

Editorial

Tuesday, February 12, 2019

The 'ban' of Internet: Who is going to compensate the lost?

Banning the internet (data service) is becoming an instrument of the present government to control any public uprising or agitation against the government. This is perhaps the second time that the N. Biren Singh administration has shut down internet service (data) in the state. Similar ban to the data internet service was done by the N. Biren Singh administration when the state witnessed mass protest against the then VC of Manipur University by the University community which was later joined by the people of the state.

Everybody knows - the ban is to control the present uprising by the people against the passing of the contentious CAB. Can they do that by banning the data internet service? And if they can't had they every calculated the lost due to the banning. And who will recover and compensate the lost of those whose business is depended on internet service.

Seems like the Biren Singh Administration seem to have forgotten that holding back access to the internet, deemed a basic human right by the United Nations is frustrating as these shutdowns threaten the democratic working of nations, and also point to the steady normalization of the mindset that permits such blanket restriction on Internet access. International human rights law protects the right of people to freely seek, receive, and provide information and ideas through all media, including the internet. Security-related restrictions must be law-based and a necessary and proportionate response to a specific security concern.

India has witnessed numerous Internet shutdowns for various reasons, all under the same provision of law - Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1973 (CrPC). This section resides as the sole occupant under the chapter of 'temporary instrument to maintain public tranquility' and gives State Governments the power to issue orders for immediate remedy in urgent cases of nuisance or apprehended danger. However, the increasing use of this provision to completely shut down the Internet is becoming a cause of concern, for the reason that it amounts to a direct violation of the fundamental right to freedom of speech guaranteed under Article 19(1)(a) of the Constitution of India.

The Current ban on Cellular Data in Manipur which was imposed since today morning by the Government amidst the present volatile situation without considering the pros and cons of it may be term as a thoughtless and ignorant.

While the whole of country is talking about digital India, the internet bans make the auspicious project of the central government as meaningless. Majority of the Internet users in Manipur relies on Cellular data. Be it using social media sites, doing business transaction or purchasing goods, most of the people uses their Smartphone using Cellular data. All these have been disrupted with the current internet ban. Adding to the woes is the disabling of SMS for all service providers. SMS also plays an important role with cashless transaction. For example, when doing an online purchase through internet banking, Debit Card or Credit card, one needs a special code called One Time Password (OTP) that is delivered to the users registered number at the time of transaction and this has been disabled too with the current internet/SMS ban. It may be mentioned that the ban on SMS is to prevent any dissemination of unwanted message through this medium. One wonders, who uses SMS in this era of WhatsApp and Facebook to exchange messages. If the Government thinks it is necessary to disable SMS to prevent from circulating unwanted messages, they could do so by disabling outgoing message and enabling incoming message. That way it would not disrupt anything.

Moreh Battalion AR and Moreh Police Seizes Contraband Worth Rs. 1.25 Crores

IT News
Imphal Feb 12,

In yet another major haul, Moreh Battalion of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) recovered contraband items worth approximately 1.25 crore from Moreh.

On 11 Feb 18, based on specific information of likely transportation of contraband items from Moreh to Imphal, a joint team of Moreh Battalion Assam Rifles and Moreh Police established multiple check

posts and carried out search of suspicious locations in and around Moreh. While carrying out search a suspected gunny bag of charcoal was found lying in front of Naseer Hotel, Moreh Bazar. On opening the bag 24 soap packets were found wherein, 300 gms of Heroine, in 22 soap packets and 28 gms of Brown Sugar in 2 soap packets were found concealed. The assessed market value of the contraband is worth approximately 1.25 crores. The seized contraband was handed over to Police for further legal action.

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DIPR facts on Census confuse Pangals and Muslims

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Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) released some facts on the Census of Manipur in local dailies on the 11th of February.

These facts on the Census of Manipur came to light after ISTV's discussion on Manipur's demographic profile according to the 2011 census report. DIPR's facts on Census seem to have some problems.

First, the bar chart, with the title "Manipur Census 2011 as per mother tongue, religions and ST population," takes into account the linguistic data on mother tongue, data on religion and data on schedule tribes in the 2011 Census. The bar chart categorises the population into Meitei/Meetei, Tribals/Schedule Tribes, Meitei-Pangal/Muslims and Others (for outsiders). Linguistic data of the 2011 census tells us that the total

number of Meiteilon speakers in Manipur is 1522132.

