

**Assam Riots 2012**

***Congress responsible  
for  
Assam bloodbath***



**Bharatiya Janata Party**

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## **Publisher's note**

**A**ssam has been on the boil for the last over three decades because of unbridled illegal infiltration of Bangladeshis. This has disturbed the demography of the State. As a result, in many districts of Assam, the ethnic population has been turned into minority. The illegal migrants are a tax on the meager natural resources of the people. They are depriving the local people of their avenues of employment. Despite the infamous Nellie massacre on February 18, 1983 and the Assam Accord signed in 1985, no serious efforts had been made to identify and deport the illegal infiltrators. The Congress government had enacted the IMDT Act 1983 which made the detection and deportation of the illegal migrants all the more difficult. The Supreme Court set aside the IMDT Act as "unconstitutional" in 2005. The Congress-led UPA then introduced the Foreigners Act which again was set aside by the Supreme Court saying it was trying to bring back the IMDT Act through the back door. As the Congress is banking on the votes of these illegal migrants, for political and electoral considerations it is not doing anything. This intransigence on the part of UPA is squarely responsible for the eruption of riots between Bodos and illegal Bangladeshis in July last. Congress and Congress alone is responsible for the violence and the loss of innocent lives. It is still time if the UPA acts right now.

We are publishing this booklet to make our readers understand the genesis of the problem. We hope this will help our readers the most.

Separately, we are also publishing the full text of the speeches of our leaders in both houses of Parliament while taking part in the discussion on Assam riots.

**Publisher,  
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**August 2012**



***Congress collusion in massive Bangladeshi infiltration is the root cause of recurring violence in Assam : Advani***

**Statement issued by Shri L.K. Advani on Assam riots on 31 July 2012 at a press conference in Guwahati**

- ◆ Appeal to all parties for a national consensus on a four-point solution
- ◆ Treat the Assam problem as an Indian vs. Foreigner issue, and not as a Hindu vs. Muslim issue
- ◆ Prepare an updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) by deleting the names of non-citizens from the voters' list in Assam
- ◆ Uphold the non-violability of the tribal belts and blocks in Bodo areas
- ◆ Save Assam to Save India's unity and integrity in the North-East

I visited Kokrajhar and other violence-hit areas in the Bodo areas of Assam. My heart goes to the victims of the recent violence. I convey my heartfelt condolences to the families of those killed in the violent incidents, and also to the

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large number of people of who have been rendered homeless. I visited both Bodo and non-Bodo relief camps.

I wholeheartedly agree with Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, who visited Assam on July 28, that the riots that rocked Assam is a kalank (blot) on the face of our nation. I also agree with him that the guilty must be punished.

However, I would urge the Prime Minister, the Congress president as well as the Chief Minister of Assam to do some honest introspection on where the real guilt lies. Firstly, isn't the Congress government in the state guilty because of its criminal delay in responding to the worsening situation in and around Kokrajhar, even though there were plenty of clear indications of imminent conflicts? Secondly, aren't the UPA government at the Centre and the Congress government in the state also guilty because of their persistent, conscious and deliberate inaction in the face of the root cause of the conflicts — namely, the massive influx of infiltration of Bangladeshis into Assam, including in Bodo areas?

The answer to both questions is in the affirmative.

Therefore, the Congress deserves to be punished for its collusion in the massive influx of illegal immigrants from Bangladesh, which has caused and exacerbated three serious problems in Assam:

(a) the land problem; Indigenous Assamese people are losing control of their land — Satra Land, forest land, grazing land and tribal land —, while illegal Bangladeshis have embarked on a large-scale 'land-grab' policy;

(b) the ethnic problem; Bodos are feeling threatened that they would be marginalised in their own lands;

(c) the problem of Assam's population profile: the native residents of Assam are feeling that they are being squeezed out and disempowered by the immigrant population.

The combined effect of these three problems is the threat to India's very unity, integrity and security. After all, the Supreme Court, in its July 2005 verdict which struck down IMDT Act as "unconstitutional", had warned that the large-scale infiltration from Bangladesh constituted "external aggression" against Assam. The apex court had also urged the Central Government to take effective steps to stop the influx of Bangladeshis. In the past seven years, the UPA government has done nothing to honour the court's directive. Obviously, the Congress party's votebank politics has triumphed over its weakening concern for India's unity and integrity.

I would like to refer here to some observations made by Shri H.S. Brahma, Election Commissioner of India, from an article he wrote in the Indian Express on July 28, 2012.

"The recent ethnic clashes between Hindu Bodos and Muslim immigrants, which occurred in the Bodoland Territorial Autonomous Districts of lower Assam (BTAD), were unfortunate. However, the clashes were not wholly unexpected. The question that is generally asked is: why did it take a few decades to occur in the first place? Assam has been virtually sitting on a huge tinderbox. ..It has been alleged by knowledgeable persons that out of the 27 districts in Assam, 11 of them

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are going to be Muslim majority districts once the 2011 census figures, religion-wise, are published by the census authorities....The systematic grabbing of government lands and the steady encroachment of denuded forest areas by illegal immigrants and non-indigenous communities have created serious differences among the local indigenous populations...Even the Election Commission of India is not immune to this problem. It has to tackle the problem of D-Voters (doubtful voters)... People who are found to be illegal migrants by these tribunals should be deported. Unless this basic issue of illegal migration into the country is resolved, the problem is bound to recur from time to time and in place to place.”

On behalf of the BJP and the NDA, I wish to make it categorically clear that the problem that Assam is facing is not a Hindu vs. Muslim conflict. Rather, it is clearly a conflict between Indian nationals vs. foreigners. We believe that a distinction must be made between native Muslims in Assam and foreigners who have infiltrated into Assam and other parts of India. The latter cannot claim protection, much less the same rights, as Indians, Hindu or Muslim, tribal or non-tribal.

The time has come to find a durable and effective solution to the problem that Assam has been recurrently facing, often in its violent anifestations. The solution, in my view, has four elements:

Treat the Assam problem as an Indian vs. Foreigner issue, and not as a Hindu vs. Muslim issue

Prepare an updated National Register of Citizens (NRC) by deleting the names of non-citizens from the voters’ list in Assam

Uphold the non-violability of the tribal belts and blocks in Bodo areas

Save Assam to Save India’s unity and integrity in the North-East.

I appeal to the governments at the Centre and in Assam, as also all political parties, to show a sense of urgency in creating a national consensus on the above-mentioned four-point solution. ■





Communal Riots in Kokrajhar, Chirang and other districts of Lower Assam

## BJP demands resignation of the Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi

*Statement issued by BJP National Vice President Smt. Bijoy Chakraborty  
and BJP National General Secretary Smt. Kiran Maheshwari at  
Guwahati on 25th July, 2012.*

### **Appeal**

Appeal to the people of different sections to maintain peace, harmony and integrity and appeal to people not to heed to rumors.

### **BJP Demanded:**

1. The Chief Minister of Assam should resign for his failure to control law and order.
2. Publish the report of Justice S. Haque Commission (1996).
3. Culprits should bring to book.
4. Night curfew should be imposed in all the affected districts.
5. Sufficient security support in camps and other villages. Providing



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security support to those villagers who are willing to return home.

6. Give full protection to railway track and NHs.

7. Start train and bus services under police protection.

- The State Govt.ment has totally failed in tackling the communal riots in Kokrajhar, Chirang and other districts of lower Assam.
- 5 days on and after loss of many lives there is still no let-up in the communal riots that has not only engulfed Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) areas but is now also spreading to new areas and districts.
- Fear's growing that it might be several days before normalcy is restored in trouble-torn areas with severe shortage of security forces.
- On 24th July, 12 a delegation team of BJP sent by BJP National President Shri Nitin Gadkari visited Chirang district under the leadership of the following;
  1. Smt. Bijoya Chakraborty, MP & National Vice-President
  2. Smt. Kiran Maheswari, National General Secretary, BJP
  3. Dr. Pradip Thakuria, State General Secretary
  4. Shri Manoranjan Das, MLA, Patacharkuchi LAC
  5. Smt. Chikimiki Talukdar, State Mahila Morcha President
  6. Shri R.P. Sarma, Senior Advocate & BJP leader
  7. Shri Deba Kr. Saikia, RTI cell state Convenor, BJP
- On 25th July, 12 another team is proceeding to Kokrajhar district under the leadership of the following
  1. Shri Vijay Goel, National General Secretary, BJP
  2. Shri Ajit Kr. Bhattacharjya, State General Secretary
  3. Shri Dilip Moran, MLA, Doomdoma LAC
  4. Shri Debashish Sur, Senior Advocate & BJP leader
  5. Phanindra Nath Sarma, General Secy.(Org.)
  6. Shri Ranjit Das, MLA, Sorbhog LAC
- We have visited the trouble-torn areas of Chirang dist. yesterday and found many lapses were there in respect of controlling law and order situation from the government side. We have met SDO (Civil) of Bijni sub-division who told us about shortage of security personnel to control the situation. On the same day one Shri Narayan Das, S.D.P.O of Bijni tendered his resignation due to failure in controlling the situation there.
- We visited Dangsiarpara, Bhawraguri L.P. School where thousands of affected people are there but no adequate security and relief materials from the Govt.ment side. During our visit to relief camp at Bhawraguri, we met Minister of Assam Siddique Ahmed, who was found helpless there because each and everybody victim complained about their insurity and relief materials.



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- We visited Bhalatol village where clashes left a Bodo teacher of Dakhin Bijni M.V. School Babul Basumatary, 45 years old dead. We met his son Shri Pradip Basumatary who cried helplessly in front of us. No Minister, no BTC council member visited them.
  - During our visit to the Bijni sub-division we met different organizations' leaders viz. minority, All Assam Bodo Students Union (AABSU), AAKRASU (Koch-Rajbonshi Students Union), Bengali Students Federation. Everybody wants peace but the Chief Minister Shri Tarun Gogoi has totally failed in restoring normalcy in the trouble-torn areas.
  - People of the trouble-torn areas of Chirang and Bongaigaon districts left their home (particularly Bodo, Koch Rajbonshi & other community) and move here and there on the Highway for their shelter but no police personnel was found there to help them. We complained in Manikpur Police station of Bongaigaon district and requested them to help the victims forthwith.
  - During our visit we have observed that only minority muslims have been protected by the police, even night curfew was imposed in those areas on the other hand, other communities -Bodo, Koch-Rajbongshi, assamese, Bengalis, Adibashis were neither protected nor given any security by the Govt.ment of Assam.

**BJP demands:**

- We demand immediate steps to shield the International Border with Bangladesh as well as borders of trouble-torn borders of Dhubri, Kokrajhar, Chirang, Bongaogaon since the suspected illegal Bangladeshis are entering to create new violence in those areas.
- We appeal the Central Govt.ment to deploy Army to take control of the situation.
- Kokrajhar riots are reflective of the inefficiency of the Tarun Gogoi government that has failed to ensure security to the common people so we demand resignation of the Chief Minister forthwith. ■



## A helpless, hopeless and hapless government that is UPA

By Prabhat Jha

**T**here is no denying the fact that the genesis of the Assam problem lie in the short-sighted policy of the Congress which has always had its eye wide open for its votes and closed where for the interests of the nation were involved. Congress has been in power in Assam for most of the time during the last 65 years and for more fifty years at the Centre. Added to that is the fact that Dr. Manmohan Singh is the Prime Minister for the last over 8 years and is a Rajya Sabha MP from Assam for the last 17 years (since 1995). It is a tribute to his acumen that during all these years he has found no time to address the burning problem of Bangladeshi infiltration which has been the cause of recurring violence in the State for the last about 30 years. Hundreds of innocent Assamese, including illegal Bangladeshis, have lost their life in these recurring violent incidents every now and then.

Eruption of violence between ethnic Bodo tribals and the illegal Bangladeshis in July 2012 has once again brought into focus the problem of illegal Bangladeshi infiltration.

As to the problem of illegal Bangladeshi infiltration successive Congress gov-

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ernments, their Assam chief ministers, prime ministers and union home ministers have always been in the denial mode. Although they have the full information from their own official sources, yet they wish to withhold it from public because telling the truth means exposing its own self and its failure to tackle the problem head-on. Not doing anything to prevent this illegal migration from Bangladesh serves Congress political interests in two ways: one, Congress has connived into granting these illegal migrants ration cards and voter identity cards who en bloc vote for it. This is the secret of successive Congress victories in elections in Assam. Two, since an overwhelming majority of these illegal migrants are Muslims, helping them earns Congress dividends in other States too where it is seen as a benefactor of Muslim community.

One wonders why does the Congress soul not pinch at the successive violence and loss of thousands of innocent lives because of the unending infiltration by Bangladeshis? The genesis of the problem lie much earlier, but the things came to a boil in 1978 when a by-election was necessitated by the death of the sitting Member Hiralal Patwari in the Mangaldoi Lok Sabha Constituency. During the process of the election it was noticed that the electorate had grown phenomenally (allegedly due to illegal immigration). The All Assam Students Union (AASU) demanded that the elections be postponed till the names of "foreign nationals" were deleted from the electoral rolls. The AASU subsequently launched an agitation to compel the government to identify and expel immigrants.

Congress government's failure to gauge the sentiment of the people on the issue led to the infamous Nellie massacre on February 18, 1983 claiming 2,191 lives (unofficial figures run at more than 5,000) from 14 villages. Most of the victims were reported to be Bangladeshi infiltrators. Election to the Assam assembly had to be deferred. Finally, on August 15, 1985 the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi signed what is known as the Assam Accord with the leaders of the All-Assam Students Union (AASU) which involved identification and deportation of illegal migrants. Election to the State assembly that followed put the political wing of AASU, called Assam Gana Parishad (AGP) in power.

Earlier, in 1983 the Indira Gandhi government had enacted the Illegal Migrant (Determination by Tribunals) Act 1983 which was challenged in the Court. It was the right stand taken by the BJP-led NDA government in the Supreme Court that finally led to the Act being declared "unconstitutional" by the Supreme Court on July 12, 2005. It held that the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 and rules "has created the biggest hurdle and is the main impediment or barrier in the identification and deportation of illegal migrants."

The three-judge Bench observed: "The presence of such a large number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh, which runs into millions, is in fact an aggression on the State of Assam and has also contributed significantly in causing serious

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internal disturbances in the shape of insurgency of alarming proportions."

The court, in its 114-page judgment, noted that this "aggression" had made the life of the people of Assam "wholly insecure and the panic generated thereby had created fear psychosis." The Bench said this hampered the growth of Assam though it had vast natural resources. The rest of the country viewed it as a disturbed area and hence there were no investments or employment opportunities, giving rise to insurgency.

Justice Mathur, writing the judgment for the Bench, pointed out that the IMDT Act and Rules had been so made that innumerable and insurmountable difficulties were created in identification and deportation of illegal migrants. The Bench noted that though enquiries were initiated in 3,10,759 cases under the IMDT Act, only 10,015 persons were declared illegal migrants and only 1,481 illegal migrants were physically expelled up to April 30, 2000.

The Bench directed constitution of fresh tribunals under the Foreigner (Tribunals) Order, 1964. Blinded by its vote bank politics, the court direction fell on the deaf ears of the UPA government. Instead it brought in the Foreigners Act which again was struck down by the Supreme Court as "unconstitutional". For the last over six years UPA government is sitting legs crossed for vote bank considerations. The recurring acts of violence can, therefore, be attributed to this apathy of the Congress Party. Had the Congress-led UPA risen above petty partisan political considerations, the July 12 riots could have been avoided and precious lives saved.

In the wake of reign of terror let loose by the then Pakistan government in Bangladesh which was then known as East Pakistan, about 10 lakh people sought refuge in India in 1971. Indira Government then raised a great hue and cry all over the world. All of them were sent back on the birth of Bangladesh. But when crores of Bangladeshis infiltrated illegally in the same manner, it makes no ripple on the mind of Congress. It has welcomed them with open arms as honoured guests with privileges more than that enjoyed by native citizens of Assam.

For political and electoral purposes, Congress continues to harp on Gujarat riots but, for the same considerations, it does not wish to take a lesson from Bhiwandi, 1984 anti-Sikh riots, Nellies, Kokrajhar etc. As long as the Congress-led UPA government does not wake up to the reality of the situation in the interests of the nation the massacres like the Nellies, Kokrajhar etc. will continue to recur every now and then devouring innocent lives.

It is time our Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh who represents Assam in Rajya Sabha not just shed crocodile tears but acts in right earnest. ■

*(The writer is the Editor, Kamal Sandesh, Madhya Pradesh State  
BJP President and a Rajya Sabha MP.)*

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## Detect, delete and deport all Bangladeshi infiltrators - Bhaiyaji Joshi

**T**he Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) stressed the need to immediately detect all Bangladeshi infiltrators living in different parts of the country, delete their names from voters' lists and all other documents, which make them Indian citizens and deport them to the level that they do not return at all. In an exclusive interview to Organiser Senior Correspondent Pramod Kumar, RSS *Sarkaryavah* Shri Bhaiyaji Joshi said the infiltrators have posed a grave threat to not only security of the country but also to social and economic fabric of the nation. Referring to recent riots in Assam, which displaced lakhs of people and claimed the lives of many, Shri Joshi said the problem would not be resolved until the roots of the conflict i.e. the Bangladeshi infiltrators, are removed. Excerpts:



### **What do you think about the displacement of lakhs of people in Assam?**

The situation in Assam is very serious. The prime reason of this conflict is large-scale infiltration from Bangladesh. The entire Kokrajhar region where the riots broke out has huge population of such infiltrators. There are regular fights there over land. The indigenous people feel they are losing control over their own land, while the infiltrators have embarked upon large-scale land grab. It is wrong to give it minority-majority or Hindu-Muslim colour. The fact is that it is a fight between the Bangladeshi infiltrators and the original inhabitants. The Bodo Vanvasis are very agitated over it. Since the matter is very sensitive, the government has not acted as responsibly, as it should have been. We feel the situation will not be controlled just with providing relief to



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the victims, it needs eradication of the root of the problem, which is nothing but the infiltrators.

