

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, January 5, 2016

What is new?

Another year has passed, and the unstoppable passage of time has brought us another new one, with all the hopes and expectations every new beginning entails. The state, as is the rest of the world is still reverberating with the wishes for and from one's dear and near ones. But scrap the surface filled with festivity and gaiety, and one can feel the palpable sense of frustration and exasperation with things developing the way it is in the state- the way it has always been. So what can we expect from the new year that been welcomed with much fanfare and high spirits? If one could keep the judgmental part aside for a moment, there certainly are quite a few new things. For one, there are numerous new potholes appearing besides the ones which have been neglected and literally avoided for so long that they have taken the proportions of craters and small pools. There are also new and extra personnel being deployed to provide security along the way where heads of state are to travel. One must also include the new modus operandi being increasingly utilized by the administrators to preempt any negative backlash from the public for the innumerable deliberate mistakes and wrongdoings which has been carried on in cahoots with the cronies. The new system of power distribution should not be left out as the public, in spite of having made to pay for their power usage in advance, are still denying their right to electricity as and when they require. There are talks on the street about a new way of peddling contracts where those who strode the rarified corridors of power in the state are becoming silent partners with majority stakes. The people of the state are also witnessing a new method of ushering in development- one where construction and other developmental activities are increasingly confined to high exposure areas where maximum number of the public can actually see the works going on irrespective of the actual benefit such activities would provide to the public.

At the risk of sounding contemptuous of the developmental efforts of the state government, most of the changes the public are witnessing had been of a regressive nature- from the nature of rewarding contracts for public developmental works to the manner in which selection of various candidates for different jobs and professions are being carried out bears the unmistakable stamp of indifference and self-serving motives. Assurances and promises have so far come out to be empty. The state government should stop passing the buck and own up for the mistakes and screw-ups. It should draw up clear-cut objectives and the method of performing them. Responsibilities should be fixed and any discrepancies should be addressed before they are allowed to foment and become uncontrollable. And these things should commence from an earnest will.

Home Ministry seeks report from Punjab Govt.

ANI
New Delhi, Jan. 5: The Home Ministry on Tuesday directed the Punjab Government to submit a report over the ongoing attack on the Air Force Base in Pathankot. The MHA has demanded the report to be submitted in 24 hours. Earlier, the MHA had sought a report from the Border Security Force demanding an explanation as to how the terrorist managed to sneak across the border carry out a full-fledged terror attack on a military base. The operation against the terrorists at the air base entered its fourth day today as security forces continue to carry out combing operation to smoke out any remaining terrorist. Five terrorists have been killed so far

but since uncertainty reigns over the number of infiltrators, operations are expected to continue until the base is declared safe. Meanwhile, Defence Minister Manohar Parrikar left for Pathankot to take stock of the current situation and he was accompanied by IAF chief Air Marshal Anup Raha and Army Chief General Dalbir Singh. Earlier today, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) team reached Pathankot to carry forward its probe of the three cases lodged in connection with the ongoing terror attack. The NIA had registered three cases at local police stations in Punjab yesterday to probe the 'conspiracy' angle behind the attack.

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Muslims in the history of Manipur

By : **Dr. Syed Ahmed**

Muslims (Pangal/Meitei-Pangal) constitute almost 9% (2 lakh) of the total population of the State. Manipuri speaking Muslims are also found scattered in parts of Assam (Barak Valley), Tripura, Bangladesh and Myanmar. They found their way to these places in the wake of the Chahi Taret Khuntakpa (1819-26) or Seven Years of Devastation.

Muslims became a significant part of the Manipuri society from the early part of the 17th century during the reign of King Khagemba (1597-1652) when one thousand Muslim soldiers, led by a General Muhammad Shahi, from Taraf in Sylhet were captured and later settled in the valley of Manipur. The events of the Muslim invasion are recorded extensively in *Nongsamei Puya* and *Pangal Thorakpa*. However, there are evidences and records which suggest presence of few Muslim families before the reign of King Khagemba. It is believed that the progenitors of the Aribam sagei were the earliest Muslim inhabitants in Manipur. Muslims in small number continued to come and settle down in the valley of Manipur even after the reign of King Khagemba.

As most of the Muslim captives were endowed with skills in different trades and vocations, the secular and forward-looking King Khagemba possibly realized the advantage of settling them in his kingdom. The indigenous sources (esp. *Nongsamei* and *Pangal Thorakpa*) are replete with instances of rewarding the Muslims with local women as wives and land in appreciation for their skills in different trades. Interestingly, many of the Muslim families were given family titles, which later became the name of their sagei (clan or lineage group), on the basis of their vocations. For instance, Phu-sam-mayum: pot maker, Phundrei-mayum: carpenters who used phundrei/lathe, Che-sam: paper maker, Khut-hei-bam: skilled in handicraft and designing, Kori-mayum: those who made copper utensils, Hawai-igkhoh-mayum: lentil cultivators, Phisa-bam-mayum: weavers, Hidak-igkhoh-mayum: tobacco cultivators, Mansam-mayum: acrobats, Sangom-sum-pham: those who produce milk and its products, etc.

