

## Editorial

# Panchayat election matters, if want India to march ahead

What makes one person different from others when it comes to the virtue of patriotism? A person who love to safeguard and developed his own native village, a person who want to see the state marching ahead and a person who want the nation shines bright. Prime Minister Narendra Modi is doing everything to make the country one among the most powerful country in the world. Before becoming the Prime Minister of India, Mr. Narendra Modi had proven his essence of patriotism by fulfilling the dream of Guajarati at his capacity of chief Minister. There has been good report of Mr. Narendra Modi about his love for his people in the organization where he began his career. To be precise when he was in small group he do to meet the satisfaction of his fellow colleagues and be becoming the chief Minister Gujarat he had made the state moving far ahead from other states. Now when he become the Prime Minister he is doing all he could at his capacity to make India the most advance country. There may be critics to the way of his working style but the fact is that all he is doing is for the country. One thing need to understand is that without a likeminded Chief Ministers in the 29 states of the country, it is likely that the good effort that he has been doing since he assumed the post of Prime Minister may be in sabotage. It is no difference from a head of a family looking for the welfare of the whole family and the mother and sisters looking after the needs of the household. Chief Ministers of each state need to work harder than the prime Minister to fulfill the dream of making India the best in the world. Similarly, the Chief Minister of any state can do no progress if the leaders of the local body are not as sincere as them. When Chief Minister takes care for the whole of the state, the leaders of the local body looks for development of their respective constituencies. This is where the local body election - (Panchayat, Zillag Parishad and ward member election) scheduled on October 7 is important. Electing someone capable of serving the local institutions is a much if the people really think that Manipur should march ahead in the field of development. If local body leaders are sincere and work at his level best for the development of their respective constituencies, and if the Chief Ministers spend his time working for all round development of the state to fulfill the dream of the Prime Minister. Then one would certainly say that the level of patriotism among them remain the same. When the level remains same people will certainly feel the taste of real democracy and feeling of responsibility towards the nation will increase to every citizens of the country. That is why Panchayat election matters and people should think on whom to elect before casting their valuable vote.

## More State News

### AR construct barbed wire boundary fence at public cemetery, Moreh

**PRO, IGAR (S) Imphal, Sept 14:** 11 Assam Rifles of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) has inaugurated Construction of Barbed wire Boundary Fence at Public Cemetery, Moreh Sub Divisional, Tengnoupal district on September 12 which has served as a special initiative towards preservation of the fascinating history that the Cemetery beholds. The inauguration function was also attended by the village Chairman and villagers extended

gratitude to the Assam Rifles for undertaking such developmental project for the people. The longstanding assumption that cemeteries are creepy and depressing has lately been totally transformed. Driven by a flood of amateur genealogists seeking their families roots, the cemetery revival is in full swing. Cemeteries are today looked as full of history and full of artwork which form a window for the knowledge seekers to look into the rich heritage that it beholds.

## Of northeast and northeast experts

**By Abani Baruah**

They say the World War II produced more writers than soldiers. Similarly insurgency has produced more Northeast experts than insurgents. If we exclude the Telangana movement which was based on class conflict, Assam is the first state which has the misfortune of tackling insurgencies based on ethnicity. Almost after India becomes a Republic, Assam faced the extremist problem in Naga Hills and Lushai Hills – then two hill districts of Assam. The State government under two successive respected Chief Ministers – the late Bishnuram Medhi and Bimala Prasad Chaliha – tried to contain the situation with its limited resources. In the 50s and the 60s, many junior officers of the Assam Police sacrificed their lives in combating insurgency.

