

Editorial

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HM assurance to GOM : Is it the only means left?

Once more Chief Minister of Manipur N. Biren Singh had stated that the Union Home Minister Amit Shah had assured that state government of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh will be consulted before the signing of the final settlement of Naga issue. It's not a new words from the Chief Minister of Manipur. He had been saying this quite for sometimes in the wake of the public uprised. Then why the people cannot be convinced?

Well an assurance by the Union Home Minister conveyed through the Chief Minister of Manipur should have been enough to calm the people of the state from any kind of fear psychosis lingering to the mind of the people of the state. However, the trust deficit that they failed to bridge fails to calm the people of this state. It was not that people are skeptic to the political integrity of Union Home Minister Amit Shah but it was the bitter instances of those in the highest post of the state and centre had committed in the past.

If one remember, it was on June 13 of 2001 that the then Union Defence Minister George Fernandez, while speaking at a gathering at GM Hall here in Imphal announced that, no agreement that the people of the state opposed including extension of cease fire between the government of India and NSCN-IM beyond the state of Nagaland will be signed. It was on the next day, i.e. on June 14, 2001, after the then Defence Minister had left Imphal, the then interlocutor of that time Mr. Padmabhaya, signed the agreement with the leadership of the NSCN-IM by adding three words to the extension of the cease fire - "without territorial limit", which was against the assurance of the then Defence Minister of India a day before. The result of adding the three words that the defence minister assured to exclude it from the agreement, had burnt the entire state of Manipur. The world witnessed burning of the state legislative Assembly, along with many government quarters and offices of political parties. The tears still wet mothers, widows and son and daughters of 18 people who died during the bloodiest uprising for protection of the territorial and political boundary of the state. Left with no choice the then government had removed the 3 words "without territorial limits" from the agreement on July 27 of that year.

Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi had assured many times that Manipur's interest will never be hurt while solving or settling the issues with the NSCN-IM. The words were also echoed by many BJP leaders who are in power including the strong man Amit Shah, the Union Home Minister of the country. Unlike other Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Amit Shah combo led government is a bit different. Since they started running the country most of the words promised by them have been fulfilled, no matter they get votes or not during election, they always stand with what they had promised to the people. The first term of Narendra Modi led NDA government witnessed many outdated law being scrapped after he announced that outdated laws will be scrapped while delivering speech at Madison Square garden. However, for reason best known, AFSPA is still not scrapped.

So the point wanted to draw the attention of the government is that if they really want the people to have trust in the government to believe in whatever announce or declare by the Prime Minister or Home Minister, let it be converted into action, leaving aside the political gain.

Manipur have been a more peaceful state today if the so called promises are being fulfilled. Now one way to calm the people and to restore the peaceful coexistence in the state is to let everything known to the public. Settling the issue of NSCN-IM is what people of the entire North east region have desired. What ever agreed and whatever the NSCN-IM demanded should be made public and it is perfect time now as the final settlement has been reached yesterday. It's time now that the government of India placed the demand of the NSCN-IM in public domain and also the agreed points of the government that the NSCN-IM had demanded. Otherwise, the trust deficit between the common people and the Political leaders running the country can never be bridged.

Stop Burning of Hay Straw will uplift the Rural Economy

By N. Munal Meitei

In absence of viable industries, agriculture is the main occupation in Manipur. Agriculture shares the major part of our state's domestic product and provides employment up to 22.13% (2011 census) of the total work force. About 80% of the state total populations are engaged in agriculture and allied activity. Out of 22,327 sq.km geographical area of the state, only 12.98% is used for cultivation and 52% of it is confined in the valley and the rest in the hills. The total cultivated area of about 289500 ha, which is about 82% of the gross cropped areas is utilize for paddy cultivation. The people living in the hills also practice Jhum cultivation.

In Manipur, harvesting normally started during mid-October to November-end and now the peak season starts on. A rough estimate based on the grain to straw ratio showed from Punjab and Haryana, with rice production of 24.1 million tons during 2011-13 it generated about 35.6 million tons of straw. In Manipur, the average rice yield is as high as 3.2 to 3.6 tons per ha or pari and thus the subsequent hay stubble production is about 5.7 tons per ha. Therefore, our state produced 13,53,123 tons of hay stubble annually.

In the past few years we have seen that almost all the hay stubbles are burnt down just after harvesting in our state. Such were not done in the past. People used to collect all the hay straw and stacked in their homesteads for fodder and other purposes. But now rearing of cattle are almost nil. While properly discharging the hay straw over the field for better decomposition, it takes more labour and wages. People also have less knowledge on the environment impact from stubble burning. Thus, burning in heap up at the harvesting site itself is commonly carried out as the easiest and cheapest method for the cultivators.

One very wrong perception among the cultivators is the hay stubble infected by aphid (wahik) should be burnt as a precautionary measure. This is a wrong conception because haystraw has nothing to do with the wahik infestation on the current year crop and the next year crop. In aphid's life cycle, they can't hide up in the hay stubble up to the next year.

