

Editorial

Imphal Wednesday, January 4, 2016

Of nations and nationalism; Manipur's perspective

Election is an important component for the success of democracy. But announcing election at a time when the state is under frying pan is something that will certainly make a mockery of the democracy.

The past few days, people in the state have been living with fear of uncertain future. The prolonged indefinite blockade along the two national highways for over 60 days followed by picketing of government offices is no joke. There have been evidences that state government functionaries including the security forces has been barred in certain areas of the state.

The recent sequence of events witness either in term of political circus and the struggle for protection of Manipuri identity is indeed a worrisome for all people.

The idea of nation having one identity, one religion, one culture, one language promulgated by some self style son of mother India has created fear psychosis to various ethnic communities in the country. At a time when chauvinistic idealism of creating a nation of only one community is seen marching ahead, it is natural that each and every ethnic communities of the nation have reason to be feared. Because it is family first then come the society then it is the nation.

India was and is a nation of diverse people. The beauty of India is the existences of different ethnic people with diverse cultural people. It is important that if India has to prove the world as the most successful democratic country, the leaders and the so called self style son of the soil should tried to become real son of the soil by accepting that the concept of one religion, one culture and one language should not be followed in the Nation called India.

During Kargil war, two soldiers from this region, that too from a border village between Myanmar and India in the state of Manipur were martyred while fighting the Pakistani troops. Family of the two did not know the common language that their sons spoke with their fellow soldiers and moreover, the villagers of the two soldiers are fighting tough safeguarding their villages from intruders of the neighbouring villages. Yet they pray for the success of India.

The Indian administrators of the time was not the one which brought victory to the Kargil war, but it was the prayers of those thousand parents, whose sons were fighting for the country, but who never see Delhi, or who never understood the common language (Hindi) that make India success. Indeed, many critics are of the views that India is still in the process of nation building. But the reality is that India is already a nation. A nation of imagine community living under the same roof.

The peaceful co existence and communal harmony was put in dead danger with the rise of communal centric feudalism classes. They spew venom of hate feeling among the various communities for their mere selfish gain. Last few decades showed rise of many such feudalists and the rise of this class raises the feeling of enmity among the various community.

Coming back to the state of Manipur, the problem facing right now has similar roots. The force annexation is often pin point as the root of all sort of trouble here, but the reality is that the root of the entire problem facing in the state of Manipur is the chauvinistic attitude of the ruling government in the mainland India.

Instead of looking on the problem, the then ruler of the mainland India had sideline the real issue submitted by the then expert officials deputed by their government, they never tried anything to put a halt to the rise of the armed opposition group. But rather the then government incited hate feeling among various communities thinking that the same technique adopted the British ruler can suppressed any movement in the region.

Instead of taking into consideration and finding a means to end all sort of violent activism a Scheme called Surrendered Rehabilitation Schemes had been introduced and the result - people now suffered double the problem that they had faced before the coming of the scheme.

Well Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, the last President of USSR had understood the important of safeguarding each community and USSR was separated into various independent nations. Problem will be there as long as human kind exists. Because they think and act and those act are sometime negative from one's view point even if he or she thought it right from his viewpoints.

The fear factor right now is felt to everyone. Man dies and sacrifices for their children and nation. If the fear factor grows no one can guarantee any untoward incident at which the fear factor was challenge and wipe out completely to restore the once upon a time nation state called Manipur.

National & International News

Jagdish Singh Khehar sworn in as 44th Chief Justice of India

PTI
New Delhi, Jan. 4: Justice Jagdish Singh Khehar, who led the five-judge constitution bench in the Supreme Court which had struck down the controversial National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) Act for the appointment of judges, was on Wednesday sworn in as the 44th Chief Justice of India.

President Pranab Mukherjee administered the oath of office and secrecy to Justice Khehar at the Darbar Hall of Rashtrapati Bhawan. Khehar took oath in the name of God in English at the ceremony where the Opposition was conspicuous by its absence.

Then CJI, TS Thakur had last month recommended the name of Justice Khehar, the senior-most judge of the Supreme Court, to be his successor. Justice Khehar, 64, will be the first Chief Justice from the Sikh community. Justice Thakur demitted office on Tuesday. He will hold the tenure for over seven months until 27 August.

Besides heading the bench in the NJAC matter, Justice Khehar has also headed a bench which had set aside the imposition of President's rule in Arunachal Pradesh in January.

