

Editorial

Imphal Monday, December 12, 2016

Channeling the drive

Today, the state is observing the 77th year to the day when the womenfolk of Manipur rose against the oppressive and unconcerned attitude of the state authority as 'Nupi Lan Numit' - the Manipur Women's Agitation of 1939. The historic event which started as an agitation by Manipuri women against the economic policies of the Maharaja and the Marwari monopolists especially in regard to the unrestricted export of rice from the valley in view of the impending scarcity due to prospects of a poor harvest, later on changed its character to become a movement for constitutional and administrative reform in Manipur. The original demands of the women were confined to the banning of rice exports, but later included changes in the administrative set-up.

Perhaps it would be pertinent to reflect on the points of similarity between the event of 1939 and the present society to attempt a probable prediction of how things might turn out in the near future given the uncertainties and increasing feelings of disregard by the state authorities to the protracted sufferings and feelings of unprovoked challenges to the very existence of the public by a bunch of incorrigible trouble-mongers who, in the garb of nationalists and upholders of a 'unique' breed of humanity, are indulging in vandalism and self-indulgence by stirring up emotions of the naive and simple public.

In a dramatic turnaround, the people of the state is scrambling for essential commodities of daily consumption almost all of which are now being brought in from different places outside the state. If there ever is another 'Nupi Lan' it would be for the means to import or bring in these essential goods. Funnily enough, the unfortunate irony seem to be lost to many at present including those at the helm of affairs of the state - that what was once a state of surplus have been reduced to one which depends on the produce of other states for survival. The focus for most public figures is on extolling the spirit and valor of the Manipuri women, and of respecting and upholding their high social status while nothing could be further from the truth if anyone cares to take a reality check.

The focus should not just be to maintain the 'status quo' as some 'experts and social commentators would so enthusiastically suggest. The focus now is to break away from the conventions and customs that have been holding the collective society back from reaching the potential the state has shown it possessed in abundance. Nupi Lan and other historic agitations have shown that there is no dearth of spirit and drive in the hearts of the people of the state. History has also borne witness to the high level of social and political consciousness of the people of the state. Perhaps the one prominent blot in the history of the state is the lack of true progressive leaders to lead the people and the state out of the social quagmire and political instabilities which has been reflecting on the overall dismal economy despite the tantalizing promises and possibilities. Or is it the case of too many 'self-styled' leaders confusing the public and confounding themselves?

470 died of shock over Jaya's demise: AIADMK

**PTI Chennai, Dec 12:** The ruling AIADMK today said 470 persons had died of "shock" after the demise of party supremo and former Chief Minister J Jayalithaa on December 5, and announced a relief of Rs 3 lakhs each to the families. The party released a list of 190 persons, who had died of shock, and said the toll of such persons stood at 470. Condoling their death, the party announced a welfare fund of Rs three lakh each to the families of the deceased. Further, a total of six persons had attempted suicide so far, it said, releasing the details of four such persons. The party had already named one person who had allegedly attempted suicide and another who had severed his finger after coming to know of Jayalalithaa's death, and announced Rs 50,000 for them. The party also announced Rs 50,000 today for the four persons towards their medical treatment. Having had hospitalised since September 22, 68-year-old Jayalalithaa suffered a cardiac arrest on December 4, and passed away the next day.

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

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](mailto:imphaltimes@gmail.com). For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O)

National & International News

DU students study for exams in ATM queues as landlords insist on rent in cash

**By:- Naina Chaturvedi New Delhi, Dec. 12:** When the entire country is struggling with the cash crunch, there is little chance of college students in Delhi being left untouched by demonetisation. Going by a report in the *Times of India*, landlords of many accommodations rented out to Delhi University students are demanding rent in cash only. As a result, the hapless students are having to spend hours in queues before ATMs to be able to withdraw cash and they are coping by studying while standing in line. Shifa Naseer, a student in Hans Raj College, reportedly told TOI, "I don't understand why my landlord cannot accept the rent through e-transfer when there is no cash. Instead of studying during my preparatory leave, I had to stand in queue for five

hours so that she could get her cash." Since withdrawal limits at ATMs are restricted to Rs. 2,000 and accommodation costs range between Rs.6,000 to Rs. 12,000, spending hours in ATM queues just once is not enough. "My exams are going on, so I asked my landlord if I could pay the rent after my exams, but he did not agree," a Jesus and Mary College student who stays in a PG or a paying-guest accommodation told TOI. "My rent is Rs 8,000, so I had to stand in queue for four days, wasting hours of prep time. I also tried to study in the queue, but with the traffic noise and people talking loudly, it was impossible to concentrate." Many students complained about landlords being unresponsive at a time when they have exams coming

