



INDIA AND SOUTH ASIA: SEPTEMBER DOSSIER

The Dossier offers an overview of the major trends and developments in Indian politics in September, including a detailed analysis of the *Naga Peace Accord* and the unexpected agitation of the *Patel* community in Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit and the visit of Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wikramasinghe to New Delhi.

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FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN
PROGRESSIVE STUDIES
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**FEPS
STUDIES**
SEPTEMBER
2015

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Synopsis

As mentioned in the July-August Dossier, the September issue highlights in detail the *Naga Peace Accord* and the unexpected agitation of the *Patel* community in Gujarat.

Domestic developments are manifold in India's mega society of nearly 1.3 billion people. In Bihar with its approximately 100 million people, an epic power battle with the elections to the Assembly is currently taking place. The October issue will give a background and perhaps even the outcome of this polarised fight of the ruling BJP and NDA at the center against the coalition of the regional forces of the Janata Dal United, Rashtriya Janata Dal and the Congress, which can become indicative for the course of Indian politics in the near future.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's US visit and the visit of Sri Lanka's Prime Minister Ranil Wikramasinghe to New Delhi underline the tremendous foreign policy activities of the NDA government internationally and regionally.

The articles by leading journalists and experts supplement and expand the treated topics.

Part I India - Domestic developments

A preliminary assessment of the *Naga peace Accord*

By Dr. Klaus Julian Voll

A weak central government in Delhi allegedly leads to centrifugal tendencies at the periphery of India, according to a widely accepted hypothesis.

The Modi-government sees itself as a truly decisive, the national unity expanding and consolidating center. Does this correspond with reality? There are quite a few, who doubt that there is a consistent policy vis-a-vis Pakistan with regard to Jammu & Kashmir, as demonstrated in the context of the recently cancelled meeting between the *National Security Advisors* of India and Pakistan.

Instead India's North-East receives quite a bit of attention by the Prime Minister personally as well as from several cabinet ministers.

The Peace Accord

“Every effort at resolving the Naga imbroglio has been embroiled in a challenging quagmire of unending and conflicting demands” Will this assessment of Dr. Sanjoy Hazarika, the leading Indian North-East expert, also be true in future?

The recent so-called *“Peace Accord”* with the *Nationalist Socialist Council of Nagaland (IM)* surprised quite a few leading politicians – amongst them the Chief Ministers of Assam, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh, even Home Minister Rajnath Singh and his ministry, and the army (the home ministry and the army are both important actors in Nagaland and the border areas of the North-East). *This is a strange case of a deal whose contours are unknown. Not only the Union home minister, the home secretary and other senior officials, including the joint secretary in charge of the Northeast, the Nagaland governor and CMs of neighbouring states were also kept in the dark.”* (Pranay Sharma & Meetu Jain)

The details of the content - if at all already existing – are till now not known. Therefore it is still too early to speak of a success.

The central government with its aim of *great power*-status can't afford an instable Northeast, if it takes its concept of *“Act East Policy”* serious and if it wants to bring to an end to the delayed but necessary infrastructural projects with regard to Myanmar – the *gateway to ASEAN* – and to China.

Also in its relations towards China India cannot afford an open wound in the Northeast. The recent agreements with Bangladesh – especially transit-rights to the states of the Northeast - have improved India's position there.

It is still too early to judge, if this *'Peace Accord'* – some observers as well as the *Press and*

Information Bureau (PIB) are speaking cautiously of a '*Framework Agreement*' – will be a truly functioning agreement and therefore successful, like for instance the Mizoram Accord of 1986. It should be remembered, that other accords in Assam and Tripura did not contain any conflict management mechanisms and ended therefore in bloodshed.

Therefore, Dr. Sanjoy Hazarika showed certain scepticism with regard to this new *Peace Accord* by reminding of the failed *Shillong Accord* in 1975 between the central government and the *Naga National Council (NNC)*. (see the time-table in the Annexe)

The NSCN (IM) and Nagalim

The *NSCN (IM)* is considered as the biggest and strongest armed group in Nagaland. The Indian government tried to ignore during the last years the rival *NSCN (Khaplang)*. "*Negotiating with leaders of particular insurgent groups and marginalising their rivals has been a key element of the Indian approach to conflict management in the region.*" (Sanjib Baruah)

Yet recently, the *NSCN (K)* attacked Indian security forces with sizeable losses on the Indian side, thereby indicating that it is still a factor to reckon with. It also forged alliances with other secessionist forces and formed the *United National Liberation Front of West South East Asia (UNLFWSEA)*, see members).

The Union state of Nagaland (see short profile in the Annexe) contains only a portion of the areas inhabited in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh und Manipur by Nagas – "*one of the most robust, reflective and remarkable communities in South Asia*" (Sanjoy Hazarika).

An possible integration of the areas inhabited in Manipur, Assam and Arunachal Pradesh into the state of Nagaland faces stiff resistance by these governments and its people. At best certain autonomy rights and guarantees for the preservation of the cultural identity of the Nagas are feasible.

Yet Sanjib Baruah, a well-known North-East expert, holds the opinion: "*The Central government is expected to make territorial concessions that evoke intense emotions in neighbouring states over the heads of popularly elected state governments.*"

Currently it looks like, as if the *NSCN (IM)* has finally given up its original aim of *Greater Nagaland (Nagalim)*, not to speak of its Independence proclaimed in 1947.

