

Editorial

Imphal, Monday, June 27, 2016

Covering-up exercises

'Whatever a man soweth, that shall he also reap' - an age old proverb that has been proving undeniably true with increasing frequency in our present state than ever before. The unfortunate nexus between the politicians and unscrupulous contractors that are mercilessly raping the land of its rightful resources and utilities has been a well-documented and repeatedly proven one. Yet the audacity of those in power and position seem to have increased with each exposure of their misdeeds and underhand dealings. While the issue of the reconstruction of the two Ima markets in the heart of town which was damaged by the earthquake at the beginning of the year has not yet been settled, the recent reports of the tilting of the barely-year old double-storied market complex constructed at the Chief Minister's constituency have left many flabbergasted. These series of events where public structures are collapsing like a deck of cards, or are in danger of doing so can no longer be dismissed as mere coincidences. What is more frightening for the public who are supposed to be using these structures is the fact that even after results of the shoddy workmanship and negligent supervision has been laid bare for the whole world to witness, there is evidently no remorse or admittance of the faults and lapses from those involved in the project including the concern minister/s. In the instance of the Wangmataba Shopping complex which is gradually been sinking and tilting towards the river, the inspection visit by the Chief Minister accompanied by officials and engineers turned out to be a big farce with the CM apparently turning out to be a bad actor who, having forgotten his lines, had to repeat the prompts made by the engineers and officials to the media. That those behind the project have done an excellent job of temporarily mending the numerous cracks and covering up the damage speaks for their expertise and experience in similar circumstances. The 'guides' who were explaining the situation to the CM also diverted his attention from the worst damaged portion with practiced subtlety and polished tack. Has the CM been made a fool of by a few conspiring officials and experts who stand to lose face? Or is he a party to the whole charade put up for the benefit of the concerned public? What made the PWD officials to assure the CM that the problem can be rectified with a few pillars and new support frameworks? Have they done a detailed examination of the site before the inspection visit? Who is/are to blame if the repaired structure tumbled/collapsed and cause injuries, or worse? Why is the CM contradicting himself by confessing to construction flaws and then declaring that the engineers are not to blame for the problem? Is the CM still oblivious of the unfortunate facts of contract works in the state? - an unlikely excuse given his precedent. Has there to be some lives lost to drive home the point?

The practice of covering up needs to stop immediately. Absolving his near and dear ones without a fair trial is bound to backfire, sooner than later. Those playing with the lives of the public for personal gains must be made to pay their dues in full. Time to serve up a glaring example of the lofty promises of equality and justness so frequently pledged.

International Day Against Drug Abuse celebrated



PIB Defence

Imphal, June 27: Noney Battalion of Loktak Brigade under the aegis of Red shield Division celebrated international day against drug abuse on 26 Jun 16 at L Hengjol

village by organising educational camp against the abuse of drugs. The medical office of the battalion also conducted medical camp on the occasion and distributed free medicines.

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MANIPUR AND THE PARADOX OF SECURITY

By-SIAMCHINGHANG TUNPO

The situation of security in Manipur today has gone from bad to worst. It is no longer a question of law and order problem but increasingly a socio-political and economic problem of the various ethnic groups of the state. The security concerns are not merely confined to insurgency and counter-insurgency operations, and its repercussions on the general public and society, it also encompasses the ethnic tensions faced by the state and the people as a major challenge to the peaceful co-existence of the numerous ethnic communities. The scenario is a cluster of complex and myriad issues ranging from identity formation by various ethnic communities to gross human rights violations especially by the security forces. In a very common parlance, the notion of security is closely related with the concept of security forces or the police. The people look up to them as an agency for ensuring public order, protection of the people and property for a peaceful and secure life by maintaining law and order, and prevention and detection of crime. However, people in Manipur have developed a different perception of these law enforcing agencies. Mistrust of the public towards the security forces are large, where they are seen as tormentors rather than helpers. Whether it is isolation and insolvency from the country, between the valley

