

Editorial

Imphal Wednesday, September 28, 2016

The election cards

Election euphoria is silencing some of most important issue of the state. People now have stopped talking about draconian AFSPA and hardly spare time to discuss issue of massive human rights violation committed under various outdated laws, at which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to scrap while delivering his infamous speech at Madison Square Garden in New York, few months after becoming the Prime Minister of India.

For Congress who is in power in the state, issue of territorial integrity is assumed as the effective cards to play with the voters. The congress really have advantage as BJP is in power at the center and is the political party that will get blame or appreciation for the outcome of the peace talk with the NSCN-IM. The signing of Frame work agreement and concealing the details of the agreement is another advantage of the congress party in attacking the rival BJP.

However, the apple of discord between a civil society group at Churachandpur and people in valley demanding legislation for protection of an Inner Line Permit system make the Congress party handicapped. They appeared to have been caught between the devil and deep blue sea. JCILPS hard stands to make 1951 as the baseline for original residents of the state and the JAC CCpur strong opposition to introduction of any ILPS Bill is perhaps the greatest challenge the ruling congress is facing.

The issues are of no worry to the congress as they understand the mentality of the voters. The congress is now concentrating on mass recruitment at government departments. They have been issuing notifications and conducted DPC for recruitment of various post in the government department. These recruited candidates or who are in the list for recruitment are considered as bonus votes for the congress. Thanks to the CEO Manipur, for directing the state government to furnish all details for recruitment and undertaking recruitment at various government department that has been taking place since April 1 this year. As for the BJP the issue of Territorial Integrity has been left aside and the ILPS is of no serious matter as they consider these issues to be of no help in election. As some of the BJP hard ore in the center are strong advocate of draconian AFSPA, the party now had stopped mentioning about draconian AFSPA. Like the congress the party now firmly believe in the developmental matra as well as providing of easy access to central government grant-in-aid is more important to win more seats in the upcoming assembly poll.

For reason best known the political party who had promised to punish those involved in the multi-crores Loktak scam has remain silent. The party is also silence to fight corruption with appropriate tool, so no words have been spell out to establish Lok Ayukta.

Once the election notification has been issued the simmer talk about real issues of the state will all gone under the blanket. And people will start enjoying the festival - the festival that happened every five years. ILPS or Anti-ILPS is not going to give any impact to this election , Chief Minister Okram Ibobi as well as BJP leader Th. Chaoba knows this.

Contd. from page 1

Senapati Forest Division celebrates 61st Wildlife Week

Joyson Tao, a postgraduate from IIT Guwahati and promoter of Varao Integrated Model Farm for Rural Poor also spoke on the significance of biodiversity conservation in today's context saying that climate change or global warming is not a future threat but a present reality. He also invoked on the importance of integrating schools children in promoting conservation of forest and wildlife. In Article Writing Competition under the topic "Wildlife Conservation in Manipur", Th. Ave Haleno, Class-X of St. Anthony's School bagged 1st Prize, D. Rakhu Ramai, Class-IX of St. Anthony's School bagged second prize and Ripon Rai, Class-IX of Bethany Hr. Sec School was the third prize winner.

And in On-Spot Painting Competition on "Wildlife in Manipur", 1st Prize went to Sochui Kasar, Class-VIII of St. Anthony's School, Muivashang A Shimray CL.VI of St. Anthony's School got 2nd prize and the 3rd prize was jointly won by H. Augustine Class-V of Bethany Hr. Sec. School and D. Jubilian, Class-VIII of St. Anthony's School. The winners will be facilitated with cash prizes and certificates of recognition at the State Level Valedictory Function to be held on October 7 at Maharaj Chandrakirti Hall, Imphal. The competitions were evaluated by John Basho, Editor, Herald Today, A. Pfokehrii Khrashi, Convenor, Peoples for Animals (PFA) Senapati and Joyson Tao.

