

Editorial
Imphal, Friday, July 22, 2016

Bewildered Manipur police cyber cell

On June 9, this year Cyber crime unit of Manipur swung into action and arrested four persons including two minors for assaulting a non-local and uploading the video of the incident on social networking sites. No individual complaint, but the cyber crime cell took up a *suo-motto* case after the video they uploaded went viral on social media. The four youths were charged of hate crimes. As two among the four were minor boys they were sent to observatory homes while the other two were sent to prison. On February 6, the Cyber Crime Unit of Imphal West police finally identified a woman who mercilessly thrashed a small girl in a video that went viral on the social networking site Facebook in the third week of January. As the matter is of juvenile related case, the cyber crime unit acted as according to a report filed by Child Welfare Committee Imphal West. The victim child was rescued and people lauded the commendable job delivered by the Cyber crime Unit.

On June 2, Imphal West police registered a case against the then JCILPS convenor Khomdram Ratan, after National Daily 'Indian Express' reported a news item at which Ratan was portrayed as a member of a banned rebel group UNLF, based on a photo which was uploaded in social media Facebook. It took less than 24 hours for the police to swing into action for arrest of any person who spread hate crime through social media.

Now on June 24, after a 6-mins 2 sec. length video was seen uploaded in social which has the tendency to spark communal enmity among two important community of the state, Imphal Times drew the attention of the concerned police department through its editorial under the title "Macabre Messiah".

The video showed a Muslim cleric physically assaulting a Muslim girl using a cane in front of many Muslim men inside a room at which a banner with script "ANJUMAN, was seen hanging on the wall. The banner hinted that the physical assault of the Muslim girl happened inside an office room of the so called ANJUMAN- a civil body of Muslim community. What is more shocking about the incident is the hate speech used by the Muslim cleric. He was even heard saying that a Muslim girl marrying to man of another religion is unforgivable and liable for capital punishment. He said it as written in the holy book Qurans. The effort went in vain as no police officers or any concern government authority did not catch up with what *Imphal Times* was trying to convey. On July 15, Imphal Times taking the matter as a serious one, as it has the tendency to spark communal violence, the story was once more re-produced under the title - "Police fails to take action on hate mongering video that went viral on social networking site".

While filing the story Imphal Times did questioned the Imphal West Cyber Cell Unite on whether they had taken case as the video has tendency to break communal clashed. But straight away the authority in the cyber cell unit replied that they haven't taken up any case on that specific issue as nobody complaints. However, what surprises Imphal Times is that, when the Cyber crime unit can take up *suo-motto* case base on the media report they haven't taken up a case nor did they showed any interest in the video.

Well, it is about human rights violation and hate mongering speech. And if no action is proceeded; there is no reason for us in the media to say that "Cyber cell of Police as well as the Superintendent of Police are here not for the state of Manipur but for the so called Ministers and MLAs.

As it stands as a fact that video mongers communal ideas, violates human right, amounts to cruelty to woman, provoke enmity between religious groups moreover it is undemocratic and is against constitution of India.

Indian Air Force AN 32 Plane with 29 on board missing, massive search Ops on

New Delhi, July 22: An Indian Air Force (IAF) AN-32 plane with 29 on board is missing after it took off from Chennai this morning. A massive search operation has been launched by the air force, Navy and Coast Guard. The Navy has launched surveillance aircraft to look for the missing plane in the Bay of Bengal. A Domier aircraft has also been sent and four ships, Karmukh, Gharial, Jyoti and Kutuh have been diverted to the region at full speed.

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Rising Attacks to Silence Journalists

By Mohd. Afsar

The murder of journalist Rajdeo Ranjan at Siwan—the most recent one in a series of attacks on journalists in recent times, is an alarming sign of danger on freedom to report in India. As per the latest report released by the worldwide known organisation 'Reporters Without Borders', India is among the top three most dangerous countries for journalists. It has named India as "Asia's deadliest country for media personnel, ahead of both Pakistan and Afghanistan".

Recent Attacks on Power of Free Speech of Journalists

Violence, including murders and threats, is emerging as a factor to silence the journalists. This is being done by politicians and criminals in particular. The media, which is supposed to have the power of free speech, is being controlled by the influential people (especially those with political links). "Indian journalists daring to cover organised crime and its links with politicians have been exposed to a surge in violence, especially violence of criminal origin, since the start of 2015." 'Reporters Without Borders' states. One more journalist association, 'Patrika Halla Virodhi Kruti Samiti', working for the protection of journalists, also states that the number of attacks on journalists is rising by the day in India.

