

Senior Lama for Army rule, UT status for Ladakh

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, JULY 15

LAMA Lobzang, a member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, today demanded separation of Ladakh from Jammu and Kashmir and granting of Union territory status, becoming the most senior Buddhist leader to lend his support to the call.

Accusing the National Conference government of "hatching a conspiracy to terrorise the Buddhist population of the region to flee in panic", the Lama demanded immediate handing over of Ladakh to the Army. "We are going to meet the same fate as the Kashmiri Hindus," he said.

The Lama, who just returned from curfew-bound Leh, told mediapersons that the Buddhists are feeling highly insecure after the recent killing of the three monks by armed persons. He alleged that the insurgents had dumped massive arms inside Ladakh and a large number of trained insurgents had also infiltrated into the area.

Sources say Buddhist leaders are likely to renew their demand for separation of Ladakh in the wake of the state's talks with the Centre on autonomy. A delegation of the Ladakh Buddhist Association (LBA) is likely to camp in Delhi from the next week to press for the demand.

The UT status demand had

earlier been shelved following an agreement between the LBA, Centre and the state government, which had led to the creation of the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

Lama Lobzang alleged that the killing of the three monks was part of a wider plan to spread insurgency in Ladakh, which has so far remained peaceful. He also ruled out the possibility of insurgents striking at the monastery, saying there are no escape routes there. He also ac-

cused the J&K government of inaction after a huge haul of sophisticated arms and ammunition "was retrieved from Turkturk, a village on the Line of Control, two years ago.

Says NC govt has hatched a plot to scare Ladakh Buddhists away and they might meet same fate as Kashmiri Hindus

The Lama alleged that the J&K government has been settling Muslims from Kashmir and Kargil into Leh to "change the demographic complexion of the region". He also accused that the Buddhists are being discriminated against in job recruitments and admission into government colleges, and that religious conversions continued despite protests by Buddhists.

He asked the Centre to hand over the region to the Army for door-to-door search for weapons, allegedly stockpiled by Kashmiri insurgents. "These arms are definitely going to be used against the Buddhists, who don't even possess a single sword," Lobzang told mediapersons.

NC govt antagonistic towards Ladakhis, says Buddhist leader

New Delhi

15 JULY

EMINENT BUDDHIST leader Lama Lobzang today claimed that the present disturbance in Ladakh was in retaliation by the Farooq Abdullah government to the demand of Ladakhis for a separate Union territory status.

Pointing out that the Buddhists of Ladakh had always maintained cordial relations with Muslims, Lobzang, a member of National Commission for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe, told reporters "this is an antagonistic attitude of the state government towards the demand of Ladakhis for Union territory status which led to unfortunate incidents."

Stating that derogatory remarks made by an uneducated office bearer of the Ladakh Buddhist Association against Holy Quran was "in a bad taste and against secular fabric of the Himalayan region", he said "since then the accused had been arrested therefore the action of Muslim community was excessive and deplorable." He said the Buddhist community had no faith in the state government and hence it was the moral responsibility of the Centre to protect lives of minorities in the Leh district.

Lobzang alleged that the ongoing

communal tension in Leh following the killing of three Buddhist monks in Zaskar was part of a conspiracy to divide and rule the Ladakhis on communal lines.

Lobzang also alleged that the state government instead of nabbing the killers of the monks "has unleashed police repression" in the area by arresting people protesting against the incident."

Meanwhile, the funeral of three Buddhist monks, reportedly killed by militants in the Zaskar division of Ladakh district on July 11, will take place tomorrow amidst tight security.

The three monks fell prey to bullets of militants at Rangdum Monastery in Panikar area on Kargil-Zaskar road on Tuesday evening and a monk who had escaped the shooting had reported the matter to police on Wednesday. Lobzang said senior office bearers of Ladakh Buddhist Association and Ladakh monastery from Leh district had left for the area to perform the last rites of the three monks.

He said elaborate security arrangements had been made to allow the proceedings smoothly.

Lobzang said a peace march by the leaders of two communities was also taken out last evening. -

PTI

■ Ladakh leader rules out violence to get UT status

AGENCIES

NEW DELHI, JUNE 24

LADAKHI Buddhists will not take up arms to press for Union territory status for their region, prominent Ladakhi leader Lama Lobzang said here today.

case for Union territory status for the "much neglected" region.

