

Assam Govt. to introduce new laws for Land and Language Rights for Indigenous People

Courtesy New 18 Guwahati, Dec 22

As efforts to convince people on the amended Citizenship Act seem to go in vain, the BJP-led government in Assam on Saturday announced its commitment to safeguard the language and land rights of the indigenous people.

Citing the need for strong land rights, Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma announced that the state government will introduce

two new legislation to ensure "land of the indigenous people remain with the indigenous population".

"It has been noticed in Barpeta and Dhubri districts that the indigenous people of Assam are abandoning their land while moving to others places due to economical or other reasons. The new bill would ensure that indigenous people sell land only to indigenous people of Assam," said Sarma, adding that the modalities for the new legislation have been

discussed, and the government will bring the bill in the next session of Assam Legislative Assembly.

However, the minister said the recommendations of Clause 6 implementation committee on the definition of "indigenous" is awaited, and if the committee is late to submit its report, the government is expected to go ahead with its own definition of the term and enact the law.

The state has seen the largest anti-government demonstrations in recent times, with people refusing to back down till the contentious Citizenship Amendment Act is withdrawn.

The government is also working out a framework for a new Heritage Protection Bill that would protect the 'Satra' (Vaishnavite socio-cultural institution) land and heritage sites in the state.

"A number of land grabbing cases have come to light in the heritage sites and the Satras — the new Heritage Protection Bill will safeguard the Satra land. If anyone buys, encroaches upon or sells Satra land or any heritage area, he or she will be considered a criminal offender punishable under law," said Sarma while announcing the cabinet decisions.

The Assam government will also approach the Union government to amend Article 345 of the Constitution, and declare Assamese as the state language, excluding Barak Valley, Bodoland Territorial Area Districts (BTAD), and the Hill districts.

The Sarbananda Sonowal government will introduce a legislation in the next Assembly session making Assamese language a compulsory subject in all English and other medium schools, including Kendriya Vidyalayas up to Class 10.

The state would also request for Constitutional status to the six Tribal Development

Councils — Mising, Rabha, Thengal Kachari, Sonowal Kachari, Deorandi Tiwa — so that they can receive funds from both Central and state governments, besides other rights and privileges.

"The Chief Executive Member of all tribal autonomous councils will be ex-officio members of Sub-divisions Land Advisory Committee of Sub-divisions within their territorial jurisdiction," said Sarma.

The state cabinet also decided to create three new autonomous councils for three communities of Assam — Koch Rajbongshi, Matak and Moran.

"A new autonomous council will be formed for Koch Rajbongshi community that has made significant contribution to the history of Assam — the Kamatapur Autonomous Council will be constituted under undivided Goalpara district, excluding BTAD and Rabha Hasong areas. Similarly, two new Autonomous Councils, for Moran and Matak communities will be created. A Rs 500-crore special package announced in budget

Dr. Nara urges government to release L. Sotinkumar without condition



hanged to dead", Nara said and added that the left parties of the country taking into account the significance of the day announced "Protest Day against CAA across the country" on December 12.

Voice of dissent against an Act which is a threat to the people of the country is what has been following in a democratic country and the same argument has also been made in both the houses of parliament, Nara said. He further said that it was the numbers that they passed the Bill and every political party have the right to protest against it.

"Now December 19 is over and no unwanted incident had taken place on that day, there is nothing wrong in releasing him", the CPI leader who had contested the last Lok Sabha Election in Inner Manipur Parliamentary constituency said.

Recalling a speech made by Chief Minister N. Biren Singh during a function at Namdanglung at which he appealed people to forgive and forget, Dr. Nara said, "Such appealed is the need of the hour for solving the differences and today I appeal the Chief Minister to 'forgive and forget', as whatever Comrade Sotinkumar had addressed was in the interest of the political party he belongs to".

CPI condemn repressive measures of the State Police

IT News Imphal, Dec 22

Communist Party of India (CPI) Manipur State Council, has condemned the re-arrest of its general secretary L. Sotinkumar after being released on bail by the Court. A statement by M. Joykumar Luwang, Asst. Secretary, CPI Manipur State Council said that L. Sotinkumar who was arrested by the State Police on December 20 in connection with the General Strike called by Left Parties in protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 on December 19. He was released on bail by an order of the Chief Judicial Magistrate, Imphal West. However, as soon as L. Sotinkumar came out from the Court Complex, he was picked up again by a team of state police from the gate of the Court Complex on the pretext that SP/Imphal West wanted to have a talk with him.

The statement added that L. Sotinkumar Singh was re-arrest and detained unlawfully as SP/IW was on leave yesterday and not available in his office. The statement term the arrest as repressive measures of the State Police.

IT News Imphal, Dec 22

CPI leader Dr. M. Nara today urged the government of Manipur particularly to the Chief Minister N. Biren Singh to release L. Sotinkumar, the general secretary of CPI, Manipur State Council, without any condition.

