

Editorial

Corruption Still a menace to our society

The scourge of corruption has been one almost everybody in the state has had the unfortunate opportunity to experience it. This all pervading social malaise has been acknowledged, reported and discussed, but till now precious little has been done to ease its frightening grip on the society. And for the intrepid few who dare tread the dangerous path to unveiling the mask of the corruptors, the conclusion has almost always been the same- engineered confusion and institutional indecision leading such laudable efforts to be an exercise in futility. That the practice of corruption has been deeply institutionalized in the system would be stating the obvious and a fact made redundant by its ubiquitous nature.

The setting up of anti-corruption cell by the new N. Biren Singh regime has served some purpose but not all. The scourge is increasingly becoming a crippling experience for the state, especially at the backdrop of the increasingly volatile social atmosphere.

As serious and insidious as the problem is proving to be, there has never been any worthwhile or concerted effort to remedy it. While the number of individuals openly condemning the many reports and instances of corruption has been on the rise, thanks in no small measure to social medias and other interactive platforms, institutional reforms or efforts has been sorely lacking. There is a plausible explanation for the same- that corruption is being bred and nurtured within the very system that generates power and authority. Corruption results from a structure that can be manipulated. The two might be regarded as the two sides of the same coin, given the fact that where power resides, there is bound to be corruption, for at the heart of the matter lie the irrefutable truth that corruption is a result of inequalities, of imbalances in power and authority and the insatiable urge of men to collect wealth and riches not warranted by the power and authority vested in them by the society. In other words, corruption means the practice of obtaining power, influence, or other personal gains through illegitimate means, often at others' expense. While the situation looks gloomy, there also remains the fact that corruption is a practice as old as civilization itself, and that despite the years, there are still institutions and systems which have managed to fend off or reduce the menace to a great extent. Taking a leaf out of such government institutions and systems, we need to build on the principles and procedures which will elevate the problem to a manageable level, because truth be told, eradicating corruption completely would be an impossible ideal and wishful thinking. A more pragmatic approach would be to build a sub-system of checks and balances into the system to counter the present practices and the procedures that enables such practices to continue and flourish.

Beside the Anti -corruption Cell, another approach would be to raise awareness of the various devices made available for individuals to check the menace at the personal or individual level- the PIL (Public Interest Litigation) and RTI (Right to Information), along with a proactive and earnest print and electronic media, could prove very effective in stemming the tide and keeping things in check for now.

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The Story Of 40 Pineapple Suckers

Seventy years down the line, yet all is not well and there are mounting problems being faced by the farmers' community. To begin with, transportation is always a headache for the farmers as there are hardly good and motorable roads within the periphery of the sprawling pineapple farms. In the absence of modern transportation, the farmers have to transport the harvested pineapple by traditional means, carrying the pineapple basket (palbawm) on their back. Secondly, marketing is another problem being faced by the farmers. With no semblance of large scale fruit processing industry hindsight in the state, pineapple have to be sold in open market only for human consumption, which limits the selling capacity and the price of pineapple are being compromised, much to the agony of the farmers. The Queen variety of pineapple, which are harvested in the month of June is predominantly found in Thoubal and Imphal East.

The Khouasbung Experience:

Even as Khouasbung DCC area is the largest producer of pineapple in Manipur, the area has been unfortunately one of the most "neglected" area in terms of development and governance for nearly half a century. Although Khouasbung has given the state a pride of place in the field of pineapple cultivation, on the other hand, the government is yet to deliver its due to the people. Decades of apathy and lackadaisical approach of the successive governments all these years have resulted in Khouasbung DCC as the most "backward" area in the whole of Manipur.

Notwithstanding the fact that the people of Khouasbung area worked and toiled through thick and thin, braving the mercurial sun and rains. A true reflection of their grit and determination in upholding the spirit of "dignity of labour", they have chosen the profession for the last 70 years, giving an "alternative" livelihood mission, pioneering a profession since India's Independence.

