

# Editorial

Imphal Wednesday, December 14, 2016

## Birth pangs of a new Manipur

Two new districts- Pherzawl and Jiribam will officially come into existence with the Chief Minister of the state inaugurating both the districts today. The event will be nothing less than the proverbial baptism by fire, as preemptive moves by the United Naga Council which include but by no means limited to total shutdown of all Naga inhabited areas of the state, imposition of indefinite economic blockade along the national highways and even attempts on the lives of the truck drivers who are being escorted back to the state by state and central security personnel have been carried out in attempts to thwart the move. Yet even as the state has been reeling under the impact of the prolonged indefinite economic blockade along the two national highways compounded by the demonetization move of the Narendra Modi government, Chief Minister Ibobi have gone ahead and declared the creation of seven new districts which are carved out of seven older districts. The move, as the Chief Minister have stated, is to improve administration and governance. While there are many who are still questioning the decision and are still protesting the same, yet the state also saw a surprisingly huge number of the public applauding what is termed as a masterstroke of the Ibobi government and went up in spontaneous merrymaking and rejoicing.

Despite the claims and counterclaims on the present developments in the state, the timing of it all still leaves a shadow of doubt in the minds of the people as to the real motive and agenda behind such an unusually swift decision by a government whose administrative trademark for the most part is to dither and dally on almost every issue whether political or social until every ounce of interest and enthusiasm runs out of steam. While time will eventually unfold the truth, yet that is the one luxury the people of the state does not have. Amidst the display of bravado and resoluteness in creating the new districts, one cannot help but notice a tinge of desperation and an attempt at diversion of issues which would have otherwise gathered momentum by now. The unrestrained run of employment notices in almost every department, the unexplained attempt of the state government to acquire almost double the land officially required for the National Sports University, failure of the government to put effective administration in almost all the hill districts and the dismal lack of timely actions even in the valley districts to name a few. The present demands from the Naga based groups would definitely have sprung from a concern which is serious enough to warrant taking risks and agitate. Regardless of the validity or practicality of such demands, it is the inherent duty of the state government to allay the fears of any unfounded concepts or assumptions or to address any real and genuine ones before things get out of hand. Now that the state government has had its way, it now remains to be seen how the landmark decision can change and effect administration that has hitherto failed for all practical purposes in the hill areas of the state.

## Militant killed in encounter

**PTI Srinagar, Dec 14:** A militant was today killed in an encounter with security forces in Anantnag district while another ultra was trapped in a cordon in Sopore area of north Kashmir, police said here. Militants opened fire on a patrol party of army at Beewra in Srigufwara area of Anantnag district this morning, a police official said. He said the army personnel retaliated, triggering a gunbattle.

One militant, identified as Basit Ahmad Dar, was killed in the encounter. Dar had recently joined Hizbul Mujahideen militant outfit. In another counter-insurgency operation, a militant — believed to be a foreigner — was trapped in a house in Bomai area of Sopore in north Kashmir's Baramulla district, the official said. He said further details of the incident were awaited.

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## National & International News

# India gets ready to test nuclear-capable Agni-V ICBM that can hit northern China

**New Delhi, Dec. 14:** India is getting ready to test its Agni-V intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) in its final operational configuration from Wheeler Island off Odisha after two years. Defence sources said preparations were on in full swing to launch the nuclear-capable Agni-V from its canister on a launcher truck towards December-end or early January. "There were some minor technical snags in Agni-V, which required tweaking of its internal battery and electronic configurations after its last test in January 2015+," a source said.

But India also conceivably wanted to exercise some strategic restraint while making a bid to join the 48-country Nuclear Suppliers Group+, which China thwarted earlier this year. India, however, did manage to join+ the 34-nation Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR+), as also ink a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with Japan+ recently. The impending fourth test of Agni-V, capable of striking even the northernmost parts of China, is in itself significant. "This will be the final test of the three-stage Agni-V, which will be tested for its full range, before the Strategic Forces Command (SFC) begins its user trials," the source said. The tri-service SFC, established in 2003 to manage India's nuclear arsenal, will conduct at least two tests before the missile is produced in adequate numbers for induction. While Agni-V was tested in an