**Do you say the problem will not be resolved until the infiltrators are deported?**

Yes. This is the only solution. Any sovereign country has the right to deport all migrants who infiltrate its land illegally. If the government wishes to provide employment to some foreigners, it should be done only following the set mechanism so that the foreigners do not take unfair advantage of the constitutional rights granted to the citizens. If the infiltrators get themselves enrolled in voters' list, obtain ration cards and other documents, which prove them Indian citizens, it should not be tolerated. It also creates population imbalance.

**But the infiltrators have been obtaining these facilities with the help of a section of Indian politicians. Secondly, all the efforts to deport such immigrants have proved to be futile so far?**

The government does not have effective mechanism to detect, delete and deport the infiltrators. There is a dire need to first detect their names, then delete them from all documents and then effectively deport to the level that they do not return at all. Until there is sincere work on these fronts the problem will continue. Such people cannot be allowed to cross limits in the country. India must act swiftly and effectively on this front. The policies, which are formulated only keeping in mind the political mileage, can never be beneficial for the country.

**Some fanatics have encroached land in Delhi also and forcibly built an structure there. How do you react on it?**

This type of incidents are not new. The government must take the anguish of national society on such issues seriously. It is the responsibility of the government to curb any kind of illegal construction. If the structure at Subhas Park is illegal, it must be removed forthwith. There should be no politics or communal divide on it. Everybody should avoid giving it a communal colour and developing the atmosphere of conflict. At the same time, the mentality of encroaching land like this should be arrested effectively.

**How is the response to the countrywide protest recently conducted against the Interlocutors' Report?**

The countrywide protest was organised till the district headquarters. There were effective dharnas, protest meetings and demonstrations and people in good number attended them. There were impressive protest meetings in some of the metro cities like Mumbai, Bengaluru, Pune, Nagpur, Delhi, etc. These protests have effectively exposed the ill-will of the Interlocutors. ■



## ***UPA Band-Aid won't heal Assam***

**By Ram Jethmalani**

**V**iolence returned to Assam as curfew and flag marches took over Kokrajhar, Chirang and Dhubri districts.

The standard routine, but not so operative procedures have all been completed - visits by Prime Minister, Home Minister, Congress president to Kokrajhar, announcements of compensation to the deceased and injured, promise of quick relief to the homeless, extra Special Central Assistance, etc. To ensure that nothing has been forgotten, the latest remedial measure announced by the UPA government is a CBI enquiry into the Assam violence.

But Band-Aid can only heal the surface, and never the roots. As expected, violence returned soon after, and as I write this piece, the death toll has risen to 73. Curfews and flag marches have taken over Kokrajhar, Chirang and Dhubri districts. I am informed that the situation is fast turning into a humanitarian crisis, with a critical shortage of doctors and medicine, the government obviously unable to cope with the numbers, said to be around 2 lakh in refugee camps. Hunger, disease and death stare the camps in the face, and it should be the first priority for the state government to address them with whatever assistance they require.

The debate in Parliament has started, but we are yet to see whether the government shows the wisdom of providing a long-term solution in protecting the local populations, tribal, Muslim and Hindu, preventing mass infiltration from Bangladesh, and protecting India's national interest, or whether it will continue its strategy of fomenting minority politics, encouraging import of minority vote banks through illegal migration of the dimension of a demographic invasion, at the cost of subverting national interest, and the social stability of Assam. It is distressing to note that the UPA regime has shown the highest degree of communalism in its zeal to convert every incident possible into a Muslim minority issue, so that it can bluff



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the minorities that they alone can protect their interest. Fortunately, the UPA has become so bankrupt in policy and wisdom, that they do not carry conviction with the responsible and nationalist sections of our minority communities, whom they try and hoodwink with empty vote bank sops and gestures - be it preventing Salman Rushdie from entering the Jaipur Literary Festival, promising quotas and jobs that were so patently unimplementable in the UP election campaign, that the freebies just did not fool the minorities (and cost Rahul Gandhi quite a few seats in the UP election in the bargain), or reversing the Shah Bano case judgement. I think that the Muslims of India have caught on to the communal Congress game that they are not viewed as equal citizens by them, but only as a clutch of ballot papers and must be manipulated as such.

The UPA should remember that Assam is a border state, and illegal importation of minority vote banks can be at grave peril to the nation. I am reminded of the then Governor Assam Lieutenant General (Retd.) S.K. Sinha's warning to President K.R. Narayanan in 1998, regarding the grave danger to India's security from the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

Sinha rightly argued that Pakistan has coveted Assam right from partition days, as part of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh. Even Sheikh Mujibur Rahman had his coveting eyes on Assam. Sinha warned in his report, "No matter how friendly our relations with Bangladesh, we can ill-afford to ignore the dangers inherent in a demographic invasion from that country." Sinha with his military experience was deeply concerned about the vulnerability of the "chicken neck corridor" connecting mainland India with its northeastern region. If cut off, it would completely isolate the region. He feared that the influx of illegal migrants was turning Lower Assam districts, particularly Dhubri and Goalpara, into a Muslim-majority region, and that it would be only a matter of time before they demanded merger with Bangladesh as part of a "Greater Bangladesh project". "The loss of Lower Assam will sever the entire land mass of the northeast from the rest of India and the rich natural resources of that region will be lost to the nation," warned Sinha's sage report.

How right he was. Census figures substantiate the demographic invasion, but the UPA government continues to see it as a local law and order problem. It shows no serious concern or priority to even implement the Assam Accord of 1985, in which the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi agreed that those immigrants who came to the state from Bangladesh till 1966 will be given citizenship, those who came between 1967 and 1971 will be only allowed to settle down but not given voting rights and those who entered after 1971 would be deported. And let it also be known to our minorities that all Assamese, Muslims, tribals and non-Muslims lose out by the illegally imported vote banks for jobs, lands, and even, I am informed, for entitlements to national programmes, such as NREGA and NRHM.

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I wonder what the opinion of our national security establishment is regarding this massive demographic invasion on our country. Stray infiltration happens at every international border, but the organised infiltration of millions of such illegal immigrants from a neighbouring country where ISI and terrorist modules are known to flourish, whose identity is not on record, is a serious threat to our national security. Lack of adequate concern and prompt countermeasures by government constitute treason against the Indian nation.

No one can contest that unchecked illegal infiltration of such mammoth scale is majorly responsible for deepening the ethnic and religious polarisation in Assam. The present state of denial of this fact by the State and Central governments will not only allow the issue to simmer further but will make it more insoluble and irreversible.

Most countries have legal provisions ranging from detention, fines, deportation and imprisonment against illegal migrants. Only in Assam are they gifted with a ration card, a job, entry into the electoral roll, and entitlement into NREGA and NRHM.

Madam Sonia Gandhi, president of the ruling Congress Party, I am entitled to ask: Is this your way of showing your gratitude to India, which has allowed you to behave like its uncrowned empress?

*Courtesy :The Sunday Guardian*



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# Debate cause, not label, of Assam riots

By Swapan Dasgupta

Last week, as one part of Assam burned, some TV channels were engaged in an utterly grotesque exercise: trying to ascertain whether the clashes were ‘communal’ or ‘ethnic’. The deliberations also had a definite sub-text. In the hierarchy of repugnance, a ‘communal’ riot was unacceptable while an ‘ethnic’ conflict was somehow understandable. In the political context this meant that while the 2002 riots in Gujarat were beyond the pale, the cleansing of communities from Kokrajhar and Dhubri were an outcome of a skewed historical process and, therefore, less damning.

Why the killing of people on account of their religion should count as a greater offence than the murder and dispossession of communities on account of their



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ethnicity remains a mystery to me. If the Gujarat Government is to be put in the dock for its failure to prevent the deaths of nearly a thousand citizens, why should the Assam Government's failure to prevent the dispossession of more than a lakh people be construed as a lesser offence?

Clearly, a debate centred on competitive culpability is unlike to get us anywhere. No one seriously suggests that Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi sat back in Guwahati and let slip the dogs of war. The astute Gogoi, who is well versed in the art of competitive politics — examine the deftness with which he deprived the BJP of its Bengali Hindu vote in the Barak Valley in the 2011 Assembly election — knows what is permissible in democratic politics and what is not. Without necessarily exonerating him of the charge of administrative laxity in responding to the brewing troubles in Kokrajhar district, my guess is that he failed to anticipate that a tiny spark could lead to a prairie fire. He may have been guilty of misjudgement and tardiness but he did not plan last week's violence.

Judging from his aggressive response to attacks on him by a clutch of MPs, particularly his suggestion that the Central forces took their own sweet time to arrive in the affected areas, I think that Gogoi is only too aware that a substantial section of Assam isn't viewing the recent troubles through the prism of compassion alone. At the risk of over-statement, I would say that the more Gogoi is attacked by 'outsiders', the greater will be his popularity among the indigenous Assamese. The resemblance between his situation and that of another Chief Minister may well invite attention.

Cruel as it may sound, the dominant perception in Assam is that Kokrajhar, Dhubri and the other districts of the undivided Goalpara region were living on the edge, and that this was an explosion waiting to happen. That it happened as a consequence of four Bodo activists being butchered in May was an incidental detail. If not yesterday, the troubles would have happened tomorrow.

The extent to which last week's clashes were a consequence of unattended problems has been spelt out by Election Commissioner MS Brahma (writing in his personal capacity) in Indian Express. Brahma has argued that the "present ethnic clashes between the two communities can be directly attributed to... illegal immigration into Assam." The illegal migrants from Bangladesh have put pressure on land, livelihood and opportunities. More important, they have contributed to a significant demographic change. Brahma writes that "It has been acknowledged... that out of the 27 districts in Assam, 11 of them are going to be Muslim majority districts once the 2011 Census figures are published..."

The past decade has also seen this demographic change manifesting itself in politics. Till 2006, the Congress owed its success to what was called the Ali-Coolie-Bengali alliance. However, the rise of the UMFA under Badruddin Ajmal has led to a large-scale exodus of Muslim voters from the Congress, to the extent



that in the present Assembly UMFA has greater representation than the AGP and BJP. Ajmal, who represents the Muslim-majority Dhubri in the Lok Sabha has mounted a spirited campaign for the abolition of the Bodo Tribal Council that controls land transfers and ownership in most of Kokrajhar. His assertion is that Bodos constitute only 27 per cent of the BTC area. Ajmal's estimate may be exaggerated but it suggests that even the heartland of the Bodos has witnessed a staggering demographic shift which is provoking tension. Indeed, there are reports that the present clashes may witness a transfer of population: Bangladeshi Muslims to Dhubri, and Bodos to Kokrajhar.

In 2011, as UMFA grew more belligerent, Gogoi altered the social coalition behind the Congress. He successfully undercut both the AGP and BJP, hitherto seen as the main representatives of the Assamese in the Brahmaputra Valley and the Bengali Hindus in the Barak Valley. However, while he secured their electoral backing, the Chief Minister is yet to act on the disquiet of those who switched their vote to the Congress. The demands of the Bodos in Kokrajhar mirror the demands made by the rest of the indigenous Assamese peoples in other parts of the State. The demand to do 'something' about the demographic invasion of Assam is all pervasive.

Unfortunately, so skewed is the public discourse in the metropolitan centres of India that illegal immigration has become a fear that dare not speak its name. No wonder Assam nurtures a profound sense of alienation.

We need to speak about the issues behind the clashes, and not fall back on facile debates on whether the disturbances were communal or ethnic. ■

*Courtesy : The Pioneer*



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## ILLEGAL BANGLADESHI INFILTRATION

### A problem for the nation that is a salvation for Congress

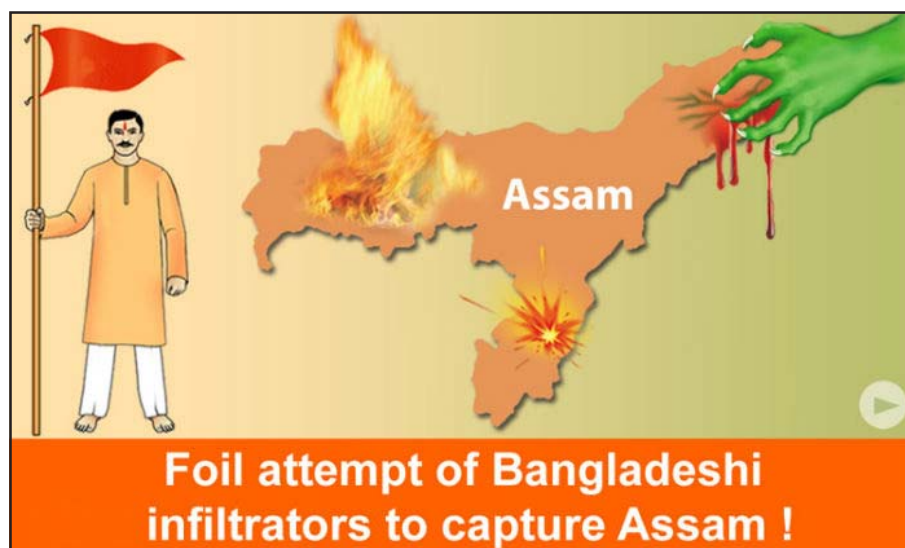
By Amba Charan Vashishth

**I**t looks the Congress thinks denying its very existence is the panacea for a problem. This is the stand it has been taking throughout.

It is the refusal of the Congress and its UPA government from seeing the reality of the day that is standing in the way of solving the country's problems, perennial and chronic, eating into the vitals of this nation.

The latest is the communal violence that erupted in July 2012 in Kokrajhar in Assam that left about 77 dead, many more injured, and rendering a few lakhs homeless.

The Congress government in Assam and UPA at the Centre refuse to accept what is visible to the naked eye: the continuing, unhindered illegal migration from Bangladesh. It has never spoken with one voice. One day it says something and the next days it denies the same altogether. Way back on April 10, 1992 the then Assam Chief Minister Hiteswar Saikia stated on the floor of the assembly that there were 'between two and three million' such infiltrators in Assam. He disclosed that 'in ten out of the 13 districts' of the state, 'the presence of Bangladeshi infiltra-



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tors had contributed to an increase in the population'." A two-time chief minister could not make a statement in the Assembly without having proper record and proof with him. He was certainly not that irresponsible.

But immediately politics came into play. The threat of the Muslim Forum, a communal outfit by any standard, worked wonders on Saikia. Power appeared to be more magnetic than the interests of the State and the nation. For electoral and political considerations, on June 7 the same year, addressing a meeting of the All-Assam Minority Students Co-ordination Committee he clarified that "there was not a single illegal migrant in the state." Which of the two statements was right? Both cannot be true. One of the two certainly was a lie. Will the Congress tell the nation which of the two Saikia statements is wrong? But the Congress accepted this volte face with pride.

Further, India's Home Minister in the United Front government, the late Indrajit Gupta had disclosed in Parliament on May 6, 1997 that "there were upwards of ten million illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators who have made India their home". Further, the late JN Dixit, a Foreign Secretary and National Security Advisor of India, wrote in 2000: "We have definite information that between seven to nine million Bangladeshi foreign nationals have not only migrated illegally but also registered into India." And an Indian Home Ministry estimate prepared in 2001 had said: "Approximately, 150-170 lakh Bangladeshi infiltrators have crossed into India illegally since 1971."

In a written reply as late as March 21, 2011 the Minister of State for Home Affairs Mullappally Ramachandran admitted "reports of Bangladeshi nationals having settled in India without valid travel documents. As entry of such Bangladeshi nationals into the country is clandestine and surreptitious, it is not possible to have a correct estimate of such illegal immigrants living in the country. A number of Bangladeshi nationals who have entered into the country on valid travel documents have been found to be overstaying. As per information available, 28,667 Bangladeshi nationals were found to be overstaying as on December 31, 2010." Further, the same Ramachandran in 2011 had said that "almost 1.4 million illegal Bangladeshis have migrated to India over the past decade alone". But in his reply to an unstarred question on July 14, 2004 the then Minister of State for Home Sripakash Jaiswal had stated that out of 1,20,53,950 illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators all over India, 50,00,000 Bangladeshis were present in Assam alone as on December 31, 2001. But Home Minister P. Chidambaram calls these figures as just "estimates". Then does it mean that what the two Ministers of State for Home Affairs had stated in Parliament was not on the basis of record but just "estimates"? Does it behove a responsible person holding such posts to do so? Why did the Home Minister not take the ministers of State to task for giving exact figures which Chidambaram calls "estimates"?