These Meiteilon speakers are both Meitei/Meetei and Meitei-Pangals. When we see the linguistic data, we do not know how many of the Meiteilon speakers are Meiteis and how many of them are Pangals as they have the same mother tongue. Dr Moirangthem Manimohon, in the said ISTV discussion, argues that we cannot find out the number of Meiteis from this linguistic data. But, we can infer the number of Meiteis from the religion data of Manipur in the census.

Dr Moirangthem finds the population of the Meitei community through subtracting the Muslim population from the Meiteilon speaking population in the linguistic census data of 2011. He states that since the population of Muslims, according to the 2011 Census, is 239836, the total number

of Pangal is also 239836 since as Pangals and Muslims are the same. DIPR estimates the population of Pangals based on the population of Muslims in the Census' data on religion. It estimates the population of Pangals as 239836, the same as Dr Moirangthem's numbers. This equation of Pangals with Muslims has serious problems. First, there are claims that politicians have made that there are Bangladeshi Muslims and Rohingya Muslims in Manipur. If all the Muslims in Manipur are indigenous Pangals who speak Meiteilon, then there are no Rohingyas and Bangladeshi Muslims in Manipur. Second, these numbers on Muslims in Manipur do not give any estimate on Pangals of Manipur. Outsiders population which is around seven per cent, according to Dr. Moirangthem and DIPR charts, includes Assamese, Bengalis, Hindi speakers, Punjabi speakers, Malayalam speakers and speakers of many other Indian languages. A large portion of these outsiders could be very well Muslims in religion. Afghans and Kashmiris who are living in Manipur, according to the Census, are Muslims.

These outsider Muslims are not indigenous Pangals. Neither Dr Moirangthem nor DIPR bar charts make distinctions between the outsider Muslims and Pangals. The Muslim populations, which is 239836, consists of Afghans, Bengalis, Assamese, Kashmiris, Malayali, Hindi speaking and Punjabi Muslims along with Pangals. Therefore, the Pangal population cannot be estimated as 239836. It has to be estimated lower than this number. It means the Pangal population cannot be eight per cent of the total population. The eight per cent is for the combined population of Muslims and not for Pangals.

There is a separate table for Muslims in DIPR's facts on the census which all the local dailies published. There are no separate tables for non-indigenous communities or the hill people. The separate table on Muslims highlights that DIPR wants to convey the growth rate among Muslims in Manipur. The population of Muslims in Manipur saw a decline in 2011, according to the 2001 and 2011 Census. DIPR facts on the census fail to mention it. It gives no specific reason for these actions. However, it is not surprising that such data is being presented when the movement

against CAB is going on furiously in Manipur. The focus must shift from non-indigenous to Muslims. It seems to be the plan. CAB did the same thing in Assam. From NRC for all, it became CAB for Hindus. The debate shifted from expelling all non-natives to expelling only Muslim non-natives. Such shifts did not work in Assam. It would not work in Manipur. The line is clear. It is not a matter of religion here. The case is about indiginity. This shift of focus from Mayangs to Muslim religion hides the fact that the non-indigenous population increased from one per cent in 1901 to eleven per cent in 1981 in Manipur. The non-indigenous population in 2011 is seven per cent. These drastic changes in the non-indigenous population are hidden in these DIPR charts and tables.

We need to calculate the number of outsider Muslims to estimate the Pangal population with some accuracy. If we cannot estimate the Pangal population closely, we would not be able to determine the Meitei population from the linguistic data properly. Given the inaccuracy in estimating the Pangal population, the already inaccurate Meitei population seems more inaccurate. There are more things which should increase our doubts about these numbers. The census data is generally doubtful. These pieces of information can be easily manipulated given how state machinery functions in Manipur. It is also probable that people can fill in their mother tongue as Meiteilon when their mother tongue is something else for economic and political reasons. Second, sometimes it is good to doubt the numbers that the government provides. Many journalists and politicians have accused the BJP government of fudging GDP data and parameters multiple times to show that India is growing well. When we can doubt growth indicators, we can go one step further and question the census data too. We need to doubt it, especially when Muslims are included in the CAB row so that the Hindu mayangs do not get the heat of the anti-CAB struggle. The movement of indigenous people is not against Hindus or Muslims. It is against the settlers coming to the lands of the natives and the state that empowers these settlers. So, it does not matter whether settlers are Hindus or Muslims for the indigenous Meiteis and Pangals.

