



I think it's very healthy to spend time alone. You need to know how to be alone and not be defined by another person. Oscar Wilde

'Signs of community spread' Over 15 thousand cases

Chief Minister N Biren must have weighed his words carefully before announcing that there are indeed signs of community transmission in the State. The Chief Minister did not exactly go to the extent of proclaiming that there is community transmission in Manipur now, but more than obvious that his observation on October 19 in front of the media that there are signs of community transmission in the State must have come after receiving adequate inputs from health workers and professionals who are engaged in studying the spread of the virus. Significant to note that the proclamation of the Chief Minister came after a group of eight doctors, many of whom had earlier served in different capacities in the State Health Department, had proclaimed that there is community spread in Manipur. The group of 8 doctors had even gone so far as to say that Manipur was in the early stage of community transmission as early as the first week of August and now with the Chief Minister himself admitting that there are signs of community transmission, the time calls for more vigilance and everyone to up their self defence strategy. Stepping up the self defence strategy should not mean anything new except that people will now need to follow the dos and don'ts of the World Health Organisation and the Indian Council of Medical Research more religiously. Wear a face mask every time one steps outside, maintain social distancing of at least two metres or six feet, wash one's hand with soap and water thoroughly and regularly or use an alcohol based hand sanitiser, avoid touching one's eyes, nose or mouth, cover one's nose and mouth with a bent elbow or a tissue when one coughs or sneezes, avoid large gatherings as much as possible and to seek immediate medical help if one has fever, cough and difficulty in breathing. Not such a difficult thing to follow but the problem is how many people in Manipur are actually ready to sit down and listen to good suggestions.

The question at the moment is whether the guidelines issued by WHO and ICMR would be followed or violated with impunity during the campaigning for the by elections to five Assembly Constituencies. The Chief Minister has admitted that there are signs of community transmission and the question of importance here is how effectively would the SOPs would be followed during the campaigning in the run up to the by elections. The reality of the situation is, Manipur has already crossed the first stage when it was only people with travel history who were detected positive for the virus and is now well into the second stage where local transmission is rampant. In fact a look at the daily newspapers is more than clear that infection among people with no travel history accounts for most of the positive cases. This is the second stage and Manipur is looking at the grim reality of many cases where the source of infection cannot be traced. This observation is made in the backdrop of the fact that Manipur today has 15,778 positive cases (as on October 19, 2020) with 118 deaths. Over 15 thousand positive cases in a State of just about 30 lakh or so people and clearly the picture is worrisome and so is the number of deaths at 118. The reality is extraordinary and perhaps what is needed are some extraordinary measures and the Government will need to think out of the box.

Notice

Contributors are requested to submit their articles within 1000-1500 words. Any article exceeding the word limit will not be entertained. Editor

Etc etc

Can supplements really help fight COVID 19? Here's what we know and don't know

Laura Beil

(Contd from previous issue) **Vitamin D** What it is: Called "the sunshine vitamin" because the body makes it naturally in the presence of ultraviolet light, Vitamin D is one of the most heavily studied supplements (SN: 1/27/19). Certain foods, including fish and fortified milk products, are also high in the vitamin. Why it might help: Vitamin D is a hormone building block that helps strengthen the immune system. How it works for other infections: In 2017, the British Medical Journal published a meta-analysis that suggested a daily vitamin D supplement might help prevent respiratory infections, particularly in people who are deficient in the vitamin. But one key word here is deficient. That risk is highest during dark winters at high latitudes and among people with more color in their skin (melanin, a pigment that's higher in darker skin, inhibits the production of vitamin D). "If you have enough vitamin D in your body, the evidence doesn't stack up to say that giving you more will make a real difference," says Susan Lanham-New, head of the Nutritional Sciences Department at the University of Surrey in England. And taking too much can create new health problems, stressing certain internal organs and leading to a dangerously high calcium buildup in the blood. (To be contd)

Nagas and India will remain two separate entities : Thuingaleng Muivah-I

The readers must have read the news of this interview on October 17 and many would have seen the interview (recorded or live on October 16) of the interview. Nevertheless the full transcript of the interview which is long, very long, is being reproduced here courtesy The Wire. The interview will be serialised and we hope the readers enjoy it and gain an insight on the subject.