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The then Governor of Assam, General S. K. Sinha, in his report to the President of India in 1998 had "warned that if the present trends are not arrested, the indigenous people of Assam would be reduced to a minority and there may, in course of time, be a demand for the merger of Muslim-dominated bordering districts with Bangladesh". Governor's report called the infiltration a "national threat". Further, on July 23, 1998 the Guwahati High Court had said that "Bangladeshis have become kingmakers in Assam". The inference is obvious.

According to a report, about 30,000 Bangladeshi illegal migrants, mostly Muslims, infiltrate into India every month. Another report says, Bangladesh's per capita income is \$848 and India's almost double at \$1527 and that is the attraction for Bangladeshis illegally entering the region every day. Should the Indians be made to pay through their nose for the misery in the neighbouring countries?

The Bangladeshi infiltration problem is another instance of failure of government to act. Union government itself admits that as the Indo-Bangladesh border are porous, it is not possible to exercise utmost vigil and prevent illegal infiltration. What can you say when a government itself admits its failure and helplessness?

The Assam violence this time has another angle. Whenever a riot takes place or terrorists strike in any part of the country, the Home Ministry is quick to say that it had sent a warning in advance, particularly when the State is not ruled by Congress. When Home Ministry made this claim, the Congress chief minister Tarun Gogoi was quick to deny it. Further, he alleged that when he requested for army to be deployed in the riot-affected area, for about three days the defence ministry did not act.

Further, the rift within the Assam cabinet has also been attributed to have been one of the causes of the riots. Chief Minister Gogoi has accused one of his ministers, a Muslim, trying to overthrow him.

The reality of the situation is that for political and electoral purposes, Congress is deliberately trying to put the nation in dark about the real situation in the North-East, particularly Assam. Despite all the facts and files in its possession and all the sources of information at its command, UPA feigns ignorance about the crux of the problem. It is just a ruse because not solving the problem earns it handsome electoral dividends. Therefore, except for shedding a few crocodile tears every now and then, Congress is not going to do anything, as it has sat over the directions of the Supreme Court for about 7 years. ■

*(The writer is the National Convener of Literature & Publications Cell of the BJP. )*



**The only  
solution  
is  
the  
hardest  
one**

**By Tathagata Roy**

**W**e must accept that Bangladeshi migration is the root cause of all disaffection in Assam. Unless niceties are discarded and the task of identifying and expelling foreigners taken up, Assam will continue to see riots like last week's explosion

So where is Kokrajhar and who live there? Kokrajhar is district headquarters town in 'Lower Assam' (Namoni Akhom in Assamese). Near Kokrajhar the mighty river makes a wide leftwards right-angle turn, changing its flow from westwards to southwards before it enters Bangladesh just below Dhuburi. It is also close to the border with West Bengal's Koch Bihar district. Its topography is like that of any river valley, plains sandwiched between the Bhutan Himalayas and the Garo Hills of Meghalaya. The plains are alluvial, very fertile, were heavily forested and were the abode of the Bodos, a Mongoloid tribal people, with names like Basumatary, Narzary, Mahilary etc, and worshipping deities within the Hindu pantheon.

In 1937, after the first election held under British oversight, Assam got its first Chief Minister (then called 'Premier'), Sir Syed Mohammed Sadullah, who decided to 'Grow more' by importing Bengali Muslim cultivators, mostly from the district of Mymensingh in East Bengal, just to the south-east of the present international border near Dhuburi. He pursued an active policy of settling them on unoccupied lands, especially the fertile char lands along the Brahmaputra, deforesting them and cultivating them. The Bodos did not seriously mind, because there was enough land and to spare. Only the British understood what was going on (not that they disapproved) and dubbed Sadullah's 'grow more' as more of a 'grow more

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Mohammedans'. But they did not go public on this and let things take their own course.

The influx meanwhile took the form of a steady stream and gradually began to change the demographic composition of the place. It also continued after Independence. The immigrants acted with great political sagacity and in every census returned their mother tongue as 'Assamese' though most could not speak a word of Assamese, using only the Mymensingh dialect of Bengali (so much so that these Muslims are still referred to as 'Mymensinghias', as opposed to ethnic Assamese Muslims called Goriyas, with whom the Assamese do not have any issue). As a result, the Assam Congress, the major political party in the State also did not mind. Not only were the immigrants a solid vote bank for the Congress; at the time there was tension between Assamese speakers (inhabiting the Brahmaputra valley) and Bengali speakers (inhabiting the Barak valley) in the state, and the linguistic status returned by the immigrants helped the Assamese who were the majority in the Congress.

By the 1970s the Muslim population in the state had swollen to such proportions as to render several districts Muslim-majority. Now the Assamese people sat up and took notice. The All-Assam Students' Union, and later the Assam Gana Parishad, started the 'anti-foreigners movement' which culminated in the horrendous massacres of Gohpur and Nellie. Rajiv Gandhi's government tried to manage it by enacting an extraordinary piece of legislation: the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act - IMDT law - until it was struck down by the Supreme Court in 2005.

In effect, the IMDT law formalised an Assam exception to India's citizenship laws and gave legitimacy to the questionable citizenship practices prevalent in Assam. By the end of 2006 the Indian Supreme Court intervened once again; this time to nullify the pre-election notifications that had brought back the IMDT law by the back door. However, the most devastating judicial critique of citizenship practices in Assam so far is a July 2008 verdict of the Gauhati High Court. In a case involving as many as 61 people who had been found to be 'foreigners', the court said that most of them were able to avoid "proceedings against them as well as their deportation from India' and that they have 'incorporated their names in the voters' lists on the basis of which they must have cast their votes". One of them with a Pakistani passport even contested the State Assembly elections in 1996. Going further than any judicial opinion so far, the court said, 'large number of Bangladeshis' in the state now play 'a major role in electing the representatives both to the Legislative Assembly and Parliament and consequently, in the decision-making process towards building the nation.' Not mincing words, the court described their political influence as that of 'kingmakers'.

That is where things stand now. And with things thus, riots of the type that the

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country has seen in Kokrajhar will be endemic. The indigenous inhabitants of Assam - an enormous pot-pourri of ethnic groups that are as varied as those in the whole of India, comprising Assamese caste Hindus, Ahoms, Assamese 'Goriya' Muslims, Bengali Hindus of the Barak valley, and the large variety of plains tribals like Bodos, Miris, Rabhas, Cacharis, Lalungs, Mikirs, Dimasas, etc. - have realised that if the East Bengali immigrant Muslims continues to grow in political stature then one day they will demand an Anschluss with Bangladesh, and the result would be unmitigated disaster. They will therefore rebel - as they have rebelled in Kokrajhar.

As to the solution, things do not look hopeful primarily because of the reason that we Indians prefer to be politically correct and pretend everything is bhai-bhai. Behind this, of course, there is the solid realpolitik of vote banks, but there is also our innate reluctance to accept the truth and go for the solution. Unless the disease is diagnosed and accepted as such, no question of any cure can arise. The disease is what the Gauhati High Court had, without regard to political niceties, pointed out. And the cure lies in deportation, or at least disenfranchisement, of the immigrants. How this will be done is the next question. But let's not jump the gun - let's accept the solution first. ■

*(Courtesy: The Pioneer)*

*(The author is a former West Bengal BJP President and BJP National Executive Member)*



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# *Assam riots: What leaves Bodos angry and frustrated?*

By Simantik Dowerah

**W**hy are the Bodos on a short fuse all the time? As another conflagration sweeps across the Bodoland districts—nearly 50 people have been killed and 170,000 rendered homeless so far in the latest one—the time is apt to revisit the crux of the problem.

It's unfortunate that the largest and the oldest plain tribe in Assam with a rich cultural history would be known for conflicts only. It has indeed been a trouble-torn history — the Bodos have found themselves at war with different people from time to time with devastating results for both sides in the conflict. Their leaders would say it is about rights, not alone claim over land and local resources.

“It is not land issue alone. It is deprivation on several fronts. Our areas remain underdeveloped,” All Bodo Students’ Union (ABSU) president Pramod Boro told Firstpost from Kokrajhar over telephone. He would not admit



that Bodos are prone to picking up fights. “With the Assamese and Bengali population we have led a fairly peaceful life. In 1996, we had an ethnic clash with the Adivasis. But I believe that it was a third force that ignited the fire between the Santhals and the Bodos,” Boro said.

The Bodo-Santhal conflict which broke out in May 1996 in Kokrajhar and Gossaigaon resulted in the displacement of over 250,000 people. The fight started again in 1998 triggering another wave of exodus from both communities. In both the conflicts, hundreds lost their lives. During the dreaded 90s, militancy reached its peak in Bodoland, particularly in Kokrajhar district.

It is no secret that Bodo militant groups like the National Democratic Front of

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Bodoland and Bodo Liberation Tigers Front used gun power to scare away non-Bodo population from Bodo areas. The groups used force to assert their dominance in areas where they were in minority. The Adivasi Cobra Force, the Santhal militant wing, was born out of the relentless attack.

Boro, however, chose to differ. “The enquiry commission set up by the state government to look into the Bodo-Santhal conflict never gave its report. So it is wrong to blame the Bodos for the conflict. I still believe that some outside force were behind this. If you go to a village today, you will find that both Bodos and Santhals are co-existing peacefully,” the ABSU president said. Given the history of conflicts this only appears partial truth. The Bodos have been in fight against Bengalis too though it never escalated to unmanageable levels.

The latest conflict involves Bangladeshi migrants. According to Bodo leaders, there has been large scale influx of illegal migrants to the Bodo districts. The local population is now at the risk of turning into a minority. The increasing population increases pressure on common economic resources too, they maintain. “Bangladeshis are filling Assam every day. This is not a secret. . . They would no longer be a minority. They would be majority very soon. Bangladeshis are a real threat.” Kameswar Brahma, president, Bodo Sahitya Sabha (BSS), agrees. When there would be pressure from external population, temperature will simmer, he said.

Anjali Daimari, convenor, Bodo National Conference, said, “In the 80s and 90s the Muslim population was so less. Today the indigenous population is facing a threat. People now say we are just a 20 percent of the population.”

Boro pointed out that new non-Bodo organisations coming out in BTAD areas were a matter of concern. “These non-Bodo organisations are working against the interest of the Bodos and also the non-Bodos. They are instigating a sense of insecurity among the non-Bodo population in Bodo areas,” the ABSU chief said.

Brahma blamed the mess in the Bodo areas directly on the Central government. “The Centre has failed to provide rights to the Bodos and Santhals. Even though we have the Bodoland Territorial Areas District (BTAD) under the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) it is more or less toothless,” Brahma told Firstpost. “The state government is also neglecting the Bodo areas. Had the BTC got full administrative and police power the present situation would not have escalated to this extent. Lack of executive power to the body worsened the situation,” he said, adding lack of opportunity and years of neglect have put the Bodos in a state of distress.”

Both called for short and long term policies to end the recurring violence. “There is an urgent need to review the entire internal security scenario in our areas. The entire law and order situation needs an evaluation and reorganisation to instil confidence among people,” Boro said. ■

*(Courtesy : First Post)*





## Assam riots: Fruits of living in denial over Bangladesh influx

By Venky Vembu

One of the red herrings being tossed around in the context of the ongoing riots in Assam is that the Muslims who attacked the Bodo tribals and drove them out of their homes are in fact Indians, and that it breaks their bleeding riotous hearts to be branded Bangladeshi settlers.

As perverse as that may sound, that claim isn't an elaborate justification for the riots as typical 'boys will be boys' conduct. But it does represent another effort to draw the curtain on the foundational problem that underlies both the latest riots and the simmering tensions in Assam and elsewhere in the North East: the problem of unchecked infiltration of Bangladeshis into India.

Precise estimates of the number of illegal Bangladeshi immigrants in India are hard to come by but conservative official estimates put it at over 20 million. But every attempt to raise it as a matter of concern, and to point to the security and other social perils that they come laden with have been met with cursed unwillingness to face the facts.



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Lt Gen (Retd) SK Sinha, who served in the region and served as Assam Governor following his retirement, knows what it means to raise the red flag of warning. In 1998, as Governor, he sent a report to President KR Narayanan, in which he warned of a grave danger to India's security from the influx of illegal migrants from Bangladesh.

In that report, Sinha had pointed out that even as far back as 1947, Pakistan wanted Assam incorporated in East Pakistan (as the eastern province that subsequently became Bangladesh was known). Only the opposition of regional leaders thwarted that transfer, but the matter rankled with Pakistani leaders who equated it as a dispute nearly as important as the Kashmir dispute. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto is known to have claimed that Pakistan had "very good claims" over Assam and some districts adjacent to East Pakistan.

Sinha's report noted that even the father of the Bangladeshi revolution, Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, whom India helped to liberate Bangladesh in 1971, had expressed a covetous desire for Assam, given its forest and mineral resources. "No matter how friendly our relations with Bangladesh," Sinha had warned, "we can ill-afford to ignore the dangers inherent in a demographic invasion from that country."

For his efforts, Sinha was pilloried by the Congress and the CPM and accused of stoking communal tension. Some 22 Congress MPs wrote to the President asking for Sinha's recall.

Sinha's concern all along, as a military strategist, was that the whole of India's north-easteren region was connected to the rest of India by a "chicken neck corder" which, if cut off, would effectively isolate the region. He feared that the influx of illegal migrants was turning lower Assam districts – particularly Dhubri and Goalpara – into a Muslim-majority region, and that it would be only a matter of time before they demanded merger with Bangladesh as part of a 'Greater Bangladesh project'. "The loss of lower Assam will sever the entire land mass of the northeast from the rest of India and the rich natural resources of that region will be lost to the nation," Sinha had observed.

In the decade and more since then, the plot has played out exactly as Sinha has predicted, and has been borne out by Census statistics over time, but most political parties have been blind to the security and social threats arising therefrom.

The irony is that the Indian Muslims in Assam, for all their religious affinity with the illegal Bangladeshi Muslim immigrants, lose just as much from the influx as the other native people of Assam. The illegal immigrants compete for the same manual work – as rickshaw pullers and in the construction and other industries. And being somewhat more desperate for jobs, they are considered more industrious. And if they manage to procure illegal citizenship documents in the black market, as often happens, they illegal immigrants even have access to work under the NREGA program and services under the National Rural Health Mission.

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Yet, political parties are reluctant to so much as have an honest conversation on this issue.

On the other hand, the argument has been made that there may even be an acceptable level of illegal immigration from Bangladesh on the ground that they add to the cheap labour pool in India. This argument is specious on at least two counts. For one, India isn't exactly lacking in unskilled labour force, given the vast numbers that still live in abject poverty in both rural and urban areas. If it weren't for rural employment guarantee schemes that have driven wage price inflation, there would still be an abundance of cheap labour. And now, illegal Bangladeshi immigrants have even begun to access these schemes and health services, driving up the cost of service delivery.

For another, even if it's an overstatement that every illegal immigrant is a potential security threat, the presence of millions of such immigrants—who effectively remain off the radar of the official agencies—is a recipe for disaster.

Even if it is the case that the riots in Kokrajhar, which have since spread to other districts were not directly perpetrated by illegal immigrants, their unchecked entry in the millions over time has played an undeniable role in sharpening religious and ethnic polarisation in Assam and other States in the northeastern region. To live in continued denial over this will only stoke the tensions even further.

Right now, the immediate need is for calm to be restored, but the longer a mature discussion on the underlying problem is delayed, the bigger and more serious will it get. ■

*(Courtesy : First Post)*



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# Assam Riots: How should India deal with illegal migrants?

By Sanjay Chetia

**L**ike any other region of India, Assam too has seen large scale migration throughout history. Migrants from both sub-continent and from east were accommodated and assimilated in the larger Assamese society. For instance Ahoms who ruled Assam for over 600 years were descendants of ethnic Tai people from Burma. Assamiya identity crystallized during the latter part of Ahom rule in response to Islamic incursions from neighboring Bengal. Ahoms infact scored a decisive victory against the marauding Mughal army in 1671. Thanks to the patronage provided to Hinduism by later day Ahom Kings, many tribes dotting the complex ethnic landscape of Assam were subsumed in to larger Hindu framework which concomitantly and comfortably co-existed with an emerging Assamiya identity. Linguistic conception of Assamese nationhood too played a decisive role in strengthening the identity.

By the time India secured independence in 1947, Assam was a region with a divergent demographic composition. As a complex cauldron of polyethnicities, state had Ahoms, various hill tribes of Nagaland, Meghalaya and Mizoram, indigenous tribes like Bodos and Mising, migrants from peninsular India brought by the British to work in tea industries, Sikhs living in villages near Nowgaon since pre-colonial era and other migrants from rest of India who came for trade and mainly inhabited cities. That was the time when Indian nationhood as we know it came into being, and we became a republic a couple of years later. Not that it's not common knowledge, but it's central to the debate as we seek to demonstrate.

The first wave of large-scale migration post-independence was in 1971 – about 10 million Bengalis took refuge in India during the liberation war of Bangladesh as they were persecuted by erstwhile West-Pakistani Army. About 100,000 Chakmas, a minority Buddhist tribe, from the Chittagong Hill Tracts of Bangladesh, fled erstwhile East Pakistan as communal violence was unleashed on them. Chakmas faced oppression on grounds of religion and ethnicity at the hands of the East Pakistan government. Over and above the migration caused by such cataclysmic events, extraordinary population density and pressure on land in East Bengal also contributed to the migration. Many of them never returned and started competing

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with the native Assamese for land and resources.

