

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, July 21, 2016

Does reporting news amounts to contempt of court?

A very relevant and anticipated report of a media briefing by a renowned senior Advocate jolted the Advocate General to cry foul and press for contempt of court for carrying the said report. While the legality of the matter is not within the purview of this editorial, what should be kept in mind is that the report is what it is - a report of a press briefing by a senior advocate regarding a closely followed procedure which is bound to incite fervent reaction whatever the outcome. "Right to Freedom of Speech and Expression" is a fundamental right of the citizens of India. This is mentioned in Part III of the Constitution of India - Article 19(1) in which the Freedom of the Press is included in Freedom of Speech and Expression. It includes the right of free propagation and free circulation without any previous restraint on publication but without the use of objectionable and obscene language which would lead to disorder and anarchy. The Article 19(2) of the Constitution imposes reasonable restrictions on the exercise of the right conferred by the said sub-clause in the interests of the sovereignty and integrity of India. The security of the state, friendly relations with foreign states, public order, decency of morality or in relation to contempt of court, defamation or incitement to an offense. Whenever, emergency is declared in a country, these rights remain suspended. Having said that, almost every Government prefers to link the freedom of the press with social and fundamental responsibilities and the obligation to report objectively which is also an ethics guarded with pride and responsibility by every journalist and media person, following the principle that the press should be neither an adversary nor an ally of the Government, but a constructive critic. The press is a vital bulwark against forces of repression, corruption and other excesses, and the most vocal and effective watchdog of the society. The freedom of press is the mother of all other freedoms. Various media laws, such as the Indian Penal Code, 1860, Indian Telegraph Act, 1885, The Copy Right Act, 1957, impose restrictions on the exercise of the right of freedom of speech and expression by the press, which is under consideration to be amended to expand the scope of press freedom and at the same time to protect the right to privacy of the individual and prevent newspapers from indulging in unrestrained character assassination, as suggested by the second Press Amendment. Perhaps the observation of the court in the famous case of Express Newspapers (Bombay) (P) Ltd. v. Union of India sums up the gist of the matter: "In today's free world freedom of press is the heart of social and political intercourse. The press has now assumed the role of the public educator making formal and non-formal education possible in a large scale particularly in the developing world, where television and other kinds of modern communication are not still available for all sections of society. The purpose of the press is to advance the public interest by publishing facts and opinions without which a democratic electorate [Government] cannot make responsible judgments. Newspapers being purveyors of news and views having a bearing on public administration very often carry material which would not be palatable to Governments and other authorities."

Kejriwal to visit Goa again next month

PTI Panaji, July 21: Delhi Chief Minister and AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal will again visit Goa in the first week of August during which he is expected to meet a cross section of society including farmers. "Kejriwal will be in Goa during the first week of August. This would be his third visit to the state," Goa AAP spokesperson Rupesh Shinkre said today.

During the visit, Kejriwal is expected to meet women's groups, people affected with the iron ore mining activity, farmers and agriculturists, he said. "We might also arrange one more interaction with the youth during his Goa visit. The modalities are being finalised," Shinkre said. AAP has announced that they will contest all the 40 seats in the Goa Assembly elections next year.

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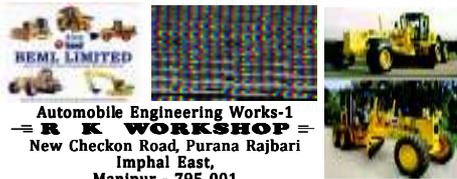
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Empowering people with Financial Inclusion

By : Ms Purnima Sharma

Sogada, a small village of Jashpur district in Chhattisgarh, is beautifully nestled in the lap of nature. The picturesque settlement is surrounded by green hills which make the village somewhat difficult to access. Not surprisingly, this inaccessibility has added to the difficulties being faced by the villagers in this region. Ask Roshni Bai, a resident of this village who says that the nearest bank to this village is 15 kilometer far, and for this very reason, the banking services were beyond the reach of villagers. Even after 69 years of Independence, people like Roshni Bai could not be brought within the banking system. Roshni Bai and her future generations could have been living in the same conditions, but for a new change occurred. Some 'Bank Mitras' from a bank visited her village and explained the meaning of savings and availing banking services at their doorstep. It was a new dawn for the villagers. People from the bank explained the benefits of opening a bank account to them. They were also told that they didn't need to visit bank now and for banking services. Bank Correspondents will provide most of the banking services to them at their doorstep. After knowing all this, there was no reason for them but to open a bank account. Roshni Bai now has a fair amount of savings in her bank account and this has encouraged her and her husband to save more. The couple is now planning to enhance their monthly deposits and save enough money to buy a scooter for the household. This would enhance the mobility of family members and help increase the income. For the first time, Roshni Bai and crows of such people now have bank in their lives, and it happened only due to Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY). Under this Scheme, a majority of people who opened their bank accounts were earlier outside the periphery of banking system.

