

The Big Gamble

By: MC Meetei

Gambling the gamble is two directional; winning or losing the gamble. Nobody plays gamble just to lose it. But, for politically appointed Aadya Prasad Pandey, the Manipur University is a big gambling ground inciting even Mr. Chief Minister to throw a casino for branding the legitimate movement for his ouster an anti-India (sic national) activity as he whispered our Chief Minister a 5 Crore tax tagged on his head by some armed opposition groups. Appointed by His Excellency, the President of India October 2016 as the Vice Chancellor of Manipur University for a term of 5 years, Prof. APP (writing his full name is a wastage of time) has been the Head of the Department of Economics in Banaras Hindu University, and has gained experiences in different related fields including how to derail a University on becoming an administrative dictator under the saffron culture. A graduate of Banaras Hindu University, earning BSc, MBA, MA, PhD degrees from the same institution, APP started his teaching career at the same university in 1979 and later became a member of the Executive Council Member of BHU.

Barely one and a half year after his appointment as the Vice Chancellor of Manipur University, the Manipur University Students' Union (MUSU) launched the agitation 30 May 2018 for the total shutdown of the Manipur University after failing to address the academic and administrative failures and crises the University has long been confronting since APP's assumption of the charge of the Vice Chancellor of the University. The movement took a sharp turn into hitting no retreat till the irresponsible and incompetent Vice Chancellor of Manipur University is disposed of with the joining of the Manipur University Teachers' Association (MUTA), Manipur University Staff Association (MUSA), the en masse resignation of the deans and the heads of all departments, proctor and assistant proctor and the shutting down of the affiliated colleges. The Manipur University community has been demanding VC APP's resignation over manifold allegations of administrative negligence and recklessness in running the university. The allegations made include his staying away from the university for wholesome time on unofficial duty, failure to conduct the Court Meeting for possible manipulation of university functions and programmes, and huge sanctioned amounts, utter rejection of holding Convocation (last held on 29 April 2014), conscious overlooking of the conduct of mandatory Executive Council Meeting and Financial Committee Meeting to evade scrutiny of the office of the Vice Chancellor; siphoning a huge amount of Rs. 5 Crore to a closely related Lucknow based firm by misappropriating the VC Office; striking a deal with another Lucknow based firm for supply of examination sheets at the rate of Rs. 24 per sheet in contrary to the previous rate of Rs. 5 per sheet; donating an unaccounted amount of money to a highly politically enthused organisation in breach of the rules and regulations of Manipur University; failure to summon the 2017 academic

session of the much awaited LLM, MA Fine Arts and MED courses; accumulation of huge sum of money in the contractual recruitment of several posts without making proper notification; transgressing the sanctity of the university with the building up of a night club dance bar atmosphere in the Office Chamber of the Vice Chancellor in the company of quite a lot of unknown women, contractors, businessmen and his cohorts with reported indulgence of immoral activities; deliberate filling up of statutory posts of the Registrar, the Controller of Examination, the Librarian and the Curator under the *in charge model* for total authoritarian rule of the University, issuance of original certificates in 30 to 45 days in stark contrast to before his tenure-ship wherein the same was issued within 2 to 3 days; failure to conduct semester examinations and declaration of examination results in time, collapsing the one year courses of the Centres for Myanmar Studies and Human Rights to two years', and the frisking of students with gross disrespect by his security guards in his chamber which tantamounts to psychological harassment and threatenings.

Now, 49 days have passed and nothing tangible comes out from the authority concerned except for the movement to dethrone APP taking a violent turn when volunteers of DESAM thronged to the Manipur Governor's Bungalow and the BJP Office on 16 July 2018 and clashed with brute state police forces which led to the critical injury of the Secretary General of DESAM and six others. The calling of 48 hours general strike by MUSU from the midnight of 17 July 2018 added salt to injury. The One Day Public Dialogue 15 July 2018 organised by LSPOMUC, SYC and SYDA at Kakwa Community Hall and participated by CSO's including AMUCO, IPSA, UCM, ATSUM, COHR, etc., senior citizens, veteran politicians, former VC of Manipur University and representatives of various political parties—INC, BJP, CPI (M), MPP, PRAJA, etc.—has strengthened the movement and resolved a solid stand for sacking the VC APP as the only option for saving Manipur University. The Dialogue outrightly rejecting the low profile inquiry committee instituted by the MHRD outlined a high power judicial inquiry, forced leave for APP during the conduct of the inquiry and the appointment of a pro VC for resuming the academic functions of the University. The last effort at New Delhi 16 July 2018 by the Manipur Chief Minister and his colleagues urging the Union Human Resource Development Minister in the line of the resolutions adopted during the Dialogue is commendable. The HRD move has come after the President's Office sought information on the issue and Manipur Chief Minister's repeated requests for central government intervention to break the impasse as the Manipur University Community launched a relay hunger strike from 8 July 2018 at the gate of the University Campus demanding the removal of the VC APP. In his diabolic gambling design, a self made Y-Category status and cajoling in a Rs. 80 lakh bulletproof motorcade, VC APP denied all the charges levelled against him and refused to resign, exhorting the agitators to refrain from unlawful acts in

