

**The difference between a moral man and a man of honor is that the latter regrets a discreditable act even when it has worked and he has not been caught**

H. L. Mencken

## China's ballyhoo on Arunachal

Whenever the President or the Prime Minister visits Arunachal Pradesh, China routinely expresses its objection, claiming that Arunachal is Chinese territory which it calls 'Southern Tibet'. The objection is without any logic. Arunachal Pradesh is a part of India. It is under the administrative jurisdiction of India. Indian officers run its administration. China accepts these facts. But whenever the Indian Head of State or the head of the Government visits Arunachal, Beijing raises a hue and cry. When Prime Minister Modi visited Arunachal last Thursday, Beijing objected again. China has a habit of laying claim to any land or territory unilaterally and brushing aside any objections to such unilateral claim. It has been making a unilateral claim on the whole of South China Sea. The claim has been rejected by the International Court but China has stuck to its position, because it knows nobody would risk an armed confrontation with it to carry out the ICJ's verdict.

China knows it well that what happened fifty-six years ago, when the Chinese army overran most of Arunachal Pradesh in a sudden blitzkrieg which an unprepared India was in no position to resist cannot be repeated. Any such misadventure will prove costly to Beijing. Indian defence preparedness in the Himalayan region is in a far better position now and India occupies some vantage positions in the region as was shown during last year's Doklam standoff that lasted for well over two months. Ultimately China had to dismount from the high horse it was riding and restore the status quo ante. India refused to be bullied or browbeaten.

Objecting to visits to Arunachal Pradesh by the President or Prime Minister will not help China in any way. It will only make a solution to the Sino-Indian boundary dispute more difficult to the resolved. The dispute continues because China does not want it solved. Further embittering of relations with India will help China in no way. China may have established its de facto sovereignty without meeting with any resistance from any quarters. But this will not be possible in Arunachal. While India wants to avoid any armed confrontation with China or an escalation of tension in the borders, border peace will depend on Chinese response. It takes two to tango. As far as Arunachal is concerned, India will never accept China's claim on it. The sooner China realized it and stops making pinpricks, the better for all.

# Chandrababu's grievances and options

## REFLEX ACTION

Kalyani Shankar

In his political career, Andhra Pradesh chief minister Chandrababu Naidu has exhibited the same showmanship, like Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It was Naidu who declared himself in the mid nineties as the CEO of the state. It was he who had started using laptop, video-conferences, monitoring the work of the district collectors and propagating his governance skills. He got funds from the World Bank, made Hyderabad the Cyberabad and also got the giant multinational IT companies like Microsoft to invest in Hyderabad. He hosted big names like Bill Gates. Despite all these, he was out in the cold from 2004 for ten years. In 2014 he formed the bifurcated Andhra Pradesh government with the BJP as his coalition partner.

After four years, he is upset that the state was not getting funds from the Centre for development and irrigation projects. He was even threatening to leave the NDA. A high level TDP meeting on Sunday in Vijayawada to decide about the future was surcharged with emotion but a call from Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh saved the situation and the party decided to stay on. The BJP knows how to keep the allies in check. Now the TDP supremo had instructed his M.P.s "even at the risk of being suspended and thrown out of Parliament, protest and make yourself and the people of Andhra Pradesh who feel let down, be heard loud and clear." The BJP has two MPs and five MLAs from Andhra Pradesh. While ties between the two parties have steadily deteriorated over the years, Naidu's frustration is that he has not been able to get money from the Centre.

"I am sticking to the coalition dharma and keeping quiet. I am also restraining my colleagues from speaking out against the BJP. But if they do not want us, I will say 'Namaste' and walk away," he had said. Naidu dabbled in national politics in formation of all coalitions from 1996. He was not involved with UPA

however. He was a convener in the United Front, a major partner in the Vajpayee government and a stakeholder in the present Modi government. The TDP is in coalition in Andhra Pradesh as well as at the Centre with the BJP.

Despite all these, Babu seems to be trapped in a predicament, whether to continue to be in the NDA. The latest provocation was that Andhra Pradesh was not even mentioned in the budget presented on February 1. Naidu had high expectations from the Budget this year, especially as it was the last year of the NDA for this term. An exasperated Naidu tweeted after the budget that the "ache din" were eluding his state. So he has resorted to what he knows best - threats but unfortunately for him the Modi government has its own majority. Naidu had used the strength of his MPs in the Lok Sabha in the United Front and the Vajpayee government earlier to get funds and hefty portfolios for Andhra Pradesh. Though he has supported Modi on several occasions like the demonetization drive, their relationship is strained.

