

**Tour Report of official visit of Bodh Gaya**  
**by Shri T N Shanoo, Member, NCM**

On the invitation of National Co-ordination Committee of Buddhist Organizations (India), I participated in a two days conference on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> August, 2014. The conference was held in the main hall of the International Meditation Centre at Bodh Gaya. About 200 to 300 delegates from all the States attended the conference. Prominent Buddhist Bhikkhus Dr. Bhikkhu Satyapala Mahathera Chief Advisor of the Council, Ven M. Ananda Convener, Ven. Priya Pal Co-convener attended the conference. All the issues regarding Buddhist problems in the Country were discussed. At the end of the conference they adopted a resolution which is enclosed. Intense discussions were held during the two days conference on the following issues.

1. Security and safety of the World Heritage Place Mahabodhi Mahavihara
2. Formation of Bodh Gaya Development Authority
3. Beautification of Bodh Gaya
4. Renaming of the present Gaya Airport to Buddha International Airport
5. Linking of railway lines from Lumbani (Nepal) to Bodh Gaya via Kushinagar
6. Total change of the composition of members under Bodh Gaya Temple (Amendment) Act- 2013
7. Buddhist Personal Law
8. Buddhist Marriage Validation Bill
9. Establishment of State Minority Commission in all the States
10. Violation of Act 14 & 25 of the Constitution by passing anti conversion bill by Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat.

I apprised the gathering that immediately after the bomb blast that took place at Bodh Gaya on 7<sup>th</sup> July 2013, the National Commission for Minorities made a recommendation to the Central Government regarding deployment of a Paramilitary force for the security and safety of the Bodh Gaya Temple. The Government agreed to deploy CISF for the security of the temple but the deployment could not be materialized due to the demand of CISF that the entire expenditure incurred for the deployment of the 250 personnel is to be borne by the State Government and also their demand that the Command and control of this force will rest with the CISF. The State Government did not agree to both the demands of the CISF. In this connection, the Commission has again taken up the matter with the MHA to sort out the problems on priority and for the deployment of the CISF as early as possible.

I also apprised the gathering that the status of the Temple Management of Bodh Gaya and demand for change in composition of nominated members under the Bodh Gaya Temple are subjudice and hence cannot be taken up, pending the final judgment of the Supreme Court. I also mentioned the outcome of the NCM's meeting with the Principal Secretary Home, Govt. of Bihar and other authorities at Patna in February, 2014. At that meeting the Principal Secretary had apprised the Commission that the arrangement of street lights on the road, linking of several Buddhist Monasteries and the work on the drainage system was already in progress. For improving the law and order situation, petty criminals and anti-social elements active in the area have been nailed and proper security measures have been taken for the safety of tourists.

The delegation from Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Gujarat were very critical of the passing of the anti conversion law in their respective states.

The delegates were extremely aggrieved and agitated that the entire management of the Temple and day to day affairs seems to be influenced by the Non-Buddhist Members, being in majority in the BTMC.

The Bodh Gaya Temple is the most sacred and the holiest Temple and lakhs of Buddhists devotees from across the world visit this Temple for pilgrimage

purpose around the year and therefore the safety and security of the pilgrims and the cleanliness of the entire Bodh Gaya are most essential. The delegation thus opined that the formation of the Bodh Gaya Development Authority is required.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

We may take up the following issues with the Govt of Bihar:

1. Establishment of a separate Bodh Gaya Development Authority
2. Renaming of Gaya Airport as Buddha International Airport
3. Beautification of Bodh Gaya
4. We may take up the issue of linking important Buddhist pilgrimage centers with Bodh Gaya, with the Railway Authority.

  
T. N. Shanoo  
Member

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