



The Power of Truth
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By Witoubou Newmai

Manipur burning under utter neglect

The multi ethnic fissure of Manipur, once again, is portentously ripe for eruption - a classic illustration of the Central Government's partisan and cockeyed approach in dealing with the volatile situation in the state. For a month now, the three communities in Manipur—the Nagas, the Kukis and the Meiteis— have been juxtaposed in a situation where a slight spark could spiral into a catastrophic scenario.

Regrettably, the Central Government, whose pertinent attention and intervention is imperative to defuse the situation, is still absent. When will the Central Government allow itself to make an effort to separate what is hypocrisy and what is not? Except to cut ribbons, not a single Union minister has shown urgency to visit Manipur so far to take stock of the situation.

It is not an exaggeration to say that not a single day went by without a union minister's presence down south at the height of the recent Cauvery water impasse. This nonchalant attitude also brings to the fore the sense of alienation and disenchantment among different sections of the people of in the region. The Central Government is not only skewing from its obligation but also fueling the alienation.

The United Naga Council (UNC) has imposed the indefinite blockade on all goods trucks plying along Imphal-Dimapur route and Imphal-Silchar route connecting Manipur shortly after the Manipur government drew up a plan to declare Sadar Hills and Jiribam as full-fledged revenue districts.

The stir has led to increase in prices of all essential commodities. Fitful transportation of consumer items under heavy security arrangements through Imphal-Jiribam highway has not been able to help solve the acute shortage of goods, including petroleum products, in a land-locked Manipur. The people have been caught up in between the issue and made to bear the brunt of the stalemate. It also resulted in counter blockade in the valley on the flow of goods to the hill districts, smothering all avenues to envision a way out of the unfolding affairs.

Even at this level of danger, however, the Central Government is still displaying its insipid attitude.

It has been New Delhi's way to give undue emphasis to any insurgency related incident but neglect the wail of the distraught people. For seasoned observer as well an inhabitant of the region, the depressing precedence to hype over all the wrong reasons, is a perpetual norm. The despair and forlorn engulfing any of the places of the Northeast region never merits the Centre's registration until the situation advanced into dire straits.

Things have turned from bad to worse in Manipur. After the arrest of the UNC leaders, there is a marked intensification of economic blockade in the hills and counter blockade in the valley, threatening the trend to assume a dangerous communal tone. The Government of Manipur under the leadership of O Ibobi Singh seems to have exhausted its resources to tackle the situation.

But the continued Central Government's utter indifference to the grim scenario of Manipur is a major concern. The UNC has been saying that it cannot directly hold dialogue with the Manipur Government citing 'severance of ties' with the latter. The Central Government, knowing the position of the Manipur Government and the UNC, should invest meaningful and urgent intervention into the impasse.

LEFT WING |

IANS

Stop pressuring kids over grades

If you want your kids to become successful later in life, better avoid pressuring them over grades, suggests new research.

Parents should not obsess over grades and extracurricular activities for young schoolchildren, especially if such ambitions come at the expense of social skills and kindness, as doing so can work against helping kids become well adjusted and successful in life, the study said.

"When parents emphasise children's achievement much more than their compassion and decency during the formative years, they are sowing the seeds of stress and poorer well-being, seen as early as sixth grade," said study co-author Suniya Luthar, Professor at Arizona State University in the US.

"In order to foster well-being and academic success during the critical years surrounding early adolescence, our findings suggest that parents should accentuate kindness and respect for others at least as much as (or more than) stellar academic performance and extracurricular accolades," Luthar noted.

The study focused on perceptions of parents' values among 506 sixth grade students from an affluent community.

Kids were asked to rank the top three of six things their parents valued for them.

Three values were about personal successes such as good grades and a successful later career, and the other three were about kindness and decency towards others.

The researchers examined underlying patterns on scores based on children's perceptions of their parents' achievement emphasis (relative to children's kindness to others).

These patterns on perceived achievement emphasis were compared against the children's school performance and actions as measured by grade point average and in-class behaviour.

Results showed that mothers and fathers perceived emphasis on achievement versus interpersonal kindness played a key role in the child's personal adjustment and academic performance, as did perceptions of parents' criticism.

The best outcomes were among children who perceived their mothers and fathers as each valuing kindness toward others as much as, or more than, achievements, Luthar said.

Much poorer outcomes were seen among children who perceived either mothers or fathers valuing their achievements more highly than they valued being kind to others.

The findings, published online in the Journal of Youth and Adolescence, demonstrate the value of being socially oriented, Luthar said.

"It is beneficial for kids to be strongly connected with their social networks, whereas focusing too much on external validations (such as grades, extra-curricular honours) for their sense of self-worth can lead to greater insecurity, anxiety and overall distress," she added.

