

Editorial

Imphal, Sunday, May 29, 2016

Is election euphoria killing the ILPS agitation?

Election euphoria is once more suppressing the peoples' agitation in which 25 girl students in full uniform dared police hostilities braving the water cannon charges attempting to foil the democratic protest. The series of agitations spearheaded by the JCILPS has created turmoil in the state and the state government's inability to deal with the issue has already affected the academic atmosphere in the state. Even after knowing what is going on in the state some learned individuals criticised the protest by students saying that they should be concentrating on their academic pursuits. 2 students had been detained and some are advising the students to stay away from the agitation. The moot point being that concerned citizens should also consider the fact that the future pillars of this nation have every right and responsibility to save the future generation. True leaders are borne from such students and not from contractors or drug smugglers.

Matured people of the state are now busy campaigning for election for their favourite candidate leaving aside the peoples' movement. When the 25 courageous students are facing all odds and braving the police atrocities, many ladies and gentlemen of Imphal area are seen going from door to door begging for votes for their respective candidates.

Regarding the 3 Bills, only experts will know for certain where it went wrong, if anything is wrong at all. However there is no denying the fact that a system to safeguard the 38 plus indigenous communities is indeed the need of the hour. Every one of us knows that and the issue is a sentimental one for almost all Manipuris. At one of our write up we have presented our view about the need to review them to find out why and where two diametrically opposite groups emerged- for and against the Bills. The demand for ILPS is a long standing one, and any such matter should not be treated as a game to be played for political gains. It is a matter of great surprise for the people of this state as to the inexplicable silence of the government. 9 dead bodies still remain without performing their last rites protesting against the 3 ILPS related Bills at Churachandpur. On the other hand students now have no fear to initiate any form of agitation to implement an Inner Line Permit System to check the flow of illegal migrants. And our political party leaders are busy canvassing for IMC election. The Congress which is in power in the State and BJP leading the NDA government at the centre are now engaging in a tough verbal war blaming one another without bothering for that section of the public who are not concerned with their political gambit but are struggling, even at the cost of their lives, for saving the future generation.

If one could recall, it is a fact that what is happening in the state now is the eventual fall out of the protracted negligence by this irresponsible government. The wait and watch policy of Mr. Okram Ibobi this time is stoking the fire of dissent over the whole society. The countdown for election has begun and he might think the issue will be diverted. However the irony of the elusive mindset and politically motivated actions- or rather inactions to be precise, is not lost on the disgruntled public who are edging towards the tipping point.

Flights diverted as rains, wind lash Delhi

AN New Delhi, May.30: Many flights were either diverted or rescheduled as heavy rains and winds lashed the national capital on Monday morning, leaving a number of passengers stranded at the Indira Gandhi International airport. The passengers had a harrowing time as around 27 flights were diverted due to dust storm and showers. "Many flights were diverted due to bad weather and many others were rescheduled. We were going to London by AirIndia flight; our flight was to take off at 2:30 am, but has been rescheduled to 4:00 am," said a passenger, Sanjay Dubey.

The people waiting for their friends and family members complained that there was no information about the delayed flights. "I came here to receive my wife but the flight got delayed. No back up has been provided. Earlier, the information board said the flight was delayed and now it reads 'closed'. She is coming from Toronto. The flight was diverted to Ahmedabad. We don't have any other information from the authorities," said Gurmeet, who was waiting to receive his wife. Meanwhile, residents of the capital woke up to rains that brought down temperature to 23 degree Celsius, bringing relief from sweltering heat over the last few days.

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National & International News

Indian Army recovers huge cache of arms in Doda, J-K

ANI Doda, May 30: Acting on specific information, the Indian Army launched a swift and surgical joint search operation in Sunarthwa Forest near Gosti Bowl in Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir. The team recovered a total of four weapons and war like stores, which included one AK 56 Rifle, two 9 mm Pistols, one country Made Pistol, seven AK Magazines, two 9 mm Pistol Magazines, one Pika Magazine, four UBGL Grenades, five Pakistan origin hand grenades, 1696 Rounds of 7.62 mm AK 47, 1340 Rounds of 7.62 mm CTN, 40 Belted Rounds of Pika, two Binoculars, one Telescopic Night Sight, one camera, ten recording cassettes and sustenance stores from a natural cave hideout in Sunarthwa Forest. The Army had been getting information of suspicious

unidentified movement of the personnel in the general area for the last three months and, therefore, a close watch was being maintained. The recovered arms likely belong to one of the terrorist tanzems of the area, active in the past, which could have been hidden for later usage.

