

Editorial

Monday August 6, 2018

The politics of divide: Will MU community roll back its stand?

State government effort to end the prolonged agitation by the Manipur University community has failed time and again as the demand by the MU community has not been a major concern for them.

The Manipur University community which comprises of MUSA, MUTA and MUSU want an independent fact finding committee constituted under the commission of enquiry Act 1952 by placing VC AP Pandey either on suspension or by giving him force leave.

The MU Community had placed their unwillingness to cooperate with the fact finding committee as it is not constituted under the Commission of enquiry Act, 1952. The presence of a Retd. High Court judge will have no significance at all but rather appeared as a humiliation to the judiciary of the nation. How could a retd. judge of a reputed High Court be assigned task to head a departmental enquiry which will have no power to even summon the VC which is being alleged of massive financial and administration irregularities.

What is surprising is the sudden organisation of massive protest against the MU community at different places as well as allowing of a mass protest rally against the MU Community in front of the Manipur University gate where the district administration has been imposing prohibition under sec 2 of the CrPC 144.

The other day a peace rally to show solidarity to the MU community by renowned politicians of the state was not allowed to stage on the ground that the DM had imposed prohibition. It was on that evening that the makeshift platform was vandalised forcing the MU community to shift the protest site inside the MU complex.

The number of protest organised simultaneously at various places showed well organised protest and not the anger of the people. When the MU community began the strike it was the anger which prompted the hold stakeholders to go on strike following the high handedness of the VC AP Pandey.

Earlier it was felt that the centre ignores this part of India but never believe that the son of the soil will voice against the genuine demand of the MU Community.

Instead of understanding the problem and find a way which was already shown and pin pointed, why such a big protest against the MU community has been organised by allowing staging a violent rally at the jurisdiction where the prohibition has been imposed.

The MU Community are not fool, they know how the rally has been organised.

The divide may work in electoral politics, but it won't in a place like University where people treated as the temple of knowledge.

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Robert Naorem showcases "Unity of Community"

Robert Naorem's collections were inspired by the cultural diversity of Manipur. The outfits included those of Kuki, Naga, Tangkhul, Kabui and Meitei communities. He has used the different communities' fabrics and made a fusion by mixing Meitei and tribal fabrics as a symbol of love and exchange of ethnic style of fashion bringing a unity of our communities in Manipur. The handloom and textiles of the region are rich, but in today's world, due to the influence of the fashion industry, the industry is losing its sheen. However, in an endeavour to revive the indigenous handloom culture of the state and to promote trendy traditional outfits and promoting the weavers of the State. This would give an opportunity to the weavers of Manipur to raise their products to a higher standard. Robert was the only designer from NE participating at BFW. Models from Mizoram & Manipur including a model from Ukhrul walk down the ramp. The Show was witnessed by all well known businessmen, designers & models from India & abroad. The designs and textiles showcased at the BFW was new to the audience and it was a delightful vision to the city. The BFW also had exhibitions which have the designers a platform to exhibit their collections. The audience were mesmerized and were completely taken by the experience when the models with vibrant and unique styles walked the ramp. The event received thunderous applause and appreciation with a standing ovation. Robert Naorem's used the track music of pena, langdeng and sembung (traditional Meitei instruments), evoking appreciation from the audience.

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Tikendrajit: The Lion of Manipur

By - Dr. Lokendra Arambam

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Conflict of Symbols in the Anglo-Manipur War 1891

