

Editorial

Imphal, Tuesday, February 23, 2016

A dangerous precedent

The declaration of Naga Student's Federation to ban movement of all Meitei/Meetei owned vehicles in all Naga inhabited areas in the state is perhaps the clearest indication of the level of audacity any and every organisation or group of persons have elevated themselves to. It also indicates the level of failure of the state government in nipping a problem in the bud and preventing dissents and agitations. What was an issue of a group of irresponsible state security forces mishandling a few students have now been blown out of proportions and have come to such a situation that the unfortunate event has acquired a communal undertone. The not-so-subtle expression of communally charged allegations could not be missed by anyone, and the diversion from the real issue portends the increasingly widening communal chasm. One major concern that has been felt by the public is the increasingly diluted focus of the myriad student's bodies operating in the state, from indulging in price checks of goods and commodities to interfering in admission procedures. The root of the problem though, is the failure of the state government in keeping a tight grip on the issues and addressing the administrative anomalies in time. But what has been conveniently ignored all along is the existence of the legal system in the state. The reason is not very difficult to decipher. The most obvious and glaring reason being the losing faith in the legal system in addressing any issue. Issues which should have been dispensed with as a matter of routine have been made to fester and foment into bigger and more complex issues thereby presenting an opportunity for the different groups and parties to step in and pronounce their verdicts. The present system of administration being followed in the state is nothing short of a recipe for mayhem, and if opinions of various think tanks and retired bureaucrats are of any importance, the present social situation is not one borne of circumstances but rather out of design. The real losers, however, turns out to be the general public who still bore the brunt of the conflicts in interests and show of strength. The present development however, is threatening to steer the whole communal undercurrent into totally uncharted territory and bifurcate the state into unmanageable fragments. To be allowed to run amok along the fragile communal fabric is a matter that needs to be checked instantly. The state authorities should consider the allegations and provide justice if necessary, at the same time, allowing any party or group of individuals to drive a wedge between the different communities on any pretext should not be tolerated. It is time to take off the velvet glove and deal with the issue on its merit rather than playing the reluctant bystander. The diktat of the NSF should not be allowed to be a precedent for future attempts at fomenting communal tension. Ever.

Agitators remove blockades from most of the roads in Haryana

New Delhi, Feb. 23: In Haryana, the agitators have removed blockades from most of the roads including National Highway number one and number 10 and rail tracks. The traffic has been restored on these roads. President of Akhil Bhartiya Jat Aarakshan Sangharsh Samiti Yashpal Malik has said that Jat agitators had left the railway track near Mayyer. He said that as per his knowledge agitators have cleared almost all the blockades. The agitators have left the Bhattu rail track in Fatehabad district. However, agitators in Sonapat today morning set on fire some shops. Meanwhile, Sonapat Deputy Commissioner Dr Rajiv Rattan has

ordered to keep closed all government and non-government educational institutions till tomorrow. In Rohtak candle march for peace was taken out. Rohtak Range IGP Shrikant Yadav who was being blamed for letting the things happen has been shifted. He is posted as IG State Crime Record Bureau at Madhuban. The curfew has been lifted at Rohtak but at Sonapat and Hisar curfew continues. Srs Deputy Commissioner has also announced to keep government and private educational institutions closed. Army has taken control of western Yamuna link canal and water supply to Delhi is being restored.

Bangladeshi held for Kolkata firing incident

PTI Barabanki (UP), Feb 23: A Bangladeshi citizen accused of opening indiscriminate fire outside a college in Kolkata has been arrested from Dewa area here, police said today. Arid-ul-Islam was

arrested during a raid at a guest house yesterday. Superintendent of Police Abdul Hameed said. An automatic weapon was recovered from the possession of Ismal, who used a fake identity to stay at the guest house.

Fake videos: checks channels can do

As the Kanhaiya video controversy continues, the BBC's Social Media Editor explains how to handle videos.

Webby award-winning journalist Mark Frankel says that a strong editorial policy coupled with a professional team that follows a strict standard operating procedure, can ensure that doctored or fake videos do not get aired.

