

Assam mum on giving nod for citizenship to minorities

IN A SPOT Indigenous bodies say the small state can't accept any outsiders

Saubhadra Chatterji
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: BJP-ruled Assam has so far remained non-committal about supporting the NDA government's proposed law that allows citizenship to religious minorities from three neighbouring countries.

In a letter to a Parliament's joint panel that is reviewing The Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, BJP chief minister Sarbananda Sonowal has cited the ongoing protests against the proposed law in his state.

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU), an influential students' organization, and other indigenous bodies have hit the roads to protest against the bill, maintaining that a small state like Assam can't accept any outsider, be it Hindu or Muslim. "Without categorically stating if he is supporting the bill, the CM has only asked the panel to visit his state to talk to stakeholders," said a member of the parliamentary committee.

The panel is going to Guwahati on Wednesday to interact with student bodies, political groups and other stakeholders.

Asom Gana Parishad, BJP's ally in the assembly polls, has also opposed the move. Many Assamese organizations feel that the state will bear the brunt of the new law, if enacted, as many more people from Bangladesh may settle in Assam where large numbers of Bangladeshi Muslims



■ The All Assam Students' Union, an influential students' organisation, had protested in October against giving citizenship to Hindu Bangladeshis.

THE BILL RELAXES THE 11-YR-OLD CONDITION OF CITIZENSHIP TO SIX YRS FOR RELIGIOUS MINORITIES FROM AFGHANISTAN, BANGLADESH AND PAK

have already migrated illegally. The bill amends the Citizenship Act to make illegal migrants who are Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Parsis and Christians from Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan, eligible for citizenship. Under the Act, citizenship by naturalization is granted if the applicant has stayed in India for

11 of the previous 14 years. The bill makes citizenship easier as it relaxes the 11-year condition to six years for religious minorities from these three countries.

While the BJP's own government in Assam remains non-committal, its outside supporter AIADMK has demanded that Sri Lankan Christians should also be included.

West Bengal government is also apprehensive about the bill. Trinamool member Saugata Ray has said in one of the panel's meetings that the bill smacks of discrimination and if passed, it may dilute India's secular character.

Pro-Sabarimala ban group targets 'atheist feminists'

Bhadra Sinha
bhadrasinha@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The ban on the entry of women of menstruating age into the inner sanctum of Kerala's Sabarimala temple was part of a "unique custom (that is) rooted in Tantra Shastras" and hence should not be lifted, a socio-religious group has contended.

Chennai-based group, People for Dharma, filed an application before the Supreme Court, questioning the locus standi of "feminist" lawyers who want the ban to be lifted.

In its submission before the court, the organisation said different traditions and customs were tailor-made for the kind of deity invoked in a temple. It argued that those challenging the Sabarimala ban have "no business" in telling Ayyappa devotees how they should conduct themselves.

The apex court is hearing a plea that seeks an end to the discriminatory practice of barring women between 10 to 50 years from entering the temple's inner sanctum.

Those in favour of the ban argue that lord Ayappa is a celibate and will be disturbed by the presence of women of menstruating age.

"Devotees of lord Ayyappa are the more important stakeholders in the debate over faith and not the atheist and agnostic feminists. A handful of activists, who do not have the temerity to understand the beauty of Indian spirituality are not the ones who should decide how half a billion women should follow their faith," the plea read.

PM takes jibe at Cong over Sardar Patel

HT Correspondent
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Celebrating Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel's birth anniversary on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi took potshots at the Congress over the legacy of the iron man of India.

"When I talk about unity (on Sardar Patel's birthday), the first message goes we are BJP but he was a Congressman," the PM said amid laughter, inaugurating a digital museum on Patel.

He pointed out that "no one has the copyright on Sardar's life and legacy", in an indirect message to the Congress, which had often accused the BJP of trying to appropriate the legacy of India's national icons.

At the national stadium, flagging off the Run for Unity, Modi announced that he will inaugurate a museum but also added that such a museum should have come up many years ago. "After



■ Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the flag-off ceremony of "Run for Unity" on the occasion of Rashtriya Ekta Diwas at National Stadium in New Delhi on Monday.

so many years of Independence, so many years after his death, the country finally gets a museum on him. This should have been done 40 to 50 to 60 years ago. But I don't know why it was not

done," he quipped.

