

# Editorial

Imphal Saturday, October 15, 2016

## Sharmila, don't go for election, lead people to vote for change and repeal AFSPA

Manipur is an incredible land. People takes just a few second coupled with hollow promise by politicians to change the mindset and take them forget the 16 years of sacrifice made by a lady, now popularly called Iron Lady. August 9, this year will be engraved to all the politically sensitive people of the state. It will be remembered by the people of the state generation after generation, not because the AFSPA crusader had stopped the Gandhian style of protest but rather the activist herself has been made believe that electoral politics is the most effective tools to fight a social cause. A world figure, a believer of non-violence has said that she stopped fast protest as it gave no affect and to achieve her goal she change the strategy of fighting the most heinous draconian law. Many people appreciate her decision to change strategy for repeal of the dreaded act. But on the other hand many are making mockery of her decision as they know that election is different from the real issue. It is about money, power, relatives and Delhi.

Having said so, Irom Chanu Sharmila is can be an effective factor of the upcoming 11th Manipur Legislative Assembly Election which is just 100 days from now. Not only people in the state but people from across the country as well as some from aboard particularly those working in the field of Human Rights consider her as an icon. But her popularity decline here in her home state not because people have forgotten her sacrifices but because she chose something which is considered as the last refuge for scoundrels. Election regalia, as experience from what has been happening in the last couple of terms, it is clear that no sincere persons, who are willing to sacrifice for his or her state, had ever succeeded. It is history and is known by everyone. In democracy, election perhaps is the best way to protest or bring reform, but necessarily that he or she should go for it. The term politics and fighting election is for scoundrel can be change if people across the state are well aware and educated on whom to elect.

This is the point that we in the Imphal Times wanted to put up. Irom Chanu Sharmila can be an effective factor to change the mindset of the people if she kicks campaign to let the people understand about electing qualified and committed representatives. But things will not be that effective if she herself chose to contest election. Every concern human rights activist, senior citizens, scholars ad not the least those who love their motherland wanted a change. But lack of efficient leaders had failed to bring about a change that many people have been awaiting since the last couple of terms. Campaigns to educate voters to choose the right candidates in the upcoming poll have been witnessed in the state. These campaigns are organised by various social bodies. But the unfortunate part is that they campaign without communicating each other as there is trust deficit even among those leaders of the organisation who wanted people to vote for the right person. This is a clear sign of lack of an efficient leader. This vacuum can only be field if Irom Sharmila, the AFSPA crusader comes out and unit all these organisation to work together.

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# MANIPUR NEEDS A GAME-CHANGER

By : Seram Neken

Being a state in complete turmoil, Manipur now needs a competent Chief Minister who is able to bring lasting solutions to its burning issues concerning the very future of its people and the land. The impending threat to the integrity among numerous indigenous groups residing in this land is a matter needing urgent solution, which requires the attention and intervention of the central leadership. Mushrooming homeland demands among the smaller groups in this already small state, which have tended to destabilize the age-old composite existence of various ethnic communities as Manipuris, also call for political solutions with the sincere initiative of the state government coupled with the non-judgmental and balanced attitude of the central leaders. Being a resource scarce state, Manipur is in hectic need of generating a big economic opportunity for its over two million inhabitants by way of establishing a viable and locally adaptable industry. Issues of people's economic empowerment, emotional and physical integrity of the so called brothers in the hills and the valley, demarcation and safeguard of a concrete state boundary, protection of indigenous peoples and their land from being occupied by outsiders both from other Indian states as well as from neighboring countries like Myanmar, Bangladesh and Nepal are issues which need urgent intervention of both the state and central leaderships in order to visualize the future of Manipur and

the Manipuris.