LBA youth wing chief Lobzang Nyantak, during a protest rally in Leh on June 19, had stunned the mostly-Buddhist crowd when he said that if the present trend continued, Ladakhi youths would be compelled to take up arms.

"The decision of the Farooq Abdullah government to discuss the (autonomy) report has caused turmoil in Ladakh," he said, adding that the biggest district in the country was observing a bandh today on the last day of the LBA-led week-long agitation coinciding with the special Assembly session in Srinagar.

"We have been discriminated against and even victimised by the state government. If this continues, we fear that the demographic pattern of Ladakh would soon overshadow Buddhists," he claimed.

The senior monk cited instances where the National Conference government had "manipulated" matters in the field of politics, employment, education, financial assistance etc. "We have also proof to show that Buddhists in the area are steadily being subjected to conversion. Of course, this happens through marriage. But it has connivance from the state government," he added.

He had regretted that despite showing unflinching loyalty to the country and coming to national service during all the wars, Ladakhis have been subject to "discrimination and victimisation".

Lama Lobzang also asked the Centre not to restore the pre-1953 administrative status to the border state, saying that the greater autonomy report being discussed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly would undermine the cultural identity of an "already neglected" Himalayan terrain.

The Ladakhi leader lamented the fact that the cultural commonality Ladakh lacked with the rest of the state merited a Union territory status for the region.

NOMY

J&K

Ladakhis, cherishing our age-old tradition, we cannot think of armed struggle," Lobzang told reporters, while reacting to the Ladakhi Buddhists Association (LBA) youth wing's threat of picking up "AK-47s" for redressal of their decade-old grievances. "Such statements from youth leaders is just a manner of expressing their protest," he said.

However, Lobzang, who is also a member of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, made a strong

...singh that his grandfather was

Lama Lobzang blasts autonomy demand

Daily Excelsior
25/6/2000

Ladakh Buddhists to intensify stir for Union Territory status

From B L Kak

NEW DELHI, June 24: Buddhists of Ladakh have planned to intensify their ongoing agitation for grant of Union Territory status to the trans-Himalayan region. Formal announcement, in this regard, was made by Lama Lobzang, a prominent leader of Ladakh and member of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, on Saturday.

New Delhi's Constitution Club was chosen as the venue for a hurriedly-called press conference, where Lama Lobzang warned that the entire country will have to face traumatic events if the "victimised" Buddhists of Ladakh were allowed to get "finished in a phased manner at the hands of those who want to drastically alter the demographic character of the most sensitive region".

Asserting that the Buddhist community constituted a "clear majority" in Ladakh, Lama Lobzang held the Government policy responsible for "very fast" changes in the demographic pattern of Ladakh. And his prediction: In the near future, Muslims are likely to overshadow Buddhists. His demand: Concerted measures for preserving Buddhist culture and heritage.

Lama Lobzang cited instances of what he termed as "political manipulation" by the J&K Government to support his findings with regard to the "very fast" changes in his homeland's demographic character. His serious allegation: Voters' list was inflated in Kargil district, where, according to him, minors were allowed to cast votes in the Lok Sabha elections.

It is not unknown that Zaskar sub-division of Kargil district is almost entirely Buddhist. But to prevent a Buddhist from getting elected to the State Assembly from Zaskar Assembly constituency, Lama Lobzang alleged, three patwari circles of Kargil sub-division, were tagged on to the Zaskar constituency.

Lama Lobzang admitted that Muslim majority of Kargil district did not support the Buddhists' demand for Union Territory Status to the entire region of Ladakh. "Indifferent attitude

of Kargil Muslims towards the Buddhists' genuine demand will not deter us from pursuing our goal. Indeed, we are determined to make sacrifices for grant of Union Territory status to Ladakh", he said.

Highlighting obvious discrimination against Buddhists in the services, Lama Lobzang regretted that only 4 Ladakhi officers were inducted from the State services into IAS but all of them were Muslims. He also regretted that the same story of discrimination was to be found in the educational field.

The data made available to the Central Government by the aggrieved Buddhists revealed that the number of seats reserved for Ladakh in engineering courses was 8, out of which 7 went to Muslims and just one to Buddhist community during 1997-98 and 1998-99. During those years, six seats in the MBBS course went to Muslims and only two to Buddhists. In the polytechnic at Leh, 23 Muslims were admitted in April 2000 while the number of Buddhist students admitted was only 2.

