

Rioters target police stations

Spreading violence reaches central Paris

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PARIS: Spreading urban unrest — with arsonists striking from the Mediterranean to the German border — reached central Paris for the first time on Sunday after 10 days of violence and more destruction of cars, buildings and symbols of French authority.

The crisis, which began as an outburst of anger in suburban Paris housing projects, reached new intensity with at least 900 cars torched across the country overnight, despite repeated calls for calm and massive policing to halt the unrest.

Police said 32 cars were set afire in Paris as the violence moved from poor suburbs into the capital for the first time.

Post offices, municipal buildings, provincial police stations and even nursery schools were

targeted by arsonists to the north, south, east and west of Paris. Police made 186 arrests overnight nationwide.

Simmering anger

The unrest is forcing France to confront long-simmering anger in its suburbs, where many Africans and their French-born children live on society's margins, struggling with high unemployment, racial discrimination and despair — fertile terrain for crime of all sorts as well as for Muslim extremists offering frustrated youths a way out.

France, with some 5 million Muslims, has the largest Islamic population in Western Europe. The number of cars torched overnight — 1,295 across France — was the highest since the un-

rest began on October 27, France-Info radio and other French media reported.

Police, who earlier put the number at 918, did not immediately confirm the figure. Some 900 vehicles were reported burned the night before.

Police say copycat attacks have fanned the unrest, but there was no evidence of coordination behind the spreading violence.

Police found a gasoline bomb-making factory in an abandoned building in Evry, a southern Paris suburb that contained 150 explosives ready for use, more than 100 bottles, litres of fuel and hoods for hiding rioters' faces, senior Justice Ministry official Jean-Marie Huet said. — AP

ETHNIC VIOLENCE ■ 10 more camps opened, Opposition slams Cong government

45,000 homeless, Gogoi under fire

SAMUDRA GUPTA KASHYAP
GUWAHATI, OCTOBER 23

OVER 45,000 tribals, both Karbis and Dimasas, have fled their villages and taken shelter in 53 relief camps as the situation in the strife-torn Karbi Anglong autonomous district continues to be volatile. Assam CM Tarun Gogoi, meanwhile, is busy trading charges with Opposition leaders on who was behind the trouble.

Confirming that the number of inmates in relief camps has risen from 27,000 last Sunday to a little over 45,000 today, Karbi Anglong Deputy Commissioner G D Tripathi told *The Indian Express* over phone from Diphu that more people had fled the villages out of fear.

The number of relief camps in the district has risen to 53, while 10 camps have been



Army jawans patrol the streets of Diphu town in Karbi Anglong district of Assam. P71

opened in North Cachar Hills and Nagaon district. There was, however, no report of fresh incidents since Friday afternoon. With the October 17 massacre of 34 Karbis, who were pulled out from two buses, the death toll from the month-long bout of ethnic violence stands at 91—80 Karbi tribals, eight Dimasas, one Bodo and one Nepali.

In Guwahati, while Opposition parties blamed the Con-

gress government for failing to anticipate and control the situation, Gogoi has taken on Jayant Rongpi of the CPI(M), a prominent Karbi leader and former MP, and NDA convenor George Fernandes. As he blamed Rongpi for being "irresponsible", the BJP has expressed surprise at the CM calling Fernandes a trouble-maker.

"Gogoi has failed to douse the fire in the hill district and

is now indulging in cheap politics. He is also trying to protect his junior minister (P&D Minister Himanta Biswa Sharma) against whom there are serious allegations of hobnobbing with perpetrators of the violence in Karbi Anglong," said Rongpi, adding "If he is a responsible CM and knows that I am involved (in the violence), then why does not he ask the police to arrest me?"

Asking how a CM could

Govt failed: Governor

GUWAHATI: The contents of a report apparently sent by Assam Governor Lt Gen (Retd) Ajai Singh on the Karbi Anglong situation has further embarrassed the Congress government. Singh has reportedly said that the state government had failed to keep the two militant outfits (which are in a ceasefire with the government) under control. Raj Bhavan sources, however, are silent on this report. —ENS

keep shifting stands, Rongpi said, "On October 10, he (Gogoi) said that the Dima Halao Daogah (DHD) and United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) were involved in the violence. On October 15, he said the incidents were taking place in remote forests and hilly areas. On October 21, he suddenly names me, Fernandes and Prafulla Kumar Mahanta. This is ridiculous."

