

Editorial

Thursday, February 28, 2019

The making of a united India

An undeclared war between Pakistan and our country have already begun. It all began after the Pakistan nurtured JeM militants who claimed attack to our CRPF Jawan at Palwana district of Kashmir. Modi administration attack need appreciation, but the real problem now has been curtain. No body talk about a lasting solution of Kashmir but a war - or revenge for killing our martyred soldiers is the topic for all. If the Kashmir problem exist such unwanted incident may continue and may be more precious jawan of ours may lost life. Finding alternative solution is perhaps the need of the our. We cannot simply play cards to meet the desire of the majority community base religion for mere benefit at the cost of brave soldiers. India is a land of multi ethnic people who speaks various language and follow different religion.

The idea of nation having one identity, one religion, one culture, one language promulgated by some self style son of mother India has created fear psychosis to various ethnic communities in the country. At a time when chauvinistic idealism of creating a nation of only one community is seen marching ahead, it is natural that each and every ethnic communities of the nation have reason to be feared. Because it is family first then come the society then it is the nation.

India was and is a nation of diverse people. The beauty of India is the existences of different ethnic people with diverse cultural people. It is important that if India has to prove the world as the most successful democratic country, the leaders and the so called self style son of the soil should tried to become real son of the soil by accepting that the concept of one religion, one culture and one language should not be followed in the Nation called India.

Talking about North East state in general and Manipur in particular, during Kargil war, two soldier from this region, that too from a border village between Myanmar and India in the state of Manipur were martyred while fighting the Pakistani troops. Family of the two did not know the common language that their sons spoke with their fellow soldiers and moreover, the villagers of the two soldiers are fighting tough safeguarding their villages from intruders of the neighbouring villages. Yet they pray for the success of India.

The Indian administrators of the time was not the one which brought victory to the Kargil war, but it was the prayers of those thousand parents, whose sons were fighting for the country, but who never see Delhi, or who never understood the common language (Hindi) that make India success. Indeed, many critics are of the views that India is still in the process of nation building. But the reality is that India is already a nation. A nation of imagine community living under the same roof.

The peaceful co existence and communal harmony was put in dead danger with the rise of communal centric feudalism classes. They spew venom of hate feeling among the various communities for their mere selfish gain. Last few decades showed rise of many such feudalists and the rise of this class raises the feeling of enmity among the various community.

Coming back to the state of Manipur, the problem facing right now has similar roots. The force annexation is often pin point as the root of all sort of trouble here, but the reality is that the root of the entire problem facing in the state of Manipur is the chauvinistic attitude of the ruling government in the mainland India.

Instead of looking on the problem, the then ruler of the mainland India had sideline the real issue submitted by the then expert officials deputed by their government, they never tried anything to put a halt to the rise of the armed opposition group. But rather the then government incited hate feeling among various communities thinking that the same technique adopted the British ruler can suppressed any movement in the region.

Instead of taking into consideration and finding a means to end all sort of violent activism a Scheme called Surrendered Rehabilitation Schemes had been introduced and the result - people now suffered double the problem that they had faced before the coming of the scheme.

Well Mikhail Sergeyevich Gorbachev, the last President of USSR had understood the important of safeguarding each community and USSR was separated into various independent nations. Problem will be there as long as human kind exists. Because they think and act and those act are sometime negative from one's view point even if he or she thought it right from his viewpoints.

The fear factor right now is felt to everyone. Man dies and sacrifices for their children and nation. If the fear factor grows no one can guarantee any untoward incident at which the fear factor was challenge and wipe out completely to restore the once upon a time nation state called Manipur.

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By : Yambem Laba
(Courtesy - The Statesman)

It was with a great sense of national pride that the Central Government announced the setting up of a National Sports University in Manipur in 2016. It was the first such establishment being set up in the country and perhaps, the third in Asia after China and Japan. And it was also said that it was the Centre's gift to the people of Manipur for the prowess it had exhibited in the realm of sports by representing the country in various international meets including the Olympics. Manipur had, down the years, gained a reputation of being the powerhouse of Indian sports. People of the state as well as sports lovers across the country were jubilant.

Troubles began with the selection of the site of the Manipur sports university. Then Congress chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh decided to use it as a vote bank and chose to locate it within his district of Thoubal. He chose a place called Yaithibi Loukol in Kakching, an area which was under rice cultivation. The people there protested over the decision and the stalemate continued for a while.

