

Editorial

Perils and possibilities

The present situation arising in the state in the wake of the repeated havoc created by the recurring floods is set to worsen and in fact, the undesirable consequences that always follows a flood is already starting to show. Cases of Japanese encephalitis have started emerging from different places. Other symptoms and complications due to cholera, typhoid etc is surely bound to increase. The state government should make necessary arrangements to reduce the instances of these threats to the society while there is still time - a luxury at present but one which will not be available for the asking in the very near future. True, the vagaries of nature cannot be foretold nor prevented. But we can certainly lessen the impact of such natural phenomena if due diligence is paid in the planning and execution of various agencies specifically established for implementing preventive as well as relief measures for victims of such natural calamities. There is also the added concern of shortage of foodgrains and poor harvest of various crops since the repeated floods have laid waste to vast tracks of cultivations. This in turn brings up the issue of the increasingly talked about incidents of 'plastic rice' and 'plastic eggs' as well as 'plastic cabbage' finding their way into the local market causing harm to the consumers. The issue as of now remains vague to a majority of the public in the state as to the methods of identifying these reportedly spurious commodities. Efforts to spread awareness regarding the existence and circulation of these adulterated and spurious consumables on the part of the state government have been totally absent so far. And as if mother nature has decided to test the resilience and adaptability of the people of the state, landslides and sunken roads along both the lifelines of the state at various different points along these roads have proved to be a huge obstacle in the ongoing efforts to provide relief and essential commodities to the victims of these natural calamities. However, every setback can also be an opportunity. The state government should grasp the opportunity to study and device means and ways to reduce the impact of the vagaries of nature. Given the possibility of such floods recurring in the future on a regular basis, appropriate plans can be drawn up to create natural reservoirs and to improve on the existing lakes and other naturally existing water bodies to be able to hold larger volumes of water which will serve the public during the dry season. This very unfortunate occurrence should also be used to study the drainage system so that every possible disruptions, misaligned and blocked as well as damaged portions can be repaired or modified according to necessity. Possibility of improved means and methods of farming and cultivation of various crops can be explored. Given the unpredictable nature of the highways serving as the lifelines of the state, the state government should push for self-sustainability by utilizing resources at its disposal. This will also put an end to the blatant abuse of territorial and geographical advantages to hold the state to ransom. The present natural disaster is indeed an opportunity to turn things around for the better. But as always, things will unfold exactly how we made it.

Contd. from page 1

FM tabled Budget

works in Khuman Lampak Sports Complex for starting classes of National Sports University from the Academic Session 2017-18 and Rs 20.00 Crore provided as 50% of total cost for flood lighting of Khuman Lampak Sports Complex and Luwangshangbam Cricket Stadium under the One Time Special Assistance of Central Plan Scheme. There is a provision of Rs 1.46 Crore for supply, Installation & commissioning of new medical gas pipeline system (Oxygen and Nitrogen gas pipeline) at JNIMS and Rs 2.50 Crore as 50% of total project cost for completion of 100 bedded district hospital at Ukhrul under One Time Special Assistance of Central

plan Scheme. For the development of Smart City project an amount of Rs 16.44 Crore is provided as State matching Share and Rs 21.98 Crore for retrofitting of Ina Markets affected by 2016 earthquake. For the implementation of Pradhan Mantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana by Manipur Skill development Mission there is a budgetary allocation of Rs 24.99 Crore being Central Share and Rs 2.00 Crore for Skill Development Training programmes. Rs 10.00 crore for the Manipur State Journalists Welfare Scheme for providing relief and assistance to journalist fraternity, Finance Minister said in his speech.

Noises of the Silence – Part 1

By: Jinine Lai

That was around late 1970s. As a little boy I could sense the air of military phobia in my village. Most of the days were quiet and still. People did not speak loudly anything. The villagers were not going out of their houses for cultivation, fishing and other outdoor activities. One mentally disabled man about fifty was very exceptional who dared out in the paddy field. I heard people whispered about brutal torture on him by the Indian army. Those sun sets were so tensed for the silent evening would cast a dark night of sleeplessness. I cannot forget the various facets of militarization and armed conflict that people were whispering around. I remember those scary nights of hearing army's vehicles and pounding boots, then daybreak bombing operations, separation of adult male from women and day long torture in the summer heat in the village grazing grounds. When I was a teenage, there were talks and noises I heard from the outside coming to my village - killings and tortures by government armed forces. The hearsay came real shock to my village. I was numb - at the time the neighborhood of Phubala began crying as the body of one local uncle, Moirangthem Ingobicoing home dead. He was killed in 1981 in Kwakeithalong with some artists. Heirangaithong 1984 - killed 13 people by CRPF at, Onimam 1987-15 people killed. During the time I heard the noises from Naga groups, All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU), Meirapaibis and Committee on Human Rights Manipur (COHR). The armed conflict environment pelted my basic instinct towards making noises for justice. It had made me participate in student's activities in late 80s and print media in 90's. Again, when a strange maiden had decided to go on her hunger strike unto death after Assam Rifles killed 10 innocent civilians near the Imphal airport, an empathy moved me. Moreover by