From a long list of murders, attacks and violence against journalists since the last few years, some are listed below. On May 13 this year, a senior journalist, Rajdeo Ranjan, was shot dead at Siwan town in Bihar. He covered Siwan politics and crime extensively and published several reports on court proceedings against former Siwan MP Mohammad Shahabuddin. The MP is the primary accused in

the case of his murder. A day before the murder of Rajdeo Ranjan, Akhlesh Pratap Singh, a journalist working with the Taza TV news channel of Jharkhand, was shot at least thrice before he died. The reason of his death is that he revealed a number of scandals of corruption in the Jharkhand State and was therefore targeted.

Karun Misra, bureau chief of *Jan Sandesh Times*, a Hindi daily of Uttar Pradesh, was shot dead in February 2016. The Director-General of UNESCO, Inna Bokova, condemned this killing of the journalist and said: "The free flow of information as provided by the media benefits every member of society and must be defended swiftly to ensure there is no impunity for such crimes."

In July 2015, Akshay Singh, a reporter of the Aaj Tak channel, was found dead in mysterious circumstances near the railway tracks in Madhya Pradesh while investigating the unnatural deaths in the Vyapam scam.

Editor of *Khushboo Ujala*, a local weekly in Mumbai, Raghavendra Dube, was murdered after he disclosed the alleged nexus between bar owners and police in July 2015.

Journalist Jagendra Singh died from burn injuries in June 2015. His family has made allegations on the UP Minister, Ram Murti Singh Verma. Before his death, he wrote on his Facebook page alleging that "Ram Murti Singh Verma can have me killed. At this time, politicians, thugs, and police, all are after me. Writing the truth is bearing heavily on my life. After exposing some of Ram Murti Singh Verma's acts, he had me attacked..." He reported critically on politics and wrote on illegal mining and land grabs in newspapers as well as on his Facebook page regularly.

In June 2015, a journalist from

Madhya Pradesh, Sandeep Kothari, was murdered by those who were involved in illegal mining and running chit-fund companies.

Senior journalist M.V.N. Shankar was brutally murdered with iron rods in Andhra Pradesh in November 2014 by the mafia exposed by him. The mafia was involved in adulteration and illegal distribution of kerosene oil and gas.

In May 2014, Tarun Acharya, a stringer with Kanak TV in Odisha, was found dead with cuts and injuries on his throat and chest. The charge for the murder was made on the owner of a cashew processing factory who used child labour at his factory and this illegal practice was reported by the journalist in his TV news reports.

Increase in murders is not the only concern about the safety of journalists. The number of physical attacks, threats and abuses on journalists is also continuing to grow in recent years and hence newspersons are facing mounting restrictions on the free flow of news and information to the public. A few cases are being mentioned here among the hundreds of such types of incidents.

In the month of April this year, more than half-a-dozen journalists and camerapersons in Jharkhand were assaulted and their equipment was damaged by policemen when they were trying to get pictures of the Cabinet Minister, Saryu Rai, who came to the police station in connection with the alleged illegal detention of a man.

Alok Singh and Kaunain Sheriff, *Indian Express* journalists, were assaulted by a group of lawyers at the Patiala House court complex in February 2016 while they were covering the sedition

case against JNUSU President Kanhaiya Kumar.

A child died due to firing after the victory of Samajwadi Party MLA Naved Hasan in the block pramukh elections in February 2016. While reporting this incident, the television reporters were assaulted by the SP workers.

In October 2015, several reporters and camera-persons were allegedly assaulted by unidentified men when they were covering the West Bengal civic polls. The Opposition parties in Bengal have blamed the ruling Trinamul Congress (TMC) for the attack and alleged malpractices.

In June 2015, Kanak TV reporter Satyajit Sen and his cameraman were beaten up and their equipments were damaged by a railway security officer while they were covering a protest by the passengers of a train against the delay of the train for several hours in Odisha.

A journalist reports on what's going right and wrong in our society. Journalists communicate facts and news stories to the people that the latter should know; that may change their lives; that inspires and motivates them. Journalists put their best efforts in order to gather evidences and chase sources. And what do they get in return? Death, physical attacks and threats! Furthermore, the attitude of the government dampens the high spirits of journalist when, for example, the present Minister for Women and Child Development, Maneka Gandhi, seeks the withdrawal of government accreditation of the journalist. This is what she did in case of two Reuters India reporters, Aditya Kalra and Andrew MacAskill, after the news agency refused to "amend or withdraw" an October 19, 2015 report headlined "India's budget cuts hurt fight against malnutrition: Maneka Gandhi".

Courtesy Main Stream (To be contd.)

