

Raj youth dies in custody, five MP cops suspended

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bhopal

FIVE personnel of the Narcotics Wing of Madhya Pradesh police in Mandsaur district have been suspended after a 21-year-old Rajasthan youth allegedly died in their custody.

Sohail Khan, a resident of Pratapgarh district of Rajasthan, was arrested on Friday for allegedly possessing a narcotic substance, but died the next morning in custody.

The victim's family alleged that Narcotics Wing Sub Inspector Rajmal Dahima had demanded ₹45 lakh from them, threatening that if they failed to give the money, Sohail would be implicated in a false case.

According to Mandsaur SP Siddharth Chaudhary, "A judicial probe has been recommended. The autopsy of the body will be performed by a panel of doctors and the procedure will be videographed."

According to sources, five personnel, including SI Dahima, have been suspended.

The deceased youth's 29-year-old brother-in-law Asif Khan (a native of Pratapgarh which borders Mandsaur) told this newspaper on Sunday that Sohail and he was on way to Mandsaur on Friday afternoon for making purchases for a marriage, when their motorcycle was stopped by a Scorpio boarded by three plainclothes



Sohail Khan (21)

policemen, including SI Dahima.

"They took the keys of our motorbike and herded us in their vehicle, asking us where is the *maal* (drugs). We told them that we are farmers. However, without listening our words, they kept on thrashing us. We were taken to the police station and were beaten separately with belts," Asif said.

"At around 8 pm, they telephoned one of our relatives Izhar alias Babloo Khan, who is a Community Liaison Group member of police in Pratapgarh. He came to Mandsaur, where I was handed over to him, after he made some payment to the policemen," Asif alleged further.

Seconding Asif's allegations, Babloo Khan said, "I was called by SI Dahima to Mandsaur, where he allowed Asif to go upon payment of ₹4.5 lakh. He demanded ₹45 lakh for releasing Sohail and threatened to frame him in NDPS case if we failed to pay the amount."

13 labourers injured as scaffolding collapses

LUCKNOW: Thirteen labourers were injured after a scaffolding collapsed while they were working at a power plant in Uttar Pradesh's Sonbhadra district in the early hours of Sunday, the company which had employed them said.

In a letter addressed to the district magistrate and the superintendent of police, factory manager of Lanco Anpara Power Ltd S K Dwivedi said the iron structure fell around 2.45 am during maintenance work.

AGENCIES

The case of women Maoists: How gender equality can tackle terror

Addressing the gender injustices that motivate many to join Maoist cadres can help the Indian state contain this insurgency



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Last March, the Communist Party of India (Maoist) released a list of 22 martyred women cadres to applaud the contribution of women to its cause. This renewed the conversation around female Maoists composing a substantial 60% of their total cadres and occupying almost all operational and tactical positions responsible for sustaining the Maoist rebellion in India. For a security threat constituting such a sizeable number of female combatants, embracing the woman question should be central to conflict resolution. This is why most of the government's counter-terrorism measures fall short: They consider male motivations as the human default set, and model security responses accordingly. Female Maoists often express different reasons for joining the rebellion than their male comrades, indicating a need to address them separately. The umbrella grievance of women in the movement is that of gender inequality, which worsens problems of sexual assault, police brutality, atrocities against Scheduled Caste/Tribe (SC/ST) communities, and economic inequality.

Many ex-Maoist women, like Krishna Bandyopadhyay, admit Maoism's appeal was rooted in its commitment to women's rights. This commitment manifests in all-women squads such as the Krantikari Adivasi Mahila Sangathan (KAMS) leading extensive campaigns against forced marriage, abduction, outcasting menstruating women, bigamy, domestic violence, and police brutality. Such initiatives encourage many younger females to join the armed rebellion. The demand for gender equality is so potent that male Maoists themselves cannot escape it. In one instance, female combatants compelled the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) to admit its own patriarchal failings within the party and the overall insurgency.

