

Editorial

Imphal Tuesday, November 29, 2016

Clearing the way

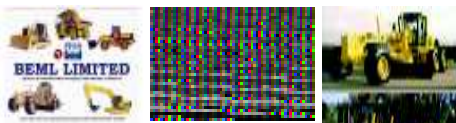
And so it has come to this: while the state- or its high and the mighty to be precise- is reveling in a false sense of euphoria and portraying a picture of normalcy, even going to the extent of inaugurating schemes and projects in which hundreds of crores have been incurred for the expressed benefit of the general public, hundreds of truck drivers who have been risking lives and limbs to bring in the much essential daily requirements from across the state along with their vehicles loaded with items which are in very short supply in the state right this very moment has been left stranded at Mao, not for a day or week, but for almost a month. Earlier, since the current edition of the 'Indefinite Economic Blockade' was announced by UNC as a preemptive warning against the move by the state government to announce Sadar Hills and Jiribam as full fledged Districts, there has been few instances when security escorts were utilized to bring in loaded vehicles stranded at Jiri through National Highway 37 (Imphal-Jiribam). Those trucks approaching the state from the Imphal-Dimapur road however has so far been neglected, and after weathering what nature and men had to throw against them for a month along the roadsides of the national highway, they are at their wit's end, with resources drying up fast. Their plea for help from the state government should be taken as nothing short of an insult by the administration to the concerns and increasing difficulties being faced by the general public. Which brings up the very pertinent question: why is the state government so visibly reluctant in escorting back the long-stranded vehicles from Mao after having stated in no uncertain terms that no CSO, group, or party will be allowed to disturb the normal flow of traffic along the national highways for any reason whatsoever? Is it a subtle hint of the hesitation of the state government in handling unsavory issues irrespective of the relevance or necessity? What message will the administration be sending to those who are holding the blockade, or those who are planning to utilize the same approach to press for demands in the future? Has the state government wrongly concluded that the generally permissive and accommodative yet increasingly agitated lot in the valley will not flare up even after reaching the tipping point? On a more serious note and referring to a very recent incident, it wouldn't be far from the truth to assume that the state government have lost its administrative hold over most of the hill regions of Manipur, and that stringent and necessary steps, however unpopular or disruptive it might appear to be, can no longer be expected from a government who have done very little groundwork to enforce and ensure that the people in every part of the state has been given equal opportunities during three terms in office. The present 'Showroom administration' should be replaced by pragmatic steps and policies to ensure the future of the state is steered towards inclusive progress and development.

CBI registers case against 3 postal officials for allegedly converting old currency notes

Hyderabad, Nov. 29: The Central Bureau of Investigation, CBI has booked three postal department officials including a senior superintendent of Post for allegedly converting old currency notes of 36 lakh rupees with new ones without necessary documentation. CBI has registered a case of criminal conspiracy along with criminal breach of trust, falsification of accounts and provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act against Senior Superintendent of post offices in Hyderabad Sudheer Babu, Sub-Postmaster Himayatnagar G. Revathi and Office Assistant G.

Ravi Teja. The accused in a criminal conspiracy with other public servants and private persons abused their official position to fraudulently exchange old notes with the new currency notes, without genuine documents, which were meant for disbursement among public. On Thursday, the agency had conducted checks on post offices based on credible information that alleged irregularities were being committed by postal officials in the conversion of currency notes at Hyderabad sub-post office in Hyderabad.

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National & International News

New Pakistani Army Chief takes command on the day of terror attack on Indian Army unit in Nagrota

New Delhi, Nov. 29: Pakistani Lieutenant General Qamar Javed Bajwa is taking over as the chief of the country's Army on today. On Monday, Pakistani Defence Minister Khawaja Asif had said there would be no change in the country's military policy under Bajwa's leadership. The taking over of command came amid a fierce gunbattle between security forces and heavily armed militants who opened fire on an Army camp in the garrison town of Nagrota in Jammu and Kashmir. Two soldiers were martyred and two others critically injured after militants attacked an artillery unit in Nagrota today morning. Heavy exchange of fire has been going on between the militants and security forces since 5:30 am.

