

Editorial

Imphal, Saturday, June 4, 2016

Free students; framed criminals

Our thoughts go out to the 5 student volunteers of Kangleipak Students' Association (KSA), who have been detained in judicial custody by the state police for performing duty that the government machineries were supposed to do. It's been almost a week, but the government authority is obviously ignoring the plea of the students' body. Now the matter is getting serious, having revealed as to why and what led the police to immediately respond to protecting the traders who sold adulterated edible salt.

Deputy Chief Minister of Manipur Gaikhangam, who is also in-charge of Home department, was once heard talking about discrepancies in enforcing the law at some point of time with issues pertaining to the sentiments of the people. He was perhaps right because taking action against the mob is an impossible task in Manipur for it would multiply problems if the victim of the so called mob action happened to be someone like rapists or criminals. But while saying so the Home Minister had indirectly pointed out the inefficiency of the police department in delivering justice to the common people. It was a fact that police failure or inaction, perhaps is the cause of mob action or say mob justice which is not at all a justice in any sense.

The arrest of 5 student volunteers who had reportedly pulled up a few non-Manipuris for selling adulterated food items amidst series of agitations to introduce inner line permit system to check influx of illegal migrants in the state is nothing but fuelling the anger of the people, particularly the students community. Instead of arresting the non local traders for selling adulterated food items, the police had detained five students' volunteers on charge of taking the law into their own hands.

The way things happened in this particular case and the statement of the students' volunteers as appeared in news reports clearly showed that an influential person - a relative of Chief Minister, is setting up the play to create another chaotic situation. From what has been found and revealed it is clear that those two grocery shops are selling adulterated salt. Selling or distribution of adulterated edible food is an offence and are liable for punishment under the law of the land. Setting them free and revealing nothing about their criminal activities showed that the police department is in the clutch of this influential person and are being prevented from doing the right thing.

When the law protectors becomes our brutalizers, it is natural that the one who want to see the state alive will definitely take the law into their own hand.

"Students are meant to concentrate on their studies" - this is what many critics said and wrote. But when the academic atmosphere has been polluted and disturbed how could they concentrate to what they had been assigned.

As for us at Imphal Times we do not encourage students or any other persons including relatives of Chief Minister to take the law into their own hands. We do not say police are doing wrong by rescuing the traders who were pulled up by the student volunteers, if that was the case. But we do stand with our belief that dancing to the tune of someone in power, or is related as the case may be is a criminal act. The police should consider the plea of the students and set the 5 volunteers free while conducting drives against criminal activities like adulteration of food items by joining hands with the Food Safety Authority before some other civil organisation or individual take the law in their hands to save the future generation.

Two policemen shot dead in Anantnag

Srinagar, June 4 (PTI) Militants today shot dead two policemen, including an officer, in poll-bound Anantnag town of south Kashmir, police said. Militants opened fire on a police party at General Bus Stand in Anantnag town, 52 kms from here, at around 11:20 AM, resulting in injuries to the two policemen, a police official said. He said the injured policemen were rushed to a hospital where both of them succumbed. The deceased have been identified as Assistant Sub Inspector Bashir Ahmad and Constable Reyaz Ahmad. The attack comes ahead of

the June 22 polling for by-election to Anantnag Assembly seat where Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti is one of the nine candidates in the fray. The by-poll for the seat was necessitated due to death of then chief minister and incumbent MLA Mufti Mohammad Sayeed on May 7 this year. This is second attack in less than 24 hours in the district. Three BSF jawans were killed and nine others injured last evening as militants ambushed their convoy at Gorawan in Bijbehara town. Security forces have been put on an alert to track down the assailants, the official said.

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The skewed balance of justice

By: Lourebam Nganthoi

It would be an acute understatement of fact to state that instances of unsolved and unattended criminal cases in the state are piling up without any letup, nay, with increasing frequency each passing day. Tragically, yet understandably, most of these unsolved and neglected cases fade away into oblivion with the passage of time. But ever so rarely there comes certain incidents which left an indelible scar in the collective consciousness of the public, with lingering questions that raise itself ever so frequently as if to challenge and mock the frailty of the human mind. The recent tragic death of Keithellakpam (o) Debjani of Teru Lukram Leirak is one such amongst numerous unfortunate incidents that have come to represent the callous and indifferent attitude of the judicial system in the state. Has justice been delivered, fairly and squarely, to the family members of Debjani? What holds the future of two the small children she left

behind against her own will and understanding? What happened to the enraged JAC formed at her death ostensibly to secure justice for the bereaved family?

