

Editorial

What if Pan Naga Hoho is the final settlement ?

It's no wrong presuming that the center has now framed a modality to solve the issues of the NSCN-IM. It's only a matter of time that the announcement of what holds the fate of Nagas will be made official latest by December this year. Well a leader like Prime Minister Narendra Modi will keep his word and it's no wrong believing that this final solution (as assumed by the Gol) will not disturb the territorial boundary of any of the neighbouring states of Nagaland particularly the territorial integrity of Manipur.

Think tanks and leaders of the India government are no fool; while the leadership of the NSCN-IM cannot be underestimated, when it comes to determine the fate of the Naga people. If one goes back and look at how NSCN-IM was borne and how it had struggled for nearly three decades, the said will certainly understand how the rebel group had utilized all possible means to find a solution irrespective of its position. We can assume 1988 as the birth of NSCN-IM after the NSCN has been split into two faction - one led by SS Khaplang and the other led by Th. Muivah. In less than five years, the rebel group popularized its name by targeting to Kuki communities leading to a communal flare up which led to the death of 1000s of innocent people belonging to both Kuki and Naga. Number of Kuki civilian killed during the communal clash ignited by the NSCN-IM was much more than those of Nagas. When the wind was settled with the intervention of major community Meitei, the NSCN-IM entered to peace deal with the government of India. It was in August 1, 1997 that the rebel group put its step to begin peace talk with the Government of India and in June 14, 2001, the cease fire agreement between the Government of India and the NSCN-IM was signed between the two entities at Bangkok, which is also known as the Bangkok agreement which led to a mass uprising in the state of Manipur. The journey of the NSCN-IM from 1988 to 2001 and the later stage to till today showed that the rebel group is driven by a desire to achieve something no matter what it had stood earlier.

It is at this point that we can assume the final solution of the framework agreement will not disturb the boundary of the Manipur and other neighbouring states of Nagaland. But what else could be the framework agreement? - a matter need to be pondered by all.

Well time and again a modality called "Pan Naga Hoho" has been reported at many of the newspapers published in Manipur as well as at Nagaland. Neither the Interlocutor nor the collective leadership of the NSCN-IM had denied it. And the so called Pan Naga Hoho modality has also been a talk of the NSCN-IM among its frontal bodies and intellectuals. If the Pan Naga Hoho is the final solution than the territorial boundary of the neighbouring states will remain as it is but the so called Nagas coined by the NSCN-IM, no matter where it stays will come under a single administrative unit.

In this column this newspaper has stated what actually is a Pan Naga Hoho briefly. It is a statutory body with Executive authority, budgetary and negotiating power. This body will function beyond territorial limits of any state and will be able to operate in any state where Nagas are settled.

If this is the agreement, no matter the territorial boundary of Manipur remain intact, the so call Manipur will have no meaning at all as the government will not be able to govern to its citizen residing in its soil.

Political parties in the state who had always stood for the integrity of the state should also be aware of a situation arises this way.

Army to help build foot overbridge at Elphinstone station

Mumbai, Oct 31: The Army will help build a new foot overbridge at the Elphinstone Road station, Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis today said as Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Piyush Goyal visited the station, where a deadly stampede took place last month. 23 people were killed in a stampede on the Elphinstone Road station foot overbridge (FOB) last month. "We are taking the Army's help in

building a new FOB at the Elphinstone Road station and at two other suburban train stations in Mumbai," Fadnavis told reporters at the venue. After the stampede on September 29, railway officials posted police personnel to manage the crowd on busy platforms, evicted hawkers from suburban train stations and started speeding up infrastructure projects on suburban network.

Sardar Patel - Man who United India

By : Aadiya Tiwari (PIB feature)
Sir John Strachey, a British Indian civil servant used to address his civil servants-in-training by saying, "The first and most important thing to learn about India is that there is not and never was an India." Historian David Ludden in his book *Contesting the Nation: Religion, Community, and the Politics of Democracy in India* writes "the territory that we use to describe the landscape of Indian civilization was defined politically by the British Empire. India was never what it is today in a geographical, demographic, or cultural sense, before 1947." Many like Winston Churchill had predicted that post independence, India would disintegrate and fall back into the Middle Ages.

