

Editorial

Friday, January 24, 2020

Earlier it was outlaws, then the govt. Machineries, Now the CSOs started infringing to media freedom

Imphal Times evening newspaper is registered under the Registrar for News Paper of India (RNI) and started publication after getting valid permission for publication from the District Administration. Since the launching of this paper, dedicated team members of the *Imphal Times* spare no pain in rendering their services to make sure that people of the state get information of their interest. Be it trade and commerce, law and order, peoples' agitations, heinous crime against children, government's policies, corruption and criticisms etc. team *Imphal Times* with limited staffs has been trying to make sure that the information are timely serves to readers.

The idea of journalism and its utilizations never remain same as the world keep on changing from time to time. When Reuter started wire service in Europe it was solely for providing information of trade related activities. When Karl Marks, Mahatma Gandhi, Mao se Tung Hijam Irahbot and NK Sanajaoba etc. started journalism it was for a cause. Journalism that time was a tool to wake up the slumbering common people who didn't even know that they were being ruled and colonized by alien people. When people fail to understand about their rights entitled to each and every human, the leaders of those times used journalism to make them understand their rights.

The world has changed a lot. Unofficially there are various regions being kept as colony by superior regime. But after the non-existence of De-Colonise Committee of the United Nation, officially no region has been officially recognized as a colony by superior regimes which are members of the United Nations.

After 1987, there showed a paradigm shift of journalism and its practice. During middle month 2015 the world politics showed drastic change. Each and every government running their respective government, having understood of the power of media are making all effort to put the media on their own pocket. The essence of patriotism that once runs through the veins of the journalists of olden days seems to have parish. Experienced journalists, not only in India but across the globe are working hand in glove with their respective government. And the situation facing today, witnessed by almost all people including those not affected by the changing media trend even understood that something is seriously wrong with the media of today, which is once considered as the fourth pillar of Democracy.

Media today is in grave danger. In conflict ridden state like Manipur and other North Eastern states of Manipur (leave aside Jammu and Kashmir) there is no guarantee to the security of media persons. When it comes to the state of Manipur, till 2000, media houses and those working in different publication received uncountable threat and intimidation either from the government (state actors) and some outlawed armed organizations for not accepting their dictate on what to publish and what not to be published. And many times it was the people of this state and particularly the civil society organizations and human rights body that came out for those working in the media houses.

Later part of 2015, the trend of civil bodies and people of the state protecting media person seem changed. When government notified order of serious action for publication of news which appeared more like a mouthpiece of the UGs, the UGs keep sending their press statements forcing the media houses to publish it or to face serious consequences if fail to do so. Now what is more worrying is that beside these two element which is an allergic to media people, another third party which once stand for the cause of fair reporting emerges.

A news item published in this newspaper on January 21, 2020, regarding a meeting between the CSOs representatives of Manipur and the NSCN-IM Supremo at Hebron in Dimapur, was being question by some CSO leaders about the region for the publication. Editor of this newspaper received two calls asking me the source of the news. Those calls were not intimidation and perhaps they might want to know from where *Imphal Times* get the news. The intention of the reporting was a simple attempt to let the people know that - two groups, one a civil society and another armed rebel group engaging peace talk with the government of India finally sit together for talk. Nobody knows what the members of the CSOs from Manipur and the NSCN-IM Supremo **Thuigalen Muivah** discussed. But sitting together presumably is a signed of good gesture.

The unfortunate part is an announcement by one Jitendra Ningombam, the media co-ordinator of the COCOMI at which he told other media houses not to publish the news item carried by *Imphal Times* under the heading "**Differences between Manipur's CSOs and NSCN-IM likely to end**", on the ground that the news was not authentic one. He even advice the journalists on what news to be published and what should not be published. This confused the credibility of the *Imphal Times* to many of our readers. However, two days later, the President of the UCM Karam Sunil in a press meet stated that they did meet NSCN-IM Supremo Th. Muivah at Hebron.

It is alright when someone criticizes and blames newspaper or even takes up defamation case for reporting wrong information. But trying to sabotage the image of a newspaper for reporting the event that has happened is nothing but an act of intrusion to the media freedom.

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail : 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.

By Raju Vernekar

As we are set to celebrate 71 st Republic Day, the presence of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro as the chief guest at the R day function assumes significance, since with this visit bilateral ties and strategic partnership between both the countries is expected to be strengthened.

The invitation extended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the sidelines of 11th BRICS Summit held in Brasilia, was accepted with pleasure by Bolsonaro.

This year there will be 22 tableaux from 16 states/Union Territories and 6 Central Ministries, rolling down the Rajpath in New Delhi, at the grand R day parade. NDRF was raised in 2006 for specific tasks of relief and rescue during natural and man-made disasters or similar life-threatening situations.

