

Editorial

Baffling Budget

The presentation of Budget, whether by the Union government or the state government has always been an anticipated event as the overall outlook and the intention of the government is determined by the financial budget. Government Budget is a subject of immense importance for a variety of reasons including allocation of the limited resources, determination of planned approach to government's activities, instrument of economics policy and program, integrated approach to fiscal operations, affecting economic activities, index of government's functioning, public accountability among others. Yet the maiden annual state Budget presented by the new BJP-Led government turned out to be a disappointment for those who are eagerly anticipating various positive changes from the previous Congress government.

The biggest indicator of the state government going back on the various promises and plans of infrastructural developments it announced with much aplomb and grandeur is the share of capital expenditure allocated out of the total expenditure. A capital expenditure of just twenty percent would certainly mean curtailing various long term development plans since these development activities entail huge capital investments which is contradictory to the budget estimate prepared by the state government. Another major concern which the state government needs to take note of is the composition of Revenue Receipts where Grant-in-aid from the centre constitutes 53 percent of the total amount. This figure clearly demonstrates the extent to which the state is depending on the centre for almost everything. This in turn indicates the hold that the centre has on the state government. With various issues whether political, social or financial plaguing the state for so long, the figures tell a sad story- of how the centre can possibly influence or impose its decision which might very well go against the aspirations and wishes of the public thereby giving rise to protests, agitations and social restlessness. The figure should be viewed as a wake-up call for the state government to draw up a pragmatic long-term plan to increase the share of contribution of the state towards total revenue receipts. The avenues which can help increase the share of state revenue receipts namely agriculture and tourism has been relegated to non-relevance as reflected in the budget. All the talks and rhetoric about improving the plight of farmers and increasing productivity turned out to be just that- rhetoric. What the state need at the moment is a long-term plan to increase the productivity as well as participation of the farmers in raising the earnings from the sector. A sustained action plan backed by determined officials who can oversee the proper implementation can bring about a positive change in this regard. Haphazard and half-drawn plans cannot capture the attention of tourists. A well-thought out plan with the involvement of local teams and interest groups together can ensure that the tourists can once again focus their interest in the state.

Perhaps the biggest disappointment of the present budget is the narrow and limited focus on the Model Schools in just five districts which clearly displayed a lack of sense of priority on the part of the state government.

In all, the annual budget is seen more as an assumed statement of income and expenditure rather than a detailed presentation of the intentions and means of achieving the goals set forth umpteenth times by the present government. A more detailed presentation of the priority, objective and direction is needed to make sense of it all.

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Noises of the Silence - Part 2

By: Jinine Lai

The pattern of fake encounter killings of Manipur appears passing through a timeline marked by pre 2005 and post 2005.

In pre 2005, the perpetrator's names are much of the Central Government of India namely Central Reserved Police Force (CRPF), Border Security Forces (BSF), Maratha Regiment, Raj Rifles, Rajput Regiment, JK Rifles, etc. However in post 2005, the Assam Rifles and Manipur Police Commandos have relatively increased their activities and involvement in human rights violation incidents. The term, Assam Rifles is very much of the North East India which gives a confused understanding of the violators that sounds a type of internal and fraternal involvement to the international and national perception in the likely ostensible absent of Indian Government's responsibility. And another similar reality is Manipur Police Commandos which the entire manpower is of the soil. Thus the increase involvement of the Police and Assam Rifles was supposed to absolve the culpability of the central Indian Forces.

In the earlier period of pre 2005, one nature of the violations was, at the outset, the government armed forces picked up the victims without issuing arrest memos, detained illegally, administered various types of torture forcing them to accept they were members of the outlawed organizations or to extract information, clicked photos of the victims in the custody, got recorded their names, particulars adding to the list of so called extremists. The more army arrested people, the longer the list and eventually they were promoted to higher posts and awarded incentives.

Usually the same armed forces group would not stay long in a same station. They would shift within a period of from six months to two or three years. A new group would come to see the record of the extremists handled by the earlier group. They would start their operation checking persons in the list. Very unfortunately most of the torture victims in the list would be picked up and killed in the fake

encounters. Some of the victims of the torturers who had gone to the law court for illegal detention and degrading treatment would usually survive the cruel action. However, the most of the victims had not the courage to file cases against the military. Due to intimidation from military and ignorance as well only few of them went to law courts. Many of them lost their lives in next cycle of rights violations.

