

Editorial

Imphal Wednesday, May 3, 2017

Unsure assurances

Arguably the most vulnerable point regarding the state which still continues to be exploited and abused by various vested interests to have their way are the two main national highways connecting the state to the rest of the country. These lifelines have seen untold horrors and experienced unimaginable atrocities perpetrated by every wannabe crusaders espousing causes most often conceived without the benefit of logic or reason. Looting, plundering, vandalizing and even killings has been carried out at whim for so long and so frequently that people taking these roads have resigned and braced themselves for such possibilities every single time. And while such unwanted incidents are nothing new, it is unfortunate that whatever little the central and state authorities have done has so far have fallen way short of any reasonable expectations and are evidently carried out not with the intent to ease the real problem but rather as an act of tokenism. While the state and its people continue writhing and reeling under the relentless pressures being imposed by cutting off essential supplies from outside by strangulating the highways, precious little has been done so far by way of concrete steps to curb the menace threatening the very existence of the people of the state. Uncountable assurances were given and promises made, and in trusting the very words of the high and mighty, precious lives were lost. The sad story continues, and while the sordid saga of uncertainty and danger continues for those whose only means of transportation remains through these treacherous roads at the best of times, for those who are accorded security and protection, the whole episode remains an impersonal and distant irritant. The bitter reality was driven home yet again when escorted convoy of tankers carrying various types of fuel for consumption in the state were fired upon, not once, but twice within a span of a month just a few kilometers from the state capital injuring a number of people and causing damage to the vehicles. Needless to say, the resultant protests by the transporters against the state government for its failure to safeguard the vehicles and secure safe passage along the highways forced the fuel pumps to shut shop causing much inconvenience to the public. Talks of establishing a Highway Security Force has been doing the rounds for as long as one would care to remember, and while battalions of security forces are being raised to maintain peace in the state, it is rather unfortunate and a cause for concern that the much needed mechanism to secure the lifelines of the state are being given a miss until now. There also remains the big question of dealing with the perpetrators in a befitting manner. The overwhelming consensus being that the velvet gloves must come off for good. If, however, the alacrity and vigour with which the present Biren-led state government is approaching the challenges facing the state is any indication, there is still reason to hold on to our hopes. The danger, as always, is in the unpredictability on whether the present momentum and intent would last the full term. Only time and Biren can prove that with certainty.

Open letter to MAHUD

Offer of full marks

Aprpos to the Hon'ble Minister of MAHUD, Shri Th. Shyamkumar for his blod declaration that pattas given to Shopkeepers/ vendors over drains in between rows of shops/building with Imphal city would be cancelled if the pattas are found issued in fraudulent manner. I am referring of a big drain just behind the Leima Shopping Complex (Earlier, Mini-Friends Cenima) on the western side and running full parallel to the said Shopping Complex. One mouth of the said drain is touching the entrance approach road on the Northern side between the main Paona Bazar and No. 2 Paona Road (Also known as Fire Brigade Entrance Road), while the other mouth of the drain on the northern remain blocked up wall fencing. Both the mouth of the particular drain are not visibly free and without cover, the drain lay neglected for many years, resulting in huge accumulation of water, waste product and presently utilised as dumping ground. I am drawing the attention of the Hon'ble Minister MAHUD and arrange the needful as announced to be corrected.

Sd/-
Yours faithfully
Th. Gopinohon Singh,
Keishamthong Imphal, Contact No. 9774001541

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India's Green foot Prints hog International lime lights

By: Neeraj Bajpai
PIB Feature

If Anti-corruption drives, including demonetization of high currency notes, are the center piece of the Narendra Modi Government's first three years of governance. A slew of initiatives including India's bold stand in the Paris climate meet, sustained bids to protect flora and fauna and stringent control orders for air and water pollution levels, are among noteworthy foot prints on the environment, forests and climate front.

The government says that it has done massive work during last three years to protect environment while also ensuring that the developmental projects also do not suffer. A right balance has been created between developmental needs of the nation and adequately addressing the environmental concerns.

India participated in COP-22 meeting in Marrakech, Morocco last year. The main thrust of COP 22 was to develop rules for operationalizing the Paris agreement and advance work on Pre-2020 actions.

