

Magisterial probe into Kerala's Meenmutty encounter death extended for 4th time

<https://www.newindianexpress.com/states/kerala/2021/nov/22/magisterial-probe-into-meenmuttyencounter-death-extended-for-4th-time-2386474.html>

The state government for the fourth consecutive time has extended the deadline for completion of a magisterial probe into the encounter death of Tamil Nadu-born Naxal cadre Velmurugan near Meenmutty forest in Wayanad in November 2020.

The police version was that Velmurugan was killed during a gunfight with the Thunderbolt commandos, while human rights activists and relatives of the slain Naxal cadre maintained that it was a cold-blooded murder.

As per the Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission guidelines, magisterial inquiries should be conducted at the earliest in encounter deaths. The state government in November 2020 had ordered the then Wayanad collector Adeela Abdulla to conduct the probe. Though she was given three months' time to conduct the probe and file a report, she could not meet the deadline and sought three extensions, which was granted by the government.

The previous extension was given this September as Adeela had written to the government that the statements of the family members of the slain Maoist cadre could not be recorded as they had shifted from their old residence in Theni to Madurai district and they could not be located. The collector also informed that she was yet to examine the mahazar witnesses and sought another three-month extension of deadline, taking into consideration the Covid scenario as well.

Following this, the government had set November 10 as the new deadline. Meanwhile, A Geetha replaced Adeela as collector. The new collector sought another extension saying that it was not clear whether she could continue with the probe started by the previous collector or have to start a fresh one. The government after considering the representation from the collector gave a two months' extension (till January 10, 2022) and ordered a continuation of the probe that was initiated by Adeela.

SC norms flouted

As per the Supreme Court and the National Human Rights Commission guidelines, magisterial inquiries should be conducted at the earliest in encounter deaths. The government had ordered the then Wayanad collector Adeela Abdulla to conduct the probe in November 2020.

मौतों से थरथराया यूपी का ये जिला : बुखार ढा रहा भयंकर कहर, दम तोड़ते मासूम

<https://newstrack.com/uttar-pradesh/vindhyachal/sonbhadra/sonbhadra-innocent-child-died-makra-sendura-village-mayorpur-district-hospital-critical-belhatthi-gram-panchayat-15-deaths-fever-wreaking-havoc-taja-khabar-aaj-ki-uttar-pradesh-2021-296126>

जिस आदिवासी बाहुल्य सोनभद्र में सरकारें विकास की गंगा बहाने का दावा करती हैं। आदिवासी सम्मेलनों के जरिए वोटों को रिझाने की कोशिश होती हैं। आदिवासियों और उनके बच्चों की होती मौत न तो सरकारी तंत्र के लिए बड़ी बात है, न ही सत्ता के बड़े सियासतदारों के लिए कोई मुद्दा। मयोरपुर ब्लॉक के मकरा (सेंदुरा) गांव में शनिवार की रात 11 वर्षीय मासूम ने दम तोड़ दिया। यह 35 दिन में 15वीं मौत है। एक और मासूम की हालत गंभीर होने पर जिला अस्पताल रेफर कर दिया गया है। बताते चलें कि इससे पहले बारिश के सीजन में इसी ब्लॉक के बेलहत्थी ग्राम पंचायत में दो महीने के भीतर 23 जिंदगियां बुखार की भेंट चढ़ चुकी है। ज्यादातर संख्या मासूमों की है। एक निजी पैथोलॉजी की रिपोर्ट पर गौर करें तो शनिवार की रात हुई मासूम की मौत मलेरिया से हुई है लेकिन स्वास्थ्य महकमा अभी भी इसको नकारने में लगा हुआ है। Also Read - Sonbhadra : चुनाव बहिष्कार का नारा देकर प्रदर्शन, बंधी की मरम्मत न होने से फूटा आक्रोश हालात कितने गंभीर हैं, इसका अंदाजा इस बात से लगाया जा सकता है कि मौतों की सूचना पर पहुंची स्वास्थ्य विभाग की टीम ने दो हजार की आबादी वाले इस गांव में 3 दिन में 135 बुखार पीड़ितों का ब्लड सैंपल लिया। सूत्रों पर भरोसा करें तो इसमें 22 पैल्सीफोरम मलेरिया (मलेरिया का सबसे खतरनाक स्वरूप) और 39 टायफाइड पीड़ित पाए गए हैं। शेष सर्दी, जुकाम, खांसी और मौसमी बुखार की चपेट में हैं। इसमें रानी (3) पुत्री बहादुर अगरिया को सीएचसी मयोरपुर से जिला अस्पताल रेफर कर दिया गया है। शांति (24) पत्नी रामप्रसाद गोंड का इलाज पीएचसी मकरा में चल रहा है। स्वास्थ्य विभाग स्थिति सामान्य होने का दावा कर रहा है लेकिन ब्लड सैंपलिंग की जो रिपोर्ट आई है, वह कुछ और ही कहानी बयां कर रही है।