Karbi Anglong bleeds again, 9 dead

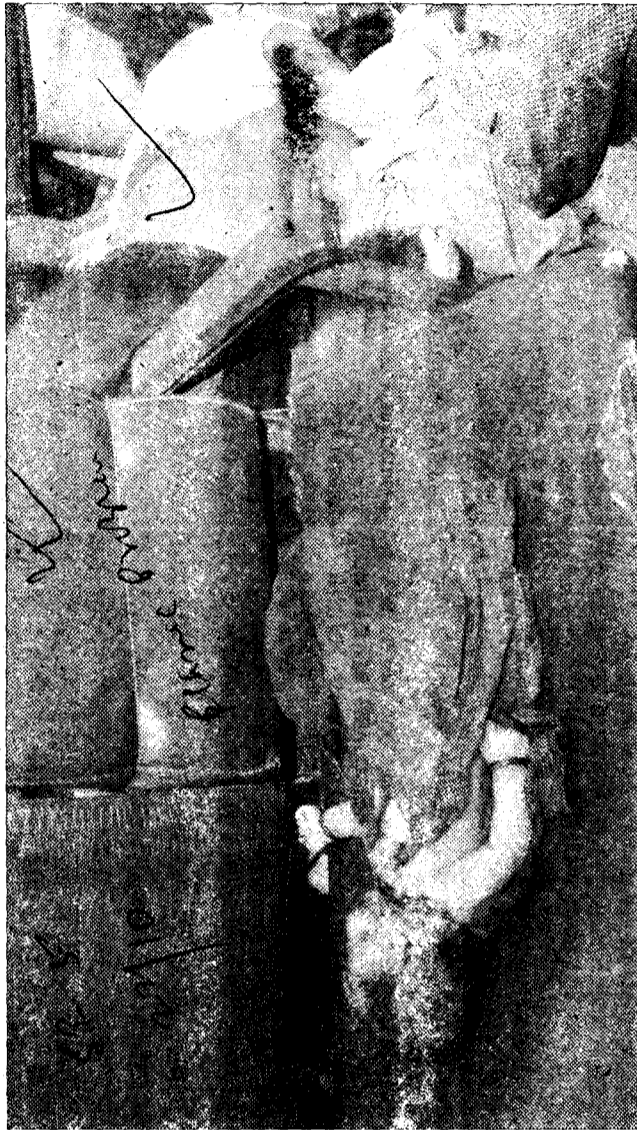
Statesman News Service

GUWAHATI, Oct. 21. — At least nine militants belonging to Karbi outfit, United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) were killed by rival Dimasa militants belonging to Dima Haram Daogah (DHD) in the strife-torn Karbi Anglong hill district of Assam early this morning.

Official sources informed that the UPDS militants were gunned down by the rival DHD ultras about 14 km away from the district headquarter at Diphu in the wee hours today while they were trying to set fire to a Dimasa village. Bodies of the ultras in army battle fatigue were later recovered from a place called

Tamulpur village under Diphu police station. The ultras had torched at least seven houses belonging to Dimasa tribes in a neighbouring village before they were killed by the DHD ultras. The incident had taken place before an all-party team of Assam Assembly set out from here to visit the violence affected areas in Karbi hills later in the day.

The Union Home Secretary Mr Rajib Agarwal yesterday announced in Diphu that the Government of India might be forced to disarm cadres of both UPDS and the DHD which are in ceasefire and engaged in peace process, as both the outfit were found involved in the ethnic flare-up in Karbi hills in sharp violation of ceasefire ground rules.



Bodies of recent massacre victims in Karbi Anglong. — Eastern Projections

Karbi violence: Jaiswal in Assam, talks to Gogoi

Subhomoy Bhattacharjee



Karbi tribal women take their lunch at a relief camp at Kheroni police station in Karbi Anglong district, Assam.

SAMUDRA GUPTA KASHYAP
DIPHU, OCTOBER 20

TWENTY-FIVE days after outbreak of violence between Karbi and Dimasa tribes, Union Minister of State for Home Sriprakash Jaiswal today visited the strife-torn hill district of Assam, even as a Union Home Ministry official said the government might consider disarming Dima Haram Daoga (DHD) and United People's Democratic Solidarity (UPDS) if they did not put an end to the attacks. After his visit to the two relief camps, Jaiswal left for Guwahati where he discussed the issue with CM Tarun Gogoi.

The UPDS, which wants a separate state for Karbis, and the DHD, which is a Dimasa tribal outfit and wants a separate "Dimaraji" state, had reached ceasefire agreements with the Centre in May 2002 and December 2003 respectively.

