

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, August 11, 2016

Save Sharmila; constitute an inquiry

It's almost two days, story encircled around from Sharmila still continues. But one part missing in almost all media is the issue of AFSPA. Today's media seem to have forgotten that Sharmila is known across the Globe for her historic protest against the draconian Act AFSPA. What is ironic is, when Sharmila decided to stop fast-into-death protest and change the strategy National Media is seen crowded in Imphal city. Almost every big channel carries the story of Iron Sharmila. Media went live and for those who are watching the whole scene closely it is easily noted that something unnatural was noticed to our Iron Lady. And why not, she has been detained and force fed in custody for around 16 years, except for those assigned to look after her, no one knows the kind of chemicals injected to her. Sharmila's protest for the people of the region in particular had given much headache to the Indian government authority who thinks the country will not be able to govern without the help of draconian act like AFSPA.

With the name of Sharmila spreading far and wide, Indian democracy was many a time put to the center of criticism by world community. For this reason it is natural that the Indian authority finds a way to make her a mockery. But her protest becomes so powerful that, anything needed to end the issue (Sharmila's) must be carried out shrewdly. When Sharmila said that she will end her fast and continue to struggle against the AFSPA by contesting election it was indeed a wise decision. But when she started spelling out her desire of getting married than it turns out to be illogical. And one thing that is needed to ponder upon is - what made her mind believed that contesting in the election from the CM constituency will make her become the CM of the state? When she said that she will fight election from the constituency of Chief Minister and become Chief Minister in front of whole the media, it definitely showed her immaturity in the field of politics. When she knows nothing about how a person will become chief minister than what made her said that she will become chief minister?

There is a conspiracy going on. And another thing that is matter, is today's news story carried in a specific newspaper at which she told that celebrating Indian Independence Day is an insult to the people of the region. There is no linking to what she said in the jammed court room on that day and the kind of statement that she told to the news reporter of that specific newspaper. This is unnatural and one need to ponder on what is the present state of Sharmila's mental status. What changes is seen to her since one person called Desmond Cotinho (an NRI) came to her life. Earlier, before the NRI appeared everything was okay, the issue of AFSPA was drawing attention to almost all the people of the country. She talked with sense and there was no misunderstanding.

At this point of time it is worth recalling the Bollywood mega movie "Peepili live" at which a one character called Natha was projected as an issue. Instead of focusing on the issues of the poor farmer the media giants of the country rushed to the village and dramatize the issue to push up their TRP rating. "Peepili live" was no different from what has happened in the last two days here in Imphal. This is said so because to anybody who listen to Sharmila during the press conference held two days back, the person if have sense will definitely said that her mental state is not sound.

In our yesterday issue we proposed the fellow Manipuris who want to save Sharmila to urge International Body to constitute an enquiry into the matter of how Sharmila has been treated while she was in the hospital. And today too we in the Imphal Times propose an enquiry conducted by an independent body under the supervision of International body like the United Nation to find out what has been done to her while she was detained in custody.

Issue of AFSPA should not end with the mission accomplishment to Sharmila's long march; let this be another beginning on the fight against the draconian act.

By : **Khekiye K. Sema IAS (Retd)**

A great deal of time have been spent in the print media for the past several years desperately addressing the core Naga Political issues that concerns our immediate lives, the lives of our present children and most importantly, the lives of our grandchildren and the great grandchildren that will surely follow long after we are all dead and gone, whose lives will be measured by the legacy we leave behind for them today. This is the ultimate call of duty to honestly search our Christian hearts and find an honourable solution that upholds the dignity and identity of all Nagas as free people. It is imperative that the decisions we take must be based on true Christian humility and equality that emphatically transcends all personal ego considerations... because what we do today will irrevocably define who we really are for all times.

It is only in times of death of people we love that we are seriously reminded of the transient nature of life. It momentarily registers in our minds the utter meaninglessness of amassing wealth beyond our basic needs, security and comfort zones... because each one of us, without exception, are fated to depart from planet earth at the appointed day of Our Lord the way we came... empty handed. No matter how much power, riches or self esteem we may like to credit ourselves with in our lifetime, our little footprint on earth will eventually be wiped out by the sands of time and forgotten. I repeat... No matter who we are... no matter how many AK 47's we wield... we will all still die empty handed as God decreed. Was this not the case for our respected Late Isak Chishi Swu, Chairman, NSCN (IM)? Will it not equally be relevant for Ino. Th. Muivah, our General Secretary NSCN (IM)? Yes, as mere mortals, the desire to go down in history as the 'Father of the Nation' is extremely tempting without doubt but is it worth destroying the sanity of peaceful future of the generation to come... just trying to satisfy our present individual lust for a reputation we cannot take where we are going? Would this really matter after we are dead and gone?!

