

# Editorial

Imphal, Monday, June 6, 2016

## A burning issue

The world experienced the hottest summer ever recorded last year, and this year, even before the summer is yet to peak, the record has already been broken, at least for our country when India recorded its highest-ever temperature this may when the heat in the town of Phalodi, in the western state of Rajasthan, shot up to a burning 51 degrees Celsius (123.8 degrees Fahrenheit). The scorching run is set to continue, and is expected to get worse as the summer progresses. While the state has it comparatively easy as the highest recorded temperature according to the State Meteorological Office stands at 36.1 degree Celsius during April 1999, yet the disquieting impact of the rising mercury has already been felt by the people, and the talks of the threat of global warming and killer heat waves are gradually playing out in reality in the state as in every part of the world. The year 2015 recorded more than 2500 deaths due to heat waves across the country, and if the present is any indication, that figure is unfortunately going to be topped before long, with the death toll this year already crossing 1500 according to reports from scientists of the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology. But what brings the world to such a lamentable pass? The answer, as always is: blatant disregard for the ecological balance by the humans in their insatiable quest for better comforts and opulence. The increase in emission of greenhouse gases due to the rapidly advancing pace of industrialization the world over compounded by depletion of forest cover at an alarming rate and the breakdown of wastes which are piling up each passing day due to the lack of a sustainable and systematic waste management policy has resulted in a world where the very survival of any living being has begun to be questioned if the present situation is allowed to be festered without any deliberate and proactive intervention. For, with the rise in global temperature, sea-levels will rise, low-lying lands such as the Maldives and Tuvalu, among thousand others will be submerged for ever rendering thousands homeless and even death, vagaries of nature such as storms, floods, droughts and forest fires will increase in severity and frequency, not to mention the inescapable loss and extinction of species of flora and fauna. Which brings us to the all-important question: how do we prevent or reverse global warming? While governments and concerned groups around the world are joining hands and resources to reduce global warming and the resultant threat to the environment on a massive scale, the most basic mantra that everyone can take up as individuals is: Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Instead of waiting for the grand scheme of things to be operational, each of us as citizens of the world has a stake in saving the planet from burning itself out, and the best way to go about it is to start now, by reducing wastes, use of power, dependence on gadgets and emission of greenhouse gases, smokes etc. It would do a world of good to seriously reconsider the abundant and splendid gifts nature has been offering us, of which we are too inconsiderate and arrogant to abuse and replete it to our own stupidity.

## MANIPUR AS SEEN BY MEITEIS, NAGAS, AND ZO PEOPLES

By: *Siamchingthang Tungpo*

Manipur is a multi-ethnic place in which different ethnic groups have lived in harmony. In recent times the relationships between them have dramatically changed. Now, Manipur stands an example of a severely divided society. Ethnicity has occupied the center-stage of local politics. It finds expression into education policy, land policy, employment, cultural policy and development plans. At the outset, many Meitei's alleged that Manipur had unwillingly joined India after coercing their king. Thereafter, it was directly ruled by the central government, and the bureaucrats who came to Manipur from other parts of the country were not trusted by the local population (Ram Mohan 2005: 155). Subsequently, they launched a movement resisting the merger which further transformed into an armed conflict. Twenty three years after the merger Manipur became a state of India in 1972. But, it failed to end the conflict. The movement is confined largely to the Meiteis. In addition, the Meiteis wanted to promote their language, Meiteilon. It is not only the language of the Meiteis, but is used for internal communication in the state. It was recognized in 1992 by the central government, and included in the eighth schedule of India's constitution. [iii] As a result, they wanted to introduce Meiteilon in school education and administration. This has become a concern in the relationship between Meiteis, on the one hand, and Nagas and Kukis, on the other. On the other hand, in order to materialize the formation of Nagalim, the Nagas wanted to detach part of Manipur, Assam, and Arunachal Pradesh, and integrate to the adjacent state of Nagaland. The movement is presently spearheaded by National Socialist Council of Nagalim-Isak-Muivah (NSCN-IM),

