

Editorial

Imphal Monday, February 6, 2017

Diabolic effect

The unsettled dispute between the government of Manipur and the UNC should not be sideline due to the upcoming state assembly election. Any political parties, whichever is in the government both at Center as well as at the state should not try to take advantage of the dispute that finally has hindered peaceful co-existence among the various people of the state?

Tomorrow is February 7, and as per the declaration in the aftermath of the tripartite talk held at New Delhi, the UNC will announce its stand on whether it will lift the blockade or not.

If one goes to the timeline of UNC's series of agitation it is hard to believe that the organization which is alleged as the frontal body of the armed rebel group NSCN-IM presently ensuing in peace talk with the government of Manipur, will in no way lift the economic blockade or roll back its agitation. For an incisive political decision would hurt the political strategy of the NSCN-IM.

On August 13, 2015, Imphal Times had carried a news report about the leaked preamble of the "Frame Work Agreement" signed between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM leadership.

Even as the report was not seriously looked upon by both the people of the state as well as the government machineries, we had high lighted the dream of the NSCN-IM.

The leaked preamble of the framework agreement signed at the residence of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi content eight points. A separate constitution for Nagalim, Sepaerate flag, Sepaerate Naga Passport, Permanent UN Representation, Joint Foreign Affairs, Joint Defence/military, currency and Pan-Naga Government to cover to all the Naga inhabited areas.

If the UNC which has been agitating and supporting the cause of the NSCN-IM rolls back its agitation then definitely, the so call pan-naga government agreed between the NSCN-IM and the government of India will be just another joke.

Point wanted to make here is that the blatant lie to garner support to the respective political parties in the upcoming state assembly election will only bring miseries to the people of the state. Instead of going for a lasting solution, playing with the sentiments of the people will only meant an invitation for catastrophe.

Development and change is the poll plank for BJP, as stated by Ram Madhav, the General Secretary of BJP yesterday. If it is so why the central government is still keeping the content of the framework agreement in darkness. The content though unofficially reported by Imphal Times, why it is not officially let known to all the citizen of the country particularly the people of the state of Manipur.

Has the BJP has some agenda in North Eastern states particularly Manipur to the signing of the framework agreement with the NSCN-IM. Is this political party going to use the outfit if suppose it wins less seat in the upcoming poll? Everyone knows that people of the state are fed up with the corrupt an autocratic congress government under the leadership of Chief Minister Okram Ibobi, but the so call collaboration by BJP with the NSCN-IM has left the people with no choice but to once more support Ibobi led congress government. Reason - Manipur is first for all Manipuris and political parties come next for the people.

Is Democracy in India a farce?

By : Satyen K. Bordoloi

The happiness of a simpleton Bodo man from a village near Guwahati knew no bounds. While others showed the election ink mark on one finger, he held out both his hands to show the mark on two fingers. "I went once but voted twice," he boasted. Before even being pressed to, he explained, "BJP workers gave me a ride to the polling station and asked me to press the lotus symbol which I did. But the polling officers chided me for my ingratitude saying it was the Congress that had initiated endless schemes for people like me so I should vote for them. They told me to go and this time press the hand symbol. I did and as reward they marked a second finger."

A woman of poor means in my neighbourhood in Mumbai, who hails from a village in the Karnataka-Tamil Nadu border, was unusually happy in the run-up to the elections. "Are you optimistic that a good government will come to power and solve all your problems?" I asked her. "I don't know about that," she began, "But it sure is good to receive gifts from different parties before elections in lieu of votes. So far three different parties in our village have given us different things and they have promised to give more if they won." Surprised, I asked, "If you have taken gifts from all of them, who will you vote for then?" "Why, the best candidate of course," she replied as if it was obvious.

On the 25th of April, a footage shown on a local TV channel in Assam, shocked the entire region (it would have shocked the entire nation if the North-East were not the perfect example for the 'out-of-sight-out-of-mind' syndrome for the rest of India). In it a young man at a polling booth in the Jalukbari area of Guwahati, allegedly a Congress worker, is seen pressing the EVM machine for a voter. The footage led to the arrest of most of the polling officers at the booth, the man who pressed the EVM and ironically even the Election Commission cameraman who shot the video. At

a repoll a few days later, the booth registered one of the highest turnout for any booth: 90.4 percent.

A friend in Mumbai told me about a few first time voters from an MBA college who inadvertently pressed the jhaado (broom) symbol of the Aam Aadmi Party when they actually wanted to vote for the lotus symbol of the BJP. When asked how these allegedly well-educated people could make such a dumb mistake, they said that a few days back they had heard Narendra Modi talk about sweeping the country clean of bad governance. When they were voting, they searched for Narendra Modi's name on the EVM machine in the Mumbai constituency but when they couldn't find it, they assumed that his symbol was the broom and pressed it.

