

Editorial

Imphal Friday, May 12, 2017

Breaking the barrier

Technological advancements are an all-pervading phenomena, one which is impossible to miss. And so, our small and relatively remote state has been engulfed with such changes that are hard to ignore. Though physically and geographically hard to access, technology has made its mark on the public. The virtual world has shrunk and information is now just a click or a swipe away. The state Government is also doing its bit to promote and propagate the integration of technology in every department and systems, albeit in a rather frustrating and for-the-sake-of-it manner. Despite such advancements and progress; or attempts at progress, the plight of a section of the public with disabilities and difficult physical deformities remains almost impossible when it comes to accessing these public facilities and services. The Persons with Disabilities (Equal Opportunities, Protection of Rights and Full Participation) Act, 1995 was an Act to give effect to the Proclamation on the Full Participation and Equality of the People with Disabilities in the Asian and Pacific Region. However, almost two decades on, we still have yet to see even the most basic groundwork to implement the recommendations and directions of the laws which is aimed at making all and every public facility accessible to the differently able and physically challenged persons. More surprising is the fact that these recommendations are not something which would put a financial constraint on the Government as it entails very basic changes and alterations or additions to the present infrastructures to make them more accessible. The total absence of such facilities at the public places in the state indicates a total lack of regard and consideration for this section of the society more than anything. Discounting the weak and infirm will only add to the woes of the Government. It should instead focus on making the most of its citizens by empowering them to contribute to the society. The contributions of outstanding persons like Prof. Stephen Hawkins, a multiple paraplegic in the field of science, or that of Marla Runyard, the first legally blind paraolympian to compete in the Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia, or Ludwig Van Beethoven who composed some of the most famous musical compositions after he became completely deaf cannot be ignored. One would surely admire the achievements of Helen Adams Keller, the deaf and blind American author, political activist and lecturer. All these extraordinary people managed to overcome their physical and mental constraints and outshine everyone in their respective fields because of the support, guidance and understanding provided to them. A government which cannot render even the most basic assistance for its disadvantaged citizens, for all its achievements and advancements, cannot claim itself ideal. Understanding the everyday ordeal of these people can shape the holistic development of a state or a country. It is for all of us to try and make the world that little bit easier for the physically less fortunate citizens, and the Government has a very urgent and important task of living up to its own claims of a fair and considerate setup.

OFFICE OF THE STATE HEALTH SOCIETY, MANIPUR
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS
 Imphal, 11th May, 2017

No.465/01/NHM-2017: The sealed tenders are invited from individuals, transporters and private owners of BOLERO and Maruti Van for providing services at SPMU office and other programme under NHM for monitoring and official works. The interested firms, individuals and transporters may submit the tender along with all documents and the financial bid (outsourcing fee per month).
 2. The last date for receiving tender from interested individuals, transporters and private according to the performance and requirements.
 3. The contract period will be for 10(ten) months, which may be extended further according to the performance and requirements.
 4. The State Health Society, Manipur reserves the right to reject any or all tenders without assigning any reason thereof.

Sd/-
 Dr. K. Lokendro Singh
 State Mission Director,
 SHS, Manipur

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Digital India for Inclusive Growth and Sustainable Development

By : Ratnadeep Banerji
 Cashless society is not a new found phenomenon. Decades back, India craved for it with plastic cards. The worldwide trend is to relegate cash transaction and India is not an island. Indian government has been facilitating this trend with a number of schemes and retro-measures. To weed out black money and corruption from public life, Government has been leveraging digital transaction ecosystem. By December 2017 all government agencies would adopt digital way of transacting to ensure inclusive growth. Digital India consists of three core components of creation of digital infrastructure, delivery of services digitally and digital literacy. Digital India is not only transforming India but also helping to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Agenda 2030. Government's priority in 2017 is three pronged. The first priority is to address poverty. The second priority stands over industry, innovation and infrastructure and the third priority is to bring in partnerships. Between Nov 2016 and Feb 2017, there have been 3264 million digital transactions. 20 million people and 718,000 shopkeepers got trained through DigiDhan Melas. By 2020, digital payments will reach 45% of retail transactions and the digital payment ecosystem is estimated at 3.3 trillion Rs or 3.3 hundred thousand crore Rs. The Government of India's mission for digital and financial inclusion is being supported by business organization associations like Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, FICCI and even International Chamber of

