

Editorial

Wednesday, January 17, 2018

Consolidating the sporting heritage

The small state of Manipur though plagued with social problems and communal complications have been acknowledged as the sporting powerhouse of the country. Sports in Manipur is not only a form of physical activity or a form of recreation but has been regarded as an integral part of our culture since time immemorial. Stories about Mukna Kangjei (an indigenous sport where hockey is combined with wrestling) matches being played between humans and the divinities have been found in the ancient manuscripts bearing testimony to the importance of sports and the role it plays in the culture and tradition of the indigenous people in the state.

The sporting scenario of the state at present, while still vibrant and engaging, have felt the need for an overhaul, not only in the way they are practiced and administered but also in the way the sportspersons and athletes approach their chosen events. The sheer number of children and youth practicing any form of games and sports in the state at a competitive level will still overwhelm and outnumber any other state as percentage of the population, and yet the decline in quality and expertise of the athletes on an average has been increasingly felt.

The initiative of the central government to establish a National Sports University in the state should be regarded as an acknowledgement of the sporting achievements by the people of the state and the potential it holds for producing more outstanding athletes which can bring laurels for the nation. With proper guidance, timely support and technical inputs, there is every possibility of talented and dedicated athletes from the state and the country making it to the top in various events. The catch however is the ground reality that is threatening the realization of this initiative. The inability to appreciate and support such an important and necessary move has proved to be a huge dampener. Narrow considerations for personal gains, unethical dealings by public officials and suspicions of tweaking the system for less honourable intentions by some from within the highest echelon of power have all but brought the efforts to a grinding halt. The languorous efforts and divided opinions regarding the project do not bode well for anything relating to the proposed initiative.

For the people of the state who have prided themselves in the sporting achievements of their brethren, it is time to shed the petty differences and insignificant objections and take the initiative to settle issues relating to the setting up of the Sports University in view of the enormity of importance and significance such an institute will represent for the state.

For the state government and its machineries involved in the whole exercise, the collective sporting dream of the state and the nation rests in complying and ensuring that each one plays its part to the fullest and with earnestness, as everyone in a team ought to do without the slightest hesitation or doubt, so that the ultimate result will be the success for the team. Of course, discipline, dedication and diligence need to be observed. But that goes without saying for a sportsperson.

Pak troops fire at LoC posts in Poonch; Army Captain injured

PTI Jammu, Jan 17: Pakistani troops opened fire on Indian posts along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, injuring an Army Captain, officials said. There was a ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army. They resorted to firing along the LoC in Chakan Da Bagh area in Poonch last evening, a security force official said. The injured Army Captain has been

hospitalised, they said. The Indian troops retaliated and the exchange of fire continued till late night, they said. The latest violation of the ceasefire came a day after seven Pakistani Army men, including a Major, were killed and four others injured in retaliatory action by the Indian Army in Poonch. Authorities had on Monday suspended the cross-LoC bus service between Chakan Da Bagh and Rawalakot, following heightened tension on the LoC.

'Bed of cash': Nearly Rs. 100 Crore in banned notes at Kanpur home

NDTV Uttar Pradesh, Jan. 17: Banned notes worth crores, making up a "bed" of cash when stacked up, has been found at a house in Uttar Pradesh's Kanpur. The police had already counted Rs. 97 crore before the big find surfaced in the

media. The police named the owner of the house as Ashok Khatri, who has a money exchange business. The cash was in Rs. 500 and Rs. 1,000 notes, which were demonetized by the government in November 2016.

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Nations to consider more North Korea sanctions, US may consider Military response

By : David Brunnstrom and David Ljunggren

Twenty nations agreed on Tuesday to consider tougher sanctions to press North Korea to give up its nuclear weapons and US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson warned Pyongyang it could trigger a military response if it did not choose negotiations.

A US-hosted meeting of countries that backed South Korea during the 1950-53 Korea War also vowed to support renewed dialogue between the two Koreas "in hopes that it leads to sustained easing of tensions" and agreed that a diplomatic solution to the crisis was both essential and possible.

North Korean leader Kim Jong Un has refused to give up development of nuclear missiles capable of hitting the US in spite of increasingly severe UN sanctions, raising fears of a new war on the Korean peninsula.

The US and Canada co-hosted the day-long meeting in Vancouver to discuss ways to increase pressure on Kim.

US officials have reported a debate within the Trump administration over whether to give more active consideration to military options, such as a pre-emptive strike on a North Korean nuclear or missile site.