The elementary principle of forgiving others and expecting forgiveness in return is certainly a fine Christian gesture. It is however the 'historical principle' that NSCN (IM) keeps doggedly harping about and expecting all other Factions to come on board their bandwagon is the area that causes severe indigestion... so let us try and address this subject objectively. Despite varied customs and traditions, the one common ancestral trait that stands out significantly amongst the Tribes, is our predominant traditional sense of honour. It is within these

NAGAS WILL REJOICE

confines of honour that the Nagas and the NSCN (IM) need to evaluate this 'historical principle' more sensitively. Firstly, that same 'political principle and political history' germinated within the minds of our uneducated Nagas of Nagaland who cherished freedom dearly. Secondly, from a factual standpoint, when Nagas of Nagaland were mercilessly being subjected to inconceivable, inhuman treatment devoid of any human dignity at the hand of our enemy with their fate hanging in a balance, there were other brothers beyond our boundary watching it happen right before their very eyes and yet had no political consciousness or inclination to join the fray in response to the desperate cry for help to them by the Nagas of Nagaland. At that desperate time of 1962, Nagas of Nagaland could only boast of a handful of graduates in the Naga National Movement (NNM) whereas our Southern brothers, more specifically our Tangkhul Brothers, had 264 graduates at that very point of history... as confirmed by no less a leading personality as Late Scato Swu, the President of the Federal Government of Nagaland... but our Tangkhul brothers declined to lend a helping hand as if this was someone else's war! This is not an anti-Tangkhul sentiment being expressed. This is a recorded history being shared! Captain Vighoto Swu, with his small band of patriotic Naga Army, was sent as a special envoy to create awareness and plead to our Tangkhul brothers to join the Naga National Movement (NNM). Not only were they unprepared to join the NNM but their indifferent response was to do nothing when their Tangkhul CIDs informed the Indian Army of the whereabouts of Capt. Vighoto's boys. As a result Capt. Vighoto lost a couple of his comrades (Tukukha and namesake Vighoto) shot by the Indian Army and his Sergeant Nihhaje arrested at Chingai forest. The 52 Villages of East Tangkhul area in between Kuchangpong Village and Senakathel Village were fully aware of the desperate plight of this 'special envoy' team struggling in their jungles without food but were collectively afraid to help them... and did not help them. Capt. Vighoto's troop suffered starvation for 14 days (May 5 to May 19, 1962) in the Eastern Tangkhul jungles before being able to somehow crawl back home, having dismally failed in their mission.

Dispassionately... being evaluated... would such treachery be traditionally considered worthy of brotherhood within the mainstream tribal community... no matter which tribe they may belong? Would not our traditional honour demand condemnation of such behaviour devoid of courage and ostracise them from any Tribal responsibility?!

Customarily speaking therefore, our Tangkhul 'Brothers' would traditionally be duty bound to render an official apology to the Nagas of Nagaland for their past apathetic indiscretion to restore their honour first to begin with, let alone being tolerated for their domineering takeover of the NNM and negotiating our destiny without letting us know what is being hatched on our behalf! This can seriously be construed as the highest traditional insult no Tribe with honour would be prepared to swallow! Yet this is the greatest quality of the Nagas of Nagaland. The bottom-line is this: the Nagas of Nagaland have exercised matured wisdom by not taking our Southern brothers to task on this issue. Instead the Nagas of Nagaland acknowledges that the times have changed from brawn to brain and also credits our Tangkhul brothers in the NSCN (IM) for being better disposed to carry out mental exercise of a complex negotiation with the GoI as compared to the present brains of Nagas of Nagaland within their fold. Our Southern Brothers must believe that the fair-minded Nagas do not grudge them this ground reality and in fact wish them all the best of luck for all our sakes. The only thing that any right thinking Nagas of Nagaland would find it difficult to agree and vehemently oppose is to have our fate decided without our knowledge or consent. In the absence of Late Chairman Isak Chishi Swu, the sensitive tribal equation hangs in an imbalance ever so glaringly for all to see. The Indians have always looked down on the Nagas as secondary human beings unworthy of real consultation as history would testify. Our Tangkhul brothers must fight this same temptation of undermining the Nagas of Nagaland by giving lectures for hours and then claim it as a 'consultation' and an 'endorsement' to suit whatever designs they have. No real honest consultation has been had concerning our present Naga political logjam to date and their guarded secrecy is not helping to clear this air of suspicion. A high profile Tangkhul member of NSCN (IM) had the audacity to tell me that he felt that the general illiterate population of the Nagas of Nagaland will not understand the complex nature of the ongoing negotiation with the GoI and therefore the secrecy! I was wondering whether he knew that there was also a literate section of equally concerned Naga population who just might understand what is going on? Our intelligence is not equal to their? Was that what he was implying?! Anyway let's move on....