मौतों के बाद जगते हैं

जिम्मेदार पूर्व प्रधान रामभगत यादव, जगधारी, अक्षय, राम नारायण, हरि प्रसाद आदि कहते हैं कि बीमारी शुरू होने पर स्वास्थ्य महकमे को सूचना दी जाती है लेकिन न तो सामुदायिक स्वास्थ्य केंद्र के लोग इसे गंभीरता से लेते हैं, न ही जिले के लोग संजीदगी दिखाते हैं। मौतें जब मीडिया की सुर्खियां बनती हैं, तब स्वास्थ्य टीम गांव में कैंप करना शुरू करती है। स्थिति नियंत्रित होने के बाद पूर्व की तरह उदासीन हो जाते हैं। मकरा में समय रहते मलेरियारोधी दवा का छिड़काव हो गया होता तो शायद यह स्थिति न आती। Also Read - Sonbhadra News: गैंगस्टर्स पर पुलिस ने कसा शिकंजा, 1.86 करोड़ की संपत्ति की कुर्क लापरवाही का लिया जाएगा संज्ञान एसडीएम दुद्धी रमेश कुमार ने कहा कि स्थिति पर लगातार नजर रखी जा रही है। स्वास्थ्य टीम के जरिए प्रभावितों की जांच और उपचार कराया जा रहा है। इतनी ज्यादा मौतें क्यों हो रही हैं? किस स्तर से लापरवाही बरती गई है। इसका भी संज्ञान लिया जाएगा। मलेरिया निरीक्षक के अक्सर गायब होने की वजह भी जांची जाएगी। इस मसले पर सीएमओ डॉक्टर नेम सिंह से भी संपर्क का प्रयास किया गया लेकिन उनका सेलफोन नाट रिचैबल मिलता रहा। जहरीले पानी को पीकर मर रहे ग्रामीण, आइपीएफ की मांग मकरा में हुई मौतों को लेकर आल इंडिया पीपुल्स फ्रंट ने सीधा हमला बोला है। मौतों के लिए जहरीले (प्रदूषित) पानी के सेवन को जिम्मेदार बताया गया और प्रशासन से इसकी जांच की मांग की गई। आइपीएफ जिला संयोजक कृपा शंकर पनिका,

मजदूर किसान मंच जिलाध्यक्ष राजेन्द्र प्रसाद गोंड, मंगरू प्रसाद गोंड, मनोहर गोंड, ज्ञानदास गोंड, बिरझन गोंड, रामचंदर गोंड, रामसुभग गोंड, जयपत गोंड, जगमोहन गोंड आदि ने कहा कि एक तरफ जिले में आजादी का अमृत महोत्सव मनाया जा रहा है। वहीं आदिवासी, ग्रामीण जहरीले पानी को पीकर बेमौत मर रहे हैं। मकरा में लोग इसी जहरीले पानी को पीकर असमय मृत्यु का शिकार हुए। इससे पहले बेलहत्थी के रजनीटोला में ऐसी ही मौतें हुईं। राष्ट्रीय मानवाधिकार आयोग ने संज्ञान लिया, तब भी वहां एक हैंडपंप तक नहीं लगा। मानवाधिकार आयोग और एनजीटी ने ग्रामीणों को शुद्ध पेयजल उपलब्ध कराने के लिए कई दिशा-निर्देश दिए। करोड़ों रुपये के कारपोरेट सोशल रिस्पॉन्सिबिलिटी फंड और डीएमएफ का फंड होने के बाद भी उदासीनता बनी हुई है।

