

# Editorial

Imphal Friday, March 24, 2017

## New Minister's promises on Imphal Jiribam road; just make it happen

Thank God, this time a young and energetic Minister of the New government has promise to fulfill the demand of the people of the state by assuring completion of the Imphal Jiri road stretch. Hope the new minister Mr. Th. Biswajit is not playing for political purpose.

This is being stated as we in the Imphal Times had witnessed how the issue of Imphal Jiribam road has been using as a tool for political gimmick by almost all the politicians.

Well, fifteen years ago, the Imphal-Jiribam stretch of National Highway is a major issue. We still remember Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren, before joining over to politics, organising a mass movement to repair the road with money contributed from the public. At that time Mr. Biren was the Editor of a popular Manipur's Newspaper. It has been nearly 18 years.

As witness so far, each time when there is a prolong economic blockade called along the National Highway, both the government as well as the transporters started talking about this road until the blockade called ended.

Fifteen years down the line now, nothing has change to the condition of the Imphal-Jiribam road, now NH 37. The condition is no better comparing those days.

Mr. Biswajit the PWD Minister is perhaps the one Minister who talk of the 2<sup>nd</sup> life line of the state when there are no issues.

As stated yesterday, BJP's Nongthombam Biren Singh led Manipur government have one good reason to believe that the state will surely deliver justice to each and every citizen of the state. Before elaborating on why it is expected, one needs to appreciate the wisdom of the new chief minister over his understanding to the running of a democratic form of government. His assurance in the house to complete the incomplete structures of various central sponsored scheme is worth praising and we the people of the state believed that this new chief Minister who had converted into action his party's promises to solve the 139 days old economic blockade along the National Highway within a span of 24 hours after swearing in of the MLAs of 11<sup>th</sup> Manipur Legislative Assembly is an example to make people think that there is hope in the coming days.

We in the Imphal Times believe that PWD Minister T. H. Biswajit will surely make the people realize that a good government is coming to change the state.

## Tackle vigilantes with iron hand, CM Yogi Adityanath tells officials

**Lucknow, March 24:** Taking a serious note of cow vigilantes and moral police taking over the government's initiatives of banning illegal slaughter and starting anti-Romeo squads, UP chief minister Adityanath Yogi+ on Thursday issued instructions to senior officials to tackle such elements with an iron hand.

The CM's concern came after reports of mutton shops being torched in Hathras district+ and innumerable instances of moral policing where young boys and girls in friendly conversations were allegedly harassed by anti-Romeo squads of

the police.

Expressing his displeasure over such incidents, Yogi warned the officials of stringent action if such cases were not contained.

Presiding over a meeting of top officials, including chief secretary Rahul Bhatnagar, principal secretary (home) Debashish Panda and DGP Javed Ahmed, Yogi said such incidents should be tackled with an iron hand.

The CM directed the DGP to ensure that the incidents of arson were not repeated in the name of checking illegal slaughter.

## BJP legislator Michael Lobo elected deputy speaker of Goa assembly

**Goa, March 24:** BJP legislator Michael Lobo was today elected the deputy speaker of Goa assembly, defeating Isidore Fernandes of Congress. In the election held in the House, Lobo polled 21 votes, while Fernandes bagged 15. While Speaker Pramod Sawant did not vote, two MLAs - Churchill Alemao (NCP) and Francis Silveira (Congress) - were not present in the assembly at

the time of the election.

The coastal state has a 40-member House and one MLA resigned days after assembly poll results were announced two weeks ago. Chief Minister Manohar Parrikar escorted Lobo to his chair after he was declared elected. Parrikar congratulated the MLA from Calangute on assuming responsibility of an important post.

## MGNREGA - Lifeline to millions

**By : Shambhu Nath Chaudhary**  
Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has come a long way since its inception and has become a lifeline to millions. The Act was notified on 7th September, 2005 to provide minimum of 100 days of guaranteed wage employment in a financial year to every rural household whose adult members volunteer to do unskilled manual work. Social inclusion, gender parity, social security and equitable growth are the founding pillars of Mahatma Gandhi NREGA.

**Achievements**  
During Financial Year (FY) 2015-16, 235 crore Persondays were generated which was the highest compared to the previous five years. During FY 2016-17 so far, 4.8 crore households were provided employment in 142.64 lakh works. In the process 200 crore person-days of employment were generated. Out of the total employment, 56% have been generated for women. This is the highest ever participation of women since inception of the programme. Total expenditure in the programme since its inception is Rs. 3,76,546 crore and Rs.48,000 crore is the allocation of fund for FY 2017-18, which is the highest ever allocation for MGNREGA. The expenditure in FY 2016-17 so far is Rs.51,902 crore and is the highest since inception.

On an average, 25 to 30 lakh works were completed every year (till FY 2013-14). On the contrary, 51.3 lakh works have been completed so far in current FY 2016-17.

