

Violence revisits Assam



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Rituparna Goswami Pande 26 November 2007 21006 views

Violence has revisited Assam with a vengeance. After a comparatively peaceful period once again Assam bleeds. The unfortunate incident of group clash jolted Assam out of its reverie and has triggered a kind of a chain reaction of bandhs, blasts and increased the probability of ethnic clashes. Ethnic clashes were an alien occurrence in Assam till black Saturday dawned upon the people of Assam on the fateful day of November 24.

An allegedly peaceful rally of Adivasi Students' Association demanding the status of Scheduled Tribes status of the Adivasi community turned into a gory battleground for local residents of Beltola area of Guwahati and the rallyists. Hundreds of vehicles, shops and business establishments and residential buildings were damaged. Officially at least one person has been reported killed while around 200 people injured in the clashes. The death toll may go up as 10 people were reported to be in a critical state.

An indefinite curfew was clamped from Basistha Tiniali to Dispur Last gate on Saturday and an eerie silence has taken over the areas as people are unable to come to terms with the incident.

The failure of the administration to bring the situation under control has led the political parties to condemn the government's failure to maintain law and order in the state.

Allegedly, prompt action on the part of the administration could have averted the violent eruption. Another major factor was how some of the adivasi students were allowed to carry bows and arrows in the rally?

However the state government has taken measures to curb further disturbances in the state by ordering the District Commissioners and Superintendents of Police to take adequate steps to prevent the spread of violence in other parts of the state. A 36 hour Assam Bandh had been

called today by the All Adivasi Student's Association in protest of the group clash on Saturday.

Meanwhile two blasts rocked Guwahati last evening near a glass factory in Fatasil Ambari killing one person and another blast occurred in Tinsukia's Manik Hazarika Road killing two people. The police suspect the ULFA behind the blasts.

Taking advantage of the disturbed situation the ULFA has renewed its violent streak in Assam. Today Assam is in a sensitive spot with emotions of the locals and the adivasis running high, hence it's the government's turn now to douse the fires of hatred ignited by people with vested interests and foil the ulterior motives of the enemies of the state. And it's the peoples' turn to show their solidarity by maintaining peace and controlling the situation which has already gone out of hand.

Photo: Security personnel having a strong vigil on 26-11-07 in the Beltola-Survey area, Guwahati, after the mass violence on 24th November.

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BY RITUPARNA GOSWAMI PANDE

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