Manipuri scholars, following the attitude of their British masters in their analysis of the character and behaviour of the Manipur princes in their struggle for power of the throne, often spoke of the hatred and spite amongst the aspirants of the throne. They write about the animosity, hatred and factional disputes between the sons of Maharajah Chandrakirti and point to Tikendrajit as being the mastermind of the palace revolution of 1890, the coup against the eldest son Surchandra's occupation of the throne, and thereby leading to the intervention of the British on the issue of succession to the throne. Not much of studies are done by Manipuri scholars on the issue of what it is to occupy the throne, and how the throne represented a sacred energy bequeathed by the ancients which empower the occupant to serve the basic unity of the cosmos and the earth, and to effect the regulation of the course of the seasons to provide welfare and equilibrium to the citizens, that the court and palace of the king should represent an exemplary centre, a model of the heavenly abode of human ancestors who provided the life and continuity of the race, and the vivacity and joy of living. The throne was indeed a sacred power which the incumbent received through a complex ritual of coronation whereby the spirits of the ancestors empowered the occupant the right to effect force to govern the state and model the polity towards a spiritual attainment which was sacred, sanct and pure. The ancient capital Kangla was therefore a sacred ritual centre which should never be contaminated by profane human acts, and attack on the sacred space should be punished by capital punishment. By tradition of the

absence of the law of primogeniture, the princes had a moral and spiritual right to succession, but the wishes of the elders, the women of the court, and the desire of the populace would be important factors to succession. But the changes of perceptions and precepts in association of new values that penetrated the realm in the wake of a new world religion and practical pragmatic influences of the secular western ideas would have had a dilutive effect on matters of politics and exercise of power later in history.

The conflict amongst the brothers and cousins amidst the sons of Chandrakirti no doubt has poignancy and thrust in the scramble for power, but at the same time we have to be aware of the contemporary experiences in the history of the Burmese polity in the 18th and 19th centuries which had similar refrains in those of Manipur, who shared valuable culture and traditions of the courts. We must be aware of the fratricidal conflicts and massacres in the Konbaung dynasty amidst the successors to Alaung Zeya (Alompra by Manipuris, 1750-60), and BodawPaya (1782-1819), who was the fourth son of Alaung Zeya effected a murder of some eighty three princes and princesses in 1789. This sort of fratricidal blood-letting was also effected during the reign of Thibaw, the last of the Konbaung dynasty (1875-85), who massacred some seventy to eighty brothers and kinsmen in Mandalay in 1878, which was known as the Massacre of the Kins. In Burmese tradition it was in fact a purging of the realm according to custom, and the body of the king was homologous with the body of the polity. This was so in Manipur too. Manipur had an autonomous, independent attitude



to kingship and occupation of the throne according to ancient beliefs and traditions. The British authorities had a mundane, earthy notion of holding of power as a source of control over people and resources, and they claimed the right to intervene in all aspects of succession to kingships all over India, thereby gradually depriving political authorities of the princes the exercise of their own sovereignty. For Manipur it was a challenge to their civilizational symbols and beliefs. The midnight attack in the capital by Quinton and his co-hosts was a severe trampling upon the sacred space of the Kangla, the sacred navel of the universe of the Meitei. 'Heads of white bodies shall roll in front of the Kangla Ultra' was a prediction of the soothsayers. The story of the visit of the Chief Commissioner of Assam along with a military escort and the subsequent developments leading to the massacre of four British officers and the confrontations led to the defeat of the Manipur state is known to one and all. But not much is known about how the native state of Manipur responded to the visit of the British

dignitary from Shillong, and the gestures of the officials and military representatives of the Asiatic state towards the visitors reflect the attitude of the traditional Asiatic power towards the foreign dignitary worthy of respect and honour. A contingent of the Manipur army with seven hundred soldiers under General Thangalwet to Mao in the northern hills to first receive the visiting British dignitary. Later, the Senapati Tikendrajit himself with fifty soldiers met him at North Sekmai. The Commissioner, as head of the military contingent reached the capital, at every nook and corners of the highway, the citizens erected banana plants, with sugarcane and lighted lamps to give blessings to the visitor. The Maharajah Kulachandra who was now king of the land, followed by the palatial officials received the Commissioner with four hundred soldiers with a thirteen gun salute at the western gate of Kangla. The Commissioner was ushered into residence of the Political Agent, at Konthoujamfam (the present Governor's residence).

(To be contd)

International & National News

What is Article 35A? Supreme Court to hear plea challenging special status to J&K- 5 things to know

New Delhi, Aug 6.