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National & International News

Curfew clamped in Koimoh town in south Kashmir

PTI Srinagar, Sep 28: Curfew was today imposed in Koimoh town of south Kashmir's Kulgam district in view of the separatists call for a march, while restrictions on the assembly of people continued in the rest of the Valley. A police official said the curbs in the town were imposed as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order in the wake of the

separatists call for a march to the area. The separatists, who are spearheading the current agitation in Kashmir, have asked people to march to various tehsil headquarters, including Koimoh, today. The official said while there was no curfew in any other areas in Kashmir, restrictions on the assembly of people under section

144 CrPc were in place in the rest of the Valley. Meanwhile, normal life continued to remain affected in the Valley for the 82nd straight day today due to the separatist call for shut down but there was increased movement of private vehicles in the city, indicating mass fatigue among the populace due to the prolonged unrest. Shops, petrol pumps and other

business establishments remained closed. Schools, colleges and other educational institutions also remained closed across the Valley. As many as 82 persons, including two cops, have been killed and thousands of others injured in the ongoing unrest that started after Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani was killed in an encounter with security forces in south Kashmir on July 8.

Search continues for unidentified armed men, red alert sounded in Pathankot

Chandigarh, Sept. 28: Security agencies carried out a night-long search operation in Pathankot district of Punjab to look for some armed men seen by local residents, police said on Wednesday. "We carried out search operation around Chakki river bank and nearby forest area. However, nothing has been found so far. The search operation was started on Tuesday and carried on through the night," Pathankot district police

chief Rakesh Kaushal said. An extensive search operation began in Pathankot on Tuesday following reports that some local residents had spotted four armed "suspicious men". The area searched, lying close to the Punjab-Himachal Pradesh-Jammu and Kashmir border, is around 250 km from here. However, no arrests were made, police officials said. Search operations have been carried

out by security forces in Pathankot and Gurdaspur districts virtually every month after the January 2 attack this year. Terrorists, suspected to be from Pakistan, had attacked the frontier Indian Air Force (IAF) base in Pathankot on January 2, leaving seven security personnel dead. The attack was preceded by a terror assault by Pakistani terrorists in Dinanagar town of neighbouring Gurdaspur district on July 27 last year.

HP High Court asks SMC reasons for water shortage

PTI Shimla, Sep 27: Himachal Pradesh High Court today asked the Shimla Municipal Corporation (SMC) to explain reasons for shortage of water supply in Shimla again and instructed it to ensure water is supplied in the town as per directions passed by the court from time to time.

The court also directed the SMC to file a status report in this regard by October 25.

During hearing of the petition, Pollution Control Board brought to the notice of the court that the SMC had given details of 42 water storage tanks and 42 reservoirs. The board had taken samples from there for which 12 reports have been received and others are awaited.

The court also directed the Pollution Control Board to file a status report on the next date of hearing. A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Mansoor Ahmad Mir and Justice Tarlok Singh Chauhan passed these orders on a petition taken up suo moto by the court as Public Interest Litigation on the basis of reports published in newspaper on January 3.

The reports had also suggested that sewage mixed water was being supplied to the residents which had created an epidemic like situation. It was also reported that jaundice and other water-borne diseases were affecting the people in the town.

OBC community to hold rally in Bhubhal's support

PTI Nashik, Sep 28: Members of the OBC community will take out a rally in Nashik on October 3 in support of former Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Chhagan Bhubhal, who was arrested in March by Enforcement Directorate on charges of money laundering. A decision to this effect was taken at a rally held by the Other Backward Classes (OBC) members at Nashik's Ramliya Lawns on Monday.

The rally was addressed by local OBC leaders, who praised the efforts of Bhubhal in developing Nashik and other parts of the district when his party NCP was in power in the state. They alleged that the present BJP-led state government has put the former PWD minister behind bars with a revengeful attitude, and urged people to participate in the march scheduled on October 3.

Several OBC communities in the state have expressed their support

for the march, the organisers claimed in a release here. The development comes at a time when the Maratha community members have been holding 'silent marches' across the state demanding quota in education and government jobs. Bhubhal, an OBC leader who is MLA from Yeola constituency in Nashik, is presently in judicial custody at a Mumbai jail after his arrest on March 14 by the Enforcement Directorate on charges of money laundering.

The Bombay High Court had yesterday said it was not inclined to grant the interim relief sought by Bhubhal in a petition filed by him, challenging the constitutional validity of certain sections of Prevention of Money Laundering Act. Maharashtra Rural Development Minister Pankaja Munde had last week called on the beleaguered NCP leader after he was admitted to state-run JJ hospital in Mumbai following an illness.

