

# Editorial

Friday, Feb. 23, 2018

## Rebooting efficient governance

The relationship between politicians and bureaucrats has always been a delicate one, cordial at best. While politicians provide the vision and policy direction, bureaucrats implement these within the legitimate framework and provides continuity to governance and is duty-bound to serve the elected representatives but is obliged to object to pressures which are potentially illegal and unconstitutional. There is no doubt that the relationship is a challenging one and ideally symbiotic but fraught with dangers because it is ultimately a division of powers between the two which is essential to our system of checks and balances. A weak political leadership will result in bureaucrats running riot and ruling the roost, throwing the government machinery out of gear and making implementation of government policies difficult if not impossible, while domineering or overbearing ministers can render bureaucrats irrelevant and subservient thereby leading to all manners of abuses of power entrusted with them.

The recent declaration by the Chief Minister of meting out strict actions regarding non-responsive bureaucrats of the state on a complaint brought up by a minister is another instance where the tussle, and therefore the balance of power was perceived to be tilted to one side. The flipside of the incident is that the minister has been seen by many as one who is unable to take matters into his own hands and one lacking the skill and the authority to address the issue despite the constitutional powers and authorities bestowed on him to perform the task.

Reforming the bureaucratic system has for long been felt to be the answer to the policy paralysis which has so far been holding back the pace of progress and development in the country. The system, a behemoth entity consuming an estimated 12 per cent of the government's revenue receipts is still perceived by the general public as corrupt, inefficient and unresponsive owing to the unpleasant and often frustrating experiences of having to deal with them.

It must be said that the attempt made by the central government to reverse previous policy paralysis immediately after it came to power by empowering the bureaucracy to take decisions relying on their best professional judgments without considering undue pressures from any quarter have not been able to bring about a perceptible change as anticipated, yet. While there had been a slew of measures taken up by the state government to curb corruption in public offices and improve transparency in government offices, there is still a considerable amount of trust deficit amongst the public for government offices and institutions.

The need of the hour to bring about that much needed positive change in the governance of the state is to start with a practical and effective system of checks and balances between the bureaucrats and politicians. A healthy dose of competition and mutual respect for each other will go a long way in removing the entrenched paralysis in administration and getting the state well and truly on the move.

## More State News

### Assam Rifles distributes solar lamps in Moreh

**Imphal, Feb. 23:** On 22 February 2018, 11 Assam Rifles of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis HQ IGAR (South), organised a programme on "Support to the Needy" and distributed Solar Lamps to villages around Moreh. The event was a huge success with extensive participation of the villagers. A total of 68 Solar Lamps were distributed to the villagers

of Maojang and D Mannaphai villages. It was also assured to the villagers that additional development projects/assistance will be provided by the unit in future as well. The success of the event was evident by the gratitude expressed by the villagers who were extremely grateful to Assam Rifles.

### Assam Rifles conduct Ex-Servicemen meet

**Imphal, Feb. 23:** In an endeavor to address grievances and other administrative issues of ex-servicemen, 26 Assam Rifles of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) conducted Ex-Servicemen Meet (ESM) meet for retired Army and Assam Rifles personnels on 22 Feb 18 at Thoubal Company Operating Base. The meet was chaired by Wing Commander AD Singh (Retd), ex-servicemen and

Company Commander of Thoubal Company Operating Base and focused on educating the Ex-Servicemen with policies in vogue for welfare of ESM. Grievances regarding documentation issues were addressed and necessary assistance was provided for the same. A total of seven Veer Naris and widows and 35 Army/AR Ex-Servicemen attended the meet who appreciated the endeavor of the unit.

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## National & International News

### India ranks 81st in global corruption index, Pakistan 117th

**Agency Berlin, Feb. 23:** A report released by Transparency International (TI) has placed India on the 81st spot on the Global Corruption Perception (GCP) Index 2017, in terms of graft and press freedom in the Asia-Pacific region. India was ranked 79th on the Global Corruption Perception Index in 2017. The GCP index ranks a total of 180 countries and territories by their perceived levels of public sector corruption. The index uses a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is

very clean. India's score in the latest ranking is 40, which was the same in last year. In 2015, the score was 38. "In some countries across the region (Asia Pacific), journalists, activists, Opposition leaders and even staff of law enforcement or watchdog agencies are threatened, and in the worst cases, even murdered," the TI said in a release. "Philippines, India and the Maldives are among the worst regional offenders in this respect. These countries score high for

corruption and have fewer press freedoms and a higher number of journalist deaths," it added. The TI report stated that in the past six years, at least fifteen journalists, who were working on corruption stories in these countries were murdered. Its observation was based on a report submitted by the Committee to Protect Journalists (CPJ). In the latest ranking, New Zealand and Denmark occupied the first two spots at the top of the index, with scores of 89 and 88 respectively.

On the other hand, Syria (178th), South Sudan (179th) and Somalia (180th) were ranked the lowest in the index, with scores of 14, 12 and nine. Among other South Asian countries, Bhutan fared the best with a ranking of 26th. Other countries include Pakistan (117th), Afghanistan (177th), Nepal (122th), Myanmar (130th), Bangladesh (143rd), the Maldives (112th) and Sri Lanka (91st). China fared a bit better than India and was ranked 77th, with a score of 41.