Not surprisingly thanks to the radical reshaping of religious, ethnic, linguistic composition of the state, due to the what now is called in popular narrative as ‘Illegal’ immigration’, Assamese started to agitate for deportation of Bangladeshi refugee turned immigrants and the agitation reached its peak during early 80s. It’s common knowledge that the ruling Congress struck gold in terms of huge number of assured votes in the form of grateful Bangladeshis. That was one of the first instances of Congress’s perhaps hugely successful experiment with vote bank politics that entire India is familiar with today.

Ruling Cong tried it’s best to maintain status quo as it suited them. It tried to divide Assam by driving a wedge between Bodos and Ahoms – it was the time when demand for a separate ”Bodoland” started to emerge. The highly controversial IMDT Act of 1983 was enacted that made it near impossible for a Bangladeshi migrant to be deported from Assam. Under the Act, the onus of establishing nationality rests not on the illegal migrant, not on the government, but on an individual who had to pay a fee to lodge a complaint to a stipulated jurisdiction. It took 22 years for the Supreme Court to repeal IMDT Act as un-constitutional in 2005. The economic disparity between Bangladesh and India coupled with a government friendly to illegal immigrants and a corrupt security force manning borders ensured that large scale immigration continue unabated.

Assam agitation culminated in “Assam Accord” signed by the central government and representatives of All Assam Students Union. This was largely an economic package and along with Illegal Migration Determination by Tribunal (IMDT) Act, enacted two years before the accord, virtually regularized illegal migrants from Bangladeshis who migrated into India up to March, 1971 and even beyond. Peace was bought through a financial package on one hand, and status-quo prevailed in terms of accepting Bangladeshis who migrated before March, 1971 as Indian citizens on the other. The vote bank was saved. Constitutionality of such an accord between a students union and central govt was never questioned.

What followed was rise of armed rebellion by United Liberation Front of Assam demanding independence from India. ULFA became yet another outfit from North East asking for freedom from India, after National Socialist Council of Nagaland and Mizo National Front. President’s rule ensued and AFSPA was applied to quell the “militancy”. ULFA militancy was controlled by sustained military action on one hand and rival militancy of outfits like National Democratic Front of Bodoland and Muslim United Liberation Tigers of Assam etc. on the other. If rumors are to be believed the other outfits were created and sponsored by state as counterweight to ULFA. How far is that true is anybody’s guess.

The other consequence of Assam agitation and accord was All Assam Students Union (AASU) developing into a full-fledged political party – Assam Gana Parishad

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(AGP), first credible opposition to Congress in Assam, it had two, including a partial tenure, clueless, lacking in vision, and largely unremarkable tenures as govt in the state. In the last elections Assam United Democratic Front (AUDF) representing the now substantial Muslim population of Assam overtook AGP to become the second largest party after Congress in state assembly.

The Bangladeshi migrants who came as refugees initially struggled to make a living and gradually started competing for land and resources with villages in hinterland leading to violent clashes with the natives the worst of which we are witnessing in Kokrajhar that saw more than 40 people killed and close to 200000 people mostly Bodos displaced from their home and rendered refugees.

Predictably, Congress is in the same denial mode refusing to accept that Illegal Bangladeshi Migrants are the source of problem and taking refuge behind Assam Accord which they signed with AASU to legitimize Bangladeshi migrants. They tend to be ably supported by the mainstream national media that has over the years become an appendage of the state. The rest of Assam is helplessly watching from the sidelines as the state is still under AFSPA marked by heavy presence of security forces. They nurture a hope that Army/SFs will take care of the situation and restore their rights as citizens, as they ought to have in normal circumstances. Or maybe they have reconciled to vote bank politics which they know is a reality they have to live with.

Assam accord which I consider dubious (it legitimized millions of Bangladeshi immigrants who came in before 1971 instead of taking 1947, the year of independence as the only acceptable point of time as it ought to have since India became Republic) is at the heart of the debate. The matter was too important to be have been left it to an inexperienced students union and the ruling party to decide that it was merely an economic package that was needed for the state. The matter should have been decided at least by the parliament after a thorough national level debate. If the issue of Citizenship and the Citizen's rights over Foreign Migrants is a regional issue then by that stretch even the issue of Territorial Integrity should also be a regional one.

Having said that, Bangladeshi migrants are a reality that we as a nation must acknowledge. The economic disparity we have with Bangladesh that drives migration cannot be overlooked. We have to deal with them and decide the approach we want to take, should we confine them to refugee camps – the approach many countries take, or allow them to legitimately earn a living as non citizens – like in Dubai for e.g. is a call the Nation has to take collectively through parliament.

Certain amount of labor migration from various countries comprising South Asia is to be expected for economic reason considering the disparity in the economies of various countries. So the first approach that involves confining all

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illegal migrants to camps and treating them as convicts, even though it's the most popular method being used by the western world including US to deal with the issue of illegal migration, may not be practical or desirable in India's case. Hence the second approach of allowing them to legitimately stay, with limited rights, and earn a living, knowing fully well that they will compete with Indian labours, increasing supply in the labor market, seems to be the best available alternative.

Having infiltrated into India, illegal migrants would either head for cities for jobs, or look for pieces of fertile land to own. Our Villages are ill equipped to handle more than handful of migrants to help them as farm hands or at odd jobs, least of all share their agricultural lands with them. Cities on the other hand have a voracious appetite for labors, and they are better equipped than the villages in terms of availability of sufficient police force to take care of law & order situations, utilities, and job opportunities to make it possible for the migrants to make a living without land ownership, the downside of which is driving down of wages in the labor market.

If we "must" have migrants from other countries, we must have them in cities which are better equipped to handle them and their cosmopolitan nature reduces friction between communities and provide a support base for various communities, which can not be expected from villages anywhere, and any attempt at forcing villages to accept and share resources with foreign migrants will lead to bloody clashes the kind of which we are seeing in Assam.

IMDT Act, enacted by the ruling Cong in 1983 that replaced the Foreigner's Act of 1946, was clearly driven by political agenda of vote bank. Supreme Court declared the act unconstitutional in 2005, but 22 years were enough to change the demographic along with electoral landscape of Assam. The rights of Scheduled Tribes like Bodos etc. and also that of non-tribal villagers need to protected at all cost. And rights of foreign migrants cannot be put on the same pedestal as those of citizens.

There is no dearth of practical solutions and ideas as expressed by the opinion leaders, well informed and good intentioned people Like here (<http://in.news.yahoo.com/blogs/opinions/beyond-blockade-key-manipur-20100615-010111-765.html>) and here (<http://storify.com/Dosabandit/illegal-migration-issue-tweeple-suggestions>), which thanks to a democratic social media have made it possible for people to express and spread. Thanks to them a renewed and much needed debate on a national level on the crucial issue of how to deal with Illegal Migration has been set rolling which till now was sadly absent in the main stream media. Whatever be the solution that emerges from the debate can only be better than dubious accords and flawed legislations like IMDT. ■

*(Courtesy : Center Right India)*



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# *The illegal identity*

By General Shankar Roychowdhury

**T**he flawed and incredibly unwieldy procedure for identification of illegal immigrants heavily favours the 'illegal'

The fundamental doctrine, "the more you use, the less you lose", on the use of force in mass was formulated prior to World War II by the German Panzer general, Heinz Wilhelm Guderian, a military genius universally revered in military circles.

Though it was developed in the context of high-intensity armoured warfare in Europe, with variations in time, space and local situations, the same principle can be applicable to internal security situations as well when law, order and public safety are required to be restored at the earliest, with minimum loss of life and property.

The parallels are not as far-fetched as they may appear - the doctrine of mass is common to both but requires to be interpreted appropriately. Internal security or law and order are also operational situations which require rapid induction and deployment of security forces and administrative resources into the affected areas in adequate strength, backed by determined political support.

Another cardinal principle of internal security and law and order operations which often goes by the board in emergency situations is that of minimum force. While the use of force has to be minimum, it should nevertheless be commensurate with the extent and intensity of the disturbances for which intervention has become necessary. It must be minimum but adequate to overwhelm disorder if possible in the very initial stages and literally stamp it out of existence, something always difficult to immediately assess at very short notice and based on fragmentary information. It is thus better to overreact in strength at the earliest and reduce force levels subsequently rather than the reverse.

Intervention in adequate strength is precisely what does not seem to have happened when dealing with the recent outbreak of violence in Kokrajhar, Assam, between tribal Bodos and immigrants with a predominantly Bangladeshi background. It was a clash of ethnicities with communal overtones, combining the worst aspects of all contingencies.



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The primary responsibility of preventing and controlling internal disturbances is always that of the state government concerned, which has to be the first to respond due to its proximity to the situation. Failures reflect either incompetence or disengagement on the part of the local administration and the political leadership at state level. If Kokrajhar is taken as a typical case in point, then the entire responsibility has to be borne by the government of Assam. Chief minister Tarun Gogoi's petulance in berating the Centre for inadequate intelligence is totally unacceptable, because local intelligence is the responsibility of state governments whose agencies are expected to remain in touch with local situations and be aware of their possible fallout within the state.

However, Mr Gogoi's comments in the matter of delayed dispatch and inadequate strength of Central reinforcements are more understandable, though the Centre, too, may have its own case here. With large areas of the country on a slow boil due to insurgency, terrorism, volatile borders and deteriorating law and order situations, uncommitted reserves of Central police and paramilitary forces have wound down to inadequate levels to rush reinforcements for every fresh outbreak. In the case of Kokrajhar, Central forces were required to be swept up from all corners of the country, many from ongoing deployments, and re-assigned to Kokrajhar and other affected districts of Assam. Transportation is laborious because the rail route is far from being the fastest means of movement. The time has long arrived to use air as the primary mode of transport for at least the initial contingents to the zone of deployment with the balance following on by other modes of transportation. Direct "heliborne operations" into specific points of intervention have to be seriously considered as a routine requirement.

However, the inevitable political mudslinging and verbal catfights between the government and the Opposition tend to sidetrack and obscure (often by design) the much larger and contentious issue highlighted by the Kokrajhar clashes - that of the long-running illegal influx from Bangladesh, particularly into the eastern states of India, where Assam has always been amongst the most afflicted. It is a highly painful and volatile political sore that refuses to heal because of vested interests amongst the Indian political class who are the attending physicians. Political interests have always been held paramount to win and retain the support of sections of the population at the ballot box even at the cost of national security. The state leadership of Assam under the present dispensation cannot claim to be any different.

As in all other aspects, identification of illegal migrants from Bangladesh along the Indo-Bangladesh border in Assam as well as in Tripura and West Bengal has been reduced to a gigantic farce. Mizoram, with its distinctive tribal society, has succeeded to some extent in keeping illegal migrants from Bangladesh at bay, but here, too, the water has started seeping in through the dykes. To begin with is the flawed and incredibly unwieldy procedure of identification, which heavily favours

the "illegal" ab initio, and under which the bonafides of individuals under scrutiny are accepted as genuine, leaving the burden of proving otherwise on the state. This is an impossible task, given the non-existent personal documentation and official record-keeping. It is impossible to ascertain identities along the porous borders of Assam. Angry outbursts from local communities, as witnessed in Kokrajhar, are the result of frustrated exasperation and are indicators of a worsening situation.

The sequence of events in most such outbreaks repeats the commonalities. To begin with, administrative authorities routinely claim that they had little or no warning of any imminent violence, which often develops from incidents as absurdly trivial as a collision between two cyclists or bargaining over the price of groceries. Police resources at the local level are invariably inadequate for such sudden outbreaks, which indicates a socio-cultural and socio-economic environment latent with hair-trigger tensions even in everyday activities.

The police and administration are beleaguered everywhere and need to be provided the resources and leadership capable of reacting at short notice. This is the main lesson of Kokrajhar and we need to take a serious note of it. ■

*(The writer is a former Chief of Army Staff and a former member of Parliament)  
Courtesy :The Asian Age*



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# Silent Invasion

By Prakash Nanda

In its latest “Annual Report”, the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has admitted that checking illegal migration from Bangladesh is a major challenge “considering the porous nature of the international border”. But then, it is only one part of the story. Here, the government wants us to convey that it is trying its best to check the illegal immigration, but that is proving to be a difficult task given the nature of the border that features “riverine areas, hills and jungles”. But then, there is another part of the story which the present UPA government does not say fully. And that is the fact that it is afraid of taking any remedial measures, let alone preventive steps, in deporting back the “illegal Bangladeshis” in India.

In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha on March 21, 2012, Minister of State for Home Affairs Mullappally Ramachandran said: “There are reports of Bangladeshi nationals having settled in India without valid travel documents. As entry of such Bangladeshi nationals into the country is clandestine and surreptitious, it is not



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possible to have a correct estimate of such illegal immigrants living in the country. A number of Bangladeshi nationals who have entered into the country on valid travel documents have been found to be overstaying. As per information available, 28,667 Bangladeshi nationals were found to be overstaying as on December 31, 2010.”

What about the number of those Bangladeshis who have entered illegally? Here, the UPA government is prevaricating. For instance, Ramachandran was quoted as having said sometime in 2011 that “almost 1.4-million illegal Bangladeshis have migrated to India over the past decade alone”. But Home Minister P Chidambaram has suggested on many occasions that there is no official number of the illegal Bangladeshis and that the cited numbers are only “estimates”. And this despite the fact that on July 14, 2004, in reply to an unstarred question in Parliament, the then Union Minister of State for Home Shriprakash Jaiswal had stated that out of 1,20,53,950 illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators all over India, 50,00,000 Bangladeshi were present in Assam alone as on December 31, 2001. West Bengal topped the list with 57, 00,000 Bangladeshis. The figures were based on Intelligence Bureau reports”.

Another Indian Home Minister, the late Indrajit Gupta (a veteran Communist), had disclosed in Parliament on May 6, 1997, that “there were upwards of ten million illegal Bangladeshi infiltrators who have made India their home”. The late JN Dixit, a Foreign Secretary and National Security Advisor of India, wrote in 2000: “We have definite information that between seven to nine million Bangladeshi foreign nationals have not only migrated illegally but also registered into India.” And an Indian Home Ministry estimate prepared in 2001 had said: “Approximately, 150-170 lakh Bangladeshi infiltrators have crossed into India illegally since 1971.”

My sources in the IB say that at present, there must be at least 30 to 40 millions of illegal Bangladeshis in India. They have silently invaded India, but our “secular” government at the Centre will have nothing to do with it. And this despite the fact that the then Governor of Assam Lt. Gen (Retd.) SK Sinha had authored a “Report” in 1998 and titled it “Illegal Migration into Assam”. This “Report” was submitted to the President of India. In it, the Governor “warned that if the present trends are not arrested, the indigenous people of Assam would be reduced to a minority and there may, in course of time, be a demand for the merger of Muslim-dominated bordering districts with Bangladesh”. Governor’s report called the infiltration a “national threat”. This assessment, it is important to note, has been shared subsequently by the Assam High Court and the Supreme Court of India.

It may be noted here that the Muslim population in Assam in between 1971 and 1991 increased 77.42 per cent as against the figure of 41.89 per cent by the Hindus. In between 1991 and 2001, the corresponding figures were 29.3 per cent for Muslims and 14.95 for Hindus. It is not surprising therefore that today,

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out of the total 24 districts of Assam, six districts have 60 per cent Muslim population while another six have above 40 per cent of them. And, out of the 126 assembly seats, election of 54 MLAs (Members of Legislative Assembly) depends on the Muslim vote bank. And all this has been due to the influx of the illegal immigrants from neighbouring Bangladesh. In fact, the trend is similar in West Bengal. In between 1981 and 1991, the census figure shows that the Muslim population in the state rose by 36.67 per cent as against that of 21.05 per cent of Hindus. And in between 1991 and 2001, the corresponding figures were 26.1 per cent for Muslims and 14.26 per cent for Hindus.

Coming back to Assam, it is becoming increasingly evident that because of illegal Bangladeshi voters, the political landscape of the state is set for a big change. The illegal voters are about to not only pose a serious threat to the socio-cultural identity and stability of the State, but may also be in a position to form their Government and have their own Chief Minister. The threat was clearly enunciated when on July 23, 2008, the Guwahati High Court stated in a judgment: “Bangladeshis have become kingmakers in Assam.”

Whatever the reasons behind the huge number of Bangladeshi nationals in India, experts say that their overall presence in the country, and the east and northeast regions in particular, is shattering of the socio-economic balance in the region, not to speak of distorting the region’s politics. Illegal immigrants not only occupy char areas in the riverine belt, but also lead to the growth of unauthorised settlements on government lands, agricultural lands, grazing reserves and forest areas. They compete with genuine Indians for jobs, thereby worsening the already serious unemployment problem.

Besides, Indian intelligence officials have often complained that Pakistan has fished in the troubled water in the sense that it, with active grassroots- support of Harakat ul-Jihad-I-Islami-Bangladesh (HUJI-B), Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and Jaish-e-Mohammad (all are notorious fundamentalist terrorist outfits in South Asia ), has used its “agents” under the guise of immigrants to exacerbate the communal disharmony between the Hindus and Muslims in parts of the country and promote secessionist- terrorist activities. Besides, many of these immigrants have indulged in smuggling, trafficking, drug peddling, illegal cow smuggling and trans-border gang robbery.

