

Govt. ready to uphold people desire: CM

DIPR
Imphal, Aug 16,

As in other parts of the country, the State also celebrated the 72nd Independence Day yesterday. The State level celebration was held at the 1st Battalion Manipur Rifles ground with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh as the chief guest. The Chief Minister hoisted the National flag amid playing of National anthem. Addressing the gathering, N. Biren Singh urged the people of the State both hill and valley to join hand in protecting the oneness and integrity of the State and the country. He said that the State Government is ready to uphold the people's will and desire regarding keeping the oneness and integrity of the State intact. The State Assembly is still kept unprorogued by the Government so that a special session can be convened at any moment towards this end, he said. The Chief Minister said that the Manipur Legislative Assembly had renewed its stand to protect the integrity of the State by taking another unanimous decision in July this year. He expressed hope that the Centre would certainly consult the States before taking any decision regarding fulfilment of demands of the Nagas.

Regarding the present unrest at Manipur University, the Chief Minister informed that a high ranking official of the Union Ministry of Human Resources Development is currently camping in Imphal to address the situation. N. Biren Singh informed that the official had a marathon meeting with the representatives of MUSU, MUTA and MUSA at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in his presence and Cabinet Ministers yesterday.



Stating that the two sides were so close to reach an understanding, he expressed hope that an amicable solution would be brought within a few days. During his speech, he also mentioned about State and Central Government's remarkable achievements and pro-poor schemes. He said that the NDA Government at the Centre had made outstanding progress in diplomatic relations with different countries apart from

bringing many developmental and economic changes. Passing of OBC Bill 2017 and National Sports University Bill, 2018 could be mentioned among the latest positive developments made possible by the Central Government, he added. Likewise, the State Government has been putting in effort to maintain corruption-free and transparent administration in the State. With the setting up of an Anti-Corruption Cell, 310 corruption related cases had been taken up so far, he said. The Chief Minister added that 33 officials had been put under suspension while one official had been terminated from service and appointment orders for 11 persons had been cancelled. He also said that 10 officials had been given warning for indulging in corrupt practices.

In order to ensure transparency, the Physical Efficiency Test (PET) for recruitment in the Manipur Fire Service was done with full video recording, he said while adding that the same procedure would be followed in the recruitment of IRB personnel as well. Stating that condition of NH-37 (Imphal-Jiribam road) has now improved considerably, the Chief Minister said that Makru and Barak bridges are likely to complete by March next year. Maintaining that another remarkable achievement of the State Government was mass drives against drugs and intoxicants, the Chief Minister said that huge quantity of drugs and intoxicants could be seized within a short span of time. Earlier, the Chief Minister reviewed and took salute from 50 different march-past contingents of BSF, CRPF, civil police, India Reserve Battalion, Manipur Fire Service, Home Guards, Traffic

Police, VDF and Excise Department personnel, Forest Guards, NCC Cadets, Anganwadi and ASHA workers, college and school students, Commandant of 5th India Reserve Battalion, Shri Sh. Jugeshore Sharma, MPS was the parade commander. This year's special attraction of the march past was participation by a contingent each from 15th Mahila IRB, Nagaland and 9th Battalion State Armed Force, Madhya Pradesh. Eight main platoons of different security forces, Home Guards, Manipur Fire Service and Sainik School also took part in the march past. Later, the Chief Minister also decorated three police officers with President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service and presented Police Medal for Meritorious Service to 13 officers and personnel. Recipients of the President's Police Medal for Distinguished Service are Shri Anand Prakash, IPS (Additional DGP-AP), Shri Shyamchoron Singh Asem (Inspector), Shri RK Tejbir Singh (Inspector) while the recipients of Police Medal for Meritorious Service are Shri IK Muivah IPS (IGP-Adm), Shri Th. Bijananda Singh (Dy. CO), Shri A. Basanta Sharma (Dy. CO), Songlianthang Vaiphei (Inspector), Pamreingam Longpinao (Inspector), Shri Nongthombam Ingocha (Inspector), Chabungbam Subol Singh (Inspector), Shri Y. Roshankumar Singh (H/C), Shri Md. Anwar Shah (Havildar), Shri S. Sanatomba Singh (Havildar), Shri T. Abhiram Singh (Rifleman), Shri Md. Kayamuddin (Rifleman) and Shri L. Miralokum Singh (Rifleman). Medal for Excellence in Police Training 2015-16 was conferred to Smt. Priyadarshini Laishram (CO 7MR) and Md. Riyajuddin (Subedar). The Chief Minister's Trophy for Community Service was presented to Dr. S. Ibomcha Singh (SP, Tengnoupal) and Shri B. Rishikesh Sharma (Inspector NAB) while the Chief Minister's Trophy for Anti-Drug Campaign was handed over to Shri W. Basu Singh, MPS (SP-NAB), Shri Philem Bangmei Singh (Sub-Inspector, Senapati district) and Shri Ganagei Gajjion (Constable - NAB).

