

# Prelude to partition

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Rational program

## Questions On Bringing Darjeeling Hills Under Sixth Schedule

In recent months, Subash Ghisingh's sabre-rattling appears to be a forgotten episode, and Writers' Building is also not crying hoarse over "gross violation of democratic norms" by him for refusing to hold elections to the Hill Council. Press reports have it that a memorandum of understanding was signed between the central and state governments and Ghisingh to the effect that the DGHC would be given the status of autonomous council under the Sixth Schedule after suitably amending the Constitution. After that there is all quiet on the northern front.

The state legislature in its final sitting very quietly extended the life of the Hill Council by another six months. No one asked any question and so there is no obligation on the part of the state government to give a clarification. In fact, in this state not many questions are asked nowadays and so no untruths are told. It appears a veil has been thrown on the Darjeeling Hill Council affairs.

### Request spurned

Ghisingh had asked for autonomous status under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution even earlier, when in 1986 his prayer to the King of Nepal for interference on behalf of the Gorkhas of Darjeeling was spurned. Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi firmly turned it down outright as such a concession outside the North-east would open a Pandora's Box by whipping up unrest in the tribal areas. Ghisingh refrained from raising the issue till the wily leader was convinced of the weakness of his opponents, which could be used to his best advantage. His electoral alliance alternatively with the Congress and then with the CPI-M speaks of his capabilities in this regard.

Article 244(2) of the Constitution states, "the provisions of the Sixth Schedule shall apply to the administration to the tribal areas in the state of Assam,

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Amiya K Samanta

Meghalaya and Tripura and the Union territory of Mizoram". Mizoram was granted statehood in the wake of the Mizo Accord in 1986. The provisions of the Sixth Schedule have a self-contained code for governance of tribal areas. The provisions for governance of the tribal areas may be

apply to the administration of the tribal areas". So even if both the state and the central governments join hands to amend the Constitution, how are they going to make the Hill Council area a tribal area as defined by Article 342 of the Constitution?

Are the Nepalese of Dar-



changed by Parliament by a simple majority in both Houses, without going through the process of constitutional amendment as provided by Article 368 of the Constitution. But in this case Article 244(2) will have to be amended, as this article mentions not only the territory under the schedule but also the essential criterion for inclusion under the Sixth Schedule. So both the addition of new territory to the present areas under the Sixth Schedule and also for changing the criteria for extension of the Sixth Schedule, amendment of the Constitution according to Article 368 has to be undertaken.

The schedule was devised for administration and development of the underdeveloped people and their habitats. Article 244(2) has noted that the schedule shall apply to the administration of tribal areas. The expression "tribal area" has to be understood in the context of the habitat areas of scheduled tribes, an expression defined, categorised and listed according to the provisions of Article 342 of the Constitution. An area, which is predominantly inhabited by such tribes, is known as tribal area, and "the sixth schedule", according to Article 244(2) "shall

jeeling hills a scheduled tribe as described in the article? Do the Nepalese of Darjeeling or their usurped name Gorkhas figure in the Register of Scheduled Tribes maintained by the government of India as per the Constitution? As a matter of fact, neither Nepalese nor Gorkhas are a scheduled tribe as their names do not occur in the register. The Nepalese are predominantly Hindus and as such they have the Hindu caste structure with Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Shudras along with various other castes internalised from the Buddhist community.

Ghisingh has appropriated the term Gorkha to mean the Indian Nepalese alone since, by a queer logic, Nepalese denotes a foreigner while Gorkha is Indian. In reality, however, Gorkha was the name of a small principality in the Nepal valley in the 18th century, ruled by the ancestors of the present ruling family of Nepal. They conquered the entire Nepal Valley and much beyond, and shifted the capital to Kathmandu. The recruiting officers of the British Army popularised the term. Ghisingh has the habit of creating his own history and anthropology and effectively selling them to his opponents.

The Lepchas and Bhutias of Darjeeling are, however, scheduled tribes and their names do figure in the register of scheduled tribes of government of India and Darjeeling historically is Lepcha country. But they constitute only five to six per cent of the total population of Darjeeling, and under the pressure of Nepalese migration they are now a vanishing tribe. With their meagre strength the council area cannot be designated as tribal. Ghisingh foresaw this and submitted before the West Bengal Backward Caste Commission that the Gorkhas are a separate category and they should be declared a scheduled tribe.

Though nothing can be said with certainty, the connivance of the state and the central governments can be presumed. That the West Bengal Backward Class Commission, in an unusual move, visited Darjeeling to ascertain the status of the Gorkhas is an indicator.

### Ominous signs

Signing of the memorandum of understanding with Ghisingh and an agreement to amend the Constitution is another. These straws in the wind make one feel that there is something more than what meets the eye. The inclusion of Gorkha as a scheduled tribe will precede the requisite amendment to the Constitution for making the Sixth Schedule applicable to the Darjeeling hills.

How far is categorisation of Gorkha as a tribe legally and constitutionally tenable? As noted, the omnibus name Gorkha encompasses all castes of the Hindu society and under no circumstances can they be called tribal. A state government commission may be manipulated for politically expedient recommendation and the rest is simple as long as both the state and the central governments have common interests.