"Comrade Sotinkumar was only performing his duty as a leader of a political party in the interest of the people and it would be wrong to treat him like a criminal", Dr. Nara said during a meeting with media persons at Irabot Bhawan in Imphal today.

He said that many members of the CPI were arrested from different part of the state in

connection with the nationwide general strike called by left parties of the countries on December 19. They were all charged under seditious act but court released them all as the sedition charges were not attracted to the activities of the CPI members. However, Comrade Sotini has been arrested again and again from one police station to another under the similar charges after the court had released him.

"December 19 was a significant day in the history of India as on this day of 1927, when the country was struggling for freedom from the British colonial rulers, many freedom fighters who were lodged in prison were

beneficiaries have not been released. A total of 206 applied for grant under the scheme for the WMC, out of these 167 were approved by the Town Planning department. Leima said that the fund has been released to the WMC however the Chairperson and Executive Officer of the Municipal Council halted the money of the beneficiaries without giving any proper reason.

The matter has been put to the notice of the Chief Minister by the beneficiaries and even the former Chairperson of the

Wangoi Municipal Council Housing for All Scheme in chaos- "Beneficiaries" money halted without any reason"

IT News Imphal, Dec 22

Beneficiaries of the Housing for all schemes under the Wangoi Municipal council today said that funds which had already sanctioned under the scheme have not been released for reason best known to the Executive officer of the WMC.

In a press meet held today at Manipur Press Club one of the beneficiary Laishram Yumshang Leima said that even as fund have been released for some of the beneficiary who are close to the local MLA, fund for other

Municipal Council had reached out to Secretariat concern authority. However, the fund has not been released till today.

Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (Urban) Housing For All scheme was one of the important schemes/ Programmes of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but for Wangoi Municipal Council H.F.A.P.M.A.Y is in mess.

Leima further said that the Executive officer have been harassing the beneficiaries when asked for release of the fund. She appealed the government to intervene the matter.

Anti and pro - CAA rallies continue in Maharashtra Sharad Pawar opposes CAA, NRC

By Raju Vernekar Mumbai Dec 22

While anti and pro-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) rallies continued in Maharashtra, NCP Chief Sharad Pawar on Saturday said that the Maharashtra Government should refuse to implement new citizenship law since it would hurt the religious and social harmony of India.

Speaking to media after attending "Bhimthadi Jatra", an annual affair in Pune, Pawar said that 8 NDA rules states, including Bihar, have refused to implement the law. Besides Bihar, states of Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal and Rajasthan have also opposed the CAA implementation. As such Maharashtra also should take a similar stand. But if the states oppose the Union government's order, there is a

likelihood that it may dismiss these state governments, Pawar hastened to add.

The NCP is a ruling constituent, along with the Congress, in the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government headed by the Shiv Sena. Earlier Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray (Shiv Sena) had said that implementation of the CAA will be dependent upon the ruling of the Supreme Court and had added that "We are checking legality of the new law and waiting to find out whether the new act fits the framework of Constitution or not, since some people have challenged the CAA in the SC".

Pawar also questioned selective grant of citizenship to non-Muslim immigrants from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan under CAA while excluding Sri Lankan Tamils. "Is



it because Sri Lankan Tamils don't belong to a particular religion?" he asked.

"As per the Act, people from Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Jain, Parsi and Christian communities, who have come to India till December 31, 2014 owing to their religious persecution will not be treated as illegal immigrants and will be given Indian citizenship". There are many Nepalis working as

domestic helps in many establishments in Maharashtra, Pawar said and added that two Nepali staff members have been looking after his official residence in New Delhi for the last 30 years.

Pawar said that the Union government was misusing its power and avoiding the dialogue with the stakeholders. In fact it should clarify things so that peace is restored.

In the meanwhile on Saturday evening hundreds of people congregated outside Dadar railway station in Central Mumbai in support of the contentious CAA and raised slogans hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi. On the occasion, the organisers — Sanvidhan Sanman Manch — appealed to the citizens to peacefully support the CAA and proposed NRC (National Register of Citizens) exercise. "We just put up the poster with the message 'I support CAA' and students came forward to sign," the organiser Harshad Kulkarni said.

The pro-CAA rally was also held in Thane, Kalyan, Navi Mumbai and Panvel. Senior citizens to youngsters shouted slogans and displayed placards expressing their support. Some also distributed pamphlets explaining how CAA is beneficial. In Kalyan, students held a drive outside Birla College to collect signatures in support of CAA. "Around 250 students signed the banner.

However the anti-CAA rallies organised in Bhiwandi (by a group of Congress workers), Nanded, Parbhani, Hingoli, Jalna, Beed, Solapur, Buldhana, Gadchiroli, Chandrapur and Gondia out numbered pro-CAA rallies.

The biggest rally took place in Buldhana town, where around 10,000 people marched 1.5 km to the district collector's office and submitted a memorandum of their demands. Whereas 20 people were detained and 130 booked in Hingoli for allegedly damaging public property and rioting during protests. Similar pro and anti-CAA rallies were slated to be held in late Sunday evening in Mumbai.