

## India's active & diverse roles sought in Myanmar

By NJ Thakuria  
Guwahati, Dec 9,

As India and Myanmar (formerly Burma) maintain a strong legacy of friendship, trust and cooperation for centuries, the southeast Asian nation expects an active role in diverse fields from New Delhi. But reasons, best known to the Indian government, visible efforts from New Delhi continue to be rare in contrast to hyper activism adopted by the Beijing based Chinese administration.

Speaking to a group of scribes at Guwahati Press Club from Bogo near to Yangon on 7 December 2018 through video conferencing, Debbie Stothard, a journalist turned pro-democracy human rights activist, also pointed out the unusual delay in functioning of much hyped Kaladan multi-

modal project that would connect Myanmar's Sittwe port to northeast Indian provinces.

On the other hand, Beijing successfully installed the project of oil & gas pipelines from the same Arakan province to China's Kunming city and already made it operational. Not only in energy sector, Chinese agencies have been working relentlessly in Myanmar with an inherent influence over the present regime in NayPyi Taw, added Ms Debbie, who used to work as a journalist, community educator and trainer in Malaysia, Thailand and Australia.

Answering queries from Guwahati scribes, she pointed out that all historical ruins related to India's glorious freedom movement across Myanmar should be preserved. She mentioned

about Gandhi Hall, INA (Indian National Army/Azad Hind Fauj) headquarter, Bahadurshah Zafar tomb etc in Yangon needs proper conservations. Debbie argued that it would also help Myanmar government as those places have historical and tourism interests for millions of Indians.

Describing State Counselor Aung San Suu Kyi's role in the quasi-democratic government of Myanmar, she admitted that it emerges as a great challenge to the Burmese icon to continue the peace mission with various ethnic armed groups as well as other relevant pro-people initiatives. Debbie however admitted that even though the international community and media fraternity had outraged the lady over her silence on Rohingya controversy, Suu Kyi continues to be popular

among the common Burmese nationals.

On the Rohingya issue, Debbie insisted on their safe and dignified returns to Myanmar and here the International Federation for Human Rights secretary general urged the Bangladesh and India governments to support the mission. She revealed that there is a sizable population from both the neighbouring countries in Myanmar and hence the regimes in Dhaka and New Delhi should consider it a matter of immediate concern.

Asserting that the Burmese military still enjoys a significant influence over the government, Debbie disclosed that the media and rights activists are still under pressure to function independently in Myanmar. Even though there is no censor board for the media at present,

the journalists in the county have to be extra careful while reporting hard issue relating to corruptions in high places and non-governance in the nascent democracy.

Putting lights on the poor healthcare condition in the government run hospitals, the outspoken activist however informed that various private parties have come up with affordable medical facilities.

Millions of common Burmese in the poverty stricken country are still deprived of necessary healthcare accesses. Mentioning about Thailand government's special packages for visiting Burmese patients, Ms Debbie commented that private hospitals in eastern India can also supports those needy patients with specific policies adopted by New Delhi.

## MSAD, MUSU and common people stage candle light demonstration protesting arbitrary detention of Wangkhem Kishorchand

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Manipur Students' Association, Delhi (MSAD), in association with Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU) organized candle light demonstration inside the Manipur University campus on Saturday evening.

MSAD had earlier gathered at Kangla Western Gate in Imphal to stage the candle light demonstration in protest against the detention of Wangkhem Kishorchand under NSA, but was force to vacate the place by the state police.

"The state government used all its power to curb and curtail our democratic right to peaceful assembly. There were dozens of armed police personnel deployed at the Kangla Gate, led by the Superintendent of Police of Imphal West district", a MSAD spokesperson said.

"We decided not to cancel and instantly decided to shift the site of demonstration to Manipur University. We gathered in large number and carried on with our gathering. It was an utter shock to us that the government has become so intolerant and coward that they have disallowed any demonstration or gathering against them. This is the utmost reflection of how Indian

administration operates in Manipur in weird ways", the spokesperson added.

He added that the demonstration was a solidarity to the arbitrarily arrested journalist Wangkhemcha Wangthoi, and to all people who stand for justice and freedom.

"It was all a voice of resistance to the authoritarian BJP fascist government led by its CM Nongthombam Biren", he added.

