

Editorial

Wednesday, Feb. 7, 2018

Back to the hot seat

Crores have been spent on equipments that still await qualified handlers. Purchases have been made at prices inflated more than double the MRP, and chairs have been procured even before its operations and operators are not yet ready. These are the uncomfortable yet undeniable truth that has been unearthed due to the diligence and unwavering spirit of the journalistic fraternity of the state. The story of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS), regarded as one of the premier medical institutions in the North eastern region of the country and the pride of Manipur have so far been a mixed bag of emotions as far as the 'common man' is concerned- the majority of the public who sought treatment and cure for their myriad ailments and sufferings. A number of private hospitals with specialized staffs and state-of-the-art treatment facilities have been established and are doing brisk business, but RIMS has remained the preferred destination for a majority of the people seeking respite from their ailments because of the affordable cost of treatment. But scratch the surface and almost everyone who have had the unfortunate and harrowing experience of being hospitalized at the premier medical institution have a disappointing experience to narrate.

Stories of inadequacy, negligence and inefficiency abound, and the repeated report of misappropriation of funds during the procurement of equipments for the Dental College is but a tip of the iceberg as far as mismanagement and abusive administration is concerned. The systemic rot and the institutionalized corrupt practices right from securing a special ward to according preferential treatment for the patients, not to mention the nexus between the touts peddling medicines for a commission and the medical staff recommending particular chemists for these medicines is mind boggling to put it mildly, to the point where one starts wondering if the whole setup is for benefitting from the unfortunate patients seeking some respite from their sufferings.

For those privileged lot who can afford the medical bill and charges of the private clinics and hospitals, the travails of the common man might appear to be just a section in the newspapers, but for those who are struggling to save the lives of their loved ones the efforts are all too overpowering. And despite repeated reports and complaints, the sad story continues.

For all its tall claims and declarations, very little- if at all, have so far been done to assuage the difficulties of the common public by the authorities or the state government. Is there no way where the state government have a say in making efforts to address the situation? And if there is any, why is the present government still playing the dumbfounded audience while the common people of the entire region are being taken for a ride taking advantage of their compromised circumstances?

Enquiries and investigations are all very heartwarming and welcome, but the real meaning of the proposed fight against corruption spearheaded by the Biren-led BJP government will come to light when those responsible for the rot and decay in the effort to alleviate pain and suffering of the common public and the declared agenda of improving the healthcare of the common people are brought to book in an exemplary manner.

Assam Rifles lecture conducts on drug awareness for school student

Imphal, Feb. 7: 11 Assam Rifles of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) conducted a lecture on drug awareness for students and youth at Chikkim Veng village, Tengnoupal district on 06 Feb 2018. A total of 185 (15 teachers and 170 students) attended the lecture. Special emphasis was laid on the importance of awareness against drug abuse amongst the society. Chikkim Veng village, being a border village and due

to easy availability of various kinds of drugs through the porous borders, has been affected by the menace severely. Individuals shared their stories about their acquaintances who have been victim of drug abuse and how non-cooperation from family members further aggravate the situation. The lecture concluded by taking a unanimous pledge to fight against the menace of drug abuse and help in thrashing the drug supplies from foreign.

Congress's Vivek Dhakad takes oath as MLA

PIT
Jaipur, Feb 7: Congress's Vivek Dhakad who won the Mandalgarh seat assembly in the recently held bypolls today took oath as a Member of Legislative Assembly (MLA) in Rajasthan. The swearing-in ceremony was held at 11 am. Dhakad was sworn in by Speaker Kailash Meghwal

and took the oath in English. With this, the Congress' tally in the House of 200 members has increased to 25. Bypolls were held on Mandalgarh Assembly and Ajmer and Alwar Lok Sabha seats on January 29 which all were won by the opposition Congress. All the three seats were with BJP before the bypolls.

