

Editorial

Wednesday, October 31, 2018

A perfect coincidence: CM should not let this opportunity out of hand

Today's mass rally organised by the United Committee Manipur (UCM) participated by around thousands and thousands of people here in the heart of Imphal city is another indication to the central leadership that there will be no differences among the people of the state when it comes to the issue of the territorial integrity of the state. The issue of the territorial integrity is a sentimental issue; everyone remembers that 22 lives have been sacrificed in June 2001 when the people felt that the peace talk between the NSCN-IM and the Government of India had signed extension of the cease fire without territorial limit. The inclusion of the 3 words "Without Territorial Limit" is a direct indication for segregation of the state of Manipur into two as per the desire of the NSCN-IM. Because every Manipuris including the Meitei, meetei, naga, Kuki, Pangal and other tribes knew that the extension of the cease fire to the territory of Manipuri is a direct indication for granting any demand put up by the NSCN-IM.

That was years back. The situation changes after the signing of the Frame Work Agreement on August 3, 2015. Narendra Modi led government assurance to the NSCN-IM to settle their issue is another big threat to the people of the state who wanted to keep the state intact.

Even as the state government is also led by the BJP, it is left in a helpless position as any objection to the central government issue may be a troublesome for the Chief Minister. And a support by the Chief Minister himself to this rally may mean biasness towards his people. As the people supporting the demand of the NSCN-IM is also his people under his government administration.

Chief Minister N. Biren Singh now seems to be caught between the devil and the deep blue sea. Against the proposed rally the United Naga Council had also called a total shut down in all the hill district of the state. Almost all major Hill district head quarters including the Senapati and Ukhrul district remain shut during the UCM rally.

Thankfully, today falls the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel and the state government is organizing a Run for the Nation.

N. Biren Singh joined politics after June 18 uprising. He had time and again promised for protection of the territorial integrity of the state. It is now upto him on how he will tackle the situation which seems like diving the state into two.

The Chief Minister's yesterday's visit to Senapati and Teamenglong district is indeed significant as his government position showed neutrality towards any community. His magic words - of building trust between hill and plain people with action and not with lip service ahead of both the UCM Rally and the UNC total shut down somehow left aside the two body as some groups set up by vested interested people and not by all the people of the state.

The UCM rally, the UNC total Shut down and the government sponsored unity run to commemorate the birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhai Patel coincidentally save N. Biren Singh. It is now upto him on how he will deal with this issue keeping intact the integrity of the state.

Luck seems to favour the Chief Minister, but anger and intolerance may ruin him. If those surrounding him suggested good advice and if the bureaucrats are serious to turn into action what he is planning to do, his government may continue for more years.

Interim CBI Director Nageshwar Rao Denies Irregularities in Wife's Investments

Agency New Delhi Oct.31

Days after a few media reports alleged that the interim CBI director M. Nageshwar Rao's family could have been involved in a financial transaction that appeared to be a case of money laundering, the 1986-batch IPS officer on Tuesday refuted the charges and said that the reports were "incorrect and untrue". In July this year, a Tamil language

portal, Savukku had accused M. Nageshwar Rao's wife, Mannem Sandhya, of laundering money through a shell company in Kolkata in which she was an investor. It said that Sandhya allegedly loaned Rs 20 lakh from one Angela Mercantiles Private Limited to purchase a piece of land in Pedapalaluru village, in Guntur District, Andhra Pradesh. However, it turned out that she had also invested around Rs 1.14 crore in the same company.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : imphaltimes@gmail.com. For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.

Indonesia Military Chief "Strongly Believes" Crashed Lion Air Plane Found

Jakarta, Oct. 31

The smashed fuselage of a crashed Indonesian jetliner may have been found, the country's military chief said Wednesday, two days after the deadly accident feared to have killed 189 people.

Using sonar technology, Hadi Tjahjanto said authorities were confident they had pinpointed the location of the Boeing 737-MAX plane that plunged into the sea on Monday.

"We strongly believe we've determined the coordinates of the JT 610 fuselage," he told reporters in Jakarta.

"However, it has not yet been confirmed that it is part of the fuselage."

Authorities have been searching for the downed jet's location in water some 30-40 meters deep in the hopes of also finding flight data recorders expected to be crucial to the crash investigation.