According to the ceasefire ground rules, the outfits are supposed to keep their cadres in designated camps identified

by the government. Intelligence reports say both have indulged in large-scale arson in which 78 people have been killed and over 28,000 rendered homeless. Seven more bodies were today recovered at Prisek under Kheroni police station, where suspected Dimasa militants had set ablaze three Karbi villages on Tuesday.

Governor Lt Gen (Retd) Ajai Singh, who had toured the affected areas yesterday, said the government would deal sternly with the two militant outfits if they were found to be involved in violence. He said the two had flouted the ceasefire ground rules, a statement which the Home Secretary echoed today.

Jayanta Rongpi, CPI(ML) leader and a former Lok Sabha member from the two hill districts, today said the Congress was not bothered about tribals. "The government has been sitting on talks with the UPDS and the DHD since the two groups agreed to the ceasefire. They have been betrayed," Rongpi said.

বাস থেকে নামিয়ে ৩৫ জনকে মারা হুল কাবি আংলঙে

রজন সেনগুপ্ত • গুয়াহাটি

১৭ অক্টোবর: অসমের কাৰ্বি আংলঙে দুই সশস্ত্রদায়ের বিরোধে প্রাণ হেল ৩৫ জনের।

আজ সকালে জঙ্গল ঘেবা রাস্তায় দুটি বাস থেকে যাত্রীদের নামিয়ে ২৩ জনকে কচুকাটা করে জঙ্গিরা। হাতে অত্যাধুনিক আহুয়াস্ত্র থাকলেও হত্যাকাণ্ডে তা ব্যবহার করেনি জঙ্গিরা। বদলে প্রতিহিংসা মেটাতে বেছে নিয়েছে একটিই অস্ত্র—দা।

এখানেই থামেনি দুকৃতীরা। জেলার সশস্ত্রদায়গত বিরোধের ঝাল মেটাতে নির্জন রাস্তায় রক্তের হোলি খেলা সেরে অভিবৃক্ত ডিমাসা জঙ্গিরা কছের দুটি কাৰ্বি গ্রামের ৮৫ টি ঘর জ্বালিয়ে দেয়। পাল্টা হিসাবে একই থানা এলাকার অন্য দুটি গ্রামে ডিমাসাদের ৪১ টি ঘর জ্বালিয়ে দেয় কাৰ্বি-দুকৃতীরা। গ্রামে অস্ত্রের আঘাতে ও অগ্নিদগ্ধ হয়ে ১২ জন মারা

গিয়েছেন। সব নিপুলিয়ে যুতের সংখ্যা দাঁড়িয়েছে ৩৫ জন। যুতের সংখ্যা আরও বাড়তে পারে।

প্রশাসনের হিসাব, আজকের ঘটনা বাদ দিয়ে গত তিন সপ্তাহে দুই সশস্ত্রদায়ের সংঘর্ষে ৩৭ জনের প্রাণ গিয়েছে। ঘর জ্বালিয়ে দেওয়ায় গৃহহীন হয়েছেন অসংখ্য।

আজকের ঘটনার পরে ওই জেলায় অনিশ্চিন্তকালের জন্য 'কাফু' জারি করেছে প্রশাসন। দেওয়া হয়েছে 'দেখা মাত্র গুলির আদেশ'। জঙ্গি ধরতে সেনা-কমান্ডো-সিআরপিএফ-পুলিশ যৌথ অভিযান শুরু করেছে। সেখানে আরও সেনা ও আধা সামরিক বাহিনীর জওয়ান পাঠানো হচ্ছে বলে জানিয়েছেন মুখ্যমন্ত্রী তরুণ গগৈ।

ঘটনার পরেই কাৰ্বি আংলং যান রাজ্যের পুলিশ প্রধান পি ভি সুমন্ত। মুখ্যমন্ত্রী বলেন, "ওই জেলায় সশস্ত্রদায়গত বিরোধের নিষ্পত্তি ঘটাতে ইউনিফায়েরড কমান্ডের প্রধান এবং

মুখ্যসচিবকে কৌশল টিক করার দায়িত্ব দেওয়া হয়েছে।"

