

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday, June 18, 2016

And divided we fall

Nagalim/Greater Nagaland, Kukiland, Mizoland, Meetei/Meiteiland. While the rest of the world is coming to the realization that much more can be achieved with greater ease and efficiency with the integration and cooperation of different countries and their particular expertise and resources especially, but not limited to the fields of science and technology and even security and administration, the situation back home presents a diametrically opposite approach to the future. In stark contrast to the intensifying global efforts for disintegration of physical boundaries, the different communities in the state are staking their claim for separate states to be carved or chipped away from the present state of Manipur. While the demand itself is a serious threat to the future of the state as it exists at present in terms of its physical features, a far more treacherous and sinister outcome will be the mutual bitterness and suspicious attitudes of the communities that will eventually develop which will be almost impossible to get rid of. While the grievances and the concerns of the people in these parts of the state against the administration may very well be genuine, there is no denying the fact that the demand for a separate statehood entails a complex and insidious work of a few politically motivated and self-seeking individuals in the garb of righteous leaders and philanthropists. The question everyone in the state, especially those thousands rallying behind the leaders needs to ask, rather ponder over is: will the granting of a separate state be the ultimate solution to all their grievances and woes? Is there any certainty or assurance that there will not be further outcry or agitation for further demarcation or separation by the numerous sub-groups? Has it been established that the elected representatives of the various communities and regions of the state have tried their level best to address these complaints and fell short by way of the state government failing to cooperate or provide the required resources despite their due shares being in the possession of the government? Are the demands for these numerous separate states or administrative units even plausible? In our quest to attain every right granted us by the constitution and then some, we have turned our back on our responsibilities. What the state is experiencing is the consequence of our own follies - of letting our greed and emotions getting the better of our rationality thereby selecting those representatives who can put the highest price for our universal suffrage. The people sitting over the affairs of the state - who are being scorned and damned for betraying the trust, aspirations and resources of the general public are the very people who have been adjudged the most popular or trusted of the lot, how the trust was won being another question altogether. Putting our emotions before reason will only result in further alienating the different communities - a situation none of us could afford to experience. What is needed at this juncture is an enduring political solution which would ensure that the system is tweaked and primed to cater to the needs and necessities of the public without undue interference or disturbance. The need of the hour is collective resolution and not a separate state.

Kashmiri girl was detained at IGI Airport on basis of 'suspicion'

ANI
New Delhi, June 18: Jammu and Kashmir Deputy Chief Minister Nirmal Singh on Saturday said that the police must have had detained the Kashmiri girl, who was travelling to Srinagar from Dhaka on the basis of suspicion. "I am not aware of it if the security forces had stopped them, they must have done it based on some suspicion. They did not get anything and she was released later on," Singh told the media here. A Kashmiri medical student was yesterday detained at the IGI Airport in Delhi after the security staff claimed they saw 'carrying bomb' written on her check-in luggage. The girl, a resident of Rajbagh in Srinagar, was taken to the police

station at the domestic airport and put through an hour-long joint interrogation by the police and intelligence agencies. The girl and her three friends were travelling to Srinagar from Dhaka via Kolkata and New Delhi. The parents alleged that luggage of the girls was checked at Bangladesh and Kolkata, but questions were only raised by officials at the Delhi airport. The parents have taken up the issue with the Jammu and Kashmir government, which is in touch with the Delhi Police. Earlier responding to a tweet about the detention of the girls, National Conference working president Omar Abdullah wrote, "What is the reason for their detention? Can you please share some more details."

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Diversification Plans of the Samaritans

By : Arambam Kapil

A few overly respected Manipuri old-timers of a scheduled tribe demand committee have been almost successful in sabotaging the issues regarding the Inner Line Permit System. Then, a few NGOs have also jumped on the bandwagon trying to get the most out of this tragedy called Manipur. Instead of intervention, these NGOs have become a part of the problem. According to the Business Dictionary, 'diversification' is, in corporate strategy, 'a practice under which a firm enters an industry or market different from its core business'. But how is such a corporate thingy related to Manipur? Cut it short. Let's come straight to the point. We are talking about a few Manipuri NGOs; or simply put, a few organisations that have appropriated this concept of diversification successfully, but without considering the repercussions. Unsurprising it is, though, for all that matters are the success stories of diversification and nothing else, and thence more funds and more projects. NGOs are a product of the neoliberal age, of which proponents have been advocating for the least intervention from any government. No wonder we have become commodities and our societies a market that the local Samaritans can use for their record-breaking 'projects', with sponsors from the global Samaritans. Does this also imply they are working against democracy unconsciously? They are representing us without our consent, often edging towards misrepresentation and further abusing taxpayers' money from all across the globe for their save-the-world missions; so the answer is quite clear. On a whole new level, I can also name one local Samaritan, who has been putting in too much effort to redefine the concept of diversification: Mrs Binalakshmi Nepram, who has diversified from gun-control and violence-on-women issues to those of indigenous societies and cultures. Many people are watching this

