

# Amid Citizenship Amendment Bill protests, video of Tripura Police attacking ambulance carrying injured goes viral

Source: Rediffnews Agartala, Jan 11

The Tripura Police, already on the defensive after reportedly firing on protesters near Agartala, now has to deal with another crisis: a video has emerged of the police allegedly halting an ambulance transporting those injured in the clashes over the Citizenship Amendment Bill and thrashing its occupants. The video shows an ambulance rushing two of the injured: Sumit and Lalit. Four-and-a-half minutes into the clip, the vehicle is stopped purportedly by jaws of the Tripura State Rifles. The policemen begin smashing the vehicle with their batons, with one of them even breaking the windshield. The clip purportedly shows the police beating up the injured even as they cry for help. Another clip (too graphic to air) shows the injured inside the wrecked ambulance. The bandh against the Citizenship Amendment Bill, called by Northeast Students Organisation (NESO) and supported by 30 civil society and indigenous political groups in the region, evoked a massive response across the North East, with the protests in Tripura turning particularly violent. On the afternoon of 8 January, the entire Khumlung and Madhav Bari areas saw massive protests by Twipra Student Federation (TSF) and Indigenous Nationalist Party of Twipra (INPT).

**Ambulance not attacked, say police**  
Earlier Thursday, a section of the bandh supporters and police clashed near the blockade on National Highway 8. After the bandh supporters torched a few shops in Khumlung area of West Tripura, the police had to resort to firing. Six protesters were injured: five were shot and two were critically injured. Among them is 19-year-old Sumit Debbarma, a native of Khumlung area who lives near the site of the highway blockade. He has been flown to Kolkata for advanced treatment after his condition deteriorated. According to TSF general secretary Sunil Debbarma, Sumit was just an innocent bystander caught in the crossfire. TSF member Lalit Mohan Debbarma, 29, protesting near the blockade, was also critically injured in the firing. According to Sunil, protesters had blocked NHS near Madhav Bari truck terminus. They knew police might force to remove the blockade, but they never expected to be fired upon. "The government didn't ask us to withdraw the blockade; instead they imposed Section 144 and the police fired on us straight away," Debbarma alleged over a phone call. This part of the story the police agrees with. "We first had to use water cannons to disperse the mob. Then we used tear gas. Finally, when the mob began torching public property and became a threat to life, we had no choice but to fire," said Additional Director General of Police Rajiv

Singh. "But we were the ones who evacuated the injured and shifted them to the hospital," Singh added. Here the plot thickens. While the injured were indeed brought to the GB Hospital in a police jeep, videos show them, at one point, travelling in an ambulance that seems to have been stopped and attacked by Tripura State Rifles. Tripura Police said no such attack occurred. "Why on earth would policemen stop an ambulance?" Singh said. "It never happened. In fact, I was there later on. We evacuated the injured and got them to the hospital in police vehicles. In fact, the driver of the ambulance ran away." But Singh declined to comment on the video: "I have not seen the video. So it would not be proper to comment, but these things are never done by police. Obviously, police can approach the ambulance to see who are the patients, who is the driver. This can happen, but attacking ambulance, the police never does that. I can say with conviction because I was on the spot and issuing instructions to rush the injured to the hospital." A journalist working for a local TV channel, speaking on the condition of anonymity, confirmed the incident. "I got information about the attack on the ambulance. I was on the highway. Since the situation was bad, I didn't venture into the area. However, my sources in the area confirmed that an ambulance was

attacked and when senior police officers learned of the incident they evacuated the injured in a police gypsy." **INPT blames BJP**  
The ruling BJP's allies and opponents alike condemned both the firing and the purported attack on the ambulance. The INPT, which is part of the state government, demanded an independent probe into the events. "It's the failure of BJP government," said INPT general secretary Jagadish Debbarma. "The administration could have handled the situation without having the police resort to firing. Regarding the Tripura State Rifle ambulance attack, this is true. I also have the video." Tripura CPM MP Jitendra Choudhury said the firing incident highlights the government's insensitivity. "There were protests and blockades under previous governments, but these were tackled without firing a single bullet. This time, they resorted to lathi charge, tear gas and bullets. Six people were seriously injured. The police was also allegedly accompanied by BJP hooligans. This government is resorting to violence and creating a communal divide; these must be investigated by a judicial committee and victims should be compensated." He said he hasn't seen the ambulance attack video, but alleges his sources said "BJP goons" attacked the ambulance and not the Tripura State Rifles.