But strangely the Centre was oblivious to suggestions of the Assam administration or even of its chief ministers. Delhi relied more on their so-called experts in the region. Barring a few, they were normally IAS and IPS officers who did not have the slightest inkling of the mindset of diverse ethnic groups of the Northeast. Trained to look at all problems from the angle of law and order, these young officers simply could not understand that with Independence, the people of the Northeast expected more sympathy and concern from their brown sahibs. Instead in some cases these brown sahibs had become more arrogant than their previous white masters. As a result, a perpetual conflict between the administration and the people resulted. **Army Generals as Governors** Later this syndrome was further compounded by the politicians of

national parties who were given the task of political management in different states. This practice has two obvious flaws. First, Army men who have a challenging job in combating insurgency tend to give more importance to governors with whom they can easily identify themselves. In the process they tend to give little credence to the state government's view. Secondly, top state government officials and WGP become confused. They wondered who is their master – the governor or the chief minister? As a result the state administration which is constitutionally responsible for law and orders has become rudderless. In a democracy, it is the opinion of the chief minister that matters in the affairs of the State. We remember during the Chinese

aggression in 1962, while the people of Arunachal (then NEFA) and of Assam stoically faced the grave situation, the rest of India, including its Prime Minister, could offer sympathy only. For those of us who were in schools and colleges in those days, his statement 'My sympathy goes to the people of Assam' has become a bit of joke till today. After this remark by the then all powerful Prime Minister, most of the people from outside the State left Assam. Even an IAS Deputy Commissioner abandoned his district and took the first available flight to Calcutta (in those days there was no direct flight to Delhi). But the then Chief Minister of Assam was a pillar of strength to the people of Assam. So for God's sake, leave us to be governed by our own democratically elected Chief Ministers (no matter whether they are from the Congress, the BJP or the AGP). (Courtesy: Assam Times)

## The Reality in Rakhine and Myanmar's Complex Political Conundrum

**By Kyaw Zwa Moe**

(Courtesy: Irrawaddy)

What we can say definitively about the motivation behind the recent attacks in Rakhine State is that they were a violent rejection of meaningful recommendations made by the Kofi Annan-led Rakhine State Advisory Commission and a total obstruction against implementation as promised by the Myanmar government.

The Arakan Rohingya Salvation Army (ARSA), led by Attallah Abu Ammar Jununi – who was born in Pakistan and raised in Saudi Arabia – launched its synchronized attacks against 30 police outposts in Maungdaw on Aug. 25, hours after former UN secretary-general Kofi Annan presented comprehensive long-term solutions to solving the issues in Rakhine and integrating the local Muslim community (who self-identify as Rohingyas).

The Myanmar government led by Daw Aung San Suu Kyi welcomed the commission's final report recommendations and officially said that it would implement them "within the shortest timeframe possible."

Within a few hours of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi's meeting with Kofi Annan and his commission members on Aug. 24, the State Counselor's Office released a statement saying: "As an immediate step, the government will form a new Ministerial-led committee responsible for the implementation of the commission's recommendations."

The statement also said, "We hope to set out a full roadmap for implementation in the coming weeks."

That's not exactly what the ARSA – designated a "terrorist" group by the government after its attacks – had in mind when it launched simultaneous attacks.

Two weeks since the attacks, the

government still cannot set out to implement the recommendations as it has been too busy trying to control the situation on the ground, which is in turmoil due to the ARSA's attacks, militant supporters' attacks on ethnic Rakhine and other groups as well, and military "clearance operations," – all of which have forced hundreds of thousands of Muslim refugees to the Bangladesh border and thousands of Rakhine refugees to other cities in the state.

But the ARSA's violent methods have been a victory for them, at least so far. Their attacks – which killed more than a dozen security or government officials – may be seen by some outsiders as a "legitimate" retaliation to alleged military oppression and human rights abuses against Muslims in Rakhine State. Beyond that, they have led to heavy criticism of the Myanmar government and its de facto leader Daw Aung San Suu Kyi.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi is under attack by rights groups, campaign groups and the international media for not publicly defending the rights of the Muslim refugees.

But their criticism comes from a lack of knowledge regarding the country's complex political situation.

Emphasis of the international community and its media on the exodus of refugees and destruction alone is not helping this complex and volatile situation. Instead, it will prove to be counterproductive.

Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and her government are sandwiched politically by the powerful military, nationalist parties and an undemocratic Constitution.

There is no civilian oversight of the military, and it is guaranteed 25 percent of the seats in Parliament and three key ministerial positions – defense, border and home affairs.

Some observers have said that the

country is driven by two "parallel governments."

