

Editorial

Wednesday, December 27, 2017

Blessing of Christmas

The festive season brings with it the mandatory greetings and wishes from and to our dear and near ones, to let others know that their well-being is thought about.

The feeling of hope and positivity increases with the anticipation of an approaching festival and revelry- and that perhaps answers the question as to why Manipur and its people always embrace festival and celebrations with such intensity. Not to be outdone, the heads of the state are greeting the people with much fervour and seemingly heartfelt sincerity.

Never mind the unfinished activities and development works which started in and around Imphal with amazing alacrity- but then the fate of many such rushed jobs have been a foregone conclusion, and once again the representatives of the people does not disappoint.

Cheer up, because the people can predict their moves and moods- an increasing effort in transparency? And never mind the increasing instances of armed security personnel and their responsible officers, with prodigal off-springs of responsible and prominent politicians who are too busy looking after the welfare of the people to mind their issues, being caught with mammoth caches of narcotic substances. Maybe they are just trying to correct the negative balance of trade by exporting these immensely sought after items, one of the very few things they are really adept at, so cheer up, because we have security officers who also showed enterprising talents. And never mind the increasingly common cases of extortions and attacks on innocent persons and working professionals in the state by the self-styled guardians of the freedom and independence of the downtrodden people of the state. Maybe they knew secrets the simple public is not privy to.

Or maybe we should not be questioning the moves of those who wield death in their hands and lofty ideals in their speech, all the while garnering supplies and contracts, not to mention the periodic obeisance in cash and kind for their mercy and leniency shown to us lesser mortals. Maybe they are trying to bring about a resurgence of the brave and fearless state where the meek and the humble does not find a place in the society.

Cheer up, because we are going back to our roots at last, the fabled times when men and god intermingled and myths are a part of everyday life. Who cares about the development and the race for progress in other parts of the world? And never mind the rising crimes against women, children and the weaker sections of the society. Their woes and difficulties are part of life and life is never perfect. Cheer up, because maybe they will come out stronger and wiser from their ordeal.

Let nature take its own course.

Never mind the worsening public facilities and deteriorating basic amenities. Man had survived without purified drinking water and electricity centuries ago, and we now can really appreciate their endurance and perseverance.

Cheer up, because we are being given a valuable practical lesson in appreciation. And if not for anything, cheer up, because we are being thought of in these times of happiness and celebration.

Shri Shri Bijoy Govinda Naharol Seva Singlup Marup. Keishamthong Elangbam Leikai

Annual General Body Meeting of the Shri Shri Bijoy Govinda Naharol Seva Singlup Marup was held today at the residence of Khangembam Bodhamani Singh, Elangbam Leikai on 24th Dec. 2017. The meeting observed 2 (two minutes) silence as a mark of respect to the three departed members of the Marup identified as Laishram Jaya, Ningthoujam Lokendra and Elangbam Chaoba. Later the GB also elected new office bearer (nine executive member) for the period of one year. Oinam Baldev has been selected as President Once more.

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National & International News

Delhi: Arvind Kejriwal govt had a busy time in 2017 as the National Capital breathed uneasy

PTI New Delhi, Dec. 27: The year saw less of rabble-rousing between the AAP government and the Lt Governor's office as compared to the past but the Arvind Kejriwal dispensation had to grapple with issues like pollution, unfulfilled poll promises and corruption charges. Since Anil Bajjal took charge at the Raj Niwas on 31 December last year, he has given his nod to the Aam Aadmi Party government's several key decisions like the new minimum wages and education loan scheme. Bajjal's predecessor Najeeb Jung and the AAP government had been at frequent loggerheads on a range of issues, including administrative control over the bureaucracy. However, the L-G's office and Kejriwal sparred on some occasions as the latter in October had said he was an "elected chief minister, not terrorist" over the delay by Bajjal in approving the government's decision to regularise around 17,000 guest teachers. The 2017 also saw the ruling Aam Aadmi Party change its strategy of directly attacking Prime Minister Narendra Modi after multiple poll reverses and instead focused its charge on the BJP as a whole. Since the AAP government was formed in February 2015, Kejriwal had adopted a strategy to hit out at the prime minister on several fronts. However, after the rout in the Assembly elections in Punjab, Goa and MCD polls, the party changed

its stance. There was also a political firestorm in the national capital when Kejriwal had in May sacked the then water minister Kapil Mishra over alleged "poor water management". After being ousted from the cabinet, Mishra launched a series of attacks against Kejriwal, alleging that he had seen him taking Rs 2 crore in cash from Health Minister Satyendar Jain. Later, the AAP rubbished Mishra's charges. After his removal, Kejriwal reshuffled his Cabinet and inducted two new faces — Kailash Gahlot and Rajender Pal Gautam. The induction of Gahlot, who comes from rural areas and Gautam, a Dalit face, also appeared to be AAP's initiatives to rebuild the organisation after it suffered a humiliating defeat in the municipal corporation elections in April. Although the Delhi government will complete three years in office in February, there are several pre-poll promises the AAP dispensation is yet to fulfill. Two key promises — Wi-fi and installation of CCTV cameras across the national capital — are yet to be fulfilled. According to the Delhi government, it is in the process of fulfilling all these promises. In the transport sector, the Kejriwal government was not been able to add a single new bus to the existing fleet of Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC) for which it was attacked by rival BJP and Congress when it had

