

Editorial

Saturday, September 21, 2019

Revisiting Sept. 21 (1948 & 1949)

The Manipuri people have every reason to remember 'September 21' for two historic occasions. This day of 1948 is important because a pioneer leader who was supposed to change the fate of the erstwhile nation had gone underground and secondly, it was on this day of 1949 that Maharaja Bodhachandra signed the Merger Agreement with the Union of India at Shillong.

If one revisits and dissects the incidents of September 21, 1948, at which Hijam Irabot was compelled to go underground, it would be easily understood that it was a matter of intellectual deficiency among the people of those times who had been following the leadership of Hijam Irabot that compelled him to go underground. Everyone knows that it was the incident that happened at Pungdombam on that day where a policeman was killed in an alleged confrontation with the supporters of Hijam Irabot that gave chance to the then government of Manipur to issue warrant of arrest to him. But as per historical record the police team actually used force to stop the supporters of Hijam Irabot who came to attend a meeting organised at MDU Hall to oppose the India Government proposal for formation of Purbachal state by merging Manipur, Tripura, Mizoram, Cachar and Karbi Anglong districts of Assam with Silchar as its capital.

Then, Irabot was already elected as representative of the Manipur State Assembly, but was organizing a protest meet against the India government proposal for formation of new state call Purbachal. Irabot had a dream for the future of Manipur. He wanted an Independent Manipur within the Independent India. The mainstream politician today interpreted the idea of Irabot's Manipur in their own perspective but those who had been following the ideology of the great leader felt that Irabot wanted Manipur to be an Independent Nation. The debate can continue, but one thing that everyone understands is that Irabot wanted a Manipur an Independent nation. This is being stated as he was against the idea of merging few states and districts of North Eastern region to form a new state call 'Purbachal Pradesh'.

So, if the people and those close associates of Irabot, instead of asking him to go underground, stood by his side and continue the movement things could have been change.

A year later, that is 1949, on this day, Maharaj Bodhachandra was invited by the representative of the Indian Union and was forced to sign the controversial Merger Agreement under duress. As per revelation of late Mayengbam Ananda Mohon, who accompanied the Maharajah, the constitutional Head of Manipur of the Independent state of Manipur which have its own Constitution and already have a constituent Assembly of elected representatives by conducting adult franchise, reported cried the whole night. Bodhachandra was forced to sign the Merger agreement.

The signing of the merger agreement has been declared as 'illegal and unconstitutional' after a series of consultation and public meeting by the people of the state in 1993. Well, if Maharaj Bodhachandra sacrificed even at the cost of his life by not signing the Merger Agreement then Manipur today would have been a different one.

Things that wanted to draw the attention of the people of the state is that 1949 was the time when Hijam Irabot was in underground. Police were hunting for him but he was busy mobilizing for a movement by building good relation with the Myanmar Communist Party.

If Hijam Irabot wanted to stay inside India and if his movement was just against the formation of the Purbachal formation, then Irabot could have ended his armed struggle and come out. But he continue his struggle and was even prepared for a mass armed struggle. That may be the reason for his return to the Manipur. But unfortunately, the pioneer leader died on September 26, 1951 at Tungo in Burma, now Myanmar.

Why Hijam Irabot continued his struggle even after India had recognized Manipur and merged it to the Indian Union. If want look back to what he had stated, he always wanted Manipur to be Independent and as the merger means the shattering of the Independence of Manipur, Irabot definitely would have wanted to continue the armed struggle against the merger with the Indian Union.

And the unfortunate part is that most of the close associate of Hijam Irabot turn out to be bourgeois and joined the mainstream India.

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Protective Thinking: Territorial Integration, Flag or Constitution?

Mr. Pakinrichapbo (Advocate) Samzuram Village, Peren Nagaland

Northeast Live News Anchor Mr. Wasbir Hussian in its Northeast Tonight edition hosted a live discussion titled "Way to Naga Peace" on 18.09.19, the panellists includes tall figures from Nagaland and Assam. Among the many questions the Anchor Hussian posed to the panellists, one particular question which Nagas should not just let it go without further deliberation was, "are you optimistic of an early solution to the Naga problems?" One of the panellists, Mr. Sushanta Talukdar, a senior journalist, also shared that the Central Government should not rush to the process fixing time limit but try to bring all groups together for amiable solution.