up in a matter of days. "Last month, I paid my rent of Rs. 11,000 on 2 November, and on 8 November, after the demonetisation news, the PG owner returned Rs. 7,000 in Rs. 500 notes and asked me to exchange and give it to him," Naseer said. "I had to get it exchanged while I was preparing for my exams." Her landlord is not willing to accept rent by cheque this month either, telling Naseer that if she queued at five in the morning she should be able to withdraw the money by ten. Moreover, with most ATMs on campus out of cash, students have to travel some distance to get money. "I have to pay my rent by the first week of the month, but I only had Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes," says Gayatri Mishra, a Miranda House student who lives in a PG accommodation

told TOI. "So I asked my landlord if he would accept them, but he refused and instead told me to pay the rent on time. Since all ATMs in the campus run out of cash very quickly, I travelled to Vidhan Sabha for several days to get the cash. My rent is Rs. 11,000, so I stood in queues for five hours every day to withdraw Rs. 2,000 at a time. Instead of studying, we are standing in queues and the PG owners are getting cash without any difficulty." Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced his decision to demonetise Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 currency notes on 8 November to curb corruption, tax evasion, counterfeiting of notes, and terrorism among other reasons. (Courtesy : [Huffpost India](http://Huffpost India))

Rilbong food fest draws foodies from across Northeast

**ANI Shillong, Dec. 12:** Food lovers and gastronomes from all across Shillong and other parts of Northeast thronged the Rilbong food festival in large numbers recently. The popular food festival, held after a gap of 14 years, proved to be a big draw and served as an ideal platform for some of the best cooks to showcase their creative culinary skills. The food festival was organised by the Rilbong Sports and Cultural Club as part of its ongoing Diamond Jubilee celebrations. "Everybody has a food culture and we were trying to bring together this cosmopolitan and diverse food culture on one platform so that people will see and appreciate what they don't know about other communities, what kinds of food they have to offer and how do they make them," Manash Choudhury, President, Rilbong Sports and Cultural Club, said.

There were over 200 participants in different categories that included mutton dishes, chicken and pork delicacies, fish curries and even dry fish in the non-vegetarian category. "Both tribal and non-tribal people came and tasted my items. It was really surprising that people here explored and had food items like fermented soya beans, pork etc. People liked it and packed stuff from my stalls. I think such festivals should be organized every year as it unites different communities and people come together to get a taste of different dishes," said Sheena Milick, a participant. From a bird made out of sweet potatoes to a nest of noodles, which was a major attraction, the event drew huge crowds from all walks of life. There was also the vegetarian category and, adding to this, was the "live" cooking contest where participants cooked. "I came here with my daughter and

mother and all of us were participants. I visited many stalls and it was very interesting to make the salad as on-the-spot competition was going on. It really enlightened us," said another participant. Some of the participants came out with extraordinary displays that included a mutton keema dish made in the shape of a fish. Apart from the regular contest, there were various other contests which involved visitors identifying different Indian spices, answering a questionnaire on table etiquette, identifying Indian Thalis and a general quiz on different aspects of food. "Different cultures and communities came here and tasted each other's cuisines. I think it was very good bonding as we learned about each other. So, that's more important. I learnt about so many other cuisines and tried some others such as the non-vegetarian items. I am very happy as Manash da has done a really good

job," said another participant. Besides these, an exclusive array of sweet dishes like cupcakes, Rabri and Faluda etc. were also on display. Wide varieties of pickles and local made potato chips were also exhibited in the festival. Delectable Bengali cuisine such as the famous fish curry was one such item that drew foodies. "I am presenting it to enjoy as I'm participating here for the first time. I prepared Sheetal Fish Kofta which is boneless. I have enjoyed my time here as people are visiting my stall were eating my food. It is a very good platform for people to communicate, get to meet others, taste various dishes and also learn a lot," said Pinky Ghosh, a participant. Such food festivals bring to light the essence of culinary cultures of different communities, evoke a bit of inclusiveness and strengthen the bond of unity among people of diverse cultures.

Contd. from yesterday issue

Regional Economic Agglomeration and Openness: The Economic Development of the North Eastern Region (NER)

Other parts of the region can supply these resources which in turn will enhance efficient use of 'once' underutilized (both natural and human) resources of the region. More of Manipur can act as gateway to the ASEAN economies and eventually to the World. To make these happen, the transportation plays a very crucial role. In addition to improve present road connectivity, it is necessary to think of waterways in every possible ways. The Bharnaputra River has been underutilized so far or at least not up to the extent that it should have. As far as operational of waterways in NER is concerned, it heavily depends on the relationship between India and Bangladesh. Since the route of the NER's waterways is via Bangladesh, a tacit understanding and the two countries is very vital. Otherwise, it will be very difficult to make these waterways fully operational. Both the Centre and the concerned state government should work hand-in-hand in order to use waterways effectively and efficiently in the region. In short, once the regional economic integration takes place, there will be positive spillovers effect to other parts of the region. It also leads to increase economic activities that will, in turn, raise the demand and supply of the region economy.

