

Editorial

Imphal Saturday, April 29, 2017

Earning our rights and privileges

The rising sense of desperation in the state as a result of the increasing scarcity of water is threatening to spill over into agitations and unrest. Studies have shown a direct connection of rising crime rates with the rise in temperature, and the people in the state is indeed reeling under the wilting rays of the sun, while everyone is hoping for even the briefest of respite with their eyes on the sky. Various organizations and civil society bodies have started conducting seminars, discussions and conferences to try and find a sustainable solution to the problem which is poised to get worse in the future. While it would be easy and seemingly natural to put the blame squarely on the Government, the fact stays that we, as a society have played a large part in making the situation what it is today. The civic sense of the society or the lack of it has been for everyone to see and experience. The overwhelming stench of the drains and gutters, the liberally littered roads and lanes, the over polluted rivers- evidence of a collective mentality that does not consider cleanliness as important or necessary as proper personal grooming or constructing resplendent residential buildings. The result, as expected although undesirable, is the receding green areas and shrinking percentage of the water bodies which are usable and safe in the state, once abundant. While it cannot be denied that the efforts of the Government to address the present situation is neither sufficient nor timely, it would do ourselves more harm to sit back and whine about it. There is still enough opportunity and resources with us to make the change. It is time for us to take the initiative and realize the power of collective effort. Cleaning up our sources of water such as the rivers, lakes and ponds which are still in abundance and making them fit for use, making sure that the drains and rivers are connected to ensure that precious water is collected and stored properly and not let go to waste etc are some of the basic steps we all can take up to ensure that the scarcity of water is reduced. Rain Water Harvesting is another practice that can ensure availability of water all year round. The Public Health Engineering Department (PHED), the Government body entrusted with carrying out activities relating to distribution and management of water resources in the State can play a big role in the effort by ensuring that the consumers keep their taps properly closed when not in use, and by ensuring that the water for distribution are properly treated to prevent diseases to the consumers. Proper disposal of waste products also decreases the chance of spreading of wildfire and prevents spreading of diseases and reduces stench. These seemingly inconsequential steps can definitely add up to making a big difference in our own lives. We should make all possible efforts before taking to the streets demanding for things we have taken for granted. We need to learn to earn our rights and privileges.

Jayalalithaa's Former Driver, Suspect In Murder Case, Killed In Accident

PTI Tamil Nadu, April 29: Days after a security guard was found murdered at former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's sprawling estate in the state, her former driver was killed in a road accident in Salem district last night. Kanagaraj, 36, was employed at Ms Jayalalithaa's Poes Garden home in Chennai and was sacked three years ago. Police sources indicate he was one of the suspects in the guard's murder and was questioned by the police. However, another officer says they had not questioned him yet. The driver-turned-taxi owner was on his motorcycle when he was hit by a four-wheeler. Kanagaraj's close friend Sayan, a co-suspect, was seriously injured while his wife and child died in a road accident involving their two-wheeler and a car in Kerala's Thrissur district today, police said. Another suspect Sayan was

seriously injured while his wife and child died in a road accident. On April 24, a security guard at Ms Jayalalithaa's Kodanad estate in Nilgiris district was found dead. His mouth was stuffed with cloth and taped up, the police said. The guard, Om Bahadur, was found at the bungalow that Ms Jayalalithaa frequently visited in the years before she died. The police believe a gang broke into the bungalow to steal documents and valuables. Another guard, Kishore Bahadur, was also attacked. Villagers had reportedly told the police that a gang was seen entering the estate in two cars. Kanagaraj and Sayan were suspects in the break-in and murder case, the police said citing information provided by three persons taken into custody yesterday in connection with the murder.

