

# Editorial

Imphal Thursday, September 29, 2016

## September and Lamyamba Irabot

It is now 65 years that Manipur's real leader Hijam Irabot has left us all. The month September is significant for us in the state of Manipur, as this is the month where Hijam Irabot was born (September 30, 1896). The pioneer leader went underground on September 21, 1948 and latter he left for heavenly abode on September 26, 1951. September indeed is a month that reminds us of our pioneer leader, who had cease all comfort of life for the cause of the working class people particularly the proletariat class.

A classless society with the proletariat on the forefront was the dream of our great Leader Hijam Irabot. For the cause the leader had waged a political war against the British colonial rule and then later against feudalistic nature of the Maharajah and the ruling capitalist class of Manipur. What makes different from this pioneer leader and the so call leaders of our days is that he was not lured by the prospect of the royal prerogatives and official facilities including the prestigious post of membership to the Sardar Panchayat Court that was being offered to him for having married princess Khomdonsana.

To Hijam Irabot, the war was not only against the external force which had colonized the nation state but it was rather against all forms of oppression and suppression committed under the feudalistic character of the system. He dreamt of a nation where every citizen has the right to live with dignity. His work for promotion of the culture, sports, literature and journalism is a reflection of his love towards this erstwhile nation state.

All his life the great leader had work for the cause of the people sacrificing every comfort of life. To convert his dream into reality he spearheaded various political movement starting from the grass hood level. He was the man behind the formation of students' federation, peasant union, women's organization and progressive party.

For his active role to bring about a reformed state, he was sent to prison many a times during the British colonial era. Later after the British left the nation state, Hijam Irabot was once again declared as a terrorist as his activities continued to be a threat to the Maharajah himself as well as the ruling capitalist. In recognition to the activities of this all time leader, the state is celebrating his Birth Anniversary across the state. A political Party - Communist Party of India (CPI) is taking the main initiative in organizing the day to commemorate the leader's birthday.

But one think we in the Imphal Times would like to remind is that, would the person who had sacrifices every comfort of life would be happy to see us celebrating the day without fulfilling any of his dream. Will our leader be happy if he sees the conditions of the peasant community or the working class people of this state? It is an open secret for each and one of us that a government posts are being bought with money, Rice meant to distribute to the poor appeared to be commodities for making quick easy money for the politicians, Cold storage construction is a fund for the government machineries and equipments and Fertilizers which are meant to be distributed to the farmers are being traded by some pseudo social workers for their own benefit; many people are driven out from their home stead in the name of development.

This is the state of our state. There is no doubt that our great leader Hijam Irabot would certainly shed tears in heaven seeing the reality.

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Date 30/8/16

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## Popular movements in colonial Manipur, 1891-1947

Manipur an erstwhile independent kingdom in South East Asia came under British colonial domination consequent upon her defeat in the eventful Anglo-Manipuri War in 1891. She formally became a part of India since 15<sup>th</sup> October 1949 which was described as signed under duress. Though Manipur got defeated yet it didnot directly annexed into the British Empire. Rather she was put under the system of indirect rule by restoring the monarchy. Under the system of indirect rule, no colonial official was allowed to undertake any major reform or changes. Through this system the British colonial authorities could extend their Influence without the economic and political costs of direct annexation. If there was any necessity for affecting changes it was done in the name of the king of Manipur. In other words the colonial authorities exercised authority without responsibility.

After the war of 1891 it was expected that Manipur would be annexed to the British-India. However the British authorities had other schemes in their mind and accordingly native rule was reestablished in the state by appointing Churachand Singh a young boy of about five years old and a great grandson of Nar Singh the late king of Manipur. During the minority of Churachand, administration of the state was carried out in his name by Maxwell, the British political agent in Manipur. The regency administration operated in the state from 1891 to 1907 and this period was fully utilized for making all major decisions and also introduced several changes in the administrative set up of the native state which the raja even after his formal installation of the gaddi of Manipur with full power would find impossible to change. During

this regency period, Maxwell, the political agent and superintendent of the state dictated by imperial interest introduced a number of new socio-economic measures which affected the people in different ways.

