

# Editorial

Imphal Tuesday, May 16, 2017

## Reality bite- something seems fishy

Desperate times calls for desperate measures. It would only be fooling ourselves to think otherwise. Despite the rosy pictures and the recent indication of the Government finally waking up to the realities, we still have a long way to trudge along and uncountable promises to be kept before we can truly call ours a stable and well-governed society- a common knowledge yet to be acknowledged by those who matters. What is still beyond comprehension and logical reasoning are some of the most baffling questions on the minds of all the thinking public- baffling as to why the problems- if one could ever term them as such- are allowed to exist in the first place. Instances like Increasing transparency in governance: the bitter truth can be sampled if one has the patience of a saint- to try and access information of various departments through the numerous obsolete official websites launched with much fanfare and reams being written about, updated every decade with unerring accuracy. Anti-corruption cell - it is just about two months old and has been established by the present government with much enthusiasm to wipe out corruption. Intention of the government led by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh is crystal clear. He really want to begin his work with trust from the public. But is it enough to make people happy just by establishing the Anti Corruption cell. The question is being put up as the people still do not see any action taken report except some minor ones. The newly established Anti Corruption cell still fails to make public about the kind of complaints that it received till today. Besides, inability to commission Lok Ayukta by the government is one reason that will make the public feel - Is this government too fooling us.

People of the state appreciated Chief Minister N. Biren Singh and his team when he commission an enquiry to the installation of CCTV in and around the Imphal city and also about the electronic traffic signal. Despite the instruction to complete the enquiry within a stipulated time, the commission of the enquiry into the matter has been extended for reason best known to the Chief Minister Himself.

Drugs: why haven't any breakthrough been achieved till date regarding the source, the supply route and the people behind such mammoth hauls - a cartel that obviously enjoys the support and collusion of those in the highest echelon of power and influence? Pulling up and shoving a few pawns up our faces to earn few brown points does not impress anyone. Everybody knows of the existence of a virus that is spreading the vicious disease- apparently behind a wall of immunity and protection. Much has been exposed about the wrongs of various works being implemented by the previous government. But one thing need reminding is that just exposing the wrongs and initiating nothing sort of action to those responsible made the people think that - is the functionaries of this new government trying something else by highlighting the wrongs to the general public. These are just some few of the realities experience from the new government.

Bottomline- it's high time to take the velvet gloves off and deal with the issues as they should be. Things can change, and for that to happen, people entrusted with making the changes must start acting their part without further delay- or else they need to be changed.

## Pakistan Airlines crew detained, searched in London over 'security threats'

**Agencies**  
**London, May 16:** Fourteen crew members of a Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) flight were detained at London's Heathrow Airport and later left off the aircraft was thoroughly searched for over two hours post-landing. The Dawn and the Express Tribune newspapers quoted PIA spokesperson Mashhood Tajwar, as saying that Flight PK-785 from Islamabad to London arrived at Heathrow Airport at 2.50 p.m. on

Monday, and after passengers disembarked, the flight crew and aircraft were searched by authorities. It is yet not known why the crew was detained. Tajwar said nothing was found on the plane, adding that the PIA plans to take up the case with the British aviation authorities. Other reports in Pakistani media said the crew was detained over 'alleged security threats via confidential information' and their passports withheld.

# A big turn-around in India's Power Sector

By : Anupama Airy

India's power sector that was marred by continuous shortages and lack of quality and steady supplies to homes and factories has seen an unprecedented turnaround in the past three years.

Today the country boasts of a situation where surplus power to the tune of 3000-4000 mw is available on real time basis at any time of the day to states and distribution companies and at affordable rates on the power exchange.

The ease of getting power at affordable rates comes on the back of focussed reforms unleashed by the Modi government over the past three years in the power sector.

Within three years, India's total power capacity has increased by nearly one third (31% or an addition of 76,577 MW) from 243GW in March 2014 to 320 GW in Mar 2017 and the conventional or coal based power capacity (which is the mainstay of the country's overall power capacity) has increased by 26% (one fourth) from 214 GW in Mar 2014 to 270 GW in Mar 2017. Energy shortages in 2014 were 42,428 million units (4.2%), which came down to 7,459 MU in 2017 (0.7%). Similarly, peak energy shortage in 2014 was 6,103 MW (4.5%) which came down to 2,608 MW (1.6%) in 2017

The power generation growth in the past three years is 6.4% from 2014-2017 (provisional). Generation growth would have increased further but for Energy Efficiency activities like UJALA, which have been the focus of our Government since 2014. In 2014-16, growth was 6.9% & if we add the generation avoided due to energy efficiency activities it was 9.5%. Significantly, India has turned around from a net importer of electricity to net exporter of electricity exporting around 5,798 Million Units to Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar in 2017

As generation alone cannot drive

the sector, appropriate measures have also been initiated in the power transmission sector that too witnessed an impressive growth over the past three years. In line with the government's "One nation, One price and One grid" initiative, the transmission sector witnessed as much as 36% (One third) increase in transmission capacity from 5,30,546 MVA in Mar 14 to 7,22,949 MVA in Mar 17.

