

Editorial

Imphal Friday, December 16, 2016

Elections, integrity and rhetoric

Neighbours Manipur and Nagaland have not been on good terms from the times when Congress ruled both the states and at the Centre. Now that Congress is alone, which is to say BJP is in office at the Centre and NPF in Nagaland, with the latter two parties having made an alliance, the Ibobi-government of Manipur seems to have little say whenever Nagaland does something in the interest of Manipur, be it 'forced' resignation of MLAs after instigations by leaders from across the state's border.

At the same time, a landlocked state like Manipur has been put at the mercy of Nagaland as the "only transportable road" to the outside world passes through the neighbouring state. Like an enemy state, at the behest of Naga leaders in Nagaland, hill residents of the state have been declaring the war-like strategy of economic blockade many a times and hold the Manipur people to ransom. Gradually, the state's integrity seems to be eroding with nothing concrete done to stop it.

While Manipur had a clear cut boundary since time immemorial, Nagaland was carved out from Assam. Now, this age-old boundary of Manipur seems to be under attack time and again even during the 21st century, and people from Nagaland are spreading misleading information as if this 2000-year-old history of Manipur never existed. It seems like, if India has a thorn in the form of neighbouring Pakistan; Manipur, a mini-India, has a Pakistan-like neighbour in Nagaland.

As the state elections get closer, the battle has now been partly focused on getting maximum of the 20 reserved seats to the hill districts to the Assembly so that those MLAs can speak up for "Southern Nagaland". This term has been introduced to Manipur when some signboards were put up in Senapati district nearly two decades ago to describe the Naga-inhabited areas of Manipur as part of the present day Nagaland.

This time around, Nagaland CM T R Zeliang led the missile with an address to a huge gathering at the first ever conference of 'Naga Village Authority of South Nagalim' at the local ground of Tagaramphung in Senapati district on Wednesday.

Indeed, Zeliang has done what NSCN-IM leader Th Muivah could not. While Muivah was not allowed entry into the state, Zeliang was accorded the status of a state guest. The intention of Zeliang and other Naga leaders could be interpreted as against the interest of Manipur, the long-term strategy of the Nagas and that of Zeliang is indeed laudable.

In his own state, Zeliang has his own tribal problems. The Central Nagaland Tribes Council (CNTC) in an earlier statement had said it never objected the Rongmeis being accorded the Indigenous Inhabitants of Nagaland state to those qualifying the norms of the Nagaland government notification dated the 28th of April 1977, No.AR-8/876. "However, the CNTC also makes the stand of the three tribes of CNTC clear to whomever concerned, that the recognition of Rongmeis with a tribal status of Nagaland state will be opposed and objected together with all the other Naga tribes of Nagaland till it is revoked. On the ongoing tussle involving the Rongmei recognition as an Indigenous Tribe of Nagaland, the CNTC takes this step in opposing the recognition of the mentioned tribe in the larger interest of the people of Nagaland and for the sake of our future generations."

Despite problems like these, Zeliang has been able to display a view of 'United Nagas' at least in Manipur.

Manipur needs to learn a lot from a chief minister like Zeliang who could wield influence in neighbouring states. It is unthinkable of the Manipur chief minister going to Manipuri localities in neighbouring states and hold public meetings in the interest of Manipur, notwithstanding the fact that many problems exist in the state. Local and regional parties of Manipur are also unable to spread their wings beyond the boundary of the state, unlike the NPF, which is in office in Nagaland and targeting to get a double-digit figure in the upcoming Manipur Legislative Assembly elections. In view of the above, it is high time that people of Manipur leave aside their differences for the better good of the state, at least for once and continue till stability comes to the state.

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National & International News

Ratan Tata to step down as chairman of Tata Trusts: Report

Reuters
Mumbai, Dec. 16: Ratan Tata is likely to step down soon as chairman of the Tata Trusts, which controls a 66 per cent stake in the \$100 billion Tata conglomerate's holding company, according to a *Times of India* report, citing the patriarch's long-time confidant, R K Krishna Kumar, a trustee of the Tata Trusts, told the newspaper that the Trusts have asked an external consultant to advise them on the process of selecting a new chairman to replace Tata. That could be completed by the middle of next year, though any incoming executive would work alongside Tata first. The role of the Trusts has been at the centre of the ongoing feud

