

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, July 1, 2016

Gateway to the South East Asia

The erstwhile kingdom of Manipur with 2000 years of unique history and tradition, known to the rest of the country as the Jewel of India finally deserve the title with the coming of the country's look east policy now act east policy. The border state has now been boon with the Trans Asia High way which will connect the nation's capital with the rest of the South East Asian Countries. The nation's vision to get in touch with the South East Asian Countries under its Look East Policy has added the real meaning of the term 'Jewel of India' at which the first Prime Minister of the country Pandit Jawarharlal Nehru slipped from his tongue when he first landed on the soil. The opening of the new policy on the other hand stands as a big challenge to the people of the state. Many multinational companies of the world will target the soil for setting up of their companies and trade centers as the state will possess tremendous potentials for development in the field. It may be simply the east meet west zone but the impact is horrible unless the state prepares to face all challenges.

Even though Manipur stood in third in term of literacy rate people of the state don't seem to have understood well about the probable impact which might come as a result of the India's look east policy. Apprehension based on pessimist theory hunts every single day. This perhaps is due to lack of proper awareness from the side of the state government or some sort of interference to hinder the developmental process which is in midway. For decades the people of the state inhabiting at both side of the National High Way has been utilizing the high way for their immediate desires and goal. Bandh, Blockade and picketing has been a common phenomenon undergoing in the two high ways. Local people instead of looking ahead of development of the road condition have been creating hindrance to the developmental works at the influence of few vested interested persons.

Since time immemorial, transportation stood as the main factor for success of the trade and commercial purposes. The state government has been taking up various projects and scheme under its department of commerce and industries. The already existed free trade between the Country the neighboring country Myanmar has already boosted the economy of the state. Even though minor problems of misunderstanding or perhaps put halt to the existing trade.

The main reason for the failure and the probabilities of putting into the pool of miseries on the arrival of India's Act East Policy is or will be the lack of transparency to the kind of developmental works. The various schemes being taken up at many district head quarters especially the Moreh (the Indian Border Town which connect the neighbouring country Myanmar) need to be highlighted to the people for mass awareness. Transparency is the only means to create awareness and a white paper showing details of every works implementing is perhaps considered as the need of the hour.

8 people killed, scores missing after cloudburst in Uttarakhand

Pithoragarh, July 1: Eight persons were killed and 25 others were missing as a cloudburst hit Singhal area here early this morning. Flattening homes in over seven villages and leaving many residents trapped in the debris. "We have recovered five bodies from Singhal area while three bodies have been recovered from Thal village. The search for others is on by rescue parties consisting of army and paramilitary personnel," Pithoragarh District Magistrate H C Semwal said. The cloudburst brought over 100 mm rains in two hours in a region of 50 sq km, affecting several villages.

"25 persons, missing from over seven villages of Singhal area in Didihiat sub division of the district, are being traced with the help of ITBP, SSB and Pithoragarh district police," said RS Rana, the district disaster management officer who reached the spot soon after the disaster occurred. According to disaster management office sources, the cloudburst occurred in the villages of Singhal, Patthakot, Ogla and Thal villages. "The villages are buried under heavy debris and people are trapped. The rescuers are trying their best to locate and save them," Rana said.

Nation and Nationality : Themes and Perspectives on Manipur

By: Th. Kishan Singh
"In proportion as the exploitation of one individual by another is put an end to, the exploitation of one nation by another will also be put an end to. In proportion as the antagonism between classes within the nation vanishes, the hostility of one nation to another will come to an end". Karl Marx.

Human history has not been an amiable narrative of peaceful co-existence and development. Throughout the various epochs, many politico-cultural trends have emerged and disappeared with particular time periods, only to reappear again in a more subtle form and then proceed toward another transformation. A peculiar feature evident throughout has been the stark feature of dissent a resultant of various opposing, contesting (and unequal), asymmetrical forces, which in turn get expressed through various means - violent or otherwise. What is conspicuous is the culture in which dissent is suppressed, repressed subversion contained and opposition strategically anticipated, controlled and diffused by the dominant force working exclusively in the interest of the prevailing power structure. This culture is explicitly underlined in the contemporary human society which reveals the asymmetrical relations between the peoples inhabiting this planet; the scene where several nationalities ethnic and linguistic groups are marginalised, oppressed, dominated, subjugated and exploited by the bigger, powerful and lusty nationalities. Historically speaking, nationalism as an ideological formulation started in the west, in countries like France, England and Germany around the seventeenth century. What is important in our context is the development of "State - base nationalism" which "spilled over easily into imperialism and colonialism", with Britain and France, followed to a lesser extent by Russia, Spain, Portugal, Italy and Holland subjecting a major portion of the world to colonialism, in order to exploit markets and export capital. (1) Brutal in all its aspects colonial imperialism was responsible for the emergence of nationalist movements in the colonised regions. These nationalist sentiments were triggered by the need to liberate the colonised from the colonial yoke. (2) The various nationalisms of different hues, colours and various degrees that emerged in the India sub continent were largely anti-colonial in nature directed against colonialism. These nationalist movements, like their counterparts elsewhere, were led by the indigenous elite, the native bourgeoisie who mobilized the people in the fight against colonialism "but did not allow internal and external oppressors and exploiters". (3) The Indian subcontinent witnessed a grant deal of these bourgeois led nationalisms fanned incited by religious and nativity's

