

Editorial

Imphal Saturday, December 17, 2016

Straight talk

It does make sense when people across the state condemn act of terrorism, however, torturing the common people in the name of condemning terrorism is something that is hard to be accepted by all. The sentiments and the height of intolerance is notice when the ladies of the state came out in the street and openly points fingers to the government authority over its failure to content the armed group NSCN-IM which have created all the fiasco in the state in the recent days. But one thing that the people seem to have forgotten is that the more the people showed its anger to this group the more the demand of the armed group is appearing as crystal clear. Now it is open that the frontal body of the NSCN-IM, the UNC has now charted strategy for creation of a Nagaland state by carving out portion of Manipur. The parent body has begun its war to the state authority killing 3 state forces and leaving 11 plus 3 security personnel injured at three separate attacks in the last couple of days. And there is no doubt that even after receiving so much support to the state government, the armed group still managed to organize mass rally at four hill district against the state government's declaration of seven new districts. With the way things are going on this time, one can easily notice that there is no turning back to any of the sides. This is perhaps going to be the final bout between the team NSCN-IM and the people of the state who have been struggling every now and then for protection and preservation of the territorial integrity of the erstwhile kingdom call Manipur.

The creation of 7 new revenue districts in addition to the existing nine districts had demoralized the long strategic warfare of the NSCN-IM. The stance of the congress party has now left with no option to the armed group but to openly declare war against the Manipur Government.

Now it's left to the wisdom of the state government on whether Manipur of today remain as it is in the coming days or portion of it segregated to form a new state as desire by the NSCN-IM. Historically the demands of the NSCN-IM may not be legitimate but politically they have succeeded in showing their presence to the notice of the India government and if the demand is for formation of a new state then center may not be having much problem as it has nothing to do with the integrity of the Indian Nation. This may be region on why the BJP which is in power at the center still did not spell out any single condemnation note to the terror strike to Manipur police by cadres of NSCN-IM. Narendra Modi led government in the center was always in the forefront to condemn any act of terrorism but this time when such act of terrorism occurred in the soil of the state by an armed group currently ensuing in peace talk with the government of India, no message of condemnation comes out from any of the leaders of Indian government.

Now this is the juncture at which Okram Ibobi Singh Government should score more point. He already did it by creating more districts but he needs to move on with more such bold steps to tackle the problems created by the NSCN-IM in the state. Objection from the center regarding any strike to the cadres of the rebel group should given befitting reply. The non-designated camps at Chandel, Ukhrul, Senapati and Tamenglong area of Manipur should be driven out using all sorts of manpower with state government at this hour. If Chief Minister Okram Ibobi felt it important to save Manipur he should act, strike when the iron is hot.

PIB Feature

Pay Digital and Win Prizes! As India moves towards a digital and cashless economy, the Government announced on 15th December, 2016 two schemes Lucky Grahak Yojana and Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana to give cash awards to consumers and merchants who utilize digital payment instruments for personal consumption expenditures. The prizes range from Rs 1000 to Rs 1 crore and the transactions permitted are from Rs 50 to Rs 3000 to keep the focus on the common man. The schemes will not only give a boost to cashless transactions, but will particularly bring the poor, lower middle class and small businesses into the digital payment fold, and new way of life.

The poorest of poor will be eligible for rewards by using USSD, (the Unstructured Supplementary Service Data) System that is applicable to ordinary GSM mobile phones. People in village and rural areas can participate in this scheme through Aadhaar Enabled Payment System (AEPS). The scheme will become operational with the first draw on 25th December, 2016 (as a Christmas gift to the nation) leading up to a Mega Draw on Babasaheb Ambedkar Jayanti on 14th April 2017.

The Lucky Grahak Yojana for Consumers provides a daily reward of Rs 1000 to be given to 15,000 lucky consumers for a period of 100 days; and weekly prizes of Rs 1 lakh, Rs 10,000 and Rs. 5000 for Consumers who use the alternate modes of digital Payments. This will include all forms of transactions viz. UPI (Unified Payment Interface), USSD, AEPS and RuPay Cards, but will for the time being exclude transactions through Private Credit Cards and Digital Wallets. The Digi-Dhan Vyapar Yojana for Merchants provides Prizes for Merchants for all digital transactions conducted at Merchant Establishments and weekly prizes of Rs. 50,000, Rs 5,000 and Rs. 2,500.

There will be a Mega Draw on 14th of April - Ambedkar Jayanti. This will give three Mega Prizes for

consumers worth Rs 1 crore, Rs 50 lakh, Rs 25 lakh for digital transactions between 8th November, 2016 and 13th April, 2017 to be announced on 14th April, 2017. For merchants too, there will be three Mega Prizes worth Rs 50 lakhs, Rs 25 lakh, Rs 12 lakh for digital transactions from 8th November, 2016 to 13th April, 2017 to be announced on 14th April, 2017.

