

Editorial

Friday, April 13, 2018

Banning the Bandh

After what should be described as an illusory lull for a brief period, the spectre of chaos and mayhem looms large again over the state as threats of Blockades and Bandhs once again becomes all too real. In line with its promise to make Manipur a Bandh and Blockade-free state, the incumbent state government have until recently managed to rein in all forms of disturbances, shutdowns, strikes etc that have been holding back the state from marching towards the stated objectives and goals of progress. It may be recalled that the Manipur High Court declared on March 3, 2017 that the over four-month-old economic blockade of the state is 'illegal' and ruled that the persons and organizations imposing the economic blockade are violating the Fundamental Rights of the citizens. The ruling was made after a petition was filed on the economic blockade called by the United Naga Council (UNC) in the state starting from 1 November 2016 on both the National Highways (NH) 37 and NH 2 which resulted in untold hardships to the public. The state government, in its effort to enforce the direction of the Supreme Court in matters of bandhs and blockades, issued an order declaring such bandhs and blockades which will cause inconvenience to the public as unconstitutional on the 10th of this month. The order further stated that shops and commercial passenger vehicles which do not operate on days when bandhs and blockades are called shall be liable for legal action.

However wishful one might get, it would be impossible to do away with these forms of protests completely as they still remain a very effective form of drawing attention and elicit response from the government. It is also not desirable for the authorities to put a blanket ban on these forms of protests as such an act would tend to drown out the voice of reason and stifle the concerns of the public. The most pragmatic solution which can dissuade any individual, group or organisation from resorting to bandhs, blockades etc. is to follow a practice of transparent and fair yet strict protocol of initiating talks and discussions on issues raised and laying down its course of action in no uncertain terms. Resorting to force is an option the state authorities should not hesitate to consider if the demands does not merit discussion or negotiation.

If the state government is keen on maintaining its image of a strict and decisive authority capable of not only maintaining but also improving the law and order situation in the state, it need to win over the trust and cooperation of the people rather than to rely on armed security personnel to coerce the public to fall in line with the prevailing laws of the land. People's day and hill leaders day are radical steps which is making a world of difference in the way the public perceive the state government. Lending a patient and sympathetic ear to the grievances and concerns of the public is laudable, but the real test of commitment and political willpower is in the implementation of its assurances and promises and not in their declarations.

National & International News

Four people, including two kids, die as fire breaks out at building in Delhi's Pitampura

Agency
New Delhi, April 13

Four people of a family died after a fire broke out inside their house in north-west Delhi's Pitampura area on Thursday night. Police have identified the deceased as Rakesh Nagpal (40), his wife Tina Nagpal (37) and their seven-year-old son Himanshu and three-year-old daughter Shreya. However, the Delhi Fire Service managed to rescue three other people, including an elderly woman, who are undergoing treatment at Ambedkar Hospital.

Police said prima facie the fire might have been a result of a short circuit, even though a report on the matter was awaited and investigations were at a preliminary stage. The fire broke out at House 484, Kohat Enclave, a three-storey building, which houses four families. When the blaze was reported at 2:48 am, more than 25 people were there inside the building. "We got information about the fire at 2:48 am. After

ascertaining the volume and severity of the blaze, seven fire tenders were sent to the spot along with three other support vehicles, including a water bowser," Chief Fire officer Atul Garg said.

Explaining the modus operandi of the operation, a DFS officer said while some managed to escape, the trapped people were taken out from the back exit of the building. "Some of the people had managed to escape, while those trapped were rescued by the firemen. The rescued people were taken out of the back exit of the building," said a DFS officer. The casualties could have been higher but for the alertness of the security guard, who immediately raised an alarm after he witnessed sparks from an electric meter at the ground floor. However, it is unclear why Nagpal and his family members, staying at the first floor, did not rush outside. Their bodies were found near the staircase of the building and it is suspected that they suffocated to death, police said.

Punjab minister Navjot Singh Sidhu says Telangana mining policy will be emulated in Punjab

Agency
Hyderabad, April 13

Taking Telangana as an example, the Punjab government will come up with a sand mining policy that will ensure more money into the coffers of the government. Punjab's local bodies, culture and tourism minister Navjot Singh Sidhu, who was in Hyderabad on Friday, said from doing a study of the mining policy in many states, he found that what was adopted in Telangana was the best. Sidhu was appointed chairman of a sub-committee on mining in

Punjab and it was this assignment that brought him to Telangana.