a fictitious hand out not signed by any individual under the name of the office of the PRO, MU when the University itself has no PRO. This clearly indicates APP's high-handedness and his continuation of indulging in false fabrication to deceive everyone and all. Adding rhetoric to his clarification, Pandey decried the en masse resignation of the deans and heads of the departments of the University was due to the pressure put on them by the students who were in turn instigated by some anti-national elements. The attitude of the VC APP clearly reveals his character of being a secretive member of BJP and RSS, spreading only RSS's ideology as an RSS pracharak instead of acting as the head of the University. The Protection and Preservation Committee, Manipur (PPCM) upon joining the movement questioned the behaviour of VC Pandey for acting like an army Brigadier and changing the university into a fortress keeping the Assam Rifles against the aspirations of the University Community and the public. Different sections of the society have now begun to oppugn the inaction of the Centre as well as the State to take up any appropriate action against APP. The Manipur Peoples' Party (MPP) opined the state government to approach the central government to immediately remove APP in case he refused to resign from his post on moral ground. The Indian National Congress asserted the VC to step down after meeting all the stakeholders of the ongoing agitation. The Communist Party of India-Marxists (CPI-M), Manipur State Committee alleged that APP in connivance with some of his confidantes has been trying to saffronise university education undermining the need to uphold the sanctity of the University saying that the on-going agitation for removal of APP is justifiable. Saffronisation of all academic institution is not a new thing after the Modi Government came to power at the centre. "The RSS is conspiring to gain a hold of all academic institutions", remarked the ousted Magsaysay Award Winner BHU Professor Sandeep Pandey in January 2016 while discussing the circumstances of his removal as a visiting professor at the instance of RSS influence. He sparked a storm in the academic community with his allegation that his political ideology had him a target of the Narendra Modi government. The People's Action for National Democratic Movement (PANDM) has warned 15 July 2018 the State and the Central Governments against turning Manipur University into a political battlefield insisting the Manipur Chief Minister to consider the sentiments of the people and act according to the wishes of the people and get Professor APP removed from the post of VC. But, the gamble continues. VC APP remains unmoved enjoying the patronage of his well wishers. He remains adamant totally disregarding the sentiments of the agitation against him. He served his job of coming to Manipur by looting the Manipur University Exchequer. The question remains why this Pandey keeps on clinging to the post of the Vice Chancellor of Manipur University despite his wife, Veena Pandey - a film star of BJP

- refused by saying why they had sent her husband to the jungles on his appointment as the VC of MU by the President of India. Veena Pandey, who can even influence Mr. Modi of Hindu India was a former member of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Council. She is at present the National Vice President of BJP Mahila Morcha and has been a member of the National Executive of the Bharatiya Janata Party from 2012 until 2015. The posting of APP as the VC of MU may be viewed as the acid test for the Saffronisation of Manipur University. Veena Pandey and her higher ups must be aware of the history and culture of Manipur. The people of Manipur have not totally forgotten the pains and agonies on how the Sovereign Nation of Manipur (erstwhile *Kangleipak*)—an ancient Asiatic Power with 5500 year old civilisation was once turned into a petty Chief Commissioner's Province on 15 October 1949. Leave this jungle for good, these jungle people have their own expertise to rule their Jungle Kingdom. All over the world through war and peace, the education institutions have always been spared from becoming army dungeons. University is the highest place where a nation trains her children for the love of their country and the highest level of education. The complete shutdown of the Manipur University for 49 long days shall not go unpaid. The bid for Saffronisation of the University will not succeed as the Manipur People have learnt much how to defend any untoward misadventures from the days of Puya Meitaba, Seven Years' Devastation and the War of 1891. With VC APP as the dice thrower, the Manipur University has been turned into a gambling ground for all political parties of different hues but the real sentiments and the realities of the cause of the ongoing agitation cannot be wiped out in the annals of the history of Manipur as the Manipur People as one person knows only the players change in the game of football. You must have seen now the Manipur University Community and the Manipur People stand out their only resolution of chasing you away from the University. Prolongation of the Manipur University Impasse shall only destroy the game you and your masters gamble. Political maturity says every household in Manipur has some students and every locality in Manipur has at least one teacher. Students are the pillars of the nation and the teachers are the mentors. Imagine how hurt would be them when they cannot attend classes and they cannot teach them for such a long time of 49 days. By the time Manipur University resumes normal academic activities, the gambling ground would be shifted from the MU Campus to each and every heart of the students and teachers' community. Who, even the mightiest man of India would be able to prevent them when the students and the teachers' community stoop to play the Big Gamble of not participating in the electoral process of quasi-federal and autocratic Indian polity? The answer is a BIG NO. (The writer is the Coordinator of Manipur International Youth Centre and can be reached at micy96@yahoo.com.)

