

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, May 20, 2016

Saving the future to fight over

The relentless agitation spearheaded by the JCILPS Manipur has been demanding the state government to obtain the assent or approval for the three bills - (Protection of Manipur Peoples Bill 2015, Manipur Land Revenue & Land Reforms (seventh amendment) Bill 2015, and Manipur Shops & Establishment (second amendment) Bill 2015), passed by the state legislative assembly on August 31 last year from the President of India, even after the state government have appointed a committee to represent the state and argue the case for approval of the said bills which will enable them to be enacted as laws speak volumes about the level of trust the public has endowed on the current government. Perhaps the genesis of this deep distrust and suspicions of the intent of the state government can be traced back to the time when neighbouring forces, both as individuals and in groups from across the state cajoled the central government to extend the ceasefire between NSCN-IM and the Government of India "without territorial limits" during June 2001 which prompted the public to go on a spontaneous rampage fuelled by the feeble attempt of the state government to raise objections against the pact which the public in the state considers a transgression of ethical and territorial integrity of the state. Or perhaps the calculated silence is a tried and tested formula for waiting out the initial fervour of any agitations or campaigns by the public, which, while mostly successful on the part of the state government, have further embittered the agitating public, paving the way for more intense and destructive forms of protests and agitations.

The present agitations, however has two sides to the story, and the people in the hills are rising against the efforts of the state government to push for the enactment of the bills by the state government, terming the three bills as 'Anti-tribal' and threatening the future of the people in the hills. The protests against the state government passing the bills in the state assembly has been gathering momentum, and by the looks of it, the two opposing parties are on a collision course if both decides to stick to their points. It must be added here that there are certain points of contention in the bills which needs to be revised and brought to consensus as otherwise these will prove to be the proverbial spanner in the works, one most prominent point being the fixing of 1951 as the base year for detection of outsiders and their deportation. The very point, though included in the three bills passed has not reached its rational conclusion with many prominent individuals and organisations expressing doubts and reservations on the particular issue, and as Imphal Free Press editor and author Pradip Phanjoubam opined - the point is not 'within reason,' and has 'no practical application' and hence the Manipur government needs to revise it, while adding that "There are still major doubts about the claim that the three IRL related bills hurt the sentiments of the tribal people in the state. I've gone through the contents of the bills. Though I'm not a legal expert, I would say that the bills do not impinge upon their interests at all".

The ominous showdown of the two contrasting views and demands has put the state to a grinding halt, and the society has adopted a suspicious and uncertain outlook as a matter of fact. It is time to bring a rational closure to the protracted issue before there is no future to fight over.

Achievements and Initiatives of Ministry of Power, Coal and New & Renewable Energy in two years

PIB Feature

The last two years have seen rapid progress towards Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi's vision of 24x7 affordable environment friendly 'Power for All' by 2022 - a mission we are working to achieve by 2019.

Scarcity to Surplus
In a significant transformation, India has become power surplus from chronic power shortage. Record capacity addition of around one-fifth of current conventional power capacity and solar power capacity addition of 157% in the last two years led to a boost in power generation. The highest-ever increase in transmission lines and sub-stations improved the transmission scenario resulting in energy deficit falling to lowest ever of 2.1% in 2015-16.

Critical Coal Situation Resolved
Today, not a single power plant faces shortage of coal as opposed to the impending power crisis in 2014 when two-thirds of major power plants had critical coal stocks of less than 7 days. Working on war footing our government completely eliminated coal shortage in the country. In line with achieving the target of doubling coal production to 100 crore tonnes by 2020, the last two years witnessed the highest ever growth in coal production of 7.4 crore tonnes.

Most comprehensive power sector reform ever
Our government focused on addressing the root problems of the power sector. UDAY (Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana) for improvement in financial and operational efficiencies of State Power Distribution Companies (DISCOMs), the weakest link in the power value chain, was launched in 2015. Every DISCOM is expected to eliminate losses by 2019-20 with potential savings of over Rs. 180,000 crore every year from 2019. UDAY was designed through extensive stakeholder consultations and has been a game changer for States. Despite being a voluntary scheme 18 States and 1 Union Territory across political and regional lines have signed agreements or agreed to join.