পাশাপাশি দুই জেলা কাৰ্বি আংলং এবং উত্তর কাছাড় পাহাড়ি জেলায় বসবাসকারী কাৰ্বি ও ডিমাসা সশস্ত্রদায়ের মধ্যে বিরোধ অসমে কোনও নতুন ঘটনা নয়। দুই সশস্ত্রদায়ের জঙ্গি গোষ্ঠীর সঙ্গে কেন্দ্রীয় সরকারের 'অস্ত্র বিরতি' চুক্তি থাকলেও অপহরণ-তৌলা আদায়কে কেন্দ্র করে গোষ্ঠী সংঘর্ষের ঘটনায় ছেদ পড়েনি। সেক্টরের মাসের তৃতীয় সপ্তাহ থেকে ওই জেলায় কাৰ্বি-ডিমাসাদের পেশীশস্ত্রের টানা লড়াই চলছে।

জেলার অগ্নিগর্ভ পরিস্থিতি সামাল দিতে মাত্র কিছুদিন আগেই জেলা প্রশাসনের রদবদল ঘটান মুখ্যমন্ত্রী। কিন্তু তাতে যে পরিস্থিতি বদলায়নি, তার প্রমাণ আজকের ঘটনা। পুলিশের কথায়, স্বরণকালের মধ্যে এমন নৃশংস হত্যাকাণ্ড জেলায় হয়নি। কেন্দ্র প্রশাসন এখানে বার্ষিক, তার একটা বাণী দিয়ে

জেলার পুলিশ সুপার পঙ্কজ শর্মা বলেন, "গোটা জেলায় ৯৫ শতাংশ পাহাড় আর জঙ্গলে ঘেরা। যোগাযোগ ব্যবস্থা প্রায় নেই বললেই চলে। কেনও প্রান্তে ঘটনা ঘটলে পুলিশের কাছে খবর আসে অনেক পরে।"

যেমন আজকেরটাও। মুখে মুখে রটে যাওয়া হত্যাকাণ্ডের খবর শুনে পুলিশ জানতে পারে সবটা। পুলিশ ও স্থানীয় মানুষ সূত্রে জানা গিয়েছে, আজ সকাল পৌনে ছুটা নাপাদ ডিফু ও হামারনের উদ্দেশে দুটি যাত্রীবোঝাই বাস রওনা দেয় জিরিকিংডিং এলাকা থেকে। পাহাড় আর জঙ্গলে ঘেরা খেবোনি থানার সারসিংয়ের রাস্তায় আহুয়াস্ত্র হাতে শতাবধিক যুবক বাস দুটির গতিরোধ করে। পরনে সেনা পোশাক, মুখে কালো কাপড় বাঁধা দুকৃতীরা সব যাত্রীকে নামিয়ে দুটি বাসেই আশ্রয় ধরিয়ে দেয়।

এরপরে নির্জন রাস্তায় জ্বলন্ত বাসের সামনে অস্ত্রের মুখে দাঁড়িয়ে শুরু

হয় যাত্রীদের 'আয়-পরিচয়' দেওয়ার পর্বা। যাঁরা কাৰ্বি সম্প্রদায়ের, তাঁরা এক দিকে। বাকিরা অন্য দিকে। পরিচয় পর্ব মিটেতেই বাকবৃদ্ধ অ-কাৰ্বিদের সামনে শুরু হয় কাৰ্বি নিধন। গুলি নয়, বন্দুকের নলের গুঁতো নয়। সকাল ৮ টায় রাস্তায় দাঁড় করিয়ে ২২ জন পুরুষ-মহিলাকে শুধু 'দা' দিয়ে কুপিয়ে মারে জঙ্গিরা। বাকি যে চার জন হাসপাতালে ভর্তি হন, তাঁদেরই এক জন সন্ধ্যায় মারা যান। অপর তিন জনের ক্ষেত্রে কথা দিতে পারছেন না ডাক্তার।

একসঙ্গে এত হতাহতের ঘটনায় বিশেষহারা জেলা প্রশাসন। জঙ্গি হামলার দ্বিতীয় পর্বে আক্রান্ত ও অগ্নিদগ্ধের সংখ্যা প্রায় ৫০ জন। পরিস্থিতি মোকাবিলায় আজ সারাদিনই জেলা প্রশাসন দফায় দফায় বৈঠক করে। জিজ্ঞাসাবাদের জন্য শতাবধিক ব্যক্তিকে আটকও করা হয়। রাতের খবর, রাজ্য সরকার জেলা পুলিশ সুপারকে বদলি করে দিয়েছে।

Militants hack to death 34 ethnic Karbis

Statesman News Service

GUWAHATI, Oct. 17. — Dimasa militants killed at least 34 bus passengers, including nine women, belonging to the Karbi tribe, and set ablaze two buses at Sarsing village in Jengkha in the strife-torn Karbi Anglong district of Assam this morning. Four persons were grievously injured in the attack, an officer of the local Kheroni police station said. With today's deaths, the toll in the clashes between the Karbi and Dimasa tribes in the hill district has risen to 71.