announced odd-even in the wake of rising air pollution in November. According to the court's direction, there is a need of 11,000 buses to cater to commuters though there are only around 6,500 buses. The government plans to procure 100 e-buses, aimed to bring down air pollution in the city. Tackling rising air pollution was also one of major challenges for the AAP dispensation. It is yet to procure sufficient number of mechanical sweeping machines to reduce dust pollution. On several occasions in 2017, the National Green Tribunal slammed the government over the issue of pollution. The government also aims to provide drinking tap water to every household by 2018. In March, the AAP government inaugurated its ambitious pilot project to provide 24x7 potable water to residents of Navjivan Vihar in south Delhi. The AAP government has prioritised health and education sectors since its formation. This year, 8,000 new classrooms were constructed and another 8,000 rooms are to be built next year. Earlier this month, Kejriwal had claimed that the AAP government has succeeded in preventing private schools from arbitrarily increasing fees, thus providing a major relief to parents. In October, the AAP dispensation introduced higher education and skill development loan guarantee

scheme under which students are provided loans by banks with the government as a guarantor. Under this scheme, students can get education loans of up to Rs 10 lakh from banks while the government would be their guarantor. In order to promote sports in Delhi, the city administration has also plans to provide financial assistance of up to Rs 3 lakh per annum and specialised training to young sporting talents from the national capital. Besides education, health sector is also on the top priority of the Delhi government. Mohalla clinics, numbering over 160 at the moment, are expected to go up to 1,000 in 2018. The deadline, which was April earlier, was revised as authorities struggled to acquire land to set up these clinics. The government, officials said, has also been improving infrastructure in the health sector. In 2017, the AAP government announced two major schemes — free surgery scheme in private hospitals and free-medicine scheme. In March, the Kejriwal government raised minimum wages by 37 percent for unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled workers. For an unskilled worker, the minimum wages is Rs 13,350 per month against the earlier Rs 9,724 per month. For semi-skilled and skilled persons, minimum wages are Rs 14,698 and Rs 16,182 per month respectively.

United Nations cuts budget by \$286 million, US claims credit

PTI United Nations, Dec. 27: The UN has approved a \$286 million cut in its annual budget for the next year, a 5% "historic reduction in spending" that the US said it had negotiated. The General Assembly on Sunday approved the regular budget of \$5,397 billion for 2018-2019, the UN said in a statement on Tuesday. The amount sets the budget level around \$286 million (or 5%) below the final approved level for 2016-2017, and \$193 million below the initially proposed budget level for 2018-2019, including all "add-ons". The additional reductions come mainly from across-the-board cuts in non-post resources for most Departments and Offices, including the Special Political Missions, the UN said in a statement. Taking credit for the budget cut, US's Indian-origin ambassador to the UN Nikki Haley said that she negotiated a reduction of over \$285 million off the 2016-2017 final budget. "In addition to these significant cost savings, we reduced the UN's bloated management and support functions, bolstered support for key US priorities throughout the world, and instilled more discipline and accountability throughout the UN system," she said in a statement. "The inefficiency and overspending

of the United Nations are well known. We will no longer let the generosity of the American people be taken advantage of or remain unchecked. "This historic reduction in spending, in addition to many other moves toward a more efficient and accountable UN, is a big step in the right direction," Haley said. She said that while "we are pleased with the results of this year's budget negotiations, you can be sure we will continue to look at ways to increase the UN's efficiency while protecting our interests". According to the UN statement, the General Assembly approved resources in the amount of \$88 million for the establishment and maintenance of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) for the period from 16 October 2017 to 30 June 2018. It approved resources in the amount of \$911 million for the maintenance of the United Nations-African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) for the period from 1 July 2017 to 30 June 2018. This brings the total overall approved resources for peacekeeping operations for the 2017-18 period to \$7.316 billion, which compares to approved resources for the 2016-17 period of \$7.909 billion, a reduction of \$593

million or 7.5%. The General Assembly granted a one-year commitment authority for the International Residual Mechanism for Criminal Tribunals, it said. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres welcomed the General Assembly's support to his management reform proposal aimed at enhancing delivery of all mandates and the performance of the Secretariat. The General Assembly also provided guidance on the comprehensive proposals, including on the restructuring of the Departments of Field Support and of Management to be submitted by mid-2018. In particular, the General Assembly

endorsed the proposal to move from a biennial planning and budgeting period to annual programme budget on a trial basis, as of 2020. This signals one of the most significant shifts in the programme planning and budgeting process of the Organisation since the 1970s, the UN said. The General Assembly also requested the Secretary-General to undertake an assessment of the mechanisms and levels of discretionary managerial authorities that may be required in order to address unanticipated programmatic needs and to report in the 73rd Session, the UN statement added.

Huge cache of arms, explosive seized in Reasi

PTI Jammu, Dec 27: Security forces recovered a huge cache of arms and explosives from an underground arms dump in Reasi district of Jammu and Kashmir, a senior police officer said today. The recovery which included an AK 56 rifle, a pistol, 23 explosive sticks and two IEDs weighing six kg each, were recovered from Shergari area of Chassana. Senior Superintendent of Police, Reasi, Tahir Sajad Bhat told PTI. He said the arms and explosives were recovered in a joint operation carried

out by the Army and the police on specific information last night. The other material recovered from the arms dump included two rounds of rocket-propelled grenade (RPG), one illumination round, one .303 rifle with one magazine and 90 rounds, three grenades including two of Chinese make, one Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) round, one AK magazine with 81 rounds, a pistol magazine and 67 PIKA rounds, the officer said. Police have registered a case in this connection and further investigation is on, the SSP said.

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