

Editorial

Imphal Tuesday, March 21, 2017

State government-perceptions and premonitions

With the passing of the floor test of the state assembly, the newly formed N Biren led BJP coalition government is set to dispense its duties and obligations to the people of Manipur. More than anything, the just concluded state assembly election represents in no uncertain terms the growing disillusionment of the general public and the pressing need for a change of guard. While the developments leading to the occupation of the governance by the BJP cannot be termed empathic, the message is rather for the congress party who was in power for the previous three terms, and despite claims of ushering in progress and development, has failed to convince the public of its intentions and political integrity. That said, politics does make for strange bedfellows, and the new government is no exception. It remains to be seen how much of its rhetoric and bold assurances are being converted into concrete work. It also remains to be seen how the complex and often seemingly impossible inter-communal tensions and counter-claims on various issues are handled and managed.

Now that the change is finally happened, the onus of proving its mettle regarding governance and administration of the impoverished state lies with the BJP, and needs to steamroll its way through the various hurdles and obstacles which will undoubtedly spring up from various vested interests who thrive on taking advantage of the uncertainties and insecure atmosphere prevailing in the state. In fact, the greatest threat to the promise of accelerated development and progress as elaborated and elucidated as eloquently by Narendra Modi as only he could, will be from those elements who furtively operate from the shadows of those who are in power and influence, basking in reflected glory and self-profiteering at the expense of the common people without remorse. There still is the ever-present danger of the good intents and efforts of the change being diverted by a few. If the new government is to make sure that all its promises are kept and wish to continue governing and administering the state for the next many terms, it needs to get rid of the crony-capitalism, rampant corruption and sponsored terrorism which was synonymous with the previous government.

Manipur, being a volatile state when it comes to issues relating to communities and faiths, needs to develop greater understanding and bonhomie amongst the various communities and groups, and the best way to go about it is to break down the psychological and physical barrier that is proving to be the biggest factor in preventing the promotion of understanding. Better communication and means of transportation which entails improvement of roads should be prioritized in order for the mutual mistrust and rivalries existing amongst the groups and communities. The protracted practice of communal politics and fomenting unrest by opportunists must be put to a complete stop.

The Manipur of today presents an unparalleled opportunity for the new government to mould and shape a different, vibrant and radically different state. The potential is there all along. What have sorely been missing are the political will and the integrity to initiate and see things through. Hope the Biren-led state government has the political gumption and acumen to fill in the vital missing gaps.

What are the Terms of Reference of Negotiation between the GoM and the UNC?

-Media in-charge
People's Campaign for Resurgent Manipur

Last Sunday, the United Naga Council (UNC) had called off the 139-day-long blockade of the state's two national highways, after talks with representatives from the state and Centre and a day ahead of Chief Minister N Biren's crucial floor test to prove his majority in the Manipur assembly. This must be a good news but it has raised more questions than answers.

For instance, what is the real position of the Government of Manipur in the negotiated matter? What are the principles and political positions that the GoM uses as the terms of reference in its negotiations with the UNC on the matter? Does it reflect the constitutional/legal imperatives of the rule of law? Does it register the suffering of the people due to such blockades of the highways? How does it accommodate the grievances and aspirations of the UNC? Does it address the root cause of the crisis?

The reports have raised as well multiple viewpoints on what the indications of this development are; but it is quite an irony that nothing has been mentioned, for example, about the hardships

faced by the people in both the hills and the valley when the blockade was in place. Nevertheless, the resolution of the blockade-breaking talks is all over Facebook and Twitter. See the following reported draft.



However, PCRM has an alternative draft to the agreement paper, which is prepared by one of our convenors, Dr A. Bimol Akoijam.

