

Editorial

Wednesday, August 28, 2019

Going beyond people's expectations

It seems the battle for power is not yet finish and is likely to continue giving more insecurity to the expected threat to the security of the state. Yes the tussle for power amongst the representatives of the people of Manipur is increasingly threatening to slow down the already trudging pace of progress in the state. While the gripe of the MLAs are understandable, their future prospects and political advancements depending to a large extent on the delivery of the demand by their leaders at New Delhi or else is depended to the delivery of the reported assurance by the Chief Minister to reshuffle the portfolio at the mid-point of the term of the present Government.

But all is not well. What is at stake is not just the position and the power, but the accompanying financial benefits and responsibilities which have sadly come to be viewed more as personal sanctions to be used as per their whims and fancies. The plethora of problems staring the State Government in the eye is on the brink of being sidelined, with no real issues being discussed threadbare in the just concluded state assembly session. It goes without saying that the assembly session, which is held to discuss and deliberate on the development activities being carried out in the state, to draw up future course of action and also to review works and progress of the government rather turns out as a mere talk show with no representative showing their real concern, and subsequently the state stands to suffer.

Notwithstanding the politicking that goes on behind closed doors, from the point of view of a common man, there is a perceptible sense of the Chief Minister starting to lose his grip on the control as manifested in the haphazard activities being drawn up which has been evoking responses contrary to expectations. There has not been a proper and strict allocation of responsibilities, nor have there been the necessary steps of admonishing concerned ministers who have failed to deliver on the tasks assigned to them.

The protracted issues of non performing departments failing to fulfill the needs of the people continued to plague the state, and yet there still lacks any visible signs of efforts to rectify the issues. The process of periodically evaluating the performance of the ministers and officials should be made a part of the governance process. Building up a transparent system of governance is the only way to go, and for that to happen, those in power should take the initiative and lead by example. We should shed the divisive mentality and embrace inclusive progress. The people have the right and the prerogative to understand the workings of the government. Keeping a psychological and physical boundary between the ruler and the ruled can work for only so long.

The real power of these rulers lies with the people, and to try and sideline the issues that are troubling the public is bound to backfire, sooner or later.

India bags four medals in Worldskills Kazan competition

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The Indian team created history by winning one gold, one silver and two bronze medals at the 45th WorldSkills Kazan 2019 competition, in Russia yesterday. It has been the country's best

performance since it first participated at the event in 2007. S Aswatha Narayana won the gold medal in water technology. Pranav Nutralapati won silver medal in web technologies. Sanjoy Pramanik and Shweta Ratanpura won one bronze medal each in Jewellery and graphic design technology.

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IAS Officer: a Hero- a Whipping boy- a Villain



By: Sanjenbam Jugeshwor Singh Faculty, NIELIT Imphal.

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) is the administrative arm of the All India Services. Considered the premier Civil Service of India, the IAS is one of the three arms of All India Services along with the Indian Police Service (IPS) and the Indian Forest Service (IFoS). Members of these three services serve the Government of India as well as the individual states. IAS officers may also be deployed to various public sector undertakings. As with other countries following Westminster Parliamentary system of government, the IAS is a part of the permanent bureaucracy of the nation and is an inseparable part of the executive of the Government of India. As such, the bureaucracy remains politically neutral and guarantees administrative continuity to the ruling party or coalition. Upon confirmation of service, an IAS officer serves a probationary period as a sub-divisional magistrate. Completion of this probation is followed by an executive administrative role in a district as a district magistrate and collector which last several years, as long as sixteen years in some states. After this tenure, an officer may be promoted to head a whole state division, as a divisional Commissioner. On attaining the higher scale of the pay matrix, IAS officers may lead government department or ministries. In these roles, IAS officers represent the country at the International level in bilateral and multilateral negotiations. If serving on deputation, they may be employed in intergovernmental organizations such as the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank or the United Nations or its agencies. IAS officers are also involved in the conduct of election in India as mandated by the Election Commission of India. The modern Indian Administrative Service was created under Article 312(2) in part XIV of the Constitution of India and the All India Services Act, 1952. The typical functions performed

by an IAS officer are: To collect revenue and function as court officials in matters of revenue and crime (for the revenue courts and criminal Courts of executive magistrate) to maintain law and order, to implement Union and State Government policies at the grassroots level when posted to field positions, i.e as Sub-Divisional magistrates, additional magistrates, district magistrates and divisional Commissioners and to act as an agent of the government in the field, i.e to act as an intermediary between the public and government.