### Australian deputy prime minister resigns following sex scandal

**Agency Sydney, Feb. 23:** Australia's deputy prime minister resigned Friday after being undermined by a sex scandal that triggered a ban on sex between government ministers and their personal staff and a national debate over exposing politicians' bedroom behavior. Barnaby Joyce, the leader of the rural-based Nationals Party, told reporters that a sexual harassment complaint against him that emerged in the press the previous day had convinced him that his position was politically untenable. The complaint added to the pressure from the revelation three weeks ago that Joyce and his former press secretary had had an extramarital relationship and are expecting a baby. A ruddy-faced political maverick who once threatened to euthanize actor Johnny Depp's pet dogs for

arriving in Australia without permission, Joyce had presented himself as a family man devoted to his wife of 24 years and their four daughters. But rumors had circulated for months in political circles that he was having an affair with a former journalist who had joined his political staff. When a tabloid newspaper published photographs on Feb. 6 of the woman, heavily pregnant, crossing a suburban street, the 50-year-old Joyce acknowledged that they were in a relationship. Australian media outlets say she is 33. He tried to rally support by arguing the media shouldn't pry into politicians' private lives, a position that even some journalists agreed with and which he repeated at his resignation announcement. "That's just not who we are in

Australia," he told reporters in his country district. "Don't go after private individuals. It's just wrong." But Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull, who is in Washington for talks with President Trump, was aghast at Joyce's behavior, according to people who know him, and introduced a rule prohibiting sexual relations between ministers and their personal staff, a decision that tapped into global #MeToo movement inspired by the allegations against movie producer Harvey Weinstein. Although a poll showed most Australians agreed with what social media dubbed the "bonk ban," some members of Turnbull's own center-right Liberal Party and other government ministers were uncomfortable with what essentially ended an unwritten convention that politicians' sex lives

are never discussed publicly. "It licenses the press to investigate politicians' private lives," said Tom Switzer, the executive director of the Center for Independent Studies think tank who had sought Liberal Party endorsement for federal office. "It's an invasion of policy." Despite three weeks of negative publicity and open tension with Turnbull, Joyce seemed determined to keep his position. But news this week that a woman had complained to the Nationals Party, which is in coalition with the Liberal Party, that he had sexually harassed her led Joyce to resign. The woman's name or the nature of the allegation isn't publicly known. Joyce said he wanted the allegation to be referred to the police and to be given an opportunity to defend himself.

### Armed school resource officer stayed outside as Florida shooting unfolded, sheriff says

**Agency Parkland, Feb. 23:** The armed school resource officer at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, waited outside the school building as the shooting unfolded last week, officials said. Scot Peterson never went in after taking a position on the west side of the building. Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel said at a Thursday afternoon news conference. Peterson resigned after he was suspended without pay by Israel pending an internal investigation into his actions during the shooting that left 17 people dead, Israel said.

Peterson was eligible for retirement. During that time, Israel said, Israel made the decision to suspend Peterson — who was armed and in uniform at the time of the shooting — after interviewing the deputy and reviewing footage and witness statements, he said. "What I saw was a deputy arrive at the west side of building 12, take up a position," Israel said of the video. "And he never went in." Israel told reporters Peterson should have "[w]ent in. Addressed the killer. Killed the killer." Instead, the deputy waited

outside for about four minutes. During that time, Israel said, Peterson got on his radio and took a position where he could see the western entry of the building. Asked how he felt watching the footage, Israel said: "Devastated. Sick to my stomach. There are no words. These families lost their children. We lost coaches. I've been to the funerals, I've been to the homes. ... I've been to the vigils. It's just — there are no words." CNN was attempting to reach Peterson for comment. Peterson held several jobs, including working as a security guard and stock clerk, before he

was hired as a sheriff's deputy in 1985, according to his personnel records. He also served in the military, he told the sheriff's office. Peterson, who attended Florida International University, was largely lauded for his performance on the job, including garnering two deputy of the year nominations in recent years, the personnel records show. In 2015, Israel noted Peterson's then-30-year tenure. "Your dedication and allegiance are the best illustrations of the service [the sheriff's office] provides to the people of Broward County," Israel wrote, according to the records.

### Teen Burnt to death outside her village in UP's Unnao

**Agency Unnao, Feb. 23:** In an extremely disturbing incident in Uttar Pradesh, an 18-year-old girl was burnt to death last evening. Her charred body was found outside her village in Unnao district, about 100 kms from state capital Lucknow. Moments after she had left home on her bicycle for the weekly market in the area, she was attacked by unidentified persons who may have used petrol to set her on fire, police said.

Her body, with 100 per cent burn injuries, was recovered by the side of a field outside her village. Her cycle was lying next to her. It appears that the girl was burnt alive, the Uttar Pradesh police said. An empty can and a bundle of matchsticks were also found on the spot. They have registered a case of murder and any sexual assault will be confirmed in the post-mortem report, a senior officer said.

"She had left home to buy vegetables around 4.30 pm. Soon after, her burnt body was recovered in the village. The news of her death spread in the village and her family rushed to the spot. They identified her cycle and slippers," said a senior police officer. The police have no information about the attackers so far. Also, the circumstances that led to the girl's death have not been established yet.

Sujit Pandey, Inspector General of Police, Lucknow, said, "It appears to be a murder. We have recovered the body, her dupatta, slippers and a bicycle. Investigations are on." According to National Crime Records Bureau data, Uttar Pradesh accounted for 9.5 per cent of total crimes reported in the country in 2016. UP reported 14.5 per cent (49,262 out of 3,38,954 cases) of total cases of crimes against women.

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