

Editorial

Life is to be lived, not to merely survive

The present era of information Technology has ushered in such irrevocably radical changes that the world is viewed as a global village, and rightly so.

Unrestrained and instant access to knowledge and information as well as coverage of communication facilities throughout almost every nook and corner of the world has indeed demolished the barriers to communication and information. Yet in such an era, ancient habits and archaic practices tend to subdue the logical and contemporary mindset which can only explain the developments in such a small and geographically challenging state as ours.

The Nagas, in their quest to bring together naga inhabited regions, using various means both fair and foul, are sculpting a new region as per their wisdom, which they claim is essential to fulfill their end without proper understanding of the repercussions and the collateral damages.

Same is the case with the Kukis who are demanding a unified kuki land, and if tomorrow, the other groups like the Manipuri Muslims, Kabuis, etc. were also to start demanding a separate region out of this state, leave alone the Meiteis, what rational could support such a demand or demands? Shouldn't it be better to leave Manipur for the Manipuris the Nagas, the Kukis, the Kabuis, the Muslims, the Meiteis and whichever group is residing in it? Regressive thinking, although might benefit a section or group of individuals, ultimately will hamper even their own development-mentally, spiritually and financially.

A staggering amount of efforts and expenses have been utilized in rising and sustaining such issues as is evident from the scale of operations of these demands. What if these precious resources-financial and manpower-had been used for finding pragmatic solutions and answer to alleviate the way of life for everyone in this state-be it the scarcity of water almost every modern equipments and gadgets are based on, the dismally prepared roads hindering travel and transportation- to be at par with the rest of the world and to prepared roads hindering travel and transportation- to be at par with the rest of the world and to prepare the future generation to compete and strive with fairness and intensity rather than to bide one's time and survive on another's misfortune and circumstances, as did our forefathers during the stone age.

Life is to be lived, not to merely survive, and to strive and grow and progress should be the endeavor of every human. Succumbing to rhetorics about one's filial pride and privileges will only leave one behind in the quagmire one so deviously schemed to trap others in. Is everyone up for it?

Nirmala Sitharaman takes charge as defence minister

PTI New Delhi, Sept. 7: Nirmala Sitharaman today took charge of the defence ministry, becoming the first full-time woman Defence Minister of the country. She took charge in the presence of her predecessor Arun Jaitley who was given the additional charge of the key ministry in March after Manohar Parrikar quit the union cabinet to become the chief minister of Goa. Sitharaman was elevated to the cabinet rank on Sunday and given the defence portfolio. A priest held prayers in the defence minister's chamber before she

assumed charge. Senior officials of the ministry were present and she briefly interacted with them after taking over as the minister. She became the first full-time woman defence minister and the second woman to take charge of the key portfolio. Indira Gandhi, as then Prime Minister, had also held the portfolio in the seventies. As the Defence Minister, Sitharaman will be a member of the crucial Cabinet Committee on Security whose members include the Prime Minister, the Home Minister, the External Affairs Minister and the Finance Minister.

Paradigm shift in Governance

By : Dilip Kumar Bisoi

The Nation has witnessed a paradigm shift in governance in the three years of Narendra Modi Government. Policy statements laced with highly reformative decisions have changed the mood of the nation for development and growth. Prime Minister Modi has pushed through a slew of reforms to bail out the country's economy from a state of policy paralysis.

The NDA government inherited a baggage of low growth rate, high inflation and apathetic governance. With exports moving in south directions, industrial output almost stagnated.

The Prime Minister set the tone for the development and growth by announcing programmes like Make-in-India, Start-up India, Skill Development, MUDRA, PM Jan Dhan Yojana, JAM, DBT and many more. To support these initiatives, he put in place the required policies and reforms. The decision of demonetization and amnesty scheme to flush out black money helped in cleansing the economy to some extent. The creation of NITI Aayog in place of outdated Planning Commission is in line with the new demands and aspirations of a young nation and "New India".

The historic indirect tax reform, the boldest step since Independence, came with the introduction of GST (Goods & Services Tax) in mid-night of June 30 and July 1, 2017. The GST regime put the countrymen under "One Nation One Tax" administration. The reform is aimed at bringing in transparency in taxation with an ultimate goal

of safeguarding the interest of the consumers as well as the business and industries.