The Inspector-General of Police (law and order), Mr Dipak Kumar Pathak, who has been camping at Diphu in the violence-torn district, said that militants had waylaid two passenger-laden buses from Jirikending heading for Diphu and Hamren at Sarsing around 6 a.m. They made the Karbi passengers stand in a separate group before hacking 34 of them to death. Soon after, the insurgents torched the vehicles. The four seriously injured persons were later shifted to a hospital at Kheroni, nearly 45 km from Sarsing.

According to unconfirmed reports, many others are feared dead as the extremists made another group of bus passengers accompany them while escaping into nearby jungles.

Mr Pathak said that additional Battalions of Assam police and paramilitary forces had been deployed in different parts of the district because of escalation of the violence. The district Superintendent of Police was personally supervising a large-scale combing operation to ferret out the anar-



The debris of a fire-ravaged house in Hemariterang village of Karbi Anglong district on Monday. — Eastern Projections

chists, he said. Though Army personnel were deployed in the strife-torn areas of Diphu and Bokajan, they were yet to take charge of Kheroni where Dimasa rebels struck this morning.

The spell of ethnic violence between Karbi and Dimasa tribes has rendered nearly 10,000 people homeless in the hill district. In response to the latest incident, the chief minister, Mr Tarun Gogoi, today asked the state chief secretary, Mr S Kabilan, and Unified Command Structure Commander, Lt. Gen. HS Lidder, to work out a special strategy to deal with the situation in Karbi Anglong district. Mr Gogoi said he had instructed them to rush to the district to join the Director-General of Police, Mr PV Sumant, now camping there. The chief minister said he had invited the Dimasa militant group, Dima Halam Daogah, now observing an unilateral cease-fire, to hold talks with the government.

Violence was stoked in the hill district with the killing of three Dimasa youths on 26 September, 2005.

Ranil promises political solution to ethnic conflict

United National Party's presidential poll manifesto vows to defeat separatism in Sri Lanka

10.15.2019

V.S. Sambandan

COLOMBO: Opposition Presidential candidate Ranil Wickremesinghe has promised a "permanent resolution" of the ethnic conflict "through a political solution based on a united Sri Lanka."

In the 13-page manifesto of the United National Party, released here on Tuesday, he vowed to "defeat separatism".

2002 Oslo accord

An English translation of the manifesto made no direct mention of the word 'federalism.' It, however, referred to the agreement reached between his Government and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam in Oslo, Norway, in 2002 and a declaration made by international donors in Tokyo in 2003 as guaranteeing "the

unity, democratic character and territorial integrity of Sri Lanka," and having created "the framework of a solution acceptable to all communities."

Mr. Wickremesinghe sought a popular mandate to "discuss and reach a consensus" with the UNP's main political foe, Sri Lanka Freedom Party "to proceed as above."

He promised a "separate ministry" for the war-displaced people in the north and the east. He "guaranteed the security and protection of the eastern province" and "Muslim representation in peace talks." He would ensure that "at all times, the views of the community are taken into consideration."

The UNP proposed to draw up a 10-year defence plan and build a force having all modern equipment. The island-wide election to directly elect the constitutionally powerful

in 18 months, you cannot solve it in 18 years," he said, referring to the ruling SLFP and its Presidential candidate, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapakse. On economic affairs, Mr. Wickremesinghe promised to make Sri Lanka the "commercial hub of the Indian Ocean."

Seeks mandate to reach consensus with SLFP

Assures separate Ministry for the war displaced

Muslims will be represented in peace talks

10-year defence plan proposed

Executive President is scheduled for November 17.

"People's agenda"

Mr. Wickremesinghe described the manifesto as a "people's agenda" with promises of price reduction, more jobs, assistance for rural areas and doubling of incomes "in less than 10 years."

"I deliver on what I say," he told a press conference. "They were there for 18 months, problems were not solved. If you cannot solve it

Foreign affairs

On foreign affairs, he said he would "improve" relations "with every country." In South Asia ties, his party "will implement to the letter" the proposed Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement, which is under discussion. He would also strengthen the free trade agreement with Pakistan, enter into an economic partnership agreement with the Maldives and start talks for free trade pacts with Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan.

