

Editorial

Imphal, Wednesday, December 9, 2015

A take on our history

The decision to give recognition to the so call unique history of the Nagas as proposed by the NSCN-IM by the Gol is a good step. Although no written document about the history of Nagaland exists, medieval documents of the neighbouring Ahom in present Assam State mentioned that in 1816 Assam was invaded by the Burmese (ava) after which they controlled the place (1819-1826). After 1826, the British annexed the region and started ruling over it. By 1892, the entire Naga region excepting Tuensang came under the British rule thus bringing to an end the massive bloodshed and inter-regional conflict. Post independence, the district of Assam called Naga Hills and Tuensang were made to represent a single unit under Indian administration. At the Naga Peoples Convention in 1960, it was finally decided that Nagaland will be considered a full-fledged state of India and in 1963, Nagaland was finally declared a separate state. But political and factional conflicts continued all these while and even presidential rule was declared after which many anti-government leaders agreed to accept the administration of the Indian Government. This is the simplest version of the so called unique history of the Nagas. Cut to the present demand for an "alternative arrangement", according to the Committee on Alternative Arrangement, the proposed regions will have a political system independent of the Manipur Government - meaning-in simpler terms- freedom to do anything they like and wish without any government intervention (extortion, collection of illegal taxes from vehicles plying through the regions, looting and vandalizing of goods, battering of drivers to death, molesting women); otherwise why has the committee still adamant on sticking to their point of a separate region by disintegrating the state of Manipur, even when the Government has promised to review the working of the various development projects in all the hill districts of the State and to expedite ongoing ones. The contention of being neglected for decades is also one based on misinformation and lack of understanding of the past history of the state. It would bode well for the committee to ponder over the questions- how many decades in total has Mr. Rishang Keishing- the most prominent Tangkhul in the state, been the Chief Minister of the state and what were his achievements regarding development works in the hill districts of Manipur during his tenure? How many of the candidates from the NPF won the Manipur state assembly election? What was the message conveyed by that result? Which system will be more rational-allotment of constituencies according to the area covered or according to the density of population? Has the representatives of these group ever expressed concerns of inequalities or misappropriation over allocation of resources and benefits meant for their people? Before declaring their intention of handing over the decision for the course of action after the tripartite talks which is nothing but a veiled threat of inciting communal riot and mob laws, the matter should be looked at in an impartial and different perspective. Threats of resorting to violence and disruptions as a means to achieve their end will only result in regression of development in their region and alienation by the neighbouring states. The flagbearers of this non-issue should instead draw up a pragmatic plan of action to bring development and prosperity for their people if they are genuinely interested in their welfare and advancement instead of pushing the unwary people to conflicts and confrontations. Rest assured that every group, whether minority or majority, will extend their helping hand in their endeavour. One cannot shake hands with a clenched fist.

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Women of Manipur Rise Up For United Struggle

CPDM Statement on the occasion of the commemoration of Manipur Women's War 1939

On the occasion of the commemoration of the Manipur Women's War 1939 on 12 December, the Campaign for Peace & Democracy (Manipur) hails high the historical resistances that the women of Manipur had carried out during the British colonial period. At the same time, CPDM acknowledges and pays homage to the courage, commitment and selfless contribution of the women democratic forces in Manipur who are fighting injustice and asserting democratic rights. May your democratic voices spread across the borders and be remembered in the canon of resistance history. To recollect, it was on this day, in 1939, that a bulk of aggrieved women in the capital Imphal, largely composed of famine affected petty-traders, launched an agitation to immediately impose an embargo on the British policy of exporting rice which had created the famine. In the following months, agitation became widespread and targeted British Indian monopoly traders (Marwaris), rice mills owned by them and their local rice suppliers. The agitation added to the tempo of rural anti-tax agitations and it culminated into a popular struggle for a responsible government. The December event came to be known as the Second Women's War; the first being occurred in 1904, when women rose in agitation to boycott colonial punitive measures directed against recalcitrant princes and collective forced labour imposed on men to avenge certain sporadic 'incendiarism'. In