Another area of contention, Lama Lobzang pointed out, was conversion of 24 Buddhist girls of Leh district to Islam. The 1992 agreement between the Ladakh Buddhist Association and the Ladakh Muslim Association, he recalled, opposed conversions. He deplored that in Kargil district, too, as many as 72 Buddhist boys and girls had been converted to Islam. These conversions, he alleged, had also been facilitated by official connivance and political intrigue by a particular class of society.

Lama Lobzang charged the J&K Government with giving preferential treatment to Muslims in Leh district by way of generous grants and sanctions to Muslim institutions, mosques, etc.

He also deplored that during the current year both Leh and Kargil districts got equal funds, Rs 42 crores each, though Leh district was thrice bigger in area than Kargil district. The Wazir Commission, he pointed out, had recommended creation of 2 new blocks each in the two district, but whereas 2 blocks had been opened in

Kargil, same was not done in Leh district, thereby depriving the Buddhist majority district of Central assistance to the tune of Rs 4 crores annually.

Lama Lobzang urged the Government of India not to consider any demand by the J&K Government for greater autonomy or restoration of pre-1953 position in the State. The situation in Ladakh, he said, had once again become grim and serious over the issue. He also said that the decision of the Farooq Abdullah Government to hold a special session of the State Assembly to discuss the State autonomy committee report had caused a "turmoil" in Ladakh region.

Binny Koul bags prize in letter writing competition

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 24: Binny Koul, a student of class-VIII of Dewan Badrinath Vidya Mandir has been selected for consolation prize of 29th Universal Postal Union letter writing competition.

The competition was held on January 9, 2000. Binny is the only girl selected from the State.

Warm farewell to retiring physical instructor

Excelsior Correspondent

JAMMU, June 24: A warm and touching farewell was accorded to Mr K L Kotwal (Physical Instructor) by the office of the Divisional Youth Services and Sports Office, Jammu, on his attaining age of superannuation recently.

As per a release, speaking on the occasion Mrs Veena Bakshi, Divisional Youth Services and Sports Officer Jammu, recalled the services of Mr Kotwal who has put in over 40 years service in the department.

A memento was also presented to the retiring official by the Divisional Officer wishing him pleasant and happy post-retirement age.

Ladakhi leader cautions Centre against autonomy

By Our Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI, JUNE 24. A prominent leader of Ladakh and member of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Mr. Lama Lobzang, has cautioned the Centre against considering any demand for greater autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir without considering the long-pending demand of the people of Ladakh for Union Territory status.

In a statement here, Mr. Lama Lobzang said the Farooq Abdullah Government's decision to have a special session of the State Assembly to discuss the Autonomy Committee report has caused a turmoil in Ladakh region.

He said there was nothing common between the Ladakh region and the rest of the State in all matters — language, culture, food habits and level of development. He said the demand of the Ladakhis for Union Territory status was fully justified and was imperative to preserve Buddhist culture and heritage.

He alleged discrimination against the Buddhists in Government services, educational institutions and financial assistance. He also said the State Government was giving preferential treatment to Muslims in Leh district by way of grants and sanctions.

Mr. Lama Lobzang claimed that recent conversion of 24 Buddhist girls of Leh district to Islam by allurement was against the 1992 agreement between the Ladakh Buddhist Association and the Ladakh Muslim Association. In Kargil district too, he said, 72 Buddhist boys and girls had been converted to Islam.

दूसरा कश्मीर बन सकता है लेह-लद्दाख क्षेत्र : लोबजेंग

नयी दिल्ली, 15 जुलाई (एजेंसियां)। जम्मू-कश्मीर का लेह-लद्दाख क्षेत्र डोडा और कश्मीर क्षेत्र से हो रही व्यापक पैमाने की घुसपैठ के कारण दूसरा कश्मीर बन सकता है। यह चेतावनी आज राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जाति तथा जनजाति आयोग के सदस्य लामा लोबजेंग ने दी।

यहां कांस्टीट्यूशन क्लब में जम्मू और कश्मीर स्वायत्तता प्रस्ताव उसके निहितार्थ विषय पर आयोजित विचार गोष्ठी को संबोधित करते हुए श्री लोबजेंग ने कहा कि अनुमान से नौ से बारह हजार लोग कुली के वेश में लेह-लद्दाख तथा जांस्कर में प्रवेश कर गये हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि तुरंत से भारी मात्रा में अत्याधुनिक हथियार तथा गोला बारूद बरामद हुआ है और यदि सघन तलाशी अभियान चलाया जाए तो और भी ज्यादा हथियार तथा गोला बारूद बरामद किया जा सकता है।