On October 16, in an interview to Karan Thapar for The Wire, the general secretary of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isak-Muivah) Thuingaleng Muivah revealed that there are still sharp differences that are separating the NSCN from the Indian government. He repeatedly and forcefully said that the Nagas will never be part of the Indian Union nor will they accept India's constitution.

He said there could be no compromise on the NSCN's insistence on a Naga flag and Naga Constitution. "We have stood our ground on these two non-negotiable issues and we shall continue to stand till the last man standing", he said. Muivah added that Naga organisations like the Naga National Political Groups or several civil society organisations, who are not insisting on a separate flag and Constitution, are "traitors".

In a 55-minute interview, the 86-year-old Muivah also sharply criticised RN Ravi, the Interlocutor and Nagaland Governor. He says Ravi has "betrayed" the NSCN. He said "he has thrown us away" and that he was acting at the behest of the Home Ministry.

The following is a transcript of the interview, edited lightly for clarity and style.

Hello and welcome to a special interview for The Wire. Five years ago when the Government of India and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland – as it was then called – signed a Framework Agreement, it was widely believed that a solution to the 70-year-old Naga problem was just around the corner. But now, five years later, it seems the talks are at the brink of collapse. With me to share his side of the story, in an exclusive interview, is the general secretary of the NSCN, Muivah.

Karan Thapar (KT henceforth) : Muivah, let's start with the statement your organisation put out on October 13, just three days ago. The statement says, "The road to a final deal has become ticklish as the sensitive issue of Naga flag and Yehzabo," that's the Naga constitution, "remains as the sticking point. We have stood our ground on these two non-negotiable issues and we shall continue to stand till the last man standing. NSCN shall be failing before God and before the Naga people if we stumble at this most decisive moment of our history." I'll come to the details in a moment's time, but are these two issues potential breaking points for your talks with the Government?

Th Muivah (TM henceforth) : Yes now, the point is that most of the important points have been understood together. There is no confusion anymore between us because – allow me to tell you like this – when the Nagas went to meet Jawaharlal Nehru, unfortunately, he had no patience to listen to the Nagas. When the Nagas said, "We will not be under the Indian Union because our history is clear," when the delegation members said that, he had no patience anymore and he replied, "Even if heaven falls, and the whole country goes to pieces, and rivers run red, yes, with blood, I will not allow the Nagas to be independent. It will be a matter of few days for the Indian armed forces to crush the Nagas." That was what he uttered. All Nagas were totally surprised! You know, that was the beginning – and I memorised it.

So that was the attitude. So, when the Nagas refused to be a part of the Indian Union, yes, you know, countless troops were sent and operations started. How? And how they treated Nagas? Sorry. In the most cruel and inhuman way Nagas have been treated, but Nagas did not surrender. So,

after fighting and after the – I mean, yes, condemnation of the Shillong Accord and this and that – after fighting nicely and successively, more than twenty years, from your side, from the Indian side, an official declaration was made: military solution is no longer possible. It is not a law and order issue of India, it is a political issue of the Nagas and India.

KT : Quite right, sir. In '97 there was a ceasefire, in 2002 or 2003 the AB Vajpayee's Government accepted the uniqueness of Naga history and identity; since then, for 23 years you have been talking. In 2015, you had a Framework Agreement and everyone thought a solution is bound to follow. Today, you have issued this statement, which says that the sensitive issue of the Naga flag and the Naga Constitution is the sticking point. So, tell me, is the flag and the Constitution an issue over which the talks can break?

TM : Hmm, you're right, you're right. You know – KT : Just be clear, sir. Can the talks break over the flag and Constitution?

TM : Of course. If those rights are ignored, you know, it is not acceptable to us, because – as we have told your delegation members very often – Nagas are not lost people. We have our history, we have our history, we have our right. Now, we have told them and, at last, they recognise, "Mr Muivah! Your history is unique, you were never under the Indians, either by consent of the Naga people or by," I mean, "the force of the Indian armed forces."

KT : You're saying the Modi Government has accepted that the Nagas were never under the Indian people, you're saying that?

