

Editorial

Imphal Thursday, March 2, 2017

Its' now left to the people Lets' make no more mistakes

Heated election campaign by respective political party for the first phase Manipur election will end today evening. The propaganda war in the game of throne will be not heard in streets, television or any other form of mass media, yet there may be secret gathering at some places in support of their respective candidates. Forget about those hard core election workers of candidates, it is now left to the majority common people who will decide the fate of Manipur.

The good, the bad and the ugly had already been known almost all candidates in this game of throne has been tested, some for around 5 terms.

Man, being a social animal has to exist with and amongst other humans and in order to adjust and make co-existence possible certain laws and regulations are drawn up to safeguard the welfare of every member of the group or community, curtailing certain personal freedoms and liberties that might infringe on other person's welfare. This is the basic idea of a social set-up. And if we the voter fails to rethink the matter then it would be nothing less than chopping the own leg with an axe.

It is well known in democracy leaders and arbitrators are then chosen to oversee the smooth working of the social system with adequate executive powers as deemed necessary to enforce the same - the Government as we know, create and accept in the contemporary world. A society, being made up of individual members, is bound to come up with conflicting interests and emotions. This is where the quality and the efficiency of the people entrusted to sort out these social issues are being tested. The problems being faced by our society as a collective whole in recent times is uncountable and varied - indeed an intimidating and daunting task for those entrusted to solve them. Public memory is short lived - or so it is believed. But sweeping away these problems under the carpet and shrouding them with silence, putting the theory about public memory to the test is not the right step towards easing the problems. Nor is the polished method of prolonging the issues and tiring out the protesting parties to buy time and making these matters fade out of the mind of the public the prudent way of resolving things.

The recent assurances doled out to the different parties regarding their claims for parts of the state by the State Government smacks of the repeated and always successful modus operandi. Instead of finding a lasting solution and bringing peace in the State, almost all political parties contesting the election are now engaging in war of words. Political parties who are supposed to form government shouldn't be promising something impossible to deliver. It's better to call a spade a spade and wind up the matter before things become irreparably damaged. It needs to speed up the workings of it's various departments and deliver the goods in time to avoid and prevent more problems. Genuine issues should be resolved before things gets out of hand. Let's hope people this election exercise their franchise to build a better Manipur.

REGIONAL INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL SCIENCES

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Advertisement for the post of Deputy Director (Administration), Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal

No. 11(A) 72-MC (Pt.II): This office advertisement of even number dated 18/11/2016 for the post of Deputy Director (Administration), RIMS, Imphal on deputation, is hereby cancelled as there is no eligible candidate who applied for the post.

Sd/-
(Prof. Ch. Arun Kumar Singh)
Director,
Regional Institute of Medical Sciences, Imphal
Imphal, the 27th Feb, 2017

Admit Card lost

I, the undersigned have lost my Admit Card bearing roll no. 41953 issued by the Board of Secondary Education, Manipur (BOSEM) today for appearing the class X final exam of 2017 was lost somewhere in between Singjamei Chingamakah to Singjamei Kshetri Leikai, Imphal West District while returning home from BOSEM today afternoon.

Finders are requested to handover the admit card to the undersigned.

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United Naga Council in Manipur Electoral Politics

The UNC appeals to the Nagas of Manipur to choose (elect only those candidates who have no party affiliation whatsoever, who enjoys the confidence of their respective Assembly Constituencies (ACs) who are god fearing and who subscribes to the above four objectives (in italics) to work unitedly with his/her other fellow Naga representatives elected in the same manner. The UNC appeals to the Naga people of Manipur through their respective tribal Council/Hohos, churches; intelligentsia; professionals; women, youth and student's organisations to rally behind the goal to mutually strengthen for the unification of the Nagas. This is possible through the empowerment of the people, where "our people free themselves from the clutches of power mongering politicians who have been always guided by their self centered agenda". "The Nagas of Manipur have to go beyond the immediate compulsions of personal gains; family, clan, village, and tribal interests and political opportunism. We must ensure the return of responsible candidates with clear visions who will represent the Nagas aspirations and carry forward our struggle for peace, justice, and freedom. It is an uphill task but we must do it because we know what awaits us if we don't," it further says. [United Naga Council, Call for Democratic Expression of our Birth Right: Position Paper on the 9th General Election 2007, Manipur, On 3 August 2006, UNC took a resolution wherein Naga candidates had been instructed against contesting the 9th MAE under any national political parties and intimated to all the sitting Naga MLAs. This led the incumbent Congress MLA, RK Theko to state that the NSCN-IM was attempting to wipe out the Congress from the Naga areas through the UNC. It can be recollected that RK Theko was the President of UNC at a time when it issued Quit Notice to the Kukis in 1992. Spat of resignation by Naga MLAs took place ahead of the 9th MAE in which five sitting legislators resigned from the Manipur State assembly in support of the ongoing Gol-NSCN-IM peace process and "to fulfill the inherent and democratic aspirations of Naga people" for "unification of all Naga Homeland". In the UNC sponsored meeting of the all the intending Naga candidates for the Manipur Assembly Election 2007, 60 Naga intending candidates signed the Eight Point Declaration. The Declaration states: "I willfully support the ongoing Indo-Naga Peace talks for a negotiated and honorable solution. On being elected I will steadfastly defend the interest of the Naga people for the integration/Unification of the Naga Areas; That I will resign from the Manipur Legislative Assembly if called upon to do so by the Naga people represented by the UNC; ... I declare that I will accept without any reservation whatsoever, the candidature of the particular person who is determined by the Naga people represented by the UNC to be the consensus candidate; ... I shall not defect/ split/ merge to any political party without the approval of the Naga people represented by the UNC. Failing to fulfill the above Commitments and Declaration, I and my witness shall be made liable to any measures adopted by the Naga people."