So at a convenient moment the plan will be executed to amend the Constitution for the Sixth Schedule to favour Ghisingh. Then another partition of West Bengal for creation of a Gorkhaland state is a matter of time.

# No contest really

Ghisingh keeps Left and Congress guessing

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The assembly election in Darjeeling proves all over again that Subash Ghisingh has put himself in an unassailable position against both the Left Front and the Congress. He has virtually ensured that the Gorkha National Liberation Front candidates for the three seats in the hills - Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong - will encounter no opposition. The Congress had decided to leave the three seats to the GNLF as a reciprocal gesture after Ghisingh allowed the Congress candidate to get a walkover in the last parliamentary poll. The Left, on the other hand, has always expected GNLF support for its candidate, Ashok Bhattacharya, in Siliguri as a favour for non-interference in the affairs of the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council. This time, too, the Left may find it tough going in Siliguri but for the GNLF's support especially in segments like Mirik which fall within the Siliguri constituency. The trouble is that the Congress also expects GNLF support in Siliguri. The wily hill leader can be trusted to keep both sides guessing and do only what is in his own interest.

Support for the Congress candidate in the parliamentary election could be linked to Ghisingh's effort to have the Hill Council included in the Sixth Schedule that would result in a larger flow of Central funds. On the other hand, the tacit understanding with the Left with regard to the Siliguri contest can be construed as a favour granted to Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee after the chief minister allowed Ghisingh to continue as caretaker chairman of the Hill Council more than a year after its term had expired. The state government no longer talks seriously of holding elections to the Hill Council. This means that Ghisingh has played his cards so well that he doesn't have to worry about opposition groups in the hills or about discontent that is seen to be building up over the Hill Council's failure to bring about improvement in basic civic amenities like drinking water, power supply and maintenance of roads. The assembly poll scenario confirms that as a strategist he has no rival.

15 APR 2005

THE STATESMAN

# The problem that refuses to go away

## The issue of a separate Telangana is once again dominating the political discourse in Andhra Pradesh? Will a solution ever come?

MA 10-11  
of Hyderabad  
Telangana

S. Nagesh Kumar

THE ISSUE of a separate Telangana has again come to centre stage in Andhra Pradesh politics. Recently, BJP president Rajinath Singh said his party would support a Bill on Telangana provided the Congress tabled it in Parliament.

For Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, the renewed wrangling could not have come at a more inopportune time — when he is aggressively wooing investors to park their funds in the State. At a platform of prospective investors in Bangalore he declared that Andhra Pradesh would remain united and that the prospects of the formation of Telangana were “not bright.” This should help cool temperatures.

The chairman of the UPA sub-committee on Telangana, Pranab Mukherjee, seemed to have put paid to hopes of an early solution through his statement during the 82nd AICC plenary in Hyderabad that the issue, hanging fire since 1956, was not simple to resolve.

In October 2000, the Congress Working Committee felt there were valid reasons for creating the States of Telangana and Vidharbha. However, that could lead to a demand for constituting a second States Reorganisation Commission (SRC).

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), in the forefront of the struggle for a separate State, is opposed to a second SRC. It has threatened to pull out both its representatives from the Union Cabinet if there is no concrete commitment on the issue by May 10. Party chief K. Chandrasekhara Rao has

vowed not to visit Hyderabad until the State is created.

The BJP rejected Mr. Mukherjee’s statement that it had not proffered its opinion on Telangana. Firstly, it said, the party had received no communication from Mr. Mukherjee. Secondly, it said, the UPA sub-committee on Telangana had no official sanctity and so the BJP was not obliged to reply. From 1998 when its State unit passed a resolution in Kakinada backing a separate State till now, the BJP has been ambivalent on Telangana. The BJP, a part of the National Democratic Alliance that took the initiative in creating Uttaranchal, Jharkhand, and Chhattisgarh, has kept its resolution on Telangana in cold storage for eight years. Now, it has de-frosted the resolution — evidently to end its isolation after being dumped by the TDP following the 2004 electoral debacle. Mr. Rajinath Singh admitted that the BJP did not espouse the Telangana cause since the TDP was opposed to it. This has given new hope to the TRS which has begun knocking on the Congress doors while keeping its options open for a tie-up with the BJP.

The Congress, ever dichotomous on Telangana, has not come out with a forthright stand. This is perhaps part of a game plan to keep the TRS guessing. The Telangana Regional Congress Coordination Committee, headed by K. Keshava Rao who is also the State unit chief, is all for a separate Telangana. Yet this avoids making common cause with the TRS or other parties on any issue concerning Telangana.

The TRS president refused to fight the

2005 municipal elections in alliance with the Congress and received a severe drubbing. Now, with the panchayat polls approaching and under pressure from his party-men, he is trying to build bridges with the Congress. The Congress is also playing along lest the TRS goes with the BJP. At the instance of the AICC, which does not want smaller parties in the UPA to part ways, the State Congress chief is holding parleys with Mr. Chandrasekhara Rao. Quite a turnaround for the two parties which were at each other’s throats after the TRS Ministers quit the State Cabinet last year.