sentiments which instantly got elevated to the status of "patriotism". Exemplary are Aurobindo Ghose, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bankim Chandra Chatterjee followed by Gandhi whose idea of associating and identifying foreign goods as symbols of evil and hence to destroy them by burning was justified by invoking the Vedic practice of Yojna or sacrificial burning which was believed to have a purgatory effect in Hinduism. The patriotic slogans chanted during the burning drew to immediate analogy to the "mantras" chanted during the Yojna.

(4) These nationalisms and the consequent movement towards national liberation were aided by the contemporary historical circumstances and events. What is pertinent at this juncture is to realise the objective truth that the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent from British colonial imperialism was not because of one single dominant factor as the average Indian mind made to believe. To undermine the numerous reasons and other factors is not without neo-imperial strategies and tendencies to obscure the total perspective of decolonization, because of anticipation of possible adverse consequences. It was only after the second world war (referred by the many non-western peoples as Europe's Civil War) that the process of de-colonization began to proliferate in the colonised regions of Asia, Africa and Latin America. The de-colonization process explicitly underline by national liberation struggles, which were largely violent/militant, gave froth to the emergence of nation-state and national territorial realignment and distributors' process. It is to be noted that this region known as India's North-East region suffer unscrupulously, illegitimate and illogical territorial ambitions between Nehru, Jinnah, Chou-Enlai and Aung Sang.

(5) This present geo-political structure called India is the result of the fervent and over-zealous attempt by the indigenous elite of what we now call "mainland India" (6) It is the only basis of "controversial" premises that these people have constructed this political territorial structure known as India. Many arguments have been put forward at the wake of this projected postulate of India as a nation-states revealing the star antagonistic contradictions. With the gross use of force and strong arm tactics, India has consolidated itself as a separate state with a marked geographical territory; but still the postulate of nationhood remains vague and flimsy.

(7) Moreover, the postulate of the state is regeneratorily contested by the explicit fact that several nationalities are struggling for their legitimate right to self-determination against what has been term as forcible "integration" and annexation. Henceforth, it is an objective statement that the status of nationality question in India has

remained unsolved till date.

(8) This is ultimately located and placed in the discourse propelled by the urgency and the genuine need to explicate a proper analysis and security through and academic space which incorporates both theory and praxis.

An understandable and perceivable reality is that decolonization is not a static or technological process. It depicts an ongoing movement in the politics of ever changing power equation that will continue as long as "powerful, ambitious, intelligent, greedy and possessive organised peoples or the nations dominate, colonised rule, administer and exploit the vulnerable, defenceless and the weaker among the fellowmen". As long as exploitation, subjugation, subjectification exist revealing asymmetrical relations between cultures, nations, races and linguistic groups decolonization will remain an agenda inspite of the postulate of multi nationalism inserted by the western sponsored global capitalism. A mapping of colonial and post-colonial discourse become and unending process which remains open ended. It would be definitely among a fallacy if we say that decolonisation has been completed.

This question of nation/nationality and the state need to be assessed through a proper objective and scientific discourse in conjunction to the ongoing debate about nationality question in this geo-political structure called India. Arguments forwarded in the region known as the North-Eastern part of the India state call upon the need to assess the facts and historical truths. It remains a fact that what is today known as India's North-Eastern state remained outside the framework of Indian nationalism Indian nationalism and its sporadic waves remained exclusive of this region till the time of British departure from the sub-continent chronologically described as 1947. That, till the signing of the Yandaboo Treaty in 1862, Assam or Ahom remained economically, politically, culturally and historically a sovereign nation-state in the modern sense of the term. It was later appropriated by the newly constructed Indian state which claimed inheritance after the departure of the British. The ancient Asiatic country of Manipur was forcibly "merged" into the Indian state on 15th October 1949 in pursuance of a contested treaty sign by the then nominal despot of Manipur under coercion and physical pressure, with a representative of the Indian state. (9) If coercion, threat and illegitimate force are used to create a union, it raises many problems which are invidious in nature. Can this structure be called a union is the million dollar question that needs no complicated answer. This act do not confirm to the fact of the despot who had written categorically on the proceedings prior to the treaty about the transfer of legitimate power to the people of Manipur. Accordingly, he did not have any legitimacy or

locus-standi to enter into a treaty. The fact remains that this Act of forcible merger, termed by the people.

