

Editorial

Saturday, February 15, 2020

Is accepting gifts by newsperson unethical?

Much has been talking about journalists being paid by vested interested groups for the promotion of their activities. There are rumours about celebrity journalists across the country by big corporate houses in exchange for news report which promotes them. In Manipur, people started spreading rumours about journalists being pocketed by politicians by offering them gifts in the form of money or luxurious items. These are rumours spread by vested interested people who had faced the music of reported news items that sabotage their careers. Having said so this write up is not saying that all journalists particularly those who are based in Manipur are clean.

There may be some but if any person who has proof of auctioning their profession for mere gift or benefit, there is a body called All Manipur Working Journalist Union (AMWJU) and Editor's Guild Manipur (EGM) whom they can complain with proof so that the declining image of the journalists' fraternity can be safe. Simply blaming for personal enmity towards the journalists' fraternity will not help the fourth pillar of the Indian Democracy in rendering their service to push forward the nation in the right direction.

When N. Biren Singh led BJP government supported by some other political party replaced the Congress led government in 2017, he being started his career as journalists invited all journalists of the state for a dinner and presented gifts (Samsung Tablet) to each journalist. Many people particularly the opposition criticized it. It was not to the selected journalist that he offered the gift but to all the journalists. It seems like these critics which tried to misinterpret the presentation of gifts seem to have forgotten that – the world has changed today. Diary and pen which used to be gifted to journalists in the earlier days were common and none criticized such presentation of gifts to journalists.

On the other hand, these days people who criticized or judged the activities of journalists started calling those journalists who use to visit Ministers, MLAs, bureaucrat officers without knowing the purpose of the visit. Journalists reporting political beat need to meet Ministers, MLAs, or even the bureaucrats to extract worthy news.

Talk about payment of some money during the press conference is also a matter of serious concern. But why these people paid to the journalist for publishing their news. Instead, they could come to the media house and request for publication in the form of advertisements through proper channels. Blaming the journalists is a kind injustice done to demoralize the spirit of journalism.

People who are not in the profession should remember that everything that is being published by media today is still the nation's conscience. Editorial still continues to condemn the venality of politicians and corruption.

Infringing to one's profession without having a complete understanding of the profession will do no good to the society but will only demoralize those in the profession of journalism where the maximum of them works with sincerity with meager pay.

CATC-114 for Air Force and Army NCC cadets organised

IT News
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The Combined Annual Training Camp-114 for Air Force and Army NCC cadets was organized by Manipur Air Squadron NCC, Imperial Group from February 5 at NCC Group Complex concluded yesterday. The Camp was attended by Air Force and Army cadets of NCC including 163 boys and 88 girl cadets from various schools and colleges of Manipur.

The cadets were imparted training on weapon handling, foot drill, arms drills, aeromodelling, physical training, etc.

For the first time some of the air wing cadets were given a flying experience with the Microlite Virus SW 80. Various lectures & classes were conducted on various NCC topics like, Airframe, Aeromodelling, Metrology, National Integration, Health & Hygiene, Communication skills etc. The cadets were also put through a number of competitions like quiz, debate, extempore, firing, football, drill competitions & cultural events.

As a part of 'Swachh Bharat Abhiyan' a cleanliness drive was carried out in and around ISBT, Imphal and DM College by the cadets. Trekking was also conducted at Cheirao Ching for motivating the cadets to take part in adventure activity and also to improve their physical strength and

overall fitness.

An interesting lecture followed by Mock Drill on First Aid was delivered by Dr Arunkanta, O Ratan Singh & Dr Bankim Chandra and team of Indian Red Cross Society. Imphal West Dist. Fire Lecture was also conducted for the cadets by Fire Department, Fire Services Manipur followed by a demonstration. Dr Nilakanta of Medical Directorate also delivered a lecture on importance of deworming and distributed medicines to the cadets as a part of National Deworming Day.

Also, Officer from 15 AR delivered a motivational lecture with informative videos which was followed by weapon display by the team of 15 Assam Rifles, Mantri Pukhri. A lecture on role of ASC in Armed Forces and its importance was delivered by officer of Indian Army and also Officer from Redshield Division delivered a lecture on Career in Armed Forces and clarified all the queries raised by the cadets regarding the procedures to join the Armed Forces.