Typhoon Megi makes landfall in China

PTI Beijing, Sep 28: Typhoon Megi has made landfall in China's Quanzhou City today with winds peaking over 118 km per hour speed after causing havoc in Taiwan. Megi, the 17th typhoon this year, brought downpours to the coastal areas of the Fujian province. Four counties and one city in Fujian saw more than 300 mm precipitation,

while the precipitation in 15 counties, districts and cities was between 200 and 300 mm, said the provincial flood control office. The water level of local rivers surpassed alert levels. China has already issued an orange alert for Megi. Fuzhou, the provincial capital, was also battered by rainstorms. The city's roads and streets were waterlogged, affecting traffic.

Contd. from previous issue

Meitei Women in Collectives: Gender, Roles and Potentials

Towards Empowerment and Decision Making
With the rise in female literacy rate from a mere 0.04 in 1901 to 47.60 in 1991, there are many new women's groups who have taken multiplicity of roles in Meitei society. Many of these groups have modern organizational structure and work beyond the confines of *leikai* or kinship. They are not governed by traditional norms of collectivity but are bounded by the rules of the organization. However, their cultural values for solidarity and commitments are at the same level with that of the other traditional and informal groups. There are various formal self-help groups across the state. The most noteworthy of all these organizations is the *Macha Leima* founded in 1969. *Macha Leima*, roughly translated as "precious daughters" have taken many roles in highlighting not only women's issues but also the overall socio-political context under which issues they function. The organization has successfully run schools and had also launched micro-credit finance system in the state. In recent times, *Macha Leima* has taken up the initiative to spread awareness of the benefits of the "Right to information Act, 2005" among the women of Manipur. The law was enacted by the Parliament of India to give the people access to records of Central and State governments in India. Activities of such groups like the *Macha Leima*, while banking on the values of

solidarity, have infused the rigour of formal structures in order to incorporate modern education and governance concepts. This has helped the organisation grow effectively and also walk the easy rope between tradition and modernity. Here, it is pertinent to note that the concepts and principles behind *Macha Leima* precede the new global NGOization process. The effective growth of organisations like the *Macha Leima* is possible because of its core foundation - the community. The significance of community driven development is that it allows the active participation of defined communities in at least some aspect of the project design and implementation. While participation occurs at any level, the importance is the incorporation of local knowledge into the project decision-making process. This gives 'voice', 'control' and 'choice' under certain conditions to the people. In Manipur too, the existence of community based organisations with a stock of social capital, have gained their 'voice' and are making their choice. Despite a highly politically charged and volatile environment, Manipur still has many community-based women's organizations. The tremendous potentials of the Meitei women have been demonstrated in the ways how they have reacted to given situations arising out of socio-political issues. Because of their

peculiar positions, these potentials have been distinctively displayed at the public realm confining themselves just to the "power to resist" and also to some extent control. The tremendous empowering potentials exist within the bigger unquestioned peritrichal structure. When it comes to political decision making, the women rarely figure in the picture. Having taken cognizance of the existence and the vast potentials that the Meitei women have, there are some issues that needs to be highlighted. Does the acquisition of a vast social capital by Meitei women necessarily translate into at the least the idea of empowerment? By empowerment here, I am referring to multi-pronged social processes by the women themselves that helps them gain control over their own lives. This process entails not only the acquisition of social capital but also the power for its effective use in a democratic order that balances gender inequality. The process of acquiring immense capital implies the power or the capacity to decide and implement for use in their own lives, their communities and in their society. For this, the women should have the power to decide and define what is important to them within or beyond the patriarchal social set up they belong to. The power to preserve solidarity and the power to resist as shown by the women in the history of Manipur have not translated into the power to decide in the body-politics of the Meitei society

beginning from the domestic to the public realm. The durability of the informal solidarity based networks may experience ruptures and disjuncture due to the impact of the new global order. It is here that there is a need to rethink on how do the Meitei women sustain the collective solidarity that binds them without the traditional forms of "socializing" the girl child. Modern education system as a tool for empowerment does not follow the traditional pattern of socialization and therefore has a definitive impact on how young girls grow up into women. There is a need for a creative fusion between tradition and modernity to make not only the social capital of Meitei women circulate but also have some purchasing power to decide. This fusion can be further enhanced by capturing the potentials of being able to stand collectively on ethical or moral grounds. It may be recalled that within the patriarchal Meitei society, women's collective voice always had a social sanction despite rigid social mores. And the auto-mechanism that has existed so far has not brought any damage or hindrance to the forms of solidarity as social capital. The solidarity based on informal relationship supported by traditional institutions has always backed the Meitei women. It is time they also take part in formal decision-making process and governance through both a declarative and deliberative policy by the government and the society at large. **(Concluded)**