Commerce. Financial inclusion is expanding. Digital India is giving thrust to affordable devices, internet access and digital literacy. P.P. Chaudhary, Minister of State, Ministry Law & Justice, Electronics & Information Technology, points out at the last two years showing a three-fold increase in the number of e-transactions and the government is aiming to connect 90 per cent of India with internet services by 2018. The combination of Aadhaar with Jan Dhan and access to finance is proving people-friendly. India's smartphone share of internet traffic is expected to reach 46% by 2018. Since 2014, mobile phone users have increased 1.5 times standing at 1080 million. Even more impressive is the 1.9 times increase of internet users since 2014. And the number of Aadhar Cards has increased 1.8 times since 2014 standing at 1110 million now. The second priority has three thrust areas of enabling fintech innovation, investing in internet infrastructure and at the same time focus on electronic manufacturing of mobile phones, ATMs and PoS. Mobile handset manufacturing has seen a stupendous spurt of 185% since 2014. India's internet penetration stands at 365 with 3-5 million users getting added every month and thus the total number of internet users can be conjectured to reach 730 million by 2020. Under BharatNet, India has already achieved the laying of 1,77,144 kms of fibre connecting 78,220 villages against a target of 2.5 village panchayats, up from 59 villages in 2014 May. A 'Digital First' budget of 10,000 crores has been declared as investment outlay for BharatNet

program to ensure that the backend network is transaction-ready. 150,000 access points is the targeted number of villages to be connected through WiFi Hotspots and access to digital services. Ramesh Abhishek, Secretary, Department of Industrial Policy and Promotion (DIPP), Government of India emphasizes that digital economy is critical for India to make government services and welfare benefits accessible to remote areas of the country seamlessly and to provide last-mile connectivity in far-flung areas and the government has expedited the process of connecting all these 150000 gram panchayats with broadband services. A whopping subsidy of 745 crores, under Modified Incentive Package and Electronics Development Fund has been laid for electronic manufacturing. The third priority is encouraging PPP models for infrastructure expansion, cross-sectoral knowledge sharing and India to provide world-leadership in infrastructure investment and technology transfers. National Digital Literacy Mission (NDLM) also called Digital Saksharta Abhiyan (DISHA) initiated with the vision to make at least one person in every family digitally literate with digital literacy skills by 2020 and provide digital literacy to 6 crore rural households, including Anganwadi and ASHA workers and authorized ration dealers across the country. So far, 8.2 million people have been trained to use digital devices and services and further leverage it to improve livelihoods and access e-governance.

In order to take the benefits of Digital India to every corner of country, a vast network of more than 2.5 lakh Common Services Centers have been created, expanding from 83,000 CSCs in May, 2014. This has allowed digital entrepreneurs among poor, marginalized, dalits and women of India. More than 34,000 women are working in these CSCs that provide digital services like ticket booking, telemedicine, Jan Aushadhi and Aadhaar service to people. Our Minister, P.P. Chaudhary feels, it's important to leverage technology to enhance quality of education and healthcare and content in Indic languages could be a game changer. India is expected to have over 650 million Indians connected to the internet by 2020. There is an urgent need to make the internet content more useful for Indians, many of whom do not speak English. FICCI along with internet stakeholders is setting up the Indian Language Internet Alliance to work with stakeholders across government, publishers and technology companies to build capacities of Indic publishing ecosystem and develop local language content of internet in India. Now, over 82% Indians can access telecommunication services in the country. Also for a smooth transition to Industry 4.0 and smart manufacturing, the government is working on a policy, which addresses issues such as data security, data storage and privacy. DigiGao initiative is on the cards for ushering telemedicine, education and skills. *Author is a senior journalist and a radio documentary maker. (Courtesy PIB Feature)*

National and International News

Nepal signs up to China's new Silk Road plan

AFP
 Kathmandu, May 12: Nepal on Friday signed up to China's new Silk Road drive, a massive infrastructure project spanning some 65 countries at the centre of the Asian giant's push to expand its global influence. The long discussed deal between impoverished Nepal and its much bigger neighbour comes just days before China hosts a summit for 28 leaders near Beijing, showcasing the ambitious plan. The One Belt, One Road Initiative (OBOR) spearheaded by President Xi Jinping would see 60 percent of the global population and around a third of global GDP linked through a network of Chinese-bankrolled ports, railways, roads and

