

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, December 1, 2015

How smart are our traffic police?

"Talks' about smart city, of which Imphal is among the 100 selected from across the country to implement the project, is becoming a real issue for almost everyone of us. According to the guidelines Imphal Municipal Corporation (IMC) has been entrusted for the dream project. The concept of "smart city" as mentioned earlier in this column is about making the people smart by providing smart requirement for all like - providing 24 hour potable water, dwelling for all, electricity for all, roads for all etc. etc.

One more important concept of smart city is to make the people smart which can be literally translated as making the people more civilized by improving their civic sense. When we talk about improving civic sense of the citizens there are certain areas that has to be associated with the functioning of government machineries. For example, the aggressive attitudes of so call bureaucrats who are running the state need to be changed first. The law enforcers - 'police' should be people-friendly and should be smart enough to tackle situations giving top priority to protection of the common people. The government employees at the government offices need to be checked by their concern head of department about the way that they are dealing with the common people. Schools, colleges and Universities need to be improved and not the least the present traffic management system need to be properly streamlined.

Beauty of a house is often judged by the way that the owner arranges the contents inside the house in an organized manner. The way the owner plant trees, manage garden and arrange his living room shows the standard of the person. Likewise, it is the way that a person dressed and combed his or her hair that people judged him as a respectable person. (Mahatama Gandhi's story is different as he was protesting the British colonialism attitude).

Point being here is to let those who are working hard for converting into a smart city realize about the need for proper traffic management. According to feedback received by this newspaper, people are of the opinion that both the people driving smart vehicles as well as the traffic police are both to be blamed for the present chaos in Imphal area particularly at Paona Keithel and Thangal Keithel.


It is not that the parking area should not be allotted in this small stretch of road, but it is about the way that the smart vehicles drivers park their vehicles in these road stretches. May be due to the lack of proper man power with the traffic police, many private security personnel, both men and women are seen on duty managing parking for vehicles at many places both at Thangal and Paona Keithel. Besides these private securities mainly assigned (on contract basis) for parking management, few policemen and women are also seen at certain check area.

To be precise, the men and women hired for parking management seem to be powerless, or rather clueless to properly arrange parking for all the vehicles. Many vehicles are seen parked beyond the allotted parking area creating lots of difficulties for commuters. This is perhaps because private security personnel are sometime helpless as they are not authorised even to take any action against them. On the other hand the police men and women too never bother to rectify the way vehicles are parked at their wishes.

Traffic police are sometime seen with loud speakers to check this kind of unorganized parking but only at the time when some VIP are to pass the route.

Well it is not only the Traffic police that are responsible for the traffic chaos, but the whole department that are members of the TRPC (Traffic Regulations and Parking Committee), PWD, Transport, Police etc. are all members of the committee. They are directed to at least have a sitting once in month to review about the failure in the traffic management. The dream about smart city is likely to be sabotaged by the failed traffic mismanagement in the Imphal area. It is time now those responsible officers need to be sincere and proactive in tackling this issue.

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Media in armed conflict situation: Manipur Perspective

Contd. from yesterday

Faced with these threats, the editors and journalists locked up the newspaper offices and decided to launch a cease work agitation on August 1, 2007. The strike was called off five days later after the underground faction withdrew the threat with the assurance that there will be no such threats in future. This assurance was, however, forgotten in October of the same year. The editors of newspapers were threatened for the non-publication of a press release and as a result, the newspapers with the ISTV Network went on cease-work strike again from 11 to 14 October, 2007. These events are clear indicatives of the intense pressures under which journalists of the state had to suffer while trying to carry out their responsibilities.

Ban of publication of newspapers by underground elements, ban of transmission of local private TV Network by state government and militant organizations, harassing journalists at reporting sites and even picking them up from their newspaper office and leaving them after torture by security personnel; and dictating terms or trying to manufacture a guided press both by legal and ultra-legal forces have been witnessed by the people of Manipur time and again. It is not the insurgents alone who are trying to browbeat media persons. Many of the editors and senior journalists of the state have been arrested on different charges by the government. Moreover, it is noteworthy that in more than ninety percent of the cases of journalists being harassed in Manipur, the culprit is either state police or central security personnel.

