

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, December 24, 2015

Abating credibility

The air is thick with anticipation of the arriving festivals in this State with a perennial presence of occasions for celebrations. That the people pour their hearts out in their celebrations might very well be a manifestation of their frustrations and hopelessness of the present situation. Wishes and messages of peace and harmony, not to forget development and progress will be doled out to the public with unerring accuracy and seemingly empathic statements, both by the ruling leaders elected by the people, as well as by those who have taken over the cause of fighting against the injustice and independence of the people upon themselves. The ideologies, have they been practiced as propagated, could have propelled this small state into a league of its own, one which the rest of the world would have looked up to for inspiration and guidance. The reality that lay around us couldn't be more different or ironic. In spite of so many patriots and pioneers of freedom and justice, why is the common man in Manipur still could not live a decent life? Why is efficiency and hard work not being regarded with the same venerability as the ability to cozy up to power and riches? Why is fear and violence being viewed as the preferred mode of getting things done for those who can, or profess to have the power, to unleash them? What is the meaning of peace and independence when the common people, far removed from the company of the powerful government and the relentless insurgents, live in fear and uncertainty, deprived of their rightful stakes, their share of the benefits being utilized, albeit without their consent or knowledge, by the bureaucrats and heads of departments as well as those fighting for independence to further their professed cause of development, justice and independence? Why, despite the teeming guardians of truth and equality, the majority of the public is still reeling under injustice and oppression? Is extortion and use of force-lethal force at times a prerequisite for attainment of peace, freedom and independence? How do these opposing forces, purportedly working towards the same goal, envisage the participation of the public for which they are supposedly carrying out their pursuits when the trust and empathy have all but evaporated into thin air? The frightened feelings and uncertainty of the people should be allayed first. The present practice of holding a gun to the head of the public while enquiring their allegiance will not work in the long run. The spawning of a breed of self-styled insurgents and protectors of freedom and progress who are taking advantage of the naivety and unsure state of mind of the common public, while carrying on with extortion, demanding huge exorbitant amounts as donations, and conniving with the powerful whose faults are conveniently overlooked as long as their purpose are being served, should be put to a complete halt. The Government should cleanse itself to regain that dwindling confidence of the people. A new beginning is still possible. It is not lofty ideals or poetic words that will win the hearts of the public. It is the cold hard facts of their deeds which will determine the outcome of their professed goals.

Gas card lost

I, the undersigned, have lost my Gas card bearing card no. CI/6615 issued by KK Gas Agency, Tera Bazar on the way between Kishamthong Elengbam Leikai leirak Macha to KK Gas Agency Tera on 21/12/2015. Finders are requested to kindly hand over it to the undersigned.
B. Debikarani Devi
Kishamthong Elengbam Leikai leirak Macha
Imphal West

Wanted Sub-Editor

Imphal Times is looking for an experience sub editor with excellent writing skill in English who can read Bengali written script. Working hour is 12 noon till 5 pm. Honorarium is Rs. 3000 p.m. Preference will be given to candidate who had already work in English daily as desk editor. Age no bar, and Imphal Times have no problem with those candidates working in other newspaper at night shift.

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Open letter from Thailand

To
M. Okendro, Hon'ble Minister Department of Education
Govt. of Manipur, India.

Dear Sir,

We are group of educators living and working abroad. We compare the education policy and system abroad and back home in Manipur. We believe it is possible to do better with you, your team as well as we, the people at the grass-root level to get ready our youths in job market to get benefit to the individuals as well as to our state. We would like to propose the following points in education system to bring changes and upgrade our human resource sector.