After the attack Army has intensified the combing operation against the militants. The state administration has ordered shutting down of schools in Nagrota. Nagrota serves as the headquarters for the Army's 16 Corps and plays a very important part of the military formation and security on the border as well for anti-terrorist operations. In a separate encounter, one Border Security Force (BSF) jawan was injured after the security forces intercepted a group of militants attempting to cross the border at Chamliyal border out post which is located in the Samba district in Jammu and Kashmir. In this exchange of firing about three terrorists were gunned down by the security forces.

The two attacks come on the day when the newly appointed Pakistani Army chief Lieutenant General Qamar Javed Bajwa is taking command from the outgoing chief Raheel Sharif. His appointment comes at a time when relations between Pakistan and India have touched a new low after the Uri attack and Indian Army's replies in the form of surgical strikes on terrorist launch pads inside PoK on September 29. There has been a steady rise in ceasefire violations by the Pakistani side. There is considerable rise in infiltration attempts by terrorists from Pakistan to sneak into Jammu and Kashmir post surgical strike by Indian Army.

This is the fourth major attack on an Army camp establishment in last 3 months. Before this, on October 6 militants attacked an Army camp at Langate in Kupwara District in which three militants were killed in the encounter. On October 2, two militants and a soldier were killed when militants launched a suicide attack on two military camps in Baramulla. The worst militant attack over Army camp was seen on September 18 when 18 Army personnel belonging to infantry battalions were killed in Uri town of Baramulla. At least four militants were also killed in the encounter. Following today's attack, security forces have been ordered to maintain high vigil across Jammu and Kashmir. Forces are also on high alert along the highways.

Pak Court issues arrest warrant against Pervez Musharraf for Baloch Leader's murder

Islamabad, Nov. 29: A Pakistani provincial court on Monday issued an arrest warrant against former President General Pervez Musharraf in a case pertaining to the alleged murder of former Baloch nationalist leader Nawab Akbar Bugti. A divisional bench of Balochistan High Court passed the order during a hearing of a review petition challenging the acquittal of the

former President by an Anti-Terrorism Court in the case, Dawn reported. Justice Jamal Mandokhail and Justice Zaheeruddin Kakar heard a review petition filed by Nawabzada Jamil Bugti, son of Akbar Bugti. The counsel of former President Musharraf, Akhtar Shah pleaded in the court that although his client respects the court, he cannot appear

because the court due to "security reasons". However, Bugti's lawyer complained that despite repeated orders, the former President has failed to appear before the court. The court ordered that the administration should ensure provision of security to the former President while he appears in court. Baloch leader Nawab Akbar Bugti

was killed in an operation in Balochistan's rugged mountains of Taratani in Kohlu district on August 26, 2006. Bugti had led an armed campaign to press for provincial autonomy and a greater share of profits from Balochistan's natural resources. The death of the Baloch chieftain had sparked angry protests in parts of the country.

Plane carrying Brazilian football team Chapecoense Real crashes in Colombia, 6 survivors reported

Bogota, Nov. 29: A chartered aircraft with 81 people on board, including a Brazilian first division soccer team heading to Colombia for a regional tournament final, has crashed on its way to Medellin's international airport. Aviation authorities said there are reports of at least six survivors. A local mayor aid that at least three passengers have been rescued alive from the crash site and that there may be more survivors but that access to the crash site is complicated.

Local media in Colombia are reporting that a male passenger going by the name of Alan has arrived in an ambulance to a hospital near Medellin after the plane crash. *Blu Radio* said the passenger arrived on a stretcher with an oxygen mask and covered in a blanket. He appeared to be alive, reports *The Associated Press*. The aircraft, which made a stop in Santa Cruz, Bolivia, was transporting the first division Chapecoense soccer team from southern Brazil. The team was scheduled to play on Wednesday in the first of a two-game Copa Sudamericana final against Atletico Nacional of Medellin.

