

# RPF talks tough on forceful merger of Manipur to India; says murders, patricides, fratricides, rape crimes go uncontrolled

IT News  
Imphal, June 6,

Proscribed group Revolutionary Peoples' Front (RPF) blamed the forceful merger of the erstwhile nation state to the Indian union for the rapid rise of crime against women and children murders, patricides, fratricides etc. A statement issued by the outfit's Publicity Secretary Roben Khuman categorically recounts the series of problems arisen troubling the Manipur society in the aftermath of the merger to the Indian Union. The statement said that social discrimination and distrust among different communities started taking deep roots while corruption has infected every sphere of life. The statement said, "even though fake encounters staged by State Police and paramilitary forces declined considerably following intervention by Courts, many men in the productive age were shot or shot dead by unidentified persons. According to newspaper reports, 49 men were found dead in 2015, 64 men were found dead in 2016 and 21 were found dead in 2017, till May. "When men are killed, it is the women who suffer the most. All these suffering and miseries are consequences of repression and denial of human rights by the alien rule", the statement said. It also added that different

forms of violence against women which are typical to Indian society are now taking place in Manipuri society. There have been numerous reports of abandoning/burying and burning dead bodies of women after raping them. The situation has so degraded that it seems there is no one to protect women. It usually takes 10 to 20 years for Courts to pass a verdict in rape or murder cases. Just like in India where sons are always preferred to daughters, Manipur's sex ratio has been declining over the years. The merger of Manipur into the Indian Union sowed seeds of distrust and animosity among different communities of the land who have been living together harmoniously since ages. Even though the indigenous communities have stepped back towards reconciliation, the alleged evil influence of India cannot be exercised completely, Roben said. It is a matter of grave concern that the alleged alien rule has succeeded in drawing a sharp line of division between haves and have knots in Manipuri society. It is this division which paved the way for oppression and subjugation of the poor by the rich. Any society afflicted by such division will see starvation and homelessness sooner rather than later,

warned the publicity secretary. Meanwhile, corruption has become a way of life for the rich. Bribery is now a culture and more and more people are willing to compromise their dignity in exchange for some material benefits, he said. When the whole society has been afflicted by such maladies, people would find it very difficult to distinguish what is wrong and what is right. People would not be able to see things from the right perspectives. Under such a grim situation, there would be very few people who can work in the larger interest of the society and the Nation. Manipuri society is now passing through a very critical phase where the vast majority of people have lost the direction of their lives. The sorry state of affairs prevailing in Manipur is an outcome of imposition of alien rule. As such, economic, social and cultural measures would never be enough without political struggles to pull out Manipur from this labyrinth, he said. All these maladies can never be cured until and unless Manipur is independent, Roben said and appealed to all the people to come forward and join the revolutionary movement being spearheaded by RPF with a conviction that all are duty bound to uproot the alien rule.

# LET'S GO TO VILLAGE & POWER TO PANCHAYATS

*Without proper Devolution of Power to Panchayati Raj Institutions, Rural Development will remain a farcry in Manipur.* **By-SeramNeken**

Socio-political environment in Manipur during the past few decades had been infested with increased trust-deficit on the government, widening distance between the ruled and the rulers, conflicts between state and non-state actors, and burgeoning tensions among various communities. Amidst the unfavorable social atmosphere, real progress in economy, human resource and knowledge could neither be strived for nor achieved. However, during the past one year, the people of Manipur have begun to feel a course of social reconstruction under the so called 'People's Chief Minister'.

At the first stint of his rule, Shri N Biren Singh was able to bring about a meaningful solution to the 'Churachandpur Imbroglion' that had boiled the state for a long time. His another innovation aimed at recouping the lost ties came under the Mission 'Go to Hills'. Really fruitful are the results of this Mission that the valley inhabitants are now experiencing free movement to the hill districts and the vice versa. There was a time when the valley dwellers were reluctant to visit the hill districts of Manipur due to communal tensions and for fear of anti-social elements. Such days are gone. During the recent 'Sirui Festival', Ukhrul was so heavily thronged with visitors from the valley that huge traffic congestion of Imphal-Ukhrul Road occurred on the eve of closure of the festival. Not only Ukhrul, but all other hill districts also wear a peaceful look nowadays. The reminiscence of 'Emotional integrity' between the hill and valley dwellers has begun to resurface on Manipur soil today. Credit goes to the BJP-led government of Manipur and its charismatic Chief Minister.

