

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday, February 6, 2016

Intertwined history

The unprecedented turnout at the ongoing Mass Rally organized by UCM, AMUCO and CCSK with the expressed objective of a united future of Manipur has reiterated the desire of the people in the state to protect its territorial and social integrity in no uncertain terms despite the repeated expressions of the United Naga Council of their belief that Meities and Nagas cannot live together, as also its premeditated desire to bifurcate the society on the lines of ethnicity. The statement is, as conceded by the UNC spokesperson, a reaction to the rigid stance taken by the All Manipur United Clubs Organisation (AMUCO) and the United Committee Manipur (UCM) regarding the disturbing developments by various minority ethnic groups demanding their respective "Homelands" or separate regions outside of the ambit of the Manipur Government which, in effect, amounts to the demand for their own separate independent states. The protracted and ambiguous imbroglio over the extension of ceasefire agreement between the NSCN(IM) and the Indian Government inside the territories of Manipur, and the vexing and apparently confused stand of the state Government on the issue should be attributed with bringing the matter to what it has now come to be at present. Without going deeper into the nitty-gritty of the whole unfortunate episode that is threatening to destabilize the fragile social balance in Manipur, it would be rather catastrophic for the state and everybody residing in it if matters are allowed to be blown out of proportion and let our emotions get the better of our rationality. The declaration of the UNC that Nagas were never a part of the history of Manipur would be pushing things a bit too far, for according to the Naga version, Meities are the younger brother of the Tangkhuls who decided to go and settle in the fertile plains of the present Imphal valley. As they set out, they told their elder brother to always set up a big bonfire in the mountains whenever they lighted their own bonfire from the plains. This according to legends was to show others that they were not alone in the valley but that their brethren from the hills would come to their rescue in case they were attacked by others. Also it is a fact that even as late as the 19th century, the Meetei Kings and Queens used to ascend their thrones wearing Naga shawls and dress. This practice was witnessed even by Sir James Johnstone as mentioned in his book "Manipur and the Naga Hills". Manipur does not belong to any single race or ethnic group, but is rather a state inhabited by a colorful mix of groups with vastly differing rituals and ways of life, not to mention the multitude of languages and dialects. It should be a common endeavor for everyone in the state to safeguard its territorial integrity, and Nagas are not the only other tribe inhabiting in Manipur. There is as much stake in it for the Pangals, Kukis, Mizos, Kabuis, Marings and every other ethnic groups. The Central and the State Government should not even dream of starting to threaten the integrity of Manipur on the insistence of any group, big or small. The grumbling brains of a few discontented anarchists might find something to ponder over with the track record of the most famous Tangkhul (Proclaimed Nagas) in the state who, during the periods 1980 - 85, 1985-Feb.1988, 1994 - March 1995 and 1995 - Dec. 1998 served as the Chief Minister of Manipur. That is a piece of undeniable and undeleteable history of Manipur. Just as threads of different hues lends beauty to a fabric, so must the diverse communities come together to make the state unique and an enviable paradise rather than making it an inhospitable hotbed of contention and conflict.

Migration Certificate Lost

I have lost my migration certificate bearing roll no. 2011-AJ-60 issued by Assam Agricultural University, Jorhat 785013 on the way between Singjamiei to Canchipur. Finders are requested to handover to the undersigned.

Sd/-
Mainsam Ronaldo Luwang
Loklaobung Yumnam Leikai, Imphal - West, Manipur
Ph.: 8794666054

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National & International News

PM Narendra Modi inaugurates gas cracker project

TNN Dibrugarh, Feb 6: Setting his sights on the impending assembly election in Assam, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday dedicated the Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited petrochemical complex the region's first petrochemical project at Lepetkata here to the nation and said development in the northeast would complete development in the country. The Prime Minister also inaugurated a wax de-oiling unit at Numaligarh Refinery Limited. "If the northeast does not develop, India's development would be

incomplete. Developing the northeast is a priority for me if the country has to develop fast," Modi said. Making a strong political statement before the assembly election likely to held in April, Modi said Assam had the potential to become country's Number 1 state. He promised jobs and opportunities to local youngsters in start-up ventures in the Brahmaputra Cracker and Polymer Limited petrochemical complex built at an investment of Rs 10,000 crore at Lepetkata in Dibrugarh district and in the Rs 676-crore wax plant of

Numaligarh Refinery Limited in Golaghat district. "These two projects are important for two reasons; for the value addition they will achieve for natural raw material and for the employment opportunities they will create for the youth of Assam. As a result of the dedication of these projects to the nation, there is anand (joy) in the country and sarbanand (all-round joy) in Assam," Modi said in reference to Union minister of state for sports and BJP's chief ministerial candidate Sarbananda Sonowal. Modi said completing projects on time not only avoided cost overruns, it generated more employment. The gas cracker project, which will produce 2,80,000 tonnes of polymer products every year, was the result of the Assam Accord signed between All Assam Students' Union and the Centre in 1985. It was approved in 2006 and took 10 years to be complete. "Had this project been completed 25 years ago, the second generation of employees would have been here today," Modi said. The GAIL (India) Limited is the main promoter of the project with 70% equity participation while the

remaining 30% will be shared by Oil India Limited, Numaligarh Refinery Limited and the state government. The project, set up on 3,000 bigha land, has already generated direct employment for 700 people and indirect employment for 2,500 people. It is expected to result in the growth of new plastic processing industries in the region and generate nearly one lakh indirect employment opportunities through downstream and ancillary industries. On the other hand, the wax plant at Numaligarh is the country's largest wax-producing unit using indigenous technology. It has been developed by the Indian Institute of Petroleum, Engineers India Limited and Numaligarh Refinery Limited and is a manifestation of Modi's 'Make in India' campaign. The wax plant will produce superior quality paraffin and semi-crystalline wax from the oil produced by the oilfields in Assam. The paraffin will be used in manufacturing candles, tarpaulin sheets, food-grade wrappers and PVC pipes, while microcrystalline wax can be used to make tyres, rubber products, paints, polishes, pharmaceuticals and cosmetics.