The development comes as Boeing officials are to meet with Lion Air on Wednesday, after Indonesia ordered an inspection of the US plane maker's 737-MAX jets. The Boeing-737 MAX 8, which

went into service just a few months ago, crashed into the Java Sea off Indonesia's northern coast moments after it had asked to return to Jakarta on Monday.

Aviation experts say it is too early to determine what caused the accident.

But Lion's admission that the plane had an unspecified technical issue on a previous flight — as well as the plane's abrupt nose dive just 12 minutes after takeoff — have raised questions about whether the plane had any faults specific to the newly released model.

The accident has also resurrected concerns about Indonesia's patchy air safety record which led to a now-lifted ban on its planes entering US and European airspace.

"When you have a new plane, you expect the thing to work exactly like it's supposed to in the written contract. It's in everyone's interest for this thing to work," Stephen Wright, aviation expert at the University of Leeds, told AFP.

'Many questions' Indonesia's transport minister ordered an inspection of all 737-MAX aircraft on Tuesday, while representatives from Boeing are due

to meet with the budget carrier, said Lion spokesman Ramaditya Handoko.

Lion Air Group Managing Director Daniel Putut said the airline had "many questions" for the Chicago-based company and they would discuss the delivery of remaining aircraft 737-MAX models, Indonesian news website tirto.id reported.

Lion Air, Indonesia's biggest budget airline which has been engaged in huge expansion, announced earlier this year it was buying 50 Boeing-737 MAX 10 jets for \$6.24 billion.

Boeing suspended release of the fuel-efficient 737 MAX just days before its first commercial delivery last year due to an issue with engines.

But the narrow-body jet was subsequently cleared for commercial delivery and has had thousands of orders from more than 100 customers worldwide.

Boeing said in a statement it was providing technical assistance at the request and under the direction of Indonesian authorities, but did not comment on the reported meeting.

The US National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) will also help out into the investigation of the downed plane.

Search teams have taken up the grim task of separating human remains from plane debris and recovered personal effects, sending the body parts — including from an infant — to hospital for DNA testing.

Some 48 body bags filled with limbs and other remains have so far been recovered, authorities said Wednesday.

Dozens of divers were taking part in the recovery effort along with helicopters and ships.

Indonesia's search and rescue agency has all but ruled out finding any survivors from the high-impact crash.

The plane was en route to Pangkal Pinang city, a jumping off point for beach-and-sun seeking tourists on nearby Belitung island, when it dropped out of contact around 6:30 am (2330 GMT).

The pilot and co-pilot had more than 11,000 hours flying time between them and had undergone recent medical checkups and drug testing, the carrier said.

PM Modi to dedicate today to the nation world's tallest Statue of Unity on birth anniversary of Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel

Gujarat, Oct. 31

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will dedicate to the nation world's tallest statue, the Statue of Unity, at Kevadiya in Narmada district of Gujarat today. The 182-metre statue of the Iron Man of India, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel is being unveiled on his birth anniversary.

AIR correspondent reports that the dedication ceremony will have many attractions, including fly-pasts and playing of patriotic music by ceremonial bands of the Army,

Navy, Indian Air Force.

"Surya Kiran of the Air Force will perform aerobatics in the sky over the statue while spreading the colours of the Indian flag in the sky. At the same time, a team of Jaguar fighter aircraft will also fly, and a team of Mi-17 choppers will shower rose petals on the statue. Cultural programmes and folk dance performances by artists from Gujarat, Punjab, Assam and Mizoram have also been planned. The statue has been built at a cost of about 2,400 crore rupees.

Approximately 70,000 tons of cement in addition to 18,500 tons of reinforcement steel and 6000 tons of structural steel has been used to build the statue.

1700 metric tons of bronze has also been used. Mr Modi had laid the foundation stone of the project on 31st October 2013 when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat. With the unveiling, the statue will become a representative and inspiration of Unity, Integrity and Peace across the globe.

Near the statue, Mr Modi will also

unveil the 'Wall of Unity' which has been created with the earth samples collected from various states across the country. As part of the effort to make the region around the statue a tourist spot, many projects like Valley of Flowers and Tent City have been developed.

