

Editorial

Imphal Saturday, November 26, 2016

Concealing the bitter truth

If one is asked to think of two words that would best describe the present working system of the Government and its various Departments, more often than not, the words would be "Confusion" and "Corruption", but this does not mean that there is no other word that can be used. Miscommunication, inefficiency, favoritism, mismanagement, absenteeism- attributes that has come to be synonymous with Government functioning. Yet we have seen at times that the Government and its Departments have, in spurts, managed to accomplish seemingly impossible tasks and projects in record time- that they can rise to any challenge and face it successfully. For a society to develop, a holistic approach is very essential. Making things work in fits and bounds would only make a farce of whatever precious little progress we have managed to accomplish. It would require a very proactive and prominent role from the judiciary if we ever aspire to bring in real change in our society. Curtailing the brash attitude of the often high-handed nature of the security forces or fighting the rampant corruption being practiced in almost every sphere of public domain needs the support and encouragement of the judicial system to become effective. A swift and stern justice system would surely deter many from tempering with the law, if not altogether contain it. Such a scenario would also revive the will of the common people to demand their rights and dispense their duties without fear or apprehension. The Government, on its part should come clean on various issues and try to make a clean start. The unspoken nexus of power and fear will not augur well for anybody, least of all for those who use them in their pursuit of personal advancement. Until and unless those at the helm of affairs have the integrity to discharge their duties and responsibilities, no law or directives will make any sense or serve any purpose. In this age and time when any information can be accessed with the touch of a button, trying to fool the people and underestimating their intelligence will surely prove to be a costly mistake. One does not need to draw up grand designs and mammoth schemes to initiate development. When each and every arm of the Government have done their bit, then the big picture will emerge itself as it ought to be. All everyone need is a sense of belonging, of responsibility and a spirit of participation, and the public should join in with an open mind instead of sitting back and being mere spectators waiting to point out every little mistake and make it out into a mountain, to complete the picture.

One dead after 6.7- magnitude quake hits China

PTI Beijing, Nov. 26: One person was killed after a powerful 6.7-magnitude earthquake rocked Akto County in the quake-prone Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region, state media reported today. A villager died as a house collapsed due to the strong tremors that hit the Kizilsu Kirghiz Autonomous Prefecture last night. Six houses also were found cracked or collapsed, state run Xinhua news agency reported. The local administration said the epicentre was located 10 km beneath the surface and was in the cold highland areas which are sparsely populated. No casualty was reported from the village closest to the epicentre. Strong tremors were also felt in neighbouring Kashgar

Prefecture. Sections of the railway in southern Xinjiang have been temporarily closed. The China Earthquake Administration has initiated emergency response measures and sent a team to the quake-hit area. An emergency response was also initiated by the regional seismological bureau. At the village near the epicentre, where about 80 households are located, damaged houses and dead livestock were found, but no person was injured, officials said. The United States Geological Service measured the quake at 6.5 magnitude. In the last five years, 83 earthquakes of magnitude 4 or over have occurred within 200 km radius of the epicentre with the largest recorded on Dec 7, 2015 when a quake of magnitude 7.4 hit the neighbouring Tajikistan.

Fidel Castro: Political leader of Cuba

(Gathered from around the websites)