Duty-free access

The party promised to "enter into discussions" with the United States and the European Union to "obtain duty-free access to our apparel in their markets."

UK's idea of hyphenated identity irks British Asians

Minorities Up Against America-Like 'Re-Branding'



BEND IT LIKE BLEARS

By Rashmee Roshan Lal/TNN

London: Britain's ambitious plans to "re-brand" its visually distinct, large and settled coloured minority population with geographical monikers, such as 'Indian-British' have been attacked as just so much "nonsense" by leading British Indians.

On Monday, Jeevan Singh Deol, an academic with a diverse ancestry ranging from India to the US, Canada and Britain, rejected the UK government's proposal to rename ethnic minority groups along US lines.

The proposals, unveiled by the UK's de facto home secretary Hazel Blears, envisages describing coloured Britons as "Indian-British" or "Pakistani-British" along the US model of "Italian-American" or "Irish-American".

Deol, who said he was British but "was born in Canada and my ancestors left India one-hundred years ago", described any attempt to label him as "Indian-British" as a bit of "an historical flaw".

He criticised the attempt to re-brand Britain's Asians as tantamount to feeling like "a box of soap powder". With Britain's three-million Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities in a ferment over the re-branding exercise, East African Indian commentator Yasmin Alibhai-Brown said she hoped the re-labelling would not mean "they're going to tattoo us".

Deol, who added that his "grandfather fought for the US Army in France in WWI" and was subsequently deprived of his passport because he was labelled "nigger", said Britain's plans to

"re-brand" its ethnic minorities was just another "way to talk about colour but we're too shy to do it". He declared that labelling him as "British Asian" was simply a way for the UK authorities and its White host community to describe him as "brown".

Deol's argument is thought to underline the deep divisions that have opened up over Britain's official policy of multi-culturalism in the wake of 7/7 and the abortive multiple suicide attacks of July 21. The British government is keen to find out whether or not coloured minority groups would like to have US-style hyphenated identities terms rather than simply being described as British Asian. But in a sign of the anguished striving over issues of ethnicity and identity, Sir Iqbal Sacranie, the Malawi Indian who arrived in Britain and has now risen to the post of general secretary of the Muslim Council of Britain, said efforts to hyphenate coloured Briton's identity were useless. He said, "What of the second generations? Why should they be defined as other than British?"

And in a warning that political battle may be joined on the controversial plans, the home affairs spokesman of the main opposition Conservative Party, Edward Garnier, said the growing number of Asian British people in his constituency regarded themselves as British.

"They don't need a government minister to tell them how to describe themselves," he said.

Script row lays bare Manipur ethnic divide

HT Correspondent
Guwahati, April 21

THE RAGING script row in Manipur has laid the ethnic divide in the state bare.

The All Tribal Students' Union, Manipur (Atsum), has warned against the imposition of the Meitei Mayek script by an under-pressure Okram Ibobi Singh government, maintaining that the a script change warrants the consent of various tribal bodies in the state.

"The imposition of Meitei Mayek (by replacing the Bengali script) on the tribal people of Manipur is not acceptable," an Atsum communiqué said on Thursday. It added that the move to switch scripts was fraught with possibilities of ethnic tension in the state.

Advising both the state government and Meelal, the group spearheading the script-change agitation, to refrain from taking hasty decisions and rubbing tribal organisations the wrong way, Atsum said, "We respect any movement to restore an indigenous script. But the tribals are not in a position to accept Meitei Mayek".

The students' body, which claims to represent the hill dwellers, said the tribals have already been hit hard by the imposition of Manipuri language on them right from the primary level to the civil services Manipur is divided



Okram Ibobi Singh

into plains dominated by the Meiteis, while Nagas, Kukis, Hmars and Paites comprise the population in the hills. "A change in script at this juncture can have a long-lasting impact on the tribal people," the Atsum communiqué said.

The organisation also criticised Meelal for its short-sightedness and asked the government not to succumb to the pressure. "If the script is imposed, the government should spell out a separate policy for the tribal people," it said.

Meelal launched the agitation demanding the switch of the Manipuri language script from Bengali to the ancient Meitei Mayek a couple of months ago to "undo the damage done by Manipur's rulers 300 years ago". The stir claimed reams of school textbooks as well as the Manipur Central Library, which was reduced to ashes on April 13.

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES