

Editorial

Imphal, Friday, June 22, 2016

The hoarding call

While an increasing number of people in the state are beginning to make their opinions heard on the standoff regarding the three Bills passed in the house of the state Assembly last year as a means to protect the interests and resources of the indigenous people of the state, but has been contended as a set of Bills intended to rob the tribal people of their rights and share of resources by the valley people, a group of tribal individuals supporting the economic blockade along the national highways have called for the tribal people to start hoarding essential stocks of foodgrains and other stuffs. The call does not portend well for the future of the state and the social developments in any sense, and should be seen as nothing but a declaration of the intent to wreak havoc on the fragile fabric of the society holding the different communities together. There has to be more than meets the eye for those behind the declaration, as in any conflict situation, the only lasting rationale is for the opposing parties to come together and chalk out their differences and find a way acceptable to both parties, however the solution might be below expectations for both sides. Pilfering, thefts and looting along the national highways- the lifeline for the landlocked Manipur state from the numerous trucks bringing in essential supplies is nothing new, and it would not be an exaggeration to state that quite a substantial number of individual in the garb of one group or the other along these roads have made an easy living out of taking their cut of the cargos through coercion, intimidation and even violence. Lives have been snubbed for not giving in to their plundering activities. One could not help but wonder if such characters would not spawn a generation of worthless plundering thieves living their lame lives off the resources of others- a regression to times we could only refer to as the stone age.

The hoarding call should however be a wake-up call for those living in the valley irrespective of the community, faith or custom to invent, modify, tweak and innovate so that self-reliance becomes a reality. It is also a boon in disguise for the valley dwellers to seek out every opportunity and possibility to make the best of every available resource at their disposal. As the saying goes, necessity is the mother of invention. But before such a situation is allowed to develop and change the social and communal landscape of the state beyond repair, it would be prudent for us to make an earnest attempt to come to an amicable solution for everyone, and for the future, not in terms of the land or other resources, but the children which will one day inherit everything we have today. Would we want them to inherit the hatred, suspicion and the uneasiness amongst the communities some elements have been trying to foment?

'Glimmer of hope' seen for compromise U.S. gun control bill

Washington, June 22: U.S. senators pushed for a compromise gun control bill on Tuesday, a day after the Senate failed to advance four gun measures following last week's mass shooting in Orlando, the deadliest in modern U.S. history. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he would schedule a vote on a bill by fellow Republican Senator Susan Collins that would prevent about 109,000 people on "no-fly" and other surveillance lists from purchasing guns. Collins said she expected a vote on the bill this week or next. On Monday, the Senate defeated a Democratic prohibition on gun sales to people on a broader range of government watch lists, while also blocking a narrower Republican measure. Some senior Republicans would not commit to supporting the Collins bill, citing worries about people being denied the ability to buy weapons without adequate safeguards. But the No. 3 Senate Democrat,

Chuck Schumer, told reporters: "There may be a glimmer of hope now," adding that Collins' proposal seemed to be "a step in the right direction." The measure is being debated in the Senate before the Nov. 8 election when Democrats hope to win control of the Senate and gain seats in the House of Representatives. Democrats believe Republican congressional opposition to wider control bills gives them a powerful campaign issue. It was too soon to tell if President Barack Obama would support the Collins bill. Spokesman Josh Earnest said senior officials including lawyers at the Department of Justice were taking a look at it. "If the assessment is that this would enhance the ability of our law enforcement professionals to keep us safe and prevent suspected terrorists from purchasing a gun, then that's likely something that we'll be able to support," Earnest told reporters in a daily briefing.

More State News

HQ IGAR (S) celebrates International Yoga Day



IT News
Imphal, June 22: HQ IGAR (S) celebrated International Yoga Day at Khuman Lampak Stadium, Imphal yesterday. The grand event for all Central Armed Police Forces was attended by Maj Gen V S Sreenivas, VSM**, IGAR (S), joined the event to spread awareness about benefits of yoga for the forces. More than 1000 soldiers of Assam Rifles, BSF, CISF and CRPF performed various breathing exercises and yoga asanas. The volunteers from the Ministry of AYUSH which covers traditional Indian practices of physical, mental & spiritual well being, guided the soldiers through the paces of the event. Besides this central event, yoga was practiced at all units and Headquarters of the CAPFs in Manipur. Speaking on the occasion, Maj Gen V S Sreenivas, VSM**, highlighted the importance of Yoga in the holistic development of the physical, mental and spiritual well being. He highlighted the benefits of yoga in our

day to day living and its importance for soldiers who lead lives in challenging environments which can sometimes prove to be stressful. He further emphasized that yoga not only brings harmony between man and nature but also inculcates holistic approach to healthy lifestyle. In true spirit of "THE FRIENDS OF THE NORTH EAST", the Assam Rifles and other Central Armed Police Forces plan to spread awareness about benefits of Yoga in all North East states through their own unique way. Derived from the sanskrit word *Yogi* (Unite), Yoga stands for the union of individual consciousness with the universal consciousness. The first International Yoga Day was celebrated on 21 Jun 2015, after the initiative by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and its declaration by United Nations General Assembly. It is estimated that over 40 crore people from more than 230 countries practiced Common Yoga Protocol on 2nd International Yoga Day yesterday.

