

# Editorial

Monday, December 30, 2019

## The state of the economy in the dark times in the mainland and Manipur

The International Monetary Fund, which has always praised the Modi government, has said that India is facing a slowdown. Economists have termed this slowdown, the Great Indian Slowdown. Both the former Reserve Bank of India Governors, Raghuram Rajan and Arvind Subramanian have claimed that India is facing an economic slowdown. Nobel laureate economists Abhijit Banerjee has similar views on the matter. This reveals that even those economists who support the existing market driven economic system are not very happy with the state of Indian economy. India is facing an unemployment crisis. Agriculture production is also in crisis. People do not have money and consumption in rural India has sharply declined. All these are reflected in the growth of India's Gross Domestic Product. GDP growth rate reached a new low in this quarter, 4.5 percent. This should worry the government. Economists have claimed that the worst is not over yet. Now learned economists are cursing the bold measures of this government, demonetisation and GST.

While all these are happening in economy, political chaos has become the new normal. Kashmir is still under heavy military repression with no internet. In all the non-BJP states in mainland India political mobilisation against CAA and all India-NRC are happening. In BJP ruled states, mass protests, violence, state repression, mass detentions, arrests and above all police firing have happened. BJP has started a mass campaign in favour of CAA. The country will now discuss CAA. Though CAA is the most political of all the matters in the air now and it is rightly so, the focus must also be given to economic realities of the dark times. The protests in mainland India have started incorporating the economic angle. Economy and politics must go hand in hand and in our analysis, they must figure together. Experts tell us that the political crisis will further impact the economy. BJP leaders, as one has accepted in public, were not prepared for the protests they are facing when they passed the CAA in the parliament and IMF also revealed that the down turn of Indian economy was surprising. Both in economy and politics, it seems the ruling party at the centre is in damage control mode now.

Can a conflict ridden poor state like Manipur remain unaffected by the slowing economy in the mainland? The answer is obvious. When it comes to Manipur, the state has always been poor. But now the overdrafts have returned. The Economic Survey of Manipur 2018-19 reveals that Gross State Domestic Product for agriculture, forestry and fishing has declined gradually since 2015 when calculated at constant prices. For the year 2016-17, the GSDP for this sector was Rs. 269945 Lakhs at constant prices. It declined in the next year to Rs 265085 Lakhs and further declined to Rs. 263909 Lakhs in 2018-19. The prices that the farmers got while selling their paddy has also declined. The price that a farmer receive while selling a quintal of paddy, according to this survey report, in 2016-17 was Rs. 1593 and in the next year it fell to Rs. 1550 per quintal for the autumn paddy. For the winter paddy, the prices fell from Rs. 1636 to Rs. 1612 per quintal for the respective years. However, the wholesale price of milled rice has steadily increased and also the retail price has increased. It means that neither the farmers nor those purchasing rice from the retail shops have been benefited.

Gross State Domestic Product in primary sector, which includes manufacturing, electricity, gas, water supply and construction, calculated at constant prices has also declined steadily since 2015. The only silver lining comes from the service sector where there is a steady growth. The per capita remains quite low compared to other north-eastern states and much lower than the national average. We should also remember that more than ten lakh people in Manipur are living below the poverty line since 2011, according to the poverty estimate of the then planning commission data released in 2013. It means that more than ten lakh people live on less than forty rupees per day in this state. Though the conflict, as claimed by the government has drastically reduced in recent years, we do not see any drastic improvement in the state's economy. If we take the data of industrial production for July 2017-18 and July 2018-19 and compare it, there is negative growth of forty percent. We see similar decline for the month of May and June for the respective years. The economic survey report of 2018-19 admits the issues in agriculture, manufacturing and employment. The report claims that "despite persistent efforts made by the Government, the state continues to be an industrially backward state." It further reveals that "despite the crucial importance of this primary sector in the state's economy, the irregular and erratic behaviour of monsoon accompanied by inadequate irrigation facilities have resulted in severe fluctuations in agricultural production. Agriculture becomes a living proposition rather than a commercial proposition." When it comes to unemployment, it says that "due to ever-increasing number of educated job seekers including technical and professional job-seekers, the problem of unemployment is continuing to be a matter of serious concern to the state's economy." These revelations are not new. These sentences have been copied and pasted from the earlier economic survey reports of 2016-17, 2015-16 and 2013-14. We will find the same sentences without any change in these earlier reports. It seems neither the reality nor its analysis has changed even though we are living in a new Manipur, as claimed by the political leaders in the state government. Lastly, a question remains. How are we going to call this our good days when it is both politically and economically very grim?