and the hills or among the tribes themselves, the sense of divisiveness due to the lack of inclusive politics is well highlighted in the third chapter. The chapter deals on the geographical seclusion of the state owing to the landlocked nature and its subsequent social complications, compounded by the government's failure to address these complications and social issues. The chapter deals more on the internal isolation and insolvency among the different communities of Manipur and less on the political and social isolation of the people towards the greater Indian society. However, the author once again lifts major portion of the chapter from different articles on Conflict Management and Conclusion. The government has contributed to the conflicts through its action and inaction. The Hill Areas Committee of Manipur Legislative Assembly was constituted in 1972. It consists of all members of the legislative assembly who represent the hill constituencies. Theoretically its mandate is to oversee planning, implementation, and monitoring of development activities in the hill region of Manipur. But, it has been ineffective. Further, in order to grant limited home rule powers to the hill areas, the Indian parliament enacted the Manipur (Hill Areas) District Councils Act, 1971. Accordingly the hill region is divided into six autonomous districts each having

a district council (18 elected and 2 nominated members). The elected members are elected on the basis of adult franchise from the territorial constituencies of the district. Six district councils were constituted in 1972. [vi] Each council has limited executive and financial powers. The executive powers are the construction and maintenance of roads, bridges and other public buildings; the establishment, maintenance and management of primary schools, dispensaries, markets and fairs; the supply, storage and control of water for agricultural purpose; the preservation, protection and improvement of livestock and prevention of animal disease, public health and sanitation; the management of any forest not being a reserved forest; the regulation of the practice of Jhum or other form of shifting cultivation and the like. Although the district council does not have legislative powers but it can recommend legislations on certain matters concerning scheduled tribes such as the appointment or succession of Chiefs, inheritance of property, marriage and divorce and social custom. The council's financial powers include levying taxes on profession, trades and employment; on animals, vehicles and boats; on the entry of goods into the market for sale; on the

maintenance of schools, dispensaries or roads and the like. The first elections were held in 1973. But, the councils soon became defunct. As a result, the elections could not be held. After a long period of neglect the government of Manipur realized the need for reviving the district councils, and hence the elections were held in 2010. The government has developed more powers and functions upon the councils. Every ethnic group of Manipur are resorting to political mobilization to gain more political power, cultural autonomy, control over territory, economic security and development (Bhagabati 2004: 9). But, their political aspirations are fed by a belief that adequate political power is a necessary condition for retaining their ethnic identity. In themselves, these aspirations are legitimate. The difficulty arises when the ethnic identity is connected to the demand for separate homelands. But it is important to emphasize that on account of the ethnic heterogeneity it is virtually impossible to divide Manipur along ethnic lines. It is impossible to accept that there are ethnically homogeneous areas that can be aggregated into either Nagalim or Kukiland. But the ethnic conflict makes Manipur a dangerous place. At the same time, the government's conflict management has not been effective.

National News

India Enters Elite Missile Tech Group, Which Has Not Yet Admitted China

Courtesy NDTV

New Delhi, June 27: India on Monday joined an exclusive club of countries controlling exports in missile technology, just a day after decrying its exclusion from the Nuclear Suppliers Group or NSG, which governs international nuclear fuel and technology.

Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar signed onto the Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR) aimed at preventing the unchecked proliferation of missiles and their delivery systems.

The Foreign Ministry, in a statement issued soon after signing the accession document in the presence of the ambassadors of France, the Netherlands and Luxembourg, thanked the other 34 members of the MTCR group for supporting its inclusion.

"India's entry into the regime as its thirty-fifth member would be mutually beneficial in the furtherance of international non-proliferation objectives," the statement said.

Admission in the MTCR was seen as the next step for India in legitimizing its nuclear energy and missile programs after it conducted atomic tests in 1998 that alarmed the international community.

The MTCR restricts the proliferation of missiles, rocket systems, unmanned air vehicles, or drones, and the technology for systems capable of carrying a payload of 500 kilograms for at least 300 kilometers, as well as systems intended for the delivery of weapons of mass destruction.

In 2008, India signed a landmark civil nuclear deal with the United States giving it some access to nuclear materials and technologies. Since then, India has been pushing for its inclusion in the various elite groups that control the export of nuclear materials and regulate technologies relating to conventional, nuclear, biological and chemical weapons. Last week, at a plenary meeting of the nuclear group NSG in Seoul, India's membership to the 48-nation

group that controls access to sensitive nuclear technology was shot down after China raised procedural hurdles.

India, still smarting over being denied entry, on Sunday hit out at Beijing, saying that the issue of its membership of the nuclear group was not going to go away.

External Affairs ministry spokesman Vikas Swarup said New Delhi had taken up the issue with Beijing at multiple levels.