He also tried to refute the Congress' claims that its leaders are the champions of women reservation in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies. "Sometimes, we hear

about women administration. You will get many people, many sycophants who will say the credit for women reservation goes to certain people. As far as I have read, in 1930, when Patel was the chairman of Ahmedabad municipality, he had first proposed 33% reservation for women," the PM said.

Modi maintained that Sardar Patel's legacy is so great that "efforts to forget them for 70 years were not fruitful," in what could be seen as an indirect accusation against the Congress of trying to undermine Patel's legacy.

Modi also said that India should be more powerful and the world should acknowledge her power. "India should be powerful, strong, and prosperous. But to realize this dream, India should be united. In the name of community or caste, poverty and richness, India can't divide itself. Many forces are working to divide the people of our country. We should remind ourselves about all forces of unity," he added.

Civic bodies look at bonds for infra funds

Moushumi Das Gupta
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Nearly half a dozen urban local bodies (ULBs) across cities are gearing up to tap the municipal bond market this financial year, a move aimed at mobilizing resources to fund urban infrastructure projects.

This includes ULBs in cities such as Visakhapatnam, Pune, Nagpur, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar and Rourkela that have been rated as investor-friendly by credit rating agencies.

Union urban development (UD) ministry officials said this will be the first time after 2010 that ULBs

will float municipal bonds to fund infrastructure projects under the government's flagship schemes, such as developing 100 smart cities and Atal Mission for Rejuvenation and Urban Transformation.

"These are capital intensive programs and need huge fund. It is not possible for the Centre or the ULBs to fund these through their own resources. ULBs have to think of innovative ways to raise money," said a UD ministry official.

An exercise to check the credit worthiness of 16 municipalities has already been completed. Though it has huge potential, municipal bond market has not been tapped

fully in India. Compared to US cities, which raised approximately \$300 billion in 2014 from municipal bonds, municipalities in India have managed to raise just ₹1740 crore since 1997, when India had decided to use this instrument.

"We are sensitizing the ULBs about the choices they have and handholding them with the ground work before they float municipal bonds. So far, credit rating exercise has been completed in 16 cities. Over half-a-dozen have been found credit worthy and fit to raise money from the market," said UD secretary Rajiv Gauba.

According to credit rating agencies, ULBs have the poten-

tial to raise upto ₹1500 crore every year from the market.

Urban sector experts said that most of the municipalities in India are cash-strapped. According to the 14th Finance Commission report, in 2012-13, municipal revenue accounted for just over 1% of GDP in India as compared to emerging economies such as Brazil and South Africa where it was 5% and 6% respectively.

"ULB's will have to increase their own source of revenue by increasing property tax and levying user charges. This has also been recommended by the 14th Finance Commission," a finance ministry official said.

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General Public is hereby informed that a female **Name:** Unknown, **S/o** Unknown, **R/o:** Unknown, **Age:** 50-52 years, **Height:** 5'2", **Complexion:** Shallow, **Gender:** Female, **Wearing:** Green Printed Blouse and Saree was found in front of platform no.2 service Road Nizamuddin Site New Delhi, Rly.Station on Dated 30.10.2016. at 10.15 a.m. In this regard, a **DD No.17-A**, has been resisted at New Delhi Railway Station on Dated 30.10.2016. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far.

Any person having any information or clue about this person may kindly inform to the following. **SHO P.S., New Delhi Railway Stn., New Delhi**
DP/2201/RLY/16 **Ph. : 011-23744073**

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- श्री यमुना महाआरती

1 नवंबर 2016, सायं 4.30 बजे
डाई पुस्ता, सोनिया विहार, दिल्ली

मुख्य अतिथि : श्री अरविंद केजरीवाल, माननीय मुख्यमंत्री, दिल्ली
विशिष्ट अतिथि : श्री मनीष सिसोदिया, माननीय उप-मुख्यमंत्री, दिल्ली
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