Lt Gen V.S. Atem, a former "*Army-Chief*" of the *NSCN (IM)*, referred to the long history of failed negotiations between the central government and the Nagas. He indicated, that the renunciation of "*Greater Nagalim*" is not yet finally decided. "*The formation of Greater Nagaland will be done through process. There are some difficulties. For example, Manipuris may oppose integration and, at the same time, Gol understands that we are opposed to integration on an "as-is" basis.*"

In his opinion, Atem underlined the unique situation of the Nagas: *“Historically, no Indian rajah had ever conquered Naga territory. None of the Nagas, individually or collectively, ever consented to join Indian kingdoms or post-1947 India. We declared our independence from British rule on August 14, 1947 and decided not to join India because our uniqueness was never recognised. This government is forthright. As a soldier, I appreciate that they are straightforward about what they can do and what they cannot.”*

Opposition and criticism of the Congress

Congress-President Sonia Gandhi criticised the Modi-government for not consulting the concerned Chief Ministers of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, all ruled by the Congress, and accused the government of 'arrogance'. *“This is an insult not only to the chief ministers, but to the people of these states and to the federal structure of our country.”*

Interestingly, the CM of Arunachal Pradesh, Nabam Tuki, as a reaction to this statement took back his Tweet, in which he welcomed the accord. Also the *Lok Sabha* member from Arunachal Pradesh, Ninong Ering, had to change officially his opinion, after he had called the accord *“historic”*.

Sitaram Yechury, General Secretary of the *Communist Party of India/Marxist* (CPI/M), remarked, that the accord would require more discussions and consultations, thereby describing it as unacceptable. *“No accord can be made over night. There should have been more discussions. The central government needs to work together on important matters like this.”*

Nirmala Sitharaman, Minister of Trade and Industry, contradicted the accusations of Sonia Gandhi: *“We reject this. Congress CMs were called for consultations but chose to boycott the meeting.”*

Guessing games, motives and actors

Modi, accused by some to be a *showman*, felt seemingly comfortable in the Naga-traditional costume, unlike the Muslim costumes that had been rejected by him. He did not aim only for a press event - a *“pseudo event”* as criticised by Sanjib Baruah, but also for a peaceful Northeast opens the transition to ASEAN and China.

The seemingly old NSCN (IM)-leadership – the Chairman Isak Chishi Swu, once rebelling against the *Shillong-Accord*, gave his signature in the intensive care unit of the *Fortis*-hospital in Delhi- obviously wants to reach a solution during the life-time of Swu, although one is quite conscious of the difficult hurdles till a final solution is reached.

One of the international promoters of the NSCN (IM) – the *Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organisation* (UNPO) and one of its founders, Michael van Walt van Praag had more than 20 years advised the Dalai Lama, the NSCN and also the Indian government that the lack of detailed informations would not lead the groups to an accord, which would respect

the “*honour and dignity*” of the Nagas even after nearly hundred years long struggle with a lot of bloodshed and pains, (Sanjoy Hazarika).

Clear an accord with the NSCN (IM) would be insufficient. For complete success, the rival armed groups, which have been probably consulted by the government, have to be included under all circumstances.

G. K. Pillai, a former *Home Secretary* with tremendous knowledge about the Northeast, says: “*A final agreement must include all—the church, civil society, armed groups and the state government.*” Therefore, a consensual approach is required, in which opinions as much as possible should be heard and a maximum, if perhaps not all, be accommodated. (Sanjoy Hazarika).

It will be important to see, what shape the “*autonomous councils*” will take and how far they possibly will undermine the concerned state governments and the already existing councils.

Speculations assume, that besides the serious illness of Isaac Swu also reports by the intelligence services contributed to the speedy signing of the accord, since the allegedly NSCN (IM)-cadres were expected to desert to the NSCN (K) in greater numbers because of discontent over the slow pace of the talks with the central government, which could have led to a breakdown of the cease-fire.

The commando-style attacks by the NSCN (K) led to an additional attraction. The intelligence reports also spoke about arms supplies from China and Myanmar to the NSCN (K).

Background to this Accord

The preliminary work for this accord had been done in many rounds of negotiations during the regime of the *United Progressive Alliance (UPA)*.

G. K. Pillai mentions some of the basic assumptions, which guided UPA as well the NSCN (IM):

- 1.The Indian government accepts the unique history of the Nagas and complies with special notifications, in order to adopt them in the constitution and laws.
- 2.Neither sovereignty nor a *Greater Nagaland* are politically acceptable.
- 3.Acceptance of greater autonomy for the state of Nagaland and above all the right to all the resources below the surface.
- 4.In order to enable the surrender of weapons, the armed groups as well all the civil society groups have to be involved including the churches and the government of Nagaland.
- 5.A mutually acceptable regulation for the autonomy of the *Naga Hill Districts* in Manipur, without affecting the territorial integrity of Manipur.

Perspectives

Naga-Society is rapidly changing. Thousands are studying and working primarily in the big Indian metros like Delhi and Bengaluru. This younger generation does not confine like their ancestors only to the linguistic and cultural heritage. Allegedly we see the *“birth of a northeastern identity in the diaspora.”* Besides, Nagaland has a powerful and influential civil society worth its name.

The following important tasks have to be approached with a view to a final settlement:

- 1.All Naga groups in the Northeast, which should finally lay down their weapons, have to be taken into confidence, groups also include the civil society, the churches and the state.
- 2.Rehabilitation of armed cadres into new batallions of the state and central police forces.
- 3.Legal cases of members of armed groups have to be dealt with pro and contra amnesty and the beginning of a process of conciliation should be initiated.
- 4.Elimination of multiple taxes and intimidations.
- 5.Capacity building of the government for economic development in view of big regional disparities with disadvantaged “tribes“.
- 6.Creation of a *Pan Naga Council* for the preservation of culture, history and traditions of the Naga population.
- 7.Final settlement of the border between Nagaland and Assam.

It was important, that Modi recognized in his speech explicitly the cultural idnetity of the *“Naga-tribes”* and the highly civilisational value of the Naga-society altogether.

This accord, if successfull – also with regard to a genuine democratisation in Nagaland – will certainly have consequences for the entire Northeast, irrespective of entrenched *“vested interests”* of different groups.

Till now there have been no celebrations in Nagaland. *“The mood in the hills is of edgy speculation. If the stakeholders are unimpressed, then, in the words of R.N. Ravi (Indian negotiator) again, it would be “impossible to expect sustainable peace from the ongoing process between New Delhi and the NSCN(IM)”.*

High-ranking officials are arguing, that the answer to the question about the future role of the NSCN (IM)-leadership has not been given, particularly since Muivah is a *Tangkhul Naga* from Manipur and can therefore not become Chief Minister of Nagaland. Similar questions are raised about the cadres.

