

Ushering in Peace with Peace



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1st January 2009 witnessed blasts in Guwahati ahead of Home Minister P. Chidambaram's visit despite high security, as claimed by the state government. In the wake of the blasts, P. Chidambaram said that the Assam government had clue of miscreant activities but, were not able to able to avert the blasts. As such, the law and order situation of the state had to be handled by the Union Home Ministry. Whether CM Tarun Gogoi and his council of ministers felt pinched is not known, but mature citizens have understood the tone of sarcasm in the Home Minister's remark. It also reflects that P. Chidambaram has gouged the lack of will of the state government to tackle insurgency in earnest.

It is said that to tame an unruly bull, it has to be gripped by the horn. If one gets hold of the tail, it gets even violent and uncontrollable. This simple fact can be seen in the sphere of administration in a wider forum, and is applicable in the case of a far bigger problem.

Assam witnessed a series of killings of family members of leaders of the outlawed United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA) between 1996 to 2001. This was the time period when L.K. Advani was the Union Home Minister and Prafulla Kumar Mahanta was the CM of Assam. Advani took to the tail and believed in killing at the grassroot, which is undemocratic, unfruitful and above all, a heinous crime against humanity. How can one think of bringing in societal peace with violence? The situation can be silenced, but that Silence is no Peace. It might turn out to be a latent volcano in the long run.

On the other hand, present Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram has got hold of the ULFA by its horns, that is, the top leaders. The arrest of the ULFA Chairman Arabinda Rajkhowa is an out and out result of the focus of the Home Minister to bring a peaceful end to the long stretched insurgency wrecked by this mother outfit of all militant groups of Assam. This step might help to bring about a solution without affecting the lives of innocents. No doubt, P. Chidambaram is a stern administrator, but he is equally concerned about the aspect of human approach. He will go down the history of India as one of the finest Home Ministers the country ever had.

The commitment of Home Minister P. Chidambaram to the cause of internal peace of India can be ascertained when he said in Jammu on Oct 14 last, "The Prime Minister has given me the task of finding a solution to the J & K problem... We cannot afford to pass on this issue to generations ahead." He has stressed on humanistic approach in mentioning "quiet diplomacy with all the political groups in Kashmir...We'll build a consensus, which would then be made public."

In the case of Assam, a lasting solution to the insurgency problem can be achieved only when the ministers of the state and the government administration is committed to the cause of peace and order.

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BY PALLAVIBARUA

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