Withdraw cases booked against farmers: forum

<https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/Madurai/withdraw-cases-booked-against-farmers-forum/article37612462.ece>

Human Right Defenders Alert - India (HRDA) has welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on the decision to repeal the three farm laws in the upcoming winter session of Parliament.

In a statement, HRDA national working secretary Henri Tipahgne said farmers across the country had been peacefully protesting against the three farm laws, passed in Parliament in a manner raising several questions on the conduct of the government and severely threatening agrarian economy and lives of millions of farmers.

The year-long nationwide peaceful protest by farmers was a unique contemporary example of free and peaceful assembly globally, reaffirming the significance of people's collective right to express opinion, dissent, expression, association and assembly in a democracy.

Despite harsh weather conditions, the farmers stood united and fought the Union government and hence the actions had to be commended.

Loss of lives

The HRDA, he said, was anguished as the PM's announcement failed to acknowledge the loss of lives – close to 700 farmers died in incidents related to the protests, including the recent murder of farmers at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh.

The Centre should withdraw the criminal cases registered against the farmer-protesters and give compensation of ₹25 lakh to the family of each of the deceased. The farmers should not be forced to end the protests, he said and urged the Prime Minister to withdraw the laws in the ensuing winter session of Parliament.

The National Human Rights Commission should undertake an independent, transparent and impartial investigation into all incidents of use of excessive force by security forces, acts of harassments by State police and administration such as fabricated FIRs, arbitrary detentions, illegal arrests and custodial torture of protestors, Mr. Tipahgne said.

An Ill Wind That Blows No Good

<https://www.thecitizen.in/index.php/en/NewsDetail/index/4/21140/An-III-Wind-That-Blows-No-Good>

Over these last seven years we have become used to our saffron eminences and their intellectually challenged acolytes spouting all kinds of asinine nonsense: Einstein discovered gravity, Darwin was wrong because no one witnessed an ape turning into homo sapiens, Chandragupta defeated Alexander, India invented plastic surgery and in-vitro fertilisation procedures, Haldighati was a victory for Maharana Pratap, cow urine cures Covid, India achieved independence in 2014 and not in 1947.

If these statements did not educate us they at least added a little levity to our despondent existence. But two recent statements, equally bizarre, may give us cause for concern. They come close on the heels of Justice (R) Arun Mishra, Chairman of the NHRC (National Human Rights Commission) who is unable to control his admiration for the Prime Minister even at international fora, organising a debate on the subject " Are human rights a stumbling block in fighting evils like terrorism and naxalism ?" In legal parlance this was the ultimate " leading question". We thought that things couldn't possibly get worse, but we were quickly proved wrong.

Mr. Ajit Doval, the National Security Advisor and India's third most powerful person, told IPS probationers at a passing out function that the new frontier of war was civil society, it was the " fourth generation" of warfare, that it can be suborned, manipulated, subverted and divided to " hurt the interests of a nation", and that the police are " there to see that the land is fully protected." He went on to further expound on his doctrine of democracy (I am paraphrasing here): that the electoral process is not paramount, what is important are the laws made by lawmakers and the police must enforce them ruthlessly.

The other declaration, even more alarming, was by the Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat who opined that it was a " good thing " that the public of Jammu and Kashmir was now ready to lynch terrorists. He did not see the necessity of making a distinction between suspected, hybrid and genuine terrorists. Presumably, the good citizens of J+K would make this judgment themselves just before they strung up these individuals on the nearest lamp-post. He also seemed to forget that there are laws in place to deal with terrorists, and that lynching is not yet an approved form of justice.

