

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday, July 2, 2016

Twists of droughts and floods; Is water management an impossible task for the state government?

Crimes against humanity deserve the worst form of punishment. Different nations have different legal systems to protect the interest of their countries. The enforcement of certain laws - like capital punishment, Special powers act to armed forces may have strong and supportive argument as it is about the security of their respective nations. Gross violation of human rights in certain parts of the country and other parts of the world may receive severe criticisms from many who are concerned for Human values. Arguments may continue for certain human causes permitting each sides to stand tight with their act. But what about some issues like global warming, water scarcity and deforestation?

There is no wrong in saying that environment has no boundary. A massive destruction of forest or extraction of crude oil or mismanagement of natural water or any other resources is among the issues which no nation could give reasonable arguments as it affect regions beyond the politically drawn boundary. After all, these issues concern about the humanity across the globe.

Reports about the scarcity of usable water have been top news with almost all newspapers in Manipur. The state which have adequate rainfall annually now face acute shortage of water since the last couple of decades. Interestingly, during this period the state had also witnessed flood many times. In short the state suffers the ugly twists of flood during rainy season while they had to bear drought in the remaining days. In view of the arising situation that we are facing right now, there is an urgent need to ponder on what went wrong so that a sustainable solution can be attempted. Is it the people or is it the government who is responsible for the present crisis?

Deforestation that has been taking place illegally in different parts of the state has been often blamed - both by government and the many social activists which is universally accepted by all. One thing we at Imphal Times suggest is that we cannot squarely blame the people who are responsible for cutting the trees for their livelihood. It is the government which is responsible and why shouldn't it be so? It was all about their survival and some people do not have any alternatives for survival. On paper the government had passed numerous schemes to substitute the livelihood but it is an open secret that none of this schemes meant for the poor people had ever been benefitted as the money meant for them had been pocketed by government authority who were entrusted with implementation of the project.

Another matters, which we at IMPHAL TIMES is concerned is the poor understanding of the government department about the need for storage of natural water underneath the earth. There seem to be a complete lack of knowledge by the government authority about the need to let the earth absorb any source of water. Clear example is the network of drains constructed under huge funding from the Jawaharlal Nehru Urban Renewal Mission (JNURM). The cubicle shape drainage construction has no mechanism to let the drain water absorbed underneath the earth. This is not the only case as, with any government infrastructural development work there is no sign of the government authority showing concern with the importance of rain water harvesting. Harvesting rain water does not mean that it should be stored in a tank or some man-made water storage tank. It is about harvesting inside the earth to be reused when required.

The problem of water scarcity has been much talked about and the matter was raised by Imphal Times on many occasions and had also suggested many ideas to the government to create water body in and around the Imphal city.

Now, the state is in crisis with increasingly frequent flooding. It is time someone with conviction and authority act up.

Sometimes we need to learn from Gujarat

IT Feature

On 3rd July 2012 IBN Live reported an article about Punsari, a small village in Gujarat thus: "Ever heard of a village with CCTV cameras, 24-hour Wi-Fi Internet and solar-powered lamps? Well, Punsari village in Gujarat is providing its citizens much more than what even some urbanites can hope for. And all this is being done without any NRI funding or any special donations - Their formula for success. Make optimal use of the government schemes."

At a government primary school in the village, the students are under constant CCTV observation. This is to keep a tab on any wayward activities. Says Bhagwatiben Patel, Principal of the Punsari Primary School, "With the cameras in place, we can monitor the kids better. And even the children know they are being watched."

A reverse osmosis plant in the village provides clean drinking water at a nominal cost of Rs 4 for a 20-litre drinking water can. An independent bus service, a Wi-Fi tower providing 24-hour free Internet connectivity, water-free public speakers and solar-powered lamps have enhanced Punsari's brand equity. And with each villager being insured for an accidental cover of Rs 1 lakh and a mediclaim cover



of Rs 25,000, the people here have little to complain.

Sarpanch Himanshu Patel says, "The main intention was that we should have an atmosphere of a village, but facilities like those in the city. The government talks of urban-rural connect now, but we have already done it." Punsari's turnaround happened when the village sold part of its land for plotted schemes. The money, deposited in government coffers, is used to fund the village's welfare schemes. And the village has now received good governance awards from both the central and state

governments. Meanwhile, neither is the village drenched in NRI funds nor have its schemes been funded through donations. It's just that the village has managed its accounts well and has made optimal use of government schemes".

The above report would seem like a fiction story written by an author with a hyperactive imagination, but is the truth. In our society embroiled with crimes, spineless bureaucrats, holier-than-thou politicians and scheming officials looking for ways to enhance their personal coffers, not to mention the self-proclaimed

social activists whose "sacrifices" and "selfless endeavours" have been proven to be laced with considerations benefiting themselves and their near ones, the prospect of a better tomorrow for our future generation has become more obscure than ever before. The real issues of inclusive development, transparent governance and sustainable progress have been lost in the ensuing melee. Meanwhile, the general public who chose to mind their own personal business without resorting to unnecessary influence or obligatory favours are paying the price and are made the scapegoat from both sides of the social and ideological divide while they are the very source of the sustenance for these opposing forces in the society, stealing and snatching with unabashed impunity the goods and benefits meant to bring some measure of relief to the general population.

The above report is an undeniable indicator of the collective power of the general public. Each and every individual whether in power or opposing it should understand, respect and support their normal aspirations and wishes. Coercion, force and arm twisting tactics can only work for so long. It is time to subjugate personal interest to the interest of the collective society.

