

Editorial

Imphal Thursday, January 5, 2016

When election subsides major issues

Poll date has been announced. Following the announcement political parties and aspiring candidates of the 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly had already kicked off their campaign to make sure that they get elected in the upcoming assembly election. People across the state too have been swept by their thirst for power.

The prolonged economic blockade called by UNC, the fury of the JCILPS volunteers at various stages and the unsettled dispute to the introduction of a legislation to protect the indigenous people of the state will as well as other demands for the cause of the nation will be now put to complete silence. Leave aside the demands or the differences, when matters which give direct impact to the common people who live on hand to mouth, when children are being forced to stay home without attending school, when government servant are barred from attending their offices due to the action of some groups placing demands to the government, then such thing is a serious matter. But people will make no differences. Majority will now be intoxicated with election fever.

The prolonged social tensions and manifestations of discontents have taken various shades and hues with the course of time. What is becoming more apparent with each passing day is not the clarity for the expressed demands, but for the implications of such agitations. The increasing rigidity of the stances of the opposing parties has increased the necessity for an effective and speedy intervention. The ruling party in the state however, having found themselves caught in the middle as always, has started the process of implementing its tried and tested formula of dumping the whole issue with the centre, or at least making it seem like so.

Meanwhile, the adamancy of the extremists in sticking to their ends of the issue has elevated the present imbroglio up another notch in complexity. But for all the wise talks and fervent campaigns, the very fact remains that political boundaries and areas are never constant, and can be changed. Separation of East Timor from Indonesian occupation and, closer home, formation of Telangana state from Andhra Pradesh drives home the point. What is also an undeniable fact is that these separations have been at huge costs to lives and properties. Choosing to ignore the fact would be living in self denial and will eventually cost us more than we can afford to lose. There still is, however, a faint ray of hope for the beleaguered people of the state. History bears witness to the fact that the people of the state have endured unimaginable sufferings and extreme torments in the hands of the neighbouring Burmese invaders. That the very reason for the survival and continued existence of the people of the state irrespective of their community, customs, language or beliefs was the cooperation, support and solace extended and exchanged during the darkest days without the consideration for caste or creed. Are we ready to discard the very attribute which ensured the collective survival of our varied communities and cultures in the most trying of times? The history of Manipur is one which is made up of the myriad cultures and customs being practiced in various farms and regions. It would indeed be a great insult to our forefathers in whose name we are preparing to take up the cudgel, if we are to part ways for the sake of our different cultures and customs. But if ever things have to come to such a pass, the prospect of bidding loving farewell is a distant dream. For those who are hatching the plots, there is more to life than a few acres of land or a few thousands worth of freebies. Who knows, the rest of the world might even leave their countries with us for more prospective planets while we are still drawing and redrawing our claims

Two-day Assam Biotech Conclave to begin today in Guwahati

ANI
Guwahati, Jan. 5: The two-day Assam Biotech Conclave will begin today in Guwahati. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal will inaugurate the conclave in presence of Science and Technology Minister Keshab Mahanta. Mahanta said that the conclave is being organized by Guwahati Biotech Park in association with industry body FINER. He said that this conclave will bring together the policy makers, Industry professionals, Investment bankers and academicians to deliberate the latest trends in this sector. The conclave will create business and partnering opportunities for its stakeholders and to showcase the facilities and opportunities offered by Guwahati Biotech Park. Mahanta said the draft policy on Assam Biotechnology will be made public today.

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National & International News

Arvind Kejriwal's former secretary, Rajendra Kumar alleges harassment by CBI, seeks retirement

New Delhi, Jan.5: CM Arvind Kejriwal's former principal secretary, Rajendra Kumar, who was suspended in July last year after his arrest by the CBI in a case of alleged corruption, has sought voluntary retirement. In a 26-page letter to the Delhi chief secretary on Wednesday, Kumar quoted rules to plead that his request be accepted within three weeks. In an emotional appeal, he said, "I have no personal knowledge of an honest, efficient officer being implicated in false criminal cases, arrested, prosecuted and harassed in all imaginable and unimaginable manners. I have never earlier seen or heard of brute state powers being used in such brazen and bizarre manner, which I have experienced. Never earlier have I...heard of investigative agencies so openly flouting all norms of professionalism." Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's former principal secretary, Rajendra Kumar, has said in his letter to the chief secretary, seeking voluntary retirement, that "never earlier have I experienced the kind of such utter disregard for system, process, protocol, transparency and decency which I have experienced first-hand in my own case." The 1989-batch IAS officer, who has worked in various capacities in Delhi government, faced an Anti-Corruption Branch (ABC) case after bureaucrat Ashish Joshi alleged that Kumar had as director of education