जाने-माने बौद्ध नेता लाम लोबजेंग ने आज दावा किया कि लद्दाख में वर्तमान गड़बड़ी एक पृथक केंद्र शासित दर्जे की लद्दाखियों की मांग पर फारूक अब्दुल्ला सरकार द्वारा की गयी बदले की कार्रवाई है। राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जाति और

जनजाति आयोग के सदस्य श्री लोबजेंग ने संवाददाताओं से बातचीत करते हुए कहा कि लद्दाख के बौद्धों ने मुसलमानों के साथ हमेशा सौहार्दपूर्ण संबंध रखे हैं। उन्होंने कहा कि केंद्र शासित दर्जे की लद्दाखियों की मांग के प्रति राज्य सरकार का यह विरोधी रवैया है जिसके कारण यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण वारदात हुई। उन्होंने कहा कि पवित्र कुरान के खिलाफ लद्दाख बौद्ध एसोसिएशन के एक अभियुक्त प्रदाधिकारी द्वारा की गयी अपमानजनक टिप्पणी हिमालय के इस क्षेत्र के धर्मनिरपेक्ष स्वरूप के विरुद्ध है। उन्होंने कहा कि हालांकि अभियुक्त को गिरफ्तार कर लिया गया लेकिन मुस्लिम समुदाय की कार्रवाई निंदनीय है।

श्री लोबजेंग ने कहा कि बौद्ध समुदाय का राज्य सरकार में विश्वास नहीं है और इसलिये यह केंद्र की नैतिक जिम्मेदारी है कि वह लेह जिले में अल्पसंख्यकों की रक्षा करे। उन्होंने आरोप लगाया कि जंस्कार में तीन बौद्ध भिक्षुओं की हत्या के बाद लेह में जारी साम्प्रदायिक तनाव साम्प्रदायिक आधार पर लद्दाखियों में फूट डालो शासन करने की साजिश का हिस्सा है। श्री लोबजेंग ने आरोप लगाया कि राज्य सरकार ने बौद्ध भिक्षुओं के

हत्याओं को पकड़ने की बजाय इस वारदात का विरोध कर रहे लोगों को गिरफ्तार करके 'पुलिस बत्तीझन' किया।

इस बीच आतंकवादियों के हाथों मारे गये तीन बौद्ध भिक्षुओं का अंतिम संस्कार कड़ी सुरक्षा व्यवस्था के बीच कर दिया जायेगा। तीनों बौद्ध भिक्षु कार्गिल-जंस्कार मार्ग पर पाणिक्तर इलाके में रंगदूम मठ में 11 जुलाई को आतंकवादियों की गोलियों का निशाना बने हैं और आतंकवादियों की गोलियों से बच निकले एक बौद्ध भिक्षु ने अगले दिन पुलिस को इस वारदात की जानकारी दी। श्री लोबजेंग ने बताया कि तीन बौद्ध भिक्षुओं के अंतिम संस्कार के लिये लेह जिले से लद्दाख बौद्ध एसोसिएशन और लद्दाख मठ के वरिष्ठ पदाधिकारी रवाना हो गये हैं।

उन्होंने बताया कि अंतिम संस्कार के लिये व्यापक सुरक्षा प्रबंध किये गये हैं। उन्होंने बताया कि लेह में साम्प्रदायिक सौहार्द बनाये रखने के लिये दोनों समुदायों के नेताओं ने कल शाम शांति प्रार्थना किया। बौद्ध भिक्षुओं की हत्या के बाद साम्प्रदायिक हिंसा से बचने के लिये जम्मू-कश्मीर सरकार ने कर्फ्यू लागू किया है।

दैनिक जागरण, नई दिल्ली, 16 जुलाई 2000

लेह-लद्दाख क्षेत्र घुसपैठ के चलते दूसरा कश्मीर बन सकता है : लामा लोबजेंग

नई दिल्ली, 15 जुलाई (एजेंसियां)। जम्मू-कश्मीर का लेह-लद्दाख क्षेत्र डोडा और कश्मीर क्षेत्र से हो रही व्यापक पैमाने की घुसपैठ के कारण दूसरा कश्मीर बन सकता है। यह चेतावनी आज राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जाति तथा जनजाति आयोग के सदस्य लामा लोबजेंग ने दी।

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'Peaceful struggle for Ladakh's UT status to continue'

THE BUDDHIST leaders have ruled out any armed struggle to press for Union Territory (UT) status for Ladakh, but cautioned the Centre not to concede the Jammu and Kashmir Government's demand for restoration of the pre-1953 position in the State.

