

# Editorial

Monday July, 30, 2018

## Issues plaguing the state need to be addressed

After what can be considered an unusually long period of relative calm and semblance of positive development in the state by any yardstick, we are now reverting back to the old days of chaos and confusion if the present social developments is anything to go by. After the initial euphoria and the heightened expectations of the public for a radical change in the system of governance in the state with the change of guard, the emerging picture is proving to be one of increasing disappointment with each passing day, not for lack of effort or expressed intent on the part of the incumbent state government, but more due to the fact that the very system which the public wants changed and were expecting to be altered, has eventually claimed yet another well-meaning bunch of 'social activists' who have evidently missed the woods for the trees.

Instances of 'hands-on' publicity gimmicks where ministers and political leaders got their hands soiled with physical activities in what is often described as acts of encouragement have become a rage of late, and while such acts may very well motivate the general public to contribute or cooperate with the government, it still does not address the basic issue of remedying the system of governance.

The deepening crisis on the educational front with the present imbroglio between the Vice Chancellor on the one hand and the students and the teaching as well as non teaching staff on the other has already put the future of thousands of students, if not more, at jeopardy, and there is still no sign of any initiative from the state government to settle the issue in the larger interest of the state even if the matter may not justify official intervention.

The ongoing agitation by the government employees demanding implementation of 7th pay commission is another huge hindrance which is proving to be a nightmare for the general public as the already lethargic and unfriendly public services has ceased functioning for all practical purposes. It goes without saying that the debacle which is unlikely to be resolved in the foreseeable future has already done its damage to the efforts on development and progress of the state.

What about the frighteningly regular reports of seizure of narcotic drugs in the state? The suspicious silence on the part of the government and the failure to admit as yet, the growing menace of drugs in the state and the presence of a powerful and influential drug cartel which is using the state as an international highway for drug trafficking is a cause for serious concern for everybody. A more proactive and stringent approach towards the issue is required to allay the fears and suspicions from the minds of the public.

And why is the state government, in this time and age, still unable to present a definite stand on the much discussed and disgruntled border issue for once? Every state ought to have its definite boundary, and the state government should present the official area and physical boundary of Manipur to the public which will be of immense help in framing policies, programs and conclusions regarding the public perception.

While the present government has repeatedly expressed its intent to usher in positive change in the state, there is still a load to be done, and the manner of implementation of various programs, policies and activities remain far from satisfactory. Slapdash efforts will only worsen the situation. What is sorely needed is for the system to be rectified so that more transparency, efficiency and effectiveness are achieved. The voice of the public should be a guiding force towards such efforts.

### 8th Foundation Day of South East Asia Cultural Organisation (SEACO)

On Sunday, the 5th August, 2018.

Maliyapham Palcha Kumshing - 341

Venue :- Thangmeiband THAU Ground, Imphal

All concern are requested not to call bandh or general strike on the day

### Land Plots for sale

Land bearing Patta No. .0219 hectare Covered by C.S Dag No. 550/714 under patta No 57 (Old)/69/306 (New) situated at Revenue Village No.99 covering an area of Ningthoujam Leikai. Imphal West district Registration Number 2673 (V) Land Plot bearing Patta No. Agricultural land Taothabi class 2.50 acre Covered by C.S Dag No. 3044/3144 under patta No.973 (New) of Revenue Village No.74 Uchiwa covering an area of Sub Division Wangoi Imphal West district Registration Number 2669 (V) is on sale. Interested party who want to buy can contact at 8732004469 or 9436038417.

### Mark sheet lost

I, the undersigned, Riyandan Nongmaithem (Aged 24) son of N. Sunil Kumar Singh of Sagolband Moirang Leirak Machin , P.O & PS, Imphal West district Manipur have lost my original mark sheet of Senior School Certificate Examination – 2012 bearing Roll No. 3628842 issued by the CBSE on the way between M.M. Higher Secondary School, Wangkhei , Imphal East district and Konung Mamang Bazar in Imphal East district on July 20, 2018.

Finders are requested to hand over it to the undersigned sd/- Riyandan Nongmaithem

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## People's Strike Grets This August

By- SeramNeken

The month of August has long been filled with mixed emotions across the globe. Tears and smiles, celebrations and observances all over the world characterize the onset of this eighth month of the year in Gregorian calendar. In Manipur, the peace loving people of all sections irrespective of their diverse affiliations are now ready to greet August 2018 with a 24-hour General Strike to show strong defiance against the proposed extension of Article 371(A) of Indian Constitution to the so called Naga-Inhabited areas other than Nagaland. Although the strike is called by a few Civil Society bodies working in the interest of Manipur's integrity, it would be a 'People's Strike', which will be and should be supported by all sections of Manipuris, all political parties, all types of unions and associations and so on.