Over 600 school children will be carrying out exercises and drill. A spectacular march past by the Indian armed and paramilitary forces will be an added attraction. While R Day is a national festival, celebrated all over the country, it is important to take stock of situation related to different aspects of economy and social conditions prevailing in the country.

Economic slow down
The country is facing economic slow down. Although Prime Minister Narendra Modi aims for a 5 trillion dollar economy by 2024, the task seems to be difficult since GDP needs to grow steadily. As per the Government statistics, India's economy is expected to grow at 5% (as against earlier forecast of 6.1 per cent). But experts including former Union Finance P Chidambaram have termed the claim as "exaggerated". GDP came down to 4.5 per cent in quarter II of 2019-2020 (against 5 per cent in quarter I of 2019-2020) and declined consecutively for 7 quarters.

Inflation
The National Statistical Office (NSO), has indicated that the Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) has spiked to 7.35 per cent (from earlier 5.54 per cent) in December, triggering further growth concerns amid a slowing economy. The retail inflation is the highest witnessed since July 2014. The real worry for the RBI and government is the rate of food (vegetable) inflation, which was the key trigger behind the steep rise in inflation in December 2019.

MHRC have no adequate manpower, vehicles; YFPHR urges for immediate upgradation

IT News
Imphal, Jan 25

Youth's Forum for Protection of Human Rights (YFPHR) has urged the Government of Manipur to upgrade the Manipur Human Rights Commission by notifying to open the Administration Division, Law Division, Investigation Division and Research and Transparency Division at the earliest. It also urged to provide sufficient Vehicles which could reach out every nook and corner of the state besides setting up Human Rights Cell in every districts of the state of Manipur.

"We learned that due to lack of enough manpower and the infrastructure within the Manipur Human Rights Commission, various cases on the violation of Human Rights could not be properly addressed as the primary Divisions such as Administration, Law, Investigation and Research and

India on 71st Republic Day

Poverty

Nearly 25 states and Union Territories have been facing poverty, hunger, income inequality and every fifth Indian is below the poverty line states the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Index 2019-20 recently released by NITI Aayog. The index, aimed at measuring performance vis-a-vis the United Nations-mandated SDG goals, was prepared after a survey in 640 districts. With 21 per cent of the population below poverty line, India's target is to bring it down to 10.95 per cent. However only six states have shown some improvement and other states are lagging behind.

Disinvestment in PSUs
The massive disinvestment in public sector undertakings (PSUs), amply proves that the economy is on unsteady wicket. Many PCUS-Air India(New Delhi) (debt burden of Rs 80,000 crore), BPLC (Govt's share 53.29 per cent), SICI (63.75 per cent), Container Corporation of India Ltd. (New Delhi) (30.8 per cent), Tehri Hydro Development Corporation India Ltd. (THDCIL) (Rishikesh, Uttarakhand) (75 per cent), North Eastern Electric Power Corporation Ltd (NEEPCO), Meghalaya (100 per cent) and NTPC Ltd. (the government's stake has already come down to 63) are on the disinvestment list. NDA Govt raised Rs 2,79,622 crore from the disinvestment of PSUs(2014-2019) compared to Rs 1,07,833 crore, raised by earlier UPA Government. Amid this the question why profit making BPLC figures in the list of disinvestment remains unanswered.

Investment in infra sector
Amid resource crunch, the Government has announced a plan to invest Rs.102 lakh crore in the infrastructure sector in the next 5 years to achieve the GDP target of \$5 trillion by 2024-25. Some of the sectors are: NIP projects covering expressways, national gas grid and PMAY-G (Rs 42 lakh crore), energy (Rs. 24.54 lakh crore), Road projects (Rs. 19.63 lakh crore), Suburban infrastructure (Rs. 16.29 lakh crore) and railway projects(Rs. 13.68 lakh crore). Although a portion of this investment will be shared by respective state governments, the plan is expected to put enormous burden on the Central exchequer.

US-Iran Strife
The escalation in the tension between the US and Iran can have implications on India's exports to

the Persian Gulf nation, according to the Federation of Indian Exporters' Association (FIEO). India's exports to Iran in 2018-19 were worth \$3.51 billion and the imports were valued at \$13.52 billion. Indian exporters may find their payments getting blocked in the coming months. The rupee kitty with Iran, through which the payments to Indian exporters are made, is fast depleting. Unless an alternate mechanism is put in place, the Rupee-Rial trade might come to a grinding halt.