The Supreme Court on Monday will hear a clutch of petitions challenging the provision of Article 35A of the Indian Constitution which grants special status to permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir. The state witnessed two-day shutdown called by separatist groups on Sunday, demanding the continuation of the contentious Article. The Bharatiya Janata Party has advocated that a scrapping of Article 35A would facilitate the idea of 'Kashmir for all' and would benefit the state.

On the other hand, political parties such as the National Conference and the People's Democratic Party, as well as separatists believe that removing the Article would be detrimental for the welfare of the Kashmiri people. Two days before the hearing, the NC and PDP led separate protest marches demanding that Article 35A be not removed from the Constitution

What is Article 35A?

The article in the Indian Constitution empowers the Jammu and Kashmir legislature to define who are the "permanent residents" Jammu and Kashmir.

The permanent residents of the state, as defined by the J&K legislature, are conferred with special rights and privileges, particularly in public sector jobs, scholarships, acquisition of

property in the state as well as other public aid and welfare.

The article also declares that any act of legislature coming under the article cannot be challenged for violating provisions of the Constitution or any other law of the land.

Article 35-A was added to the Constitution through a Presidential order. In 1954, on the advice of Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru-led Cabinet, President Rajendra Prasad passed the order - The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 1954 - in accordance with the Article 370 of the Constitution.

NGO We The Citizens, first filed a petition challenging the Constitutional validity of both Article 35A and Article 370, according to The Hindu. It argued that Article 35-A was against the "very spirit of oneness of India" because it created a "class within a class of Indian citizens". Another plea was filed by Jammu and Kashmir resident Charu Wali Khanna who petitioned against the Article which protected certain provisions of the Jammu and Kashmir legislation. These provisions deny right to property to Kashmiri women who marry a man from outside the state. The women lose their right to property in the state, which is applicable to their sons as well.

Courtesy: Times Now

Tourists flee as powerful earthquake kills 91 on Indonesia's Lombok

Agency Jakarta, Aug 6.

Rescue workers found chaos and destruction across the Indonesian resort island of Lombok on Monday after a magnitude 6.9 earthquake killed at least 91 people and prompted an exodus of tourists rattled by the second powerful quake in a week.

The National Disaster Mitigation Agency (BNPB) said the death toll was expected to rise as information came in from areas where thousands of buildings collapsed or were badly damaged, especially in the north, the quake's epicentre.

Power and communications were cut in some areas of Lombok, and the military said it was sending in a vessel with medical aid, supplies and logistical support for the island. The Indonesian Red Cross said in a tweet that it helped a woman give birth after the quake at a health post in the north. One of the names she gave the baby boy was "Gempa", which means earthquake.

120 aftershocks

Lombok was hit a week earlier, on July 29, by a 6.4 magnitude quake that killed 17 people, injured hundreds and briefly stranded several hundred trekkers on the slopes of a volcano.

The Indonesian Agency for Meteorology, Climatology and Geophysics (BMKG) said that more than 120 aftershocks were recorded after Sunday evening's quake,

whose magnitude the U.S. Geological Survey revised down to 6.9 from an original 7.0.

There were no foreigners among the dead and the number of injured stood at 209, BNPB spokesperson Sutopo Purwo Nugroho told a news conference. The tremor was so powerful it was felt on the neighbouring island of Bali where, according to BNPB, two people died.

Extra flights added

Indonesia sits on the geologically active Pacific Ring of Fire and is regularly hit by earthquakes. In 2004, the Indian Ocean tsunami killed 226,000 people in 13 countries, including more than 120,000 in Indonesia.

Long lines formed at the airport of Lombok's main town, Mataram, as foreign visitors cut their holidays short. The Garuda Indonesia airline said it was adding extra flights from Lombok to help tourists leave.

AirAsia Group CEO Tony Fernandes tweeted that the budget airline would try to lay on extra flights, while Indonesian budget carriers Lion Air and Citilink said there had been a jump in demand for outbound flights from Lombok and Bali.

"I was at the rooftop of my hotel and the building started swaying very hard. It felt like two metres to the left, then two metres to the right, I could not stand up," said Gino Poggiali, a 43-year-old Frenchman, who was with his wife and two children, at the Lombok airport.