

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, April 1, 2016

Undermined Universities

The state cabinet has taken yet another decision to establish a technical university citing the need for honing the skills of the educated youths to prepare them for the real world challenges in various technical fields. The thought can be appreciated. However, there is still a big slip between the cup and the lip, and judging by the unenviable track record of the state government in seeing things through especially vital projects and schemes, the recent decision is more than likely to recede into oblivion like so many others taken in a collective rush of social fervor. That there is evidently a great disconnect with reality is obvious in the fact that almost every school run by the state government is floundering and most are likely to become obsolete and face closure in the near future, a fact admittedly recognized by the state government but is in a quandary as to its solution. What is ironic is that the rampant and increasingly worsening problem of dysfunctional Education Policy of the state, or perhaps the abject failure to implement it as the case may be, has been overlooked in its quest to put up the technical university in what many see as nothing more than a political gimmick by the state government in an effort to stem the declining acceptability by the public. The fate of the sports university and cultural university which have been in the pipeline for long has not been able to be set up on ground, and there is no evidence in sight to assume that things will start moving in the foreseeable future. No amount of excuses or justifications can explain away the failure of the state government to grasp the opportunities with both hands, especially when the central government will be funding the projects in full. The unfolding chain of deliberate and unfortunate events over the years has proven the inconsiderate and narrow sightedness of those in power beyond doubt and have clearly demonstrated that activities with financial and political benefits for their persons holds priority over the effort for formulation or implementation of a sustainable and effective development plan for the state. The utter lack of a clear perspective on almost every development policy and plan has had a regressive effect on the society, and the absence of political will to push through even the most routine activities have left the society in a collective state of uncertainty and annoyance. The state government needs to put its act together and address the existing lacunae of policy implementation before attempting to take up activities only to make up the numbers. Clearing the educational mess should be given priority so that there are students worthy of benefiting from the universities or else it will prove to be just one of the many exercises in futility.

First time voters in Jorhat voice their expectations

AN Jorhat (Assam), April 1: With Assam going to elect a new government through the upcoming assembly polls, Jorhat town of Upper Assam will be voting with high hopes and expectations. Employment remains a major agenda among the youth there. There is excitement and energy among first time voters of Jorhat, but it is not going to be a cakewalk for political parties. Jorhat's CKB college student Tanvi, who is a first time voter expects

higher education infrastructure for Jorhat and employment. Another first time voter Dimple Gogoi wants the scholarship amounts to be increased. "Education facilities, infrastructure, a clean Jorhat and employment are top priorities for me as a first time voter" she said. Ankumi Saikia, another first time voter, said "employment is a top priority demand from the new government in Assam." While some voters, reservation was a major concern

Strong 6.0-magnitude quake hits off Japan coast; no tsunami

AFF Tokyo, April 1: A strong 6.0-magnitude earthquake struck off Japan's southwest coast today, the US Geological Survey said, but local authorities said there was no danger of a tsunami. The quake hit at 11:39 am (0809 IST) off the coast of Japan's main Honshu island, at a location about 350 kilometers southwest of Tokyo, USGS and the Japan Meteorological Agency said.

The quake was measured at a relatively shallow depth of 10 kilometres. No damage or injuries were immediately reported though heavy shaking forced some of the country's bullet trains to temporarily stop running, public broadcaster NHK reported. Japan sits at the junction of four tectonic plates and experiences around 20 percent of the world's most powerful earthquakes.

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Ethics of Ethnic Crisis in North East India : An Unchanging Phenomenon in Contemporary Manipur. Its Solutions.

By : Dr. Priyadarshni M. Gangte, Associate Prof. in History Dept & Co-ordinator Human Rights & Duties Education Centre, Damdei Christian College, Motbung, Manipur.

