

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, November 20, 2015

By-election and the 'Framework agreement'

The bye-election scheduled to hold on November 21 at both Thangmeiband and Thongju Assembly constituency is perhaps one of the most important election which has the tendency to change the political theatre of this state. The verdict of the people in this election will be the reflection of the people of the state towards handing over the fate of the state to either BJP which is in power in the center or to the congress which is ruling the state for three consecutive terms. But the verdict which have the tendency to decide on which political party will come to power in the state, is also likely to be another factor that will decide the destiny of the 'frame work' agreement inked between the Government of India and the collective leadership of the NSCN-IM. This may be assumed as over estimation, but there are strong circumstances that make us believe that, the result of both the Thongju and Thangmeiband Assembly election will have impact to the ongoing framework agreement.

It is a fact that, the BJP is trying all its effort to establish a strong BJP in the state and every possible attempt is being made to make the party as peoples' choice. After the last parliamentary constituency election at which the BJP under the leadership of Narendra Modi has swept overwhelm victory, the party has been targeting to build a strong base as it appeared as an insult to the party by not succeeding in sending a single representative in not even a single sit in both the parliamentary constituencies and the Assembly constituencies. But with the party leading the government in the center, the Manipur BJP unit act like a strong opposition since then.

They have learnt somehow, the party's inability to win the heart of the people after the defeat of the Hiyanglam Assembly bye-election. Well that was when the BJP led government at the center hadn't move ahead anything to the ongoing peace talk with the NSCN-IM.

It is not just saying, but a truth, that almost all mainstream political parties work to spread their arms far and wide. Regional problem are little consider as long as they have good numbers of their party men. The agenda of every political party is also to get maximum number of elected representatives. And if the said political party fails at one of the constituency it is a logic that the same party will try other alternatives to occupy at some other constituency.

At present BJP is not having any representative at any of the assembly constituency of the state. If they failed to find place in Valley area of the state, it is certain that the party may change its strategy towards the Hills.

This is the juncture that is needed to be discussed in depth. It is a common understanding that the NSCN-IM has the potential to influence the voters of some of the assembly constituencies based at Hill districts of the state. It is also an open secret that once a powerful armed group stands at the back of a political party it makes the political party easier to penetrate to the voters' community here at some of the North East states of India particularly the state of Manipur.

What is concern here is that if the second alternative has been put as a priority for the BJP then there is every possibility the government at the center which is being lead by the BJP may do any move to please the NSCN-IM.

This paper had reported about the 3 state formula charted out by the NSCN-IM by curving out portion of Manipur's territory and Arunachal Pradesh Territory. May be if none of the BJP candidate contesting the election had succeeded to win a seat, the BJP will chose the option.

This is assumed so because BJP's agenda is to have more MLAs or MPs of their party across the nation, no matter if it had to retell the history of an erstwhile nation now an Indian state.

Wanted Sub-Editor

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My search for the Manipur Lok Ayukta

By : Ringo Pebam

Corruption is a violation of human rights that leads to "systematic economic crimes", and a "serious malady undermining the very health of the polity".

Manipur's modern culture of corruption is the nexus of contractor-technocrat-bureaucrat-politician who steals public money in standardised percentages. This organised system of robbery loots our money. The public money meant for building infrastructures have turned into marble palaces, sports utility vehicles (SUVs) and expensive apartments owned by government employees and politicians in the metropolises of the country.

The current scenario gives us no guarantee that we won't lose many other opportunities to corrupt practices in regards to development of our state; whether be it in giving jobs to the deserving, or in implementation of laws and development programs/ schemes that directly or indirectly affects us (unknowingly).

The 'Let it be' disease has infected the eyes and minds of us all so much that we have developed a sense of immunity from any of the prevalent economics, cultural and political state of Manipur.

How many times do we remember discussing corruption with our friends over a drink? We come up with all the Utopian solutions and criticise the policy and opinion makers of the state and we forget the topic as we part.

Carrying along this guilt (inaction) with me, I roamed about the city few days ago enquiring the existence of a Lok Ayukta office, which many states of India have. I visited courts, met legal luminaries, and inquired for Lok Ayukta's office, but I was told that Manipur government has not appointed a Manipur Lok Ayukta yet.

What/ who is Lok Ayukta and Lok Pal?

