

NDA Govt's decision on new scheme for NE bypasses NEC's Plenary

Agency Shillong, July 9,

The NDA government's decision to introduce a new scheme for the Northeast which led to taking away of some sectors from the North Eastern Council (NEC) has raised a question mark in the region.

Some of the sectors that would not come through the NEC include skill development, education, irrigation, power among others.

This issue is likely to be raised in the 67th Plenary of the NEC which will be chaired by Union Minister for Home Affairs, Rajnath Singh in Shillong on Monday.

The two-day Plenary of the NEC will begin at 2 pm at the State Convention Centre in Shillong.

Pointing out that the NEC is a statutory advisory body under the NEC Act 1971 which came into being on November 7, 1972 with its headquarter in Shillong, sources said that members of the NEC which include Governors and Chief Ministers were not taken into consideration when the Union Cabinet at the Centre decided to change the NEC scheme.

"Such decision should have been approved by the Plenary of the NEC, but it was arbitrarily approved by the Union Cabinet, and this reflects total disrespect to the

Governors and Chief Ministers of the North Eastern States who are the members of the NEC," sources pointed out.

On March 28 this year, the Union cabinet had approved a new scheme known as "Northeast Special Infrastructure Development Schemes (NESIDS)" and this scheme would be routed directly through the Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region (DoNER) with 100 per cent funding from the Centre.

Moreover, sources said that since the Centre has decided to implement the new scheme (NESIDS) from 2020 onwards, the NEC was not allowed to take up new projects for two years from 2018 to 2020, except ongoing projects which are being funded on 90:10 basis between the Centre and the respective state governments in the North Eastern Region. "This planned holiday of two years disallowing the NEC to take up new projects would have adverse impact on the region which requires speedy execution of infrastructure," sources said.

Recently, only Mizoram Chief Minister, Lal Thanhawla had raised this issue, and dashed a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on June 8 where he stated that "the Plenary of the NEC is considered to be the highest

decision making authority. However I am very sorry to learn that the decision on the new scheme approved by the 4th Union Cabinet on 28th March 2018, bypassed the Plenary Council and the new scheme came to us by surprise."

Lal Thanhawla also said that Rs 4,500 crore earmarked for the new scheme for the whole North Eastern States during 2017-18 to 2019-20 is going to be too less to have a meaningful impact for the region's development.

"The earmarked funds include Rs 2,357 crore for committed liabilities of ongoing projects, Rs 1,000 crore for North Eastern Road Sector Development Scheme (NERSDS), and Rs 640 crore for NLCPR liabilities. However there is no fund left for new projects during the new scheme. It is highly doubtful that the region can be made an engine of growth with such a meager investment from the Centre," Lal Thanhawla said while requesting the Centre to allocate more funds to the NEC in order to have a meaningful impact for the region's development.

Lal Thanhawla also said that the Centre has even asked to put on hold projects sanctioned during 2017-2018 as the new scheme's effective period is scheme was scheduled from 2017-18.

Large portion of road sinks near Kohima due to incessant rain; roads cut off

Agency Kohima, July 9,

Incessant rain has taken its toll in Nagaland with a section of the National Highway 29 sank in around two kilometers from capital city of Kohima.

Meanwhile, hundreds of vehicles, especially trucks were stranded after the section of the NH 29 below a petrol depot here sank more than 10 feet.

According to concerned officials, the road could not take the heavy load of tons of soil dumped by its side and with incessant rains, sank in early hours of Sunday.

Meanwhile, traffic to and from Kohima has been diverted through two alternative routes- via Jotsoma by-pass road or via Peducha-10 mile (Wokha road). While the Peducha-10 mile (Wokha road) can be used by all types of vehicles, the Jotsoma by-pass road will be



allowed only for light vehicles, officials said.

According to officials, it would take around three weeks for complete restoration as fresh earth cutting will be required. However, issues like land compensation and other related matters would have to

be sorted out before earth cutting.

Machinery equipments were at the site to begin restoration work.

Meanwhile, Border Road Task Force (BRTF) have been entrusted to maintain the Jotsoma by-pass road.