The quality of Parliamentary Democracy is measured by the amount of proximity between the people and their representatives. The closer the relation between the ruled and the rulers, the brighter will be the Democracy. Now, none can deny the fact that the people of Manipur in general have felt the presence of a People-friendly Government in Manipur. Trust-deficit on the government has diminished to a great extent. This is only because of the institutionalized mechanisms of 'MeeyamgiNumeet' and 'Hill Leaders' Day' mooted by Shri N Biren Singh.

Amazingly, the Chief Minister of Manipur is never tired of meeting hundreds and hundreds of his subjects who approach him for one or the other amenities entitled to citizens. It has apparently become his way of life to listen to the people and help them grow. As a result of 'MeeyamgiNumeet' and 'Hill Leaders' Day', many a good number of poor and helpless from the nook and corner of the state have been encouraged to live meaningful lives. One beautiful aspect of such a meet is that people from very remote villages brave the geographical hurdles to reach the Chief Minister's Bungalow only to shower blessings and small-but-valued gifts from their villages. During the last seven decades since merger into India, none had ever dreamt of such a day when a Chief Minister of Manipur would personally attend to the poor and the helpless visitors to give a ray of hope in their lives. Even though other Ministers and MLAs do not heartily arrange 'MeeyamgiNumeet' at their premises, we can well claim that the Chief Minister is never tired of institutionalizing such regular rendezvous with his subjects, and general people's faith on the Chief Minister is increasing day by day.

Moreover, the pro-poor health assistance schemes taken up by the Manipur Government in the form of 'Chief MinistergiHakshelgiTembang' (CMHT), 'Chief

MinistergiSotharabasinggiTembang' (CMST) etc. have been praised at every corner of the state.

In spite of all the positive images in governance, the State Government is still neglecting the grassroots level Democracy in the villages. The Panchayati Raj Institutions in Manipur are yet to be empowered in order to be able to serve the rural population. The concept of Devolution of Power to Panchayats is almost absent in Manipur today for obvious reasons. No doubt, the recently launched Mission entitled 'Let's go to village' orchestrated by the BJP-led government in Manipur under the guidance of Chief Minister N. Biren Singh, has indeed activated and recharged the already lethargic and red-tapist administrative machinery to reach-out to the village population. Thanks to the incumbent Chief Minister of Manipur, who is now widely branded as 'People's Chief Minister', for his innovative efforts in transforming the indisposed Manipur Society. However, the real success of the Mission lies in empowering the Panchayati Raj Institutions.

It is not possible that the whole administrative machinery go to the villages daily to attend to the needs and grievances of the villagers. Instead, we must strive to empower the existing elected local bodies so that they serve the aspirations of the huge rural population that is ailing with poverty and ignorance. Panchayati Raj Institutions, by virtue of their constitutional status, are the vital components of government at the grassroots level. Local leaders are more conversed with the local issues than any other leaders of varied levels. Hence, power to Panchayats means power to villagers. Without proper Devolution of Power to Panchayati Raj Institutions, rural development will ever remain a farcry in Manipur.

Funds of various schemes such as Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) have not been released to implementing agencies regularly and on time. The amount of honorarium and other entitlements currently given to elected representatives in Panchayats are really embarrassing. Zilla Parishad Members who represent around 12,000 to 18,000 voters get an honorarium of Rs. 4000/- per month, while the Pradhans who represent around 3,000 to 5,000 voters are paid Rs. 3000/- as monthly honorarium. Ward members representing around 500 voters get a monthly honorarium of Rs. 1,000/-. In fact, the Panchayat representatives do not even get the minimum wages entitled to a manual labour under the Minimum Wages Act. It simply indicates that the State Government is neglecting the rural development aspect and the grassroots level democracy.

Regarding the Devolution of Power to the PRIs, Manipur is in the 23<sup>rd</sup> position in the Devolution of Power in Practice (DPR) of 25 states in India: (Ministry of Panchayati Raj; Devolution Report, 2014-15). This is highly discouraging. Both in terms of Eleventh Schedule of the Constitution of India, and also the Manipur Panchayati Raj Act, 1994, the Panchayati Raj Institutions in Manipur are not suitably empowered. Hence, all other efforts aimed at village development will never be successful in the absence of a powerful Panchayati Raj system. Instead of yelling 'Let's go to village', the government may initiate another Mission called 'Power to Panchayats' for a sustained village development.