an insurgent group. According to them, Nagalim occupies land area of about 120,000 sq km. It also claimed that Nagalim was historically an independent country of the Naga people. The NSCN-IM alleged that Nagalim was divided, during the British colonial rule, into two parts in which one part was allocated to India and another part to Burma (Myanmar). The portion of Nagalim allocated to India includes Nagaland and part of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, and Manipur, while the portion allocated to Myanmar constitutes part of Kachin and Sagaing division. The demand for Nagalim intensified after NSCN-IM signed a ceasefire agreement with the central government in 1997. Although the Nagas wanted Nagalim to be a country with full sovereignty, India's nonnegotiable position has forced them to focus on the integration of Naga-concentrated areas of India into a state within the framework of India's federalism. Finally, the Zo people also wanted to integrate the Zomi-concentrated areas of India, Myanmar, and Bangladesh under one homeland known as Zale'n-gam. The United Peoples Front (UPF) or Kuki National Organisation (KNO), the insurgent group advocating Autonomous Hills State or Zale'n-gam, contended that AHS or Zale'n-gam comprises part of Assam, Tripura, Nagaland, and Manipur in India, part of Sagaing in Myanmar, and part of Chittagong Hill Tracts in Bangladesh. It also claimed that prior to the advent of British colonial rule Zale'n-gam was an independent nation. The movement is not so active, and also confine to Manipur where the Zo people constitute a large ethnic group. In addition, the Zo people have been demanding the formation of a state to be known as Autonomous Hill State, or Kukiland within the framework of India's federalism.

The proposed state covers more than half of Manipur's land, viz. Churachandpur and Chandel districts, and part of Senapati, Tamenglong, and Ukhrul districts. The supporters of AHS or Kukiland have resorted to agitations in order draw the attention of the central government. Related to this, the Kukis also wanted the elevation of Sadar hills of Senapati district into a district. In this regard, they have resorted to strikes. The demand has been strongly opposed by the Nagas. Take, for example, for about three months (August-October 2011), the Kukis blocked all traffic along the highway that passes through Sadar hills forcing the Manipur government to conclude an agreement to elevate Sadar hills into a district, but the promise remains unfulfilled. The Nagas claimed that Sadar hills have been historically an integral part of Nagalim. They alleged that the area was given to the Kukis in order to act as a buffer between Meiteis and Nagas (Shimray 2001: 3677). Thus we understand that the three ethnic groups have widely divergent political interests. What has gone wrong? There are no easy answers. However, in developing countries like India there are some commonalities. Atul Kohli (1998: 9) has asserted that the "state-society traits" of developing country democracies have significantly contributed to the political conflicts. The reasons: (a) their cultural conditions do not readily mesh with the imported model of democracy; (b) considerable state intervention is inherent in the overall design of "late development" but this structural trait generate problems when democracy is introduced; (c) democratic institutions are weak in most follower democracies; and (d) the introduction of competitive elections and mass suffrage amidst weak institutions generates more

pressures towards more equal distribution of power in society. Rajat Ganguly (2009: 49) underlines four sets of causal conditions which have combined in different ways to produce ethnic conflict in India. They are: (a) the fear that assimilation could lead to cultural dilution and the unfulfilled national aspirations; (b) the process of modernization; (c) the unequal development, poverty, exploitation, lack of opportunity, and threats to the existing group privileges; and (d) the political factors such as endemic bad governance, anti-secular forces, institutional decay, and vote-bank politics. Susan Olzak and Joane Nagel (1986: 3-4) underlines four basis propositions for ethnic mobilization. They are: (a) urbanization increases contact and competition between ethnic populations; (b) expansion of industrial and services sectors of the economy increase completion for jobs; (c) development of peripheral regions or the discovery of resources in a periphery occupied by an ethnic population; and (d) processes of state building (including those following colonial independence) that implement policies targeting specific ethnic population increase the likelihood of ethnic collective action (quoted in Barton, 1998: 224). Ethnic groups use ethnicity to make demands in the political arena for alteration in their status, economic well-being, civil rights and educational opportunities are indeed engaged in a form of interest group politics (Brass 1991: 19), and can sometimes constitute "a kind of implicit bargaining, even if their participants do not think of their actions in such terms" (Barton 1998: 222). For Brass the key factor creating ethnic consciousness is not emotional or psychological, but political, and ethnic mobilization focus on territory, resources, and power (see, Basu 1998: 248).