TM : Yes! KT : The Modi government has accepted it? TM : Huh?

KT : Narendra Modi has accepted it? That Nagas were never under the Indian people?

TM : No. Among the negotiators, we have come and they agreed. They agreed.

KT : So, Ravi has agreed? TM : Yes, it is not Ravi but the Indian side.

KT : Has agreed? TM : Yes, agreed because – KT : That Nagas were never under the Indian people?

TM : Yes, they have admitted it is not a law and order issue of India. That is how they declared to the whole world.

KT : Then tell me this, Muivah, is the flag and the Constitution a breaking point? If the Indians do not agree that you can have your own Constitution and your own flag, will the talks break on that?

TM : If our rights are ignored, then we are being treated as lost people. That, we cannot accept. How can we accept, you know, this kind of attitude towards us?

KT : So, you're saying without a flag and without a Constitution being granted to the Nagas, there can be no solution.

TM : There can be no solution! Why? Because we're not lost people. We have our history and our history is officially admitted from the Indian side also. "Your history is unique, you were never under the Indians – either by conquest of the Indian armed forces or by consent of the Naga people."

KT : For the record, tell me, what does the Indian side say to you when you say, "We must have a flag, we must have a constitution"? What do they say?

TM : Well, they said, "Your history is unique." So, since our history is unique, I mean, our Constitution must be ours. We cannot not constitution or flag or this or that from others. It is our right to have.

KT : That's your position, what do the Indians say? What does the Indian side say when you say, "We must have a flag, we must have a Constitution"? What is their answer?

TM : Their answer was this, "Your history is unique. You are never under the Indians according to your-," I mean, "own

efforts or accord."

KT : But they will not agree? They will not agree to a flag or Constitution?

TM : No. The history is unique, this is the main point. Since the history is unique, solution must also be unique. Yes. Since our history is unique, the right to have our Constitution, the right to have our sovereignty, this is up to us. Why should you ask from others? How is it that the Indians will have to impose this Constitution and right on us? Why? How?

KT : Let me put this to you. In August 2019, India revoked Article 370 as a result of which Jammu and Kashmir – which had a Constitution, which had a flag – lost both. After that, how can the Indian Government agree to give Nagaland its own Constitution and its own flag? They've just taken it away from Jammu and Kashmir, how can they agree to it for you?

TM : The issue, the problem, is that Nagas were never under the Indians and by virtue of what Indians will have to impose their Constitution and their flag on us. We were not under them either by conquest of their forces or by consent of ourselves so...

KT : So, your position is, "Because our history is unique, the solution must be unique and if the solution is unique, we must have a Constitution, we must have a flag. What has happened to Jammu and Kashmir cannot apply to us."

TM : You're right, that is our stand. Why? Because in the course of our long talks, they have agreed, "Your history is unique. Your history is unique." So, solution must also be unique.

KT : Let me put a problem to you. The NSCN, your organisation, is insisting on a Constitution and a flag. The problem is, there are many other Naga groups that are not insisting on a Constitution and flag – the Naga National Political Groups, several civil society groups – don't worry if there is no Naga Constitution, if there is no Naga flag. On this issue, the Indian Government has divided the Nagas.

TM : Now, you know, these are traitors. These are traitors. KT : Traitors? TM : Traitors! They are traitors.

KT : You're saying the Naga National Political Groups are traitors?

TM : In most cases they are traitors. Okay, okay, the unique history is clear; how can they deny that? How can they deny that? Who are they? Who are they? They are the people who accepted Sixteen Point Agreement which was rejected by the Naga people – we fought against it. So, how many years after that?

KT : So, you're saying to me, Mr. Muivah that Naga groups who are not insisting on a flag or a Constitution are traitors? You mean that? Traitors?

TM : They are all traitors. Those people are traitors. We have been standing for our rights, for our history since we were never conquered by the Indians – since we were never with them, as part of the Indian Union. How could you? How could you, the Indians, say that the Nagas will have to be under the Indian Union, or Nagas will have to be under the Indian flag?

KT : So, you're saying – as you said in your statement, till the last Naga is alive, you will insist on your own Constitution and your own flag?

TM : Yeah, we have to stand our ground! That is our history.