all these events of 1904, 1939 and the Zeliangrom movement under the leadership of Gaidinliu from 1931 onwards, women had played leading roles. After the annexation of Manipur by India in 1949, the latter's geo-strategic-market interests and 'national' security concerns have created a situation of misuse and humiliation amongst the Manipur patriots. Many women could not remain unaffected when; (a) their 'nation' was subdued and denied statehood (1950- 1971); (b) Kabow Valley was arbitrarily ceded away to appease a neighbouring country (1953); (c) there was militarisation and violation of human rights (e.g., Armed Forces Special Powers Act in 1958 and other repressive laws); (d) there was underdevelopment and capture of market by the 'outside' market forces; (e) unregulated immigrants were causing negative impacts on land ownership, labour market and 'indigenous' culture; (f) there were displacement and destruction as land and natural resources were no longer under their 'social' control; (g) divisive policies were creating communal tensions and sectarian conflicts; and; (h) the peoples were subjected to corruption, oppression and misuse by the local regimes composed of the parasitic rentier bourgeoisies that were promoted and protected by Delhi regime. Against the backdrop of the scenario, many women took up arms to join insurgency to fight

for their respective 'sovereign' 'nationhood'. Some of them became 'martyrs' at young age and some others are in the jails. Several innocent women fought against tortures and penalties, arbitrarily imposed on them because each was either a 'suspect' or her husbands (if not fiancée) were an insurgent or she was sympathetic to the cause of insurgency. Many women whose husbands or children or dear ones or relatives were forced disappeared or killed or incapacitated in fake encounters are fighting for justice. Many women who are organised into human rights vigilant groups and civil society organisations are fighting injustice and for the protection of human rights. At the same time, many women (including school and collegiate students) who are on the forefront of popular agitations for social, economic and political rights were either killed or wounded or disabled in brutal police repressions. Although the tradition of resistance prevails; the women's democratic forces operate in a fragmented society that is disunited due to vested ethnic (communal), party, partisan, sectarian, individual and political interests. Women's resistances and democratic assertions, therefore, occurred in different regions in different times and led by different forces; thereby, sporadically organised, localised, sectarian, and some of them ended with self-defeating tactics. There is no unified command structure; no common ideological, strategic and

tactical position to strive for a collective goal across communities, sections, and regions. Inasmuch as there is lack of internal cohesion, there is also lack of 'internationalism' as many do not endeavour to relate their struggle with the international movement against imperialism, neo-liberal exploitation and local reactions; except some breakthrough in internationalisation of certain selective issues by the NGO networks that operate within the framework of international human rights movement. Despite weaknesses and shortcomings; women's resistances against misuse and struggles for justice at different layers, locations, sectors, times and issues constitute a general trend that deserves commendation. Instead of being completely fallen to become silently submissive to injustice, there are women who resist and fight for justice in their own ways. Their actions exemplify progressive role; as these expose the bourgeoisie misuse, keep the spirit of resistance alive, and pose some forms of threat to the regime. We formalise these resistances with the hope that these can keep the door open to future consolidation of common goal towards building a society free from subjugation, exploitation and oppression.

Long live Women's War 1939
Solidarity to the Manipur Women's Democratic Struggle

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PREPAK greets people on Intl. Human Rights Day

Even as Justice Avtabh Alam and Justice Ranjana Prakash Desai if the Supreme court of India has exposed the suppressive authoritarian regime of the Indian government the Authority of India still continue different tactics to suppress the people of the region. Even as the NHRC and The AMNESTY International has warned the security force of the various fake encounter cases the India still continues their tactics to suppress the people. Justifying the revolutionary movement to restore the lost Independence of the region, the PREPAK said that world agreed to grant freedom to all the colonial country of the world. It said United Nations has adopted a resolution No. 154(xv) on December 14, 1960 called Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and People. Further the outfit also warn the people of the tactics being used by the Indian regime to distort the political boundary of the erstwhile kingdom which was merged to the Indian Union by dividing into pieces. The PREPAK term the present political crisis in the state as an impact of the colonial rules to the people of the region. It appeals the people to understand the hidden agenda of the colonial government. The outfit also appeals the people of the state to jointly fight against the colonial force to free ourselves from the claws.