In an interview with The Hoot from London, Frankel said that the BBC has an entire team dedicated to checking for fake videos on a 24x7 news cycle basis. "We take it very seriously and it is at the centre of our newsroom. What is real? What is fake? That is the team I manage." "The BBC has an entire team dedicated to checking for fake videos on a 24x7 news cycle basis." The BBC ensures that the videos they use have not been tampered with in any way through several measures. "A number of checks can be done routinely to ensure that the footage is not fake. The videos will often be thumbnail images. In fake videos, people scrape that image and it reveals it. You can easily detect that it is associated with another video," Frankel said. Other than its own homegrown footage, the BBC has a relationship with various global news organisations to source footage.

"We take footage from Reuters, AP, European agencies etc. Some of them are also amateur videos but accompanying them must be dope sheets and we are bound to run checks on them to establish their authenticity."

According to Frankel, things become critical when there is a developing news story. "Suddenly the Internet explodes with video and some of that will work its way to us. What we then do is what is called a 'reverse image' search. We look at the video frame by frame, we look at the date encrypted on where the video was taken, when it was taken and how real it is. We look at when the video was first posted. We look at the location and timing. We look online at the weather in that place at the time when the video claims it was shot and check whether it was really taken where it was supposed to have been taken." "Lots of things can be done to check whether a video is fake or genuine." "There are other cross checks too. For example, suppose a video claims it has been shot in Egypt, but in the background we can hear lots of people talking in Italian, then obviously there is a problem. So lots of things can

be done to check whether a video is fake or genuine."

Frankel says that a reverse search on the Internet, on another social media platform, is a good way to detect fake videos. "For example, during the Paris attacks, huge numbers of people were posting on YouTube. When we started the search, we found that many of the videos had come from Instagram, that is, the original video was on Instagram. We then found the original and discovered that the first time it was posted was on an entirely different platform and not on YouTube," he said.

On the doctored of sound in a video (as has allegedly happened in the case of the JNU video), Frankel said: "That is a very easy thing to do and it is known as the 'classic' distortion. It is also very easy to detect, each date can be traced, we can track when the picture was uploaded and when the sound was uploaded. There is something called the 'unique code' and it will contain that date. Once you see this data, you can quickly detect whether the sound track is in sync with the picture or has been added from another place. All you need to do is look for something

called 'ExisData' - it has the properties of an image, the shape of an image, the picture quality and the time it was uploaded. If someone posted it later, you can detect that when you analyse this data," he explained.

Are these processes difficult? "Not at all. It involves asking some very basic questions and cross checking the facts. If you do these things, you will not end up using doctored videos," he said.

Asked if he remembered any major instances where doctored videos had got past editorial scrutiny, Frankel said he had seen it happen only in still photography. "The obvious ones have been those related to the weather. We have noticed instances when during an impending tornado or tsunami, you will get a picture of an event like that posted. It will be an old image, not a current one, so you can't really describe it as fake, but it is not associated with the current weather pattern and hence is false," he said. The basic message from the BBC's Social Media Editor is check, cross-check, check, cross-check... constantly. Are Indian TV channels listening? (Courtesy The Hoot)

National & International News

NDA Govt. inherited problems from UPA regime: Naidu

ANI New Delhi, Feb.23: With the Congress cornering the government over the recent controversies such as the JNU campus row and the suicide of Hyderabad University PhD scholar Rohith Vemula, Union Parliamentary Affairs Minister M. Venkaiah Naidu on Tuesday alleged that the BJP-led government has inherited some of these problems from the UPA regime. Naidu assured the Opposition that the government is willing to discuss every issue whether it is JNU, Hyderabad University, Pathankot attack and Jat reservation in the Budget Session of Parliament. "All these issues are not created by

this government. We inherited some of these problems. Whose regime was there when the students were committing suicides in Hyderabad University? It was the Congress regime. They have to answer to the country," Naidu told ANI. "With regard to JNU, such things have been happening since many years," he added. Speaking on the JNU row, he said that there was no question of closing a 'very prestigious university'. "We will strengthen it further but anti-national comments will not be allowed. It can be used as a platform for pro-Pakistan elements. We are very clear about it," he said. The Congress Party, which is all

geared up to corner the government in the Budget Session of Parliament earlier alleged that the NDA regime was trying to saffronise the educational institutions of the country. The government has, however, assured the Opposition that it is ready to discuss each and every issue in the Budget Session. Leader of the Congress Party in Lok Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge, said that they are going to raise eight to nine important issues, including the controversies surrounding the JNU, Hyderabad University PhD scholar Rohith Vemula's suicide and the FTL. The Budget Session of Parliament

will begin today with President Pranab Mukherjee's address to the joint sitting of the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. During the session, the Rail Budget will be presented on February 25 and the General Budget on February 29. The first phase of the Budget Session will come to an end on March 16 while the second phase will start from April 25 and conclude on May 13. The government has prioritised 32 items for the session including 11 Bills pending in the Rajya Sabha and one in the Lok Sabha besides transacting financial business related to the budget.