I had to come out with this small piece, as I am not optimistic at all about the early solution to the Naga problems. Some of the reasons why I cannot be optimistic of an early solution to Naga problems are as follows:

Territorial Integration

As an outsider, one does not have access to the plans of the NSCN-IM and NNPGs negotiators to bring territorial integration of all Naga contiguous areas under single administrative roof. However, more than twenty years of negotiation and statements issued by the NSCN-IM show that it continue to hold Gol responsible for the unification of all the Naga territories. Yet, after the breakdown of first negotiation with the Federal Govt. of Nagaland (1966-67)—for more consult "Why repeat

the 1960s" by Benito Z. Swu in Nagaland post dated 03.05.19—later rejection of Suisa Proposal by AZ Phizo lead NNC, Gol made its position clear that territorial integration is out of the picture. Its latest position on Naga territorial integration was displayed when Mr. R. N. Ravi, interlocutor turned Governor of Nagaland, informed the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs in the Rajya Sabha (while sharing the 213th report on the security situation in the North-eastern States) that the Nagas had now reached a common understanding with the government that "boundaries of the States will not be touched" and "some special arrangements would be made for the Nagas, wherever they are." (The Hindu dated 19.07.18, Details of Naga Agreement emerged). Of course NSCN-IM still maintained that "No integration, no solution". The question is will Gol changed its policy within three months?

It's difficult to fathom what comes next, unless territorial integration is achieved. NSCN-IM hold on the Naga tribes may not remain as it is of now, and only time and future will be the judge of it. Not to forget the mainland journalists and Manipur based media houses love to tag NSCN-IM as a Naga Government in exile. As such without territorial integration it is likely to remain as a Government in exile.

Flag

Honestly speaking Naga flag is really beautiful, more beautiful than the Indian National flag or the

German National Flag. Thanks to our fine Rengma ladies and Gentleman who had beautifully woven and designed it. The larger question is? What purpose does the flag serves when Nagas are still placed under different administrative roof, where inter-tribe relations continuous to remain sour. We must remind ourselves that regionalism has bypassed Naga nationalism, most common Nagas feeling no belongingness with fellow common Nagas. What's more, underground and over-ground decisions makers and general population are more focus on building tribe influences, and list can go on. Nagas have waved the Naga National Flag for more than 70 years, but can't the people think how to wave off the diseases caused by our extreme love of our village, clan, range and tribe system. For many prosperous nations, their national flag had united the citizens cutting across ethnicity, language and cultures, but for us, village thinking, clan thinking, range thinking and tribe thinking had put the people in such a mess that the people still make unity call at this final hour. Ambedkar in its attack on evils of Hindu Caste system brilliantly pointed out that, "You cannot build anything on the foundation of caste." Nagas attempted to build sovereign Naga Nation on the foundation of village and tribe, the current situations is the result of it. Moreover, studying the 14 Naga tribes living under single administrative roofs of the State of Nagaland, some tribes wanted separate administration on account of bad governance, etc. Such

outcome within Nagaland is a subject for serious in-depth research and study instead of brushing it off.

Conclusion

For several decades, Naga nationalists could not carry out democratic debate due to the customs and habits of a primitive tribal man, a person will quickly label his disagreeing opponents as traitor leading to violent clashes. For a typical Naga man, raising his hand has become his second nature. But now, one witness massive changes in the behaviour of the Naga Nationalists of all ranks in different functions. Before dwelling on Naga Constitution, let me remind that Gol acted against the 16-Point Agreement on several occasion, for example in 1972, Nagaland was quietly and unilaterally transferred to the Ministry of Home Affairs from the ministry of External Affairs (P-42, The Naga Imbroiglio - a personal perspective by Charles Chasie). The Central Government curtailed the Nagaland State Government to carry out oil and natural gas exploration citing it as the "exclusive domain" of the centre, despite State Government claim of 371A giving power to the State. People may say Naga peace talks and statehood is different matter, but the people are the same. Will Gol feel safe to grant more power or autonomy to see the Indian legal structure getting destroyed at midnight after recognizing the Naga Constitution?

In such reality, if Nagas still dream of a nation, first step to save the idea of Naga Nation is to achieve territorial integration, leaving other matters to be settled later on.

Rifles Ex-Servicemen Rally



IT News Imphal, Sept. 21

Amega Assam Rifles Ex-servicemen Rally for ex-servicemen of Manipur was conducted under the aegis of HQ IGAR (South) at Khuman Lampak Stadium yesterday. The rally elicited participation by more than 1000 ex-servicemen from all the districts of the State including World War-II veterans, Veer Naris, widows and their dependents. The aim of the rally, organised under the theme 'We Connect - We Care', was to connect with the veterans, strengthen bonds with them and also acknowledge their contribution made for the country during the prime of their lives. The occasion was graced by Lieutenant General Sukhdeep Sangwan, SM**, DG Assam Rifles as the Chief Guest. Brig DS Shishodia, Deputy IGAR (South), Brig Amit Kabthiyal, SM and other Assam Rifles officials were also in attendance.