That was when people of Koutruk in Imphal West District came to the rescue and offered 350 acres of land in their village, free of cost, to the state authorities for establishing the NSU in national interest. By this single act of charity from the villagers of Koutruk, the Centre saved several crores of rupees that would have had to be given as compensation for acquiring land. Thereafter Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to Imphal in 2016 and laid the foundation stone of the National Sports University. A camp office was set up at Olympic Bhawan of the Manipur Olympic Association within the Khuman Lampak Sports Complex in Imphal. The Centre appointed just three people to man the office — Jayashree Acharya from the Lakshmbhai National Institute of Physical Education in Gwalior as

Treading murky waters

dean, K Radhakumar Singh (a retired IAS office of the state) as registrar, and a retired Army officer, Major Y Angamba Singh (born in Imphal but now settled in Delhi) as the deputy project director.

Classes began in makeshift classrooms with guest lecturers. Trouble soon erupted when the dean began bypassing the registrar over policy matters. The first was when an assistant professor had the mess manager of the hostel assaulted, resulting in an FIR being lodged. Even the sports secretary was said to have rung up the chief secretary to apply pressure to have the FIR withdrawn and that was eventually done.

When time came for paying the assistant professor's salary, the registrar pointed out to the dean that since he was on a contract, he could not be paid for the 10-odd days when he had not turned up for work. The dean however chose to ignore the registrar.

Thereafter on the appointment of guest lecturers, it was pointed out, both to the dean as well as the Union sports secretary that the procedure ought to follow established UGC norms of first putting out an open advertisement and calling for interviews with requisite subject experts. The dean again decided to ignore the directives of the registrar. Radhakumar Singh put in his resignation papers as he received no support from higher ups in the Sports Ministry.

All such murky happenings in the new-born NSU, however, proved to be the tip of the iceberg. When the tender process began for the construction of the NSU at Koutruk, the construction mafia came into the picture. Tenders were floated by the National Building Construction Corporation of India Limited, which directed its subsidiary, the Hindustan Steelworks Construction Limited to carry out the necessary bidding.

Four parties bid for it but only two were left in the fray for final consideration. They were the Planning and Development

Authority, a Government of Manipur Undertaking with a member of the Legislative Assembly as its chairman. The other was Simplex Projects Limited, a Kolkata-based construction firm. The PDA's bid was for Rs 104 crore while Simplex stated it would be able to do the job for Rs 98 crore. By standard tender rules, Simplex was awarded the contract as it was the lowest bidder.

While the HSCL authorities may claim that they were going by the rule book, they chose to ignore the notorious trail of records that the Simplex group had. First, they were named as co-accused in a CBI case of criminal conspiracy and cheating through fraudulent availing of letters of credit from Vijaya Bank and Canara Bank amounting to over Rs 290 crore. Then, the Securities and Exchange Board of India blacklisted Simplex for non-compliance of their regulations — specifically for violating the "Listing of Obligations and Disclosure Requirements" Regulations, 2013. The Sebi, according to its order dated 26 November 2018, said that trading in securities of Simplex and 22 other firms were suspended.

Then came the bombshell from the director of the Regional Institute of Medical Sciences in Imphal. Professor A Santa Singh in a signed letter (number RIMS/HSCC/2/12-13/Part I dated 30 April 2018) had issued an expulsion notice to Simplex. The letter was addressed to Sudarshan Mundhra, director of Simplex, for non-completion of construction of hostels and residential quarters within the Rims complex. The agreement was signed on 27 April 2016, which said all construction works were to be completed within 24 months and handed over for use by 3 March 2018. Simply put, Simplex was declared persona non grata within the Rims complex and the construction was completed by the institute.

On 14 January this year, Manipur sports minister, Letpao Haokip wrote to Rajyavardhan Rathore, Union minister of youth affairs and sports, stating he had learnt that the HSCL is considering

awarding the construction of the NSU Complex to Simplex, a firm with a dismal record of non-completion of projects entrusted to it, resulting in huge cost escalation. Another letter was shot off to Anoop Kumar Mittal, chairman of HSCL, by K Bhabananda Singh, Member of Parliament in the Rajya Sabha from Manipur. The same matter pointed out to Rathore was intimated to Mittal. It added that the governments of Maharashtra and Assam had already blacklisted the Simplex Group for non-performance there. Bhabananda also urged Mittal not to allot the construction of the NSU to the Simplex Group.