National and International News

19 killed as Myanmar bus plunges into gorge

AFF Yangon, April 29: Nineteen people were killed and 21 injured after their bus toppled into a ravine in eastern Myanmar, police said Saturday. The bus was carrying around 40 passengers from central Bago province when it plunged off a highway near Myawaddy, a town on the Thai border, on Friday. "Nineteen people were killed and 21 people were injured, while a

few people were lucky to live," Kyi Lin, the chief of police in Karen state, told AFP. "(The bus) fell down into a narrow and deep gorge," he said, adding that police believe the driver lost control of the bus because of a brake failure. Police and local aid groups have brought the injured to nearby hospitals for urgent care and are making funeral arrangements for the dead, he added.

A hospital in Mae Sot, the Thai town across the border, took in seven patients from the crash who were in "critical condition," a medical worker told AFP. Road accidents are common in impoverished Myanmar, whose transport network is in poor condition after decades of underinvestment by the junta that ruled the country for almost half a century until early 2011. With 20.3 road fatalities per

100,000 people, Myanmar has the second most dangerous roads in Southeast Asia, according to data collected by the World Health Organization in a 2015 report. Despite its relatively good infrastructure, neighbouring Thailand has an even worse road safety record. The WHO estimates about 24,000 people die each year in traffic accidents on Thai roads.

No talks with separatists in Jammu and Kashmir, Centre tells Supreme Court

New Delhi, April 29: The union government made its stand clear and reiterated that there will not be any talks with separatists or those raising slogans of "accession or Azadi" in Jammu and Kashmir. The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Friday that a dialogue to restore normalcy was possible only with the legally recognised stakeholders or political parties. The Supreme Court, which was in complete agreement with the view of Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi said, "All those whom the law does not prevent, can meet and come out with suggestions, as the situation is not very palpable". The top court's observation came after Mr Rohatgi said "the government would come to the negotiation table only if the legally recognised stakeholders participate in the dialogue and not with the separatist elements who rake up the issue of accession or Azadi in Kashmir." The Supreme Court asked the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association in Srinagar to come up with suggestions to resolve the current situation, which includes stone-pelting and violent street protests in the state. It told the bar association, which sought a ban on the use of pellet guns to quell the agitating mob, to take the "first steps" of bringing all legally

acceptable stakeholders on the table for workable suggestions to overcome the crisis. The Supreme Court also took exception to the stand of the bar association, which said that it cannot vouch for all stakeholders and could only speak on behalf of lawyers. The top court told the bar association that "you cannot take such a stand when you have come here (to the Supreme Court)". The Supreme Court bench headed by Chief Justice JS Khehar made it clear that the next step would come only if the bar association comes out with workable suggestions and posted the matter for further hearing on May 9. While the bench, also comprising Justices DY Chandrachud and SK Kaul, was persuading the lawyer's association to ensure that there should not be any street agitation and stone-pelting in the state, the Attorney General objected to the stand taken by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association for involving separatist elements in talks. Mr Rohatgi read out the part of the affidavit in which the bar association gave a political colour to the matter by mentioning names of some separatists who were under house arrest. "The case of the bar here is different but he (lawyers for

bar) talks about Geelani and separatists. What is this going on? Ten times he says release them..." the attorney general said as the Supreme Court bench assured him and clarified that it has not accepted or entertained such arguments as pre-conditions for dialogue. "Did we agree", the bench told Mr Rohatgi when he repeated the submission made by the bar association. Mr Rohatgi made it clear that politics of this nature (involving separatists) will not be allowed. He also said that talks to bring normalcy in the state was going on at the highest level - between the Prime Minister and the Chief Minister of the state. "The Chief Minister is with the Prime Minister, what further dialogue is required? The Prime Minister has invited the Chief Minister. She (Mehbooba Mufti) is their CM," he said. Pulling up the High Court bar association on their submission about separatists, the Supreme Court said, "It is not acceptable that you come here and say that there are several other stakeholders". The top court also said, "You make an undertaking that there will be no agitations (stone-pelting) for two weeks, then we will direct them (the Centre) to keep away the security forces from