International & National News

BSF asked to set up control room in Dispur

By Our Correspondent Guwahati, July 18,

Assam government prefers a control room of Border Security Force (BSF) in Dispur with an aim to monitor the Indo-Bangla border area activities from the State capital. After discussing various border related issues with top BSF officials recently in the city, the State chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal insisted on equipping the control

room with modern technology so that it becomes helpful in monitoring of border fencing works, infiltration and other border issues from Guwahati itself.

"The control room will be a better platform to formulate mechanism to ensure security at the 135 km Mizoram-Cachar frontier areas of Karimganj & Cachar district and also 147 km Assam-Dhubri sector," said Sonowal. Moreover, he added that the control room

would facilitate checking of illegal trading of cattle through reverine areas of Dhubri border.

The participating BSF officials informed that as per direction from the Union home ministry, they have already adopted modern technology for border security including tackling infiltration through 61 km riverine areas under Dhubri district and the process would be completed by September this year.

Lok Sabha proceedings begin on stormy note

Agency New Delhi, Jul 18,

Lok Sabha proceedings began on a stormy note on the first day of the Monsoon Session today, with members from the TDP and the SP trooping into the Well as they sought to raise various issues. As soon as Speaker Sumitra Mahajan took up the Question Hour, members from Opposition parties, including the Congress wanted to raise various issues, creating a din. An assertive Mahajan told members that issues can be discussed after the Question Hour. "I won't allow..." she said even as many members

continued to raise slogans. Members from the TDP, a former ally of the ruling NDA government, trooped into the Well with placards and shouted slogans. The members were heard saying, "we want justice" as they demanded special status for Andhra Pradesh. Some members from the SP were also in the Well as they sought to raise various issues but could not be heard in the din. Standing at their places, many Congress members were also trying to raise certain issues. Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted members before the proceedings

began in the Lower House. Clad in a white kurta and pyjama, Modi took a round of the front rows of ruling and Opposition benches. He greeted members with folded hands and was also seen exchanging a few words with Samajwadi Party patriarch Mulayam Singh Yadav. Some members clapped when the prime minister walked into the House.

UPA Chairperson Sonia Gandhi and Congress President Rahul Gandhi, among others, were present. Before the Question Hour commenced, four new members took oath and Mahajan read out obituaries of three former members.

Delhi HC asks JNU not to take any coercive step against Kanhaiya till July 20

Agency New Delhi, Jul 18,

The Delhi High Court today directed Jawaharlal Nehru University not to take any coercive step on a fine imposed against its former students union president Kanhaiya Kumar till July 20. A Rs 10,000 fine was imposed on Kumar by an appellate authority of the university in connection with a 2016 incident in which anti-India slogans were allegedly raised at an event relating to Parliament attack convict Afzal Guru's hanging. Justice Rekha Palli, in an oral order, asked the university not to take any coercive action as far as depositing the fine is concerned. The matter came up before Justice Palli as the concerned judge was on

leave. The judge said she has not read the file and the matter should be listed before the regular bench on July 20. Senior advocate Rebecca John and advocate Taranum Cheema, appearing for Kumar, said the urgency was that he ceases to be a student of the university and the last date to deposit the fine is today. Former JNU students union (JNUSU) president Kumar had moved the Delhi High Court yesterday against the fine imposed on him. On February 9, 2016, a poetry event was held at JNU in connection with the third anniversary of Guru's hanging for his role in the attack on Parliament on December 13, 2001. A high-level panel of JNU had in 2016 recommended a fine of Rs 10,000 on Kumar.

It also recommended that another student, Umar Khalid, be rusticated in connection with the incident. Besides, financial penalty was imposed on 13 other students for violation of disciplinary norms.

The students had then moved the Delhi High Court, which had directed the university to place the matter before an appellate authority to review the panel's decision. On July 5, the university had revealed that the appellate authority upheld the decision against Khalid and Kumar and in some cases the penalty has been reduced. Kumar, Khalid and Anirban Bhattacharya, arrested in February 2016 on charges of sedition in connection with the controversial event, are out on bail.

Three killed, many feared trapped as two buildings collapse in Greater Noida

Agency, Noida, July 18,

At least three bodies were recovered and three people have been taken to hospital after two buildings collapsed in Greater Noida's Shahberi village on Tuesday night. Three persons have been arrested in connection with the incident in which several people are feared trapped under the rubble, police said on Wednesday. Rescue operations that began

on Tuesday night continued on Wednesday. A six-storey building under construction collapsed on an adjacent building around 9.30 p.m., and that building too collapsed in the impact. The police have detained a builder and property dealer for questioning. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Tuesday night directed the police and administration departments to monitor and coordinate with the National Disaster

Response Force (NDRF) in the rescue operation. Drills are being used to remove metal rods to reach those trapped under the debris. A dog squad has also been sent to service. "Four teams of the NDRF and a dog squad are at the spot," said Gautam Budh Nagar District Magistrate B.N. Singh. "Exact casualties are yet to be ascertained as the rescue operation is on," regional chief fire officer Arun Kumar Singh said.