

Assam violence divides India

TNN, New Delhi

The volatile debate in both Houses of Parliament on Wednesday on the continuing conflagration in Assam cast the spotlight on "illegal" immigration and the sharp divide it has caused in the state.

Allegations of ethnic cleansing and demographic change marked the sharp exchanges with representatives of Muslim outfits crossing swords with tribal leaders.

In the Lok Sabha, government business was suspended to take up the issue through an adjournment motion moved by BJP leader L K Advani, which was shot down by a voice vote after a five-hour debate.

The debate is significant as illegal immigration from Bangladesh, which had great traction in the 1980s and the 1990s, had appeared to have lost its salience in Assam. However, the current round of violence has belied the assessment that Assam was at ease with the new demographic normal where Muslims are in the majority in several districts of the state.

The debate also brought to the fore fears that the large-scale immigration is a threat to the indigenous people of Assam and their way of life.

S Biswamuthiary of Bodoland Peoples' Front objected to the term ethnic cleansing banded about by Muslim leaders and contended that the unrest in the region was due to "blatant kind of



L K Advani



Sonia Gandhi

aggression by illegal hostile Bangladeshi immigrants". He pointed out that earlier, the tribal belts and blocks in Assam were restricted for outsiders.

The member said the population of the Bodoland Territorial Area District was 30 lakh out of which indigenous people comprised 60% and the rest were non-Bodo communities.

Bwiswamuthiary said that if the Centre did not check illegal migration from Bangladesh, there would soon be a Bangladesh-occupied Assam on the lines of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

His colleague Biswajit Daimary alleged that foreign forces were creating problems in Assam and the northeast.

Saugata Roy of Trinamool Congress opposed the adjournment motion moved by Advani accusing him of constantly harping on the problem of illegal immigration and not referring to the people who have been uprooted from their home and hearth. "The tone and tenor of Advani's speech

will lead to further provocation of violence," he said, urging the House to "reject lock, stock and barrel" the adjournment motion.

Roy, who is minister of state for urban development, took a swipe at Advani saying that he was losing the sharpness he had displayed during his tenure as home minister in the NDA regime. The Trinamool leader contended that perhaps the BJP distancing itself from Advani had made him stray off from his line of thought.

Balbir Punj of BJP, who initiated the discussion in the Rajya Sabha, demanded that infiltrators from Bangladesh should be declared "stateless persons, disfranchised and debarred from owning properties in the state", a remark which drew sharp criticism from the treasury benches.

Responding to charges that Congress allowed illegal immigration from Bangladesh, Bhubaneswar Kalita said he was "pained" to listen to what Punj spoke. "What message do you want to send? To divide people or unite people? To divide people in distress in terms of religion should not be our approach. We should help the state administration, the people to promote peace. That should be the aim of every political party," the Congress leader said.

In Lok Sabha, home minister Sushil Kumar Shinde said a comprehensive security plan had been chalked out to provide fool proof security to the affected population.

Pak Taliban threaten to kill Imran Khan

GUARDIAN ONLINE

The Pakistani Taliban yesterday threatened to kill Imran Khan if the cricket player turned politician holds a planned march to their tribal stronghold to protest against US drone attacks.

Although the Pakistani Taliban opposes the strikes, which have killed many of their fighters, spokesman Ahsanullah Ahsan said they would target Khan because he calls himself a "liberal". Ahsan also warned they would attack anyone who participates in upcoming elections.

"If he comes, our suicide bombers will target him," Ahsan said in an interview in the militant group's South Waziristan stronghold. "We will kill him."

The threat could come as a surprise to many in Pakistan who have criticised Khan for not being tough enough on the Pakistani Taliban and instead focusing most of his criticism on the government's alliance with



Imran Khan

the US. Some critics have nicknamed him "Taliban Khan" because of his views and his cosy ties with conservative Islamists who could help him attract rightwing voters in national elections likely to be held later this year or early next year.

Khan, who is the founder of the Pakistan Movement for

Justice party, has gained momentum over the last year after more than a decade in politics. He is perhaps the most famous person in Pakistan because he led the country's cricket team to victory in the 1992 World Cup.

Khan was once known for his playboy lifestyle and marriage to British socialite Jemima Khan. But the couple divorced several years ago, and he has since become more conservative and religious. Khan has described himself as a liberal in various TV interviews, but has also made clear that he is a practising Muslim.

Ahsan said the militants didn't want Khan's help in opposing drone attacks.

Go tough on rights

FROM PAGE 20

He was speaking at a discussion organised at the Central Shaheed Minar in Dhaka to mark International Day of the World's Indigenous People.

It has become clear that the government wants to wipe out the identities of Adivasis, whereas the ruling Awami League in its electoral manifesto had pledged to give them constitutional recognition, Larma said. "Their [AL men] sympathy towards us is gone."

Most of the speakers at the programme denounced the government for not granting constitutional recognition to indigenous people and not implementing the Chittagong Hill Tracts peace treaty.

Workers Party President Rashed Khan Menon, MP; Jatiya Samajtantrik Dal President Hasanul Haq Inu, MP; Dhaka University Vice-chancellor Prof AAMS Arefin Siddique, DU professors Mesbah Kamal, HKS Arefin and Sadeka Halim, Ain o Salish Kendra Executive Director Sultana Kamal and Manusher Jonno Foundation Executive Director Shaheen Anam spoke in the discussion.

The speakers also con-

demned the government for its non-cooperation and even putting up obstructions to celebrations of the indigenous day in some districts.

Wearing their traditional and colourful costumes, several hundred indigenous people attended the program. They also sang and danced that portrayed their culture.

