

# Editorial

Imphal, Thursday June 1, 2017

## Banning the bandhs

If only Bandhs and Blockades could have addressed every grievance real or perceived, or produce solutions for all the social problems, things would have turned out much better and easier. History and experience have unfortunately proved beyond any shred of doubt that these forms of social disruptions rather have the opposite consequences- unexpected shutdowns, unscheduled postponements, loss of valuable work-hour, closed schools and deserted markets and other places of public conveniences, not to mention the damages to property and threat to life. In short, bandhs and blockades hamper economic activities and retards development. The already lagging economy always takes a bad hit every time such forms of protests and agitations are being resorted to by various groups and parties, and it goes without saying that the number of working days lost due to such situations has been way too many for anyone to keep count consistently over the years.

The right to protest, dissent and criticise, challenge state policy, and question the government is squarely protected under the Indian Constitution. This right is enshrined in the Fundamental Rights Chapter in Part III of the Constitution in Article 19 (the fundamental right to freedom). India attained its Independence through peaceful struggle. Passive resistance and civil disobedience are few of the well known instruments of protest which involve peaceful and non-violent methodologies of protest. When exercised with caution and in the good spirit of toiling for a worthy cause, protest remains perhaps the only and most effective means of showing our dissents and concerns and should be viewed more as a precursor to a meaningful dialogue and discussion for bringing about an amicable and lasting solution.

But more often than not, in our eagerness to assert our rights and voice our concerns, we forget to read between the lines. The keywords- "peaceful and non-violent" have been given a miss thus changing the very nature of the whole exercise. The unfortunate truth about protests in the state is that violence has played a pivotal role in the process and will undoubtedly continue for the foreseeable future. "Flash strikes" without any prior information are on the rise catching the public by surprise and putting everyone to much inconvenience. Venting out of frustrations by the protestors on passers-by and the common public often always leads to altercations and physical violence resulting in damage to properties and physical injuries, and even loss of life in a few unfortunate instances.

The decision of the state cabinet to enact a new law to declare bandhs and blockades illegal comes as a much needed breather for the common people of the state who have been bearing the brunt for so long with neither law nor the benefits of influence and power to ease their sufferings. There is however an intrinsic danger of the real and genuine concerns of the people being subdued and suffocated by the authorities taking advantage of the new law. The state government should therefore exercise caution and make judicious decisions in dispensing with the protests put up by the public. Hopefully the new law will eventually necessitate and set an alternative and more effective mode of raising the real and genuine concerns of the public without having to put the state to a grinding halt.

## Rejoinder to "Kukis, as recorded in the chronicles of Manipur and Tripura"

By: Kendy Pamei  
Freelance Writers

Shri. Ngulminthang has brought us the most significant article on the captioned subject in the Imphal Times on May 29, 2017. It was always an opportunity to read new articles and acquired the knowledge, however I wanted to reiterate to the article through this rejoinder and in-fact my intention was to clear few of my doubts and there is no intention to revile the history of our Kuki brethren. The question of dominance or the ownership of land has always drawn great interest to the humankinds. The facts that the writer has sedulously and sagaciously pointed out were in fact scurrilous to many Meitei and Naga in particular. Sir. J. Johnstone (1897) wrote "The kukis are a wandering race consisting of several tribes who have long been working up from the south. They were first heard of as Kukis, in Manipur, between 1830 and 1840; though tribes of the same had long been subject to the Rajah of Manipur". It is clear that the author doesn't talk about the year when they first contacted, as claimed in the above mentioned article. Rather, Sir. J. Johnstone clearly pointed out the fact, that Kukis has long been subject of the Rajah of Manipur. T.C Hudson (1911) quoted the words of kuki man "we are like birds of the air, we make our nests here this year, and who knows where we shall build next year", such writings manifest that the Kukis are indeed migrating from places to places even during the 1800s, whereas the Nagas and Meiteis at that time has already set up a proper village and social structure. The probability of the Kukis migrating upward from the Burma can be attributed to scare of their powerful kindred, was undeniable. The proclamation made in the article that the Kukis are the only inhabitant

of the Hills areas of Manipur and they were the sole owner of the Hills is risible to all the intellectuals irrespective of which tribes or communities. "The new immigrants began to cause anxiety about the year 1845, and soon poured into the hill tracts of Manipur in such numbers, as to drive away many of the older inhabitants..... Seeing that the Kukis had been driven north by kindred but more powerful tribes, and that their first object was to secure land for cultivation; McCulloch, as they arrived, settled them down, allotting to them lands in different places according to their numbers, and where their presence would be useful on exposed frontiers" (Sir. J. Johnstone; *My Experiences in Manipur and the Naga Hills*; 1897). Had McCulloch, the then political agent of British in Manipur had not been handed the management work of the new arrivals, it is uncertain as to where the history of our brethren Kukis would have been now. It was obvious that during the 1820-1850 AD, the Kuki migrated to Manipur and Major McCulloch was gracious enough to arrange them a place for their settlement. It is also still evident till date that, the Kuki are mostly settled in the frontiers areas as stated above. Despite allotting them land, the Kukis are not satiate with the land, as such the only mean to satisfy their thirst for more land and to secured more land, they drive out the original inhabitants, T. C Hudson "I have stumbled across ruins of large villages in the jungles south of Nongba, and learnt that they were the ruins of Kabui villages that had been destroyed by Kukis", Sir. J. Johnstone "Just before we started for the Naga Hills, I received the news of an attack by the Chussad Kukis on the Tankhool Village of Chingsow, to the north east of Manipur, forty-five people were said to have been killed or carried off; and the excitement was