UDAY bonds worth about Rs. 1 lakh crore were issued within three weeks.

Progress of Programmes
Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day, 2015 promise of connecting the unconnected 18,452 un-electrified villages in 1,000 days is ahead of schedule with over 40% (7,779 remote villages) already electrified. India is headed for the top slot in the global LED market through UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All) Yojana, which will replace 77 crore bulbs with energy efficient LED bulbs by 2019. Over 9 crore LED bulbs were distributed in 2015-16, about 150 times higher than 6 lakh in 2013-14.

Unprecedented Transparency
Due to widespread irregularities, the Supreme Court had cancelled 204 coal blocks in 2014. Through transparent e-auctions and allotment of just 74 coal blocks around Rs. 3.44 lakh crore potential revenues will accrue to coal bearing States over the life time of the mines. Again, by supplying gas through transparent e-auctions in 2015, nearly half of gas power plants were revived. Transparent procurement process reduced LED bulb prices by 83% in two years and Solar Tariffs reduced to one-fourth from 2010. DEEP (Discovery of Efficient Electricity Price) portal for compulsory purchase of short-term power through auctions by States.

Mobile Apps to Empower the Citizens
GARV (Grameen Viduyutikaran) app to help people track rural electrification and UJALA app to monitor LED distribution has brought accountability and transparency in these two programmes. Moreover, Viduyut Pravah app provides real time information of electricity price and availability. By filling the information gap, State governments have been made accountable.

World's Clean Energy Capital
India is running the world's largest renewable energy expansion programme with a target to increase overall renewable capacity by more than 5 times from 32,000 MW in 2014 to 1,75,000 MW in 2022. By taking a leadership role in the International Solar Alliance of 121 countries and

Road map ready for 24X7 affordable environment friendly 'Power for All'

India turned power surplus from chronic power shortage; Record capacity addition in conventional and solar power, transmission lines; Lowest ever Energy deficit

Coal shortage eliminated; highest ever growth in coal production of 7.4 crore tonnes

18 states and 1 union territory already signed agreements or have agreed to join UDAY; bonds worth Rs. One lakh crore issued

Accelerating connections to 18,452 un-electrified villages ;7,779 remote villages already electrified

Over 9 crore LED bulbs distributed through UJALA in 2015-16

Unparalleled transparency adopted in e-auction of Coal blocks; supplying gas to gas power plants; procurement of LED bulbs

Mobile Apps : GARV, UJALA & VIDYUT PRAVAH to Empower Citizens

Increase overall renewable capacity by more than 5 times from 32,000 MW in 2014 to 1,75,000 MW by 2022

Farmers benefitted through highest-ever distribution of solar pumps in 2015-16

organising RE-Invest 2015, the world's largest renewable financing meet, our government has laid the foundations for massive growth in this sector.

Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas
Our government is committed to the mantra of Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas. Urban areas are being provided smart infrastructure through the Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), while rural infrastructure is being improved through the Deen Dayal Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUGJY) for Gramodaya se Bharat Uday. The farmer has been additionally benefited through the highest-ever distribution of solar pumps in 2015-16, greater than total solar pumps installed since launch of the scheme in 1991. Apart from

this, the less developed Eastern states will benefit through the revenues accruing from coal auctions. The power constrained Southern states have been provided relief by increasing the transmission capacity by 71% and revived gas plants, which has expanded availability of electricity and reduced procurement prices of electricity by over 50%. By resolving problems in hydroelectric projects the government is ensuring clean power to the North East.

The last two years have seen many records broken and many firsts. There is now a clear roadmap to achieve the vision of Ujwal Bharat - delivering 24x7 affordable power to every household and adequate power to farmers, in an environment friendly manner.