# Tripura Govt orders magisterial inquiry into Madhabbari firing incident

Agency Agartala, Jan 11,

The BJP-led Tripura government on Thursday ordered a magisterial inquiry into the Madhabbari police firing on Tuesday where tribal youths had sustained injuries while demonstrating against the controversial Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016. Tripura Chief Minister Biplab Kumar Deb asked West Tripura District Magistrate Sandeep

Mahatme to inquire into the incident and submit a report as early as possible. Police had fired rubber bullets and used tear gas to chase away the protesters. Moreover, police had order under Section 144 of the CrPc has been imposed for indefinite period at Tripura's Madhabbari and adjacent areas following the clash between the police and the protesters where at least seven persons were injured, police informed.

# Barak Indigenous Burnt Effigies; Says "Black bill"

IT News Silchar, Jan 11,

The Assam Indigenous Peoples Protection Committee (AIPPC) burnt the effigies of PM Narendra Modi, Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal, Silchar MP Sushmita Dev and few other this Thursday here at Modhurap point of Rongpur in Silchar. The team also celebrated with the happiness of not passing the Citizenship Amendment Bill, 2016 in the Rajya Sabha. Speaking to the scribes, AIPPC Secretary Seram Herajit opined that Silchar Congress MP Sushmita Dev expressed her statement about supporting the bill which is against the will of the indigenous

communities including the Muslims. The indigenous communities are ready to answer the MP Sushmita in the upcoming MP election. Herajit further added. The AIPPC team today organised many public meeting at different places including Auliya Bazar at Sonai, Silchar Medical College, etc where the protesters burnt the effigies of many leaders including Silchar MP Sushmita Dev, Minister Primal Suklabaidya and so on.

# Militant abducted two construction workers

Source: CNS Moreh, Jan 11,

Two labours of HVS construction have been allegedly abducted from the construction site at Noney by militants suspected to be the cadres Zeliangrong United Front (ZUF). The victims have been identified as one Waikhom Shamjai, 45, S/o Y. Jugindro of Komlakhong, Mayang Imphal and Projin Bidung, 35, S/o P. Kitish of Julara, Jirighat, Cachhar District, Assam. According to source, the two labours were engaged in the construction work of a culvert at Longmai (Noney) part-5 along NH-37. Armed militants, suspected to ZUF (numbering around 7) abducted them at around 9:30 pm of Wednesday.

**Free Health camp**  
Bijoy Govinda Naharol Seva Marup Keishamthong Elangbam leikai Khabam Lakpa Mandop is organising a free Mega Health Camp at Keishamthong Model High School on Jan 13.

# Open letter to the The Government of India & he People of India

## Against the Citizenship Bill Act 2016

"It is a very unfortunate, condemnable and illogical acts of BJP led government and supporters that let Citizenship Bill which seeks to provide Indian citizenship to non-Muslims from other countries from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan passed on Tuesday, the 8th January 2019 by the Lok Sabha.

The Citizenship Amendment Bill 2016 is contemptible as it bypass the democratic ideals of India. Introduced in the Lok Sabha by the Minister of Home Affairs, Rajnath Singh, its primary objective is to amend the current Citizenship Act 1955 to provide for the acquisition and determination of Indian citizenship for a certain category of illegal immigrants and not for the benefits of any citizens of NE and rest of India. Additionally, this bill relaxes the citizenship criteria for such immigrants and merges the categories of Persons of Indian Origin (PIO) and Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) together. This Bill cannot be acceptable to people of the Region.

When Mr. Modi, Prime Minister of India said that "I want to assure the people of Assam and North East that their rights will not be hurt after passage of the Citizenship Bill". What Rights of the People is he talking about, when we are treated unjustly and undemocratically.

Apart from the Citizens issues worrying for other's countries please look into the problems faced by people of the region. NE has many major issues to be discussed and solve at the earliest. Some may point out like, AFSPA, Law and Order, Internal Territorial State, Undemocratic Political issues, Immigrants/Refugees problems, Revolutionary issues, Educational drawback issues etc. Please bring solutions to these problems. Stop giving burden to the NE people by passing such illogical bill against the people of NE.

North East is a small region which comprises of seven sisters and one brother states namely as Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim respectively. It is approximately an area of 262,230 square kilometres which is almost 8 percent only of that of India. North East India so different from the rest of India. Nothing is common other than being Indian. Precisely the food intake, life-style, cultures and traditions, environmental and geographical factors etc... This bill will affect the indigenous people of this region and threats to the identity and cultures prevailing in North East. The immigrants / refugees in NE will soon rise in its peak and turn into a citizen. NE was never part of India or any Indian kingdoms before the British came and conquered unfortunately. In fact, NE should be protected & safeguarded from the rest of the country with prior to the Indigenous and uniqueness of the region.