The most gendered motivator, distinguishing female experience, is sexual assault. Crimes against women are more rampant in Maoist-affected areas than in other parts of the country. Security personnel are known to use body searches, casual molestation, custodial rape, torture, threats of harm upon loved ones, etc., as warfare tactics against combatants and even civilian women. National Crime Records Bureau data shows that Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh and Odisha alone registered 84,938 crimes against women in 2019. This is in addition to the 118,677 investigations pending from previous years. Despite the large figure, it captures only part of the ground reality. Women face sexual harassment from the state as well as insurgents, with no avenues to seek justice. Many find it nearly impossible to even register a first information report with the police.

Evidently, police brutality and impunity pushes women towards Maoism, creating a cycle of violence. Aside from threats of extrajudicial arrests,



detention, harassment, torture and murder, women find it hard to get justice for their loved ones. A female combatant from Odisha affirmed this while recalling her sister's custodial gang-rape by the police; and later, her brother's illegal arrest and extrajudicial killing under "mysterious circumstances" by the same force, she said, left her "no choice but to join the revolution".

The Red Corridor's SC/ST women know this first-hand as they endure layers of gender, caste, and class subjugation. While one in five police personnel believe SC/ST complaints to be false and motivated, figures suggest that tribal women were victims of 69.6% of violence against women over the past decade. Even within the rebellion, SC/ST women form 40% of the forces but 90% its martyrs. In addition, SC/ST women disproportionately suffer mass displacement and loss of livelihood, as 75.8% of India's mineral production currently comes from their ancestral lands.

Further, marginalization from the rural economy renders women poorer than men of the same households. Therefore, many women perceive Maoism as relief from poverty and unemployment. Rashmi Mahli, an ex-combatant from Jharkhand, confirmed this. Maoists promised regular pay for her low-income family, she said, in exchange for her joining their cadres.

Herein lies the allure of Maoism for women. It acknowledges gender discrimination and works to overcome it. However, radical movements tend to exist within the zeitgeist of their time. Despite sustaining the uprising, female Maoists are rarely at the table during peace talks and ceasefire negotiations. Even within the ranks, they face sexual assault and gendered division of roles such as

cooking, cleaning and nursing. Maoists are not immune to patriarchal attitudes and behaviour, suggesting a scope for the state to re-enter the discourse through effective gender-sensitive policies that offer women of the region a better alternative than joining the cadres.

However, currently, state schemes focus on hard-power security responses and not the welfare demands of the populace itself. When asked why Maoists had so many women, the Union ministry of home affairs responded that Maoists coerced Adivasi parents into parting with girls to brainwash and indoctrinate young women with Maoist ideology to form Bal Dastas. Apart from demonizing Adivasis, that explanation suggests more than half of Maoist cadres had no consent in being inducted, framing all women as victims of male recruiters. However, even if Adivasi parents were solely to blame for the swelling number of female Maoists, it doesn't explain 60% of female Maoists from non-SC/ST backgrounds.

The need of the hour is for the state to adequately address women's ground realities in the region that push them toward radicalization. The cadres' patriarchal set-up doesn't excuse the state's own failings on gender equality. Female Maoists continue to outnumber men, with fresh reports suggesting numbers as high as 70% of their cadre strength.

Failing to address women's grievances around patriarchy renders the state's counter-terrorism response inadequate. The Indian state's priority must be to diminish motivations, not demean them. The driving factors should not only be understood as incentives behind violence, but potential solutions for peaceful outcomes.

'Educate the poor about their rights'

Justice Ramana speaks to young lawyers

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Supreme Court judge, Justice N.V. Ramana, on Sunday said the most vulnerable sections of society often fall prey to human rights atrocities from either the state or anti-social elements.

Justice Ramana, who has been recommended for appointment as the 48th Chief Justice of India, urged young lawyers to educate the poor and the vulnerable about their rights. Young lawyers, he said, should raise their voice against atrocities committed against the poor by the state and criminal elements.

