

Islamic militancy a threat to progressive Bangla thinkers

By- NJ Thakuria
Guwahati, Oct.7,

Rise of Islamist extremism in Bangladesh poses serious threats not only to the religious minority communities there, but also to the secularists, intellectuals and other sects within the Muslim community. Speaking to a group of scribes at Guwahati Press Club from Dhaka through video conferencing on 6 October, prominent Bangladeshi journalist Saleem Samad made this comment.

An Ashoka Fellow and Hellman-Hammett Award recipient journalist also added that an upsurge of fundamentalist forces in the Muslim dominated country may affect some to its

neighbouring Indian States in due course of time. Samad narrated how atheist & secularist bloggers and activists are increasingly becoming the target of the Islamic extremists in Bangladesh, which has otherwise slowly (but steadily) marched on the path of becoming a country of one nationality (Bangladeshi), one language (Bangla) and one religion (Sunni Muslims). The outspoken journalist made an observation that due to overwhelming majority of Sunni Muslims in the country, among whom considerable rise of extremism is observed, other minority sects within the Muslim community like the Ahmadiyya also face threats of survival.



Citing how a network of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh was busted in West Bengal few years back, Samad urged the north-eastern States to remain alert about jihadi elements after the ongoing crackdown on Islamic militancy. He revealed that thousands of Bangladeshi youths had joined various militia groups in Syria, Iraq, Chechnya,



Indonesia, Philippines, Afghanistan, Pakistan etc to fight alongside the jihadis there. Answering queries from Guwahati scribes, the senior journalist reiterated that currently there is no northeastern separatist leader in Bangladesh as the Sheikh Hasina government in Dhaka continues rigorous crackdowns against the

outfits. Samad made it clear that Prime Minister Hasina would leave no stone unturned to wipe out militancy in the country. A front runner for media rights, Samad painted a dismal picture of press freedom in Bangladesh, as journalists are frequently targeted by both State and non-State actors. He regretted that though 26 Bangladeshi journalists lost their lives to assailants since 1991, majority cases remains pending till date. In another significant remark, Samad, who works as special correspondent at The Bangladesh Monitor and contributes news-features to the India Today, has divulged that none of the Indian leaders visiting Dhaka and

Bangladesh delegation meets in New Delhi had taken up the issue of illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators in Assam (India) with their counterparts. Speaking about the process of National Register of Citizens (NRC) updation in Assam, Samad asserted that for the Bangladesh government believes that it is an internal affair of India only and hence it has not made any official statement over the development. He agreed that there is hardly any media attention in Bangladesh press over the NRC updation process and its outcome. Strongly advocating people-to-people contact between Assam (India) and Bangladesh, Samad lamented

how Assam had missed the bus despite being so closely located, while other States like West Bengal and Tripura were taking several steps to improve connectivity with Bangladesh via railway and roadways. Emphasizing on direct air connectivity between Guwahati and Dhaka, Samad opined that trade & commerce along with cultural ties would help in erasing many misconceptions prevailing on both sides. He also claimed that more students and patients are expected to move from here to there & vice versa for better options and would enhance the tourism in both parts of the international divide.

Tamenglong District Hospital In Grave Shortage

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Further, newly transferred six (6) doctors to Tamenglong District Hospital are undergoing P.G course which exposes the insincerity on the part of the Manipur Government in depriving the needed services for the wellbeing of the Tamenglong Public. It is also observed that the new Tamenglong District Hospital is poorly ventilated and the drainage system is not safely maintained which has a high risk of breeding many types of diseases. As per the Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS), there should be dedicated parking space separately for ambulances, hospital staff and visitors, there should be no stagnation or overflow of drains, there should be no water logging/marsh in or around the hospital premises and there should be no open sewage/ditches in the hospital. It may also be recalled the many assurances made by the Manipur state government which was publicized on the

13th of September, 2017 by the then Deputy Commissioner Shri. Armstrong Pame, IAS during the incident where a mother had to give birth on the way to Imphal. It was assured that old machineries and equipments to be replaced was already ordered by Chief Medical officer, Tamenglong but it will be placed only when the hospital is shifted to the new upgraded 100-bedded hospital at Duigaliong Village since there is no space in the old 50-bedded hospital. However, all the rusted hospital beds are still in used and many of the old equipments are yet to be replaced. As per the 2012 revised guidelines of Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS) for District Hospital of 101-500 bedded, the approach road should be all weather motorable road and it should be illuminated in the nights but the approach road of Tamenglong District Hospital is in a dilapidated condition. The road is hardly motorable which causes a great

inconvenience for the commuter especially while transporting the patients. When the matter was enquired upon by **The Gaanphiu Mail**, even the CMO office could not disseminate the required information which is a serious concern for the general public. The existing sub-standard of the Tamenglong District Hospital is a great threat to the lives of many people living in Tamenglong District. In many instances, the District Hospital continue to remain as referral centre since there is hardly any specialist doctors and other required facilities to treat the patient in many cases. Unfortunately, women and children are the constant victim of non-availability of basic medical facilities in the Tamenglong District Hospital. If the matter has not been addressed on time by the concern authority (Health Department), it is feared that many precious lives will continue to wither especially that of women and children because of medical negligence.

