

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday, August 20, 2016

5 days after 70th Independence Day

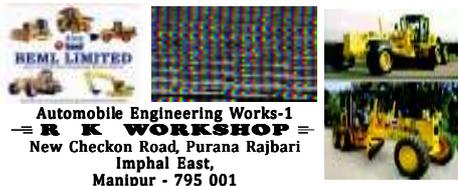
It is 5 days since the nation celebrated its 70th years of independence with much fervor and fanfare, as has been done every year since India attained independence from the British rule in 1947. The occasion was initially observed to remind and redeem the pledge of rebuilding and redirecting the nation towards the path of development and progress from the state of despair and disarray in which the British rulers left it in. Seventy years on, what we are actually experiencing is a far cry from the dreams and visions which every citizen of this country hoped to see unfold into reality. There has been a perceptible loss of foresight and vision amongst the so called leaders who have grown to take their positions and the powers entrusted to them for granted, making a mockery of the democratic setup that was designed to aid in the speedy and judicious dispense of duties and justice. The law and order situation in almost every part of the country leaves much to be desired, and development index seems to be going southwards. There has not been any significant increase in the basic amenities for a very large number of citizens who are struggling to make ends meet in the rural areas and in the far flung villages. In this day and age when space travel is no longer a figment of the imagination, a substantial percentage of the population still dreams about electricity. Roads still remain basic and unpaved and social upliftment measures like the Public Distribution System under the ambitious NFSM has been proving to a colossal waste of precious foodgrains, being manipulated by those entrusted to ensure their proper implementation in order to aid the underprivileged and the needy. Perhaps these people have taken the slogan "Public property is our property" to mean that they are thereby authorized to hoard them and use them for their personal purposes. Social unrest and agitations are on the rise, and the governments are taking undue advantage of these to fill their own coffers instead of looking for measures to address these unrest and upheaval. The nation is rather regressing into a vortex of chaos and unrest, while the leaders and officials are busy giving lip service without the will or the temper to carry out their empty promises. The symptoms of social ills are pretty evident closer home. The police personnel, trained to protect the public are in total disconnect with the common public, their very presence causing panic and concern rather than reassurance and safe. The representatives of the people are unreachable once they assume power, and amidst all these mayhem, various unscrupulous elements are taking advantage of the unrest and social chaos, amassing wealth through intimidation and coercion without the least hesitation to kill or be killed, justifying their actions and deeds by citing noble ideals and espousing selfless sacrifice with their fingers on the triggers of their guns all the while. The altruistic meaning of Independence has been lost in the chaos. The maddening rush for survival and personal enrichment has caught the public and the powerful alike in its wake. Development and progress are concepts that has been relegated to the dark corners. Unless we come to our senses and redeem ourselves now, it would be too late to salvage whatever little we have achieved as a society and as progressive humans. It is in us all to change things. It is in us to stand up and start working on it.

Government of Manipur
Directorate of AYUSH, Lamphelat
NOTIFICATION
Imphal, the 18th August, 2016

No. DAS(Nomination)/2015: 1st Counselling for AYUSH Courses (BAMS/BNYS & BHMS) will be held on 26/08/2016 at Directorate of AYUSH, Lamphelat. Details can be seen at Notice Board.
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National & International News

CNN anchor breaks down while reporting on story of injured Syrian boy

New Delhi, Aug 20: Words cannot do this image any justice. At best, one can say who this boy is and what happened minutes before he was captured on film, to explain why he looks the way he does. Many times, it isn't even possible to say those words while looking at such a picture. That's exactly what happened to a CNN anchor who broke down on air while trying to give details about this boy, another victim of the civil war perpetrated by the Islamic State in Syria and surrounding countries. The boy is **Omrnan Daqneesh**. He was being taken to hospital in an ambulance, after being pulled out from under the rubble of a building after terror airstrikes in Aleppo, Syria, last week. The terror strikes occurred in the rebel-held area of the Qaterji neighbourhood which has been besieged by air strikes in recent weeks. The Independent reported.

The British newspaper also said that **Omrnan** was one of 12 children to receive medical treatment after the airstrikes. Omrnan's picture symbolizes the humanitarian crisis in Syria in the same way that the photo of toddler Aylan Qadri, lying face down, dead, on a Turkish beach, brought home to the world the seriousness of the war.