These statements fall into a different category from the Kangana Ranaut and Satyendra Singh ones, and have to be taken more seriously, because they have been made by the two senior most officers of our most important uniformed forces- the police and the army. These two gentlemen are acknowledged to be very close to the ruling dispensation and never speak out of turn. They are also good weather vanes. That is why the two statements need to be taken seriously and condemned unequivocally.

The import of Mr. Doval's exhortation goes far beyond a few dozen IPS probationers: it is an attack on civil society, a warning to the government's critics and an incitement to

the police to target dissidents and liberals. I do not know whether his choice of words was deliberate or just unfortunately random, but to term civil society as a frontier of war is shocking, it equates citizens with an "enemy". And to elevate any peaceful confrontation between a government and its citizens to a "fourth generation warfare" is an astounding militarisation of dissidence. It is also a very innovative doctrine: most military strategists will tell you that the new generation of warfare consists of cyber, asymmetrical or algorithmic war. For Mr. Doval to add "civil society" to this list would be inviting ridicule. But somehow I don't think he was being facetious or stupid; he appears to have chosen his words carefully, and his messaging is deliberate.

For me, this is confirmed by Gen Rawat's statement, which, shorn of its uniformed origin, is nothing but an incitement to vigilantism and mob violence. That the senior most defence officer in the country can say this publicly is condemnable but no longer surprising, for new furrows of illegality are being carved out everyday in this country these days.

Both prescriptions are in direct contradiction with , and a violation of, our Constitution and the law of the land. They criminalise freedom of speech, the right to disagree with the government, the right to protest peacefully. As Aruna Roy points out in a recent article, Mr. Doval is short circuiting the democratic social and developmental safeguards assured us by the Constitution, and is painting civil society as a force which is undermining development and nationalism. Moreover, it is clear that he is referring to the "other" civil society which protests the government's excesses, and not the one represented by the Kapil Mishras, Kangana Ranauts and Swami Narsinghanands, all supporters and purveyors of hate and intolerance.

In fact, one would have expected these two senior functionaries of the government to have done just the opposite of what they did. Given the manner in which most police forces in the states- not excluding opposition ruled states- have run amok of late, using UAPA and sedition laws with gay abandon, arresting anyone who writes against the government on trumped up charges, defying court orders, being selective in their policing, the correct counsel to the IPS probationers should have been one which enjoined on them to work within the limits of the Constitution, abide by the judgments of the courts, respect the rights of citizens and the values of our democratic traditions and history, treat everyone equitably. General Rawat could have redeemed his rapidly shrinking reputation by denouncing vigilantism, reminding his audience that the sovereign right to violence belongs only to the state, and that too only after a due process of law is followed.

By branding civil society as internal enemies of the state, however, the two have now given a license to the police and other coercive agencies to be even more ruthless and brutal in their treatment of those members of society who incur the govt's wrath and displeasure, including journalists, human rights activists, students, writers, liberal intellectuals, workers, farmers, artists. This is no longer just a dog whistle, it is sounding the bugles for a new war on the most fundamental of democratic values- the right to

disagree. Disagreement is the bulwark of democracy- to crush it is to crush democracy itself.

It is difficult to explain why Messers Doval and Rawat have decided to open another front at this time, considering their performance on all other fronts- Kashmir, the Naga Peace Accord, Afghanistan, Ladakh, Arunachal Pradesh, Nepal, CAA, Pegasus, to name just a few. Moreover, the BJP ruled undisputed over social media till just about a couple of years ago, successfully drowning out the voice of civil society. So why now ? My guess is that, as repeated failures of the government in all areas of governance pile up, a significant back lash is building up among the public. The hold and influence of the sold out mainstream media is also diminishing, with independant portals and Youtube channels garnering huge viewership running into millions. The results of the recent by-elections seem to bear this out.

Crucial elections in five states are due in just a few months. It is therefore time for desperate measures to instil more fear among members of the civil society, to fire up the vigilantes, and to convey the desired signals to the police.

This will be the new template in the coming days. The barometer is falling and the wind is picking up.

It's an ill wind that blows no good.