National & International News

ISRO launches record 20 satellites in one go

Sriharikota (AP), June 22: Setting a record in its space programme, India today successfully launched 20 satellites, including its earth observation Cartosat-2 series, in a single mission on board ISRO's workhorse PSLV-C34 from the spaceport here. In a precision launch, PSLV-C34 took off from the second launch pad of Satish Dhawan Space Centre here, about 110 km from Chennai at 9.26 AM and placed the Cartosat-2 Series and 19 others in the designated polar Sun Synchronous Orbit (SSO) about 30 minutes later in clear skies. The 727.5 kg Cartosat-2 series satellite will provide regular remote sensing services with its panchromatic and multispectral cameras and its imagery will be of multiple use. Of the 19-satellites, 12 are earth imaging "Dove satellites" of USA and another American satellite. The rest are from Canada (two) and one each from Germany and Indonesia. Two academic satellites are from Sathyabama University (Sathyabamasat) in Chennai and from College of Engineering (Swayam) at Pune. Use of Cartosat 2 includes cartographic, urban and rural applications, coastal land use and regulation, utility management like road network monitoring and water distribution. Also, creation of land use maps,

precision study, change detection to bring out geographical and man-made features and various other Land Information System and Geographical Information System applications can be done. It is similar to the earlier Cartosat-2, 2A and 2B. Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated ISRO and described today's launch as a "monumental" accomplishment. "20 satellites in a go! @ isro continues to break new barriers, hearty congratulations to our scientists on the monumental accomplishment", he said on Twitter. ISRO Chairman A S Kiran Kumar congratulated his team for the successful launch 'in a record time' and said "PSLV-C-34 has done its job." "We have the current generation of earth observation satellite of Cartosat 2 series," he said, adding ISRO had done a "wonderful job". P Kunhikrishnan, Director, SDSC-SHAR, said that it was a major accomplishment by PSLV in its 35th consecutive successful mission. "PSLV has become a success symbol for ISRO and India. ISRO is adopting more and more professionalism," he said. D Jayakumar, Mission Director, described today's launch as a major landmark and said that the vehicle performance was "exceedingly well."

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LOCATION OF ETHNIC GROUPS IN POLITICIZATION OF ETHNICITY

By- Siamchingthang Tungpa

There are 60 territorial constituencies in the legislative assembly of Manipur, in which the plain region is divided into 40 constituencies and the hill region into 20. All the 20 hill constituencies are reserved for the scheduled tribes, while the rest are unreserved. The 20 hill constituencies virtually belong to the Nagas and the Kukis, and that of the plain region to the Meiteis with the exception of one or two by the Meitei-Muslims or Nepalis. Therefore, if all the Meitei legislators come forward they can easily form a government. [v] The Nagas and the Kukis allege that they are under-represented in the legislative assembly, and little efforts have been made by the successive governments for the development of the hill region (see, Tuan 2009). They contended that since hill region occupies 90 per cent of the land it shall get more constituencies. Again, Manipur is landlocked practically without inland waterways and railways. It is connected to the rest of India by few highways, the narrow roads with sharp curve. The highway that passes through the adjacent state of Nagaland is Manipur's lifeline, its major link route to outside world. Other highways are very narrow roads. Almost all the essential goods such as fuel, food, petrol, diesel, and medicines are imported from outside. A large number of vehicles bring essential goods through these highways. The Nagas and the Kukis used to impose frequent indefinite curfews along these highways to mount enough pressure to seek the redress of their grievances. The blockade of these highways has been the most common and effective method to put pressure to bear on the government, but affected the livelihoods of many people due to the acute shortages of essential goods. It is useful, in this context, to recall the 52-day-long (June 19 to August 11, 2005) blockade of the main highway imposed by a student group in protest against the Manipur government's decision to declare June 18 as "State Integrity Day" in honor of 18 strikers killed while protesting against the extension of ceasefire between the Government of India and the NSCN-

