

Editorial

Imphal Tuesday, January 10, 2016

The public: more than mere numbers

With the announcement of dates for state election, the long run for parties contending for the coveted seats of power is on the home stretch now. And with it, last minute scramble to present a semblance of continuing development activities is being seen around the state capital. The long trench being dug right in the middle of the road along the RIMS road, the demolition of sewage drains along Keishamthong-Elangbam Leikai constructed just a few years ago being few of the numerous examples. Roads are being laid with stones and soil which presents a frustrating experience for the public with harmful dust posing a threat to health and the rough surface causing accidents. Come rain and the damage is complete. Such incomprehensible efforts to hoodwink the public is nothing new, and is the preferred method to extract the most political mileage by every political party without exception for as long as one would care to remember. The irony though, is the public is not buying any of it, and therefore the whole futile exercise has come to represent the foolhardy misconceptions of those drunk with power and resources but are insulated from the real concerns and problems of the general public.

Why is the government and its implementing agencies so consistently stepping on its own toes when it comes to the actual delivery of developmental projects envisaged to benefit the people of the state? Why is it so apparently difficult to draw up plans which would remain functional for at least a decade, if not more? And why is there no visible mechanism in place to effectively monitor the activities and pull up erring parties when it comes to such development activities for betterment of the people? And why are those at the helm of affairs of the state still unable to deliver efficiently and with earnestness any single project without focusing their entire attention to retaining the biggest possible cut for themselves?

Development and progress is an ongoing process and the manner of implementing such projects and plans subsequently determine the pace of growth. It would not be too far off the mark to observe that the present turmoil and social unrest is a manifestation of the prolonged and systematic failure and deliberate attempts by those in authority to divert resources to their personal coffers at the risk of jeopardizing the projects. Siphoning of public resources has become so institutionalized that the question has shifted from 'why?' to 'how much?' It is the accumulation of the little nagging discontents and frustrations being made to endure over the years as those who are put to power indulges in looting the resources of the state, promotes nepotism and practices corruption with blatant disregard for the sentiments of the common people that has snowballed into an issue that has taken on a more sinister hue threatening the very existence of the state as we know today. It is the very system of governance and administration being practiced in the state at present which gives rise to elements feeding and prospering on the uncertainties and insecurities of the people. It is time for those in power to consider the general public as more than mere numbers they need to shore up to achieve the coveted positions. The very people are the ones who made them what they are, and disregarding their own source of power and influence will only spell their doom.

US condemns terror attacks in Egypt

PTI
Washington, Jan 10: The US has strongly condemned the terror attacks in Egypt in which nine persons were killed by militants linked to ISIS, saying it remains firmly committed to the country's security. "The US strongly condemns today's terrorist attack on checkpoints in Egypt's North Sinai governorate which killed at least nine people and injured many others," Spokesman of the National Security Council, White House Ned Price said yesterday. "Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims and families of all those who were killed and injured in this attack and in other recent violence."

"The United States remains firmly committed to Egypt's security and will continue to support the government of Egypt as it contends with ongoing threats from terrorist groups in the Sinai and elsewhere," Price added. Heavily-armed militants linked to ISIS yesterday targeted two police checkpoints using an explosive-laden garbage truck and rocket-propelled grenades, killing eight policemen and one civilian, the latest attack in Egypt's restive North Sinai.

A statement issued by the Ministry of Interior said that about 20 terrorists participated in the attack on al-Matafi checkpoint in Al-Arish city.

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JUDICIOUS SELECTION OF CANDIDATES

- Need of the hour -

By : Seram Neken

The job counters have been abruptly closed. Thanks to the Election Commission of India for enforcing the election code of conduct in the midst of unruly job business going on in Manipur during the last few weeks. Twenty lakhs, thirty lakhs, forty lakhs and fifty lakhs – the members of our affluent society were ready to pay for the salaried government jobs for their sons and daughters. Almost all recruitments done in haste during the short spell of a few weeks involved exchange of currencies in bundles from one pocket to the other. This writer also learned that a number of youths were also gifted with government jobs totally free of cost in some assembly constituencies. The job market was heavily rushed with powerful and affluent shoppers. Now the recruitment fair has ended.

Countdown to the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly elections begins. Aspiring candidates and political parties are in hectic schedule for wooing the electorate. Wealthy and powerful individuals, in the social workers' attire with folded hands have started frequenting door to door with a vow to serve the poor people. Meanwhile, majority of the voters, as usual, are surely awaiting the new 2000-Rupee notes knocking their doors. All burning social issues have now lost relevance. Political ideologies are no longer guiding principles of our leaders. ILP, AFSPA, integrity, Loktak, Ema Market, Street Vendor, so on and so forth will no longer be our concern. With money playing a greater role in elections, 'Vote' has become a

mere trading commodity between the sellers and the buyers. With such electioneering going on for a number of years, our elected leaders consider their positions and status more valuable than the very issues of the people.

Very recently we have witnessed our honorable elected leaders demonstrating more unanimity and smartness in times of crises affecting their very own positions, rather than in matters concerning the people's grievances. During the hectic agitations for implementation of Inner Line Permit system in Manipur sometime back, the leaders of various political parties including the chief minister and the cabinet ministers had taken enormous time in seeking appointments with the Prime Minister, the Home Minister and other concerned leaders in Delhi for pursuing the matter relating to the pending bills. Their proposed journey to Delhi for pursuing the approval of the bills was delayed on account of, in their words, not getting appointments with the higher-ups. However, the people of Manipur witnessed how dynamic and united our MLAs were in rushing to Delhi to react to the president's rule rumour. In the winter morning on that fateful day, members of Congress Legislature Party hurried to the Chief Minister's official residence for an urgent meet, and by evening, a team of 52 Congressmen reached the Capital to save their positions. In no other issue affecting the state and their people, did our leaders respond in such haste.