The Chief Minister also handed over the State Level Swachhata Award, 2018 at the occasion. Kakching, Imphal West and Thoubal District received first, second and third prizes for the cleanest district headquarters respectively. Prizes for the Swachh Survekshan 2018 for the cleanest towns of Manipur in North East region (population less than one lakh) were also distributed. Kakching, Kumbi and Mayang Imphal towns received first, second and third prizes respectively. Special Open Defecation Free (ODF) award was conferred to the Member Secretary MUDA. Special prizes were also presented to Shri Prasanta Oinam, District Manager, DeGs Bishnupur and Laishram Ranjeet Singh of Karimganj, Assam. Ministers, MLAs, top officers, police and military officials, Government employees and general public also took part in the celebration.

Soldiers' unprecedented petition to strengthen AFSPA sparks fears about politicisation of the Army

Courtesy- Scroll.in
By - Shoaib Daniyal

Over 350 serving Indian Army officers petitioned the Supreme Court on Tuesday, asking that the actions of soldiers in areas where the Armed Forces Special Powers Act is in force be exempted from legal scrutiny. The plea is being seen in the backdrop of a 2016 Supreme Court ruling that Army men did not enjoy absolute immunity from criminal prosecution even in places under AFSPA and directing an investigation into alleged extrajudicial killings in Manipur. It is unprecedented for soldiers to move the court, that too in such large numbers, over a matter that, if so required, should be dealt with by the Army as an institution. The move has raised concerns about human rights and questions about the politicisation of the armed forces.

Enacted by Jawaharlal Nehru's government in 1958 to facilitate counterinsurgency operations in the North East, AFSPA gives the military vast powers in areas declared "disturbed". The law currently applies in Nagaland, Manipur, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Jammu and Kashmir. It was withdrawn from Manipur on April 1.

No legal action

The Army officers' petition calls upon the Supreme Court to issue "specific guidelines to protect the bonafide action of soldiers under AFSPA, so that no soldier is harassed by initiation of criminal proceedings for actions done in good faith in exercise of their duties". Calling AFSPA "sacrosanct", the plea asks that "no prosecution, suit or

other legal proceeding shall be instituted, except with the previous sanction of the Central Government, against any person in respect of anything done or purported to be done in exercise of the powers conferred by AFSPA".

It also demands an investigation into individuals and organisation that have made complaints against human rights violations.

Extrajudicial killings

The court's 2016 ruling that AFSPA does not provide absolute immunity from trial by a criminal court came in response to a Public Interest Litigation filed by the families of the victims of alleged extrajudicial killings in Manipur. "If members of our armed forces are deployed and employed to kill citizens of our country on the mere allegation or suspicion that they are the 'enemy' not only the rule of law, but our democracy would be in grave danger," the court said. The court also ruled that the Army can only be deployed as "aid to civil authorities", not for an "indeterminate period".

The Army was unhappy with the judgement, as *Scroll.in* reported at the time. In 2017, the Supreme Court directed the Central Bureau of Investigation to inquire into cases of alleged extrajudicial killings in Manipur. On August 2, the CBI booked Major Vijay Singh Balhara for allegedly killing in cold blood a 12-year-old boy in Imphal West in 2009. It was the first time an Army officer had been charged in such a case. Colin Gonsalves, counsel for the families whose petition led to the 2016 judgement, contended that the Army officers' petition is a direct result of the CBI's

chargesheet. "This petition has nothing to do with nationalism or patriotism, as it is being made out to be," Gonsalves said. "About 99.9% of Army men are fearless and faithful. There are only some rogue elements. How can you say that even if a person in uniform has killed a person in cold blood, they stand above the law and cannot be prosecuted?"

Babloo Loitongbam, executive director of the Human Rights Alert in Manipur, is of the view that the Army officers' petition weakens the rule of law. "In cases of combat, we recognise killings will happen," Loitongbam said. "But how can you protect people accused of extrajudicial killings? The CBI has examined the case and come out with a chargesheet. If despite this evidence, you are saying there can be no action then you are throwing out the rule of law and the Constitution."

