

Editorial

Saturday, Feb. 24, 2018

Tackling the traffic menace

The state capital is presently experiencing traffic congestions and traffic jams on a scale never witnessed before, and the problem is bound to increase with time. With rising expendable incomes and introduction of newer and better vehicles, the people of the state are thronging the automobile dealers and business is brisk like never before. From what was considered a basic necessity, automobiles have come to represent a status symbol for the owners, so much so that it is now common for many to own different kinds of vehicles for different purposes. The result, as everybody have experienced, is increased congestion and inconvenience. What was once a trip that took a few minutes has now consumed a good part of an hour or more depending on the time of the day. Add to it the abject absence of civic sense of most motorists who still doesn't have a clue to even the basic rules of traffic and parking and we now have a deteriorating crisis threatening to bring the small capital to a grinding halt.

While it is heartening to notice that the chief minister has expressed concern on the issue and posted his personal views on social media, the ground reality is far from satisfactory. Many busy intersections are seen without any traffic personnel even during the peak traffic hours, and the few who are trying to control the situation are often left with a chaotic situation, with the state police personnel deployed to stand in as traffic regulators - a job they are neither trained nor prepared for.

The absence of a permanent and systematic parking arrangement is another aspect contributing to the mayhem. In a place such as Imphal where parking spaces are at a premium, the lack of a proper traffic management system is sorely felt by all and sundry.

But the solution to this increasing menace is not as daunting or far-fetched as one would envisage. An event call TrafficInfraTech Expo - Asia's largest & India's only integrated shows on Intelligent Traffic Management Systems brings together Government Departments, Enforcement Authorities, Infrastructure Companies, Consultants and the National & International Traffic & Parking Industries is being organized annually and is designed in tune with the Indian Government's vision to fast track the traffic infrastructure. The government's effort in the recent years to provide fast and safe mobility has given a very big push to the traffic industry. International technologies have been adopted and there is a huge budget allocation to develop roads and highways (83,677 km of roads by 2020). The expo showcases the latest in intelligent traffic management systems, Integrated Traffic Systems/tolling/telematics, safety & security, mass transportation, road construction & infrastructure.

While ad-hoc measures are being experimented at home to ease the problem, the state government should prepare a team of delegates to participate at the event which will definitely be immense help in devising ways and means to tackle the worsening issue at the earliest. It is time to walk the talk and time is of the essence - in more ways than one.

Senior journalist Neelabh Mishra passes away

Agency New Delhi, Feb. 24: Senior journalist and editor-in-chief of National Herald, Neelabh Mishra, passed away today at a Chennai Hospital. He was critically ill and with complications resulting from non-alcoholic liver cirrhosis. Mishra, 57, was admitted to Apollo Hospital in Chennai earlier this month, and developed multiple organ failure before a liver transplant could be

carried out. Mishra steered the relaunch of National Herald, the newspaper. Congress chief Rahul Gandhi condoned his death, describing him as one who spoke the truth to power. "An editors editor. A man who spoke truth to power. An institution builder. On Neelabh Mishra's tragic passing away this morning, my deepest condolences to his family, friends, colleagues and admirers," he tweeted.

At least one killed, 6 injured in a suicide bomb blast in Kabul

Agency Kabul, Feb. 24: A suicide bomber detonated his explosives near the diplomatic area of the Afghan capital on Saturday, killing at least one person, officials said. "This morning a suicide bomber blew up his explosives in Shash Darak area of Kabul, killing one and wounding six others," interior ministry spokesman Najib Danish told AFP. A security source who requested not to be named said the explosion happened near a compound belonging to the National Directorate of Security (NDS), the Afghan intelligence agency.

The NDS compound is located near to the headquarters of NATO and the US embassy.

In December, a suicide attacker on foot blew himself up near the same compound, killing at least six civilians.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for the latest attack in Kabul, which in recent months has become one of the deadliest places in war-torn Afghanistan for civilians.

Since mid-January, militants have stormed a luxury hotel, bombed a crowded street and raided a military compound in Kabul, killing more than 130 people.