all the greater from the belief entertained that the attacked has been instigated by the Burmese". Such are the pictured of the Kuki on rampage killing of Nagas and forced taking of the land. Pu. Ngulminthang rightly pointed out that the Manipuri Nagas who were subjects of the Kuki Chieftainship do not have any rights to question, however this doesn't meant the Naga are not the original settlers of the Hills of Manipur, histories of the world hardly tell us that the subject of the Kings or Chief has the rights to question them, the Nagas in many instances were captured and subsequently became the subject of the Kuki waging warriors. "The census of 1881 gave the population of the capital as 60,000, that of the rest of the valley an equal number, while the hills were estimated to have around 100,000". (Sir. J. Johnstone). It is the well known fact that the population of the Manipur both Valley and Hills boomed only after 1900s. It would be wrong to claim the ownership of the Hills on the basis of the Population. In fact the population growth can be attributed to the work of British officers; it was through their efforts that the rampage killing of innocent people were reduced tremendously in the Hill areas of Manipur. Sir J. Johnstone wrote "I sent a message to the Choomyngs and other Kukis who had given trouble, telling them that they were undoubtedly within Manipur, and that I gave them forty-two days in which to submit, or clear out, adding, that if at the end of that time they gave any trouble, they would be treated as rebels and attacked without more ceremony". Nagas on the other hand though being the older settler of Hills of Manipur did not, in most case retaliate the Kuki's attacked for some unknown reasons. The story of the Writer's Tangkhul Friend depicts the cruelty and barbaric nature of the Kuki Chief

rather than their power of dominance over the Nagas. On the issue of head hunting among the Nagas, unlike the Kukis, the Naga warriors gave the highest respect to the victim and in some cases the head are often returned. Such mutual respect for the victim or enemy is seen among the Naga, it can also be seen that for three years all kinds of raids against the victim village was forbidden (T.C Hudson; the Nagas tribes of Manipur). The head huntings were often portrayed as brutal by the western writers, however, they do not try to understand the concept behind it. It was not fair to term the Nagas as head hunting tribes, when such practice was very much existed among the Kukis. In this regards, B. B Kumar (1941) wrote "Some Kuki-Chin tribes, such as Thadou Kukis, and the Lakhers also indulged in head-hunting. The Koms, a Kuki Chin tribe of Manipur, also claim to be head-hunters in the past. Thadous needed a freshly cut head to adore the grave of their chief". T.C Hodson (1911) was careful enough to point out the fact that the Kukis do settled in the southern part of Manipur. "A line drawn across the map following the Kubo valley road via Aimole and joined to the Cachar road which traverses the western hills from Bisnupur in Manipur to Jiri Ghat on the western boundary of the state separates the Nagas area from the Kuki area without excluding more than a few small Kabui villages which lie to the south of Nongba". Having quoted the above lines, we get the clear picture of the Naga and Kuki area, the Nagas in whatsoever condition never claim Churchillpur as the Naga dominated area whereas the Kuki are claiming the whole Manipur as their land. Neglecting the factual facts of our history to repress the others will do no good in the coming generation.

### National and International News

## Assam Rifles Installs 6 KVA Wind and Solar Hybrid Power Plant at Molanghat Village

Imphal, June 1: 29 Assam Rifles of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) installed 6 KVA Wind and Solar Hybrid Power Plant at Molanghat village, District Chandel under Border Area Development Programme (BADP) for the year 2016-17. Molanghat is located near the Indo-Myanmar border and is devoid of any developmental project by the government. Assam Rifles true to its name the "Friends of Manipur" has brought electricity



to Molanghat by installing 6 KVA Wind and Solar Hybrid Power Plant. The people of Molanghat have expressed their gratitude to the 29 Assam Rifles for installing solar power plant and have ensured that it will further strengthen bond between AR and locals.

## Bomb threat by passenger disrupts Malaysia Airlines Flight

Sydney, June 1: Passengers and crew on a Malaysia Airlines flight from Melbourne to Kuala Lumpur tackled a fellow passenger who attempted to enter the cockpit shouting he had a bomb, authorities and witnesses said on Thursday. The 25-year-old man, a Sri Lankan national, was tied up with seatbelts and the flight diverted back to Melbourne following the incident shortly after takeoff from Tullamarine Airport late on Wednesday. Former AFL player Andrew Leoncelli, who was a passenger on the flight, said the man screamed, "I've got a bomb and I'm going to f\*\*\*ing blow the plane up," before flight attendants and other passengers tackled and restrained him. Arif Chaudhry, another passenger on board MH128, told Reuters that about 30 minutes into the flight a male passenger attacked a female member of the cabin crew who screamed for help.

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