

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, October 22, 2015

Indices of life

The world over, with advancements made in various spheres encompassing the whole spectrum of life be it social, technological, economic, political, educational, health and medicine or arts and culture; traditional measures of different aspects of life- both personal and social- have come up short of truly expressing the changes and the factors effecting those changes. In today's evolved world characterized by heightened awareness of one's surroundings and social implications, increasing attempts are being made to measure and analyse different aspects of life in order to create as perfect a society as humanly possible. Social thinkers, psychologists and analysts, and even concerned heads of states have come up with different yardsticks to try and uncover the real situation and the reasons behind it. Indices such as The Satisfaction with Life Index, created by Adrian G. White, an analytic social psychologist at the University of Leicester, using data from a metestudy is an attempt to show life satisfaction in different nations by calculating subjective well being which correlates most strongly with health, wealth and access to basic education. Gross National Happiness (GNH) is a phrase coined in 1972 by Bhutan's fourth Dragon King, Jigme Singye Wangchuck. It represents a commitment to building an economy that would serve Bhutan's culture based on Buddhist spiritual values broadly categorized under four heads: Sustainable development, Preservation and promotion of cultural values, Conservation of the natural environment and Establishment of good governance instead of western material development gauged by gross domestic product (GDP). The GNH concept has inspired a modern political happiness movement. Through the contribution of several scholars from around the globe, economists and politicians, the concept evolved into a socioeconomic development model, and in July 2011, the United Nations passed Resolution 65/309, that was adopted unanimously by the General Assembly in July 2011 placing "happiness" on the global development agenda. Another set of criteria, The Social Progress Index published by the nonprofit Social Progress Imperative measures the extent to which countries provide for the social and environmental needs of their citizens and the well-being of a society by observing social and environmental outcomes directly rather than the economic factors. The social and environmental factors include wellness (including health, shelter and sanitation), equality, inclusion, sustainability and personal freedom and safety. Our part of the world has evidently not started warming up to these concerns that promulgate the holistic development and progress of life. Right now, we are still struggling to make do each passing day without having to have our vehicles and belongings stolen or snatched, standing in serpentine queues to avail services rendered with grudging incompetence, running after officials to expedite routine work as favours, keeping ourselves and our family safe from the violent whims of the state security, the volatile mob and the swarming vigilantes. Quantity of life still takes precedence over quality of life. It is high time to burst the bubble of self-accorded greatness as a collective society and embrace the reality. The rest, as is often said, is bound to follow.

Ballabgarh: Seven arrested for killing Dalit kids

ANI Faridabad, Oct. 22: Seven accused have been arrested so far for the death of two Dalit children who were burnt alive at Sunper village in Ballabgarh. The children, aged two-and-a-half years and eleven months, died after their house was set on fire. Seven policemen, who were part of a team deployed for the security of Dalits in the village about a year ago after a similar attack, were suspended.

The children's family has said that they will not perform their last rites till all the accused are punished. Haryana Chief Minister M. L. Khattar had earlier asked the political parties to refrain from giving the Ballabgarh immolation incident a political colour, adding that it should not be looked through the prism of caste politics. Meanwhile, the Congress asserted that the incident was a miserable failure of law and order situation and the government machinery in Haryana.

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National & International

Japan offers India soft loan for \$15 billion bullet train

Reuters New Delhi, Oct. 22: Japan has offered to finance India's first bullet train, estimated to cost \$15 billion, at an interest rate of less than 1 percent, officials said, stealing a march on China, which is bidding for other projects on the world's fourth-largest network. Tokyo was picked to assess the feasibility of building the 505-kilometre corridor linking Mumbai with Ahmedabad, the commercial capital of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home state, and concluded it would be technically and financially viable. The project to build and supply the route will be put out to tender, but offering finance makes Japan the clear frontrunner. Last month China won the contract to assess the feasibility of a high-speed train between Delhi and Mumbai, a 1,200-km route estimated to cost twice as much. No loan has yet been offered. Japan's decision to give virtually free finance for Modi's pet programme is part of its broader push back against China's involvement in infrastructure development in South Asia over the past several years. "There are several (players)

offering the high-speed technology. But technology and funding together, we only have one offer. That is the Japanese," said AK Mital, the chairman of the Indian Railway Board, which manages the network. The two projects are part of a 'Diamond Quadrilateral' of high speed trains over 10,000km of track that India wants to set up connecting Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Kolkata. Japan has offered to meet 80 percent of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad project cost, on condition that India buys 30 percent of equipment including the coaches and locomotives from Japanese firms, officials said. Japan's International Cooperation Agency, which led the feasibility survey, said the journey time between Mumbai and Ahmedabad would be cut to two hours from seven. The route will require 11 new tunnels including one undersea near Mumbai. "What complicates the process is Japanese linking funding to use of their technology. There must be tech transfer," said Mital. **Rickety rail** JICA declined to comment on the details of its offer. "The report has already been handed over to