It is also to be seen, how the politics and administration of the traditionally influential “tribes“ (ethnic groups) of the Ao and Angami will react to the eventual presence of Muivah

and his cadres in Nagaland.

Also in the Chandel-district in Manipur the conflicts with the Kukis have not been solved. In the past it lead to bloody battles between the NSCN (IM) and the Kukis. Sanjib Baruah opines: *“Some version of an alternative arrangement for the Nagas of Manipur — perhaps the creation of autonomous councils — is clearly under consideration.”*

The rival Naga secessionist groups (see Annexure), opposed to the NSCN (IM), will for the time certainly reject the accord. *“Acceptance of the agreement by the Naga public in general is also far from certain. If the August 3 Naga agreement and its contours are not sold well to Naga stakeholders, they may soon face a situation where the ‘sellout’ tag will be put on them by the younger generation of Nagas.”*

Only the future can prove, if the assessment of Sanjib Baruah will become true: *“The structural flaws in the design of the Naga peace process have been obvious for a while. The format — bilateral and secret meetings between NSCN-IM leaders and the government’s interlocutor — leaves out critical stakeholders. It is unlikely to produce a durable settlement.”*

Short profile of Nagaland (by Dr. Joyce Lobo)

Nagaland is a state in the Northeast of India, formed on December 01, 1963. It borders the state of Assam to the north and west, Arunachal Pradesh to the northeast, Manipur to the south and Burma to the east. The state is mostly mountainous except those areas bordering Assam valley. The state is home to a rich variety of flora and fauna; it has been suggested as the “falcon capital of the world”.

The state being one of the smallest states of India has an area of 16,579 sqkm., with a population of 1,980,602 (2011). Out of this 1.04 million are males and 0.95 million females. 75% of the population live in the rural areas. Nagaland was the only state to show a population drop between the 2001 census to the 2011 census (considered most reliable so far) due to incorrect counting in past censuses.

Agriculture is the most important economic activity, while forestry, tourism, insurance, real estate, and miscellaneous cottage industries form the other activities. Due to the insurgency as well as inter-ethnic conflicts since the 1950s, the economic development has remained limited.

However, in the last 15 years, the state has witnessed less violence and an annual economic growth rate nearing 10% on a compounded basis, one of the fastest in the region. As of 2013, about 10% of the rural population and 4.3% from the urban areas live below the poverty line.

Nagaland has a unicameral legislature with 60 members. The governor is the constitutional head of state while the Chief Minister is the real executive. Unlike most states in India, Nagaland has been granted a great degree of state autonomy, as well as special powers. The

Naga tribes have autonomy to conduct their own affairs. Each tribe has a hierarchy of councils at the village, range and tribal levels to deal with local disputes.

The state is inhabited by 16 major tribes - Ao, Angami, Chang, Konyak, Locha, Sumi, Chakhesang, Khiamniungan, Bodo-Kachari, Phom, Rengma, Sangtam, Yimchunger, Thadou, Zeme-Liangmai (Zeliang) and Pochury as well as a number of sub-tribes. Each tribe is unique in character with its own customs, language and dresses. However, the English language and the population being predominantly Christian act as common denominators.

The Naga people have been fighting for an independent Naga state since 1918, when the members of the *Naga Club* requested the British to exclude them from any constitutional framework of India. The demands were continued through the *Naga National Council (NNC)*. However, after the *Shillong Accord* between the central government and the NNC, certain sections within the latter formed the *National Socialist Council of Nagalim (NSCN)*.

Clan rivalries within the NSCN led to its split in the 1980s. The *NSCN- Isaac-Muivah* or *NSCN (IM)* faction led by the leaders Thuingaleng Muivah and Isak Chisi Swu became chief negotiators of the Naga cause and have been officially recognized by the Indian government till today.

The *Naga Peace Accord (NPA)* was signed on August 3, 2015 which tops the 80 round of negotiations and 5 agreements that failed to seal the peace deal so far. The other factions, led mostly by the NSCN (K) of Khaplang is operating from the Myanmar jungles to retaliate against India. The NPA deal which is shrouded in secrecy and having left out several key stakeholders is expected to falter, wherein experts have pointed that the road to Naga peace is long and arduous.

Time Table:

- 1920: Formation of the *Naga Club*
- 1929: The *National Naga Club (NNC)* submits a memorandum before the *Simon Commission*, in which it is stated, that the people in the Naga-areas have nothing in common with the inhabitants of the Indian mainland and should therefore be left alone.
- 27th and 28th of June 1947: Akbar Hydari-Agreement between the Governor of Assam, Sir Akbar Hydari and the NNC, in which the right of the Naga's to freely develop, has been respected. Yet Clause 9 of the agreement led to different interpretations: "*The Governor of Assam as the Agent of the Government of the Indian Union will have a special responsibility for a period of 10 years to ensure the observance of the agreement, at the end of this period the Naga Council will be asked whether they require the above agreement to be extended for a further period or a new agreement regarding the future of Naga people arrived at*".