At this critical juncture, people of Manipur wish to have a sincere and committed government which is able to translate ideas into action. Even at this eleventh hour of the ensuing general election being held at the dawn of next year, any political party has not yet assured its people with a vision in the lines of the aforesaid agenda. Will the Congress party try to retain power by placing sustainable and practicable solutions to state's burning issues, which it has failed to solve during the last 15 years rule in Manipur? Or can the BJP which has a powerful and practicable Prime Minister at the national level, pledge a viable solution to these state problems to gain people's mandate? Or is there any other political party either national or regional which can foresee a vision for the future of Manipur? This writer is optimistic enough that if the national leadership of BJP is sincere enough to wrest its position in this border state of Manipur, it will place a specific 'Vision Document' for the future of Manipur in front of state's voters before the coming state elections. Otherwise, usual pre-poll oratory and election time promises of the state politicians will not defuse the existing trust-deficit among the electors. When the people of Manipur, who have long been toiling amid problems of all hues, can visualize a constructive and viable future for their land and people, they will automatically give mandate to whichever party or whoever leader that can do so. The

so called money power and muscle power will no longer work, if strong agendas with practicable solutions come out from the leaders and political parties. Elections will become more meaningful with the electors becoming politically conscious of their future.

In what could well be anticipated as a trend setter in Manipur polity, a seasoned politician from the ruling Congress party recently resigned from the membership of both the State Legislative Assembly and the Congress party by placing bigger state issues in the forefront, instead of dwelling on personal political opportunism. His first agenda set by former Congressman N Biren is to implement an Act which protects the state's land from being occupied by outsiders before the operationalization of 'Act East Policy'. The move is to prevent powerful and affluent companies from occupying the state's land for their business. Secondly, the former cabinet minister demands a political solution restricting the free movement and operation by armed groups under SoO and ceasefire agreements. Thirdly, development of national highways to the level of four-lane and to ensure security by engaging Highway Protection Force. Fourthly, non-disturbance of state boundary and administration in the process of political negotiations with armed insurgent groups. Lastly, he proposes framing of a topographical budget for the hills to bring about balanced development of the state. Even though the former Congressman

missed to cite any point on economic empowerment of Manipur, the fairer part of his move is that he even opts to shun politics, if any of the political parties fails to respond to his five point agenda. Now the pertinent question is "which political party is ready to accept his bargain", which is in fact a vision for a future Manipur. No mature and considerate political party can take such a people's agenda from a seasoned politician as a simple pre-poll oratory. It needs in-depth analysis and a viable framework for solution, before the party concerned decides to garland the leader and elevate him as its game-changer in Manipur politics. Manipur in the recent past has not seen such a leader as N. Biren who has all set to sideline personal gains in favour of the bigger issues concerning the future of Manipur. It is well presumed that the top brass of BJP at the national level is now taking time preparing responses to Mr. Biren's five point agenda. If the BJP is able to provide feasible and practicable answers to the five agenda set by the resigned MLA before the eyes and ears of the voters, BJP's position in Manipur will get an abrupt uplift. If the BJP embraces Mr. Biren and his visions as its election agenda, it may be hoped that former Congress Minister will be a game changer not only in Manipur polity, but also of the state BJP. Moreover, the state BJP is sure to garner sizeable position when politicians like Mr. Biren assume a leading role in its election campaigns.

## National & International News

### “India alone may not bring about change in Pakistan”

**PIT**  
**Washington, Oct 15:** Observing that Pakistan tends to regard itself as “indispensable”, an eminent South Asian expert has said that unless the rest of the world is willing to join India, Islamabad will only continue to “play games” with New Delhi. “India alone may not be able to bring about change in Pakistan’s behaviour. Pakistan tends to think of itself as indispensable to the

world; too important for the rest of the world to ignore. “Thus unless the rest of the world is willing to join India, Pakistan will only continue to play games with India, assured by the prospect of lining up others behind it in its games,” said Aparna Pande, director, Initiative on the Future of India and South Asia, Hudson Institute, a think-tank. As other experts at a panel discussion here urged India to come

up with policies to address Pakistan’s concerns, Pande emphatically argued that in Pakistan, the psychological need for imaginary threats from New Delhi will not go away as a result of India’s policies. “Pakistan needs to threaten India and feel threatened by it to maintain its national identity. That makes normal policy responses ineffective,” she said. The military’s institutional interests require that Pakistan continue to attract international attention through terrorism and nuclear weapons, she added. “Nothing short of fear of the unraveling of Pakistan or the prospect of global isolation will make the military rethink its fundamental worldview. India has to remain the enemy, Kashmir must continue to be the casus belli. Nuclear arms must be brandished both to mobilise Pakistani nationalism and to keep India at bay,” Pande said. “The world must be persuaded to remain engaged with Pakistan on Pakistan’s terms, without changing