KT : There is no compromise possible on this? TM : Well, the compromise, you know, that they brought – we don't deny that, or we don't totally reject that. Because, you know, they started finding out the way to make a compromise from the Indian side. Well, I will let you know. "Well, since Nagas have rights, your history is unique, solution must be unique, you're right."

(To be continued)

Re-imaging agriculture through the lens of food processing industry

Sanjana Kadyan and Tulsipriya Rajkumari

The COVID-19 pandemic has accentuated the criticality of food security and food surplus management in the current policy space. To this end, policy steps in the agriculture sector in recent years have shifted their orientation from sustenance to marketing. However, the sector is still exposed to challenges of post-harvest management (PHM), poor price discovery and inadequate market access for farmers. Lack of PHM, in particular, has led to significant post-harvest losses of 4-6-15.8% in fruits and vegetables, 10.5% in marine fisheries and 6.7% in poultry (ICAR-CIPHET, 2015). While significant progress has been made in building individual cold storage facilities, their lack of geographical spread persists as also their tardy upgradation into integrated multi-commodity hubs. The food processing industry (FPI) is poised to address these supply chain gaps bolstered by an ecosystem recently set up by the Government's three Farm Acts under the Aatmanirbhar Bharat package, Agri Infrastructure Fund and formalisation of Micro Food enterprises. A growing FPI sector will also help create a fair and equitable agricultural market while ensuring good remuneration for farmers, as elucidated by models of Amul, Mother Dairy and Big Basket. However, FPI in India is currently at a nascent stage, accounting for only 10 percent of our total food production. Despite the sector employing 11.4% of the organized manufacturing workforce, India's FPI share in manufacturing GVA is fairly low at 9.7% as compared to 35.5% in Indonesia and 34.3% in New Zealand. For this sector to contribute to the establishment of an efficient farm to fork supply chain, Government will be required to intervene in five key areas: First, as part of the One District One Product initiative, the Government may

conduct a district level crop-wise assessment of existing bottlenecks in the supply chain, mapping all strategically located stakeholders. These stakeholders will include farmers, farmer co-operatives/producer companies and private enterprises such as standalone investors, traders, food enterprises, online and offline supermarkets, exporters and retail chains. Second, make it behaviorally and financially viable for the farmer to adopt PHM technologies by aggregating information and services ranging from inputs, credit and marketing for him at the district level, which is currently done by the local trader. These local agents with intimate knowledge of farmers and social norms are ideal candidates to be risk assessors, information aggregators and influential catalysts for trust building. Therefore, it is critical to retain the role of such key local agents in FPI business models, as exemplified by ITC's E-Choupal and NABARD's Maa-Thota programme. Further, with the farmers now free to sell their produce beyond mandis, building alternative locations of service and information aggregation, both online and offline, becomes salient. These may emerge at GraminHaats for building PHM, E-NAM centres for price discovery, WDR registered warehouses for storage and Krishi Vikas Kendras and Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies for technology dissemination. Third, encourage integration of all locally available micro food processing units with nearby production clusters for enabling them to vertically integrate with big private players. This can be facilitated through investor platforms like NiveshBandhu Portal and India Investment Grid, which can be upscaled with backward linkages to farmers/FPOs. Fourth, address local ca-

capacity needs via bottom up FPI training channels. In particular, impart basic IT training to rural youth via Common Service Centres to serve as digital links for the farmers/FPOs and food enterprises. Further, upskilling of mandi labourers with key PHM skills of loading, unloading, cleaning and bagging will also improve the efficiency of FPI supply chains. Fifth, engage consumer behavior analytics firms to study post-COVID emerging signals of shift in consumer preferences towards fresh produce and environmentally friendly products. The firms could also analyze the massive data collected through M-Kisan and Kisan Call Centres on e-TAAL to bridge the FPI demand-supply data dichotomy and identify potential areas for FPI investment. Today, with India's food sector opened to global participation and the Government bringing in the ecosystem to strengthen the food value chain, the food processing industry is poised to be a harbinger of a third green revolution in India's agriculture. However, this favourable global ecosystem will be a lost opportunity if the national and rural constructs of India's agri-business systems are not dovetailed with it. These interventions will precisely do that by bringing the macro, meso and micro in sync with each other. PIB