- 14. 8. 1947: Angani Zapu Phizo declares the independence of Nagaland
- 1951: Phizo declares: *"In the name of the Naga National Council and on behalf of the people and citizens of Nagaland, I wish to make our stand and our national position clear. We are a democratic people, and as such, we have been struggling for a Separate Sovereign State of Nagaland in a democratic way through constitutional means"*
- 27. 8. 1955: *Assam Disturbed Areas Act* in the *Naga Hills*
- 1956: Phizo forms the *Naga Federal Government* and a *Naga Federal Army*. Operations of the Indian Army in the *Naga Hills* in Assam and flight of Phizo to East-Pakistan and 1960 to London.
- 1958: *Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act* is applied in the *Naga Hill-District*.
- 1. December 1963: Formation of the state of Nagaland
- 1964: Constitution of a *Nagaland Peace Mission* and signing of a cease-fire, which lasted till 1968.
- 11th of November 1975: *Shillong Accord* between the Indian Government and the *Naga National Council*, giving up force and accepting the Indian Constitution.
- 1980: Thuingaleng Muivah , Isak Chisi Swu and S. S. Khaplang form the *National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN)* and reject the *Shillong Accord*.
- 1988: Split of the NSCN: Khole Konyak and Khaplang form the *NSCN (K)*.
- Meetings of the NSCN-leadership with the Prime Ministers PV Narasimha Rao (15. 6. 1995) and Deve Gowda (3. 2. 1997)
- 25th of Juli 1997: Signing of a cease-fire agreement between the central government and the NSCN (IM) with effect from the first of August 1997.
- 30. 9. 1998: Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and National Security Advisor Brajesh Mishra meet the NSCN (IM)-leadership in Paris
- 9. to 11. Januar 2003: Muivah and Isak have discussions with Vajpayee and L. K. Advani in Delhi.
- 7. 12. 2004 NSCN (IM)-leadership meets Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh.
- 31. July 2007: Ceasefire indefinitely extended.
- 27. July 2015: The Parliament of Nagaland reiterates its earlier demands for a *Greater Nagaland* through the integration of adjoining Naga-areas into Nagaland and passed

a resolution, demanding from the central government to implement it. Assam and Manipur declare, that they will reject any compromise with regard to the territorial integrity of their states.

- 3. August 2015, *Naga Peace Accord* between the Indian government and the NSCN (IM)

List of insurgent groups on Nagaland

- National Socialist Council of Nagalim (Isaac-Muivah), NSCN (IM)
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Khaplang), NSCN(K) [armed group led by S.S. Khaplang; other half of old NSCN]
- Naga National Council/Federal Government Nagaland, NNC/FGN [Led by S. Singnya and Zhopra Vero, ended fight amongst Naga rebel groups in 2009.]
- National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Kitovi-Khole), NSCN(KK) [formed by Naga leaders who wanted to honour the ceasefire against the wishes of Khaplang.]
- United National Liberation Front of West South East Asia, (UNLFWSEA), this includes the United Liberation Front of Assam (ULFA) (Independent), the National Democratic Front of Bodoland (NDFB) (Songjibit) and the KLA (Jibon).
- Kangleipak Communist Party (KCP)
- Meitei Kanglei Yawol Kunna Lup (KYKL)

Groups which reject a *Greater Nagalim*

- United National Liberation Front (UNLF) is the largest representation of the Meitei, objecting to a *Greater Nagalim*.
- Kuki National Organisation (KNO) pleads for a contiguous state for Kuki tribals.
- Zeilangrong United Front, ZUF (Small Naga Group)
- Manipur Naga Revolutionary Front, MNRF (Small Naga Group)

Civil Society Groups

- Forum for Naga Reconciliation
- The Naga Mothers Association
- The Association Against Corruption and Unabated Taxation (ACUAT)

- Naga Hoho
- The Naga Students Federation (NSF)
- Churches

Indian and international Northeast-Experts

- Sanjib Baruah, *Professor, Political Studies at Bard College, New York.*
- Rajiv K. Bhatia, Director General of the *Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA)* and former envoy to Myanmar.
- Subir Bhaumik, Journalist, erstwhile BBC.
- Pushpita Das, Research Fellow, *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi.*
- Namrata Goswami, *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses, New Delhi*
- Shekar Gupta, Chief Editor, *IndiaToday*
- Dr. Sanjoy Hazarika, Director, *Center for North East Studies, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi*
- Douglas Hill, South Asia researcher at the University of Otago, New Zealand.
- Dr. Athiko Kaisii, Centre for Culture, Media and Governance Jamia Millia Islamia. He has authored a book *Youth and Media in Violence Situation: Frontier Tribes in Indian States*, co-edited a book on *Tribal Philosophy and Culture: Mao Naga of North-East* and contributed in an edited book *Naga Today: Indigenous Discourse*, and published in journals such as *South Asia Politics*.
- Bengt G. Karlsson, Prof. Department of Anthropology, Stockholm University. Monograph on *Unruly Hills: A Political Ecology of India's Northeast*.
- Binalakshmi Nepram-Mentschel, General Secretary, *Control Arms Foundation of India*, specially knowledgeable with regard to Manipur and the situation of women in the Northeast.
- G. K. Pillai, former Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs.
- E. N. Rammohan, former *Director General, Border Security Forces (BSF)*
- Jaideep Saikia, South Asian security and terrorism expert. Author of the book *Terror Sans Frontiers: Islamist Militancy in North East India*, University of Illinois.
- C. Joshua Thomas, *Indian Council of Social Science Research (ICSSR) North Eastern Regional Centre, Shillong*. Works: *Dimensions of Displaced People in North East*

India (2002), *Indo-Myanmar Border Trade: Status, Problems and Potentials* (2005), *Peace in India's North East: Meaning, Metaphor and Meanings* (2006) and *India-China: Trade and Strategy for Frontier Developments* (2010).

- B.G. Varghese (died in 2015), Senior journalist and author: *India's North East resurgent* and *Reorienting India: Rage, reconciliation and security* (2008).

Revolt of the Upper Castes? *Patel*-Agitation in Gujarat.

By Dr. Klaus Julian Voll

The recent agitation of members of the *Patel*-caste in Gujarat brought a new and unexpected quality into Indian domestic politics. The consequences are not yet clear at all. Do we see a “*revolt of the upper castes*“, which we should comprehend, as insinuated by the experienced journalist Bharat Dogra?

Modi's public relations machinery presented Gujrat, during the General Election campaign 2014, as a model for the whole of India. This *Gujarat Model* should show the way for a better future for all the states of India.

Now, at the eve of Assembly Elections in Bihar and local elections in Gujarat, mass-demonstrations of the politically powerful and economically influential *Patels*, also called *Patidars*, demanded that *Patels* should be included into the reservation category for *Other Backward Castes* (OBC's).