"We are going to continue discussing this with China. This is going to be an important element of our discussion with China. We will continue to impress upon them that relationships move forward on the basis of mutual accommodation of each other's interests, concerns and priorities," Swarup told reporters in New Delhi. China is not a member of the MTCR, however. Beijing's application to join the MTCR is pending, leading to some analysts in New Delhi to say India could use it as a bargaining chip to leverage its entry into the nuclear group.

Lionel Messi quits intl football after Copa loss

EAST RUTHERFORD (US): Lionel Messi sensationally announced his retirement from international football on Sunday after Argentina crashed to an upset defeat against Chile in the final of the Copa America.

The heartbroken Barcelona superstar was distraught after missing a spot-kick as Chile snatched victory in a penalty shootout - Messi's fourth straight defeat in a major final while representing Argentina.

"For me the national team is over," the crestfallen 29-year-old told reporters.

"I've done all I can, I've been in four finals and it hurts not to be a champion.

"It's a hard moment for me and the team, and it's difficult to say, but it's over with the Argentina team." Messi's dramatic announcement followed Argentina's third loss in a major final since 2014.

They were beaten 1-0 by Germany in the final of the World Cup in 2014 and lost on penalties, also to Chile, in the final of the 2015 Copa America.

Messi also tasted defeat with Argentina in the final of the 2007 Copa America. Despite a glittering career that has seen him be named FIFA World Player of the Year on no fewer than five occasions, Messi has often faced baffling criticism from Argentina fans.

Although universally regarded as one of the greatest footballers ever, he has regularly been criticised for his failure to land a major title in the colours of Argentina.

Messi's failure to match the achievements in the Argentina jersey of Diego Maradona, who single-handedly carried the team to victory in the 1986 World Cup, has often been held against him.

Maradona himself has often taken potshots at Messi, criticizing him on the eve of the tournament for a perceived "lack of personality."

"He's a really good person, but he has no personality," Maradona said in Paris shortly before the start of Euro 2016.

"He lacks the character to be a leader." Messi's bombshell decision comes after a gruelling season which was disrupted by injury last year.

Pope says Christians should apologize to gay people

From CNN

Aboard the Papal Plane : Pope Francis said Sunday that Christians owe apologies to gays and others who have been offended or exploited by the church, remarks that some Catholics hailed as a breakthrough in the church's tone toward homosexuality. "I repeat what the Catechism of the Catholic Church says: that they must not be discriminated against, that they must be respected and accompanied pastorally," Francis said at a press conference aboard the papal plane returning from Armenia. "The Church must ask forgiveness for not behaving many times - when I say the Church, I mean Christians! The Church is holy, we are sinners!"

As he often does during unscripted moments - particularly papal news conferences - the Pope spoke expansively, saying the church should seek forgiveness for a number of historical slights committed in its name. "I believe that the church not only should apologize to the person who is gay whom it has offended," he added, "but has to apologize to the poor, to exploited women, to children

exploited for labor; it has to ask forgiveness for having blessed many weapons."

The Rev. James Martin, a Jesuit priest and editor at large of America magazine, called the Pope's apology to gays and lesbians "a groundbreaking moment."

"While St. John Paul II apologized to several groups in 2000 - the Jewish people, indigenous peoples, immigrants and women, among them - no pope has ever come close to apologizing to the LGBT community. And the Pope is correct of course. First, because forgiveness is an essential part of the Christian life. And second, because no group feels more marginalized in the church today than LGBT people."

The Pope's comments came in response to a question about a German Cardinal who said that a Catholic Church should apologize for being "very negative" about gays. The Pope was also asked, by the same journalist, whether Christians bear some blame for hatred toward the LGBT community, as horrifically demonstrated in the Orlando massacre at a gay night club that

killed 49 people on June 12.

Repeating the teaching of the Catechism of the Catholic Church about respecting and not discriminating against gays, Pope Francis said that one could condemn certain behavior.

"One can condemn, but not for theological reasons, but for reasons of political behavior... Certain manifestations are a bit too offensive for others, no?"

"But these are things that have nothing to do with the problem. The problem is a person that has a condition, that has good will and who seeks God, who are we to judge? And we must accompany them well?"

Francis first uttered that rhetorical question - Who am I to judge gay people? - in 2013, also during a news conference on the papal plane. His comments were hailed as a breakthrough for a church that has historically condemned homosexuality, often in harsh terms. Francis has not changed church doctrine that calls homosexual acts sinful, but he has shown a more merciful approach to people on the margins, including gays and lesbians.