

What would Indira Gandhi ask Narendra Modi today?

Contd. from yesterday
By: Ningombam Bupenda Meitei

On tackling communalism and maintaining peace

Indira Gandhi, on tackling communalism and maintaining peace, would ask, "We, as a nation, thought that the martyrdom of Gandhi ji had eliminated the poison of communalism, but today in 2015, there is a celebration of that poison of communalism. Why do you, Mr. Prime Minister Modi, keep quiet on the celebration of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination? How can you remain silent when the martyrdom of Mahatma is being ridiculed in a country which is under your Prime Ministership? Can you, as the Prime Minister of the nation of Mahatma, stop the celebration of ridiculing the Father of the Nation in India itself? If you do not stop, then for whom are you waiting to stop it? Are you waiting for the President of India to express his statement on it and say, 'Kindly follow what our Rashtrapati ji has said,' by standing on his shadow? I know you are a bold man, but I also want to see you as a bold Prime Minister of our nation.

Mr. Prime Minister Modi, you keep talking about peace and development and it is also said that you were born in a weaker section, the Other Backward Classes, of society, but why do you not give special attention to the weaker sections of our country when they get killed, murdered, raped, beaten up, burnt, mocked at, humiliated and discriminated by intolerance in our own country? Where are your heart and soul of being with the weakest section of our society? Do you believe that your first duty is not to bring peace in the country by protecting them because you may have tolerance which can never be tolerated by the weakest? How can you remain so deeply tolerant on intolerance till now? Why do you not follow a zero tolerance towards intolerance in our country?"

["The poison of communalism has been there in our society for many years. We had thought that the martyrdom of Gandhi ji had eliminated this poison but we see how easily it bursts out again. You know that from my childhood I have been taught that special attention should be given to the weaker sections in our country - whether they are weak because of their numbers or because of poverty and backwardness. Our first duty is to protect them, help them and to raise them up, because only then can there be peace in our society." (At a turning point, from free rendering of the Independence Day speech of Indira Gandhi delivered in Hindi from the Red Fort, Delhi, August 15, 1980)]

Indira Gandhi would further ask, "The circumstances of Gandhi ji's assassination led us to imagine that communalism would receive a death blow. But, in 1983, attempts were made to make political and economic capital from those things. But, today in 2015, why do you not act against the celebration of Mahatma Gandhi ji's assassination and glorification of the Bapu's assassin today under your Prime Ministership?"

["The circumstances of Gandhi ji's assassination led us to imagine that communalism would receive a death blow. But we see today that attempts are being made to make political and economic capital from these things." (Symbol of National Unity, from Indira Gandhi's inaugural address at the Urdu Conference on National Integration, New Delhi, September 6, 1983)]

On national integration and food habits

Indira Gandhi, on national integration and food habits, would ask, "Mr. Prime Minister Modi, you take pride in saying that you are from Sardar Vallabhai Patel's Gujarat, but do you only take pride in Sardar ji only or also in his philosophy? Do not you think that for national integration to be alive and strengthened, there is a need for you, as the Prime Minister, to fight against the communal virus that destroys the climate of peace and harmony

and creates fear and suspicion to our brothers and sisters of minorities? Why do you not act against those who not only create communal tension by spewing communal venom but also claim that those minorities who have different kind of food habits must leave India and go to some other country? Have food habits of some minorities or sections of our own Indians become so intolerant even in your own Council of Ministers that your own silence, by not removing those who are so intolerant of some minorities' food habit from your own Council of Ministers, cannot justify that you, as the Prime Minister, stand with the entire population, irrespective of any food habit?"

["National integration has three major aspects. First, the removal of all vestiges of disabilities from the lives of the Scheduled Castes, Tribes and Backward Classes. Secondly, the fight against the communal virus and the creation of a climate in which minorities do not have fear or suspicion and can live in peace and harmony. And, thirdly, the total eradication of casteism or provincialism." (Ayanjali: Symbol of urge for equality, from Indira Gandhi's speech at the unveiling of a statue of the Harijan leader, Shri Ayanjali, Trivandrum, November 10, 1980)]

Indira Gandhi, on national integration, would further ask, "If we can be and we are good Indians while being good Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs or members of any other religion, then why do you, Mr. Prime Minister Modi, act against those who preach that all Indians are Hindus only? Do you reject that non Hindu Indians are impossible? Is not the national integration an internal defence of our country? Do not you accept that the humankind's greatest enemy is violence? Do not you consider that any incidence of violence in anywhere in India brings a bad name to the nation as

a whole? Why do you not act and speak strongly against any form of violence because violence only yields to more intolerance and it in turn becomes a source of intolerance further? Why do you not act swiftly when the basic values and ideals are being attacked by intolerance today in our society?"

