

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, August 30, 2016

From spark to arson

The way the Manipur government is dealing with the issue of the Manipur Police Constable (Male) recruitment appeared candidates for 2013 batch, is nothing but inviting another burden to the already loaded people of the state. From a spark it is now turning into arson with state BJP openly supporting the cause. A mere clarification which failed to prove the credential of the state government is not enough to extinguish the anger of 10,200 plus youths if the state that is at the verge of losing its whole career. Besides, the arrival of state assembly election appeared as a boon to the deprive candidates as, 'the would be' main opponent political party of the congress counterpart now openly support the cause by even joining the candidates in their protest. It's been long that the candidates have been demanding declaration of the result of the recruitment test which was completed a year back. Various forms of agitations including sit-in-protest demonstration, protest rally, bandh, blockade on High ways has been staged, But the government headed by chief Minister Okram Iboi Singh did not consider the kind of agitation as serious and left the matter ignored. This is being said because the Honourable Chief Minister Mr. Okram Iboi Singh had once said that bandh Blockade are coming happening in the state and there is nothing to worry. For Mr. Okram Iboi and his relatives, bandh blockade do not affect them so it might be just an event of interest to him as he can take leave from attending important public function. Same way his relatives who had been on security protection round the clock they have no problems and could not be affected as they could visit anywhere, anytime when desire. But the common people, for example those living on hand to mouth, those women who support their family with the piece of products they sold in the market, bandh or blockade are a matter of serious concern. One thing even more surprises is the clarification of the deputy Chief Minister Gaikhangam, which stated that the cancellation of the recruitment test was done as according to the finding of the enquiry committee conducted by the principal secretary to the state government. It was on Janmathami Day that Mr. Home Minister announced the clarification to prove that their government was doing the right thing by cancelling the recruitment test. The unfortunate part is the mental status of Mr. Home Minister at which he failed to see things that may arise as a result of the clarification where the act may be challenged and criticised. If the government really felt that justice should be done to the people then it should be done in an unbiased manner. The findings mentioned about irregularities and foul play during the various stages of the recruitment test. But how could the government left aside those government departments who conducted the test and punished the candidates who only followed what was told to them. If justice should be done then before making any statement or before taking any hard decisions action should have been taken to those who are responsible in sabotaging the recruitment process. The mental status of the Iboi government which underestimated every public issues and who consider him as the master of handling public issue either by force or negotiation is not going to work this time. The BJP is already in. They have picked up something which is going to be an important strategy of the party in the upcoming election. Now it was little spark of fire that first started the issue but now this issue arises after the cancellation of the police constable candidate recruitment test is going to be an arson which might cinder the government into ashes by redrawing the State Assembly Election Scheduled to a date not less than six months if President took the power from the state government.

India's first military heritage website launched

New Delhi, Aug. 30: India's first military heritage website coloursofglory.org was launched by Glory Foundation. A veteran of the 1971 Indo Pak war, city based Captain D.P.Ramachandran who is also the executive trustee of the foundation said, the war heroes of South India held great significance to the history of India. The foundation will conduct various awareness programs throughout major cities in the Country to educate the people about the Nation's military history and heritage. The programs will be in the nature of exhibitions, films, seminars and talks. The foundation is also planning battle re-enactments or military tattoos, before Independence.

WHENEVER YOU SEE CONSTRUCTION AND MINING EQUIPMENTS, JUST THINK OF US
A SOLUTION FOR EVERY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT



Automobile Engineering Works-1
R K WORKSHOP
 New Checkon Road, Purana Rajbari
 Imphal East,
 Manipur - 795 001

ALL KINDS OF SPARE PARTS AVAILABLE
 AFTER SALES SERVICE TO YOUR SATISFACTION

Authorised dealer **BEML Limited**
 (A Government of India Mini Ratna Company under Ministry of Defence)

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com.
 For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O)

Oh, Manipur! Can you see this photo?

By- Ningombam Bupenda Meitei

*Oh, Manipur!
 Do not see the photo as you see.
 Can you really see yourself in the same photo as you see the photo in front of you, at present?*



Manipur is a state where the present Chief Secretary's mother is considered to be a humble woman who raised her children by fishing and selling fishes. It is a world in itself where any old aged woman - who is, or almost, of the age of one's grandmother - is honourably addressed as "abok" ("abok", in Manipuri, means "grandmother"). "Abok" is even used to begin any conversation even with a grandmotherly woman who humbly sells her home-grown vegetables, not in a market but mostly sitting besides the footpath, that joins a road. The space of honour for *abok* in Manipuri society is measureless, but today the same Manipuri society needs to introspectively inquire whether the same honour is still being bestowed on *abok* in today's world of Manipuris. "Abok", which may semantically mean "grandmother" in English, has larger connotation with a sense of the guardian of "cultures, values, ethics, morality, principles and civilization" of Manipuri world. To meet and talk with *abok*, in Manipuri world, is almost akin to meeting and talking with Socrates, in Greek world. *Abok* is, indeed, the living treasure of Manipuri civilization.