During the many months, the people of Manipur and the government have long been kept in vexed after the so called 'Framework Agreement' between India Government and the NSCN(IM) was signed. Having remained concealed for a long time now, the contents of the 'Framework Agreement' suddenly opens up in the form of extension of Article 371(A) of Indian Constitution beyond Nagaland to all Naga inhabited areas covering Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. Hence, the foremost and most serious issue for this August is 'Extension of Article 371(A) beyond Nagaland'.

Border Pillar issue, Manipur University impasse, Street Vendors' protests, VDF's strike, BoSEM imbroglio and a few other problems are lying unsolved in Manipur Society today. Some issues are under the jurisdiction of state government, while others are beyond the state's purview. But, as of now, the people of Manipur are witnessing the all-out efforts of the state government led by the Chief Minister N Biren Singh towards bringing solution to the multiple problems facing the state. However, 'Bandh-less Blockade-less' state which was pledged by the incumbent government cannot be fully realized amid the hordes of problems arising in Manipur society.

Usually, August has remained a month of Bandhs, Blockades, protests and strikes from the very beginning all over the world. In August, many people around the world celebrate their freedom as many others observe their awes of all hues. It has indeed been a month of tears, as it has been of smiles on the face of another millions. Usually, the government and the civil society bodies of Manipur have been in a hectic schedule to celebrate as well as observe memorable moments in its history. August 2018 will be of greater value to the people of Manipur.

Going back to history, Manipur got freedom from the British yoke on 14 August in 1947, a day before India got independence from the colonial regime after centuries of subjugation. The day has been celebrated as an important occasion in Manipur. On 13of August in 1891, two gallant sons of Manipur - Bir Tikendrajit and Thangal General made the supreme sacrifice of their lives for their motherland. In the evening of August 13, the British handed them in public at Imphal Polo ground for their alleged rebellion against the white regime. It remains a red letter day in the history of the once independent kingdom, which later became a part of the Indian sub-continent on 15 October 1949.

On August 27 in 1965, people of Manipur spearheaded by the student forces revolted against the artificial famine created out of the Indian businessmen's hegemony and misrule of the then state's rulers. Hunger Marchers' Day every year reminds Manipuris of their claims for the right to food, which was brutally responded with bloodshed. The

memorial at PishumChingamacha still narrates the story of students' power in almost all uprisings to save their basic rights.

The unfortunate incident, in which many students laid down their lives in police firing while protesting against non-availability of rice due to artificial famine in the State, gave birth to All Manipur Students Union (AMSU) which celebrates its birthday on 28 August every year.

A decade ago, on 4 August 1997, people of Manipur demonstrated their defiance against the tendencies to smash the harmonious existence of its indigenous inhabitants. Observance of Manipur Integrity Day and the Integrity Pillar at Imphal Pologround stand testimony to the people's inherent aspirations for a unified and dignified existence within the Indian political framework.

On August 16 in 2004, student activist PebamChitaranjan burnt himself to death as protest for repeal of AFSPA during the infamous Manorama Murder Issue.

It was on 8 August 2009 that a story appeared in TehelkaMagzine unleashed the series of fake encounter designs orchestrated by state security forces on innocent Manipuris. It really opened the Pandora's Box, inside which a long chain of encounter dramas remained hidden for long. The story that appeared in August 2009 has demonstrated its last episode now, with the investigative agencies acting on the revelations made by the very perpetrator of the crime.

Controversy-marred Manipur Sports University was an August 2014 gift of NarendraModi government to the congress-ruled powerhouse of sports.

In August 2014, victim families of extrajudicial killings got a sigh of relief, as the Supreme Court directed states to furnish investigation reports on extrajudicial killings. It was surely a welcome development in Manipur where the voices of numerous families remained unattended to by state government for long.

On 3 August 2015, the Government of India and the NSCN (IM) jointly adopted a 'Framework Agreement', the provisions of which are still not disclosed to the public even after a year of the agreement.

August seems synonymous with people's movements around the globe. A host of nations gained independence from foreign occupancy in the month of August in different years. Ecuador became a free country on 10 August 1822 and Uruguay gained independence from Brazil on 25 August 1825.

After years of struggle, Bolivia became a republic on 6 August 1825. Korea, Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia celebrate their independence days in the month of August. Hawaii became the 50th state of the United States on 21 August 1959. Vietnam's revolution succeeded on 19 August 1945. Gandhiji's Quit India movement materialised on 9 August 1942. India gained Independence on 15 August 1947 with the formation of Pakistan as a Muslim state the same day.

To many nationalities, August is a month of great tragedies. The memory of the August 6 and August 9 bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 still lingers in the minds of peace-loving people of the globe. After these greatest crimes against humanity, Japan declared unconditional surrender on August 15.

In Manipur, this August will be a turning point as it will tighten the stand of Manipuri people towards protecting our integrity and unity.

