

## Editorial

Imphal, Wednesday, November 11, 2015

### Of Sangai Festival and our preparation

There is a sudden feel of anticipation in the air with the "Sangai Festival", touted to be a showcase of the rich traditional and cultural heritage of the State which is scheduled from November 21. The emphasis of the festival is admittedly to draw in tourists to Manipur. There has also been a marked increase in the spending by the State Government with an intense beautification drive of the Imphal city in this regard. Yet those at the helm of affairs apparently missed the whole point of the exercise as various countries have expressed their apprehensions in participating at the tourism extravaganza. A radical approach needs to be implemented from the point of view of a tourist. The starkly visible and seemingly omnipresent armed police personnel with their stern expressions and unapproachable attitude needs to be done away with urgent immediacy, even with the looming threat of violence and mindless mayhem from various quarters. That the Government and the police force are under tremendous pressure to prevent any untoward incidents would be an understatement- yet the fact remains that the sight of so many armed police and their "peculiar" style of dealing with the public leaves a lot to be desired and is proving to be a huge deterrent for the tourists- both domestic and foreign. A more people friendly and polite yet firm approach could definitely do a world of difference in the perception by the general public. More than the renovations and refurbishing of facades and roads, creating an atmosphere conducive to tourism should be given priority- a task easier said than done what with the worsening social and law and order conditions. Utilizing machines and other gadgets for security checks and reducing the presence or at least minimizing their utilization wherever possible would be a good start. Another often overlooked yet equally vital aspect that would make a huge difference in the efforts to make Manipur a tourist friendly state would be by improving the sanitation facilities existing in the state at present which is almost non-existent to say the least. There had been a lot of complaints and negative feedbacks on the inadequate and haphazard sanitation facilities being provided in the festival premises in the last edition compounded by the dismal maintenance of the same. But then, even adequate arrangement inside the festival premises would not serve the purpose as the whole city needs to be adequately prepared in this regard as well as other places of tourist interest as the overall set up will be crucial for sustaining and improving the prospects of tourism taking off in the State.

That the State Government is sparing no efforts to make the Sangai Festival a resounding success is apparent, with the sudden spurt in beautification drives and renovation activities till the wee hours being witnessed by all and sundry- a far from the lethargic and often protracted working style the people of this small state has been used to, but nevertheless a welcome sight. One should extend support and cooperation in these efforts as the prospect for development of tourism in the small yet versatile state is immense. The Government and departmental heads responsible should take into confidence and consideration the suggestions and concerns of the public for a holistic development. Meanwhile, an open mind and a genuine smile should make for a great start to the whole momentum.

#### 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 3 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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## Contestations for Sovereignty over Land and Natural Resources: A Legal Perspective on the Political Economy of the Manipur-India Conflict

Abstract:

The driving force behind colonialism had been to gain control over land and resources of a territory for commercial exploitation. The same holds true for neo-colonialism today. The paper argues that the annexation of Manipur post-war, which began in 1949 by the Indian State, is an ongoing process and therefore, yet to complete. The economic repercussions of the annexation process are beginning to unfold with more intensity and rapidly. In the disputed territory of Manipur, the Indian State, through its multiple policies from appeasement techniques involving political-dialogues or cease-fire agreements, piece-meal economic concessions to extreme forms of violence and repression under wartime - emergency situation legislative measures has successfully established its authority over the lands, natural resources and peoples of the former. A certainty of consistency ever since the 1949 political onslaught. Uncompromising positions of the State to address and resolve the conflict has made it a never-ending or near-permanence in character. In the light of such an indefinite nature of conflict *lis pendens*, the State and its agencies have adopted an approach that favours maintaining the status quo. This art of conflict management produces certain actors who become key

stakeholders of the situation. The paper attempts to underline that militarisation, enforcement of wartime legislations, heavy State repression, restrictions on freedom of speech and expression, elimination of political dissentism, among others contribute to a situation which gives virtual immunity to the State and its agencies to exploit the lands and natural resources of Manipur. The elite class of the society is able to fast reap the fruits of the exploitation with the active cooperation of the State. The exploitation is witnessed in multiple forms - construction of giant dams for hydro-electric projects, acquisition of vast areas of arable and habitat lands, oil and natural gas explorations, developing wild-life and tourist spots, corporatisation of essential public services, dispossession and relocation of local inhabitants to the extent of depriving their means of sustenance, smuggling of natural resources, inter alia. All these policies combined produce a situation that suppresses the well-being of the peoples. The paper draws its major premises of critique from both the Indian domestic legal system and rules of international jurisprudence. It calls for a serious politics to contest and challenge the virtual authority of the State in the exploitation of lands and natural resources pending the resolution of the Manipur-India conflict. It is argued that this politics of retaining sovereignty over natural

resources constitute the core of the right to self-determination struggles around the world. The paper concludes by highlighting that the political economy dimension of the conflict sustains the conflict itself to the disadvantage of the peoples of the occupied territory. Questions of unaccountability, illegitimacy, repression, militarisation and non-governance are conveniently shielded under the umbrella term of conflict-ridden state of affairs. The interests of the State are more sub-served by the status of the conflict than from its resolution. The paper can be divided into three main parts. Part I tries to define Manipur and India conflict as a proper conflict from the perspective of international law. It traces the undemocratic nature of the Indian State building process after the colonial British left the Indian sub-continent. Series of instruments, instruments of accessions, merger agreements with the native rulers of the then princely States took place. Junagadh, Hyderabad, Jammu & Kashmir, Manipur and Tripura led the protest against such coercive and aggressive State building process of the Indian Union. Particularly, after the former titular Head of Manipur State was forcibly made to sign the Merger Agreement on 21<sup>st</sup> September, 1949, on September 28, 1949 the Manipur Legislative Assembly (read Parliament) renounced the conclusion of the Merger agreement under duress. Soon the

