

Editorial

Imphal Saturday, April 1, 2017

State of hoods

We are told a wise man prophesied that the meek shall inherit the earth. By the turn of events for as long as one cares to remember, one will be tempted to think that the wise man has perhaps slipped up on his predictions. Amidst the hue and cry of desperations and unfulfilled promises, those who are at the helm of affairs of the state continues to wax eloquent on the trumped up achievements which are unfortunate far and few between. It would perhaps sound pessimistic for a lot of people as the media turns up page after another on the sordid state of affairs day in and day out, but the fact of the matter is that despite the small positives happening in between, they get crowded out by the sheer number and magnitude of the social maladies, caused either out of ignorance or as an effective distraction for other bigger deliberate blunders.

The state today is on the verge of yet another social turmoil, with various armed groups openly coming out in support of their communities and chasing out the rightful owners from their homes, just because the think-tank at the service of the state government either failed to counsel with the subject experts and knowledgeable historians or, more likely, ignored the suggestions and inputs of those in the know. The result, as we have witnessed, is an unnecessary and undesirable tension between communities that have been coexisting since time immemorial, giving rise to feelings of suspicion and ill-will. The present situation also presents an existing opportunity for certain individuals with vested interests to slip a wedge of hatred between the various communities. What is making the situation worse is not the admission of the blunder by the state government, but is rather the dithering and unnecessary delays in rectifying it. The festering tension, if allowed to continue unchecked will most likely turn violent and unstoppable with armed groups joining the fray. The state government has so far handled communal issues with velvet gloves, and more often than not has acceded to unacceptable demands and conditions just to keep peace. The practice, on the face of it might seem judicious and acceptable, but it also breeds resentment and bad blood amongst the remaining groups.

To be fair, it is an extremely sensitive exercise for the state government to address communal differences, and is often fraught with possibilities of the solution snowballing into another. But that cannot be an excuse for the lack of effort and enthusiasm, nor is the repeatedly backfired procedure of taking hasty and often uninformed decisions in an ill-advised attempt to rush up such affairs. At the end of the day, the best decision will be one where the history, customs, laws and regulations have been consulted, referred and incorporated. The state government should then be strong enough to enforce and stand by its decision rather than to give in to the arm twisting communal hooligans and opportunists. Hope the new government has the political gumption to come up with a pragmatic solution and stand by it.

4 arrested with old currency worth Rs 21.33 lakh

PTI Jaipur, April 1: Four persons have been arrested with old currency worth Rs 21.33 lakh here, police said today. Based on a tip-off, the Anti-Terrorist Squad along with Vidhyadhar Nagar police arrested the men last night while they were exchanging the old

currency with the legal tender in a car, SP (ATS) Vikas Kumar said. They have been booked under section 109 (security for good behaviour from suspected persons) of CrPC, he said.

The income tax department has been informed about the matter, Kumar added.

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Dr Hedgewar - The Architect of India's Transformation

By : Tarun Vijay

If we have to select a person whose life and the organisational capacity has impacted the life of an average Indian the most, that would be undisputedly Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar.

Born in Nagpur on the Hindu new year, in 1889 (1st April), he later rose to be the architect of a modern powerful India with an unapologetic pride in Hindu civilisational legacy of the nation.

It is an incredible saga of a person who succeeded in transforming the society with a new order of dedicated youth, whose spread is seen today in every corner of India from Tawang to Leh and Okha to Andamans.

He founded the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) on Vijaydashami day in 1925 but the name was given a year later- the very first announcement that day was a simple one liner- 'I am announcing the formation of Sangh (organisation) today.' The name RSS was given a year later after intense deliberations and receiving many suggestions which included- Bharat Uddharak Mandal (loosely translated as - Society to rejuvenate India) and Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh. The principal purpose was to create a society that will never fall prey to the internal squabbles and forge a solidarity so that none would be able to subjugate us in future. Before that he had been an active member of the Congress and was the co-incharge for organising the famous Nagpur session of Congress. He participated in non-cooperation movement and was sentenced to one year's rigorous

imprisonment for giving passionate speeches for freedom. He had also been a target of the British for his connections with the revolutionaries of Anusheelan Samiti and its leader Pulin Behari Bose.

