

Editorial

Monday, March 26, 2018

Tampered transparency

“Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely.”

The word ‘Corruption’ connotes many things for many people and under differing circumstances which makes it difficult to define. However, in a narrow sense, corruption is mostly concerned with ‘bribery’ and ‘undue advantage’ and it takes several forms. Transparency International- a global movement with the vision to free the world of corruption and having chapters in more than 100 countries leading the fight against corruption describes ‘Corruption’ as the abuse of power for private gain. It is a global phenomenon and is pervasive in almost every society the world over. Corruption, especially in a state such as ours where strife and unrest is a part of our everyday life, is a consequence of the parasitic nexus between Bureaucrats, politicians and criminals. Its reach and chronicity can perhaps be gauged by the very fact that at one time, bribe was paid for getting wrong things done but now bribe is being paid for getting right things done at right time. Today, India’s ranking in the annual corruption index, released by Berlin-based non-government organisation Transparency International (TI), slid to 81 among a group of 180 countries based on a scale of 0 to 100, where 0 is highly corrupt and 100 is very clean. The Corruption Perception Index 2017 also singled out India as one of the “worst offenders” in the Asia-Pacific region. In 2016, India was in the 79th place among 176 countries. TI said it found crackdowns on non-government organisations (NGOs) and media were associated with higher levels of corruption in the world. “Given current crackdowns on both civil society and the media worldwide, we need to do more to protect those who speak up,” said Patricia Moreira, managing director, TI. The 2017 index revealed that despite attempts to combat corruption, most countries were moving too slowly with their effort. In the past six years, many countries have made little to no progress, TI said.

The big question is: Is it possible to contain corruption in our society? To fully answer the question, it would be crucial to understand certain perceptions and myths such as: Corruption is a way of life and nothing can be done about it, or that only people from underdeveloped or developing countries are prone to corruption. Distrustful or apathetic attitude of the public towards the political system, its institutions and its leadership also creates a big hurdle to challenging corruption. The best weapon for fighting corruption is transparency. It is about shedding light on rules, plans, processes and actions. It is knowing why, how, what, and how much. Transparency ensures that public officials, civil servants, managers, board members and businesspeople act visibly and understandably, and report on their activities. And it means that the general public can hold them into account. It is the surest way of guarding against corruption and helps increase trust in the people and institutions on which our futures depend.

Corruption is an intractable problem and can only be kept in check if representatives from the government, business and civil society work together to develop standards and procedures they all support. It cannot be eliminated in one fell swoop. It is a global problem that all countries of the world have to confront, solutions, however, can only be home grown. We have tolerated corruption for so long, hoping the next person will take up the cudgel for us. The time has now come to root it out from the society, and if we are to succeed, we all should join our hands and stand firm.

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National & International News

NEUWJ calls for ingenious journalism

Guwahati, March 26: Constituted to provide a common platform to professional journalists of northeastern region, the North East Union of Working Journalists (NEUWJ) got off to a rousing start on Sunday (25 MARCH 2018) with its first convention held at Guwahati Press Club. Chaired by veteran journalist and NEUWJ president Joykanta Sarma and graced as chief guest by Pradip Baruah (Editor, Prantik), guest of honour Shashi Phukan (Editor, Bismoi) and senior journalist Samudra Gupta Kashyap, the convention discussed several issues related to journalism and news coverage in NE States. Addressing the gathering, Prantik’s editor Baruah dwelt upon the need for a receptive mindset that would enable journalists of the region to master various tongues for effective communication. Kashyap, while drawing upon his wide experience traveling the rugged terrain of the



region for news coverage, said that stories are just waiting to be discovered for the enterprising journalist. “When I began my career in The Indian Express, I was the only scribe hailing from this region. Happily, times have changed so that hundreds of keen young journalists from the Northeast are now

manning major national media houses,” he said. Aizawl based journalist Malsawmpuia Ralte thanked the NEUWJ for its initiative to bring together scribes of this trouble-torn region. NEUWJ general secretary Manoj Agasti delivered the welcome address. Journalist Nava Thakuria spoke of the need to put up a united front for journalists

