

Editorial

Tuesday, August 13, 2019

Remembering patriots

As a mark of respect and honour to the great martyrs who had sacrifices for the cause of the nations freedom, August 13 is being observed as the Patriots' Day in Manipur. On this day of 1891, 2 great sons of its soil Bir Tikendrajit and Thangal General were hanged to death by the British at Sahid Minar.

Every stakeholders of Manipuri society and individuals including State government, political parties, educational institutes and people living outside the state observed the day in their own capacity. The main official function of the state government was held at "Shahid Minar", the site where two patriots were hanged till death. They were hanged till death with the charge of waging war against Queen Victoria of England.

Remembering the patriotic spirit of our heroes is very much important but all the more important is to nurture the sense of patriotism among us while observing the 'Patriots' Day'. It's been 128 years that we are observing 'Patriots' Day'. However, it seems that we did not think of spending a minute in taking resolutions to follow the footprints of our patriots.

We all know that our forefathers were aware of the strength of the British Empire before they fought with them. However, they decided to fight with the British with a meager army they had just for the sake of their motherland. Their bravery, courage and patriotism were the key factors that inspired them to fight for their land.

Now, it is the time for us to reconsider that whether we will be able to follow the footprints of our forefathers. Do we have the bravery, courage and patriotism that our forefathers had few generations ago? No. Many of us take part in 'Patriots' Day' observation but most of us don't dream for a better Manipur. We do not learn anything from our forefather. That is why the state of Manipur is deteriorating in many fields day by day. The rise of corruption is one of the examples of deteriorate Manipur. Will our forefathers be happy seeing their descendants committing various crimes including corruption? No. They may be weeping seeing such a situation in their motherland. So, let us take a decision starting from the auspicious day of 'Patriots' Day' to follow the footprints of our forefathers in order to fight against such unwanted crimes in Manipur.

J&K administration relaxes restrictions in 9 districts of Kashmir Valley

Agency New Delhi Aug 13,

Jammu and Kashmir administration has said, it is committed to maintain peace and public order in the State and police are working in this direction. In a statement, the administration said, restrictions were completely lifted in five districts of Jammu. Similarly, relaxation was also given in the nine other districts of Kashmir based on local assessment of the situation. It said, media persons are being facilitated through a media centre set up by state government and they are being provided phone and

internet facilities. Restrictions on connectivity continue as a result of security requirements. However, people are being facilitated to contact their relatives and children outside state through widespread deployment of helplines at convenient locations. Thousands of calls are being made every day from these designated places. Over three hundred public points for phone connectivity are functional across the Kashmir division. According to Inspector General of Police Kashmir range SP Pani, there has been a malicious campaign on social media and the contacts of these were strongly refuted by the police.

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A shot at survival

" You who are so-called illegal aliens must know that no human being is illegal. That is a contradiction in terms. Human beings can be beautiful or more beautiful, they can be skinny, they can be right or wrong, but illegal? How can a human being be illegal?" - Elie Wiesel, Writer, Nobel Peace Prize winner and Holocaust survivor.

Today, the 13th of August is an important day for all the Manipuris as it is on this day that the two heroes of Manipur, Tikendrajit Singh and Thangal General were hanged by the British for waging war against the British Empire-a short yet significant struggle by a tiny hilly Asiatic kingdom against the most powerful empire in the world at that time. The 'Anglo-Manipur war' of 1891 drives home the irrefutable point of men's willingness to go to any length to safeguard their identity and dignity even in the face of insurmountable obstacles. It is also a struggle against exploitation and subservience and at the root of it, a struggle for survival.

At this time and age, while outright war might not be an immediate possibility, ethnic persecutions, atrocities and crimes against the weak and

vulnerable on a social, political and economic level has been continuing, and with an imperfect and insensitive administration, the problem can and does get serious. When such problem gets out of hand, the only option is to look for safer places, and more often than not, such oppressed people will invariably try and seek shelter in some neighboring state or country where the political and economic conditions are more favorable. It is not easy or desirable for anyone to uproot their lives and decide to take unseen risks and obvious troubles to move away from the lives they have been used to unless absolutely necessary and options are closed, when the very survival is threatened.

India is such a country whose social, economic and political situation is considerably more stable and secure than many of its neighbours for a long time, and people from these neighbouring countries have been crossing over to India in search for a better and more secure life, often illegally who are collectively and generally termed 'illegal immigrants'.

Under the Citizenship Act an "illegal migrant" is defined as

a foreigner who has entered into India-

(i) without a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf; or (ii) with a valid passport or other travel documents and such other document or authority as may be prescribed by or under any law in that behalf but remains therein beyond the permitted period of time.

An illegal migrant (though the term is often misleading since their presence inside the country is a civil infraction, not a criminal offense) is excluded from the acquisition of citizenship through birth, registration, or naturalization. There is no program to grant citizenship to illegal migrants or their children. They are also denied the right to legal recourse and other basic amenities, reducing them to non-entities.

