

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, April 29, 2016

To mould our future

Children are the most precious treasure for the whole of humankind. They are the future, the torch bearers of our species who will ensure the survival and progression as a distinct race that has come to rule the world and almost everything in it. And like everything, they also need to be prepped and prepared for the future, to carry forward and improve upon the advancements made in every aspect of our lives. It goes without saying that we should spare no expenses or efforts in nurturing and protecting them.

The bitter irony here, however, is that in our society there is an increasing evidence of apathy, reluctance and even willful misleading of the young children to serve some vested interests. The most glaring example of this is presently being witnessed in the way the state is providing, or rather pretending to, be more precise, education to the children. Despite the verbiage and self-praise on the efforts being put into improving and modernising the education system in the state by the government, the utter failure of the whole exercise cannot be stressed enough. What is more disturbing is the fact that the state machinery vested with the power and the resources to bring about positive changes in the education system are still not ready to admit to their shortcomings, and therefore effectively curtailing the opportunity to review and redraw the system. The concern here has shifted from bringing up educated and qualified children to securing the biggest cut for oneself from the resources allocated for education. The end result - derelict schools, empty classrooms, absent teachers, negligent officials and depraved authorities who have totally lost the plot.

The danger, however does not stop here. Numerous social forces out to make a point regardless of the relevancy to the development and progress of the children are using these young and impressionable minds to echo their demands and diktats. Students too young to comprehend any social issues are often seen being used to shore up the numbers by various social and student bodies in the demand for various issues. There is also the dark and discomfiting fact of child trafficking that has been largely ignored till now but one which is becoming a big cause for concern for everybody in the state in view of the rise in the occurrence of the crime. Yet another issue which will have far reaching consequences is the way incessant violence, crimes and social disruptions are starting to make impressions on the young minds. When such undesirable social aberrations are being taken as a way of life and understood as such, we have a big and unavoidable challenge before us, one which has the potential to bring the whole state into oblivion.

Nurturing and shaping our children is a collective responsibility of the society and we must learn to accept the challenge and take pride in chipping in with our efforts in trying to dispel the doubts and negative influences that are being experienced by the children. We need to look beyond narrow communal, religious or cultural boundaries and bring up our children to be eligible and qualified citizens of the world. The state authorities need to lead from the front.

AR organizes pulse polio vaccination camp

Imphal, April 29: In its ongoing endeavour to help in sustaining the eradication of Polio from India, 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organised a Polio vaccination camp at Nodal Hospital, Pallelin Chandel district of Manipur state on 27 April 2016. The Medical team led by Senior Medical Officer administered the pulse polio vaccination to the children below 5 years of age. The event was a huge success as a large numbers of children (approximately 135) were given the doses and the neighboring villagers also utilized this opportunity. The step taken by the Assam Rifles will go a long way in keeping India free from the curse of Polio and thus help in making the future brighter for the children of Pallelin.

Rifles of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR(South) organised a Pulse Polio Immunization camp at Tengnoupal Village in Chandel district of Manipur state on 25 April 2016. The programme was organised in collaboration with the Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Tengnoupal as part of the nationwide Pulse Polio Immunization (Switch Plan) planned by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. The medical team administered the pulse polio vaccination to children below 5 years of age from Tengnoupal Village and vaccination booths were also established at Sita, Shaibol and Kwatha Villages. The local populace appreciated the efforts and dedication of Assam Rifles, which strengthened the friendship bond between security forces and local populace.

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Destination North East: Can DONER and NEC go together?

By-Ningombam Bupenda Meitei

The significance of North East India, in terms of connecting between South Asia and South East Asia besides China, has been discussed and acknowledged not only in today's modern economy but also in the context of the ancient trade routes of silk from China to Greek world. The North East India is not a homogenous set of similar cultures, traditions, religions, food habits, literature, dresses, style and languages, it is indeed the most diverse part of India. Out of its 8 North Eastern states, Assam, Manipur, Tripura and Sikkim are not a tribal state and these 4 states do have non-tribals as majority communities. What drives New Delhi to reach out to the North East India - Act East or internal economic development necessity of North East and East India or making an attempt to bring South East Asia, by competing against Chinese economy, closer to South Asian economy? Can New Delhi kick start the economic and commercial boom of North East India without taking along with all the capital cities of the 8 North Eastern states?