National & International News

SC to hear plea for Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir

PTI New Delhi, July 22: The Supreme Court today agreed to hear a plea seeking imposition of Governor's rule in Jammu and Kashmir, under a provision of J&K Constitution, due to the prevailing law and order situation in the state.

A bench headed by Chief Justice T S Thakur directed that the petition filed by Jammu and Kashmir National Panthers Party (JKNPP) be listed next week.

The plea was mentioned before the bench by the counsel for JKNPP who said that Jammu and Kashmir has been "under siege of the security forces and the police for the past two weeks resulting in a total chaos, anarchy and disorder

in the entire valley of Kashmir".

The counsel said that Governor's rule under section 92 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir should be imposed.

The petition sought a direction to the Governor to dissolve the Assembly of Jammu and Kashmir "which has failed to discharge its duties and functions".

The bench also comprising justices FML Kalifulla and AM Khanwilkar asked the petitioners why they did not approach the Jammu and Kashmir High Court for remedy.

The counsel said that the Jammu and Kashmir High Court "has been locked up" as well and they can't go anywhere else. "The situation in Jammu and Kashmir has been

chaotic and there is no public order in existence as such."

It said "there is literally rule of the gun and the people in the Valley have no access to even water or medical stores.

"The people in Jammu and Kashmir have been forced to stay inside their house and homes without food, medicines or other essential commodities needed for human survival," it alleged

The plea sought direction to the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir to intervene under section 92 of the Constitution of Jammu and Kashmir and take over the administration in the state in the interest of security, safety and fundamental rights of the Indian citizens.

Head constable found hanging in KSRP quarter

Bengaluru, July 22: Head constable Annarao Saibanna Gamaga (48), attached to the Indian Reserve Battalion (IRB) II in Vijayapura, allegedly committed suicide by hanging in the KSRP quarters at Taj Sulantpur on the outskirts of Kalaburagi city in the early hours of Friday.

His family members found him hanging in the hall of the police quarters and informed the police. Annarao, who was promoted a year back as the head constable and transferred to the IRB, was not happy with his transfer and had applied for transfer back to KSRP battalion in Kalaburagi.

According to his wife, Seethabai, he was withdrawn and mentally upset for the past few days after his application for transfer was not taken into consideration. Incidentally, eight other constables of the KSRP battalion who were transferred along with Annarao were successful in getting the transfer back to Kalaburagi few days back. Annarao, according to his family members was an alcoholic and had few health problems. Ms. Seethadevi said he had not complained of any harassment by higher officials and was only upset that his application for transfer was not accepted. He did not show any symptoms of suicidal tendency. After having dinner with the family members, he was discussing various family matters till midnight and asked her and his younger son to sleep in the bedroom and preferred to sleep in the hall.

The deceased leaves behind two daughters and two sons. While the daughters have been married off, one of the sons is working in Bengaluru in a company.

Annarao hailed from Bankur village in Chitapur taluk in Kalaburagi district.

SC issues notice to EC on plea seeking disqualification of convicted lawmakers

New Delhi, July 22: The Supreme Court of India on Friday issued a notice to the Election Commission of India (ECI) to respond to a plea with regard to disqualifying convicted Members of Parliament and Members of State Assemblies/Legislators as per an earlier direction of the apex court.

It may be recalled that in September 2013, the Supreme Court had refused to entertain the central government's plea seeking a review of its verdict on disqualification of MPs and MLAs on being convicted in a criminal case.

The apex court, however, agreed to hear the Centre's petition seeking review of its judgment barring arrested persons from contesting elections.

In August of that year, the Union

Cabinet had cleared a proposal to allow convicted lawmakers to retain their membership till an appeal is pending before a court while suspending their voting rights.

According to the law ministry's proposal to amend the Representation of People Act, a Member of Parliament or a Member of a Legislative Assembly can retain membership even after conviction if his or her appeal is pending before a court and sentence is stayed, but he or she shall neither be entitled to vote nor draw salary and allowances. The move was necessitated after the Supreme Court ruled that a lawmaker should be disqualified in the event of a conviction for an offence attracting a sentence of more than two years. The law ministry's proposal then also suggested

introducing a new clause to the Constitution to say that a person can contest elections even if he can't vote. It states that a person cannot cease to be a voter while in detention as his or her right is only temporarily suspended. It was argued that as the name of the person in jail continues to be on the electoral role, he or she also continues to be an elector and can file nomination for election.

Around three years ago, political parties across the board opposed the apex court order, arguing it could be misused to settle scores. They even suggested that the Supreme Court order was a clear case of "judicial overreach" and argued that the supremacy of Parliament must be maintained and if required, amendments must be brought in the Constitution.