Alongside, the transmission lines saw a 26% (One fourth) increase from 2,91,336 circuit kilometres (ckm) in March 14 to 3,66,634 ckm in March 17. Then there has been an 87% increase in Alternate Transfer Capacity to South India from 3,450 MW in March 14 to 6,450 MW in March 17. The growth in the sector was aided by simultaneous reforms on the rural front under the Modi government's flagship program to provide electricity across all villages in the country.

Rural Electrification under Deendaya Upadhyaya Gram Jyoti Yojana (DDUJY) was a program announced in 2014 to connect un-electrified villages and transform the lives of rural people. The number of un-electrified villages in 2014 stood at 18,452. This program, that was given a special focus under the reform programme of the government, achieved a new milestone of more than 13,123 villages of 18,441 electrified as on May 12, 2017.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised the nation from his speech on Red Fort on 15<sup>th</sup> August 2015, that the remaining 18,452 villages (as of 1 April 2015) would be electrified within a 1000 days. So while under the target set by the government electrification of all villages will be completed by May 2018, however, the dynamic minister for power, coal, renewable energy and mines Piyush Goyal has prepped this deadline and wants to do it by December 2017,

that in itself will set a record of sorts.

The talk of reforms in the power will be incomplete in the absence of a mention of the energy efficiency movement through UJALA (Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All).

The energy efficiency drive saw distribution of nearly 23 crore LED bulbs by the Government along with 33 crore by the private companies, a move that resulted in savings of over Rs. 20,000 crore per year in electricity bills of consumers.

Government's lead agency for this program, the Energy Efficiency Services Ltd (EESL) did not restrict this drive to mere distribution of energy efficient bulbs but also fans, air-conditioners, tube lights (for urban areas) along with energy efficient agricultural pumps for the farmers in rural India.

The largest contributor in India's power reforms story is the government's Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana or UDAY scheme for turnaround of state distribution entities, that were considered as the weakest link in the entire chain of power sector reforms.

According UDAY was launched by the government to develop sustainable power distribution companies. Within three years, we have a total of 27 States and UTs who have joined this scheme for financial and operational turnaround.

The scheme has already yielded savings of nearly Rs 12,000 Crores to the state power distribution companies. Already 85% UDAY Bonds have already been issued (Rs. 2.32 lakh cr out of total Rs. 2.72 lakh cr) leading to less rate of interest for DISCOMs.

Transparency has been the major driving factor behind this government's major reform initiatives. In the power sector alone, in order to empower customers track the working and

performance of the ministry and its companies on real time basis, the power ministry has launched various mobile Apps and websites to ensure transparency and accountability.

These includes the GARV (Rural Electrification) App that provides updates related to the electrification of villages and households in India; the Ujala (LED bulbs) App provides real-time updates on the LED distribution; Viduyt Pravah (Power Availability & Price) App giving real-time information on electricity price & availability; URJA (Urban Jyoti Abhiyaan) APP to help enhance consumer connect by showing DISCOM's performance in cities and gives data of the Integrated Power Development Scheme (IPDS), the TARANG (Transmission System Monitoring) App to monitor the progress of Transmission System in India; Ujwal DISCOM Assurance Yojana (UDAY) that gives the progress of the UDAY yojana which assures the permanent resolution of all past, present and future issues of DISCOMs along with the latest kid on the block or the Urja Mitra APP that enables the citizen to access real time and historic outage information for DISCOMs.

India's power sector has indeed taken rapid strides during the past three years and the process or reforms continues unabated. The reforms in the sector today are recognised by all across the globe. From ranking 99<sup>th</sup> at the global level in 2014 in terms of electricity accessibility ranking, India today has come up many notches and is sitting at the 26<sup>th</sup> spot. Nothing better to sum this up in minister Piyush Goyal's own words, "Many problems had set India back for many years but now the mood has changed."

Author is senior freelance journalist and a regular contributor of Articles on Energy Sector. Courtesy PIB Feature

## National and International News

# Monsoon to hit Kerala as per schedule

**TNN**  
**Pune, May 16:** The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday put to rest the hopes for an early onset of monsoon in Kerala as in Andamans.