Tillerson brushed off a question about such a "bloody nose" strike, telling a closing news conference: "I'm not going to comment on issues that have yet to be decided among the National Security Council or the president."

However, he said the threat posed by North Korea was growing.

"We all need to be very sober and clear-eyed about the current situation ... We have to recognize that the threat is growing and if North Korea does not choose the pathway of engagement, discussion, negotiation, then they themselves will trigger an option," Tillerson said.

"Our approach is, in terms of having North Korea choose the correct step, is to present them with what is the best option - talks are the best option; that when they look at the military situation, that's not a good outcome for them."

"It is time to talk, but they have to take the step to say they want to talk."

The Vancouver meeting pledged to ensure that UN sanctions already in place were fully implemented and the participants said in a joint statement they agreed "to consider and take steps to impose unilateral sanctions and further diplomatic actions that go beyond those required by UN Security Council resolutions." They gave no details.

Tillerson said all countries needed to work together to improve interdiction of ships attempting to skirt sanctions and said there must be "new consequences" for North Korea "whenever new aggression occurs."

He said the meeting had agreed that China and Russia, which did not attend the Vancouver talks, must fully implement UN sanctions. US officials say discussion of

a military strike option has lost some momentum since North and South Korea held formal talks for the first time in two years this month and Pyongyang said it would send athletes to the Winter Olympics that South Korea will host next month.

'No time for reward'

Japanese foreign minister Taro Kono said in Vancouver that the world should not be naive about North Korea's "charm offensive" in engaging in talks with the South.

"It is not the time to ease pressure, or to reward North Korea," he said. "The fact that North Korea is engaging in dialogue could be interpreted as proof that the sanctions are working."

South Korean Foreign Minister Kang Kyung-wha said she hoped the dialogue would continue well beyond the Olympics, but stressed that existing sanctions must be applied more rigorously.

Tillerson said North Korea must not be allowed "to drive a wedge" through allied resolve or solidarity and reiterated Washington's rejection of a Chinese-Russian proposal for the US and South Korea to freeze military exercises in return for a freeze in North Korea's weapons programs.

A senior state department official said US defense secretary Jim Mattis briefed the Vancouver participants over dinner on Monday and stressed the US preference for a diplomatic solution while keeping a military option on

the table.

"It was a chance to raise people's confidence that we have thought through this, that we definitely prefer a diplomatic solution," the official said.

Russia and China have been accused of not fully implementing the UN sanctions, something they deny. They have sharply criticized the Vancouver meeting. China's main English-language newspaper, the China Daily, said the meeting was "poorly conceived" and would prove counter-productive.

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi, speaking on Tuesday in the West African state of Sao Tome, said everyone should cherish the present easing of tension on the Korean peninsula.

But history shows that each time tensions ease, there could be interference or backsliding, Wang added.

"Now is the time to test each side's sincerity," he said. "The international community must keep its eyes wide open, and see who is really the promoter of a peaceful resolution to the peninsula nuclear issue and who will become the saboteur who causes a return to tensions."

A US official said Susan Thornton, the state department's senior diplomat for East Asia, would travel to Beijing from Vancouver to brief China on the outcome. He said he expected Tillerson to provide readouts to his Russian and Chinese counterparts.

Courtesy The wire.com

National & International News

22 nations mull more sanctions on North Korea, US warns of military strike

Reuters

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options, such as a pre-emptive strike on a North Korean nuclear or missile site. Tillerson brushed off a question about such a "bloody nose" strike, telling a closing news conference: "I'm not going to comment on issues that have yet to be decided among the National Security Council or the president." However, he said the threat posed by North Korea was growing. "We all need to be very sober and clear-eyed about the current situation ... We have to recognize that the threat is growing and if North Korea does not choose the pathway of engagement, discussion, negotiation, then they themselves will trigger an option," Tillerson said. "Our approach is, in terms of having North Korea choose the correct step, is to present them with what is the best option - talks are the best option; that when they look at the military situation, that's not a good outcome for them." "It is time to talk, but they have to take the step to say they want to talk." The Vancouver meeting pledged to ensure that U. N. sanctions already in place were fully implemented and the participants said in a joint

statement they agreed "to consider and take steps to impose unilateral sanctions and further diplomatic actions that go beyond those required by U. N. Security Council resolutions." They gave no details. Tillerson said all countries needed to work together to improve interdiction of ships attempting to skirt sanctions and said there must be "new consequences" for North Korea "whenever new aggression occurs."

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