He was a part of the bench which sent Sahara chief Subrata Roy to jail while hearing the matter relating to the refund of money invested by

people in his two companies. Justice Khehar also headed a bench which recently gave a significant verdict holding that the principal of "equal pay for equal work" has to be made applicable to those engaged as daily wagers, casual and contractual employees who perform the same duties as the regulars.

While the turf war between the judiciary and the executive over the appointment of judges for higher judiciary has intensified, Justice Khehar on the occasion of Constitution Day on 26 November had responded to the tirade from Attorney General Mukul Rohatgi by saying the judiciary was working

within its "lakshmanrekha". "Judiciary is mandated to shield all persons, citizens and non-citizens alike, against discrimination and abuse of state power. Liberty, equality and dignity of citizens have flourished substantially in India due to the pro-active role of the judiciary in the country," he had said.

IWT: US asks India, Pak to work together to resolve issue

PTI
Washington, Jan 4: US Secretary of State John Kerry spoke to Pakistani Finance Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar over phone on Indus Water Treaty issue and encouraged both the South Asian neighbours to work together to resolve their differences.

"I can confirm that he (Kerry) did speak on the 29th of December with Finance Minister Dar. "I am not going to read that out in any great detail," State Department spokesperson John Kirby told reporters at his daily news conference.

"The Indus Waters Treaty has served, as a model for peaceful cooperation between India and Pakistan for now 50 years.

"We encourage, as we have in the past, India and Pakistan to work together to resolve any differences," Kirby said.

However, he refused to entertain questions on if the US has offered help to India and Pakistan resolve the issue.

"As I said, we encourage India and Pakistan to work together bilaterally to resolve their differences," he said. "We are in regular communication with the Indian and Pakistani

governments on a wide range of issues," Kirby said.

Earlier, Pakistan had sought support of the US on the implementation of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) with India even as Secretary of State John Kerry had called for an amicable settlement of the issue between New Delhi and Islamabad.

LeT militant arrested in Kashmir's Kupwara district

PTI
Srinagar, Jan 4: A suspected militant belonging to the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) has been arrested from north Kashmir's Kupwara district, police said today.

Acting on an intelligence input, a joint team of police and army arrested Ashiq Ahmed alias Abu Haider from Handwara area of the district, a police spokesman said here.

A cache of arms and ammunition, including an AK-47 rifle, three magazines, a Chinese Pistol with a magazine, three hand grenades, a magazine pouch and a map, was seized from him.

During interrogation, Ahmed said he was a close associate of Abu Bakar - an LeT Commander who was killed in an encounter in Sopore township last month, the spokesman said.

Contd. from previous issue

Intensifying Global Crisis and Conflict

(This paper was presented by Malcolm Guy on 6th Ojha Sanajaoba Memorial lecture held at VC's Court room on Dec. 30, 2016)

In behalf of monopoly firms and local elites in their countries, imperialist states have been competing to rewrite international and national legal systems and regulations through trade and investment agreements such as the Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement (TPPA), Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), Economic Partnership Agreements and the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA). They include institutionalizing mechanisms for Investor-State Dispute Settlement that grants de facto veto power to multinational corporations over regulations or reforms that governments might adopt under increasing popular pressures for immediate relief and reforms amidst the crisis.

Trump has threatened to pull the US out of the TPPA and TTIP in the face of rising popular resistance to these imperialist trade deals. But this is fundamentally a smokescreen. In future many such deals could be forged bilaterally as opposed to multilaterally. Trump will push to grant the major US corporations the right to veto other governments and continue efforts to open up other economies to US imperialist monopoly interests, while granting the major corporations tax holidays and handouts at home while facilitating their right to attack workers.

This can be attested by the soaring value of stocks of some of the world's biggest and deadliest corporations - arms, fossil fuels and pharmaceuticals - in the wake of the Trump election.

All these can only be expected to further impoverish the toiling masses of the world, increase the concentration and over accumulation of capital in the hands of the monopoly bourgeoisie and exacerbate the crisis of overproduction that neoliberalism was intended to resolve in the first place.

Breaching planetary boundaries
Meanwhile, the election of Trump and continuing control of the global economy by the oil, gas and coal barons and their elected fossil fuel supporters has the world facing an

ecological catastrophe of the highest degree.