["National integration is the internal defence of the country - the domestic and civilian counterpart of the work the defence services do to safeguard the territorial integrity of the nation. We can be and we are good Indians while being good Hindus or Muslims or Christians or Sikhs or members of any other religion. Violence is humankind's greatest enemy. The incidence of violence brings a bad name to the country as a whole... What is even more urgent and vital is that violence and the other tendencies which I have mentioned weakened the very fabric of the nation. Our problem is to take the message to others, to the doubters, to the fanatics, and most of all, to those who pay lip-service to national integration but do not accept it in their hearts. Sometimes we do not answer questions adequately because it is so much easier to be polite, it is so much easier to take the softer option. When basic issues are concerned, when basic values and ideals are being attacked, when people are being used, perhaps unwittingly, to weaken us, then is the time when every citizen must take the responsibility. Every citizen must feel that the future of his descendants is at stake. He must speak out in India and outside." (India's internal defence, from Indira Gandhi's inaugural address at the All-India National Integration Convention, New Delhi, January 12, 1984)]

(To be contd.)

Contd. from page 1

CM, legislators meet APO, KVC over Gaidinliu project

MLA. Er. Kropol stated that Kohima, even though located in the heart of Angami territory and by virtue of being the state capital, belonged to all tribes of Nagaland. He said since the project was decided by the state government, the matter ought to be put to rest and allow the work to be completed. Advisor NSMDC Neiphrezo Keditu urged both sides to seek an amicable solution as there was a solution for every problem.

Stating the "Kohima village is the father of all Naga villages", parliamentary secretary Arts & Culture Eshak Konyak urged upon the villager elders for a more inclusive attitude. He also said the museum would be an asset to the Nagas and urged APO to review its stand.

Minister of social welfare Kiyanelie, said that since the entire project was funded by the government of India and for which the preceding government decided to take up the work, it would be fitness of propriety, if the present government continued with the project.

Officials of planning department pointed out that the erection of Gaidinliu's statue has been shelved as it was opined that it was a culture alien to Nagas and would hurt the sentiments of sections of society.

Officials of Art & Culture department pointed out that one of the objectives of the project was for an "open museum and exhibition hall with galleries and dioramas for preservation and display of relics, artifacts and objects of historical importance, portraits, photos and memorabilia of not only Rani Gaidinliu but other leaders also."

Speaking on the issue, chief minister TR Zeliang urged upon all to find an amicable settlement as the museum even though named after Rani Gaidinliu, was not only for her and would not be used to propagate any cult or religious sect.

He pointed out that the Arts & Culture department would manage the museum as it does with the museum at Bayavu. Zeliang reassured, that the museum would not be used to promote or propagate any religion that was alien to Nagas.

He also narrated the account of his father who was expelled from their then Heraka dominated village for becoming a Christian and the family had to settle in a Kuki village. Over the years, he said the villagers gradually converted to Christianity and now his village is a cent percent Christian village. Zeliang also opined that it would be unwise to rake up the past that Heraka

militants killed NNC functionaries since NNC also killed many Heraka militants. He said since former Heraka followers had confessed and converted to Christianity, it would not go down well with those who confessed in the name of the Lord (Jesus) and became strong proponents of Christianity.

"Phizo is dead and so is Rani Gaidinliu" said Zeliang as both cannot come back to justify their actions. He also said both his uncles were widowed when his uncles were killed by Heraka militants. He urged all not to justify but "to live and let live."

Zeliang also cited historical accounts of how in 1937, Jawaharlal Nehru gave the title "Rani" to Gaidinliu when he visited her in a British jail. He said neither Nagas nor Zeliangrongs gave her the title nor did any Naga ask the government of India to accord Gaidinliu the title of Indian Freedom Fighter. He said it was given by the then Congress government in 1972.

He stated that Rani was born in Luangkao village in Manipur and a conflict took place between NNC and Heraka during 1960-66. After Gaidinliu surrendered and came overground, he said 400 of her followers also surrendered with arms and ammunition and were inducted to the INAP in 1966. Thereon, he said Gaidinliu

was accorded status of minister of state and was allotted a bungalow by the government of Nagaland. Gaidinliu was also given escorts whenever she travelled from Nagaland to Assam or Manipur and TA/DA was also paid by the government of Nagaland besides an allowance of Rs.10,000 every month till her death in February 1993.

