

Editorial

Menace of Mob Justice

The most basic purpose of an exercise is to make the whole process involved in that particular exercise become second nature, or in other words, become attuned to the requirements of that exercise. There are certain social exercises that needs to be performed without any let-up especially by those of us in the Media if certain collective behavior or social inclinations are to be highlighted and changed if needed- for good or bad, and one of the most important issue that has to be brought out in the open and discussed without any reservations or preconceived notions is the increasing instances of what can only be ironically termed 'Mob justice'.

For a community drunk in the reflected glory of our ancestors, it is shameful that we still are unable to reign in our bestial instincts and give rationality a chance to play out its role in the society. The latest unfortunate incident of the mob serving 'justice' for the crime of an alleged double murderer once again raises the uncomfortable question on the validity of the decision of a collective group, even though the incident touched a raw nerve and angered every single rationale human. More embracing situation is the tonsuring of a woman in public which went viral in social media. Even more alarming is the fact that a section of the public deemed it their privilege to discard the law of the land or disrupt the process of law in destroying the property of the accused and ostracizing the family. The very incident also clearly projects the primal mindset of generalizing or attributing people into packs or groups.

While the accused, if proven guilty deserves the harshest of punishment under the law of the land and certainly deserves no sympathy whatsoever, it would be highly unlikely to even suggest that the whole family is involved in the alleged crime, or is encouraged to commit the crime. It would be humanly impossible for the guardians of the law and the security forces to apprehend and dole out justice the very moment a crime is committed. The state security and investigating authorities truly deserves a round of applause for the excellent work of taking up the lead and pulling up the suspect in such a short period of time. If we expect them to perform up to their maximum potential, then we need to encourage and assist them in our maximum capacity as ideal citizens rather than to obstruct and view their efforts with suspicion.

We have come a long way since the evolution of humans a few billion years ago. We have the good fortune of being able to keep pace with the rest of the world in almost every aspect of life- be it fashion, technology, news and informed views, food, culture and arts. But there is still the pressing need to change our mindset to enable new ideas and views to have a chance of taking root. We need to open up and take charge of our emotions. We need to be the change we are striving for, and mob mentality should not be given even an iota of space to work its insidious designs. We have to speak up and speak out as frequently and clearly as required until such blot on the society is removed.

An Escape: Experience in Militarized Landscape

By: Jinine Lai

July triggers me reminiscence of my partaking in campaign against militarization; Thangjam Manaroma's killing and my participation in ApunbaluPeuper since floated it in a sangioif herneighborhood, and birth of my conceived campaign idea - EEVFMto an energetic LoitngbamSarat, father of a fake encounter victim.

Then my poor memory cannot forget an incident of a small sigh of relief amidst the aching atmosphere of tight militarization in Manipur. Somewhere around the end October of 2005, Indian army stormed in to the southern Jiribamwith a military operation called Tornado. The situation feared human rights violations and displacement.

On 28 October, we, some activists and MeiraPaibis set off to assess the situation with the Human Rights Commission. Next morning, our private bus approaching from Jiri town, along a stretch of about 30 km to the south. The Commission started some hours earlier in their vehicles. We followed them. Along the dilapidated roads in the rain forest, swarm of army with sophisticated rifles and machinery were lined up. Now and again we were stopped and checked by the army and got throbbed in military phobia in our heads.

Around the noon of 29 October we reached a village where motor-able road ended. Left the bus there and walked into two three villages. To see us, those men, women and children who could not flee earlier were so happy and relieved. People from other villages came to join us and some also came out from the jungle then. They felt like rescue from a death danger. They narrated - army came with Zoros, (the bad guys hiding faces under black scarfs)beat up the villagers, posed questions whereabouts of underground cadres. After the military action, civilians were displaced to leave the landscape deserted. Some of them reached safely Jiri town, some were hiding in the jungle some had crossed Barak River, escaped to Assam. A woman who born a baby just after half an hour joined the run.

The Commission had assessed the situation and left in the afternoon. Our team too was about to follow their vehicles for avoiding unnecessary harassment from the army on the way. Then, most of the families wanted to leave the villages, they wanted to go out to Jiri town in our bus. Scanty passenger buses, one or two times were playing in and around the villages. Yet they could not travel by those buses because military men would pull down, torture, harass even kill them on the allegations of nexus with the armed opposition groups.