"The most vulnerable are often the victims of human rights atrocities, by either the state or by anti-social elements. As young advocates, you are best placed to strongly oppose the same through legal action. You must be the conscience-bearers of the nation," Justice Ramana said in his virtual address at the Damodara Sanjivayya National Law University convocation.

Lawyers should give proper legal advice and not drag people to court in disputes which could be settled amicably outside courtrooms, he said.

"One of the consequences of the poor quality of legal education in the country is the exploding pendency in the country. There are nearly 3.8 crore cases pend-

 The most vulnerable are often the victims of human rights atrocities, by either the state or by anti-social elements

ing in courts in India despite the large number of advocates in the country ... They [lawyers] must keep in mind not only their duty to their clients, but also their duty to the courts, to society and to the law," Justice Ramana said.

Quality issues

The Supreme Court judge said that with over 1,500 law colleges and schools in the country, law was no longer a rich man's profession. However, there was also the problem of quality suffering over quantity.

"Please do not take this wrongly, but what proportion of graduates who are fresh out of college are actually ready or prepared for the profession? I would think less than 25% ... It is a comment on the large number of sub-standard legal educational institutions in the country which are colleges merely in name. There are many sub-standard colleges in the country, which is a very worrying trend. The judiciary has taken a note of this, and is attempting to correct the same," Justice Ramana said.

Capt goes after Centre over 'bonded labourers' row

Denying bonded labour in Punjab, CM says Centre 'spreading misinformation' about state's farmers

STATESMAN NEWS SERVICE
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The sparring between the Centre and the Punjab dispensation over 58 rescued "bonded labourers" seems to have intensified. Punjab Chief Minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Sunday slammed the Central government for "spreading misinformation" about the state's farmers with its "grave and incorrect allegations of bonded labourers working in the fields".

The CM termed it "yet another conspiracy" to defame Punjab's farmers, whom the Central government and the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) have been "persistently trying to malign by dubbing them terrorists, urban naxals, goons etc, in a bid to derail their agitation against the farm laws".

Capt Amarinder castigated the BJP-led government at the Centre over its "unwarranted charges" of farmers using people as bonded labourers in Punjab, trashing the Union home ministry's letter of 17 March in this regard as a "bundle of lies, clearly aimed at undermining the farmers' protest and denigrating the Congress government in the state". A careful analysis of the whole episode reveals that highly sensitive information pertaining to national security regarding the arrest of some suspicious persons, apprehended by Border Security Force from close to the volatile Indo-Pak border, has been unscrupulously twisted on baseless conjectures to malign and tarnish the farmer community, the CM alleged.

This reality has been further sub-



stantiated by the point that "a selective leakage of the contents of Union home ministry's letter to some leading newspapers and media houses has been done without waiting for an appropriate response from the state government," he charged. Asserting that his government and Punjab Police are totally competent and committed to safeguard the human rights of the poor and the down-trodden, Capt Amarinder said suitable action has already been initiated in each case and most of the persons are residing with their families. If anything comes to notice at any stage, a suitable legal action will be initiated against the culprits, he added.

He was reacting to the Union home minister's letter claiming that the Border Security Force (BSF) had apprehended 58 Indian nationals in the border areas of Punjab and that the

detainees had purportedly revealed that they were working with farmers of Punjab as bonded labourers.

Rejecting the letter as totally "unwarranted and factually incorrect", the CM said neither the data nor the said reports submitted by the BSF authorities were in tune with the content of the letter.

"The home ministry letter talks of Abohar also while the fact is that there is no case of Abohar or Fazilka districts," he pointed out, adding that none of the conclusions of the Centre were borne out by facts.

Further, it was not the job of the BSF to investigate such matters, and they were only responsible for detaining any person found to be roaming along the border in suspicious circumstances, and handing them over to the local police, he added.