farce quietly because they are apprehensive about being called a name. Yes, we are a very polite people though we still indulge in territorial pissing like it is 10000 BC. We also suffer from the crab mentality but let me be clear: this has nothing to do about hate or envy. For some time now, Manipur has been under siege from the two overlapping issues of Inner Line Permit System and the scheduled-tribe demand campaigns with multiple stakeholders. In the brouhaha, Mrs Nepram & Co is now talking about indigenous craps to make the public issues a sort of cottage industry that can be exploited for whatever reasons one can come up with. Sometimes it makes me wonder whether such a topic on an indigenous society is lesser controversial than, say, human rights, and therefore more hassle-free to get clearance for funds. Is it like: 'The government should be soft with its Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act in this field, so why not dive in?' I heard it through the grapevine that a couple of human-rights NGOs in the hinterland of Manipur are also sneaking into the world of sustainable development these days. Truth be told, we cannot solve several of these issues within the existing system while the NGOs are too naive to see the condition beyond the next big project. Solutions to a huge part of the problems lie, again, outside the existing establishment but these organisations, with other civil bodies—like that of the piggish scheduled tribe demand committee—are making a complete 'mess' out of the mess! Fascinating. We can never expect these organisations to be impartial because that makes no business sense. Business, baby, business. You merely have to impress the funders with the number of deaths you have recorded, the number of conferences you have organised at fancy places, the number of volunteers you have been able to hoodwink and so on. It's not

without reason that people are claiming the NGOs are closer to the funders than to the 'clients' they claim to represent. Now, more than the business expertise and all the scatological number games, our lives are precious and our socio-political goals not negotiable. So it will be a world of good for large-hearted organisations if they focus on their core business and do not allow their whims and fancies to get carried away. A little bit of honesty would have been appreciated but apparently, shamelessness is not in our vocabulary. There are many drugs-menace-related NGOs in Imphal, for instance, and it will make perfect sense if they intend to get into HIV-AIDS areas for obvious reasons. But it is altogether a different tale when an NGO, which has been working on gun-related issues and polishing its portfolio with lists of conferences and seminars on arms and ammunition, starts nose-diving into an indigenous puddle. Can you see the gluttony is so blatant? I'd expect that from politicians but never from self-styled saviours. While we are on this point, let me be also very clear that it's not a problem if the heads of these organisations become millionaires and billionaires—or become the Gail McGovern and the Anthony Lakes, those people who are known for their reason-defying salaries while working in non-profit organisations. Yet if they started being nosy about a development, not necessarily in terms of growth, but rather like on indigenous matters just because it is trendy, then there will be a problem; that's a given. It is like an additional headache to the prevailing misery over the decadence of our public life. Besides, it will be extremely myopic if we start considering every public issue as a project that should be funded and 'maintained'.

We are not even talking about the unabated gun-related issues and armed movements, despite the fact that many of our local NGOs have been working on these areas day and night for the last 500 years. Now, the real issue is that many of these groups are simply trying to treat the symptoms rather than the cause. In this regard, would a conformist like Mrs Nepram ever be able to question the Indian establishment? A big NO. Read the first line of the press release her organisation had published about one of the recently held conventions on peace and reconciliation: 'Manipur, literally translated [as the] "Land of Jewels" [is a former Asiatic kingdom that joined [the] Union of India in 1949 and became a state of India in 1972.' In the name of Supreme Mother, Manipur did not 'join' the union—it was 'annexed' or to the liberals, it was merged under coercion. Everybody knows about the Merger Agreement. So just ignore it if you don't have the balls to talk about it, but don't be so sycophantic and stupid simultaneously. Staying in New Delhi, the best that Mrs Nepram can do is to ask her disciples in Manipur to send death certificates and reports so that she can, perhaps, mull on the symptoms, and make a PPT presentation, which she can further send it to potential funders. Such a Samaritan's act might be cute to many people but it is very grave. It is grave because the NGOs, by concentrating on the symptoms, are already legitimising terrorism and violence perpetrated by all sorts and shades of power brokers including state and non-state actors based in and out of Manipur. Besides, through overt aspirations of becoming saviours in every possible area the organisations and particularly their ringmasters are behaving like clowns. Finally, the issue is about treating the causes and not the symptoms. It is all apparent that the NGOs have become a part of the disease today. The sooner they realise it, the better it will be for all of us. By the way, the reference to 'diversification' was just a lame joke.