Various agencies like Medical Directorate, Fire Services, Public Works Department, Indian Red Cross Society and Principal of DM College of Science has extended support in making this Combined Annual Training Camp-114 a successful event.

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Budget Session: Supplementary Demands for Grants 2019-20 and Budget Estimates, 2020-21

DIPR

On the first day of 10th session of the Eleventh Manipur Legislative Assembly which begins yesterday Chief Minister N. Biren Singh also in-charge of Finance presented Supplementary Demands for Grants, 2019-20 for expenditure from the consolidated funds of the State of Manipur during the financial year 2019-20. The Demands for Supplementary Grants included an additional expenditure of Rs 484479.17 lakhs (Rs 135943.18 lakhs in Revenue Expenditure and Rs 348535.99 lakhs in other expenditure).

Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh, also in-charge of Finance, reaffirming the commitment of the Government stated that the policies of the Government are people-oriented and decisions are based on feedback from the public. He said that the decisions and actions of the Government are evident from the various initiatives taken up such as, 'Go to Hills', 'Go to Village', 'Meeyamgi Numit', 'Hills Leaders Day' and various schemes launched, including Chief Minister's Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT), Chief Minister's Shotharabashingi Tengbang (CMST), Start-Up Manipur and Stand-Up Manipur.

Chief Minister presented the fourth Budget of the present Government of Manipur for the year 2020-21. The total receipts are estimated at Rs. 20,146 crore. The revenue receipts are estimated at Rs. 18,083 crore and capital receipts at Rs. 2,063 crore. The total estimates of State's own tax and non-tax receipts in the budget estimate 2020-21 are Rs. 1,325 crore and Rs. 257 crore respectively. Receipt from the State's share in Central Taxes & Duties is estimated at Rs. 5,630 crore in BE 2020-21. This is an increase of 39 per cent over RE 2019-20 estimates.

Chief Minister also proposed a total expenditure of Rs. 21,224 crore out of the Consolidated Fund of the State for the year 2020-21. Out of the total expenditure, an amount of Rs. 2,066 crore is Charged expenditure and the

remaining amount of Rs. 19,159 crore is Voted expenditure.

Total Revenue Expenditure is estimated at Rs. 16,445 crore. Capital outlay is estimated at Rs. 3,356 crore, which is an increase of Rs. 397 crore over Revised Estimates of 2019-20. Summing up, Chief Minister highlighted the likely fiscal position during the next year with Fiscal deficit estimated at Rs. 1,363 crore. This is 4.06 per cent of the GSDP and it is beyond the prescribed limit of 3 per cent fixed as per State FRBM Act. The total outstanding debt is projected at 35.91 per cent of the GSDP during 2020-21 against Revised estimates of 37.88 per cent.

Chief Minister also highlighted the Investment, Expenditure and Policy Initiatives of the Government. He said that investing in human capital is the need of the hour and priority has been given to Education by enhancing the budgetary outlay from Rs. 1748 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 2017 crore in RE 2019-20 and further to Rs. 2252 crore in BE 2020-21. The Government has also allocated Rs. 6 crore in BE 2020-21 to support Higher Education. To enhance Skill Development, the Government have taken up skill development programs under various schemes including PMKVY, SANKALP and Strive. For Skill Development, Budgetary outlay has been enhanced from Rs. 51 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 71 crore in BE 2020-21.

A budgetary allocation of Rs. 20 crore has been made in BE 2020-21 with an aim to continue to provide support under the flagship Health Programme – Chief Minister's Hakshelgi Tengbang (CMHT). The budgetary support to JNIMS has been increased from the existing level of Rs. 95 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 103.34 crore in RE 2019-20 and Rs. 116.4 crore in BE 2020-21. A budgetary allocation of Rs. 2 crore in BE 2020-21 have been made for proper management of biomedical waste generated to ensure a healthy society.

