

# Editorial

Saturday, October 12, 2019

## Swindling of Public Money: Mr. CM act like PM Modi

Recently, anti corruption agencies of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi led NDA government had pulled up former Finance Minister P. Chandrababam on alleged charges in INX Media scam. The case is related to an incident happened around 2007, about 7 years before Prime Minister Narendra Modi led NDA government replaced the Congress led regime.

People of the North Eastern region of India and those in the South may have differences with the ideology of the BJP over its virtue of patriotism rather than making the country a diverse nation, but the spirit of the leadership of the BJP over their commitment and actions against all perpetrators of corruption make the people left with no choice but to give their mandate to the BJP. What impressed the people amidst the souring experiences of some BJP elected representatives is the fulfillment of the promise that the leadership made during their election campaign. Prime Minister not only made promises but converted those promises into action soon after he holds the office. Whether the crime is committed 10 years ago or 15 years ago, the Modi led government left no stone unturned and initiated legal action to whoever is involved in the swindling of public properties.

It was the political sincerity of the Narendra Modi and his team that the state of Manipur got the BJP as alternative government to root out corruption. 2016, during state legislatures' election, people from across that state put up 21 BJP MLAs out of 60 Assembly seat. Congress who had ruled and built a dynasty got 28, but failed to form the government as people were fed up and urged some of the none congress and none BJP MLAs who got elected were pressured to support the BJP government by their voters.

Why many politically sensitive Manipuri people wanted BJP government at that time was the series of daylight robbery at the nose of the common people committed by the near and dear one of the then Chief Minister of that time. After witnessing the series of action by Prime Minister Narendra Modi against culprits involved in criminal activities, the Manipuri people do hope that the BJP led government headed by the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh will do the same as Prime Minister Narendra Modi as he had time and again stated that the nation will only be saved in the hand of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

But not everything that has been expected from the Chief Minister is fulfilled. Serious crime of corruptions committed by influential political personalities or the bureaucrats in connivance with the near and dear one of the then ruling class have been let free till today even though he has been in the power for over 2 and half years as Chief Minister.

Soon after N. Biren Singh assumed the charge of Chief Minister, his government faced serious crisis of natural disaster. 5 times flash flood in the valley region and now draught like situation. During press conference it was often stated that the natural disaster like flash flood was due to the mass deforestation that has been taken place in the catchment area of major rivers of the state. That was accepted and has been a matter that the world knows and India government knowing that such would happen in the future had also taken up many measures to prevent such natural disaster.

In 2011 the concerned central government department had sanctioned a huge amount of 11 crore rupees for mass plantation of trees at river catchment areas of Senapati district to the Horticulture and Soil Conservation department of the government of Manipur. The matter was reported in this newspaper and on further investigation it was found that even after the release of the huge fund for plantations at River catchment area no plantation was seen taken place. Table works might have completed the plantation but the reality was that villagers had never witness any such plantations at any of the river catchment area. The kind of swindling money by the govt. department authority had not only looted public money but also ruined the people of the state. During a press conference, when this matter was put up by Imphal Times journalist, the Chief Minister said that his government cannot look into each and every crime committed during the last government - a contradiction to the ideology of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. As for Modi he left no one, no matter the person hold top position in the last government.

On April 18, 2017, this newspaper reported about the irregularities to the construction of the Water Transmission System of raw water from Maphou Dam to Chingkeicheing in Imphal East. The project began during the time of Congress regime and the total cost of the project was Rs. 289.64 crore.

The irregularities were reached to the notice of the government and some Engineers and Section Officers were transferred. No enquiry was conducted no persons or officials of the PHED now Water resource department were punished. The irregularities to the construction of the raw water pipeline is a serious crime to humanity as it may create artificial flood at various parts of Imphal East district with potential to destroyed thousands hectares of paddy field.

Now, Imphal Times again report about the possible swindling of public money sanctioned under the Rashtriyas Swasthya Bima Yojna (RSBY) in the name of providing treatment to poor workers by some private hospitals. Beneficiary patients (RSBY card holders) while talking to Imphal Times narrated that they never had any idea of the kind of treatment recorded to the Hospital and they never had any knowledge of how much money have been deducted from their card for the treatment. There sense discrepancies to the implementation of the RSBY and if this has not been checked, people will be skeptical to the Prime Minister ambitious PMJAY and Chief Minister's CMHT scheme.