More State News

Government's Welfare Schemes for Scheduled Castes and Tribes

DIPR

Imphal, July 2: The Department of Tribal Affairs, Hills & Scheduled Castes Development under the initiative of Government of Manipur is taking up various schemes for socio-economic development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes in the state through implementation of developmental programmes: family oriented schemes, welfare schemes, infrastructure schemes. The schemes implemented by the department are all supplemental in nature to the programmes implemented by the concerned Departments of the state Government.

The Department assisted 12,000 nos. of ST and 560 nos. of SC families with family oriented income generating schemes like Land Development, Rearing of Animals Assistance to the Tribal Weavers. Under the welfare programmes, 10,262 nos of ST families and 420 nos. of SC Families were assisted

with GCI Sheets, Post & Pre Matric Scholarships were awarded to ST & SC students, 980 nos. of tribal weavers were assisted financially, medical assistance were also given to tribal patients and another 1050 nos. of disabled tribals were given wheel chair, tri-cycle and hearing aids. Skill Development Training in various trades were given to 200 nos. of ST and 18 nos. of SC youths. Three Health Centres were established in 2014-15 by the Autonomous District Councils (ADCs) of Tamenglong, Churachandpur and Ukhrul. Medical personnel were engaged to provide medical treatment to ailing patients and also one Ambulance and medicines are provided free of cost. Remaining three District will be covered shortly. 30 nos of First Aid Centres were opened in 2014-15 by the ADCs and another 30 First Aid Centres will be opened shortly. 60,000 Tribal students

were issued Health Cards and 6 nos. of Health Camps/ Anti Addiction camps were also organized. These programmes will be continued in 2016-17 also.

Under the funding from the 3rd State Finance Commission Award, developmental programmes are being taken up for the welfare of the ST & SC communities.

The Department is planning to take up various developmental programmes in order to bring the people of hill districts on developmental path. Construction of Barrack type quarters for the primary teachers under Autonomous District Councils, construction of Market sheds at Imphal and Hill Districts of the State, construction of ST Boys and Girls Hostel buildings, construction of Community Halls and construction of Common Facility Centres in the hills areas processing of Agriculture/Horticulture produce (NEC).

Lt. Gen MK UNNI takes over as the new DGAFMS

IT News

Imphal, July 2: Lieutenant General Manoj Kumar Unni assumed the charge of Director General Armed Forces Medical Services (DGAFMS) in a function held on Friday. A graduate from the Armed Forces Medical College AFMC, Pune, he was commissioned in the Army Medical Corps on February 27, 1977. He trained as a paratrooper and has served with the Special Forces as a Regimental Medical Officer of the elite 9 Para Commandos. During his illustrious service career

of over 39 years, the General Officer, apart from specialist duties, has also held important staff and command appointments. He was Major General Medical Northern Command. He commanded the prestigious Army Hospital (Research & Referral), Delhi Cantt before becoming Director General Medical Services (Army). The General Officer has received several commendations and awards during his career. He has received two Presidential awards, VSM and AVSM. He was elected Colonel Commandant of the Army Medical



Corps in 2014. Lt. Gen Unni was appointed Honorary Surgeon to the President of India on 01 July 2015.

AR conducts EX servicemen rally



IGAIR (S)

Imphal, July 2: In an endeavour to address grievances and other administrative issues of Veterans and Ex-Servicemen, Thoubal Battalion of Keithelmanbi Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organised an Ex-Servicemen Rally at Thoubal (near Thoubal Police Station) in Thoubal district, Manipur on 29 June 2016. The Rally provided the Ex-Servicemen an opportunity to resolve their grievances related to Pensions, CSD facilities, Medical or any other aspects concerning them. A total of 62 Ex-servicemen including 04 widows of deceased soldiers attended the event. The Ex-Servicemen who attended the Rally conveyed their utmost satisfaction and pleasure at the conduct of the event and desired that such rallies should be held more frequently in the future also. They expressed their gratitude to the Assam Rifles for inviting them to the rally and the care taken towards their welfare and well being.

Fuel crisis continues in Tripura

ANI

Agartala, July 2: Fuel crisis continues in Tripura as supply from neighbouring Assam by tankers has almost stopped due to dilapidated condition of the NH 44 in Assam-Tripura border. Long queue of bikers waiting for several hours for their turn to fill petrol were noticed outside the filling stations in Agartala while most of the filling stations did not have fuel.

Jitendra Nath, an aged office who have been in the queue for more two-and-a-half hour for petrol said, "This problem is going on for the last one month as because the poor

road condition in Assam vehicles are unable to come and are blocked near to Churaibari. Public is facing great problem like I could not go to office due to petrol crisis and is in the queue for 2.5 to three hours, everyone is facing problem." Meantime, another person complained that this has become a daily problem and along with fuel there is also severe crisis of cooking gas cylinder and other essential commodities. Partha Sarathi Paul, a sales executive complained, "I am in queue for the last 2.5 hours for petrol. This is a daily affair as petrol crisis is going on since

tankers are unable to come due to bad road condition. For office goers and people like us working in sales are facing lot of problem. There is also crisis of gas (cylinder) with a backlog of one month along with other essential commodities including medicine." He informed that in the grey market petrol is available but at a cost of Rs 150 to Rs 200 a litre.

Tripura is passing through a fuel crisis for around a month as the NH44 in Assam-Tripura border is in dilapidated condition. Moreover, the rail link has also come to a halt due to conversion work.

Kerala government bans e-cigarettes

Kerala, July 2: Kerala Government has banned e-cigarettes following study reports that the use of e-cigarettes could lead to cancer and heart diseases.

An official release said, orders have been issued banning manufacture, sale, marketing and advertising of e-cigarettes in the State. There had been reports that e-cigarettes were becoming very popular among the youngsters in the State.

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