Speaking on the occasion, Lieutenant General Sukhdeep Sangwan, SM**, DG Assam Rifles at the outset welcomed the august gathering and encouraged all the stakeholders to render maximum support to the veterans who have dedicated the prime of their lives to protect the nation.

Addressing the ex servicemen during the rally, DG Assam Rifles highlighted the contribution of

the DG Assam Rifles felicitated Veer Naris, World War II veterans and other ex-servicemen. An Open Adalat was also conducted by the representatives of HQ DGAR, Shillong to provide a platform for registration of grievances and their immediate redressal. Online as well as on the spot solutions of various problems and grievances were rendered to the ex-servicemen during the rally. As part of the rally, a medical cum dental camp was also organised. 10 doctors from Assam Rifles along with 16 specialist doctors from RIMS, Imphal, 12 specialist doctors from Shija Hospital, Imphal and over 10 specialist doctors from the State Government Medical Department

Assam Rifles and various achievements of the oldest paramilitary force. The DG further highlighted about the year 2019 dedicated as 'Year of NOK' and various new initiatives under the theme of 'We Connect-We Care' undertaken by the Assam Rifles for the welfare of its veterans. The DG lauded the contribution of the veterans and the serving soldiers of Manipur who have immensely contributed as Assam Rifles soldiers for the security and prosperity of India. The DG enlightened the veterans about various beneficiary schemes including the recruitment rallies, sports quota for recruitment in Assam Rifles, reservation in various educational institutes/ hostels and extension of Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS) to Assam Rifles veterans. The DG informed all veterans about conception of an Ex-servicemen (ESM) Cell at every Unit level, adoption of Veer Naris and disabled veterans and outreach programme as part of which the Assam Rifles is identifying its Veer Naris and veterans Pan - India. The DG also used the platform to thank all the media persons, State Government and civil officials for their cooperation and attendance at the event. As part of the event, a felicitation ceremony was organised in which

provided consultation and free medicines to the veterans and their dependants. The needy veterans were also distributed various medical aids like wheel chairs, spectacles, walking sticks and hearing aids at the venue. A number of stalls were also setup during the rally to provide facilities including CSD, banking, Aadhar and PAN card registration etc to the veterans and their dependants. The event was followed by lunch for all participants. The band of Assam Rifles, which was in attendance certainly brought back the memories of old times. The ex-servicemen expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the DG Assam Rifles for organising the event.

District level SVEEP and EVP at Kangpokpi

DIPR Kangpokpi, Sept. 21

A Special Summary Revision and District level SVEEP and Electors Verification programme was held yesterday at Brig Thomas Ground, Kangpokpi district with an objective to facilitate awareness among the voters of the district.

The programme was attended by Chairman Sadar Hills- ADC Haokholal Hangshing; Vice-Chairman SH-ADC Thangzakam Misao; ADC/ADM Kangpokpi Lalramsang Infimate MCS; AC to DC Mangminlina Vaiphei; SDO Champai and T. Waichong Shri Chunglemanang; SDO Island Paotinmei Kipgen; SDO Kangchup Geljang T. Opendro; SDO Lungthin Amjad Ali; ZEO Kangpokpi Lhingneikim Kipgen; CMO Kangpokpi Dr. Kimmeng Misao; Election Officer Chungsat Khongsai; DLOS, staff of DC and SDOs and citizens.

Three Voter Facilitation Centers for three ACs- Saitu, Saikul and Kangpokpi were opened for verification of voters. Different cultural programmes and talent

show by disabled ADUSH-K were also showcased during the function.

'Swachhta Hi Sewa Drive'

IT News Imphal, Sept 21

Taking forward the spirit of the national campaign 'Swachhta Hi Sewa', #IndianArmy has extended its whole hearted support and active participation by its troops in the cleanliness drive in Rangapahar Military Station and Dimapur. The 'Swachhta HiSewa' drive which commenced on 16 Sep 2019 and will be conducted over next two weeks culminating on 'Mahatma Gandhi Jayanti' on 02 Oct 2019.

During this event, the troops, the local population, and civil administration would be organising various events and marches with the message of Swachhta campaign. The residents of Rangapahar Military Station will also be participating in a 'Swachhta Run' and undertake the 'Swachhta Pledge' to commemorate the noble cause.