

Editorial

Tuesday, Feb. 20, 2018

Of sporting spirit and Yaosang festival: Imposition of prohibition to culture would be chaos; think the other way

The unmistakable hint of festivity is in the air as the state is gearing up to welcome the Holi or Yaosang festival in right earnest. As always, the state will indulge in revelries and merry-making, play with colours and witness friendly competitions and contests in the "Yaosang Sports" being organized in almost every local clubs. This is also the time for the youngsters to explore possibilities of a romantic relationship through the Thabal Chongba dance.

Chief Minister of Manipur's seeking opinion of the public through social networking site on whether to continue celebrating the Yaosang for 5 day or shorten it to 2 days is appreciative move. Maximum people like the idea of shortening it but when converting it into reality.

Culture cannot be change overnight but can be move towards the right direction through proper planning without hurting the sentiment of the public. Instead its better think of the other way like declaring holiday for 2 days only for yaosang festival, but it will be like walking in the sky if assume that people will follow the idea of celebrating yaosang festival to 2 days.

Well, something significantly changing in celebrating the Yaosang Festival is that the state it has now become a celebration, cutting across religion, ethnicity, caste or community. This is indeed a very welcome change from the everyday tussles and feelings of distrust that has been permeating the society slowly yet surely.

The festival of Yaosang, with the fading custom of collecting any and every edible contributions from every household in the locality to arrange a small feast especially for the young ones on the first day of the festival will surely evoke fond memories of simple pleasures of yesteryears. The emerging present trend of organizing sports meets across the state by the local clubs during the festival period is an ingenious means of initiating the naturally gifted young individuals to the reality of competitions. It also weans away a lot of the youths from the emerging dangerous trend of speeding and racing along the streets in their ever increasingly sophisticated and faster motorcycles during the festival.

From all of these developments, a new possibility emerges-one which can revive the slow degradation and deterioration in the quality and quantity of sporting achievements in the state, and for that to happen, we all need to be prepared for the next big step. It is rightly said that the first step to successful introduction of a young mind to sports is to create an atmosphere of fun and success around it, and what better opportunity is there for us in the State than during the festive occasion of Yaosang.

A state-wide competition amongst the outstanding performers from each of the clubs could very well be the perfect boost to propel the enthusiastic athletes towards serious competition and a future in sports. For this to happen, the proactive involvement of the Government is a must. Encouraging a sportsperson does not only mean monetary rewards and accolades after they have proved their mettle and excelled in their respective events. Encouragement and support should be from the grassroot level, when the aspiring athletes are struggling to find their feet and are at the most vulnerable stage of their sporting endeavour, both financially and psychologically. It is the crucial stage when a lot of aspiring sportspersons with potential and skill gave up for lack of financial and emotional support.

A proper planning and integration of all the social clubs and sports associations can make this a reality. However one wishes to celebrate the festival, it must be borne in mind that our celebration should not interfere or restrict other's right to enjoy the same festival. Maintaining the spirit of the occasion will ensure a delightful and memorable time. Imphaltimes wishes the present govt utilise its wisdom in making the culture alive beside properly shortening the holidays of the festival instead of saying that the festival is shorten to 2 days.

IRPE to set up radar for weather forecast

Agency Kolkata, Feb 20: The Institute of Radio Physics and Electronics (IRPE) of Calcutta University will set up a state-of-the-art weather radar in Nadia district. The resolution of the data images of the radar will be several notches higher than the existing weather forecast radar of the India Meteorological Department, IRPE professor Ashik Paul told PTI. The radar, the first of its kind in eastern India, will come up at Haringhata. The proposed radar will have a total

of 475 antennas, each fitted with a maximum 2 KW capacity power transmitter, Paul, who is coordinating the project, he said. "It will be a DST (Department of Science and Technology)- funded integrated radar facility project which will operate at a frequency of 53 MHz," Paul said. The radar will make a correct round-the-clock forecast of the atmosphere of the region through high-resolution images and help the nation and the foreign countries with its data, Dean of Technology, Calcutta University, Amlan Chakraborty said

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National & International News

India successfully test fires nuclear capable Agni-II missile off Odisha coast

Agency

Bhubaneswar, Feb. 20: The Indian Army on Tuesday successfully test-fired surface-to-surface nuclear capable Intermediate Range Ballistic Missile (IRBM) Agni-II in full operational configuration from a defence base off Odisha coast. Defence sources said the weapon system with a dummy payload blasted off from a mobile launcher at the launching complex-IV of the Abdul Kalam Island at about 8.40 am leaving behind a chain of thick smokes.

This was third successful trial of an Agni series missile in the last one month. While 5,000-km Agni-V was test fired on January 18, a user trial

of 700-km range Agni-I was conducted on February 6. The 2,000 km range Agni-II missile, already inducted and part of the country's arsenal for strategic deterrence, was launched as a training exercise by the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) of the army. The missile equipped with advanced high accuracy navigation system, guided by a novel scheme of state of the earth command and control system was propelled by solid rocket propellant system. A defence official said the missile travelled along the intended flight path before reaching the point of impact with a few meter accuracy, meeting all mission parameters as

coordinated.