IM to Manipur. To provide relief to the people, the Indian Air Force was pressed into service to airlift medicines and other essential goods to Manipur from Guwahati, Assam's capital. The Nagas demand for Nagalim. Others Zo armed organization of the UPF demand AHS, and the KNO demand for Kukiland have the tactical support from the adjacent states of Nagaland and Mizoram. Manipur shares border with Nagaland on north, and Mizoram on south and south-west. The Zo peoples and the Nagas inhabit both sides of the border having close cultural affinities. The Naga movement first started in Assam's Naga Hills (today's Nagaland) in order to achieve an independent state of the Naga people (see, Das 2007). It has spillover effect on Manipur since the former is the home of the largest component of Naga people outside Nagaland. When the British Raj decided to free India the Nagas had sought to set up a country, but they were integrated with India. In the early 1950s, the Naga intellectuals of Assam proposed to set up an administrative region comprising of Assam's Naga Hills and Tuensang Frontier Division of North-East Frontier Agency (today's Arunachal Pradesh). The Government of India accepted the proposal, and Naga Hills-Tuensang Area came into existence in 1957. In 1963, it was elevated into a state of India known as Nagaland. But, many Nagas rejected Nagaland for not integrating other Naga-concentrated areas of Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh to Nagaland. The "contiguous Naga inhabitations" fall into Nagaland, Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh (Shimray 2000: 3007). The Nagaland legislative assembly had also urged the Government of India to bring all the Nagas of India together into a single political entity. The Naga insurgents also wanted to bring all Nagas of India under a homeland known as Nagalim. The integration of Naga-concentrated areas in Myanmar with those areas in India is not on their agenda at the moment (see, Chasie and Sanjoy 2009). Further, the two-decade long "Greater

Mizoram" movement came to an end after Mizo (Lushai) Hills of Assam became the state of Mizoram in 1987. It has had a great influence on Zopeoples of Manipur since there wanted to unify Zo (Kuki-Chin-Mizo groups) of people inhabiting part of Manipur, Assam, Tripura, Chin Hills, of Myanmar, Chittagong Hill Tract of Bangladesh and part of Mizoram (Suan 2009). Many Zo young people from Manipur had joined the movement (Chaube 1999: 213), but the formation of Mizoram betrayed them (Kipgen 2006). But the Meiteis are against Nagalim and Kukiland or Autonomous Hill State because the Meitei kings had ruled the former kingdom of Manipur that extended to the hill areas (Zehol 1998 & Suan 2009). The Meiteis alleged Manipur is the homeland all the ethnic groups of Manipur. Hence, they are against its division. Further, the majority of the Meiteis have been converted into Hinduism since the 18th century while the majority of Nagas and Zo peoples have also been converted into Christianity since the early part of 20th century. After embracing Hinduism, the Meiteis considered themselves as members of a higher status group, and considered others inferior people. Thus, the relationship gradually turned into a relationship characterized by subordination-super ordination, and inferiority-superiority (Saha 2005: 233-234). Meiteilon is not only the language of the Meiteis, but is used for internal communication in the state. Since it is one of the 22 schedule languages of India, it has to be promoted by the government. Every state of India has one or more official languages, and being the principal language Meiteilon is Manipur's official language. The Nagaland legislative assembly had also urged the Government of India to bring all the Nagas of India together into a single political entity. The Naga insurgents also wanted to bring all Nagas of India under a homeland known as Nagalim. The integration of Naga-concentrated areas in Myanmar with those areas in India is not on their agenda at the moment (see, Chasie and Sanjoy 2009). Further, the two-decade long "Greater

resolution to accord Meiteilon, in addition to English, as the official language of Manipur. Thus, the Manipur Official Language Act, 1979 mandated "Manipuri language written in Bengali script" as the official language of the state. In 1983, the state government introduced Meiteilon as a compulsory subject in all schools in the state. In addition, the Meiteis wanted to substitute the Bengali script by the Meitei script. However, it has not been easy because the Bengali script has been in used for writing for more than 200 years. The Meitei script was formally introduced in class I and II level from 2005. However, the Nagas and the Kukis have been accusing the government for trying to impose Meiteilon upon them. "The languages of the dominant non-tribals are being forcibly imposed upon the minority tribals. Manipur often witnesses a tug-of-war among dozens of tribal languages versus the dominant Meiteilon. The language problem in Manipur began during the early 1980s when the state government tried to introduce Meiteilon as a compulsory subject in class X. But the issue was settled by keeping Meiteilon as an option for the tribal in lieu of additional English or state's recognized tribal languages. But the tussle continues with the insertion of Manipuri in the eighth schedule in 1992. The problem of language has immense political implications. The language problem in Manipur creates or worsens ethnic tension in the state" (Shimray 2000: 3007-08). The Meiteis are in favor of lifting the restriction that debarred them from buying and owning land in the hill region which they as "discriminatory." But, the Nagas and the Kukis said that allowing the settlement of the Meiteis in the hill region would further marginalized them. Some Meitei groups have urged the Government of India to declare Manipur a "Hill State" and follow uniform laws throughout the state. They have also started mobilizing public opinion in favor of the recognition of Meiteis as scheduled tribe. (Concluded)

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