People expect Chief Minister N. Biren Singh to act like Prime Minister Narendra Modi when it comes about tackling the Corruption crimes.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : [imphaltimes@gmail.com](mailto:imphaltimes@gmail.com). For advertisement kindly contact : - 0385-2452159 (O). For time being readers can reach the office at Cell Phone No. 9862860745 for any purpose.

## Power of Artivism in 'An Act of Remembrance' and Political Debates

By- Cicil Thounaojam

A group of Manipuri performing artists, supported by Zubaan, performed a 3-act play called An Act of Remembrance: Short Performance on Sexual Violence and Impunity in the Mass Communication Department of Manipur University on 10th October, 2019, as a part of their artivism of using art as an instrument to provoke the political context and struggles around sexual violence. The performance narrated some episodes of sexual violence from the past that involved predatory men and Indian army.

The first act was a solo performance about a woman who defied the societal norm of painting and reducing her to being a rape victim. Instead, she claimed to be a survivor, reclaiming her identity of being a human, a woman, a mother, and a daughter with a family. It was an act of denying to give in and showing her children that she did not succumb to the fear and disgust of the society. The second solo act was about a man living and struggling with the trauma of sexual abuse by his uncle at a very young age. It was a story of years of holding back, questioning himself and trying to understand what led to what had happened. Recounting the indifference and disbelief that his friends and family showed, he narrated the series of events, finally, with a lump in his throat. The final act was a short narration of the multiple events of rape and sexual abuse committed by the Indian army in the conflict zones,

like Kashmir, Manipur, Nagaland, Assam. It recounted the cases of sexual violence on anyone from 13-year old child to 65-year old woman in Kashmir, rape and murder of Thangjam Manorama, and gang rape of Miss Rose among many by Indian army. The play concluded by distributing and playing an audio of the letter written by Miss Rose before committing suicide.

The forum was then opened to the audience for discussion and the conversation was initiated addressing the issues highlighted in the play: social stigma around women who had been raped, uprising of many women who denied to be victimized by rape and stood up to the society as survivors, cultural masculine norms taught to men from an early age, negligence of sexual violence towards boys and young men in the society, and Indian army exercising the power granted by the Indian state and sexually exploiting thousands of women and children in the conflict zones.

Many women also spoke of various unwanted sexual advances and abuses that women face during festivals, in market places, while travelling, etc. Both men and women in the audience brought up topics of uncomfortable "friendly" gestures even in the close knit circles. Insights on the importance of educating boys from an early age on the family aspects, sensitivity and the harms of toxic masculinity were also discussed. Some of major touch points around toxic masculinity were the toxic narratives of "not manly", "boys

don't cry", "man up", etc.

Another important aspect of the event was impunity. It focused on how, most of the times, the blame for rape was put on women for dressing a certain way or for staying out late or for drinking. The state of victim blaming that came from medical experts and police personnel, resulting in mental and emotional harassment, was also put forth in the forum. In addition to this, discussion around men exempted from holding accountable of the crimes and how Indian army enjoyed impunity because of its state machinery also happened. One major area of focus on Indian army enjoying impunity was draconian acts like AFSPA granted by the Indian state which allowed the Indian armies to abuse their power and protected the Indian armies. Since the Indian state required their armies in the conflict zones to control and monitor the people, rape allegations against them were not addressed by their authorities most of the time or swept under the rug. Further, the forum also recounted names of many women who were sexually violated and who lost their lives in the hands of Indian army. Another case in point was that people had to revolt and go on the streets to raise voices and fight for justice against such sexually violent acts by Indian armies.

In the course of the whole discussion, another interesting topic close to home that came up was the topic of 'nupi chenba' and its roots in patriarchy and sexual purity of women. The idea of 'ahing yareppa', which had an

underlying meaning of having sexual intercourse, associated with 'nupi chenba' was introduced to the room. For the society, having spent a night with a man meant that the woman had sex on that night, whether she had it or not. This would come with a lot of stigma and shaming if she did not get married, even if the 'chenba' was against her will. In case of 'chenba' without consent, the discussion pointed out that the act of sexual intercourse, if happened, would be rape and the 'chenba' would be an act of kidnapping. Various cases wherein women were forced, physically or mentally, into submission to elope, especially in the interiors, were also discussed.