Imphal: Smart city or High Security City?

Smart city for Imphal, extension of the 'Disturbed Area Act', 'extrajudicial killings as sovereign duty of the state' and 'alternative arrangement' for the hills have never been listed in any election manifestoes of any political parties in the state and yet these are becoming the realities, today for the people. This shows that people's issues like 'protection of territorial integrity', 'equal development for hills and valley', 'questions of social justice, quality education, conflict resolution, peace and harmony in the state, public security, accountability and transparency in development works, better transport system and services, healthcare, child rights and protection of women have had no connection with the routine periodic electioneering processes and governance in the state. On the contrary, the gradual improvement in the voting percentage in every election and single political party winning absolute majority providing the most stable government in the electoral history of Manipur at present time further shows that there is clear disconnect between people's issue and electoral politics in the state. This Smart city is clearly not the need of the people's situation. The difference is easy to reckon from recent past. One MP from outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency could demand for 'Honourable Naga political solution' in the parliament session but none from inner parliamentary constituency took a position on the 'political issue emanating from the controversial merger of the state' which caused the protracted armed conflict in the state having taken lot of precious lives of younger generations. If the present MP from the inner constituency continues to remain silent to the Home

Ministry's recent position to the Supreme Court on extrajudicial killings in Manipur one surmise what is state's politics all about? Whose government is this any way that people dutifully elect every five years that is run on 90% grant from the Centre? Is this for the people of state or for the contractors-turned-politicians or for the Central Government? Is this political economic context, the Smart city has been dropped in Imphal and so it is exciting for many who run the state and manage the centrally funded economy. Even while Manipur has to catch up with the winds of change under Act East Policy in the neoliberal global context, it could be worthwhile to question: how the proposed Smart city is going to impact on and affect some of the persistent issues of the people. How would Smart city which will be based on smart and intelligent technology (power dependent and on which there will no local control) impact on the galloping population of unemployed educated youths (already crossing 7 Lakhs), the armed political conflict and violence situation, corruption in recruitment processes, increasing crime against women and children, and increasing militarization, hill and valley conflicts over land and natural resources, the dependent economy of the state, food security of the increasing population as against increasing loss of agricultural lands to non-agricultural usages, and increasing number of large land owners over small land owners? Most importantly so, will the army personnel respect the honourable elected representatives of the people

inside the Smart city? More fundamental question is also why Imphal has not so far developed as a functional city? But even as the Imphal city has to emerge as Smart city by external designs and described as engine for growth by economists what sector of economy the city is going to grow on? Even when we leave behind the past and take a leap into 21st century what is the VISION of the economy that the Smart city is designed to take the people to in future that is at least socially, culturally and environmentally friendly, also? Whose vision that will be of any way: of the indigenous people of the state or of New Delhi or of the elite class in the state? If there is no clear understanding on how the proposed Smart city might impact on the contemporary issues and situation or connection with, then, the foundation of this city must be reconstructed by solving the many of these socio-political and economic problems, first, while keeping the dream for smart city at a distant place in future. Justice must be done without delay. If the foundation of Smart city is being built on by burying the truth about the skulls found in erstwhile Tombisana High School campus and silently approving the extrajudicial killings and deep militarization in the state in line of the Union Home Ministry then one can be sure of having a 'High Security City' instead of a 'Smart city'. For, the security of the elite class is important than common people in the streets! Some people are more equal citizens than others if security force has the slightest suspicion on the loyalty of 'the others' in this occupied native state.