Name changed

I, the undersigned, **Basant Kumar Jain**, Residence of 43- Mahavir Pharmacy, old Assembly Road PO, Imphal, Imphal West, Manipur do hereby declare that, I have wholly renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of old name **Nathmal Jain**, as I have assumed my new name **Basant Kumar Jain**.

Sd/-

Basant Kumar Jain
43 Mahavir Pharmacy, old Assembly Road PO, Imphal, Imphal West,

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National & International News

Cong MP from Andhra forced to withdraw from Rajya Sabha

PIT
New Delhi, Feb 7: Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu today invoked the rule book to force Congress MP KVP Ramachandra Rao to withdraw from the House for the rest of the day after he refused to end his protest in the Well to press for a special package for Andhra Pradesh.

During the zero hour, Rao stood in the Well holding a placard that read "Help Fight For Justice to Andhra Pradesh" right in front of Naidu's seat.

The chairman repeatedly asked Rao to go back to his seat saying he will not tolerate such behaviour.

Some members urged the chairman to proceed with the listed business, but Naidu ruled that the House was not in order if even one member was in the Well.

He said he had two alternatives before him - adjourn the proceedings or name the member. The chairman asked Rao's party, the Congress, to persuade him to go back to his seat.

Leader of the Opposition and senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said his party does not approve of Rao's behaviour. Naidu repeatedly asked Rao to go back to his seat and when he refused, he invoked Rule 255 of Rules and Procedures of Rajya Sabha.

He said that rule 255 states, "The Chairman may direct any member whose conduct is in his opinion grossly disorderly to withdraw immediately from the Council and any member so ordered to withdraw shall do so forthwith

and shall absent himself during the remainder of the day's meeting."

Naidu then directed Rao to either go back to his seat or withdraw from the proceedings of the House for the rest of the day. Rao ignored his party colleagues who asked him to return to the seat. He chose to withdraw from the House, terming the entire episode as "very unfortunate". He then picked up his belongings and walked out of the House. The House took up the listed business thereafter.

As Maldives crisis worsens, Nasheed returns to main stage

Agence France-Presse

Maldives, Feb. 7: A decade after he swept to power in the Maldives' first democratic elections, exiled opposition leader Mohamed Nasheed is again pushing for change - by force if necessary - as his island homeland spirals into crisis.

Nasheed made history in 2008 when he defeated Maumoon Abdul Gayoom - then Asia's longest-serving leader - after three decades of unchallenged rule.

In the years that followed, the charismatic young president won international renown as a campaigner against climate change and the rising sea levels posing an existential threat to the low-lying Indian Ocean archipelago.

But he fled into exile after he was convicted and jailed in 2015 on a terrorism charge widely seen as politically motivated.

Now Nasheed, whose tumultuous life in prison and politics has earned comparisons to Nelson Mandela, is back in the global

spotlight after a Supreme Court ruling that has plunged his homeland into chaos.

He is calling for help to depose President Abdulla Yameen, whose refusal to comply with the court's order to release high-profile political prisoners drew international censure.

The surprise court ruling - since overturned after the president declared a state of emergency and arrested two top judges - opened a new chapter for the veteran opposition leader, who has appealed to regional superpower India to send in troops and restore democracy. Nasheed spent decades building a pro-democracy movement in exile before his 2008 election. He was repeatedly arrested for speaking out against the government in the 1990s and he established the Maldivian Democratic Party (MDP), now the main opposition, in exile in Sri Lanka and Britain after leaving the Maldives in 2003. He returned in 2005 and was elected president three years

later on a promise to make the holiday paradise islands carbon neutral within a decade.

In 2009, he held an underwater cabinet meeting in an effort to press the world to cap carbon emissions. He also raised eyebrows by announcing his intention to buy a new homeland to relocate the Maldives' entire population.

But he was pushed aside in 2012 after weeks of street protests over the sacking of a judge, and a year later lost a controversial run-off against Yameen - half-brother to his old foe Gayoom.