The National Payment Corporation of India (NPCI), a not for profit company, which has the mandate to guide India towards a cashless society, is the implementing agency for the schemes. The NPCI has been directed to ensure a technical and security audit of the same to ensure that the technical integrity of the process is maintained. The Government shall incur an estimated expenditure of Rs 340 crores on the first phase of the scheme (up to 14th April, 2017). The Centre has approved a slew of initiatives in February 2016 to encourage digital payments and a transition to less-cash economy in a strategic manner. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had highlighted these measures in his Man Ki Baat address in May 2016. Urging people to adopt cashless transactions, he said "If we learn and adapt ourselves to use cashless transactions, then we will not require notes. Under-hand dealings will stop; the influence of black money will be reduced. So I appeal to my countrymen, that we should at least make a beginning. Once we start, we will move ahead with great ease. Twenty years ago who would have thought that so many mobiles would be in our hands. Slowly we cultivated a habit and now we can't do without those. Maybe this cashless society assumes a similar form. But the sooner this happens, the better it will be."

Towards this end, the Government had launched a major drive for financial inclusion in terms of opening Jan Dhan accounts, giving a statutory basis for Aadhaar, implementation of Directs Benefits Transfer, introduction of RuPay Cards and Voluntary Disclosure

Scheme for unaccounted money. Demonetization of 500 and 1000 Rs. notes on 8th November was another important milestone in this endeavour. Following demonetization, there has been a spurt in the digital payments across the country and both the volume and amount of money transacted through digital methods saw seen manifold increase since 9th November.

Yet, as on date, nearly 95 per cent of India's personal consumption expenditure transactions are cash-based giving rise to a very large informal economy, limiting the ability of State to levy and raise taxes. The daily Ru-Pay Cards transactions in the country have risen from 3.85 lakh on 8th November to 16 lakh on 7 December; the e-Wallets transactions have increased from 17 lakhs to 63 lakhs; the UPI transactions from 3721 to 48238; the USSD from 97 to 1263 and PoS (Point of Sale) transactions from 50.2 lakh to 98.1 lakh.

To further accelerate the surge in digital transactions, the Government announced on 8th December an attractive package to promote the use of cashless payments through various concessions like a discount at the rate of 0.75 per cent of the sale price to consumers on purchase of petrol or diesel, if payment is made through digital means. To expand the digital payment infrastructure in rural areas, the Central Government through NABARD decided to extend financial support to eligible banks for deployment of two PoS devices each in one Lakh villages with population of less than 10,000. These PoS machines are intended to be deployed at primary cooperative societies, milk societies and agricultural input dealers to facilitate agri-related transactions through digital means and serve 75 crore population.

No service tax will be charged on digital transaction charges for transactions upto Rs.2000 per transaction. Railway through its sub urban railway network shall provide incentive by way of discount upto

0.5% to customers for monthly or seasonal tickets from January 1, 2017, if payment is made through digital means. Government has waived service tax charged while making payments through credit card, debit card, charge card or any other payment card; limiting the waiver to payments up to Rs. 2,000 in a single transaction.

On 6th December, the Government, as part of the plan to expand the digital payments eco-system and facilitate the move towards cashless transactions, decided that an additional one million new PoS terminals should be installed by 31st March 2017. The Ministry of Labour & Employment and States' Administration organized 2,73,919 camps to open 24.54 lakh bank accounts for unorganized workers. Recommending a medium term strategy to promote the growth of digital payments, the Committee on Digital Payments constituted by the Ministry of Finance on 9th December submitted its Final Report to the Finance Minister and wanted the benefits to cover the financially and socially excluded groups.

Explaining the Government policy before the Finance Ministry's Parliamentary Consultative Committee meet on 15th December, Finance Minister Arun Jaitley said that digital transactions were a parallel mechanism, not a substitute, for cash transactions and cashless economy was actually a less cash economy, as no economy could be fully cashless. The Finance Minister said that the Government was trying to encourage digitization as much as possible because an excessive cash economy had its own social and economic costs and consequences. The Government incentives to people had evoked a positive response to shift to digital mode of payment. Cyber security measures, he said, were being taken by the banks under RBI supervision.