COMMENTARY

David Kaye
Reuters

The high price of Turkey's 'witch-burning' crackdown



Demonstrators shout slogans during a protest against the arrest of three prominent activists for press freedom, in central Istanbul, Turkey on June 21, 2016. (REUTERS File Photo)

Necmye Alpay greeted me warmly. Dressed casually in a workout-style jacket and sneakers, her spirit of optimism stood in stark contrast to the sparseness of the setting: the Bakirkoy Women's Prison in Istanbul.

Alpay has been held in Bakirkoy since the beginning of September. I met with her when I was in Turkey this month on an official mission as the United Nations' monitor for freedom of opinion and expression worldwide. The government invited me to visit back in February, before the July 15 coup attempt, before the state of emergency declared by President Recep Tayyip Erdogan that same month, but well after a crackdown on government criticism had begun.

Alpay is a prominent translator, linguist and writer based in Istanbul. She was detained along with her friend, Asli Erdogan, one of Turkey's most accomplished novelists and essayists. The government refused my request to meet with Erdogan (no relation to the president), but allowed me to spend an hour with Alpay on Nov. 17.

Both women were detained in late August, apparently because of their association with Özgür Gündem, a pro-Kurdish newspaper shuttered by the government that month. Ankara claims their work - guest editing, writing and membership in a symbolic advisory board - amounted to membership of or propaganda for the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK), which the United States, the European Union and Turkey have designated a terrorist group. The women reject the idea that their writing, suffused with an intense pro-peace talks orientation, could constitute terrorism or incitement to violence.

In a letter she asked her lawyer to send to me, Erdogan calls her detention a "witch burning" without basis in law or reason. Alpay, in a letter she gave me when we met, calls it "irrational, illogical and unreal." Prosecutors are threatening the two women with life in prison.

Across Istanbul at the Silivri Prison, a massive detention complex for over 13,000 prisoners, the story repeats itself. There, among dozens of writers and thousands of public servants (judges, prosecutors, government workers, military servicemembers, and

others), authorities are detaining 13 writers, staff and board members of modern Turkey's founding.

At Silivri I met five Cumhuriyet writers and executives: Hakan Karasınır, Bülent Utku, Güray Tekin Öz, Mustafa Kemal Güngör and Onder Celik. The government denied me visits with several others, including the famous writers and academics, Ahmet and Mehmet Altan, cartoonist Musa Kart and columnist Kadri Gursel.

As with Alpay and Erdogan, the Cumhuriyet staff have no access to the evidence against them. But those I met have been told that their articles or advertisements constituted propaganda or fundraising for Fethullah Gülen, the ally-turned-enemy of President Erdogan whose movement is widely believed in Turkey to be responsible for the coup attempt.

These are just a few of an estimated 155 writers, editors and media executives in prison in Turkey today, most awaiting trials for apparently doing nothing more than practicing their profession. Authorities have arrested reporters in the field as well, as they did over the weekend by detaining (and releasing a day later) BBC reporter Hatice Kamer in the Kurdish southeast.

Under the same kinds of terrorism charges, the government has launched a widespread attack on critical voices. It has closed at least 12 television and 11 radio stations. Kurdish media has been decimated. Web pages are regularly blocked, communications networks taken down, social media platforms censored. Political opposition leaders have been harassed or arrested. Erdogan himself has initiated some 1,900 defamation lawsuits, often solely on the basis of ironic, mocking, or even obnoxious social media posts.

I met with dozens of others caught in the vortex of the government's repression. Several academics told me how they, like thousands of others, were removed from their positions, accused of being Gülenists or pro-Kurd operatives without any opportunity for challenge. Representatives of several of the hundreds of non-governmental organizations and cultural centers shut down by the government told me they'd been given no reasons for their suspension.

Meanwhile, approximately two percent of Turkey's civil service - at least 110,000 employees - have been removed from their jobs on the basis of mere assertions of Gülenist connections. Thousands of prosecutors and judges, including two members of the Constitutional Court, have been removed on similar grounds. And lawyers who defend any of these people are themselves often investigated and detained.

My UN role gave me the opportunity to meet not only those crushed by the crackdown, but also those dozens of officials responsible for implementing it. In meetings with senior officials and parliamentarians, I heard a common refrain: Turkey faces real threats. Still reeling from July's failed coup and major Islamic State and PKK attacks on civilians, one official after

the other claimed that it is essential to take extreme measures.

I also met judges who expressed a deep commitment to the rule of law. I met bureaucrats who seemed genuinely committed to protecting their institutions. I came away feeling that much of the government merely implements the decisions made in the offices of the presidency and prime minister, whose officials I sought unsuccessfully to meet.

Since July 15, Erdogan has enacted nearly a dozen decrees under the state of emergency. His government has told the UN and the Council of Europe that it would not meet its fundamental human rights obligations while seeking to protect its citizens and democratic institutions. The Constitutional Court seems hamstrung in its ability to consider claims that Ankara has overreached.