Sanjana Kadyan is a civil servant of the Indian Economic Service, Assistant Director in the Department of Economic Affairs (DEA), Ministry of Finance. Tulsipriya Rajkumari is an Indian Economic Service officer, Deputy Director in the Economic Division (Macro Unit) and Chief Economic Adviser's office, D/o Economic Affairs, Ministry of Finance. The views in the article are of authors

Building resilience is critical to minimise impact of humanitarian crises

Shobha Shukla-CNSS

Contd from previous issue **Recovery** will require application of a comprehensive approach across the triple nexus through a resilience lens. There are already reports of increase in maternal and neonatal morbidity and mortality, increase in unmet need for family planning and increased risk of gender-based violence and harmful practices during the lockdowns. But Dr Tomoko Kurokawa is upbeat with examples of innovative and creative demonstrations of resilience at various levels for the continuity of provision of sexual and reproductive health information and services across the Asia Pacific region during the pandemic. She shares that "In Pakistan, a women's safety App was upgraded as an innovative solution to counteract chal-

enges posed by lack of mobility and gender-based violence during the lockdown. In Afghanistan, a youth health line providing adolescent sexual and reproductive health information and services has reached over 5000 young people. In Mongolia, telemedicine services were set up by practising physicians to provide quality sexual and reproductive health services. In Mongolia a legendary Mongolian queen chatbot avatar provides counselling to adolescents about life and love on Facebook. In the Philippines, a free condom delivery service under 'a condom heroes program', is enabling people in lockdown to access condoms". Investing in resilience helps prevent and curtail economic, environmental and human losses in the event of a crisis, thus protecting development gains and benefiting many of the sustainable development goals. The 'new normal', necessitated by COVID-19, will require agility, creativity and nimbleness to bridge the humanitarian development peace divide and to empower women, girls and young people as agents of change to build resilience and ensure sustainability of effective humanitarian action. Shobha Shukla is the founding Managing Editor of CNS (Citizen News Service) and is a feminist, health and development justice advocate. She is a former senior Physics faculty of Loreto Convent College and current Coordinator of Asia Pacific Media Network to end TB & tobacco and prevent NCDs (APCAT Media). Follow her on Twitter @shobhalsukla

Solar power plants using the rivers in Manipur

Prof I Tomba Singh

With the rapid depletion of fossil fuel reserves, it is feared that the world will soon run out of its energy resources. Energy has an established positive correlation with human population and economic growth. Primary energy requirements are expected to increase manifold in the years to come. Providing adequate, affordable and clean energy is a prerequisite for eradicating poverty and improving productivity. The inevitable increase in the use of fossil fuels alongside a country's economic growth presents associated side effects of threat to the Nation's energy security as well as environmental degradation through climate change. A feasible alternative to the indiscriminate burning of fossil fuels lies in the accelerated use of renewable energy. Major types of renewable energy sources include solar, wind, hydro and biomass, all of which have huge potential to meet future energy challenges. Solar Photovoltaic (PV) technology is one of the first among several renewable energy technologies that have been adopted world-wide for meeting the basic needs of electricity particularly in remote areas. In tropical countries, which have sunshine almost throughout the year in most parts, solar energy is one of the most viable options. This form of renewable energy occupies less space compared to the space occupied by hydropower projects. The amount of solar energy incident on the earth's surface has been estimated approximately 1.5x10¹⁸ KWH/year which is about 10,000 times the current annual energy consumption of the entire world. In fact, a standalone solar photovoltaic system does not provide a continuous supply of energy due to reasonable and periodic variations. Therefore in order to satisfy the load demand, grid connected energy systems are now becoming promising options that combine solar and conventional energy systems. A solar cell is a device which converts photons in solar rays to direct-current (DC) and voltage. A typical silicon photovoltaic (PV) cell is thin wafer consisting of a very thin layer of phosphorous doped (N-type) silicon on top of a thicker layer of boron doped (P-typed) silicon. An electrical field is created near the top surface of the cell where there two materials are in contact (the P-N junction). (To be contd)