NEC and DONER

It is mostly in post-independent India that the need of economic and social growth of the North East India is seriously taken into

consideration. It was in this notion that NEC (North Eastern Council) was established under the North Eastern Council Act 1971 which was passed by the Parliament of India. The Act got amended in 2002 to include Sikkim in the already existed seven North Eastern States (Assam, Manipur, Tripura, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh). Much later, in September 2001, Department of DONER (Development of North Eastern Region) was established and it got upgraded to a ministry of Union of India in May, 2004. Ministry of DONER is the only ministry of India that deals with a particular region in India's Union ministries. It caters to the needs of the eight north eastern states of India.

NEC works from its Headquarter in Shillong under its NEC Secretary who is usually Union Secretary level while Ministry of DONER functions from New Delhi with its DONER Secretary who is also of the rank of Secretary to Government of India. The composition of NEC comprises Governors and Chief Ministers of eight North Eastern States besides its Chairman and 3 other members who are nominated by the President of India. Ministry of DONER, organisationally, is run by its Union

Minister, who is mostly of Union Minister of State and not Cabinet rank till its inception as a full-fledged ministry in 2004. The Minister of DONER is assisted by Union Secretary and other Joint Secretaries. DONER has its nodal officers in all the 8 North Eastern States of India. It also has its nodal officers in all the ministries of Union of India. The Minister of DONER is the ex-officio Chairman of NEC. The Ministry of DONER, in its official website, points out that *The Ministry of Development of North Eastern Region is responsible for the matters relating to the planning, execution and monitoring of development schemes and projects in the North Eastern Region. Its vision is to accelerate the pace of socio-economic development of the Region so that it may enjoy growth parity with the rest of the country.* NEC, in its official website, states that *The North Eastern Council is the nodal agency for the economic and social development of the North Eastern Region which consists of the eight States of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura. Over the last thirty five years, NEC has*

been instrumental in setting in motion a new economic endeavour aimed at removing the basic handicaps that stood in the way of normal development of the region and has ushered in an era of new hope in this backward area full of great potentialities.

Though DONER and NEC are organisationally different, both have the same person, who is both the DONER Minister and ex-officio Chairman of NEC, to lead. The Ministry of DONER, in its website, explains that *the nature of the associate organizations of the Ministry of DONER is complex.* NEC is listed as one of the associate organisations of the Ministry of DONER. The question of whether NEC, which functions under the Chairman who is also the DONER Minister, is under the administrative control of Ministry of DONER or not, as NEC is a statutory body set up by an Act of Parliament, is a point of deliberation to get clarity in terms of the administrative delegation of authority and reporting - such as, shall NEC Secretary in Shillong report to DONER Secretary in New Delhi or DONER Minister?

(to be contd.)

***Ningombam Bupenda Meitei, educated at St. Stephen's College, Delhi, is a poet and author.

National and International News

Civil Services Examination and Indian Forest Service Examination - 2016

New Delhi, April 29: The Union Public Service Commission will hold the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examination, 2016 on August 07, 2016. This Preliminary Examination will be common for the candidates applying for Civil Services Examination and Indian Forest Service Examination, and will act as a screening mechanism for selection of candidates for the Civil Services (Main) Examination and Indian Forest Service (Main) Examination. The examination will be held at 72 centers across the country, in accordance with the rules of Civil Services Examination notified in the Official Gazette on April 27, 2016 by the Department of Personnel & Training,