Interestingly, there is also a linkage between immigration from Bangladesh and the division of British India in 1947. This is particularly true in the case of Assam. There were serious attempts at the time of partition to see that Assam went to Pakistan, because always people over-populated East Bengal (which became part of Pakistan) had traditionally migrated to Assam for work. And this trend continued even after partition. So much so that the Muslim population in Assam, which was about 190,0000 in 1947, increased to about 360,0000 within 25 years



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of Independence by 1972. In 1971, Bangladesh emerged as a sovereign nation after liberation war against Pakistan with the help of Indian Army. But its first Prime Minister Sheikh Mujibur Rahman remained consistent with his views that, “without the inclusion of Assam the East Bengal economy could not be balanced”.

In fact, right since Pakistan’s inception in 1947, its geopolitical design has been to promote “Muslim expansionism” in Assam and balkanise India on the basis of religion. ZA Bhutto had spelt out this design as far back as 1968. The late Prime Minister of Pakistan wrote about the geo-political aims of Pakistan in his book, *The Myth of Independence*. He argued: “It would be wrong to think that Kashmir is the only dispute that divides India and Pakistan, though it is undoubtedly the most significant one, at least is nearly as important as the Kashmir dispute is that of ASSAM and some districts adjacent to East Pakistan.”

It is not that Indian political leadership and officials are unaware of the problem, but then they, particularly the Congress (including Trinamool Congress of Mamata Banerjee, now Chief Minister of West Bengal) and the Communists, who between them, have dominated the politics of West Bengal and Assam, have tended to ignore it, the reason being “vote bank politics”. They have even tried to circumvent the Supreme Court which has struck down the Assam-specific IMDT (Illegal Migration Determination Tribunal) Act. When Assam vote-bank politics dictated passage of the Foreigners’ (Tribunals for Assam) Order, 2006, the Supreme Court struck it down again.

The courts say that India cannot have two different sets of laws to detect illegal immigration. After all, the normal laws of the country say that the onus of proving “citizenship” is always on the accused. But the UPA government wants a different law for Assam where the burden of proving the citizenship or otherwise rests on the accuser and the police. And it justifies this absurdity (rather “illegality”) on grounds of providing “special protections” against undue harassment to the “minorities”.

What a perverse logic, which is nothing but highly communal in a secular country such as ours! ■

*Courtesy : UAI India*



## Assam on a suicide course

By R N Ravi

**A**SSAM is yet again in flames! Scores are dead, many more are feared to have suffered the same fate and/or are missing and some 200,000 have been rendered homeless in renewed bouts of ethnic violence in a large swathe of lower Assam. Flames are leaping in other areas. Chief minister Tarun Gogoi has sternly warned the miscreants and threatened to unleash the might of the state on them. True to his known reflex, he has indented more troops and money from his comrade-in-arms, Union home minister P Chidambaram, to “firmly” deal with the situation. Several districts are under curfew and the police have been issued shoot-at-sight orders. The Army has been called out as if its personnel were in barracks!

Chidambaram, and, if not him, then certainly his minions from Delhi, would descend on Assam, have closed-door confabulations with their like in the state government and commanders in uniform and, before returning to Delhi, would

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drop, for the media's consumption, some beaming nuggets of confidence such as the "situation is under control" and "all would be well soon".

The scenario is all too familiar to anyone, even those having a nodding acquaintance with Assam. Only the scene of carnage and victims differ from case to case. Such utterances from the eminences in Delhi and Dispur are not uncommon. These were heard when the Rabhas and Garos set against each other in Goalpara in 2011, when the Dimasas and Zemi Nagas gunned each other down in 2009 in the North Cachar Hills, when the Rabhas and Muslims clashed in 2008 in Goalpara, when the Bodos and Muslims butchered each other in 2008 in Udalguri-Darrang, when Hindi-speaking migrant labourers were attacked in 2007 in central and upper Assam, when the Dimasas and Karbis hacked each other in the hill districts in 2005, and when minorities were wantonly targeted in lower Assam in 2004.

One wonders at the quaint chemistry of these gentlemen who every time tell the same brazen lies and get a good night's sleep unmindful of what happens to hapless victims. If only their conscience were not on rent!

Assam, home to innumerable ethnic denominations, is arguably the most heterogeneous state in India. Varied communities shared a common space in peace for millennia, observing traditional protocols of mutual engagement. Skirmishes of grave intensity, in colonial and even post-colonial days, were few and far between until recent decades. First to rock the boat were migrants from outside Assam, mainly from Bangladesh, whose robust demography posed a credible threat to the natives, who feared their growth would lead to the eventual loss of their ownership of the state.

They protested. The idioms of protests were couched in terms of imminent threats to the identity and culture of the natives. Such was the core narrative of the Assam Agitation. Although the socio-psychological impact of the Assam Agitation has not been adequately assessed as yet and is a pregnant subject for research, its aftermath has been insidious. It radiated the logic of preservation of identity and culture to the ever-increasing number of constituent communities of the state. The fear of the migrants has morphed into fear of the neighbours. The seeds for the unravelling of Assam were planted.

Ironically, the state government, abetted by the Centre, instead of pursuing the syncretic politics of inclusion — a strategy imperative for the survival of an ethnically heterogeneous society — did the reverse. It stoked and cynically pandered to the politics of ethno-exclusivism. Its indiscreet acts and omissions accentuated the latent fears of the subaltern communities and reinforced their apprehensions of the "others". Some of them resorted to brutal ethnic cleansing. Egregious violence against Adivasis in Kokrajhar district, lower Assam, in 1992, in which scores of them were killed and over 200,000 rendered homeless refugees, was an enterprise in ethnic cleansing. It was repeated in 1993-94 in the same district against migrant

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Muslims. In these horrendous acts of carnage the state government looked the other way. Should one be surprised if it soon led to the birth of armed militias among Adivasis and migrant Muslims for protection, retribution and revenge?

Politics of ethno-exclusivism received a boost when the late Hiteshwar Saikia, then chief minister of Assam, created six ethnicity-based autonomous councils through acts of the state legislature in 1995 on the eve of the assembly elections, apparently to reap electoral dividends. His legacy is being vigorously carried on by Tarun Gogoi. The controversial Bodo Accord in 2003, presided over by him, gave a toxic twist to the politics of ethno-exclusivism with far reaching sinister implications for the stability and integrity of Assam. The accord, in order “to fulfill the aspirations of the Bodo people”, created an autonomous territorial council in form and substance that was nothing short of a subversion of the benign spirit of the Sixth Schedule.

The Sixth Schedule, as incorporated in the Constitution, was an audacious experiment in the democratic devolution of governance of a specified territory through an autonomous territorial council with considerable legislative, executive and judicial mandates. It did not stipulate any discrimination among the residents of the specified territory on any ground whatsoever. All residents had equal political rights, irrespective of their ethnicities. The Bodoland Territorial Council upended the principle of equality and introduced a sinister provision of discrimination among the denizens. Of the 40 elected seats in the council, it reserved 30 for the Bodos. Such a measure is not only insidious in principle but is egregiously iniquitous as the minority Bodos acquired a disproportionate majority share in political power. No wonder the BTC has kept neither the Bodos nor the others at peace since then. Gogoi in 2005, with the Assembly elections due the following year, did a repeat of 1995 and created, as if with vengeance on Assam, 14 autonomous and development councils along ethnicity lines. One of these councils was for Thengal Kacharis, a small community of a few thousand, who until then belonged to the Sonowal Kachari family. The fact that their habitat falls in Titabor constituency of Gogoi was perhaps potent enough to merit a council for them. This is a classic illustration of cynical invention and accentuation of identity through amoebic multiplication of an existing one. Needless to say, each of these ethnicity-based councils has created many more disgruntled communities who, out of rancour and a sense of iniquity, are raring for a fight.

Gogoi, in his macho pursuit of the politics of ethno-exclusivism, changed the more than century-old politically neutral name of the North Cachar Hills district to a highly controversial and politically fraught Dima Hasao in 2011. It symbolises the pre-eminence of the Dimasa community. It was done — in the teeth of opposition from the majority of the district’s population and also sane elements among the Dimasas, who constitute barely 34 per cent of the population — to appease a

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militia group considered a surrogate of the state. The very next day of the decision on name change, some new non-Dimasa ethnic militias were born. With their sporadic violent protests, they are keeping the region restive.

Assam is straining at the seams of innumerable ethnicities. It is a powder keg and the powder is rendered ever dry by the divisive politics of ethno-exclusivism. A small spark anywhere is enough to trigger an explosion. The current conflagration raging through lower Assam is a direct fallout of this. It may be subdued using overwhelming force, but it will be a temporary respite only to erupt again soon, with no less virulence. To survive, Assam urgently needs the healing therapy of inclusive politics. But with the state and the Union governments in sync over playing the opposite game, does it have a chance? ■

*(The writer is a recently retired Special Director, Intelligence Bureau)*







## ***IMDT Act is the biggest barrier to deportation, says Supreme Court***

The Supreme Court held that the Illegal Migrants (Determination by Tribunals) Act, 1983 and rules "has created the biggest hurdle and is the main impediment or barrier in the identification and deportation of illegal migrants."

A three-judge Bench comprising Chief Justice R.C. Lahoti, Justice G.P. Mathur and Justice P.K. Balasubramanyan, which, on Tuesday, struck down the IMDT Act as unconstitutional, observed: "The presence of such a large number of illegal migrants from Bangladesh, which runs into millions, is in fact an aggression on the State of Assam and has also contributed significantly in causing serious internal disturbances in the shape of insurgency of alarming proportions."

The court, in its 114-page judgment, noted that this "aggression" had made the life of the people of Assam "wholly insecure and the panic generated thereby had created fear psychosis." The Bench said this hampered the growth of Assam though it had vast natural resources. The rest of the country viewed it as a disturbed area and hence there were no investments or employment opportunities, giving rise to insurgency.

Justice Mathur, writing the judgment for the Bench, pointed out that the IMDT Act and Rules had been so made that innumerable and insurmountable difficulties



were created in identification and deportation of illegal migrants. The Bench noted that though enquiries were initiated in 3,10,759 cases under the IMDT Act, only 10,015 persons were declared illegal migrants and only 1,481 illegal migrants were physically expelled up to April 30, 2000.

This, the Bench said, "comes to less than half per cent of the cases initiated." On the contrary in West Bengal, where Foreigners Act was applicable, 4,89,046 persons were deported between 1983 and November 1998, which was a lesser period. Thus the IMDT Act "is coming to the advantage of such illegal migrants as any proceedings initiated against them almost entirely ends in their favour, enables them to have a document having official sanctity to the effect that they are not illegal migrants."

The Bench said "the IMDT Act and the Rules clearly negate the constitutional mandate contained in Article 355 of the Constitution, where a duty has been cast upon the Union of India to protect every State against external aggression and internal disturbance. The IMDT Act, which contravenes Article 355 of the Constitution is, therefore, wholly unconstitutional and must be struck down."

The judges said the impact of such large-scale illegal migrants not only affected Assam but also other north-eastern States as the route to these places passed through Assam. The Bench said the influx of Bangladeshi nationals into Assam posed a threat to the integrity and security of the north-eastern region.

Their presence had changed the demographic character of the region and the local people of Assam had been reduced to a status of minority in certain districts. The judges said the enforcement of the IMDT Act had helped the illegal migrants to stay in Assam. The illegal migrants had affected the language, script and culture of the local people. The Bench directed constitution of fresh tribunals under the Foreigner (Tribunals) Order, 1964.

*(Courtesy : The Hindu)*





## सैकड़ों मरे व लाखों बेघरबार हुए कांग्रेस वोट बैंक की राजनीति छोड़, देशहित में काम करे

कमल संदेश ब्यूरो

असम में हाल की साम्प्रदायिक हिंसा में अभी हजारों लोगों की जानें चली गई और लाखों लोग बेघरबार हो गए। असम के निचले भाग के कोकराझाड़ और चिराग जिलों में भारत में बसने वाले बोडो लोगों और अवैध रूप से घुसपैठ करने वाले बांग्लादेशियों के बीच हुए उपद्रव से सीमापार से दशकों से हो रही घुसपैठ के कारण विस्फोटक स्थिति सामने आ गई है। विशेषज्ञों का मानना है कि इन अवैध घुसपैठियों के कारण इन तमाम वर्षों में न केवल राज्य की जनसांख्यिकीय स्थिति बदल गई है, बल्कि उन्होंने आदिवासियों और राज्य के निवासियों पर भी कब्जा कर लिया है जिससे लोगों में असंतोष फैल गया है हाल की हिंसात्मक घटनाएं इसका उदाहरण प्रस्तुत करती हैं। वातावरण अब भी तनावपूर्ण है और छुटपुट घटनाएं निरंतर जारी हैं। हजारों घर जला दिए गए हैं, जिससे 5000 से अधिक गांव प्रभावित हुए हैं और लोगों को राहत कैंपों में शरण लेने पर मजबूर होना पड़ा है। यहां तक कि रेलगाड़ियों को भी निशाना बनाया गया और इससे एक जगह से दूसरी जगह जाने में बाधा बड़ी है जिससे आंतक फैल गया है।

असम के निचले भाग के बोडोलैण्ड टैरीटोरियल आटोनॉमस जिलों (बीटीएडी) में जातीय झड़पें दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण और निंदनीय हैं। परन्तु इस प्रकार की झड़पों का होना कोई ऐसी बात नहीं है जिसकी

आशा न की जा रही हो। यदि हम असम हिंसा के कारणों पर गौर करें तो हम पाएंगे कि इसका एक लम्बा और जटिल इतिहास है, जिससे एक बात सामने उभर कर आती है कि छोटी सी घटना भी राज्य में चिंगारी की तरह भड़क कर शोलों में परिवर्तित हो सकती है। वास्तव में इस बार क्या कुछ हुआ, इसका अंदाजा लगाना मुश्किल है। रिपोर्टों के अनुसार बोडो आदिवासियों और अप्रवासी मुस्लिम समुदाय के बीच स्थानीय रूप से घटित झड़पों ने असम के निचले भाग के पूरे क्षेत्र को हिंसा की लपेट में ले लिया और इन क्षेत्रों में सेना की तैनाती के बारे में हुए अक्षम्य विलम्ब ने तो स्थिति को और भी बदतर बना दिया। किन्तु, असम पुलिस का कहना है कि झड़पें उस समय शुरू हुईं जब 19 जुलाई को दो मुस्लिमों की हत्या की प्रतिक्रिया में कोकराझाड़ जिले में बांग्लादेशी विस्थापितों ने चार बोड़ो युवकों को मार डाला। और, इस प्रकार कोकराझाड़ की गैंगवार ने चिराग, दुबरी और बोंगाईगांव को दंगों की लपेट में ले लिया। बोड़ो लोगों का कहना है कि उनका हत्या की घटनाओं से कोई लेना देना नहीं है और वे मानते हैं कि यदि अपराधियों को समय रहते पकड़ लिया जाता तो स्थिति काबू से बाहर न होती। असम के मुख्यमंत्री तरुण गोगोई के कैबिनेट सहयोगियों और जिला कांग्रेस सदस्यों एवं राज्य प्रशासन की चेतावनी के बावजूद किसी ने भी इस विषय को गम्भीरता से नहीं लिया और न ही हिंसा को नियंत्रित करने के लिए निवारणकारी कदम उठाए गए।

यह भी आरोप है कि असम की कांग्रेस सरकार ने चुप्पी साध रखी क्योंकि बोड़ो पीपुल्स फ्रंट उनका सहयोगी भागीदार है, जबकि अवैध रूप से बांग्लादेशी घुसपैटिए उनका प्रमुख वोट बैंक हैं। अब तो राज्य की कानून व्यवस्था इस बुरी तरह से बिगड़ चुकी है कि स्वयं मुख्यमंत्री भी मानते हैं कि इस नरसंहार में राजनीति काम कर रही है क्योंकि उनके साथ काम करने वाले लोग ही उन्हें हटाने की साजिश कर रहे हैं और इसके लिए उन्होंने केन्द्रीय गृहमंत्री की निष्क्रियता की भी आलोचना की। इसी प्रकार, असम के कांग्रेसी सांसदों ने पूर्व गृहमंत्री पी. चिदम्बरम से मुलाकात करने के बाद राज्य सरकार की आलोचना की और माना कि “हमारा राज्य सरकार से भरोसा उठ गया है और वह हिंसा को नियंत्रित करने में अक्षम है तथा यही कारण है कि हमने केन्द्र से हस्तक्षेप करने का आग्रह किया है।”

प्रश्न यह उठता है कि क्या असम में कांग्रेस सरकार कोकराझाड़ में तथा इसके आसपास क्षेत्रों में बिगड़ती स्थिति के लिए सीधे-सीधे आपराधिक लापरवाही की जिम्मेदार नहीं है, जबकि इस प्रकार के निश्चित ही होने वाले टकराव के संकेत पहले से मिल रहे थे? दूसरे, क्या केन्द्र की कांग्रेस-नीत-यूपीए सरकार भी दोषी नहीं है क्योंकि वह इस बात को अच्छी तरह से जानती थी और फिर भी वह जानबूझकर निष्क्रिय रही कि टकराव का मूल कारण क्या है- यानी वह जानती थी कि इसका कारण असम में बांग्लादेशियों की भारी घुसपैठ है, जिसमें बोड़ो क्षेत्र भी शामिल है? इस दोनों प्रश्नों का उत्तर निश्चित ही ‘हां’ में है। अतः केन्द्र और राज्य दोनों में कांग्रेस ही असम के आंतरिक क्षेत्रों में अवैध अप्रवासियों की भारी घुसपैठ में सहयोग देने के लिए दोषी है।