CNN anchor Kate Bolduan began the segment of the story on the airstrikes with this picture of Omrnan. "There are no tears here. He doesn't cry once. That boy is in total shock," Bolduan said, her voice cracking and shaking as she goes on.

"What strikes me is, we shed tears, but there are no tears here. He doesn't cry once. That boy is in total shock. Inside his home one moment, and the next - lost in the flurry and fury of war and chaos," she goes on, uncaring that her eyes are full of tears, on film, and that the whole



word can hear the anguish in her voice. The CNN anchor said Omrnan is one of hundreds of thousands of children who are trying to escape war-torn Syria. The death toll of children, in five years of conflict in Aleppo alone, is 4,500. "At least three people were killed in the bombing in his neighbourhood. This is Omrnan. He's alive. We wanted you to

know," Bolduan concluded. The death toll of children in five years of conflict in Aleppo alone is 4,500, The Independent wrote.

Edible oils extend gain on rising demand

New Delhi, Aug 20: In holiday shortened week, edible oils extended an upward trend at the wholesale oils and oilseeds market on increased buying by vanaspati millers to meet rising demand from retailers driven by festive season against tight supplies from producing belts.

Castor oil in the non-edible section, also showed some strength on increased offtake by consuming industries.

Markets remained closed on Monday for 'Independence Day' and Thursday for 'Raksha Bandhan'. Marketmen said persistent buying by vanaspati millers and retailers triggered by ongoing festive season amid paucity of stocks on restricted supplies from producing regions mainly kept edible oil prices higher.

Pak shuts border with Afghanistan after protests

PII Islamabad, Aug 20: Pakistan has closed one of its main border point with Afghanistan after a group of Afghans staged a protest and tried to attack the crossing in the troubled Balochistan province. A large number of people had gathered near Friendship Gate at Chaman in Balochistan to celebrate Afghanistan's national day yesterday. During the event, some Afghans

attacked the gate and burnt a Pakistani flag in the evening, prompting authorities to deploy additional security troops and shut down the gate for indefinite period, an official said.

Another official said the Afghans belonging to border town of Spin Boldak protested in favor of India after Pakistan protested against the remarks made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi regarding Balochistan. They also chanted slogans against

Pakistan, threw rocks at the gate. The closure resulted in long queues of trucks and lorries on both sides of the border. The traders suffered on both sides as fresh supplies of essential items have been badly interrupted. Pakistan had closed Torkham border crossing in the north-west region in June after deadly clashes with Afghan forces. It was later reopened after talks between high officials of the two countries.

Contd. from yesterday issue

Kuki Political Stand and The Way Forward

This chain merges, in the east, into the spurs, which the Himalayas shoot out from the north of Assam towards the south. From here a great mass of mountain ridges starts southwards, enclosing the alluvial valley of Manipur, and thence spreads out westwards to the south of Sylhet. It then runs almost due north and south, with cross-ridges of smaller elevation, through the districts known as the Chin Hills, the Lushai Hills, Hill Tipperah, and the Chittagong Hill Tracts. Farther south the mountainous region continues, through the Arakan Hill tracts, and the Arakan Yoma, until it finally sinks into the sea at Cape Negrais, the total length of the range being some seven hundred miles.

The greatest elevation is found to the north of Manipur. Thence it gradually diminishes towards the south. Where the ridge enters the north of Arakan it again rises, with summit upwards of 8,000 feet high, and here a mass of spurs is thrown off in all directions. Towards the south the western off-shoots diminish in length, leaving a track of alluvial land between them and the sea, while in the north the eastern off-shoots of the Arakan Yoma run down to the banks of the Irrawaddy. This vast mountainous region, from the Jaintia and Naga Hills in the north, is the home of the Kuki tribes. We find them, besides, in the valley of Manipur, and, in small settlements, in the Cachar Plains and Sylhet.

