

Fuss continues over Pakistani flag

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Daya Nath Singh 14 October 2008 17100 views

An incident of recent communal violence in Udalguri district has bred a number of questions to argue between the administration and opposition parties as well as media. The issue of Pakistani flag hoisting in Mohanpur at Jargaon playing ground on October 4 last has raised a number of questions about the incident. First of all the chief minister, Tarun Gogoi, going through the media reports flatly dismissed the report of hoisting Pakistani flag. Following the publication of photographs in the newspapers and video clippings shown by the electronic media, the government spokesperson and health minister, Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma tried to defend the administration by over ruling the claims of Indian and Pakistani media which spread this news. Since then the ruling and opposition parties have started blaming each other. Whereas the ruling party claims it as the handiwork of the opposition, the opposition blames it as the total failure of administration.

Nobody can deny the fact that an incident of the communal violence has put the state government under very awkward position. This issue has raised certain doubts about the intention of the state government. It is astonishing that the violence in Udalguri erupted on October 2 and engulfed more places by the following day. The state government was under dark about the actual situation till the chief minister visited Udalguri after a week of incidence taking place and probe by the CBI

was ordered.

In a press conference held on October 11, the government spokes person and Health Minister Dr Himanta Biswa Sarma tried to explain the defects in the flag as an 'expert' and said it was not a Pakistani flag at all, by showing the footage of the video. He pointed out that the same was 'tailored by some non-Muslim' elements. Had it been made by a Muslim the defects found in it would not have occurred, he said. His statement created confusion in the minds of a section of minority people. They have taken the remark against them, as they feel that the minister had tried to say that 'Indian Muslims know better about the Pakistani flag'. Whatever be the intention of the minister, they pledge they are Indians and have no idea about the Pakistani flag as any other Indian.

Another aspect of Dr Sarma's statement was that Mohanpur area was a Bodo dominated area and after the outburst of violence on October 2 the minority community people fled out of the area and the flag was unfurled on October 4. Further he said that nobody was seen near the flag, as if the person who hoisted it was supposed to be present till his/her photograph was taken by the media persons.

Lapses by the government machinery were that the proper security to the people was not provided and simply transferring the District Commissioner and suspending the police official was not the solution to the problem. The chief minister did not visit the place till the opposition parties flayed the negligence of duty by the administration. The chief minister visited the place on October 9 to announce the compensation to the bereaved families. The tragedy with the state government is that it always decides to provide security to the people after the occurrence of some incidents. Such incidents could be averted if timely security is provided. The security forces demanded by the state administration are

used mostly for the VIPs and not for the general people. This practice should not continue in this democratic country like India, people feel.

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