Even after India became an independent country on 15th August, 1947, 72nd years of Independent, India have failed to recognised and established for the wellbeing to the people of the Region. We are living in a broken democracy with untruth leaders. If India cannot feel our sentiments and keep on doing such injustice to the people of the Region, I believe one day India will have to face the consequences of all the deeds done to this Region."

Yours sincerely,  
**Chongtham Thangamba Meetei,**  
Teacher of St. John Higher Secondary School, Shillong cum  
Advisor of the Shillong Manipuri Students' Union, Shillong  
Shillong, Meghalaya  
9856600442  
[thangamba.meel3@gmail.com](mailto:thangamba.meel3@gmail.com)

# Sahitya Akademi awardee charged with sedition for remarks on citizenship bill

Agency Ghy, Jan 12

The Assam government came in for severe criticism from opposition parties and prominent personalities on Thursday after sedition charges were slapped against a Sahitya Akademi awardee litterateur and two other known faces for their remarks on the citizenship bill. The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party, however, defended the move and accused RTI activist Akhil Gogoi, against whom sedition charges were also slapped, of having links with Maoists and "terrorising" people with a "false issue" by campaigning against the bill. The police on Thursday booked litterateur Hiren Gohain, Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti chief Gogoi and senior journalist Manjit Mahanta under sedition charges for their comments on the Citizenship Amendment Bill. The Congress, the All India United Democratic Front, the Asom Gana Parishad along with the KMSS and the All Assam Students Union termed the police action as "unfortunate"

and alleged it has been carried out at the behest of the BJP government in Assam. The Congress slammed the Sarbananda Sonowal government which it said believes "Hitler as a hero". Leader of the Opposition in the assembly Debabrata Saikia accused the Sarbananda Sonowal government for harassing people who are speaking against the "anti-Assam" policies and are creating awareness about their undemocratic and autocratic ways. "Sonowal considers 'Hitler' as his hero and now it is certain that Hitlerian action will be taken on all those opposing his misconduct", the Congress leader said. AGP leader Prafulla Kumar Mahanta said it was indeed "sad and shameful" that a sedition case has been filed against intellectual and social thinker Hiren Gohain and two others. The government cannot silence the voice of the people and their sentiments too cannot be ignored, he added. AIUDF spokesman Aminul Islam also condemned the move.

"We may not agree with them on many issues but it is unfortunate that the government is trying to stop democratic protests and gag the voice of the people," he added. KMSS chief Gogoi accused the BJP government at the Centre of trying to create an "Emergency-like situation" in Assam by attempting to suppress protests by people against the bill. "The BJP government has gone mad and is trying to create an emergency like situation to suppress a spontaneous movement by the people of Assam against the bill," he said. "It is unfortunate that a learned 'pandit' like Gohain Sir has been targeted by the government and sedition charges filed against him. "I am used to case upon case being filed on me and going to jail has become a lifestyle for me," the KMSS leader, who is spearheading the agitation against the bill by 70 organisations, said. All Assam Students' Union chief advisor Samujjal Bhattacharya accused the BJP government in the state and Centre of "indulging in anti-national activities by going against the interest of

the indigenous people and giving protection to Bangladeshis". "We condemn the sedition case filed against a learned intellectual like Gohain whom we hold in high esteem and respect," he said. Describing Gohain as "Assam's great thinker", Nagen Saikia, who is also a Sahitya Akademi award winner said, "I may not agree with him on various issues but what he thinks is right, he says it with courage." "Ignoring the people of Assam against the bill, the central government is trying to stoke thoughts of cessation in the minds of people", said the former president of Asom Sahitya Sabha - the apex literary body in Assam. "Educated youths are going to ULFA. Instead of extinguishing the revolutionary flame in the people, the government is by itself igniting that fire", he claimed. Shortly after the sedition cases were registered, a panel of BJP spokespersons addressed a press conference claiming that Gogoi has Maoist links

and is "terrorising" people with a "false issue" by campaigning against the bill. "Akhil Gogoi is related with Maoists and other Left linked persons. He is a professional agitator. He is working to fulfil someone else's political agenda," BJP spokesperson Mominul Awal said. Like an elephant, Gogoi also has two sets of teeth, he said. "He shows people the outside teeth on the Hindu Bangladesh issue, while he chews with the inner teeth sitting with Muslim Bangladeshis," the BJP leader said, adding that Gogoi was "terrorising people with a false issue". Gohain, an eminent litterateur and retired Gauhati University professor, said that he had spoken thrice at the meeting and on all occasions "I had highlighted that Citizenship should be on the basis of secular principles and the rightly demand of the Assamese on the Citizenship Amendment Bill must be achieved by democratic means".