Fidel Castro, in full **Fidel Alejandro Castro Ruz** (born August 13, 1926, near Birán, Cuba) political leader of Cuba (1959–2008) who transformed his country into the first communist state in the Western Hemisphere. Castro became a symbol of communist revolution in Latin America. He held the title of premier until 1976 and then began a long tenure as president of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers. He handed over provisional power in July 2006 because of health problems and formally relinquished the presidency in February 2008. Castro was born in southeastern Cuba. His father, Angel Castro y Argiz, an immigrant from Spain, was a fairly prosperous sugarcane farmer in a locality that had long been dominated by estates of the U.S.-owned United Fruit Company. While married to his first wife, Angel Castro began an affair with one of his servants, Lina Ruz González, whom he later also married. Together they had seven children; Fidel was one of them, and Raúl, who later became his brother's chief associate in Cuban affairs, was another. Fidel Castro attended Roman Catholic boarding schools in Santiago de Cuba and then the Catholic high school Belén in Havana, where he proved an outstanding athlete. In 1945 he entered the School of Law of the University of Havana, where organized violent gangs sought to advance a mixture of romantic goals, political aims, and personal careers. Castro's main activity at the university was politics, and in 1947 he joined an abortive attempt by Dominican exiles and Cubans to invade the Dominican Republic and overthrow Gen. Rafael Trujillo. He then took part in urban riots that broke out in Bogotá, Colombia, in April 1948. After his graduation in 1950, Castro began to practice law and became a member of the reformist Cuban People's Party (called Ortodoxos). He became their candidate for a seat in the House of Representatives from a Havana district in the elections scheduled for June 1952. In March of that year, however, the former Cuban president, Gen. Fulgencio Batista, overthrew the government of Pres. Carlos Prío Socarrás and canceled the elections. After legal means failed to dislodge Batista's new dictatorship, Castro began to organize a rebel force for the task. On July 26, 1953, he led about 160 men in a suicidal attack on the Moncada military barracks in Santiago de Cuba in hopes of sparking a popular uprising. Most of the men were killed, and Castro himself was arrested. After a trial in which he conducted an impassioned defense, he was sentenced by the government to 15 years' imprisonment. He and his brother Raúl were released in a political amnesty in 1955, and they went to Mexico to continue their campaign against the Batista regime. There Fidel Castro organized Cuban exiles into a revolutionary group called the 26th of July Movement. On December 2, 1956, Castro and an armed expedition of 81 men landed on the eastern coast of Cuba from the yacht *Granma*. All of them were killed or captured except Fidel and Raúl Castro, Ernesto ("Che") Guevara, and nine others, who retreated into the Sierra Maestra to wage guerrilla warfare against the Batista forces. With the help of growing numbers of revolutionary volunteers throughout the island, Fidel Castro's forces won a string of victories over the Batista government's demoralized and poorly led armed forces. Castro's propaganda efforts proved particularly effective, and as internal political support waned and military defeats multiplied, Batista fled the country on January 1, 1959. Castro's force of 800 guerrillas had defeated the Cuban government's 30,000-man professional army. As the undisputed revolutionary leader, Castro became commander in chief of the armed forces in Cuba's new provisional government, which had Manuel Urrutia, a moderate liberal, as its president. In February 1959 Castro became premier and thus head of the government. By the time Urrutia was forced to resign in July 1959, Castro had taken effective political power into his own hands. Castro had come to power with the support of most Cuban city dwellers on the basis of his promises to restore the 1940 constitution, create an honest administration, reinstate full civil and political liberties, and undertake moderate reforms. But once established as Cuba's leader he began to pursue