People's response to the administrative changes and policies of the colonial authority were of mixed feelings. The abolition of slavery and lallup system freed people from servitude and introduction of patty system in land enabled common people to own land however were subjected to strict payment of land tax. The imposition of annual house tax in lieu of lallup, the forcible disarmament of local populace, unpopularity of the new ruler which was appointed against the wishes and expectations of the people coupled with the declining authority of the Rajkumars and Brahmins made the new regime unpopular in the eyes of the people. To worsen the situation, the free trade policy adopted by local officials under whom huge quantity of rice was exported outside the state without any restraint created an economic crisis and acute scarcity of rice in Manipur by the beginning of 1904. Thus people began to feel the impact of colonial rule in Manipur and a conflict between the people and the authority was imminent.

On the night of 6 July 1904 the women market at Khwairamband (the main market) with twenty eight sheds were burnt down by some unidentified persons. Again on the 15<sup>th</sup> of the same month the official bungalows of two colonial officials were burnt down. Further on the 4<sup>th</sup> of August another bungalow was burnt down after midnight. Taking a serious note of these acts of incendiarism, Maxwell issued an order that the people of Imphal

should make contributions towards rebuilding of the bungalows. Maxwell further announced the stationing of a punitive force at Imphal for which expenses have to be borne by the people if his orders are not carried out. However, people considered Maxwell's order as an act of punishment under the lallup system which had been abolished long ago.

The people in and around Imphal were not prepared to accept such unreasonable orders of the authority. A big protest meeting attended by about 5000 people was held near cheirap court on 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1904. Prohibitory order was issued from the side of administration. However paying no heed to the order the meeting continued and resolved to oppose the orders of the government to rebuild the bungalows. As a reaction to this the authorities arrested six persons belonging to Rajkumar families. They were tried and charged for instigating against the government and Maxwell passed an order for expulsion of the Rajkumars outside Manipur.

As a reaction to the actions of the administration on September 3, 1904 thousands of women at the market came out spontaneously and began to launch demonstration. Hence it may be mentioned that women of Manipur had played a crucial role in socio-economic life of the state throughout history. Having felt that the colonial authorities are acting in an unjust manner the agitation of the womenfolk continued for several days. During the days of agitation the main market remained closed and situation became so serious that the government was compelled to requisition forces from outside the state. Security forces resorted to lathi charge against the demonstrators and many got

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injured. On the other hand the issue became so serious that administration could not be carried out smoothly and normal life in the capital came to a complete halt. Under these compelling circumstances the government decided to withdraw order for the reconstruction of the houses. Thus the women of Imphal could achieve what their male counterparts could not accomplish. This event of 1904 came to be popularly known as Nupial Ahnaba (First women's war) in the history of Manipur. Though short lived it paved the way for future anti-imperialist movement in the state.

The next episode in the history of popular movement in Manipur came from the southern hills of Manipur which was more widespread and more violent was the Kuki rebellion. The rebellion of 1917 is an act of open challenge to British imperialism in the state which successfully exposed the shallowness of British control over Manipur. The immediate cause of the movement was the forced labour recruitment policy of the government to raise a labour corps for the allied forces during the First World War. The economic hardship of the people faced during the colonial rule, penetration of monetised economy in the hills, coming of Christian missionaries under colonial patronage, the decreasing power and authority of the traditional chiefs and dubious power and authority of lambus (a mere interpreter) pertaining to hill affairs caused lot of discontentment among the Kuki tribes. (To be contd.....)

### National & International News

## Pakistan defence minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif threatens to unleash nukes against India

New Delhi, Sept. 29: Islamabad is open to using tactical devices — a reference to tactical nuclear weapons that Pakistan is believed to possess — against India if it feels its safety is threatened, Pakistani defence minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif said in an interview to Pakistani TV channel SAMAA. "Tactical weapons joh hain, joh hamne yeh progammes develop kiya hua hai, yeh apne hifazat ke liye develop kiya hua hai. Hamne devices joh hain just as showpieces toh nahin rakhe hue. Lekin agar hamare salamati ko khatra hua, toh hum nestanabud kar denge unko (Tactical weapons, our programmes that we have developed, they have

been developed for our protection. We haven't kept the devices that we have just as showpieces. But if our safety is threatened, we will annihilate them (India)." Asif said in the interview, telecast on September 26. He had made a similar comment on Geo TV on September 17, a day before the terrorist attack in Uri. Asif's latest salvo comes soon after the Indian Army's brigade headquarters in Uri, Jammu & Kashmir, was attacked by terrorists on September 18, resulting in the deaths of 18 soldiers. The four attackers were also killed. India has since handed over evidence to Pakistani high commissioner Abdul