While the concerns on the pressures on the resources like land, law and order situations and economics of a state or country as a result of the influx of undocumented immigrants is legitimate and understandable, in the absence of an official deportation or any formal repatriation treaty

From _IT desk

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with Bangladesh whose citizens form the largest number of such undocumented immigrants (Kiren Rijju, Minister of State for Home Affairs in the NDA government has put the figure at around 20

Invoking Dalit Rights Isn't the Best Way to Counter Centre's Decisions on J&K

Courtesy The Wire By : Anurag Minus Verma

It was a relative on the phone. "The day is not far when reservations too will be scrapped by the ruling party in the same undemocratic manner. They will soon come for our people," said the relative, a Dalit activist, as news about the scrapping of Jammu and Kashmir's special status broke. Then it was Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien who in his Rajya Sabha speech paraphrased German pastor Martin Niemöller. "First, they came for the Dalits, and I said, I'm not a Dalit, so I didn't stand up. Then, they came for the oppressed, and I said, I'm not oppressed, so I didn't stand up. Today, they came for the Kashmiris, and I said I'm not Kashmiri."

I am not sure why he wasted the limited time of the Rajya Sabha by using the words "oppressed" and "Dalits" in two separate lines.

On social media, sections of Dalit activists are visibly angry with the position taken by Mayawati's Bahujan Samaj Party which supported the move. Some even claimed that Dalits have become "Islamophobes" by supporting the watering down of Article 370.

Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) supreme Mayawati. Photo: Reuters Which brings us to the question, is it possible to connect Dalits with Article 370? Yes, but not in the way most activists and liberals might like to think.

The scrapping of Article 35A has been a long-standing demand of the Dalits of Jammu and Kashmir. One might argue that the sense of partial relief among Dalits after the reading down of Article 370, which is spoken of in the same vein as Article 35A, is an unintended byproduct of the Bharatiya Janata Party's main agenda. That could well be true, but one cannot overlook the huge discrimination meted out to Dalits due to Article 35A.

Article 35A and Permanent Resident Certificate

Article 35A is provision incorporated in the constitution, giving the Jammu and Kashmir legislature the authority to decide who the "permanent residents" of the state are, and confer on them special rights and privileges in public sector jobs, in the acquisition



of property in the state, in getting scholarships and other public aid and welfare.

This means those who are not permanent residents of the state never got access to government jobs, government scholarships, government loan schemes and even business opportunities in many cases. In order to get state benefits, it is mandatory for a citizen to possess a PRC or a Permanent Resident Certificate.

The strange case of the Valmiki community

In 1957, a union of sweepers in Jammu city went on an indefinite strike to push forward their demand for a salary hike and regulation of jobs. The back and forth between the government and the agitators continued for a month without any resolution. The urgency of the situation can be gauged by the fact that the then Jammu and Kashmir government, headed by Bakshi Gulam Mohammad, finally had to bring in sweepers from another state. A deal was struck between the Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir government, as a part of which many Dalits belonging to the Valmiki caste were bought in the city of Jammu for sanitary work. Initially, they were promised PRCs in the state and also assured all rights that state citizens enjoyed. Yet nothing of that sort happened.

While change were made in the Jammu and Kashmir Civil Services Rules to assist them in migrating to the state, a clause was added which prevented the sanitary workers from changing

professions. This meant that they could never opt for any other government job apart from that of a sanitary worker's.

The real brunt of these were felt by the educated younger generation who wanted to become lawyers, officers and policemen. Despite possessing Masters and post-graduate degrees, they had no other options but to stick to cleaning jobs.

Radhika Gill and Eklavya

The case of Radhika Gill, who belonged to the Valmiki caste of Jammu, reflected this awful conundrum. Her dream was to join the Border Security Forces. She cleared the BSF written exam and was also said to have topped the second group of physical tests. When it came to the document verification round, her application was rejected because she had no PRC.

Generations of Valmikis have been forced to remain sweepers in Jammu and Kashmir. Photo: Reuters

The story of Eklavya, who was a political science postgraduate but still only was eligible for the job of sweeper, is similar.

Like many others, Radhika tried to approach the authorities to for a PRCs but her requests were rejected on the grounds of provisions such as Article 35A and Section 6 of the Jammu and Kashmir constitution. They had all filed a petition in the Supreme Court.

Dalits laws not applicable

Many government schemes which were designed for the emancipation

of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe communities were not applicable in Jammu and Kashmir. This also includes the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, which safeguards the rights of these marginalised communities.

Bakarwal Muslims come under the ST category in the state and until now have been deprived of the benefits of many tribal acts which are meant to protect the life and dignity of tribal communities across India. The victim of the Kathua atrocity was from the same community. Had the region come under the purview of the SC/ST (PoA) Act, then the perpetrators would have been charged additionally under it as well.

It needs to be seen whether the Centre's decisions on the special status of Jammu and Kashmir turns out to be a great move or a disastrous one. At the moment, we have no exact way of anticipating any social and political eventuality in the region. One thing, though, is clear: the move has some unintended beneficial consequences for Dalit communities.

Those who are opposing the decision should not invoke the name of the Dalits to win the battle. There are many ways to attack this extremely controversial decision. Linking Articles 370 and 35A with the Dalit conflict is perhaps not one of them.

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