witnessing the agonies of young widows of fake encounter killings, an emotional connection pulled me. The time was when my personal journey entered the experience of having baby and began the psychosomatic entanglement of husband and wife. Mind reflected on the total helplessness of wives and their young children looking at the near future down the line. Early 2000s as I began taking part in human rights work, I was deeply shocked to see - the sudden deaths of husbands leaving the young wives at utmost agonies. Most of the widows did not weep; they seemed they were at a loss as bolt from the blue hit them. The new marriage lives, the hopes, the shared dreams in the light of little kids, all the basic sweetness of life were shattered when their psychological strengths so suddenly vanished. About 70% of the victims of custodial killings in Manipur were recently married to and young fathers, leaving one kid or two. Most of their survived children were of aged about 1 month to 6 years, and many a married wives were survived getting pregnant at the time their husbands were killed. Majority of the victim families were economically much challenged. I was getting into the noises of the first half of the 2010; from Chanu's hunger strike, brutal killing of Ms Thangjam Manorama, Mother's nude protest and Pebab Chitaranjan's self immolation. Early 2000s I began initiating save Sharmila campaign and later joined the journey of ApunbaLup (a conglomerated body in the valley of Manipur). As the noise of Manorama and Mothers' nude protest got fading away, there sensed a silence which sent shivers down the people's spine. That was about 3 years in prior to BT Road killing in summer of 2009. That episode appeared to be nostalgia of military phobia of my younger years. For desolated Manipur, dismay morning were breaking only to let insomber nights soon. The usual scene of the localities of the victims

of fake encounter killings were drawn by the mute and tensed. The atmosphere was gloom after military and police shot dead the victims. Apprehension of the intimidations and tortures often smeared the locals' faces with fear, and in no time silence loomed though there were some noises that triggered by the tears of the deceased families. Chills were instilled by the presence of camouflaged sepoy and AK 47- police commandos around the victims' residences. The prolonged military activities fractured million minds and snuffed out over thousand lives. People were getting tired of protesting time and again, their noises got fade away. Impunity is one strong gag that discouraged the people while encouraging the perpetrators getting away scot-free every time. We were of really meagre size of human rights defenders visited the victim families and documented the cases. The predictable intimidation from the government military and Police Commandos and life risk exposition to them always gave us hyper-tension. Our expectation of concerted noise from locals and civil societies found belittled owing to state suppression and also due to personal cleverness among the civil societies and NGOs that guided themselves to the safe corners. Somewhere around 2007-2009 was the height of extrajudicial executions and was also the time least number of human rights defenders were coming out to make noises. The only support we got during such tyranny was from the local journalists in the form of news-reporting. Usually based on their reports we were sneaking into the victims' places for documentation and counselling. To Access and meet the victim families was very tense and tough job as the police commandos and military personnel were alert virtually everywhere. We were trying to avoid the them as much as we can. To meet them and answer their questions on the ways was a matter of playing with fire. We carried out the jobs taking great risk on our own because human

rights people are normally perceived as enemy by the perpetrators for the obvious reason that we are working for the victims. We do not have any authorized support, recognized identification papers alike. A concern in my mind got ready to flip wings as the military phobia gaining its best weight. I was looking out any collective energy to subside the fear effect in encountering the fake encounter killings happening on daily basis. Finally some local journalists, politicians, lawyers, rights workers and senior citizens were solicited to come to a table. The initiative floated a group called Legal Protection Centre in January 2009. Khaidem Ta Mani was president and I coordinated the centre. It pulsated some morale warmth to the victim families and rights defenders. I started family visit of fake encounters on my old Yamaha motorcycle with a colleague in early 2000s. Ever since I had been planning to bring up the victims' families from traumatized surface up to the platform of campaigners. We have collected copies of victims' photos, academic documents, the families gave us best information they could recollect and shared their emotions well and extensively. During a fact finding visit I met one energetic Loitongbam Sarat, father of a fake encounter victim from Singjamei. His 34 year old son, Loitongbam Satish was killed by a team of Thoubal Police Commandos and 23 Assam Rifles on 18 May 2009. As he began showed his concern to involve in fighting against the ever rising extrajudicial execution in Manipur, I shared the information of the unfair deaths which had been documenting since 2004. He took a good responsibility to concretize an organization. I coined it EEFAM for Extrajudicial Execution Family Association Manipur. (Pabung) Sarat added V for Victims' thus shaped EEFVAM on 11 July 2009 finally. (The writer is an Asst. Prof. at University of Suwon, S Korea)