The area due to its remoteness and rugged terrain makes it an ideal location for establishing a hideout. The dense forest and steep gradient increased the degree of difficulty in approach to the intended target area and subsequent search.

The recovery of war like stores was possible only due to the accurate intelligence developed by the Army and launching of well synchronised joint operation with SOG in the dense jungle, in a relentless day and night operation



of 36 hours.

Apart from the three columns of the Indian Army, the team also included one Head Constable with six persons of SOG from Thatri Police Station.

The recovered arms and ammunition were handed over to the Thatri Police Station, wherein a

FIR has been lodged.

The recovery of a huge cache has given a major success to the Security Forces and a massive blow to the terrorists in the area, thereby preventing the arms and ammunition from falling into the hands of inimical elements, aiming at revival of militancy in Doda.

BJP protests Batla encounter issue

PII New Delhi, May 30: BJP leaders and workers today staged a protest near Congress headquarters here, demanding an apology from Sonia Gandhi and her party leaders on their statements over the Batla House encounter issue.

"BJP wants that after the latest revelation that terrorists involved in Batla House shoot-out have IS links, the Congress president and her associates should apologise to the nation," said Delhi BJP president Satish Upadhyay who led the demonstration.

The protesters including party MPs Ramesh Bidhuri, Udit Raj, Meenakshi Lekhi and Vijay Goel were stopped by police near 24 Akbar Road, headquarters of Congress.

Several protesters were detained when they tried to dismantle the barricades. They were later taken to Parliament Street police station.

Last week, Congress general secretary Digvijaya Singh had stoked a controversy after he dubbed the 2008 Batla House encounter as "fake".

He asked the central government to order a judicial probe into the encounter in which two suspected terrorists and a police officer were killed. "Batla House encounter was fake. I dare the BJP to go for a judicial probe. I still stand by my remarks on the encounter. I don't know who is Bada Sajid or Chhota Sajid," Singh had said.

BJP has latched onto an IS video where one of the men claimed that he was at Batla House when police had raided the premises and fled afterwards. However, it was not clear whether he was inside the same house where the two alleged Indian Mujahideen militants were killed in the encounter.

The NIA had said it was in the process of identifying all the six people who were part of the 22-minute video.

Suicide car bombing kills at least 8 people in Baghdad

Baghdad, May 30 (AP) Iraqi officials say a suicide car bombing has targeted an army checkpoint in Baghdad, killing at least eight people.

A police officer says the bomber rammed his explosives-laden car into the checkpoint near a commercial area in the northern, Shiite-dominated Shaab neighborhood of the Iraqi capital today morning.

He says five civilians and three soldiers were killed and up to 14 people were wounded.

A medical official confirmed casualty figures. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity as they were not authorized to release information.

No one immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks, which bore all the hallmarks of the

Islamic State group. The attack comes as Iraqi forces are poised to push into Fallujah to retake the city west of Baghdad from IS militants.

Maipakpi expired

Imphal, May 30: Member of Inner Manipur Parliamentary Constituency Dr. T. Meinya's mother, Maipakpi expired on 26th May 2016. She was 94 years old.

During the expiry of his mother, Dr. Meinya was attended in the opening of the B. G. Silchar Jiri passenger Train which was flagged off by the Prime Minister of India through remote control from Shillong.

Contd. from yesterday issue

Our common crisis : What are we to do?

What does this "consciousness of ourselves", from which the Naga struggle germinated, mean? I shall try to explain how I see it.

Rajagopalachari, the first Indian to be Governor General of India and the last man to hold the post, came to Shillong in 1947. Two Nagas went to see him, Pfurhitsu Terhujal and A.Z. Phizo. They joined the line-up of representatives of tribes and communities from the region outside the Raj Bhawan to see Rajaji. The Secretary to the Governor announced that each group was allotted only a few minutes. Pfurhitsu was resplendent in the full regalia of a village elder, complete with thick ivory arm bands and his striking shawls draped over his shoulder. He stood ramrod straight looking into the distance. When their turn came Pfurhitsu started to speak with Phizo translating his words. Looking straight into Rajaji's eyes he conveyed the position of his people to the visiting leader. Turning to the translator Rajaji asked "Who is he?" Before Phizo could translate it, Pfurhitsu replied loudly with deliberate emphasis, "I am a man!"