यह बात भी विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय है कि राज्य तथा केन्द्र सरकारों में जिस प्रकार का राजनैतिक इच्छाशक्ति की कमी देखी गई है, उसके कारण असम में वर्षों से भड़क रही चिंगारी ने दावानल बनाने का काम किया है। 1970 के उत्तरार्ध दशक में एएएसयू ने असम से सभी अवैध घुसपैठियों को निकालने का आंदोलन शुरू किया था। उसने मांग की थी कि नागरिकों का राष्ट्रीय रजिस्टर बनाया जाए, मतदाता सूचियों से बांग्लादेशियों को मताधिकार से वंचित किया जाए और उनको देश से बाहर निकाला जाए। जब 1979 के असम विधानसभा चुनाव होने वाले थे तो एएएसयू ने

चुनावों को तब तक के लिए स्थगित करने का आंदोलन चलाया जब तक कि विदेशियों का मुद्दा तय न हो जाए। परन्तु सरकार ने इस लोकप्रिय मांग को नकार दिया।

जब तक लोगों के सामने नेल्ली की भयावह स्थिति से सरकार की अक्षमताओं का पता नहीं चला तब तक शेष भारत ऐसी घटनाओं के बारे में जानता ही नहीं था। 18 फरवरी 1983 को गुवाहाटी के पास बांग्ला-भाषी मुस्लिम एक छोटा सा गांव 'नेल्ली' भारत के इतिहास में सबसे बड़े नरसंहार का दृश्य बना था। एक ही रात में 2200 से अधिक लोग मारे गए थे। 1983 के नेल्ली नरसंहार और 1979-85 के असम आंदोलन ने सरकार को 1985 में असम समझौते पर हस्ताक्षर करने के लिए मजबूर किया था। हालांकि इस समझौते में बांग्लादेशी अप्रवासियों का पता लगाने और देश-निष्कासन पर विशेष ध्यान दिया था, परन्तु असम में आने वाली सरकारों और केन्द्र सरकार इस मोर्चे पर बुरी तरह विफल रही और उसने मुश्किल से ही कुछेक लोगों को ही बांग्लादेश भेजा।

21 जुलाई 2007 को, सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने आईएमडीटी एक्ट को अवैध और असंवैधानिक घोषित कर दिया। उसने यह भी चेतावनी दी कि बांग्लादेश से भारी संख्या में घुसपैठ 'बाह्य आक्रमण' है।

सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने यह भी कहा कि केन्द्र सरकार को बांग्लादेशियों के भारी घुसपैठ को रोकने के लिए प्रभावकारी कदम उठाने चाहिए। फिर भी, अवैध अप्रवासियों का औपचारिक देश-निष्कासन नहीं हुआ, जैसा कि गुवाहाटी हाईकोर्ट के फोरेनर्स ट्राइबुनल में भी कहा गया था। विगत सात वर्षों में कांग्रेस-नीत यूपीए सरकार ने हाईकोर्ट के निर्देशों पर कुछ भी नहीं किया है। स्पष्ट है कि कांग्रेस की वोट बैंक नीति भारत की एकता और अखण्डता पर हावी होने में सफल हुई है।

हरैत की बात है कि असम आज एक ज्वालामुखी पर बैठा हुआ है। भारी घुसपैठ के कारण 10 से अधिक जिलों में जनसांख्यिकीय स्थिति पूरी तरह से बदल गई है। जनगणना रिपोर्ट के अनुसार असम के 27 जिलों में से 11 जिलों में मजहब के आधार पर मुस्लिम बहुमत जिले बन गए हैं।

अवैध अप्रवासियों और गैर-असमी समुदायों द्वारा सरकारी जमीन पर व्यवस्थित रूप से कब्जा और वन क्षेत्रों में घुसपैठ के कारण स्थानीय लोगों में गम्भीर मतभेद पैदा हो गए हैं।

यदि सरकार इस मुद्दे को स्थायी रूप से सुलझाना चाहती है तो उसे असम समस्या को भारतीय बनाम विदेशी मुद्दे के रूप में लेना होगा, न कि वह इसे हिन्दू-बनाम-मुस्लिम मुद्दे के रूप में ले। दूसरे, असम में मतदाता सूची से गैर-नागरिकों के नामों को निकाल कर नागरिकों का अद्यतन राष्ट्रीय रजिस्टर (एनआरसी) तैयार करना होगा और तीसरे, सरकार को अवैध घुसपैठियों को भारत देश से बाहर निकालना जरूरी होगा। जब तक देश में अवैध घुसपैठियों की मूल समस्या का निराकरण नहीं होगा हिंसा की वारदातें बार-बार होती रहेंगी, यदि असम में नहीं होंगी तो किसी दूसरी जगह होंगी, हो सकता है कि उनका स्वरूप कुछ अलग हो। यही समय है कांग्रेस पार्टी भारत की एकता और अखण्डता की सुरक्षा के लिए पार्टी हितों से ऊपर उठकर काम करे।■

## यह भारतीय नागरिकों बनाम विदेशियों का मुद्दा है : लालकृष्ण आडवाणी

असम में बार-बार होने वाली हिंसा का कारण बंगलादेशियों की बड़े पैमाने पर घुसपैठ में कांग्रेस की सांठ-गांठ सभी दलों से चार सूत्री समाधान पर राष्ट्रीय आम सहमति बनाने की अपील



- ▶ भारतीय बनाम विदेशियों के मुद्दे को असम समस्या माना जाए, न कि हिन्दू बनाम मुस्लिम मुद्दा
  - ▶ असम में नागरिकों का राष्ट्रीय रजिस्टर तैयार करके मतदाता सूची से उन लोगों के नाम हटा दिये जाए जो नागरिक नहीं हैं
  - ▶ बोडो इलाकों के आदिवासी क्षेत्रों और ब्लॉकों में बाहरी लोगों को प्रवेश नहीं करने दिया जाए
  - ▶ भारत की एकता और पूर्वोत्तर की अखंडता को बनाए रखने के लिए असम को बचाएं
- मैंने असम के कोकराझार और अन्य बोडो इलाकों में हिंसा प्रभावित इलाकों का दौरा किया। हाल की हिंसा के शिकार लोगों के प्रति मेरी पूरी सहानुभूति है। मैं उन लोगों के परिवारों के प्रति भारी मन से संवेदना व्यक्त करता हूं जो इन हिंसक घटनाओं में मारे गए और बड़ी संख्या में जो



बेघर हो गए। मैंने, बोडो और गैर बोडो, दोनों राहत शिविरों का दौरा किया।

मैं प्रधानमंत्री डा. मनमोहन सिंह, जिन्होंने 28 जुलाई को असम का दौरा किया, उनकी इस बात से पूरे दिल से सहमत हूँ कि असम के दंगे हमारे देश के माथे पर कलंक हैं। मैं उनकी इस बात से भी सहमत हूँ कि दोषियों को सजा मिलनी चाहिए।

फिर भी मैं प्रधानमंत्री, कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष के साथ-साथ असम के मुख्यमंत्री से आग्रह करता हूँ कि वे ईमानदारी से आत्मविश्लेषण करके बताएं कि वास्तव में दोष कहां है। सबसे पहले, क्या राज्य की कांग्रेस सरकार ने कोकराझार और उसके आसपास बिगड़ती स्थिति को संभालने में देरी कर अपराध नहीं किया है, जबकि इस बात के संकेत मिल रहे थे कि संघर्ष हो सकता है? दूसरा, क्या केन्द्र में यूपीए सरकार और राज्य में कांग्रेस सरकार विवाद की जड़ को जानते हुए बोडो इलाकों सहित असम में बंगलादेशियों की बड़े पैमाने पर घुसपैठ पर लगातार, जान बूझकर, सोची समझी निष्क्रियता बरतने की दोषी नहीं है?

दोनों सवालों का जवाब स्वीकारोक्ति है।

इसलिए, बंगलादेश से बड़े पैमाने पर अवैध घुसपैठ में सांठ-गांठ के लिए कांग्रेस को सजा मिलनी चाहिए, जिसके कारण असम में तीन गंभीर समस्याएं खड़ी हुईं और बढ़ी हैं:

**(ए) भूमि की समस्या:** असम के लोग अपनी जमीन-सत्र भूमि, वन भूमि, चरागाह और आदिवासी भूमि पर नियंत्रण खो रहे हैं जबकि गैरकानूनी तरीके से आए बंगलादेशी बड़े पैमाने पर 'जमीन हथियाने' की नीति में जुटे हुए हैं।

**(बी) जातीय समस्या :** बोडो इस बात का खतरा महसूस कर रहे हैं कि वे अपनी जमीन पर ही अधिकारहीन हो जाएंगे।

**(सी) असम की जनसंख्या की रूपरेखा की समस्या :** असम के मूल निवासी महसूस कर रहे हैं कि अप्रवासियों ने उन्हें दबा दिया है और कमजोर बना दिया है।

इन समस्याओं का असर भारत की एकता, अखंडता और सुरक्षा पर पड़ रहा है। आखिर उच्चतम न्यायालय ने अपने जुलाई 2005 के फैसले, जिसमें उसने आईएमडीटी अधिनियम को "असंवैधानिक" करार दिया था और चेतावनी दी थी कि बंगलादेश से बड़े पैमाने पर घुसपैठ ने असम के खिलाफ "बाहरी आक्रमण" का खतरा खड़ा कर दिया है। उच्चतम न्यायालय ने केन्द्र सरकार से आग्रह किया था कि वह बंगलादेशियों को रोकने के लिए प्रभावकारी कदम उठाए। पिछले सात वर्ष में यूपीए सरकार ने अदालत के निर्देश का सम्मान करने के लिए कुछ भी नहीं किया है। जाहिर है, कांग्रेस पार्टी की वोट बैंक राजनीति भारत की एकता और अखंडता की उसकी कमजोर सोच पर हावी रही है।

मैं भारत के चुनाव आयुक्त श्री एच.एस. ब्रह्मा द्वारा की गई कुछ टिप्पणियों का यहां जिक्र करना चाहूंगा जो उन्होंने 28 जुलाई, 2012 को इंडियन एक्सप्रेस में एक लेख में की हैं- "निचले असम के बोडोलैंड क्षेत्रीय स्वायत्त जिलों (बीटीएडी) में हिन्दू बोडो और मुस्लिम अप्रवासियों के बीच हाल में हुए जातीय संघर्ष दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण थे। हालांकि ये संघर्ष पूरी तरह अनपेक्षित नहीं थे। जो प्रश्न आमतौर पर पूछा जा रहा है, वह है: इस बवाल को बाहर आने में इतना समय क्यों लगा? असम विस्फोटक स्थिति में है..... सुशिक्षित लोगों द्वारा कहा जा रहा है कि 2011 की जनगणना के धर्म के आधार पर आंकड़े प्रकाशित हो जाने के बाद असम में 27 जिलों में से 11 जिले मुस्लिम बहुल होने वाले हैं। अवैध अप्रवासियों और जो मूल निवासी नहीं है ऐसे समुदायों द्वारा गैर सरकारी



जमीन सुनियोजित तरीके से हथियाने और खाली जंगल क्षेत्रों पर धीरे-धीरे कब्जा करने के कारण स्थानीय मूल आबादी के बीच गंभीर मतभेद पैदा हो रहे हैं। यहां तक कि भारत का चुनाव आयोग भी इस समस्या से निरापद नहीं है। उसे डी वोटर्स (जिन मतदाताओं पर संदेह है) की समस्या से निपटना होगा। न्यायाधिकरण जिन लोगों को अवैध अप्रवासी पाए उसे वापस भेज दिया जाना चाहिए। जब तक देश में अवैध अप्रवासियों का मुद्दा हल नहीं होगा यह समस्या समय-समय पर, अलग-अलग जगह पर पैदा होती रहेगी।”

भाजपा और एनडीए की ओर से, मैं स्पष्ट तौर पर कहना चाहूंगा कि असम जिस समस्या का सामना कर रहा है वह हिन्दू बनाम मुस्लिम विवाद नहीं है। यह भारतीय नागरिकों बनाम विदेशियों का मुद्दा है। हमारा मानना है कि असम के मूल निवासी मुसलमानों और असम और भारत के अन्य भागों में घुस आए विदेशियों के बीच भेद होना चाहिए। अवैध घुसपैठ संरक्षण और उन अधिकारों का दावा नहीं कर सकते, जो भारतीयों हिन्दू या मुसलमान, आदिवासी या गैर आदिवासी को मिल सकते हैं।

अब समय आ गया है जब असम समस्या का एक स्थायी और असरकारक समाधान निकाला जाना चाहिए। मेरी नजर में समाधान के चार तत्व हैं :

- (i) असम समस्या को भारतीय बनाम विदेशियों का मुद्दा समझा जाए, न कि हिन्दू बनाम मुस्लिम मुद्दा।
- (ii) असम में नागरिकों का राष्ट्रीय रजिस्टर तैयार करके मतदाता सूची से उन लोगों के नाम हटा दिये जाएं जो नागरिक नहीं हैं
- (iii) बोडो इलाकों के आदिवासी क्षेत्रों और ब्लॉकों में बाहरी लोगों को प्रवेश नहीं करने दिया जाए
- (iv) भारत की एकता और पूर्वोत्तर की अखंडता को बनाए रखने के लिए असम को बचाएं

मैं केन्द्र और असम की सरकारों और सभी राजनैतिक दलों से अपील करता हूं कि वे इस मुद्दे की गंभीरता को समझते हुए ऊपर दिये गए चार बिन्दुओं पर राष्ट्रीय सहमति बनाएं।■



# असम की उपेक्षा होगी खतरनाक

किरण माहेश्वरी

देश के प्रभाहीन प्रधानमंत्री और राष्ट्र की ज्वलंत समस्याओं के प्रति उदासीन सत्ता प्रतिष्ठान की अकर्मण्यता का आज मूल्य चुका रहा है, पूर्वाचल। असम जातीय हिंसा की आग में धधकता रहा। पर राज्य और केन्द्र सरकार मूकदर्शक बनी रही। और तुरा यह कि केन्द्र और राज्य सरकार एक दूसरे को हिंसा के लिए जिम्मेदार ठहराने में जुटे हैं। असम के मुख्यमंत्री ने तरुण गोगोई ने इस हिंसा का ठीकरा केन्द्र सरकार पर यह कहते हुए फोड़ा कि यदि केन्द्र ने समय पर सेना भेजी होती तो हिंसा को रोका जा सकता था। अब तरुण गोगोई जो भी दलील दें पर असल में असम भड़की इस हिंसा के लिए कांग्रेसी सरकारें और अतीत की उसकी नीतियां दोषी रहीं हैं। बंगलादेश देश की आजादी से पहले सत्तर के दशक के पूर्वार्ध में भारी संख्या में बंगलादेशी शरणार्थी भारत में आए थे। पर बंगलादेश की स्वतंत्रता के उपरांत भी बड़ी संख्या में शरणार्थी भारत में ही रह गए थे। तत्कालीन कांग्रेसी सरकारों ने उन्हें वापस भेजने में कोई रुचि नहीं दिखाई थी। भारत में रह गए शरणार्थियों के बंगलादेश में रह रहे संबंधियों और परिचितों से संवाद एवं सम्पर्क बना रहा। भारत में अपेक्षाकृत बेहतर जीवन स्तर और रोजगार की संभावनाओं के कारण बंगलादेश में भारत में घुसपैठ की प्रवृत्ति बढ़ती ही गई। कांग्रेस सरकार द्वारा घुसपैठ की सतत अनदेखी और राजनीतिक दलों में उनमें वोट बैंक की संभावनाओं की तलाश ने



घुसपैठियों का कार्य सरल बना दिया। पाकिस्तानी गुप्तचर प्रतिष्ठान और बंगलादेश के कट्टरपंथी संगठनों ने घुसपैठ को भारत के विरुद्ध संघर्ष में एक हथियार के रूप में उपयोग करना प्रारम्भ कर दिया। घुसपैठियों में कई आधुनिक हथियारों के साथ आने लगे। इनमें कट्टरपंथी संगठनों के कार्यकर्ता और अभिकर्ता भी अवैध रूप से भारत में बंगलादेश से सटी खुली सीमा के रास्ते भारत में बड़ी संख्या में आ गए।

पूर्वोत्तर भारत का शेष भारत से सम्पर्क का मार्ग एक छोटे से गलियारे जैसा है। यह निचले असम क्षेत्र से होकर ही जाता है। बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठ से सर्वाधिक प्रभावित क्षेत्र भी यही है। इस क्षेत्र की जनसंख्या का स्वरूप ही बदल गया है। बड़ी संख्या में यहाँ आकर बस गए बंगलादेशी मुस्लिमों के कारण इस क्षेत्र में कांग्रेस, भाजपा, असम गण परिषद् जैसे दलों को पछाड़ कर विगत विधानसभा चुनावों में आल इंडिया युनाइटेड डेमोक्रेटिक फ्रंट नामक दल ने अधिकांश सीटों पर विजय प्राप्त की है। यह पार्टी मुख्यतः बंगलादेशी घुसपैठियों की राजनीतिक इकाई के रूप में कार्य करती है। यह केन्द्र में कांग्रेस का घटक दल भी है। अवैध घुसपैठियों के बसने से पूर्व वहाँ पर साम्प्रदायिक सद्भाव का लम्बा इतिहास रहा है। अवैध घुसपैठ को बंगलादेश की सरकार, कट्टरपंथी संगठनों एवं पाकिस्तानी गुप्तचर संगठन का सतत प्रश्रय मिला है।

