

Editorial

Ongoing state Assembly Session reveals the activities of the past govt.

The ongoing 2nd session of the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly which began from July 20 has turned out to be another plus point for the N. Biren Singh led coalition regime. No doubt, many new faces are seen in the ruling bench, some as the first timer but hold important portfolio. On the other hand those in the Opposition benches are heavy weight politicians. Except for some young and dynamic newly elected representatives like Surajkumar Okram and Henry Okram, almost all the legislators in the opposition benches have been elected either 4 times or some even five times. It is a fact that the opposition MLAs who were moving policy cut motions in most of the demand for grants are all one or two times Ministers in the past regime. Leader of the house who keep continuing watching the scene is three times Chief Minister until the new BJP led government under the leadership of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh comes from the government about some 3 months back.

Enthusiasm to correct the wrong in the system which had been not satisfied either by the public and the political leaders has made so busy the newly elected MLAs and the new Ministers that - people sees no holidays for them in doing something for their people. Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was so busy that one wanders how he managed to take rest while completing the incomplete left over works by the previous government in just 100 or more days.

Saying so, it stands true and as nobody is a fool in today highly developed society with each having television sets to listen the day today happening in the state. Those who understand the meaning of state budget surely have reason to criticise the budget estimate presented by the State Finance Minister. The way the budget was tabled showed that there are certain loopholes and miscommunication between the various departments of the state, above all promises and planning announced by the Chief Minister as well as by some of the Ministers are not even reflected to the budget presented. Agriculture the main priority area has been left aside. Perhaps the time limitation is one reason for leaving out the priority area. And Mr. Finance Minister who is also the Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur had already pointed out.

Well, on the part of the opposition MLAs, who has been ruling the state for 3 consecutive term, there is nothing much to say. Senior leader K Ranjit, N. Loken, Kh. Joykishan, AK Mirabai among others who are very vocal in the debate for passing of demands for grants moved by the Finance Minister.

Interestingly, some of the concern areas that these MLAs moved policy cut motion are indeed knowledge for the people of the state. It was only at the time when an Opposition MLA who had run the state until three months back that people in the state knows that money meant for distribution as Pension to aged people have been misappropriated during in the last three terms.

Nepcha Kipgen the new Social Welfare Minister who took charge of the department only after 3 months back might have miss out in understanding where all the pension who are expired but not replaced officially.

On the matter of discussion on Health department it is already known that in just three months the new government is doing everything it can to streamline the department. But why the Congress MLAs put it up only now, when they could have done when they are in power. Nothing much to say but the Opposition MLAs did revealed what the previous government had failed in their hard debate on demand discussion. Or does that mean that they have more faith in Chief Minister N Biren Singh led government.

A matter needs to ponder.

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National and International News

NIA probe unearths how Pakistan-based groups use WhatsApp to fuel terror in Kashmir

New Delhi, July 26: NIA, while analysing social media activity of "habitual" Kashmiri stone-pelters as part of its J&K terror funding probe, found at least 28 WhatsApp groups whose creators, administrators and some members are based in Pakistan and include identified cadres of terror outfit Jamaat-ud-Dawah. Sources in NIA on Tuesday told TOI that the WhatsApp groups together have 5,000 members, of which majority are local Kashmiris but a significant number are linked to Pakistani mobile numbers. Many of these groups have either been created by a Pakistani or have Pakistanis as their administrators. "We have identified Pakistani

numbers in the WhatsApp groups. Some of these numbers also show up in JuD posters and publicity material, confirming JuD link to the J&K youth who regularly pelt stones to disrupt ongoing anti-terror operations, allegedly on payment arranged by Hurriyat separatists," said an investigator. The origin of the funds is believed to be in Pakistan, though NIA says it can establish more specific details after questioning the seven arrested Hurriyat leaders. The messages on the 28 WhatsApp groups tracked by NIA range from religious posts, terror-inciting material to updates on J&K militancy and ongoing anti-terror operations.