What has happened to Manipur? Is it Manipur or Bandhpur (the land of Bandhs)? Is Manipur a laboratory of national highway blockades? Is Manipur a chemistry laboratory of testing the spirit and energy of different sections in competitively calling bandh or blocking of roads connecting districts or towns? There is even a joke of calling a bandh to demand that all the bachelors of Manipur, till they get their suitable brides, shall sit on a dharna and call for the bandh to meet their demands positively. To add more to this joke, the state's Chief Minister - the elected Leader of the people of Manipur, under the Indian Constitution - stated, publicly, "Bandhs happen every time (in Manipur) and it is not new."

The people of Manipur are also so used to Bandhs and Blockades that they also find hardly of any use even in discussing about Bandhs or Blockades, and this "hardly of any use" attitude is humbly and, perhaps - helplessly also, presented publicly by none other than the Chief Minister himself.

The fundamental question is asking the people of Manipur who are "not" used to Bandhs and Blockades, not because they cannot become used to them, but because they cannot afford to become used to them as that would put an end to their physical, biological and socio-economic existence on this planet. Who are these people of Manipur who are "not" used to Bandhs and Blockades?

Those who are not used to

Bandhs and Blockades in Manipur may be a few, or none, or many, or all in the entire state of Manipur. But, there are two persons in which one is sure that that one could afford to become used to Bandhs and Blockades, while the other person cannot afford to do so at all. The one who could afford is the Chief Minister, notwithstanding who the Chief Minister is, at present. Then, who is the other one who cannot afford to do so like the Chief Minister?

This writing of mine is dedicated to that person who is sure of both the inability and impossibility to afford to become used to Bandhs and Blockades in Manipur, and that person is none other than "the *abok*" who is seen in the photo presented, here. I don't know her, I don't know her name, I know nothing of her. I know one truth, and that truth is: she is "the *abok*" of Manipur. To me, she is not merely *abok*, she is the Socrates; through her, I could sense and feel the civilization of Manipur. But, when I see my Socrates - the *abok* - decaying but not accepting to decay, dying but not accepting to die, I would like to know why she cannot look up, if she is at all alive on her own motherland.

The *abok* makes her every attempt to sell a handful of vegetables grown, probably with her grandchildren and daughter-in-law, at her house and carries them on her shoulder to be sold in a capital city called Imphal - which could almost become the birthplace of the 21st century's Bandhs in the world. Her hands' thinner, paler and aging skin becoming a support of her grey-haired head's wrinkled temple, she chooses not to sit either on a government's footpath or on a road constructed by the state, but on a land which is usually a place to throw garbage from the nearby shops. Taking out her old feet - that have travelled through the dusts of Manipur's roads - from a pair of sandals, she has deeply thought and decisively determined to sit there and there itself. She, like Socrates defying the Greek law, openly challenges the existing

Manipur society, which is being slowly poisoned by the madness of competing in calling Bandhs and Blockades, by not looking up to see herself. Deliberately, she chooses not to look up; she chooses to worry about her dying family but swallows the death by her courage to live not only for her but also for her family; she chooses not to look up, not because she cannot look up to see, but she does not desire to see the decaying Manipuri society, at present. She cries not because nobody has bought her vegetables, but only because she has every right to mourn the beginning of the demise of Manipuri society. She mourns because she can mourn; she can mourn because she knows; she knows because she is the *abok*, she is the Socrates of Manipur. If she does not mourn when today's Manipuri society is poisoned by Bandhs and Blockades, then who - on the earth - would ever mourn for the world of Manipur from getting extinct by almost continuously engaging Bandhs and Blockades, as if "those bandhs and blockades" are almost made to become synonymous with "oxygen of Manipur"?

The *abok* is also not looking up, not because she cannot look up; but because she does not want to look up to pragmatically realise the real existence of the Elected Leader of Manipur who says, "Bandhs happen every time and it is not new." It could be, indeed, true that the poisoning of Manipuri society is taking place in a rapid swiftness every time, through bandhs and blockades, and such poisoning of the society is nothing new, and therefore, since they happen every time, the continuation of such poisoning will only further in the world of Manipuris. What would happen after some point of time from the effect of such continual poisoning? Will not it bring an end to Manipuri civilization? Will not it justify the dawn of the demise of Manipuri world? Will not it uproot the Manipuri society from furthering its generations for the next 22nd

century? Will there be any future for Manipuri? Could Manipur exist without the world of Manipuri?

