

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, May 17, 2016

Interrupted future

Progress is impossible without change, and those who cannot change their minds cannot change anything

-George Bernard Shaw

With the passage of time everything changes- outlooks, ideas, methods, perceptions. The most profound of these changes is perhaps the ever continuing social changes, for despite the path-breaking changes and developments being made in other fields and realms of arts, science and technology, medicine, management and what not, the one change that has a direct and instant impact on the society are the changes being seen in the society. While such changes connote progress and development, the unfortunate truth is, it is not always so. The ongoing social turmoil in the state may be seen as an example where the social campaigns against perceived aberrations on the society kicks up more uncertainty, confusion and contradictions. The discordant notes on certain social issues being raised by various sections of the public has baffled the public more than ever, raising the very real threat of these movements being derailed and fading into oblivion.

Another grim prospect which is threatening to turn into reality is the disintegration of the already worsening educational system in the state. But there is more to the story than meets the eye. For everyone who treasures human life and strives for progress, the ongoing conflicts have scarred the minds of the young children in the state, exposing them to undesirable conducts and violent social outbursts. The frequent spurts in social disruptions have disturbed their academic pursuits and destroyed the peaceful atmosphere required for them to learn. Instead, their young impressionable minds are bombarded with stories and news of atrocities and perceived injustices, of threats both imagined and real to one's beliefs and customs, community and state, resulting in the formation of a mindset tinged with suspicion and reluctance to accept and trust groups and communities. The seemingly intractable social conflicts and clashes of interests may have a lasting solution in the hands of the future generations. For that to happen, they need to be nurtured with love and care, just as one would tend a precious plant. They also need to be made understood that these conflicts and clashes are all about borders- physical, religious, ethnic, ideological and national, and that these boundaries are not permanent and can shift as history have proved, and yet the sense of enmity and bad-blood will linger long after the events have gone and are finished. It is for us to try and bring up our children in an impartial, conducive and progressive environment so that they can make educated and informed judgments about the society. The continuing verbiage and agitations for safeguarding the future will mean precious little if we cannot secure a free and conducive atmosphere for our children to grow up today. We must not allow borders, artificial divides and politics to obfuscate the essential need to protect all children. These are times when we must take a stand for a cause which is greater than ourselves. We need to make doubly sure that the inevitable changes are for the better.

'Rajan not 'fully Indian', sack him immediately

Source PTI

New Delhi, May 17: In a fresh salvo at RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan, BJP MP Subramanian Swamy has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking immediate sacking of the former IMF Chief Economist while alleging he was "mentally not fully Indian" and has "wilfully" wrecked the economy. Following up his barb against Rajan at the end of Parliament session last week, Swamy yesterday wrote to Prime Minister seeking termination of Rajan's services with immediate effect. "The reason why I recommend this is that I am shocked by the wilful and apparently deliberate attempt by Dr Rajan to wreck the Indian economy," he wrote adding his concept of raising interest rates to contain inflation was "disastrous." Also, bad loans with public sector banks has doubled to Rs 3.5 lakh crore in two years, he said.

Rajan was appointed RBI Governor by the previous UPA government in September 2013 for a three-year term, which can be extended. "These actions of Dr Rajan lead me to believe that he is acting more as a disrupter of the Indian economy than the person who wants the Indian economy to improve. "Moreover he is in this country on a Green Card provided by the US government and therefore mentally not fully Indian. Otherwise why would he renew his Green Card as RBI Governor by making the mandatory annual visit to the US to keep the Green Card current?" he wrote. Swamy had last week stated that Rajan was "not appropriate for the country" as he had in the garb of controlling inflation raised interest rates leading to "collapse of industry and rise of unemployment in the economy."

National & International News

PM discusses drought situation with CMs of Chhattisgarh and Andhra Pradesh

New Delhi, May 17: Prime Minister Narendra Modi today discussed drought situation in Chhattisgarh with Chief Minister Dr Raman Singh. The meeting is a part of Prime Minister's review of the drought situation in 11 States to mitigate the problem with focus on immediate, medium and long term measures. Chhattisgarh government has declared 93 tshalis in 20 districts across the state as drought-hit in view of deficient rainfall. These tshalis would not have crop yield higher than 50 paise as per 'Aanawari', which is a measure of crop yield in farms. Drought hit tshalis are in the districts of Balod, Dantewada, Koriya, Raipur, Mahasamund, Dhamtari, Gariyaband, Durg, Bemetara, Rajnandgaon, Bastar, Kondagaon, Narayanpur, Bijapur, Balasapur, Mungeli, Korba, Raigarh, Balampur and Jashpur.