There are messages posted during encounters between the terrorists and security forces in J&K, telling the participants how "your brothers have been cornered" and sharing details of the encounter site. "The idea is to mobilise the local youth for stone-pelting at the encounter site so that the terrorists can escape," said an NIA officer. It was on the basis of these 28 WhatsApp groups that the NIA could zero in on phone numbers of 48 Kashmiri youth present at more than three encounter sites that saw stone-pelting protests over the past year. While the call details of the 48 youth showed frequent telephonic contact with local and middle-level

Hurriyat leaders, who in turn were in touch with top-ranking separatists, their Facebook timelines confirmed their involvement and sympathies with terrorist leaders/ outfits and their role in stone pelting. The agency is likely to arrest at least a dozen "habitual" stone-pelters whose location has been mapped across various districts of south Kashmir. Eventually, the probe is expected to reach right up to the top leadership of both hardline and moderate factions of Hurriyat. In fact, sources indicated Tehreek-e-Hurriyat chairman Syed Ali Shah Geelani's son Naem Geelani may soon be summoned for questioning by NIA.

Ghatkopar building collapse: toll 17; Sena worker arrested

Mumbai, July 26: A Shiv Sena worker was today arrested in connection with the building collapse in suburban Ghatkopar which left 17 people dead. According to residents of the Siddhi-Sai Cooperative Housing Society, the pillars of the building got weakened due to renovation work of a nursing home on the ground floor owned by Shiv Sena worker Sunil Shitap, leading to the collapse yesterday. Shitap has been booked under IPC sections 304 (II) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder), 336 (act

endangering life or personal safety of others) and 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others). Shitap, who was detained last night, was arrested after questioning, a senior police official said. The death toll, meanwhile, today rose to 17 after five more bodies were pulled out from the rubble of the four-storey building during overnight search and rescue operations. "Our rescue team along with the fire brigade and NDRF jawans extricated 28 people from the debris, out of which 17 people have been declared dead.

Eleven injured have been admitted in the nearby Shantiniketan and Rajawadi hospitals," an official of the disaster management unit of Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said. Five bodies were pulled out during the night. Two firemen were injured in the rescue operation and shifted to a hospital, the official said. The search and rescue operations are still underway. The city and its suburbs received heavy rains over the last several days, though there has been some respite since yesterday with

downpour giving way to intermittent showers. The BMC has made temporary accommodation arrangements for the affected people in three nearby municipal schools, however, survivors preferred to stay at homes of their relatives. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis visited the collapse site last night and said, "An offence has been registered and police are investigating. I have directed the commissioner of BMC to investigate and submit report within 15 days.

PM Narendra Modi unlikely to attend UNGA session in September

United Nations, July 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi is unlikely to attend the annual UN General Assembly session here in September and External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj will address the high-level session, according to the provisional agenda released by the UN. According to the first provisional list of speakers for the General Debate of the 72nd session of the General Assembly, Swaraj will address the high-level session on

the morning of September 23. She had addressed the General Debate last year as well. The General Debate will open on September 19 and run through September 25. All eyes will be on US President Donald Trump, who will deliver his first address to global leaders from the General Assembly hall's iconic green podium on September 19. The US is traditionally the second speaker on the opening day of the General Debate, after Brazil.

According to the list of speakers, Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is scheduled to address global leaders on September 21. Modi had visited Washington late last month for his first bilateral meeting with Trump. Modi had given his maiden address to the UN General Assembly as Prime Minister in 2014. In 2015, he had attended the high-level UN Sustainable Development Summit ahead of the General Debate, when the world leaders had adopted

the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, an intergovernmental set of aspiration Goals with 169 targets. He had also attended the UN Peacekeeping Summit hosted by President Barack Obama when he had announced that India will contribute an additional battalion of 850 troops for UN peacekeeping operation. The summit was the only forum when Modi and Sharif had come face to face during their visit to the UN General Assembly.

