

Editorial

Imphal Friday, October 28, 2016

Bridging the divide

The people in the state have had the unique distinction of enduring decades of indifference and negligence on the part of the Government, both at the state and the central level. The present turmoil and volatile situation in the state is arguably an important manifestation of the festering angst and indignation such dismissive attitudes have fomented in the minds of the people of the region, feeling betrayed and ditched by successive governments, one worse than the other. In fact, such shortcomings of the governments have presented a plethora of opportunities for various unscrupulous elements amidst the uncertainties and frustrated nerves. It would not be too far from the truth if anyone observes that the majority of the people are getting more reactive, violent and vindictive, while residing under what is considered the world's largest democracy, where freedom and individual rights are given as birth rights. And one of the most important topic of contention and frustration for the people is the state of the two national highways which serves as the lifeline for the people of the state and which has been kept in its outdated and dilapidated condition for so long notwithstanding the fact that hundreds of trucks are risking everything by using this same route to bring in thousands of tons of essential commodities for the people of the state. That there has been innumerable loss of precious lives and much needed articles which could have been avoided had the Government taken up necessary action in time would be repeating the obvious. The state Government have for long been trumpeting the paucity of funds as an excuse for every conceivable lacunae of developmental activities, while reports of huge amounts of funds being called back due to the inability of the state Government to utilize them in time, have consistently flummoxed the public. The recent report of hundreds of trucks getting stranded on their way to Manipur with full loads of essential and often perishable commodities due to the worsening condition of a bridge along the route have once again highlighted the nonchalant approach of the state Government to the protracted problem that has been hampering the progress of the state as a whole, inspite of fervent promises and generous assurances issued at the drop of a hat. Such self-contradictory and reactive system of governance has raised doubts on the validity of the promises made and development activities initiated by the present government. When a 200-odd kilometer stretch of road has overwhelmed the collective will of the state Government and eluded any long term solution, shouldn't we be considering ourselves too optimistic to be eagerly looking forward for the much anticipated railway services to reach Imphal, given the noncommittal approach to almost every development activity being carried out in the state, despite the tall claims and rosy pictures being portrayed with fervent zeal. One could only wish if the action could have matched the speed and zeal of the spoken words. That would really have bridged the yawning divide between the ruler and the ruled- psychologically, ideologically and politically.

Indian-Americans raise over USD 10 mln for Clinton Campaign

PTI
Washington, Oct 28: Indian-Americans are believed to have raised at least USD 10 million towards the election campaign to elect Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton as the next president of the US. At least two of the Indian-Americans philanthropist Frank Islam from Maryland and Shefali Razdan Duggal from California alone have helped raising a million dollar each for the presidential campaign of the former First Lady and the secretary of state, campaign insiders told PTI. Notably the Hillary Campaign does not give details of the major fundraisers and the amount of money raised by them. It does have a group called 'Hillblazers' which has list of individuals who have contributed and/or raised USD 100,000 or more for Hillary for America, the Hillary Victory Fund, and/or the Hillary Action Fund since the launch of this historic campaign on April 12, 2015. Among those listed in the latest list of Hillblazers released by the Clinton Campaign are more than 30 Indian Americans, each of them raising a minimum of USD 100,000. However, these Indian-Americans are reported to have raised much more than that, campaign insiders said. For instance, Ajay and Vinita Bhutoria from San Francisco is understood to have contributed or raised more than USD 500,000 for the Hillary Campaign. Among other Indian-American Hillblazers as released by the Hillary Campaign are Monica Arora and Raj Goyle from New York, Raj Fernando from Chicago, etc.

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National & International News

Pak violates ceasefire in Jammu, Rajouri, Kathua; girl injured

PTI
Jammu, Oct 28: Pakistani troops continued the ceasefire violations today with firing and mortar shelling on Indian posts and civilian areas along the LoC and international border in Jammu, Kathua and Rajouri districts, leaving a girl injured. BSF and Army have responded "appropriately and befittingly" a defence spokesman said. "There was unprovoked ceasefire violation by Pakistan Army in Sunderbani, Pallanwala and Nowshera sectors of Rajouri and Jammu districts today," the spokesman said. They used small arms, automatics, 82 mm mortars and 120 mm mortars in the firing and shelling, he said. "They are being responded appropriately and befittingly. No casualties to our troops have been reported," he said. Firing and shelling continued overnight along the international border. "At 1720 hour yesterday, Pakistan Rangers started unprovoked heavy

firing and helling in Katgus Sector of Jammu which further spread to Hiranagar and Samba. "It continued till 0500 hours till today in area of 24 BSF posts," a senior BSF officer said, adding the BSF responded strongly after which the firing stopped. "Some Pakistani posts and villages have suffered heavy damage, he said. On the Indian side, a girl was injured in the ceasefire violation, the officer said. Yesterday, a Pakistani Ranger was killed and another injured in the retaliatory firing by BSF, as Pakistani troops heavily shelled five sectors along LoC and IB in J&K in which one BSF jawan died and 13 other civilians were injured. While Pakistani troops pounded BoPs and hamlets along IB in Kathua, Hiranagar sectors (Kathua), R S Pura and Arnia sectors (Jammu) and Samba sector, they also targeted forward Indian posts and villages along LOC in Krishnagati, Balakote and Mankote sectors (Poonch) and Sunderbani sector (Rajouri) yesterday.