Manipur went a step further in muzzling the media by enforcing censorship in news coverage. The Manipur government in October, 2007 issued an instruction for the local media with a clear direction of not to publish any statement or handout released by the outlawed militant outfits and also any other news item that amounted to sedition. The censorship cautioned that any newspaper organization that violates the order would be dealt with severely under the rule of the law.

The founder president of the Editors Forum, Manipur (EFM) and founder editor of *Hueiyen Lampao*, Bharat Bhushan, the former State Cabinet Minister of Youth Affairs and Sports; and former editor of the local vernacular

daily, *Naharolgee Thoudang*, Nongthombam Biren, editor of the onetime popular local English daily, *The Freedom*, Rajkumar Ranendrajit, to mention a few, had to enjoy state government's hospitality in jail on the charges of having nexus with militants and threatening national security through their published items which were never proved and some of them had to taste prison life for months.

During the period from 1996-2006, two journalists were kidnapped, six journalists were taken into hostage by militants and unknown miscreants. During this period, one newspaper editor was reprimanded by the Manipur Legislative Assembly and thirty journalists were either assaulted or humiliated at reporting sites or on their way between their media offices and homes by security personnel and unknown miscreants. Ten journalists of the state were also either arrested or detained by the state forces. Publication of newspapers and transmission of local television networks were also banned by the state government and militants in six different occasions. Even imposters threatened media persons taking advantage of the turbulent situation.

In most of the cases of deliberately targeting journalists, the culprits could not be booked and punished as per law established. The journalists who have become victims of the professional hazards in the armed conflict situation were not given due redress for the crimes committed against them. The perpetrators of the crimes escaped with impunity in most of the cases. The allegations labeled upon the journalists by the state and non-state actors also could be substantiated in none of the cases. However, next issues of professional hazards of the local journalists came up even before solving the earlier ones.

The brief data mentioned above explains per se the professional hazards faced by media persons in the state while performing their committed assignment at a paltry sum. In spite of facing all these inconvenient problems they are serving the state and the situation is not likely to change in near future. And hence, their engagement is called for a more responsible and proactive duty towards improving the present state of affairs and solving the

decades old problem of armed conflict in the state.

Role of media in conflict resolution:

Opening a two day regional seminar for senior editors from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bhutan on the theme "Media responses to conflict" jointly hosted by Jamia Millia Islamia, Press Institute of India and the International Committee of the Red Cross on 28 and 29 March, 2006 in Delhi, former Chief Justice of India J. S. Verma told editors: "All conflicts arise in the minds of men and that is where they need to be tackled. The impact the media makes in influencing the mind is so great and it can make all the difference." Many advocates of conflict resolution are of the view that mass media can play a pivotal role in defusing tensions and forging peace in armed conflict or armed violent situations. But journalists are reluctant to become actors in the developments they are covering; nevertheless there are opportunities for them to be won over to the cause of conflict resolution.

About a decade ago, the Centre for Conflict Resolution and the Media Peace Centre in South Africa started the Mediation Project for Journalists which was a series of workshops imparting conflict resolution skills to journalists. Many of the journalists they invited to attend the program declined to oblige it on the ground that learning about managing or resolving a conflict is hardly accounted in their profession, and that their job is mainly to report the facts and conflict of interest may bound to jeopardize objectivity in news reporting. Still there is another view which contends the contrary view is that "media's role in conflict resolution" debate is not about taking sides in conflict resolution, but to take the side of peace and confidence building measures.

Media can also exacerbate conflict. It is quick and easy to do, and will draw a following; it can also be irresponsible. Media can educate. Indeed, there is much evidence that it is the fastest educator in contemporary society. Once upon a time we thought that the three Rs would give us all we need; now we all need to "read, write, reckon and resolve". No-one can help us better than our media. It has the power to bring together sections of our society previously out of touch with each other.

By : Dr. Aribam Ibomcha Sharma (IIS)
 News Editor, All India Radio

Media can mediate. Mediation is a neutral, objective process which helps conflicting parties to design their own solutions. It is a just and compassionate practice and does not demand that the mediator be value-free.