Mount Abu receives highest rainfall in decades, landslide alert issued

Ahmedabad, July 26: Incessant rains since July 21 night have virtually cut off Mount Abu from Gujarat with the hill station plundered by as much as 110 inches rainfall in just four days. This is the highest rainfall received in Mount Abu in the last several decades. Heavy rains sent rocks hurtling down near Aana Hanuman, 6 km from the entry toll booth. But the local authorities are confident of

clearing them in a few hours. While there has been no major casualty in Abu, the Internet broadband connectivity of BSNL and other private telecom operators has been badly hit. Vodafone and Airtel have managed to partially restore the services but BSNL services remained hampered. The supply of essentials including vegetables too has been hit due to flood-like situation in adjoining

places like Pali, Jhalore and other parts of Sirohi district. "Chillies are selling for Rs 80 per kg so are the potatoes," said a local resident. Though the highway from Abu Road to Mount Abu is clear for traffic, vehicles are moving at a snail's pace and have been asked to exercise caution due to possibilities of landslides and rocks falling from height. People have been advised not to take this road after 6pm.

All schools and colleges have been closed as per the order of collector as a precautionary measure. Kashyap Jani, president of Mount Abu Hotels Association said that there are nearly 2,000 tourists. "Many from Gujarat are unable to go back due to flooding in Banaskantha," he said.

GST impact: Small grocers shift away from unorganised trade, sign up with wholesale majors

Courtesy ET By: Sagar Malviya Mumbai, July 26: While last November's demonetisation choked the cash-based unorganised retail trade in the country, the game-changing Goods and Services Tax (GST) is rewiring the retail eco system in other ways. Walmart and Metro Cash and Carry stores have seen mom-and-pop store memberships surge as they shift away from unorganised wholesalers yet to be GST compliant. A greater number of small grocers are rushing in to buy daily essentials from the bigbox format, a trend that companies expect to continue in the long term. "There would be some level of channel reset in which we believe that organised wholesale will become stronger," Sanjiv Mehta, managing director at Hindustan Unilever BSE 0.89 % said in an

investors call last week. "And just speaking to Walmart the other day, the numbers of customers they have enrolled in the last couple of weeks have been much higher than what they have done in the past, which is a very clear indicator that organised wholesale will go up." Nearly 2.6% of traditional trade in all consumer product goods (CPG) moves through organised wholesale and has been growing faster than modern trade, albeit on a lower base. Cash and carry operators sell merchandise to local kirana stores, hotels and catering firms. "There will be a process of education, although we didn't expect memberships and sales to surge so quickly. GST will definitely benefit us in the long term as smaller customers get habituated to buying from organised channel," said Krish Iyer, CEO at Walmart India. India moved towards a unified tax

structure that replaced multiple state and central levies from July 1. While the rollout has largely been smooth, consumer goods makers, retailers and trade channels have experienced some disruptions, especially in June. Most companies and distributors tried to empty their stocks by June 30 because of uncertainty over transition norms and new prices. While both Walmart and Metro saw sales dip in the first week of July, it recovered sharply due to increase in memberships. "Increased customers, especially from smaller businesses, resulted in higher sales but smaller basket size on an average. We have set up GST kiosks at our stores to help traders file returns," said Arvind Mediratta, managing director, Metro Cash and Carry India. "We also expect several unorganised traders shutting shop due to non-compliance."

Two arrested for carrying drugs

Agency Maharajan July 26: Two persons have been arrested after contraband worth Rs 50 lakh was allegedly recovered from their possession along the Indo-Nepal border, police said. A joint team of the local police and SSB nabbed Lila Kumari Thapa, resident of Surkhat district of Nepal with 2.750 gm of charas near the main gate of Sonauli border here yesterday. The woman told police that she was on her way to deliver the contraband worth Rs 33 lakh at the bus station and was to get Rs 5000 for it. During checking, the team arrested Dil Bahadur, resident of Rupandehi district of Nepal at the bus stand with 83 gm heroin worth Rs. 17 lakhs, police said. A case has been registered in both the cases and further action is being initiated, police added.