

Editorial

Thursday, November 28, 2019

A blow to survival

You who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is illegal. That is a contradiction in terms. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal? – Elie Wiesel, Writer, Nobel Peace Prize winner and Holocaust survivor.

Manipuri heroes - Tikendrajit Singh and Thangal General were hanged by the British for waging war against the British Empire—a short yet significant struggle by a tiny hilly Asiatic kingdom against the most powerful empire in the world at that time. The 'Anglo-Manipur war' of 1819 drives home the irrefutable point of men's willingness to go to any length to safeguard their identity and dignity even in the face of insurmountable obstacles. It is also a struggle against exploitation and subservience and at the root of it, a struggle for survival.

At this time and age, while outright war might not be an immediate possibility, ethnic persecutions, atrocities and crimes against the weak and vulnerable on a social, political and economic level has been continuing, and with an imperfect and insensitive administration, the problem can and does get serious. When such problem gets out of hand, the only option is to look for safer places, and more often than not, such oppressed people will invariably try and seek shelter in some neighboring state or country where the political and economic conditions are more favorable. It is not easy or desirable for anyone to uproot their lives and decide to take unseen risks and obvious troubles to move away from the lives they have been used to unless absolutely necessary and options are closed, when the very survival is threatened.

India is such a country whose social, economic and political situation is considerably more stable and secure than many of its neighbours for a long time, and people from these neighbouring countries have been crossing over to India in search for a better and more secure life, often illegally who are collectively and generally termed 'illegal immigrants'.

Under the Citizenship Act an "illegal migrant" is defined as a foreigner who has entered into India—

(i) without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or (ii) with a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.

An illegal migrant (though the term is often misleading since their presence inside the country is a civil infraction, not a criminal offense) is excluded from the acquisition of citizenship through birth, registration, or naturalization. There is no program to grant citizenship to illegal migrants or their children. They are also denied the right to legal recourse and other basic amenities, reducing them to non-entities.

While the concerns on the pressures on the resources like land, law and order situations and economics of a state or country as a result of the influx of undocumented immigrants is legitimate and understandable, in the absence of an official deportation or any formal repatriation treaty with Bangladesh whose citizens form the largest number of such undocumented immigrants, the issue is a humanitarian one as such as any and needs to be dealt with empathy and understanding in a pragmatic and diplomatic manner. At the end of the day, a starved, tormented individual at the risk of losing one's life will embrace the vague hope of a better life and a shot at survival, even with the punishments, trials and troubles that is more than likely to unfold.

National News

'Sad day in Parliament's history' Pragya Thakur barred from attending BJP Parliamentary Committee Meeting

Agency
New Delhi, Nov. 29

Cracking the whip on MP Pragya Thakur over her remarks on Nathuram Godse in Lok Sabha, the BJP on Thursday barred her from attending its parliamentary party meeting in the ongoing Parliament session and removed her from the consultative committee on defence. BJP working president J P Nadda announced the disciplinary action against her and condemned the controversial Hindutva leader's remarks in a bid to defuse the political crisis triggered by her remarks in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday.

Nadda also said that Thakur will be removed from the consultative

committee on defence, at which she was recently appointed. Meanwhile, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi called BJP MP Pragya Thakur a "terrorist", and said that her remarks hailing Mahatma Gandhi's assassin Nathuram Godse in the Lok Sabha marked a sad day in the history of Parliament. Thakur created a controversy on Wednesday with her remark in the Lower House of Parliament during DMK member A Raja's narration of a statement by Nathuram Godse before a court on why he killed Mahatma Gandhi.

Hitting out at Thakur for her remarks in Lok Sabha, Rahul called her a "terrorist" and said it was a sad day in the history of India's Parliament.

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Manipur International Boundary

-Toward Safeguarding under MNK Bonding-

By - S.Bhubol, OSMT

Manipur Boundary including the Manipur-Myanmar boundary as per national and international laws has been in existence as international boundary even after the state was merged to the Dominion of India in 1949. The Manipur International boundary as supported by the maps of the Oxford and the Survey of India had been officially maintained in three directions by agreements in between the then British India and independent Manipur. In spite of having had changes in the contours of Manipur Boundary in different stages of history, the present area though much constricted in its size than before is still bigger by 1500 Sq. Km. in area from the Israel state and larger in population by not less than 5 lakhs from that of Estonia a Baltic state. Many impacting events had been articulated by external forces time and again to disintegrate the people of Manipur like one that could be vividly seen in years during 1997 to 2001 and during that time from attentive people of Manipur have been seriously concerned about boundary issues in the midst it seems that the metropolitan powers does not really know or ignore intentionally the reality that Manipuri nationalism is but the territorial nationalism. The State of Manipur emerged out as part of the world history as an Asiatic nation state hundreds of years before it was controversially merged to the Union of India. It is time for everyone's properly understanding of the internationally established boundary of Manipur and to act accordingly. This well defined Manipur International Boundary has been remained by intertwining the brethren communities alike to the inseparability between the liquid tea and the container.