Besides the Chief Minister Anandiben Patel, six ministers in a cabinet of 27, the BJP-President in Gujarat, more than three dozens Members of the Legislative Assembly of Gujarat and 5 Members of the Union Parliament in Delhi belong socially to this caste group.

Differentiating the *Patels*

The *Patels* are very much focused on their clans and claim to be the descendants of the Hindu-god *Ram*. They constitute 12% of the population, undoubtedly the dominant caste in Gujarat. Traditionally the term *Patidar* describes somebody who owns a piece of land.

The *Patidars*, through their representation in the government and the Union Parliament and overall as an elite, are politically very influential. They are certainly the economically best situated community and control vast agrarian areas.

The dominant segments amongst the *Patels* are the *Leuva-* and *Kadva-Patidars*, who claim to be descendants of *Lord Ram's* twins Luv and Kush. Besides, there are sub-castes like the *Satpanthis*, who live predominantly in the *Kutch*-district bordering Pakistan, with similar social practices like the Muslims – for instance they follow a *Pir*. In the north of Gujarat the *Chaudhary Patels* are concentrated and recognized as OBC's.

Besides the eastern “tribal belt” *Patidars* are everywhere in Gujarat, with a higher concentration in northern Gujarat and in Saurashtra. *Leuvas* are slightly more numerous than the *Kadvas* and dominate the Saurashtra as in central Gujarat, whereas the *Kadvas* dominate the north of Gujarat. As a result of the migration to the diamond center Surat the South of Gujarat is more mixed.

Patels provide upto 30% of the state employed teachers, engineers and employees in the health and finance departments as well as the government center. Their institutions receive approximately 60% of government funds for social and educational purposes, more than half of the subsidies for schools are going to the ones controlled by *Patels*. Only in the police force *Patels* are under-represented with about 7%.

After withdrawing support from the Congress in the early 1980's – a result of their anti-reservation agitation, which was directed against the *KHAM (Kshatriya, Harijan, Adivasi, Muslim)*-caste strategy of the then Congress-Chief Minister Madhav Solanki - the *Patels* turned into the biggest support basis for the BJP and later for Modi. They form a cohesive vote-bank, according to the BJP-MP and Dalit Udit Raj. “*Politically the Patels are aligned to Hindutva.*”

Now, Hardik Patel, the 22 years old leader of this agitation threatens openly to bring down the BJP-government in Gujarat, if the demands – which are also an expression of unfulfilled aspirations - are not met.

Demands of the Demonstrators

The *Patel*-demonstrators demand to be included into the job-reservations for OBC's, although the *Patels* demonstrated in the 1980's against reservations.

The French India specialist Christophe Jaffrelot calls this paradoxical: “*Patels are probably better represented among professionals and industrialists than any other peasant caste in the whole of India.*” Also abroad, for instance in Eastern Africa and the United States, *Patels* are highly successful.

The extremely well organised movement headed by Hardik Patel mobilizes particularly younger *Patels*, amongst them many unemployed. He demanded from the state government: “*Give us a time-line and give us a share.*”

Anandiben Patel came to the venue of the demonstration, in order to receive the demands. Yet her government clarified, that the *Patels* don't fulfill the criteria of the *Mandal-Commission*, in order to be admitted into the OBC-category. It is now attempted to offer special programs for the community.

Causes for the Demonstrations

The current movement is predominantly an urban phenomena, although some rural areas

have also been affected.

The younger *Patels* don't want to go back to agriculture. Every third *Patidar*-household is headed by a marginal farmer or a landless farm-labourer. There are farmer suicides also in Gujarat, like in so many other regions in India.

The young *Patels* also don't want to join the traditional industries, like the crisis-ridden diamond industry. Besides government employment, they want to join the “*new economy*”.

Therefore, the demonstrators demanded an abolition of reservation related to caste and its replacement by a reservation related to income within the OBC-Quota for government jobs and study places in educational institutions. Obviously they enjoy the clandestine support of the upper-caste *Brahmins* (Priest caste) and *Banias* (trader caste) in Gujarat, which speaks for the correctness of the hypothesis of an '*Upper Caste Revolt*'.

M. G. Vaidya, a very senior functionary of the Hindu-nationalist *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh* (RSS) favours on behalf of this 5 million cadres organisation the abolition of reservations based on caste. At best the reservations for *Scheduled Castes* (SC's) and *Scheduled Tribes* (ST's) should continue for another ten years and then get abolished.

Major reasons for this movement are:

- Gujarat as compared to other states in India has very few “*white collar jobs.*” Besides English is spoken rarely. According to the journalist Aakash Patel, who hails from Gujarat, this is a determined RSS-policy and part of its cultural nationalism. There are no IT-companies in Gujarat.
- Besides factional fights within the BJP, Christophe Jaffrelot sees the following reasons for this mass-movement: “*The Patels may well be victims of the neo-middle-class syndrome. Those who have not yet arrived, who are part of this aspiring class, and find it difficult to achieve their goals because jobs are scarce, education is expensive (especially if you can't buy your degree), buying a car is hard, to say nothing about a home. The so-called Gujarat model has not favoured the SMEs as much as the capital-intensive industries that do not create as many jobs.*”

The number of trained unemployed in Gujarat has risen to about 700 000. “*The danger of the demographic dividend turning into a demographic disaster is looming over the State.*” (Indira Hirway, a well-known scholar on labour issues in Gujarat)

- After liberalisation many of the small and medium companies, which provide jobs, went bankrupt or have been replaced by bigger companies with less working-places. About 40% of the small and medium industries are led by *Patels*. Salaries in the informal sector are lower in Gujarat compared to other states.

Since months, the diamond industry is in a big crisis, which led to a large number of displacements. About 450 smaller units, which do orders for medium and bigger diamond companies, had to close down. *“Besides, diamonds and ceramics, sectors like textiles, auto components, engineering as well as chemicals among others are feeling the pinch of slowdown.”*

- The Gujarat government buys more and more land for foreign investors in the infrastructure sector.