### Long history

Since the separatist agitation in 1969, the Telangana issue has come in handy for politicians to stage comebacks or float new parties. In the 1971 mid-term elections, the Telangana Praja Samiti emerged as a credible alternative to the Congress, winning 10 of the 16 seats in the region. Before long, the Samiti merged with the Congress and in 1978 its prime moving force, M. Channa Reddy, became Chief Minister. Those were the days of high emotion and the yearning of the people of Telangana to break free of the domination of the State’s other regions and get their due share of economic prosperity was genuine.

Twenty-five years later, Mr. Chandrasekhara Rao broke away from the Telugu Desam and formed the TRS. He won 26 Assembly and five Lok Sabha seats. Unlike in 1971 when separatism was a live issue, the issues were different in 2004. The Congress generously allotted 45 Assembly seats to the

TRS and the anti-TDP sentiment among the voters helped. A year later, however, the TRS received a severe drubbing.

At the core of the entire issue is the region’s backwardness. Successive Governments have not addressed it adequately. The Krishna and the Godavari rivers cut across the region but, barring a few pockets, the farmers depend largely on the monsoon. The present Government has taken up a string of irrigation projects such as Sripadasagar but most of the projects have been affected by controversy over alleged corruption in the tender process.

Indira Gandhi balanced the conflicting demands of the Telangana and Andhra regions by evolving a six-point formula and later issuing a Presidential Order in 1975 to safeguard Telangana’s interests in employment and education. In the last three decades, the Presidential Order has been violated many times. As a result, hundreds of employees from coastal Andhra and other parts of Telangana are now working in Hyderabad. Some of these violations are now being rectified beginning with the transfer of 3,000 policemen out of Hyderabad amid protests by Congress MLAs from the Andhra region.

Will a separate State become a reality? Going by the statements of Congressmen, the answer lies with UPA chairperson Sonia Gandhi. A false move could prove hazardous. In arriving at a decision, Ms. Gandhi will have only the versions of political parties but no authentic record of the people’s pulse as it has not really been measured in the recent past.

# Relevance of autonomy

**T**HE last two decades of the 20th century witnessed the creation of three Autonomous Development Councils within the Indian federation. They are the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Autonomous Council (1988), the Ladakh Autonomous Development Council (1995) and the Bodo Autonomous Development Council (1993). The creation of ADCs restructured and decentralised our federation, which consists of the Union and the federated units (states). ADCs are basically district level councils created within a district under the traditional district level administration. They are mainly responsible for taking care of development activities within their functional jurisdiction while the district administration, as a representative of the state, looks after the general administration of the district.

ADCs were formed after taking into account factors like geographical isolation, a distinct regional identity and some special problems that are different from those of mainstream India. They are the result of a long ethnic struggle to regain a measure of political autonomy from the ruling state. They have been created on the basis of the belief that decentralisation of power would give a boost to developmental activities and meet the aspirations of the people. The aim of ADCs, thus, is the socio-economic and cultural advancement of the local people within the established council.

## Ladakh Autonomous Development Council

Ladakh is a region located in the Trans-Himalayas and is geographically isolated from the rest of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Consequently, the people of the area have a distinct regional identity in terms of ethnic composition, religion and linguistics. The people of Ladakh demanded an effective local institutional arrangement that could help promote and accelerate the pace of progress and equitable all round growth and development, and have regard for its unique geo-climatic and locational conditions and stimulate the full participation of the community in the decision-making process. The demand was to regain a measure of autonomy from J&K.

The history of the struggle can be traced to the loss of independence of Ladakh in the 1830s, and more immediately to the 1930s and particularly to the years after the accession of the state to newly independent India. Initially, the

struggle had been intermittent and thus failed to make much progress. It was, however, resumed in 1989 when the Ladakh Buddhist Association launched a violent communal agitation. Finally, negotiations with the Central and state governments followed and a compromise was reached in 1995. The compromise was based on the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council model. The Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council Act, 1995, was enacted and thus was formed LAHDC.



The creation of LAHDC has, however, not been able to address the aspirations and needs of the Ladakhis over the years. Buddhists in Ladakh still feel they suffer discrimination in every field of development and are being treated as second-class citizens. There is an effort to resume the agitation for total secession from Kashmir. This was the original demand of the people.

## Bodo Autonomous Development Council

The Bodo problem is multidimensional in nature. The term Bodo refers to a tribal group residing in the state of Assam. The group is often regarded as autochthonous. The movement initially started with a cry for identity that had supposedly been endangered by the myopic outlook

## A new chapter in the history of Darjeeling Hills was added on 6 December 2005, following a tripartite agreement between the DGHAC, West Bengal government and the Centre

of the then chauvinistic groups ruling Assam. Subsequently, the question of ascertaining political rights and constitutional safeguards arose. There were protests against the exploitation and deprivation of the common man by the upper classes. The struggle against anti-Bodo cultural chauvinism intensified in the 1960s. Illegal immigration from the surrounding regions amplified the situation.