The North – Eastern territory of India is a geopolitical strategic region. It comprises eight states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura). It was carved out from originally Province of Assam of British India with the inclusion of Sikkim and the princely states of Manipur and Tripura. It has been termed as the 'Land of eight sister'. The region covers an area of 261,179 square kilometers (101,201 square miles) with a population of 39 million as per census of India, 2011 of which 22,327 square kilometers and 2,570,390 populations are of Manipur. (Directorate, Census Operation, Government of Manipur). The region is connected with five countries, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Burma (formerly Myanmar), China and Nepal i.e. by the 4500 kilometers (2,796 miles) of international border. It is populated by variegated groups of people. Migration of people from Bangladesh, Burma and Nepal to these areas was very common, and as such, we find people of Mongoloid strains in respect of their physical features, cultures, tradition, language, etc. the autochthones who settled in the hill tracts were subsequently identified and differentiated one from the other based on various historical process of stress and strains, communication difficulties to a great degree, had contributed to their being in isolation for a number of generations. Their adjustment process, in course of time alienated some groups from the bigger ones, while the other found themselves in aligned or aggregate. Such alienation and alignment of different groups came to bear various ethnic appellations identifying themselves as distinct tribes. This is a common feature in many places, which is however, significant to this tract of land. It is true that they are not a permanent crystalline structure in the stage of historical and social development and all the time due to interaction and adjustment, these groups of people are found to

accommodate themselves in different degrees to varied situation. It is also expected that their society has less and less hierarchy in economic specialization. Thus, we find Bhowmick¹, to have said, "In course of travels and shifting for security, following clashes with other groups italic have been transformed to a considerable extent or blended according to the demands of the situation or circumstantial exigencies. As a result, present day cultures of these groups bear such mark of incorporate, into the core of their cultural matrix". And, in order to be eligible for constitutional benefits which have been declared after independence, these groups have been capsulized as "weaker section" and listed separately as "scheduled". In this part of India, there are all together 160 Scheduled Tribes² with identifiable characteristic and traits, distributed in different areas of this region³. Our country has 179 languages and 544 dialects according to Linguistic Survey of India. Out of this, 116 belonging to Tibeto-Chinese family group are found in this region and over 400⁴ distinct tribal and sub-tribal as well concentrated mainly in Assam, Manipur and Tripura. The entire region is inhabited by three⁵ distinct groups of people: the hill tribes, the plain tribes and non-tribal population of the plains. An in Manipur, there are more than 40(forty) tribes out of which 36(thirty-six) are recognized with as many dialects as there are tribes, if not more. Furthermore, Gangte⁶ has maintained that it is true that the enchanting land known as the North-East region of India attracted waves of diverse racial groups through ages. It has come to stay as the confluence of the most colorful mosaic of ethnic, linguistic and cultural diversity⁷. The Culture and tradition of the people often overlap the manmade political unit of the region. Political loyalty mostly transcends the boundary of each political unit⁸.

These groups of people came to region at different periods of history some of them came in the prehistoric days and other came at different point of time in history. Thus, even though some of the belong to the same ethnic group, time – gap in the waves of migration between different groups contributed greatly to their present wide – range of divergence and multiplicity, ultimately resorted to a multiple cause for destabilizing political economic, ethnic and communal tensions in the region⁹. Moreover, at present, the swelling migrant population in the region has also loosened the grip of indigenous settler over their land, economy and sense of freedom. Total area of Manipur is one and nine-tenths Valley and Hills. It is a state of economic backward but a land of nature bounty with natural resources of all kinds including human resources and a rich cultural heritages belonging to indigenous ethnic groups who have been living together in the State since time immemorial in particular. Yet, in spite of its vast natural resources and human potentialities it has ever produced from its own soil, the State and the citizens of different Stratas including weaker sections, backward classes and destitute children and women have remained underdeveloped and finding themselves with lagging behind all infrastructure facilities in all fronts. This might have happened for the failure of authorities to adequately harness and utilize resources available in a manner that can give sustainable to socio-economic development of the people as well as planning development of the State. A prolong negligence and lack of concrete initiatives for development over decades has now resulted in plaguing the State with manifold problems on various issues ranging from land dispute, administration conflict, ethnic issue and lack of effective governance in different

parts of the State and even to drag a petty case unnecessarily on communal line whenever it is raised up. In addition, the ever increasing population without multiculturalism and lack of generating adequate employment and actualization of work culture and not to depend on others have also further worsened the complexities, thereby creating anarchy and chaotic in all walks of life, and with no sign of getting a relief from such critical issues in a near future are in fact do not bide for the socio-cultural transformation of all the weaker section is not in the tune of social reality¹⁰. Moreover, population in the lower stratum of society comprising mostly of distributives whose basic needs of food, shelter (due to displacement as a result of developments and construction of dams, project etc.) medical care, education etc. still remain unfulfilled. We all know the prevailing situation and emerging trend or shall we term as culture of drugs mafia and human trafficking inter alia. The population – largely illiterate, property less and jobless – lives through queer ways: parent selling or pleading their progeny for money, individuals selling their blood or organs, children of tender age working under dehumanizing and exploitative condition, is part of their life story. Besides, the Government of India, following the legacy of British Colonial administration, in its Constitution (Scheduled Tribes, Part (State) Orders 1957) notified the Scheduled Tribe. List of Manipuras (I) Any Kuki Tribe (II) Any Naga Tribe and (III) Any Lushai Tribes without making any mention of ethnic names of the different tribes. This has again resulted in the polarization of the tribes into the Nagas and the Kukis, for the constitutional compulsion made the tribes to identify themselves as either the Naga or Kuki so that the could get the constitutional safeguard¹¹. (To be contd.....)