Since surgical strikes by army on terror launch pads in PoK on September 28-29, five Indians, including four security personnel, have been killed and 34 injured in ceasefire violations. On October 21, BSF killed seven Pak rangers and a terrorist opposite to

Hiranagar sector along In in Kathua, in which one BSF jawan was injured. On October 25, at least 2-3 Pakistani army men are believed to have been killed in retaliatory firing by Indian troops in the Noushera sector of Rajouri district.

Indian-origin bus driver burnt alive in Australia

Melbourne, Oct. 28: A 29-year-old Indian-origin bus driver was charred to death on Friday when a man set him on fire after pouring some flammable liquid on him in front of horrified passengers in Brisbane town in Australia. Manmeet Alisher, who was driving a Brisbane City Council bus, was targeted by a man who threw an "incendiary device" at him which sparked a fire. Alisher, a well-known singer in the Punjabi community, died on the spot while several passengers on board the bus at the time managed to escape through the rear door,

police said. Six persons were rushed to a nearby hospital for smoke inhalation and minor injuries, they said. A 48-year-old man was taken into custody over the incident. Detectives from South Brisbane district and the state crime command's homicide group have commenced a homicide investigation, Police Commissioner Ian Stewart said. Preliminary inquiries indicate just after 9am (local time) passengers were boarding a bus on Beaudesert Road when a man threw an item at the driver causing fire, police said.

Contd. from page 1

PRJA, MPP, Left parties: Is Third Front in the offing in Manipur?

Under AFSPA, as Supreme Court observed in a recent judgement, human rights violation and use of excessive force took place. Irom Sharmila took to fast demanding revocation of AFSPA 1958 from Manipur and justice for victims of Indian army's terror spell. Here it is worth mentioning that Indian army being a Govt body can be tried (either by martial or civil law) or criticised, but the casualties and murders carried out by the so-called insurgents have gone unreported or untried. We as young boys and adolescents, like any other Manipuri civilian, lived with insecurity, terror and lawlessness because of the armed conflict. It is not possible for us to forget the retributive murder of five innocent civilians at our village in cold blood one night, few days after one of their comrades was mob-lynched in the village for killing a son of the then MLA of the constituency. There was no case and trial. **AFSPA 1958** It happened to one of us (M.I. Khan) in 2010. One cold January night few armed men (Indian army) barged into our house in the dark of the night as there was no current. Every family member was pulled out of the warmth of bed and interrogated, while some men started frantically searching the house without showing any warrant, as it turned out, only to plant a sophisticated weapon in one of the almira's in which our dresses and valuables were kept. Being a hawk eye, my mother somehow saw that something has been kept in the almira. Sensing trouble, she shouted on top of her voice, "why are you planting weapon in my almira? Have you come here in my house tonight to blame my family?". After this once bitten twice shy moment, they called out my brother to interrogate and then abducted him. My brother alarmed us from the courtyard where he jostled to free himself from the army men. By this time, all the army men had headed towards gate/street where their vehicle was parked. We all followed, created a commotion and called out names to attract neighbours' attention. After almost 10-15 minutes of our failed struggle to free my brother, he was abducted and the next day after gheraoing the jurisdictional police station, he was released with clean chi. I was shell-shocked to read in the newspaper next day that he was picked up from Patsoi, a place around 20 km far from my home, on suspicion of being a member of proscribed militant outfit as he was possessing arms (on the contrary, it was the army men who

