

Editorial

Saturday, January 11, 2020

Traffic chaos – a serious problem

Promises after promises for improvement of traffic chaos make no difference in Imphal city. Since 2014, Imphal Times has been drawing the attention of the concern government authority to take up some stringent measures for its improvement. When BJP led government under Chief Minister N. Biren Singh came to power people waited for change as he himself had stated that he will make sure that the traffic regulation improved. But people continue to face horror while walking or driving in the streets of Imphal. Is it the government alone that should be blamed or is it lack of discipline of the people riding vehicles.

To be frank, Imphal city witness a phenomenal increase in the amount of vehicles. This perhaps can be taken as an indication of the rising social status of the public and improving economic conditions in the state. While these factors are a welcome sign, the fact remains that the concerned authorities have failed to keep pace with the times and the changing social scenario in the state resulting in heavy traffic jams and delays which needs to be addressed immediately. An effort to fix responsibility to the citizens in maintaining road discipline is what the government should plan and implement.

The short term policies and systems being implemented from time to time in an attempt to ease the congestions and traffic jams have not been able to alleviate the problem in any way, on the contrary these ad-hoc measures have managed to confuse the public and compound the problem the authorities have been trying to solve. The meeting of Traffic regulation and parking committee convened by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh has not been of much help, and no sitting of the TRPC is being heard today. Queries put up to the concerned departments have only resulted in more bewildering responses- a classic example of the effectiveness of passing the buck around that has been at work in all government set ups.

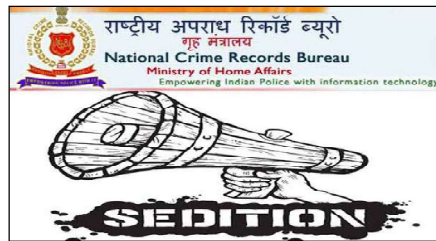
While formulation of policies and systems to control and regulate traffic may be a beginning in the right direction, the fact remains that the increasing number of vehicles need additional space to accommodate them and juggling acts of the traffic system by the experts, however efficient and experienced they may be, will not bear fruit. In addition to the footbridge being constructed in many part of Imphal city what is required are additional parking spaces at strategic locations.

However, construction of public utilities does not automatically guarantee improvement- their proper usage is as important- an obvious example being the use of footpaths by the vendors and shopkeepers to stock and ply their goods forcing the pedestrians to walk on the road. The need to streamline and re-orient the traffic police personnels is also being felt by the public. Turning a blind eye to the irregularities being committed by the drivers of various public and commercial transport vehicles in consideration for a "quick handshake" has been well documented- despite the dangers and inconveniences such greedy acts causes. The present government ministers and high ranking officials may not be feeling the burden such traffic jams causes as they seem to have a prerogative of the right of use of the road over the common public but unless some concrete steps are taken up very soon, the only option that would be available to them would be to use their feet with their retinue of escorts and assistants wading through the impossible traffic- surely a distracting relief for the stranded common public on the road.

Sedition cases double since 2016, Jharkhand records maximum: NCRB Data 2018

By Raju Vernekar
Delhi/Mumbai, Jan 11

At least 18 sedition cases were reported in Jharkhand followed by Assam with 17 cases in 2018, as per the latest report of crime in India, released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2018. On the other hand, J&K, a State, now a Union Territory, infamous for presence of separatist forces, reported only 12 cases of sedition. However J & K witnessed a sharp increase in sedition cases up to 12 in 2018 compared to just one in 2017. There has been sharp increase in sedition cases-35 (2016), 51 (2017) and 69 (2018). Of 69 incidents of sedition reported in 2018, 47 cases were reported from Jharkhand, Jammu & Kashmir and Assam together. Besides, Kerala (9) and Manipur (4) also made it to the top 5 in the list of 2018. Assam, battling insurgency, illegal immigrants and lack of development registered offences against 27 persons. Jharkhand and J&K, who had their share of insurgency hardly have topographical similarity or cultural proximity. But the cries of "freedom" have been reverberating in the valley



since 1989, giving rise to rebellions. On the other hand in Jharkhand, the former BJP led Governments had tough time battling with Left Wing Extremism (LWE). In Jharkhand, the Pathalgadi movement, with its epicentre in Khunti, advocated the idea of having liberated lands in the interiors where the administration's interventions were prohibited. The villagers declared the land as liberated land through writings on stone plaques – and allegedly prohibited entry of the administration in their villages. Soon after coming to power in the end of 2019, Chief Minister Hemant