Deadly earthquake topples buildings in Taiwan city

BBC Taiwan, Feb 6: An earthquake has toppled buildings in the south Taiwanese city of Tainan, killing at least seven people. Rescue teams have been trying to reach people trapped in rubble since the magnitude 6.4 quake struck just before 04:00 (20:00 GMT Friday). A baby was among at least four people killed when a high-rise block collapsed. More than 300 people have been injured. President Ma Ying-jeou promised an "all-out effort" to rescue people. Shelters would be set up for those who had lost their homes in the city of two million people, he said when he arrived in the city.

Leaning ruins
Television pictures showed rescue

workers frantically trying to reach people trapped in collapsed buildings, using ladders to climb over piles of rubble. One of the worst affected was the 17-storey Wei Kuan apartment complex, home to at least 256 people. More than 200 people were rescued, but a baby, young girl and two adult men did not survive, officials said. At least 30 people are believed to still be trapped inside. Interior Minister Chen Wei-jeu said he feared more people may have been in the fallen apartment block than usual as families gathered to celebrate Chinese New Year. He said investigators would examine whether the building's construction met requirements.

SC can't question Muslim personal law: Jamiat

Agency New Delhi, Feb 6: Jamiat-Ulama-i-Hind, the powerful body of Muslim clerics, has said that Muslim personal law flows from the Holy Quran and cannot be subjected to any scrutiny by the Supreme Court based on principles of the Constitution. "Mohammedan law is founded essentially on the Holy Quran and this cannot fall within the purview of the expression 'laws in force' as mentioned in Article 13 of the Constitution, and hence its validity cannot be tested on a challenge based on Part-III of the Constitution (guaranteeing fundamental rights, including right to equality)," the JUI application filed through advocate Ejaz Maqbool said. The assertion by the body marks a fierce challenge to the intent to extend the principle of gender equality to Muslim women and can open a fresh phase in the debate on whether personal laws based on religion can trump the Constitution. The debate will require the BJP-led government to spell out its stand on the fraught issue. Last year, while entertaining a petition, a two-judge bench of

Justices AR Dave and Adarsh Goel had directed registration of a separate PIL to consider the rights of Muslim women as there was no safeguard against arbitrary divorce (triple talaq) and second marriage by Muslim men during subsistence of their first marriage. The court had issued notice to the attorney general and National Legal Services Authority (Nalsa). On Friday, a bench of Chief Justice TS Thakur and Justices A K Sikri and R Banumathji took up the petition titled 'Muslim Women's Quest for Equality' and agreed to make JUI a party to the proceedings and sought responses from the JUI, the AG and Nalsa on the questions posed by the SC in six weeks. All India Muslim Personal Law Board is also expected to request the SC to make it a party in the case. The JUI also referred to Article 44, which figures as a provision in the Constitution, providing that the state shall endeavour to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India. But the JUI said, "Article 44 envisaging UCC is only a directive principle and is not enforceable."

Photo report of Mass Rally for the common future of Manipur



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National Seminar Ethno Science and Traditional Technology

In the first technical session, ENVIRONMENT AND ECOLOGY. Two resource persons presented papers. The session was chaired by Prof. W. Vishwanath, Dean, School of Life Sciences, Manipur University. In his paper titled, ETHNO SCIENCE & TRADITIONAL TECHNOLOGY OF TRIBES AND INDIGENOUS PEOPLE OF NORTHEAST INDIA, Sukumar Haobam, Consultant, MCCIC stressed on rethinking of the state of Manipur in context to the traditional usages and wisdom and protection of the unique identity from exploitation by the outside groups. He observed that three highly-acclaimed handloom products namely Saphee-Lanphee, Wangkhei

Phee and Moirang Phee have been forwarded for GI registration. He added that there is immense prospect for the products to become globally valued goods but there is the need for safeguarding the knowledge and value of these goods at a time when consumerism takes away indigenous knowledge and skills. The second paper entitled, "Traditional Method of Bio-diversity Conservation in Manipur" was presented by DR. HOMEN THANGJAM, Assistant Professor of Political Science, M.B. College, Imphal. His paper focussed on two traditional systems of the Meiteis such as the Umanglai System and the Salai system which play a socio-

religious role from the conservation of the ecology and biodiversity. According to him, sacred groves known as 'Umanglai Laikoi' in Manipur are sacred territories which are not only repositories of the socio-religious heritage of the people but are also the focus of the cultural and traditional means of biodiversity conservation system and environment management. Like any other religion of the indigenous people, Meitei religion in Manipur has also been observed to perform important latent functions to preserve environment at two important levels - at the level of the Salai system (clan) and at the level of Umanglai (community deity)

system for meeting human needs. The present paper deals with the basic functional issues of this age-old Meitei socio-religious life in Manipur as a way of ecological understanding and management in traditional society. From this we may understand this body of religion which not only functions as a system of socio-religious organization of the people but which also functions as an important factor for the conservation of many forests and species in Manipur valley. The seminar which was scheduled to continue today has been postponed due to the public rally organised today.