India. ASEAN maintains a growing relationship pattern with India in Asia, making a common ground for South

Korea's foreign policy.

Third, China's rising influence in Asian and global affairs has encouraged Seoul to search for new partners. After the THAAD deployment, Seoul's potential tourism industry suffered due to China's decision to put a check on Chinese visiting South Korea. China's age-old partnership with North Korea has also encouraged Seoul to search for alternative partners without abandoning Beijing as an economic partner. China's rising economic and strategic influence in Asia and the world has posed a greater challenge to Korea's economic interests and investments. Japan too poses a challenge to South Korea's economic investment opportunities in Asia and beyond. Given India's "cold-peace" relationship with China, Seoul has positioned India as a prospective and exclusive partner in the longer term in its bilateral framework in Asia if not in the global framework.

Fourth, Seoul wants to recapture the potential Indian market which is the most important aspect of its New Southern Policy. South Korea's automobile, technological and consumer products may be a regular household feature in India, but these industrial products are facing an enormous challenge from Chinese and Japanese products. Besides, trade and economic contacts between India

and South Korea remain below their potential even though the two sides have signed the Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CEPA). Seoul would also wish to have stronger defence ties with India to eye to export potential small-scale defence equipment and instruments to Indian market. A good momentum is already visible in the shipyard sector between India and South Korea. But Seoul's eventual aim is to transform this good momentum to other potential Defence sectors.

In strategic terms, Seoul's expectations are specific. Seoul not only wants to build stronger economic contacts with India but also wants to figure out if India will accord South Korea ahead of Japan in its foreign policy engagement. Moon's visit to India must encourage New Delhi to seriously read the new context arriving in India-South Korea relations.

(The writer is a Fellow and Centre Head for East Asia at IDSA, New Delhi. This paper is partially based on the author's speech at the Korea-India Strategic Partnership Conference organised jointly by the Observer Research Foundation (ORF), New Delhi and Yonsei University, South Korea, in New Delhi on June 20, 2018)

INSIGHT

# Space for 'other' in Trump's America

The USA is known across the world for its national polity as a multidimensional melting pot. Since the last two millennia, America has witnessed Asian and European exodus by the "other" to seek shelter in the American homeland in the face of exploitation, penury, and religious-ethnic repression.

Since the campaign trail and the Presidential declarations to stymie the entry of population from seven Muslim nations and South America, it no longer remains a convenient task for the fastidious fortune seekers to milk the land of Oregon trail and the North Eastern seaboard.

In the contemporary context, the sequestration of families with the parents staying away communicated from their progeny in American detention centres remains a far cry from the notion of an all welcoming and embracing America. Apart from that, the Trump Administration has resuscitated its "iron door with spikes" policy by announcing that the progeny of adult aliens would not be separated from their parents in detention centres. Thus, the all-pervading notion of President Donald Trump being an inhuman and cruel capitalist amounts to the genre of over simplification, as quite generally speaking, the idiom of national security along with the tenet of human security of the American homeland is the primary prerogative of any American President and its executive despite even seasoned Republicans opposing President Trump's separation plan in the US Congress.

Thus, here one can witness the anti-establishment and the overtly true blue American strain of thought on "National Security First" approach towards policy making in general and immigration policy in particular.

It can be argued that placing American interests on the forefront amounts to a deft implementation of the theme and practice of economic nationalism. It is in this domain that President Trump intends to assuage the con-



Protesters gather to demonstrate against US President Donald Trump's immigration policies during the Families Belong Together - Freedom for Immigrants March in Los Angeles on June 30, 2018

cerns of the American workers and industry. Trump has repudiated the DACA law promulgated by President Obama which amounts to "Deferred action for childhood arrivals". The schemata on immigration proposed by Trump as part of a factual interlude proposes to initiate a 12 years procedure for around 1.8 million immigrants who are aliens as they arrived as undocumented entrants when they were in their toddlerhood. The visa lottery along with green cards for distant relatives and delimiting the provision of green cards only for children and spouses are the key constituents of Trump's immigration plan. The US Supreme Court has ruled the aliens under the DACA cannot be deported until the matter has not been pondered over by courts. The courts have placed a dragnet over the Department of Homeland security in the context of the DACA deportations.

A Trump tweet explains the Presidential positioning which is no more a posturing. Trump tweeted, as this sourced from one of his present tweets, "When we have an 'infestation' of MS-13 GANGS in certain parts of our country, who do we send to get them out? ICE! They

are tougher and smarter than these rough criminal (elements) that bad immigration laws allow into our country. Dems do not appreciate the great job they do!". Thus, the "infestation" rhetoric back on the tracks with the establishment expressing concern about the undocumented aliens being a security threat to the homeland security. And, why not? It has been observed that radicalisation of youth becomes a much easier pathway for establishing the peacenik apple cart of the US despite strivings being on by the education policy works in the US.

President John F Kennedy of the yore used to explicate rather honestly that America is the land of immigrants. In the light of a literacy test being imposed on the immigrants by the US Congress in 1897, the melting pot heydays of the American homeland were obstructed to a certain extent. President Woodrow Wilson, President Cleveland and Taft vetoed the legislation and but President Kennedy too tempered down his "America: The land of Nations" argument and his 1960 campaign document in the light of some reservations about the "new arrivals". EL Doctrow in his seminal and popular novella *Ragtime* also

picturises the sub-human state and toil of the immigrants during this American epoch. EL Doctrow clinically creates a telling imagery of the squalid dwellings, dirt ridden and squalid roommates in the underbelly of the city of New York. The dream was not so bountiful for many but the caveat before we dwell upon the failings of the American dream is that the population were saved from the threats of genocides and had prospects to rise up the ladder as the national industry and strength gradually augmented.

A Senate Press Release in 1960 informs us about President Kennedy's pledge that high priority would be given by the Democrat Administration to make amendments in the immigration and naturalisation laws in order to bid the land of discrimination based on national origin. In the European context, too, the German Chancellor is under the threat of her ruling coalition being destabilised on the fractious issue of immigrant refuge and shelter and neighbourly responsibility to respond to the surge of immigrants.

President Reagan was not too much confrontational about the theme of receiving immigrants. It was his com-

mitments to keep the trade and immigration free in his nation. President Reagan was a conservative by political texture but he opposed the legislations and the activism by the likes of Lou Dobbs, Bill O'Reilly, Pat Buchanan and Tom Tancredo of Colorado who bore the anti-immigration whip during the eighties. President Reagan too believed that the immigrants possessed a determination of hard work and steadfast growth had been registered by them.

President Trump on the other hand is an iconoclast and a renegade from the establishment for the blue collar America. His actual sentiment of being driven by the sentiment of "America First" is a hard reality of the core of the denizens in the homeland.

As an instance, the larger population is also tied of the usurpation of employment opportunities and the realisation of the "American Dream" by the immigrants who work hard and have attained prominent stations in the American-escape. Thus, apart from the imminent homeland security threat, an ingrained cultural bias pervades under the much hyped and politically correct lore of multiculturalism and integration. The Reagan-era Immigration and Control Act of 1986 redefined the scenario in the conglomeration that the United States actually is. The Act made it a requirement for the American employers to desist from hiring workers without permits and papers.

Thus, economically speaking also, the immigrants matter a great deal for the American economy and some observers have gone on to contend that the domestic American economy runs on the immigrants. Phantasmagorically speaking, the construct of "mutants" from outer space getting hold on political power and all American resources very well explains the American anxiety.

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