Mass media addresses problems of power-inequality and aims at "leveling the playing field". It makes available voice to the inarticulate and provides audience for the unheard. While media research workers are recognizing the destructive role of media which had clearly been seen in Rwanda and the former Yugoslavia, and holding in mind the potential of free and independent media for fostering democracy, global bodies and non-governmental organizations are of the view that media has a crucial role to play in peace building. The significance for media's role and its impact on peace building is mounting.

The conflict-resolving approach of media also enhances the consumer's interest in media reporting and analysis. Conflict is exciting. It is the very stuff of change. It is never to be ignored or swept under the carpet. It has always commanded an audience for media. Wherever media not only presents conflict but also points to its resolution, they get compelling stuff. Conflict resolution approach in the presentation of media content is another style often more creative and effective. Cynicism and disenchantment about the media can be overcome with a conflict-resolving approach.

Media persons around the globe, by professional demand, have access to the state and the non-state actors in a conflict situation. If the government is sincere enough practically and wants to engage the media persons to explore pragmatic ways to bring the non-state actors to the negotiating table for an amicable settlement, making an earnest effort in this regard will be a right step. The venture, however, should be comprehensive, inclusive and sincere in approach and detailed study of the prevailing situation is also must prior to the endeavour.

(Concluded)

National & International News

US warns of 'imminent' attack in Kabul

AP **Kabul, Dec. 1:** The US embassy said on Monday it has received "credible reports of an imminent attack" in Kabul.

A statement on the embassy's website urged US citizens to exercise "extreme caution" if moving around in Kabul during the next 48 hours. The statement said the embassy has no further information about the targets, timing or nature of the planned attack.

The Taliban often carry out attacks in Kabul and elsewhere, mainly targeting Afghan security forces and foreigners. Supporters of the Islamic State group have a growing presence in Afghanistan. The US State Department has long warned against travel to Afghanistan, which has been mired in war for decades.

In Washington, department spokeswoman Elizabeth Trudeau told reporters that the US Embassy received the reports of a specific and credible imminent threat, but it wasn't against the embassy, US citizens or US

interests.

She would not elaborate on the nature of the threat or who was behind it, but said "it was sufficient enough that we did feel that an email and a message should go out to US citizens in Kabul."

Advani's wife admitted in AIIMS

PTI **New Delhi, Dec 1:** The wife of senior Bharatiya Janata Party leader L.K Advani was admitted to All India Institute Of Medical Science (AIIMS) today due to health complications.

According to sources at the premier institute, Kamla Advani who is in her early eighties, had breathing problems early in the morning following which she was rushed to AIIMS at about 5.30 AM.

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Manipur tribals held indefinite Coffin Protest in Delhi for 27 days now; 9 dead bodies

"As we remain vibrant and committed to our political causes, we also reiterate our support to the JAC against the three anti-tribal bills. Joint Philanthropic Organisations, Manipur Tribal Forum formed in various cities and towns, Inps, Church leaders, and a host of civil organisations in their movement against the three Bills," said a joint statement of the Kuki National Organisation (KNO) & United Peoples Front (UPF) signed by Calvin H and TS Haokip on November 28.

The KNO and UPF have unanimously decided to pursue common political objectives which would be nothing less than a 'State status,' send joint delegation to Delhi and recently worked out its 'common political road-map' on 25th November, 2015, the statement said. The nine tribal martyrs were still lying unburied for the last 91 days. Earlier JAC, JPO and Inps decided to bury on November 30, but it turned out to be futile. However the burial date is not yet known. In its meeting on Monday, the Joint Action Committee against Anti-Tribal Bills (JAC) resolved that starting

December 1, 2015 all schools as well as shops and establishments including government offices will be allowed to re-open as normal. However, *Lengkhawm* at the Lanka District Hospital will continue under the supervision of the Joint Philanthropic Organisation (JPO) and the JAC. Women Wing till the mortal remains of the nine Tribal Martyrs are laid to rest. In pressing the central government the Manipur Tribals Forum Delhi (MTFD) is set to organise a massive Coffin Rally in New Delhi on December 9.