

# Editorial

Imphal, Wednesday, January 27, 2016

## Real terror unmasked

The undeniable truth that has long been eluding the people has been laid bare today for all to ponder upon. The sensational revelations of head constable Herojit can no longer be denied or ignored. What has been presumed by the public and concluded by the national investigating agency- the CBI has been proved true beyond any trace of doubt. Names have been named and authorities have been mentioned in no uncertain or terms. The turn of events as narrated by Herojit has all the elements of a superb thriller, the only unfortunate twist being that the chilling incident was for real. The blatant abuse of power and worse, the horrific network that was created to cover up the incident and bury it under mounds of lies, inconsistencies and deceit, even to the extent of using all and every conceivable means to secure their own thick hides- from making false promises and doling out assurances to harassments and threats to the very life of the person who has been made scapegoat of the whole incident and has been treated and made to feel like the proverbial leper has made the public think twice about the powers that are ruling the state and would certainly be questioning the safety and security of their lives and that of their families in the state. The controversies surrounding the brutal killings of known and suspected anti-social elements in fake encounters is nothing new in the state, and going by the startling revelations, is unlikely to see an end to it anytime in the foreseeable future. What made the public cringe in disgust and despair is not so much the fact that a suspected extortionist has been killed without being made avail his fundamental right to be represented in a court of law, but that the state government and all its machineries are party to the crime, and that the power and authority entrusted with them by the mandate of the people has been used- abused rather than snub out a life at its whim in broad daylight right in the middle of the busiest place in the state- a testimony to the increasing audacity and indifference to the sensitivities of the public. There is however the case of Rabina- a victim who has been written off as a collateral damage in the staged encounter. The despicable attempt by the state government to wash its hands off the whole bloody affair is another irrefutable evidence of the high-handed and callous attitude towards its own people who have provided it with the power and authority which it used against the public in an increasingly frightening and vicious manner- the same authority which the people is supposed to look up to for protection and assurance. The public needs to know what measures the state government will be taking up to address the gross injustice. The mask has come off, and instead of denying its involvement or justifying the incident, the only means of redemption would be to own up its blunders and make earnest efforts without further ado to make amends. Anything less would definitely be just a feeble effort at self-preservation.

## Three naxals gunned down in Chhattisgarh

**PTI Raipur, Jan 27:** Three naxals were gunned down today in a face-off with security forces in the dense forests of Chhattisgarh's insurgency-hit Dantewada district, police said. The skirmish took place between a team of District Reserve Group (DRG) and ultras in the jungles of Katekalyan police station area, Dantewada Superintendent of Police Kamlochan Kashyap told PTI. While undertaking an anti-naxal operation in Katekalyan, located 450 kms away from the state capital, security forces spotted a group of armed cadres between Lakhpal and Turrempara villages following which a gun-battle broke out between both the sides, the SP said. After the ensuing firefight that lasted for around an hour, naxals escaped into deep jungles. After searches at the spot, bodies of the three naxals along with many weapons were recovered from the spot, he said. Further details are reached as security forces are yet to reach back to their camp, the SP said.

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## National News

### Fresh batch of students to sit for hunger strike

**ANI Hyderabad, Jan. 27:** The Joint Action Committees (JAC) of the University of Hyderabad would decide on the fresh batch of students, who would sit on a hunger strike demanding justice for Dalit scholar Rohith Vemula, who committed suicide on January 17. "There were six people, whose health conditions deteriorated. They were forcefully shifted to health centre of the university. They are all in medical care now," Ram Avtar, one of the protestors, told ANI. "Their blood pressure and sugar level was fluctuating. Some people were critical earlier. So, this time the university authorities didn't want a similar situation to take place. However, no one from the administration has come to negotiate on the matter," he added. The professor further stated that the authorities should cater to the demands of the students and allow the university to function normally. The impasse between the JAC of students and the university administration continued as the academic suspension entered its tenth day today. Amid calls for him to step down, Vice-Chancellor in-charge Vipin Srivastava appealed to help the administration restore normality at the earliest. M.A. student Mubashir, who was part of the hunger strike that started three days ago in the university, along with six others was shifted to the campus Health Centre after he fainted at around 1.30 p.m. yesterday. Meanwhile, University's Vice Chancellor Appa Rao Podile, whose resignation is being sought by the protesting students, has gone on leave. Rohith Vemula, a Dalit research scholar, was found hanging at the Central University's hostel room on January 17. He was among the five research scholars suspended by the Hyderabad Central University (HCU) in August last year. The HCU has already revoked suspension of the four students, following uproar over Vemula's suicide. Imphal encounter: 6 years later, the admission — 'Yes, I shot him dead, he was unarmed, officer told me'

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### Imphal encounter: 6 years later, the admission — 'Yes, I shot him dead, he ....