Boundary of Manipur can be defined under two categories as Historical Boundary (Greater Manipur Boundary) and the Recognized Boundary based on the history of understanding by its people as well as all neighboring countries. The Boundary of Manipur officially declared in the Assembly session by the King of Manipur on 18th October, 1948 can be reread as "Read her political history from 24A.D. She had her dominion over a wide area extending as far as the southern portion of China in the north, the gold mines in the Sibsagar Valley, the river Chindwin in the east and south, and Chandrapore (Chachar) in the west. Her present area is 8,650 Square miles plus 7,000 Square miles of the Kabaw Valley including 7,900 square miles of the hills" and it was added that "All these times when Manipur was in the highest of her power, Hill and Valley were one; and this oneness defended Manipur against all invasions and thus, she could maintained her independence upto 1891, when the rest of India has already been conquered by the British." This only among many others is sufficient to understand the international status of Manipur Boundary. Everyone concerned is to know the sentiments of Manipur people on boundary issues as that they love their land more than their hearts and lives as it is proven by the leaderless Manipur people's uprising on the 18th June, 2001 during which courageously sacrificed by 18 lives substituting people's aspiration that successfully countered the unruly extension of Indo-NSCN(IM) ceasefire without territorial limit and thus safeguarded the Manipuri people's territorial nationalism showing that the territory of Manipur shall be protected by her people till the last

blood.

Soon after the Treaty of Westphalia arrived at after of 30 years unrest in the west, concept of safeguarding international boundaries emerged out about 362 years ago. Chow Dynasty began to consolidate the boundary of China in between 1122BC to 227BC; many Greek city states began to exist in between 800BC to 322BC and following the defeat of Napoleon in 1814 AD not less than 20 state boundaries came out by 1991AD. Boundary of India was still to form even while the Asoka Empire and the Mughal Empire powerfully spread out but beyond the boundaries of Assam, Manipur and Tripura. Only after 1600AD, British turned up and began to form the British India, excluding many native states, until it finally became India as architect of Mountbatten in 1947AD. For Manipur state, as per recorded in the Cheitharol Kumbaba (Court chronicle of Manipur) and other records such as the works of Prof. N. Sanajaoba, the transformation of political status of Manipur are summarily highlighted as such, Sovereign State(33AD- early 20C); International Protectorate (1891-1946); Autonomous State with her own Constitution(26th July, 1947); Associate State as Sovereign within Indian Confederation (11th August, 1947); Sovereign State (14th August, 1947); Sovereign State with Assembly functioning(18th October, 1948); Annexed State with suspended sovereignty(15th October, 1949) and Constituent State of India(suspended sovereignty). Modern Manipur started to conceive in the 17th century and it was fully characterized in the 18th century as during the time there completed territorial consolidation, instituted early constitutional form of governance (Loyumba Shilyen Shinthia), came up to the Anglo-Manipur Defense Treaty-1762 and founded diplomatic relations and practices thereby led Manipur to enter the Comity of Nations.(Sanajaoba.N.)

Captain Pemberton defined the international boundary of Manipur in 1835 as "(2nd)The territories of Manipur have fluctuated at various times with the fortunes of their princes frequently extending for three to four day's journey east beyond the Ningthee or Khendwen river, and west to the plains of Cachar. Its present boundaries, as far as they have been fixed, are on the west, the Jeezee river, from its sources to the confluence with the Barak, and from this point, South, to the north of Chikoo or Toeye, a Nullah, which flowing from lofty ranges bordering on Tripura country, falls into the Barak at the Southern extremity of a range mountains, three sides of which are embraced by the tortuous course of this river."

The Manipur International Boundary as being safeguarded by various international Treaties or Agreements and also fully endorsed by the comity of nations for the past many years, can be perceived at once with the historic past events as such;(1) Treaty of Verelast (September 14, 1762) so as to return land unlawfully occupied by Burma to Manipur states the relations that had to maintain in between British and Manipur as "That the said Joy Singh will at all times fully consider every enemy to the said English as his own enemy and that the English shall consider every enemy (Clause 5)"; (2) Treaty of Yandaboo (February 28, 1826) fully recognized Manipur country, its King and the boundary and says " Article-2nd: His Majesty the king of Ava renounces all claims upon and will

abstain from all future interference with, the principality of Assam... with regard to Manipore, it is stipulated that, should Gambhir Singh desire to return to that country, he shall be recognized by the king of Ava as Rajah thereof"; (3) 2nd Anglo- Manipuri Treaty (April 18, 1833) is the Treaty with which both British and Manipur finalized the international boundary of Manipur located at Jiri along the eastern sides of the Barak river; (4) The Kabow Valley Agreement (January 25, 1834) clearly states that the Burmese government had to pay Rs 500/- per month to Manipur Government for occupying the Kabow Valley and that the payment had to stop when the said valley returns to Manipur in the manner how the Britain returned Hongkong to the People's Republic of China after 100 years. But unending dispute still exists since Jawaharlal Nehru gave away the Kabow Valley to Burma without holding any arbitration in 1953; (5) Barak Treaty (August, 1874) was held on the Barak river in between the British Governor General and King Chandrakirti of Manipur which not only recognized the international boundary of Manipur but also agreed upon to extend helping hands between the two powers at times of need.