of NE region faced with many common, inter-related problems, as well as existential threats looming over mainstream media. A souvenir, enriched with contributions on various journalistic aspects from K Vikram Rao, Snehasis Sur, Prasanta J Baruah, Bijoy Gurung, Kenter Joya R, Prakash Mahanta, Ranjit Hazarika, Oken Jeet Sandham, Mubina Akhtar, Bijay Kr Sharma, Bibekananda Choudhury, Dr Satyakam Borthakur, Hiren Sarma, KR Kamath, Rituraj Konwar etc, was released on the occasion by Bismoi’s editor Phukan. Moderated by senior journalist Pulin Kalita, the meeting was attended by a number of acclaimed journalists including Rupam Barua, Ranen Kr Goswami, Raman Bora, Siva Prasad Deka, Mukul Kalita, Apurba Kumar Das, Tarun Saikia, Anup Biswas, Rubee B Das, Pankaj Nath, Rajat Baishya, Samir Choudhury, Bipul Sarma etc.

Saudis intercept seven Yemen rebel missiles in deadly escalation

Agency Riyadh, March 26: Saudi forces intercepted seven Yemeni rebel missiles today, including over the capital Riyadh, in a deadly escalation on the eve of the third anniversary of the Saudi-led coalition’s intervention in Yemen. One Egyptian was killed and two of his countrymen were wounded by falling shrapnel in Riyadh, authorities said, with residents reporting loud explosions and bright flashes in the sky shortly before midnight. The Iran-aligned Huthi rebels fired three missiles at Riyadh and four others at the southern cities of Khamis Mushait, Jizan and Najran, with the coalition saying they all targeted populated areas. “This aggressive and hostile action by the Iran-backed Huthi group proves that the Iranian regime continues to support the armed group with military capabilities,” coalition spokesman Turki al-Malki said.

“The firing of multiple ballistic missiles towards cities is a serious development. “The Huthi-run Al-Masira television channel claimed the rebels had targeted Riyadh’s King Khalid International Airport as well as other airstrips in the south of the kingdom. The strikes come after the US defence secretary last week urged Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during his visit to Washington to pursue “urgent efforts” to end Yemen’s wrenching conflict. The Huthi rebels have fired dozens of missiles into Saudi Arabia since last year, all of which Saudi forces claim to have intercepted, underscoring their capacity to strike deep within the kingdom amid a stalemated war in Yemen. The latest attack could further escalate the coalition’s military campaign. A major attack targeting Riyadh international airport on November 4

triggered the tightening of a longstanding Saudi-led blockade of Yemen — already on the verge of famine. Another strike on December 19 targeted Riyadh’s Yamamah palace, the official residence of King Salman. Saudi Arabia has accused its arch foe Iran of supplying the missile to the rebels, a charge Tehran strongly denied. The Huthis expelled pro-government forces from the capital in September 2014 and went on to seize swathes of the impoverished Arabian peninsula country. This prompted a military coalition led by Saudi Arabia to intervene in Yemen on March 26, 2015, to help the government push back the Shiite rebels. Since then, around 10,000 people have been killed and 53,000 wounded in Yemen, triggering what the United Nations has called the world’s worst humanitarian crisis.

Huthi rebel chief Abdelmalik al-Huthi today said his fighters were ready to make more “sacrifices” against the Saudi-led coalition, in an address marking the war’s third anniversary. The Huthis plan a huge rally in Sanaa today to mark the anniversary. The UN says living conditions in the war-scarred country have reached catastrophic levels and that 8.4 million people face imminent famine. The UN urgently needs USD 350 million for humanitarian projects in Yemen, a senior agency official said yesterday, insisting it was mere “peanuts” compared with the cost of the country’s war. Saudi Arabia and its allies — aided by billions of dollars worth of military equipment from the US and Britain — could stand guilty of war crimes, Amnesty International said on Friday. Numerous rounds of UN-sponsored peace talks have failed to stem the bloodshed in Yemen.