The Prime Minister will also unveil a 'Light and Sound show' on Sardar Patel in the exhibition hall built at the pedestal of the Statue of Unity. The show will depict the Iron Man of India's fight against British rule.

SC asks Centre to submit details of pricing of 36 Rafale fighter jets

Agency New Delhi, Oct 31

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the Centre for pricing details of the 36 Rafale fighter jets India is buying from France in a sealed cover within 10 days but agreed that "strategic and confidential" information need not be disclosed.

In its order, a three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, gave some more leeway to the government which has been arguing that pricing details are so sensitive that they have not even been shared with Parliament.

The Centre must bring details of the decision making process of the deal into the public domain, except those that are confidential and have strategic importance, the court said.

The bench said the information must be shared by the government within 10 days and the petitioners could respond to it in the next seven days. It posted the matter for the next hearing on November 14.

"If pricing is something exclusive and you are not sharing it with us, please file an affidavit and say so," the bench told Attorney General K K Venugopal in its oral observations. It was hearing four petitions, including one by advocate Prashant Bhushan and former ministers Arun Shourie and Yashwant Sinha who are seeking a court monitored CBI investigation in the procurement of the fighter jets.

"That you will have to wait," the CJI said, adding, "Let CBI put its house in order first."

The attorney general had expressed reservations about

disclosing the details of pricing of the jets and said its cost was not even disclosed in Parliament.

He also said the documents placed by the Centre before the court are covered by the Official Secrets Act.

The bench, also comprising Justices U U Lalit and K M Joseph, said the "core of information" that can be brought in the public domain should be shared with the "petitioner and petitioners in person".

In its order, the bench observed that none of the petitioners have questioned the suitability of the Rafale jets, their equipment and their utility to the Indian Air Force. "What has been questioned is the bonafide of the decision making process and the price/cost at which the same is to be procured," the bench said.

The bench also noted that following its October 10 order the government has placed before it a note giving details of the steps taken in the decision making process leading to the procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets.

At this stage, the bench said, the court did not want to record any finding or view on the documents placed before it.

It also observed that information regarding induction of the Indian offset partner be given to the court and the petitioners.

When a counsel appearing for AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh told the bench he has also filed a petition in this matter, the court asked, "What is his interest? We don't have to entertain so many petitions."

Shourie was present in the court during the hearing.

India signed an agreement with France for the purchase of 36 Rafale fighter aircraft in a fly-away condition as part of the upgrading process of the Indian Air Force equipment. The Rafale fighter is a twin-engine Medium Multi Role Combat Aircraft (MMRCA) manufactured by French

aerospace company Dassault Aviation.

Indian Air Force had advanced a proposal to buy 126 fighter aircraft in August 2007 and floated a tender. Following this, an invitation was sent to various aviation companies to participate in the bidding process.

Nirmala Sitharaman flags off 'Run for Unity' in Chennai

Chennai, Oct 31

Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman Wednesday flagged off the 'Run for Unity,' an event organised to mark the birth anniversary of freedom fighter and India's first Home Minister, Sardar Vallabhai Patel, here.

Sitharaman, besides Tamil Nadu Ministers D Jayakumar and SP Velumani, participated in the event.

Later, the Defence Minister recalled the contributions of Patel

in uniting India and pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was scheduled to dedicate to the nation, the freedom fighter's statue in Gujarat.

Titled the 'Statue of Unity,' the 182 metre tall Patel statue is touted to be the "tallest" in the world.

"We are attending the Run for Unity to mark that (dedication of Patel statue).

Youngsters have turned up in good numbers today. They have to play an active role in the country remaining united," she said.

Kerala Minister's gunman shoots self to death

Thiruvananthapuram, Oct 31

A personal security officer of Kerala Irrigation minister Mathew T Thomas, allegedly shot himself to death, using his service revolver early Wednesday, police said.

The deceased, Sujith (28), who was attached to the armed reserve camp here, was found with gunshot wound on the head at his home at Kadakal in Kollam district, they said

adding he had also cut veins in both hands.

Though the officer was rushed to the hospital, his life could not be saved.

Sujith, a bachelor, has left a suicide note, police said.

Meanwhile, the Minister's office said Sujith has been working as Thomas' personal security officer for the past three months and was on leave yesterday.