

Editorial

Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2018

Are our women safe?

Breaking the gloomy and dark atmosphere of increasing crimes against women hovering over our society, a bright silver lining has appeared with the concerns shown by every stakeholder committed for the rights of the women. Even new legislations passed in the last few years definitely deter the perpetrators and make life safer for women.

However, the question remains about the fate of those unfortunate victims who had been offended against before these laws became stringent? Were the accused and perpetrators of those crimes to be tried under the lax laws of those times? Why shouldn't the cases which are still in progress, irrespective of the period in which they were committed be tried under the new law? And why was the document provided by the high school of the minor accused in the Delhi rape case that triggered the chain of reactions and agitations which ultimately led to the amendments of the existing rape laws in the country, given preference over a medical test as a proof of his age?

Questions that still needs answered in clear and concise terms- a habit alien to those responsible who are used to stressing inane and incoherent aural mutterings as responses to issues they are incapable of or are unwilling to deal with. There was no dearth of laws to deal with any form of crime or offence in the country to begin with. Judges have been empowered to exercise their judicial knowledge in awarding penalties and sentences within the limits laid down for each section for which the crimes are tried for. They are at liberty to award the harshest punishment permissible for crimes against women - and had they done so consistently, the collective outburst the nation demanded for a change in the laws would have rather been for the speedy and fair implementation and delivery of justice instead, which will be the focus the society and the nation needs to turn on because, after the laws have been amended to everyone's satisfaction, as if that is possible and done, what of the other arms of the law that is to ensure it's execution and upkeep? Is a very strict law the only criteria required for a safer society?

One hope not- the mind performs through the arms- the judiciary and the executive powers bestowed on the courts of law, the police and the army are to be exercised in the right manner and with due diligence in order for the laws to benefit the general public for which they are framed. Only a well co-ordinated and concerted legal system could ensure a free and ideal society.

Cyclone wreaks havoc in Tonga's capital, parliament flattened, homes wrecked

Reuters Wellington, Feb. 13: Tonga's neighbours scrambled to deliver emergency relief on Tuesday after Cyclone Gita tore across the Pacific island nation in the middle of the night, flattening the parliament, tearing roofs off homes and causing widespread flooding.

There were no confirmed reports of deaths from the Category 4 storm that brought winds of around 200 km (125 miles) per hour, but there were a lot of injured people, some seriously, said Graham Kenna, an Australian government adviser at Tonga's National Emergency Management Office.

Photos posted on social media showed a wrecked Parliament House building in the capital, as well as extensive flooding and downed power lines. Access to areas outside the capital were hindered by the storm damage and debris.

"The full extent of damage caused by Cyclone Gita is still being assessed but there is an immediate need for assistance on the ground," NZ Foreign Affairs Minister Winston Peters said in a statement. "About 5,700 people sought shelter in evacuation centres overnight, and it is expected these numbers will increase substantially tonight."

New Zealand is donating NZ\$750,000 (\$545,000) in aid, and a NZ Air Force Hercules aircraft was due to fly emergency relief supplies into Tonga on Tuesday. Australia is donating A\$350,000 (\$275,000) worth of emergency shelter, kitchen and hygiene kits, while the country's foreign minister said the Australian Defence Force personnel would assist with clean-up efforts.

The cyclone was heading towards

Fiji's southern islands on Tuesday, with some forecasts reporting it intensifying towards a Category 5 storm. Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama warned residents to "heed warnings and prepare", although the storm is expected to bypass heavily populated areas. Gita had pummeled Samoa and American Samoa, about 900 km (560 miles) to the northeast, over the weekend, flooding the Samoan capital, Apia.

Power Down

Tonga's clean-up began in the early hours of Tuesday as the tail of the cyclone was still over the capital, Nuku'alofa. "Every second power pole has been knocked over and the lines are just everywhere," Kenna said, saying it would likely be days before power could be restored. Water supplies and radio networks were also disrupted.

"They turned the power off very early before the cyclone came, knowing that the power lines would be blown down, which was a good move." The worst of the cyclone hit around a low tide, so there were no reports of storm surges worsening the impact of the wind and rains.

Kenna estimated around 40 percent of houses in the capital had suffered some damage, many with roofs blown off. "A lot of the older houses, especially some of the older heritage houses, have been badly damaged or destroyed, which is very sad, they're quite historical," he said. "They've been through cyclones before, but this is the biggest cyclone this island has had for at least 60 odd years."

National & International News

Suspected terror attack on Army camp in Jammu foiled

PTI Jammu, Feb 13: Security forces today launched a massive search operation after Army personnel foiled a suspected terrorist attack on their camp in Jammu, three days after a deadly strike by Jaish-e-Mohammad group killed seven people at Sunjuwan military station, an official said. "An attack (on a camp) was averted and the terrorist fled away," Jammu-based Army spokesperson Lt Col Devender Anand told PTI. A senior police officer said two motorcycle-borne terrorists are

believed to have approached the main gate of the camp at Domana on Jammu-Akhnor road around 0430 hours and fired on the sentry post after security officials signalled them to stop, prompting retaliation. "An investigation has started and a search operation is underway to trackdown the fleeing terrorists," the official said adding that an alert has been sounded in the area. Heavily-armed terrorists of Pakistan-based Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) group struck an

Army camp in Sunjuwan area in Jammu on Saturday morning, triggering a gunbattle in which six soldiers and a civilian died. Three terrorists were also killed by the security forces. Yesterday, Defence Minister Nirmala Sitharaman visited Jammu to take stock of the situation following the attack. She blamed Pakistan for the attack and said Islamabad will pay the price for the "misadventure". "Pakistan will pay for this misadventure. I repeat Pakistan will pay for it," she told reporters. Asked whether the Indian

government was sharing evidence with Pakistan, Sitharaman said "yes". "Yes, all the evidences which have been collected will be compiled and definitely the evidences will be given - as always - to Pakistan. But Pakistan, inspite of being given dossiers after dossiers, has not taken any action," she said. Her visit came as another encounter between security forces and terrorists began to unfold in Srinagar's Karan Nagar area. The encounter was still on, a CRPF official said this morning.