"open configuration" in April 2012+ and for the second time in September 2013+, the third test, in January 2015, saw it being fired from a hermetically sealed canister mounted on a Tatra launcher truck. The missile's canister-launch version makes it even deadlier since it gives the armed forces requisite flexibility to swiftly transport and fire the 50-tonne missile from anywhere they want. Once the Agni-V is inducted, India will join the superexclusive club of countries with ICBMs (missiles with

a range of over 5,000-5,500km) alongside the US, Russia, China, France and the UK. Apart from the shorter-range Prithvi and Dhanush missiles, the SFC has inducted the Agni-I, Agni-II and Agni-III missiles. While these missiles are mainly geared towards Pakistan, the Agni-IV and Agni-V are specifically meant for deterrence against China+. Beijing, of course, is leagues ahead in terms of its missile and nuclear arsenals. But the Indian defence establishment believes the Agni-V

is sufficient to take care of existing threat perceptions. As earlier reported by TOI, DRDO has also done some work on developing "manoeuvring warheads or intelligent re-entry vehicles" to defeat enemy ballistic missile defence systems, as well as MIRVs (multiple independently targetable reentry vehicles) for the Agni missiles. An MIRV payload basically means a single missile is capable of carrying several nuclear warheads, each programmed to hit different targets.

## Dimchrang Festival seeks branding of Meghalaya's Garo Hills as 'winter holiday destination'

**ANI Tura, Dec.14:** In an effort to market Meghalaya's Garo Hills as a winter holiday destination, the annual Dimchrang Festival at Ampati in South West Garo Hills made its pitch to showcase a volley of activities, which were aimed at spreading awareness about the region and its lifestyle. The two-day festival from December 9-10 demonstrated indigenous sports, music and cultural bonhomie. It also showcased the Korean choir to send out a clear message that the Garo Hills is indeed ready as a Christmas and a New Year destination. The art and culture department in collaboration with the district level arts and cultural societies have been putting up spectacular shows to fructify the ambitious plans of the

government to brand and market Garo Hills, known for its exclusive lifestyle, culture and scenic beauty. This year's event at Ampati was organised by Ampati Arts and Cultural Society. District Administration of South West Garo Hills in collaboration with Arts and Culture Department, Government of Meghalaya and Meghalaya Tourism. Meghalaya Chief Minister Mukul Sangma believes that such events will put the region on a global tourism map, which in turn will increase flow of visitors to this beautiful part of the world. He attended the festival on both days. He said that such festival has given much needed exposure and attention to the region. Talking about the promotion, he said that if

people from cross culture attend the event, they help in sharing the stories. He also spoke on the power of social media, which play a vital role in spreading awareness. The theme for this year's event was "youth as change maker" and in sync with this, the organisers had invited Senorita Miss International India 2016 Rewati Chetri to walk the ramp during the Dimchrang Queen 2016. Sports and Youth Affairs Minister Zenith Sangma felicitated Chetri during the inaugural programme of the festival. Chetri acknowledged the initiative of the festival and crowned the winners of the beauty pageant Shano Chelsy Sangma, while the first and second runners up were - Annameza Sangma and Iyana Rinky Sangma.

Contd. from Page 1

## Reviewing Unification Politics of Manipur Nagas through....

The matter reaches the corridors of those in power at the national capital as a delegation team of NSF on July 2006 met the Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh and apprised him of the affiliation issue of private schools of Manipur four hill districts to NBSE. The delegation also apprised the matter to Union Home Minister Shivraj Patil, Minister of State, PMO Prithviraj Chavan, and also called on George Fernandes, Convenor of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). The delegation then met Mohammad Hamid Ansari, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities and Joint Secretaries of University & Higher Education, Department of Secondary and Higher Education. Earlier, the NSF submitted a memorandum to Union Human Resource Development Minister Arjun Singh stating that the four Naga Hill districts the Naga student community of four hill districts of Senapati, Chandel, Ukhrul and Tamenglong resolved to sever affiliations with the States educational system and had denounced the imposed syllabus prescribed by the Board of Secondary Education Manipur. Subsequently, 163 private schools of the four Naga hill districts on March 25, 2006 have introduced the syllabus prescribed by NBSE and the process of affiliation had been initiated as well, claimed the NSF memorandum. The State Cabinet of Nagaland on June 12, 2006 referred the matter to the Ministry HRD for urgent intervention. However, reacting strongly to the reported assurance given by the HRD Minister to the NSF delegates, he had not received any intimation from the centre in connection with it, the Manipur Chief Minister stated. Later, he informed that HRD Minister had denied giving any assurance to the NSF team further adding that the HRD Minister guaranteed him of no interference from the centre. The Kuki Students Organisation, General Headquarter (KSO, GHQ)