Popular Front holds Congress leadership responsible for imposing NSA in cow slaughter and transport cases

IT News
Imphal, Feb 12,

The Central Secretariat meeting of Popular Front of India has expressed deep disappointment and anger over invoking stringent National Security Act on Muslims allegedly involved in cow slaughter and cow transportation by the Congress government of Madhya Pradesh.

"Cow politics has been a Sangh Pariwar tool, which they used to win Hindu sentiments. This cow politics gave rise to the horror of cow vigilantism. Over the past few years, dozens of innocent Muslims lost their lives by the hands of Gorakshaks constituted of Sangh Pariwar outfits. It created a situation in the country that, mere accusations, whether right or wrong, of holding beef or transporting beef, became sufficient reasons for getting brutally lynched in public. The state of Madhya Pradesh also witnessed many such incidents.

Minorities in the state looked at the winning of Congress with relief thinking that they would end this lawlessness and bring the Goraksha criminals before law. It is quite disappointing that the opposite is happening. State government is acting to fulfill the agenda of Gorakshaks. By linking cow slaughter and cow transportation to national security, the Congress government led by Kamal Nath has shown his closeness to RSS perception of nationalism", a statement of the PFI said. The statement further said that

though some Congress leaders have expressed their disapproval of this grave misuse of law, the party failed in correcting their chief minister. The Central Secretariat meeting reminded the Congress national leadership that by not preventing such misdeeds by MP government, Muslims and other religious minorities are getting more distanced from the party on the eve of general elections.

In another resolution, the Central Secretariat meeting of Popular Front criticized the misuse of power in dealing Muzaffarnagar riots cases. Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adhithyanath is reportedly all set to withdraw 131 cases related to Muzaffarnagar riots in which dozens of innocents, mostly Muslims were brutally killed, women were raped and houses were set on fire. The cases to be withdrawn include serious charges against local BJP leaders including murder cases. Obviously he is trying to save his party men and supporters accused of the killing, raping and arson. This is clearly an act of discrimination where the culprits get punished or let free based on their religion and politics.

Chairman E Abubacker presided over the meeting which was also attended by M Muhammed Ali Jinnah, OMA Salam, Anis Ahmed, KM Shareef, Abul Wahid Sait and E M Abdul Rahiman.

The meeting hoped that the judiciary will prevent such a large scale degeneration of law and order under U.P. government.

A R Organises Medical Cum Health Awareness Camp

IT News
Imphal Feb 12,

Thoubal Battalion of 9 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South) organised a free Medical cum Health Awareness Camp in Laikhang village of Yairipok, Thoubal district on 10 February.

As part of the camp organised by Yairipok Company Operating Base, locals were provided with free medical treatment, consultation on various diseases and health related issues as well as free medicines were distributed to the needy patients.

A lecture cum interactive session was also conducted as part of the

camp to enlighten the villagers about basic healthcare including precautions against common viral diseases as well as importance of hygiene and sanitation for maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Over 200 locals from Laikhang village benefitted from the awareness camp.

The camp conducted by Battalion received overwhelming response from the local populace. The people of the area conveyed their heartfelt gratitude to the Assam Rifles for their sincere endeavour and requested for more such camps in the near future for the benefit of the entire community.

Moreh Battalion Conducts Drug De-Addiction Drive



IT News
Imphal Feb 12,

In continuation of de-addiction drive undertaken by Moreh Battalion of 26 Sector Assam Rifles under the aegis of IGAR (South), the medical officer along with team carried out check up and provided medicine at Rehab Hope centre, Moreh Lhangtheng, Ward No 2, Moreh.

A total of 52 patients with 42 men including 08 women and 02 children attended the medical camp during which they were educated on the benefits of drug free life and critical withdrawal symptoms associated with drug addiction. Inmates were provided counseling and provided medicines free of cost to alleviate their agony. The inmates thanked Assam Rifles for the unique initiative.