On the 27th October, this year's

Diwali night, many areas in Delhi recorded an Air Quality Index (AQI) of 999, beyond which reading is not possible, but the national prescribed limit is 60. With people celebrating Diwali with crackers and fireworks, toxic fumes once again made the capital city a gas chamber. Truly, this was not due to the Diwali alone but was the continuous stubble burning in the neighboring states of Punjab and Haryana over the past few days. The average AQI of the capital region has shoot up 484 which as per CPCB, beyond 400 is 'severe' and the current situation is "severe plus category" that can affect even the healthy people and seriously impacted those with chronic diseases. Thus, the schools in Delhi and NCR were closed up to the 5th November and enforcement of odd-even scheme for vehicular traffic is also in bid to curb the air pollution. As per the wind direction, the next victims will be the cities in U.P. and Bihar.

National Green Tribunal directs all state governments to take up for coercive and punitive action to the violators of stubble burning. The penalties are; farmers with below 2 acres land while on burning have to pay Rs. 2500, 2 to 5 acres for Rs. 5000 and more than 5 acres for Rs. 15000/- as the environmental compensation. But the sad part is the farmers still burnt the field and prefer to pay the fines because paying fines save them than to keep the NGT norms and also there is less time gap for starting the next Rabi crops. Therefore, it is important to diagnose and address the fundamental problems that force the farmers to burn the paddy straw on the field without obeying the NGT guidelines in the national interest.

How to uplift the rural economy While on stubble burning, the loss of nutrients per ha amounts to 339 kg Nitrogen, 6 kg Phosphorous, 140 kg Potassium and 11 kg Sulphur and many more soil beneficial nutrients. Therefore, with this rate, the total loss of nutrients in Manipur would be around 80.50 million tons N2, 1.42 million tons P, 33.22 million tons K and 2.61 million tons of Sulphur per annum. It is a big loss of valuable nutrients and we could save them if we stop burning of hay straw.

The amount of greenhouse gases emitted, when 1 ton of hay straw is burnt are 2 kg of SO2, 60kg CO, 4-7 kg CH4, 1460 kg of CO2, 3 kg particulate matters, and 199 kg of ash. These are the pollutants that hamper the climate which have hindered us in our agriculture this year. At the same time, if we could allow them to decompose without burning somewhere at a corner of the paddy field, preferably at the most elevated part of the field, then the soil could get back 125-136 kg nitrogen, 2.28-3.8 kg phosphorus, 53-56 kg potassium and 3.8-4.56 kg sulphur from the hay straw of 1 acre paddy field. While comparing the loss of food grain from the area occupied by the hay straw and the quantity of nutrient supplied back from the hay straw, it is a huge economic gain. Thus, the total nutrients saving in Manipur would be around 113.6 million tons of NPKS per annum.

Burning also takes a tool on beneficial micro-organisms and other small creatures such as earthworms which help to enrich the soil. M.S. Swaminathan, the father of green revolution in India, said stubble can be used to make cardboard, paper and other products. Paddy straw enriched with urea and molasses is a wonderful animal feed as is successfully practicing in Myanmar. Now, the state government may decide to establish the industries which utilize the hay stubble for various purposes, like producing ethanol, paper and packaging material, including manufacturing of boards, rough paper and fodder.

The other method involves use of hay straw for biomass energy plants to generate electricity. In Punjab, seven such plants have been built and six more are in the pipeline. In Manipur also, we need to go for such electricity generating plants. It will surely reduce the social impacts and also minimize the local unemployment problems. Rearing of goat is another option, because goat preferred the hay straw and can digest without a problem. The goat meat and milk are costlier and has high demand in market. Goat reproduces 3 to 6 kids at a time and the maturity is much faster than other calves. The goats are harder and less prone

to diseases also. Therefore we may encourage large scale goat farming in our state.

To tackle straw burning, we may use Seeders machines which can put the straw back into the earth to enhance the soil nutrients. Rice harvested with machines has better crushed and are easy to put inside the soil. The soil health is our future life. While burning the heap up stubble near to the trees along the roadside after harvesting also kill the valuable plants.

Hay straws are very useful moisture retention blankets which when properly uses can enhance the germination and plant growth. While using the decompose hay straw in the field, ploughing of the soil is easier and takes less time and cost.

Mushroom cultivation also known as Protein cultivation on hay straw is one of the most prospective ecofriendly practices both to fight the malnutrition and environmental pollution due to stubble burning in Manipur. Rice straw contains 41% cellulose, 14% lignin, 0.8% nitrogen, 0.25% P2O5, 0.3% K2O, 6% SiO2 and with pH 6.9.

Since mushroom being one of the most preferred foods in Manipur, its cultivation is a profitable agro-industrial activity. It could have greater economic and social impact in our state by generating income and employment for both women and youth, particularly in rural areas. The stubble residue after mushroom cultivation can also be used in agricultural field.

