

Editorial

Imphal Thursday, February 2, 2017

Tripartite talk: an unfair game

Finally the Ministry of Home Affairs of the Union government has initiated tripartite talk between the Govt. of Manipur, UNC and the Union Govt. of India to find a solution to the ongoing crisis in the state.

But to those who have been following the ongoing conflict between the UNC and the State Government, it is hard to believe that the proposed tripartite talk may be able to find an amicable solution to the conflict between the two. Reason, UNC's stand is crystal clear - until the state government revoke the state government decision for creation of the 7 new districts, there is no way that the body which has been organizing prolonged economic blockade along the national main road will roll back their agitation. On the other hand the state government too had spell out its stand to the declaration of the 7 new district saying that there is no way that the government will revoke the creation of the 7 new districts as it is for the purpose of running better administration.

November 25, last year, similar tripartite talks was convened but, state government representatives did not attend the meeting, on the ground that the information about the talk was not conveyed on time to the state authority. Whatever be the reason, the attitude was clear that the state government will in no way retreat the creation of the seven new administrative districts.

As far as the demand of the UNC is concern, it is no wrong to imagine that the proposed talk is nothing but a political gimmick to show the people of the state that at least the government is doing something to end the misery of the people. It is an open secret that UNC's demand is a direct threat to the territorial integrity of the state and majority of the people including the various hill tribal communities in the state are against any motive to distort the integrity of the state.

Hence, any move or decision to appease the UNC will face the music in the upcoming state assembly election scheduled on March 4 and March 8. If Central government authority started a move then BJP which is in power at the centre will lose its popularity in the state and if it is the state government then definitely the people will give a befitting reply to the Congress party in the upcoming election.

So, matter wanted to draw the attention of our readers is that, people of the state have no reason to be happy to the proposed tripartite talk as one have no reason to believe that the so call talk will solve the present crisis in the state.

Jilted lover sets himself and woman on fire in Kerala Medical College

Kottayam, Feb. 02: In a shocking incident reported from Kottayam in Kerala, a former student set himself and a girl on fire at the School of Medical Education (SME) campus. On Wednesday, 21-year-old Lakshmi was sitting in the classroom with other students when Adarsh barged in, poured petrol and then set her and himself on fire. Both succumbed to their injuries at the medical college hospital later in the evening.

According to the *Times of India*, Lakshmi, a final-year Bachelor of Physiotherapy student at SME, had been in a relationship with Adarsh for around six months. She had reportedly ended the affair following suspicions about his character, but Adarsh was furious at Lakshmi for breaking up with him and continued to follow her around. He even approached her family with a marriage proposal but they lodged a complaint against him with the Kayamkulam police.

The TOI report says that the police had warned Adarsh to keep his distance from her. A former SME student, he had completed his course in 2013 but had come to the campus for a supplementary examination on the day of the tragedy. He reached the classroom at around 1 pm where Lakshmi and her friends were sitting and poured petrol on her. He then tried to set her on fire but she ran out of the classroom. Adarsh finally caught hold of her and set her on fire at the library and then tried to hug her.

According to the witnesses, Lakshmi managed to free herself from his grip but fell down gasping for breath. Other students doused the flames and rushed both of them to the hospital. "Lakshmi had 65 percent burns and Adarsh 80 percent. Lakshmi had burns on her face too, which affected her respiratory system," Renjin RC, the resident medical officer said.

By : Prakash Chawla

Finance Minister Mr Arun Jaitley, in his Budget for 2017-18, has put the money where the mouth is. Among different descriptions about the Rs 21.46 lakh crore Budget, the most apt came from a top global banker who said it was a piece of workmanship and business-like.

Even though, expectations were running high, the final set of numbers and development roadmap was low on hype and substantive on deliverables for farmers, rural workers, lower middle class, aspirational youth and small and medium enterprises.

Given the kind of global challenges like protectionism being resorted to by the most developed economies and the capital flight away from the emerging markets, the Finance Minister had to factor in the domestic variables while presenting the Budget which had many firsts to its credit. For one, it was presented a month in advance that would have a qualitative impact on the government expenditure and secondly, the rigidities of the plan and non-plan expenditures were given a go-bye.

Coming after demonetization and imperative of giving a big push to the rural economy, Mr Jaitley has given a combined allocation of Rs 1.87 lakh crore, to the country's rural landscape. The flagship rural job programme, Mahatma Gandhi (MNREGS) that has been given the largest ever outlay of Rs 48,000 crore would no more be meant for 'digging holes and pits' but used for building quality rural assets. So

much so that, all MGNREGA assets would be geo-tagged and put in public domain for greater transparency.