Basit that the terrorists were from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Pakistan defence minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif has made threatening references before to the option of nuclear strikes against India. The statements, emanating from the minister, are an alarming reminder of Pakistan's position on the use of nuclear weapons. In an interview with Geo TV on September 17, when TV on September 17, when asked if he thought there was a threat of war, Asif answered, "I don't think there is any such threat but as Allah has said in the Quran, 'The horses must be prepared', so we should always be completely prepared. There is also a fa mous

English proverb, 'The price of freedom is eternal vigilance'. We are always pressurised (sic) time and again... that we have more tactical weapons than we need. It is internationally recognised that we have a superiority, and if there is a threat to our security, or if anyone steps on our soil and if someone's designs are a threat to our security, we will not hesitate to use those weapons for our defence." Asked if Pakistan could use atomic weapons in case of a war with India, he had replied, "This depends on the situation...but if our defence and survival is (sic) in danger, then we should use everything. What is there to fear?"

## 32 People Missing In China Landslides Following Typhoon

Beijing, Sept. 29: At least 32 people were reported missing on Thursday after rain-saturated hillsides collapsed onto villages in southeastern China following a typhoon. A rescue operation was underway in Sucun village in China's Zhejiang province, south of the financial hub of Shanghai, after it was hit by a landslide on Wednesday evening, leaving 26 missing, the state-run Xinhua News Agency reported. Another six people are missing in Baofeng village, also in Zhejiang, after a landslide destroyed their homes. The landslides were triggered by torrential rain brought by Typhoon Megi, which lashed southeastern China on Wednesday. The storm had already killed at least five people in China and Taiwan, and forced the closure of schools and offices and the cancellation of hundreds of flights. State broadcaster CCTV showed rescue crews, accompanied by sniffer dogs, combing through piles

of mud and rock in the mountainous, forested areas. Megi caused more than \$10 million in damage as it swept across Taiwan before weakening into a tropical storm after hitting the coastal city of Quanzhou in China's Fujian province early Wednesday. At its height, it was packing winds of up to 118 kilometers (74 miles) per hour, China's National Meteorological Center said.

In Fuzhou, Fujian's capital, people were shown on state television walking through knee-deep waters that had swamped major roads. Rescue workers were seen pulling stranded residents through the streets on inflatable boats. Taiwan's Central Emergency Operations Center reported that 625 people were injured by Megi, including eight Japanese tourists whose tour bus flipped on its side.

Three people suffered fatal falls and a fourth person died in a truck crash, Taiwan's Central Emergency Operations Center said. Megi dropped 300 millimeters (12 inches) of rain in the south and eastern mountains of Taiwan, and more than 220 flights were canceled at Taiwan's Taoyuan International Airport. It was the fourth typhoon to hit Taiwan this year and the third in two weeks.

## Air India to increase flights to Australia

Melbourne, Sep 29: Air India will introduce three more flights on the Australia-India air route next year, increasing the frequency to 10 flights per week after receiving an overwhelming response. "The response to Air India's non-stop Dreamliner between Delhi and Sydney-Melbourne has been overwhelming and we will be deploying the additional capacity on this route in the second quarter of 2017," Air India chairman and managing director Ashwani

Lohani, said. Currently, India's national carrier operates seven flights a week to Sydney and Melbourne, which will increase the frequency to 10 from next year. The triangular air service between Sydney, Melbourne and Delhi was launched in 2013 but currently operates four weekly flights using Boeing 787 Dreamliner from New Delhi to Sydney and three flights weekly using Boeing 787 from Delhi to Melbourne. According to official figures, last year 29 per cent of visitors on Australia-

India route travelled on Singapore Airlines followed by 21 per cent on Malaysia Airlines while 12 per cent of travellers used Air India. Australia, a leisure holiday destination, is favourite among Indian tourists for its Sydney Opera House, Great Barrier Reef, the vast Outback (interior desert wilderness) and unique animal species, including kangaroos. The geographically vast country provides sightseers with aquatic, coastal, nature and wildlife experiences, among other attractions.