1. Adopt No Fail Policy

This will benefit in the long run. Literally speaking we do not let students fail in Thailand. If fail because of ill, accident or whatever reasons students can come and take test as special case on the following day. We thought fail means we remove unqualified candidate and maintains quality. However failing system in exam brings more harm than benefit. It will bring a tremendous psychological effect for the whole life to the individuals. This makes high drop out rate from school. A bad taste of failure is the main cause of emotional torture, depression, diverting attention to drug, crime etc, and sometimes leads to suicide. Instead, please introduce a grading system that those who cannot achieve a particular grade-score, just put them into compulsory vocational training course. Whether good or bad, keeping students without failing for 10-12 years at school will make them at least able to read, write, do some basic maths which is necessary for a common man. Weaker students might not be able to become a doctor or engineer, but they must have something for survival and it is important right as a citizen which is very important for nation building. If students cannot become a doctor or an engineer, that is no problem. Let us send our children to suitable disciplines such as carpentry skill, farming skill, mechanic, animal rearing skill, dress making, repairing different things etc. This is what developed countries are doing. Doctors, engineers or lawyers constitute only a fraction of population in a society. Let us stop education system supporting for only a few students who will become doctor or engineer, and also an education system that makes them believe that they will work in government sector. Let us open doors of opportunities in many fields for academically weaker students and they might even be smarter in other skills. The present education system causes some individual schools adopt a policy that they jump over some of the class IX subjects neglecting the value of learning of that particular subjects in order to see the good result only in matriculation. This sacrifice and short term vision will harm in long run and that will bring serious effect in nation building. We should not focus learning only for the result of exams. A student who failed in academic field might excel in sports, business or other fields. There are numerous examples of individuals who could not achieve well academically but they become leaders in the world of business, such as Apple's former boss Steve Jobs, Microsoft's former boss Bill Gates, and Facebook's boss Mark Zuckerberg. Please consider to remove the mistakes existing currently in our education system in Manipur. Let us plan for long term education policy. You took right step by introducing a system that there would not be common class 10 exam under the board, however it seems you reverted your decision to our original common exam system. Board is doing excellent job, but board exams also become carrier stopper to individuals. Here in Thailand, they do not have board exam for class X and XII.

2. Mass Education

We need mass education. We cannot sacrifice huge population of students knocking out them from school in the name of maintaining quality. What we are seeing here abroad is very different from India. Almost everyone except some disable people can read, write, do basic maths for their daily business. This can be achieved because of education policy as literally they do not have failing system in their education. They support students and giving training is more important. In our system, exams and evaluation is more important. They put students at suitable field if they do not achieve particular grade score. We need this in our system too. Also, please do not detain kids at the same level more than one year. There is wrong belief of the people that promoting all the students will bring down the quality of education. Detaining kids more years at the same class underestimate individuals' self confidence and ability when they are grown up. Mental strength, psychological health of individual is equally important as physical strength. Marking students fail will lose the individuals' confidence. Better and more capable students will be absorbed in a more intellectually capable field of study, and lower able students will be engaged in low skill area with proper education in any specific area.

3. Strong Foundation of Primary Education

We need special attention to primary education. Children who did very good primary level is more likely to go to better middle/high school. Those students who do very well in high school again are more likely to go to better college and university. So, we need to pay more attention to primary education that lays foundation which is seemingly given less importance in our country than other countries from parents or authority's side. Healthy nursery and primary education will shape better strength of our youths.

4. Focus on Opening More Vocational Schools

Let us focus on opening different vocational schools. This is what people do in

more developed countries. Support the students up to 12th standard, no matter what they are - good or bad. At the end of 12th standard, send them to different vocational schools rather than tagged them failed and useless individuals even if students cannot achieve particular grade-score. This policy will keep them move on their education. By the time they are 18 or 19 years old, they will start thinking for their future career. But in our present education policy, weaker students are removed from school system before they are able to think of their own future career. Make any vocational skill importance, meaningful and give their place, and employ them at the right place. What we are trying to say here is: For example, a student studies a vocational training about electricity and power management. If there is a job vacancy in electricity department, employ this right candidate rather than recruiting someone who has studied biology. It is time to stop employing wrong candidates but putting right person at the right place.

5. Teaching a Competitive Job

Make teaching a competitive job. Competitive jobs means pay good salary and make it rewarding job to teacher. Doctors, engineers, MBAs, civil servants and whoever must go through school system and are under the guidance of teachers on top of the students' personality. There is huge contribution of teacher than any other authorities to produce good citizen but for now teaching is not good and respectable like doctors, engineers, and civil servants. We request you to bring some changes on this perspective.

