

## Editorial

Imphal, Friday, May 6, 2016

# The peaking heat

The smallest glitch, if left unattended long enough, will eventually snowball into an uncontrollable blunder. This simplest of truth has more often been discarded much to the bitter inconvenience and consternation of the general public without the wherewithal to surround oneself with fawning officials, protective gun slinging escorts or expectant hangers-on. The society has seen more than its fair share of disruptions and chaotic upheavals, perhaps much more than is necessary or inevitable. While the social problems have been an inconvenient part of our life for as long as one can remember, there has been a perceptible increase in its potency and ferocity in recent times. Perhaps the public, even for the most trivial of a hatch have come to the conclusion that if there is enough public hue and cry, or rather mobilize supporters to raise enough noise, then the state administrators will try to pacify them, no matter if the issue is worth giving any importance or have merit. The uncomfortable conclusion could also be due to the fact that the state administrators have, as a practice rather than an exception, kept in abeyance issues that should have been accorded immediate attention and solution. On the other hand, a peculiar pattern in all these madness has been emerging- that the worst social problems and disruptions in social life starts peaking up in tandem with the peaking summer. For over a decade now, most, if not all, the protracted issues, problems and disruptions have been rising in fervour and pitch during the summer, and as things stand at present, the trend is set to continue, what with the ever increasing temperature and decreasing essential amenities adding to the level of frustration albeit unobtrusively. While the shortcomings of the government- both at the centre and the state has been debated, discussed and dissected umpteen times, it would be mere short sightedness to jump to conclusions on the single premise that every fault lays with the government, or more specifically, people running it. What we need to take into consideration are various other factors hampering the dispensing of an ideal administrative system. The first and foremost one being the impatient or desperate section of the public who fuels the system of bribery and corruption in the society which leads to favouritism, nepotism and an unending race to amass undeserved wealth and riches which in turn leads to entice more onlookers to join the game and try their luck at the game. The end result- governance becomes an exercise in securing one's future and establishing financial dominance over the common people which will be utilized to buy back the power and influence which will keep most of those at the helm of affairs of the state in the loop. For these people, chaos and mayhem is a very effective tool to entrench their position and enrich themselves. The only way to get out of this spiralling social quagmire is to realize the futility of the idea of exclusivity and divisions on communal, cultural or ethnic lines while admitting to the truth which so many of us are blindly fighting against. Unity is the way forwards, and for that, understanding, acceptance and empathy should be developed.

### More News

## Casualty evacuation by AIF

### PIB Defence

**Imphal, May 6:** On the midnight inbetween May 4 & 5, a major bus accident happened 200 km north of Raipur (Chhattisgarh). Request for casualty evacuation was received and Indian Air Force responded promptly wherein two Mi-17

helicopters were launched within an hour to evacuate critically injured passengers from the accident site. The Advanced Landing Ground at Ambikapur was used for this purpose. Thirteen critically injured passengers were evacuated to Raipur.

## AR conducts medical camp

### IT News

**Imphal, May 6:** 11 Assam Rifles of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organised a Medical Campat Bongiang Village (adopted by the battalion to develop it as a model village) in Chandel district of Manipur state. The aim of the medical camp was to provide free medical checkup and medicines to the villagers of Bongiang and adjoining villages. Apart from providing medical assistance, the Medical Officers also conducted an awareness lecture on basic health education and the importance of hygiene and sanitation in the society. The response and gratitude from the local populace was overwhelming and they greatly appreciated the initiative by Assam Rifles for organizing the free medical camp.

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## National and International

# Save Democracy March:

Sonia, Rahul, Manmohan detained, released

New Delhi, May 6: Members of the Congress party, including Congress vice-president Rahul Gandhi, party president Sonia Gandhi and former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, were detained by the police on Friday.

Party workers protested the arrest outside the Parliament Street Police station, climbing over police barricades.

The party had taken out a 'Loktantra Bachao March' (Save Democracy March) against the BJP government, starting from Jantar Mantar.

Before the march, the party leaders collectively slammed the Narendra Modi government, asking them where their promised 'Achhe Din' was and accusing them of "attacking democracy."

Ms. Gandhi alleged that the Congress-led governments in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh were dislodged by the Modi regime with use of money power:

"Do not make the mistake of thinking that the Congress party is weak. We will not allow democratic institutions to be weakened or destroyed," she said. She said, "Today, Uttarakhand's jungles are burning but nothing is being done about it because there is no government. The BJP government is murdering democracy by taking down democratically elected governments. No matter how much they try to fight democracy, we will not let you succeed."

She asked Congress workers to "unmask" the Modi government in a democratic way and said they would not buckle under any form of injustice. "We will take detractors head on. Life has taught me to struggle, we have faced a lot of challenges. They don't know what we are made of," she said.

"Do not try to frighten or defame us. Life has taught me to fight on," the Congress Chief said, in the backdrop of the bribery allegations in the VVIP chopper deal case.

"Today those who do not agree

with them are harassed," she said, addressing the rally, and warned "Inke din ab poore hogaye hai" (Their days are over now). People can teach them a lesson if they continue to indulge in it."

Targeting RSS, Ms. Gandhi said, "We have to send a message so strong that people sitting in Raisina Hill and Nagpur sit up and listen." Accusing the Modi government of "murdering democracy and destroying democratic institutions", she said, "I want to say clearly that whatever effort you make to destroy democracy, we will not allow it to happen. We are used to waging struggle and we have faced many challenges in the past. 'Congress is not new to struggle. We have shed blood for the cause of the nation. We are the people who have given blood and laid down our lives to protect the basic principles. We will not withdraw from it."