In such a state of affair and narrow

mindsets of our leaders, the people of Manipur have developed a trust deficit on the political system in general and the politicians particular. With the election and governance becoming a big business, a number of wealthy and powerful notwithstanding their commitment to the people's cause, come out to contest elections in the nook and corner of the state. Besides the long queues at banks, ATM booths, Oil pumps and what not, another queue has been lined up on the eve of general elections. It is not of the voters in front of polling booths, but of the politicians who are aspiring for party tickets to contest the election. We, the people of Manipur, should be proud that we have innumerable number of leaders who appear to be dedicated and sacrificed for the service of the people. Moreover, we have social workers who are wealthy, powerful and capable. The current fashion is: "Earn money by hook or by crook, become self-styled social workers, join politics, contest elections, be leaders and loot the people". Hence, with the so called social workers mushrooming in the nook and corner of the state, there is no reason Manipur lags behind the rest of the world.

As soon as the party tickets for the forthcoming general elections are announced, it is for sure that lotuses on top of buildings will turn aeroplanes, cars, lanterns, electric bulbs, tractors, spades or any other, while the flags with 'Hand symbol on it' erected at the gates will be replaced by those of others. In

Manipur, defection from one political party to another for contesting elections is not a matter of shame, and we are sure that our politicians never stick to party ideology. Their only goal is to contest election from any political platform. Party ideology, leadership quality, political ethics and Election agenda have no place in Manipur polity.

With the dates for the poll approaching, the major political parties particularly the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) is surely in quandary over the allotment of party tickets to its plentiful of aspiring candidates. Barring a few assembly constituencies, almost all constituencies have no less than three candidates aspiring for BJP ticket. The Congress party is not completely free from such impasse over party tickets in some assembly constituencies. When ticket losers of the major political parties shift affiliations at the eleventh hour to contest elections, the whole political scenario of the state will get an overhaul. Therefore, psephologists in Manipur will be in a difficult situation in analyzing trends of this upcoming election because of the likely topsy turvy in the political parties after the ticket announcement.

Now the time has come for setting a certain basic minimum qualification and experience for those who aspire to be party candidates. Money should not be the criteria for selecting candidates. Each and every political party must at least consider the personal career, character and degree of involvement in social activities of the aspirant candidates while issuing party tickets.

National News

Militant killed in encounter with security forces

PTI
Srinagar, Jan 10: A militant was killed today in an encounter with security forces in Kashmir's north Bandipora district, police said. Acting on specific intelligence input about the presence of the militant in Parray Mohalla in Hajin area, security forces launched a search operation in the village, they said. As the forces were conducting the search operation, the hiding militant opened fire on them. In the ensuing encounter, the militant was killed, a police official said. The identity and group affiliation of the militant was not immediately known.

9 IEDs planted by naxals recovered in Chhattisgarh

PTI
Raipur, Jan 10: Security forces today recovered as many as nine IEDs (improvised explosive devices) allegedly planted by naxals, in Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Sukma district.

The explosives were planted near a culvert on a kuccha road between Bheiji and Injam villages under Bheiji police station limits, Sukma Superintendent of Police Indira Kalyan Elesale told PTI.

The haul was made when a joint team of CRPF 219 battalion and District Reserve Group (DRG) was out on a search operation from Bheiji, around 500 kms away from the state capital. Security forces have its camps between Bheiji and Injam.

After covering a distance of about two kms, when patrolling party reached near a culvert, they spotted the explosives placed beneath the earth, he said.

The IEDs of low intensity were planted to target security forces during their operation in this strategically important region, the SP said adding that further details are awaited as search operation was still underway in the area.

Contd. from page 1

National Children Residential Painting Camp

He said the main aim and objectives of the residential camp is to make the children realized their inner potentials through the medium of art, camp is specially designed for children to inculcate a good habit of converting the wasteful summer and winter vacation into a productive Artistic vacation. The main purpose of inviting the prominent Cine Stars and eminent personalities for a lunch on Programme and short interaction and also a photo session will definitely encourage their moral spirit during the camp. Such ventures with special guests/ Artists will certainly boost up the spirit of the children who are in the camp and also making this venture more challenging, he added. Children Painting Camp for 7 days on residential basis will do great wonders and miracles by their

simple forms of expressions through sketches/drawing/paintings/posters etc. children will be given 7day to paint, make, sculptured whatever they feel like. their minds and hands will be free for 7 days well guided by eminent experts on each day. Moreover, the cine stars and different eminent personalities will encourage the young artists with lunch and interaction on each day, its said.

During the Children residential Painting camp an interaction programme, Basic concept & skill development of drawing and practical study of drawing & painting demonstrated by renowned Artists of Manipur on different 6 days will also be held. In this Children residential Painting camp the renowned Manipuri actor and also National film awardee

Leishangthem Thonhoi will be the Brand Ambassador and the students from Cashar, Hojai, Guwahati, Mizoram and Tripura will participate in this camp, he said. About 'Brain Drain Exposia': The Brain-Drain Exposia" (a multi-talent hunt unit) is an active unit under the banner of the Institute of Rural Education-IRE, Wanging expanded and founded in 2008 with the kind co-sponsorship of Huiyen Lanpao and MAMICON Academy, a prominent film banner of 'Mami-Sami'. Rakesh Naorem, Programme Co-ordinator 3rd Brain-Drain Exposia who is also Secretary, Patriotic Writers Forum Manipur, Ch. Birendra Asst. News Editor DDK Imphal, L. Subachandra, Programme Sponsor and Ch. Ranbir, Member, Patriotic Writers Forum, Manipur attended today press conference.

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