The demands of the *Patels* are categorically rejected by the 146 communities of OBC's as well as SC's and ST's. *“We will not allow it at any cost. Essentially, their's is a question of greed not need.”* so the OBC-leader Alpesh Thakore says.

The sequence of events

Already since months, Hardik Patel with his organization *Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti* (PAAS) conducted demonstrations in several cities and villages in Gujarat. This culminated in a very big demonstration (*Kranti-* or Revolution-Rally) with about 800 000 participants – other sources speak of about half a million – on the 25th of August 2015 in Ahmedabad.

After the dissolution of the demonstration in Ahmedabad the police assaulted brutally remaining demonstrators with batons, tear gas and bullets and arrested for a short while Hardik Patel.

This led to violent acts of his followers not only in Ahmedabad but also in other parts of Gujarat with 10 people dead and about 150 damaged or set on fire buses, the burning of police stations or other government properties and finally to curfews in Ahmedabad and other cities. *“News of his (Hardik Patel) arrest today sends the 1.8 crore Patidars of Gujarat into a frenzy, holding the state to ransom in a dance of destruction.”*

After this army units and other security forces have been deployed to maintain order. Schools have been closed for several days and the state government blocked for several days the internet. *“Meanwhile Gujarat continues to be pulverised with SMS, WhatsApp and other internet applications forcibly turned off by the government for fear that it will fuel rumours and more troubles.”*

Who is Hardik Patel?

Two months ago, the twenty-two years old-Hardik Patel, who likes weapons, was unknown. He studied Business Administration in a College in Ahmedabad with modest success. He runs a small shop for submersible pumps in Virangam, 60 kilometers away from Ahmedabad. In the context of his social work he founded the *Patidar Anamat Andolan Samiti* (PAAS) in the village of Mehsana.

During the election campaign 2014 he was - with an anti-Modi position - a *Volunteer* of the *Aam Aadmi Party* (AAP), although he strictly denies any party membership and any intention

to enter politics.

The late Bal Thackeray, the erstwhile charismatic Supremo of the semi-fascist *Shiv Sena* in Maharashtra - currently a junior coalition partner of the BJP there and at the center - functions as a model for Hardik Patel, besides Sardar Patel, the "*Indian Bismarck*".

Contrary to Modi, Hardik Patel sees Gujarat not as a shining example for the rest of India: "*The reality in Gujarat is vastly different from what is being projected. It is very much like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Thousands of farmers have committed suicide. Go to the rural areas to see it for yourself. – She (Anandiben Patel) has no power. She is in the chair, but somebody else is holding the power.*"

Genuine Movement and/or destabilisation Instrument?

If the current movement (*Andolan*) in Gujarat of a doubtlessly socio-politically important caste-group will have a wider political effect, can only be assessed with certainty within a longer time-frame. "*The number of educated and jobless Patels is very high due to the menace of reservation. It is killing merit and stopping India from becoming a superpower.*"

The Indian state definitively failed to provide its young generations with a universal and skill-oriented school-system with equal chances, irrespective of caste and religion. Investments into the educational sector are far too low. The government schools are considered bad. Only 30% of available study places for future engineers and doctors don't fall under the reserved category. Better educated members from those communities, who are entitled to reservations, "*...are eating into the share of the non-reserved categories on the basis of merit.*"

Industrialists like Karsanbhai Patel of the *Nirma*-group and the newspaper baron Parthiv Patel openly support the demand for reservation for the Patel-community.

The Congress and others are seeing in these events a very underhanded conspiracy from Delhi, which is allegedly considered as a part of wider moves.

Other observers in Gujarat assume internal BJP-sabotage against Narendra Modi and see Hardik Patel above all as an instrument of Dr. Praveen Togadia, leader of the fundamentalist *Vishwa Hindu Parishad* ('World Council of Hindus' / VHP) – Modi was once close to him but later disassociated himself – in order to launch with the help of like-minded groups "*a country-wide anarchy.*"

VHP-cadres – in the words of former BJP-finance- and foreign-minister Jaswant Singh they represent "*collective madness*" - have penetrated each village in Gujarat and exercise a tremendous influence on the less successful *Patels*.

It is argued, that the launch of this movement so short before the Assembly Elections in Bihar is not at all accidental. The message to OBC's in Bihar would be, that the support basis

of the BJP in Gujarat with its demand to admit the *Patels* into the OBC-category, would dilute the reservations, possibly abolish them, and this would lead to a rejection of the BJP by certain sections of the electorate.

In the 24x7 'rumour kitchen' of Indian politics, the *Aam Aadmi* ('common man') in Gujarat allegedly believes, „‘ that the ‘invincible’ Modi is behind all this. Modi does not believe in caste reservations. All he wants is economic criteria for reservations. Gujarat is Hindutva’s laboratory, so Modi is experimenting with the prospects of removing caste reservations in Gujarat. Later he will extend it to the rest of India.

But in the process he ignored the original supporters of the party who had expected manna to rain from heaven. They are seething in anger and frustration and Hardik Patel is the manifestation of this phenomenon of jobless growth and forcible land acquisition solely for big business.”

Perspectives

Critics of Hardik Patel argue, that he is not consistent in his arguments and immature. The senior journalist Swapan Dasgupta, close to the BJP, gives this movement no longer perspective. Is this wishfull thinking?

Yogendra Yadav, India's leading psephologist, argues, that the rural communities, so also parts of the *Patels*, are confronted with a crisis of Indian agriculture. The agrarian problems could not be solved through reservations, besides leaving out Muslims completely in this context.

In his opinion, *“the agrarian crisis, which also shows the crisis of the highly praised Gujarat-Model, has to be tackled with immediate effect. - The political class as a whole is not adequately handling the quota system, which leads to a climate of intolerance. Now, even the better-offs of OBC’s want inclusion.”*

India's currently most prominent sociologist, Professor Dipankar Gupta, argues, that this movement, should it have success in the near future, could lead to more right-wing politics.