He had learned some English when he was a Dobashi attached to the British Deputy Commissioner in Kohima. The Secretary butted in to say their time was up. Rajaji sharply told him not to disturb saying "Don't you see I want to listen to this man?" The rest of the queue waited and Pfurhitsu completed what he had come to say. Phizo said later Pfurhitsu did what no one else could have done by being fearlessly himself.

About 25 years later I was privileged to meet Rajaji briefly when his grandson Rajmohan Gandhi introduced me to him in the home of the publisher of Kalki, the Tamil magazine, in Chennai. Rajaji was resting lying on a cane bed, I think

recovering from an illness. When Rajmohan said he had brought a Naga friend to see him, even before he could see me from his reclining position, Rajaji replied, "Tell Phizo to keep fighting. Delhi understands and respects only those who fight boldly for what they believe in". I sensed that he was completely fearless and free in his mind and spirit.

The declaration by Pfurhitsu, "I am a man!" made in defiance and desperation lest it failed to capture the attention of the Head of State from Delhi conveys well what the Naga struggle has been about.

I have narrated this account because Pfurhitsu's assertion can be said to explain what has energized the Naga struggle. And Rajaji's sensitive understanding and respect for the Naga leader and his authentic conviction about himself and his people regardless of how far India would be able to go to meet the Nagas to solve the longest lasting conflict in South Asia, shows the attitude and body language Delhi will do well to understand and adopt if an honourable and acceptable solution is to be reached.

"The high ideals, and not long after, the dark, dead-end of man-made schemes". This was how English author and playwright, Peter Howard, described what so frequently happens to noble human struggles for freedom and other aspirations. The ideals and dreams are stirring and worth fighting for. But they most easily collapse into unimaginable destructiveness when wrongs are rationalized and allowed to become acceptable in the pursuit of the struggles. I do not know enough about the issues the people are wrestling with here. I can only share what Nagas are asking about their crisis. In our discussion of our crisis it is important we keep in mind the

truth that every crisis is made up of dangers and opportunities. In Chinese the word 'crisis' is represented by two characters, danger and opportunity. If we respond correctly to the opportunities and the dangers we break through to something better and the dangers become a part of our strength and wisdom.

The Irish poet W.B. Yeats wrote - **But, I being poor, I have only my dreams; I have spread my dreams under your feet;**

Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

These lines movingly describe the common crisis of all leaders of highly vulnerable peoples and societies who find themselves compelled to protest and fight the threats they perceive to be coming to their people from the changing world all around them.

There is desperation in the words because the odds are overwhelming. But there is also unyielding defiance because not to fight is not an option. What King Porus said to Alexander comes to mind. Then the names, images and memories of a host of others flood in from the past and from the present. For us here some of them are - Neta Irabot, Jadonang, Phizo and all who with him launched what became the Naga struggle. Isak, Muivah, Kaplang, so on, and of course Arambam Somorendra, whose life and contributions to his people we are commemorating today. I am inspired by the decision of Arambam Somorendra's family, friends and supporters to build on the fire and conviction that burnt in him during his lifetime. The Lecture series created in his name is bringing people together to listen to one another to find solutions to the challenges that we need to confront together.

These memorial lectures are expected to provide "insights on issues of the Northeast". Seeing the issues together will help our people to realize that whatever our differences we are on the same perilous boat taking us to the future. There is growing realization now that unless we reach out and learn to help one another in response to the changed paradigms our boat will take us all down to the bottom.

I shall try to contribute some thoughts to the discussion by drawing from the struggle of my people which has been our most important common experience. I acknowledge that those who have actually carried the terrible burdens of the struggle are more qualified than I am to talk about it. But our situation demands that all who are concerned do not stay silent and watch something that is so important for our journey into the future destroy itself and us. That is why I do value this opportunity to reflect together and to develop mutual understanding, goodwill and compassion, the only way to create the security we all need for our region.

The struggles our leaders and fighters launched and sacrificed for have run into problems that were not anticipated and therefore they and we were not prepared to handle them. Serious mistakes have been made and are being made- as happens in all human struggles for aspirations. And the people who applauded and supported the struggles are now starting to condemn the struggles and their fighters. This is fully understandable because all are suffering the consequences of the mistakes made. **(To be contd.....)**

The write up was presented by the author on 4th Annual Arambam Somorendra Memorial Lecture held at Imphal on 10/06/09. (To be contd.....)