The Lok Ayukta is an anti-corruption authority ombudsman (an ombudsman is an official, appointed by the government or by parliament to represent the interest of the public). It deals with abuse of administrative discretion, misuse of power, mal-administrative, inefficiency, administrative corruption,

nepotism, discourtesy etc. Any citizen can make his/her complaints of corruption directly to the Lok Ayukta against any government official or elected representative. The Lok Ayukta investigates allegations of corruption and mal-administration against public servants and is tasked with speedy redressal of public grievances. The Lok Ayukta is usually a former High Court Chief Justice or former Supreme Court judge and has a fixed tenure.

Lok Ayukta is at the state level, for the centre it's called 'Lok Pal'. The Administrative Reforms Commission of India 1966-70 (headed by Morarji Desai) after studying the ombudsman model in Scandinavian countries (who have had an ombudsman for over 200 years), recommended the setting up of two special authorities designated as Lok Pal and Lok Ayukta for the redressal of citizens' grievances. The first Jan Lokpal Bill was proposed by Shanti Bhushan in 1968 and passed in the 4th Lok Sabha in 1969, but did not pass through the Rajya Sabha. Subsequently, Lok Pal Bills were introduced in 1971, 1977, 1985, again by Ashoke Kumar Sen, while serving as Law Minister in the Rajiv Gandhi cabinet, and again in 1989, 1996, 1998, 2001, 2005 and in 2008, yet they were never passed.

While the Central government was still debating the establishment of the institution of Lok Pal, many states had already set up the institution of Lok Ayuktas. Maharashtra set up Lok Ayukta in 1971, Uttar Pradesh in 1975, Karnataka in 1985. By 2002, eighteen states had enacted Lok Ayukta.

Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas Act, 2013

Finally, in 2011 anti-corruption crusader Anna Hazare fought to get the Jan Lok Pal bill passed, he went on hunger strike, it led to nationwide protests in support and the bill got passed. The Lok Pal and Lok Ayuktas Act 2013 came into force from 16 January 2014. The legislation envisages that the Lok Pal would receive complaints of corruption against the Prime Minister, Ministers, Members of Parliament, officers of the Central government (all levels) and against functionaries of an entity that is

wholly or partly financed by the government.

The Bill also made it mandatory for all states to set up Lok Ayuktas within one year of the passage of the bill.

Manipur Lok Ayukta Act, 2014

In March 2014, the Manipur Legislative Assembly passed the 'Manipur Lok Ayukta Bill, 2014', it received the assent of the President of India on 23rd October 2014 and it became an Act - 'Manipur Lok Ayukta Act, 2014'.

The Manipur Lok Ayukta should consist of a Chairman and two members of whom one should be a Judicial Member. They have to be appointed by the Governor on the recommendations of the Selection Committee. The Selection Committee consists of 1) the Chief Minister, 2) the Speaker, 3) the Leader of Opposition in Legislative Assembly, 4) the Chief Justice of High Court or a Judge of the High Court nominated by him and 5) an eminent Jurist recommended by the Chairman and the Members.

Jurisdiction of Lok Ayukta includes the Chief Minister of Manipur, Minister, Members of Manipur Legislative Assembly, officers and officials of State Government.

Chapter VI of the Manipur Lok Ayukta Act, 2014 states:

14. (1) Subject to the provisions of this Act, the Lok Ayukta shall inquire or cause an inquiry to be conducted into any matter involved in, or arising from, or complaint in respect of the following, namely:-

- a) any person who is or has been a Chief Minister; [Provided that the Lok Ayukta shall not inquire into any allegation of corruption against the Chief Minister unless a full bench of the Lok Ayukta considers the initiation of inquiry and at least two-thirds of its members approve of such inquiry.]
- b) any person who is or has been a Minister of the State;
- c) any person who is or has been a Member of the Manipur Legislative Assembly;

d) all officers and employees of the State, from amongst the public servants defined in sub-clause (i) and (ii) of clause (c) of section 2 of Prevention of Corruption Act, 1988 when serving or who has served, in connection with the affairs of the State;

e) all officers and employees referred to in clause (d) or equivalent in any body or Board or corporation or authority or company or society or trust or autonomous body (by whatever means called) established by an Act of the State Legislature or wholly or partly financed by the State Government or controlled by it.

f) any person who is or has been a director, manager, secretary or other officer of every other society or association of persons or trust (whether registered under any law for the time being in force or not), by whatever name called, wholly, partly financed or aided by the State Government and the annual income of which exceeds such amount as the State Government may by notification specify;

g) any person who is or has been a director, manager, secretary or other officer of every other society or association of persons or trust (whether registered under any law for the time being in force or not) in receipt of any donation from the public and the annual income of which exceeds such amount as the State Government may by notification specify or from any foreign source under the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010 in excess of ten lakh rupees in a year or such higher amount as the Central Government may by notification specify;

(The rest of the clauses and sub-clauses are not included in this article due to lack of space)

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(To be contd.....)