tried to plant weapon). Such cruel and terrorising techniques are used by Indian Army in the name of AFSPA 1958. And, as for me, in that cold January night after my brother was taken away I along with neighbours took my mother and admitted her to RIMS, Imphal as her head was hit by the butt of an AK47 rifle and needed stitches. It was cold, sleepless, tensed night. Thanks to AFSPA 1958, I contracted allergic bronchitis because of the cold, dust, pleading/shouting for releasing my brother, crying, which worsened the persisting seasonal cold and cough. The semi-barbaric conduct of army personnel needs no further detailing here as every kid in Manipur knows this. Govt might have recommended the AFSPA to suppress the insurgency and escalating communalism/ethnic conflict at that time, but in the crossfire minority communities that didn't join the armed insurgency also bore the violent burden. Hill and valley, child and adult, men and women all have suffered under AFSPA 1958. **Political will** Supreme Court recently observed that declaring "disturbed area" for six decades is nothing but failure of the Govt. This implies that there has been a consistent lack of political will to engage with the insurgents and normalise law and order problem. Unlike other insurgent groups in the northeast (Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura), Manipuri groups have always desisted from holding talks, apart from now-obsolete demand of plebiscite, for reasons best known to them. Among the politicians, there is no consensus on the issue of how to control insurgency. We cannot look up to the Centre for our local problems. If other states in northeast have successfully controlled insurgency, why not Manipur? It is important to note here that it was the BJP whose alliance with Naga People's Front (NPF) tried to break the integrity of the state in 2001 which led to 'June 18 Uprising'. BJP is going with NPF again and they are planning to integrate all Naga-dominated areas. Moreover, the polarisation and killing in the name of cow's meat, 'ghar wapsi', ongoing uniform civil code episode threaten the tribals' autonomy and cultural identity of small ethnic communities like Meitei, Pangal, etc clearly hint that the BJP's agenda is harmful and problematic to Manipur. Govt's visionless and therefore highly deplorable strategies of job generation by introducing horrible Maxi cabs service (popularly known

as TATA Magic/Winger) for public transportation, creation of village defence force (VDF) have not solved the increasing unemployment rate, which is above the national average. Manipur has more than 7 lakh unemployed persons out of about 27 lakh population. Unemployment doubled during the last 10 years of Congress rule. The corruption and rising privatisation (e.g transport) in the state has deeply affected the society which has widened the income inequalities between rich and poor. The government has continuously failed to address and fix the health and medical concerns of the citizens which leads to medical tourism outside the state for better treatment. In this way, millions of rupees of state's economy are spent outside the state. No government has so far addressed the decaying of higher education in the state. Why thousands of natives need to go for studying Political Science or History, etc outside the state? Our politicians do not have fixed political mooring: they are known offenders of party hopping. One day in one camp, next day in another camp. How and when will they think of the pressing issues of state's importance such Citizenship (amendment) bill 2016, AFSPA 1958, insurgency, communalism, mobocracy/lawlessness, mushrooming joint action committees, frequent bandhs (or forced shutdown), reviving Manipur state road transport corporation (MSRTC), ILPS, Trans-Asian highway, natural resource mining, ST status demand, National Sports University, identity politics, etc. Apart from this, there are other

issues like police reformation, improvement of health and education (collegiate), implementation of Lokpal act, introduction of 'equal opportunity act' to safeguard minorities, implementation of land reform act, inclusive state tourism policy, and so on. For all these issues to be addressed, keeping in mind the social fabric of Manipur, in the upcoming 11th Legislative assembly election, the state needs a Manipur centric party which would put the state interests at first and do not submit to the diktats of New Delhi. In other words, it is high time to produce a non-Congress, non-BJP political bloc in the state to build a grand narrative that could encompass all the people of the state. We need a party or leaders who can understand our interests, identity and civic culture. If other north-eastern states can have strong regional parties, why not in Manipur? Although we have our reservations about Ms Sharmila's utterances in the past, we would like to support the leaders of PRJA as they hold a lot of promise because of the emotional connect they have with the local issues and masses. However, politics in India is a number game and heavily dependent on muscle power and PRJA is not yet capable of garnering enough seats to form a govt on its own or effect policy matters. Hence, we strongly advise PRJA to form an alliance with the only other genuine regional party, MPP, and parties that profess social justice like left parties. Give an alternative to the voters, form a third front to save Manipur.

MANIPUR LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY SECRETARIAT NOTIFICATION
Imphal, the 27th October, 2016

No. 1/13(6)/2014-LA(E)/Rectt.: It is hereby informed to all the candidates who have applied for direct recruitment to the following posts in the Manipur Legislative Assembly Secretariat that the written tests are re-scheduled on the date, time and venue as shown below:

| Sl.No. | Name of post | Date | Time | Venue |
|--------|-------------------|------------|---------|----------------------|
| 1. | Committee Officer | 03-11-2016 | 11:00am | Assembly Secretariat |
| 2. | Translator | 04-11-2016 | 11:00am | |

Candidates who have not yet collected their admitcards are intimated to collect the same on or before the date of written test re-scheduled above and also to appear for the same without fail.

Sd/-
(G Tapankumar Sharma)
Deputy Secretary (Admn),
Manipur Legislative Assembly