For the first time since inception of the programme, Consolidated Guidelines for Water Conservation were drafted. Mission Water Conservation - Planning and monitoring Framework for Natural Resource Management (NRM) related works under MGNREGA in convergence with Pradhan Mantri Krishi Sinchayee Yojana (PMKSY) and Integrated Watershed Management Programme (IWMP) has been prepared for scientific planning and execution of water management works with the use of latest technology is the focus area of the Ministry.

In FY 2016-17 (so far) 63% of total expenditure is on NRM (Natural Resource Management) works. Expenditure on agriculture and allied sector works in FY 2016-17 is nearly 70%, which was only around 48% in FY 2013-14.

**GeoMGNREGA** is a path breaking initiative that uses space technology for geo-tagging all assets created under MGNREGA for improved planning, effective monitoring, enhanced visibility and greater transparency. The initiative was implemented in FY 2016-17, and so far, nearly 65 Lakh assets have been geo-tagged and made available

in the public domain.

### Direct Benefit Transfer

To further streamline the fund flow mechanism and bring down delay in payment of wages, the Ministry of Rural Development has implemented National Electronic Fund Management System (NeFMS) in 21 States and 1 Union Territory. Around 96% of the wages are being paid electronically into the Bank/Post Office accounts of MGNREGA workers through Electronic Fund Management System (eFMS). In FY 2013-14, only 37% of the wages were paid electronically.

8.9 crore active workers have their Aadhaar numbers seeded in NREGASoft-MIS so far, while the number was merely 76 Lakh in January 2014. As of now, 4.25 crore workers have been enabled for Aadhaar Based Payment System (ABPS).

### Good Governance Initiatives

Job card verification and updation was taken up during FY 2016-17, and 75% of active job cards have been updated/verified in campaign mode.

Initiative has been taken to simplify MGNREGA through issuance of Annual Master Circular (AMC) for FY 2016-17 by superseding 1039 circulars/advisories issued earlier. The AMC for FY 2017-18 will be issued. Reduction in number of Registers

being maintained at Gram Panchayat level to 7 simplified Registers from an average of 22 Registers has been implemented. So far, 2.05 lakh Gram Panchayats have already adopted it.

The programme is progressing towards a more independent and empowered system of Social Audit and Internal Audit to ensure growth with accountability through a trained community cadre of social auditors drawn from women SHGs.

### New Initiatives

The Ministry has taken up skill development of the MGNREGA workers through initiatives like Bare Foot Technicians and Project LIFE (Livelihood In Full Employment) in order to move them up the skilling ladder.

The Ministry initiated Inter State Exchange Programmes, a process ensuring sharing of ideas and good practices. So far, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Meghalaya, Jharkhand, Andhra Pradesh and Chhattisgarh have already been visited by various States during FY 2016-17.

For the first time, guidelines for Non-PMGSY Roads were developed based on PMGSY Guidelines for basic layer. The asset will be durable with a possibility of upgradation to PMGSY standards in future.

The Performance Outcome Report of MGNREGA was for the first time published during FY 2015-16, and will be published for FY 2016-17.

## National & International News

### 10 most important income-tax changes which will apply from April 1

**New Delhi, March 24:** With the passage of the Finance Bill on Wednesday, the Lok Sabha has completed the budgetary exercise for 2017-18. The tax proposals in the Budget 2017 have now become law. Below are 10 most important income-tax changes that will affect you next month:

1. With a decrease in tax rate from 10 per cent to 5 per cent for total income between Rs 2.5 lakh and Rs 5 lakh, there is tax saving of up to Rs 12,500 per year and Rs 14,806 (including surcharge and cess) for those with income above Rs 1 crore.
2. Tax rebate is reduced to Rs 2,500 from Rs 5,000 per year for taxpayers with income up to Rs 3.5 lakh (earlier Rs 5 lakh). Due to the combined

effect of change in tax rate and rebate, an individual with taxable income of Rs 3.5 lakh will now pay tax of 2,575 instead of 5,150 earlier.

3. Surcharge at 10 per cent of tax levied on rich taxpayers, with income between Rs 50 lakh and Rs 1 crore. The rate of surcharge for the super rich, with income above Rs 1 crore, will remain 15 per cent.

4. Holding period for immovable property to be considered "long term" reduced to 2 years from 3. This will ensure immovable property held beyond 2 years is taxed at reduced rate of 20 per cent and eligible for various exemptions on reinvestment.

5. Long term capital gains tax will result in a lower payout owing to

beneficial amendments. The base year for indexation of cost (adjustment of inflation) has been shifted to April 1, 2001 from April 1, 1981. This means lower profits on sale.

6. Further, tax exemption will be available on reinvestment of capital gains in notified redeemable bonds (in addition to investment in NHA and REC bonds).

7. A simple one-page tax return form is to be introduced for individuals with taxable income up to Rs 5 lakh (excluding business income). Those filing returns for the first time in this category will generally not be subject to scrutiny.

8. Delay in filing tax return for 2017-18 will attract penalty of Rs 5,000 if

filed by Dec 31, 2018 and Rs 10,000 if filed later. Such fee will be restricted to Rs 1,000 for small taxpayers with income up to Rs 5 lakh.