Today, the right of self-determination – with various interpretations, from political autonomy to complete freedom, that is, a separate nation – is important for the Bodo community. The common goal of all Bodo organisations is the creation of a separate state of Bodoland. The Bodo movement took a violent turn from 1980 when a vigorous mass movement started in the region. The move-

ment came to an end in 1993 with the signing of the Bodo accord. This treaty led to the creation of the Bodoland Autonomous Council. The Bodo accord and the Bodo council could not, however, keep pace with the aspirations and requirements of the Bodos. The Bodo movement has been revived today.

## Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Autonomous Council

Darjeeling, currently the northernmost district of West Bengal, was an integral part of the kingdom of Sikkim till 1706. It was ruled by Bhutan, Nepal and British India in the subsequent years before it was permanently taken over by the Government of India after 1947. As a result, the region evolved as a multi-ethnic, multi-cultural and multi-lingual area. People living in the region had to pass through difficult phases in the process of development and importantly, never formed a part of the mainstream development process. The district has seen ethnic insurgencies since 1907. The Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Autonomous Council was formed under a state Act in July 1988.

The 1990s saw radical changes in the political scenario of Darjeeling. The DGHAC was granted autonomy. With the passage of time, over-confidence set in among the councillors of

Darjeeling. Easy wins in elections ensured the councillors' lethargy. There was frequent mismanagement of funds. Naturally, development work has failed to yield the desired results. A new chapter in the history of Darjeeling Hills was added on 6 December 2005, following a tripartite agreement between the DGHAC, West Bengal government and the GoI. It was formally agreed that Darjeeling Hills would be included in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, with two more mauzas to be the part of the updated council. There will be some minor changes here and there and a revision of electoral representation in the updated council. Further, as earlier, the offices of the district magistrate and superintendent of police will be outside the control and direction of the new council.

The complexities in the functioning of ADCs and the prevailing socio-economic and political situation therein compel us to question the very existence of ADCs in the country.

Some of the pertinent queries that must be clarified in this connection are:

What is the political status of ADCs? Are ADCs appropriate development units? What is the planning and development status of ADC areas within the Indian federation? Do ADCs fit the geographical, historical, socio-cultural and political constraints of the concerned people? Who is being empowered here, on what basis and to what extent?

Mere institutional and legal empowerment of local communities does not address in itself problems of social justice and inequality, and certainly does not lead naturally or necessarily to better policies. We also need to know that devolution and decentralisation are indispensable components of any attempt to move towards social justice and sustainability. The challenge ahead is to reconceptualise the very concept of community representation and institutional arrangements that we often envision in the context of their relevance to the regions and the people therein so that inter-regional as well as intra-regional disparities/conflicts are reduced and sustainable development is attained. Besides, the scientific allocation of resources and respective functions also have to be worked out systematically.

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# Hills inch closer to Schedule Six

HT Correspondent  
Kolkata, March 16

THE STATE Assembly passed an all-party resolution on Thursday, urging the Centre to amend Article 244 of the Indian Constitution in such a manner that a new autonomous council can be set up under the Sixth Schedule for the hills of Darjeeling.

The Congress and the Trinamool Congress have readily agreed to this proposal, which was first floated by chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee. The other parties which constitute the Opposition in the Hills, however, have raised objections to this move. They feel that it would pave the way for ethnic violence in Darjeeling by dividing the people of the hills into tribals and non-tribals. As a result, the Opposition parties have dubbed the proposed Bill as Gorkha Community Division Bill.

"It is a sinister design by the Left Front, which still follows the colonial policy of divide and rule. GNLF chief Subash Ghisingh, being a CPI(M) backer, is party to this policy," said Madan Tamang, president, All

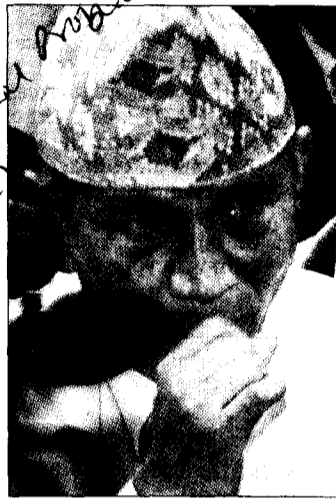
India Gorkha League (AIGL).

Ghisingh, in fact, is indeed in agreement with the proposal, something that has not gone down well with everybody. One of his detractors is GNLF MLA D.K. Pradhan, who recently fell out with his boss. Pradhan said the move could be supported only if the entire Gorkha community was accorded tribal status.

"We were initially born as Nepalis who are living in independence in India. Now, the government wants to further distance us by giving us tribal and non-tribal tags," Pradhan said. "The non-tribal Nepalis will now be strangers in their own land, with no amount of laws being able to protect them," he added.

Another quarter that is in vehement opposition of the Bill is the All India Scheduled Castes Association (AISCA), which is dissatisfied that no seats would be reserved for the scheduled castes in the Sixth Schedule. "The scheduled caste community should stand up in search of justice," said Kaman Singh Ramudamu, president, AISCA.

