



Editorial

Thursday, June 6, 2019

Environment Day and Manipur



The world over, "World Environment Day" is being observed yesterday. And while the event is also being organized by various social organizations and Government departments in the state, a cold hard look at the turn of events over the years indicates more of lip service rather than effective implementation of suggestions and plans when it comes to taking up concrete and sustainable steps to reverse the ill effects arising out of damaging our natural environment.

Saying so, the State Education Minister, Th. Radheshyam initiative to make record in the history of Manipur by Planting over 50000 plants in around 1000 schools and colleges is a worth appreciating. The initiative may be considered a decision of a wise man as everyone knows that caring is more important than just planting. An as the venue chose or selected by the Education Minister is School and college campus, a simple logic suggest that a little initiative by the head of the schools is what is needed to make the 5000 plus sapling grows.

Well and good, this time the concern for the environment is growing among the people of the state. The pollution at major Rivers and the initiative by local clubs and organization to preserve and protect the River, beside grooming of culture among the youths for planting of trees is a better signed for the future of the state.

The theme adopted for this year- "Beat Air Pollution" perhaps encapsulates the growing concern being increasingly felt by one and all.

Over the past few years, "Sustainable Development" has emerged as the latest development catchphrase. A wide range of non-governmental as well as governmental organizations have embraced it as the new paradigm of development.

An in-depth analysis of the literatures and deliberations on the concept indicates, however, a lack of consistency in its interpretation or implementation. More important, while the inclusive nature of the concept gives it political strength, its current formulation by the mainstream of sustainable development thinking contains significant weaknesses. An inconsequent insight or awareness of the problems of poverty and environmental degradation, and confusion about the role of economic growth and about the concepts of sustainability and participation and the inherent relationship between these factors are some of the key issues which still needed to be addressed if any significant positive outcome is to be expected. The inefficiencies, inadequacies and contradictions in policy making demonstrated in the context of trade, agriculture, and forestry bears testimony to the fact that a more cohesive and sustained effort needs to be taken up. It is further suggested that if the concept of sustainable development is to have any significant impact, politically expedient indecisiveness will have to make way for clarity of purpose and vitality in implementation.

But it is easier said than done. The existing political and social condition in the state calls for more pressing attention such as the improvement of law & order, improvement of economic conditions, not to mention the perennial struggle of sustaining self and family. While these pressing concerns may appear disconnected with the increasing negative impact being demonstrated more clearly with each passing day on the gradually degrading natural environment, the inherent relation between the environment and the social condition cannot be ignored. The interdependence of the two factors, as well as the importance of maintaining a proper balance between progress and environment should be highlighted. Progress at the cost of the environment will still drag us back to the stone age. No amount of man-made structures or infrastructures can replicate the unappreciated benefits provided by the natural environment.

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Coldest years will be warmer than hottest in p...

Courtesy-Justin Gillis

If greenhouse emissions continue their steady escalation, temperatures across most of the Earth will rise to levels with no recorded precedent by the middle of this century, researchers said Wednesday. Scientists from the University of Hawaii at Manoa calculated that by 2047, plus or minus five years, the average temperatures in each year will be hotter across most parts of the planet than they had been at those locations in any year between 1860 and 2005. To put it another way, for a given geographic area, "the coldest year in the future will be warmer than the hottest year in the past," said Dr. Camilo Mora, the lead scientist on a paper published in the journal Nature. Unprecedented climates will arrive even sooner in the tropics, Mora's group predicts, putting increasing stress on human societies there, on the coral reefs that supply millions of the people with fish, and on the world's greatest forests. "Go back in your life to think about the hottest, most traumatic event you have experienced," Mora said in an interview. "What we're saying is that very soon, that event is going to become the norm." The research comes with caveats. It is based on climate models, huge computer programs that attempt to reproduce the physics of the climate system and forecast the future response to greenhouse gases. Although they are the best tools available, these models contain acknowledged problems and it is not clear how accurate they will prove to be at peering many decades ahead. The models show that unprecedented temperatures could