In a sample study, the total cost for construction of a controlled environment mushroom production center is about Rs. 48,000 while the total selling cost of the harvested mushroom is found to be Rs. 13,900 as compared to the production cost of Rs. 9,950 and thus, making a profit of Rs. 3,950. In the subsequent productions, the profit realized would be higher. There are also many high yielding mushroom varieties in the market now and if we go for them, then more profits could be fetched.

Therefore let's not burn the stubble but utilize it to uplift our rural economy and to save the environment for the sake of our future generation.

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Manipur's identity and it's political ingenuity

By: YFPHR

The political trend in concealing the actualities that relate to decision making conduct of the government lead to lack of transparency and in effect curtails the right of the so called governed (public) to equal participation in the decision making processes of the Government. Such conduct of the Government goes against the principle and the basic feature of the constitution of India more specifically the preamble of the constitution of India which voices the power of the Government to have been derived from the people of India. By implication as said above, the clear sounding premises could be founded which indicates that the democratic form of governance in the so called largest democratic country of the world has been a mere non functional political ideology having no spirit and letter. This assumption may or could

likely be propounded taking the cue of the present political turmoil in the State of Manipur whereupon the Government of India in concern with the present ongoing unrest arising out of the secret frame work agreement inked between its instrumentality, the interlocutor and the NSCN-IM is not only unfortunate but a violation of the basic principles of Democracy on the ground that the ground the major stakeholders of the State of Manipur have been debarred from participation in the talk or agreement and neither have they been heard of regarding the far reaching effect in case of territorial disintegration of the State when the interlocutor on behalf of the Government of India gives in to the high stake demands of the NSCN-IM. On the contrary of dealing with intricate political issue, the Government of India has shown high handed attitude by imposition of military power upon

the Government of Manipur and its people which may fall out with negative repercussions. The catch word for the Government of India should be "No imbibe attitude" from the Britishers by not forgetting that India or Bharat also went through various forms atrocities committed by the Britishers during the colonial era and should not be imitating the same and practicing same upon the people of Manipur under the shadow of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, 1958 and its hidden dictatorial form of ruling the nation.

With regard to the prevailing crisis, the Government of India should with the wiser card to open up the agreement and make it public. The Government of India has still failed to divulge the contents of the said Naga Accord despite various official communications and demands from the people including the Government of Manipur. In various instances Government of Manipur met with the Prime Minister of India, the Interlocutor of the Frame work Agreement, Home Minister, etc by campaigning at Delhi incurring huge expenses from the State exchequer ultimately with no concrete response but rather

hands out insult to the peoples' representatives which in turn is the insult to the people of Manipur. The Executive head of the State, the present Governor of Manipur stays safe by playing the "Judas role" and only wakes up when on occasions to inaugurate a functions by cutting a ribbon and on the other hand having complicit hands with the hidden agendas of the Government of India which is a far cry from actual shouldering of the "de jure" Political Agent of the Union of India. The Government of Manipur should have in a way lost the trust of the Executive Head of the State as the executive is more focused personal luxuries rather than aken with the aspirations of the people. The Government of Manipur is busy engaging directly with the Government of India in Delhi which is again a painful reality of suppression and social exclusion from the democratic form of Government in India of not being heard of the demand of the people. The demeanor of turning blind eye and deaf ears to the political aspiration of the people would always have resulted with ill effects and such insensitivity also make worse the situation and the sufferers mostly the daily bread

earners take pain in the end and the poorest section of the society become the brunt holders of such dilemma. The attitude of the Government of India on the prevailing crisis would further ignite the sentiments of the people of Manipur for which serious attention to deal with the situation is called for.

Lack of Transparency, Accountability from the end of Government of India cannot be ruled out and these doubts stand as starkly possible and the people of Manipur would always be in deficit of trust against the Central Government of India.

The Government of India must also view the deterioration academic atmosphere of thousands of students of the State and must also refrain from utilizing schools and colleges for military deployment in the name to curb or settle the Framework Agreement peacefully which is yet another forceful imposition. The possible questionnaires posed are in relation to hundreds of women specially the daily bread earners like street vendors who have been denied access to their livelihood on fear of possible showdown which might erupt anytime if any adverse interest is

caused against the territorial integration of Manipur.

"Who should be responsible for such loss and who will compensate the loss? The Government of India must not deviate from its obligation of responsive Government and should stop floating the comment of excuse such as "who told you to create unrest?" Rather it should come up with a holistic approach to solve the issue than to solve the same from the mid way using brute and force.

Militarization should not be used as a means to tackle an issue and if the opinion is of military solution, it becomes an old fashion of ruling the country or a nation. Government of India should not forget its obligations to abide by the International Law and its commitments by virtue of being the largest democratic country in the World. The punch word remains "Stop Militarization! And respect Peoples' Voice".

The future of Manipur should be left in the hands of the Manipuris and for that matter the ethos and the principles set forth and propagated by the ancestral leaders need to be acknowledged and recognized by the Government of India.

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