Apart from the GNLF, the Congress and the Trinamool



Subash Ghisingh

Congress, the Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists (CPRM) is also supporting the move. But while the party welcomed the bill, it seemed dissatisfied with the processing of the Sixth Schedule draft. Their main grievance is that Ghisingh, although an appointed administrator of the DGHC, is still a signatory.

The GNLF itself is maintaining a stoic silence over the issue. "Why do we have to comment or react to the development when the sixth schedule is our political demand, which the government was moving a motion to support," said Shanta Chhetri, a GNLF MLA from Kurseong. His counterparts from Darjeeling were similarly satisfied.

Oppn Backs State Legislative Assembly Proposal Too, GNLF MLA Refuses To Lend Sup

# Darjeeling hill council plan gets no

Our Bureau  
KOLKATA

**T**HE West Bengal Legislative Assembly on Thursday passed a proposal mooted by chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee to set up a new autonomous council for the hill areas of Darjeeling district under Schedule VI to the Constitution of India and urged the government to take appropriate steps to amend Article 244 of the Constitution without any delay.

All the political parties, including the Opposition — Trinamool Congress, and the Congress supported Mr Bhattacharjee's move to pass the proposal without any objections in the state Assembly. DK Pradhan of the Gorkha National Liberation Front (GNLF) was the only MLA who refused to lend his support behind Mr Bhattacharjee and complained that the "entire Gorkha community will be divided into two groups — tribal and non-tribal once the proposal was passed in the House." Mr Pradhan also apprehended that the hills will witness an ethnic violence once such a proposal was passed.

Moving the proposal, Mr Bhattacharjee said a memorandum of settlement (MoS) which was known as the Darjeeling Accord was signed on August 22, 1988 between the then Union home minister, chief minister of West Bengal and the GNLF president, Subash Ghisingh to give shape to various demands of the people in the hills.

"Following the settlement, the GNLF had agreed to drop its demand for a separate statehood for Gorkha people and an autonomous hill council, termed as Darjeeling Gorkha hill Council (DGHC) was set up under the DGHC Act, 1988," Mr Bhattacharjee informed.

He said, over the past few years, the administrator of DGHC (Mr Ghising) and other political parties had been demanding constitutional status for DGHC and a series of meetings were held between the Union government, the West Bengal government and Mr Ghising. As a result of the move, an MoS between the three parties was signed on December 6, 2005. Following the MoS, the existing DGHC will have to be replaced by electing a self-government council under Schedule VI to the Constitution of India, the chief minister said.

Mr Bhattacharjee informed of his talk with Prime Minister Manmohan Singh during his recent visit to the Capital on March 10 regarding the issue and "the Prime Minister has expressed his pleasure over our move to pass the proposal." Responding to Mr Pradhan's apprehension that passing of the proposal by the state Assembly will draw a line of difference between the tribal and non-tribal population in the hills and also instigate an ethnic violence, the chief minister said: "The intention of our government is to maintain peace and stability in the hills and help the hill people to develop the areas."

"Yesterday (Wednesday), I had a talk with Mr Ghising who has also expressed his pleasure over our move," Mr Bhattacharjee told the state Assembly. He also informed that elections in the hills to reconstitute the DGHC will be held after Schedule VI status was accorded to it. "Ghising wants to hold the polls after getting Schedule VI status and we also did not oppose to his move as we don't want to apply force in the hills," he added.

## CPM's not keen to have DGHC polls so

Our Bureau  
KOLKATA

**T**HE CPM in West Bengal is unwilling to antagonise the hill population in Darjeeling, Kalimpong and Kurseong sub-divisions and Subash Ghisingh in particular, before the Assembly elections in the state, beginning April 17.



That is why the CPM-ruled government is not insisting on holding elections to the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council (DGHC) immediately, though the CPM leader in Darjeeling and urban development minister Ashok Bhattacharjee had on a number of occasions, demanded DGHC elections be held without any delay.

The CPM's intentions were reflected clearly in the state Assembly on Thursday when chief minister, Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee declared his government will not put any pressure on the DGHC chief, Mr Ghising to go for polls immediately and will allow him to run the hill council till the three hill sub-divisions got special status under the Schedule VI to the Constitution of India.

"Subash Ghisingh does not want to hold elections to reconstitute the DGHC before getting the status under Schedule VI and we also don't want to apply any force to compel

him to go for polls," Mr Bhattacharjee said in the state Assembly. "Mr Ghisingh wants to go for DGHC polls after getting the status and we also want the same, because applying force will not solve any problem," the chief minister mentioned.

Incidentally, the Constitution allows conferring of special status to backward areas and the people living there. In India, there are seven councils which were formed by offering special status under Schedule VI of the Indian Constitution. The last such council was formed in Asom, when Schedule VI status was given to the Bodo people.

Once this status is given, tribal people living in the particular area begin to enjoy special benefits, including economic support from the Union government. The DGHC chief, Subash Ghisingh, has long been demanding the status for the three hill sub-divisions of Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling, though the people living there comprise only about 35% of the total population in these areas.

The chief minister said on Thursday: "We know that the tribal population in the hills is not more than 35% of the total people living in the area, but there is no constitutional bar in getting a Sixth Schedule status for the three hill sub-divisions even then."