"Modiji talked about 'Achhe din' when he came to power. But today, almost 40% of the country is affected by drought and he has nothing to say," said party vice-president Rahul Gandhi. "They destabilized the Congress government in Arunachal Pradesh, removed elected leaders & broke all laws," he said.

"Today in this country, there is talk of only two people - Narendra Modi ji and Mohan Bhagwat Ji. And whoever stands in their way or speaks against them, there are false accusations made about that person," he added.

Dr. Singh also spoke at the rally, saying Mr. Modi had attacked democracy. "By destabilising Congress governments in Uttarakhand and Arunachal Pradesh, Modi ji has attacked democracy. Now they are eyeing other INC governments," said Dr. Singh.

"Congress has always made sacrifices and taken steps to ensure that democracy is safe and we will continue to do so," he added.

Scene at Uriopok Kangchup road during the 42 hours public curfew capture through lens



Contd. from yesterday's issue

## Can Manipur be inclusively developed without ST status to Meitei-Pangals?

(from yesterday)

If Meitei-Pangals are not included in the Scheduled Tribe category, then Manipur could take decades more to go for a rapid and inclusive socio-economic development. Today's youths of Meitei-Pangals need employment in central government services and access to central universities. Without ST to Meitei-Pangals, Meitei-Pangal youths can not be made as a scapegoat to be blamed for the slow socio-economic development of Manipur. No Meitei-Pangal youths of today's generations can be held entirely responsible for all the contested economic and commercial illegalities taking place in Manipur. The answer is not in blaming the Meitei-Pangal but in supporting the true cause for a genuinely overall development of the Meitei-Pangal youths of today so that the future of Meitei-Pangal is secured, honoured and prosperous, and that is strongly possible, in a shortest time, if Meitei-Pangal is included in Scheduled Tribe category under the Indian Constitution. The secured, honoured and prosperous Meitei-Pangals also could, undoubtedly, mean the secured, honoured and prosperous Manipur. If Meiteis and the other indigenous communities, but not Meitei-Pangals, are included in Scheduled Tribe, in a near future, then, the non-inclusion

of Meitei-Pangals in Scheduled Tribe will make Manipur to pay a heavy price in future because without the development of Meitei-Pangals, Manipur can never be developed, and the only constitutional way and safeguard to develop Meitei-Pangal is to list Meitei-Pangal in the Scheduled Tribe category, and thereby, the total true development, in all fronts, of Manipur shall be a pragmatic possibility. The more the disparity between Meitei-Pangals and the rest exists in Manipur, the less developed the state of Manipur could be. Should not Manipur and its people be happy if in future, through a Scheduled Tribe category, a Meitei-Pangal joins IAS or IPS and becomes Chief Secretary of Maharashtra or Uttar Pradesh or Andhra Pradesh, or Director General of Police of Jammu and Kashmir or West Bengal or Kerala? Should not Manipur and its people be proud if in future, through a Scheduled Tribe category, a Meitei-Pangal is seen as a faculty member in almost all the central universities of India? Where is the illegality and unconstitutional in accepting the demands of Meitei-Pangal for an inclusion in Scheduled Tribe under the Indian Constitution? Can all Meitei-Pangals go for fighting an election from their own localities that they represent? There is a huge population of Meitei-Pangals who can only vote but can not fight any democratic election. How can India's democracy justify such democratic principle that a voter can only vote but can never fight an election under the Indian Constitution? How long will the Meitei-Pangals remain as mere voters only and not as elected representatives in Lok Sabha and not only in Rajya Sabha? How long will the Meitei-Pangals wait since 1949? Should Meitei-Pangals be made to wait to fight an election till 2050? When will the democracy of India witness the Meitei-Pangal voter, who is also an Indian citizen, who has been only a voter for decades, since 1949, but who can never, so far, fight an election to represent his or her community from the area where he or she hails from? Is this logically democratic and socially justifiable? The solution to such injustice, which has been prevailing for half a century, lies in the inclusion of Meitei-Pangal in Scheduled Tribe category under the Indian Constitution. The demand of Meitei-Pangals for Scheduled Tribe category is not to destroy the existing fabric of Manipur society but instead it will ensure the true inclusive and overall socio-economic development of Manipur with humane face. The demand is not illogical, it is neither illegal nor unconstitutional. It is, indeed, the decades' old hidden pain and truth of Meitei-Pangals that needs to be appreciated, accepted, understood and considered so that the true meaning of democracy, in our own largest democracy of the world, remains meaningful in many villages which are predominantly, since an ancestral time, occupied by Meitei-Pangals who have never been given an opportunity to be an elected representative in Lok Sabha or Manipur Assembly, except 2 seats in the assembly, but have been only giving votes, as true citizens of a democratic India, in Manipur. The inclusion of Meitei-Pangals in Scheduled Tribe category is to be taken seriously and strongly, and the recommendation of Meitei-Pangals for Scheduled Tribe needs to be executed by the Manipur Cabinet headed by the state Chief Minister Okram Ibobi Singh so that the true overall inclusive growth and development of Manipur with its people, its youths and its future, are and shall be a reality soon. Whether or not Manipur remains or becomes a tribal state, without the inclusion of Meitei-Pangals in Scheduled Tribe category, the people of Manipur can never witness an inclusively prosperous and developed state of Manipur. (Concluded)

Ningombam Bupenda Meitei is a poet, author and orator.