

Editorial

Imphal Sunday, May 28, 2017

Women again

In 1904, when Manipur became a colony of the British Empire, womenfolk of the state raised a strong demonstration against the then British government over the decision to force utilization of almost all male to build the Bungalow of the then British political agent which was burnt by resistance group of the time. The uprising of the women folk is still remembered as the first women's war. Next it was in 1939 that another mass uprising spearheaded by women folk of the state was witness against the artificial famine occurred in the erstwhile kingdom which was colonized by the British Empire, the uprising is known all over the world as the 2nd "Nupital" or 2nd Women's War.

Then in 1980s women folk again raised and spent sleepless night to protect their children and husband from the atrocities and harassment of the Indian security forces.

Problem of insurgency reached its peak during the time and it was also a time when controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act 1958, an ordinance used by the British government to suppress the freedom struggle of India was re-introduced. Under the notorious act many civilian were involuntarily made disappeared and many were picked up and killed in staged encounter, some were miraculously escaped from the death jaw but landed in jail.

Notably it's the women folk which have been taking active role to safe the people of the state at time of any form of atrocities committed by state actors or the non state actors.

When non state actors killed someone or placed a hand grenade or fired at the residence of some people, it was also again the women folk of this state who raised their voice against such terror activities.

Besides these, Manipur is also one such place in the world where there is market exclusively for the women. While fighting against the suppression and atrocities committed towards the people of the state by either the state actors or the non state actors, womenfolk of Manipur have also played major role in the economy of the state. Over thousands of women spare no pain to support the needs of their family by coming in the women market.

Another thing worth mentioning is that the women folk also spearheads movement against selling and used of intoxicants. "Nisha band", banned of all form of intoxicants is also one movement that the women folk of the region had started and is still continuing.

In fact women of this region are the savior of this erstwhile kingdom now a state of India.

Question want to put up here is how far we the people of the state including the government had acknowledged the sacrifices and courage of the women folk of our state. How far the women folk have been protected by the so called law of the land? There is no denying that there are many legislation to protect the right of the women and their children, however, is the authority serious enough to honour the rights of the women?

Crimes committed against the women are on the rise. Untold and published story of women being tortured by their husband have become a common phenomenon of today's Manipur.

No action is on the record on the practice of polygamy by government employees of the state government even though there is legislation for looking into the matters.

Not the least but one think Imphal Times would like to ask is that why did the state government still fails to introduce the 33% reservation for the women in the state legislatures when it has been passed by the Parliament of India.

Women should be respected at any cost.

By : K V Venkatasubramanian

Safe water, adequate sanitation and personal hygiene are indispensable for human health and progress. Lack of these can seriously impact psychological and social development of communities. The worst sufferers are women and children. Some 300 million women and girls, mainly from underprivileged sections of society, defecate in the open, by one estimate. Deprivation of sanitation and toilet facilities imposes immense stress on women, who are forced to relieve themselves under cover of darkness. This poses threat to their safety and even life. Often, they are forced to reduce their food and water intake to minimise the need to exit home to use toilets. Nearly 23 per cent of adolescent girls drop out of school for want and need of access to functional toilets, clean water and proper sanitation. These also affect children's learning, safety and quality of their lives. Unsafe water, poor hygiene practices and inadequate sanitation contribute to high incidences of diarrhoeal diseases, and under-five mortality caused by pneumonia, neonatal disorders and undernutrition, according to UNICEF. Contamination causes infection. Absence of sanitation leads to contamination and results in infection. This contamination is a major cause of diarrhoea and leads to other major diseases such as jaundice, cholera, schistosomiasis (snail fever, caused by parasitic flatworms called schistosomes) and trachoma (a chronic contagious

bacterial infection of the eye). Diarrhoeal diseases are also responsible for stunting in children (low height-for-age). Poor sanitation and its resultant diseases have a telling effect on everyone and a country as a whole. It imposes heavy burden on human, economic and environmental health. Hence, a clean nation alone can make sustained progress. Realising the magnitude of this problem, Prime Minister Narendra Modi gave a clarion call to end open defecation by providing clean toilets and improving sanitation. Nearly three years ago, he launched the Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) on October 2, 2014. The SBM offers a promising solution to address the issues of sanitation and water, and aims to achieve universal sanitation coverage and make India open defecation free by 2019, the 150th birthday of Mahatma Gandhi. The mission's objectives are also to eradicate manual scavenging, effect behavioural change in healthy sanitation practices, and generate awareness about sanitation and its linkage with public health. It has two sub-missions—SBM-Urban (SBM-U) and SBM Gramin (SBM-G). The SBM-U focuses on making urban India free from open defecation and achieving 100 percent scientific management of municipal solid waste in 4,041 statutory towns. The SBM-G intends to bring about an improvement in the general quality of life in rural areas, by promoting cleanliness, hygiene and eliminating open defecation. The progress on various fronts is