The rebel GNLF MLA in the state Assembly, DK Pradhan

had refused to support Bhattacharjee when he had a proposal to set up autonomous council for Hill areas in Darjeeling district under Schedule VI to the Constitution of India.

"Tribal people are not majority in the three hill divisions and offering a special status to the three hill sub-divisions will draw a line of distinction between the tribal non-tribal population in the area. This might also instigate ethnic violence also," Mr Pradhan said while opposing Bhattacharjee's move.

The chief minister who not want to antagonise Ghisingh, however, refute Pradhan's statement and "The state government has hidden agenda. We want progress of the people in the hill sub-division that is why we don't want to apply force in conducting elections to the DGHC."

The CPM is organisation very weak in the hills of Darjeeling. All the three from Kalimpong, Kurseong and Darjeeling belong to GNLF. Even the urban development minister, Ashok Bhattacharjee, who was elected from the Siliguri Asser segment in Darjeeling district required support from Ghisingh and his men to the polls. This is another reason why the CPM is not ready to antagonise Mr Ghisingh before the Assembly election

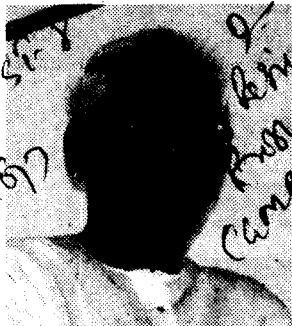
# Hill council motion in House today

**Statesman News Service**

DARJEELING, March 15. — After about three months of signing the memorandum of settlement for including the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council in the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution, the motion on the matter is to be introduced in the Assembly tomorrow.

The MoS was signed between the state government, Centre and administrator of DGHC Subhas Ghisingh on 6 December, 2005 in Darjeeling. The settlement proposes constitutional guarantee to the DGHC in the Sixth Schedule.

It is only after the Assembly adopts a resolu-



Mr Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee

tion on the matter tomorrow that the Centre can go ahead with the process of amending the Constitution — required for the inclusion.

Chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharjee, during his last visit here on 19 February, had blamed the Centre for the delay in the endorsement of the



Mr Subhas Ghisingh

DGHC. "I had written to the Centre recently to go ahead with the move on the matter (Sixth Schedule inclusion). I had told them that time was running out. But they have not replied yet," he said.

The geographical jurisdiction of the DGHC under the Sixth Schedule was to be firmed up within

three months of signing the MoS.

It has not been done yet, despite all the controversy it created with the failure of Mr Ghisingh's assurance that Dooars and Siliguri would be included in the DGHC.

Tomorrow's motion, which is to be moved by Mr Bhattacharjee, will be crucial in that delineation of the new DGHC would be clarified.

Further, the issue of reservation for the Scheduled Caste also hangs in balance.

The SC community here has warned that if the proposed council does not include reservation for them, they would step up their agitation.

16 MAR 2006

THE STATESMAN

# মাওবাদী কায়দায় ডায়ার্সে হামলার ছক কেএলও-র

বিশ্বজ্যোতি ভট্টাচার্য  
● জলপাইগুড়ি

মাওবাদীদের কায়দায় ডায়ার্সের জঙ্গল লাগোয়া প্রত্যন্ত এলাকায় পুলিশের ক্যাম্প হামলা চালিয়ে অস্ত্র লুণ্ঠের ছক কষেছে কেএলও জঙ্গিরাও। সম্প্রতি মালদহ ও জলপাইগুড়িতে ধৃত কয়েক জন জঙ্গি ও লিঙ্কম্যানকে জেরা করে পুলিশ এ নিয়ে তথ্য পেয়েছে।

মালদহে ধৃত প্রথম সারির কেএলও জঙ্গি মালখান সিংহকে জেরা করে পুলিশ জেনেছে নাশকতার ছক কষতে ১২ জন প্রশিক্ষিত জঙ্গিকে উত্তরবঙ্গে পাঠিয়েছেন কেএলও 'কমান্ডার' জীবন সিংহ। পুলিশ সূত্রের খবর, ওই দলে কুমারগ্রামের ৪, দার্জিলিং জেলার ২, কোচবিহারের ৪ ও দক্ষিণ দিনাজপুরের ২ জন জঙ্গি রয়েছে। তাদের বাংলাদেশে প্রশিক্ষণ দেওয়া হয়েছে। ওই তথ্য জানতে পেরে জলপাইগুড়িতে পুলিশ কর্তারা প্রতি বিধানসভা এলাকায় নিরাপত্তা টেলে সাজার পরিকল্পনা নিয়েছেন। জেলার অতিরিক্ত পুলিশ সুপার তাপস দাস বলেন, "ভোটের মুখে জঙ্গি তৎপরতা নিয়ে বিভিন্ন তথ্য মিলেছে। এলাকায় নজরদারিও বাড়ানো হয়েছে। নিশ্চিত নিরাপত্তার জন্য আরও বিশেষ কিছু ব্যবস্থা নেওয়া হচ্ছে।"