FDI
The Government has relaxed FDI norms in single-brand retail trading, contract manufacturing, coal mining, and digital media. Further, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) is working on "new industrial policy" and "national e-commerce policy", which are expected to be announced by March 2020. According to Union Commerce Minister Ramesh Prabhu, the government has been working on a plan to bring in \$100 billion FDI this year.

Indian Rupee
Indian rupee has been hovering around 72 against US dollar. The rupee which went through bouts of volatility earlier, fell further to breach the 72 mark against the US dollar (USD), spooked by a surge in global oil prices. A surge in crude prices raised the spectre of a higher import bill for India.

Population
The population of India is estimated at 1,368,938,792 (equivalent to 17.74 per cent of the total world population) and India ranks second in terms of population in the world. 33.6 per cent population is urban (460,249,853) and remaining population is settled in rural areas. The population comprises 70,71,26,717 (51.6 per cent) males and 66,24,07,581 (48.4 per cent) women population. India is expected to add nearly 273 million people between 2020 and 2050.

Health
Despite various public health schemes, health care sector continues to remain neglected going by the recent death of 107 infants in Kota's (Rajasthan) JK Lon Hospital within a month. Besides, a total of 146 children died in Umaid and MDM hospitals in Jodhpur in December. Thus the issue of spike in fatalities at the state-run institutions and evidence of poor hygiene, broken equipment and staff shortages continues to raise head time and again. Sixty per cent of primary health centres (PHC) in India have only one doctor. Only 20 per cent of the PHCs fulfil Indian public health standard norms.

Food grains

Average yields of most crops in India are still rather low. Amid low income growth scenario, demand for food grains, is projected at the level of 256 MT this year. It comprises 112 MT of rice, 82 MT of wheat, 39 MT of coarse grains and 22 MT of pulses.

Literacy
The overall literacy rate in Urban India is 79.5 per cent (74.8 per cent women, 83.7 per cent men), while it is 64.7 per cent in rural India (56.8 per cent women, 72.3 per cent men). There is a wide gender disparity in the literacy rate. The low female literacy rate has a dramatically negative impact on family planning and population stabilisation efforts.

Unemployment
Unemployment rate increased to 8.50 percent in October from 7.20 percent in September 2019. The unemployment rate averaged 5.16 percent from 1983 until 2019, reaching an all time high of 8.50 percent in October of 2019 and a record low of 3.53 percent in December 2011. The latest Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) released by the National Statistical Organisation (NSO), Kerala and Jammu and Kashmir have the highest rate of joblessness, while Gujarat and Karnataka have the least joblessness.

Electrification
Prime Minister Narendra Modi on April 29, 2018, had declared that 6 lakh villages in the country were electrified by 100 percent. However official data, reveals that only 7.3 % of the total Indian villages, are having 100% household connectivity, and about 31 million homes in Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, and Rajasthan are still in the dark.

Housing
The Government has announced to build 1.12 crore houses by 2022. It claims that 24 lakh houses were given to beneficiaries under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) (Urban) and the number will soon reach 50 lakh. But the fact remains that even after 4 years after the launch of PMAY-Urban, just 20 per cent houses were constructed, while another 52 per cent are grounded for construction.

Space Technology
The Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) which has already made significant advancement is planning to send three astronauts to space for seven days by 2022, under "Gaganyaan mission", the indigenous human spaceflight programme. India is expected to become one of the most powerful countries in the time to come. Let us hope that India becomes super power by 2030.

Name Changed

I, the undersigned, Binda Wagle of Senapati Dist., p.o T. Waichong P.S Kangpokpi do hereby declare that I have renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of my old name Wakle Chetty as I have assumed my new name Binda Wagle .

Sd/-

Binda Wagle
Address Gorkha Tapon
Senapati.p.o T Waichong P.S Kangpokpi

Name Changed

I, the undersigned, Bal BDR Wagle of Senapati Dist., p.o T Waichong P.S Kangpokpi do hereby declare that I have renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of my old name Balaram Wakle Chetty as I have assumed my new name Bal BDR Wagle .

Sd/-

Bal BDR Wagle
Address Gorkha Tapon
Senapati.p.o T Waichong P.S Kangpokpi

Name Changed

I, the undersigned, Arjun Wagle of Senapati Dist., p.o T Waichong P.S Kangpokpi do hereby declare that I have renounced, relinquished and abandoned the use of my old name Arjun Wakle Chetty as I have assumed my new name Arjun Wagle .

Sd/-

Arjun Wagle
Address Gorkha Tapon
Senapati.p.o T Waichong P.S Kangpokpi

Holiday

Imphal Times will have no publication on Sunday, January 26, 2020 on account of Press Holiday in connection with the 71st Republic Day of India.

SD/- Manager