

Truth Commission In Manipur Needed For Securing Justice To Victims Heads Of State Human Rights Institutions In Manipur Assure Full Support

IT NEWS
Imphal, April 15,

Heads of State Human Rights Institutions, senior academics, human rights activists, victims and other stakeholders strongly emphasized the need for a transitional justice process in Manipur to address the pressing needs of widows, children and other family members affected by the extrajudicial killings and other serious human rights violations in Manipur over the past several decades. Towards this end, they stressed, among other measures, the immediate need for the establishment of a truth commission, payment of compensation to victims, strengthening the justice institutions including the State Human Rights institutions, expedite criminal cases lodged against the perpetrators and ensure accountability and uphold rule of law. These unanimous recommendations emerged at the end of a one-day consultation on Application of Transitional Justice Framework for the Families of



Victims of Extrajudicial Execution in Manipur that was organised by the Centre for Studies of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy (CSSEIP) of Manipur University, Human Rights Alert (HRA), Extrajudicial Execution Victim Families Association, Manipur (EEVFAM) and Centre for Human Rights Studies of O.P. Jindal Global University (JGU) at Manipur University Court Room on 13 April 2018. Participating in this

Consultation, the Acting Chairperson of Manipur Human Rights Commission (MHRC), Chairperson of Manipur State Commission for Women (MSCW) and Chairperson of Manipur State Commission for Protection of Child Rights (MSCPCR) assured the support of their respective institutions in seeking justice for these victims. Delivering the keynote address, Babloo Loitongbam, executive director of HRA

pointed out the limitations of the on-going investigation and prosecution of the perpetrators to address the pressing justice needs of the families of more than 1528 victims. Transitional Justice (TJ) framework—defined by the UN as the full range of processes and mechanisms associated with a society's attempt to come to terms with a legacy of large-scale past abuses, in order to ensure accountability, serve justice and achieve reconciliation—needs to be invoked in Manipur today, he asserted.

In that spirit he called upon the meeting to deliberate if it is time for Manipur to establish a Truth Commission as was done elsewhere. Professor YSR Murthy, executive director of the Centre for Human Rights Studies of JGU, presenting a report of a similar consultation on the same issue conducted by his university involving national and international experts in December 2018 at New Delhi, pointed out that the Constitution of India puts the 'dignity of individual' in the same pedestal as 'National Security'. He also emphasised on the close relationship between Peace, Justice and Human Rights and stressed the crying need to initiate TJ processes in Manipur. Referring to the 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' and 'Unnar Bharat Adhiyan', he observed that the country can become great only when human rights of all persons are protected including widows and children affected by extrajudicial executions. Dr. Th. Bharat Singh, Reader, CSSEIP, MU made a PowerPoint presentation of the preliminary findings of the socio-economic survey of the families of the victims of extrajudicial executions in Manipur conducted by CSSEIP and pointed out the 54.8% of the families are expecting justice in their case. Director of CSSEIP, Prof. Amar Yumnam, during his presidential address, stated that no examination of economics is complete without addressing the issue of justice. And justice, in economics, is understood in terms of welfare and wellbeing. He pointed out the ongoing survey will be able to identify what kind of interventions are needed for different categories of persons amongst the victims—women, children, disabled, aged etc. Mr. Khaidem Mani, Acting Chairperson of MHRC encouraged the families of victims left out from the CBI/SIT investigation to petition the State under section 357A of Criminal Procedure Code for compensation and to approach MHRC if they failed to get the remedy. He

also expressed his Commission's willingness to function as the Truth Commission if such a mandate is granted by the Supreme Court or the State Government. Dr. Meinam Binota, MSCW chairperson also committed to work for the socio-economic upliftment and sustainable livelihood of the widows of extrajudicial executions. In the same spirit, Ms. Sumatibhala Ningthoujam, MSCPCR chairperson, assured to extend all possible help for the protection of the rights of children of the victim families. The panel discussion on Truth, Justice and Restitution of Families of Victims of Extrajudicial Executions was moderated by Prof. Arambam Lokender, eminent organic intellectual of Manipur. R.K. Bobichand, director of Change and Peacebuilding Action, tracing the history of the Government of India (GOI)'s response to issues of Manipur, opined that it is unrealistic to expect GoI to constitute a Truth Commission for Manipur. Instead, he suggested that a direction from the Supreme Court or alternately a civil society process is more realistic to think through. Prof. N. Pramod of the LMS Law College pointed out the need for infusing the restorative justice elements in the process and Keisham Pradiip of the Manipur Alliance for Child Rights pointed out the need to

widening the scope of the proposed Truth Commission to include all the children affected by armed conflict. Deben Bachaspatimayum of the North East Institute of Social Science and Research opined that the TJ process can be achieved either through judicial process, political demand or social movement. Vijayalakshmi Brara of the Centre for Manipur Studies of Manipur University identified that initiation of a TJ process will require various elements including the acceptance of guilt by the perpetrators, forgiveness by the victims, multiple institutional collaboration, doing away with social hierarchies and recovery of and building upon the indigenous justice processes. Participating in the discussion, Malem Mangal of North East Hill University pointed out the need to include all the victims of ongoing armed conflict in Manipur and also address the underlying root causes rather than confining the scope to only the victims of extrajudicial execution. Prof. Lokendra saw the proposed Truth Commission as a one time clinching of the rot though it is a difficult exercise. He stated that there are different kinds of truths—'forensic truth' or the 'personal narratives', 'dialogic truth' or the 'final truth' etc. But what we should be seeking ultimately, he concluded, is the healing and restorative truth.