(10) The socialist and Marxist developments in Manipur with the emergence of Hijam Irabot's radical politics was largely responsible for the death-wound inflicted on the institution of monarchy and the not so well developed - in comparison with Indian mainland - institution and practice feudalism in Manipur. Irabot political movement was instrumental in creating a radical political consciousness among the Manipuri people which culminated in the creation of the Manipur constitution Act 1947. (11) It brought about many significant changes in Manipur's polity including the emergency of a people's institution based on democracy. Thereby the question of Manipur's merger remains contested and opposition to this forcible annexation is a logical consequences. This observation needs to be scrutinised and understood vis-a-vis the nation state formation in Manipur, stated to have been completed a millennia ago with the essential parameters and qualifications territory, culture native population, distinct population distinct civilization, political institution administration and indigenous national language and national cultural psyche (common ethos) deeply embedded and entrenched in her own national and composite history.

(12) Like every other nation-state formation elsewhere, it had passed through the multifarious stages of the tribal, community, kinship and ethnic assimilation process in the distinct historical past. Despite recurrent catastrophe, endemic hostility, interecnic conflicts and classes and British interference, Manipur status and continuity as a nation-state, a separate political entity remained an uncontested fact till the act of forcible merger and the consequent appropriations by the Indian state through its academia and media. There is a compelling need to access the question of Manipur in a proper democratic and academic discourse, which in turn is propelled by the impending need to challenge and resist the Indian elite's construct and attempt to project a unified and homogenised whole. It remains a vivid fact that, when power was transferred and negotiated it remained exclusive of the oppressed and exploited millions and was confined, restricted strictly to the indigenous mainland Indian bourgeoisie in the legitimised. Co-opted form of state-power exercised through liberal parliamentary democracy. The need to identify colonialism, feudalism, imperialism and to struggle for genuine democratic order specially at such a time when caste-race, ethnic linguistic cards "and myth of nationalism with all its aporia secularism, citizenship and nationhood are dexterously used to suppress/repress and erase heterogeneity in a decolonising country like India, acutely felt in many circles.

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National & International News

Sikkim celebrates Asar Rice Plantation festival with fervor

AN Gangtok, July 1: The northeastern state of Sikkim, also known as the nature's paradise, came alive with the Asar Rice Plantation festival, which marks the arrival of the monsoons and onset of the crop plantation season in the state. The festival was celebrated with great zeal and enthusiasm at the saramsa fields in the outskirts of the state capital. Bestowed with varied agro-climatic condition, Sikkim produces some of the major crops such as cardamom, ginger, turmeric, off-seasons vegetables, flowers, kiwi, paddy maize and millets etc. The farmers in Sikkim are inclined towards rice cultivation. The Asar Pandhra festival is very

important to the farming communities of the state, as it marks the day farmers begin sowing paddy in their fields. "We farmers of Sikkim do all kinds of cultivation but not in terms of commercial purposes, but for the livelihood and for the family itself. Sikkim farmers do rotation cultivation as well," said Simon Subba, DIO, IPR, West Sikkim. The farmers and locals from across the state actively took part in the rice plantation festival. The day is also marked by the traditional custom of eating beaten rice "cheura" with yoghurt "dahi". The festival is celebrated with utmost gusto with the people from all walks of life gathering in the paddy field and playing with mud and water. During the festival, the youth danced

and sang to the tunes of the traditional Sikkimese songs. Various cultural and sports activities were also organized during the festival. The farmers ploughed the paddy fields using traditional methods. "Organic farming, which is very much popular in Sikkim and of course, Sikkim is the first organic state in the country, such festival is a dedication to cultivation and the farmers of the state. Various cultural and sports activities are organized to mark the celebration bringing together the entire community. It is a very great experience. It was first organized by the 'Sarvoday Samaj Lingchom' last year," said District Collector Aishwarya Singh. The festival that is only celebrated in Geyzing West Sikkim, has given the

state a unique identity. The tourists also actively joined the celebration.

Army foils infiltration bid along LOC

PTI Srinagar, July 1: Army today foiled an infiltration bid along the Line of Control (LOC) in Karnah area of Kupwara district of Kashmir. However, no casualties were reported. "Army personnel noticed movement of heavily armed militants trying to infiltrate into Indian territory near the Eagle Post in Safar forest area of Karnah," a police official said. There was exchange of fire between the troops and militants for nearly an hour but no casualties have been reported so far, he added. "Searches are on in the area," he said.