National and International News

Six killed, 11 injured in cloudburst in Doda

Bhadarwah, July 20: Six persons were killed and 11 injured after flash floods triggered by a cloudburst wreaked havoc in Thathri town of Doda district of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday, inundating vast areas along the Batote-Kishtwar National Highway and washing away half a dozen houses. While 11 persons have been rescued from the debris, many others are feared trapped and the toll is likely to rise, police said. Four of a family were among those killed in the cloudburst that damaged six houses, two shops and a school.

"Flash floods triggered by cloudburst hit Thathri town at 2.20 am resulting in a massive increase in the level of the 'nullah' flowing along the Jamai Masjid locality close to the town" a police officer said. Dy SP (headquarters) Doda, Iftkhar Ahmed, said the water level and silt suddenly rose in the drain after the cloudburst, washing away several structures along its path leading to the main market. "As of now, six persons including five women have died and their bodies recovered from the debris. 11 people have been injured and rescued from the debris. They have

been shifted to hospital", a police spokesman said. Dev Raj of Nagni village lost his 40-year-old wife Naru Devi and three children - 14-year-old Sapna and 7-year-old Priya and 9-year-old son Rahul. Their bodies have been recovered, police said. Apart from them other two deceased persons have been identified as 45-year-old Patna Devi of Balgran and 15-year-old Shrishta Devi of Balgran. The injured have been admitted to the Primary Health Centre (PHC) at Thathri, the spokesman said. "However, several others are still under the debris and more

casualties cannot be ruled out," the Dy SP said. "We cannot assess the exact loss of life or property immediately as we are in the middle of rescue operations trying to save those still trapped under the debris," Ahmed said. "The entire district administration, along with the police and army, has started rescue operation on a war footing," the police official said. The Batote-Doda-Kishtwar National Highway (NH1B) was closed due to huge boulders at Thathri market triggered by the cloudburst. Water supply pipes and power supply remained snapped in the area.

Delhi doctor kidnapped for 14 days by Ola driver for 5-Crore ransom

Uttar Pradesh, July 20: An Ola cab driver who allegedly kidnapped a Delhi doctor and held him captive for 14 days to try and extort Rs. 5 crore in ransom from the cab company has been arrested. The police said the doctor, kidnapped on July 6 on his way home to south Delhi, was rescued from the gang on Wednesday after a gunfight in Meerut, 82 km away. Teams of Delhi Police and Uttar Pradesh's Special Task Force had earlier tracked down the four members of the gang at Haridwar and Meerut over the last few days. But they had managed to slip away. On Wednesday, the police traced them again, this time to a village in Meerut. The

four kidnapers including the cab driver were arrested after a shootout that injured one of them. A native of Telangana, Dr Shrikant Goud had booked an Ola cab on July 6 evening to return to his home in south Delhi from a private hospital in east Delhi where he works. But instead of driving him home, the driver took him to Dadri near Noida where other members of the gang joined them. The kidnapers made the first ransom call to Ola's call centre using his phone and demanded 5 crores. Another ransom call was also made to the private hospital. As proof, they also made a video of him on the phone camera and sent the clips to the doctor's

family and private cab operator. During the next 13 days, the police said the gang did not use their mobile phones but Dr Goud's phone to avoid identification. The precaution wasn't of much help. On Sunday, a police team was just metres away from the kidnapers travelling in a vehicle in Meerut but they were able to evade arrest. The police later tracked them to Haridwar but again lost the trail. Last evening, the police received information that the doctor was being held at an under-construction building in Meerut. The police team surrounded the locality where the doctor was being held captive and rescued him after a brief gunfight.

Fire in godown in Anand Parbat, shops in Lala Lajpat Rai market

New Delhi, July 20: Two incidents of fire were reported in central Delhi this morning. However, there were no reports of injuries to anyone. A fire broke out at a two-storey godown, used to keep confectionery items, in the Anand Parbat area around 6.35 am, a senior officer from the Delhi Fire Services said. Ten fire tenders were rushed to the spot and the blaze was put out by 9.10 am, he said. Another incident of fire was reported from Lala Lajpat Rai market opposite Red Fort. A call about a fire in 15-16 makeshift shops in the market was received around 7.20 am, said the officer. Sixteen fire tenders were sent to douse the flames, which could be controlled only by 8.50 am. A short-circuit is suspected to have triggered the blaze.

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