Thus a changing pattern of rights violations started being seen in the late 2005. This time-line seems to be noticed by

1. Strong anti AFSPA protest of the people in 2004 following the rape and murder of Ms Manorama by the government forces.

2. The recommendations from Review Committee of Home Minister of India and Amnesty International for reviewing/repealing the AFSPA.

3. And, four points proposal of plebiscite by a political armed organization, United National Liberation Front to government of India in January 2005.

In cases of post 2005, so called Police and Commandos were becoming very active in the killings, they committed the crimes in combined with Assam Rifles or sometimes with Regular Army. They killed the young boys and newly married men aged from 16 to 35 which constituted about 90% of killings. Ironically some of victims were ambitious to join Indian Armed Forces. According to the statements of the victim families and friends, they attended selection tests and walk in interviews.

More than 90 percent of the victims were tortured so badly before they were shot dead. It is feared that many of them even breathed last during the cruel and inhuman act. The tortures were somewhat executed silently somewhere shying away from public and media. But each body bore loud noise of bullet blast; the civilians heard the gun fires, the killers claimed the acts and local media carried the police reports.

According to claims from victim families, circumstantial study and media reports, regarding the arms recovery, only about 10% of the data may be accurate. After security forces killed the victims, they planted the arms nearby the body

or even they leveled up faults confessions of possessing arms by using various ways of threats. For such arms recovery incidents, the army and police use some certain limited arms over and again that they had recovered in previous incidents. When they recovered money, they count less in media therefore it is considered that the data on the amount of money recovered from the AOGs and other outfits is another tip of the iceberg. Such incidents happen in the pre as well as post 2005 period.

The possibility of exposing one's life to the shot dead and dead body found is also increasing. According to the testimonies of the some victim families, when someone especially lone rider or driver passes through particularly security personnel, more dangerously after sun set and at a spot less travelers pass by, in case, the person happens to have cash normally above INR 5000, expensive cell phone and gold made ornaments are at risk. Sometimes male of no age bar and even duo on vehicle are not spared. The most of the victim families found the body missing those possessions. One of the causes of such violations as general people believe is that the police commandos had given bribe, about INR 300,000 - 12, 00, 000 to get the job. People fear they commit crimes to enable to meet the monthly payment of the interest of the amount used for the bribery they borrowed. In fact their salary is not at par they expect.

And again, there are claims about government forces are using some drug users and anti social elements as their informers providing them money and drugs. The killings based on the misled information supplied by such agents are happening frequently. People fear, sometimes it turns out of taking revenge on the personal grudges. Also people had a firm suspicion on the involvement of the police personnel in the robbery episodes by mysterious men in black. For the simple reason that the man disappeared so illusively at the moment police Jeep/Gypsy appeared on the spot. In a few cases, according to eye witnesses met in the field visits, the man in black got into the vehicles of the security personnel and driven along. In most incidents

when locals had catch attempt on, they found police vehicles already stationed somewhere around the spot. Next morning newspapers reported the police drove into the spot but not found the suspect.

Out of 100 cases of extremists/outfits arrested as claimed by security, about 90 cases found difficult to be proved guilty. About 95% were detained illegally and carried out without issuing arrest memos in spite of Supreme Court's order. One alleged happening was when army and police arrested members of the Armed Oppositions and other proscribed outfits, money would be a negotiating lever either to release them or to send them to jail alive. If the underground happened to be picked up with arms and weapons seldom they were safe, for they would be killed in fake encounters. As the ranks of the so called extremists differ, the bargaining cost also varied. According to unconfirmed reports it ranged from about INR 50,000 to INR 500,000. Nevertheless, in case of top braces of underground arrested such deal might not be exercised for some army officers prefer promotion and award.

Concerning the FIR of the cases, the police identified and noted the people killed in the fake encounters as culprits not as victims. This is one big hurdle at the very outset of the legal course. We often talked to the families and locals to make noises through kind of protests and local actions if possible for it would help legal endeavor in some ways. As we have one or two lawyer friends who willing to fight for human rights we encouraged the families to come to the law court. Interestingly some MLAs sneaked into the matter to make the families and locals silent extending INR 10-20 thousand to them. Sometimes military approached the families when they heard the family had initiated litigation or was about to go to law court. They would start talking with victim's party offering sop. They came in civil clothes with human like faces this time to request the families not to go to court or to withdraw the case since the law court can bother them.