To handle the administration and daily proceedings of the government including the formulation and implementation of policy in consultation with the ministers-in-charge of a specific ministry or department

To contribute to policy formulation and to make a final decision in certain matters with the agreement of the minister concerned or the Council of ministers (depending upon the weights of the matter), when posted at the higher level in the Government of India as a Joint Secretary, additional secretary, Special Secretary or Secretary equivalent, Secretary and cabinet Secretary and in state Government as Secretary, Principal Secretary, additional chief Secretary or special Chief secretary and Chief Secretary.

Upon retirement, high ranking IAS officers have occupied Constitutional posts such as the Chief Election Commissioner of India, the Comptroller and Auditor General of India and Chairperson of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC). They have also become members of administrative tribunals such as the National Green Tribunal and the Central Administrative Tribunal as well as Chief of regulators including Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, the Securities and Exchange Board of India and the Reserve Bank of India. If a serving IAS officer is appointed to a Constitutional post such as Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Chief Election Commissioner of India or Chairperson of UPSC or as head of a Statutory authority, such as the National Human Rights Commission, the National Commission for Women or the Central Information Commission, he/she is deemed to have retired from service. IAS officers can also be deputed to private Organizations for a fixed tenure under Rule 6(2) (ii) of the Indian Administrative Service (Cadre) Rules, 1954. If IAS officers execute the services rendered on them in public interest sincerely and honestly, they are the savior of people. However the

IAS is the hamstrung of political interference. Outdated personnel procedure and a mixed record on policy implementation and it is therefore need of urgent reform. The Indian Government should reshape recruitment and promotion process, improve performance-based assessment of individual's officers and adopt safeguards that promote accountability while protecting bureaucrats from political meddling. Several think tanks and media outlets have argued that IAS is hamstrung by political influence within the service. It has been reported that many local political leaders have been seen to have interfered with IAS officer. Politicians have also exerted pressure on IAS officers by repeatedly transferring them, suspending them, beating them and in some extreme cases, killing them. A deputy Commissioner of one hill district was removed as DC of the same district and transferred to some other department for exposing the boundary dispute between India (Manipur) and Myanmar (Burma) which was a public issue in Manipur, known as boundary pillar no 81 issue. This makes bureaucrats' officers' scapegoats. While hearing T.S.R Subramanian vs Union of India, the Supreme Court of India ruled that IAS officers and other civil servants were not required to act on oral instruction given by politicians as they "Undermined credibility."

In spite of all these, IAS officers have also involved in corruption and crimes for which many convicted of crimes. In 2015, it was reported by the Government of India that a hundred IAS officers had come under scrutiny by the CBI for alleged corruption. In 2017 Government records showed that 379 IAS officers had deliberately failed to submit details of their immovable assets (IPR). Since 2007, a number of Chief Secretaries and Principal Secretaries have been arrested in cases of graft or money laundering. IAS officers have been found amassing disproportionate assets and wealth varying from Rs.200 crore (equivalent to Rs 254 crore or USD 37 million in 2018) to Rs 350 crore (equivalent to Rs 587 crore or USD 85 million in 2018). A retired IAS officer who was the Deputy Commissioner of one hill district of Manipur was arrested by Imphal West district Police in the night of 24th June, 2019 in connection with the misappropriation of compensation of villagers for the expansion of NH-102, Imphal Moreh road and remanded to police custody for eight days by Judicial Magistrate

(First Class), Chandel. The bail plea of the said (Retd) IAS officer was rejected on 2nd July by Special Judge (PC) Imphal West and remanded up to 5th July in judicial custody for further investigation. Which are the destroying acts of IAS officers. In 2016, it was reported that the Government would provide the means to prosecute corrupt IAS officers with the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, agreeing to receive request from private citizens seeking punitive measures against IAS officers even without supporting documentation. In 2007, a CBI special Court in Delhi sentenced a former Union coal Secretary and two other IAS officers to two years in prison for their involvement in the coal allocation scam. In 2017, it was reported by the Department of Personnel and Training, part of the Ministry of Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions that since 2014, one IAS officers was prematurely retired from service, ten IAS officers had been deemed to have resigned, five had their pensions cut and a further eight IAS officers suffered a cut in remuneration. In 2018 the Union Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances and Pensions, Jitendra Singh, informed the Lok Sabha that disciplinary proceedings were underway against 36 IAS officers. Few days back Modi Govt sacks another 22 senior officials in latest crackdown on corruption charges. Sometimes news of missing IAS officers has also come out. In 2015, "The Telegraph" reported that 12 IAS officers had gone missing and has not reported to either the Union or the State Government for their allocated cadre. It was believed that they were working in foreign countries for companies such as Microsoft for more lucrative pay. The Asian Age, later reported that the services of three of the 12 officers were likely to be terminated due to prolonged absence from service. However, some of the notable IAS officers whose names are worth mentioning are: Naresh Chandra (1956 batch IAS of Rajasthan); T.N Seshan (1955 batch of Tamil Nadu); Narinder Nath Vohra (1959 batch of Punjab); Vinod Rai (1972 batch of Kerala); Duvvuri Subbrao (1972 batch of Andhra Pradesh); Yogendra Narain (1965 batch of Uttar Pradesh). Their contribution in public service and Nation building were incredible and will remain forever, at the same time they are the role model of the new IAS officers.