Government of India and the Rules of Indian Forest Service Examination notified by the Ministry of Environment and Forest in the Official Gazette on April 27, 2016. Candidates are required to apply through online mode on the Commission's Website www.upsonline.nic.in. No other mode is allowed for submission of application. The commencement of filling online applications shall start from April 27, 2016 and conclude on May 27, 2016 (till 11.59 PM). For details regarding the Syllabus and Scheme of the Examination, Centers of Examination, Guidelines for filling up application form etc. aspirants must visit

the Commission's Web site www.upsc.gov.in or www.upsonline.nic.in and refer to the Notices of the above mentioned two examinations. While submitting the online applications for the Civil Service (Preliminary) Examination, the candidates will have the option to choose either the Civil Services or the Indian Forest Service or both. Therefore, before exercising their options, applicants may carefully read and understand the eligibility and other criteria contained in the detailed notices of both the Civil Services [Examination] 2016 and Indian Forest Service Examination 2016 which are available on the aforementioned Website of the Commission.

Nuclear power

New Delhi, April 29: The Integrated Energy Policy formulated in the year 2006 had envisaged reaching a nuclear power capacity of 63,000 MW by 2032. Further, the government in its recent submission of Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) has also stated that efforts are being made to achieve 63 GW installed capacity by the year 2032, if supply of fuel is ensured. The percentage share of energy from nuclear power by the end of the Twelfth Plan period is expected to be around 3%. In the 2016-17 budget speech, the Finance Minister has announced that the Government is drawing up a comprehensive plan, spanning next 15 to 20 years, to augment the investment in nuclear power generation, said Dr. Jitendra in RS yesterday.

Rs. 94 Crore released under Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme

PIB
New Delhi, April 29: The overall objective of the Beti Bachao Beti Padhao (BBBP) Scheme is to improve declining Child Sex Ratio in the country and create an enabling environment for the education of girl child and this requires long-term attitudinal change. The Scheme has completed its one year and is at the nascent stage of implementation. In the last one year, several local innovative interventions have been demonstrated by the districts with support from Department of WCD, Health and Education. This has resulted in increased awareness, sensitization and conscious building around the issue of declining CSR in the public domain. As per Census 2011 data, Child Sex Ratio (CSR) stands at 918 girls per 1000 boys in the age group of 0-6 years, against 927 in 2001 Census. The reasons behind the declining Child Sex Ratio in the country are primarily the socio-cultural mindset having preference for son, considering girls as burden and preference for small family. Further, easy availability of technology for sex determination tests and abortion services act as a catalyst in the declining Child Sex Ratio.

The BBBP scheme is being implemented through the State Govt./UT Administration. The Village Convergence & Facilitation Service (VCFS) is being implemented in BBBP districts at Gram Panchayat (GP) level to generate awareness regarding various schemes/programmes of the Central/State Government and mobilize the community to create demand and access/avail such services at grass root level. The States/UTs have undertaken various activities under the BBBP. Funds to the tune of Rs.93.90 Crore have been released for the implementation of Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao Scheme. This information was given by the Union Minister of Women and Child Development, Smt Maneka Sanjay Gandhi in reply to a question in Rajya Sabha yesterday.

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First Meeting of Group of Ministers

Among other issues the focus points for deliberations tomorrow are likely to be how to deal with non-motorized transport on roads like pedestrians and cyclists or non road vehicles plying on public places; testing for issue of Driving License which would include discussion on having unified driving license, use of automation, mandatory driver training, rationalization of categories and periodicity for license renewal. Grant of fitness for transport vehicles is another subject on the agenda and would include issues like reviewing periodicity of vehicle fitness in view of better technology, introduction of automation in

vehicle fitness, third party fitness testing by dealers or other authorized service stations. Deliberations will also be held on framing rules of road regulations and increase in penalties for traffic violations, with a part of the penalty collected going into improvement of traffic management. For enhancing customer experience discussions will be held on simplification of forms and linking with Aadhar for biometric verification, making forms online, inclusion of accidental insurance cover for commercial drivers in third party insurance scheme and also removing provisions regarding dress code for drivers.



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