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INDIA

### Telangana, a new Indian state, is given go ahead

by CT Nilesh

It comprises 10 districts of Andhra Pradesh. The decision arrived at yesterday at midnight, while the leader KC Rao, champion of the cause, lay dying. Telangana Irredentism has lasted 50 years. Telangana is the poorest area. Concerns about possible divisions of other states of Indian Union.



Mumbai (AsiaNews) The decision taken by the central government of India yesterday evening, allows for a new state to be carved out from Andhra Pradesh with the name of Telangana. This will be the 29th state of the Union of India. This decision is the culmination of fifty years process and vindication.

Telangana is the region around the present capital of Andhra Pradesh comprising 10 of the 23 districts. Historically and culturally it has always been separate from the coastal districts of Andhra although they speak the same language Telugu. Telangana was belonging to the Muslim kingdom of Nizam, while Andhra was under the direct rule of the British Empire and could benefit of western education and modern development.

After the Nizam, who wanted to be independent, was invaded and incorporated by the Indian army in 1948, a separate Hyderabad state was formed. In 1956 all the boundaries of Indian states were redrawn on linguistic criteria. Part of Hyderabad state, speaking Marati, went with Maharashtra, part went with Karnataka, and the Telugu speaking part, or Telangana, went in the state of Andhra Pradesh with the coastal districts separated from Madras.

The Telangana movement intensified in 1969. Primarily a student driven protest based on Osmania University, it became a people movement. Over 350 students were killed in police firing. But later on the Congress leader Marri Channa Reddy, who raised the "Jay Telangana" slogan, diluted the movement by merging the Telangana Praja Samithi Party with Congress and Indira Gandhi appointed him Chief Minister.

The movement was revived recently by K Chandrashekar Rao (KCR) who was belonging to the Telugu Desam Party and was hoping for a minister's post but was made deputy speaker after the 1999 election. He quit in 2001 to champion the cause of Telangana State. The votes of those supporting the Telangana movement had always been exploited by the oppositions during the electoral campaigns without fulfilling their demands when in power.

In the past weeks Hyderabad and other Telangana cities like Nalgonda and Karmnagar were paralyzed by the agitation. Several youths committed suicide for the cause and KC Rao went in fast-unto-death for the last 10 days. Suffering also from diabetes, yesterday he was in a critical situation and the Central Government went in frantic consultations till midnight when the decision was announced by the Interior Minister Chidambaram.

But a lot of difficulties remain to be solved. The region accounts for 119 seats of the 294 in the assembly. The region is poorer and less developed but has the capital city Hyderabad in its boundaries and Andhra does not want to lose Hyderabad. Giving in to the demand of a separate state, the central government may open a Pandora box because many other regions in many other states have a claim for statehood and politicians are always scrambling for better seats.

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by Bernardo Cervellera



Chinese Catholics at home and around the world prayed for the Church in China, according to the intention laid out by Benedict XVI in his letter of June 2007. The shrine is a place of encounter between underground and official Christians, the government continues to prohibit pilgrimages. Unity in truth for the Church in China and in relations between Beijing and the Vatican.

CHINA-VATICAN

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