After several attempts, Naidu was able to meet Modi after one and a half years on January 12, this year for half an hour. Armed with a 17-page memorandum, he urged the prime minister to immediately sanction Rs. 58,000 crore required for the Polavaram project and ensure sufficient funds for development of the new state capital Amravati. Naidu is also upset that the BJP leaders in the state including his sister in law Purandhreshwari, have been critical

of him. Why did the TDP decide to continue the alliance? First of all, the TDP has nowhere else to go unless a third front comes into existence. While he had good relations with the left parties they are becoming more and more irrelevant today. There is no tall leader to lead the third front as the SP leader Mulayam Singh is ailing, the RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav is in jail. Nitish Kumar has joined the NDA and the other socialist parties of the Janata Parivar are insignificant.

Secondly, the TDP is not on a strong wicket in the state. In spite of its alliance with the BJP in 2014, the party could manage to win with just 2 per cent votes against the YSR Congress Party. The campaign by Telugu super star K Pavan Kalyan, a youth icon, helped TDP shore up support but Kalyan has indicated that his Jana Sena Party would contest on its own in 2019. Thirdly, Babu fears that the BJP is growing in the state at the cost of Telugu Desam. The saffron party is already working on building a Kapu-Reddy caste combination as an electoral option to the Khamma-dominated TDP for 2019. While Naidu has already split the YSR Congress and got ten MLAs to his party and made four of them ministers in his cabinet, he does not want Jagan Mohan Reddy to exploit the fissures in the BJP-TDP ties.

Above all, Chandrababu needs the BJP more than the BJP needs TDP. He does not have too many options. The first is to swallow his pride and continue the alliance. The second is to withdraw the ministers and allow his M.P.s to resign prior to final parting. The third is to part company. He chose the first. Babu is worried about his re-election in 2019 and was trying to tell people of Andhra Pradesh who were angry for not getting the funds that he was with them. If the anger escalates then he will reassess his strategy. Now it is only posturing and positioning, as he cannot afford to antagonize the Centre beyond a point. (IPA)



Children in traditional costumes are carried by villagers during a local celebration event as they pray for harvest and good fortune for Chinese Lunar New Year, in Dong village in Qiongdongnan Miao and Dong autonomous prefecture, Guizhou province, China--REUTERS

# Nagaland polls: A sensitive exercise

## FOCUS

Barun Das Gupta

An unexpected political development in Nagaland has made the holding of state Assembly elections on February 27 uncertain. On January 29, eleven political parties of the state decided to boycott the elections, demanding an early solution to the Naga political problem. The BJP, which can by no stretch of imagination be called a 'Naga' party was also a signatory to the joint statement, much to the chagrin of the party's central leadership because the boycott was actually to protest the Centre's feet dragging on the issue.

The joint statement stated that "the opportunity for a peaceful resolution of the Naga political issue has never been this favourable, as the political negotiations are in an advanced stage and we can't afford to distract the focus from the (peace) process at any cost." The BJP is the ruling party at the Centre and its state unit was joining a boycott call given by other parties!

The next few days saw hectic political activities. The BJP severed its ties with the ruling NPF, with which it was sharing power for many years.

It entered into an alliance with the newly formed Nagaland Progressive Democratic Party. The new alliance announced that the NDPP would contest 40 seats and the BJP the remaining 20. Neiphiu Rio, a sitting MP and former chief minister, who was chairman of the NPF, resigned from the party following differences with Chief Minister T. R. Zeliang. It was known that he was gravitating toward the BJP. Then came the formal launch of the NDPP, with Neiphiu Rio as chairman. It was clear that whatever happened was according to a plan with the knowledge and consent of the BJP.

The present crisis has its origin in the signing of a "Naga Framework Agreement" between the Prime Minister and the leaders of the NSCN(IM) in August, 2015. The details of the agreement have never been put in public domain; nor was the exact commitment, if any made by the Prime Minister to the NSCN(IM) leaders. After signing the agreement, the Prime Minister, in the course of his speech, had commented that "the nation will join you

in shaping a future of dignity, opportunity and prosperity for the Naga people. Today, as you begin a new glorious chapter with a sense of pride, self-confidence and self-respect, I join the nation in saluting you and conveying our good wishes to the Naga people."