To provide safe drinking water to the areas in and around Imphal, the allocation of Rs. 15 crore has been provided for BE 2020-21 for the

Chingkhiekhong Water Treatment Plant project. Steps have been taken to start the Implementation of NBD-assisted project of drinking water supply and a provision of Rs. 82.5 crore as state component for this project has been kept in BE 2020-21. The Imphal Sewerage Project Phase-I has been completed and is undergoing trial runs and will be commissioned by March 2020. To enable the PHE department to operationalize the Imphal Sewerage System, a provision of Rs. 10 crore has been provided in RE 2019-20. Budgetary outlay under Drinking Water & Sanitation has been enhanced from Rs. 261 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 426 crore in RE 2019-20 and further to Rs. 1017 crore in BE 2020-21.

To provide pension to employees of the Autonomous District Councils (ADC), the Government has allocated Rs. 13.5 crore and Rs. 35.2 crore respectively in RE 2019-20 & 2020-21. The Government has allocated Rs. 2 crore in BE 2020-21 to construct a Guest House to provide accommodation for the Village Chiefs/Chairman of the hills. The Budgetary outlay under Tribal Affairs & Hills has increased from Rs. 676 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 885 crore in RE 2019-20 and further to Rs. 912 crore in BE 2020-21.

The Budgetary Outlay under Rural Development has increased to Rs. 2714 crore in BE 2020-21 from Rs. 1869 in RE 2019-20. For Public Works Budgetary outlay has been enhanced from Rs. 855 crore in RE 2019-20 to Rs. 895 crore in BE 2020-21. As the State has immense potential for tourism sector, the Government is planning to develop tourist spots in all the districts of the state. For this a budget allocation of Rs. 18 crore has been made in BE 2020-21.

For environmental conservation and protection of forest cover and wildlife, a budgetary allocation of Rs. 1 crore has been provided in BE 2020-21 under The Chief Minister's Green Manipur Mission (CMGMM). For the project 'Rejuvenation and Conservation of Nambul River', an amount of Rs. 97.72 crore has been

sanctioned by the Ministry of Environment and Forest, Government of India of which an amount Rs. 18 crore has been released till date. The budgetary outlay for Forest & Environment has been enhanced from Rs. 232 crore in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 345 crore in RE 2019-20 and further to Rs. 491 crore in BE 2020-21.

For Scheduled Castes, Minorities and Other Backward Castes, the budgetary outlay has been enhanced from Rs. 112 crore from BE 2019-20 to Rs. 275 crore in BE 2020-21. For the welfare of the mediapersons, the Government have enhanced allocation of pension scheme from Rs. 5 lakhs in BE 2019-20 to Rs. 20 lakhs in both RE 2019-20 & 2020-21 under the Manipur Journalist Pension Scheme.

Chief Minister stated that in order to meet any shortfall, the Government proposed to create a 'State Share Corpus' providing an allocation of Rs. 200 crore for BE 2020-21. This is to ensure higher pace of development of the State as the proper flow of funds from Centre under various Centrally Sponsored Schemes depends to a large extent on the provision of adequate State Matching Shares. In addition, a separate 'Development Corpus' has been created with an allocation of Rs. 130 crore in BE 2020-21. This corpus fund will be used to fund special projects which can bring real and tangible benefits to the State. Chief Minister also stated that the Budget is not a 'Magic Pill' that can miraculously solve all the problems, constraints faced by the State in general and particularly the economy. There are serious issues facing the State's economy and the Government, through this budget, conveys its seriousness in tackling these issues to bring about real and holistic development of the State.

Chief Minister Shri N. Biren Singh, Leader of the House also presented Twelfth Report of the Business Advisory Committee, 2020 and also moved for allocation of time proposed by the Committee.

Chandrashekhar Azad and the Soul of Freedom Movement

By-Abhishek Dayal

India's fight against colonial rule was a long and difficult one. Apart from the need to overcome the brutality of an alien regime, the national leaders of the time had the daunting challenge of preparing the poor and disorganized people of our subcontinent for this fight. The most significant aspect of our struggle against foreign domination was the ability of our leaders to lift the people out of their ignorance and the resultant resurgence of the idea of an Indian nation.