(The writer is an Asst. Prof. University of Suwon, S Korea)

National and International News

It is up to States to take action on cow vigilantes: Centre to Supreme Court

New Delhi, July 21: The Centre on Wednesday told the Supreme Court that while it is against "cow vigilantism by private persons", any action against such people has to be taken by States and not the Centre. The top court then asked the Centre and states to file their response on how they will prevent cow vigilantism.

The court's comments come amid a spate of cow vigilantism-related incidents around the country. On Thursday in Parliament, the Opposition targeted the government over the lynchings, with the Congress accusing PM Narendra Modi of "creating an environment" for the violence and indulging in "double speak" on the issue.

Congress leader Kapil Sibal, while speaking in the Rajya Sabha, alleged that the PM was doing nothing to restrain cow vigilantes who, he said, include elements from the VHP and the Bajrang Dal. Sibal said the year 2017 has witnessed maximum murders and the cattle ban had negatively impacted leather industry besides industries like soap and shampoo.

"I am shaken and shattered by the images of grotesque violence and heart-wrenching scenes (which) I have seen on social media and Twitter. We did not see it in the last

50 years," he said.

Later in the day, Union minister Arun Jaitley criticised the opposition for "politicising the issue of mob lynching".

"Violence can never be a partisan issue and oppression in the name of cow won't be tolerated," the minister said in Parliament.

He defended the government saying it has taken requisite action.

"Wherever acts of violence and lynching have erupted, legal proceedings and chargesheets have been filed in a systematic way."

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi has always strongly condemned the act of lynching," he said, adding, "We should all support each other to fight this."

2 terrorists killed

Srinagar, July 15: Two terrorists were believed to have been killed in an encounter with security forces in Tral area of South Kashmir's Pulwama district on July 15, police said. A senior police officer said the bodies of the terrorists were yet to be recovered and that the exchange of fire continued. The encounter began after militants opened fire on security forces who were carrying out a search operation in Satoora forest area of Tral, 36 kms from here.

Quake damages buildings on Greek island; 2 killed, 100 hurt

Kos (Greece), July 21: A powerful earthquake struck Greek islands early morning today, damaging buildings and a port, killing at least two people and causing more than 100 injuries, authorities said.

The island of Kos was nearest to the epicentre and appeared to be the worst-hit, with two deaths and structural damage to older buildings. Minor damage — cracks in buildings, smashed windows and trashed shops — appeared widespread, according to city officials.

"The rest of the island has no problem. It's only the main town that has a problem," Kos Mayor Giorgos Kyritsis told state-run Greek media. "The buildings affected were mostly old, and were built before the earthquake building codes were introduced."

Rescuers were checking for trapped people inside houses after the quake struck in the middle of the night. Kyritsis said the army was mobilised along with emergency services. The island's port was among structures that sustained damaged and a ferry en route there was not docking, the coast guard said. Giorgos Halkidiou, Kos regional government official, said the number of injured was more than 100.

"Two or three of them are in serious condition and are in surgery," he said.

He said the injured included people who were underneath a building that collapsed. Ferry services were suspended due to damage at Kos's main port, where a 14th-century fortress also was damaged. A minaret from an old mosque also was damaged.

Greek officials said the quake was 6.5-magnitude. It was centred 10 kilometres south of Bodrum, Turkey, and 16 kilometres east-northeast of Kos with a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the US Geological Survey.

According to Turkish disaster officials, the earthquake had a magnitude of 6.3, and more than 20 aftershocks have been recorded. Esengul Civelek, governor of Mugla province, said there were no casualties according to initial assessments. She said "there were minor injuries due to fear and panic."

In Bitez, a resort town about 6 kilometres west of Bodrum, the quake sent frightened residents running into the streets. Hotel guests briefly returned to their rooms to pick up their belongings but chose to spend the rest of the night outside, with some using sheets and cushions borrowed from nearby lounge chairs to build makeshift beds, according to an AP reporter on the scene.

Greece and Turkey lie in an especially earthquake-prone zone.