To this, a couple of men argued that 'Chenba' was not wrong in its true sense, instead it was a privilege that allowed both men and women to have their own choice. However, some women countered it by saying that the said choice should not be a privilege to begin with and 'chenba' should not be the deciding factor for someone to get married. They pointed out the harmful consequences of forced elopement and the idea of revoking consent at any point of time. Another argument for the legitimacy of 'Chenba' was it being an age-old tradition, which was nothing but an appeal to tradition fallacy.

At the end of the day, the short 3-act play brought about a discussion around the topic of sexual violence and impunity as a result of what the performance intended: to provoke.

## Salt brines of Manipur: The source of Meitei Thum

By: Herojit Nongmaithem

The present day kids might not have seen or even heard of Meiteisalt (thum), but those 90's children must have surely tasted it. To remind again that was so tantalisingly tasty and all have ate those salt cakes. Nowadays these are only used for ritual purposes and are available only at the local markets and Ningel village. It costs heavily nowadays and these are not as tasty as it used to be.

Historical records that of Hudson (1997) in the book "The Meitheids" described that the Loi communities were assigned to work for the production of salt by the Kings of Manipur. The contextual specific connotation of the term Loi is found to be different from its historical specific connotation. Ningel is reported to be the only surviving village where the production of local salt-cake is still in practice to meet the domestic, religious and ceremonial needs of the people of Manipur. The record also highlighted the effect of the earthquake of January, 1869, and there had been to increase the yield of salt water in the well enormously; the water in the Ningel well after the earthquake rose six feet, and that rise had continued up to the present time undiminished. Sharma, (1991) in the Meitirabakki Khunthok Khundarol, Waikhong was considered to be one of the prime locations where salts were manufactured mainly for the royal family. The production of salt under the patron of the king in the Meiteileipak began during the reign of King Paikhomba (1666-97). The scientific study of these salt brines was initiated by Geological



Survey of India (GSI) during the 1960's to 80's. Waikhong, Shikhoang, Chandrakhoang, Phojoukhong, Nongnaukunon, Ningel, Keithelmbani, Chingai, Mariamphung, Namrel, Lachakhulen, Kharasom, Thiwa and Sanakeithel village respectively are being reported by the workers of GSI. One peculiarity from the geological perspective is that these salt brines do occur along the piedmont hills bordering the eastern margin of the Imphal valley and in the shale units of the Disang Group. Many of these are seasonal and discharge varies. They have carried out preliminary researches about the salt quality and content, pressure & temperature, total dissolved solvents, X-ray analyses, etc.

Neither the traditional method of salt production nor the conventional scientific approaches to these salt brines are at present yielding better prospects. In the context a deep insight of the possibilities of high end products can be meaningful. So to cite many of the natural salt brines across the globe are

extremely rich in high end mineral commodities like lithium and rare earth elements. Worldwide identified reserves in 2018 are estimated by the United States Geological Survey (USGS) to be 16 million tonnes. The world's top 3 lithium-producing countries from 2016, as reported by the USGS are Australia, Chile and Argentina. The last decade have experienced a pronounced inclination in the concept of energy production and utilization more towards solar energy than your hydro and thermal energy sources; lithium ion batteries instead of your acid based batteries. That's why this year Nobel Prize for chemistry has been

awarded to the team that conceptualized in their ideas for lithium ion batteries that run almost the entire electronic gadgets ranging from those nano chips to mobile and even the techno-fitted Artificial Intelligence (AI). Viewing these trends and possible resources at Manipur, these traditional salt brines may be targeted for the Lithium reserves instead of running the unprofitable salt cake business. This does not imply to end the much heritaged tradition of salt cakes production rather it can go hand in hand with the search of Lithium sources. One more point to be focused is to target new possibilities of salt brines locations with proper scientific approach. This will eventually bring India particularly Manipur in the world map of Lithium production. A few investments in terms of new and prioritised investigation in these salt brines will be quite logical owing to today's scientific approach. Let's have the pristine taste of Meitei Thum as well as the potential of providing life to those AI's, mobiles, e-gadgets from the soil of Manipur.

(The writer is a Senior Geologist of the Geological Survey of India (GSI), Imphal Office)

### Driving License Lost

I have a lost my Driving License on the way in between Heirangoithong to Singjamie Bazar on 28th September 2019. Finders are requested to handover the same to the undersigned.

Sd/-  
Maibam Sunil Singh  
S/o M. Mosen Singh  
Heirangoithong Maibam Leikai, PO- Canchipur PS Singjamie  
Imphal West District, Pin 790001  
Contact No. 7005155608