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Assembly was dissolved and the administration of Manipur was taken over by the Indian Dominion on 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949 without providing an opportunity to the popularly constituted Manipur Legislative Assembly and its people to ratify the association. In 1950 the Manipur Visa system was revoked by an authority of the Indian Union. Irbot's movement inaugurated the national liberation movement in Manipur against the annexation of Manipur by India. The Indian Parliament enacted the infamous AFSPA in 1958 without paying regards to the opinions of the MPs from then Assam and Manipur. Since then intensive militarisation, heavy state repression, elimination of political dissentism, virtual authority of the State over the lands and natural resources of the State, etc. have been taking place. The People's Democratic Movement, Manipur in 1993 had in its convention adopted a unanimous resolution stating that the 1949 Merger Agreement was "annexation" without any constitutional validity. It can be noted that no parliamentary deliberation have taken place till date regarding the annexation issue of Manipur. Nor did a plebiscite have been held to ascertain the best wishes of the people with regard to defining the relationship between Manipur people and India. (To be contd.....)

### National & International News

#### OROP row: Ex-servicemen to set their medals on fire at Jantar Mantar today

**ANI**  
**New Delhi, Nov. 11:** The ex-servicemen protesting for the implementation of the One Rank, One Pension scheme have decided to set their medals on fire at the Jantar Mantar here on Wednesday objecting the notification issued by the government. More than 2,000 ex-servicemen protesting against the government's OROP scheme had yesterday returned their medals in Delhi, Haryana and Punjab. The chairman of Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement, Major General (Retd.) Satbir Singh, had earlier accused Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar of turning back on his assurance on OROP. The government had earlier notified the implementation of the OROP scheme that will guarantee equal pension to military

personnel retiring at the same rank with the same length of service, regardless of the date of retirement. The notification, however, failed to impress the veterans as a result of which they are continuing with their agitation. Veterans have listed seven deviations in the announcement, including annual equalisation, 2013-2014 financial year as the base year for calculating pension, taking the highest pension scale of 2013 as the base for calculation and not the average as announced by the government, not to link OROP with the seventh pay commission and accept that OROP once implemented continue forever and in perpetuity. Parrikar had yesterday said that while it was the democratic right of ex-servicemen to protest against the government's version of the OROP, they were being 'misguided'.

"It's their democratic right (to protest), but I think they are misguided. If at all they have grievance they (ex-servicemen), they should put it before commission we are appointing. My major job was to get One Rank One Pension notification issued, which

I have done. They must approach the Commission to discuss further problem. The demand which was not even considered for last 50 years has been more or less completed," Parrikar said at the inauguration of 'ICGS Samarth' in Panaji.

#### Picks from Facebook post

#### Rose, they want us to forget but we will remember you

1974: Ukhrul - Ngaprum incident. Under the command of Major Pundir, the Commandant and his assistant Commandant Capt. Negy, about a Company of 95 BSF (Indian armed forces) marched to a remote village Ngaprum on 4 March 1974 on the pretext of defending our nation and protecting our villages. But alas, the Commandant's intention was quite beastly. By ordering the constables to lie in ambush around the village, major Pundir and Cap Negy stayed inside the village ordering the leaders and some young girls of the village to stay with them for their personal attendance. When the night drew near, they ordered some villagers to arrange their beds. The V.A. Secretary Shri Ramthar and Miss Rose aged about 19 years together with two other young girls came for the purpose to the house where these officers were staying. After the arrangement of their beds, the girls were going away but Miss Rose was forced to stay back alone before the eyes of Shri Ramthar. She asked the reason why but she was forced to remain quiet at the point of a

pistol. Miss Rose was forcibly taken into a room by Major Pundir who raped her while Capt. Negy was guarding Shri Ramthar. Major Pundir had done his job, he came out to guard Shri Ramthar and Cap Negy took his turn. Her cry for "Excuse me" and "Namasti" could not move the hearts of these officers; instead they forced her to remain quiet by pushing their pistol on her throat. For our tribal people, it is a sign of hospitality to attend on any outsider for their comfort. But these officers took advantage of our hospitality and innocence. Miss Rose was the most beautiful girl in her village and she was reading in Class VIII. Obviously, she was chosen for their desire. The crime of these Officers was too much for her and she ended her life on 6 March 1974. She left letters to her dear ones before her death. But the most important letter was forcibly burnt by the BSF. -East District Women Association, Manipur Dated, Ukhrul 10 May 1974 (Courtesy: Naga Boy Blood)

#### Climate change creating tensions across the world: Kerry

**PTI**  
**Washington, Nov. 11:** The effects of climate change like extreme drought are creating tensions across the world, including in the Indus river basin, US Secretary of State John Kerry has said as he linked the complex issue with national security ahead of a major UN climate summit later this month. Kerry said the prospect of a hotter, drier climate throughout the Middle East and parts of Asia will place more strain on the most precious resource of all - fresh water. "We've already seen tensions rise around the basins of the Nile River in Africa, the Indus River in

South Asia, and of course, the Mekong River in Southeast Asia," he said. Covering an area of more than 1 million square kilometres, the Indus basin touches 4 countries: China, India, Pakistan and Afghanistan. Kerry said the bottom line is that the impacts of climate change can exacerbate resource competition, threaten livelihoods and increase the risk of instability and conflict. "Because the world is so extraordinarily interconnected today - economically, technologically, militarily, in every way imaginable. Instability anywhere can be a threat to stability everywhere," he said.