Not so long ago in the gynaecology ward of RIMS- the much touted premiere medical institution of the North Eastern region, Debjani was admitted for her second delivery, brimming with hope and anticipation. In the evening of 20 November 2013, Debjani reportedly gave birth to her second son weighing 4.3 kgs at around 9.30 pm on an occasion of unbounded joy. Sadly, about an hour later she started having postpartum bleeding, and according to her family members Debjani was left unattended by any doctors or nurses till 11.00 pm despite repeated attempts and requests to the medical staffs. As her situation worsened gradually, doctors conducted a hysterectomy operation. At around 1.40 am the doctors declared that Debjani had suffered a cardiac arrest, and after an intensive short struggle they

couldn't save her life. Following the incident, various NGOs and civil bodies formed a JAC against the death of Debjani demanding punishment for the concern Doctor and removal of the Director. The movement of the JAC sparked outrage throughout the state and for a while it seemed justice was to be given to the victim's family in a short period of time. Past nine months, just like any other unsolved cases it seems to fade away.

People who are alive suffer more than those are dead. Debjani is gone but she left two small children behind. What will happen of the two little lives when they realise of the fateful moment? After meeting with the family members of late Debjani one would realise how unfaithful life could be to those who are living. Her mother-in-law Keithellakpam (o) Chandrika, who runs the family of four owns a small grocery shop and the income she gets from the shop is proving very difficult to maintain

the household. She laments 'Not only my daughter - in-law, there might be many women who might have died of over bleeding while delivering their babies for the reason of doctor's clumsiness and carelessness. Be my daughter-in-law the last, no other women must die due to the negligence of the doctors and nurses. We demanded to give punishment to the doctor and to remove the Director of RIMS from its post but no action has been taken by the government. And honestly speaking we haven't got a single penny of help from others and thinking for the two children for their future education worries me a lot. But I do pray that the incident must not be repeated to any women while delivering.'

This is just a single heart rending story of negligence and indifference suffered by those who have no influence or power to stake their claim to justice. Perhaps the blindfold on the Lady Statue of Justice has been removed, albeit inadvertently?

National & International News

Indian Express pegs Manipur report to a six-year-old photo

Courtesy: newslaundry.com

There hasn't been much news coming from Manipur, but one photo has done the rounds thanks to Whatsapp and Facebook. You might have seen it too, since it was in the *Indian Express* issue. The article - one of the few in big media that discussed the current unrest in Manipur - showed a local leader, who has been agitating for Inner Line Permits in Manipur, seemingly pledging allegiance to the flag of the banned United National Liberation Front. The newspaper tried to play it safe, peppering the article

accompanying the image with "purportedly". However, the root of the problem is that the photograph is probably six years old.

Yesterday's *Imphal Free Press* explained why *Indian Express* should not have used that image:

"Among the four in the picture is the known face of the organisation secretary of the UNLF, Nongyai. The fact is, this man has been in the custody of the NIA since mid-2010 facing trial in the NIA court along with the former UNLF chief, R.K. Meghen, who was arrested

one year later from Bangladesh. All these were widely reported in the *Manipur media*. In other words, the picture, even if it is authentic, will have to be at least six years old, with the possibility that it dates back much earlier." UNLF is the United National Liberation Front and *Imphal Free Press* suggests that the agitation for the inner line permit is being compromised by associating it with the banned insurgent group. The editorial goes on to discuss the possible reasons for releasing and circulating this photograph now, where it might have originated from

and its intended impact. "As expected, the picture is generating only unhealthy interpretations and unwarranted finger pointing, dividing further the already badly ethnically riven Manipur society." The editorial also raises important questions about the photograph's authenticity and how this six-year-old image reflects badly on Manipur's government. *Newslaundry* was also sent the image that *Indian Express* carried, that too from a Manipuri journalist in Manipur. However, we chose not to carry it because it couldn't be authenticated.

Boxing legend Muhammad Ali passes away



Agency **Louisville, June 4:** Boxing legend Muhammad Ali, who was hospitalised following respiratory problems on Thursday, passed away on Saturday.

"After a 32-year battle with Parkinson's disease, Muhammad Ali has passed away at the age of 74," his spokesman Bob Gunnell said.

Ali, whose fame transcended sport during a remarkable heavyweight boxing career that spanned three decades, had been hospitalised in Phoenix, Arizona, area with a respiratory ailment this week.

Ali had been hospitalised several times in recent years, most recently in early 2015 when he was treated for a severe urinary tract infection initially diagnosed as pneumonia.