The process of the settlement of Muslims in Manipur was made complete by King Khagemba with the establishment of an administrative office (loishang) exclusively for the Muslims called Pangal Sanglen, also referred to as Mangal (Mughal) shang at Kangla. The principal head of the Sanglen was designated as Kazi, who was authorized to take up the general administration of the Muslims, including judicial matters.

Gradually the Muslims were integrated into the local culture. They absorbed a number of local customs and traditions, which were seen in their language, dress, food habits, habitation pattern, social organization, life-cycle rituals, pastimes, festivities, beliefs, etc. They started using Meiteilon as their mother-tongue. Their womenfolk adopted phanek, khudei, khwangnam (a piece of cloth tied around the waists of married women), etc. as their traditional dress. They started to relish themselves with the local food-items (esp. uti, eromba, kangsoi, ngari, etc.). They started constructing their houses just like that of the Meities. Their marriage custom was a striking amalgamation of the Islamic (nikah) and Meitei traditions.

The traditional games and sports of Manipur (mukna, mukna kangjei, sagol kangjei, yubi lakpi, etc.) became the favourite past-time for the Muslims. Surprisingly, the

Muslim community made all these adjustments without loosing their Islamic identity.

Muslims soon became useful and productive subjects of the kingdom. They rendered their military services and offered their skills in different trades and vocations, which helped in enhancing and enriching the economy of the kingdom.

Muslims served military and economic duties under the lallup system (military organization). They took part in many of the military campaigns made by kings of Manipur. King Khagemba for the first time inducted Muslims in his army during his campaign against Maring tribes. They took part in the Battle of Wangjing fought between Garib Niwaz and the Burmese in 1718. Many Muslims, then settled in Barak Valley, also rendered their services in the Manipur Levy, formed in 1824 to drive the Burmese from the valley of Manipur. Muslims stood along with the other Manipuris to face the British attack in 1891. Many Muslims fought at the historic battle of Khongjom in 1891. A royal photographer and a close associate of Tikendrajit, Dasu Sardar and his family members were brutally murdered by the British.

Not only Muslim men, but Muslim women too showed their courage. Muslim women vendors of Khwairamband Kheithel, took part in the women uprising of 1939 (Second Nupi Lal) against the British and the Indian business community.

In the time of peace, Pangal Khuthaiba or those Muslims skilled in various trades like carpentry, blacksmithy, pottery, weaving, boat-making etc. were engaged in various production units (Pangal Phundrei-shang, Pangal Fisa-shang, Pangal Hisa-sang, etc.) of the kingdom. Other Muslims rendered their services as Ingkhoh Sangha or those who manage the vegetable farms of the kingdom.

During the British rule (1891-1947), there was a group of departments (loishang) which were in charge of affairs relating to the Muslims (Pangan Sanglen, Pangan Inkhoh, Pangan Singa Loishang, Pangan Phundrei Loishang, Pangan Kumar, Pangan Mall and Pangan Likli). Muslims were seen in many other departments. Almost all the buglers and drummers attached to the royal army were Muslims.

The Muslims, according to Political Agent R. Brown (1867-75), had the reputation of being honest and hard-working. Political Agent W. McCulloch (1863-67) observed that the Muslims were the most industrious sections of the population of Manipur.

Muslims continued to take active part in the political development that took place in Manipur after 1947. Two Muslims - Md. Qazi Waliulla and Md. Basiruddin Ahmed - represented the committee formed to draft a constitution for Manipur in 1947. Md. Basiruddin Ahmed was inducted in the Interim Council (Aug. 1947 to Oct. 1948) constituted after King Budhachandra (1941-1955) abolished the Manipur State Darbar in July 1947. He held the portfolios of Medical, PWD and Jail.

Four Muslims were elected to the first general election held in 1948 for the State Legislative Assembly. Md. Alimuddin was inducted in the first Council of Ministers. Muslims continued to represent the Territorial Council/Electoral College/Legislative Assembly elections held after Manipur was officially merged to India in Oct. 15, 1949 as a Part-C State. Muslims took active part in the statehood movement. Md. Alimuddin, who was one of the prominent leaders of the movement, became the Chief Minister of Manipur (March 1972-March 1973) after it got its statehood in 1972.