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## About Failed "Real Madrid"& Climate Change!

By - Abhishah Borah

Imagine a world where there is no water to drink. Imagine a world where individuals are fighting against each other just to get a glass of water. And imagine a world where there is no peace, and just chaos, disturbance and fights among individuals, regions, nations leading to a catastrophic disaster that is all certain to log out humanity from the system we call, mother-earth. Complete self-activated deletion from mother-earth system! Observations and scientific evidences have repeatedly informed the civil society that the earth is transforming, that precipitation and temperature trends of the planet has altered beyond its normal pattern and manifesting into heat waves which have never been felt in the countries of temperate regions like France and Germany in 2019, and extreme cyclones like Fani in Indian subcontinent to Hurricane Dorian in the American continent. The climate is changing its behavior abnormally and it's not natural, and is unlikely able to cater to the needs of consumers who have been recklessly depleting, exploiting, and eliminating the life-giving resources that mother-nature has to offer to satisfy our more-than-required-thirst for objects. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) finds and repeatedly has disseminated that if the world doesn't take active steps to mitigate rising greenhouse gas emissions where carbon-dioxide levels has already crossed a dangerous 400 PPM in the atmosphere, which have been since 1800s only rising exponentially, the world would have a further rise of average mean temperature by 2 degree Celsius. It is leading to a catastrophic existential threat that is certainly all set to open a Pandora's box of unforeseen events like never before by 2050 and the end of this hi-tech 21<sup>st</sup> century where we are so much involved in upgrading our Artificial Intelligence to the next level that we have actually forgotten, or honestly, overlooked to upgrade our basic common sense and ethical

understanding of what should be done when crisis is just at the doorstep, both for us and our future generation who are likely to live on this planet in the year 2999. However, series of evidences, scientific calculations, and notifications have not been able to shake the fluctuating emotions of civilians who tend to use and throw plastics at its whims, and more importantly, global world leaders who sign up huge commitments on Memorandum of Understanding [MoUs] where promises into action are only left to be delayed. In this instance, the nations have only postponed the things that are important. Forsay, Chile, which was supposed to hold the UNFCCC COP25 summit, duo to turmoil in their regular political economy, was unable to take care of the highly important event, got ultimately shifted to Madrid, Spain which is widely revered for its tourism beauty and football culture by population across the globe, and it was highly anticipated that some "Real Madrid" winning moment would emerge from the climate negotiations. Where Real Madrid led by Cristiano Ronaldo does create wonderful headlines, but unfortunately what was supposed to be of "Real" concern didn't materialize to "Real Madrid" talks and it just got postponed until further times. So the Madrid talks have failed and this is not a good omen. Nations have yet again failed to reach a definite consensus on how to tap its growing greenhouse gas emissions budget, take care of its commitments which is ethically of prime importance more than ever before, and how to take more active, evidence-generating steps to mitigate climate change. Global superpower United States of America under its Supreme Leader Donald Trump, once upon a time, has already declared, climate change to be hoax, while small island developing nations et al are gasping for funds which they were supposed to receive under the Paris Climate Agreement to build their houses, schools, other infrastructure, and economy with the help of developed nations. Real