It is also time to make the local companies to shine as MNCs. How do the presence of foreign MNCs benefit local companies and manufacturing in NER? If the agglomeration with business friendly environment once prevails in NER, there is no way to go backward. Many MNCs will come to NER (for example Guwahati) for doing business due to cost advantage. These MNCs will bring FDI and technology and eventually helping us enhancing productivity of the region through knowledge spillovers. These will accelerate the economic growth of the region. Foreign investors will also come to NER to exploit the opportunities of labor intensive manufacturing exports. Because productivity differences create large variation in incomes across countries, and technology plays a key role in determining productivity. As an example, the introduction of one product might speed up the invention of a competing product, because the second inventor can learn from the first by carefully studying the product or its product design (the "blueprint"). Some of the possible way of technology transfer is through international trade in intermediate goods, export (learning by exporting) and international R&D spillovers. First, the pattern of intermediate goods trade i.e. international economic activities such as trade, FDI, etc. lead to additional contacts with foreign persons who may possess advanced technological knowledge, like exporter, importer, engineers, researchers, this may stimulate the diffusion of foreign technology. Second, through exporting experience companies will benefit from interacting with foreign customer, for example because the latter impose higher product quality standards than domestic customer, while at the same time providing information on how to meet the higher standards. International R&D spillovers are comparatively tricky. Most of the tacit knowledge can be acquired through "by example from master to apprentice" or through person-to-person demonstrations and instructions. Thus, the presence of foreign MNCs will help local entrepreneur and companies in improving their capabilities through FDI and technology spillovers (as stated by Alfred Marshall above).

**3. Conclusion:** In what ways NER should look forward to achieve faster economic growth? The paper proposes two suggestions. First, for NER to keep making progress and to transform into a new economic powerhouse, it needs to improve utilization of scarce resources, improvements in technologies, and the exploitation of scale economies. A finer production fragmentation will make it possible to better explore the comparative advantage within the diverse NER. The government should try to lower the cost of cross border merchandise movement and on the other hand, should increase the number of trade items to almost free trade. It will represent deepening of economic and social integration between NER and neighboring countries. Trade liberalization and production fragmentation has the potential to eradicate poverty. For example, the development of China's processing trade regime has helped lifting thousands of rural poor out of poverty, by creating labor intensive manufacturing jobs for one another. Besides, a good relationship with Myanmar is very vital for the economic development of NER and Manipur in particular. A good relationship with Indo-Myanmar depends on Indo-China Relation. Myanmar's polity heavily depends on China and its economy as well. FDI in Myanmar will have a positive spillover towards NER. It also requires people to people contact with NER and China. If we have people to people contact along with cultural bonding, China could help the economic development of NER as China is now a game changer in the world order. The Centre should give local governments additional concessions or preferential policies to FDI, particularly the exporting foreign funded enterprises, through cheap loans, free land use, subsidized energy supply and lax enforcement of environmental law, etc. Transforming NER into a new economic powerhouse will help India becoming an economic superpower sooner than expected. Finally, we highly recommend whether differences in institutions, regulations, and cultural factors are an issue for keeping the region as a closed economy. (Concluded)

All these requires improving physical infrastructure, such as ports, roads, power, telecommunications, etc., an accountable and corrupt-free governance, and mutual cooperation with one another. Besides, a good relationship with Myanmar is very vital for the economic development of NER and Manipur in particular. A good relationship with Indo-Myanmar depends on Indo-China Relation. Myanmar's polity heavily depends on China and its economy as well. FDI in Myanmar will have a positive spillover towards NER. It also requires people to people contact with NER and China. If we have people to people contact along with cultural bonding, China could help the economic development of NER as China is now a game changer in the world order. The Centre should give local governments additional concessions or preferential policies to FDI, particularly the exporting foreign funded enterprises, through cheap loans, free land use, subsidized energy supply and lax enforcement of environmental law, etc. Transforming NER into a new economic powerhouse will help India becoming an economic superpower sooner than expected. Finally, we highly recommend whether differences in institutions, regulations, and cultural factors are an issue for keeping the region as a closed economy. (Concluded)