Nobody can clearly guess how much room the government has to use its executive power in dealing with the military in handling the latest situation in Rakhine. Daw Aung San Suu Kyi has said that the government cannot tell the military not to launch offensives.

On Aug. 24, when Kofi Annan met Myanmar Army Chief Snr-Gen Min Aung Hlaing, the army chief said that the commission's report included some factual inaccuracies and questioned its impartiality.

In fact, some political groups rejected the commission from the start. In Parliament, three main groups – members of the Arakan National Party, the previous ruling Union Solidarity and Development Party formed by the ex-generals, and all military-appointed lawmakers sought to abolish the commission in early September 2016. But they didn't succeed.

Critics of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi, including western media, denounced her for not criticizing military leaderships over the institution's alleged human rights violations – showing that these groups don't clearly understand the political situation.

The most important thing the country needs is genuine collaboration from the military leadership to continue this transition to democracy. The military could still return to power if military leaders believed it was necessary for the country. Critics of the military share a common view that since the current administration assumed office, military associates and USDP party members have a wait-and-see policy as the government confronts a difficult situation that may prove to be opportune for the opposition.

A handful of people can

understand the complexity of Myanmar. Derek Mitchell, who was US ambassador to Myanmar under former President Barack Obama's administration, told the Associated Press that the militant attacks have "in some ways empowered the military to assert themselves 'as saviors of the country,' which is how they like to see themselves." The former ambassador added, "That's not very helpful to the transition." Unlike him, most critics have shortsighted views without seeing the bigger picture, which is that the government and the military need to have good relations for the long-term benefit of the country.

Violence begets violence and it cannot be accepted, in response to human rights abuses or terrorist attacks. Security forces must restrain themselves from using "excessive force" against militants and from hurting Muslim civilians during field operations. The government should be assertively talking to military leadership to follow the principles of democratic reform.

But Daw Aung San Suu Kyi cannot afford to publicly criticize the military, which still has both seen and unseen power as the most established institution, with the experiences of coups in 1962 and 1988 and 50 years in power.

Only smooth relations between the two sides can solve the many problems facing the country, including the current Rakhine conflict and more importantly, the peace process involving ethnic armed groups. Her speaking out against the military would only backfire.

If the international community truly wants to see Myanmar as a stable country that can prosper under democratic rule, it needs to help the government halt the violence in Rakhine immediately and implement Kofi Annan's recommendations as soon as possible.

## National & International News

### Petroleum products should come under GST: Dharmendra Pradhan

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan says it is high time that the GST Council should consider bringing the petroleum products in the ambit of the Goods and Services Tax. Speaking after the meeting heads of state-run oil firms, Mr Pradhan said 42 per cent of excise collections are transferred to state government for infrastructure and welfare programmes and many state governments have also drastically increased VAT. The Minister also ruled out the government intervention to disrupt the daily revision in petrol and

diesel prices, saying the reform will continue. Terming the criticism of spike in rates as unfair, he said the drop in prices for over a fortnight after the daily price revision was introduced on June 16 has been ignored and only "temporary" phenomenon of rising trend is being highlighted. India relies on imports to meet 80 per cent of its needs. State-owned oil companies in June dumped the 15-year old practice of revising rates on 1st and 16th of every month and instead adopted a dynamic daily price revision to instantly reflect changes in cost.

### Hindi day being celebrated

**New Delhi, Sept 14:** Hindi day is being celebrated across the country today. It was on this day in 1949 that the Constituent Assembly adopted Hindi written in Devanagari script as the official language of the country. President Ram Nath Kovind will give away Rajbhasha awards for the Year 2016-17 at a function in New Delhi. The Rajbhasha awards were instituted by the Department of Official Language of Home Ministry to recognize the excellent contribution of Ministries, Departments and Nationalized Banks in the field of Hindi. Home Minister Rajnath Singh has stressed on the need for more and more use of Hindi language in official works. In his address on the

occasion of Hindi Divas, Mr Singh appealed to the heads of all the Central Ministries, Departments, Offices and Banks to use Hindi language in their official works as well as in their daily works. He said, this activity will inspire other officials and staff to work in Hindi. The Home Minister said, the proper knowledge of Hindi language is the key foundation of any person to work in Hindi.

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