First of all, note the difference in the reported draft of the tripartite talk above and the alternative draft below. Given the political and legal issues, things/postures we have heard and seen on TV and media, and going beyond the knee-jerk reaction to specific episodes, a government committed to the law of the land would have worked for an agreement like this alternative draft to the one which was signed on 19 March, 2017. We believe that we should reflect on this alternative draft, which takes into account the grievances of UNC and imperatives of ensuring a lawful society and polity. Even though the agreement has been signed now, we also believe that deliberations and discussions will enhance our understanding of the issues and challenges at hand.

National & International News

SC suggests fresh attempts to resolve Ayodhya dispute

PTI New Delhi, Mar 21: The Supreme Court today said fresh attempts must be made by all parties concerned to find a solution to the Ayodhya temple dispute which is a "sensitive" and "sentimental matter".

A bench headed by Chief Justice J S Khehar said that such religious issues can be solved through negotiations and offered to mediate to arrive at an amicable settlement. "These are issues of religion and sentiments. These are issues where all the parties can sit together and arrive at a consensual decision to end the dispute. All of you may sit together and hold a cordial meeting," the bench also comprising Justices

D Y Chandrachud and S K Kaul said.

The observations came after BJP leader Subramanian Swamy mentioned the matter seeking urgent hearing of the issue. Swamy said that it has been over six years and the matter needed to be heard at the earliest.

The Parliamentarian told the court that he had approached the Muslim community members who told him that judicial intervention was required to solve the matter. "You must make fresh attempts to arrive at a consensual decision. If required, you must choose a moderator to end the dispute. If the parties want me to sit with mediators chosen by both the sides

for negotiations, am ready to take up the task. Even the services of my brother judges can be availed for the purpose," the CJ said.

The top court said that it may also appoint a principal negotiator if the parties want.

The bench then asked Swamy to consult the parties and inform it about the decision on March 31.

On February 26 last year, the apex court had allowed Swamy to intervene in the pending matters relating to the Ayodhya title dispute with his plea seeking construction of Ram temple at the site of the demolished disputed structure.

The BJP leader had earlier moved the plea for a direction to allow

construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya at the disputed site and had mentioned it before a bench headed by the then Chief Justice T S Thakur on an urgent hearing. In his petition, Swamy had claimed that under the practices prevalent in Islamic countries, a mosque could be shifted to any other place for public purposes like constructing road, whereas a temple once constructed cannot be touched.

He had also sought directions to expedite the disposal of several petitions challenging the Allahabad High Court verdict of three-way division of the disputed Ram Jannabhooni-Babri Masjid site in Ayodhya on September 30, 2010.

Lankan Navy arrests 10 fishermen

PTI Rameswaram, March 21: Ten Indian fishermen were today arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy when they were fishing near Katchatheevu, a fisheries department official said.

They were arrested on charges of crossing the International Maritime Boundary Line, Assistant Director of Fisheries, Kulanjinathan, said. The fishermen, belonging to Thangachimadam near here, were taken to Kankesanthurai along with their boat, he said.

Earlier on March 6, 22-year-old Bridgo was shot dead by the Sri Lankan Navy personnel while he was fishing in a mechanised boat near Katchatheevu islet. Another fisherman, Saravanan, had suffered injuries in the incident.

The fishermen had protested the killing and had refused to receive the body of the youth till a Union minister visited the island and gave them an assurance that such incidents would not recur. They had withdrawn their protest a week later after talks with Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Pon Radhakrishnan, who assured them that their demands would be met. Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami had also written to the Centre and urged it to summon Sri Lankan High Commissioner to India forthwith and convey to him "the strong feelings of the Government of India and Tamil Nadu about the 'unprovoked' firing on fishermen and non-adherence to earlier agreements on this issue".