Later on Sunday, State PWD

Minister, Tongpang Ozukum and other officials of district administration, police, State Disaster Management and PWD engineers visited the affected areas and also inspected the possible alternative roads including 10 mile to Peducha road, Jotsoma road and Forest colony Kohima.

Gangster Munna Bajrangji shot dead in UP jail

Agency Uttar Pradesh, July 9

A gangster in Uttar Pradesh, Munna Bajrangji, was shot dead in a prison in Uttar Pradesh on Monday, just a week after his wife had alleged a threat to his life. Bajrangji, who was accused of killing a BJP leader in 2005, was to be produced in a court in Baghat this morning. The jailor and his deputy and two others have been suspended.

Sources say around 6.30 am in the Baghat prison, when the inmates were having tea, another prisoner Sunil Rathai, fired at Bajrangji, killing him instantly. The gangster had been transferred to the prison in Baghat from Jhansi on Sunday.

Munna Bajrangji, originally Prem Prakash, was arrested in Mumbai in October 2009, for the murder of BJP lawmaker Krishnanand Rai. The lawmaker was shot more

than 100 times with an AK-47 in 2005.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said: "I have ordered a judicial inquiry and suspension of the jailor. Such an incident occurring inside jail premises is a serious matter. Will conduct an in-depth investigation and strict action to be taken against those responsible."

Bajrangji's wife had recently told the police that his life was in danger and there was a conspiracy to kill him. "I want

to tell UP Chief Minister Adityanath ji that my husband's life is in danger. A conspiracy is being hatched to kill him in a fake encounter," Seema Singh, the gangster's wife had said on June 29.

In 2012, Bajrangji had contested the UP election on a ticket from Apna Dal.

Bajrangji, accused in as many as 40 cases of murder and extortion, survived after he was shot nine times in an encounter in 1998 in Delhi.

Man held for facilitating Assam MLA to rape wife

Agency Hailakandi, July 9

A man has been arrested after his wife complained to the police that he had helped an Assam MLA in raping her twice in May, the police said today.

The man was arrested from Azara area in Guwahati on July 7 and was produced in the Chief Judicial Magistrate's Court in Hailakandi, which remanded him to five days in police custody.

The woman had complained to the police on July 6 that the

AIUDF MLA, Nijam Uddin Choudhury, had raped her at Hailakandi circuit house on May 19 and later at her house on May 23, the police said, adding she claimed that on both the occasions, her husband had facilitated the MLA.

In her complaint, the woman has accused the MLA of trying to take her to Guwahati, but had to give up the plan after she threatened to commit suicide.

The woman alleged that she was not allowed to go out of the house by her husband

and could not lodge a police earlier as was forcibly confined to the house.

The Algapur MLA, however, dismissed the allegation, saying, "It is totally baseless and a conspiracy against me."

He said the woman had met him along with her husband to settle their family problem and he had no connection with her.

AIUDF president Badruddin Ajmal said the law will take its own course after police investigations reveal the truth.

Strike disrupts normal life in Kashmir on death anniversary of Burhan Wani

Agency Jammu, July 9

Normal life was disrupted in Kashmir in response to a strike called by separatists to mark the second death anniversary of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani while authorities imposed restrictions in parts of the Valley.

Clashes between the security forces and groups of youths trying to defy the official restrictions occurred at some places in Tral area, the ancestral town of Wani, who was killed in an encounter in Kokernag area of Anantnag district on July 8, 2016.

Security forces used tear smoke shells to chase away the protesting youths at some places in south Kashmir areas. The Amarnath pilgrimage was also suspended for a day following the call for a shutdown.

"In view of law and order situation in south Kashmir where three civilians died in clashes with security forces on Saturday and militant Burhan Wani's death anniversary, no fresh batch of pilgrims was allowed from Yatri Niwas base camp in Jammu on Sunday," said an official at the Niwas control room.

Only pilgrims already in Baltal and Pahalgam will be allowed to move towards the cave shrine. Mobile internet services were suspended throughout

Kashmir as a precautionary measure, while security forces were deployed in strength at sensitive places across the Valley to avoid any untoward incident.

Restrictions have been imposed in five police station areas of Nowhatta, Khanyar, Rainawari, Safakadal and Maharajgunj of Srinagar's old city areas. The official said restrictions were imposed in Pulwama and Tral townships of Pulwama district in south Kashmir as well as precautionary measures to maintain law and order.