MSPDCL POWER DRIVE

A team of Manipur State Power Distribution Company Limited (MSPDCL) during one of its drives conducted on 17th and 18th November at different locations in Imphal and Thoubal caught the following defaulter power consumers for meter tapping and unauthorized connection.

IED - III DEFAULTERS' LIST:

1. Th. Sarat Singh from Singjamei Thongam Leikai
 2. H. Binodkumar from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai
 3. N. Sanjeet Singh from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai.
 4. N. Sanjoy Singh from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai
 5. N. Tarunjit Singh from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai
 6. N. Indrajit Singh from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai
 7. N. Somorjit Singh from Singjamei Mayeng Leikai
- The above defaulter have paid Rs. 40,000 as penalty amount for Meter Bypass.
8. Th. Harimohon Singh from Singjamei
 9. M. Sundari Devi from Heirangothong Maibam Leikai
- The above two defaulter have paid Rs 25,000 as penalty amount for Meter Bypass.

IED-II DEFAULTERS' LIST:

1. M. Manglem Singh from Thangmeiband Lairenhanjaba Leikai for tapping before Meter
Penalty amount- 15,000/-
2. Kh. Bembem Devi from Thangmeiband Lairenhanjaba Leikai for tapping before Meter
Penalty amount- 9000
3. RK Singhajit Singh from Sagolbandh Nepra Menjor Leikai for tapping before Meter
Penalty amount- 7000
4. K. Jane Singh from Takyel Khongban for tapping before Meter
Penalty amount- 4000
5. K. Ramesh Singh from Takyel Khongban for tapping before Meter
Penalty amount- 4000
6. A. Chitra Devi from Takyel Khongban for unauthorised connection
Penalty- Temporarily disconnected for 6 months with a fine amount of 20,000 (to be paid), also has to clear an outstanding dues of around 60,000 against (L) Ayekpam Muhindro.

THOUBAL DIVISION DEFAULTERS' LIST:

1. Mutum Kesho Singh from Ningombam Bazaar for unauthorized use of water pump
Penalty- Rs. 1000 and gave warning.
2. Waikhom Biken Singh from Heibong Thabam Leikai, Ningombam for use of power more than sanction load. One pipe cutting machine was taken from consumer premises. It will not be given to consumer unless he does not pay penalty.

State News

Assam Rifles organizes lecture on Drug Abuse

IT News
Imphal, Nov. 20: In its bid to spread awareness of ill effects of drugs amongst the youth of Senapati district, the Jwalamukhi battalion under Senapati Brigade of Red Shield Division organized a lecture for students of various age

groups regarding Drugs abuse, First Aid and illicit trafficking on 16 Nov 2015. The aim of organizing the lecture was to impress upon the youth the extremely detrimental effect of the usage of these substances on the physical and mental well being of people.

National Integration Tour Flagged-In at Red Shield Division

IT News
Imphal, Nov. 20: A National Integration Tour from Nonei to Bangalore and back was organized by 8 Assam Rifles of Loktak Bde under the aegis of Red Shield Division. It comprised of 23 school children, including thirteen girls and two teachers hailing from different parts of Tamenglong, Senapati and Imphal West districts of Manipur.

The aim of the educational tour was to provide the much needed exposure to young children about varied developments that are taking place in the rest of the country and to introduce them to the culture, tradition, people and landscapes which make up 'our great Nation'. It also encompassed visits to various historical, cultural, educational and places of tourist interests in Bangalore. This tour has given a positive impetus to their perceptions and has inculcated a sense of nationality in them. During the interaction the children narrated their memoirs of the tour and the ineffaceable moments they experienced. The tour signifies the ongoing endeavor of Security forces to channelize the youth towards a better tomorrow and also to encourage them to work towards the development and prosperity of the Nation.