

Editorial

Friday, March 23, 2018

Good governance - the rift between proposal and practice

With the change of guard in the state after three consecutive terms under an increasingly arrogant and incoherent group accused of institutionalizing corruption and nepotism, the people of Manipur heaved a collective sigh of relief. Although the results portray a closely contested election, there was never a single iota of doubt as to the desire of the public to put up a different government committed to its declared manifesto and inclusive progress in the state as a whole. Not unexpectedly, the new BJP-led new government came to power, and despite occasional lapses in administration and governance it must be said that the overall increase in the vivacity and positive outlook of the public is almost palpable. So far so good, and the government is performing as expected, if not better. While looking to the past to learn and avoid any pitfalls in the future is a very wise and pragmatic thing to do, trying to portray a comparative figure to the public with the previous party in power serves little else than an exercise in self-inflation of ego.

There still are areas where improvements can be made, both in policy making and its implementation as well as monitoring and following up of developmental activities being carried out in the state. One such report with the objective to inform and suggest changes to the concern authorities was carried as a news item of Imphal Times on 19 March. The report concerns the flagrant disregard for a standing government directive by the top authorities of State Electricity Department in regard to the promotion of Assistant Engineers to Executive Engineers. Interesting to note is the fact that the Managing Director of MSPCL N Sarat Singh who, according to information, is the person who recommended the promotion of an AE (Mechanical) to EE (Electrical) is also being reengaged as MD on contract basis after his superannuation in February of 2018. This is in total contrast to the declarations of the state government to stick to its commitment for termination of reengaged retired government employees. The issue here is not about a particular individual but what it represents as a glaring and deliberate challenge to the intents of the state government to usher in a progressive, transparent and impartial government.

It is high time the state government pull up its sleeve and address such seemingly innocuous oversights before frustrations and a sense of unfair partiality and favoritism pervades public offices and destroy the morale and working atmosphere which is crucial in maintaining and improving productivity in any set-up. There is also the need for the state government to display the commitment towards the rules and regulations it lays down without exceptions, and to be able to take strict actions against any defaulters if it is serious about maintaining credibility and retaining support from the public.

Explosion in illegal firecracker unit kills 5

Agency Bihar Sharif, Mar 23: Five people, including three children and a woman, were killed and 18 injured after an explosion in an illegal firecracker unit in Bihar's Nalanda district, a senior official said today. The explosion occurred last night at a crowded residential locality here, from where a man used to run an illegal firecracker unit. He used to live in the house as a tenant, said the district magistrate (DM) of Nalanda, Thyagarajan. The blast claimed the lives of the man's two daughters — one, a month old, and another aged three — and his four-year-old son. The man's sister and a neighbour were also killed in the explosion. Eighteen people suffered injuries,

four of whom were in serious condition, the DM said, adding that the seriously injured were taken to the Patna Medical College and Hospital.

A major fire broke out at the house after the explosion since a huge quantity of inflammable material was stored there. The fire could be doused in a few hours, the district magistrate said. The station house officer (SHO) of Khasganj, Sher Singh Yadav, has been placed under suspension for his failure to check the activity, he said.

An FIR has been registered against the tenant of the house for running an illegal firecracker-manufacturing unit in a densely-populated locality, he added.

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National & International News

Lok Sabha adjourns till noon amid protests

Agency New Delhi, Mar 23: The Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned till noon today following noisy protests by members of the AIADMK and the TRS over Cauvery dispute and quota issue respectively. This is the 15th straight day that the Question Hour has been washed out in the lower house. As soon as the House met for the day, Speaker Sumitra Mahajan paid tributes to freedom fighters — Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and

Sukdev— who were hanged on March 23, 1931 by the British. The House observed silence as a mark of respect to the martyrs. Before taking up the question hour, the Speaker appealed to members to maintain order but members from the AIADMK and TRS trooped into the Well holding placards and raising slogans. While the AIADMK is pressing for immediate setting up of the Cauvery river management board, the TRS is demanding that the states be given the right to

determine the proportion of reservations. Some members were heard shouting 'we want justice'. Congress members too were on their feet protesting against the Supreme Court verdict on the SC/ST Act. The Congress has been demanding that the Centre seek a review of the court order which diluted provisions related to atrocities on Scheduled castes and Scheduled Tribes. Expelled RJD member Pappu

Yadav was seen holding two placards demanding special status for Bihar. Amid the din, Mahajan tried to proceed with the Question Hour, but adjourned the House within minutes as the protests continued. The House has been witnessing disruptions every day since March 5 over issues like PNB scam, special status to Andhra Pradesh and Cauvery water dispute after it re-assembled to continue the Budget session.