The indirect tax reform decision, supported by all the states in the country including Jammu & Kashmir, was hailed by many countries world over. The signals from first month of GST implementation show a promising trend and bright economic future for the nation.

Meanwhile, the Modi government has achieved thunderous success so far as implementation of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) policy is concerned. Particularly, the DBT introduced for cooking gas proved to be the biggest DBT scheme in the world. Nearly 15 crore cooking gas consumers have come under the DBT known as PAHAL which has been acknowledged by Guinness Book of World Records. The DBT has saved over Rs56,000 crore government money from leakage.

The NDA government is now proposing to introduce DBT for fertilizer and kerosene subsidies on pilot basis.

The UPA policy of retrospective taxation and the stagnation in further opening up of sectors, spoiled the environment for Foreign Direct Investments (FDIs) in the country. Soon after coming to power, the NDA government announced that the retrospective taxation case would be considered case by case in a bid to assuage the feelings of the foreign investors. It liberalized the FDI policy and announced a slew of decisions to attract off-shore investments in sectors like insurance, railways, defence, retail marketing.

The union finance minister, Arun Jaitley, in his budget speech, announced that FDI in insurance will be automatically allowed upward the sectoral cap of 49%. He also allowed more than 50% FDI in defense. Not only that most of the railways sector was opened for 100% FDI vide DIPP Press Note 8 (2014), issued on 8/27/2014. Similarly, the DIPP Press Note 12 removed almost all restrictions on FDI in construction.

Removing restriction on foreign investment in single brand retail, the Centre allowed FDI up to 100% via the government approval route, but requires that 30% of goods sold in the first 5 years be manufactured in India. This period is tolled 3 years for "cutting edge" technology. The Government also allowed more than 50% foreign investment in direct retail e-commerce with a rider that FDI is not allowed in business-to-consumer e-commerce, unless items are all being sold under a single brand and meet local-content requirements.

The NDA government has put the fuel pricing reforms on fast track. Following the deregulation of petrol prices, the diesel prices were deregulated from October 18, 2014. So also the natural gas pricing.

Realizing that the mining sector plays a key role in propelling growth, the Modi government put in place laws and policies for development of the sector. The MMDR Act was amended to bring in transparency in leasing out non-coal major minerals. It also opened the coal mining

sector to private and foreign investments by a legislation Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 on March 20, 2015. The transparent e-auction in mining sector has fetched government a huge revenue also.

Similarly, changes were brought in the policies to conduct the telecom spectrums in a transparent way. India has now conducted multiple free and fair telecom auctions with no complaints from stake-holders.

As part of ease of doing business, the government extended the expiration date of industrial licenses. DIPP issued an order on December 20, 2014, increasing the maximum validity of an industrial license from two years to seven years. Removing sectoral investment limit, the government on April 10, 2015 removed the last 20 products from the reserved list. The government has also recently enacted bankruptcy laws to make it easy for the companies to go for liquidations.

Modi government has several reform initiatives in its agenda. Now further reforms in subsidies expenditures is the top priority of the government. Reform is a long term and continuous process. The real dividend of the reform processes that have already initiated is expected to come in the next two years.

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National & International News

CBI summons Lalu, son Tejashwi in hotels-for-land scam

PTI New Delhi, Sept. 7: The CBI has summoned former Railway Minister Lalu Prasad Yadav and his son Tejashwi for questioning in connection with alleged corruption in awarding the maintenance contract for two IRCTC hotels to a private firm, agency officials said. The RJD leader has been asked to appear for questioning at the agency headquarter on September

11 and Tejashwi the next day, they said. It is alleged that Yadav as railway minister had handed over the maintenance of two Railways hotels— BNR Ranchi and BNR Puri—to Sujata Hotel, a company owned by Vinay and Vijay Kochhar, after receiving a bribe in the form of three acres of prime plot of land through a benami company. The FIR alleged that Yadav, as a

railway minister, abused his official position for extending undue favours to Kochhars and acquired the "high-value premium land" through a benami company Delight. It alleged that Yadav, "dishonestly and fraudulently", managed the award of leasing out BNRs at Ranchi and Puri to the company of Kochhars in quid pro quo transactions. The CBI has registered the case

against Lalu Yadav, wife Rabri Devi, son Tejashwi, and Sarla Gupta, the wife of former union minister Prem Chand Gupta. Others named as accused in the FIR include Vijay Kochhar, Vinay Kochhar, both directors of Sujata Hotel; Delight marketing company, now known as Lara Projects and the then Managing Director P K Goel.