The IMD officials expect a normal monsoon onset date over Kerala because of an anti-cyclone over the west coast, hindering its further movement. A K Sahai, climate research and services, IMD, Pune, told TOI that an anticyclone in the lower levels over the Arabian Sea was hindering the further advancement of monsoon towards the west coast and Kerala. "Extended range forecasts show

that the anti-cyclone is expected to dissipate by May-end, leading to strengthening of the westerlies. This will translate in to a normal monsoon onset date over Kerala," said Sahai.

Monsoon normally reaches Kerala on June 1. A late or early onset by a day or two is considered normal. The southwest monsoon had advanced into some parts of southeast Bay of Bengal, Nicobar Islands, entire south Andaman Sea and parts of north Andaman Sea on May 14, a day prior to its onset date here. But there was no progress in monsoon on Monday. Scientists believe it is due to the

persisting anticyclone over the Arabian Sea.

On how monsoon is expected to fare this year, Sahai said with models showing weakening of El Nino conditions and strengthening of IOD (Indian Ocean Dipole) conditions during monsoon 2017, hopes for rains close to 100% of the 50-year average are becoming more plausible.

The IMD had earlier forecast this year's monsoon rains at 96% of the long period average.

A K Srivastava, senior scientist and head of climate monitoring and analysis group at IMD, Pune, said the normal monsoon onset date

over Andaman is around May 15, and that over Port Blair is May 20. "This time, monsoon arrived over Andaman a day early as weather conditions over that part changed rapidly, heralding the onset of monsoon," he said.

D S Pai, head, climate prediction, climate research division, IMD, Pune, said there was no relationship between the date of monsoon arrival over Andaman and its arrival in Kerala or the quantum of rainfall.

"There have been seasons in the past when monsoon arrived early over Andaman but reached Kerala on time," he said.

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# CBI raids premises of P Chidambaram and son..

"Contrary to the approval of FIPB conveyed through letter dated May 31, 2007 and condition mentioned therein, INX Media deliberately and in violation of the conditions of the approval made a downstream investment to the extent of 26% in INX News without the specific approval of FIPB which included indirect foreign investment by the same foreign investors and generate more than Rs 305 crores FDI in INX Media against the approval foreign inflow of Rs 4.62 crores by issuing the shares to the foreign investors at a premium of more than Rs 800 per share," says CBI in its FIR. CBI says information further disclosed that upon receipt of a complaint in this regard, the investigation wing of Income Tax department, in February 2008, sought clarifications on the above two issues from the FIPB unit. When FIPB sought clarifications

from INX Media, in order to wriggle out of the situation without any punitive action, entered into a criminal conspiracy with Karti Chidambaram, son of then finance minister P Chidambaram, and Promoter Director of Chess Management Services so as to get the issues resolved amicably by influencing the public servants of the FIPB unit of ministry of finance "by virtue of his relationship with the then finance minister".

Based on the clarifications suggested by Chess Management, INX Media through their letter dated June 26, 2008, tried to justify their action on both the counts as - a) on the un approved and unauthorised downstream investment, it falsely claimed that same was in accordance with the approval and b) on the excess foreign inflow received, it was justified as premium received against the shares

issued, says CBI FIR.

The agency adds that after receiving a letter from INX Media, the officials of FIPB unit, by virtue of influence exercised over them by Karti Chidambaram, "not only ignored the serious illegality on the part of INX Media on both the counts but also deliberately embarked on showing undue favour to INX Group by abusing their official position and advised the company to apply fresh for FIPB approval in respect of the downstream investment which had already been made by INX Media. The officials of FIPB also ignored the "request of department of revenue to investigate the matter". "Such deceitful and fallacious proposal was favourably considered by the officials of ministry of finance and approved by then finance minister," says CBI. The agency further says that for the

services rendered by Karti Chidambaram to INX Group through Chess Management in getting the issues scuttled, consideration in the form of payments were received against invoice raised on INX Media by Advantage Strategic Consulting P Limited (a company owned by Karti).

CBI says that "the very reason for getting the invoice raised in the name of ASCPL was with a view to conceal the identity of Karti Chidambaram in as much as on the date when the invoice was raised or when payment was received, Karti was promoter/Director of Chess Management, whereas ASCPL was being controlled by him indirectly". CBI says that invoices of Rs 3.5 crores were raised by INX in the name of other companies in which Karti Chidambaram was having sustainable interests either directly or indirectly.

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