
Muslim Board Opposes Indian Govt's Bid To Deliver Babri Land To Temple Extremists

The legal committee of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, in its emergency meeting on Sunday, February 9, 2003 vehemently opposed the BJP-led central government's move to get the Supreme Court stay on religious activity at the 'undisputed land' vacated.

"The Supreme Court had explicitly given its verdict in 1994 in the Ismail Farooqi case that the 67 acres of the acquired land shall remain in the government's possession till the final decision in the pending title suit before the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad high court," Syed Qasim Rasool Ilyas, Board's spokesman said in Delhi.

The Board, an umbrella organization of leading Muslim organizations in India for the protection of Muslim personal laws,

also reiterated its earlier stand that the court case should be expedited in order to diffuse the prevailing tension and uncertainty over the issue.

Courts have been on and off looking into the Babri cases for the last half a century. At present all cases have been bundled into one case which is being tried by the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court.

The Board's meeting was attended by five out of its 12 members and two special invitees, with Maulana Syed Nizamuddin, general secretary of the Board, as its chairman.

Indian Muslims made the Board solely responsible for all deliberations on the Babri issue on behalf of the community in the wake of the demolition of the mosque in 1992.

Influence of Video Games, TV On Students Worries Malaysians

A survey carried by the local Malay newspaper Berita Harian (BH) said thirty percent of kids treated for psychiatric problems at the Hospital universiti kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM) in Kuala Lumpur were affected by addiction to television, computer or video games, sending an alarm in the

country of the impact of these technologies of the society.

The paper said Prof Zasmani Shafie, who is a child psychiatrist said the children sent to this hospital were those who refused to go to school, did not listen to the advice of the teachers and were not paying attention in classes.



Amnesty Calls For Inquiry Into Crackdown On Muslim Uprising In China

Amnesty International on Wednesday, February 5, 2003, called for an independent inquiry into accusations of serious human rights violations during and after a crackdown on a 1997 demonstration by ethnic Uighur minorities in western China.

The appeal comes on the sixth anniversary of the demonstration in Yining city in the restive, traditionally Muslim-dominated Xinjiang region, reported Agence France-Presse (AFP).

The Chinese government has said 10 people were killed in the unrest but Uighur sources at the time said about 100 died.

In a statement Wednesday, Amnesty said dozens of people were killed or injured when Chinese security forces reportedly opened fire on Uighur demonstrators in Yining on February 5 and 6, 1997.

The initially peaceful demonstration on February 5 was followed by several days of sporadic rioting in which both civilians and members of the

security forces were killed or injured.

Thousands of people were detained as the security forces went systematically through the streets, arresting suspected protestors and supporters, including their relatives. Many of those detained were reportedly tortured, Amnesty said.

China has ruled Xinjiang to varying degrees for centuries and it re-established control in 1949 by crushing the short-lived state of East Turkestan that emerged during the Chinese civil war, which ended that year.

Since then, Beijing has encouraged and assisted in the mass migration of Han Chinese to the region, some say to dilute nationalist tendencies, but hopes of independence have been rekindled since the fall of the Soviet Union and the emergence of the Muslim states of Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Tunisian Lawyer Files Lawsuit to Repeal Law Banning Hijab

In a move seen as the first of its kind, a Tunisian female lawyer and human rights activist filed a lawsuit to revoke Law no. 108 of 1981, which banned Tunisian women from wearing Hijab (headscarf) inside the state-run bodies.

In press statements during a symposium in Paris, Saida al-Akrami said she is absolutely convinced that this controversial well-known law brazenly violates the basic rights enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which states that everyone has the right to freedom of religion and choose the clothes which suit him/her.

The Tunisian lawyer said the incumbent Tunisian authorities revitalized the anti-Hijab law, noting that “the implementation of this law sharply conflicts with the Tunisian Constitution, which stipulates that Tunisia is an Islamic country.”

Akrami asserted that five Tunisian female university students were referred to the

university’s disciplinary council for refusing to take off their Hijabs inside the campus, adding that another civil servant was given a three-month suspension for the same reason.

Akrami further said that the religious wake-up witnessed by Tunisia recently and the increasing number of Tunisian girls wearing Hijab had forced the Tunisian authorities to take a hard-line approach in implementing this notorious law, pointing out that an MP with the ruling party demanded the government stand up to the “phenomenon” of Hijab in Tunisian society.

The Tunisian league for human rights, for its part, recently released an unprecedented statement, calling on the Tunisian authorities to put an end to their anti-Hijab campaign.

In 1981, Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba (1956-1987) ratified the law, which banned Tunisian women from wearing Hijab in state offices.



Severe Cold Kills Dozen Afghan Refugee Children: Official

Severe cold has claimed the lives of more than a dozen Afghan children in two refugee camps in northwest Pakistan over the past two weeks, a local official said Saturday, January 11, 2003.

“Some 14 children have died in the past two weeks due to extremely cold weather and lack of medication,” a local official in Bajaur tribal belt said.

He said the deaths occurred in two refugee camps housing around 40,000 Afghans in Bajaur tribal

belt, where the temperature has dropped to minus 3 degrees Celsius (27 degrees Fahrenheit).

“The refugees urgently need blankets and medicines.”

Pakistan still shelters about 1.5 million Afghans, the majority of them living in camps in North West Frontier Province, bordering Afghanistan.

Furthermore, more than 700,000 people are still displaced within Afghanistan itself.