"As such, the problem is not about the sand mafia. It is the transport mafia that make sand smuggling possible," Sidhu said adding that the Telangana government had taken measures to tackle this problem mainly through use of technology. "Tabs are kept on vehicles carrying sand and their movements are monitored. This is the best thing that we can implement in Punjab," he said. Sidhu also said price fixation was another thing that could be emulated as the online selling had made it transparent. He also said the concept of having godowns from where the sand could be transported was a perfect plan being implemented in Telangana. "I am not trying to indulge in flattery. The best practices in Telangana when adopted in Punjab will plug revenue losses and fill the government coffers," he said. He said he would suggest a mining corporation to be formed in Punjab, like the Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation. "From just Rs 10 cr in 2014, Telangana increased its revenue to Rs 1,300 cr last year. This year it may be Rs 1,500 cr. It has got Rs 43 cr in just 11 days. This is impressive," he said. "If Telangana, with just one and a half river can get such huge revenues, Punjab which has more should be able to get more," he said.

Scribe's blood samples collected for lipid profile tests

By NJ Thakuria
Guwahati, April 13,

Assam's well-known healthcare institution Dispur Hospital collected blood samples of 20 journalist-members belonged to Guwahati Press Club yesterday for lipid profile tests. The free blood test series was launched on Monday at the press club premises and it culminates today with collection of another 20 samples (from 11 am to 12.30 pm). It may be mentioned that the lipid profile (lipid panel) test includes various types of blood screenings to measure the level of cholesterol and triglycerides. The tests can identify certain genetic diseases and determine approximate risks for cardiovascular disease, certain forms of pancreatitis, and other related diseases.

The first three days witnessed the participation of over 60 journalists. All the reports will be available accordingly in the office of the press club. Meanwhile, Dispur Hospital's managing director Dr Jayanta Bardoloi agreed to assign an experienced physician for consultations with the participating journalists after the Bohag (Rongali) Bihu celebrations.

More State News

Vice-Chancellor conducted routine inspection at Manipur University

IT News
Canchipur, April 13,

Professor Adya Prasad Pandey, Vice-Chancellor of Manipur University conducted routine inspection yesterday at many Departments and Centres of the varsity to check if classes are conducted regularly and progress on other research & project works of the concerned departments to improve the academic atmosphere of the university.

In his visit, he interacted with the faculty members, non-teaching staff, research scholars, and students of different departments, Viz., Biotechnology, Political Science, Economics, Centre for Study of Social Exclusion & Inclusive Policy, and Manipur Study Centre. Vice-Chancellor had discussions with them on problems, if any, and future academic plans for the growth of the departments. Certain proposals raised by some of the departments were noted by the Vice-Chancellor for further discussions and implementation. Some of the proposals were new toilets for the Political Science, History, Economics Dept. and Centre for Study of Social Exclusion



& Inclusive Policy. Political Science Department also made a proposal for an exclusive library for the department.

Professor Pandey wanted to know if any research activities and other developmental works for students are taken by the Centre for Study of Social Exclusion & Inclusive Policy. He also urged to all the Head of Departments to conduct more research works and other academic activities on regular basis to enhance the quality of education and for the greater benefits of the students and research scholars of the University. Vice-Chancellor also assured that all possible assistance and support required for the welfare of the students will be extended. He further remarked that his only vision, as the head of the institute, is the inclusive development of the university.

Assam Rifles distributes solar lamps, conducts vaccine immunization campaign



PRO(IGARS)
Imphal, April 13,

Truly living up to the spirit of being "Friends of the North East People" the 4 Assam Rifles of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) distributed solar lamps to each of the houses in the Gelbung and Moulphei villages, Chandel district. This gesture is a part of the contribution of the battalion in bringing succour to the locals and also helping in upliftment of their living standards. Two officers along with their team interacted with the villagers and it was much appreciated by one and all. These deeds will surely have a long lasting and positive impact of Assam Rifles in the hearts and minds of the locals and will also help

strengthen our bonds. On the other hand 39 Assam Rifles of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) also conducted vaccine immunization for children of Kakching garrison and students of Assam Rifles Public School (High School) Kakching on 11 Apr 2018. As a part of Measles Rubella Campaign in Manipur state, 39 Assam Rifles in conjunction with State Task Force on Immunization (STFI) conducted this vaccination programme at Kakching garrison. More than 450 children (09 months to 15 years of age) were given vaccination which included students of Assam Rifle Public School and children of Kakching garrison. The philanthropic gesture was highly appreciated by the local populace.

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