and later secretary (IT and Health) and VAT commissioner set up various companies to award work orders without tenders, causing financial loss to Delhi government. He alleged that Endeavors Systems Private Ltd (ESPL) was one such company. The CBI moved in later and the trial is on. Kumar alleged that during his interrogation by CBI, he was repeatedly told that he would be allowed to go free if he implicated the chief minister. Leveling serious allegations against the investigating agency, he said: "Maybe this was the reason for CBI to go to such extraordinary lengths. Not only this, the CBI, just to force people to implicate me and the chief minister, has beaten up dozens of people, and some of them sustained permanent major injuries." He added pointedly that "it is the same set of people in CBI who forced B K Bansal and his son to commit suicide." According to Kumar, his troubles started soon after he was invited by Kejriwal to work with him in December 2013. He claimed that after the CM resigned in February 2014, the LG had conveyed to him that people had informed him that he had identified himself too closely with the new government. In his second stint with the state government, he faced the ACB case. When the Government failed to find anything against him, he has alleged, his name was dragged into the CNG

fitness scam which dates back to 2002 on the point why he didn't cancel the contract during his tenure as commissioner of transport in 2012 though legally there was no such need, he said. Finally, the CBI registered an FIR and began investigating him. "In my case, it has been alleged that I have given contracts worth Rs 9.5 crore without following due process. The CBI has not been able to even allege that a single paisa has come to me," he claimed. He was arrested on July 4, 2016, seven months after the FIR was registered and suspended on July 6. "My suspension for three months was to end on October 2, 2016. There is a Supreme Court judgement guiding the course of action in such cases (Ajay Kumar Choudhary versus Union of India, February 16, 2015) ...Still the Government, in clear violation of the Supreme Court judgement, which is the law of the land, and its own office memorandum, illegally extended my suspension by another 180 days." Finally, on December 19, the CBI filed a chargesheet against him. He was accused of criminal conspiracy, cheating and forgery under IPC and provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act, along with eight others and ESPL. CBI said Kumar abused his official position by "favouring a particular firm in the last few years in getting tenders of Delhi government departments".

Narrating how he has been hounded, Kumar has alleged that income-tax notices have been slapped on him only to harass him, his tenant at his house at the Civil Service Officers Welfare Society in Greater Noida threatened and scared away - the house is lying vacant now - and his subsistence allowance for July, August and September was released only in October and nothing has been released since then. This amount has also not been enhanced from 50% of the salary to 75% at the end of three months, as is the rule, he says. This is apart from a series of raids and searches. "The administrative environment appears to have become so poisonous that anybody who decides to continue with his belief in political neutrality of a civil servant is bound to get suffocated," he says, claiming that he has finally decided to serve people in "other ways" and not by working in the government. In the earlier part of the letter, Kumar recalled his humble origins - his father was a sub-inspector, - and said it was only because of the welfare schemes of the government that he was able to have a distinguished career and come this far. Seeking a quick exit now, he has argued the government of NCT of Delhi is competent to grant him voluntary retirement. That, however, may not come easily.

Contd. from previous issue

Intensifying Global Crisis and Conflict

(This paper was presented by Malcolm Guy on 6th Ojha Sanajaoba Memorial lecture held at VC's Court room on Dec. 30, 2016)

Elsewhere in the US, workers are fighting for a \$15 an hour minimum wage to enable working people and their families to get enough to eat and have proper housing; the struggle is paying off for many. Several cities, including San Francisco, Seattle, Los Angeles, New York and Washington have passed ordinances that gradually increase the minimum wage to \$15. On July 1, 2018, San Francisco is expected to become the first US city to reach a minimum wage of \$15 an hour. Meanwhile, in Chicago and other cities, teachers continue to fight for good schools for their students and decent wages for themselves. In Europe, workers and the people have conducted large mass actions demanding a stop to government cutbacks in spending on social welfare and public services, higher wages for working families, protection of trade union organizing and bargaining rights. In Greece they are demanding freedom from debt bondage to the EU banks and other instruments of imperialist globalization. Tens of thousands of people marched in the streets of Brussels, Madrid, Helsinki, Warsaw, Prague, Berlin, Munich, Paris and other European cities last year and more recently to oppose the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) between the EU and the US. In Asia, the factory floor of the global economy, protests and strikes against multinational corporations and governments have been increasing, including in China. According to CNN.com, from 2011 to 2013, China Labor Bulletin (CLB), a Hong Kong-based workers' right group, recorded around 1,200 strikes and protests across China. In 2014 alone, there were more than 1,300 incidents. The following year, that number rose to over 2,700 - more than one a day in Guangdong province - a pattern that has continued into 2016 with no