9. Deduction for first-time investors in listed equity shares or listed units of equity oriented fund under the Rajiv Gandhi Equity Savings Scheme is withdrawn from 2017-18. If an individual has already claimed deduction under this scheme before April 1, 2017, he/she shall be allowed to avail a deduction for the next two years.

10. Time period for revision of tax return cut to one year (from 2 years) from the end of the relevant FY or before completion of assessment, whichever is earlier.

### 2 surprise guests visited Uttar Pradesh chief minister Adityanath this morning

**New Delhi, March 24:** This is a visit that has raised a lot of eyebrows - SP founder Mulayam Singh Yadav's younger son Prateek and the latter's wife Aparna met early this morning with Adityanath, the BJP chief minister of Uttar Pradesh+, who dethroned Mulayam's other son Akhilesh.

The couple met with Adityanath at the 'VVIP Guest House' in

Lucknow, where the Uttar Pradesh CM has been staying since he was sworn in on Sunday.

The SP-Congress combine was definitively routed by the BJP in the recently concluded Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. Aparna was roundly defeated by Congress-turned-BJP candidate Rita Bahuguna Joshi.

With the air thick with such political

rivalry, what explains this bonhomie, people are wondering.

Still, what has been known for a while now is that Aparna and Prateek Yadav are Narendra Modi fans. Last year, a selfie they took with the PM was widely circulated. This was after Modi attended a religious event at the Yadavs' residence.

As well, in January 16, Aparna was

a guest at a Modi event at Babasaheb Bhimkar Ambedkar University. At the time, she said no political inference should be drawn from her presence there, according to a PTI report.

"I have been invited here by the Vice-Chancellor. There is no politics involved in it. The Prime Minister of the country is for everyone," she added.

### London terror attacks: Metropolitan Police's restraint must serve as a lesson for the media

**London, March 24:** It turns out his name was Khalid Masood. Or Adrian Elms, if you'd rather go by his birth name.

Either way, the identity of the perpetrator of Wednesday's abhorrent attacks on pedestrians on Westminster Bridge and a police officer near Parliament Square was out in the open in less than 24 hours after the incident. But, as some have opined, this was apparently not good enough and was tantamount to dishonesty.

The article hyperlinked above continues, and I quote, "Beyond the time required to clear reasonable doubt and investigation compulsions, what purpose is served by going slow in releasing crucial information? The only thing it succeeds in doing is to force media, which must cope with public need for information, by making erratic assumptions of the kind we saw on Wednesday night when Britain's Channel 4 erroneously blamed a hate preacher who is safely lodged inside jail" (emphasis mine). Therein lie two dangerous

assumptions: First, about the role of law enforcement agencies and second, that of the media. But these will be addressed in good time.

### Mum about Masood

The 52-year-old Birmingham resident was, as *The Guardian* noted, identified by the police as "a criminal with a 20-year record of offending, who had once been investigated for extremism but was assessed as posing a low risk". Prime Minister Theresa May was quoted as telling MPs, "He was a peripheral figure. The case (of violent extremism against him) is historic — he was not part of the current intelligence picture."

In the wake of Masood's actions, the Metropolitan Police took the conscious decision of not revealing the identity of the attacker and requested the media to do the same. At the time, Scotland Yard commander BJ Harrington released a statement in which he noted that the attack was being treated as a 'terrorist incident'. He added, "Although we remain open minded to the motive, a full counter-terrorism investigation is already

underway... At this stage I will confirm what we know has happened, but I will not speculate." This did not go down too well in some quarters.

But, there are three reasons — listed below in no particular order of importance — that explain this pragmatic and mature decision: The first is that the need of the hour was to prevent panic and wild speculation among citizens. The second is the need to avoid witch-hunts carried out by vigilantes or lynch mobs. And the third is the need to keep obstructions away from an ongoing investigation.

In order to elaborate on these points, let's revisit the two dangerous assumptions highlighted earlier.

### The role of law enforcement agencies

It was by keeping away obstructions from ongoing investigations that the police was able to conduct raids on six homes in London, Birmingham and Carmarthenshire in Wales, and arrest eight people in connection with Wednesday's attack. That is

the job of law enforcement. It is not, however, the job of law enforcement to be a source of non-stop soundbites to satisfy the needs of bloodthirsty TV news anchors, their assortment of cantankerous talking heads or keyboard warriors itching to rage on Twitter or Facebook. In other words, all those TRPs, clicks, hits, shares, likes and such-like are really not the concern of the law enforcement. In any case, in an unfolding situation, it's always best to err on the side of caution when it comes to disseminating information. And it is here that we must look at the concept of "crucial information" that the police is meant to be putting out in a timely manner. Through its social media channels and releases to the press, the police certainly was putting out crucial information quickly. Aside from Harrington's statement in which he highlighted the areas to avoid, the Metropolitan Police's Twitter handle also put out this timely advisory. Late on Thursday night, the police put out some more information, this time relating to the arrests made until that point.

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