Addressing a Press conference here on Saturday, prominent Buddhist leader Lama Lobzang said the people of Ladakh would continue their peaceful agitation until the Centre accepted the demand for UT status for the region.

Referring to the Ladakh Buddhist Association Youth Wing's threat of picking up arms for redressal of their age-old grievances, Lama Lobzang said, "Such statement from youth leaders is just a manner of expressing their protest."

HTC, New Delhi

WEDNESDAY JUNE 28, 2000

'Ladakh firm on fight for UT status'

Pioneer News Service

New Delhi

STATING THAT Ladakh would never agree to remain with Jammu&Kashmir if the Centre conceded autonomy, senior leader and member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Lama Lobzang expressed anguish at the greater autonomy resolution adopted by the Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

Ladakh is determined to free itself from the clutches of the National Conference Government and carry on its struggle for Union Territory status, Lama Lobzang informed on Tuesday.

Urging the Prime Minister to adopt a firm attitude towards anti-national people, Mr Lobzang cautioned the Centre against the dangers of acceding to Chief Minister Farooq Abdullah's wishes.

८ जनसत्ता, दिल्ली, २८ जून, २०००

नहीं है। साल भर पहले ही वहां से सीमा पार के हमलावरों को खदेड़ा गया था। अभी भी काफी बड़ी तादाद में वहां विदेशी हमलावर मौजूद हैं। इसलिए यह समय इस तरह की बातों के लिए ठीक नहीं है। लद्दाखी नेता और राष्ट्रीय अनुसूचित जाति एवं जनजाति आयोग के सदस्य लामा लोबजांग ने कहा कि यह प्रस्ताव पूरे लद्दाख क्षेत्र के लिए खतरनाक है। उन्होंने कहा कि अगर केंद्र सरकार ने स्वायत्तता के बारे में राज्य सरकार की मांग मान ली तो लद्दाख को अलग केंद्रशासित प्रदेश का दर्जा देने की पुरानी मांग जोर पकड़ लेगी। उन्होंने कहा कि लद्दाख निवासियों की आज लोह में एक बैठक हुई जिसमें राज्य सरकार के इस प्रस्ताव का खुल कर विरोध किया गया।

JULY 16 2000

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THE HINDUSTAN TIMES

Buddhist leader raps Farooq Govt

BUDDHIST LEADER Lama Lobzang on Saturday claimed that the present disturbances in Ladakh were triggered by the Farooq Government's opposition to the demand for a separate Union Territory status for the region.

Mr Lobzang, a member of National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, said: "The antagonistic attitude of the State towards the demand of Ladakhis led to the unfortunate incidents."

While admitting that derogatory remarks made by an un-educated office-bearer of the Ladakh Buddhist body against the Holy Quran were "in bad taste and against secular fabric of the Himalayan region", Lobzang said: "The accused has since been arrested. But reaction of Muslim community was deplorable." **HTC, New Delhi**

Ladakh Buddhists step up agitation

HT Correspondent
New Delhi, June 28

THE LADAKH Buddhist Association (LBA) has intensified its agitation following the resolution passed by the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly demanding greater autonomy for the State.

According to reports reaching here from Leh, normal life was completely paralysed in Ladakh today following the LBA-sponsored bandh. Business establishments, government offices and educational institutions remained closed while vehicles were off the road in Leh and its adjacent areas.

Buddhists, who form 85 per cent

of Leh district's population, have been demanding Union Territory status for Ladakh.

Former MP P. Namgyal said that Jammu and Kashmir could revert to the pre-1953 position only after separating Ladakh and Jammu from the Valley.

Expressing concern over the autonomy resolution, member of the National Commission for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, Lama Lobzang said that Ladakh would not remain a part of the State if the Centre conceded the State Government's demand.

The LBA will hold rallies and demonstration in the region to press for their demand.