Soren announced that cases against Pathalgadi supporters will be scrapped. Section 124A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), which deals with sedition, States, "Whoever, by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added." In the meanwhile as per the NCRB report, in 2017, 901 offences were

registered under the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA), while that number increased up to 1,182 in 2018. They included Assam (308) followed by Manipur (289), J&K (245) and Jharkhand (137). In 2017, the highest number of such cases were registered by Manipur (330), followed by J&K (156) and UP (109). Similarly the number of cases registered under the Official Secrets Act (OSA), increased to 40 in 2018, compared to 18 cases registered in 2017. Maharashtra registered the highest number (16) of cases under the OSA, followed by UP (7) and Punjab (5) in 2018. In 2017, the maximum number of such cases was registered by Rajasthan (4), and UP (3). The NCRB report of 2018 was delayed by six months after the 2017 edition was released almost a year late as the bureau had added new data and many states had not provided proper data or replied to the clarifications sought. In the latest report as well, some states, such as Bihar and West Bengal, did not respond to clarifications sought by NCRB and their data was "provisional."

Assam Don Bosco University conferred with 'Engaged University of the Year 2020 Award'

IT News
Sonapur, Jan. 11

Assam Don Bosco University won the "Engaged University of the Year 2020 Asia Pacific (Entrepreneurship and Engagement Excellence) Award" on January 10, 2020. This prestigious international award is conferred by the Accreditation Council for Entrepreneurial & Engaged Universities (ACEEU), Netherlands. The award recognizes the University's monumental work in community engagement and social service – higher education making a change in the lives of people around

the University campus. Don Bosco University won the award against stiff competition from the final shortlisted institutions across the Asia-Pacific region including Swinburne University of Technology (Australia), Fuzhou University (China), Melbourne Polytechnic (Australia), Singapore University of Technology (Singapore), University of the Sunshine Coast (Australia) and Australian Catholic University (Australia). Pro-Vice Chancellor of Assam Don Bosco University, Fr (Dr) Joseph Nellianatt received the award, on behalf of the University, at a gala

ceremony held at Taj Resort & Spa, Kochi, Kerala on January 10, 2020. The Vice Chancellor, Fr (Dr) Stephen Mavely, saw in the award "a validation of the University's engagement in 'Service Learning' – a unique feature of Don Bosco University that integrates academic inputs, relevant community-centred activities followed and preceded by structured reflection in an intertwined partnership. It combines a learning process that results in academic, civic and personal development while, at the same time, tackling the challenges affecting the wider society". The University was established in

2008. Don Bosco University is a project of the Salesians of Don Bosco (SDB) executed by Don Bosco Society, Azara, Guwahati. Assam Don Bosco University, Guwahati is the first University in India of the worldwide Don Bosco Society, present across 132 countries serving 9 million young people. In October 2018, the University was awarded 'University of the Year' (among universities in India in existence for 1-10 years) by FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry) at the 14th FICCI Higher Education Summit 2018 held in New Delhi.

Opinion

Manipur Life beyond the ILP

By Yambem Laba

For Manipur the year 2020 began in Imphal as the 4th Indian State to be 'shielded' by the Inner Line Permit under the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation of 1873. This archaic law was drawn up by the then British Crown to safeguard the interests of the indigenous tribal population then residing in the Districts of Lushai Hills now Mizoram State, Naga Hills now Nagaland State and the un-administered areas of te then North Eastern Frontier Agency (NEFA) now Arunachal Pradesh State. The Lushai and Naga Hills had then formed part of Assam while NEFA was loosely administered from Shillong t the then capital of unified Assam. Theoretically it was plain and simple that these innocent tribals mostly of whom were yet to be introduced to the money economy needed to be shielded from the greed and avarice of the plains people from Assam and elsewhere in Bengal and be exploited to the hilt. Thus although being fellow Indian citizens one would still need a special permit a Visa of sort to visit these areas for a given duration of time not exceeding six months. Amongst the Dos and Don'ts listed to the holder of the permit is that he/she cannot be

engaged in killing of elephants and tapping of rubber. In the post independence era this protection was continued in Assam and NEFA and continues to do so till date. In Manipur it was implemented because it was not a part of British India but an Indian Princely State. But post 1947 when Manipur was administered by its own elected representative under a titular king it had adopted a permit system whereby outsiders required a permit to be obtained before entering the State. Then after Manipur got merged within the Indian Union in 1949 through the controversial and much debated Merger Agreement signed between the then Maharajah who was a titular head and the Government of India in Shillong the same entry permit system continued to be in vogue till 1952 when the then Chief Commissioner Himat Singh had it abolished opening up the floodgates of illegal immigrants to flock to Manipur in search of greener pastures. Then came the Foreigners' movement of Assam which had crippled the State for more than half a decade a saw the hoisting into power of the likes of Messrs Prafulla Mohanta and Brigu Phukan to power riding on the euphoric waves of the people following the