| Sl.No. | PARTICULAR | REQUIRED | AVAILABLE | REMARKS |
|--------|---------------------------|----------|-----------|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Doctors | 29 | 8 | Only two (2) specialist Doctors |
| 2 | Nurses | 45 | 22+2 | 2 Nurses on contract |
| 3 | Hospital Administrator | 1 | 1 MS | |
| 4 | House keeper/Manager | 1 | 0 | |
| 5 | Medical Record keeper | 1 | 0 | |
| 6 | Medical Record Assisitt. | 1 | 0 | |
| 7 | Accounts/Finance | 2 | 1 | On contract |
| 8 | Admn. Officer | 1 | 0 | |
| 9 | Officer Asstt.Gr I | 1 | 0 | |
| 10 | Officer Asstt.Gr II | 1 | 0 | |
| 11 | 300 M.A X-Ray machine | 1 | 1 | |
| 12 | 100 M.A X-Ray machine | 1 | 0 | |
| 13 | Dental X-Ray Machine | 1 | 0 | |
| 14 | Ultra Sound (Obs & Gyne.) | 1+1 | 1 | Portable (Black & White) |
| 15 | Refrigerator 165 litres | 3+1 | 0 | |
| 16 | Blood Bank Refrigerator | 1 | 0 | |
| 17 | Air Conditioner | 4 | 1 | Only in OT |
| 18 | Generator 75 KV | 1 | 1 | Only 10 KV |
| 17 | Portable 2.5 KV | 1 | 1 | |

NB. The required column is as per the 2012 revised guidelines of Indian Public Health Standard (IPHS) for District Hospital of 101-500 bedded.

Plea in SC to bring office of UP Chief Minister under Lokayukta law

Agency
New Delhi, Oct 7

A plea has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Uttar Pradesh government to amend the law to bring the office of Chief Minister under the purview of state ombudsman, Lokayukta. The plea said that the existing status of the 'Uttar Pradesh Lokayukta and Up-Lokayukta Act, 1975' does not make the ombudsman 'powerful enough to serve the purpose and object for which it was enacted'. The PIL, filed by advocate Shiv Kumar Tripathi, has sought a direction for amending the 43-year-old state law to bring the

Chief Minister under purview of the ombudsman to ensure effective control over corrupt activities. "The Lokayukta of the state of Uttar Pradesh is not competent to proceed against the Chief Minister for any corruption in which he has been found guilty of favouritism, nepotism or lack of integrity therefore there is need to bring the Chief Minister under the purview of Lokayukta for proceeding against him for his corruption," it said. The plea has also sought direction to bring under the ambit of Lokayukta law the institutions like state and deemed universities and

private institutes, committees, boards, commission, established under the state laws. Besides seeking power to "search and seizure" for the Lokayukta, the plea said that the ombudsman be also provided the administrative control over state police for carrying out the probe. "The Lokayukta/Up-Lokayukta should be given independent police force which shall directly be under his administrative control," the plea said. UP Lokayukta is not "effective enough" in probing corrupt public servants and has to depend on police authorities,

which are under the control of the state government, it said. It also sought directions to empower Lokayukta for proceeding on its own on information regarding any corruption by a public servant as defined in the Lokayukta Act and to fix a time limit for presentation of the report/recommendation of the Lokayukta before both the houses of the state legislature. The plea also said that necessary amendments should be made so that every public servant submits annual return of all the assets and liabilities before the Lokayukta.

