

Editorial

Will the final settlement with NSCN-IM be a betrayal to Manipur?

"Hypocrisy can afford to be magnificent in its promises; for never intending to go beyond promises, it cost nothing"
Edmund Burke.

People across the North East Indian, particularly those in the state of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh are having keen watch to the development of the peace talk between rebel group NSCN-IM and the Government of India. Many felt the necessities of solving the issue on the perception that peace will be restored in the region. It's been nearly 2 decades that the talk is being held and after the signing of the "Framework Agreement" between the GoI and the NSCN-IM on August 3, 2016, followed by the series of meeting between the Rebel and the India Government shows that the decades long crisis between the two is nearing to find a solution. Well and good, there is every reason to appreciate both the leadership of the NSCN-IM and that of the India Government over its effort to find a lasting solution. What is unfortunate is the failure to publicise the content of the Framework agreement and also the recent statement of the India's interlocutor RN Ravi, at which he stated that there is no exact time frame for signing of the final agreement. This is a clear message to show that it is likely to take some more times, perhaps years to ink the final settlement.

In the meantime, the emergence of another group of hill base militants the UPF and the KNO, which were engaged in peace talk with the government of India and Government of Manipur. Their demand for formation of a separate administrative unit for Hill region is no exception and is synonymous to the demand of a separate state.

The talk is going on and finding a lasting solution as per the wisdom of those advising and directly involved in dealing by engaging talk with the militants is what the Government at the centre is expecting.

Insurgency or militancy is a big hurdle for the Central government leadership as it is fast growing in building good relations with various countries across the world. There is no doubt that India is fast growing and is becoming a super power country. This growing country under the leadership of Narendra Modi will surely act on things to make no room for any countries around the world for criticism. And this is one reason for us to bring up this issue as there is apprehension that the demands put up by NSCN-IM and that of the UPF and KNO are fulfilled by not violating the promises it made to the people of Manipur before election for the preservation of the territorial integrity.

Well the administrators of the India government are no fools. Keeping intact the Manipur's Territorial Integrity is what they had promise and there will be no breach in the promises in granting a 6th Schedule type status to claim Naga areas as well as granting of Autonomous District Council status as par with the Bodoland Autonomous Council.

To the Manipuris, particularly the meiteis and those in the valley area and some voiceless people from the Hills (the claimed area by the militants) granting of autonomous status or granting of 6th Scheduled is no difference from segregating the erstwhile kingdom into pieces. It is will no less than betrayal to the people of the state by those in the government.

RN Ravi might give a shrewd statement by saying that no time frame is made for signing of the agreement with the NSCN-IM. But the fact is that it is happening soon.

If it happens, Manipur might be in fire again making the issue more complicated. We now refrain from asking the authority to reveal the contents of the framework agreement. But be sure to maintain the peace and harmony which has been restored in the state after your BJP led government come to the power in the state.

AFSPA Gesture and Better Alternative

By JN Lai

Delhi has shown a gesture that AFSPA can be lifted by the State Government of Manipur and Assam if they desire to do so. How it can be construed?

Make a temporary human rights pact to the international communities to enable to get India a Permanent Member seat in the UN Security Council.

The BJP government in Delhi wants to showcase their goof feeling to the electorates.

Extend Confidence Building Measures to CORCOM and concerned stakeholders of the armed conflict of the two states.

Add another bargaining dimension to the complex context of NSCN-IM peace talk.

Minimize the unpredictable Chinese influence on the political armed organizations (PAO) of the two states.

Although the things are not sure of - it may be a pertinent point towards the long standing questions like: -

Has New Delhi, (being the bigger stake holder of conflict in the North East India) shown meaningful and sincere response to the political armed organizations in the region? Does the situation demand a conducive atmosphere and Confidence Building Measures towards initiating productive dialogue? Why there fails Collaborative Approach to enjoy the win-win experiences?

Nowadays many think the narrative about armed conflict of Manipur and NE is becoming less relevant, for it is looking forward to violence free and economically wellbeing direction. However, this is a usual fact that if roots are not properly dealt the offshoots will sprout now and again.

In regard to the armed conflict situation in Manipur and NE there are dynamics and concerns floating

over and going undercurrent.

Too big is India to acknowledge fairly the torment of North Easterners and attend adequately the woes of the others. India has already got galore of haywire system for their own in the mainland. The disability is too big to reset the legislation, executive and judiciary in places. Hence, realizing the fact of mammoth limitations of India, it will be a rational move for NE to initiate something to mitigate the reality bites from the mainland.