Even as Khouasbung area is the largest producer of pineapple in the state, giving Manipura a rightful place in the field of pineapple cultivation in India, howsoever, Khouasbung is one of the most "backward" and "neglected" area till today by successive Government, one after the other. It's high time that the Government compensate "more than 50 years of apathy and negligence" by delivering "justice" to the people whom they have been "swear" to serve them.

Basically, there are three "Es" which can transform and take Khouasbung and its surrounding areas to a giant new leap forward as under:

1. Administrative Empowerment: Khouasbung and its surrounding areas may be able to see the light of development and taste the fruit of India's freedom by "Empowering" them with necessary administrative

macheneries. This can be achieved by creating Khouasbung as a "special" zone and establishing Government's administrative wing such as Additional Deputy Commissioner (ADC) or atleast creation of Khouasbung Sub - Division for speedy progress and holistic development. In such scenario, the Government representative, say the ADC or SDO can best deliver the Government's agenda at the grassroots level, resulting in transforming the "backward" area to a "model" colony or region of Mother Manipur.

2. Infrastructural Empowerment: Khouasbung area is still lacking in basic infrastructural amenities, though they have been the largest producer of pineapple in Manipur. Towards this end, the role of Government is imperative, with setting up of "Fruit Processing Centre" to yield added value of pineapple, leading to economic boom for the farmers and pushing up the state's GDP higher-up, besides generating hundreds of employment avenues in toto.

3. Financial Empowerment: There is no basic financial institutions in Khouasbung area till today. Although there are about 400 pineapple farmers who worked and toiled through day in and day out, however, they are denied financial saving sans financial institutions. The much talked of "Financial Inclusion" is still a wild dream for the farmers of Khouasbung area as there is not a single banking sector in the area. Opening of financial institutions such as State Bank of India (SBI) may be given top priority.

The Final Call:

Seventieth year of Pineapple cultivation and a decade of grassroots movement, in the form and style of Manipur Pineapple Festival, howsoever, it is sad but true that there has been lacked of zeal and enthusiasm from the Government to promote horticulture crops and the farming community per se. In the midst of changing political dynamism, there is however a silver lining of hopes for the future. It is, therefore, interesting to note that the success of India's Act East Policy, particularly in the case of Manipur will solely rest with the success of horticulture crops and availability of indigenous products for outside exports. The clarion call is crystal clear: Act Now or Never. An administrative mechanism that links the Government and the people is the need of the hour.

(The writer is a journalist and Founding Honorary Secretary of Manipur Pineapple Festival Committee, Manipur. A Master's in Political Science and a recipient of "Jewel of India" Award, he has been honoured with the degree of "Doctor of Humanity" (Honoris Causa). He can be reached at gingangte@gmail.com, Facebook @ Gin Gange/ Twitter @ GinGangte)

পাওজেন্জবা



Shri Khumukcham Mangi Singh,
Retd. Dy. Commandant, 1st IRB
Govt. of Manipur
(Expired on 23/8/2017)

চৰম্বিৰা August 23, ইং 2017, সাংবনগী মিনি চনবা
মুমশাকৈশা নুমিঙা ঐশ্বয় ঝাইবু কোম্বীৰম্বা Shri
Khumukcham Mangi Singh, Retd. Dy.
Commandant, 1st IRB- Govt. of Manipur, মাগী
নুম্বিঙৰবা ইমুং- মনুং, শাগৈ- নাটৈ অমদি মনুং- মপাং
ঝাই পুনমকপু খাদেঙেঙপা ঐম্বোৱ গী খুয়াদা চংজুঙে।