India, and the Indian government is now in the process of making a consideration," a spokeswoman said. Toshihiro Yamakoshi, counsellor in the economic section of the Japanese embassy, said Japanese companies were keen to collaborate with their Indian counterparts on the rail project as part of Modi's Make-in-India programme. He said it was too early to provide details of the cooperation. Tokyo's push in India comes just weeks after it lost out to China on the contract to build Indonesia's first fast-train link. Beijing offered \$5 billion in loans without asking for guarantees, an Indonesian official said, ending a months-long battle to build the line linking Jakarta with the textile hub of Bandung. Japan's NHK broadcaster quoted Transport Minister Keiichi Ishii as saying that Prime Minister Shinzo Abe had instructed him to step up exports of transport systems to India and Southeast Asia. "It is very regrettable that a high-speed railway project in Indonesia was awarded to China," he said. China won the Delhi-Mumbai survey after securing clearance from Indian security agencies

long worried about China's involvement in Indian infrastructure. The two neighbours fought a war in 1962 over a border dispute that remains unresolved, though trade between them is booming. India's cabinet will take a decision on the Japanese proposal over the next few weeks, an Indian railway official said. He said there were lingering concerns about whether the billions of dollars required for high-speed rail might be more usefully spent in modernising the railway system. "There is a lot of money involved in this. The different departments are weighing the implications. Should we be committing all our resources to a single high-speed line," the railway official said on condition of anonymity. "The railways have not attempted anything as big as this before in terms of costs," the official said. India's rickety state-controlled rail system, which moves 23 million people a day, has a poor safety record and is in desperate need of funds to modernise it. The average speed of trains is 54km/hour, and rail experts have argued that the priority ought to be to improve the speed and safety on existing trains and routes.

Must keep ethical education intact to preserve cultural values, says Bhagwat



ANI Nagpur, Oct. 22: Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat on Thursday underscored the need for keeping ethical education intact along with

the current education system to preserve nation's cultural ethos. "Ethical education should be made part of education policy, to preserve our social and cultural values intact. Many experiments with education are on in our country. We need to summarise all of these and evolve a new model," Bhagwat said in his annual 'Vijayadashami' speech here. "It is also important to reduce the costs of education and standardise it. We need basic changes in text and content," he added. Praising Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Government for its approach in running the country, Bhagwat also said there was a new feeling of hope in the country now with the Bharatiya Janata Party

coming to power at the Centre in 2014, compared to the atmosphere of disappointment two years ago. "India's image in the world has improved since then. A new idea of India is rising in the world. Whenever there is a crisis situation in the world, we come forth to help," he added. The RSS chief further advised the government to pay attention to farmers, agriculture, labourers, artisans and the cooperative sector. "We need to have a feedback from the ground on what is happening to policies. Continued dialogue with all sections is very important," he added. Bhagwat further stressed the need for maintaining unity in the country despite prevailing differences.

"Situations would keep changing, but we should ensure there is unity among the people, if there is varied views. We need to discuss and find a way forward," he added. Citing the example of Baba Saheb Ambedkar, Bhagwat said the latter did not launch a protest against untouchability, but changed his own path to achieve his goal for society that was equal in all aspects. Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis and Union minister Nitin Gadkari also attended the function. Every year the RSS chief speaks on the occasion of Vijayadashami. The day assumes significance as Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar founded the RSS on this day at Nagpur in 1925.

Andhra temple administration adorns deity with Rs.2.5 crores worth of cash and gold

ANI Visakhapatnam, Oct.22 : The administrators of a 130-year-old temple in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam District has decorated a deity of the Goddess Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari with both Indian and foreign currency notes and gold ornaments worth Rs.2.5 crores on the occasion of the nine-day festival of Navratri. The decoration at the Sri Kanyakaparameswari Devasthanam Temple in Visakhapatnam City was done to mark the 'Sri Mahalakshmi Avataram' of the goddess during the Navratri celebrations. On Ashtami, the eighth day of Navratri, the goddess is worshipped as Lakshmi, the goddess of wealth. During the nine-day-long Navratri festival, devotee Hindus worship the Goddess Durga in all of her nine manifestations. Navratri began on October 13 and concludes today. It is marked by celebrations involving prayer, music and dance by both men and women. Goddess Durga represents the feminine force which

guides and destroys all evil from earth. The festival is also about the annual visit of the goddess with her children to her ancestral home on earth. For the last 15 years, the idol of Goddess Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari is decorated daily in different forms of Goddess Durga. The Sri Kanyakaparameswari Devasthanam temple is dedicated to Sri Vasavi Kanyaka Parameswari, the goddess or "kula devatha" of the Arya Vysya community as mentioned in the Vasavi Paranumalu written in Telugu during the 10th century A.D. The most famous temple of this goddess is located at Penugonda, West Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh. K. Ramakrishnan, the president of the temple's administrative wing, said, "We started with only one 1,00,000 (rupees) first and after that we are continuing 1,00,000; 200,000; 3,00,000; 4,00,000 and now yesterday we decorated Mahalakshmi avataram with money and gold, 2.5 crore (rupees 25 million) cash and

one crore (rupees 10 million) worth of gold." The Indian currency was in the denominations of rupee 1 to rupees 1,000. The Navratri festival culminates on the tenth day, known as Dussehra, which marks victory of good over evil.

Imphal Times did not have its publication on October 21, 2015 on account of BOR Festival.

'BJP's stand on reservation policy motivated by RSS'

ANI New Delhi, Oct.22: The Congress Party on Thursday alleged that the BJP-led NDA Government's stand on the reservation policy was motivated by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). "It should be seen whether Mohan Bhagwat has the courage to speak up his might because he was for the relook of the reservation. That is the policy of the RSS. The ruling party in New Delhi is the BJP, but the decisions taken by the BJP Government is that of RSS policies," Congress leader P. C. Chacko said while asserting that

the hidden agenda of the BJP and RSS is communalising the Indian society. "In the background of the Bihar elections, Bhagwat may not come out in open and may reserve it for some other event otherwise they will find it difficult. Their basic approach is that they want a relook of the existing reservation policy in the country," he added. BJP president Amit Shah had earlier said that the party steadfastly supports the reservation policy and does not want any change whatever in the existing quota system.