It looks very visible that New Delhi has been waiting for some sort of natural death of the political armed movement to be happened sooner or later. However it is very likely that waiting games may not be fulfilled so wishfully, maybe because of patriotic retention among Manipuri bloods, and seen, unseen forces of China and others. Even the form of movement may migrate from armed struggle to democratic endeavor.

Armed groups may also be waiting for domestic crumbling of India on her own in terms of splitting her territory into three or more or political paralysis triggered by Hindu fundamentalism, colossal corruption, indigent governance, corporate game, etc. (Although the recent Modi-wave is working at some extent so some changes are on the horizon in fixing Hindu nation.)

Political Armed Organizations might have well visualized India - How her might is, what she intends to, and certainly have experienced the amount of her commitment and quality in handling peace and justice. Likewise India dissects the weaknesses and strengths of the PAOs. More or less she is familiar with the psychology, what the organizations combating for, which organizations want what, how easy and difficult to deal with.

In the light of the above equations - What about an architecture towards an alternative resolution though sounds rhetoric and ambitious?

1. A unification of the (principal) Political Armed Oppositions of North East India by investing all their resources, drives and sincerity towards giving birth to a new (Nation) State sharing negotiable configuration with the Republic of India.

2. The other NE states which have low intensity of armed conflict or absent of PAOs will also be invited to. Those have not joined at the inception may be considered later. Thus, it will capacitate a desired inclusiveness of the communities of NE and even beyond. [Necessarily all the present seven/eight states may not be part of.]

3. The name of the new State may be called the United Peoples Land of Indo Myanmar - UPLIM or New Sub-Himalayan Land - NESH LAND or Western Southeast Asia - WESEA.

4. In order to legislate for and govern the UPLIM/NESH LAND/WESEA, and to practice a good socialism, and to deliver fundamental rights of life, liberty, equality and dignity to the peoples of the new State, there will be a Parliament that may be called Peoples House (PH). [The structure and modus operandi of the PH may be considered and derived from the other parliamentary practices of the world.]

5. Currency may be retained with the Republic of India with validating the Euro and US dollar in the region; Communication, Defense, External Affairs, Natural Resources may be negotiated towards a concurrent list; and the rest could be better in the PH affairs.

6. The key members or leaders of the PAOs, and from the other states where PAOs do not exist, political/

social leaders will be member representatives in the Parliament/ PH [whom may be called People Representative (PR)]

7. The modality of how and what numbers of PRs may be determined by considering various basis and will be settled democratically among PAOs in consultation with the NE communities/peoples

by considering the optimum economic-political space of ethnic/indigenous minority. [Will Bodo, Karbi, Naga, Kuki, Meetei, etc., have one PR for each of them or will drop down to ancestral tribal communities and clans or will it based on the population ratio?]

8. The first five year tenure of the PRs may be reserved and compensated for the PAOs, afterwards PRs will be elected through universal franchise by their respective peoples/communities or otherwise.

9. The existing State Assemblies will remain, so do the participation of the MLAs in the UPLIM provincial governing activities in two houses setting. However it will be with the reformation of power division and functional sharing and in conjugation with PH structure. [It may minimize the outward dismay and eventual turbulent of the existing political personalities and parties.]

10. A wider candidature in the existing constituent assemblies election will be validated to accommodate the members and leaders of PAOs by migrating their organizations into electoral political parties or joining existing parties or floating new ones. Thus it may extend a meaningful participation in the governing activities for the new (Nation) State.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at International College, University of Suwon, S. Korea)

National & International News

Soon, police verification for passport to go online

Courtesy PTI

New Delhi, Aug. 22: The time taken for police verification for passports will soon be considerably reduced with the linking of CCTNS with the MEA's passport service, a senior official said on Monday.

The Crime and Criminal Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) is being linked with the passport service that will enable online verification of passport applicants, Union Home Secretary Rajiv Mehriishi said.

Under the new system, police officers will be given handheld devices that

will enable them to go to an applicant's place and quickly upload their address and other details into the network, he said.

"It will minimise contact with police and reduce time by doing away with physical movement of relevant documents, especially in cases of interstate verification," Mehriishi told reporters here.

He also said that the government envisages to soon link various organs of criminal justice system such as police, courts, forensic laboratories, finger prints, prisons and juvenile

homes with CCTNS database.