Even space technology would be used widely to plan MGNREGA works. Initiatives like linking farmers to E-mandis and urging more and more states to de-notify lot more farm produce from the clutches of the APMC Act would go a long way to help farmers realise better prices for their harvest.

An important question is: whether this Budget can revive the consumption demand and investment in the private sector?

As has been recognised by the Economic Survey, a brilliant document making some brilliant and honest assessments about the state of the domestic and international economy, India's private sector is battling the crisis of balance sheets with heavy debt on their books. So, it would logically take a while before India Inc starts committing fresh money, making it imperative for the government to front-load the investment cycle and then follow it in the second order. That's what exactly this Budget does. Despite global headwinds, as much as 24 per cent hike has been committed in the capital expenditure for capital formation. The most prominent sector receiving the government investment is the road, rail and shipping infrastructure with a combined outlays of Rs 2.41 lakh crore. In the following order of multiplier effect, the private sector would get orders for cement, steel, rolling stocks and so on, creating

jobs for the skilled and semi-skilled people and increased revenue for the promoters.

When it comes to youth, the thinking is quite clear: to create an echo system where entrepreneurship flourishes with the help of easy bank credit, fiscal sops and technology enablers. As one of the analysts put it, the corporate India should not be seen only in terms of wealth creation in the stock market for five-ten top business houses but for millions of micro, small and medium entrepreneurs. The Budget makes a big difference to this lot of people. Even as the government has made a commitment to reduce the corporate tax to 25 per cent for the entire industry, the preference has been given to the SMEs who will pay lower taxes.

With the affordable housing receiving an infrastructure status after some tweaking of the nomenclature, a big boost has been given to the sector which had received a hit after the demonetization and subdued demand. As a growth driver, it would boost employment in construction and deliver on the promise of the government to give housing for all. If there is one area, where the Budget has delivered in sync with the expectations, it is with regard to taking India digital. It has affirmed quite assertively that the digital drive was not limited to demonetisation but would be a new normal. Host of incentives and infrastructure support has been committed for making operational Apps like BHIM, fiber optics, points

of sale and merchandise platforms to link the entire eco - system digitally. Making the economy cashless is one of the 'TEC' pillars, enunciated in the Budget to Transform, Energise and Clean India. In fact, it would not only help India clean up internally from the menace of black money and corruption but would also create jobs and energise youth.

Connected to this theme is abolition of the Foreign Investment Promotion Board, sending a loud and clear signal to the global investors about drastically cutting the red tap and removing the discretionary powers to clear or not clear foreign direct investment projects. Then, one of the most courageous initiatives is to bring in transparency in funding of political parties through the electoral bonds and limiting the cash contributions to just about Rs 2,000. This would go a long way in winning popular support for fight against corruption.

While the Finance Minister has given direct tax giveaways of Rs. 20,000 crore, he has done it without introducing any new taxes and sticking to the financial discipline. The fiscal deficit has been kept at eminently acceptable level of 3.2 per cent of the GDP; a measure that would help the country retain confidence of the global rating agencies.

Summing up, the Budget for 2017-18 is well-grounded and would set a stage for revival of GDP growth in excess of 8 per cent in the coming year, if not in the next fiscal itself. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

Budget: Low on Hype; High on Substance

National & International News

Plea against pre-poll freebies promise: Delhi HC seeks govt, EC reply

New Delhi, Feb. 02: The Delhi High Court today sought responses of the Centre and the Election Commission of India (ECI) on a petition seeking to restrain all political parties from making promises of offering freebies to people if they are voted to power. A bench of Chief Justice G Rohini and Justice Sangita Dhirga Sehgal asked the ECI to explain if its guidelines on election manifesto are in conformity with the Supreme Court's direction given earlier. "You (ECI) will have to file your response and inform this court whether the guidelines issued by you are in conformity with the directions given by the Supreme

Court," the bench said. The court also issued notice to the Centre and asked both the government and ECI to file their response within eight weeks. The bench has fixed the matter for hearing on May 24. The high court was hearing a plea by Delhi resident Ashok Sharma who has sought direction to the ECI to restrain all political parties from distributing free goods (freebies) as are being allegedly offered in the upcoming state Assembly elections in the five states, scheduled to be held in February and March. Assembly polls are to be held in Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Uttarakhand, Goa and Manipur.