পুলিশ জেনেছে, ওই কেএলও জঙ্গিরা ষষ্ঠ ব্যাচের। দলের সদস্যদের বয়স ১৮ থেকে ৩০ বছরের মধ্যে। দলের নেতা হিসাবে নটরাজ মুর্মু ওরফে নরেশ বর্মনের নাম মিলেছে। শিলিগুড়ির মাটিগাড়ার বাসিন্দা নরেশ দীর্ঘদিন ধরে

বাংলাদেশে লুকিয়ে ছিল। তার নেতৃত্বে জঙ্গি দলটি চোরাপথে বাংলাদেশ থেকে দক্ষিণ দিনাজপুরের সীমান্ত পেরিয়ে উত্তরবঙ্গে চুকেছে। কয়েকটি উপদলে ভাগ হয়ে তারা এখন ডায়ার্স এলাকায় আত্মগোপন করতে সক্রিয়। ওই জঙ্গিরা ভোটের মুখে হামলা চালিয়ে অস্ত্র সংগ্রহ ছাড়াও অস্ত্র জ্ঞান দিতে সক্রিয় বলে খবর। মালখান সিংহ জেরায় বলেছেন, কয়েক জন জঙ্গিকে সঙ্গে নিয়ে নরেশের ভুটানে যাওয়ার পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে। ভুটানের অবস্থা দেখে অসমের বঙ্গাইগাঁও হয়ে জঙ্গি নেতাকে বাংলাদেশে ফিরে যাওয়ার নির্দেশ দিয়েছেন জীবন সিংহ।

ওই তথ্য জানার পরে ভুটান সংলগ্ন থানাগুলিকে সতর্ক করা হয়েছে। ভোটের মুখে ঝুঁকি না-নিয়ে জেলা পুলিশ কর্তারা নির্বাচন কমিশনকেও জেলার পরিস্থিতির কথা জানিয়েছেন। সম্প্রতি বেলপাহাড়িতে পুলিশকর্মীদের উপরে মাওবাদীদের আক্রমণের ঘটনার পরে পুলিশ কর্তারা ক্যাম্পগুলিতে কর্মী সংখ্যা বাড়ানোয় জোর দিয়েছেন। প্রয়োজনীয় সশস্ত্র পুলিশ পাওয়া না-গেলে কম কর্মী দিয়ে যে ক্যাম্পগুলি চলছে সেগুলি গুটিয়ে ফেলার কথাও ভাবা হচ্ছে। কয়েকটি ক্যাম্প বন্ধও করে দেওয়া হয়েছে। এক পদস্থ কর্তা বলেন, "আয়োজন সংগ্রহের জন্য মাওবাদীদের কায়দায় দুর্বল পুলিশ ক্যাম্পগুলিতে কে এল ও জঙ্গিদের হামলা চালানোর খবর মিলেছে। স্পর্শকাতর এলাকায় দুর্বল ক্যাম্পগুলি তুলে দেওয়ার পাশাপাশি আধা সামরিক বাহিনী মোতায়েনের পরিকল্পনা রয়েছে।"



# তেলেঙ্গানা নিয়ে এখন বিজেপির কাছে শ্রমমন্ত্রী

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা, নয়াদিল্লি, ২২  
ফেব্রুয়ারি: পৃথক তেলেঙ্গানা রাজ্যের  
প্রশ্নে এখন ইউপিএ সরকারের  
শিরঃপীড়ার কারণ হয়ে উঠেছেন  
কেন্দ্রীয় শ্রমমন্ত্রী তথা টিআরএস নেতা  
চন্দ্রশেখর রাও। পৃথক তেলেঙ্গানা রাজ্য  
গঠনের জন্য যে ইউপিএ সরকারের  
বিশেষ সদিচ্ছা নেই তা আগেই ঠাণ্ডর  
করেছেন চন্দ্রশেখর। তাই তেলেঙ্গানা  
প্রশ্নে সমর্থন জোটটিতে তিনি এখন  
বিজেপির দ্বারস্থ।

বিজেপি সভাপতি রাজনাথ  
সিংহের সঙ্গে চন্দ্রশেখর গত কাল এ  
ব্যাপারে একটি দীর্ঘ বৈঠক করেন তিনি।  
তেলেঙ্গানায় পূর নির্বাচনে ইতিমধ্যেই  
তাঁর দল টিআরএস বিজেপির সঙ্গে  
জোট বেঁধে ভোটে লড়েছে। এমনকী  
বিজেপির বহিষ্কৃত নেত্রী উমা ভারতী  
গত মাসে হায়দরাবাদে গেলে তাঁকে  
নিজের বাড়িতে নিমন্ত্রণ করেন রাও।

উমাকে তিনি প্রণামও করেন।  
হায়দরাবাদে এআইসিসি অধিবেশনের  
আগে সেই ছবি স্থানীয় সংবাদপত্রে বেশ  
বড় করে ছাপাও হয়। ফলে সরকারের  
শরিক দল হয়ে ইউপিএ নেতৃত্বকে  
অস্বস্তিতে ফেলেন রাও। পরিস্থিতিতে  
আজ প্রধানমন্ত্রী চন্দ্রশেখরকে ডেকে  
তাঁর ক্ষোভ প্রশমনের চেষ্টা করেন।

