

Editorial

Thursday, Feb. 1, 2018

Cooperation rather than conflict

The state is presently obsessed with the developments taking place in the neighbouring state of Nagaland with regard to the political scenario, and with valid reasons. Any and every decision being taken will have far reaching consequences and will subsequently impact the future of Manipur. Notwithstanding the cruciality of the developments, there are and will always be aspects no outsider can influence, and is best to leave it at that. What we can take away from this changing situation is the bargaining power of the collective force. There are many questions which will remain unanswered for now, and rather than indulging in speculation and believing in hearsay, it is time for us to act accordingly so that our collective interests are secured and the continuity of Manipur as a separate and distinct geo-political entity is assured.

How does one go about it? More often than not the best solution also happens to be the simplest one, for the ability to mobilize support and cooperation from the public requires understanding and consent. What is heartening is the fact that despite the shortcomings and drawbacks present in our society, the public have slowly but surely started focusing on the silver lining rather than the dark clouds of inefficiency, underdevelopments, corruptions and bureaucratic confusions still looming over the society. More than anything, the present government should prioritise building upon the trust and 'feel-good' factor existing amongst the public to take up vital activities crucial for the inclusive and collective development of the state. The cobwebs of corruption, red tapes and bureaucratic hurdles not to mention the institutionalized practice of nepotism should be swept clean from every public office and institutions while fixing responsibility and accountability. But real and tangible changes can only be achieved when the mindset of those holding public offices can really appreciate their positions to improve the society and sees their roles as opportunities to contribute to the society rather than favourable circumstances to divert and misappropriate public wealth and properties for personal gains.

A clean and clear system of rewards and punishments and its strict implementation would help motivate the enthusiastic ones and keep in check the greedy and potentially corrupt personnel. Considerations based on emotions or personal relations should be done away with immediately to restore faith and thereby the trust and appreciation of the general public who have come to consider public offices and the authorities as unapproachable and incorrigibly corrupted. Since the new BJP-led state government took over, there have been a slew of positive initiatives which have enabled the people to shed their inhibitions and apprehensions of communicating with the government and its authorities. The public is now visibly more involved and concerned with the workings of the government- an encouraging sign that things are turning out better than before. This however should not be taken as an achievement but an indicator of what can be achieved. Refraining from self-back-patting will go a long way in ushering in a trend of letting the works speaking for themselves. The bottom line is that cooperation and trust of the public will ultimately decide the success or failure of any and every initiatives and efforts of the government.

Govt officials should be protectors of rules: Bedi

PTI Puducherry, Feb 1: Puducherry Lt Governor Kiran Bedi today called upon the government officials in the Union Territory to ensure that they functioned as "protectors of rules" and possessed the "right attitude" to serve the people. Inaugurating a training programme for officials of the territorial administration here, she said, "The government officials must ensure that they functioned as protectors of rules and possessed the right attitude to serve the people." "They (staff) should bear in mind that they are only solvers of grievances of people and earn their appreciation and gratitude,"

she added. Bedi also appealed to the officials to ensure that "financial prudence and discipline is maintained and government money should be spent carefully and honestly so that we do not create any mess." Stating that there were several challenges for the government burdened with fiscal commitments, the Lt Governor said, "Puducherry has the rich potential to emerge as one of the finest Union Territory." "I hope in the next two years Puducherry would show the way for the rest of the country in so far as quality of administration is concerned," she said. Around 700 staff underwent the training, official sources said.

Name changed

I, the undersigned, **Sophiya Chanu Chingakhom ongbi Thokchom**. Residence of H/No-35, Hotel Centre Point, Near Gate No. 2, PO - Moreh, Chandel, 795131, Manipur do hereby declare that, I have wholly renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of old name **Shophiya Devi Chingakhom**, as I have assumed my new name **Sophiya Chanu Chingakhom ongbi Thokchom**.

Sd/-
Sophiya Chanu Chingakhom ongbi Thokchom

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National & International News

Snowfall in higher reaches of Kashmir

PTI Srinagar, Feb 1: The higher reaches of Kashmir received fresh snowfall and the plains were lashed by rains today, even as the minimum temperature across the Valley stayed above the freezing point. An official of the Meteorological Department said five inches of fresh snowfall was recorded in Gulmarg, the famous ski-resort in north Kashmir, where the temperature dipped below the freezing point. He said Pahalgam in south Kashmir also recorded light snowfall and there

were reports of snowfall in many other areas in the higher reaches of the valley. The official said the plains in Kashmir Valley, including Srinagar, were lashed by rains. Meanwhile, except Gulmarg, the minimum temperature across the valley settled above the freezing point. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of 1.7 degrees Celsius, while Qazigund, the gateway town to the valley, in south Kashmir registered a low of 2 degrees

Celsius, the official said. He said the night temperature in Kokernag, in south Kashmir, settled at 1.9 degrees Celsius, while Kupwara town in north recorded the minimum of 1.3 degrees Celsius. The health resort of Pahalgam, which also serves as one of the base camps for the annual Amarnath Yatra, recorded a low of 0.6 degree Celsius last night, the official said. He said Gulmarg recorded a low of minus 5 degrees Celsius and was the coldest recorded place in the valley and the second coldest in

Jammu and Kashmir, colder even than Kargil in Ladakh region. Kargil recorded a low of minus 3 degrees Celsius, while the nearby Leh town was the coldest recorded place in the state at minus 7.8 degrees Celsius. 'Chillai-Kalan', the 40-day harshest winter period in Kashmir, ended yesterday, but the cold continued in the valley. 'Chillai-Kalan' is followed by a 20-day long 'Chillai-Khurud' (small cold) and a 10-day long 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