commitment is nowhere to be seen, and the funds released are too minuscule when compared to the promised \$100 billion per year to developing nations. And we are here at 2020 and the commitments, promises, and the so-called ambitious targets for a sustainable world seems too dull and amidst the failure of UNFCCC's COP25 Madrid talks, all things are just going awful, haywire and gloomy as we enter the next decade of the 2020s. So, are things too bad? Yes it is. But there is hope as well, as legend says where there is a will, there is a way. And the will is shown by TIMES person of the year, Greta Thunberg who has been amazingly taking the lead to mobilize young minds' opinions at the world stage and make sure the voices of young people for climate change is heard loud and clear, by leading the "Friday's For Future Campaign" across the world from Latin America to the Southeast Asian region. It is unfortunately not taken seriously making a mockery of Greta's achievement by the leader of the sole superpower of the world, Donald Trump of USA, which is ironically also most responsible along with other developed countries for creating the mess of emissions in the atmosphere which is now killing millions of children due to pollution, generating climate migrants/refugees turning people homeless, national security issues worldwide, and making women work harder to get the share of water to do the household chores in faraway sub-Saharan African region etc., including men too to do the agricultural-cum-livestock works. While things seems hopeless, it is inspiring to see countries like India and China are now taking the lead to transform its fossil fuel mobility industry into the electric vehicles frontier in a bid to remove usage of non-renewable resources. India has taken the leadership role in establishing the International Solar Alliance platform to fasten solar-enabled infrastructure across the world along with France. And China is fast forwarding its transportation infrastructure

where it has 99% of the world's electric two wheelers and more than 100 companies making electric-cars. That's inspiring to know when both the just mentioned above countries are infamously known to be among the top three nations who emit greenhouse gases, along with most number of deaths related to air pollution. So what do we need right at the moment? We all need strong compassion towards our ailing mother-nature than anything else, understand deeply and make an attempt to adapt to the changing climate and be honestly ambitious about our future to work towards where emissions are reduced, flora and fauna have their habitats intact, ocean acidification reduces, pollution stops creating respiratory problems, and where the biggest goals of the current generation, the highly earth-changing Sustainable Development Goals 2030 are on road to be achieved sooner. Can we achieve the goals? Indeed, we can. The world now needs another "Montreal Protocol" moment. It is observed that ozone layer have shrunk and is about to fully restore its original health by 2070, and be ready to protect mother-earth from harmful ultraviolet radiations. This consensus which was signed in 1980s did prove that multilateral efforts can bring absolute results in solving earth problems, and indeed everyone must, once again, take the lead to overcome our differences and work collectively, towards a greenbolization world, with a greenbolized society. [green+globalization=greenbolization]. It is up to us what do we want. Do we want a world without potable water to drink? Or do we want to create a green, bright, and sustainable future. I choose the second option. Because the first option is simply too frightening, and I do neither wish for a world of conflict nor fights among our universal brethren. Let's make a choice to upgrade our emotional intelligence and make it stronger than our quest for Artificial Intelligence applications in this anticipated happy New Year, 2020!

## Year End Review 2019 -MHA Highlights of Major Decisions/Initiatives

**PIB Important Bills Passed by Parliament**  
**1. Jammu and Kashmir -** Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A; The Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Act, 2019; The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2019  
**2. National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019**  
**3. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019**  
**4. Special Protection Group (Amendment) Bill, 2019** – aims to increase operational efficiency of SPG in ensuring the security of the Prime Minister of India.  
**5. Citizenship (Amendment) Bill 2019** – focus on granting Indian Citizenship to persons belonging to Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities on ground of religious persecution in Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh. Marathon deliberations held by Union Home Minister with various stakeholders from North East and their concerns against the CAB 2019 addressed in the final Amendment Act.  
**6. Arms (Amendment) Bill, 2019** – enhances the punishment for existing offences like illegal manufacture, sale, transfer and illegal acquiring, possessing or carrying prohibited arms or prohibited ammunition; illicit trafficking of firearms; celebratory gunfire endangering human life. Arms licenses to be issued for 5 years in electronic form, which