The plane was carrying 72 passengers and nine crew members, aviation authorities said in a statement. Local radio said the same aircraft transported Argentina's national squad for a match earlier this month in Brazil. Meanwhile, the South American football federation (CONMEBOL) put out a press release on its website saying the South American Cup final has been suspended after the crash. In a statement on its Facebook page, Chapecoense said "may God accompany our athletes, officials, journalists and other guests traveling with our delegation." The team said it would refrain from any further statements until it had fully evaluated the extent of the crash. The team, from the small city of Chapeco, joined Brazil's first division

in 2014 for the first time since the 1970s and made it to the Copa Sudamericana finals last week by defeating Argentina's legendary San Lorenzo squad. Atletico Nacional, the team Chapecoense was scheduled to play in the final, has expressed solidarity with the affected team, tweeting "Atletico Nacional regrets deeply and is in solidarity with Chapecoense Real after the accident happened and is awaiting information from the authorities."

Nabha jailbreak 'mastermind' shifted to high-security barrack

PTI Muzaffarnagar, Nov. 29: Parminder Singh, the alleged "mastermind" of the daylight jailbreak in Punjab, has been shifted to a high security prison in the district, jail officials said on Tuesday. Singh along with Khalistan Liberation Front militant outfit Harminder Minto and four other prisoners escaped after armed men in police uniform stormed the high-security Nabha prison at Patiala in Punjab on November 27. Singh was arrested from Kairana in

Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district on the day itself when the getaway vehicle was stopped at a police picket. Superintendent of district jail Rakesh Singh said the accused, Parminder Singh, was shifted to a high security barrack here on Monday. No inmate is allowed to meet him, he said, adding that security of the jail has been upped. An alert has been sounded in 65 district jails of Uttar Pradesh in the wake of the Nabha jailbreak.

Kochi NIA got tip-off leading to arrest of suspected terrorists

Kochi, Nov. 29: It was a tip off to the Kochi office of the NIA that led to the joint operation that the agency undertook along with the Tamil Nadu police to nab the quartet accused in the recent low-intensity bomb blasts in various parts of South India, on Tuesday. NIA officials said this group had collected explosives, mostly gun powder, which was suspected to have been used in the low intensity blasts in various court complexes at Chittoor in Andhra Pradesh, Mysuru in Karnataka, and Kollam and Malappuram in Kerala. Official sources said the agency would take over the probe on the Malappuram and Kollam blasts if the role of the group behind those blasts is confirmed. All the cases except the bomb blast in Mysuru court compound are now being probed by the respective state police forces. "We are still interviewing the accused persons. The group

operated claiming they were a part of an Al Qaeda module in South India. But we are looking at whether the group had any connection with Al Qaeda leadership," an official said. NIA's Kochi unit received the tip-off about the group during a probe in connection with an IS South India module. During the probe, they had received information about a group in Tamil Nadu that was procuring gun powder from Sivakasi. This led the agency to alert police agencies in Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu. The team led by SP Rahul Nair and DSP Shoukat Ali coordinated with counterparts in Tamil Nadu. NIA officials said that the accused are likely to be produced before a Sessions Court in Chennai which has jurisdiction of NIA cases in Tamil Nadu on Tuesday. They are also likely to be taken to a Sessions Court in Bengaluru in connection with the blast at Mysuru court.

Assam: Unique 'frog wedding' organised to appease rain god

ANI Guwahati, Nov. 29: Lakhimpur witnessed an extraordinary event, where two souls were united solely with the intention of appeasing the rain god Indra, however, the bride and groom appeared to be without any embellishments and were silent throughout the ceremony as the bride was a frog and the groom a bamboo puppet! According to mythological belief, holding a frog marriage ensures ample rainfall. As part of the wedding, a wild female frog is married off to a wooden figurine, representative of the Hindu god of rain, Indra. "We have faith. Last year also, we had performed this ritual, so, all of

us who have been affected by poor rainfall, have decided to hold this ritual. We have proof of last year. This year also we expect god to be kind to us, and therefore, we have organized a frog marriage," said a local resident. The wedding was solemnized by a priest and all rituals held were the same as that of a standard Indian wedding. Vermillion was applied on the frog's forehead - insignia of a married Indian woman. Women and children gathered to take part in the wedding. Even in this age and time, marriages of frog, goat, donkey and tree are still solemnized in Indian interior villages for the early arrival of the monsoon.