province of China unaffected by strikes or worker protests. A 2010 strike at the Nanhai Honda car plant in southern China was a turning point for the country's labor movement - showing for the first time that a young migrant workforce could stand up and successfully fight for their rights, according to Eli Friedman, author of *Insurgency Trap: Labor Politics in Postsocialist China*. "The production line was brought to a halt by 23-year-old Tan Guocheng, who shouted: 'Don't work for such low wages! Don't work for such wages!' as he hit the emergency stop button. Dressed in matching, formless white uniforms and red Honda-branded baseball caps, dozens and then hundreds of young workers filled the factory's courtyard, chanting slogans and singing patriotic songs. The strike would last 19 days and grow to include almost the entire factory's workforce, crippling its production schedule and forcing management and government officials to cede to strikers' demands in a rare decisive victory for workers." In Indonesia and Cambodia workers have mounted nationwide actions for wages and have won significant increases in the last few years. These are linked to the global supply chains of multinational corporations, thus defying the global race to the bottom in wages. In India, the largest strike action in history was held last September will over 150 million workers marching in the streets against the neoliberal policies of the Narendra Modi government. Strong resistance has greeted Modi's sudden demonetization decision, which has hit peasants and working people particularly hard. In Kashmir, 2016 has seen the people once again rise up despite increased military operations and sweeping civilian arrests. In Manipur and Northeast India, resistance continues to the heavy militarisation, policing, proxy

and suppression of democratic voices as well as the use of the Armed Forces Special Powers Act, National Security Act, Unlawful Activities Prevention Act, Seditious Act and other repressive laws. In South Africa and Senegal, workers and people are resisting the privatization drive and fighting courageously to improve wages and living standards. In Nigeria, workers and people are opposing the price increase of basic commodities like petrol. In Burkina Faso, protesters took to the streets to topple the three-decade-old dictatorship. In both countries, anger is growing against the militarism and terrorism backed or instigated by US imperialism. There is also rising resistance in Africa, as in Latin America and elsewhere to transnational corporations scooping up farmland and war resources more commonly referred to as "land grabbing" and "water grabbing", which is putting food security at risk. In Venezuela, Bolivia, Ecuador, Brazil, Argentina and elsewhere the economic slowdown, resulting from the end of the commodities boom, is being exploited by the persistent big comprador-landlord oligarchs and rabid US puppets with attempts to reverse social gains achieved under progressive government. But workers and social movement are condemning and opposing US intervention and destabilization attempt in Paraguay, Honduras, Venezuela and other countries in the region. Meanwhile, opposition to the imposition of US overseas military bases is sharp in several locations, including Okinawa Island in Japan, Jeju Island in South Korea as well as the Philippines. In the face of the worsening atrocities being committed by the US, its imperialist allies and its proxies, more and more people are resisting the US-led imperialist war machine. Peoples' anger against the US runs wide and deep in Iraq, Syria,

Libya, Afghanistan and throughout West Asia where the worst crimes against humanity have been committed by US imperialism and its allies in recent decades. The struggle of the Palestinian and Kurdish peoples are some of the heroic examples of people's resistance in this region. They are showing the path of people's resistance against US imperialism and against the violence spread in the regions by US-backed terrorist groups. Elsewhere progressive and revolutionary movements are also waging struggles for national liberation and democracy, including wars for liberation in the Philippines, India, West Papua and Columbia. All over the globe the people are increasingly opposed to the wars of aggression that their government are waging in their name. To assist in widening and strengthening this movement, the International League of People's Struggle (ILPS), in coordination with the International Womens' Alliance (IWA), will be organizing a major international anti-imperialist war conference in Toronto, Canada in August 2-7, 2017. It is entitled, "Solidarity and Fightback: Building resistance to US-led war and militarism". As the imperialist system descends further into barbarism, workers and peoples everywhere must like their struggles to one another and to a broader resistance movement against monopoly capitalism, neoliberalism, state terror and imperialist wars. We must maximize opportunities to arouse, organize and mobilize amidst the worsening global crisis and inter-imperialist contradictions. Only the struggle against imperialism and for socialism will truly end capitalist crises and imperialist wars; liberate the masses from exploitation and oppression; and realize greater freedom, democracy, social justice, all-round development and lasting peace. (Concluded)