লাক্ৰিৰা August 28, ইং 2017, নিংখৌকাবা নুমিঙা
অষ্টি সঙ্কৰ লৌখংচৰগা লাক্ৰিৰা September 5, ইং
2017, লৈপাকপোকপা নুমিঙা ব্ৰাহ্ম দিন থোঙে।
নুমিঙ অসিদা লৈখিঙৰবাগী আত্ৰা শান্তিগীদমক ঙমজবা
স্বৰদং শ্ৰীশ্ৰীগৌৱচন্দ্ৰ মহাপ্ৰভুগী চৰন্দা শ্ৰীহৰি সঙ্কিঙগা
লোয়ননা কচ্চগদৌৱি।
ঐশ্বয়নিদি শৰংজহৌদৰবা লৈখিঙৰবা লোয়নিবনুং ঝাই
খিবিবিনা হৰিনাম শবন তৌবা ঝাঙবিননবা ISTV গী
পোংদা পাওজেন্জৰি।

পাওজেন্জৰিৰি

খুমুকচম ঙংবি ইবেচাঙবি দেবি (সহস্ৰম্বীনি)
মচা মনুশিং, অমসুং ইমুং মনং শিং।

Keishamthong Thangjam Leirak, Imphal

Certificates and Mark Sheets lost

I, the undersigned, have lost my Original Certificate and Mark Sheet for my class X examination issued by the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur (BOSEM) bearing Roll No. 33781 of 2014 and also my Original Certificate and Mark Sheet for my class XII Science examination bearing Roll No. 9978 of 2016 issued by COHSEM on the way between Paona Bazar Imphal To Imphal Tulihal Airport on 25/07/2017.

Finders are requested to handover the admit card to the undersigned.

Sd/-

Denim Thiyam

Sagolband Tera Akham Leikai, Imphal.

RC book lost

I, the undersigned have lost my registration certificate for my 2 wheeler Maestro vehicle bearing Registration No. MN 01 - L 0393 on 8/10/2017 on the way between Elangbam Leikai to Paona Bazar.

Finders are requested to kindly hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-

Kh. Dineshwori Devi

Keishamthong Elangbam leikai, Imphal

National & International News

Thai ex-PM Yingluck skips court, arrest warrant issued

AFP Bangkok, Aug 25: Thai ex-prime minister Yingluck Shinawatra missed a court appearance in a negligence trial today that could have seen her jailed, prompting the Supreme Court to issue an arrest warrant fearing she is a flight risk.

Thousands of supporters - outnumbered by security forces - waited for a glimpse of Thailand's first female prime minister, but she did not show, prompting fevered speculation that she may have joined her billionaire brother Thaksin in self-exile.

"Her lawyer said she is sick and asked to delay the ruling... the court does not believe she is sick... and has decided to issue an arrest warrant,"

fearing she may flee the country, lead judge Cheep Chulamon told the court, rescheduling the verdict to September 27.

Yingluck's government was removed by a military coup in 2014.

If convicted for negligence over a flagship rice subsidy policy, she faces up to 10 years in prison and a life ban from politics.

"I was told at 8am that she was sick from Meniere's disease and felt vertigo, so she asked the court to postpone," her lawyer Norawit Larleng, told a throng of reporters outside the court.

He added "I don't know," when asked whether she was still in Thailand. Yingluck's brother, Thaksin

Shinawatra also a former premier, fled Thailand in 2008 before he was convicted of graft and handed a two year jail term. He has not returned since and his Thai passport has been revoked, instead he is believed to use a Montenegrin passport to travel between homes in Dubai, London, Hong Kong and Singapore.

Thailand is deeply divided between the Shinawatras and their political base, which is mainly drawn from the rural poor, and a royalist army-aligned elite, who loathe the clan and refuse to cede power to democratic governments. Thaksin remains a galvanising force for his party, which has been battered by coups, mass protests — including

the seizure of Bangkok's airports in 2008 — and legal cases.

A conviction for Yingluck, 50, would be a gut punch to the Shinawatra political dynasty.

They have clung on in Thailand's treacherous political game for more than a decade despite two coups, deadly protests, a cascade of law cases and asset seizures.

Yingluck's flagship rice subsidy poured cash on her family's rural political heartland, paying up to twice the market rate for the grain. But it was beset by graft and led to billions of dollars of losses.

She has pleaded not guilty to the charges, saying she is the victim of a "subtle political game."

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