using pellet guns. But the first positive foot forward has to come from you. This is the last opportunity and you have to play an important role. You will have to come forward. If you take a first step, you will be remembered forever in history," the bench told the counsel appearing for the bar association. The Supreme Court bench also said, "What kind of talk will happen if you keep agitating and there are stone-pelting incidents. You should first stop these agitations and then talk. If you keep throwing stones, then what kind of talk will happen." The Supreme Court was hearing an appeal filed by Jammu and Kashmir High Court Bar Association against the High Court order seeking stay on the use of pellet guns. During the last hearing on April 10, the Centre had told the Supreme Court it was exploring a crowd control option that is akin to rubber bullets but not as lethal as pellet guns which were being used as a last resort to quell the violence. The Jammu and Kashmir High Court had on September 22 rejected the plea seeking a ban on use of pellet guns on the ground that the Centre had already constituted a Committee of Experts through its memorandum of July 26, 2016 for exploring alternatives to pellet guns.

Amit Shah arrives in Jammu on two-day visit; focus will be on expanding party base

Jammu, April 29: Ahead of the 'Darbar Move' from Jammu to the Kashmir Valley, BJP chief Amit Shah arrived in Jammu Saturday on a two-day visit. Shah's visit assumes significance as it is not only his first visit to Jammu after the PDP-BJP alliance formed government about three years ago, but it also comes a few days after Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi to discuss the on-going situation in Kashmir. At that meeting, the defeat of PDP candidate in the Legislative Council elections at the hands of the BJP, contrary to an electoral

understanding between both the parties, was also discussed. Sources said that Shah, during his stay in Jammu, will meet a cross section of people including party leaders, legislators, ministers and workers to ascertain their view on the situation in Kashmir as also in the state, apart from the performance of the state government. During his meetings, he is also likely to discuss how to expand the party base in the state. Shah's visit to Jammu is the beginning of his nation-wide tour programme spanning over 93 days. Jammu is important for the BJP as the party managed to form

government in coalition with PDP by winning 25 seats in the region. Also, it's ideologue Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee had been arrested here for entering the state in defiance of the then permit system. He later died in a jail in the Valley. BJP state president Sat Sharma said Shah's visit will help him have first hand knowledge of the party activities underway in the state. He is a leader of tall stature who is

known for his keen eye towards the organisational skills of the party cadre," Sharma said. Sharma added that the visit also assumes significance keeping in view the onset of the Amarnath Yatra and the tourist season in the state. Shah is expected to discuss details of the projects undertaken by the government for the development of all the three regions of the state as well as the implementation of central government schemes

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Nearly 400 Judicial officers transferred in Uttar Pradesh

Allahabad, April 29: The Allahabad High Court has transferred close to 400 judicial officers, nearly half of them of the Additional District and Sessions Judge rank, in a major reshuffle in the lower judiciary in Uttar Pradesh. According to the notifications issued yesterday by the High Court's Registrar General Dinesh Kumar Singh, the transferred judicial officers include 199 ADJs posted in regular courts and another eight of the same rank posted at fast track courts in various districts. All the judicial officers have been directed to "keep themselves ready to hand over charge at their present place of posting on May 8". The reshuffle has been markedly comprehensive in the districts like

Jhansi, Banda, Moradabad and Sitapur - each of them having six ADJs to have been shifted elsewhere. Lucknow, Meerut, Mainpuri, Bijnor and Hamirpur have five transferred ADJs each. Besides, the list of those transferred include another 118 judicial officers holding the rank of chief judicial magistrate (CJM), chief metropolitan magistrate (CMM), additional CJM, additional CJM (Railway), additional CMM, civil judges/additional civil judges (senior division) and judges/additional judges small causes courts. The largest number of judicial officers of the aforesaid rank to have been transferred are from Aligarh (10), followed by Agra (five) and Kanpur Nagar, Meerut, Saharanpur, Sonbhadra and Varanasi (four each).

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