

Editorial

Monday, February 4, 2019

The ultimate showdown

With the increasing push for support of the contentious Citizenship Amendment Bill, the ruling BJP government has clearly indicated in no unclear terms its intent to pursue the agenda of converting the country into a Hindu nation despite the fact that with the 42nd Amendment of the Constitution of India enacted in 1976, the Preamble to the Constitution asserted that India is a secular nation. Secularity is an age-old convention and one of the most important features to ensure the unity of the nation. However, neither India's constitution nor its laws define the relationship between the state and religion thus providing the opportunity for influential zealots to abuse the faith of the majority to further their political ambitions using religion as a potent weapon. The central government is hell-bent on passing the Bill and the leaders make no bones about their decision.

On the other side of the divide is an increasing number of concerned citizens who are also hell-bent on making sure the bill get defeated in the Rajya Sabha during the Parliament session which ends on the 13th of this month. They have expressed their unwavering stand against the Bill and are leaving no stones unturned to make sure the political leaders and lawmakers come to their senses and understand the ground reality if the Bill is passed and becomes an act. For those standing up against the Bill, the fight is not merely for political relevance but for the continued existence and survival of the indigenous communities which will surely be overrun by non-Indian migrants from neighbouring countries of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan once the Bill is passed, as there is no systematic process or arrangement in place till date to check or prevent any form of exodus or infiltration especially in the porous border states of North East India.

The unfortunate fact, however, is that politics is a game of numbers and the move by the BJP is a bold and daring one to canvass support from the Hindu heartland and to add to its vote bank so that it remains in power for a long time given the fanatical and growing intolerance increasingly being demonstrated against any resistance to the propagation of Hindu ideology. The concept of political dividends which is the driving force behind such moves has started turning the government towards religion and faith to cement its hold over the nation - a very dangerous precedent which is bound to have a regressive and more-than-possibly counter-productive repercussions in the long run once the initial euphoria dies down because good and lasting governance does not entail playing to the emotions of the majority but a conscious and studied approach to connect on a logical or intellectual level such that positive and constructive support is garnered for inclusive growth and progress.

The central government must listen to the gathering unrest in parts of the country and refrain from taking hasty and forced decisions which will lead to chaos and unrest. It should study the 'political dividends' against the 'political backlash' it is bound to receive on account of the Citizenship Amendment Bill. There are times when numbers alone does not ensure success, and going by the tension and intent among the people especially the North east, this may very well prove to be the ultimate showdown between a political party controlled and dictated by religious zealots and a region whose indigenous people are ready to stake everything to save their future.

Perhaps the leaders at the centre might have a chance to give the whole issue a good thought through the poignant words of renowned film maker Aribam Syam Sharma expressed when he was returning the Padmashree Award conferred to him in 2006: - "Life has no meaning to a man who has no future. It is a matter of grave concern that such a scenario is staring all the people of Manipur in the face today. When the indigenous people are reduced to a small minority, our unique culture will be diluted beyond recognition and Manipuri people will no longer have any identity. Our future is very bleak if such a Bill is passed. Tripura always serves as a living example of how the indigenous people of Manipur can be wiped out in no time."

This time there will be much more than mere protests and usual pandemonium; this time there will be finality to the whole issue. It is up to the central government to decide the future of the country as we know it today.

AR Apprehends UG Cadre

IT News
Imphal Feb 4,

Moreh Battalion of Headquarter 26 Sector Assam Rifles carried out series of apprehensions and effective border domination ahead of Republic Day. On 03 February 2019 on specific input of likely infiltration of a UG between gate No 2 and border Pillar 80 on Indo-Myanmar border, a joint team of Moreh Battalion AR and Moreh Police Commando commenced an aggressive patrolling along suspected route. At around 1415 hours a suspected individual was trying to enter from Border Pillar 79 at Muslim Ward No 5, his suspicious move was spotted by the patrolling

team of Moreh battalion. The team tactically and discreetly approached the individual and apprehended him. On detailed questioning the individual revealed being an active cadre of UNLF. He identified himself as 2nd Lt Laishram Raghunani alias Loingam Baji son of L K Khamba resident of Nachou Mamang Leikai. He revealed that he joined the outfit in the year 1998 and received his basic military training at Eastern Nagaland in the 13th batch at Hechil (farm) camp. The apprehendee was handed him over to Moreh police for further investigation. This is the fourth apprehension made by the Moreh Battalion within a span of two weeks.

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On the Demand for Constitutional Safeguard of Manipur

People or Adivasis of the country and constitute about 8% of the total population". No community, individual or organization has right to protest or object to the demand for ST status by Meetei since ST Status For Constitutional Safeguard Of Meetei And Imphal Valley - By Dr. **Thangjam Ranjit**

The demand for inclusion of indigenous Meetei community in the indigenous or ST list of the country is the constitutional right of Meetei in the country. Since Meetei is an important indigenous community of the state, it has every right to include its name in the ST list of the country as it has been clearly stated by Supreme Court, the highest court of the country on 5th Jan, 2011, in one of its landmark judgments. It says "the present Scheduled Tribes are the descendants of the Original/Indigenous the demand is made under Article 342(1) of the India constitution. Granting of ST status to a community lies with the Govt. of India not to anybody..