In light of systemic deprivation and discrimination over decades in independent India as a part of Manipur administration, to alleviate the plight of our people various political demands have been made to the Government. This includes the Sixth Schedule, full-fledged district status for Sadar Hills, and addition of Assembly Constituencies. The delimitation of Assembly Constituencies in Manipur was stayed by the Imphal Bench of the Guwahati High Court on a writ petition filed by the All Political Parties, Manipur (APPM). Later, the

Supreme Court vacated the stay order and set the stage for the Delimitation Commission to complete its task in respect of the State of Manipur after a petition filed by Indo-Myanmar Tribal Development Association (IMTDA) on behalf of various tribal organizations in the State. Thereafter, the Government of Manipur and the All Political Parties of Manipur, having been defeated in the Apex Court resorted to all available political pressure on the Central leadership to allow the status quo to be maintained in the State. The Central Government succumbed in the name of preservation of law and order. Not content with this denial of our rights, COPTAM - The Committee on Protection of Tribal Areas, Manipur had to be formed to preserve our territorial integrity from being flouted.

An avoidable upshot that is the outcome of such policies and acts of the State Government of Manipur is the recent public movement led by COPTAM - The Committee on Protection of Tribal Areas, Manipur, which was formed under the aegis of the Kuki Students Organisation (GHO) and the Kuki Inpi, Manipur. Efforts to get the Nagas brothers on board in the initial stage, was politely turned down by the latter on the contention that 'they have severed all ties with the Manipur Government', but they would render full moral support to the movement. COPTAM came into public attention when its volunteers uprooted the 'Welcome to Bishnupur District' signboard at Kangvai, put up by the PWD Bishnupur District, on the ground that Kangvai is part and parcel of Churachandpur district. This objectionable action of the dominant community in putting up a boundary marker of sorts deep into the hill district, merely because of the presence of Meitei settlers, and the needful step taken by COPTAM to remove the same almost snowballed into a violent communal confrontation between the people of the Hill District of Churachandpur

and Bishnupur. COPTAM submitted an Official Memorandum to the Chairman, National Commission for Scheduled Tribes, the Government of India (15 October 2010).

Latterly, the infamous Three Bills passed by the Special Session of the Legislative Assembly in August 2015 sparked violent protest resulting in the deaths of nine people. The Martyrs are a symbol of sacrifice for our political rights in our own land.

The preceding accounts manifest fertile grounds for continued exploitation in the existing system. It is the existing system, which has changed the status quo from the pre British era when cordial relations prevailed between the people of the hill and the valley. The era of mutual respect for territorial integrity and political independence was altered by colonialists rule, which lumped the people of hill and valley under the same administration. In independent India, following the merger of Manipur to the Indian Union in 1949, which we, Kukis, despite opposition on grounds of not wanting our lands to be included, rule under the same administration was reinforced. Thereafter, notwithstanding our fair co-operation in the interest of communal harmony over the decades, unfortunately the conditions conducive for sustained exploitation created by being put under the 'same administrative' set up has proven the status quo does not benefit all stakeholders equitably. Experience has shown time and again that the status quo is not favourable for justice towards the interests of the hill people. The majoritarian Meitei dominated state Government has left a trail of evidence contrary to the spirit and letter of fair governance that does not discriminate on the basis of hill and valley people. Therefore, with a view to restoring the pre-colonial status of mutual

respect for one another's identity, territory and political rights conducive for peaceful coexistence among all stakeholders, hill and valley is the objective of the Kuki National Organisation. The objective is pitched in our incontrovertible history of Kuki indiginity dating over two millennia as recorded in 33 AD in the *Pooyas*, the traditional script of the Meitei people. Identity and territory are intrinsically linked, which makes it imperative, particularly in the context of present-day Manipur that we claim our political rights in the name of Kuki. Accordingly, as our demand for political settlement is within the Constitutional framework of India, KNO pitches for the best provision, i.e. statehood for the Kuki people. Following the final settlement with the Government, the name of the state may be determined through proper democratic process of consensus by the people.

Finally, my brothers and sisters, I appeal to you today that we must stand united and achieve our long overdue political rights. This is the time to overcome petty differences that have divided and deprived of our rightful due as a people with inalienable indigenous rights. WE must focus on the larger goal ahead. Our vision must not be skewed by narrow interest, which others can utilise to make inroads to divide us and in the process benefit them. Reason based on truth and forgiveness must guide us at this crucial juncture. The collectively whole must take precedence over narrow sectarian entanglements in order to achieve a state where we can share and develop together as one people the Almighty God created. (Concluded)

This is the text of PS Haokip's speech at an event organized by the Kuki Inpi Manipur in Churachandpur, Manipur, India on August 17, 2016. Haokip is president of the Kuki National Organization. Courtesy Kuki Forum