If you are an average voters (even if you are an MBA as evident from the above example), it is almost impossible to not vote for Narendra Modi. He is everywhere on television, be it on ads, interviews on every news channel - national or local - or on the hourly news. If you switch off the television, you find him on full page ads in every single newspaper in the country. If you stop even that i.e. reading a newspaper, surely you cannot stop going out. And if you do, you will be bombarded with posters, starting from small A3 sized one to cinema-screen sized hoardings across almost every city in the country. Lets assume that you don't even go out, you will have to talk to someone at least and if you do, the word 'Modi' is bound to creep into the conversation. The Narendra Modi election campaign juggernaut is practically fool-proof. It is alleged that Modi has spent the same amount that Barack Obama. Factoring in the valuation difference between the two currencies means that effectively Modi has spent much more than Obama, making his campaign by far the most far-reaching, the most elaborate and the most expensive

one in the history of the world. Many questions arise in its wake. Can anyone survive this carpet bombing and not vote for him? Isn't this another form of coercion a psychological form of attack on the average voter? Is this voter really free to vote for anyone? Is the voter really making an informed choice when a overwhelming majority of information coming to him is from one party? Does so much money spent by one political party, make it a level playing field for others? These questions itself have no answers, forget a little deeper ones like where did so much money come from and what would Modi have to do to pay it back?

The Union Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar, in the end of March, had urged those voting for him to take advantage of the multi-phase polling in Maharashtra and vote twice, once in the place they work and then at their hometowns. He asked them to erase the ink mark first before voting again. This created a huge controversy and many claimed that this was a Freudian slip by the ex-Chief Minister of Maharashtra. However, it is literally the truth, not only in Maharashtra but many parts of the country as evidenced by the example of the Bodo man from Assam who voted twice.

These are just handful examples from hundreds of thousands as the election drama reached fever pitch in India. The question that is on every conscientious and thinking mind is this Indian democracy the most elaborate farce on the planet? No thinking person can escape the feeling that the very idea of democracy, especially in India, borders on farce. When people are not free to vote - with direct or indirect coercion begin exerted on them, when political parties hide a greater agenda than the interest of the country or the common man, when the masses are themselves not educated or aware enough to make a good, informed choice, can it be called a democracy and can such a voting process be called democratic?

These questions has led people to make a battle cry for benevolent-dictatorship not even realizing that the term itself is an oxymoron. Most of these 'well-meaning' people are now hell-bent upon 'democratically electing' a benevolent-dictator to rule India. Democracy and its institutions like the elections in India are not perfect, but it is still the best option we have. In the huge, varied nation that we are, perhaps the execution of democracy in its most ideal and idealized state is practically impossible and that we may only have a strong semblance of democracy in India. But even this 'strong semblance' is better than every other possible option.

R K Sidhwa, a member of the Constituent Assembly that made the Constitution of India, in one of the concluding speeches on the 17 November 1949, had said, "Adult franchise is the greatest risk which the Constituent Assembly has taken. I may tell the House it is the greatest risk for this reason that 85 per cent of our population is illiterate. Whatever it may be, Sir, we have taken the risk rightly. We had to take the risk and we have taken the risk. A democracy without adult franchise would have no meaning."

"The members of the Constituent Assembly looked at democracy as the fastest means of spreading social, economic and political revolution through the length and breadth of this vast nation. For 190 years we were suppressed by the British. For many thousand years before that a big part of this nation's population was suppressed by brutal social laws and customs. Democracy, in comparison, has had only 64 years to try and change the wrongs of thousands of years in India. It is time we pose a little more faith in it, and work our very best to make it better and stronger. Democracy is an idea. An idea works only if the people holding that idea do. Whether democracy in India becomes a farce or a faithful servant, is completely up to us to work towards and ensure."

Source : SIFY

National & International News

Tamil Nadu governor accepts resignation of O Panneerselvam, ministers

Chennai, Feb. 6: Tamil Nadu governor C Vidyasagar Rao on Monday accepted the resignation of chief minister O Panneerselvam and his council of ministers.

Hours after AIADMK MLAs unanimously elected party general secretary VK Sasikala as legislature party leader on Sunday, Panneerselvam tendered his resignation citing personal reasons. In a letter to Panneerselvam, the Governor said: "I hereby accept your

resignation and the resignation of your council of ministers tendered vide your letter dated February 5. I request you and the present council of ministers to function until alternate arrangements are made."

Governor Rao who was in Ooty on Sunday cut short his visit and left for New Delhi in the evening in the backdrop of political developments. He was to stay further to attend convocation at Bharathiar University in Coimbatore on Tuesday.

Pass Book lost

I, the undersigned, have lost my passbook bearing Account No. 20315946076 issued by SBI High Court Complex Branch, Chingmeirong on the way between Keishampat to Babupara on 2/2/2017. Finders are requested to kindly hand over it to the undersigned.