being measured continually and updates are posted on the dashboard of the SBM website. So far, the advancement is impressive. Under SBM (Gramin), household toilet availability has improved by 22 percent to 64 percent since 2014; and over 2 lakh villages have self-declared to be open defecation free (ODF). Similarly, under SBM (urban), almost 32 lakh individual and community (and public) toilets have been built and 662 cities are ODF. Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim and Kerala have achieved 100 percent ODF status. The Clean India campaign has, innovatively, induced a healthy competition among cities. The focus is on monitoring outcomes—the number of ODF cities and towns. A public survey places Indore as the cleanest city, and New Delhi (Lutyens Zone) among the top 10 clean cities in India. Gonda in UP is at the bottom of sanitation rankings of the survey of 434 cities. The study assessed cities and towns largely on improvement in processing of municipal solid waste and ending open defecation. Infrastructure creation and citizen participation have created visibility on ground and begun showing promising results. Through several initiatives, the campaign has shaped a conducive environment for citizen participation. A social movement has steadily gathered impetus. Continually, the limelight is on stirring up attitudinal and behavioural change among society so as to make it a people's

movement. Intensive multimedia communication campaigns through various media streams, ads on social media, introduction of apps, and billboards on streets remind public about the prime minister's rallying cry. Celebrities have been roped in as brand ambassadors to motivate viewers and listeners on broadcast media to understand the importance of sanitation. The mission stresses on toilets as key to women's security. Ads on television and signs on village walls advise families to prevent their womenfolk from defecating in the open. To further the toilet construction programme, a new ad campaign on social media depicts women demanding their right to sanitation. The video ad, which highlights the plight of women, advocates a change in mindset among rural men folk about open defecation. The campaign's consistent thrust on cleanliness around historic monuments, public places and landmark cities—including heritage sights like Varanasi, Mathura, Agra and Lucknow—has changed public sensitivity about tourist places. Toilet-building and sanitation are the two buzz words today. Clean India is not business as usual anymore—living with poor sanitation, that kills 50,000 people annually. Rather, it has stirred the collective conscience of people and has become everyone's business—to throw filth out and bring health and happiness in. (Courtesy PIB Feature)

National and International News

Mohammad Shahabuddin, former RJD MP taken into CBI custody in journalist Rajdeo Ranjan murder case

New Delhi, May 29: Taking the investigation of the Rajdeo Ranjan murder case one step forward, the CBI on Monday took over custody of Bihar strongman Mohammad Shahabuddin, the main accused in the scribe's killing. The former RJD MP was taken to the CBI headquarters in New Delhi for further

questioning. Shahabuddin was lodged in Tihar prison. Reacting to the development, Ranjan's wife told *Times Now* that she was confident that in the end all those who were responsible for her husband's death will be brought to the books.

The central agency had on Friday named Shahabuddin as an accused in the infamous murder case. As per the CBI Special court's order, Shahabuddin was produced in the court of special judge Anupam Kumar in Muzaffarpur through video-conferencing facility. The agency has told a Muzaffarpur court that his name has surfaced as an accused in the case and it needs his custodial interrogation. The agency was granted the permission by the court to question him. Shahabuddin is the 10th accused in the murder case. The CBI special court had on 22 May issued the production warrant against Shahabuddin on the plea of CBI to produce him through video-conferencing for trial. The CBI had also filed the application the same day for making Shahabuddin as an accused in the case. The CBI counsel submitted that it would soon file charge-sheet against Shahabuddin, who is currently lodged in high-security Tihar jail in the national capital.

The premier investigating agency has already filed charge-sheet against seven accused persons in the case while two accused persons—Mohammad Javed and Mohammad Kaif—are on bail. Javed and Kaif are active members of Shahabuddin gang. The four-time RJD MP from Siwan is alleged to have been involved in the murder of Rajdeo Ranjan, a journalist of a prominent Hindi daily in Siwan last year. Shahabuddin is facing trial in more than 45 criminal cases and was moved to Tihar Jail in February this year on a Supreme Court order on a plea by Siwan native Chandrakeshwar Prasad, whose three sons were killed in two separate incidents. Rajdeo Ranjan, district bureau chief of a Hindi daily was gunned down on 13 May last year and his wife has accused Shahabuddin of having a role in the killing. The Special court fixed June 9 as the next date for production of Shahabuddin in the case.

US confirms North Korea launched short-range ballistic missile

Washington, May 29: The US today confirmed that North Korea has test-launched another ballistic missile and said it is committed to the security of its allies in the neighbourhood. The US Pacific Command (PACOM) said the missile was fired near Wonsan, on North Korea's eastern coast. "The missile was tracked for six minutes until it landed in the Sea of Japan," it said in a statement. "We are working with our

interagency partners on a more detailed assessment. We continue to monitor North Korea's actions closely." The statement affirmed the American commitment to stand behind Japan and South Korea, and said the missile was never a threat to North America. "The United States government is aware. The President has been briefed," a spokesman of the National Security Council, White House said.

North Korea fires missile in latest provocation

Seoul, May 29: North Korea test-fired a missile Monday into Japan's maritime economic zone—the latest in a series of provocative launches that have ratcheted up tensions over its nuclear weapons ambitions. It was the North's third ballistic missile test in as many weeks and the 12th this year—carried out in defiance of UN sanctions warnings and US threats of possible military action. US military monitors said the short-range missile flew for six minutes, while Japan said it fell into the country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ)—waters extending 200 nautical miles from its coast. The launch comes in fresh defiance of tough talk from US President Donald Trump, who promised last week at the G7 summit that the "big problem" of North Korea "will be solved".

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