Though Manipur was defeated in the Anglo-Manipur War, 1891, the British proclaimed it would not annex Manipur and this proofed the recognition of the international status of Manipur boundary which was fully protected until the British left Manipur in 1947. In the period from 1947 to 1949, the international territorial political status of Manipur was still safeguarded by the then established Acts such as (1). The Manipur State Constitution Act, 1947 (Article 2 & 3), (2). The Manipur Hill Regulations Act, 1947, (3). The Manipur Chief Court Act, 1947 and (4). The Constitution of India. 1st Schedule. The States' Reorganization Act, 1971 further clearly says that Manipur is an established state and not a newly formed one and it indicates that the boundary of Manipur maintained as a party's defined boundary to the Manipur Merger Agreement, 1949 cannot be disturbed and any act of disturbing the boundary of Manipur shall be deemed to end of abidingness by the Agreement to both parties that have nothing to do but to back to their pre-merger status. The already established status of Manipur boundary was repeatedly ratified by the then Parliament Acts of 1960s. Thus, the political status and associated status of Manipur, 1947 is recognized by the U.N. member countries and even after its merger to any other country, its boundary cannot be disturbed and any act or law empowering for state reorganization of the country cannot be applicable to the coming in already defined state like Manipur. If India does not respect the international boundary laws of UTIS POSSIDETIS JURIS, and tries to apply Article-3 of its constitution to Manipur, it shall be meant disobeying U.N. Charters and it may unconditionally invite Manipur people's movement for justification under international laws for Manipur annexation imbroglio of 1949.

Aware of the fact that there have begun intensive and invasive practices to defrag the territorial boundary of Manipur since 1964 with release of write ups equipped with untrue remarks and the relative activities thereof which are all to be cautiously dealt with. Anybody or any body who/which indulges in the disturbance of Manipur boundary has at first to know

before they themselves lead to defeat that, (1). Manipur State unlike Nagaland and Mizoram is not a newly formed or created state; it is a re-established state. India cannot disturb its defined boundary existed at its time of annexation in 1949. Any act of Centre's endeavoring to disturb its boundary shall mean lapse of abidingness by the so called Merger Agreement of 1949 to both parties, Manipur and India and if it happened so both parties have to turn back to their past status of 1947 under international reversion process. (2). With the amendments of Article 370 and Article 36, the Article 3 of the Constitution of India is not applicable to the states of Kashmir and Sikkim and likewise the same Article cannot be applied to Manipur state which had been going on under similar historical process of Kashmir and Sikkim. (3) Neither a Manipuri citizen was sitting in the constituent Assembly of India nor a representative was nominated by the then Manipur Assembly under the Manipur Constitution Act, 1947 and so any tries for imposition of Article 3 in the state of Manipur shall automatically lead people's discourteous to the Constitution of India. (4) Any Agreement or Treaty that debar Manipur to be a party and affects the permanent interest of Manipur, shall never have abidingness to Manipur. (5) Racism is invalidated and there is no space for a small Hitler to exist on this earth. If any outdated pan-movement is recognized, many more of it will be erupted out regardless of reasons. Here again **Ojha Sanajaoba emphatically said,**

' If Naga pan movement is to be legalized and legitimized beyond keeping on cultural relationship , then other pan movements of other communities like Kuki, Meitei, Zelianglong, Thadon, Mizo etc shall have to be equally legitimized which is historically a failed and out thwarted experience that was proven by the downfall of the mighty Hitler's pan Nazi movement and this unruly history should not be repeated by today's small Hitlers to knowingly and intentionally repeat bloodshed and unrest in this North East region.'

For the Nagas and Kukis, the present Nagaland state and the Mizoram state should be empowered at possible height to strengthen the Naga and the Kuki citizens on all aspects; Naga or Kuki Diasporas can be upholding under a strong policy on cultural relations; Policy may be made for granting equal rights to all Naga and Kuki communities within States respectively; Anything possible can be given to Naga and Kuki without disturbing any more the successively gnarled and gnawed boundaries of neighboring states including the internationally established boundary of Manipur. Manipur merged to Indian Union not for being fragmented and one reason for Manipur is no more feasible for any more fragmentation that has been consolidated as unbreakable wholesomeness. Lebensraum toward Nazism, Zalengam, Shepoumaramth, and Zeliangam etc should not go on synonymously and instead the commonality in the sense of Manipurization is to be inculcated. The best solution is to strengthen the **Meitei-Naga-Kuki Bonding (MNK Bonding)** that cannot be cracked by any outsider's divisive impacts. Toward equality of nations, the Meitei, Naga and Kuki should be enlivened with equitable developments on all fronts. Let a strong Manipur be rejuvenated with the **Union of MNK factors!**

(*** S. Bhubol was formerly the Editor of the Orient Vision an English Quarterly and presently the Managing Trustee of Ojha (Prof.) Sanajaoba Memorial Trust)