Agri credit target for FY' 19 up 10% to Rs 11 lakh cr

New Delhi, Feb 1: In a major bonanza to farmers, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley today announced fixing support price of Kharif crops like paddy at least 50 per cent higher than the cost of production, while raising farm credit target for the next fiscal by 10 per cent to Rs 11 lakh crore. Presenting the Union Budget 2018-19, Jaitley reiterated the government's commitment to welfare of farmers saying that the emphasis is to generate higher income for farmers. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has

given a clarion call to double the farmers' income by 2022, he added. Jaitley said the government has decided to fix the minimum support price (MSP) of coming Kharif (summer sown) crops, which include maize, soyabean and pulses, at least one-and-half times the cost of production. He said the MSPs of most of rabi (winter sown) crops have already been raised. He said the government will ensure farmers get MSP even if prices fall, for which Niti Aayog will discuss with state

governments the putting in place of an institutional mechanism to ensure that farmers get better prices for their produce. Jaitley said the NDA had promised that farmers will be offered at least 50 per cent more than the cost of production and the government is sensitive towards this. He also proposed hiking the agricultural credit target for the next fiscal by Rs 1 lakh crore to a whopping Rs 11 lakh crore. The target was Rs 8.5 lakh crore in 2014-15 and has been gradually increasing under the NDA

government. The government will set up fisheries and aqua culture infra fund and animal husbandry infra fund with an outlay of Rs 10,000 crore. Jaitley said that 470 mandis (wholesale market) have been electronically linked under e-NAM (National Agriculture Market) programme out of 585 mandis. The remaining will be linked by March 2018. Jaitley also doubled the allocation of food processing ministry to Rs 1,400 crore.

In confronting North Korea, Trump risks disaster

Washington Post, Feb. 1: President Trump's State of the Union address on Tuesday was heavy on misleading claims and nationalist vitriol, yet rather light on foreign-policy chat. What Trump did discuss about global affairs, though, has already raised alarms. The president lobbed more rhetorical broadsides at North Korea, a country whose perceived nuclear threat has loomed over the first year of Trump's presidency. "North Korea's reckless pursuit of nuclear missiles could very soon threaten our homeland," Trump said. "We need only look at the depraved character of the North Korean regime to understand the nature of the nuclear threat it could pose to America and to our allies." Trump pointed to Ji Seong-ho, a North Korean defector seated in the gallery of the House chamber, describing him as a "witness to the ominous nature" of the regime. The president relayed Ji's story — one of crushing hunger, lost limbs and dangerous escape — as further proof of North Korean perfidy. He used the moment, as he has in the past, to bemoan the "complacency and concessions" that supposedly defined his predecessors' dealings with North Korea — as well as perhaps the dovish disposition of South Korea's left-leaning government. Now, Trump warned, he was "waging a campaign of maximum

pressure" on Pyongyang as part of a tougher global posture. "Around the world, we face rogue regimes, terrorist groups and rivals like China and Russia that challenge our interests, our economy and our values," Trump said. "In confronting these horrible dangers, we know that weakness is the surest path to conflict, and unmatched power is the surest means to our true and great defense." Observers were quick to point out that "unmatched" American power has done little to end protracted conflicts in the Middle East and Central Asia. And Trump's bluster exacerbated fears in South Korea that the White House is seriously considering some sort of strike on North Korean targets, a move that would instantly put millions of Korean lives at risk. The spotlight will fall on the peninsula next week: On Feb. 9, the Winter Olympics get underway in South Korea; a day earlier, the North will stage a huge military parade — likely bristling with displays of armaments that carry coded warnings to the wider world. And while South Korean President Moon Jae-in is trying to use the moment to engage Pyongyang, Trump's own persistent saber rattling makes things trickier. "This puts Moon Jae-in between a rock and a hard place," said Lee Chung-min,

professor of international relations at Yonsei University in Seoul, to my colleague Anna Fifield. The sense of apprehension in Seoul only deepened after my colleagues broke the news that the name of Victor Cha, Trump's widely respected candidate for U.S. ambassador to South Korea, had stunningly been withdrawn from consideration for the post. Cha, an academic who served in the George W. Bush administration, is known for his hawkishness, but he apparently found the White House too hawkish for even his taste. According to reports, he disagreed with the desire among some in the White House to launch what's known as a "bloody nose" strike on North Korea — a theoretically limited assault intended to send a message rather than trigger a war. On Tuesday, just hours after his removal from the nomination process was made public, Cha published an op-ed in The Washington Post outlining his concerns. He acknowledged that some within the Trump administration are seriously considering a "preventative military strike" in the hopes of forcing Kim Jong Un's regime to the table to negotiate an end to its nuclear program. Indeed, Trump administration officials have invoked the threat of force against North Korea as an alternative to the

now-maligned "strategic patience" of the Obama administration, believing that violence is the only language that the Kim dictatorship truly understands. White House national security adviser H.R. McMaster appears to be the leading proponent of this argument, suggesting in public remarks that North Korea can't be simply "deterred." But Cha believes a preventive strike would be far too risky. "Some may argue that U.S. casualties and even a wider war on the Korean Peninsula are risks worth taking, given what is at stake," he wrote. "But a strike (even a large one) would only delay North Korea's missile-building and nuclear programs, which are buried in deep, unknown places impenetrable to bunker-busting bombs. A strike also would not stem the threat of proliferation but rather exacerbate it, turning what might be a North Korean moneymaking endeavor into a vengeful effort intended to equip other bad actors against us." He also took aim at McMaster's theory of deterrence. "If we believe that Kim is undeterrable without such a strike, how can we also believe that a strike will deter him from responding in kind?" he wrote. "And if Kim is unpredictable, impulsive and bordering on irrational, how can we control the escalation ladder, which is premised on an adversary's rational understanding of signals and deterrence?"

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