Pakistani behaviour. Promises must be made to be broken because no one can do anything about it any way,” she said. Pande warned that the reluctance to understand the Pakistan military’s mindset and worldview as the core issue in India-Pakistan non-relations leads to ideas that look good on paper but will only lead to frustration down the road. Pande was participating in a panel discussion on the launch of a book titled “Not War, Not Peace: Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism,” by George Perkovich and Toby Dalton of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Former Assistant Secretary of State for South Asia Robin Raphael also spoke on the occasion.

Responding to the argument in the book that “the condition of ‘no war’ is unsustainable if ‘no peace’ is the core of either state’s policy”, Pande said one must look for an answer to the question who gains by a ‘no war, no peace’ status. “It is Pakistan’s security establishment,” she stressed.

### Prepaid mobile services restored in Kashmir after over three month-suspension

**Srinagar, Oct. 15:** Prepaid mobile phone services were restored across Kashmir on Saturday after remaining suspended for 98 days. However, mobile Internet services continued to remain suspended. The prepaid mobile services were snapped across Kashmir on July 8 evening, soon after the killing of young militant commander Burhan Wani in an encounter with government forces. Mobile Internet services were snapped the same evening across the valley. However, services were not suspended on State-run BSNL phones. Same evening, postpaid mobile services were also snapped in south Kashmir. Similarly, postpaid services were snapped in north Kashmir on July 11 and central Kashmir on July 15. On July 16, landline services were suspended in Baramulla, Bandipora and Kupwara in north Kashmir. While postpaid mobile services were restored on July 26, the prepaid were restored a day after but outgoing call facility continued to remain barred.

On September 14, broadband services were snapped again. They were resumed after four days, on September 19. On October 14, in an official statement, police said: “With the improvement in the situation prepaid mobile services are being restored from tonight (Friday).”

### Curfew lifted across Kashmir

**PIT**  
**Srinagar, Oct 15:** Authorities today lifted curfew across Kashmir following improvement in the situation, but normal life remained affected due to the unrest which erupted after killing of Hizbul Mujahideen militant Burhan Wani in July. A police official said there is no curfew anywhere in Kashmir and the curbs on the movement of people have been lifted across the valley, including from the summer capital here, following improvement in the situation. However, restrictions on the assembly of people under Section 144 CrPc were in force throughout the Valley. He said security forces have been deployed in sensitive areas to maintain law and order as also to instill a sense of security among the people so that they can carry out their day-to-day activities without fear.

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### How can a state CM intervene in a central.....

An additional question is: in the presence of Home Minister of a state of Manipur, how has the Chief Minister taken care of the responsibility of law and order of the state of Manipur? What is decided by Academic Council or Executive Council or finally accepted by Vice Chancellor of a central university could be discussed further, as any academia flourish through debates and exchange of ideas. But, any act of violence or a forceful coercion of ideas that a particular notion must be accepted is not only detrimental to the health of any academia but it also reflects the silence of Union Human Resources Development Ministry, in this regard. The Visitor of Manipur University,

based on the rules which are laid down for the central universities of India, has to decide on any issue related to any central university including Manipur University. Manipur University cannot be given a differential treatment by making different rules for the university. Like University of Delhi, Jawaharlal Nehru University, etc. which are central universities, Manipur University shall also be treated and honoured. Politics shall not eclipse the independence and freedom of academic. Destroying the peacefully existing and intellectually vibrant academic environment of Manipur University is doing an unprecedented harm to not only India but also to humanity, at large, in today's 21<sup>st</sup> century.