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Mukerjea couple's deposition leads to action against Chidambaram

By: Raju Vernekar

While Enforcement Directorate (ED) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have tightened nose around former union finance Minister P Chidambaram, in a money laundering case related to "INX Media", the deposition by Indrani Mukerjea (who has already turned approver) and Peter Mukerjea, has prompted the action against Chidambaram.

Now Special CBI Court in Delhi has remanded Chidambaram to CBI custody till 30 August 2019 on plea that the allegations against him in the "INX Media case" are of "serious in nature" for which a "detailed and in-depth investigation is required".

"INX Media" was floated by former HR consultant and media executive Indrani Mukerjea and media baron and her husband Peter Mukerjea in 2006. In 2007 the company had sought Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance to broadcast a bouquet of channels. As per the CBI, on 30 May 2007, the FIPB approved an FDI of Rs 4.62 crore, but did not allow downstream

investment. However, "INX Media" went ahead, and in violation of the FIPB approval, made a downstream investment in "INX News" and generated Rs 305 crore in foreign investment when the approved amount was Rs 4.62 crore.

In its FIR, CBI said that "INX Media" had approached FIPB on March 13, 2007 seeking permission to issue 14.98 lakh equity shares and 31.22 lakh convertible non-cumulative redeemable preference shares of Rs 10 a piece to three non-resident investors (Mauritius based companies) under the FDI route. These shares represented 46.21 per cent of the issued equity capital of INX Media. Subsequently Indrani and peter sold their shares priced at Rs 10 a piece for Rs 810 in a piece in between August 2007 and May 2008. Subsequently in 2010, the Income Tax (I-T) Department in Mumbai forwarded the case to the ED. ED registered a case against INX Media for alleged Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA) violations.

Several years later, while investigating a company associated with Chidambaram's son Karti

Chidambaram, ED found documents linked to "INX Media" in the computer of Karti's CA Bhaskarraman. The documents indicated payments made to Karti's alleged company by INX Media at the time the Union Finance ministry granted it FIPB approval.

As per the CBI, in order to avoid punishment, "INX Media" entered into a 'criminal conspiracy' with Karti, knowing that his father was the union finance minister. This led to the Finance Ministry officials ignoring the 'serious illegalities' committed by "INX Media" by abusing their official position'. Based on the FIR by the CBI, the ED also filed a case against Chidambaram for money laundering. In the meanwhile, Indrani was arrested in Mumbai in connection with her daughter Sheena Bora's murder in 2014. Subsequently Peter Mukerjea was also arrested in that case.

ED and CBI recorded statement of Indrani and Peter in 2018 in connection with "INX Media" money laundering case. Both admitted to have raised money far in excess of the limit given by FIPB.

They claimed that as per the deal, \$ 10 lakh were to be given to Karti. Of these \$ 7 lakh were passed on to the subsidiaries of "Advantage Strategic Consultants Private Limited" owned by Karti. On 11 July 2019, Indrani applied to become approver in the case.

ED interrogated Chidambaram on 19 December 2018, 7 January 2019 and 21 January 2019. However he did not cooperate and gave evasive replies. Last week the Delhi High Court rejected Chidambaram's anticipatory bail. Then the Supreme Court also dismissed his petition for anticipatory bail in the case lodged by the CBI saying the plea has become "infructuous" as he was already been arrested. Now the Special CBI Court in Delhi has remanded Chidambaram to CBI custody till 30 August 2019.

Karti who was arrested by CBI in February last year, was granted bail by Delhi High Court, and is now the Congress Lok Sabha MP from Sivaganga (South Tamil Nadu). Indrani and Peter Mukerjea, are currently in Arthur Road jail in Mumbai in connection with the Sheena Bora murder case.