National & International News

Delhi chief secy scuffle: Cops seize CCTV footage from Kejriwal residence

Agency New Delhi, Feb. 24: In an unprecedented move, a Delhi Police team on Friday seized a hard disk containing CCTV footage from the residence of Arvind Kejriwal in connection with the chief secretary's "assault" incident, while the chief minister knocked on the Lieutenant Governor's (LG) doors to ensure that the government's work was not hit due to the boycott by bureaucrats, even as the Centre hinted that the AAP supremo might be questioned in the case. A total of 21 CCTV cameras and a hard disk were examined by the police.

The hard disk was seized and any possibility of "tampering" with the system could be ascertained only after forensic examinations. Additional DCP (North) Harendra Singh said, adding that there was a time-lag of 40-43 minutes with respect to the time of the alleged incident.

He added that 14 CCTV cameras were working, while seven were not.

The woes of the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government did not end there as former bureaucrat Dhir Jhingran resigned from its State Advisory Council For Education to express solidarity with Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash, who was allegedly assaulted by some AAP MLAs.

To make things worse for the ruling dispensation, the party's legislator from

Narela, Naresh Balyan, triggered a fresh controversy by saying officers, who created hurdles in the works meant for people's welfare, should be beaten up, days after Prakash alleged that he was assaulted by the AAP MLAs.

Meanwhile, Union minister Hansraj Gangaram Ahir hinted that Kejriwal might be questioned by the police in connection with the alleged assault on the bureaucrat.

"Whosoever it may be, the police will question all those in whose presence the incident took place," he told reporters in New Delhi.

The AAP accused the Delhi Police of acting like a bully at the behest of the Centre by "illegally" entering the chief minister's house and alleged that the action was aimed at "insulting and humiliating" Kejriwal. Without taking the name of the BJP or its leaders, AAP MP Sanjay Singh said it was "unfortunate" that some "dictators" and people with the mentality of "hooligans" had captured power, be it in Gujarat, Haryana, Maharashtra, Rajasthan or Madhya Pradesh.

"The dadagiri by the Delhi Police at Arvind Kejriwal's residence is being done at the behest of the BJP. The Delhi Police is a mere puppet, but the Centre is resorting to such dadagiri to dismiss the Delhi

government," he said.

At a press conference, the AAP also showed a two-and-a-half-minute clip, in which senior police officials were seen inside the residence of the chief minister, purportedly asking questions about the wall paint of the room.

The police claimed that its action (of dispatching a team to Kejriwal's house to collect evidence) came after its request for CCTV footage from the chief minister's residence "was not met".

The timing of the presence of the chief secretary at the chief minister's residence is important because Prakash has claimed that he was called at midnight and assaulted.

The AAP, on the other hand, has claimed that Prakash had reached the chief minister's residence at 11.25 PM. "The time-lag of the CCTV cameras corroborates that the complainant was at the CM's residence at midnight (12.05 AM) and not at 11.25 PM, as was the plea of the AAP in the court," a top Delhi Police official said.

If the time-lag of 40 minutes was added to 11.25 PM, it would match the time the chief secretary claimed to have reached Kejriwal's residence, he added.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal and his cabinet colleagues met Lieutenant Governor (LG) Anil Bajjal and said the latter had assured them that he would take all

steps to ensure that the officers started functioning normally.

The bureaucrats in the Delhi government had earlier decided to boycott all the meetings called by the ministers.

"Officers not attending meetings for last 3 days. Governance suffering. I'm v concerned. LG assured he will take all steps to ensure officers started functioning normally. Council of ministers assured him all cooperation. All of us need to work together for betterment of Delhi (sic)." Kejriwal tweeted after the meeting with the LG. Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said Bajjal had assured them that he would speak to the bureaucrats.

However, the LG sent out a very strong statement after the meeting.

"The Lt Governor strongly condemned the incidents and termed them as most unfortunate. The Lt Governor noted that no government can fulfil its promises to the people if the employees feel demoralised and insecure. There is no place for violence in a democratic and civilised society. Steps need to be taken to remove the mistrust between the government employees and the elected government, so that the development of Delhi and public interest do not get adversely affected," an official statement from the LG's office said.