National and International News

NEFIS condemns police restraining Sharmila from addressing gathering

IT News New Delhi, April 1: While welcoming the judgment of the Metropolitan Magistrate acquitting from Sharmila in 2006 case North-East Forum for International Solidarity (NEFIS) condemns the police for not allowing the student to meet Sharmila at Manipur House. NEFIS said the struggle against the AFSPA law will continue, till it is revoked. NEFIS had earlier organized a solidarity meeting in support of from Sharmila and for freedom from Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), on March 30, 2016 at Manipur House, where from Sharmila has been made to stay. From Sharmila has been denied freedom for standing against the draconian AFSPA, for more than 15 years. The solidarity meeting was organized to protest against this Act

which has been used to brutally suppress the democratic rights of the people, as well as in support of from Sharmila's release. People and students from different communities and regions of the North-East gathered outside Manipur House to meet Sharmila, but were denied permission by the police. From Sharmila, who wanted to address the gathering, was brought to New Delhi for her appearance before the Metropolitan Magistrate, Patiala House Court with an ongoing trial against her before the Court for staging hunger strike protest at Jantar Mantar in 2006. The activist is continuing her 15-year hunger strike but says it is not a fast unto death. She says she will fast till the Armed Forces Special Powers Act or AFSPA is revoked. The law gives soldiers sweeping powers to arrest



or interrogate people in "disturbed areas" or states dealing with separatists or insurgents. Declarations of the committee appointed by the Supreme Court in April 2013 that fake encounters happened in Manipur have affirmed facts that we have all known for very

long, about the nature of this brutal act. Sharmila began her fast in November 2000, days after 10 people, including two children, were shot dead in Imphal, by Assam Rifles soldiers. Three days later, she was charged with attempt to suicide and arrested.

Prez signs ordinance on U'khand expenditure

PII New Delhi, April 1: President Pranab Mukherjee has signed an ordinance to authorise expenditure from today in Uttarakhand which is under central rule. The Uttarakhand Appropriation (Vote on Account) Ordinance, 2016 was promulgated by the President yesterday, according to an official notification issued today. The ordinance is to provide for the withdrawal of certain sums from and out of the Consolidated Fund of the State of Uttarakhand for the services of a part of the financial year 2016-17, it said. Congress has said that it would to

move court if the ordinance was issued. The ordinance has been issued as "Parliament is not in Session and President is satisfied that circumstances exist which rendered it necessary for him to take immediate action for the purpose of timely compliance of financial businesses of the state of Uttarakhand", the notification said. The ordinance allows withdrawal of about Rs 13,642.43 crore to meet expenditure on certain services for the ongoing fiscal in the state, which was put under President's rule on Sunday. The decision to issue the ordinance was taken on Wednesday at a meeting of the Union Cabinet chaired by Home

Minister Rajnath Singh in the absence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who is on an official visit abroad. On March 18, the state Budget could not be passed in the Uttarakhand Assembly. The Appropriation Bill was not passed. In the absence of any lawful passage of the Bill, no withdrawal can be done as far as the Uttarakhand government is concerned from the Consolidated Fund of the state, Union Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had said after the Cabinet meeting. Since the state is under President's Rule and no budget could be passed earlier, the Cabinet had recommended

an Appropriation Ordinance for Uttarakhand, so that valid withdrawal of the government revenue can be done, he had said. In a rare development, the Budget session of Parliament was prorogued on March 29 to enable the government to promulgate the ordinance. The decision to recommend such a course was taken at a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs chaired by Singh on Tuesday following questions over the status of the Appropriation Bill which was declared as passed by the Speaker in the Uttarakhand Assembly under controversial circumstances.