would prevent forgery. The Amendment would reduce possession of illegal firearms and commission of criminal offences by limiting 2 licenses per person. Ownership of arms by retired and serving personnel of armed forces and sports persons remains unaffected by the Amendment. Further, Ancestral guns may be retained in a Deactivated State.  
**7. Protection of Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2019** - to make the constitution of NHRC and SHRCs broader and more inclusive.  
**8. Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu (Merger of Union Territories) Bill, 2019** - Administrative efficiency, better service delivery and effective implementation of Central and State Government Schemes to be the focus.  
**Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh**  
**1. Abrogation of Article 370 and 35A**  
**2. The Jammu and Kashmir (Reorganisation) Act, 2019**  
**3. The Jammu and Kashmir Reservation (Amendment) Act, 2019**  
**4. Amarnath Yatra**  
 · 3,42,883 yatis had safe and secure Darshan  
 · Higher by nearly 20%, as compared to 2018  
**5. Cabinet approved Inclusion of 5,300 Displaced Persons families of J&K in the Rehabilitation Package for Displaced Families of PoJK and Chhamb, under the PM's**

Development Package 2015 for Jammu & Kashmir  
**6. Government Employees of UTs of J&K and Ladakh to get all 7th Central Pay Commission Allowances from 31<sup>st</sup> October 2019** - allowances worth around Rs. 4800 crores approved for Government employees.  
**Strict Action on Terror and Insurgency**  
**1. National Investigation Agency (Amendment) Act, 2019**  
 · NIA empowered with extra territorial jurisdiction for investigation of terrorism related offences taking place outside India, in which Indian property/citizens are victims  
 · The mandate of NIA is expanded by inclusion of new offences viz. explosive substances, human trafficking, manufacturing/sale of prohibited arms and cyber terrorism, to its Schedule  
**2. Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Amendment Act, 2019**  
 · Central Government empowered to designate individual as terrorist  
 · NIA empowered to seize/forfeit property representing proceeds of terrorism in cases investigated by NIA  
 · After recent amendment, 4 Individuals viz., Maulana Masood Azhar, Hafiz Muhammad Saeed, Zaki ur Rehman Lakhvi and Dawood Ibrahim proscribed as Terrorists  
 · Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) banned for another five years under sub-sections of UAPA, 1967  
**3. Cyber Crime Control**  
 · National Cyber Crime Reporting

Portal ([www.cybercrime.gov.in](http://www.cybercrime.gov.in)) launched as a citizen centric initiative to facilitate public for reporting of all types of Cyber Crimes without visiting Police Station  
 · The complaints reported on this portal are accessible online to the law enforcement agencies of respective States/UTs for taking appropriate action as per law  
 · 12<sup>th</sup> India Security Summit on "Towards New National Cyber Security Strategy" held in New Delhi  
**Focus North East**  
**1. National Register of Citizens (NRC), Assam published on 31.08.2019**  
 · A machinery created for detection and deportation of illegal immigrants  
 · "In-principle" approval given for setting up of 1000 additional Foreigners Tribunals (FTs)  
 · "In-principle" approval given to Assam Government for creation of e-FT platform (estd. cost - Rs. 99 crores)  
**2. Government of India, Government of Tripura & National Liberation Front of Tripura led by Sabir Kumar Debbarma (NLF-TSD) sign Memorandum of Settlement**  
 · NLF (SD) to abjure path of violence, join mainstream and abide by Constitution of India  
 · Agreed to surrender 88 cadres with their weapons  
 · Cadres to get surrender benefits as per the Surrender-cum-Rehabilitation Scheme, 2018  
 · Government of Tripura to help surrendered cadres in housing, recruitment, education etc.