

UPFA warns against dividing indigenous people of Assam



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Daya Nath Singh 8 May 2010 8691 views

United Peoples' Federation of Assam (UPFA) has warned the State and the political parties to refrain from dividing the indigenous people of Assam by creating differences through their activities and behavior. Addressing the media persons on Thursday last at Guwahati Press Club, the UPFA President, Jebra Ram Muchahary, expressed concern over grilling of militant leaders, show casing of ceasefire and 'so-called drama' of mass surrender ceremonies and release of jailed leaders. He said that these exercises would not bring real peace in the state and demanded a meaningful settlement of all issues through process of negotiation fulfilling the genuine political aspirations of various militant groups and the people of the state in true sense.

The UPFA Chief appealed to the Assam Government and the authorities concerned to treat recently apprehended NDFB Chief, Ranjan Daimary, at par with that of ULFA leaders, to address the reportedly growing feelings of the Bodo- Kacharis communities over recent racial discriminatory attitude and ill-treatment towards NDFB Chief. In order to prevent conflicts and to maintain peace, integrity and social harmony in the state, his well wishers desire to bring a change in the attitude of the administrative machinery.

The UPFA press meet was also addressed by its Vice President, John Phoithong and Advisor of Pro-talk ULFA, Rajib Bora. They reiterated their demand to the Government of India to expedite the peace negotiations with Pro-talk ULFA, NDFB, DHD,KNLF and others who are already on ceasefire to solve their problems politically. The UPFA advocated its formulae for conferring full regional autonomy to Assam with special status along with regional federation, creating smaller states within the state for separate state demanding groups like Bodoland and Dimaraji etc.

They recalled the statement made by UPFA President at Ninth session of the United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues (UNPFII), New York on 20 April 2010, where he suggested that indigenous and tribal people should have the right to development in their own way. In the process of development indigenous and tribal peoples' landed properties should be utilized, if required, only on proper rental basis.

The indigenous and tribal peoples should have permanent sovereignty over their lands and territories and resources. Displacement of the local people in the name of public interest and national development should be stopped. Any national and international development programme in the territories of indigenous and tribal people should be designed and implanted with full and effective participation of indigenous and tribal peoples on the basis of proper terms agreed between indigenous and tribal peoples authorities and the agencies concerned. The development aid policies and implementation system of states and international agencies should be thoroughly reviewed, amended and corrected. The traditional, social and political institutions of indigenous and tribal people should be recognized and respected by the states.

In the name of eco-development and forest regeneration huge areas are being set aside and in the name of medicinal plant cultivation contracts are being issued to multinationals depriving the local medicine practitioners, these have to be reviewed. Indigenous and tribal people should have the right to choose their able community representative bodies having women representative in equal footing which will have full authority to govern their territories and affairs including development passed on their customary laws, culture, tradition and religion. Depriving the very livelihood of indigenous and tribal people without adequate and proper arrangement for their future livelihood will lead to slow genocide and should be considered as a crime against humanity.

Besides, the UPFA leaders put forward many other problems facing the community and demanded media support to highlight the same to draw the attention of the Central and State governments.

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BY DAYA NATH SINGH

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