The number of people who have been included in the banking system, in such a short time, is a global record. Both public and private banks have been roped in for this scheme. The Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) was launched on August 28, 2014 by the Prime Minister of India Shri Narendra Modi in the national capital with a vision to bring unbanked section of the society into mainstream banking. The Scheme was initiated to provide bank account and banking services to each household in the country so as to have comprehensive financial inclusion. So far, as on 29th June, 2016, more than 22.29 crore new bank accounts have been opened under the Yojna with a total deposits of over Rs 39,251.57 crore in these accounts, and overdraft facility has been availed in about 20 lakhs accounts. Out of all the accounts opened under the scheme, 61% are in rural areas and more than 52% are women account holders. As on 29th June, 2016, 10.39 crore of the accounts opened under PMJDY are seeded with Aadhar numbers. In addition to this, 18.22 crore Rupay Cards have been issued under PMJDY. Out of all the accounts opened under PMJDY, the zero balance accounts are now left almost one fourth only, that is 25.29 percent, which means people have started doing transactions in their accounts. Guinness Book of World Records has recognized the Achievements made under PMJDY especially the largest number of bank accounts opened under PMJDY in a shortest time. The most striking feature of this Scheme is that instead of delivering banking services to villages, the focus is on households. Earlier, cities were not included in the scheme assuming that banks were already there. But 8.60 crore accounts opened in cities under PMJDY showed that it was needed in cities too. Through this Scheme, banks also got an opportunity to tap the saving potential of the common man. Apart

from this, provision has also been made that accounts opened under this scheme are connected with mobile phones so that account holder can directly get information about transactions in their accounts. Pradhan Mantri Jan-Dhan Yojana (PMJDY) has proved to be a major job creator. Empowering people by financial inclusion, and creating self-employment by increasing the availability of credit is one aspect of the scheme. This Scheme also enabled banks to create jobs for more than 1.26 lakh Banking Correspondents who are delivering banking services to households at their door step. Banking Correspondents in many ways acts as ATM too for many people. They help people to open bank account, deliver their money and also in claiming insurance. In a very short span of time, Bank Correspondents/ Bank Mitras have become very popular in the rural areas. The objective of PMJDY is to bring common people within the sphere of social security. After Independence, the concept of welfare State has been talked about much but, how to take it to the common man has not been thought-out. As a result, lot of Government policies were formulated but their execution was poor. Money that had to reach to the masses from the Centre and State capitals used to remain unutilized or got evaporated midway somewhere. The previously existing system was the cause of corruption where there was no provision to check whether the actual benefit of the scheme has reached to the intended beneficiary or not. A former Prime Minister's statement was much talked about when he said that only 16 paisa out of a rupee reaches to the actual beneficiaries of the Government funds released by the Centre for their welfare Schemes. The Constitution, specifically, Article 41 of Directive Principles of State Policy, asks the State to "make effective provision for securing the right to work, to education and to public assistance

in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement, and in other cases within the limits of its economic capacity and development." As the Directive Principles are not binding on the Government, there has never been much emphasis on it in earlier regimes to ensure social security for citizens. So, the fundamental change in the methods of carrying-out the schemes was needed. Even after six decades of independence, the Government schemes could not achieve the desired results in the area of social security. And millions of people have been left out of the banking system. Therefore, there was a need to involve the people themselves, so that they can create their own future. At the same time, the need to include private sector was also felt. The Government is working on the very fundamental change and this transformation is indeed speedy. Previously, poor people had to put in tiring efforts and many formalities had to be fulfilled just to open a bank account. Now they have got enough strength from the system and merely with an identity proof or self certification, an account can be opened and banking services can be availed. With Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile (JAM) technology, bank accounts are connected and middleman can no longer exploit the poor people. Social Welfare schemes were earlier more of a boon for middleman who used to siphon-off bulk of the funds by taking advantage of flaws/ loopholes in the system. Ghost beneficiaries were also one of the facet through which middleman made profit. Now with Jan Dhan, Aadhar and Mobile (JAM) have eliminated the middleman altogether. Now the money is being transferred directly into the target beneficiary's account. Such Schemes are definitely the need of the hour and play an important role in transforming the lives of people and the country at large. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

National & International News

Notice to Centre on rape victim's plea vs abortion law

PTI New Delhi, July 21: The Supreme Court today sought response from the Centre and the Maharashtra government on a plea of an alleged rape victim challenging provisions of the abortion law which prohibits termination of pregnancy after 20 weeks even if there is a fatal risk to the mother and the foetus. A bench headed by Justice J S Khehar issued notice for tomorrow and asked the petitioner to serve it today itself through the Attorney General's office.