In the year 2015, the state has recorded 83 per cent less rainfall compared to the previous year. The centre has approved 1,672 crore rupees as financial aid for drought affected Chhattisgarh. He has earlier held separate meetings with the Chief Ministers of eight states including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan and Gujarat. Prime Minister Narendra Modi today also discussed drought situation in Andhra Pradesh with Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu. The meeting is a part of Prime Minister's review of the drought situation in 11 States to mitigate the problem with focus on immediate, medium and long term measures. He has earlier held separate meetings with the Chief Ministers of eight states including Maharashtra, Karnataka, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Chhattisgarh. By October last itself the Andhra Pradesh government has declared 196 mandals in seven districts, as

drought-affected during the Kharif 2015. Majority of the drought-hit mandals are in the Rayalaseema districts of Kurnool, Kadapa, Chittoor and Anantapur, while others are in the coastal districts of Srikakulam, Prakasam and Nellore. These include 10 mandals in Srikakulam, 21 in Prakasam, 14 in Nellore, 39 in Chittoor, 33 in Kadapa, 39 in Anantapur and 40 in Kurnool. The Supreme Court had earlier urged the Centre to immediately provide relief to drought-hit states, pointing out that soaring temperature in the summer of 2016 would worsen the situation.

Consequent to the declaration of drought, the government directed the concerned district Collectors to notify the specific drought-hit areas in the District Gazette to enable farmers to avail credit facilities. The district Collectors have also been directed to initiate other relief measures as per the norms.

The Centre has already approved grant of about 2,550 crore rupees to drought-affected states of Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh and Odisha. By October last itself the Andhra Pradesh government has declared 196 mandals in seven

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100gm gold seized from locker of Odisha godman's aide

Source PTI

Odisha, May 17: At least 100 gm of gold was seized from a bank locker allotted to a close aide of controversial self-styled godman Sarathi Baba currently lodged in a jail, police said today. Crime Branch sleuths of Odisha Police yesterday seized 100 gm gold from the locker owned by Pradeep Sahoo at the main branch of Kendrapara Urban Cooperative Bank, a police official said. "We have initiated a probe to

ascertain whether the gold was ill-gotten," the official said. Police had rendered inoperative the accounts of Sarathi Baba and his Satyam Charitable Trust in State Bank of India, Allahabad Bank, Punjab National Bank and United Bank and Urban Cooperative Bank in Kendrapara in December last year. The self styled godman has been languishing in jail since his arrest from his ashram in Barimula village on the outskirts of Kendrapara town on August 8 last year.

Film by Dibrugarh boy to screen at Cannes

PTI

New Delhi, May 17: A movie by a young Assamese filmmaker based on the 1962 India-China war will screen at the Cannes International Film Festival's market tomorrow. The 108-minute English language feature film "1962: My Country Land" is 28-year-old Chow Partha Borgohain's debut work which is produced by Marbom Mai under the banner Living Dreams. Borgohain is also the writer and cinematographer of the Rs 2.5-crore film whose music has been composed by legendary Manipuri folk artist Guru Rewben Mashangva along with Shankar Shankini.

The film was shot at Tawang and Mechuka in Arunachal Pradesh, Sohra in Meghalaya and in Guwahati. "Whenever people talk about Arunachal Pradesh, the stories of 1962 Sino-Indo war take a forefront. The stories of 1962 are fresh with the locals residing in the affected region but many others forgot the pain and torture the people went through during that time," says Borgohain, who was born in Arunachal Pradesh and now based at Dibrugarh in Assam.

According to him, Jawaharlal Nehru's iconic statement on AIR "My heart goes out to the people of Assam (at that time Arunachal a part of Assam)" was "really disheartening as I wondered how our supreme leader could so easily give up on us".

And this "thought really pushed me to write the story further. I managed to search the archives and also interact with many people and thus the plot began evolving," Borgohain told PTI from Cannes.

The story of "1962: My Country Land" revolves around Lutiyaa, an army Lt. Naik who is given the responsibility of surveying the India-China Line of Actual Control in NEFA that may demarcate India and Tibet's territory.

Contd. from previous issue

Reflections on the Conflicts of our Times : Attempt at Common Sense reading of the Manipur Experience

By: Arambam Lokendra

The Paite settlements on the Southern side of the Manipur border near Moreh were affected by Kuki reprisals from underground outfits towards the aggressive Nagas in the Naga-Kuki clashes, and a lot of Paite population were displaced. These violence and mutual hurts in the past, though temporarily assuaged through the interventions of apex civil society organizations like the Kuki-Inpi, with Zomi Reunification Army (ZRA), there remained nagging doubts of differences, primordial suspicions and mistrust which become manifest when new incidents did occur. The difference of view-points between the Kuki and the Paite and their non-participation in the Pan Chin-Kuki-Mizo identity movement are stark reminders to stubborn internal beliefs amongst ethnic self-hoods which refuse any kind of forcible fisting of collective decisions by one tribe over another. Also at the same time certain alliances of ethnic co-operation through inclusionist exercise over recognition by the Nagas of the Paite as Naga, and support with arms, money and materials for self-protection had also strengthened Paite resistance against Kuki hegemony in Churachandpur. The political influence of the NSCN (IM) in the Western Hills of Manipur are strong, because of many other smaller tribal communities, having experienced discrimination and oppression by governments or by other larger ethnic groups like the valley underground outfits in the past helped persuade the non-Naga communities in the Western hills to side with NSCN (IM) who had been assiduously engaging with other non-Naga communities for friendship or alliances to mitigate the mistakes in the 1992-1998 Ethnic Cleansing pogrom. The issues of inter-ethnic and intra-ethnic dynamics in Northeast India, particularly Manipur therefore are