Earthquake history of Manipur

- 18 August 1926 - East of Palel, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.0 (TS) 23:58:48 UTC, 24.50N, 94.50E
- 20 May 1927 - Near Kangpat, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.0 (TS) 10:51 UTC, 24.50N, 94.00E
- 11 July 1930 - North of Imphal, Manipur, 6.0 (TS) 07:06:34 UTC, 25.00N, 93.80E
- 22 September 1930 - Near Karong, Manipur, 6.0 (TS) 14:19:14 UTC, 25.30N, 93.80E
- 2 June 1934 - East of Ukhrul, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.5 (TS) 05:04:27 UTC, 25.10N, 94.70E
- 23 April 1935 - East of Ukhrul, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.0 (TS) 16:45:41 UTC, 25.10N, 94.70E
- 9 September 1937 - East of Ukhrul, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.0 (TS) 23:37:27 UTC, 24.90N, 94.70E
- 6 May 1938 - East of Ukhrul, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.5 (TS) 03:40:57 UTC, 24.90N, 94.70E
- 21 May 1937 - SW of Kohima (Manipur-Nagalaland Border region), 6.0 (TS) 16:12:02 UTC, 25.50N, 94.00E
- 27 May 1939 - South of Palel, Manipur, 6.7 (TS) 03:45:37 UTC, 24.30N, 94.10E
- 11 May 1940 - Near Imphal, Manipur, 6.0 (TS) 21:00:19 UTC, 24.90N, 94.10E
- 8 March 1947 - East of Imphal (Indo-Myanmar Border region), 6.0 (TS) 14:33:05 UTC, 24.90N, 94.70E
- 30 April 1952 - SE of Kohima (Manipur-Nagalaland Border region), 6.0 (TS) 04:33:57 UTC, 25.50N, 94.50E
- 7 November 1952 - SW of Kohima (Manipur-Nagalaland Border region), 6.0 (TS) 04:33:57 UTC, 25.50N, 94.00E
- 15 July 1957 - Near Moirang, Southern Manipur, 7.25 (TS) 19:30:22 UTC, 24.400N, 93.800E
- 30 September 1983 - East of Ukhrul, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), Mb 6.0 (HFS) 10:39:27.0 UTC, 25.0393N, 94.6695E, 60.3Kms depth
- 5 March 1984 - East of Palel, Manipur (Indo-Myanmar Border region), Mb 6.2 (HFS) 21:26:42.0 UTC, 24.5160N, 94.6204E, 67.50kms depth
- 6 May 1984 - NE of Aizwal (Manipur-Mizoram Border region), Mb 6.0 (HFS) 15:19:11.0 UTC, 24.2152N, 93.5256E, 31.60kms depth
- 18 May 1987 - Near Karong, Northern Manipur, Ms 6.2 (PEK) 01:53:51.0 UTC, 25.2287N, 94.2076E, 52.80kms depth
- 6 August 1988 - East of Imphal (Indo-Myanmar Border region), Mw 7.2 (HRV) 00:36:24.6 UTC, 25.1497E, 91 kms depth (Three people were killed in this earthquake. Tremors were felt over much of eastern and north-eastern India, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Eastern Nepal and Myanmar. Felt as far as Kolkata and Patna. Some damage was also reported from Homalin in northern Myanmar)
- 15 April 1992 - NW of Mawalik, Chin Division (Indo-Myanmar Border region), Mb 6.3 (HFS) 01:32:11.0 UTC, 24.2680N, 94.9275E, 130.90kms depth
- 18 September 2005 - Myanmar-Manipur border, Mw 5.724.653 N, 94.807 E, D=82kms, OT=07:26:00 UTC moderate earthquake struck the Myanmar-Manipur border, on 18 September 2005 at 12:56 IST causing isolated minor damage to property in some parts of Manipur. The earthquake had a magnitude of Mb=5.7 and was felt at many places north-east India and Bangladesh as well as in tall building in northern Thailand.
- 4 September 2009 - Myanmar-Manipur border, Mw 5.924.381 N, 94.712E, D=97.6 kms, OT=19:51:03 UTC moderate earthquake struck the Myanmar-Manipur border, on 4 September 2009 at 01:21IST. It was felt widely in north-east India and in Bangladesh.
- 4 Jan. 2016 - Epicenter-Noney, District Tamenglong 6.8 magnitude, 55 km depth Imphal, Manipur, India 8 dead, 100+injured

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Earthquakes will strike again!

What can the Manipuris do? How prepared are we to face another major earthquake? When I checked in on the 6th floor of the brand new solid building 20 days before Kobe earthquake, I saw wall-mounted instructions in the hallway about what to do in case of an earthquake. One of the instructions was to take refuge under a table in the room. When the rocking woke me up when the earthquake struck in the wee hours on January 17, 1995, I found myself under the table in my bedroom. I could not figure out how I landed there from my bed still asleep. I believe, the hallway instructions etched on my subconscious mind worked in my sleep. This anecdote tells us how awareness helps at times of crises like earthquakes that visit us unannounced. We can surmise a much more casualty and chaos had the Imphal earthquake struck not during the sleep time but during daytime when people are out at work and vehicles are on the road. We have plenty of national and state disaster management authorities and their written

protocols. But, when the disaster strikes, there is no time to open and consult a manual or ask others for help. Each victim has to react instinctively based on the Dos and Don'ts information etched on his brain by systematic awareness education. Manipur falls in one of the world's most earthquake prone areas. We know this. Then, let every person know about what to do about it through general education at primary, secondary and post-secondary levels. Some sporadic episodes of awareness lectures by disaster management people may not be enough. When the newly constructed Ima Keithel suffered extensive damage this time, somebody wrote, "Buildings constructed by government engineers fell while those constructed by non-engineers (my mom [sic]) survived". We need strict enforcement of building codes both for RCC buildings and traditional wooden CGI sheet roofed homes as well. Let's act proactively. Earthquakes will strike again!