To some, the *abok* comes to sell some vegetables for the livelihood of hers and her family. To that "some", she, instead of encountering the world of trade, needs to be cared and looked after at this age of hers. But, I do not have "that sympathy" of her being economically poor, financially not so sound, and hence, she has to come out to the world. Why do not I have "that sympathy"?

I also began writing this piece of mine, by being sympathetic about the *abok* but later got evolved into a maturity to understand why she comes out in the world. To those who think that she comes out in the world of markets, she is not. She comes out in the world, in the world of both ideas and actions where Manipuri society witnesses its own vibrant civilization and culture, in the world where the old people are not kept as "old people" but honoured as the liberated guardian of the society.

I started this piece by feeling that the *abok*'s physical, biological and socio-economic existence on this planet would come to an end as she cannot afford to become used to that poison in today's Manipuri society, but I have failed myself in that feeling as an understanding has captured my mind. And, that understanding is the necessity for Manipuri society to wake up to put an end to getting used to that poison in the society. Since the *abok* cannot afford to witness the dusk of Manipuri civilization, therefore she cannot afford to become used to that poison.

I, too being - an ordinary soul, could not stop my tears flowing while seeing this deeply moving photo, but while writing this piece of mine, not those rolling tears have merely rolled down but flowing tears have cleansed my eyes. And, only with those deeply cleansed eyes, I could see why this *abok* needs no sympathy from Manipuri society but Manipuri society, instead, must cleanse its eyes to understand - why she does not look up, why she hides her face.

To those who have not let their tears naturally flow when they see this emotionally touching photo, and who have not cleansed their eyes with those tears to clearly see and understand the wisdom in the *abok* - the Socrates of Manipur - to introspect the existing Manipuri society, it is undoubtedly clear and rightfully admissible that you either have not visited Manipur or are not a Manipuri, or are not a humanist.

Oh, Manipur! Do not see the photo as you see. Can you really see yourself in the same photo as you see the photo in front of you, at present?

National & International News

Curfew lifted from Pulwama; situation in Kashmir improving

PTI Srinagar, Aug 30: Curfew was today lifted from the restive Pulwama town following gradual improvement in the situation across Kashmir, leaving the city's M R Gunj and Nowhatta police stations as the only areas of the Valley under curbs, even as normal life remained affected for 53rd day due to separatists-sponsored strike call. "Only two police station areas in Srinagar city - M R Gunj and Nowhatta - are under curfew today," a police officer said, adding that no other area in Valley was under curfew which was put in place in the wake of violence following killing of Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani. Curfew has been lifted from Pulwama town where prohibitory orders were in force till yesterday, the officer said. He said the decision to lift curbs was taken following improvement in the

situation. There were minor stone-pelting incidents at a few places yesterday, but the overall situation remained peaceful and under control throughout the Valley, he said. Curfew was yesterday lifted from the entire Valley except three police station areas 51 days after it was clamped to maintain law and order. The officer, however, said security forces have been deployed in strength in sensitive areas of the Valley to maintain law and order. Life in Srinagar city has started limping towards normalcy since yesterday as there was increased movement of private cars and auto-rickshaws on the roads. This morning also, there was increased traffic in and around the commercial hub of Lal Chowk here. However, public transport continued to be off the roads due to the strike called by separatist groups who have

asked women to assemble and occupy local chowks and centres from 'Zuhr' (afternoon prayer) to 'Asr' (late afternoon prayer) in the vicinity of towns, villages and localities. Even as schools, colleges and other educational institutions and shops remained closed due to the strike, the attendance in government offices and work in banks have improved since yesterday, the officer said. Curfew was clamped in entire Valley on July 9 following violence in the aftermath of killing of Wani in an encounter in south Kashmir's Anantnag district a day earlier. The violence has left 68 people, including two policemen, dead and several thousand injured. Meanwhile, mobile internet continued to remain suspended in the entire Valley, where the outgoing facility on prepaid mobiles remained barred.

The separatist camp, which is spearheading the agitation in the Valley over the civilian killings during the protests against Wani's killing, has extended the strike call in the Valley till September 1.

SC lets Asaram to be brought to AIIMS for check-up

PTI New Delhi, Aug 29: The Supreme Court today allowed self-styled religious figure Asaram Bapu to be taken to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here from Jodhpur jail under police custody for medical examination. A Bench of Justices A K Sikri and N V Ramana however refused the plea of 75-year-old man, who heads a sect, seeking permission to stay at his ashram in the national capital during the period of check-up.