India, led by its Environment, Forest and Climate Change Minister Anil Madhav Dave, participated constructively and in association with other developing countries, ensured that climate actions are based on the principles of equity and Common but Differentiated Responsibilities (CBDR) and climate justice. The Marrakech Action Proclamation for climate and sustainable development captures the sense of urgency to take action on climate change, while ensuring sustainable development.

Signing ceremony of Framework Agreement on International Solar Alliance also took place at COP-22. COP-22 concluded on November 20, 2016.

India has committed to reduce Green House Gas (GHG) emissions intensity of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by 33 to 35 percent by 2030 from 2005 level. Other quantified goals are (a) to achieve

about 40 percent cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel based energy resources by 2030 with the help of transfer of technology and low cost international finance including from Green Climate Fund (GCF), (b) to create an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tons of CO2 equivalent through additional forest and tree cover by 2030.

The Government has also decided to ratify the Second Commitment Period (2013-2020) of the Kyoto Protocol. Developing countries like India have no mandatory mitigation obligations or targets under the Kyoto Protocol.

India has also batted for establishing an international clean energy data-grid. BRICS nations joined hands to save environment. Second meeting of BRICS Environment Ministers held in Goa on September 16-17, 2016. The areas, agreed for mutual cooperation, are - abatement and control of air and water pollution, efficient manage

Pollution abating measures

In other major moves, The Environment Ministry in consultation with Central Pollution Control Board has reclassified the industries into "Red", "Orange", "Green" and "White" category, as part of policies and objective of government to promote "Ease of Doing Responsible Business. It scrapped environmental clearance for nonpolluting - New White Category - industrial units.

The Government has notified a Graded Response Action Plan for Delhi and NCR, which comprises measures such as prohibition on entry of trucks into Delhi; ban on construction activities, closure of brick kilns, hot mix plants and stone crushers; shutting down of Badarpur power plant, ban on diesel generator sets, garbage burning in landfills and plying of visibly polluting vehicles etc. Major strategies and steps to tackle increasing air pollution include control and mitigation measures related to emissions from automobiles, industrial activities,

notification of National Ambient Air Quality Standards; Formulation of environmental regulations and statutes etc.

These measures include setting up of monitoring network for assessment of ambient air quality; introduction of cleaner or alternate fuels like gaseous fuel (CNG, LPG etc.), ethanol blending; promotion of cleaner production processes; launching of National Air Quality Index; universalization of BS-IV by 2017; leapfrogging from BS-IV to BS-VI fuel standards by 1st April, 2020; comprehensive amendments to various Waste Management Rules and notification of Construction and Demolition Waste Management Rules.

The Ministry launched a web portal for obtaining Coastal Regulation Zone clearances besides starting schemes related to coral reef conservation as well as protection.

WILDLIFE

In order to save flora and fauna, The Central Government provides financial assistance to State/ Union Territory Governments for the Integrated Development of Wildlife Habitats. It also aims at preventing human-animal conflict. It is because of sustained efforts to conserve tiger, India's tiger population has grown to around 2,500, last year while it was 2,226 in 2014.

Based on the proposals from the states, notification have been issued for listing wild pig in Uttarakhand, monkeys in Himachal Pradesh and Nilgai and wild pig in Bihar in Schedule V of the Wild Life (Protection) Act, 1972. The Government also approved a series of measures for conservation and preservation of lakes in Bengaluru. Asia's first 'Gyps Vulture Reintroduction Programme' launched at Pinjore in Haryana. India became the 56th signatory State to sign the 'Raptor MoU' on conservation of birds of prey in Africa and Eurasia. The 'Raptor MoU' extends its coverage to 76 species of birds of prey, out of which 46 species, including vultures, falcons, eagles, owls, hawks, kites, harriers, etc. also occur in India.

The Compensatory Afforestation Fund Bill 2016 passed in Rajya Sabha on July 28, 2016, thus ending the long era of ad-hocism and will help the Centre and State Governments to utilise these amounts in a planned manner. It will facilitate make available more than Rs. 6,000 crores per annum to the States/UTs for conservation, improvement and the same expansion of forest and wildlife resources of the country.