(The writer is Member, Imphal East Zilla Parishad)

## Ayursundra Hospital to conduct next media clinic

By NJ Thakuria  
Guwahati, June 6,

Ayursundra Super Specialty Hospital will conduct the next media OPD clinic at Guwahati Press Club on 9 June 2018, where Dr. Amitava Goswami DM (Gastroenterology) will be available for free consultations to the participants from 3.30 to 4.30 pm. Organized for the benefit of press club members along with their dependants, the Saturday camp will also facilitate the participants to check their weight and blood

pressure. Till date, the press club initiative titled 'Evening with a Doctor' has been supported by Down Town Hospitals, GNRC Hospitals, Apollo Hospitals, SIMS Hospital, Medanta Hospital, Manipal Hospital, Fortis Hospital, Dispur Hospital, GATE Hospital, Hayat Hospital, Excelcare Hospital, Health City Hospital, Ayursundra Hospital, Narayana Hospitals, Wintrobe Hospital, Barthakur Clinic, Sun Valley Hospital, Rahman Hospital, Sight First eye-clinic etc.

## 23 rescued after blast in iron mine in China

AIR News

In China, twenty-three workers were rescued today from an iron mine in northeast Liaoning province, hours after they were trapped by a powerful explosion. Authorities said, the explosion in the iron ore mine in Sishanling village, Benxi city killed 11 people and injured nine others who were above ground. It destroyed the hoisting system in the mine, trapping 25 miners underground. The blast took place yesterday when miners were dropping explosives down the 1,000-metre-deep mine shaft.

# China sounds positive bugle ahead of PM Modi's second trip in as many months

Agency  
New Delhi, June 6

Ahead of Indian PM's second trip to China in as many as months Beijing has sounded positive bugle and welcomed Narendra Modi's Shangri-La Dialogue speech in Singapore where he said that the two countries have shown maturity and wisdom in resolving issues and ensuring a peaceful border. Terming Modi's remarks as "positive", the Chinese Foreign Ministry on Monday stated it "highly appreciated" the "positive remarks" by the Indian PM. The Chinese Foreign Ministry also recalled the Wuhan Summit and noted that the two leaders exchanged

views in international landscape and bilateral relations and reached consensus on many issues. The two sides are holding preparatory meeting in Delhi on Tuesday and Wednesday ahead of Modi-Xi meet on June 9 on sidelines of the SCO Summit as both are keen to push economic envelope and maintain stability along the Line of Actual Control this summer. Trade protectionism issues caused by US decision and bilateral trade & investment issues could figure on the agenda of Modi-Xi meet. "We have noted the positive remark made by Modi about China-India relations. We highly appreciate it.. In April this year, Xi held an informal

meeting with Modi. They had in-depth exchange of views in international landscape and bilateral relations and reached consensus on many issues," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said. While delivering the keynote address at Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore last Friday, PM Modi had said, "No other relationship of India has as many layers as our relations with China. We are the world's two most populous countries and among the fastest growing major economies. Our cooperation is expanding. Trade is growing. And, we have displayed maturity and wisdom in managing issues and ensuring a peaceful

border. In April, a two-day informal Summit with President Xi helped us cement our understanding that strong and stable relations between our two nations are an important factor for global peace and progress. I firmly believe that, Asia and the world will have a better future when India and China work together in trust and confidence, sensitive to each other's interests." The PM while subtly highlighting challenges emanating from BRI and China's ambitions at his Shangri-la speech also made it clear that Delhi desires an inclusive Indo-Pacific region where all powers are present amid a non-bloc security architecture.

"The two sides agreed to adopt a mature and wise way to handle differences. China is willing to work with the Indian side to maintain the positive momentum of the development of the bilateral relations, to promote mutually beneficial cooperation, properly handle differences and maintain peace and tranquillity along the border areas. This takes India-China relations forward," Hua noted. Delhi and Beijing are also exploring ways to navigate challenges posed by American trade protectionist policies. At the BRICS Foreign Ministers meet on Monday in Johannesburg, the BRICS states emphasised they oppose the "new wave of

protectionism" and the systemic impact of unilateral measures that are incompatible with WTO rules, apparently referring to US President Donald Trump's tough trade policies. The participating ministers reaffirmed their resolve to foster a global economic governance architecture that is more effective and reflective of the current global economic landscape, increasing the voice and representation of emerging markets and developing economies, it said. Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj on her part underlined that multilateralism, international trade and rules-based world order was facing "strong headwinds" as she

called for joint action by the BRICS nations against money laundering, terrorist-financing and de-radicalisation. "Though the global growth has exhibited signs of recovery, the challenges to long-term growth continue to persist. Ensuring that the benefits of globalisation are shared widely remains a challenge," she added. "The other foreign ministers attending the meeting were China's Wang Yi, South Africa's Lindwe Sisulu, Brazil's Marcos Bezerra Abbott Galvao and Russia's Sergey Lavrov. Swaraj and her Chinese counterpart Wang Yi met on sidelines of BRICS meet and discussed ways to maintain momentum in bilateral ties.