National & International News

"Boko Haram kill 24 in northeastern Nigeria"

Kano (Nigeria), June 17: Twenty-four people were killed when Boko Haram fighters opened fire on mourners, a local community leader said today, in the second attack in northeast Nigeria this week after a relative lull. The attack happened at about 8:00 pm (local time) in Kuda village near the town of Gulak, in Adamawa state, according to Maina Ularumu, a former local government chairman in nearby Madagali. Adamawa police spokesman Othman Abubakar, based in the state capital Yola, 255 kilometres away, confirmed the attack. But he gave a lower death toll of 18 and said "many others were injured". Ularumu said the attack occurred

during a "mourning celebration" to mark the death of a local community leader. "They came on motorcycles and opened fire on the crowd, killing 24. Most of the victims were women. They looted food supplies and burnt homes and they left almost an hour later," he told AFP. "Gulak has been liberated from Boko Haram but the gunmen still live in villages nearby. They attack mostly to loot food supplies. "Our people who fled their homes to escape Boko Haram attacks have been returning because they can't live in the camps. "But now they are facing threats from Boko Haram who launch nocturnal attacks."

Boko Haram threatened to overrun Adamawa state in 2014, sweeping down from their Sambisa Forest stronghold which lies just across the border in Borno state to Mubi, 80 kilometres south of Gulak. The rampage, which left bridges and homes destroyed on the only road south to Yola, forced tens of thousands of people from their homes to flee into camps and host communities in the state capital. Boko Haram was driven out of the state by a military counter-offensive that began in January 2015 and since then has been a relative calm despite sporadic attacks in the north of the state. The last attack in Adamawa was on January 9, when seven people were killed and two others injured in a raid on Madagali.

Two female suicide bombers blew themselves up at a market in Madagali on December 28, killing 30, just days after President Muhammadu Buhari declared the Islamists "technically" defeated. There has been a noticeable fall in attacks since the turn of the year and the military claims the Islamic State affiliate is severely weakened and pushed into border areas around Lake Chad. But yesterday's attack is an indication that the rebels, who want to create a hardline Islamic state in northeast Nigeria, are not routed, and still have the capacity to strike. The army in late April began an assault on Sambisa Forest, which is believed to have pushed out remaining fighters.

Monsoon sets in over Bihar, WB, Odisha; Delhi awaits

PTI
New Delhi, June 17: South-west monsoon today made its way to Bihar, Odisha and West Bengal with rains drenching parts of the three states but Delhi still reeled under sultry conditions. The weatherman has predicted heavy to very heavy rains in Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Vidarbha, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, coastal Karnataka and Kerala tomorrow. Sultry weather conditions troubled the residents in Delhi that had a high of 39.5 degrees. The minimum in the city was recorded at 25.8 degrees and humidity level between 45 and 86 per cent.

The maximums of the three other metropolitan cities of Kolkata, Chennai and Mumbai settled at 32.8, 37.1 and 35.2 degrees, respectively. Heavy rains lashed Kerala and Lakshadweep with several houses suffering damage and trees getting uprooted at many places. A tree fell on the tracks at Nemom when the Thiruvananthapuram-Chennai-Egmore train was to pass following which rail traffic was held up for some time. Many houses were damaged in strong winds in the district. Several instances of trees getting uprooted were reported from various parts of the state capital,

causing disruption in power supplies. Alathur and Mankara in Palakkad district received 9 cm of rains while Ottapalam and Enmayur, also in Palakkad, and Perinthalmanna in Malappuram received 7 cm of rainfall each, IMD bulletin said. Bihar's northeast part received monsoon rains. Monsoon is expected to advance to other areas in the next three to four days. The Met department said first monsoon rains were witnessed in Araria, Kishanganj, Purnea, Katihar and Supaul districts. Purnea gauged a rainfall of 23.7 mm till 5:30 PM, while Gaya and Bhagalpur witnessed 1.8 mm and 3.3 mm of precipitation respectively.

Monsoon also set in over some parts of Odisha. It has covered districts of Mayurbhanj, Balasore, Jajpur, Bhadrak, Kendrapara, Jagatsinghpur, Puri and also some portions of the adjoining districts of Keonjhar, Dhenkanal, Cuttack, Khorda, Nayagarh, Ganjam and Gajapati, IMD said. The department said heavy rainfall was likely at one or two places over north and southern districts of the state tomorrow. The Met office announced arrival of the monsoon in Gangetic West Bengal and the sub-Himalayan belt of the state with Bankura receiving 45.2 mm of rains and Asansol 43 mm..