

NEWS WRAP

AGD

SUPPORTERS OF PEOPLE'S Committee against Police Atrocities (PCPA) are extorting money from local businessmen in Jhargram (rural) of West Midnapore district of West Bengal. The money is being collected in the name of *Santrash Durniti Samrajhabad Birodhi Ganatantrik Committee* (SDSBGC). Alarmed businessmen are leaving the area. The economically better off villages are a target of the SDSBGC activists. Each business family is forced to pay Rs 10000. PCPA and SDSBGC supporters are accused of spreading hatred against upper caste Bengalis, described as "outsiders" who had usurped the land of the local villagers, and flourished at their expense.

ANTI-NAXAL OPERATIONS

Maoists and Naxals have extended influence in 83 districts, in nine Indian states, namely Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Orissa, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. Between 2005 and May 2010, there have been 10,000 fatal casualties due to Naxal violence. Around 439 people were killed between January to May 2011. Between mid-2010 and mid-2011, the Central Reserve Police Force, the thrust force for the offensive against naxalities, lost more than 150 personnel, in various IEDS and landmine explosions in Naxal areas. The Union Government of India is recruiting more than 2000 retired Army personnel, to assist the CRPF in crippling IEDs and hidden landmines, while executing anti-Naxal operations, including specialists from the corps of Engineers Regiment, are being deputed with each of the 62 battalions of the CRPF, deployed for counter-Naxal operations, in the affected states. Army personnel are being inducted, also in the specialised Commando Battalion for Resolute Action (COBRA).

At end April 2011, acting on complaints of alleged rape of two tribal girls, police have arrested two cooks of the Counter Terrorism and Jungle Warfare College (CTJWC), in Kanker district of Chattisgarh. Resentment had prevailed in the area. A large number of women and others thronged the training centre, in protest against the incident.

AUDIT OF INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

A report of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India on the function of National Technical Research Organization (NTRO), the technical intelligence wing of the government, has exposed financial swindling, gross violations in the recruitment procedure, and plundering of public money by the senior officers of the agency. The NTRO has manipulated an approval from the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), for purchase of Rs 300 crore worth Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), during 2007-08, for favouring the Israeli Aerospace Industries (IAI), by extending Rs 150 crore on the deal, in an unauthorised manner. Rs 150 crore was dubiously added for purchasing satellite links and electronic intelligence equipment. The purchases were made from Israel Aerospace Industries without tender and trial. The Satellite links were not dedicated ones, and hence open to all for downlink. They were never tested on Indian terrain.

KURDS IN TURKEY

Kurdish is the language of Turkey's 12 million to 15 million Kurds, that the Turkish state still forbids in the official use in schools, mosques and government offices. Inspired by the Arab Spring, Turkey's turbulent Kurds are making a fresh attempt for true freedom of representation, and the right to be educated in their mother tongue. The Kurds have been fighting for their demands since the founding of the Turkish republic in 1923. Earlier the Kurds pursued a bloody guerilla war to pursue their aims. In contrast, the agitation now is civil disobedience. The Kurdish leaders admit being influenced by the events in neighbouring Syria as well as Egypt, Yemen and Libya, and also by the fight for civil rights in the United States of the 1960s. Mehmet Ali Aydin, the chairman of the Diyarbakir branch of the Kurdish Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) aims to bring democracy to Turkey. Turkey's electoral body has permitted BDP candidates for running in parliamentary elections. Prime Minister Recep Erdogan's government has removed the emergency law that covered the south-east in 2002, and has established a Kurdish language channel. A Kurdish language institute operates at a state run university in Mardin, a mountain top town, that overlooks northern Syria. Kurdish demands also include the immediate cessation of military operations against Kurds by the Turkish army and the release of all political prisoners.□□□