be delayed by 20 to 25 years if there is a vigorous global effort to bring emissions under control. While that may not sound like many years, the scientists said the emissions cuts would buy critical time for nature and for human society to adapt, as well as for development of technologies that might help further reduce emissions. Other scientists not involved in the research said that slowing emissions would have a bigger effect in the long run, lowering the risk that the climate would reach a point that triggers catastrophic changes. They praised the paper as a fresh way of presenting information that is known to specialists in the field, but not by the larger public. "If current trends in carbon dioxide emissions continue, we will be pushing most of the ecosystems of the world into climatic conditions that they have not experienced for many millions of years," said Ken Caldeira, a climate researcher at the Carnegie Institution for Science in Stanford, Calif. The Mora paper is a rarity: a class profile that turned into a high-profile article in one of the world's most prestigious scientific journals. Mora is not a climate scientist; rather he is a specialist in using large sets of data to illuminate environmental issues. He assigned a class of graduate students to analyse forecasts produced by 39 of the world's foremost climate models. The models, whose results are publicly available, are operated by 21 research centres in 12

countries, and financed largely by governments. Thousands of scientific papers have been published about the model results, but the students identified one area of analysis that was missing. The results are usually reported as average temperature changes across the planet. But that gives little sense of how the temperature changes in specific places might compare with historical norms. "We wanted to give people a really relatable way to understand climate," said Abby G. Frazier, a doctoral candidate in geography. So Mora and his students divided the Earth into a grid, with each cell representing 386 square miles. Averaging the results from the 39 climate models, they calculated a date that they called "climate departure" for each location - the date after which all future years were predicted to be warmer than that year in the historical record for that spot on the globe. The results suggest that if emissions of greenhouse gases remain high, then after 2047, more than half the Earth's surface will experience annual climates hotter than anything that occurred between 1860 and 2005, the years for which historical temperature data and reconstructions are available. If assiduous efforts were made to bring emissions down, that date could be pushed back to 2069, the analysis found. With the technique the Mora group used, it is possible to specify climate departure dates for individual cities. Under high emissions, climate departure for New York City will come in 2047, the paper found, plus or minus the five-year margin of error. Lower emissions

would push that to 2072. For Beijing, climate departure would come in 2046 under high emissions, or 2078 under lower emissions. The dates for Moscow are 2063 and 2092; for Washington, 2047 and 2071. Perhaps the most striking findings are in the tropics. Climate variability there is much smaller than in high latitudes, and the extra heat being trapped by greenhouse gases will push the temperature beyond historical bounds much sooner, the research found. Under high emissions, the paper found a climate departure date of 2031 for Mexico City, 2029 for Jakarta, Indonesia, and for Lagos, Nigeria, and 2033 for Bogota, Colombia. Many people perceive climate change to be most serious at the poles, and indeed the largest absolute changes in temperature are occurring in the Arctic and parts of Antarctica. But the Mora paper dovetails with previous research suggesting that the biggest risks to nature and to human society, at least in the near term, may be in the tropics. People living in the tropics are generally poor, with less money to adapt to climate change than people in the mid-latitude rich countries that are burning the most carbon-based fuels and contributing most of the emissions. Plants and animals in the tropics also are accustomed to a narrow temperature range. Organisms that do not have the genetic capacity to adapt to rapid climatic changes will be forced to move, or will be driven to extinction, climate scientists say. "I am certain there will be massive biological and social consequences," Mora said. "The specifics, I cannot tell you."