South Sudan: Plane crash-lands in Wau, at least 37 injured

AFP Juba, March 21: At least 37 people were injured when a passenger jet crash-landed in South Sudan's northwestern city of Wau today, government and airport officials said. There were 40 passengers and five crew members on board the South Supreme Airlines plane that had taken off from the capital Juba, said the airline's manager Gabriel Ngang. State Information Minister Bona Gaudensio said an ambulance had brought the passengers from the airport to the hospital, and most of them were released shortly

after. "We had 37 passengers taken to the hospital and so after they were given first aid we have released 31 of them and we will release the rest tomorrow," Gaudensio told AFP. He could not account for the remaining eight people who had been on board, but claimed there were no deaths in the accident. Paul Charles, an engineer at Wau airport, and local radio journalist Lawrence Yunisen both told AFP that some passengers — not counted among the injured — had managed to flee the burning plane

unscathed. Charles said the weather in the region had not been good when the plane attempted to land. "Visibility was not good up to now and (the plane) was landing from the east to west, then it just crashed (off) the runway. The pilot I think was not seeing the runway well," he said. "Some of the people got out by themselves, some of them were pulled. Only the back part of the plane remains but the rest was burned," he added.

Video images obtained by AFP showed firefighters battling to put

out the blaze as thick black smoke billowed from the aircraft. The plane was completely burned out except for the tail, which clearly displayed the insignia of South Supreme Airlines, a local carrier. In November 2015, 36 people were killed when a Soviet-era Antonov plane crashed just after take-off from Juba. Two survivors were pulled from the twisted metal hull but one later died. South Sudan has been gripped by civil war since 2013, and the country is also in the midst of a "man-made" famine due to the conflict.

Missing JNU student Najeeb Ahmed 'Googled' ways to join Islamic State: Report

DNA New Delhi, March 21: In a new twist to the missing JNU student Najeeb Ahmed's case, a report has said that he had looked up for information related to the Islamic State (IS) on the Internet, months before his disappearance.

Najeeb (27), a student of School of Biotechnology and a native of Badaun in Uttar Pradesh, went missing on October 15 following an on-campus scuffle allegedly with the members of ABVP.

According to *Times of India*, Ahmed looked for information on the ideology, executions, and network of the Islamic State.

The details have come to the fore after police received a report from Google and YouTube of his browsing history.

The report said Ahmed had also searched ways to join IS on Google. "Most of the videos he watched

on YouTube were also related to the Islamic State," sources told the daily.

After several twists and turns in the case over a period of five months, the police is now exploring the possibility of him being radicalised and lured away via Nepal.

Meanwhile, Delhi police have refuted the media report saying, they were still analysing the browsing history.

"No final report has been submitted to High Court and investigation so far does not show any links of allegiance he (Najeeb) had with ISIS," said Special Commissioner, Dependra Pathak.

In November, a proctorial enquiry by JNU found ABVP member Vikrant Kumar guilty of assaulting Ahmed during a brawl, following which the latter went missing.

In January, the Delhi Police had arrested a man accused of making a

ransom call to Ahmed's family demanding Rs 20 lakh.

Alleging political vendetta behind his disappearance, TMC's Rajya

Sabha member Vivek Gupta on Monday asked the Centre to order a probe by CBI or any other appropriate agency in the matter.

Post beef rumours, city hotel sealed, manager arrested

PTI Jaipur, March 21: The alleged dumping of meat pieces in the open by the staff of a hotel here triggered rumours of beef cooking in the city following which the police arrested the hotel manager and another employee.

No beef was found in the hotel which was sealed by the Jaipur Municipal Corporation (JMC) as the owner had no licence to operate.

The incident occurred late on Sunday night when members of a group, Gauraksha Dal led by Sadhvi Kamal raised objection over the alleged dumping

of meat pieces. The hotel employees denied that they had thrown any meat pieces which triggered protest by the members, police said today.

Police said there were rumours of beef cooking but no beef was found in the hotel.

Senior Health Officer of the JMC Rajendra Garg said that the hotel was sealed as the hotel owner had no licence to run the hotel and restaurant. The members of the Dal alleged that the hotel staffers were throwing meat in the open and cows were getting sick after consuming the remains.

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