Contd. from yesterday issue

“38TH RED ARMY UPRISING DAY observed by PREPAK

The colonial master, India has been applying a divide and rule strategy among the indigenes, who have been living together in both hills and valley with love and amity since time immemorial, to instigate a fratricidal war among us, and it is apparent in the eyes of the world that India is carrying out genocide in this region. The puppet government of the state has been turning a blind eye to these well-laid forceful machinations and keeping the Kanglei people on the point of “Sandrembi Imadi Ngaksham youre.” However, Kanglei hills and valley people have realized such sinister designs of the colonial masters and together made it futile. On the other hand, the UN’s act of meting out punishment to those who commit war crimes, conduct genocide and use chemical weapons to carry out mass executions has made man kind’s united move meaningful. The way the UN had conducted investigation into the mass executions by using poisonous chemical weapons in Syria and attempted to destroy such weapons is a remarkable step for the welfare of the human kind. Freedom from colonial yoke cannot be delayed on the ground that a nation that is politically, economically, socially and educationally dependent on others is not worthy of enjoying the right to self determination. The UN has passed resolutions several times to the effect that every dependent country has the essential right to self determination and to restore independence from the colonial regimes, and thus the UN has been insisting the governments of occupying countries on returning freedom to the colonized nations. This

Right to Self Determination is clearly given in the Statute Article 38 of the International Court of Justice, Article 1 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) allows every community or race to demand Right to Self Determination. The Decolonization policy enforced by the UN since the mid 20th century is a significant step that is believed to be a main factor for bringing peace and prosperity in the world. The UN had taken a key role in bringing freedom in countries like Namibia, South Sudan, Kosovo, East Timor, Andorra, Amga, Cambodia, Comoros, Croatia, etc. The UN has always stood for countries, which were bearing the brunt of colonial rule and struggling to get freedom and those which just regained freedom in standing on their own feet. In the same manner, the people’s revolutionary movement happening in this region for regaining our lost independence is allowed and approved by the united body of the mankind—the United Nations. With the help of the UN, one day we shall be able to reach our destination of freedom. Today people have realized the potent danger posed by the poisonous substances adulterated in various edible items and spices sent into our markets by the colonial master, India. No price tags are printed on the goods packets in order to facilitate the businessmen to sell the commodities at any price as they wish or price tags are fixed that do not suit the value of the goods. Then there are also packets of commodities that do not give proper date of manufacture and expiry

date. Such goods are available at our markets abundantly. Children, parents and pregnant women who consumed such food items have reportedly fallen sick. With the harms caused by the food items to the physical and mental health of the people, a secret genocide is going on. To cite an example, food experts of this region have confirmed and announced that the food items made available by the colonial masters at cheap price at our markets, particularly the super fine rice and other commodities are adulterated with harmful artificial preservatives. But still without being able to give a proper answer, as a secret governmental policy, such commodities are sent into our markets unabated. As if there is no other means, our people have come to such a stage where they must consume the poisonous rice at any cost. This is itself a clear example of the trap laid cunningly by the colonial masters to project the secret designs as nothing but absolute truth from which the helpless people can’t escape on either side. In today’s world, the number of countries with Imperialist and Colonialist governments of which sole interest is only to make more profits is increasing. Taking advantage of the USANorth Korea tension, Arab-Israeli cold war, internal crises in Nigeria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Syria, powerful nations of the world are jostling with each other using whatever power and wisdom they have to snatch the world market and strengthening their foot-hold. Thus amidst such confounded tension, it is crystal clear that it will be the best interest of our people to concentrate on cultivating the habit

of work culture without having to depend on anybody else. What needs to be discussed seriously is the unabated deforestation that includes clearing forest for reasons of security and destruction of natural resources that 17,418 square kilometer, i.e. 78.01% of Manipur’s land used to provide. Unmitigated deforestation not only causes ecological imbalance but also changes the existing geographical features, thus deprives the sole means of survival for many people who depend on the forest products and lastly compelled to face a lot of hardship. Thus in this repressive rule of colonial India, we can never even dream of progress, prosperity and a free life. Dear beloved countrymen, today the Red Army Uprising Day observance has completed 37 years. During these past years, the Red Army soldiers have bravely launched offensives against the IOF on many occasions and have been able to cause serious casualty on their side. This is the result of the sacrifice with which the valiant Red Army waged a war of liberation upon the IOF. In future too, our people are strongly confident that the Red Army will continue to launch significant assault on the IOF. We give firm assurance that the Red Army will surely fulfill the people’s desire. Lastly, as the 38th Red Army Uprising Day arrives, we call upon the people to come forward and join the right revolutionary movement as Red Army to dedicate our life for a new dream and bring a free, developed and egalitarian society in our motherland. (Concluded)