Swift Surge Forward in Tourism sector

By: OP Sharma

Alongside rapid strides on other spheres, the Tourism sector in India now is surging forward; swiftly and surely. Gradually, our country with rich cultural heritage, dotted with many spots with nature's bounty and charms, sublime environs and numerous other attractions, pilgrimage places depicted as "Incredible India" is gaining popularity for its destinations. Tourist traffic is attaining new heights with this sector in top gear and still moving ahead to gradually tap its vast potential. Our nation is carving out its due share and status in the global tourism industry. Tourism, a pivotal sector as a driver of social integration and economic development, is growing at impressive pace in recent years. Domestic travels for pilgrimages, business and varied other factors, is as old as our society. While there were just 17, 000 inbound tourists on the eve of our Independence, presently the figure for tourist traffic has shot up very significantly. But keeping in view the high potential, there is more scope for giving further boost to India's tourism industry. Due to some tangible bold initiatives and promotional schemes taken by the present regime, this sector will certainly go up carving out its due share in the global tourism and travel sphere. Ever since achievement of Independence, keeping in view the vital importance of tourism, concrete policies and elaborate plans have been implemented in a phased manner with the result that steadily there has been growth and development in tourism

trade. More sustained endeavors are required to secure larger share in global tour and travel sectors. Latest figures indicate that tourism generated 14.02 lakh crore (US\$220 billion) or 9.6 per cent of the nation's GDP in 2016 and supported 40.343 million jobs, which is 9.3 per cent of its total employment. This sector is predicted to grow at an annual rate of 6.8 per cent to 28.49 lakh crore (US\$440 billion) by 2027, which is 10 per cent of our GDP. To quote an instance, India's medical tourism estimated to be worth US\$3 billion, which is projected to grow further to \$7-8 billion by 2020. It is pertinent to point out that in 2014 nearly 184, 300 foreign patients traveled to India for medical treatment. About 88.90 lakh foreign tourists arrived in India in 2016 as compared to 80.27 lakh during the previous year, recording a growth of 10.7 per cent. Domestic tourist visitors numbered nearly 1,036.35 million in 2012, an increase of 16.5 per cent from 2011. Pilgrim-tourism too is registering ever-increasing numbers every year. The Prime Minister, Narendra Modi has underscored need for involvement of youth power in projection and promotion of tourism industry. As per the report of World Economic Forum on global travel and tourism, India ranks 40th out of 136 nations across the globe. Now with the present Government's emphasis on improvement of roads network, high-speed railway and air services, higher hotel accommodation, business opportunities, cashless payment system,

clean environ and liberalized visa system and suitable human resources, the tourist traffic is expected to further grow up swiftly. The Union Ministry of Tourism and all the States have to work as partners for working on suitably designed national policies and plans for sustained growth of tourism. Visa policy has been rightly liberalized and vigorous worldwide campaign of "Incredible India" is yielding encouraging results. It is envisaged to give a further fillip to tourism sector and upgrade India's status in the global tourist traffic. E-tourist visa facility extended to over 150 countries and UDAN scheme among others, will go a long way in promoting domestic and foreign tourism. There are well-designed tour packages and tourist-cum-pilgrim-circuits to suit all sorts of visitors. The Indian tourism and hospitality industry is key driver of growth among the services sector. Tourism is also a potentially large employment generator besides being a significant source of foreign exchange for the country. Every citizen has to abide by spirit of "Aatithi Devo Bhawe" (every tourist is our honoured guest) and act as voluntary ambassador of tourism to attract more tourists. India's rising middle class and increasing disposable incomes has continued to support the growth of domestic and outbound tourism. Domestic Tourist Visits (DTV's) has grown by 15.5 per cent year-on-year to nearly 1.65 billion during 2016. Foreign visitors have significantly gone up and India's foreign exchange earnings (FEE's) have through tourism increased by 32 per

cent and touched US\$ 2.278 billion in April, 2017. India is expected to move up five spots to be ranked among the top five business travel market globally by 2030, as business travel spending in the country is expected to treble until 2030 from US\$ 30 billion in 2015. Foreign Tourist Arrivals (FTA) in India have witnessed an impressive growth in the last three years. During April, 2017, it stood at 7.40 lakh compared to 5.99 lakh in April 2016 and 5.42 lakh in April 2015. There has been a significant rise in Non-Residential Indians (NRI) travelling to India as well. In the Union Budget 2017-18, more initiatives have been taken to give a boost to the tourism and hospitality sector by setting up five special tourism zones, special pilgrimage or tourism trains and worldwide launch of Incredible India campaign among others. The Union Tourism Ministry and State Governments, Private sector, NGOs and each citizen must jointly put in their best to realize the country's full tourism potential and take lot of more innovative initiatives to make India a global tourism hub. The concerted and innovative initiatives will certainly give further impetus to both domestic and foreign tourism to realize India's full potential for positive results to emerge as a major player in the world tourism industry.

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Views expressed in the article are author's personal.
(Courtesy PIB Feature)