The case was transferred to the CBI in 2010. Sanjit's mother Chungkham Tarombi, who lodged an FIR, had also petitioned the Gauhati High Court in 2009. The incident was highlighted in a Telhika magazine report which also published photographs that showed Sanjit being taken to the Maimu Pharmacy — it's near Gambhir Singh Arcade on the busy BT Road in Imphal — on July 23, 2009, and his body being brought out a little while later. Thokchom Rabina, a pregnant woman who was a bystander, also died in the firing. The official Manipur Police version stated: "On 23.7.2009 at 10.30 am, while police party was conducting frisking and checking near Samu Makhong, below the flyover, one unknown youth, when stopped for frisking, whipped out a small firearm and fired towards the police party and fled towards the east of BT Road. Due to the firing, one woman was hit on her head and succumbed at the spot. The police party chased the armed youth. The youth again fired towards them and towards public indiscriminately and in retaliation the police party fired some rounds in the air and chased the youth." "The youth ran inside Maimu Pharmacy. The police party surrounded the whole complex and entered the pharmacy under the command of Inspector H Devendra Singh (A2 — Accused 2) of CDO, Imphal West. HC Herojit Singh (A3) along with Rifleman Toyaima went inside and knocked on the door. The door flung open and the armed person opened fire toward their party. Their party immediately retaliated and in the retaliatory fire the armed youth was shot dead. One 9mm pistol was found clutched in his hand," the Manipur Police said. Herojit Singh has a different account of what happened that day: "The Assembly was in session then and I was posted in the area. I got a call from a friend that an owner of an iron rod-and-bar store called Sikander had received an extortion call. So I went to the store in Thangal Bazar to investigate. But the extortionists, who had visited the shop, had left. The store owner described them and I put it out the information on wireless. I gave instructions to my team and had all entrances to the Bazar area guarded so that they don't escape. I initiated frisking and search operations." "Around 9.30 am, I went for a meal. On the way, I got a message on my wireless set that there had been a shootout in the area, so I rushed to the spot. I didn't know that Rabina had already died. I arrived and asked my friend Toyaima Singh (Rifleman with Manipur Rifles and Accused 4 in the case) what happened. Four persons had been brought out of the Gambhir Singh Arcade. Toyaima identified Sanjit, and said that Sanjit had shot at the team. The others started roughing him up but I told them we better take him inside and talk." "We found a mobile phone on him. He had a number of missed calls. Then another call came and I put it on speaker. The caller said he had heard about the incident. He asked us to name the price and the place, that they would give whatever money we demand if we let Sanjit go. I don't know who the caller was. Before hanging up, he told Sanjit not to worry, that they will continue negotiating with the police for his life, that nothing will happen to him," Herojit Singh said. "At that point, I came to know that my senior, Additional SP, Imphal West, Dr. Akojiam Jhalajit had come to the spot. I went to him and said, 'Yes, we have caught a man... Yes, we have identified him'. I told him about the phone conversation I had. Then Akojiam Jhalajit told me, 'This is very good, finish him off'. I was startled, I told him that this is not the right place for an encounter. He said 'Toukhro' (just do it). I again pleaded, there was a huge crowd of public at the spot by then and a lot of mediapersons. He said, 'Don't worry about the media, I will lead them away toward the Kangla Fort Gate'. He told me to just follow the orders and carry out the execution," Herojit Singh alleged. "So I went in. I told my juniors to guard the gate. There was nobody in the pharmacy but Sanjit and I. The pharmacy owner and a watch seller were standing outside the shop. I shot him six or seven times, all in the torso," he said. "I'm sure Sanjit must have known that I had come back to kill him. I am sure he knew that when I was about to shoot him. But he didn't say anything. He didn't have any arms (weapons) on him. Just the mobile phone we had found earlier. Then the others came and took away his body," he said.

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- Kangujam Manaobi Meetei, Forest Ranger — Ningombam Makha Leikai - Rs. 5,000/- (Rupees Five thousand)

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### The Indo-Naga conflict: a question of internal Indian ethnic conflict or a conflict between two nations?