Sd/-
Chitrom Shyam Singh
HARINAGAR, JIRIBAM

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Srinagar-Jammu Highway Closed For 4th Day Due to Fresh Snowfall

PTI Srinagar, Feb. 6: For the fourth consecutive day on Monday, the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway remained closed for traffic in the wake of landslides at some places, even as higher reaches in Kashmir received fresh snowfall overnight.

However, the Meteorological Department (MeT) has forecast improvement in the weather from today.

The highway remains closed as it is yet to be cleared off the debris due to landslides, an official of the Traffic Control Room told PTI.

He said landslides have occurred at many places along the nearly 300-km highway, the only all weather road link connecting Kashmir Valley with the rest of the country.

There have been fresh landslides because of intermittent rains and snow, which have rendered the highway unmotorable, the official said.

He said many vehicles are

stranded along the highway and would only be allowed to proceed further once the debris is cleared. "The men and machinery are on the job, once the debris is cleared off, the stranded vehicles will be allowed, subject to weather conditions, to proceed further on priority," the official said.

Meanwhile, many areas in the higher reaches of the Valley received fresh snowfall overnight with the famous ski-resort of Gulmarg in north Kashmir recording 10 cm of snow, a MeT official said.

Gulmarg recorded the minimum temperature of minus 9.0 degrees, a drop of over five degrees from minus 3.4 degrees Celsius.

Pahalgam hill resort in south Kashmir, which serves as a base camp for the annual Amarnath yatra, recorded 7 cm of fresh snow and the mercury there settled at a low of minus 6.6, a decrease of over six degrees from 0.2 degree Celsius the previous

night.

Kokernag town, also in south Kashmir, recorded nine cm of snow while the mercury there settled at minus 0.7 degree Celsius.

Kupwara town, in north Kashmir, registered a low of minus 2.8 degree Celsius, while Qazigund, the gateway town to Kashmir Valley, recorded a low of 0.8 degree Celsius, the official said.

Srinagar, the summer capital of the state, registered a low of minus 0.2 degree Celsius, compared to minus 0.7 degree Celsius, he said.

The official said Leh town in Ladakh region registered a low of minus 7.6 degrees Celsius, while the nearby Kargil town was the coldest recorded place in the state at minus 12.2 degrees Celsius.

The MeT has forecast scattered rains or snowfall over the Valley today, while the weather is likely to remain dry tomorrow.

Coal Scam: Court Grants Time to CBI to File Final Report

New Delhi, Feb. 6: A special court on granted two weeks time to CBI for filing in a proper format the final report in a coal block allocation scam case against Congress leader and industrialist Naveen Jindal, ex-Minister of State for Coal Dasari Narayan Rao and others.

Special CBI Judge Bharat Parashar allowed the investigating officers (IO) plea seeking time on the ground that he has finalised the report, forwarded it to senior authorities and awaiting approval. "IO submits that the new director of the CBI has recently taken over and his approval is not obtained so far. He says that he needs some time to file the report. Put up the matter for further hearing on February 20," the court said. The court had earlier rapped the CBI for not filing the final report in a proper format.

Later, the court had accepted the final report noting that sufficient time has already lapsed in the matter and asked the agency to file the documents in a "proper format". While filing the report, which contains CFSL report, list of documents, list of witnesses and their statements, the agency had told the court that the probe was complete in the case.

The court had earlier pulled up the CBI for delay in filing the report, saying it was affecting the progress of trial. CBI had alleged that former Jharkhand Chief Minister Madhu Koda, also accused in the case, had favoured Jindal group firms — Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) and Gagan Sponge Iron Private Ltd (GSIPL) — in allocation of Amarkantak Murgadangal coal block in Jharkhand.

Shootout near Nehru Place metro station, Delhi Police nab wanted criminal

New Delhi, Feb. 6: Delhi Police arrested a wanted criminal who carried a cash reward of Rs 25,000 during a shootout with a gang in the national capital on Monday, a police officer said.

The shootout took place around 2.30 a.m. near Eros hotel in Nehru Place when a police team tried to stop the criminals.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Romil Baaniya told IANS that

the police retaliated after the criminal gang started firing to avoid their arrest.

"After the shootout, Akbar alias Danish was arrested while his accomplice Asif managed to escape with other associates," he said.

The officer said that Akbar was a notorious robber and snatcher.

"He is wanted in many cases of

robbery, theft, snatching and attempt to murder," he said.

He also said that Akbar carried a reward of Rs 25,000 on him for a shootout case that took place in Pul Prahaladpur in south Delhi in December 2016.

Baaniya said that two policemen who were hit in the gunfight luckily escaped without injuries as they were wearing bullet-proof jackets