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves appearing for the woman said that constitutionality of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 is being challenged in the plea as it puts a ceiling of 20 weeks for an abortion. The bench also comprising Kurian Joseph and Justice Arun Misra said that it will seek the report of medical board on the condition of the woman. The fresh petition filed by a woman, who alleged that she was raped by her ex-fiance on the false promise

of marriage and became pregnant, sought a direction to quash section 3 (2)(b) of the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, 1971 to the extent that it puts a ceiling of 20 weeks for an abortion as it is ultra vires to Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution. The petition contended that the ceiling is unreasonable, arbitrary, harsh, discriminatory and violative of the right to life and equality. It also sought an order for the Centre to provide necessary directions to hospitals for setting up an expert panel of doctors to assess the

pregnancy and offer medical termination of pregnancy (MTP) at least to those women and girls who are survivors of sexual violence and have passed the period of 20 weeks. The woman, who is in 24th week of pregnancy, said she belongs to a poor background and her physical and mental health have been put to risk due to the 20 weeks limit for abortion as her foetus suffers from anencephaly (a serious birth defect in which a baby is born without parts of the brain and skull) but doctors have refused to abort it.

Rajnath Singh squarely blames Pakistan for unrest in Kashmir

New Delhi, July 21: Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh on Thursday squarely blamed Pakistan for the present unrest in Jammu and Kashmir and also said the government will set up a panel to find an alternative to pellet guns used by security forces to control protesters in the Valley. "There can be no denying the fact that our neighbour (Pakistan) is singularly responsible for the present deterioration of the situation in the state," Singh said while replying to a short duration discussion in the Lok Sabha that had been taken up on Wednesday. The terrorism that India is witnessing today is "Pakistan sponsored", he said adding, that it was "created in the name of religion". "However, Pakistan has failed to keep itself united," he said. Singh denied that security forces were harsh while controlling protesting mobs in the Valley and hastened to add that personally he would always favour that minimum force is used to maintain control.

The minister admitted, "there could be some aberrations" in the form of high handedness by security forces. On use of lethal weapons and pellet bullets, which have caused large number of injuries, including eye wounds, the minister said the Home Ministry will soon set up an expert committee to explore "alternative" use of such weapons. Over 40 people have died in clashes between protesting mobs and security forces in the Valley since July 8. Referring to former Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee's famous lines - "chingari ka khel khelna khatra hota hae (To play with fire is often dangerous), Singh sought to caution Pakistan on its continued role to sponsor terrorism. Singh also said the NDA government at the Centre is pursuing Vajpayee's roadmap of "Kashmiriyat, Jamhooriyat and Insaniyat (Kashmiri spirit, democracy and humanity)"

towards Kashmir but at the same time there is no room for "inhumanity and violence". The Home Minister maintained that the central government alone cannot bring peace in the troubled state and sought support from all quarters. He also named Hafiz Saeed and Syed Salahuddin - Pakistan-based terror heads - for fuelling tension in Jammu and Kashmir following the July 8 killing of Hizbul militant Burhan Wani.

statement on the accident. The tragedy mirrors a similar incident which happened last year in the region where a TransAsia Airways Flight crashed into the Keelung River. The flight crashed shortly after takeoff and was attributed to a pilot error. A total of 43 died, and only 15 survived the horror crash.

Shocking moment seaplane crashes into Shanghai bridge and kills five during maiden

Shanghai, July 21: The Cessna 208 plane carrying 10 passengers including journalists who were reporting on its maiden flight, thundered into the bridge after it failed lift-off from the water. The AVIC Joy General Aviation flight was travelling from the Jinshan district to Zhoushan, an island in the eastern province of Zhejiang. Four passengers sustained minor

injuries but one passenger suffered serious injuries and is undergoing surgery, the Chinese government said. An investigation into the cause of the horrific crash is now underway. Xinhua news agency reported the seaplane was the first of its kind to be approved to carry passengers in eastern China. The airline is yet to release a