too came out on 25 July 2006 deriding the affiliation stand of the Nagas stating it as being conceivably framed to aid logistic support to the integration move of the districts in question with Nagaland at the behest of NSCN-IM. While rejecting the move as lacking validity and acceptance, KSO negated the claim by Nagas that the four districts in question belonged to them and asserted that it have been proportionately possessed and represented by both the Nagas and the Kukis in all sphere of domains. In the meantime, NSCN-K issued a warning of strong action on 25 July 2006 against any civil organization which becomes a partner in the campaign to adopt the books prescribed by NBSE in the schools located in the four hill districts of Manipur at the alleged instigation of the rival NSCN-IM stating that no civil organizations should encourage the NSCN-IM in its sinister design of impairing the career of the students and sowing the seeds of communal distrust, further warning that if any of the organisations and individual 'found taking part and supporting the drama being enacted by NSCN-IM, NSCN-K' would awarded capital punishment without giving time for clarification or explanation and that none of the student organisation should also give in to the pressure of ANSAM, NSF, UNC and Naga Womens' Union, Manipur which were acting at the behest of NSCN-IM. It also added that NSCN-K would never allow the NSCN-IM to succeed in its devilish design. The NSCN-K, Zeliangrong Region reiterated that whatever the NSCN-IM, UNC and ANSAM did nothing had been long lasted and successful and termed them as communal forces trying to create problems among different communities living in the state. The Kangleipak Students Association (KSA) also took serious note of the NBSE affiliation campaign by NSF and its accomplice, and urged the State Government to take up definite steps

so as to neutralise the design of NSF and to safeguard the career of the students who were being put under serious trouble. The Kuki Movement for Human Rights (KMHR) along with KSO, in its open letter sent to the Union HRD Minister in the early part of August 2006, while asserting that the movement for NBSE affiliation was being undertaken by ANSAM conceivably in support of NSCN-IMs Nagalim agenda, mentioned that NSCN-IM, UNC and ANSAM were behind the slaying of 900 Kukis during the ethnic cleansing campaign of early 90s. The letter also took serious note of the claim by some Nagas that Ukhrul, Senapati, Tamenglong and Chandel are Naga districts. The letter further noted that any matter or issue pertaining to these districts should be a State subject and it must be up to the State whether the matter needs to be forwarded to the Centre or not. It further noted that anything related to hill districts has to be dealt with by the Hill Area Committee of the State which is responsible for all the hill people and the entire hill areas. Contending that Kukis, not Nagas are majority in the hill districts of Manipur, the open letter stated that if the Nagas want to continue their communal politics, they can, at best speak for Nagas. They don't have any right to speak for the whole hill districts of Manipur without the consent of the Kukis or to bypass the State Government. In the meantime, five Naga MLAs from Manipur have, on August 2006, written to the Prime Minister requesting for early intervention to give effect to the affiliation of all the private schools in the Naga areas in Manipur State to the NBSE and approval thereof as a special case. However, the six other Naga MLAs, all from the Congress party did not append their signature to the representation. They include MLA and MPCC (I) President Gaikhangam, A Aza, RK Thekko, DK Korungthang, Power Minister

Francis Ngajokpa, and Z Mangabou. On 8 August 2006, a one-day open discussion on demand for an informal adoption of Nagaland Board curriculum and syllabus by some schools in Manipur and the future of students involved was held under the joint aegis of All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) and Democratic Students Alliance of Manipur (DESAM) at GM Hall. Taking part in the discussion, noted educationist Late Dr TS Gange categorically stated that the efforts being made to adopt the curriculum and syllabus prescribed by Nagaland Board in the private schools located in the hill districts is unreasonable and would never materialise. It was done at the instigation of some vested interest group of people with the main objective of setting one community against another, he said. The contents of the text books and the syllabus prescribed by the Manipur Board were in no way inferior in comparison to the all India level whereas Nagaland State didn't even have its own literature and standard language, Dr Gange added. On 26 August 2006, there was a mass rally in Senapati and Ukhrul districts demanding speedy implementation of affiliation to NBSE. The rally at Senapati ended with a submission of memorandum signed by President of Private Schools Forum and addressed to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, favouring the affiliation to Nagaland. In Ukhrul, the representatives and students of Tangkhul Katamnoo Saklong (TKS), Hungphung Katamnoo Long (HKL), ANSAM, Ukhrul District, Tangkhul students Union, Tangkhul Naga Long, Tangkhul Youth Council and Tangkhul women union took part in the rally and concluded with submission of memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister by handing over to the district authority pleading the same as submitted in Chandel. (To be contd....)