The statements or slogans issued by ATSUM, KSO, UPPCM and others against the inclusion of Meetei in the ST list of the country are all fabricated and concocted ones. The slogans like "We oppose tooth and nail all the agenda of STDCM", "Govt. of Manipur should proceed with caution", "Meetei ST demand will vitiate hill valley relation", "Meetei demand for ST status to grab land and rights of tribals", "Meetei do not fulfill the criteria for ST status", "Inclusion of Meetei in the 8th Scheduled of India constitution is a sign of civilization, hence cannot be in the ST list", "To take advantage of the special provisions reserved to the tribals in education, employment", "Granting of ST status to Meetei will trigger serious social uprising, etc., etc., are rhetorics of few pseudo intellectuals, pseudo leaders communal minded, short sighted people, who have distaste for Meetei to the core, without any rhyme or reason. These people, both

in the hills and valley, are those who cannot come out openly to express their views but clandestinely through newspapers only. People should not believe in them rather should boycott them since their slogan will create misunderstandings among the different communities and may create unnecessary social problems and chaos, at a time when the state is passing through a myriads of problem.

Time and again, in the past few years, the basic demands of ST status by Meetei has been stated through medi—print and electronic, widely and clearly. They are the people who say "Adu Oirabasu" and therefore, there is no need of educating them. It may be noted that more than 99% Meetei community whole heartedly support this demand now, unlike before. When Meetei tribe is included in the ST list, present reservation policy in the state will remain unchanged as allocation of quotas within quota is state subject, and is guaranteed by Article 16 (4) of the Indian constitution. When highlanders are leaving the hills and settling in the fertile Imphal valley in colonies, vengs, khuls, etc. How one will expect Meetei to leave fertile valley and settled in a place where life is very hard to live in khuls and Leikais. Simply the slogans of grabbing land and quota of our brethren in the hills are baseless, unfounded, misleading and obsessed with communal tone and are nothing but to sow seeds of disharmony, disunity and hatred among the different communities living in harmony since time immemorial.

It is the leadership of ATSUM, KSO and other organizations not the Govt. that should go cautiously to avoid conflagration from a single spark. Government of Manipur is duty bound to proceed with the provisions of the Indian constitution for its people. In this regard leaders of the churches, civil societies, village Chiefs, Hohos, intellectuals and public leaders as well as intellectuals should educate leaders of ATSUM, KSO and other organizations which stand against the ST status to Meetei and should advise them to desist from playing fires, otherwise a serious social tension and conflagration may engulf the state. If these unwanted incidents happen, the responsibility of which will go to ATSUM, KSO & others.

The demand for ST tag by Meetei community of the state is fundamentally banked on the following hard realities.

Firstly, to save the Meetei, one of the important and dominant indigenous people of the state, which is showing signs of its gradual degeneration in the last few centuries and rapid downfall in the last few decades in population, land, culture, language, economy, social status, etc. in his natural habitat under the Article 342(1) of the Constitution of India.

Secondly, to save the fertile lands and wetlands in the valley which are producing maximum food grains, vegetables, fishes, etc. for the people, both in the valley and hills, from being owned by more skilled, hardworking, strong, advanced and united non-indigenous people, who are coming in large numbers in the state in the form Tsunami.

Thirdly, to foster a harmonious, peaceful, united and progressive Manipuri society based on ethnic equality (as ST) among the indigenous communities of consanguineous relation who have been living together since time immemorial.

Fourthly, to enable Meetei community, like other indigenous people in the state, to compete confidently well with other communities of India on equal social status (i.e. as Scheduled tribe) in the field of education, service sectors of Central Govt. etc. to earn more laurels, medals, positions, awards, privileges, etc. for better economic, social, educational, cultural and political status of Meetei in particular and Manipur in general, by discarding and discontinuing decades long practice of competing with highly advanced educated and organized communities wrongly in General Category/OBC of other states in the country.

In fine, the demand for restoration of ST status is to save Meetei from being extinct in its own habitat and to bring harmony, progress and peace among the indigenous people in the state. Hence, the indigenous people in the state should see this great historic event of Meetei's returning to its original ST status is to be to be in equal footing with other ethnic tribes as "Home Coming" and should extend warm and hearty welcome by all the indigenous people of the state, without any reservation. Here, we all need to remember the very well known maxims - "Blood is thicker than water" and "Birds of the same feathers flock together" at least in the context of present Manipur.