Volunteers of Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU) and MSAD who were present in the candle light demonstration expressed strong condemnation to the media fraternity which remains silent on the government's clampdown on any dissenting voice led by its union All Manipur Working Journalists' Union (AMWJU).

"We extend our heartfelt regards to all the people who joined us, specially to Ranjita Elangbam, the spouse to Wangkhemcha Wangthoi, who is courageous enough in this fight for justice", the MSAD statement said.

MSAD spokesperson said the student body will continue its protest demonstration by organizing a protest at Delhi on 16<sup>th</sup> of this month in front of Manipur Bhavan.

## CORCOM re-iterated its calls on people 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of UDHR

IT News  
Imphal, Dec 9,

Conglomerate of Rebel groups operating in the region "CORCOM" greets the people on occasion of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Universal Declaration of the Human Rights which falls on December 10.

A statement issued by Leibaak Ngaakpa Luwang, Media Coordinator CORCOM re-iterated its called on the oppressed people of the region to stand united in a common platform for waging war against the colonial regime. The statement said that all human being are borne equal and free so all people irrespective of the differences

of cast, creed, colour, difference of religions should enjoy equal rights as this rights cannot be separated apart from a human being till his or her death. It was this concept that leaders from across the world came together under the banner of the United Nation and announced the Universal Declaration of Human Rights on December 10, 1948 to end the violation of Human Rights in the aftermath of the second World War. The declaration freed many colonies from the clutch of the rich regime. The UDHR is now historical declaration to protect the rights of the people across the globe.

25 years after the declaration

of the Universal Human Rights adopt International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) 1996 and its protocol 2 and later adopted International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESR) and its optional protocol to protect all people of the world and finally passed the International Bill of Human Rights, 1975 to make sure that all form of Human Rights violation, oppression and suppression be eradicated. Following this the United Nation also adopted the Declaration of the Rights of the Indigenous People to protect the rights of the indigenous people.

The CORCOM statement stated that even as it is 70

years that the United Nation adopted the UDHR, the WESEA region which has been forcibly annexed are facing the extreme form of Human Rights Violation. The right to self determination guaranteed under the UDHR and the ICCPR has no meaning for the people of the WASEA region. People of the region are facing atrocities and violation of Human Rights committed under the draconian act

Armed Forces Special Powers Act, 1958. Under the act many including the revolutionary cadres and civilians have fallen as victims of the Extra Judicial Killings as the act is more like a "License to Kill" provided to the armed security forces of India. Arbitrary arrest and

detention of common people under the UNDRH and the ICCPR are being violated by the armed security forces in the region called Manipur (Kangleipak). Many have been involuntarily made disappeared.

69 years the colonial master has been making the people more dependable either economically or socially and this the real character of the colonial regime.

The CORCOM statement said that they believe the right to self determination and appealed all oppressed people to join hand and fight together to ensure that the WESEA region gets the right of self determination and regain its lost freedom.

## International Mountain Day, 2018

By-N.Munal Meitei

This year, there was a big incident of mysterious killing of domestic animals by some unknown animals. Whatever the predator it may be but it relates to the degradation of our environments and ecology thereby losing their natural habitats. With the ongoing episode, a lot of social impacts were created and among them, it has caused a big mental harassment among the women and children and more particularly to the school going children. Now, children hardly want to read up to the late night and also do not want to go outside after the dark. Shops are closed early in the evening due to want of costumers and also fear psychosis. Due to such psycho-fear, if peoples do not work regularly, then our economy have to be hampered. As a fear-psycho, now people started to be apart from rearing the domestic animals thinking that to attack the animals they may also be attacked. But we can't ignore that a large number of unemployed youths are benefitted with these business. If the scenario continued, a huge problem

may arise in our society. We are afraid to think that such events may invite the peoples to lessen their love and care for wild animals and that may lead a huge problem while protecting and conserving the wildlife and migratory birds in future. If any of the wild animals are found in the residential areas, people presumed that they the predator and started killing them. This may lead to the extinction of many our important wild animals from our soil.