Anna Hazare slams government's 'sly' attitude

Agency New Delhi, March 23: Nearly seven years after his anti-corruption movement caught the imagination of millions of Indians, social activist Anna Hazare today accused the government of creating hurdles to stall his "satyagraha" protest in the capital, which was called to demand a competent Lokpal and better production cost for farm produce. "You cancelled trains carrying protesters to Delhi, you want to push them to violence. Police Force deployed for me as well. I wrote in many letters that I don't need police protection. Your protection won't save me. This sly attitude of the

government is not done," Hazare said. The anti-corruption crusader is expected to begin his indefinite fast in Delhi's Ramliya Ground, today. He was granted permission by the Delhi Police yesterday to hold the protest campaign at Ramliya Maidan. The Gandhian has been pressing for setting up of the Lokpal at the Centre and Lokayuktas in the states, besides implementation of the Swaminathan Commission report, which has suggested ways to address the agrarian distress. Hazare has also demanded setting up of Agriculture Price Commission on the lines of the Election Commission and Niti Aayog.

Hazare had earlier said that he would do satyagraha till life is left in his body, and accused the central government of not allotting space. The venue of his protest will be the same iconic Ramliya Maidan, where he had sat on a hunger strike in 2011 demanding constitution of a Lokpal to investigate cases of corruption. Hazare has turned down last-minute overtures from several Maharashtra ministers to call off his hunger strike. Maharashtra Irrigation Minister Girish Mahajan had earlier met Hazare to persuade him to give up his fast, but the activist, who has put together a team of around 6,000 people across India for the purpose, indicated that he would go for the fast until Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government came up with a concrete proposal to empower the Lokpal.

He said he would do "satyagraha from jail" if not allotted a space in New Delhi. Earlier, 31 apolitical farmer associations from Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh participated to set the agenda for the March 23 satyagraha. Retired Supreme Court judge and former Karnataka Lokayukta N. Santosh Hegde have announced to join the social activist's stir. The activist had in 2011 anti-corruption campaign and 12-day hunger strike warned that he would resume his fast if an effective law was not instituted to deal with corruption and misgovernance. The parliament had in the 2011 hunger strike aftermath passed an unprecedented resolution in support of his demands.



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Sd/
Prof. H. S. Shekhar Sharma
Director

BSP MLA votes for BJP in Uttar Pradesh Rajya Sabha elections

Agency Lucknow, March 23: In a jolt to the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), its legislator Anil Singh on Friday voted for BJP candidates in the Rajya Sabha polls currently underway in Uttar Pradesh. Talking to the media after casting his vote, Singh, who met chief minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday night, said he voted for the BJP on "antaratma ki awaaz" (inner call). "My inside asked me to vote for the BJP," the legislator from Purwa in Unnao said. His move sent shock waves in the opposition camp, specially the BSP which is counting each vote to get its lone candidate Bhim Rao Ambedkar elected to the Upper House of Parliament. The BSP MLA, however, said he did not know what his other party legislators were up to. In a related development, Nitin Agarwal, the Samajwadi Party (SP) legislator from Hardoi, also voted for the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) candidates. His father Naresh Agarwal joined the BJP earlier this month. Nitin Agarwal told the media that the people would punish the unholy alliance between the SP and the BSP. "The SP preferred a person who entertains the society (Jaya Bachchan) over a person who serves the society (Naresh Agarwal) which is very

unfortunate," he said, predicting that all the nine BJP candidates would win. Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya also claimed that the BJP candidates would sail through comfortably. Voting for the 10 seats began at 9 a.m. at the Tilak hall in the Vidhan Sabha building here. It will conclude at 4 p.m., after which counting will begin at 5 p.m. Among the first to vote was former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Akhilesh Yadav's estranged uncle, Shivpal Singh Yadav who is the SP legislator from Jaswantnagar. Talking to reporters after casting his vote, Yadav said he was sure that the BSP's candidate would win the Rajya Sabha seat. Congress legislators have also cast their vote. Leader of the Congress legislature party in the Assembly, Ajay Kumar 'Lallu' said all the conspiracies and dirty tricks of the BJP to wean away MLAs from other parties will fail miserably. The Congress's seven legislators have pledged support to the BSP candidate. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath was also in the Vidhan Sabha premises along with many of his ministerial colleagues. The BJP has fielded nine candidates while the SP and BSP have named one each.

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