Structured Indo-Pak engagement key to build edifice of durable peace: Pak

Courtesy Manash Pratim Bhuyan
New Delhi, April 15,

Pakistan has said it was hoping for "re-engagement" with India after the Lok Sabha polls, noting that structured dialogue would enable the two countries to understand mutual concerns, resolve outstanding disputes and build the edifice of durable peace and security in the region.

In an interview to PTI, Pakistan's outgoing High Commissioner Sohail Mahmood said diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable to improve ties between the two neighbours.

"We hope for re-engagement after the elections in India. Diplomacy and dialogue are indispensable," he said.

Tensions between the two countries worsened after the Pulwama terror attack and both the countries were almost on the brink of a war after India's military planes struck a terrorist training camp in Pakistan's Balakot on February 26 and Pakistan carried out a counter-offensive the next day.

Mahmood, who has been appointed as Pakistan's next Foreign Secretary said dialogue between India and Pakistan was the only option to understand mutual concerns and ensure peace, prosperity and security in the region.

"Sustained engagement and structured dialogue would enable the two countries to understand mutual concerns and differences, resolve outstanding disputes and build the edifice of durable peace, security and prosperity in the region," Mahmood said. He also said that there was a need to review the narrative about Pakistan in India.

"A narrative is needed that captures the reality in Pakistan objectively and more fully. A narrative that also helps recognise opportunities for peaceful, cooperative and good neighbourly relations," he said.



"We must strive for stable peace, equal security and shared prosperity for ourselves and the region," the envoy added.

In signs of easing tensions, Pakistan around two weeks ago announced that it was releasing 360 Indian prisoners, mostly fishermen as a "goodwill gesture".

The initiative was followed by Pakistan High Commission here granting visas to 2,200 Sikh pilgrims from India to facilitate their participation in the annual Baisakhi celebrations in Pakistan.

Over two weeks after the Balakot strike, India and Pakistan held talks to finalise the modalities for setting up a corridor linking the Gurdwara

Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Gurdaspur district in Punjab.

Asked about the Kartarpur corridor project, the Pakistani High Commissioner said Islamabad was committed to completing the physical infrastructure on its side.

"The government of Pakistan is proceeding in full measures to complete the physical infrastructure on its side and it is hopeful that the modalities will be mutually agreed between the two sides in good time before November 2019," he said.

Last November, both India and Pakistan agreed to set up the Kartarpur corridor to link the historic Gurdwara Darbar Sahib—the final resting place of Sikh

faith's founder Guru Nanak Dev— to Dera Baba Nanak in Gurdaspur.

Kartarpur Sahib is located in Pakistan's Narowal district across the river Ravi, about four kilometres from the Dera Baba Nanak shrine, remained tense since 2016. Former prime minister Nawaz Sharif had travelled to Delhi to attend Modi's oath-taking ceremony and the Indian premier had in December 2015 made a stopover in Lahore to greet his counterpart on his birthday.

However, the ties nose-dived following a string of cross-border terror attacks in 2016 and India's subsequent surgical strikes. The sentencing of alleged Indian spy Kulbhushan Jadhav to death by a military court in April 2017 further deteriorated bilateral ties.

Woman raped by two youths in front of mother

Agency
Muzaffarnagar, April 15,

A 22-year-old woman was allegedly raped by two youths in front of her mother in a sugarcane field in Kakrauli area of the district, police said.

The incident happened Sunday when the victim along with her mother had gone to buy medicines in Kakroli police station area here.

A case has been registered against the two accused, including Dilshad, and an

unidentified person who were absconding, Station House Officer (SHO) Jitender Kumar said, adding the victim has been sent for medical examination.

According to a complaint lodged by the victim's father his daughter was raped by the accused when she has gone with her mother to purchase medicines.

They forcefully took her to a nearby sugarcane field and raped her, he said.

Service Voters Exercised Voting Rights

IT News
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Personnel from the units of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) exercised their democratic rights and cast votes for the impending Lok Sabha Elections on 11 April 2019.

The serving personnel of Assam Rifles deployed in intense Counter Insurgency in Manipur cast votes on 11 April 2019 during the 17th Lok Sabha Elections 2019. As a run up to casting votes, the serving personnel first registered themselves as service voters online.

Thereafter Electronically Transmitted Postal Ballot (ETBP) was generated for each service voter to exercise his right to vote. After months of preparation which involved placing of requisite infrastructure, overcoming digital connectivity challenges and exhaustive awareness campaign for the Assam Rifles



personnel, the complete procedure was streamlined and voting took place under supervision of senior officials.

As part of the elections, Mantripukhri Battalion conducted the polling in a phased manner in which out of a total of 821 voters 1151

service voters cast their votes in phase I on 11 April and remaining will be exercising their rights during phase II of the elections on 18 April.

Keithelmanbi Battalion also conducted the polling in a similar manner and 256 voters out of the total 1076 registered service voters cast

their votes on 11 April. They will again be casting their valuable votes on 18 April.

The exercising of voting rights by the service personnel is indeed a great initiative by the Assam Rifles in contributing to the national development and selecting the best government for the country.