

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, October 1, 2015

Floundering progress

With the perfunctory obeisance and practiced eloquence having dispensed with, it is now once again that time of the year for the state government when fervent efforts need to be invested to present a fleeting façade of the Imphal city-town to the rest of whoever is visiting the state for the much trumpeted "Sangai Festival" - the only extravaganza touted as the showpiece that represents and promotes the rich and diverse cultural and traditional treasures of the state. One surely cannot miss the spurt in construction and repairing activities being started in and around the main city areas. While such development activities are worth applauding and needs to be encouraged, one also cannot help but puzzle over the rationale behind the decision to concentrate such activities to a very limited area or for a very limited timeframe. The conditions of the roads, especially after the prolonged heavy deluge a few weeks back, have become worse, and one need only to travel just a kilometer in any direction from the main city point to validate the point. The city itself does not fare any better. Putrid stench and rancid stagnant waters welcome one and all, with no sign for things to change in the foreseeable future. The increasing height of the refuge bears testimony to the level of diligence of the concern department as also the strictness and efficacy of the state government in making its employees perform their assigned tasks. The Sangai Festival, no doubt, can be an event to promote the potentials of the state which, to put it bluntly, will only present another problem if the state government really and earnestly starts to explore, because of its enormity. But in order to do that successfully, there is the necessity for the state government to ensure that positive things and long term development projects have actually been initiated and are moving in the right path to progress irrespective of the rate or rapidity. Presenting a gleaming park or sparkling avenue does not constitute development, and it would be very unfortunate for those at the helm of affairs in the state to delude themselves otherwise. Be it tourism or industrialization, development demand funds and funds means investments, or more precisely investors. If we are to tap the still unutilized potential for tourism, we need to put in place certain basic infrastructures for the tourists to use and enjoy. For the potential investors to have any interest in the state, there must be a proven system which is conducive to the growth of industrialization. Sadly, both these criteria are sorely lacking at present, with no scope of change in the immediate future. But most of all, a politically stable and socially accommodating atmosphere needs to be developed for all these things to materialize. There is no short cut to progress and a lot is required to lay the basic foundation. For now, all that we are experiencing is just a flash in the pan with no substance or synergy. As is often repeated, real development comes from the villages and far-flung areas of a state. Time to focus the energy and the reserves of the state to these hitherto neglected areas then.

CRPF organises athletics meet in Kashmir

ANI Srinagar, Oct 01: India's paramilitary Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) organised a sports and athletics meet in Jammu and Kashmir to promote spirit of sportsmanship among its soldiers. The four day meet that began on Tuesday (September 29) is witnessing the participation of CRPF's 23 units in state's summer capital Srinagar. The athletics meet called "Jagriti-The Health Awareness" has men, women and veterans (above 45 years of age) participating in different categories. Special Director General of CRPF, SK Bhagat, said as the soldiers are always occupied with their regular work, it is important for them to get a break from their routine. Bhagat added that the soldiers are trying their level best to organise a memorable event in a short span. The participating soldiers were also happy with the event as constant militant threat in the region gives them little time for themselves.

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National & International News

Afghan forces retake control of Kunduz from Taliban

AFP Kabul, Oct. 1: Afghan forces retook control of the strategic northern city of Kunduz on Thursday after a three-day Taliban occupation that dealt a stinging blow to the country's NATO-trained military. The fall of the provincial capital, even temporarily, highlights the stubborn insurgency's potential to expand beyond its rural strongholds in the south of the country. Afghan forces, hindered by the slow arrival of reinforcements but backed by limited US air support, struggled to regain control of the city after three days of heavy fighting. But on Thursday troops managed to reach the centre of Kunduz where the streets were littered with Taliban bodies, residents said, adding that fighting was still ongoing in parts of the city. "Afghan special forces now control Kunduz City, it is retaken and being cleared (of) terrorists," interior ministry spokesman Sediq Sediqqi said on Twitter, adding that the insurgents had suffered heavy casualties. Deputy Interior

Minister Ayoub Salangi said the city had been recaptured after a "special operation" overnight. Local residents reported deafening overnight bombardments, adding that the Taliban were still resisting Afghan forces in some parts of the city. But some scenes of jubilation erupted around the city square where local residents, who suffered three days of crippling food shortages, thanked government troops. "Afghan soldiers took down the white-and-black Taliban flag in the city square and hoisted the government flag," Kunduz resident Abdul Rahman told AFP. "The Taliban suffered heavy casualties last night. Dead bodies are scattered on the streets, and their supporters are carrying them out of the city wrapped in white cloths." Security officials said the militants had slowly infiltrated Kunduz during the recent Eid festival, launching a Trojan Horse attack that enabled them to capture it within hours on Monday. The development coincided with the first anniversary of Ashraf

Ghani's national unity government. Marauding insurgents seized government buildings and freed hundreds of prisoners, raising their flag throughout Kunduz. The lightning capture of the city sent thousands of panicked residents fleeing as insurgents erected checkpoints across the city and were seen racing vehicles stolen from the police, UN and Red Cross. Militants exposed civilians to grave danger by hiding in people's houses and conducting door-to-door searches for Afghan soldiers and government staff, rights groups said. The Taliban's recent gains in Kunduz and neighbouring provinces highlight that a large and strategic patch of northern Afghanistan is imperilled by a rapidly expanding insurgency. It is also seen as a game-changer for the fractious militant movement that has been dogged by a leadership crisis since the announcement in July of founder Mullah Omar's death. "The Taliban know that they don't have the power to retain control of a big city like Kunduz," Kabul-

based military analyst Atiqullah Amarkhil said. "But their takeover, however temporary, shows they are a force to reckon with before any future peace negotiations." Their incursion into Kunduz, barely nine months after the NATO combat mission concluded, raised troubling questions about the capabilities of Afghan forces as they battle the militants largely on their own. It has renewed questions about Washington's plan to withdraw most US troops from Afghanistan next year. Even after years of training and equipment purchases - on which Washington spent \$65 billion - Afghan forces have been unable to rein in the ascendant insurgency. The Taliban stepped up attacks during a summer offensive launched in late April against the Western-backed government in Kabul. After years of costly involvement, most NATO troops pulled back from the front lines by the end of 2014, although a residual force of around 13,000 remains for training and counter-terrorism operations.