In a first, Pakistan admits terror groups Jaish-e-Mohammed, Lashkar-e-Taiba operate from its soil

India TV News Desk New Delhi, Sept. 7: In a rare development that goes contrary to Pakistan's perennial stand of denial when it comes to terror groups using the Islamist country's soil to target other countries, Pakistan's newly-appointed Foreign Minister Khawaja Asif on Tuesday said in an interview that the country needs to restrict the activities of these terror groups so that it can tell the world community that it has put its "house in order".

"We should impose restrictions on activities of elements like LeT and JeM so that we can show the global community that we've put our house in order," Asif told Geo News. The remark, made in an interview, come as a first sign of admission

from Pakistan that the two groups— JeM and LeT—do operate from its soil. The remark came following the BRICS declaration in Xiamen, China, that named these two terror groups as being responsible for causing violence in the region.

The minister further said that Pakistan could no longer afford to "test" friends such as China. "Friends should not be tested, particularly in the changed scenario. Instead, we should impose some restrictions on the activities of elements like LeT and JeM, so that we can show the global community that we have put our house in order," Khawaja Asif told Geo News while reacting to the BRICS declaration that raised "regional security concern" over the militant

groups operating in Pakistan. The remarks by the Foreign minister come in stark contrast to what its own Foreign Office had said soon reacting to the BRICS declaration was out. The FO in Islamabad, as well as defence minister Khurram Dastagir, had rejected the BRICS declaration, saying there were no safe havens for terrorists inside Pakistan. Pakistan, it said, was itself a victim of terror.

However, the Foreign minister was point-blank in his approach. "As long as we turn a blind eye to these organisations in our country we will continue to face such our embarrassments," Asif said. "I am not making a political statement but telling you a fact: we

will continue to face such our embarrassment till the time we keep our eyes off these organisations in our country," he said.

He reiterated that Pakistan must put its affairs in order as the "entire world is pointing fingers towards us."

"We need to make a clean break from our past; in 1979, we made a wrong decision and acted like a proxy for the entire next decade. After 9/11, we again made a wrong decision and adopted a war which was never ours. We have bore uncountable losses of lives and properties in this war," he added.

Asif will pay an official visit to China on Friday, where he will hold talks with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

Indian Army will breach LoC and strike whenever needed: Lt Gen D Ambu

Jammu, Sept. 7: Lt. General D Ambu, who heads the Northern Command, on Thursday said that the Indian Army will breach the Line of Control (LoC) and strike against enemies whenever the need arises in future.

When we want to we will be able to breach it (LoC), go across and strike when we need, Lt. Gen D Ambu was quoted as saying by ANI. Reacting to the last year's surgical strikes by the Indian Army, he said, "It was a point we wanted to drive

home across that LoC is not a line that cannot be breached."

Through Army's unprecedented action, we sent a subtle message that we wanted to convey, he added. Justifying the surgical strikes by the Indian Army, Lt. Gen D Ambu said, "A large number of terrorist camps and launch pads exist across south and north of Pir Panjal, they have not decreased, so this kind of action is needed." Ambu made these remarks in Udhampur.

Praising the efforts of the armed forces in checking incidents of cross-border infiltration, Lt. General Ambu said, "While a lot of attempts are made by terrorists (to infiltrate) every year, but most are not successful, there has been a sharp decline."

Our brave soldiers have been foiling their (terrorists) attempts to infiltrate into Kashmir Valley and elsewhere in the Jammu region, Ambu said. Lt Gen Devraj Anbu was appointed

as new chief of strategically important Northern Command in place of Lt. Gen. DS Hooda, who retired on November 30, last year. Anbu took charge of the Command on December 1.

In September last year, the Indian Army carried out surgical strikes across the Line of Control dismantling at least seven camps in PoK. A team of army commandos carried out the operation after getting a go ahead from the Narendra Modi-led BJP government.

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