Irrespective of a lack of clear aims, this movement should be taken seriously as a potential harbinger of country-wide developments. *“The leaders of the Patidar agitation make no secret of their desire to extend their stir to other parts of the country in an attempt to force a national rethink on the entire reservation policy. Either we get reservation or no one gets it.”*

Similar land-owning castes in all parts of India are represented by 117 members in India's Parliament. Other OBC’s like Jats, Gujjars and Kurmis in Uttar Pradesh as well as Naidus in Andhra Pradesh raise similar demands like the *Patels*. Nitish Kumar, Chief Minister of Bihar, praised Hardik Patel.

An attempt to destabilize and dilute the current reservation system could have far-reaching

political consequences and go out of control.

Will India be returning to the late 1980's with the then beginning so-called *Mandal*-agitations, which led to reservations of OBC's? At that time, the country slid into a civil war-like situation, which brought public life especially in Northern India nearly to a standstill.

The then Prime Minister of a minority government, V. P. Singh, opted for social reforms in competition against a fundamentalist Hindu-nationalism and failed politically. Yet, the tenet of reservations for OBC's – one has to distinguish between better off *"intermediate OBC's"*, who garner a great part of the provided privileges for themselves, and *"depressed OBCs"* (numerically more than hundred different groups in some states) – got rooted deeply in the Indian political system.

Should the *Patel*-movement intensify and spread to other parts of the country, a counter reaction ('*caste-war*'?) by the concerned *Scheduled Castes* (SC's), *Scheduled Tribes* (ST's) as well as *Other Backward Castes* (OBC's) can be expected.

Gujarat Chief Minister Anandiben succeeded in talks with representatives of the *Thakores* – an OBC-group with a percentage of 27% of the population in Gujarat – to avoid, that the situation after the mass demonstration by *Patels* remained calm and peaceful and a not at all impossible '*caste-war*' did not break out. (Gujarat has in this regard a notorious history, in which 'upper castes' in clashes with the so-called 'lower castes' injected then the enemy picture of Muslims.)

Yet Alpesh Thakor, President of the *"Gujarat Kshatriya-Thakor Sena"*, says: *"We strongly condemn the way, in which Patels are pressurising the government to get reservations by threatening to uproot government in 2017. I want to warn this government that don't take our patience for granted."*

Patels are just 12%, while OBC's, SC's and ST's are 78% of the state's population. If Patels are even given one per cent reservation, this government may no longer remain in power in this year itself, forget about 2017." -

It will be interesting to learn, if we witness a sophisticated attempt, to take back the constitutionally assured reservations – although originally envisaged only for ten years - for SC's, ST's and OBC's. The RSS allegedly does not want, that the question of reservations gets politicised, because this they consider as bad for the nation.

The demonstrations suggest, that the *"Gujarat-model"* – but also the country-wide development – does not provide sufficient work for the tremendous demand. Annually 10-12 millions are entering new into the national labor market.

Is Hardik Patel losing steam and influence? Does he, together with his propagated demands, sink in the quicksand of India's domestic politics? He planned – in connotation with Mahatma Gandhi's historical *"Salt-March"* - *"a reversed march"* from Dandi to Ahmedabad,

but the authorities did not give him permission.

Besides his organization is planning allegedly a country-wide signature campaign of a whopping 270 Million members of the intermediary castes like Gujjars, Patels, Kurmis and Chaudharis etc. The attempts to approach members of the *Patel*-caste amongst Parliamentarians in Gujarat have been blocked by the police and security forces.

It is questionable, if these tactics by the state government can stop the movement or lower its speed. The deeper causes for this movement, which are an expression of social tensions and conflicts as well as an implicit critique of the existing development model, are not really tackled.

“In short, the Gujarat protests should be treated as a warning against the reservation policy and the State’s growth model. It is also a warning to other States,” so Indira Hirway.

Part II India - Foreign Policy Development

Prime Minister Modi to the USA

By Dr. Joyce Lobo

In his second trip to the USA (Sept. 24-28, 2015) Prime Minister Modi participated in the UN, engaged with a host of political and business leaders and held bilateral talks with the American President Barrack Obama. In all these meetings that took place in the USA, the themes, that have been common yet very significant in terms of focus, are on connectivity, technology, climate change, clean energy which are instrumental to India's development agenda.

At the UN, September 25, 2015

Modi explained at the *Post-2015 Development Agenda Summit* as to how developmental targets of India were in sync with being environmentally sustainable and how they integrate well with the *17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* to be achieved by 2030, as adopted by the United Nations (UN) and the international community during this UN special summit.

In terms of addressing climate change, India has maintained its "*common but differentiated responsibility*" position which is part of the *UN Framework Convention in Climate Change*. He pointed out that "*we should forge a global public partnership to harness technology, innovation and finance to put affordable clean and renewable energy within the reach of all.*"

Modi conveyed (as he had done in the UN address and in his talks with leaders of major countries) to the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon, on the sidelines, that the trust deficit amongst the developed countries persisted which had not yet delivered on their commitments including on climate finance. He conveyed that supporting the increased use of renewable energy, rather than complete focus on emissions (which constrains development choices), should be the proactive approach towards climate change. Climate justice should be kept in mind in the form of concessional financing from international institutions and should be available for renewable energy and particularly for transfer of technology.

He also made it clear that countries like India (one of the largest contributors with 1,85,000 soldiers) should be consulted while authorizing peace-keeping missions. This issue was raised by Modi during the *Summit on Peacekeeping*, hosted by President Obama. He pointed out that adequate representation should be given to countries like India within senior management and as Force Commanders. The other areas that he spoke on were poverty, UN Security Council reforms for being representative and credible, etc.