I asked officials to justify their steps, for instance, to shut down media and arrest vast numbers of journalists on the basis of the emergency laws and counter-terrorism statutes. One official captured what I found to be a consensus: "We are concerned merely with media that no longer functions as media but as propaganda for terrorists."

I get that many in the government feel traumatized by the coup, particularly those in Ankara who watched F-16s bombing Parliament. The government has every right to confront security threats. But I cannot avoid the conclusion that the government's response goes well beyond what is necessary or proportionate.

Until recently, Turkey's allies in Europe and NATO, cowed by Turkey's strategic position on the borders of Iraq and Syria and its leverage over Europe's refugee crisis, have said little about this downward spiral of repression. Last week the European Parliament took the important but symbolic step to urge suspension of the discussions over admitting Turkey to the EU. Not surprisingly, Erdogan's response was to threaten to call off last year's refugee deal with Europe, saying, "If you go any further, these border gates will be opened."

Turkey's friends in the West need to do more to convince Erdogan to recommit to the rule of law. At a minimum, they need to make clear that, while they will support Ankara's efforts to confront the threat of terrorism, the country risks its place in the Council of Europe and other institutions of global governance and human rights when it persists in such draconian actions.

Erdogan also needs to initiate a change in direction by releasing all caught up in the frenzy of collective punishment, dialing back on Turkey's emergency laws and revising Turkey's overbroad terrorism laws.

In her letter to me, Asli Erdogan suggested, "As far as I know, I am the first writer in 21st century to be tried with 'life sentence' and I will not tell you how I feel." She concluded, "We, all the victims of this Mid-Eastern version of dictatorship, desperately need the help of international organizations that protect basic human rights and values as 'freedom of thought and speech'."

Not long ago Turkey was on a path of commitment to protect those very rights and values. It's not too late to return.

David Kaye, a law professor at the University of California, Irvine, is the UN Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression. The views expressed in this article are not those of Reuters News.

Labour Market and Migration in the Eastern Himalayas and Northeast India

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As far as India is concerned, the region of eastern Himalayas and Northeast India remain under-developed in terms of infrastructure, industrial development and employment opportunities in the backdrop of the long drawn armed conflict situation. Under the political instability and continuing militarization of the region, industries in this region can be broadly classified into two types: agro-based industries (tea industry, sugar industry, grain mill products industry of rice, oil and flour mills, food processing industry and the textile industry) and forest-based industries (plywood industry, saw-mill industry, paper and paper pulp industry). In recent years, the "Look East Policy" of the Government of India has made North East more important and strategic in context of industry.

The process of labour market development in the region is leading to shift of labour force from rural to urban on the one hand and from farm activity to non-farm activity in the rural areas on the other hand. This is evident of structural changes that are taking place in the labour market in the region. With low industrial growth and shrinking agricultural land and opportunities, informal sector is the only recourse for the workforce to derive

Roundtable series on Migration on December 3

Photo Exhibition on December 3-4

Time - 10:00AM

Venue - Hotel Acacia, Dimapur



Youth migrants from the plantations of Assam to the coal mines in Mon District. A subsistence Jhum farmer during harvest in Wokha District. (Photos by Dolly Kikon)

livelihood. Despite having a number of industries in the region, the issues of labour in the industries remain unaddressed (except labour in tea industry and agricultural sector including the status of the subsistence agriculture in the hill states). And, so have been the case with growing informality in

the labour markets too. In this context, the labour markets in the region of eastern Himalayas and Northeast

India have increasingly become dependent on migration of youth within the region (to the coal mines, plantations, and cash crop farms) and also from the region to other parts of

the country (as manual workers or semi skilled professional), given how large number of tribal population are unable to sustain their households solely through agriculture.

What does the national data have to say in this context? According to 2011 census, 68.84% of India's population lives in rural areas, out of which 31 per cent population was in 0-14 age group, 28 per cent in 15-29 age group, and 33 per cent in the 30-59 age group. Large portions of rural population are primarily engage in agriculture. As per the census, out of 467 million persons comprising the total work force, 228.3 million (49 per cent) of the work force are involved in the agriculture sector. On the one hand, low return from agriculture and on the other hand, the limitations of infrastructure in rural areas have caused youths to migrate in search of jobs and opportunities. Thus, rural youth find it difficult to earn their livelihood in the rural area that meets their aspirations and dreams to succeed in life. Migration to urban areas, in this context, appears attractive. This is the trend among youth from who are migrating from Northeast India to others parts of the country. They are also increasingly exposed to urban values through the education systems and by social media. Urban centers are slowly becoming employment hubs for the youth. In addition, youth migration is also driven by socioeconomic conditions such as low wages, high rates of unemployment, and underemployment in rural areas and poverty.

Letters to the Editor should be sent to: **The Morung Express**, House No. 4, Duncan Bosti, Dimapur - 797112, Or -email: morung@gmail.com
All letters (including those via email) should have the full name and Postal address of the sender.

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