The Prime Minister's cryptic comment that the Nagas were beginning "a new glorious chapter" gave rise to doubts and apprehensions in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. The prevalent public belief is - a belief neither confirmed nor contradicted by either the Centre or the NSCN(IM) - that the separatists who had carried on decades of armed insurgency to create a sovereign Nagaland outside India have since realised that a sovereign Naga country was not possible and a settlement has to be found within the framework of the Indian Constitution. They are now

demanding a 'Nagalim' or a greater Naga state, which will comprise, besides the present Nagaland state, the Naga-dominated contiguous areas of Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh. But the people of these three states are determined not to cede any territory to the proposed Nagalim.

The irreconcilable position that the Nagas will not settle for anything less than Nagalim and the other states concerned will not cede any part of their territory has virtually created a deadlock. That the details of the Framework Agreement have never been made public and remain shrouded in a mystery has created a piquant situation. No tangible progress in the final resolution of the Naga issue is known to have been made since the signing of the agreement nearly two and a half years ago. This time the Naga parties seem determined to thrash out the issue before

elections are held. The call is "solution before election" - a solution that has to be made public.

Now that the BJP has floated another party (NDPP) with one of its trusted friends (Neiphiu Rio) as its leader and unilaterally declared seat-sharing by the two parties, it remains to be seen whether they will be the only contestants in the field, with other parties firm in their boycott decision, or whether holding of polls will be possible at all. It is a tricky situation for the Centre and the BJP. The Core Committee of Nagaland Tribal Ho Hos and Civil Organizations (CCNTHCO) has already sent a terse message to the Centre.

The message is: "The course of our agitation depends on how the Government of India reacts to the call of the Naga NGOs for the solution of the issue and not the election. The convener of the CCNTHCO Theja Therie has made their position clear: "It is up to the Government of India to take a final call on the election and the Nagas are hoping for the best." The ball is now in the Centre's court. (IPA)

**Conventional Crossword**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
			10			
11	12					
			14	15		16
17		18	19			
			20	21	22	23
24	25					
			27			
28				29		

- ACROSS**
- 1 Spirit
  - 3 Small insects
  - 8 Metal
  - 9 Mineral-bearing rock
  - 10 Edict
  - 11 Missive
  - 14 Swains
  - 17 Live coal
  - 20 Lubricating
  - 24 Complete agreement
  - 25 Loud noise
  - 27 Break suddenly
  - 28 Chances by vote
  - 29 Proseure
- DOWN**
- 1 Actus
  - 2 Thin fog
  - 3 Fashion
  - 5 Glutinous meal
  - 6 Before
  - 7 Prophets
  - 12 Tree
  - 13 Neckwear
  - 14 Slippery fish
  - 16 Homo Sapiens
  - 17 Cakes
  - 18 Salt water
  - 19 Henhouse
  - 21 Taverns
  - 22 Little devils
  - 23 Adhesive
  - 25 Nothing

**SUDOKU: 2123**

4					1	7	5	9
6		5				7	8	
	9							
		7	5	6				
			4	9	8		2	
				7	2			
		4	7				9	
		9	8			2		5
8	5							4

**Yesterday's Solution 2122**

8	9	3	4	2	6	1	5	7
6	1	7	8	5	3	2	9	4
4	5	2	9	1	7	3	8	6
5	6	1	3	9	4	7	2	8
7	2	9	1	6	8	4	3	5
3	8	4	5	7	2	6	1	9
2	3	6	7	8	5	9	4	1
1	7	8	2	4	9	5	6	3
9	4	5	6	3	1	8	7	2

**Yesterday's Cross Word Solution 131**

S	P	O	T	S	I	N		
W	V	I	A	P	S	I	L	O
E	W	E	R	M	O	L	A	R
D	R	E	B	E	L	B		
E	N	D	T	O	M	E		
N	O	O	K	S	A	L	P	
M	N	O	V	E	L	E		
C	A	V	I	L	Y	A	W	L
A	D	I	T	W	E	D	L	
T	M							

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