The common front floated by the United Naga Council (UNC) has been christened as the United Naga Democratic Front (UNDF). In its manifesto, it pledges - to mobilize the people for fullest support to the ongoing Indo-Naga political dialogue for an honorable solution; to provide leadership to society in nation building; to fulfill the inherent and democratic aspirations of the Naga people for the unification of all the Naga Homeland; to promote common interest of all the ethnic communities in the state. The Emergency Meeting of the UNC held on 28 December 2006 at Tahamzan (Senapati) resolved to totally ban and restrict the political party affiliation of whatsoever and holding of political parties' conventions and campaigns in the Naga areas. The UNC had afterwards served ultimatum on 24 January 2007 to all those candidates who had not been nominated by the UNC to withdraw their candidatures.

On 21 January 2007, AB Bardhan, National Secretary of Communist of India (CPI) had stated that CPI had not established units in 11 ACs where Nagas dominate, as several candidates were fielded under the dictates of the NSCN-IM. Four independent candidates of 47 Karong AC have cried

foul allegedly over the involvement of some NSN-IM men including upper rung leaders in the election campaign for improving the prospects of UNC sponsored candidate, RV Shirang. Amidst the threat of NSCN-IM, a peace rally was staged at Chandel on 19 February by womenfolk demanding that they be given the freedom to freely exercise their franchise without threat and intimidations. NSCN-K bans all candidates in Tamenglong AC as it felt that the NSCN-IM had grossly maneuvered the process to ensure the election of the candidate put up by them. Naga National Council (NCC) charged the Isaac Muivah leadership of shrieking their responsibility owed to the "Naga Nation." It alleged that the formation of UNDF was at the behest of NSCN-IM. It also alleged that the Nagas in Manipur are not only forced and threatened to vote for the UNDF candidate but the IM leaders have also been abducting public leaders from areas of Tamenglong and Ukhrul District for raising objections to the NSCN-IM Stances. In the third and final phase elections, three candidates have taken forced retirement. But their names continue to include in the Ballot as there were no official cognizance of such candidates who were cleared for contesting after scrutiny and who did not withdraw their candidature within the given time are considered as contesting candidate. Those who have taken Forced retirement included one independent candidate of Tamenglong AC, and two CPI candidates at Tengnoupal and Chandel AC. Mr. Khangthuan Panmei, an independent candidate of tamenglong AC was abducted on 17 February 2007 in the last couple of days preceding polls. The outfit alleged him of "lending support to the anti-UNC Policies of the so called peace rally." Two CPI candidates, Onzangam Haokip of Tengnoupal AC and Nehkothang of Chandel AC have taken forced retirement as they were threatened of dire consequences by some insurgent groups even as the repeated appeals of the village elders to allow free and fair election went unheeded.

Electoral result shows UNC sponsored candidates blank-out other political parties in Ukhrul District by winning all the three seats. In Tadubi AC of Senapati District, Tamei AC of Tamenglong District and Tengnoupal AC of Chandel District too, UNC candidates defeated sitting MLA and INC candidates in all these ACs.