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RPF to observed 39th Foundation Day as.....

"Here we would like to ask why the learned and knowledgeable individuals use all their resources only for their personal welfare all these years. Their aloofness from many national issues is one major cause of the communal polarization and turmoil seen today in Manipur. On account of the failure to discharge their national duties in the past, our brothers settled in the hills now harbor a tendency to challenge the integrity of Manipur. As a consequence, there were cases of violent clash among us and some revolutionaries lost their precious lives at the hands of armed groups based in the hills. Retaliation will definitely lead to loss of lives of our brethrens like Tangkhuls, Maos, Anals, Kabuis, Khongais etc. We are struggling to avoid any such ugly situation and ensure that nothing stands on the way of our unity. We are struggling today because what should have been done in the past to consolidate and promote the integrity of Manipur was not done satisfactorily.

"We firmly believe that there will be no inter-community conflict once the colonial Indian rule is overthrown and we will be able to march together on the path of peaceful co-existence and collective development. A large number of people settled in the hill areas cannot accept Manipur as their motherland and this is one of the many devastating effects of the

forced annexation of Manipur by India. Since the annexation, many of our hill people started looking to New Delhi for their future and they began to overlook Manipur. If the hill people can be persuaded to re-locate whatever faith they have in New Delhi to Manipur and once they accept the valley as the centre of their motherland, they will re-direct all their attention to Imphal. People settled in the interior areas of the hill districts have greater interaction with people of neighbouring states. If Imphal, the capital of their motherland is made the centre of their lives, prosperity and future, hill people and valley people will join hands to protect the integrity of Manipur and the fraternal bond we share will be strengthened.

"But the biggest issue at the moment is the question of Manipur's sovereignty. Manipur was never a part of India and every one of us knows that Manipur was forcibly annexed by India. One fundamental question arises here. Should we let Manipur remain a part of India because India had annexed the country? The answer is very clear. We can never live as subjugated people of a colonized country. For this reason, all of us need to adopt a concrete unambiguous decision on how to win back our sovereignty. Since the day India

annexed Manipur, our people are being subjugated under multi-layered military siege and it unmistakably indicates that the question of Manipur's sovereignty cannot be easily resolved through dialogue with India. That was why we launched an armed revolutionary movement with an unwavering commitment from which we will never retreat.

"Apart from forging unity among all the suppressed peoples of WESEA, all the neighboring countries of India which are hostile to New Delhi would be drawn into the liberation movement. In addition to Pakistan and China which are preparing for full scale wars with India, conflicts between India and other neighboring countries have been escalating. These countries will one day bring imperial India to its knees. Following India's sly attempts to interfere into the internal affairs of Maldives, Maldives openly declared India as their biggest enemy recently. In the aftermath of the Doklam stand-off with China, Indian Army Chief Bipin Rawat repeatedly warned the Government of India about the crucial strategic importance of forging politico-military alliance with Afghanistan, Nepal, Bhutan, Myanmar, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka but India will never succeed in forging any reliable alliance with its

neighboring countries. That was why India hiked its annual defence budget to US \$ 52.5 billion and occupied fifth position in the whole world in terms of the size of military budget. But we will have to fight only a fraction of the Indian military as it will ultimately fragment into multiple divisions.

"Our people are witness to how India has been developing military and logistic infrastructure in Manipur and WESEA as military frontiers so that it can flex its military power vis-à-vis its neighbors. Our strategy would be to draw external forces into the liberation movement or support forces which are hostile to India and convert their strength into ours. This will be the most effective means of regaining sovereignty for the small and militarily weak Manipur. Our people should not be fazed or daunted by the military strength of India or their seemingly crafty political maneuvers. We must never surrender or compromise our rights and national interests. Rather we should concentrate all our efforts and resources towards bringing all external forces inimical to India to our side. This is the foremost national duty entrusted to us by our forefathers. Only by successfully discharging this national duty, Manipur can be once again made an independent, peaceful and progressive country".

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