industrial parks. The deal will see China plough money into Nepal for a series of projects including boosting its road network, power grid and a new railway connecting the capital Kathmandu with Lhasa in Tibet. "We believe China will bring more investment to Nepal, helping the country overcome its status as a landlocked and least developed nation," said Nepal Foreign Minister Prakash Saran Mahat at the signing of the deal on Friday. Analysts have expressed concern over the Asian giant's attempt to take a lead in global commerce, cautioning that an integrated world trade system where China's Communist party sets the rules could come with serious risks and

hidden costs. New York-based Fitch Ratings said that political motivations might trump "genuine infrastructure needs and commercial logic", leading to "a heightened risk of projects proving unprofitable". Struggling countries could be saddled with Chinese loans requiring payment regardless of project performance, Fitch Ratings said. In Kathmandu, China's Ambassador to Nepal Yu Hong appeared aware of such criticism and described the plan as a "symphony performed by an orchestra" not China's "solo show" in a short speech at the signing ceremony. "The Initiative is not going to be

China's solo show. A better analogy would be that of a symphony performed by an orchestra composed of all participating countries," Yu said. "The One Belt, One Road Initiative will bring new opportunities for China-Nepal cooperation and South Asia development," she added. The newly inked deal will be closely watched by Nepal's other large neighbour, India, which has traditionally played the role of big brother to the much smaller country. Landlocked Nepal remains dependent on India for the majority of its imports, but the previous administration aggressively courted China as part of a nationalist drive to decrease the country's reliance on New Delhi.

Security Situation in Afghanistan Likely to Worsen Says US Intel Chief

Reuters
 Washington, May 12: The security situation in Afghanistan will further deteriorate even if there is a modest increase in US military support for the war-torn country, the top US intelligence official said on Thursday, as President Donald Trump's administration weighs sending more forces to Afghanistan. Afghan army units are pulling back, and in some cases have been forced to abandon more scattered and rural bases, and the government can claim to control or influence only 57% of the country, according to US military estimates from earlier this year. "The intelligence community assesses that the political and security situation in Afghanistan will almost certainly deteriorate through 2018, even with a modest increase in [the] military assistance by the US and its partners," director of National Intelligence Dan Coats said in a Senate hearing. In February, army General John Nicholson, the US commander in Afghanistan, said he needs several thousand more international troops

to break a stalemate with the Taliban. Reuters reported in late April that Trump's administration was carrying out a review of Afghanistan and conversations are revolving around sending between 3,000 and 5,000 US and coalition troops to Afghanistan. Deliberations include giving more authorities to forces on the ground and taking more aggressive action against Taliban fighters. This could allow US advisers to work with Afghan troops below the corps level, potentially putting them closer to fighting, a US official said. In the same hearing, the head of the military's Defence Intelligence Agency said the situation would worsen unless US trainers worked with Afghan soldiers closer to the front line, their numbers increased and there was greater intelligence and surveillance. Trump has not been formally presented with the options yet. Some US officials said they questioned the benefit of sending more troops to Afghanistan because any politically palatable number would not be enough to turn the tide, much less create stability and security. To date, more than 2,300 Americans have been killed and over 17,000 wounded. President Ashraf Ghani's US-

backed government remains plagued by corruption and divided by factions loyal to political strongmen whose armed supporters often are motivated by ethnic, family, and regional loyalties. Coats said that Afghanistan would struggle to decrease its reliance on the international community "until it contains the insurgency or reaches a peace agreement with the Taliban."

Announcement

Land patta No. (New) 7/740, belongs to Maibam Tomba Singh, Irom Meijrao, PS- Wangoi, District Imphal West is on the process of changing the ownership to his wife Maibam Ongbi Apabi Devi, as her husband Maibam Tomba is no more. This is to inform to all the concerns that anybody who wishes to object the changing of the ownership name can raise their objection within 5 days from the date of publication of this announcement. Sd/- Maibam Ongbi Apabi Devi, Irom Meijrao, PS- Wangoi, District Imphal West

SC to hear plea against making Aadhaar mandatory for schemes

PTI
 New Delhi, May 12: The Supreme Court today agreed to hear on May 17 a plea challenging various notifications of the Centre to make Aadhaar card mandatory for availing benefits of government schemes. A five-judge constitution bench

headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar, which is currently hearing a batch of petitions challenging the practice of triple talaq, agreed to the contention of senior advocate Shyam Divan that the Aadhaar matter is very important and needed to be heard on an urgent basis.