

HEADLINES

- Union Minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad says culture, connectivity and commerce will shape India's relations with the ASEAN bloc
- Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal draws Centre's attention on the need of turning the Brahmaputra water black in parts of the state.
- Tripura Government introduces the Child Care Leave for women employees.
- Two-day Winter Session of the twelfth Nagaland Legislative Assembly commences today.
- In Meghalaya, more than 30, 284 Single Mothers and 53, 573 Infirm have benefited from Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme.
- In a sudden political development, Nagaland Chief Minister T.R. Zeliang sacks four of his Cabinet ministers following a reported move to topple his Government.

NEWS IN ORDER

ASEAN:

Union Minister, Ravi Shankar Prasad said culture, connectivity and commerce will shape India's relations with the ASEAN bloc. He was addressing a function along with Union Minister Kiren Rijiju in New Delhi to celebrate 50 years of ASEAN and 25 years of India-ASEAN Partnership. Mr Prasad said, the importance New Delhi attaches to ASEAN is evident from the fact that leaders of all the ten ASEAN member nations will attend the country's next Republic Day celebrations. Addressing the gathering, Mr Rijiju said, the Home Ministry has started opening various channels on the borders to foster relations with neighbours, particularly in Eastern and North-Eastern Region. He said, the Land Ports Authority of India has taken up the expansion of the Integrated Check Post at Moreh in Manipur for expansion of trade with Myanmar, India's gateway to the ASEAN, and it will be inaugurated soon.

DEVELOPMENT:

In a move to draw Centre's attention to the development of turning the Brahmaputra water black in parts of Assam, Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal held a meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi yesterday. Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, Minister of Road Transport, Water Resources Nitin Gadkari, Foreign Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj were also attended the meeting. An official release said that, Mr Sonowal requested Prime Minister Modi to accord utmost importance and help the state to take remedial steps. Prime Minister has assured him that the Centre would take up the matter seriously by engaging Central Water Commission to look into the matter.

LEAVE:

Tripura Government has introduced the Child Care Leave for women employees with minor children for 730 days in their entire service life, a minister said today. Such employees enjoying the CCL for children's sickness or examinations would be paid leave salary equal to the pay drawn immediately before proceeding on the CCL. "The Child Care Leave will be granted to women employees of the state government, who have children below 18 years for a

maximum period of 730 days in the entire service life," State Information and Culture Minister Bhanu Lal Saha told reporters.

ASSEMBLY:

The two-day Winter Session of the twelfth Nagaland Legislative Assembly commences today. Besides Obituary references, presentation of select committee report, laying of reports, introduction of Government bills and assembly committee reports, the Nineteenth session and last session of the House is expected to pass the much awaited state Lokayukta Bill 2017. After repeated demands to bring in the Lokayukta in the state, Chief Minister T R Zeliang last month assured the civil societies that the Bill would be tabled during the winter session.

SCHEME:

Meghalaya Chief Minister, Dr. Mukul Sangma yesterday told informed the state Assembly that the State Government began the Chief Minister's Social Assistance Scheme a few years back and so far 30, 284 Single Mothers and 53, 573 Infirm, both men and women, have benefited. Under the scheme, single mothers and Infirm are provided a grant of 500 rupees monthly. Dr. Sangma informed the House that the Government of India provides an additional monthly allowance of 250 rupees to Infirm and the State Government is trying to persuade upon the Central Government to increase this amount and bring it at par with the State Government's scheme.

POLITICS:

In a sudden political development, Nagaland Chief Minister T.R. Zeliang yesterday sacked four of his Cabinet ministers following a reported move to topple his Government. According to a release issued by State Cabinet Secretary Pankaj Kumar, Governor P.B. Acharya on the recommendation of the chief minister has relieved four Cabinet ministers of their portfolios. The four are Home Minister Y Patton, School Education and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Tokheho Yepthomi, PWD (Roads and Bridges) Minister Neikiesalie Nicky Kire and Minister for Environment, Forest and Climate Change Neiba Kronu. Highly placed sources said the removal was necessitated following their campaign against Zeliang even after the signing of memorandum of reconciliation between him and NPF president Shurhozelie Liezietsu on December 9.