Manipur being occupy about 89% of its geographical area with hills, has the most significance meaning with the celebration of the International Day of Mountains on the 11 December every year since 2003. Mountains and hills are some of the most beautiful of nature's structures, stolid and regal they stand against the sky, of such a size that they can catch entire countryside's in their shadow, and turn back the ravages of storms against their unflinching sides. They are called the home for the origin of our entire flora and fauna. They are the source of recreation and resources, with streams providing the lives of slopes to enthusiasts, and

minerals in abundance to those brave enough to delve into their greenly sides. The increasing importance of mountains and hills led to the celebration of International Day of Mountains day every year. The day was designated to encourage the international community to organize events to highlight the importance of sustainable mountain and hill development. "Mountains Matter" is the theme for this year. Considering the crucial role they play in providing key ecosystem goods and services to the planet and their vulnerability in the face of climate change, we need for maximum attention to mountains and hills.

Mountains and hills are the world's 'water towers', providing between 60 to 80% of freshwater resource for our planet. In Manipur, almost all the rivers in the state originate from the hills. However, due to rampant felling of trees in the hills, water supplies in our state are much affecting which is relied on by thousands of people living downstream. Fresh water from hills are fundamental for achieving our food security, as it is used by farmers to irrigate crops in many lowland agricultural regions. Almost all the towns

in Manipur, are dependent for freshwater on mountains & hills.

Half of the world's biodiversity hotspots are concentrated in mountains & hills and they support approximately one-quarter of all the terrestrial biodiversity. Mountains & hills are home to rare animals as well as strikingly beautiful plants such as orchids and lobelias. Many mountain & hill ecosystems are host to higher species richness and levels of endemism. Mountains and hills at lower altitudes can support exceptional biodiversity, due to compression of a wide range of ecosystems into a relatively short distance. Mountains and hills also often provide islands of suitable habitat, isolated from unfavourable surroundings.

Endemism levels are often very high on hills. For some taxa, hills have acted as refuges from environmental change or competing species, and they often represent sites of in situ speciation. Mountain and hill species with narrow habitat tolerance, particularly higher elevation forms and those with low dispersal capacity, are at high risk from the environmental effects of climate change. Slope

dynamics and livestock grazing are significant drivers of diversity in many hill regions. Flower-rich highland meadows such as our Seroi Kangkhui hills are an important cultural heritages. Almost 32% of Manipur's population live in hilly regions, and maximum of our population depends on hills for water, food and clean energy. Yet hills are under threat from climate change, land degradation, and over exploitation, with potentially far-reaching and devastating consequences, both for hill communities and the rest of the populations in the state. Mountains & hills are places of tourism and cultural trails. Mountain & hills tourism accounts for about 15-20 percent the global tourism industry. Here lies the hope for Manipur to solve the large number of educated unemployed youths in the state. This dream will come true only when our hills are dressed with green cover. Indigenous and local populations in hills also have the unique and valuable local knowledge, traditions and cultural practices that can contribute to effective social and land development strategies.

Hills have a key role to play in providing renewable energy, especially through hydropower, solar power, wind power and biogas. Habitat degradation caused by unsustainable clearing of hill slopes results in erosion of fertile soil and increases the threat of landslides and flooding. With this change in habitat, rare species of plants and animals are facing from extinction. Mountains and hills contribute to food and nutrition security by providing land for crops, grazing for livestock, watercourses for inland fisheries, and non-wood forest products such as berries, mushrooms and honey etc. Of the 20 plant species that supply 80 percent of the world's food, six are originated and have been diversified in hills: maize, rice, potatoes, barley, sorghum and apples.

Now, climate change, climate variability and climate-induced disasters, combined with political, economic and social marginalization, increase the vulnerability of mountain and hill peoples to food shortages and extreme poverty. As the vulnerability of hill populations grows, migration increases both to valley and other urban centers. Out-

migration from hill areas will also result in an inestimable loss in terms of provision of ecosystem services and preservation of cultural and agro-biodiversity.

Therefore with the celebration of International Day of Mountains, 2018, Manipur to identify for the new and sustainable opportunities that can bring benefits to both for hill and valley communities and to help to eradicate poverty without contributing to the degradation of the fragile hill ecosystem. To respond to such challenges and threats, holistic, participatory and integrated approaches that address all aspects of sustainability are required. The specific needs and inter-linkages of different aspects of sustainable development, such as water, biodiversity, tourism and infrastructure, must be taken into account. To achieve it, all concerned stakeholders must be invited, involved and good awareness is raised amongst them at the earliest. Let's take care of our mountains and hills by today itself and otherwise tomorrow may be too late for us for the future generations.