30-year-old Youth Congress worker hacked to death in Kerala's Kannur, party blames CPI-M

SIANS Kannur, Feb. 13: Thirty-year-old Youth Congress worker, Shoaib was found murdered late last night by CPI-M workers, the party said. The Left party's leadership here has denied any role in it. The Congress party called for a dawn-to-dusk shut down in protest of the murder in the district but allowed vehicles to ply. According to the party, Shoaib along with a few others was waiting in front of a night eatery near Mattanoor, near here, on Monday, when four persons came in a car and threw bombs to create a scare. They then slashed him with a sword. The incident occurred around 10.45 p.m. Shoaib was badly injured, while two others sustained minor injuries. Shoaib was first taken to a nearby hospital and he later passed away at the Kozhikode Medical college hospital.

According to the Congress party, Shoaib was engaged in a tiff in January with the CPI-M unit in the town over student politics. "Not long back, a club of the Congress party came under heavy attack, after the CPI-M leadership was upset when the children of the party leaders took part in a meeting." "They unleashed an attack and Shoaib, was at the forefront to stop this. Since then the CPI-M had announced publicly that his days are numbered," said Kannur district Congress party chief Sateeshan Pachani. Pachani said there has been an uneasy calm in and around Edayanoor near Mattanoor for a while.

CPI-M Kannur district secretary PJayarajan, who is in the state capital attending the party's state committee meeting told the media that there has been no issue between the CPI-M and the Congress party. Jayarajan said that he has been told by the Mattanoor CPI-M leaders that they have no role in Shoaib's killing. "We will look into what has happened and if any of our party members are involved, then appropriate action will be taken. "But what we are told is that our party has no role in it," said Jayarajan. This was the 21st political murder

that has taken place in Kannur after Pinarayi Vijayan assumed office in 2016. While the Mattanoor CPI-M leaders have flatly denied any role of the party behind the murder, TV channels have now released a video of a march taken out by the CPI-M, who are seen shouting slogans that Shoaib's days are numbered. Taking a strong stance Leader of

Opposition Ramesh Chennithala said the Communist Party India-Marxist has unleashed terror in brutally finishing off its political rivals. "The police in Kannur is a mute spectator, as the CPI-M is in control of everything. They are striking at will to eliminate their political rivals in the most inhumane manner. "We have appealed to all our workers in Kannur to see that they

remain calm," said Chennithala, who is reaching Kannur on Thursday. State BJP general secretary M.T.Ramesh said that it has now become a common practise that when a political murder happens in Kannur, the CPI-M is the common factor and the victim is either the BJP/RSS or the Congress. The police have started a probe.

Pak declares Mumbai terror attack plotter Hafiz Saeed a 'terrorist'

PTI Islamabad, Feb. 13: Pakistan President Mamnoon Hussain has signed an ordinance aimed at reigning in individuals and organisations like the Let, Al-Qaeda and Taliban, which have been banned by the UN Security Council, a media report said today.

The ordinance amends a section of the Anti-Terrorism Act (ATA), enabling the authorities to take action against the UNSC-proscribed individuals and terror outfits, like sealing their offices and freezing their bank accounts. The Express Tribune reported.

The sources in the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA) confirmed the new move, saying the ministries of Interior, Finance and Foreign Affairs as well as NACTA's Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT) wing are working together on the matter.

An official in the Presidency familiar with the development confirmed the said legislation but refused to share details, saying the Ministry of Defence was the notifying authority. "The relevant ministry will notify and comment on it," the official said.

It is learnt that the authorities are bound under international obligations to take measures against such outfits under the framework of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) an

international body that combats money laundering and terrorist financing.

The UNSC sanctions list includes Al-Qaeda, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan, Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Jamaat-ud-Dawa (JuD), Falah-e-Insaniat Foundation (FIF), Lashkar-e-Taiba (Let) and others.

In December last year, the government had planned to take over two charities belonging to Hafiz Saeed the JuD and the FIF and an action plan in this connection was supposed to be submitted.

Last month, the government had also banned companies and individuals from making donations to the JuD, the FIF and other organisations.

Jundullah was the last organisation declared "proscribed" by the government of Pakistan on January 31, 2018 on the NACTA website. However, the JuD and the FIF continue to be on the NACTA "watch list". Laskar-e-Taiba was declared a banned organisation under the UNSC resolution 1267 in 2005.

The US State Department in 2014 had named the JuD as a "foreign terrorist organisation", a designation that freezes assets the organisation has under the US jurisdiction.

India also blamed JuD leader Saeed for the Mumbai attacks of November 2006, but Pakistan argues that New Delhi has failed to provide incriminating evidence against him, the report said.

At least 4 killed, several others injured in blast on ONGC ship at Cochin Shipyard

HI Kerala, Feb. 13: At least four people were killed and 11 others injured in a blast at the Cochin Shipyard on Tuesday. According to reports, the blast took place around 10:45am onboard Sagar Bhushan, a Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) drilling ship, that was berthed for repair. At least three people are reported to be trapped inside the ship and efforts are on to evacuate them.

The oil tank of the ship burst while carrying out repair. The toll is likely to go up as most of the injured are in a critical condition.

Cochin Shipyard is a public sector undertaking engaged in shipbuilding and ship-repair. The yard repairs the largest vessels in India, including ships of the oil exploration industry, the Indian Navy, the Coast Guard, and merchant ships of the ONGC.

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