The CCTNS is a national database of crimes and criminals that was started in 2009 and currently connects 14,284 police stations out of the total 15,398 across the country.

Out of 36 states and union territories, 35 are sharing CCTNS database containing seven crore records that includes 2.5 crore FIRs.

Earlier, Home Minister Rajnath Singh launched a digital police portal under the CCTNS project that will enable citizens to register FIRs online.

The portal will initially offer seven

public delivery services including person and address verification of employees and tenants, permission for hosting public events and vehicle theft among other things.

It will also enable restricted access to law enforcement agencies on topics such as antecedent verification. Mehriishi said the portal will provide investigator the complete record history of any criminal from anywhere across the country. He said the software offers Google-type advanced search option and offers 11 kinds of search and 44 types of reports.

Two IMA cadets take ill during training exercise, die

Courtesy PTI

Dehradun, Aug. 22: Two gentlemen Cadets (GCs) from the Dehradun-based Indian Military Academy (IMA) died after falling ill during a training course due to "exhaustion and dehydration", the academy authorities said on Monday. The deaths took place on Friday and Saturday.

Seven GCs fell ill "due to dehydration" during Friday's 10-km

run held under the 'Pahla Kadam' exercise, conducted in Badshahi Bagh area of Saharanpur district of Uttar Pradesh. Of the seven, Deepak Sharma (22) from Bathinda, Punjab, was rushed to the nearest local hospital in Vikasnagar, in Dehradun district, in a "critical" condition, where he died the same day.

The remaining six were sent to the Military Hospital in Dehradun. Of them, Nabin Kumar Chhetri (23) from

Darjeeling, West Bengal, was referred to Dehradun-based Shri Mahant Indresh Hospital, where he died late Saturday night, according to a statement issued by the IMA on Monday.

The remaining five GCs admitted at the Military Hospital are "stable", the academy stated.

"Postmortem reports of the two cadets are awaited but prima facie evidence indicates that the deaths occurred due to heart failure,"

Dehradun Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Nivedita Kukreti said. The cadets were in the fresh batch of GCs at IMA and were undertaking training course to leave the academy as Lieutenant-rank officers. The 'Pahla Kadam' exercise was part of the course to test endurance and build stamina of the GCs. While Sharma was undergoing training in Technical Graduate Course, Chhetri was in the Regular Course.

Prominent Indian-origin journalist ousted as LA Times editor

Courtesy PTI

New York, Aug. 22: A prominent journalist of Indian-descent has been fired as the editor of the Los Angeles Times after serving 28 years at the news organisation, as part of a significant shake-up of the American daily's top management.

Davan Maharaj, who served as both editor and publisher since 2016, was terminated along with other senior editors of the daily. "Maharaj was terminated along with a handful of other senior editors, including Managing Editor Marc Duvoisin, Deputy Managing Editor for Digital Megan Garvey and Assistant Managing Editor of Investigations Matt Doig," a report

in the LA Times said.

A native of Trinidad, Maharaj began his journey at the paper as a summer intern in 1989 and worked as a reporter in Orange County, Los Angeles and East Africa. He had later served as assistant foreign editor, business editor and managing editor. A six-part series 'Living on Pennies' done by Maharaj in collaboration with photographer Francine Orr, won the 2005 Ernie Pyle Award for Human Interest Writing and prompted readers to donate tens of thousands of dollars to support aid agencies in Africa.

While Maharaj was editor, The Times won three Pulitzer Prizes,

including for breaking news reporting of the 2015 terrorist attack in San Bernardino.

"During the last 28 years, it has been an honour working with the best journalists in a great American newspaper," Maharaj said in an email, quoted in the LA Times report.

"They are indomitable, and I wish them well in their continued fight to serve our community. I'm proud of the work we've done," he added. Ross Levinsohn, a veteran media executive who worked at Fox and had served as interim chief of Yahoo, was named publisher and chief executive of the 135-year-old LA Times. Jim Kirk, who was publisher and

editor of the Chicago Sun-Times until last week, was named interim editor.

The move was announced by Justin C Dearborn, chief executive of Tronc, the parent company of The Times and eight other daily newspapers as part of the organisation's plans to invest more resources towards ushering it into the digital age. The report added that the shake-up came just one month after an investigative report was published in The Times that revealed that the former dean of the University of Southern California Keck School of Medicine had partied with a prostitute and drug dealers, including on campus.

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