Ahead of the 10th MAE, 2012, the Manipur Unit of Naga Peoples Front (NPF) was formally open on 28th May, 2011. In 10th MAE, 2012, NPF altogether fielded 12 candidates. UNC, ahead of the election, at its Federal Assembly meeting held on January 2, resolved to support the NPF. The resolution was adopted taking into account, the situation of the Nagas in Manipur and the commonality in principle and ideology with the NPF on the political agenda of the Nagas, the UNC stated. Nephru Rio, incumbent Nagaland Chief Minister and Star Campaigner of NPF, in his campaign address reiterated that the 10th MAE should be taken as Naga's referendum and also exhorted that the Nagas have been kept suppressed due to scattered settlement. If it is referendum of Naga's, as stated, the thumping defeat of G. Gaingam, a patriarch of Naga integration campaign, Founder President of NPF Manipur State Unit and former President of UNC, defeat of NPF candidate in Chingai AC with big margin for which the sizeable number of voters is from the Sodal village, a birthplace of the Naga rebel leader, Mr. Th. Muivah are just footnotes to the poor electoral performance of NPF, despite all-out effort by its benefactor.

In March 2014, UNC came out with a position which the Naga people will have to be adhered in letter and spirit in the 16th LSE 2014. They are: a) Any political party or individual(s), who either in speech, written statement, visual display or in action, opposing the established and registered position of the Nagas will be deemed to be anti-Naga; and b) The policies, programmes and activities of any political party which does not subscribe to the established position of the Nagas will not qualify for the support of the Naga people in any manner whatsoever. In the said LSE, UNC had endorsed the NPF Candidate, Soso Lorho though there have not been consensus in the Zeliangrong Baudi which claimed to be the apex organization of the

Zeliangrongs. To enhance the prospect of NPF Candidate, helicopters were used in the campaign and even resorted to unethical means amounting to character assassination of the other Naga candidates in the fray. Prof. Gangmumei Kamei (BJP candidate) and Mani Charanmei (independent candidate & former MP) by calling them as black sheep. Regardless of their effort and endorsement Soso Lorho was defeated. Post declaration of Election results, Prof. Gangmumei came out in public stating that NPF Candidate, Soso Lorho shouldn't hold him responsible for his defeat by dividing the Naga votes but had only his benefactor to blame. Who the benefactor is to everyone's guess? The NPF Constitution (6th Amendment 2009) has in the Article II, Clause 2(c) categorically stated its aims and objectives: to work for Unity and integrity of the people by integrating all contiguous Naga inhabited areas under one administrative roof and also to provide protection to all the ethnic groups who are indigenous inhabitants of the state. Accordingly, NPF has been seeking fortune in terms of pursuing for election to political office. In the election held for the Six Autonomous District Councils on June 2015, the NPF had managed to put up a somewhat impressive show by emerging as the second largest party. The UNC, consistent with their earlier declaration of the ADCs as 'null and void' did not participate overtly in election process of the ADCs in 2015. The NPF Manipur State Unit had welcomed August 03 Framework Agreement of 2015 signed between Gol and NSCN(IM) stating the agreement so signed as a recognition of the Naga's struggle for Self Determination.

On 05 September 2015, all the four NPF MLAs submitted their resignation after the State Assembly passed the three bills for the protection of Manipur people. But all four of them reportedly continued to receive their salaries and entitlements till August 2016. This brings to doubt whether or not their resignation is out of their own free will. Later, their resignation was accepted on 15 September 2016. The NPF had in the earlier MAE unsuccessfully tried their luck in Chingai AC of Churachandpur where there is some presence of Naga and fared badly. Violence erupted at Churachandpur in the intervening night of 31 August and 01 September 2015 over the controversy of passing three bills for the protection of three bills for the protection of Manipur people leading to the loss of nine civilian lives. Naga cohorts including NPF and UNC, the NPF endorse in Manipur found the opportune moment in it to flaunt solidarity for the stated cause of 'Tribal Unity' against the 'communal government' of Manipur. The continuing agitation and the refusal to give a ceremonial burial to those even after the prospects of bill becoming an act is ruled out exposes the intention of those sticking to protest. Outer Manipur Tribal Forum (OMTF) is a joint venture of the Joint Action Committee against Anti Tribal Bill (JACAATB) and UNC with H. Mangchikhup of JACAATB and Gaidon Kamei of UNC as the respective Chief Convener and Convener formed to collectively stand against 'anti tribal bill'. Sensing something foul Kukis and Hmars have declared the severing of ties with JACAATB just ahead of observing the second anniversary of the Anti-ILP protest started in 31 August 2015. Many Kukis particularly Thadous had been very critical with the enthusiastic opportunism of the UNC which at one time had the impudence of serving 'Quit Notice' to the Kukis in Manipur Hills. In fact, those communities who disapprove the movement being piloted by the UNC started dissociating from the JACAATB. The 13 January Longmai Naya attack of 2016 at Tamenglong District resulted to the killing of a civilian and injuring three others. The state police held the NSCN-IM responsible for the attack. The UNC and later the NSCN-IM refuted and counter alleged it to be the handiwork of State Police. The allegation seemed remote as security arrangement in the area under attack had been in a collaborative effort with the central paramilitary forces. Amidst the refutations and counter allegations, the Vaiphei People's Council (VPC), Paite Tribe Council (PTC), and Mate Tribe Council (MTC) had on 16 January 2016 by withdrawing all their