As commentator Tom Engelhardt writes: "With both the CIA's coup-making and the military's regime-change traditions in mind, could the United States also overthrow a planet? If, as the head of what's already the world's second largest greenhouse gas emitter, Trump carries out the future energy policies he promised during the election campaign - climate-science funding torn up, climate agreements denounced or ignored, alternative energy development downplayed, pipelines green-lighted, fracking and other forms of fossil-fuel extraction further encouraged and the US fully reimagined as the Saudi Arabia of North America - he will, in effect, be launching a regime-change action against Planet Earth."

Of course Trump is not alone, just more transparent. Canada's so-called "progressive" government of Justin Trudeau, who came to power on the promise of climate justice and a new relationship with indigenous people has just green-lighted two major pipeline developments, Kinder Morgan Trans Mountain Project and Enbridge Line 3 Replacement. These will massively increase the extraction of dirty oil from the Alberta Tar Sands, endangering the mainly indigenous as well as other communities along its route with pipeline leaks, explosions and ship wrecks and rendering it impossible for Canada to respect its climate change promises made in Paris.

In the wake of events unfolding in North Dakota near the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe reservation, Canada's Natural Resources Minister Jim Carr told business leaders that Canada is prepared to deploy the military against anti-pipeline actions deemed "not to be peaceful," raising the possibility the country could face a scenario last seen during the Oka Crisis in 1990. Business as usual also for Canadian imperialism.

As people around the globe stand up for planet earth and environmental justice the imperialist offensive is already "not peaceful". At least 185 environment activists

were killed in 2015, the highest annual death toll on record. Global Witness documented lethal attacks in 16 countries. Brazil was worst hit with 50 deaths, many of them killings of campaigners who were trying to combat illegal logging in the Amazon. The Philippines was second with 33. Colombia had 26 fatal attacks; Peru, 12; Nicaragua, 12 and Democratic Republic of Congo had 11.

"As demand for products like minerals, timber and palm oil continues, governments, companies and criminal gangs are seizing land in defiance of the people who live on it," said Billy Kye, a senior campaigner for Global Witness and author of the report. "Communities that take a stand are increasingly finding themselves in the firing line of companies' private security, state forces and a thriving market for contract killers. For every killing we document, many others go unreported."

The most deadly industry to protest against was mining, with 42 deaths in 2015 related to anti-mining activities. Agribusiness, hydroelectric dams and logging were also key drivers of violence and many of the murders occurred in remote villages deep within rainforests.

Workers and peoples resistance

But despite the repression, the people continue to resist and fight back, even in the heart of the beast. Hundreds of thousands took to the streets across the US immediately following the announcement of the Presidential win of Donald Trump. As the ILPS USA chapter stated: "This indicates the people in the United States are not paralyzed by fear not are we willing to tolerate fascism and state repression. We must organize to ensure this fight back movement is sustained and advanced."

"The electoral results unmask the gravity of the social and economic crisis in the United States, the deep-seated slave-owner mentality still dominant with the ruling class and the gains of the divide and conquer tactics unleashed on by the people in the US to blur and diffuse the reality of class struggle

and to protest the wealthiest in this country."

The last period has also seen a resurgence of the African American people's progressive and revolutionary organizations working for the self-determination of black people in the United States. This includes the ongoing mass movement Black Lives Matter and events marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Black Panther Party.

Hundreds of thousands have protested the fact that one out of three African-Americans is in prison and are thus being used as the main fodder and modern-day slave labor for the increasingly privatized prison industrial complex.

They are likewise protesting the fact that US cops accost Africa-Americans and shoot down many of them, killing an African-American every 28 hours.

In North Dakota, the Standing Rock Sioux nation, along with 200 other Native nations and up to 7000 people from all over the world, have stood firm to block the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL), which would carry fracked oil from the Bakken shale in North Dakota across several states and under the Missouri River.

There have been dozens of arrests, tear gas and dogs attacks and violent dispersals by police and militia. While the battle is far from over, with Trump promising to support the DAPL, the protestors won a halt to construction of the pipeline along its present route.

The Standing Rock indigenous-led struggle is part of a number of such worldwide battles to confront and tame the fossil fuel giants and other extractives monopolies in the face of growing militarization of indigenous territories. Nine Guingana, an Ecuadorian activist visiting Standing Rock, told the Bill Moyers report, "The world needs indigenous people. The statistics say that we are 4 percent of the world's population, but we are protecting more than 80 percent of the world's biodiversity."

(To be contd.....)

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