

Editorial

Imphal, Thursday, March 17, 2016

How free is our media?

The advancement in information technology has made today's world a 'Global village' - the term first coined by Canadian-born author Marshall McLuhan. Man born at the extreme corner of Far East Asiatic countries knows, cry and pray for the kind of disasters that happen in Middle East countries or in Latin America. Installation of internet technologies to cell phones which every human being can afford makes the people of our Earth-whose circumference is estimated at about 40,075 Kilometer staying at a communicable distance. Now every human being equipped with cell phone can now talk or stay in touch with any of their friends or relatives staying thousand miles away. Point bringing here is about the changes in the theory of mass media in relevance to today's journalism. The very concept at which the older generation considered 'proximity' as a characteristic of news is somewhat losing its foot.

Professor M.L Stein, the then chairman of Department of Journalism, California State University, Long Beach, California in his book "Shaping the News" in 1974 wrote that people are more interested in what happens in their neighbours. The one time presumption that 'a dog fight on Main Street is of more interest to our readers than fifty thousand foreign troops killed in battle somewhere' seems to have no relevance in today's society. Readers are now interested about happenings at distance places if the subject matters is his or her interest.

However, another characteristic of news - 'Prominence' on the hand is becoming a matter of more interested subjects for almost all readers. People now want to know what had happen to their leaders, celebrity or the bureaucrats irrespective of where they stay or which country they reside. Every news readers are eager to know the story of successful personality.

Points bringing up here are not to lecture on what is news and what should be reported but this is an attempt to make some of our critic to understand on why the newspaper especially the kind of ours often published story about real heroes or events that happen far away from our state. Sometimes a mere insignificant event at which some people are of vested interest are often left of and the result is not always good for we in the media fraternity of Manipur state in particular. The other kind of pressure that the media persons sometimes remain helpless is their intentions to get publish their story.

Manipur or say Imphal is not a safe place for even VIPs who are escorted by security personnel days and night. It is an open secret that almost all the politicians including MLAs or Ministers or even the Chief Ministers have linked with the UGs, the only thing we don't have is the proof.

So, what would be the security of those working with the media if in case, some of the individuals or rebels force us to publish stories of their interest. Being taken up this profession, we always stand with our ethics and there is no question of compromising our ethics while publishing stories. But when the government said that this should not be published and this should be published then where is the freedom of speech provided under the constitution of our country. Government machineries can invite news editors and can discussed about the content on objectivity reason but should in no way dictate the media on what or what not to publish. Calls of bandh or blockade by any organisation are in some way an essential news items for media houses living in conflict zone - because it is for the safety and security of the common people that the government machineries cannot guarantee safety. We have PCI guidelines, local code of conduct and this should be respected.

Bottom line is that media should not be harassed at any cost for any reason because we chose this profession not merely to earn for living but with full intention to serve our nation.

Mentally challenged mother kills baby daughter in Nepal

ANI Rautahat (Nepal), Mar. 17: Police in Nepal's Rautahat district have arrested a mentally challenged woman for allegedly killing her daughter in the Pachrukhi village defence committee area.

Twenty-two-year-old Sutani Devi, who hails from Sarlahi District had killed her 18-month-old daughter Reena by

slamming her head on the ground, reports the Himalayan Times.

The locals immediately rushed the spot after hearing the baby screaming and later handed Sutani over to the Area Police Office in Gangapipara.

Inspector Chandan Singh of the Area Police Office Gangapipara said the reason behind the murder is yet to be established.

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Trump gets the most free media

The media prioritizes Trump, then Clinton, and, if there's time left over, Sanders. Sanders' major sin appears to have been choosing to discuss policy, says ADAM JOHNSON.

The March 15 primary elections handed five victories to Hillary Clinton, giving the former secretary of State a 1,094-to-774 pledged delegate lead, by the *New York Times*'s count, heading into the second half of the primary season. Bernie Sanders, while well behind, is still a viable candidate and is very much staying in the race. One wouldn't know this, however, from watching last night's cable news coverage (March 15), because the three major 24-hour news networks—CNN, MSNBC and Fox News—cut away from Sanders' speech. As the Huffington Post reported late Tuesday night:

"Fox News, CNN and MSNBC all declined to carry Sanders' speech, instead offering punditry about the evening, with the chyrons promising, 'AWAITING TRUMP' and 'STANDING BY FOR TRUMP'."

Hillary Clinton last week

got similarly dissed by the networks in favor of Trump. This pecking order follows a similar pattern: The media prioritizes Trump, then Clinton, and, if there's time left over, Sanders. This tracks with a recent study by the *New York Times* showing the overwhelming amount of "free media" that Trump has gotten compared to the two Democratic candidates, particularly Sanders. (All Republican candidates combined got almost three times as much free media as the Democratic candidates—\$3 billion vs. \$1.1 billion.) Sanders' major sin appears to have been choosing to discuss policy rather than dishing out the typical hoorah platitudes. His hour-long speech which, according to Talking Points Memo, wasn't carried even in part, focused on issues like campaign finance reform and the barriers to mass political change. You can watch the whole

thing here, courtesy of C-SPAN.

NPR, in its recap of Tuesday night's events, provided some insight as to why Sanders' speech didn't merit airplay. After airing soundbites from Clinton and Rubio, the public radio service explained that Sanders "delivered what was largely his standard stump speech for nearly an hour in Arizona on Tuesday night, but made little reference to the night's results."

In ignoring the process story of "the night's results" and instead focusing on substance (what NPR dismisses as a "standard stump speech"), Sanders all but assured that the networks would cover more urgent matters, like a roll of an empty podium waiting for Trump and idle speculation as to how the results would "play" over the next few days.