Finally, negotiated four five villagers to be in our bus. Our team hurried to the bus as we would follow the commission close and go away from the Tornado's tense before getting dark. Things began going wrong, the bus got stuck in the soft soil of the road aside. Three-four hours had consumed trying to push the bus out of the sticky mud. It's getting dark, no way to go out that day.

Soon the darkness of the evening began covering the place black, no electricity and no moon in the sky only glow worm and blinking stars. Locals suggested that that darkness was ideal to avoid the attention and action from the army. At around 8 pm, a quickbig supper for about 25 people was done in a house. During the food, more stories, fearer words of torture, harassment and need of getting away from militarized zone were surfaced.

For night rest, MeiraPaibis went to some houses and we headed to a Bengali teacher's house. We were sleeping in his side parlor extension. I noticed some melodious insects' song fondled the quiet night but dogs' bark afar agitated the black night. Though we had been exhausted, could not sleep well fearing army might come to harm us suspecting their enemy. Got up early in the morning, felt a bit relief that night was safe. While we were moving down from our night shelter, a woman showed us army personnel movement in around the village. From that small hill side we saw some blurred personnel down there in that hazy morning of early November. The woman told us that they had been there all night long in search of some young boys. The army accompanied Zoro to identify the suspects and their houses. According to her, some boys were hiding in the jungles fearing the army's action. These boys sometimes were used by the underground in trivial work and made mingle with them.

We visited some houses and met the families as they requested in the morning. The hard time we really encountered was -again, they wanted to go with us and be safe from the military hand and we did not have practical capacity to do that. We tried to convince them at our level best by ensuring that we should convey the message of the

situation to the government. But we could not deny one request for saving a life of a boy who just came out from hiding nearby jungle. He should be taken with us otherwise he would be finished that day itself. The army and the Zoros had been searching for him for last few days. Dilemma! If we did not take him along he would be killed or if we even let him in our bus how could we save him. For sure army and Zoros must check our bus and us, all of us must get down off the bus to line up aside, pass the check post by walking, not only once, at least three or four times on the way to Jiri town. As his life was just on the balance of terror, I suggested to escape to southern part of Manipur through jungle. No way, he could not agree to do that. So we accepted the boy in the bus and another 4 villagers too we agreed previous day.

Around 9 o'clock in the morning we gathered nearby the bus - some were weeping bidding departing gesture some casting long face for could not go along. The bus was parking about a kilometer away from the previous place it got stuck. When I got into the bus I saw the boy wearing a woman dress with some face make-up like lipstick and powder sitting beside one mother. Yet all his fear was worn on his face - in the eyes, on the lips. He was putting on Phaneq, on top a blouse and an Inaphee. Shocked! That appeared much dangerous. His looks completely showed a joke kind of make-up. Nothing was hid, nothing could disguise, and one could see the odd so straight. His head was covered with Inapheedown upto the upper part of face. But that was a sheer disastrous attempt, rather exposing then disguising. If we were going that manner were inviting a big inevitable danger. We all very likely ended up there soon. I discussed that with MeiraPaibis and other colleagues. As an ultimate way out I made the boy wear like a bus a conductor/handyman. Took off the women dress then got changed to an extra frayed short pants owned by the real bus conductor, a dirty T-shirt and a loin tie from a mother made a scarf around his head. Some dirt of black oil somewhere from the bus engine applied on his face. I told him to act like real bus-boy and not to show any tension and worry on his face - one hardest thing.

Almost one hour or so passed in the bus yet we had not started. Then the bus started to set off for the Jiri town carrying about 25 panicking passengers. With heavy worries and anxieties in all our heads the bus was moving. I told the boy not to get off the bus while stopped

at the army check posts. In fact, nothing smarter things we had in our heads to manage the menace. Having nothing else to escape the situation, after few minutes the driver slowed down the bus; we reached the first army check. At our scariest, some Zoros were being seen sitting on elevating roadside of nearby hillock. A dozen of camouflage full equipped armed men stopped our bus before crossing a narrow bridge. We got down to cross the bridge. It was supposed to search our bodies but that did not occur. I liked to look at the bus behind the bridge fearing something was happening - but could not.