respective nominated members distanced from the JACAATB. In this ensuing AE, NPF including four Kukis, fielded their candidate in the 15 Scheduled Tribes Reserved ACs of Jiribam, Chandel, Tengnoupal, Phungyar, Ukhrul, Chingai, Saikul, Karong, Mao, Tadubi, Kangkokpi, Saitu, Tamei, Tamenglong and Henglep. In the earlier 10th MAE, 2012, NPF had fielded only one Kuki candidate. The AC along with the candidate from where they fielded are - M. Thangboi Haokip from Saikul, and Sephu Haokip from Saitu of Senapati District, and K. Chonglooi from Kangkokpi, and Thongjamlen Haokip from Henglep of Churachandpur District. All these four ACs are currently represented by Congress. To add a footnote, Ms. Nemcha Kipgen of Kangkokpi District, got elected from the erstwhile Manipur State Congress Party (MSCP) and MSCP in the post-poll later merged to Congress, but she afterwards resigned from the primary membership of the Congress tendered his resignation on January 23, 2017 and is contesting on BJP. The likelihood of NPF winning from these four ACs is remote, but it will certainly narrow the chance of Congress candidate winning from it. In the ensuing 11th MAE, 2017 also, UNC had reaffirmed its earlier decision of 2012 to support the NPF because of the 'commonality in principle and political ideology' of standing 'without reservation for the Naga people in the 2017 MLA election'. UNC also expressly took the stand that CM 'Bobbi and the MPCC will be opposed by the Nagas and confronted headlong.' The embracing of BJP by the immediate kin of Muivah led NSCN strongmen from Chingai AC defying the ban of the family members of the NSCN-IM's 'national worker from contesting the Indian mainstream election. Mention can be made that the younger fraternal sibling of Mr. Sward Vashum who contested from the Chingai AC of Ukhrul District, Mr. VS Atem was formerly an Army Chief and is still an advisor of the Muivah led NSCN. And Chingai is considered a prestigious constituency of the outfit, as 'Shongran' popularly known as Sodal, the birthplace of the NSCN-IM Supremo, Th. Muivah also falls in Chingai AC. But with MK Preshow Shimray of Congress winning from the said AC in the last MAE, 2012, it is no longer considered a bastion of NPF. Mention could also be made that, Mr. Vashum abandoned the NPF as Working President and eventually joined the BJP in NPF. Eyebrows have been raised and even reportedly questioning the wisdom of the BJP Central leadership by a BJP Candidate from the Imphal Valley stating, 'We do not know how our central leadership selected Vashum as a candidate, but his blood ties with NSCN-IM could harm our chances of defeating the Corrupt Congress.' With only two and six days remaining, this time may be attributive of the unceremonious exit of the TR Zeliang from the Chief Ministership of Nagaland and the associated recent crisis within the NPF in Nagaland where it had its primary base both in terms of manpower and material base, quite contrary from the earlier MAE of 2012, the NPF leadership from its high command had still not shown any enthusiasm. The creation of new revenue districts, particularly Tengnoupal, Kamjong and Noney was earlier welcomed by its local inhabitants. It is worth collecting that the involvements of locals in enforcing blockade at the Naga-dominated major stretch of Imphal-Jiribam Highway got subsided with the declaration of Noney District and was even given a candle lit welcome. The declaration of Kamjong District was immediately welcomed by Tangkhu Naga Kuki Welfare Association, Eastern Kuki Chiefs Association and Razian Long, though in the aftermath there have been cases of retracting their respective welcome statement. In Tengnoupal also, many have organized Thanks Giving for granting a full-fledged District. Whether the continued opposition to the creation of new districts, prolonged opposition, the potential resistance from the Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front, Zeliangrong United Front, other Naga Rebel outfits, prolonged economic blockade, and the grudges over the NPF's choice of candidate, as some NPF offices have been ransacked on account of it, will or will not prove to be a dent in the NPF's quest for seeking fortune in terms of political office will soon be unfolded.