His last formal public appearance before that was in October when he appeared at the Sports Illustrated Tribute to Muhammad Ali at The Muhammad Ali Center in his hometown of Louisville, Kentucky, along with former opponents George Foreman and Larry Holmes.

Ali has suffered from Parkinson's for three decades, most famously trembling badly while lighting the Olympic torch in 1996 in Atlanta. Despite the disease, he kept up a busy appearance schedule until recently, though he has not communicated verbally in public

for years. An iconic figure who was at one point arguably the most recognised person in the world, Ali lived quietly in the Phoenix area with his fourth wife, Lonnie, who he married in 1986.



TMC to free Tripura from Left's misrule in 2018 Assembly polls: Mukul Roy

ANI **Agartala , June 4:** Trinamool Congress (TMC) vice-president Mukul Roy said that the party will defeat the ruling Left Front in the state in the upcoming 2018 Assembly polls and form a government there.

"I have come on a personal visit as well as our leader Mamata Banerjee is serious about Tripura and in the coming assembly election (to be held in early 2018), we want to gift the people of Tripura freedom from the misrule (of Left Front). So naturally today my Tripura visit again proves the seriousness on my leader about Tripura which she expressed in her press conference and keep in mind the election," said Roy.

He was accompanied by local TMC leader and rebel suspended Congress MLA Sudip Roy Barman who recently resigned from the CLP post in protest against the Congress-CPIM alliance in West Bengal.

According to the TMC vice president despite more than two decades Left rule in Tripura the state has not developed in any sector.

Roy said, "Last twenty years Manik Babu is in power and for 23 year this is a Left ruled state but till today the state has not changed. The tribal sections of people here are

deprived of the opportunities and similar is the condition of the schedule cast section and they also do not get any scope for development. Be it students, youths or women; in all section the Tripura government has failed."

He further said that the government here has failed even in the education, agriculture and in the health sector.

"They speak against other states but their own state is top in women atrocity. So we are here to aware the people against all these and now I am on a short visit," he added.

He said that during his visit to the state he had met leaders of various anti-Left political parties including Congress MLAs and is trying to bring all of them under one platform to fight against the misrule and pull down Left Front from power in Tripura.

"We met all the MLAs in the city and Sudip (Roy Barman) who is from the National Congress and for a very long period fighting against the CPIM. I came to know that he resigned from the CLP post in protest against the anti-ideal alliance between the CPIM and Congress. Hence we welcomed himvery soon you will see that TMC playing a big inside and outside the Tripura assembly," he said while adding that now Mamata Banerjee's target is

Tripura and she is very serious on it. Roy, as a representative of the TMC supreme Mamata Banerjee, was in Agartala on Friday morning on a short visit and held several meeting with seven Congress legislators led by suspended leader Sudip Roy Barman.

He also held meetings with few top leaders of the tribal-based Indigenous Nationalist Party of Tripura and Indigenous People's

Front of Tripura. Roy along with Barman is trying to gain support of at least seven MLAs to evade the clasp of the anti-defection law as the Congress's strength in the Assembly stands at 10.

Although Roy and the rebel Congress MLAs were tightlipped over the entire issue, but it seemed that the TMC is short of one MLA to for the opposition party in the Marxist-ruled state Tripura.

PM arrives in Afghanistan

PTI **Herat, June 4:** In his second visit to Afghanistan in less than six months, Prime Minister Narendra Modi today arrived here on a short trip to inaugurate a dam, a showpiece infrastructure project by India in the strategically important Herat province neighbouring Iran.

The Prime Minister will also hold talks with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani on the current situation in the country and the peace process besides other bilateral and regional issues. The Afghan-India Friendship Dam, earlier known as Salma dam, in western Herat district is built at a cost of over Rs 1,700 crore under India's development partnership with Afghanistan. The dam on the river Chist-e-Sharif will irrigate 75,000

hectares of land and generate 42 MW of power.

"It is symbol of our friendship and would usher in hope, light up homes, nourish the fertile fields of Herat and bring prosperity to the people of the region," the Prime Minister said yesterday. The Herat province lies on the ancient trade routes of the Middle East, Central and South Asia. Roads from Herat to Iran, Turkmenistan, and other parts of Afghanistan are considered strategically important. Last month, India, Iran and Afghanistan signed an agreement to set up a trade and transport corridor with Chabahan in Iran as the hub.

Over 1,500 Indian and Afghan engineers were involved in construction of the dam for several years in difficult condition.