But he got the least publicity and his life remained less known than the people he moulded who later became international celebrities. Today perhaps the largest network of service-projects run by any organisation in India are serviced by the RSS - the people who are inspired by Dr Hedgewar. One lakh seventy thousand is the number of these projects- which include hospitals, blood banks, eye banks, special centres to help Divyanga, visually challenged and Thalassaemia affected kids. Whether it's a war time or a natural calamity - Hedgewar's followers are the first to reach and provide relief. Whether it was Charkhi Dadri plane crash, Tsunami, Bhuj, Uttarkashi earth quakes or Kedarnath tragedy- the RSS Swayamsewaks were in the forefront to help the affected people and later in rehabilitation work too.

It is true that though the BJP owes its moral strength to the RSS and a large number of its leaders are swayamsewaks, still it would be an underestimate of Dr Hedgewar's impact on Indian society to judge it only by the political spread of the BJP. Think of Moreh, the last village on India-Myanmar border - who is running a school there and providing medicines to the local villagers? It is the people inspired by the vision of Dr Hedgewar. Similarly, the Mokukchang and Changlang projects for serving local

tribes in far North-East and Porblair ashram for the tribal students in Andamans are run by these people only. RSS today has the biggest network of schools and teachers and educational institutions in the country. Vidya Bharati today runs more than 25000 schools, has a quarter million students and one lakh teachers from the farthest village in the northeast to the snow deserts of Ladakh and border areas of Rajasthan, Jammu and Punjab. Last week I was on a shoot to make a documentary on Dr Hedgewar's ancestral village Kandakurti in Telangana. It's a historic village on the confluence of Godavari, Haridra and Manjiri. The ancestral home of the Hedgewar family is about fifty ft by twenty eight feet which has been turned into a memorial by local villagers helped and inspired by a senior RSS leader Moro Pant Pingle. It is running a beautiful co-educational school Keshav Bal Vidya Mandir, having a modest strength of about two hundred students. I was pleasantly surprised to find a good number, almost thirty percent Muslim girls and boys studying there. It is not that the village doesn't have other schools. The sleepy, calm village has almost 65% Muslims and 35% Hindus. The mosques are as many as the ancient temples. They exist side by side and there has been not a single unpleasant incident. Why the Muslims love to send their children in a school established in the memory of the RSS founder?

I met a parent- Mr Jalil Begh, who traces his ancestry to the moguls. He is a journalist, writing for the famous Urdu daily Munshif. He said

his family has found the school as a nice place to study because it caters best facilities to the poor and financially weaker sections. Above all the standard is good and they have a digital class also, training kids with computer education. I heard Rafia, a little sweet student of the school, sing rhythmically 'Hind Desh Ke Niwasi, Sabhi Ham Ek Hain, Rang Roop, Vesh Bhasha, Chabe Anek Hain'. (We the people of Hind are one, even if our colour, attire and language differ).

Dr Hedgewar, who remains the biggest influence on several prominent leaders, has given them the best gift to them through his ancestral village representing the theme of Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas in its full glory.

The man who gave a pan Indian vision to the millions, inspired bright young Indians to be a part of a new order of thought as Pracharak-monks, who might not be wearing ochre robes but live a life of an ascetic, giving their best for the peoples' education, health care, civilisational awakening in a most silent, unpublicised way, keeping away from the media glares, is a story of an India that is being transformed like never before.

Dr Hedgewar, who inspired millions to live for the greater good of the nation, injected a sense of pride and courage to stand for the universal values and Dharmic traditions of Bharat, that is India, needs to be studied and appreciated more. He is the biggest change maker India has ever witnessed.

Author: a former Member of Rajya Sabha, is a senior journalist and Commentator.

National & International News

Suu Kyi's new govt faces first test at Myanmar polls

Yangon, Apr 1 (AFP) Aung San Suu Kyi's government will face its first test at the ballot box today in by-elections around Myanmar seen as a barometer for growing disillusionment with her party a year after it took office.

The euphoria that surrounded the democracy icon's landslide electoral win in 2015 has ebbed as her party struggles to push through promised reforms.

Discontent is particularly acute in ethnic minority areas where many see Suu Kyi as working too closely with the military that ran the country for 50 years and still controls key levers of government.

With only 19 seats up for election, the poll is unlikely to alter the balance of power in a government firmly dominated by Suu Kyi's

National League for Democracy. But the voting may offer a glimpse into the public's view on the party's first year in power.

Hundreds of voters lined up outside polling stations on the outskirts of Myanmar's commercial capital Yangon early Saturday, though the scene lacked the fanfare and enthusiasm that marked the historic 2015 polls.

Chit Min, a resident in Dagon Seikkam suburb, told AFP many of his friends decided not to vote this time around.