India rejects allegations of blockading Nepal trade checkpoint

PII New York, Oct. 1: India has rejected as "totally false" allegations that it blockaded a key trade checkpoint on the border with Nepal amid protests over that country's new Constitution even as it emphasised that it is for the Nepalese people and parties to find a mutually acceptable solution. "Our stand is very very clear. We do not want to be prescriptive. It is for the people of Nepal and the political parties in Nepal to arrive at a mutually acceptable solution something for which ownership can be taken by all sections," Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Vikas Swarup said

here yesterday when asked about India's stand on Nepal's constitution-drafting process. He was briefing reporters on the bilateral and multilateral engagements of External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly session. Swaraj had a bilateral meeting with Nepal Foreign Minister Mahendra Pandey where she said that the allegation that India had imposed a blockade was "totally false". "We can only take goods up to the border and beyond the border it is the responsibility of the Nepalese side to ensure that there is adequate safety and security for the trucks to enter that side,"

Swarup said. He said that 4,310 trucks are waiting at the border but cannot proceed into Nepal due to the disturbed security situation. He added that Indian transporters had voiced complaints about the difficulty they are facing in movement within Nepal and the security fears due to the prevailing unrest. Yesterday, trucks from India carrying essential goods and petroleum products started entering Nepal which is grappling with a fuel crisis due to the blockading of a key trade checkpoint by protesters opposing Nepal's new Constitution.

About 100 cargo trucks entered Nepal from the Sunauli border in UP. The trucks had been stranded on the Indian side for more than five days due to the ongoing blockade imposed by the Madhesi groups opposing the promulgation of the new Constitution. Madhesis are Indian-origin inhabitants of the Terai region bordering India who are opposed to splitting Nepal into seven provinces according to the new Constitution. At least 40 people have died in over a month of clashes between police and protesters from the Madhesi and Tharu communities and ethnic minorities.

Day after serial blasts kills 7, fresh explosion in Liucheng, China

AP Beijing, Oct. 1: An explosion damaged a six-story building Thursday in southern China, less than a day after more than a dozen blasts triggered by explosive devices delivered in mail packages killed at least seven people and injured over 50 in the same small city in southern China, officials and state media said. The latest blast hit a civilian's house near a highway administration bureau in Liucheng,

but it was not immediately known if there were any casualties, according to the official Xinhua News Agency. The Ministry of Public Security said it was treating the blasts on Wednesday as a criminal act, and not terrorism. It said a 33-year-old local man, identified only by his family name of Wei, was considered a suspect, but provided no further details, including a possible motive or whether the man had been detained. Local media

reported that the suspect had been apprehended. A local Communist Party newspaper, the Guangxi Daily, cited police as saying there were 17 explosions Wednesday afternoon in Liucheng, leaving seven people dead, two missing and 51 injured. Police in Liucheng said they will hold a news conference later Thursday. Wednesday's explosions, which occurred between 3:15 p.m. and 5 p.m., hit a hospital, local markets, a shopping mall, a bus station and several government buildings, including a jail and dormitories for government workers, according to a police statement posted by the local newspaper Nanguo Zaobao. "There were so many of them, and they were so loud, everyone in (Liucheng) could hear them," said a hotel employee who gave only his family name, Li. The hotel is near a township office building that was hit by one of the explosions.

"They sounded like someone was blasting rocks in the mountains," Li said. Zhou Changqing, the police chief for the city of Liuzhou, which has jurisdiction over Liucheng, said the blasts were triggered by explosive devices delivered in several mail packages, state broadcaster CCTV reported. A supermarket employee said the store was evacuated immediately when an adjacent supermarket was hit by an explosion. "All of us heard the blast. It was very loud," he said by phone. Photos posted online showed streets filled with smoke, strewn debris, dust clouds in the sky and the rubble from a five-story building that had partially collapsed. The official Xinhua News Agency reported that at least one more explosion hit downtown Liuzhou, away from Liucheng. It did not say whether there were any casualties from that blast or whether it was connected to the ones in Liucheng.

Security on alert as Pakistan, Bangladesh women cricket teams kick off series

ANI Pakistan, Oct 1: Tight security was in place as visiting Bangladesh women's cricket squad played the first T20 international against host Pakistan, which Pakistan won by 28 runs, kicking off a series in Karachi. Pakistan and Bangladesh women squads played the first game with massive security deployed around Karachi's Southend Club, the venue of the game. A female crowd of mostly school girls and teachers turned up to witness the match. The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has promised foolproof security for the Bangladesh women's team, with players staying at the same club where they will play their matches. Kainat Imtiaz, a woman cricketer, who had been part of Pakistan team at the 2010 Asian Games, said the series will portray

Pakistan's image as a safe country abroad. Bangladesh Manager Mohammad Shafique Ul Haque and Sana Mir, captain of Pakistan's women team were happy for the crowd's response. The second T20 will be played on October 02.

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Cong blames Dadri killing on saffron fringe

enpose the philosophy of hatred. There is only one group, it diminishes India in the eyes of the world." Taking potshots at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Singhvi said such incidents of medieval kind "nullify in seconds the glitter and pomp we see abroad or in India". "We blame those who are creating such feelings that every person starts doubting his brother," he said.

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