G4 Summit, September 26, 2015: The G4 Summit has been held, for the first time since its inception in 2004, at the top leadership level of countries— India, Japan, Brazil and Germany— for expediting the UN Security Council reform through the *Inter-Governmental Negotiations (IGN)*. This meeting takes significance with the UN General Assembly approving the text for negotiations in the IGN format to bring in the reforms. India has been vigorously

pushing its agenda for UNSC reforms and particularly in its meetings with the foreign Heads of States or governments for supporting its permanent membership in the same.

Modi-Obama Meeting, September 28, 2015

Relations between India and the USA are becoming more '*transformative*' as both focus on other key areas of economy rather than stagnate over political security and defence cooperation alone. The current talks are a sort of review over the comprehensive dialogue that was started during Obama's visit to India in the beginning of this year wherein MoUs were signed in key and new areas such as space, renewable energy, skill development, urban development etc. Modi's administration has made "*national development the primary and the topmost priority*" of India's foreign policy. India has maintained that the USA today is its key partner for capital, technology, knowledge and skills in terms of meeting its goals of development. Therefore talks have revolved over climate change, clean energy technology and hydrocarbons.

Modi reiterated India's position on climate change in his meetings with PM Cameron and President Hollande on the sidelines of the UN and also with President Obama during the Bilaterals. In reply to Modi's climate financing, there is agreement by the Obama administration for the developing countries to be provided with technology and in terms of pricing. The latter confirmed that the prices of the solar panels have been reduced for this sake.

The other common themes of his discussions with these three leaders were on terrorism and in particular the *Comprehensive Convention on International Terrorism*; India's desire to be a member of the four export control regimes starting with the NSG and the MTCR; and the UN Security Council reform.

Apart from these Modi and Obama acknowledged the progress made in implementing decisions taken during the last two summits. Apart from climate change, defence cooperation was another area of key discussions. Under the *Defence Trade and Technology Initiative*, two pathfinder projects have already been signed and the rest four are under discussion. More projects are in the mode of being identified. Also both sides have agreed to strengthen maritime cooperation and also cooperation with regional partners like Japan. India is working with the USA to seek early membership of the *Asian Pacific Economic Community*.

The *India-USA Energy Dialogue* had taken place prior to the bilateral meeting. There is a strong partnership on research and development related to clean energy including solar wherein both sides have committed about US\$100 million. Modi also held discussions during the round table on renewable energy with representatives from industry, start-ups, and venture capital to look at potential technology partnerships in clean energy and renewable energy. India aims to achieve 175 gigawatts of renewable energy by 2022.

Doing business: Modi held meetings with business and financial leaders in New York and San Jose or from the West Coast to learn about the start ups, ecosystems and also talk on his government initiatives like *Make in India*, *Digital India* and *Skill India*. Modi participated in the *India-US Startup Connect 2015* wherein India has made the *Silicon Valley (SV)* as the first destination to host this event. The idea is to replicate and for the Indian start-ups to benefit from the ecosystem present in the SV. More than 15% startups in the SV are attributed to Indian origin tech entrepreneurs and he met most of the leadership of Indian origin.

The interaction was on the experience of all these leaders on ease-of-doing business within the country and the concerns that are to be addressed. Modi on his part has been selling his idea of financial and economic reforms and the large scale development that is to take place so as to attract the *American Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs)* and *Foreign Direct Investment (FDI)* in areas like housing, broadband connectivity, electricity, renewable energy, railways, etc. During the round table on *Media, Technology and Communications : Growth Story for India* (to influence India's growth story with the media and through modern communication technologies), the CEOs of companies pointed that changes undertaken by the Modi government were satisfactory but more changes need to be accelerated. These leaders have raised concerns in the form of bureaucratic red-tapism, slow pace on deregulation, concerns on taxation policy with regard to real estate, etc. Modi took the opportunity to assure "*predictable and transparent governance structures*" especially in terms of "*ease of doing business*".

Democracy and technology have strengthened the partnerships today. More has been achieved in terms of political and security cooperation where both have endorsed the *US-India Joint Strategic Vision for the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean Region* and the *India-U.S. Delhi Declaration of Friendship* that was built on the September 2014 *Vision Statement for the Strategic Partnership (Chalein Saath Saath, which means Forward Together We Go)*. During this visit, attention is being given to areas of technology, economic and trade components of the relationship. Both sides had agreed in January 2015 to increase trade levels from US\$ 120 billion to US\$ 500 billion. In this regard, Modi's engagements with business and financial leaders in the USA particularly in the Silicon Valley gain prominence.

Part III South Asia

Sri Lankan PM Ranil Wikramasinghe visits India

By Dr. Joyce Lobo

The relations between India and Sri Lanka have gained a normalizing tendency of sorts, after the brief Rajapaksa-China tensions that India was sore over. The elections in Colombo to the offices of President and that of the Prime Minister (PM) have led to reforms in the right direction of bringing in parliamentary democracy. Also the current heads of the state and government are more oriented and friendly towards India. President Maithripala Sirisena (February) and PM Ranil Wikramasinghe (September) have both made it a point to first visit India after being elected this year while PM Modi visited Colombo in March this year, a testimony to good neighbourly relations.

Wikramasinghe was able to win, given the alliance between the *United National Party (UNP)* and the *Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP)* in the recently held parliamentary elections. This was his first foreign visit (September 14-16). Both sides saw the signing of the deals in relation to satellites, small developmental projects and in health sectors.

During this meeting, Modi sought support for Indian investors, who are keen to participate in Sri Lanka's economic development, especially in infrastructure, energy and transport sectors. Discussions were held on connectivity and economic links. Both have agreed to expand cooperation in defence training programmes and also to be sensitive to security concerns of each other.

However, issues that are lingering are with regard to the fishermen. The other area where there has been slow progress is to do with the *Comprehensive Economic and Partnership Agreement (CEPA)*. The Sri Lankan business groups are wary that the CEPA would benefit India and that the non-tariff barriers in India will be an obstacle to Sri Lankan businessmen. The talks have been on since a decade (2008) that led to the stalled 2012 draft. The fears of the Lankan businessmen are in areas of banking, insurance and the IT industry. The discussions focused on how to final amicable solutions.