India extends USD 1 million as immediate aid to cyclone-hit Fiji

ANI New Delhi, Feb.23: Cyclone-hit Fiji will receive one million dollars as immediate assistance from the Indian Government. This was disclosed by Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Vikas Swarup on Tuesday on twitter. Fiji has been struck by "Cyclone Winston" which brought with it wind gusts of 325 kilometres per hour and sea and ocean waves up to 12 metres high. The area's crops and several villages have been flattened completely by the natural calamity. So far, 29 people have reportedly died and many others have been shifted to evacuation centres. Considerable damage is being reported from the main Fijian islands of Viti Levu and Koro after they were hit by strong winds directly. As aid efforts intensified, communications were established with some of the worst-hit remote communities, revealing the scale of the disaster. Officials say the Pacific nation's recovery from the devastating storm could take months. Power is gradually being restored in the main centres and roads cleared of felled trees. The international airport at Nadi also reopened yesterday, allowing international tourists caught up in the disaster to return home.

Delhi HC agrees to urgent hearing of Umar Khalid's plea for 'protection'

ANI New Delhi, Feb. 23: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday agreed to an urgent hearing of the plea of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Umar Khalid and four others booked by the Delhi Police, seeking ample security before they surrender so that no untoward incident happens. All five students Umar Khalid Anant Prakash Narayan, Ashutosh Kumar, Rama Naga and Anirban Bhattacharya, who have been accused of sedition, returned to the campus on Sunday night. Earlier, Delhi Police Commissioner Bhim Sain Bassi asked the JNU students, who returned to the university campus to join the joint probe and present evidence of their innocence. "I would say if the police is

looking for them then they should join the police investigation. And if they are innocent, they should present evidence of their innocence," Bassi told the media here. When asked if the police would enter the JNU campus to arrest the students, the top cop said that his men are competent enough to deal with the situation.

JNU row: HC asks police to file status report of probe in Kanhaiya case

PTI New Delhi, Feb. 23: Delhi high court on Tuesday directed the city police to file by Wednesday a status report of its investigation in the sedition case in which JNUSU president Kanhaiya Kumar has been arrested. The court's direction came while hearing Kanhaiya's bail plea which was opposed by Delhi Police. As soon as the hearing commenced before Justice Pratibha Rani at 10.30am, the bench said, "Are you filing a status report? If you were aware, you should have done it." Additional solicitor general (ASG) Tushar Mehta, appearing for the police, told the bench that they were opposing the bail plea of Kanhaiya. At this juncture, the bench said, "What about the status report. If you do not have the status report,

I will not proceed. Ask your investigating officer to file the report." ASG Mehta, however, told the bench that they will file the status report in a sealed cover as "this is a pre-charge sheet bail and the status report cannot be shown to the accused." To this, the bench observed, "I do not need it in a sealed cover. You will have to file it. Issue notice. File the status report by tomorrow." The bench, however, clarified that the status report will be limited to the extent of bail only. As the matter commenced, senior standing counsel of Delhi government advocate Rahul Mehra opposed the appearance of ASGs Mehta and Sanjay Jain and lawyer Anil Soni, saying before appearing in the matter they should show notification in this regard.

"If they don't have the same (notification) they cannot stand on their legs before this court," Mehra told the bench. Responding to this, ASG Jain said, "Once the ASGs are appearing in this matter, you have no business to interfere in this issue." At this stage, the bench intervened and said, "Let's not fight over this issue. I will proceed only if status report is filed." Advocate Mehra, however, said, "They have crossed the 'laxman rekha' and I will not allow this unless the court passes an order. I am appointed by the full court reference of this high court." Mehra also contended that the status report in this matter has to be filed by the Delhi Police commissioner and he has to clarify his stand as he had earlier said that the police will not oppose Kanhaiya's bail plea.

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