"But I am sure the NLD will win again," he added.

The party will face its toughest challenge to the north in Shan State, where tens of thousands have been displaced by a surge in fighting between the army and ethnic

insurgents.

"There are many victims of war here and other ethnic areas now," Sai One Leng Kham, an upper house MP from the Shan Nationalities League for Democracy, told AFP. The NLD "needs to understand the real situation.

Sometimes they are working without any understanding of what's going on on the ground," he added.

In strife-torn Rakhine State on Myanmar's western coastline, the party will face a strong challenge not only from the local ethnic minority Arakan National Party but also the military-backed USDP.

The USDP led the transitional government that took over from the junta in 2011, but was trounced in elections four years later that swept the NLD to power.

To the south in Mon, the NLD is facing a backlash over the naming of a new bridge after Suu Kyi's father that many see as a symbol of the party's disregard for minorities. Myanmar's economic and political elite, including the NLD, have long been dominated by the majority Bamar ethnicity.

"Now more people think MPs from ethnic parties should be in parliament," said local Nyan Soe, who was among tens of thousands who protested over the bridge.

"The NLD has not been good for ethnic people since it took power. They don't care much about how ethnic people feel."

Saw Tun, an NLD MP from Mon state, said he is nonetheless confident of victory after receiving strong support on the campaign trail.

Now Congress leader backs Mohan Bhagwat as next President of India

New Delhi, April 1: Senior Congress leader and former Railway Minister CK Jaffer Shareef has backed the idea to make RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat the next President of India.

CK Jaffer Shareef has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi saying, "I personally feel nobody should find fault with Mohan Bhagwat's name being considered for President."

The former Railway Minister praised Mohan Bhagwat for his 'commitment to the Constitution of India'. "...there should not be any doubt about his patriotism, love for the people of India, loyalty to the nation and commitment to the Constitution of India and to the democracy."

Shareef further said that RSS supported the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi after the Bangladesh

war in the 'national interest'.

"Who anyone should now become small and narrow-minded to say that we have no faith and confidence in an India, who is patriot and who is wedded to democracy and also working for the welfare of the people," the veteran Congress leader asked.

Shareef also refused to buy the argument that with Bhagwat in President's chair, Muslims would

have to live in fear.

"As a Muslim and a person belonging to minority community of India, I feel that the minorities should not have any fear or crisis of confidence in Mohan Bhagwat's name being considered," Shareef said.

Earlier, Shiv Sena's Sanjay Raut had suggested that RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat be made the next President of India.

Unitech MDs arrested by EOW for duping flat buyers

New Delhi, April 1: Woes of the erstwhile construction major Unitech just increased manifold, as its managing directors Sanjay Chandra and Ajay Chandra were arrested on Saturday by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi Police.

According to the sleuths of EOW, the Chandras have been accused of allegedly duping buyers who had booked flats in his Greater Noida residential project to the tune of Rs 35 crore. The buyers alleged that Unitech failed to complete the project on time and also did not refund the money along with the interest.

"There are allegations are that he fraudulently took the money from his clients and allegedly parked it in a

shell company and then laundered it abroad," said a senior police officer. "They were not having valid permissions from competent authorities before starting the project."

Both of them will be produced before a Delhi court post 2 pm. Unitech refrained from commenting on the issue. This is not Sanjay Chandra's first brush with the law. Earlier he was also arrested by CBI in relation 2G case. Chandra had bid and won licence for telecom project which he later sold to Norway based company Telenor.

According to the police, there are around 91 cases registered against them. FIR was registered against

them and they have been booked under section 406, 409 (breach of trust), 420 (cheating) and 120 (b) (concealing criminal offence) of the Indian Penal Code.

Over two dozen home buyers of Unitech's housing projects in Noida and Gurgaon had approached the National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) after the builder had failed to give them possession of their flats as the per schedule. The company had promised to hand over the possession of flats in 2012, but failed to meet the deadline.

The consumer forum had asked Unitech to refund the money to the home buyers with interest.

Militants open fire on army convoy

PTI Srinagar, April 1: Militants today opened fire on an army convoy near a hospital on Parimpora-Pantachowk bypass road here.

No casualties have been reported in the attack, a police official said. The militants opened fire on the convoy near SKIMS Hospital Bemina at around 1.15 PM, the official said.

He said the last vehicle of the convoy was hit by the bullets and the troops retaliated.

The area has been cordoned off and combing operations started to track down the militants, the official said.