Contd From Yesterday Issued

Highlights Of Interim Budget 2019-20

Income Tax

Tax collections nearly doubled in five years- from Rs. 6.38 Lakh crore in 2013-14 to almost Rs. 12 lakh crore this year 80% growth in tax base from 3.79 crore to 6.85 crore in five years Tax administration streamlined- Last year, 99.54% of the income-tax returns accepted as were filed Technology intensive project approved to improve assessee friendliness -In two years, returns to be processed in 24 hours and refunds issued simultaneously Earlier benefits given to middle class- Basic exemption limit increased from Rs. 2 lakh to Rs. 2.5 lakh Tax rate reduced from 10% to 5% for the tax slab of Rs. 2.5 lakh to Rs. 5 lakh Standard deduction of Rs. 40,000 introduced for the salaried class Reduction of savings under section 80C increased from Rs. 1 lakh to Rs. 1.5 lakh Deduction of interest for self-occupied house property raised from Rs. 1.5 lakh to Rs. 2 lakh Special benefits and incentives already given to small businesses and startups- Overall compliance processes simplified.

Threshold for presumptive taxation of business raised from Rs. 1 crore to Rs. 2 crore Benefit of presumptive taxation extended for the first time to small professionals fixing threshold limit at Rs. 50 lakh Presumptive profit rate reduced from 8% to 6% to promote a less cash economy Tax rate for about 99% companies reduced to 25%

GST

GST made India a common market GST led to increased tax base, higher collections and ease of trade Interstate movements now faster, more efficient, and hassle free Responsive and sensitive reduction of tax rates - Most items of daily use now in the 0% or 5% tax slab Relieving the businesses and service providers- Exemptions from GST for small

businesses doubled from Rs. 20 lakh to Rs. 40 lakh Small businesses having turnover up to Rs. 1.5 crore pay only 1% flat rate and file one annual return only Small service providers with turnover upto Rs.50 lakhs can opt for composition scheme and pay GST at 6% instead of 18% Soon, businesses comprising over 90% of GST payers to be allowed to file quarterly return Encouraging GST revenue trends - The average monthly tax collection in the current year is Rs. 97,100 crore per month as compared to Rs. 89,700 crore per month in the first year

Infrastructure

Civil Aviation - UDAN Scheme Number of Operational Airports crossed 100 Latest: Pakyong airport in Sikkim Domestic Passenger traffic doubled in last 5 years.

Roads

India is the fastest highway developer in the world 27 kms of highways built each day Stuck projects completed - Eastern Peripheral Highway around Delhi Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh

Waterways

Flagship programme of Sagarmala along the coastal areas For first time, container freight movement started on Kolkata to Varanasi inland waterways

Railways

'Safest year' for railways in its history All Unmanned Level Crossings on broad gauge network eliminated. Semi high-speed "Vande Bharat Express" introduced - first indigenously developed and manufactured

Climate Change

International Solar Alliance To promote renewable energy First treaty based international inter-governmental organisation headquartered in India

Installed solar generation capacity grown over ten times in last five years Now creating lakhs of new age jobs.

Digital India Revolution

More than 3 lakh Common Service Centres (CSCs) exist to deliver services to the citizens

India now leading the world in the consumption of mobile data Monthly consumption of mobile data increased by over 50 times in the last five years

Under Make in India, mobile and parts manufacturing companies increased from 2 to more than 268 providing huge job opportunities

Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile (JAM) and Direct Benefit Transfer

In the last five years, nearly 34 crore Jan Dhan bank accounts opened Aadhaar now near universally implemented Ensure the poor and middle class receive the benefits of Government schemes directly in their bank accounts by eliminating middlemen.

Customs and trading across borders

Customs duties on 36 capital goods abolished-Digitization of import and export transactions RFID technology to improve logistics

Steps against corruption

Government walked the talk on corruption and ushered in a new era of transparency; FM RERA and Benami Transaction (Prohibition) Act have brought transparency in real estate The Fugitive Economic Offenders Act, 2018 to help confiscate economic offenders Government conducted transparent auction of natural resources such as coal & spectrum

Drive against Black money

Undisclosed income of about Rs 1,30,000 crore brought under tax through initiatives like Black money Law, Fugitive Criminal offenders Act, Demonetisation etc. Benami assets worth Rs 6,900 crore

have been attached 18% growth in Direct tax.

Banking Reforms and Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC)

The IBC has institutionalized a resolution-friendly mechanism Government has stopped the culture of "phone banking": FM Government adopted 4Rs approach of recognition, resolution, recapitalization & reforms

Government has implemented measures to ensure 'Clean Banking' Government has already recovered Rs. 3 lakh crore in favor of banks and creditors

Government has invested Rs. 2.6 lakh crore for recapitalization of public sector banks

Cleanliness

Government launched Swachh Bharat Mission as a tribute to 150 years of Gandhi Ji FM thanks 130 crore Indians for translating Swachh Bharat into a national revolution India has achieved 98% rural sanitation coverage 5.45 lakh villages have been declared "Open Defecation Free"

Defence

OROP under implementation in full spirit with Rs 35,000 crore already disbursed Military pay service hiked.

Other achievements

Government put a stop to questionable practices of hiding high NPAs Swachh Bharat Mission as the world's largest behavioral change movement **Key message in the Interim Budget 2019-20** Moving towards realizing a 'New India' by 2022 - Clean and healthy India with universal access to toilets, water and electricity to all An India where Farmers' income would have doubled Ample opportunities to youth and women to fulfil their dreams An India free from terrorism, communalism, casteism, corruption and nepotism **(To be continued)**