(Write up produced here is the lecture delivered at the Centre for Manipur Studies by *Kaka D. Iralu*)

(An appeal to the Prime Minister, India, Urna Headquarters, June 30, 1956) What happened afterwards is a story of blood and tears, sacrifices and heroism as a small nation fought against overwhelming odds for over half a century. As for A.Z. Phizo who wrote all the above words, he was first offered the Chief Ministership of Assam. When he refused, he was next offered to become a Minister in the Central Cabinet. This was followed by another offer to become the Ambassador to Malaya. He was next offered to ask anything from the Indian government including any amount of money. This offer was brought by Shri Prakasa, the then Minister of Natural Resources and Scientific Research. Phizo in his letter to S.C. Jamir from London dated October 31, 1963 wrote that he declined all these offers because he loved the Naga people more than anything else in the world. (S.C. Jamir, *Reminiscences of Correspondences with A.Z. Phizo*, p.21). When all these efforts to buy the Nagas with money failed, the Indian Government tried to militarily impose Indian nationality on the Nagas. When even this failed, the Indian Government again offered Phizo to become the next President of India in the early 1960s. Full details and a systematically chronicled account of many of the above stated facts can be found in the aforementioned book written by the author of the present article. THE DEVELOPMENT OF ETHNICITY TO NATIONALITY IN INDIAN HISTORY It is not within the scope of this paper to give even a summary of the ancient

history of India stretching to over five thousand years. We can therefore only begin with the colonial British period for the purpose of our analysis. It must however be noted here that the development of ethnicity to nationality in India also began only during the colonial British period. This development began with A.O. Hume when he started the Indian National Congress in 1885. But though A.O. Hume had started the Indian National Congress in 1885, it took almost thirty years for true Indian nationalism to take root in Indian hearts. One possible reason for this very slow development of Indian nationalism may be because of the fact that prior to 1885, for more than four thousand years, the Brahmins of India had kept all of India's intellectual, philosophical and scientific knowledge locked away in the Sanskrit language and texts. All the repository of Indian literature, science, medicine, law and religion were kept locked away within the Brahmanical sect. The Brahmins monopolised all these knowledge through the caste system by making it a sin for other lower caste to read or understand the Sanskrit language. Had it not been for 19<sup>th</sup> century Christian missionaries like William Carey and Alexander Duff, the Indian masses would still have been denied their own history and achievements even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Christian missionaries like William Carey, Alexander Duff and many others translated these sacred Sanskrit and Urdu texts into English and threw open India's past greatness to the Indian masses. As one Indian Christian writer, Vishal Mangalwadi had argued in his

book *India, the Grand Experiment*, long before the British colonisation of India, the Brahmins had for centuries colonised the Indian mind that the seeds of freedom, progress and development could not sprout and grow. I personally believe that had this reservoir of Indian knowledge been released even a thousand years earlier, perhaps India and not Europe or the West might have led humanity's march into the modern world. After all it is partly true that while the Europeans were still nomads, the Indian mind had already analysed metaphysics to a very high level. The Indian zero (0) was also already in Indian mathematics from that time. (Unfortunately the Brahmin caste strangulation of Indian society was so complete, India stayed stagnant within this great zero for centuries!) Coming back to the British colonial era, the Indian Congress was from the beginning, ridden with suspicions and prejudices of high caste and low caste feelings. The Dalits and the Muslims were always suspicious of the Hindu hierarchy that dominated the Indian National Congress. As a result of all these suspicions and prejudices, even though the British had by August 20, 1917 promised Indian self rule, even as late as November 11, 1917 the Indian National Congress was expressing its full loyalty and support to the British Government. These facts and resolutions can be found in their November 20, 1917 meetings in Bombay. There were of course some extremist and violent nationalist movements prior to 1917 in the persons of people like the Chakrap brothers,

Savarkar and Bal Gangadhar Tilak etc. These movements were however confined to Hindu religious groups rather than a universal Indian national movement. No doubt, the early sparks of the development from ethnicity to nationality in India, had begun with the likes of Bipin Chander Pal and Gangadhar Tilak, but it took Mahatma Gandhi to awaken India to a consciousness of her national soul. Things began to move with vision and direction only when Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi came back to India in 1914. However, here too it took many years for India to come to a clear stand for the demand of sovereignty and independence. The first great movement was launched by Gandhi in 1921 in the form of the Non-Cooperation Movement. But this mass movement was suddenly withdrawn in 1922 after the incident of Chauri Chaura in Uttar Pradesh. And though the movement continued through radical nationalists like Ram Prasad Bismil, Bhagat Singh etc, the national movement in a mass manner picked up momentum again only in 1930. This came in the form of the Civil Disobedience Movement. However in spite of all the Round Table Conferences from 1930 to 1931, the momentum was once again dropped in 1933 when the movement was again suspended. It was only nine years later in 1942, that on July 14, the Quit India Movement was finally and decisively launched. This final decision and mass movement finally led to the Indian Independence Act of July 18, 1947, and the declaration of India's independence on 15<sup>th</sup> August 1947. (To be contd....)