"The successful launch has once again proved reliability of the medium range missile. Radar, telemetry systems, electro-optical tracking stations tracked and monitored the mission parameters throughout the trajectory. The mission was highly successful and flawless," he said. All the systems, propulsion, control, actuators, on-board computers, missile interface units and the navigation, guidance systems functioned fully to perfection and ensured the vehicle reached the target within double digit accuracy. The launch operations were carried

out by SFC while the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) provided all logistic supports.

The first prototype of an operational variant of the Agni-II was tested on April 11, 1999. The missile can be fitted with 150 kilo tonne yield nuclear warheads, in addition to chemical, high explosive and sub-munitions versions.

The two-stage, 21-metre long missile having a diameter of 1.3 meter weighs around 16 tonne. It can carry a payload of around 1,000 kg and its range can be increased to 3,000 km by reducing the weight of the payload.

20 children among 77 killed as Syria attacks rebels in Eastern Ghouta

Agency

Hammuriyeh, Feb. 20: Heavy Syrian bombardment killed at least 77 civilians in rebel-held eastern Ghouta on Monday, a war monitor said, as regime forces appeared to prepare for an imminent ground assault.

The escalation came as pro-government forces were also expected to enter the northern Kurdish-controlled enclave of Afrin, to take a stand against a month-old Turkish assault there.

Held by rebels since 2012, Eastern Ghouta is the last opposition pocket around Damascus and President Bashar al-Assad has dispatched reinforcements there in an apparent concerted effort to retake it. A barrage of air strikes, rocket fire and artillery slammed into several towns across Eastern Ghouta on Monday.

The Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said at least 20 children were among 77 civilians killed in the assault, while around 300 other people were wounded.

"The regime is bombing Eastern Ghouta to pave the way for a ground offensive," said Observatory head Rami Abdel Rahman. The main opposition National Coalition, which is based in Turkey, denounced the "war of extermination" in Eastern Ghouta as well as the "international silence". In a statement, it also accused regime ally Russia of seeking to "bury the political process" for a solution to the conflict.

Residents of Hammuriyeh could be seen rushing indoors in panic as soon as they heard the sound of airplanes.

Alaa al-Din, a 23-year-old Syrian in Hammuriyeh, said civilians were afraid of a potential government offensive.

"Ghouta's fate is unknown. We've got nothing but God's mercy and hiding out in our basements," he told AFP. "There's no alternative."

Wailing children

Shelling also hit the town of Douma, where an AFP correspondent saw five toddlers brought to a hospital, covered in dust and wailing

uncontrollably.

The hospital was full of distraught civilians: one father slapped his forehead after finding his two dead children, another erupted into tears as he discovered the body of his newborn on a purple sheet next to a pool of blood.

Eastern Ghouta is held by two main Islamist factions, while jihadists control small pockets including one directly adjacent to the capital. The Observatory and Syrian daily newspaper Al-Watan had said negotiations were under way for the evacuation of jihadists from Eastern Ghouta.

But escalating military pressure indicate that the regime would opt for a ground assault instead of talks, the monitor said.

Government troops carried out a

relentless five-day bombing campaign earlier this month that killed around 250 civilians in the enclave and wounded hundreds. Around the same time, the monitor said, the regime began dispatching military reinforcements to Eastern Ghouta.

After days of relative calm, the government sent more than 260 rockets sailing onto Eastern Ghouta on Sunday.

Those rockets, as well as artillery fire and air strikes, killed 17 civilians, said the Observatory.

The regime is keen to regain control of Eastern Ghouta to halt the deadly salvo of rockets and mortars that rebels fire on Damascus.

About half a dozen rockets hit the capital Sunday night, AFP correspondents said. State news

agency SANA reported that one person was killed.

More than 20 civilians have been killed by rebel fire this month alone in regime-held Damascus.

Regime to enter Afrin?

All was quiet in the capital on Monday but since rumours of an imminent assault on Eastern Ghouta started spreading, people living close to the rebel enclave started packing their bags.

Jawad al-Obros, 30, said he was looking to move to a hotel in the western sector of the city to escape his home in an east Damascus neighbourhood that has been regularly hit by rockets from Ghouta.

"We're tired of this situation. It seems that there's no solution but a full-blown military one," he told AFP.

Manipur University Centre for Manipur Studies

State Level Round Table Conference on CONFLICT (ARMED/ETHNIC) AFFECTED MANIPUR AND PEACE EFFORTS WITH WOMEN IN CENTRE STAGE

Dt. Saturday, 24th February 2018, 2018; Venue: Conference Hall, Manipur University

10.30 AM – 1.00 PM: FIRST SESSION

- * Collateral Damage and Women,
- * Violence against Women,
- * Internal Displacement and Women,
- * Conflict Widows and Women Headed Household,
- * Women combatants in armed conflict
- * Women in peace building initiatives and conflict resolution

1.05-1.50: LUNCH BREAK

2.00 – 4.30 PM: SECOND SESSION:

- * Women's opinion on insurgency and moral policing/inter-community relations.
- * Women's perception on Gol-NSCN (IM) peace talk/Suspension of operation (SOO) WITH Kuki-Zomi armed conglomerate insurgent groups and some valley based outfits.
- * Women in politics and formal institutions (including Role of State Women's Commission and other statutory bodies) and Peace Process
- * Previous peace outcomes and anticipations

For Details Contact: Aheibam Koireng Singh

[+91(0)7005141075 (Mob)/manipurstudiesseminar@gmail.com/akoireng@gmail.com]

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