Noose is being further tightened around poachers. Recently, The Wildlife Crime Control Bureau (WCCB), coordinated "OPERATION THUNDER BIRD" in India, from January 30-February 19, 2017. Operation Thunderbird is the code-name for INTERPOL's multi-national and multi-species enforcement operation.

A total of 2,524 Live species of scheduled animals, 19.2 kg of elephant ivory, 1 tiger skin, 9 carcasses of wild animals, 1 organ pipe coral, 1 jar snake venom, 8 leopard skins and 1 Indian Mujtak skin was seized. As many as 71 persons were arrested during the operation.

WCCB also convened a species specific operation on turtles, code named OPERATION SAVE KURMA" from December 15 last year to January 30, this year. A total of 15,739 live turtles were recovered from 45 suspects. The budgetary allocation for wildlife conservation has been enhanced from Rs. 346.38 crore in 2015-16, Rs. 475 crore in 2016-17 and Rs. 522.50 crore for 2017-18.

Other Measures

Many other steps were also taken during the NDA regime so far. Now, Bio-medical Waste Management Rules, 2016 require that the effluent generated or treated from the premises of HCFs should conform to the specified standard before their discharge into the sewer.

The Ministry of Environment & Forests has decentralised the process of granting environment clearance for sustainable sand mining and mining of minor minerals. The Ministry has constituted District Environment Appraisal Committee (DEAC) and District Environment Impact Assessment Authority (DEIAA) for appraisal and approval of mining of minor minerals up to 5 hectares and 25 hectares in case of cluster respectively.

On March 18, 2016, Government notified Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016. On March 23, 2016, the E-Waste Management Rules, 2016 were notified. For the first time, the Rules brought the producers under Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR), along with targets. New Bio-medical Waste Management Rules were notified on March 27, 2016.

A joint action has been initiated with Water Resources Ministry to run sewage treatment plants and with Urban Development Ministry for organised Solid Waste Management. The same formula will be extended to all the other rivers.

*Author is a former editor of the United News of India. Widely travelled journalist, he has covered many national and international events during his 30 years career and was also the member of the Press Council of India.

National and International News

No VIP treatment for PM

Kedarnath, May 3: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is committed to end the VIP culture prevalent across the country, has shown that he practices what he preaches others.

Setting an example that despite being the Prime Minister, he too does not ask for a VIP treatment, Modi on Wednesday stopped a man from helping him remove his shoes at the Kedarnath Temple, where he has gone to perform 'rudraabhishek'.

PM Modi had earlier reached the revered Kedarnath Temple to pay obeisance to Lord Shiva under heavy police protection. Just as he was entering the temple, he sat down to take off his shoes, it was when a man came forward to help him remove his shoes. However, the PM politely refused to take his help.

This comes at a time when the Prime Minister has taken a series of steps aimed at ending the VIP mindset of

our politicians.

He had recently banned the use of red and blue beacons for dignitaries and government officials across the country.

On Sunday, he also made critical comments on the VIP culture during his monthly 'Mann ki Baat'. PM Modi is the first Prime Minister to perform 'rudraabhishek' in the shrine in last 28 years.

Former Prime Minister VP Singh was the last PM to have performed the religious rites.

During his visit to the famous temple, the PM was gifted a miniature replica of the temple. After offering prayers at the temple, Modi came out and interacted with the crowd of about 2,500 devotees present at the opening of the gates of one of the holiest Hindu shrines.

The Kedarnath shrine in this hill state is one of the major components of the annual Char Dham pilgrimage.

India summons Pakistan's Envoy, conveys outrage at killing & mutilation of two of its soldiers

New Delhi, May 3: India today once again conveyed its outrage at the killing and barbaric act of mutilation of the bodies of its two soldiers. Foreign Secretary Dr S. Jaishankar summoned Pakistan High Commissioner and demanded action against Pakistani soldiers and commanders responsible for the act. Dr Jaishankar said, the attack was preceded by covering fire from Pakistani posts in Battal sector in

the vicinity of village Battal. He said samples of the Indian soldiers and the trail of blood on Roza Nala clearly shows that the killers returned across the Line of Control after the committing the heinous crime.

On Monday, Pakistani army and its border action team ambushed a joint patrol party of the Indian Army and the BSF and mutilated bodies of one Sub. Major and a head constable.

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