Meanwhile, the upazila nirbahi officer of Mohalchori yesterday seized at least five jeeps when locals were on their way to Khagrachhari to take part in a rally, reports our correspondent.

In protest, angry indigenous people blocked the Mohalchori-Khagrachhari road for over four hours. They withdrew the barricade after negotiations with the local administration.

UNO Abu Shahed Chowdhury, however, told The Daily Star that the seizure of the vehicles was part of their regular activities.

Our Mymensingh correspondent adds, indigenous people were not given permission for holding a football match in the district circuit house ground yesterday.

Philippine floods: A man-made disaster

AFP, Manila

Deadly floods that have swamped nearly all of the Philippine capital are less a natural disaster and more the result of poor planning, lax enforcement and political self-interest, experts said.

Damaged watersheds, massive squatter colonies living in danger zones and the neglect of drainage systems are some of the factors that have made the chaotic city of 15 million people much more vulnerable to enormous floods.

Eighty percent of Manila was this week covered in waters that in some parts were nearly two metres (six feet and six inches) deep, after more than a normal August's worth of rain was dumped on the city in 48 hours.

Twenty people have died and two million others have been affected, according to the government.

The deluge was similar to one in 2009, a disaster which claimed more than 460 lives and prompted pledges from government leaders to make the city more resistant to floods.

A government report released then called for 2.7 million people in shantytowns to be moved from "danger zones" alongside riverbanks, lakes and sewers.

Squatters, attracted by economic opportu-

nities in the city, often build shanties on river banks, storm drains and canals, dumping garbage and impeding the flow of waterways.

The plan would have affected one in five Manila residents and taken 10 years and 3.11 billion dollars to implement.

But squatter communities in danger zones have in fact grown since 2009.

He blamed the phenomenon on poor enforcement of regulations banning building along creeks and floodways, with local politicians often wanting to keep squatters in their communities to secure their votes at election time.

Architect and urban planner Paulo Alcazaren said the patchwork political structure of Manila had made things even harder.

The capital is actually made up of 16 cities and towns, each with its own government, and they often carry out infrastructure programmes -- such as man-made and natural drainage protection -- without coordination.

Solutions to the flooding will require massive efforts such as re-planting in natural drainage basins, building low-cost housing for the squatters and clearing man-made drainage systems, the experts said.

"It will cost billions of pesos but we lose billions anyway every time it floods," Alcazaren said.

Indian army officers, jawans face off in JK

TNN, New Delhi

The Army has been jolted by yet another shocking breach of discipline with a grim stand-off erupting between officers and jawans of an armoured unit after a soldier committed suicide at a military camp in the border district of Samba in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday morning.

This comes close after officers and jawans of an artillery regiment deployed in the Nyoma sub-district of eastern Ladakh had violently clashed with each other - which left the unit commanding officer, two majors and two jawans grievously injured -- in May.

The incident on Wednesday was triggered when the jawan, Arun V, who hails from Thiruvananthapuram, shot himself with his service rifle in the camp of the 16th Light Cavalry at Samba in the morning. He died on the spot.

Afghan police kill 36 Taliban fighters

ANI, Kabul

Afghan police backed by the army and the Nato-led force have killed 36 Taliban fighters, wounded 19 and captured 34 others over the past 24 hours, Interior Ministry said in a statement yesterday.

"The units of national police backed by the army and the Coalition Forces launched seven joint cleanup operations in Kabul, Kunar, Balkh, Kandahar, Uruzgan, Ghazni and Helmand provinces over the past 24 hours during which 36 armed Taliban militants have been killed, 19 wounded and 34 arrested," the statement said.

The police also discovered and confiscated 3,480 kg opium, seven machine guns, 560 kg chemical materials used in making explosive devices, 14 different types of anti-personnel and anti-vehicle mines, three radio handsets, 68 kg explosives materials, five motorcycles and two vehicles, the statement added.



United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme Vacancy Announcement

United Nations Volunteers programme in Bangladesh announces vacancy for the post of "ICT Specialist" for the "Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility" (CHTDF), UNDP under the National UNV modality.

For detailed job description, information about the position and instructions to apply, please visit <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>.

Please send hard copy of applications to **UNV programme, C/O UNDP, IDB Bhaban 14th floor, Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Agargaon, Dhaka.**

Last day of Applications: 4.30 pm on 23 August, 2012 (Thursday)

Qualified female candidates are strongly encouraged to apply. Only Short-listed candidates will be contacted.



Vacancy Announcement


United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in Bangladesh announces a vacancy for the position of **Radio Operator (1 Position)**.

The duration of the Service contract is one year initially, subject to renewal on an annual basis upon satisfactory performance and availability of funds.

For details of the Job Description and instructions to apply, please visit our website: <http://www.undp.org.bd/jobs>. Applications should be received no later than **17.00 PM, Friday, August 31, 2012.**

Only short-listed candidates will be contacted.

Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.





Request for Quotation (RFQ)

Procurement of ICT Equipment for JUST Project.

United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in Bangladesh hereby invites sealed quotations from interested bidders for procurement of different ICT Equipment (Desktop PC, UPS & Printer) for JUST Project.

All interested firms may collect the bidding Documents (RFQ) from the below e-mail address: parvin.akther@undp.org by a formal request to UNDP that will register bidders into participants list, so any correspondence, questions regarding the bidding documents and respective answers can be sent to all bidders

Quotation must be dropped to the **UNDP Registry, IDB Bhaban (12th Floor), Sher-e-Bangla Nagar, Dhaka before 16.30 hrs on 26 August 2012.**



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If you would like to take a leadership responsibility within this prestigious new school please email your CV with a cover letter & mention the subject you want to teach to:

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