Politicisation of Army?

The petition has also sparked concerns about the politicisation of the military, given that collective action of this kind by Army officers is unprecedented. On Tuesday, the *Hindu* reported that "there seems to be tacit support of the Army" for the plea.

A former chief of the Army's Northern Command suggested as much. "How did these officers come together?" asked the former commander who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "And if the case is so serious, why didn't the Ministry of Defence take action? Why didn't Parliament take action? This will open the floodgates. What will happen if another set of officers filed petitions against the top brass of the Army?"

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Ease of Living Index to Empower Citizens

2. Quantum of Data Available with Cities

Every city was invited to participate in a data collation exercise through an online data entry portal. Multiple departments participated to provide data on over 500 questions, cutting across 78 indicators. Cities that had strong systems for data generation and reporting and/or a history of planning that was evidence based (City Sanitation Plan, Mobility Plans etc.) were observed to perform better as they are simply better equipped to provide data. Cities that have inadequate systems of record keeping were observed to be at a disadvantage.

3. Quality of Data Provided

To encourage cities to provide sound data, an incentive in the form of higher weightages has been deployed for indicators that are backed by supporting documents. Cities that could support the data provided with strong secondary documents (ex: SLIPs, DPRs, City Mobility Plans etc.) were

given due weight-age in their score.

4. Relative benchmarks

To ensure that the assessment offers a level playing field to all cities, relative benchmarks are assigned for 22 of the 78 indicators in which cities are evaluated against their comparable peers, defined by the population. Cities were classified into 4 categories namely- Group 1 - Below 0.5 Million, Group 2 - 0.5 to 1 million, Group 3- 1 to 4 Million, Group 4 - Above 4 million. For example, Karimnagar (a city that is in the 'below 0.5 million' category) is observed to be performing better than Hyderabad as its benchmarks on several such indicators are fundamentally different. For example, the benchmark value (best performing city's data) for Karimnagar on surveillance density is 1.76 (number of CCTV cameras per km of road length) while for a city like Hyderabad, the benchmark is 192.

Pilot Launch of Ayushman Bharat

DIPR
Imphal, Aug 15,

A simple ceremony to mark the pilot launch of Ayushman Bharat-National Health Protection Mission (AB-NHPM) was held at the Chief Minister's Secretariat with Chief Minister N. Biren Singh as the chief guest yesterday. However, the mission will be officially launched across the country on September 25 this year, on the birth anniversary of Pandit Deendayal Upadhyay.

Four hospitals of the State viz. RIMS Hospital, JNIMS Hospital, SKY Hospital and Jeevan Hospital, Kakching signed agreement of empanelment with the State Government for the scheme at the ceremony.

Speaking at the occasion, the Chief Minister lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi for conceptualising such a noble scheme having humane touch. He expressed hope that the expenditure incurred by State Government's Chief Minister-gi Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT) would come down up to a large extent with the introduction of Ayushman Bharat.

Observing that no scheme would serve its intended purpose unless it is executed effectively, the Chief Minister asked the authority concerned to put in best possible effort to implement the scheme in a transparent and proper manner. He also advised the officials to encourage more hospitals to get empanelled for the new scheme.

The ambitious Ayushman Bharat scheme aims to cover over 10 crore vulnerable families (approximately 50 crore beneficiaries) of the country and provide health cover up to Rs 5 lakh per family per year. The expenditure incurred in premium payment of the scheme will be shared between the Central and State Governments at the rate of 90:10 for North East States. All members of eligible families as present in SECC 2011 database are automatically covered. Beneficiary can go to any empanelled public/private hospitals across the country and get free treatment for up to Rs 5 lakh. Beneficiaries need to carry any prescribed ID like Aadhaar card to receive treatment.



Health and Family Welfare Minister L. Jayantakumar, MLAs L. Radhakishore, Dr. Sapam Ranjan, Th. Satyabrata, H. Dingo, Radheshyam Yunnam, Paonam Brojen, S. Bira, Y. Surchandra, Chief Secretary Dr. J. Suresh Babu, Principal Secretary (Health) Shri V. Vumlungang, Secretary (Social Welfare) Jacinta Lazarus and Directors and Medical Superintendents of RIMS and JNIMS and Managing Directors of SKY Hospital and Jeevan Hospital were also present at the programme organised by the Directorate of Health Services.