According to reports, it was said that Mary Kom, the other Rajya Sabha MP from Manipur, had reportedly written a letter to Rathore recommending Simplex. The Central Government has, in the meantime, passed the National Sports University Bill in Parliament last year, although no vice-chancellor has been appointed as yet.

The history of Simplex in Manipur started when Okram Ibobi Singh was chief minister. He began awarding all major contract works to this firm including construction of market places; two of which constructed by Simplex nearly collapsed when an earthquake hit Manipur in 2016. The third, made by the state PWD, held firm.

The construction of the City Convention Centre and the Sanjenthong Bridge were not completed on time. At the moment, Simplex are also involved in the construction of the new market place at Tombisana High School in Imphal and the new Secretariat complex at Chingmeirong, both of which are months behind schedule. Chief minister N Biren Singh has openly declared that he will blacklist Simplex.

Therefore, it warrants little mention that dreams of transforming India into a sporting powerhouse by establishing the NSU may turn into a nightmare if the company in question gets down to constructing it. (The writer is the Imphal-based Special Representative of The Statesman)

Pak violates ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir, Schools along LoC closed

Agency
New Delhi, Feb. 28

Pakistan violated ceasefire by resorting to unprovoked firing and heavy shelling of mortars along the Line of Control this morning. This is the seventh consecutive day that Pakistan has violated the ceasefire by targeting forward posts along the LoC.

Pakistani troops violated ceasefire

in Mendhar, Rajouri and Nowshera sectors; Mendhar and Balakote sectors witnessed heavy shelling throughout night also.

The PRO, Defence said, "At about 0600 hours on Thursday, Pakistan Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by shelling with mortars and firing of small arms along the LoC in Krishna Ghati sector".

"The Indian Army retaliated

strongly and effectively", the official said.

On Wednesday, Pakistani Rangers violated ceasefire in Mendhar and Krishna Ghati sectors in the Rajouri district.

Last year, Pakistan violated ceasefire nearly 3,000 times - the highest by Pakistani troops in the last 15 years along the Indo-Pak border.

Pakistan continues to violate the ceasefire understanding of 2003

despite repeated calls for restraint and adherence to the agreement during flag meetings between the border-guarding forces of the two countries, the officials said.

Amid rising tension between India and Pakistan following the Pulwama terror attack and increasing ceasefire violations, the people along the Line of Control and the international border in this region are living under constant fear, they said.

Maha Assembly approves interim budget without debate

Agency
Mumbai, Feb 28

The Maharashtra Assembly on Thursday approved the vote-on-account, which has budgetary provisions for four months of the next financial year (April to July this year), without any debate. Leader of Opposition Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil and NCP members Ajit Pawar and Jayant Patil said they were tabling their respective speeches on the interim budgetary provisions on the floor of the House.

The appropriation bill and vote-on-account were subsequently passed by a voice vote and without any debate.

Reports of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) and the Public Accounts Committee

(PAC) were also tabled. The House was then adjourned for an hour.

State Finance Minister Sudhir Mungantiwar on Wednesday presented an interim budget for 2019-20 having an estimated revenue deficit of Rs 19,784 crore and provision of special fund for farm loan waiver.

Earlier, as soon as the House assembled for the day on Thursday, NCP legislator Jitendra Awhadurged Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis to move a motion that the state along with rest of the country stood firmly behind the armed forces and Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman, who was captured by Pakistan after an air combat on Wednesday. He said the state should lead by example and a one-line

resolution about this should be sent to Governor Ch Vidyasagar Rao, to be forwarded to President Ram Nath Kovind.

Before the session, Awhad told reporters that the state's ongoing budget session should not be curtailed due to threat

perception amid rising Indo-Pak tensions.

"We need to show courage and poise by carrying out our daily functioning here. Winding up of the session in the name of security (threat) would give a wrong message," he said.

Cold morning in Delhi as mercury falls to 6.8 deg C

Agency
New Delhi, Feb 28

It was a cold morning in the national capital on Thursday with the minimum temperature settling at 6.8 degrees Celsius, six notches below normal.

The humidity level in the morning was recorded at 97 per cent, a meteorological department official

said. "The minimum temperature settled at 6.8 degrees Celsius, six notches below normal," he said.

On Wednesday, the minimum temperature was recorded at 9.5 degrees Celsius. The maximum temperature is likely to settle around 21 degrees Celsius, the weatherman said.