Army Mountaineering team scales Mt. Everest

Agency
New Delhi, May 20: An army team, led by Lt Colonel Ranveer Jamwal from Jammu and Kashmir, has scaled the Mount Everest. Army spokesman in Udhampur said that the Indian Army mountaineering team scaled the mountain yesterday morning despite unfavourable weather conditions.

He said that the expedition to scale the world's highest peak at 8,848 metres was launched after a hiatus of two years following the Nepal earthquake. The team included one junior commissioned officer (JCO)



and personnel of five other ranks. Chief of the Army staff General Dalbir Singh has congratulated the team for its achievement.

National & International News

NEET row: Arvind Kejriwal urges PM Modi not to bring any ordinance to overturn SC order

Agency
New Delhi, May 20: Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi asking him not to bring any order against the Supreme Court ruling on National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), saying the students had welcomed the decision as it discouraged well endowed parents from making 'donations' to get their children admitted into reputed private medical colleges.

In the letter, Kejriwal said the hard working and diligent students missed out on opportunities for a quality medical education, as the students from affluent families got into through donations, which is the why the apex court's ruling on the matter should not be challenged or questioned.

"It has come to my attention that reports are afloat that the Centre is making plans to overturn the decision by the Supreme Court and people have been tensed upon hearing this news. The people of the nation will be cheated if the Centre goes through with this decision. Just a few days ago, Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda called a meeting over the issue, where almost all health ministers opposed NEET, except Delhi Health Minister Satyendra Jain," the letter stated.

Kejriwal added it is also being said that many politicians are running their own private medical colleges, in which some institutions are indulging in the practice of accepting large donations, which is why they were vehemently against the NEET examinations.

"It is my humble request to you to ensure that no orders are brought against the Supreme Court ruling in the matter, otherwise people will think that the Centre stand with those who garner black money," Kejriwal said.

Meanwhile, the Union Cabinet is

expected to clear an ordinance or an executive order to defer the implementation of NEET.

The decision to issue an ordinance was taken in the aftermath of several meetings between Union Health Minister J.P. Nadda and state health ministers to discuss the issue.

The meeting was convened after several parliamentarians opposed the common medical entrance test, saying the NEET has created confusion among the students who have already applied for the state entrance exams.

Journalist threatened for exposing the truth

Agency
Patna, May 20: A journalist with Dainik Jagran, Rajesh Singh has alleged that four men entered his office and asked about the piece about voters being threatened during the panchayat elections.

Rajesh allegedly told them that the piece was based upon the District Magistrate's inputs. He alleges that ever since that report he has been receiving threats from the JD(U) MLC.

The goons then reminded Rajesh about what had happened to Rajdev Ranjan and threatened him with dire consequences if he did not apologise and stop writing against Heera Bind.

63 deaths reported, hundreds missing as heavy rains continue in Sri Lanka

Source Xinhua
Colombo, May 20: The death toll from Sri Lanka's flash floods and landslides rose to 63 on Friday as water levels in many districts continued to rise owing to heavy rains, the Disaster Management Center said.

Sri Lanka's central Kegalle District has so far reported the highest number of deaths with 34 people killed after two massive landslides hit the district on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Rescue teams are continuing with their efforts to search for those missing under the mud and rock and

have so far recovered 16 bodies in Aranyake while 144 are still buried under the debris. The landslide which struck on Tuesday evening, buried three villages and has been recorded as the worst in Sri Lanka's history.

Teams have also recovered 14 bodies from Bulathkohupitiya and are searching for a further 15 people trapped under the debris when a landslide struck on Wednesday morning destroying 6 rows of houses.

The army said that additional troops had been deployed in Aranyake and Bulathkohupitiya to continue their search operations but efforts were

being hampered due to heavy rains. More than 450,000 people have been affected by floods and landslides across the island country due to heavy rains and strong winds which began on Saturday evening.

Several people remained trapped in many areas across the country and the Disaster Management Center said rescue efforts were continuing.

The DMC on Thursday warned that water levels of the Kelani River was also rising and people residing along the river banks had been evacuated. People in the hilly areas have also been warned to self evacuate if they observe any signs of landslides.

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