more radical policies: Cuba's private commerce and industry were nationalized; sweeping land reforms were instituted; and American businesses and agricultural estates were expropriated. The United States was alienated by these policies and offended by Castro's fiery new anti-American rhetoric. His trade agreement with the Soviet Union in February 1960 further deepened American distrust. In 1960 most economic ties between Cuba and the United States were severed, and the United States broke diplomatic relations with the island country in January 1961. In April of that year the U.S. government secretly equipped thousands of Cuban exiles to overthrow Castro's government; their landing at the Bay of Pigs in April 1961, however, was crushed by Castro's armed forces. Cuba also began acquiring weapons from the Soviet Union, which soon became the country's chief supporter and trade partner. In 1962 the Soviet Union secretly stationed ballistic missiles in Cuba that could deliver nuclear warheads to American cities, and in the ensuing confrontation with the United States, the world came close to a nuclear war. The Cuban Missile Crisis ended when the Soviet Union agreed to withdraw its nuclear weapons from Cuba in exchange for a pledge that the United States would withdraw the nuclear-armed missiles it had stationed in Turkey and no longer seek to overthrow Castro's regime. In the meantime Castro created a one-party government to exercise dictatorial control over all aspects of Cuba's political, economic, and cultural life. All political dissent and opposition were ruthlessly suppressed. Many members of the Cuban upper and middle classes felt betrayed by these measures and chose to immigrate to the United States. At the same time, Castro vastly expanded the country's social services, extending them to all classes of society on an equal basis. Educational and health services were made available to Cubans free of charge, and every citizen was guaranteed employment. The Cuban economy, however, failed to achieve significant growth or to reduce its dependence on the country's chief export, cane sugar. Economic decision-making power was concentrated in a centralized bureaucracy headed by Castro, who proved to be an inept economic manager. With inefficient industries and a stagnant agriculture, Cuba became increasingly dependent on favourable Soviet trade policies to maintain its modest standard of living in the face of the United States' continuing trade embargo. Castro remained premier until 1976, when a new constitution created a National Assembly and Castro became president of that body's State Council. He retained the posts of commander in chief of the armed forces and secretary-general of the Communist Party of Cuba—the only legal political party—and he continued to exercise unquestioned and total control over the government. Castro's brother Raúl, minister of the armed forces, ranked second to him in all government and party posts. Fidel Castro's early attempts to foment Marxist revolutions elsewhere in Latin America foundered, but Cuban troops did eventually serve as proxies for the Soviet Union in various conflicts in less-developed countries. From 1975 to 1989 Cuban expeditionary forces fought in the Angolan civil war on the side of the communist Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola. In 1978 Cuban troops assisted Ethiopia in repelling an invasion by Somalia. In the 1980s Castro emerged as one of the leaders of the less-developed world and the nonaligned countries, despite his obvious ties to the Soviet Union. He continued to signify his willingness to renew diplomatic relations with the United States, provided that it end its trade embargo against Cuba. In 1980 Castro released a flood of immigrants to the United States when he opened the port of Mariel for five months. The 125,000 immigrants, including some criminals, strained the capacity of U.S. immigration and resettlement facilities. In the late 1980s, when the Soviet Union under Mikhail Gorbachev began to undertake democratic reforms and eastern European countries were allowed to slip out of the Soviet orbit, Castro retained a hard-line stance, espousing the discipline of communism. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 took him by surprise and meant the end of generous Soviet subsidies to Cuba. Castro countered the resulting economic decline and shortages of consumer goods by allowing some economic liberalization and free-market activities

while retaining tight controls over the country's political life. In late 1993 Castro's daughter sought asylum in the United States, where she openly criticized her father's rule. The following year, economic and social unrest led to antigovernment demonstrations, the size of which had not been seen in Cuba in some 35 years. Shortly thereafter Castro lifted restrictions on those wanting to leave the country, and thousands headed for the United States in the largest exodus since the 1980 Mariel "freedom flotilla." In 1998 Castro allowed Pope John Paul II to visit Cuba for the first time. In 2003 the National Assembly confirmed Castro as president for another five-year term. During that year the Cuban government arrested dozens of independent journalists and activists in a renewed government crackdown on dissidents, and some 75 activists were convicted for conspiring with the United States to subvert the revolution. The following year Castro strengthened his alliance with Venezuelan Pres. Hugo Chávez by helping him bring to fruition the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (Alternativa Bolivariana para las Américas [ALBA]; Alternativa later changed to Alianza ["Alliance"]), a socialist initiative to promote regional commerce, through which Cuba provided health care professionals to Venezuela in exchange for discounted oil. On July 31, 2006, Fidel Castro passed power on a provisional basis to his brother Raúl in order to recover from surgery for a serious intestinal illness. It was the first time since the 1959 revolution that he ceded control. In February 2008, just days before the National Assembly was to vote for the country's leader, Fidel Castro (who had not appeared in public for 19 months) officially declared that he would not accept another term as president. His announcement that he was stepping down was made through a letter that was addressed to the country and posted on the Web site of the official Communist Party