Separatists had given a call for a strike on Sunday across Kashmir on the second death anniversary of the Hizbul commander.

Wani's killing had triggered

massive violent protests that left nearly 100 dead and countless more blinded by pellet fire.

Separatists under the banner of Joint Resistance Leadership asked people to observe Sunday as a black day following the killing of three youth, including a girl, in firing by security forces.

The police said public transport was off the roads, while a few private cars and auto-rickshaws were seen plying in some parts of Srinagar.

Senior separatist leaders Syed Ali Shah Geelani and Mirwaiz Umar Farooq were placed under house arrest while Muhammad Yasin Malik was taken into preventive custody in Srinagar on Friday and remains in custody.

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NCLT dismisses Cyrus Mistry's plea, rules in favour of Tata Sons

Agency New Delhi, July 9

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) today dismissed Cyrus Mistry's plea, who had challenged his ouster as chairman of the Tata Group, according to television channel according to CNBC-TV18. Mistry's family owns over 18% stake in Tata Sons, the holding company of Tata Group, though holding with voting rights is only under 4%. Mistry had taken over as the chairman of Tata Group in 2012 after Ratan Tata announced his retirement.

Mistry, who was the sixth chairman of the Tata Sons, was ousted from the position in October 2016. Two months later, Mistry and his family-run investment firm, Cyrus Investments, approached the

NCLT, as minority shareholders, against Tata Sons and others including Ratan Tata alleging oppression and mismanagement.

Mistry, in the petition filed under the Companies Act, claimed that his removal was a result of mismanagement by the board's trustees and oppression of minority shareholders of the group. Mistry in his plea claimed that his removal as chairman was without reason and amounted to the majority shareholders suppressing the right of the minority to ask questions about matters involving the company.

After his ouster as chairman, five months later, Mistry was also removed from the post of director of Tata Sons' Board. The Tata group

rebutted the allegations and said Mistry's removal was because the board had lost confidence in him.

The Tata group argued that the law clearly allows removal of a chairperson and director and Mistry was removed by a majority of 7 out of 9, as Mistry had not voted for his removal and another official had abstained.

The first allegation by Mistry was that his removal as chairman and subsequently as director of the board of Tata Sons was a result of oppression by promoters, who are in-turn owned by Tata Trusts that owns over 68% in Tata Sons. The second part of the plea focused on the alleged mismanagement by Tata Sons board and Ratan Tata which caused revenue loss for the group.

Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel takes over as NGT chairperson

Agency New Delhi, Jul 9

Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel today assumed charge as chairperson of the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

Justice Goel, who retired as a Supreme Court judge on July 6, has been appointed for five years.

He is the third chairperson in the NGT since its inception in 2010.

The first chairperson was Justice Lokeshwar Singh Pant, who relinquished his post after being appointed lokayukta of Himachal

Pradesh in 2011, and the second was Justice Swatanter Kumar, who retired in December last year after completing a five-year tenure. Justice Goel was appointed Supreme Court judge in July 2014.

The post of NGT chairperson was lying vacant for more than six months, since Justice Swatanter Kumar's retirement on December 20 last year.

After Justice Kumar's retirement, Justice Umesh Dattatraya Salvi was made acting chairperson. He retired on February 13. After him, Justice Jawad

Rahim was appointed acting chairperson.

At present, there is only one functional court at the principal bench in the national capital. It comprises Justice Rahim and Justices R S Rathore and S S Garbyal.

Various important matters such as air pollution, rejuvenation of the Ganga and Yamuna rivers, challenge to various redevelopment projects in Delhi and the Volkswagen emission fiasco are pending before the tribunal.

The NGT's functioning has been hit by vacancies with the

apex environment watchdog left with less than one-third of its sanctioned strength of 20 officials.

The NGT was established on October 18, 2010 under the National Green Tribunal Act for effective and expeditious disposal of cases relating to environmental protection and conservation of forests and other natural resources.

The tribunal's principal bench is in New Delhi while its zonal benches are in Bhopal, Pune, Kolkata and Chennai and its circuit benches are in Shimla, Shillong, Jodhpur and Kochi.