তবে প্রধানমন্ত্রী যতই উদ্যোগী হন,  
রাজনৈতিক সূত্রের খবর, এখন  
বেপরোয়া হয়ে উঠেছেন চন্দ্রশেখর।  
এমনকী প্রয়োজনে ইউপিএ ছেড়ে  
তেলেঙ্গানার দাবিকে সামনে রেখে  
অঙ্কে বিজেপির সমর্থনে পৃথক মোর্চা

গড়তে পারেন তেলেঙ্গানা রাষ্ট্রীয়  
কংগ্রেস (টিআরএস) সর্বাধিনায়ক। এই  
প্রেক্ষিতে গতকাল বিজেপি সভাপতির  
সঙ্গে চন্দ্রশেখরের বৈঠক তাৎপর্যপূর্ণ  
বলেই মনে করা হচ্ছে।

গত লোকসভা নির্বাচনে টিআরএস  
কংগ্রেসের সঙ্গে জোট গড়ায় অঙ্কে  
বিজেপির ভোট ব্যাঞ্চে ধস নামে। পৃথক  
তেলেঙ্গানা রাজ্য গঠনের দাবিতে  
কংগ্রেস সমর্থন দেবে, এই মর্মেই  
ইউপিএ-তে সামিল হন চন্দ্রশেখর।

কিন্তু সরকার যে এখনই পৃথক  
তেলেঙ্গানা রাজ্য গঠন নিয়ে উৎসাহী  
নয় তা বেশ স্পষ্ট। কেন্দ্রীয়  
প্রতিরক্ষামন্ত্রী প্রণব মুখোপাধ্যায়ের  
নেতৃত্বে এ জন্য একটি কমিটি গড়া  
হলেও কৌশলগত ভাবেই বিষয়টি নিয়ে  
অত্যন্ত ধীর গতিতে এগোচ্ছে কেন্দ্রীয়  
সরকার। কিন্তু এতে রাজনৈতিক ভাবে  
মুশকিলে পড়েছে টিআরএস। কারণ যে  
বিষয়টিকে সামনে রেখে দলের নেতারা  
লোকসভা ভোটে জিতেছেন বা কেন্দ্রে  
মন্ত্রী হয়েছেন সেই প্রশ্নে এখনও পর্যন্ত  
অগ্রগতিই হয়নি। ফলে সম্প্রতি পুরসভা  
ও পঞ্চায়েত ভোটে জেতা আসন  
তাদের হাতছাড়া হয়ে গিয়েছে।  
বেগতিক দেখে এখন বিজেপির সঙ্গে  
সমঝোতা করে তেলেঙ্গানার দাবি নিয়ে  
ফের নতুন করে আলোচনা নামতে  
চাইছে টিআরএস। বিজেপি সূত্রের  
খবর, কাল রাজনাথের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে  
চন্দ্রশেখর এ-ও বলেন, তেলেঙ্গানা রাজ্য  
গঠনের জন্য যে কোনও স্বার্থ জলাঞ্জলি  
দিতে তিনি ও তাঁর দল প্রস্তুত।

21 FEB 2006

ANADABAZAR

# Telangana not on plenary agenda: A.P. Congress chief

"Any reference to region to be confined to development"

W. Chandrakanth

**HYDERABAD:** The 82nd AICC plenary will not discuss the Telangana statehood issue at all as it is not even listed on its agenda. Any reference to Telangana could at best be made by the State's leaders vis-a-vis its development, as distinct from statehood for the region, a demand raised by the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS).

Making this clear in an interview to *The Hindu* here on Wednesday, APCC president K.Keshava Rao said Defence Minister Pranab Mukherji who heads the UPA sub-committee on Telangana had indicated that the party would express its views on the issue at the plenary.

But, beyond Mr. Mukherji's statement, little could be expected in the form of a resolution.

The party's rules clearly laid

down that for any resolution to be included in the agenda for the plenary had to be submitted at least one month before the event.

"Since nothing of this sort has been done, there is no question of adopting a resolution," he said.

Mr. Keshava Rao said there was no change in the Congress party's stand on Telangana.

It had been consistent in reiterating the party's sympathy for the cause. "Our understanding with the TRS is confined to considering the plea for constituting a second States Reorganisation Commission (SRC). The UPA sub-committee is seeking the opinion of all political parties in the country on this issue. Any decision will be taken only through consensus. In its absence, the debate on Telangana will be confined only to its devel-

opment," he said.

Referring to the strident stance of the Central Steering Committee (CSC) member G. Venkataswamy and other party leaders that separate Telangana was not possible under the UPA, he did not agree with the suggestion that this was an orchestrated campaign.

"At the same time, our statements have not been disapproved by the high command," he said.

Further, the *raison d'etre* of all such demands was the underdevelopment of the region and hence the emphasis on development of all regions, he added. "The plenary is going to discuss extensively the issue of balanced development of all regions including the irrigation programmes. Hence, we don't expect anything else to happen at this juncture," he said.