Assam Accord which was signed at the behest of then Premier Rajiv Gandhi. The agreed points was to detect and deport all foreigners who had strayed into Assam post 1971. By 1979-80 the Foreigners' movement had found reflection in Manipur under the All Manipur Students' Union (AMSU) and the All Manipur Students Co-ordinating Committee (AMSCOC). In 1980 the then chief minister R.K. Dorendra Singh signed a truce between his Government and the AMSU and AMSCOC inking down every details which the agitators were demanding. But it was not an executive order like the Assam Accord where although signed in the presence of Rajiv Gandhi it was inked by the then Union Home Secretary on the part of the Government of India and officials of the Assam Government on one part and the All Assam Students Union (AASU) on the other part. In the case of Manipur it was done so for it contained the signatures of the Chief Minister and other political leaders on one part and the student agitators on the other only. Meanwhile the fears of the Manipuri people losing its identity like those of the Tripuris of Tripura and to Kacharis of Assam and the Bhutias-Lepcha communities of Sikkim had continued to haunt the State. And in 1994 the Foreigners' movement was relunched by the AMSU under the leadership of N. Mohillal who was then President. Manipur began to burn again. Manipur incidentally was under President's Rule and the

Governor was the old soldier Lt. General V.K. Nayyar (Rtd) the man who got N. Bisheshwor the founder Chairman of the proscribed People's Liberation Army (PLA) of Manipur captured in 1981. The wizened old soldier first offered to olive branch to the AMSU and had instructed me to reach out to them. So I then told Mohillal to enter into an accord then for Manipur being under President's Rule it will tantamount to signing an accord with the Government of India. General Nayyar had earlier objected to his presence during the signing ceremony but I reminded him that although as the Head of the State it might be true but also reminded him that he was also the Head of the Government and hence his presence was mandatory. So it was sometime in the fall of 1994 that the formal accord to identify and deport the illegal immigrants from Manipur was signed at the Raj Bhawan Imphal. Signing on behalf of the Government of Manipur was K.K. Sethi IAS Chief Secretary and H.V. Goswami IAS (Rtd) Advisor to the Governor of Manipur as Witness. N. Mohillal President on behalf of AMSU and yours truly, myself as the witness on behalf of AMSU. The simple process of identification was to ask simple questions in Manipuri as to what his name was and his grandfather's name and village. And within six months the Government machinery was able to detect more 4000 illegal immigrants and the entire process like almost all government schemes

died a natural death. Then came from Sharmila and her 16 years long fast crusade against the Armed Forces Special Powers Act ad the outrage over the rape and murder of Manorama Devi by personnel of the 17-Assam Rifles. Then came the Naked protest of the 10 Meira Paibi (women social activists) in front of the Gates of the Kangla where the Assam Rifles were garrisoned with a placard that had simply read "Indian Army Come rape us". That picture went viral and the Indian Army was seen the world over as a "Rapists Army". The timely damage control by Manmohan Singh then premier saved the Day. He had instituted the Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee to study the feasibility of replacing the AFSPA with a more "humane" Act and also ordered the Assam Rifles out of the Kangla ending more than a century old British legacy. Then came the footfalls of the Indo-Naga peace talks between the NSCN (I-M) and the Government of India. Earlier in 2001 the Government of India got a taste of the fury of the Manipuri read Meitei the plainsmen of the State when the clause without territorial limits to the cease-fire agreement. Then came the movement for the demand for the implementation of the Inner Line Permit System in Manipur. Earlier the UPA Government had categorically stated that the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation 1873 was an archaic law which has no place in modern India. However a hard

pressed then Chief Minister Okram Ibobi of the Congress Government enacted an Act which ran something like Manipur Guests Regulation Act and sent it to the Centre for its acceptance which was obviously denied. Then came the N. Biren Singh led coalition government in Manipur which is being headed by the BJP and hard pressed again the Biren Government again passed the Manipur People's Protection Act on which the Centre sat on it again. Then in a State where public agitations can be said to be a habitual way of life the CAB ghost crept in. And before the last elections to the Lok Sabha the BJP had withdrawn it for fear of not seeing through the Rajya Sabha CM N. Biren Singh had returned home almost claiming singlehandedly not seeing the Bill through and had orchestrated victory rallies and receptions across the State. But in the post election scenario when it became crystal clear that the BJP was going to see through it's main election agenda of seeing the CAB through agitations began rearing its head in Manipur with the formation of the MANPAC a conglomeration of various civil society organizations and the battle lines began to be drawn. A worried CM Biren rushed to New Delhi to plead with Union Home Minister Amit Shah to insert a searate clause in the CAB exempting Manipur from it. (to be contd.)

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