between Tata and the ousted chairman of the holding company Tata Sons, Cyrus Mistry. Mistry has accused Tata of using the Trusts as a separate power base, retaining control of the overall group even after he retired as chairman of Tata Sons. Tata disputes the claim. A spokesman for Tata Trusts confirmed that an interview with Krishna Kumar took place, but declined to comment. Asked by *Reuters*, he did not contest the contents of the published interview. Tata Sons was not immediately reachable for comment. "The next chairman has to be someone who has the right vision and be in complete alignment with the will of the Tata Group

founders," said Krishna Kumar, according to the report. In public letters to group company shareholders, Mistry has accused trustees of abusing their position by calling for information and seeking discussions on matters they considered material and dictating Tata Sons' decisions, using veto right of their nominee directors. Tata Sons has rejected those claims and has blamed Mistry for governance lapses. Tata's likely departure from the Trusts sometime next year is unlikely to quell the raging public feud that has kept the company in the headlines for two months. Tata Sons have called special shareholder meetings to oust

Mistry as a director from the boards of over half a dozen Tata group companies where he remained even after being sacked as head of the holding company. A large number of those special shareholder meetings are set to take place next week. Shareholders of Indian Hotels Co, parent of the Taj line of luxury hotels, are set to vote on Mistry's ouster on Dec. 20, while those in Tata Steel, Tata Motors, Tata Chemicals and Tata Power Co, are set to meet and vote on the matter on Dec. 21-23 and 26, respectively. Earlier this week, shareholders in Tata Sons-controlled Tata Consultancy Services (TCS), the conglomerate's most valuable company, voted to remove Mistry.

SC questions Govt on cash hauls, Mukul Rohatgi cites 'revolution'

New Delhi, Dec. 16: The Supreme Court on Thursday asked the Centre how "crores in new currency" were being seized "every day", even as banks have expressed their inability to dispense Rs 24,000 to each account holder - the weekly withdrawal limit set after demonetisation. Replying that "the government cannot sit in every bank", Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi said people should bear "70 days" of discomfort as a "revolution" was taking place in the country after 70 years. The bench led by Chief Justice of India T S Thakur was hearing a bunch of petitions challenging the demonetisation of old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes.

when you have been citing cash crunch... you yourself have been arguing that banks are not able to give even Rs 24,000 to every person, which has been set as the limit for weekly withdrawal," the bench, also comprising Justices A M Khanwilkar and D Y Chandrachud, asked Rohatgi. "The Government of India cannot sit in every bank... bank managers have done this fraud and they are being nabbed," replied Rohatgi. He said two Axis Bank managers have been arrested so far, and the authorities have begun a crackdown. "We cannot be blamed if the bank managers have done it," he said. "Has your Rs 5 lakh crore (new currency notes) gone the same way? We are asking you this because people are complaining

they have not been able to see this money," the bench asked Rohatgi. The court said it seemed to be a problem of extremes. "Some have plenty (of new currency), and there are some who have nothing," it said. Rohatgi said a total of Rs 7.5 lakh crore, including Rs 5 lakh crore in new currency notes, was available for transaction, and the cash problem should be resolved soon. "Seventy years of change would need at least 70 days. It is a revolution that we are talking about. It will deal with terrorism, black money, counterfeit and many such evils. This has to be a gigantic exercise," he said. The bench also asked the AG why the exemption on use of old Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes at hospitals and other places could not be extended. "Till the time you are unable to give

new currency, let this continue. What could be your problem if government hospitals are allowed to accept old notes? These are your hospitals and they give proper receipts," it said. Citing an example, Rohatgi said petrol pumps deposited mostly Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in banks when the exemptions were allowed. He said the government had reason to believe that the old notes were exchanged at a premium. "Besides, it cannot be a matter of judicial review as to which exemptions should continue. After all, these are issues of executive policy," asserted the AG. The court reserved its order on issuing interim directives in the matter. It is likely to pronounce its order in the first week of January.