As the dust settled

Courtesy: The Statesman

The die has been cast. Manipur now has a Bharatiya Janata Party Member of Parliament duly elected to the Lok Sabha and the Naga People's Front has also opened their innings having won the Outer Manipur Parliamentary constituency. The BJP's Dr RK Ranjan Singh is no saffron-clad Hinduvta Bhakt but a liberal-minded man, who has spent years trying to forge unity between people in the Hills and Plains through the Manipur Cultural Integration Forum and is also a well-known environmentalist of the state. On the other hand, NPF's Dr Lorho S Pfoze is also not a known Meitei baiter. While there were 18 claimants for the BJP ticket, the top brass picked Dr Ranjan on account of the fact that he had contested unsuccessfully in 2014 and this time with their chances of winning having increased, the party wanted to replay him, as it were. But the Congress gave him a run for his money and Ranjan won by a slender 16,000 plus vote margin. He got the maximum in Andro, where the local Congress strongman, who is now with the BJP, threw his might behind Ranjan. He also did well in Chief Minister N Biren Singh's Heingang Assembly constituency. There, Congress supporters voted en masse for him based on their dislike for former Chief Minister O Ibobi Singh. But for the record, Biren Singh's constituency also saw a repoll in five polling stations after alleged attempts at rigging. Ranjan also polled the maximum at Thongju Assembly constituency, which is the home of BJP leader and state minister Thongnam Bishwajit. The other main revelation is the establishing of a base by NPF man Dr Lorho. The outer Manipur Parliamentary seat has six constituencies in the valley area. The fact that Dr Lorho was able to establish polling stations in some of those constituencies is remarkable. That is mainly because the NPF was seen by the majority Meitei community as being anti-Manipuri in its outlook with its demand for the inclusion of Naga areas of Manipur



Dr RK Ranjan Singh



Dr Lorho S Pfoze

into Nagaland. Apparently, some Meitei youth leaders had met Dr Lorho and extracted an understanding that once elected, he would voice the concerns of valley people in Parliament and also, that he would not be too vocal about the breaking up of Manipur. The few thousand votes that he polled in the valley area could sound the beginning of a new chapter in the Naga-Meitei relationship. The BJP candidate H Shokhopao came a distant second when the results were announced with Dr Lorho having swept the Naga Districts of Senapati, Ukhrul and Kamjong. Overall, the BJP victory in the valley could have maximum impact on the various Civil Society Organisations, which were at the forefront of the agitation against the Citizens Amendment Bill. That was the major weapon of the detractors of the BJP even as party chief Amit Shah had announced that the CAB would be pushed through after the 2019 elections. There was also the non-clearance by the Centre of the Manipur People's Protection Bill—a native version of the colonial Inner Line Permit system, which regulates the

The political scenario of Manipur has seen a few interesting developments after the Lok Sabha polls - By -YAMBEM LABA

entry of people from mainland India into Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh. But all the hue and cry notwithstanding, the people voted for the BJP candidate. The angst of the people fell on the CSOs and judging by posts on social media, they are in for a hard time, having been openly challenged to dare raise the issue of the CAB again. But angst against the CSOs apart, the BJP top brass seems to be unhappy with N Biren Singh's handling of the CAB issue in Manipur. Not only did he make an attempt to explain the nitty-gritty of the bill to the people but arranged a mammoth reception in Imphal after the CAB was not passed in the Rajya Sabha, almost taking credit for its non-implementation before the Manipuri public. It was playing to the gallery at its worst and now there are talks that the saffron brigade might consider replacing him. The immediate threat to N Biren's ministry, however, is the open declaration by the constituent Naga People's Front, with its four members, to withdraw support to the government. This decision was taken at Kohima before the elections, wherein it was decided that, on principal, they would withdraw support as they did not appreciate the manner in which the BJP had been treating the NPF, even though it was a coalition partner. After the election, the NPF has reiterated its earlier stance. One of the four MLAs of the NPF is currently serving as a minister. The grumblings of the NPF apart, the honeymoon with the Conrad Sangma-led National People's Party, which also has four MLAs (all of whom are ministers in the government), seems to be over. There are talks that some of them might be dropped in the forthcoming elections with the axe likely to fall on Deputy Chief Minister Yunnam Joykumar Singh. In such a scenario, the BJP government in Manipur would be in serious trouble. If the NPF and the NPP withdraw support, then the BJP, which has only 22 MLAs in the house of 60, will be a minority. There are eight MLAs from the Congress who have switched sides to the BJP but since they continue to be seated on the Opposition bench, they technically remain Congress MLAs. So all said and done, the BJP government in Manipur might be in for a jolt.