By 2016 he was again in exile in London, securing political asylum with the help of high-profile human rights lawyer Amal Clooney. Yameen's regime, furious, tore up his passport. Nasheed insisted he was "a refugee" but still a Maldivian national.

In early 2017, he announced from Colombo his intention to challenge Yameen for the presidency - even though stepping foot in the Maldives

would result in his arrest. Yameen has slowly ratcheted up his crackdown on dissent, using troops to shut down parliament and jailing critics, as the Maldives' battered image as an idyllic island paradise fades into mirage.

J-K situation has worsened, says Cong in Rajya Sabha

PIT
New Delhi, Feb 7: The issue of the daring escape of an arrested Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) militant from a Srinagar hospital was raised in the Rajya Sabha today, with the Congress saying the situation in Jammu and Kashmir has worsened.

Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Leader of Opposition and senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad said the situation, not just in Srinagar, but also in the Jammu province has worsened.

Though the government is claiming that situation in the state is better than the past decade, the ground reality is different, he said.

Yesterday, 22-year-old Mohammed Naveed Jhutt alias Abu Hunzala escaped from the custody of jail officials after his associates opened fire on his escorts, when he was brought to Shri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital in Srinagar for a check-up.

Azad also asked why Jhutt, a Pakistani who was arrested in 2014, was brought to a civilian hospital and not taken to the army hospital.

The incident, he said, does not reflect well on the state government, the Centre and the country.

"The Government should be vigilant so that such situations are not repeated," he said.

Azad sought a discussion on the worsening security situation in Jammu and Kashmir in the current or the next session of Parliament. Vivek K Tankha (Cong) said a dialogue should be started to create an atmosphere to facilitate the return of Kashmiri Pandits to the Valley.

At least 4 killed, 145 missing after earthquake hits Taiwan Tourist area

NDTV

Taiwan, Feb. 7: Rescuers combed through the rubble of collapsed buildings on Wednesday, some using their hands as they searched for about 145 people missing after a magnitude 6.4 earthquake struck near the popular Taiwanese tourist city of Hualien overnight.

At least four people were killed and 225 injured in the quake that hit near the coastal city just before midnight (1600 GMT) on Tuesday, officials said. The latest figures from government data indicated 145 people were missing.

Many of those were believed to be still trapped inside buildings, including a military hospital, after the quake hit about 22 km northeast of Hualien on Taiwan's east coast.

Aftershocks with a magnitude of at least 5.0 could hit the island in the next two weeks, the government said. Japanese, Czech and mainland Chinese nationals were among the injured.

Residents waited and watched anxiously as emergency workers

dressed in fluorescent orange and red suits and wearing helmets searched for residents trapped in apartment blocks.

Hualien is home to about 100,000 people. Its streets were buckled by the force of the quake, with around 40,000 homes left without water and around 1,900 without power. Emergency workers surrounded a damaged residential building in the area. Windows had collapsed and the building was wedged into the ground at a 40-degree angle.

Rescuers worked their way around and through the building while residents looked on from behind cordoned-off roads.

"We were still open when it happened," said Lin Ching-wen, who operates a restaurant near the military hospital.

"I grabbed my wife and children and we ran out and tried to rescue people," he said.

A Reuters video showed large cracks in the road, while police and emergency services tried to help anxious people roaming the streets.

President Tsai Ing-wen went to the scene of the quake early on Wednesday to help direct rescue operations.

"The president has asked the cabinet and related ministries to immediately launch the 'disaster mechanism' and to work at the fastest rate on disaster relief work," Tsai's office said in a statement.

Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co, the world's largest contract chipmaker and major Apple supplier, said initial assessments indicated no impact from the earthquake.

Taiwan, a self-ruled island that China considers part of its territory, lies near the junction of two tectonic plates and is prone to earthquakes. An earthquake with a magnitude of 6.1 struck nearby on Sunday.

More than 100 were killed in a quake in southern Taiwan in 2016, and some Taiwanese remain scarred by a 7.6 magnitude quake that was felt across the island and killed more than 2,000 people in 1999.

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