Before shooting out such a letter and making it public through the media, the home ministry should have

checked the facts and verified the information from the state government instead of "making false accusations against farmers", he charged. "All the 58 cases alleged by the Centre have been investigated thoroughly and nothing of this kind has been found," said Amarinder, lambasting Union ministry for spreading such "vicious and false propaganda".

Giving details, he said of the 58 detainees, four belong to different areas of Punjab and were found roaming near the Indo-Pak border by the BSF, while three were found to be "intellectually disabled".

Further, 16 of the 58 detainees were found to be "intellectually disabled", of whom four were suffering from this disorder since childhood.

It has also come to light that 14 persons had come to Punjab only a few days prior to their apprehension, hence the conclusion that they were working as bonded labourers in farms for long "is totally refuted," said the CM, adding that none of the persons apprehended has made any allegation of being forcibly kept as farm labourers under inhuman conditions even before the courts.

Nothing on record suggests that these persons were forcibly infused drugs to keep them working for long hours, and moreover, it is incorrect to conclude that the intellectual disability of these person is drug induced, said Capt Amarinder.

The CM added that most of them were medically examined with the help of the BSF or police, and nothing on record suggested that they were hooked to any habit forming drugs.

SC panel report on 1994 ISRO espionage case & Nambi Narayanans harassment submitted

<https://www.republicworld.com/india-news/general-news/sc-panel-report-on-1994-isro-espionage-case-and-nambi-narayanans-harassment-submitted.html>

Almost three decades after the former director of the cryogenic project at ISRO, Scientist S. Nambi Narayanan, was arrested for his alleged involvement in the controversial ISRO espionage case of 1994, a panel appointed by the Supreme Court to probe the matter in 2018, has submitted its report recently. 79-year-old Narayanan was arrested in 1994 with other ISRO staff after Maldivian national Mariam Rasheeda was arrested in Thiruvananthapuram for allegedly obtaining secret sketches of the ISRO rocket engines, to sell them to Pakistan.

CBI in 1996 had said 'No evidence to back charges against Narayanan'

The SC had set up the panel after repeatedly observing that Narayanan had faced "tremendous harassment" at the hands of the authorities, while the CBI which took over the case in 1996 also had observed that "the ISRO espionage case accusing Narayanan of wrongdoing is false, and there is no evidence to back the charges," the CBI had stated in 1996, 2018 and has now reiterated the facts in the apex court.

Three years after (1995) Narayanan was released on bail, he had approached the National Human Rights Commission seeking compensation from the Kerala government, for the mental agony that he had suffered in the process. Congress was heading the government in Kerala when Narayanan was arrested. An SIT team was constituted to probe the matter after which Narayanan was arrested.

CBI found top SIT officials responsible for Narayanan's illegal arrest

After the case was transferred to CBI, the premier investigating body discovered that then top police officials in the SIT team in Kerala were responsible for Narayanan's illegal arrest, PTI reported. In 2018, the SC appointed a three-member panel headed by former judge D K Jain, while the Kerala government was directed to give Narayanan a compensation of Rs 50 lakh, as he underwent "immense humiliation."

An SC bench headed by CJI Dipak Misra, in 2018, had observed "We are of the view that the appellant was arrested and he has suffered custody for almost 50 days. His arrest has been seriously criticised in the closure report of the CBI. From the aforesaid report, the harassment and mental torture faced by the appellant is obvious."

SC observed actions against Narayanan to be a "psycho-pathological treatment" For almost two and a half years, the panel studied the developments that led to the arrest of Narayanan and scrapped the allegations against the senior ISRO scientist. Meanwhile, ISRO Deputy Director D Sasikumaran and Fousiya Hasan, a Maldivian friend of Rasheeda were also arrested with Narayanan. However, the SC time and again observed the actions initiated against the ISRO scientist to be a "psycho-pathological treatment".

Moreover, the panel also noted that the officials responsible for causing such a "harrowing effect" on Narayanan's mind, must face "legal consequences" while the court reiterated "the Kerala government must compensate the ISRO scientist." More details over the report submitted by the panel are yet to be ascertained.