We were standing in line aside the road talking nothing one another. The bus came, we got up then it started moving. Next moment a sigh of relief, the boy was alright. Soon the air in the bus was of pretty quiet again because next check post was the one where about Zoros were active. After about half an hour, the bus reached near another narrow bridge. Our bus was stopped again by four-five military personnel. This time a young officer with an ease face with no weapon was coming up accompanied by two armed soldiers, and talking with a little smile in Hindi. Greeting the mothers with Namaste! Two of MeiraPaibis were responding in broken Hindi. The short conversation was around - if we had food, where we were staying previous night. He did a brief interaction in English with me too, identifying ourselves, asking if the situation in the place had just visited was alright. Luckily, we did not see the bad guys there. Nothing was happening to the boy.

Then we were set free to drive away from their check post. Another huge relief gusted in us. After few minutes our bus was stopped again by another group of military personnel at a small market place. We were asked to get down. Some mothers had already stepped down, we were about to follow them. Then suddenly the bus driver declared that no need to get off as the army permitted him to pass the check post. Drove away again, another relief sweeping in, without nothing happened to the boy. One of the mothers told us that there would be no more risk onwards as army check post left all behind. We stopped somewhere on the way to ease out our natural calls. After tensed sweating hours we reached the Jiri town safe and sound. For one last time I looked at the face of the boy and asked if he was alright then. Assistant Professor, University of Suwon, S Korea.

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Vehicle lost

I, the undersigned, have lost my Chevrolet Beat Car bearing Registration No. MN 01S8359, Chassis No. MA6BFBH2EET015351, Engine No. 10FDJZ142300141 from my residence to Babupara.

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

Sd/-
Madonna Yumnam
Khurai Lamlong Keithel
Imphal, Manipur
Contact No. 8974431218

National and International News

Restrictions in old Srinagar after local militant killed

Srinagar, July 12: Authorities today imposed restrictions in several parts of the old city after a militant from downtown Malaratta was killed in an encounter with security forces in Kashmir's Budgam district. Although police did not spell out

the reason for the sudden restrictions in five police station areas of the old city, administration officials said they apprehended violent protests following the killing of Sajid Ahmad Gilkar. "Restrictions have been imposed in the police station areas of

Maharajgunj, Safakadal, Rainawari, Nowhatta and Khanayr as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order," a police official said. Three Hizbul Mujahideen militants, including Gilkar, was killed after an overnight gunbattle with security forces in Budgam's Redbugh area

this morning, police said. His body is lying in police control room and will be handed over to his family later in the day. The other two slain militants have been identified as Aaqib Gul of Gooripora and Javid Ahmad Sheikh of Beerwah.

5-judge Constitution Bench to hear Aadhaar pleas on Jul 18-19

New Delhi, July 12: The Supreme Court today said that its five-judge Constitution Bench will sit on July 18 and 19 to hear matters relating to Aadhaar, including the aspect of right to privacy. The matter was mentioned before a bench comprising Chief Justice J S Khehar and Justice D Y Chandrachud which said that its five-judge Constitution Bench will hear Aadhaar-related matters. Attorney General K K Venugopal and senior advocate Shyam Divan, appearing for petitioners who have challenged government's move to make Aadhaar mandatory for

various public welfare schemes, jointly mentioned the matter before the bench and requested that there should be an early hearing by the Constitution Bench in the matter. When Justice Khehar asked Venugopal and Divan as to whether the matter was to be heard by a seven-judge Constitution Bench, both the parties said that it has to be heard by a five-judge bench. The Attorney General and Divan mentioned the matter before the CJJ as a three-judge bench had on July 7 said that all issues arising out of Aadhaar should finally be

decided by a larger bench and the CJJ would take a call on the

for setting up a Constitution Bench.

CBI raids Ranchi principal IT commissioner, others

New Delhi, July 12: The CBI today searched 23 locations in two cities in connection with an alleged corruption case against Principal Commissioner of Income Tax, Ranchi, Tapas Kumar Dutta, and others, officials here said. The searches were conducted in 18 locations in Kolkata and five in Ranchi, the CBI sources said.

The raids were related to an ongoing investigation of a case registered against Dutta, three other officials of the Income Tax Department and six private persons, including a chartered accountant, and unidentified others. The allegations include criminal conspiracy, taking illegal gratification and criminal misconduct, the sources said.

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