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National & International News

People pay heartfelt tribute to 855 martyrs of 1979 Assam agitation

ANI Guwahati, Dec. 17: For the first time in Assam's history and after a gap of 30 long years, the present Assam government organized an event in the memory of those martyrs, who had given up their lives in the hope of an "Infiltration Free Assam" in the 1979 Assam agitation. The grand ceremony named "Shraddhanjali" was held at Khanapara Veterinary College playground recently here.

"The Assam Movement was a spontaneous non-violent mass uprising not just for safeguarding the existence of the Assamese people but for protecting the nation's unity and integrity as a whole. Led by students, it was guided by the ideals of the Constitution of India and the apostle of peace Mahatma Gandhi. It exemplified the spirit of the Assamese people," said Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal.

People from almost all districts of Assam gathered in large numbers to pay their tributes to the great martyrs. Representatives from various indigenous organizations - All Assam Students Union (AASU), AJYCP, Assam Sahitya Sabha, Sadou Assam Karmachari Parishad, Kendriya Ardhha-Kendriya Karmachari Parishad were also a part of it. Chief Minister Sonowal led the prayers on the occasion, where proceedings began with placing of wreaths on a 34-foot-tall martyr's memorial. In his address, the chief minister

pledged to carry forward the legacy of the Movement and complete their unfinished agenda. "Nowhere else in India one could find such historical movement where for six long years the Assamese community suffered difficulties struggled for a free Assam. The movement was a historic approach of unity and integrity of the people of Assam. The mass movement earned global acclaim and support from all section of people be hindu, muslim or Sikhs. All were part of the movement," said Sonowal.

Along with Sonowal, Minister of State (Independent Charge) Railways, Rajen Gohain, Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma and other cabinet ministers were

present during the ceremony. "Six years of struggle by the jawans of Assam who sacrificed their lives for the safety and security of the people of Assam. Today they are being given tributes after 30 long years of gap which is only possible because of the humble approach of the state government. It is really appreciable," said Minister of State (Independent Charge) Railways Rajen Gohain.

During the ceremony, financial assistance of Rs. five lakhs was declared by Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma to the martyrs' families. A souvenir titled 'Shraddhanjali' was also released during the auspicious ceremony. A patriotic song composed by

legendary singer Late Bhupen Hazarika "Swahid Pronamo Tumak" was performed by a group as a mark of tribute to the martyrs. It was during the period of 1979-1985 when Assam was burning in the fire against illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. The movement was led by All Assam Student Union (AASU) with support of various other organizations of Assam. Though the decade-long issue of illegal immigrants still remains unsolved, efforts are on to solve the matter. During the historic Assam movement, one of the most famous agitations in post-colonial India, 855 martyrs laid down their lives and thousands were injured.

He further interacted with the inmates of the camps, discussed their issues and explained to them about the facilities they will get after repatriation. Meanwhile, the inmates were seen holding placards demanding birth certificates to the new-born babies, caste certificate and Adhar card, written agreements, allotment of land to each family, updating inmates' list as well as deployment of central security forces in villages of Mizoram where they shall be repatriated. "There have been lots of demands put by the inmates but it depends on how these are handled, whether they can be worked out or not.

MHA team visits Bru refugee camp in North Tripura to discuss early repatriation

ANI Aizawl, Dec. 17 : Expressing concern over the early repatriation of the Brus Refugees, which was more likely to start by November, is still on hold in the northern Tripura District. MHA officials have been frequently visiting the camps to take stock of the situation, especially pertaining to demands made by the Brus for early repatriation to their home state of Mizoram. Recently, a high level team led by the Special Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs (Internal Security), M. K. Singla, visited the camps in North Tripura district to discuss their early repatriation. "We have been putting our efforts

and the Centre is trying hard in every possible way to help them. I feel great to meet the Bru refugees, who have been staying in the camps for 19 years, and we have taken note of the issues they are facing. We will take every possible measure to fulfill their demands and the centre is in full support of us," said M. K. Singla, Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs. Singla also visited two evacuee camps at Ashapara and Naisingpara. He, along with other officials of North Tripura and security officials, also held a meeting with the leaders of Mizoram Bru Displaced People's Forum (MBDPF).

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CBI books Assistant Commercial Manager for Railways for exchanging demonetised currency

New Delhi, Dec 17: CBI has booked an Assistant Commercial Manager of Railways for allegedly exchanging demonetised currency having face value of 8.22 lakh rupees with newly introduced 2,000 rupee notes. CBI sources said, the case has been registered against K L Bhoyar, who is posted at

Chatrapati Shivaji Terminus, CST, Mumbai under sections related to criminal conspiracy and provisions of Prevention of Corruption Act. Sources said that he exchanged notes at a booking counter at CST Mumbai and Kalyan in Thane District. They said that CBI is carrying out searches today at his official and residential premises.

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