newspaper, *Granma*. In part it read, "I do not bid you farewell. My only wish is to fight as a soldier of ideas." In the succeeding months, official photos were released of Fidel Castro in private meetings, and in July 2010 he made a public visit to the National Centre for Scientific Research in Havana. In September, on the eve of the release of the first volume of his memoirs, *The Strategic Victory*, he remarked to a reporter from the United States that "the Cuban model doesn't even work for us anymore." Many took his comment as an admission of the failure of communism. However, Fidel Castro was quick to qualify his remarks in a speech that followed a few days later. Most analysts saw his remarks as offering support for Raúl's introduction of economic reforms that included a massive layoff of government employees as well as increased toleration of private enterprise. In 2011 Fidel stepped down as secretary-general of the Communist Party of Cuba and was succeeded by Raúl. In March 2016 Fidel, who seldom had been seen in public in recent years, made a high-profile appearance in print when he responded to U.S. Pres. Barack Obama's historic visit to Cuba with a 1,600-word letter in *Granma*. In the letter, titled "Brother Obama," he recapped the aggressive U.S. policy toward Cuba during the Cold War and castigated Obama, the first sitting U.S. president to visit the island in nearly 80 years, for not acknowledging the accomplishments of the Cuban Revolution, including its efforts to eradicate racism. Addressing the warming Cuba-U.S. relations, Castro wrote, "Nobody should be under the illusion that the people of this dignified and selfless country will renounce the glory, the rights, or the spiritual wealth they have gained with the development of education, science and culture." In April a frail soon-to-be 90-year-old Castro told the Communist Party Congress that he would be dying soon, and he implored party members to work to fulfill his communist vision for Cuba.

National & International News

Militants attack security convoy, BSF jawan injured

PTI Srinagar, Nov 26: A BSF jawan was injured on Saturday when militants opened fire on a security forces' convoy in Handwara area of Kupwara district in the north Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir. "One jawan has sustained bullet injuries in the attack by militants on a convoy at Handwara this morning," a BSF official said here. He said the injured jawan has been hospitalised and his condition is stated to be stable. This is second attack on security forces in Handwara area in the past 36 hours. Militants on Thursday night opened fire on a police station in Handwara but there was no damage in the incident as the ultras fled from

the scene following retaliation by the cops.

4 suicide bombers die in attack on Pak army camp

PTI Peshwar, Nov 26: Four heavily-armed suicide bombers attacked a mosque at an army facility in northwestern Pakistan's tribal region near Afghan border today, triggering fierce clashes that left all militants and two soldiers dead. The militants attacked Mohmand Rifles Headquarters in Ghalanai in Mohmand Agency, one of seven tribal districts, and reached the mosque, where residents and a large number of recruits had gathered for an early morning prayer.

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'Will carry back very fond memories'

He finds the ongoing tournament very tough and the organizers very fair and open with the rules of the game. He is hoping to make it the semifinals (which Australia has already done) and among the teams feels Manipur will be a tough team to beat. Beau Blundell, 42 runs a Thoroughbred Horse Racing and Polo Farm and resides in Hunter Valley, Sydney. He is a semi-professional polo player with a handicap of two goals. He is the President of the Wirrangulla Polo club in Dungog, New South Wales, which has 15 playing members and 150 social members. Incidentally, Beau is also the president of the NSW Polo Association. Like many polo players, Beau's association with horses started at the young age of six when he started riding them but it was only at the age of 22 that he took to polo. The initial attraction towards polo

was because of his uncle who used to play the game. But what got him really interested in polo was the horsemanship with multiple horses and the hand eye combination involved. Beau was all praise for the hospitality extended by the organizers as also the people in general and he is "unexpectedly having a very good time". On riding the Manipuri ponies, Beau says "found it hard to start with but now we are getting used to them, it is challenging but is the same for all foreign teams". He feels England, Australia are teams to watch out while "the local team is definitely the favourite". Stating that that getting to represent the country at such level of polo is a once in a lifetime opportunity", Beau stated he is very honoured to be here and "carry back very fond memories of the place".

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