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## Environmental Protection & Internal Displacement in Manipur

By- Homen Thangjam

(Contd. from previous issue)

First point worth considering is the replication of the idea of "core" and "buffer" zone in the Act by virtue of which restriction is placed upon the people in terms of access to the Lake for livelihood purposes. "Core Zone" as highlighted above is No-Development Zone or Totally Protected Zone. "Buffer Zone" means the remaining area of the lake excluding Core Zone area. However, the point is the buffer areas are too small to accommodate the people who have been traditionally dependent on the Lake. In this denial mode, what is being suppressed is use of one's knowledge and skills, which ultimately form the core of one's occupation and source of livelihood, passed down from generations, and the related issue of transformation of one's identity, for example from a fisherman to an agricultural labourer. Encroachers need to be punished but one also has to distinguish between an encroacher and a dependent on the Lake. The irony about the Act is that still there is room for commercial utilization of the lake from any sources of funding.

Using various provisions of the Act, Government of Manipur started forcefully evicting the fishermen from their habitats at the Lake in the name of environment protection of the Lake. Within five days starting from November 15, 2011, state forces burnt down around 500 floating huts as result of which more than 2000 fishermen including women and children became internally displaced people.<sup>1</sup> More than 500 huts were reduced to ashes, fishermen claimed that property worth lakhs of rupees including implements used in fishing such as fishing gears, nets, domestic articles, cloths, and ornaments were lost.<sup>2</sup> The victims were not even allowed to travel to Imphal or other places to voice their grievances. There was no public hearing, peaceful democratic process, nor any workable rehabilitative plan prior to the violent act of eviction. The State announced only a package of Rs 40,000 as compensation to each family. The State served notices to the villagers on November 11, 2011 and began burning down of the huts from November 15, 2011. The fishermen denounced such notice and compensation. They submitted a memorandum to Shri O. Ibobi Singh, the State Chief Minister, requesting to review the order, which was turned down by the Chief Minister himself.<sup>3</sup> Fishermen stated that the order was unacceptable since it could not ensure them any alternative livelihood. They demanded repeal or amendment of Loktak Lake (Protection) Act, 2006, in order to assure their right to fishing and dwelling on the *phumdis*, which were practiced by their ancestors since time immemorial.

### Conclusion

What we witness at Loktak is the inroad made by not only by western ideas but also by technology, which in fact is implemented by the state. Simmering voices of resistance have emerged against the Loktak Protection Act. The Government while denying the affected people a place for their voice, which they raised in response to the disturbances to their life, work and department, has also horrendously misrecognised these voices. They are now framed within the volt of state's own language

and categorized as anti-development, anti-government and anti-state. In this habitual framing, the victims are now identified as a security threat, not as ones demanding their rightful places. Within this order, also developing is a body of legalities and illegalities. Loktak is now more than a lake. It has already transgressed the nature that it was once lovingly understood with. It has been now metamorphosed into something that closely looks like an economy of "illegality" built around to check anti-government and anti-state elements. Cleaning the Loktak is cleaning these elements off, not about saving a heritage.

Finally, can a Loktak centric approach save Loktak? Definitely no. In the above sections of this paper, we have identified the holistic approach to environmental concerns followed by our ancestors. To reemphasize, a topical treatment cannot solve the problem of Loktak. Rivers that drain into Loktak need to be identified and dredged on a regular basis. This also demands, identifying the sources of the rivers and routes, so as to undertake afforestation. Prevent erosions; forestation is the only way out not only to control flood but also to prevent siltation. Equally important are the issues of Hydro Project and other multipurpose dams, which have restricted the normal flow rivers and streams. Participation of people is also denied in the Act, for example, one has get permission even to undertake research in the Lake. (Concluded)

## Sajik Battalion Organises Musical Concert

Sajik Battalion of 28 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) organised a Musical Concert Evening at Kana Valley under Chakpikarong Sub Division on 27 July 2018. The event was organised at Sajik Tampak ground to boost the Tribal Culture which dawn the beginning the new era of peace in the Sajik Valley. Multiple singers of all age groups enthusiastically participated in the event and showcased their talent and passion for music. The Jazz Band of Sajik Battalion provided for the administrative support and the locals belted out soulful numbers of various genres including English Rock, favorite Bollywood numbers and famous Kuki hits which instantly struck a cord within the music enthusiasts and the entire gathering of more than 500 people.

The conduct of the event included solo and group performances. Out of a total of 20 young talented boys and girls who performed, Miss Kikim of Tuilelon Village and Mr Lualchen of Sajik Tampak Village were adjudged the best talent amongst boys & girls. Miss Peneng and Miss Frands were adjudged the best in group performance amongst girls and Mr Ruef and Mr Frands were adjudged the best in group performance amongst boys. The event was well appreciated by the locals who are now closely knit with the Sajik Battalion and share common moments of fun & frolic. The Battalion has promised for more such events in future as well.