Critiques of corporate media choosing horseshoe over substance are evergreen, but remain as urgent

as ever. Political discourse that focuses on the meta, discussing perceptions or gaffes or polls rather than material issues, will inherently serve the Donald Trumps of the world. His latest "outrage" is specifically calibrated to exploit these news instincts. The corporate media didn't create Trump, but they did pave and light the road for his candidacy's unconstrained acceleration.

The Sanders campaign has been as much an indictment of the media as of the political establishment they prop up. Progressive media, including FAIR, have noted from the beginning the lack of coverage Sanders was afforded—an omission that's demonstrable and quantifiable. The reasons for the scarcity and negative tone of Sanders' media coverage are debatable, but Tuesday night showed once again that their existence isn't.

(Courtesy The Hoot)

National & International News

Suspected ISIS sympathiser arrested

PTI New Delhi, March 17: The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested an alleged 'sympathiser' of banned ISIS terror group from West Bengal.

The agency identified the youth as one Ashiq Ahamed alias Raja, a resident of Hooghly district of the state. Ahamed, who was arrested

yesterday, will be produced before a special court in Delhi today for further custody.

The agency had registered a case in this regard in December last year on charges that the Islamic State of Iraq and Levant (ISIL) also known as Islamic State of Iraq and Syria (ISIS) has been "engaged in radicalisation of Indian youths and

motivating them to join the terrorist organisation as a result of which some Indian nationals have already joined it or are in the process of joining it for committing terrorist acts in the conflict zone of Iraq, Syria and Libya." NIA has earlier arrested 14 youths in the case after a nationwide crackdown.

Bomb scare grounds two flights at IGI airport

ANI New Delhi, Mar. 17: Two flights have been grounded at the Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here on Thursday due to a bomb scare.

The Kathmandu-bound Nepal Airlines flight, which was supposed to take off at 11.30 am, and Bhubaneswar-bound Air India flight, scheduled for 11.00 am departure, have been grounded till security clearance.

The authorities rushed into action after receiving a threat call at around 10.00 am.

All the passengers have been de-boarded from the aircrafts while the security personnel are



screening the aircrafts and the baggage. The flights have been

taken to an isolation zone in the airport.

People fume over petrol, diesel price hike

ANI New Delhi, March 17: People expressed their dismay as prices of petrol and diesel were hiked across the country. While petrol has become costlier by rupees 3.07 a litre, diesel prices were hiked by rupees 1.90 per litre. The revised rates will be effective from midnight. Anxious customers queued up at fuel stations in New Delhi and Ludhiana town to get their vehicles refilled. After the revision, petrol will cost rupees 59.68 per litre in Delhi whereas diesel will be priced at rupees 48.33 per litre. Angry residents blamed Prime Minister Narendra Modi-led government for the price hike. Petrol and diesel prices are deregulated in India and are linked with market rates.

30 bombs recovered from Murshidabad in WB

PTI Baharampur (WB), Mar 17: Thirty live bombs were recovered by security forces today from a field at Sekendra in Murshidabad district of West Bengal where Assembly polls are due next month. The bombs were kept in two containers in the field and a joint team of central force, which has come to the state for the elections, and district police recovered them this morning, a police officer said.

Transgender seeks AIADMK ticket to contest Assembly elections

ANI Chennai, Mar. 17: The Transgender community on Thursday sought All India Anna Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (AIADMK) ticket to contest the upcoming assembly elections.

On behalf of the Transgender community, Sudha applied for a nomination ticket from the AIADMK Head Office.

"I came here to the AIADMK head office to file nomination for the upcoming assembly election. We transgender have come here to get our seats from

amma (J. Jayalalitha). Our Chief Minister has done a lot for us. We have faith that we will win this election."

Tamil Nadu will have single phase assembly elections on May 16, and the results will be announced on May 19. Tamil Nadu's 15th legislative assembly is ruled by Chief Minister J. Jayalalithaa-led AIADMK.

It has 234 assembly seats. In 2011 assembly elections, AIADMK had won 150 seats, DMK-29, DMK-23, CPM-10, CPI-9 and Others-13 seats.

Delhi AIIMS doctor found dead in hostel room

ANI New Delhi, Mar. 17: In shocking news, a doctor of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) was found dead in his hostel room on Thursday. Doctor Kunal, 34, had not been eating for past three days. His room was bolted from inside.

The doctor, a resident of Bihar, was found dead on his bed and there was no sign of any injury on his body.

Death toll rises to 16 in Palestinian pilgrim bus crash

Jordan, March 17: At least 16 Palestinian pilgrims died, including two children, and some 35 others were injured when their bus overturned en route to Mecca on Wednesday night, local media and news agencies reported.

The deadly accident took place near the Jordanian city of Maan. Jordan's civil defence officials said the driver of the bus lost control of the vehicle around 320 kilometres (200 miles) south of Amman and warned that the toll could rise, given the severity of

the injuries. The group had been heading to Saudi Arabia for the umrah pilgrimage, which along with the more important annual hajj attracts millions of Muslims from around the world.

Injured passenger Azzah Ibrahim told the *Associated Press* news agency that he remembers the bus overturning. "Some of us were beneath the bus, and some of us were inside the bus, between the chairs," Ibrahim said from his hospital bed.

Jammu-Srinagar National Highway reopened for vehicular traffic



PTI Jammu, March 17: The 300-km-long Jammu-Srinagar national highway was reopened today after one-day closure in Ramban district of Jammu and Kashmir.

"The highway has been reopened for vehicular traffic this morning after the closure," an official of Police Control Room said here today.

The highway was closed due to blockade caused by landslides triggered by heavy rains in Gangroo area in Ramsol belt of the district yesterday, police said.

The Border Road Organisation (BRO) cleared the landslide and threw highway open for the traffic. Over 500 vehicles, which were stranded on highway at various places are being cleared.