अवैध घुसपैठिए राहत शिविरों का दुरुपयोग करते हैं। वहाँ नाम पंजीकृत करवा कर उसके आधार पर राशनकार्ड बनवा लेते हैं। फिर उस क्षेत्र में जमीन खरीदना एवं कब्जा करना उनकी प्राथमिकता होती है। संख्या में वृद्धि के साथ ही वे बोडो समुदाय के व्यक्तियों, वनवासियों एवं अन्य स्थानीय धरतीपुत्रों को भयभीत करके खदेड़ने में लग जाते हैं। स्थानीय प्रशासन भी घुसपैठियों के विरुद्ध कार्रवाई करने में आनाकानी करता है। इस तरह पूरे निचले असम क्षेत्र में बंगलादेशी घुसपैठियों की बड़ी-बड़ी बस्तियाँ बस गई हैं। निचले असम क्षेत्र में कोकराझार, दूबरी, चिरांग, बक्सा आदि जिले आते हैं। जहाँ रहने वाले धरतीपुत्रों के मन में अत्याधिक रोष है। बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठिए एक व्यापक योजना के आड़ में वहाँ सुनियोजित रूप से अपनी संख्या बढ़ा रहे हैं। आमतौर पर 5 वर्षों की अवधि में देश के अन्य भागों में मतदाताओं की संख्या में लगभग 1 से 1.5: की वृद्धि होती है। किन्तु असम में मतदाताओं की वृद्धि की दर 14 से 16 % है।

असम की जातीय हिंसा की भयावहता का अनुमान इससे लगाया जा सकता है कि अब तक 80 से अधिक व्यक्तियों के मारे जाने की पुष्टि की जा चुकी है। लगभग 2.5 लाख व्यक्ति राहत शिविरों में हैं। दस लाख से अधिक व्यक्ति बेघर हो चुके हैं। दूसरी ओर असम सरकार और केन्द्र सरकार के बीच आरोप प्रत्यारोप का दौर जारी है। असम के मुख्यमंत्री केन्द्र पर लापरवाही का आरोप लगा रहे हैं। तो दूसरी ओर केन्द्रीय गृहमंत्री असम सरकार पर समय पर कार्रवाई नहीं करने का। आरोप-प्रत्यारोपों के बीच असम की पीड़ित जनता राहत के लिए स्वयंसेवी संगठनों एवं भगवान के सहारे समय निकाल रही है।

हिंसाग्रस्त क्षेत्रों में कर्फ्यू लगाने में भी भेदभाव किया गया। बंगलादेशी मुस्लिम बहुल क्षेत्रों में दिन रात का कर्फ्यू लगाया गया। किन्तु अन्य क्षेत्रों में मात्र दिन का ही कर्फ्यू लगाया गया था। इस कारण उपद्रवी तत्वों को रात में जम कर लूटपाट करने और आगजनी करने का अवसर मिल गया। हिंसाग्रस्त क्षेत्रों से बड़ी संख्या में नागरिक पलायन करके राजमार्गों पर जमा हो गए। वे सरकारी सहायता और संरक्षण की आशा संजोये थे। किन्तु उन्हें राहत देने के सरकारी प्रयास नहीं के बराबर थे। पुलिस बल की भारी कमी थी। क्षेत्र में कार्यरत पुलिस अधिकारियों को स्पष्ट दिशा-निर्देश नहीं दिए गए। समय पर

सैन्य सहायता उपलब्ध नहीं करवाई गई। इससे क्षुब्ध होकर बिजनी तालुका के एस डी पी ओ नारायणदास ने तो त्यागपत्र ही दे दिया। पुलिस बलों का मनोबल न्यूनतम स्तर पर है। सैन्य बल केवल राजमार्गों पर ही गश्त लगा रहा है। पुल-पुलियों आदि की सुरक्षा तो हो रही है। किन्तु ग्रामीण अंचल में सुरक्षा के कोई प्रभावी प्रबंध नहीं दिखते हैं। इसी कारण नागरिक बड़ी संख्या में पलायन करने को विवश हुए। वहाँ भय का वातावरण इतना अधिक गहरा है कि विधायक एवं सांसद भी क्षेत्र में जाने से डर रहे हैं। कांग्रेस ने चुनाव के समय भूमिपुत्रों की सुरक्षा का नारा लगाया था। किन्तु सरकार बनाने के बाद वह अपने वादों से मुंह चुरा रही है। हिंसा के इस भयानक तांडव ने गुजरात, मुंबई और दिल्ली के दंगों को पीछे छोड़ दिया है। पूर्वांचल से सम्पर्क का एकमात्र मार्ग हिंसा एवं अलगाववाद की लपटों में झुलस रहा है। अवैध घुसपैठियों के मतों के लालच में राष्ट्रीय अखंडता दांव पर लगाई जा रही है। दंगों के एक सप्ताह तक असम के मुख्यमंत्री एवं प्रधानमंत्री को प्रभावित क्षेत्रों के भ्रमण का अवकाश ही नहीं मिला। स्थिति को समय पर नियंत्रित करने में घोर विफलता स्पष्ट झलकती है। दंगाग्रस्त इलाकों का दौरा करन गए केन्द्रीय गृह मंत्री पी चिदम्बरम को तो स्थानीय लोगों के भारी विरोध का सामना भी करना पड़ा। इसके बाद भी क्या केन्द्रीय गृहमंत्री अपनी विफलता को स्वीकार कर त्यागपत्र देने की नैतिकता दिखायेंगे? हिंसा को समय पर रोकने में शिथिलता के पीछे कहीं कोई राजनीतिक रणनीति तो नहीं है? बंगलादेश से आए अवैध घुसपैठियों को वापस भेजने के प्रयास कब किए जाएंगे। बंगलादेश से लगी सम्पूर्ण सीमा पर तारबंदी और सतत चौकसी की व्यवस्था आखिर कब लागू की जाएगी? राष्ट्र इन ज्वलंत प्रश्नों का उत्तर चाहता है। दूसरी ओर इस प्रश्नों से मुंह मोड़कर कांग्रेस पार्टी राष्ट्रपति चुनावों में सफलता की कूटनीति से आत्ममुग्ध है। वह यह दर्शाने में जुटी है कि कि जैसे उसने शासन करने का शाश्वत अधिकार प्राप्त कर लिया है। आत्ममुग्धता के इस आलम में महंगाई, भ्रष्टाचार, आतंकवाद से धधकता कश्मीर, अलगाववाद और जातीय हिंसा की आग में जलता पूर्वांचल जैसी समस्याएं कांग्रेस के सत्ता प्रतिष्ठान के लिए महत्वहीन हो चुकी हैं। उसका सारा ध्यान युवराज को नया महाराजा बनाने के उपयुक्त समय पर चर्चा एवं उसकी रणनीति बनाने पर ही केंद्रित हो गया है। चाहे देश की ढेरों ज्वलंत समस्याओं को उनकी नजरें इनायत के लिए कितनी ही प्रतीक्षा क्यों न करनी पड़े। ■

*(असम के हिंसा प्रभावित क्षेत्रों के व्यापक भ्रमण पर आधारित है यह आलेख)*

*(लेखिका भाजपा की राष्ट्रीय महामंत्री हैं)*



## आग में झुलसता असम

बलबीर पुंज

पिछले दिनों की असम में हिंसक घटनाएं और आगजनी तथाकथित सेक्युलर दलों की कुत्सित राजनीति का परिणाम है। असम की वर्तमान हिंसा जातीय न होकर सीमा पार से आए मुस्लिम घुसपैठियों के हाथों स्थानीय जनजाति के लोगों की अपनी पहचान, सम्मान और संपत्ति की रक्षा का संघर्ष है।

विगत 19 जुलाई से भड़की हिंसा में अब तक जहां 58 लोग अकाल मृत्यु के शिकार हुए वहीं करीब तीन लाख लोग अपने घरों से उजड़कर राहत शिविरों में रहने के लिए मजबूर हैं। इन शिविरों में खाने-पीने, सोने और दवा की व्यवस्था तक नहीं है। हिंसा के खौफ से गांव के गांव खाली हो गए। दंगाइयों ने इन गांवों के वीरान घरों और खेतों में लगी फसल को आग के हवाले कर दिया। मीडिया की खबरों के अनुसार सरकार को अंदेशा है कि दंगाइयों का अगला निशाना अब कोकराझाड़ के पड़ोसी जिले बन सकते हैं, इसलिए वह उन्हें खाली कराने पर विचार कर रही है। इस खबर में एक सेवानिवृत्त स्टेशन मास्टर बासुमतारी का उल्लेख है, जिसने बताया कि उन्होंने स्थानीय विधायक प्रदीप से रक्षा की गुहार लगाई तो उन्होंने पर्याप्त पुलिस बल नहीं होने की लाचारी दिखाई। गांव वालों के अनुसार टकराव की स्थिति तब बनी जब घुसपैठियों ने कोकराझाड़ के बेडलंगमारी के वनक्षेत्र में अतिक्रमण कर वहां ईदगाह होने का साइनबोर्ड लगा दिया। वन विभाग के अधिकारियों ने बोडो लिबरेशन टाइगर्स के साथ मिलकर यह अतिक्रमण हटा दिया। इसके विरोध में ऑल बोडोलैंड माइनारिटी स्टूडेंट यूनिशन ने कोकराझाड़ जिले में बंद का आह्वान किया था। 6 जुलाई को अंथिपारा में अज्ञात हमलावरों ने एबीएमएसयू के दो सदस्यों की गोली मारकर हत्या कर दी। 19 जुलाई को एमबीएसयू के पूर्व प्रमुख और उनके सहयोगी की हत्या हो गई। अगले दिन घुसपैठियों की भीड़ ने बीएलटी के चार सदस्यों की बर्बरतापूर्वक हत्या कर दी। इसके बाद ही बासुमतारी और अन्य गांव वाले हिंसा की आशंका में राहत शिविरों में चले गए। दूसरे दिन बांग्लादेशियों ने उनके घर और खेत जला दिए। कोकराझाड़, चिरांग, बंगाईगांव, धुबरी और ग्वालपाड़ा से स्थानीय बोडो आदिवासियों को हिंसा के बल पर खदेड़ भगाने वाले अवैध बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठिए हैं, जिनके कारण न केवल असम के



जनसांख्यिक स्वरूप में तेजी से बदलाव आया है, बल्कि देश के कई अन्य भागों में भी बांग्लादेशी अवैध घुसपैठिए कानून एवं व्यवस्था के लिए गंभीर खतरा बने हुए हैं। हूजी जैसे आतंकी संगठनों की गतिविधियां इन्हीं घुसपैठियों की मदद से चलने की खुफिया जानकारी होने के बावजूद कुछ सेक्युलर दल बांग्लादेशियों को भारतीय नागरिकता देने की मांग कर रहे हैं। कुछ समय पूर्व गुवाहाटी उच्च न्यायालय ने तल्लख टिप्पणी की थी कि ये अवैध घुसपैठिए राज्य में किंगमेकर बन गए हैं। असम को पाकिस्तान का अंग बनाने का सपना फखरुद्दीन अली अहमद ने देखा था। जनसांख्यिक स्वरूप में बदलाव लाने के लिए असम में पूर्वी बंगाली मुसलमानों की घुसपैठ 1937 से शुरू हुई। पश्चिम बंगाल से चलते हुए उत्तर प्रदेश, बिहार व असम के सीमावर्ती क्षेत्रों में अब इन अवैध घुसपैठियों के कारण एक स्पष्ट भूमि विकसित हो गई है, जो मुस्लिम बहुल है। 1901 से 2001 के बीच असम में मुसलमानों का अनुपात 15.03 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 30.92 प्रतिशत हो गया। इस दशक में असम के अनेक इलाकों में मुसलमानों की आबादी में उल्लेखनीय वृद्धि हुई है और यह तेजी से बढ़ रही है। बांग्लादेश से आए अवैध घुसपैठियों की पहचान के लिए वर्ष 1979 में असम में व्यापक विरोध प्रदर्शन हुआ। इसी कारण 1983 के चुनावों का बहिष्कार भी किया गया, क्योंकि बिना किसी पहचान के लाखों बांग्लादेशियों का नाम मतदाता सूची में दर्ज कर लिया गया था। चुनाव बहिष्कार के कारण केवल 10 प्रतिशत मतदान ही दर्ज हो सका। विडंबना यह है कि शुचिता की नसीहत देने वाली कांग्रेस पार्टी ने इसे ही पूर्ण जनादेश माना और राज्य में चुनी हुई सरकार का गठन कर लिया गया। यह अनुमान करना कठिन नहीं कि 10 प्रतिशत मतदान करने वाले इन्हीं अवैध घुसपैठियों के संरक्षण के लिए कांग्रेस सरकार ने जो कानून बनाया वह असम के बहुलतावादी स्वरूप के लिए अब नासूर बन चुका है। 2008 में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय ने कांग्रेस द्वारा 1983 में लागू किए गए अवैध आब्रजन अधिनियम को निरस्त कर अवैध बांग्लादेशियों को राज्य से निकाल बाहर करने का आदेश पारित किया था, किंतु कांग्रेसी सरकार इस कानून को लागू रखने पर आमादा है। इस अधिनियम में अवैध घुसपैठिया उसे माना गया जो 25 दिसंबर, 1971 (बांग्लादेश के सृजन की तिथि) को या उसके बाद भारत आया हो। इससे स्वतः उन लाखों मुस्लिमों को भारतीय नागरिकता मिल गई जो पूर्वी पाकिस्तान से आए थे। तब से सेक्युलरवाद की आड़ में अवैध बांग्लादेशियों की घुसपैठ जारी है और उन्हें देश से बाहर निकालने की राष्ट्रवादी मांग को फौरन सांप्रदायिक रंग देने की कुत्सित राजनीति भी अपने चरम पर है। बोडो आदिवासियों के साथ हिंसा एक सुनियोजित साजिश है।

जिस तरह कश्मीर से कश्मीरी पंडितों को हिंसा के बल पर खदेड़ भगाया गया, हिंदू बोडो आदिवासियों के साथ भी पिछले कुछ सालों से इस्लामी जिहादी यही प्रयोग कर रहे हैं। 2008 में भी पांच सौ से अधिक बोडो आदिवासियों के घर जलाए गए थे, करीब सौ लोग मारे गए और लाखों विस्थापित हुए थे। तब असम के उदलगिरी जिले के सोनारीपाड़ा और बाखलपुरा गांवों में बोडो आदिवासियों के घरों को जलाने के बाद बांग्लादेशी मुसलमानों द्वारा पाकिस्तानी झंडे लहराए गए थे। इससे पूर्व कोकराझाड़ जिले के भंडारचारा गांव में अलगाववादियों ने स्वतंत्रता दिवस के दिन तिरंगे की जगह काला झंडा लहराने की कोशिश की थी। सेक्युलर मीडिया और राजनीतिक दल वर्तमान हिंसा को जातीय संघर्ष के रूप में पेश करने की कोशिश कर रहे हैं, जबकि कटु सत्य यह है कि यह हिंसा जिहादी इस्लाम से प्रेरित है, जिसमें गैर मुस्लिमों के लिए कोई स्थान नहीं है। बोडो आदिवासी पहले मेघालय की सीमा से सटे ग्वालपाड़ा और कामरूप जिले तक फैले थे। अवैध बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठियों की भारी बसावट के कारण वे तेजी से सिमटते गए। अब तो संकट उनकी पहचान और अस्तित्व बचाए रखने का है। दूसरी ओर इस्लामी चरमपंथी इस बात पर तुले हैं कि बोडोलैंड क्षेत्रीय परिषद (बीटीसी) के इलाके के जिन गांवों में बोडो समुदाय की आबादी आधी से कम है उन्हें बीटीसी से बाहर किया जाए। सच यह है कि असम के जिन क्षेत्रों में मुस्लिम धर्मावलंबी बहुमत प्राप्त कर चुके हैं वहां से इस्लामी कट्टरपंथी अब गैर मुस्लिमों को पलायन के लिए विवश कर रहे हैं। ■

*(लेखक राज्यसभा सदस्य एवं गुजरात प्रदेश भाजपा प्रभारी हैं)  
(दैनिक जागरण से साभार)*





# असम के दंगे बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठ का नतीजा

तरुण विजय

**असम** प्रांत भारत की संस्कृति, आध्यात्मिक परंपरा और वीरता का प्रतीक रहा है। यही वह ऐसा क्षेत्र है जहां के अहोम राजाओं की शक्ति से मुगल भी घबराते थे। आज वही असम भारत के छद्म सेक्यूलरवाद तथा मुस्लिम तुष्टिकरण की अनीति के कारण जल रहा है। इस प्रांत के बोडो जनजातीय बहुल क्षेत्र के चार जिलों- कोकराझार, चिरांग, बोंगाईगांव और बक्सा में बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिम घुसपैठियों के हिंदू बोडो लोगों पर हमले में अभी तक सरकारी सूत्रों के अनुसार 38 लोग मारे जा चुके हैं तथा एक लाख से अधिक पलायन कर सरकारी राहत शिविरों में शरण के लिए मजबूर हुए हैं। कोकराझार और उदारलगुड़ी से मिल रहे समाचार अत्यंत भयावह हैं और गैर सरकारी सूत्रों के अनुसार माना जाता है कि 100 से अधिक लोग मारे जा चुके होंगे, सैकड़ों घर ध्वस्त कर दिए गए हैं और कम से कम ढाई लाख लोग बेघर हो गए हैं। लेकिन दिल्ली अपने जश्न में व्यस्त है।