The plea, filed through advocate A Maitri, has claimed that the poll panel in its recent guidelines has "nullified" the Supreme Court's directions, which had directed the ECI to frame guidelines in consultation with all recognised parties. The apex court in its July 2013 verdict had observed that, "although the law is obvious that promises made in an election manifesto cannot be construed as a 'corrupt practice' under section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, the reality is that distribution of freebies of any kind undoubtedly influences all people and it affects level-playing field."

Sri Lankan Man Arrested For Predicting President Maithripala Sirisena's Death

Colombo, Feb. 02: A former Sri Lankan sailor, who had attacked the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi with a rifle butt in Colombo in 1987, has been arrested for "predicting" the death of President Maithripala Sirisena. Vijitha Rohana Wijemuni was arrested on Tuesday by the Crime Investigation Department for circulating a video on Facebook making an astrological forecast about the death of President Sirisena by January 26. In December, Nimal Bopage,

Secretary to the Ministry of Media and Parliamentary Affairs, had lodged a complaint with the police for an investigation against Wijemuni. "We see a conspiracy behind this and have asked the police to investigate because we suspect this to be part of a wider plot to assassinate the President," he had said in the complaint. He had been charged with misleading the public, police sources said. Wijemuni was part of a naval guard of honour in July, 1987 when Mr

Gandhi was visiting Colombo to sign the Indo-Lanka Peace Accord which led to the Indian Peace Keeping Force being stationed in Sri Lanka's north and east provinces as part of India's efforts to mediate in Sri Lanka's separatist civil war at the time. As Mr Gandhi walked past inspecting the guard of honour, Wijemuni raised his rifle and attempted to attack the then prime minister who narrowly escaped. Wijemuni was court-martialled and after his jail term, became an astrologer.

Five Indian nationals jailed in Togo released: Sushma Swaraj



New Delhi, Feb. 02: External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj has announced the release of five Indians from Kerala who were jailed in Togo and appreciated the Indian mission in Accra and Consulate in Togo for their support. She tweeted, "We have secured the release of 5 Indians from Kerala jailed in Togo. Good work by Indian mission in Accra and Consulate in Togo." The five Indians, who employees of a Merchant Navy firm, were in jail since 2013 for their suspected involvement in a piracy attack off the coast of Togo. They were sailing on board a ship from Mumbai to South Africa when they were arrested. The External Affairs Minister has in the past been appreciated for her timely interventions and speedy responses on social media, which has made her one of the most followed politicians on the platform.

WHENEVER YOU SEE CONSTRUCTION AND MINING EQUIPMENTS, JUST THINK OF US
A SOLUTION FOR EVERY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT



Automobile Engineering Works-1
R K WORKSHOP
New Checkon Road, Purana Rajbari
Imphal East,
Manipur - 795 001

Authorised dealer **BEML Limited**
(A Government of India Mini Ratna Company under Ministry of Defence)

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail: imphaltimes@gmail.com.
For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O)

UK parliament votes in favour of starting Brexit process

London, Feb. 02: Britain moved one step closer to a final separation from the EU as members of the UK parliament voted overwhelmingly in favour of allowing the government to begin Brexit negotiations. Members of the House of Commons voted yesterday by 498 to 114 to advance the bill that would give Prime Minister Theresa May the authority to invoke Article 50 of the Lisbon Treaty - the formal process of leaving the EU. The bill now faces further scrutiny in the Commons and the House of

Lords before it can become law. Earlier, May had confirmed that she will be publishing a White Paper on her Brexit strategy. In response to a query by Conservative MP Maria Miller, May told the House of Commons: "I can inform my Right Hon Friend and the House that that White Paper will be published tomorrow (Thursday)". Under pressure from the Opposition and some of her own rebel MPs, the British PM had announced last week that she

would be publishing a White Paper on the negotiating plans for Britain's exit from the EU in due course. "The White Paper will reflect the plan already set out by the Prime Minister in her Brexit speech," a Downing Street spokesperson told reporters at a briefing on Wednesday morning. The confirmation of a date for the White Paper came as MPs continued a second day of debate on the so-called Brexit Bill, which will give May the authority to invoke Article 50 and trigger the official Brexit negotiations with the EU.

"History has been made," British Foreign Minister Boris Johnson tweeted after the voting. The government was expected to win despite the Liberal Democrats and Scottish National Party voting against it. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn had issued a three-line whip, a strong disciplinary order, to his MPs to back the bill. However, many Labour MPs had already indicated they would defy that whip, including Indian-origin MP Virendra Sharma.