(To be contd.....)

### National & International News

#### Kanhaiya's 'attacker' greets Amit Shah

**PTI**  
**Pune, Jun 6:** Selfish of Assamese youths, led by Manas Deka, accused by JNU student leader Kanhaiya Kumar of trying to "strangle" him on board of an aircraft in April, have been posted on a social networking site greeting BJP chief Amit Shah. The brief encounter took place before Shah was to address a convention — 'Pramod Mahajan Skill and Entrepreneurship Mission', a Maharashtra government initiative on the lines of the Centre's 'Skill India', at an auditorium here yesterday. However, the delegation did not attend the function and left. Deka later posted the selfish with Shah on his social media account. On April 24, Kumar had alleged that Deka, working with a city-based software firm, had tried to strangle him on board a Pune-bound Jet

Airways flight. Mumbai Police had registered a non-cognisable offence on Kumar's complaint. However, the allegations were reportedly described by the police as "untrue". Kumar had described Deka as a "strong BJP supporter" in a tweet after the incident.

#### 3 dead, 40 injured in Belgian train crash

**Brussels, June 6:** At least three people were killed and 40 injured in a collision between a goods train and a passenger train in Belgium, the Belga news agency reported. The accident occurred yesterday on the line linking Namur and Liege in the east of the country, close to the municipality of Saint-Georges-sur-Meuse, with Belga quoting the mayor of the commune.

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Instead of converting the Manipur's 3 bills into act and implement ILP in Manipur, "Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh has suggested about exploring the best possible solution together with the all party delegation". What is the best possible solution, according to Union Home Minister? Is the best possible solution the implementation of ILP in Manipur or otherwise? Why did the Home Minister suggest about another alternative to ILP in Manipur? Is Union Home Minister trying to further politicise, using divide and rule politics over Manipur, by his suggestion of "exploring" the best possible solution together? What is there to explore for the best possible solution other than ILP in Manipur? If the Home Minister, after 9 months of unanimously passing the Manipur's 3 bills by Manipur Assembly, still thinks in June 2016 for an exploration of another best possible solution together, then what is the Home Minister trying to suggest, by his suggestion? Does it also not expose that Union Home Ministry, led by Union Home Minister, has not given any serious thought and deliberation to the Manipur's 3 bills in the last 9 months in New Delhi? Does not it also expose that Modi government is, for the last 9 months, not at all interested in ILP in Manipur? A statement exists in a newspaper stating that "Rajnath stated he was deeply concerned with the prevailing situation in Manipur." If Union Home Minister was so deeply concerned with the prevailing situation in Manipur, then why did he ever visit either Imphal or Churachandpur in the last 9 months of the passing of the Manipur's 3 bills to assess the ground realities on the issues pertaining to ILP in Manipur? If he was so deeply concerned, then why did not either he or his Union Home