घटना 19 जुलाई, 2012 को अश्वल बोडो लैंड माइनोरिटी स्टूडेंट्स यूनियन नामक मुस्लिम छात्र संगठन के अध्यक्ष मोहिबुल इस्लाम और उसके साथी अब्दुल सिद्दीक शेख पर मोटर साइकिल पर सवार दो अनजान युवाओं द्वारा गोली चलाने के बाद भड़की। कुछ समय से वहां दो मुस्लिम छात्र संगठनों में आपसी प्रतिस्पर्धा के कारण तनाव चल रहा था और गोलीबारी भी केवल घायल करने के उद्देश्य से

घुटने के नीचे की गयी लेकिन स्थानीय बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिम गुटों ने इसका आरोप बोडो हिंदुओं पर लगाकर शाम को घर लौट रहे चार बोडो नौजवानों को पकड़कर उन्हें वहशियाना ढंग से तड़पा-तड़पाकर इस प्रकार मारा कि उनकी टुकड़ा-टुकड़ा देह पहचान में भी बहुत मुश्किल से आयी। इसके साथ ही ओन्ताईबाड़ी, गोसाईगांव नामक इलाके में बोडो जनजातीय समाज के अत्यंत प्राचीन और प्रतिष्ठित ब्रह्मा मंदिर को जला दिया गया। इसकी बोडो समाज में स्वाभाविक प्रतिक्रिया हुई। आश्चर्य की बात यह है कि प्रदेश सरकार और पुलिस को घटना की पूरी जानकारी होने के बावजूद न सुरक्षा बल भेजे गए और न ही कोई कार्यवाही की गयी। यद्यपि बोडो स्वायत्तशासी क्षेत्र के चार जिलों धुबरी, बोंगाईगांव, उदालगुड़ी और कोकराझार में बोडो बड़ी संख्या में हैं लेकिन उनसे सटे धुबरी जिले की अधिकांश जनसंख्या बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिमों से युक्त है। वहां कोकराझार की प्रतिक्रिया में हिंदू छात्रों के एक होस्टल को जला दिया गया और 24 जुलाई को इन्हीं की एक भीड़ ने राजधानी एक्सप्रेस पर हमला कर दिया। फलतः अनेक रेलगाड़ियां रद्द कर दी गयीं और विभिन्न स्टेशनों पर हजारों यात्री बैठे हुए हैं। बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिमों की हिंसा 400 गांवों तक फैल चुकी है और भारत के देशभक्त नागरिक अपने ही देश में विदेशी घुसपैठियों के हमलों से डर कर शरणार्थी बनने पर मजबूर हुए हैं।

असम में 42 से अधिक विधानसभा क्षेत्र ऐसे हो गए हैं जहां बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिम घुसपैठिये निर्णायक बहुमत हैं। लूट, हत्या, बोडो लड़कियां भगाकर जबरन धर्मांतरण और बोडो जनजातियों की जमीन पर अतिक्रमण वहां की आम वारदातें मानी जाती हैं। ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के उत्तरी किनारे पर बोडो क्षेत्र है, जहां 1975 के आंदोलन के बाद बोडो स्वायत्तशासी परिषद् की स्थापना हुई, जिससे कोकराझार, बक्सा, चिरांग और उदालगुड़ी जिले हैं। इस परिषद् का मुख्यालय कोकराझार में है। बोडो लोग लगातार बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिम घुसपैठियों के हमलों का शिकार होते आए हैं। दो साल पहले हावरियापेट नामक गांव में स्थापित मदरसे के लिए वहां के मुस्लिमों ने काली मंदिर परिसर में शौचालय बनाने की कोशिश की थी, जिसका जब स्थानीय लोगों ने विरोध किया तो दो बांग्लादेशी हिंदू युवाओं की हत्या की गयी। एक अन्य घटना में इसी क्षेत्र में जब एक घुसपैठिये मुस्लिम युवक ने बोडो घर में घुसकर युवती से बलात्कार की कोशिश की और पकड़ा गया तो गांववालों ने उसकी पिटाई की। कुछ देर में उसके गांव के मुस्लिम भी आ गए, जिन्होंने भी उस युवक को पीटा फलतः उसकी मृत्यु हो गयी। अब घबराकर उन मुस्लिम गांववालों ने भी हिंदुओं पर आरोप लगा दिया और फलतः पूरे गांव को लूट लिया गया।

इस प्रकार के सांप्रदायिकता को क्षेत्र के विद्रोही आतंकवादी संगठन मुस्लिम यूनाईटेड लिबरेशन टाईगर्स ऑफ असम (मुलटा) से समर्थन मिलता है और मुस्लिमों की भावनाएं भड़काने में ऑल माईनोरिटी स्टूडेंट्स यूनियन (आमसू) का भी हाथ रहता है। उल्लेखनीय है कि आमसू को प्रदेश सरकार से भी प्रोत्साहन और समर्थन मिलता है। इस प्रकार इस क्षेत्र में बांग्लादेशी मुस्लिमों और हिंदु बोडो के बीच लगातार तनाव रहता ही है।

सरकार भी बोडो जनजातियों की समस्याओं पर तब तक ध्यान नहीं देती जब तक कोई भयंकर आगजनी या दंगा न हो। बोडोलैण्ड स्वायत्तशासी परिषद् को 300 करोड़ रुपये की बजट सहायता मिलती है जबकि समझौते के अनुसार आबादी के अनुपात से उन्हें 1500 करोड़ रुपये की सहायता मिलनी चाहिए। केंद्रीय सहायता के लिए भी बोडो स्वायत्तशासी परिषद् को प्रदेश सरकार के माध्यम से केंद्र सरकार को आवेदन भेजना पड़ता है जिसे प्रदेश सरकार जानबूझकर विलंब से भेजती है और केंद्र में सुनवाई नहीं होती। इसके अलावा बोडो जनजातियों को असम के ही दो इलाकों में मान्यता नहीं दी गयी है। कारबीआंगलॉग तथा नार्थ कछर हिल में बोडो को जनजातीय नहीं माना जाता और न ही असम

के मैदानी क्षेत्रों में। जबकि बोडो जनजातियों के लिए असम में स्वायत्त परिषद् बनी और बाकी देश में बोडो अनुसूचित जनजाति की सूची में है। 10 फरवरी, 2003 को एक बड़े आंदोलन के बाद असम और केंद्र सरकार ने माना था कि यह विसंगति दूर की जाएगी लेकिन इस बीच अन्य जनजातियों जैसे- हाजोंग, गारो, दिमासा, लालुंग आदि को असम के सभी क्षेत्रों में समान रूप से अनुसूचित जनजाति की सूची में डाल दिया गया सिवाय बोडो लोगों के।

केंद्र सरकार और प्रदेश सरकार में वोट बैंक राजनीति के कारण विदेशी घुसपैठियों को शरण देकर सत्ता में आने की लालसा के कारण देश का भविष्य इन विदेशियों के कारण रक्तंजित होता दिखता है। आज बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठिये जो उपद्रव असम में स्वदेशी और देशभक्त जनता के विरुद्ध कर रहे हैं, वहीं उपद्रव जड़ जमाने के बाद दिल्ली, मुम्बई, कोलकाता में बैठे बड़ी संख्या में बांग्लादेशी घुसपैठिये कर सकते हैं। लेकिन तब तक पानी सिर से ऊपर गुजर चुका होगा। क्या तब तक भारतीय समाज और राजनेता केवल चुनावी शतरंज खेलते रहेंगे? ■

*(लेखक राज्यसभा सदस्य एवं भाजपा के राष्ट्रीय प्रवक्ता हैं)  
(प्रभासाक्षी डॉट काम से साभार)*



# त्रासदी पर विचित्र खामोशी

✍ स्वप्न दासगुप्ता

इससे इन्कार नहीं किया जा सकता कि राष्ट्रीय खबरों के क्रम में पूर्वोत्तर भारत को सबसे निचला दर्जा हासिल है। जबानी जमाखर्च में तो खूब जोर दिया जाता है कि भारत के इस उपेक्षित भाग को मुख्यधारा में लाया जाना चाहिए, किंतु क्षेत्र की विलक्षण जटिलता और पहुंच में अपेक्षाकृत कठिनाई से यह सुनिश्चित हो जाता है कि यह तीसरी दुनिया में चौथी दुनिया है। पिछले दिनों असम के कोकराझाड़ और धुबड़ी जिलों में हुई हिंसा में पचास से अधिक लोग मारे गए तथा चार लाख से अधिक घर-द्वार छोड़ने को विवश हुए हैं। इस मुद्दे पर मीडिया का गढ़ा हुआ नया जुमला-मानवता पर संकट टीवी पर चर्चाओं में छाना जाना चाहिए था और विभिन्न मानवाधिकार संगठनों में एक-दूसरे को पीछे छोड़ने की होड़ मचानी चाहिए थी। ओडिशा के कंधमाल जिले में 2009 का संकट इससे हल्का होते हुए भी कहीं अधिक ध्यान खींच ले गया था। 2002 के गुजरात दंगों के बारे में तो कुछ कहना ही बेकार है, जो अब तक मीडिया की सुर्खियों में छाना हुआ है।

दुर्भाग्य से ब्रह्मपुत्र नदी के उत्तरी किनारे के हालात इतने जटिल हैं कि यहां अच्छे और बुरे के बीच भेद करना मुश्किल है। क्या यह हिंदू बोडो और मुस्लिम घुसपैठियों के बीच टकराव है, जो बांग्लादेश से आकर यहां बस गए हैं? या फिर यह मूल निवासी बोडो और बंगाली भाषी अप्रवासियों के बीच संघर्ष है? अहम बात यह है कि सांप्रदायिक दंगे अस्वीकार्य हैं और जातीय संघर्ष इतनी भर्त्सना के काबिल नहीं है। धीरे-धीरे टीवी चैनलों पर कुछ सवाल उभरने शुरू हुए। क्या दंगाइयों के खिलाफ कार्रवाई में असम सरकार ने देरी की? छह जुलाई को कोकराझाड़ में दो मुसलमानों की हत्या और 20 जुलाई को बदले की कार्रवाई में चार बोडो कार्यकर्ताओं की हत्या के बाद तरुण गोगोई सरकार ने हालात को काबू करने के त्वरित उपाय क्यों नहीं किए? क्या तरुण गोगोई के इस बयान में सच्चाई है कि सेना ने रक्षामंत्री एके एंटनी की अनुमति मिलने से पहले कार्रवाई करने से इन्कार कर दिया था और इस कारण कार्रवाई में दो दिन की देरी हुई? क्या बोडो ट्राइबल काउंसिल के प्रमुख के इस कथन का कोई आधार है कि अंतरराष्ट्रीय सीमापार से आकर हथियारबंद बांग्लादेशियों ने हिंसा को भड़काया?

इनमें से अधिकांश सवाल आधिकारिक जांच कमेटी की रिपोर्ट आने के बाद भी अनुत्तरित रह जाएंगे। हालांकि यह स्पष्ट है कि इस पूर्वनियोजित हिंसा पर प्रशासन की दोषसिद्धि पर मीडिया और राजनीतिक तबका लीपापोती पर उतर आया है। कोकराझाड़ और धुबड़ी में हुई जातीय-सांप्रदायिक हिंसा से जुड़ा एक असहज पहलू यह है कि निर्णायक शक्तियां इस त्रासदी पर कुछ नहीं करेंगी, उनके पास पेशकश के लिए कुछ है ही नहीं। असम में हिंसा की जड़ पिछले सौ वर्षों से निरंतर जारी जनसांख्यिकीय बदलाव में निहित है। बांग्लादेश से अप्रवासियों के रेले यहां बसते रहे और 1901

में 32.9 लाख की आबादी वाले असम की जनसंख्या 1971 में 1.46 करोड़ हो गई। इस कालखंड में असम की जनसंख्या 343.7 फीसदी बढ़ गई, जबकि इस दौरान भारत में जनसंख्या वृद्धि मात्र 150 फीसदी हुई। इसमें भी मुस्लिम आबादी बढ़ने की रफ्तार स्थानीय मूल निवासियों की वृद्धि दर से कहीं अधिक रही। पिछले सप्ताह चुनाव आयुक्त एमएस ब्रह्म ने कहा कि 2011 की जनगणना से पता चल सकता है कि असम के 27 जिलों में से 11 जिले मुस्लिम बाहुल्य वाले हो गए हैं। बांग्लादेशियों की अवैध घुसपैठ ब्रह्मपुत्र घाटी के असमभाषी हिंदुओं में चर्चा का विषय बन गई है, जबकि अविभाजित गोलपाड़ा जिले के बोडो भाषी अल्पसंख्यकों के लिए तो यह मुद्दा जीवन-मरण का सवाल बन गया है। बोडो भाषी अल्पसंख्यकों की आबादी असम की कुल आबादी का महज पांच प्रतिशत है। उन्हें असमभाषी बहुसंख्यक आबादी से सांस्कृतिक चुनौती मिल रही है, जबकि बांग्लादेशी मुसलमानों से उन्हें अपने अस्तित्व पर संकट नजर आ रहा है।

नब्बे के दशक में हिंसक बोडो आंदोलन इस दोहरी चुनौती से निपटने का प्रयास था। इस आंदोलन के कारण ही 1993 में बोडो टेरिटरियल काउंसिल की अर्द्ध स्वायत्तता स्थापित हुई। हालांकि इस हिंसक आंदोलन से हासिल अधिकांश लाभ मुस्लिम समुदाय के फौलाव से अब हाथ से फिसल गए हैं। मौलाना बदरुद्दीन अजमल के नेतृत्व में अखिल भारतीय संयुक्त लोकतांत्रिक मोर्चा आल असम माइनॉरिटी स्टूडेंट्स यूनियन और असमिया परिषद के उदय के कारण बोडो-मुस्लिम टकराव शुरू हो गया। एआइयूडीएफ की इस मांग से तनाव और बढ़ गया कि बोडो टेरिटरियल काउंसिल द्वारा शासित अधिकांश भागों में अब बोडो का बहुमत नहीं रह जाने के कारण इसे भंग कर दिया जाना चाहिए। पिछले सप्ताह तत्कालीन गृहमंत्री पी. चिदंबरम ने कहा था कि अब असम में विभिन्न समुदायों के लोग रह रहे हैं। इन सबको शांति के साथ रहना सीखना होगा। उन्होंने सीमा पर बाड़ लगाने अथवा अवैध घुसपैठ के खिलाफ बनाए गए लचर कानून में संशोधन पर एक शब्द नहीं बोला। दिसपुर में बोडो समर्थन और पूरे देश में मुस्लिम समर्थन को लेकर दुविधाग्रस्त कांग्रेस के पास बोडो गुत्थी सुलझाने के लिए अधिक उपाय नहीं हैं। अतीत में भारत के उदारवादी बुद्धिजीवी तथाकथित सांप्रदायिक सवाल पर बहुत मुखर थे, खासतौर पर अल्पसंख्यकों की प्रताड़ना पर। असम में हिंसक घटनाओं पर इस तबके ने आश्चर्यचकित करने वाली चुप्पी ओढ़ रखी है। इसके कारण स्पष्ट हैं। बहुसंख्यकों की कथित बर्बरता तथा अल्पसंख्यकों की कमजोरी का चिरपरिचित फार्मूला धुबड़ी और कोकराझाड़ में फिट नहीं बैठता। असम में बोडो जाति चारों तरफ से घिर गई है। यहां बोडो एक अन्य अल्पसंख्यक समुदाय की सांप्रदायिकता का शिकार है, जो राष्ट्रीय स्तर पर अपनी मजबूती का लाभ क्षेत्रीय स्तर पर उठा रहा है।

2004 में, जब 2001 की जनगणना में असम में जनसांख्यिकीय बदलाव दृष्टिगोचर हुए तो खुफिया विभाग ने अपना सिर रेत में धंसा लिया और सुनिश्चित किया कि इस मुद्दे पर कोई सार्थक चर्चा न हो। एक बार फिर असम में यही प्रक्रिया दोहराई जा रही है। 1947 में मुस्लिम डरा-सहमा समुदाय था। 2012 में भारतीय पंथनिरपेक्षता ने अपनी जड़ें गहरी कर ली हैं और उसने पंथिक अल्पसंख्यकों की गरिमा व राजनीतिक सशक्तिकरण सुनिश्चित किया है। हालांकि इससे एक समस्या उठती नजर आ रही है कि अल्पसंख्यकों का सशक्तिकरण कहीं अन्य लोगों के लिए अन्यायपूर्ण न हो जाए। असम के बोडो अल्पसंख्यकों के लिए पंथनिरपेक्ष राजनीति में उनकी पहचान और अस्तित्व का संकट निहित है। ■

(दैनिक जागरण से साभार)  
(लेखक जाने-माने स्तंभकार हैं)