It is at critical time in history such as the present, that our 'political principles' must broadly be put on

the table for honest review...not with the intention of demeaning one another but to reduce the level of arrogance with a more mutual reconciliatory attitude in dealing with each other with due humility and respect as equals. Candidly put...the top heavy Tangkhuls presence in the NSCN (IM), armed with AK47, are now unabashedly riding a horse that historically belongs to the Nagas of Nagaland that they refused to ride before 1964 Cease Fire. The Nagas of Nagaland are still feeding this horse despite the hardships of unreasonable multiple taxation being extorted...just so as not to lose our common identity as free people. Historically, NNC/FGN was our only original democratic Political Institution that the people identified with...not Mao Zedong's communism. That NNC self-destructed with Shillong Accord (SA) 1975 is a common knowledge. That NSCN came to being to keep the Naga National flag flying may also be considered a reasonable argument except for the fact that sincere efforts were not seen sufficiently to retain a united democratic house by taking a challenging but right option of impeaching Mr. A.Z.Phizo (AZP) and Naga Parliament officially condemning the SA 1975 even if AZP did not, rather than start a self-perpetuating new Faction so casually with alien philosophy. AZP was not above the law...however worshipped he may have been at that time. The GoI knows for sure that SA 1975 is a redundant document that the Nagas spit upon. So instead of defining SA 1975 as a defilement of a 'political principle' and using it as an excuse for disunity, collectively condemn it in no uncertain terms even now and forge a unity under it or by any other name if NNC is not considered as a common acceptable political platform. The unforgiving attitude of magnifying the human error of others while losing sight of our own is a hypocrisy Nagas desperately need to overcome. Meanwhile, no Faction with a modicum of traditional pride will want to join the bandwagon under the present terms. At his age, Mr. Muivah must surely understand that time is no longer a luxury. It is important for him to also believe that the Nagas are not all that unmindful or ungrateful to underwrite all the life sacrifice he has sincerely made in having reached the present status of negotiation. A united house of all Factions will surely continue to acknowledge him as first amongst equals. The masses would stand behind him and ensure such an outcome if right steps are taken towards unity...and together even if a chicken is brought home at the end of the day...Nagas will still rejoice with him and truly celebrate "Nagaland for Christ".

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National & International News

Curfew to continue in South Kashmir and Srinagar

Srinagar, Aug. 11: In Jammu and Kashmir, curfew will continue in Anantnag town in South Kashmir and in areas under five old city police stations and Batamaloo police station in uptown Srinagar.

Curfew-like restrictions will also continue in Kupwara, Handwara, Langate, Trehgam, Lalpora, Kralpora and adjacent areas in north Kashmir's Kupwara district. According to police officials, restrictions will continue in south Kashmir's Pulwama, Kulgam and Shopian districts and also in Budgam, Ganderbal, Sopore, Bandipora and Baramulla.

Yesterday, Home Minister Rajnath Singh has claimed that curfews in the Valley were not prolonged and were revoked soon according to the situation, adding that the separatists were creating an aura of fear in the Valley, which was invoking a curfew-like situation as people lived in fear. "Since 9th July, their so-called leaders

have maintained on prolonging protest. Even the areas even where there is no curfew, out of fear, the shops remain closed. I want to laud the state government for functioning effectively despite all the hurdles thrown in their way. I'm not saying

that the situation is completely under control, but the state government is ensuring the daily lives of the people continue unhindered," Rajnath had said in his statement in the Rajya Sabha.

Asserting that the Centre is ready for

talks on the matter, Rajnath announced that an all-party meeting will be convened on August 12 at 12 PM.

The Opposition earlier came down heavily on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for not addressing the concerns of the Kashmiris in Parliament.

12 injured in blast near Pakistan hospital

Islamabad, Aug. 11: Twelve people were injured on Thursday in a roadside blast near a hospital in Pakistan's Quetta city, police said.

"Balochistan Federal Shariat Court Judge Zahoor Shawani was the target in the attack," the Nation daily quoted Balochistan Home Minister Sarfaraz Bugti as saying. Civilians and security officials were injured in the attack that took place near Al Khair Hospital in Zarghon road. The explosion comes just after a suicide bombing at the emergency ward of Quetta's Civil Hospital on Monday that killed over 70 people, mostly lawyers

and journalists. The bomb was planted along the side of the road and exploded as the Anti Terrorism Force's (ATF) vehicle passed by.

"This is a busy road and the terrorists take advantage of this, planting bombs and fleeing on motorcycles," Dawn online quoted Bugti as saying. "These blasts are aimed at sabotaging Independence Day (August 14) activities in Balochistan. I believe these cowardly acts will not bring down our morale. We are in a conflict zone and we will fight with renewed resolve," the Home Minister

said. Bugti added that three to four kilograms of explosive material was used in the blast.

A combing operation is ongoing throughout Quetta following Monday's blast.

Another National Action Plan meeting has been by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Thursday to discuss the security conditions of Quetta. The meeting will be attended by Chief of Pakistan Army Raheel Shareef, Interior Minister Chaudary Nisar and other senior police and security officials, the Nation daily added.