

## Journalists dare to defy militants' diktat



Comments 0



Nava Thakuria 15 August 2008 12101 views

If it becomes a ritual for a section of the banned armed outfits in Northeast India to impose a boycott call on the celebration of Independence Day and Republic Day, the rising counter-reactions against such diktats turned equally true to the term.

As the Nation prepares to observe 61st Independence Day, four Northeast based armed groups have today called upon the people of the region to boycott and also prevent the I-Day celebration as a mark of solidarity against Indian colonial occupation and repression.

Issued on August 10, the banned outfits namely Kamtapur Liberation Organisation (KLO), Manipur People's Liberation Front (MPLF), Tripura Peoples Democratic Front (TPDF) and United Liberation Front of Asom (ULFA), also imposed a general strike throughout the region on the day.

"On this day, a general strike shall be observed throughout the Region from 01:00 AM to 6:00 PM," said in the statement, which was sent to a section of media persons through internet. The statement, issued by the ULFA chief Arabinda Rajkhowa, made an appeal to the people of Northeast 'to boycott and prevent the celebration in any manner of India's Independence Day on 15th August 2008' to consolidate the people's solidarity to the struggle for liberation from Indian colonial

occupation.

“The Indian state has been employing all means, particularly covert and state terrorism to intimidate the outfits and using massive military force to push the liberation forces into peace talks. But as anticipated, such peace talks have not produced the desired results even after 10 years of negotiations as talks could not resolve the politico-military conflict in the region because it does not address the core issue of sovereignty and independence,” the statement said.

Also said in the statement addressing the entire populace of the region to keep faith in the collective strength and display their solidarity against India, the common enemy, by making the boycott and general strike a complete success.

Mentionable that Northeast India is the home of more than 30 active armed outfits, who all have been fighting against Indian Union Government with demands ranging from sovereignty to self rule. Thousands of people died in the last few decades because of insurgency. Active among them, the ULFA was formed in 1979 and still fighting New Delhi for an Independent Assam.

Now the police suspects that the ULFA leaders might tied up with many religious fundamentalists including the Bangladesh based the HUJI (Harkat-ul-Jihad-al-Islami) with an aim to carry out terror strikes in Assam during or ahead of August 15. The Assam government has already sounded a security alert through out the State in fear of terrorists’ attacks during the celebration of the I-Day.

“It is unfortunate that the people of Assam are forced to live in constant fear in the run up to the Independence and Republic Day celebrations every year and it is no different this year as reports of possible attacks

by the militant groups kept the people under the grip of a fear psychosis,” said in an editorial of The Assam Tribune, the oldest English daily from Northeast India.

It also added that this year the threat perception in the run up to the I-Day celebrations had increased because of reports that jihadi elements including HUJI might try to trigger explosions in Assam. “Though the HUJI and other jihadi groups have not yet been able to indulge in any major act of violence in Assam, the threat perception cannot be overlooked,” it commented.

However, the spirit of Nationalism among Northerners continued and hence the diktat of militants had never deterred the journalists of Assam to convey the message of Independence Day and to make plea to the people to celebrate the Day in a befitting manner.

In a press statement, issued by a group of Assam based journalists and columnists on August 4, they had already declared that the people of Assam had ‘inherited the spirit of the freedom-fighters who had made immense sacrifices to make India a free nation’.

“The great patriots like Kushal Konwar, Kanaklata, Mukunda Kakoti, Tilak Deka, Bhogeswari Phukanani and many brave hearts from Assam laid down their lives to free the country from the clutches of colonial British rulers,” it added.

The statement, signed by Nirupama Borgohain (a Sahitya Academy awardee) and Dhirendra Nath Chakrabarty (former editor of Dainik Asom) with Ajit Patowary, Hiten Mahanta, Rupam Baruah, Ranen Kumar Goswami, Bhupen Bargohain, Sabita Lahkar, Mukul Kalita, Pramod Kalita, Kumud Das etc, ended with the appeal to the people ‘to express their gratitude in memory of those patriots and martyrs, and hoist the

National Tricolour on the Day atop their houses and also to organise community celebrations in their respective localities’.

The city-based journalists have decided to hoist the National Flag on the Guwahati Press Club campus at 11 AM on August 15. The statement concluded with the formal request to all the citizens to join the programme in press club and make it a success. It might be mentioned that the Guwahati based journalists had made it a habit of defying the militants’ diktats to celebrate both the auspicious Days on the press club premises in the last few years.

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