It is now well documented that the process of nation building preceded the actual, physical struggle of our freedom fighters, it continued through the most active phases of national movement and for that matter, continues even today – decades after Independence was won.

The fight to revive the soul of the nation was first taken up by the brave-hearts like Lion of Punjab – Lala Lajpat Rai, Lokmany Bal Gangadhar Tilak and numerous early revolutionaries of Bengal. The basic idea of the revolutionaries was to stir the soul of the country, awaken the fighting spirit of the nation, and remind the people of their past glory and to show them that the time has come to stand up and be counted.

In this journey of awakening of India's pride and self-belief, the earnest and impatient youth took up the challenge thrown by the Jallianwallah Bagh (1919) and the setback of the first Gandhian movement (1922) by demonstrating

individual bravery of exceptional order. During this period one of the most momentous event was the coming together of many talented and brave revolutionaries under one organizational umbrella – the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in October 1924 in Kanpur. This new organization saw the loose association of such great revolutionaries as Ramprasad Bismil, Jogesh Chatterjee, Chandrashekhar Azad, Yogendra Shukla, Sachindranath Sanyal, Ashfaqullah Khan, Roshan Singh, Rajendra Lahiri, Bhagat Singh, Bhagwati Charan Vohra and Sukhdev. Over the next decade, most of these names captured the imagination of the nation and stirred the conscience of the masses. That they could instill awe and fear in the heart of the British Raj is no mean achievement, considering the sheer strength of the colonial power which then was at its peak of global influence.

Even in this illustrious group of revolutionaries, the name of Chandrashekhar Azad shines through. In some senses, the image of moustache twirling youth from the heart of India struck cord with the people. Here was a young boy in his twenties who had the guts and the ability to bring down the powerful colonial police to its knees. In a series of revolutionary acts through the twenties, Chandrashekhar Azad and his friends kept themselves in the news. At times when open civil disobedience programmes were not possible due to police repression of highest degree, these revolutionaries

kept the hopes alive of eventual victory for millions of Indians.

Three important aspects of work of Azad makes him unique – his ability to evade capture and remain a "free" man till his death is perhaps the most important. The very name – Azad or free – casts an aura of the post-independence India. His very name and his knack of being one arm away from the police made him the darling of the country. His final, solitary stand against a posse of policemen at Allahabad's Company Garden or Alfred Park – now aptly named Chandrashekhar Azad Park – represents the undaunted and free spirit of the man – an inspiration for generations to come. That he was betrayed by some of his colleagues adds to his mystique – for such treachery was all too common in those days. The message in his death was: living and dying a free man was worthy goal in life. Many have emulated him in making supreme sacrifice for the nation since then.

The second aspect of Azad's personality was that he was an iconic figure that rose above his caste or religious identity. Changing his surname name to Azad was but the starting point of that process. It is said that at the age of 15, when he was first detained by the police, he gave his name as Azad and his father's name as Swatantra. In all the facts, legends and folklore associated with him, nowhere does his religion or caste come into picture. He was an Indian first and last. That was, and is, a very unique aspect of his personality.

The third aspect of Azad, shared by his friends in the Hindustan Republican Association (HRA) was a clear vision of why they were doing what they were doing and what they wanted a free India to be. Thus for instance, when Azad and his friends robbed government property to collect funds, the idea was always twofold – one, to undermine the authority of the British police and two, to build an organization that could stand up to the colonial rule. Aligned with their noble and selfless ideals of creating a just and equal India, these robberies were seen by the people in a similar light as Robin Hood – not as acts of criminality, but of rebellion against injustice. During the long periods when Azad lived undercover, mostly near Jhansi, he took on the role of teacher and taught children of the poor in the nearby villages.

Chandrashekhar Azad did not die. He lives on in our hearts. He can be seen, alive and confident, in Chandrashekhar Azad Park, twirling his mustachios, musing with satisfaction at the great distance India has travelled since his times. However, looking closely at the iconic statue, one can also detect a hint of worry on his forehead. It seems as if he is wondering if we have become too complacent about our hard won freedom and about the work that still needs to be done to fulfill his dream of building a nation that is strong and just.

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