India, after attaining independence faced massive challenges. One of the biggest tests the leaders of the time faced was to have a defined boundary of the land whose geographical sense had flowed among the masses through ages. Diana L Eck in her book, *India-A Sacred Geography* describes this land of Bharata to have been "enacted ritually in the footsteps of pilgrims for many hundreds of years." Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru writes about this sense of unity of India as an emotional experience. In *Discovery of India*, he explains the experience of instilling sense of oneness among the peasants of India. "I tried to make them think of India as a whole...the task was not easy; yet it was not so difficult as I had imagined, for our ancient epics and myths and legends, which they knew so well, had made them familiar with the conception of their country." The task of reconstructing India -

territorially and emotionally - was immense. Entire nation was going through a period of mayhem. There were forces at play which wanted a divided nation. The big question for leaders like Mahatma Gandhi at the time of partition was whether there will be two nations once British are gone or 565 different nations. At such a time, responsibility of reconstruction of India fell in the able hands of Iron Man - Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel.

Sardar Patel despite his falling health and age never lost sight of the larger purpose of creating United India. VP Menon who ably assisted Sardar Patel in this enormous task writes in *The Story of the integration of the Indian States*, "India is one geographical entity. Yet, throughout her long and chequered history, she never achieved political homogeneity.....Today, for the first time in the country's history, the writ of a single central Government runs from Kailas to Kanyakumari, from Kathiawar to Kamarupa (the old name of Assam)." Sardar Patel played an instrumental role in creating this India.

Congress had given its assent to the June 3 plan which was about partitioning India into two territories - India and Pakistan. India was then a mosaic of British occupied territory and 565 princely states. The princely states had to choose between joining either of the two nations or remain independent. Few princely states like Travancore, Hyderabad, Junagadh, Bhopal and Kashmir were averse to joining the state of India while others like Gwalior, Bikaner, Baroda, Patiala and others proactively joined India. Sardar Patel was aware 'you will not have a united India if you do not

have a good all-India Service', therefore before embarking on reorganization of states, he build confidence in the 'Steel Frame' or the Indian civil services. Sardar Patel worked tirelessly to build a consensus with the princely states but did not hesitate in employing methods of *Sama, Danda and Bheda* where ever necessary. Sardar Patel along with his aide VP Menon designed 'Standstill Agreements and Instrument of Accession' accommodating requests and demands from various rulers.

Approach of Sardar Patel and VP Menon was more conciliatory as compared to the approach of Pandit Nehru, who in May 1947, had declared that any princely state that refuses to join the Constituent Assembly would be treated as an enemy state. The official policy statement of the Government of India made by Sardar Patel on July 5, 1947 made no such threats. It reassured the princely states about the Congress' intentions, and invited them to join independent India 'to make laws sitting together as friends than to make treaties as aliens'. He stitched the princely states along with British Indian territory, and prevented balkanization of India.

Sardar Patel was also conscious of the fact that mere political reorganization of this land was not enough. He was aware that the wounded civilization of India needed to be stirred to its core and woken up from the past slavery and misery. There was an urgent need to rekindle among the people of India the bond they shared with their diverse cultures. On November 13, 1947, Sardar Patel, the then deputy Prime Minister of India, vowed to

rebuild Somnath Temple. Somnath had been destroyed and built several times in the past and the story of its resurrection from ruins this time would be symbolic of the story of the resurgence of India. The then President of India, Dr. Rajendra Prasad speaking at the inaugural ceremony at the temple said, "It is my view that the reconstruction of the Somnath Temple will be complete on that day when not only a magnificent edifice will arise on this foundation, but the mansion of India's prosperity will be really that of prosperity of which the ancient temple of Somnath was a symbol." He added, "The Somnath temple signifies that the power of reconstruction is always greater than the power of destruction."

Sardar Patel played a heroic role in the reconstruction of the Indian civilization, and at a time when Prime Minister Narendra Modi has given a call for 'New India', Patel's words in a letter to Princely rulers are more relevant than ever. "We are at a momentous stage in the history of India. By common endeavour, we can raise the country to new greatness, while lack of unity will expose us to unexpected calamities. I hope the Indian States will realise fully that if we do not cooperate and work together in the general interest, anarchy and chaos will overwhelm us all great and small, and lead us to total ruin.....let it be our proud privilege to leave a legacy of mutually beneficial relationship which would raise this sacred land to its proper place amongst the nations of the world and turn it into an abode of peace and prosperity." The author is currently a Senior Research Fellow at India Foundation.

National & International News

Aadhaar a threat to national security, will approach PM Modi: Subramanian Swamy

Zee Media Bureau New Delhi, Oct. 31: BJP Rajya Sabha MP Subramanian Swamy on Tuesday said that compulsory Aadhaar is a threat to the country's security and expressed hope that the Supreme Court will strike it down when its larger Constitution bench takes up the matter.