Ministry release an official statement stating the present status of the Manipur's 3 bills which are in New Delhi for the last 9 months? Does not the silence of Union Home Ministry under Rajnath Singh, which has not yet stated anything officially on Manipur's 3 bills in Manipur, in the last 9 months amount to justify the self contradiction in the statement of Rajnath Singh's "deeply concerned with the prevailing situation in Manipur"? What is "the prevailing situation", according to the Union Home Minister, which is so deeply concerned with by not giving any official statement on Manipur's 3 bills in the last 9 months? "The BJP team urged the Union Home Minister to give an appointment to the all party delegation from Manipur as soon as possible...Rajnath Singh stated that he is ever ready to meet the all party delegation." The question is: If Rajnath Singh is ever ready to meet the all political parties delegation, then why did not he meet the all political parties delegation, in its foremost meeting, together instead of separately giving time first to his own party members from Manipur? Are the leaders of other political parties in Manipur unable to get the appointment on their own, without the help and initiative of BJP Manipur team, to meet the Union Home Minister? Why does it appear so explicitly that only BJP team could urge proactively to get an appointment to call on the Union Home Minister? Should the all political parties delegation meet the Union Home Minister through an appointment sought by the BJP team on behalf of the delegation or by the delegation on its own? "Rajnath went on to ask, "Is the Chief Minister not expected to know the Prime Minister's schedule if he was determined to meet the Prime Minister?"

The question which can be put to Rajnath Singh is, "Is the Union Home Minister of India not expected to know and publicly and officially declare the status of the Manipur's 3 bills which are kept pending and lying in New Delhi in Modi government for the last 9 months?" How the Union Home Minister lies about Manipur's ILP In "CM never sought appointment with Home Minister", Imphal Free Press, dated 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, it states that: "Taking serious note of the issue, the Home Minister who was reportedly at Pathankot till late night returned back to the National capital to discuss the ILPS issue." If Union Home Minister is saying that the Chief Minister of Manipur has not yet sought for any appointment with either Prime Minister or Union Home Minister, then that statement of the Home Minister shall come from the official press release, in writing, of the Union Home Ministry through Press Information Bureau. Why cannot the Home Minister speak, on his own and not through a press release of his own party in Manipur, his own statement publicly on any national electronic media? Why is Modi government silent and why should BJP's press release be made to be considered and accepted as "the official statement of Modi government"? The official website of BJP, in its press release on 4<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, mentions - **SHRI RAJNATH SINGH ADDRESSING "VIKASH PARV" PROGRAMME IN PATHANKOT (PUNJAB)**. In "Pathankot attack probe: If NIA not allowed to visit Pak, it will be betrayal, says Rajnath Singh", The Indian Express, dated 5<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, it states that: "Addressing the gathering as part of "Vikash Parv" in the wake of two year completion of the Narendra Modi government,

the Home Minister claimed that in last two years, the country has achieved the GDP growth of 7.6 per cent which was commendable." In today's The People Chronicle, an English daily in Manipur, dated 6<sup>th</sup> June, 2016, its headline news "Intense lobby for ILP: State BJP delegates meet Rajnath, Rijjiu", there is a sub-headline under it which says "Rajnath dashes back from Pathankot to meet team". The manufacturing and inventing of news item to show the seriousness of involvement of Union Home Minister is by making a sub-headline "Rajnath dashes back from Pathankot to meet team". It appears that the Home Minister, who has not stated anything officially on the status of the Manipur's 3 bills for the last 9 months, came suddenly straight away from Pathankot of Punjab, India to New Delhi to only meet BJP team from Manipur to have a cup of tea and a photo session without anything substantial and official reply on Manipur's 3 bills from the Union Home Ministry. The reality is - the Union Home Minister went to Pathankot to address the gathering as a part of "Vikash Parv" in the wake of two year completion of the Narendra Modi government. Rajnath Singh was there as a part of his party's function which was celebrating the two years' completion of Modi sarkar and his visit to Pathankot is also published in BJP's official press release on its party website. He, indeed, went to attend "Vikash Parv" and not to discuss about the failure of Modi government to ensure the entry of NIA to Pakistan to complete the Pathankot probe, where Modi government has allowed the visit of Pakistani team to Pathankot while Pakistan has objected to the inclusion and arrival of Indian team to Pakistan to investigate the Pathankot terrorist attack. (To be contd.....)