6. Pay Based on Qualifications, Skill and Position

Salary is a sign of credit, respect, encouragement and social status. Pay salary based on the position as well as the qualification of the candidate. Personally we have seen many Ph.D holders who work at primary school in other countries. They are paid well, respected well not less than a professor. In our culture we neglect this and we are willing to pay more respect to more well paid job, but less respect to individuals who are paid less even though he/she holds high qualification. We do not need knowledge of rocket science from doctorate holder at primary school but we do need experience and expertise of management from these resourceful persons even at primary education where no Ph.D might apply job for primary school in our state because of low salary and low status.

7. Avoid Teacher Recruitment on Mark Basis

Different schools, states, or countries have different marking system. Percentage of marks cannot decide the overall quality of the candidate all the time even though it is customary to decide the quality of the student on percentage of marks which is very deceptive in practical world. Real capability of the individual cannot be decided by the exam's marks only. Marks in the exam is just to evaluate the outcome of students' learning on particular subjects, not the personality. If we know our student who is who, we even do not need any test. Let us stop recruitment system on mark basis. In some countries there is open book policy during exam. This does not mean copying word by word, sentence by sentence like the one what we are facing currently in our society. And, those countries' education quality is much higher than that of Indian education. We need practical knowledge in human resource sector. It is a norm in India that employers look for people who hold nice certificate rather than who can do the job. But in more developed countries employers look for someone who can perform the task. Let us bring some changes to rectify the mistakes existing in the present system.

8. Speaking and Listening in Language Syllabus

We learn English as compulsory subject. We learn reading and writing, rules of grammar. However we never include Speaking and Listening as part of syllabus which is taken very serious everywhere in foreign countries. There are lots of people who can read and write but do not speak the language. As a language teacher in Thailand and Cambodia, with personal experience with other teachers from different native English speaking countries we strongly feel that language is after all to communicate with others. Please try to include Listening and Speaking in our syllabus too. This will increase the chance of our youths in the world of job market.

Thanking you,
Yours sincerely,

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National & International News

Police officer among two critically injured in militant attack in south Kashmir

Islamabad, Dec. 24: Two policemen, including a Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), were critically injured after suspected militants opened fire on them in south Kashmir's Anantnag district on Thursday. An official said that DSP Irshad Ahmad Rather and a cop Tanveer Ahmad were escorting a Milad Procession in Gouriwan area of Bijbehara on the Srinagar-Jammu highway in the district when gunmen opened fire on them. They were shifted to Sub District hospital where from they were referred to SKIMS Soura for advanced treatment. The official added that Rather has suffered at least three bullet wounds.

25 killed in inferno at Saudi Arabian hospital

ANI Riyadh, Dec. 24: At least 25 people were killed and over hundred others were injured in a fire at a hospital in southern part of Saudi Arabia on Thursday. According to Saudi Arabia's civil defence agency, the

blaze broke out at the intensive care unit and the maternity department of the Jazan General Hospital. In its latest tweet, the agency announced that the accident is now over and investigation is underway to find out its reasons.

Road clear for ULFA leader Anup Chetia's release from jail

Guwahati, Dec. 24: ULFA general secretary Anup Chetia was on Wednesday granted bail in the last of the four cases registered against him, paving the way for his release from jail. Chetia's counsel Bijon Mahajan told reporters quoting the CBI investigation officer as saying that the investigating agency does not have any objection if Chetia is granted bail.

Before granting bail, the Additional Sessions Judge also went through the case diary. Chetia, lodged in the Guwahati Central Jail, was granted bail on a personal bond of Rs 30,000 and a surety from one individual, Mahajan said. "The court, however, granted the bail with conditions that Chetia cannot hamper the process of investigation and he cannot leave

the jurisdiction of the Special Judicial Magistrate without prior permission," the senior advocate said. Chetia had earlier been granted bail in three cases out of the four that were registered after his deportation to India from Bangladesh. On Tuesday, Chetia secured bail from the Additional Sessions Judge in one of the cases. On December 17, the designated court here had allowed the ULFA leader to be on bail in two TADA cases for facilitating his trial and for him to participate in the ongoing peace process. Chetia was handed over to India by Bangladesh where he was in jail since his arrest by the country's police in 1997 on charges of cross-border intrusion, carrying fake passports and illegally keeping foreign currencies.