much more complex and difficult from those the Indian nation state experienced in the Indian heartland. For mainstream Tribal communities in Central, Western and South-eastern parts of India, it seems are affected more by class conflicts and societal differentiation, whereas the tribal communities in Northeast India are severely affected by issues of ethnicity and identity, which are more accentuated by cultural mores, perceptions, practices and prejudices. The attitude of the Indian state as reflected in the Constitution of India however seem to categorize them equally within a uniform schedule of Hindu groupings, and yet the Northeast Indian ethnicities are distant racial others whose worldviews, concerns about life and the universe are different from those of the Indian heartland. The Framework of Agreement which was signed by the GoI and the NSCN (IM) in August, 2015 seemed to affect the politics of ethnicity which had long accumulated since the very days when the Indian state inherited the peoples, territories and spaces after the departure of the British Indian Empire. Though the public meeting in Manipur on February 6, 2016 was a signal to the Government of India to notice the feelings of major sections of the Manipur people, the responses from new civil society organizations amongst the Nagas re-affirm their very convictions about the public rally as "a motivated re-action to sabotage the tireless efforts of the NSCN (IM) and the Government of India to bring long lasting peace and development not only in the Naga areas but for the entire North-eastern region." (Nagalang Post February 8, 2016).⁵ The idea of the hill and valley people are one, "is nothing but another majoritarian attempt to deconstruct the history of hill-valley disconnect so as to muzzle the legitimate aspiration of the Nagas and other tribal communities in

the state". (Ibid, 2016). "If the dominant community is really for peace and development in the region and has concern for the hill people, then respecting the aspiration of the Nagas and other tribal people of the state and their aspiration is highly warranted". (ibid, 2016). The current presentation is a simple reading of the contemporary character and physiognomy of ethnic conflict as experienced by major communities in Manipur. There are also more deeper and sinister micro-level impacts of violence of this nature on smaller communities in the state. Violence is not simply a physical act destroying the body or life of the individual in a society, but it accompanies the structural disintegration of norms, institutions and social universes, more heavier and lethal and smaller communities are not able to speak out for justice and fair play. There are substantial records of these subterranean oppressions and pressures through claims of intra-ethnic justice and forced change of identities. The inside of the contemporary polity of Manipur had been corroded during its apprenticeship to democracy and modernization. Complex networks of the civil, military, police and bureaucracy in alliance with pushy business and social classes had penetrated into the realm of power and resources, and ethnic insurgencies, surrendered militants as well as those in peace talks with the Government are in hands and gloves with those supposedly concerned with the maintenance of law and order in society. The new social and business classes had prospered, and having had no prior relationship with core traditional values and ethics, had become rapid operators of mercenary onslaughts of economic opportunism and corruption. These classes are at the helm of public affairs. The system of modern education are heavily structured for enhanced

dependency and enslavement of minds, rather than freeing the intellect from routine knowledge and perpetuation of received ideas. Sheer violence of confrontation, attrition and mutual acrimony destroys equilibrium of extended house-holds, consistencies, and human settlements of artificially created boundaries. Through the pressures of heavily monetized electoral politics, veteran politicians often experience mental and physical wreckage and trauma. Women activists who struggle to protect the body of the innocent son from the onslaughts of the instruments of the Indian state often die unnoticed deaths from vomiting and other complex experiences unleashed in the Meira-Paibee (Women Torch Holders) movements. Sheer epistemic violence is noticed in the interstices of family, language, culture and behavioural norms and the entire originary world of the autochthons are ruptured beyond repair. In the experience of militarization and clashes between the state and non-state actors, the Manipuris do not live their lives, they live the life of others. Such is the characters of the transformation of the Manipuri in the world of global capitalism and the violence of insurgency and counter-insurgency. Not much word is said of the role and responsibility of the Indian state and its military arm, who have a double purpose of suppressing internal dissidence and protecting the country from seeming threats to security from across the globe. Many scholars and social scientists studying the issues of ethnic mobilization and ethnic assertion are prone to habitually provide distinctive features of the ethno-national movements, their genesis, their demands, their ideologies and action that fan the movements, but very little on the character of the state with whom these ethnic protagonists are in vital relationship i.e. the Indian state.

(To be contd)

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