The firebrand BJP leader took to Twitter and tweeted that he will soon write a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi detailing how compulsory Aadhaar poses a big threat to the country's security. Swamy said this a day after the Supreme Court referred a batch of petitions challenging the Centre's move to make Aadhaar mandatory for availing benefits of various services and social welfare schemes to a five-judge Constitution bench. The order was passed by the Supreme Court bench comprising Chief Justice Dipak Misra, Justice AM Khanwilkar and DY

Chandrachud while responding to a batch of petitions challenging the validity of the Aadhaar law on charges of being intrusive and violating the right to privacy. The top court also pulled up the West Bengal government for directly approaching it against the central government's move to make Aadhaar mandatory for availing benefits under social welfare schemes. The bench said that hearing on the petitions challenging the government's move would take place in the last week of November. The court said this after Attorney General KK Venugopal told the bench that the government had filed a detailed affidavit refuting all the allegations on expanding the area under Aadhaar linkage. Asking the court not to issue any further interim orders, Venugopal said the government was ready to argue and the court, if deemed fit, could set up a Constitution bench

to decide on the various Aadhaar petitions. He said the government had already issued more than 100 orders and notifications to address the glitches in the implementation of Aadhaar. The government counsel also told the court that fake reports were being spread about Aadhaar linking, including how the unique ID was being made compulsory for CBSE students to appear in Class 10 and 12 exams. As court said that the challenge to Aadhaar law would be heard by the five-judge Constitution bench, the issue of extending the deadline for linking Aadhaar with bank accounts, PAN, mobile numbers and other schemes for those who don't have the unique identification number is now on the backburner. The issue is not there, as the court is hearing the matter in the last week of November, the Attorney General said.

The existing deadline is up to December 31. In the last hearing of the matter on October 25, the Centre had indicated that the deadline for linking Aadhaar with bank accounts, PAN, mobile numbers and other schemes for those who don't have the unique identification number and are willing to go for it may be extended till March 31. The validity of Aadhaar law that has been challenged by a number of people, including former Karnataka High Court Judge KS Puttaswamy, first Chairperson of National Commission for Protection of Child Rights and Magsaysay awardee Shanta Sinha and researcher Kalyani Sen Menon. Aadhaar is being challenged in the court amid apprehensions that it violated right to privacy - which a nine-judge bench had already declared as a fundamental right - with the use of biometric details like fingerprints and iris scans.

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“IGAR (S) celebrates the bond with the Ningols”

IT News Imphal, Oct 31: IGAR (South) celebrated the Ningol Chakkouba festival yesterday. Womenfolk from various walks of life and communities of the State attended the Manipur's traditional festival. Maj Gen Virendra Singh, VSM, IGAR (South), extended a traditional welcome to the Ningols and the women folk offered 'Athenpot' to the rank and file of the IGAR (S). The event commenced with lighting of lamp by Padmashree KSH Thouranishabi Devi, Smt K Pishak Devi, Kumari Asha Wangman, Smt N Tungnung and Smt Farida Begum. The cultural programme during the occasion witnessed performances by various renowned artists from the State including musical tribute by Jasmine Leivon, performance by Voice of Symphony and vocal

performance by Kumari Mandakini Devi. Prominent Ningols addressed the audience conveying their gratitude and appreciation on behalf of their communities to the Assam Rifles for partaking in their customs and traditions and org the function which they considered above all as a real mark of respect to the women of Manipur. 29 women achievers from different fields were felicitated by Maj Gen Virendra Singh, VSM, IGAR (S). Maj Gen Virendra Singh, VSM, in his message, appreciated the invaluable contribution of the Manipuri women in all walks of life and added that it was an honour to host the Ningols. He appealed to the Ningol to continue their inimitable role of maintaining peace, development and harmony in the society. The General Officer



emphasized that the state is undergoing a positive transformation and in this the women can make immense difference. On behalf of the participants, women speakers expressed gratitude towards the gesture of the Assam Rifles to strengthen the brother-sister bond and emphasized that the cordial relationship between the security forces and the society will always

play a positive role in ensuring sustainable peace & prosperity in the state. The event was conducted in true Manipuri tradition with everyone eating the traditional Manipuri meal on plantain leaves and the Assam Rifles Officers and men attired in Peijoms serving the Ningols. The event further cemented the bonding between the Assam Rifles and the civil society.