Zeliang said he wished that a compromise formula could be worked out to solve the problem. He said options were open for discussions and hoped APO would also soften its stand for revising its stand on the matter. The chief minister also visited the construction site of the Shanoru temporary bridge with minister roads and bridges Vikheho Swu, which had to be demolished during the monsoon due to blockage of the culverts.

The temporary culvert is being constructed by the R & B department at a cost of Rs.2 crore and expected to be completed by November end this year.

CMO said the urban development department and State disaster management agency also contributed Rs.1 crore each for the ongoing work being done at war footing to ameliorate the problems faced by office goers who have to either take the Don Bosco School diversion or Meriema-Secretariat route.

Sunday Quiz

1. Dry ice is a frozen form of which gas?
2. Who wrote the Sahitya Academi Award winning novel "Imasee Narabee"?
3. Which British Prime Minister was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature?
4. When was DM College founded?
5. Name the event associated with the codename 'Smiling Buddha'?

- ANSWERS:
1) Carbon Dioxide
2) B M Mishra
3) Sir Winston Churchill
4) 6th August 1946
5) Indian's First nuclear Explosion in Pokhran (1974)

Compiled by - Dr. S Langpoklakpam.

WHENEVER YOU SEE CONSTRUCTION AND MINING EQUIPMENTS, JUST THINK OF US
A SOLUTION FOR EVERY CONSTRUCTION EQUIPMENT



Automobile Engineering Works-1
BEML WORKSHOP
New Checkon Road, Purana Rajbari
Imphal East.
Manipur - 795 001

ALL KINDS OF SPARE PARTS AVAILABLE
AFTER SALES SERVICE TO YOUR SATISFACTION
Authorised dealer **BEML Limited**
(A Government of India Mini Ratna Company under Ministry of Defence)

Letters, Feedback and Suggestions to 'Imphal Times' can be sent to our e-mail: imphaltimes@gmail.com.
For advertisement kindly contact: - 0385-2452159 (O)

'India must respect Irom Sharmila's 15 years of struggle'

Despite repeated calls to withdraw the AFSPA from UN experts as well as national and international groups, the Act continues to be enforced and continues to cause flagrant human rights violations. During the then UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navanethem Pillay's visit to India in March 2009, she said the Act breached "contemporary international human rights standards." Furthermore, Margaret Sekaggya, then UN Special Rapporteur on Human Rights Defenders in 2011 and also Christof Heyns, then UN Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary executions in early 2012, had recommended repeal of AFSPA. During the second cycle of the Universal Periodic Review in 2012, India also received specific recommendations to review and repeal AFSPA. However, these recommendations were ignored as India was reluctant to accept

them. Earlier this year, the Indian government-appointed High Level Committee on the Status of Women recommended repealing AFSPA. Previously, several other government-appointed commissions have recommended repealing the law. The Justice Jeevan Reddy Committee, the Second Administrative Reforms Commission and the Prime Minister's Working Group on Confidence-Building Measures in Jammu and Kashmir have recommended the repeal of the AFSPA. The Justice Verma Committee, set up in 2012 to review laws against sexual assault, noted that AFSPA legitimizes impunity for sexual violence. The Justice Santosh Hegde Commission, set up by the Supreme Court in 2013 to investigate cases of extrajudicial executions in Manipur, described its findings as "egregious examples of the AFSPA's gross abuse."

FORUM-ASIA, Human Rights Alert (Manipur), Amnesty International India and Naga People's Movement for Human Rights urge the Indian government to take immediate measures to repeal AFSPA given that it is not in accordance with the international human rights standards. Repeal of AFSPA is already much delayed. We also reiterate our repeated calls to the Indian authorities to promptly end judicial harassment against Irom Sharmila and demand her immediate release in consideration of her historically rooted and democratic protest, rather than criminalizing it.

Background
Irom Sharmila has been involved in a prolonged campaign demanding the repeal of the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, (AFSPA). She began her hunger strike after the killing of 10 people in Manipur by the Assam Rifles (a paramilitary force) in Malom, Imphal in

November 2000. She was also demanding the removal of the AFSPA from Manipur. She was arrested shortly after she began her hunger strike and charged with attempting to commit suicide, a criminal offence under Indian law. While she was under arrest, she refused to sign bail bonds maintaining that she had not committed any offence, and instead called for the criminal charges against her to be dropped. Irom Sharmila has been the recipient of several human rights awards for her outstanding activism in promoting human rights. She was awarded the 2007 Gwangju Prize for Human Rights, which is given to "an outstanding person or group, active in the promotion and advocacy of Peace, Democracy and Human Rights". In 2009, she was also awarded the first Mayillama Award of the Mayillama Foundation for her nonviolent struggle in Manipur.