Black money chase continues: Police makes five major seizures in Maharashtra

Mumbai, Dec. 16: In a major haul, police seized huge amounts of money in both scrapped and new denomination notes from Chembur, Kalyan, Virar, Pune and Washim in Maharashtra. **Chembur** Police on Thursday seized Rs 10 crore after intercepting a vehicle in suburban Chembur in eastern Mumbai and detained three persons. The seizure included Rs 10 crore in scrapped denomination of Rs 500, and Rs 10 lakh in 2,000 rupee banknotes, a senior official said. Officers of Tilaknagar police station found the notes stuffed in two gunny bags after they flagged down the car this evening. The detainees claimed to have been employed with a cooperative bank in Pune district.

recovered many cheque books from the accused. **Virar** In a joint operation, Income Tax Department and Crime Branch of Vasai Police on Thursday recovered Rs 1.11 crore in both old and new notes from the vehicle belonging to a Shiv Sena corporator in Vasai Virar Municipal Corporation, police said. Searches were carried out at Dhananjay Gawade's residence as well as office at Pragati Nagar in Nalla Sopara in neighbouring Palghar

district around 8.30 am, they said. During the operation, the cash was found kept inside the vehicle parked at Gawade's residence, they added. "Out of the Rs 1.11 crore, Rs 64.5 lakh were in scrapped notes of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500, while the remaining Rs 47 lakh were in the new Rs 2,000 bills," a police official said. "Gawade has been taken into custody for questioning in connection with the cash," he said. Meanwhile, replying to a query on the seizure of notes, Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray said here

that the party is investigating if the seized currency is similar to that of state Co-operation Minister Subhash Deshmukh. According to reports, cash worth over Rs 91 lakh belonging to Lokmangal Group associated with Deshmukh had been seized by flying squad of state Election Commission in Osmanabad, before the first phase of civic elections last month. Deshmukh had then claimed that the amount was meant to be disbursed as wages to sugarcane workers attached to the Lokmangal group.

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Black money in abroad and absence of

How is that the People's Republic of China succeeded within the same frame of time with its own unique metrics of planning and action to become the world's economic powerhouse, whereas India lagged behind in numerous comparable economic indices? India's leaders must, realize that the simplistic argument that India is the world's largest democracy and cannot be compared with an autocratic regime like China is no more acceptable to the bulk of Indians. The real answer could be that while economic planning by and large failed in India, the derivative instruments of planning scored high marks in China, mainly through the well-orchestrated and diligently and forcefully implemented modernization programmes. On the hand a largely modular New Delhi remained operational within a highly centralized vector of political and administrative focus, often de-linked from ground realities in the vast and varied Indian terrain. So, Banerjee suggested that it is imperative, therefore, that the development planning must be oriented from below and not above. This requires a greater role for the states of the union in areas such as education, health, food security and infrastructure and exploitation of natural resources. In the ultimate analysis India's democracy has to address aspirations of the Indian

people after assessing ground realities. Indian political class must realize democracy is truly a means to an end, not merely an end in itself. Not only planning but also the centre-state relationship in India is very much far from decentralization. In short for planning it is trickle down, even allocation of money to the state is seems to be so bothered and seriously care with inconsistent tendencies. On the other hand huge amount of money was in abroad. One came to across what was happening some years back in India regarding black money in abroad. The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) exposed on February 13, 2012 that Indians were the largest depositors in banks abroad with an estimated 500 billion US dollars (nearly Rs 24.5 lakh crore) of illegal money in tax havens. The tax havens include Mauritius, Switzerland, Lichtenstein and British Virgin Islands. Addressing the Interpol Global programme on Anti-corruption and Asset Recovery held in New Delhi, CBI Director A.P. Singh said these facts emerged during the investigation into prominent cases like those pertaining to 2G, Commonwealth Games and Madhu Koda. The investigation agency found that money was taken to Dubai, Singapore and Mauritius from

where it went to Switzerland and other such tax havens. Mr. Manmohan Singh, the Prime Minister of India also said that the states acting as tax havens for illegal money were reluctant to share information as they were aware of the extent to which their economies had become geared to the flow of illegal capital from the poorer countries. Fifty-three per cent of the countries said to be least corrupt by Transparency International are offshore tax havens, where most of the corrupt money goes. The tax havens include New Zealand, ranked as the least corrupt country. Singapore ranked number five, and Switzerland, ranked number seven. World Bank estimates of cross border flow of money from illegal activities and tax evasion is around \$1.5 trillion, of which \$40 billion is bribe paid to government servants in developing countries. Tracing, freezing, confiscation and repatriation of stolen assets is a cumbersome process because of differences in legal systems, high costs in coordinating investigations, inadequate international cooperation and bank secrecy laws. Thus money come to the states is with full of care and debates. The debates are taken place as in between two devil advocates but more than that money was in the tax haven. This is your India.