

LETTERS

SLUM HOUSING SCHEMES

According to the details of the first phase of the scheme for allotting flats to Delhi's slum dwellers, only 42% of the 15713 slum households were found to be eligible. What happens to the remaining 58% who will lose their slum dwellings? There is a plan to provide them temporary rental accommodation for six months only after which they have to be on their own.

Any scheme for the poor has to be based on the basic principle that the overwhelming majority will at least be better placed than before, and no one will be left entirely helpless. However as per the government's own data, 58% face the prospects of becoming homeless.

The government should hold closer consultations to avoid a situation in which after spending a lot of money in the name of the poor, the plight of the majority of the affected poor people worsens.

Bharat Dogra, New Delhi

NIYAMAT ANSARI

People's Union for Democratic Rights, Delhi (PUDR) condemns the threats being issued by the CPI (Maoist) party to members of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and to others investigating and protesting against the killing of Niyamat Ansari at Manika block in Jharkhand.

Niyamat Ansari, the convenor of Manika block unit of Gram Swaraj Abhiyan and the MNREGA Support Centre was killed on 2 March this year.

PUDR expresses concern that posters and printed leaflets had appeared in Manika claiming to have been brought out by the CPI(Maoist) threatening to punish Gokul Vasant, Nand Lal, Jean Dreze and Aruna Roy for claiming Niyamat Ansari's innocence. It also contained a renewed threat to the lives of Bhukan Singh and members of the Gram Swaraj Abhiyan.

The CPI (Maoist) party has owned up and justified the killing of Ansari by claiming he was involved in corrupt practices. A two-member team comprising Gokul Vasant and Nand Lal from Daltonganj have investigated these allegations and declared them to be baseless.

PUDR and many other organisations have condemned the killing and demanded that the CPI(Maoist) hand over the culprits, that they publicly apologise and that an assurance be given that no harm should come to Ansari's colleague, Bhukan Singh.

PUDR finds this kind of intolerant behaviour by the CPI (Maoist) wholly unacceptable. The CPI (Maoist) must recognise that people have a right to criticise and a right to carry on politics in

accordance with their beliefs. Intolerance of people's rights to question does not pave the way for a just society.

PUDR demands that the CPI (Maoist) withdraw the threat immediately and respect the right of people to form associations as per their conscience.

Paramjeet Singh, Harish Dhawan

Secretaries, PUDR

ATTACK ON SOCIAL ACTIVIST

Phagram has been associated with several people's movements and struggles in Madhya Pradesh. He is a member of the Hoshangabad Jila Panchayat and Hoshangabad District Planning Committee. He is at present associated with Samajvadi Jan Parishad which is dedicated to peaceful social change towards equality and justice.

On July 22 Phagram was arrested in a case relating to tribal rights in which he was not even present at the site. In Pipariya jail, he was beaten up time and again by prisoners in the presence of jail officials. He was kicked, slapped, beaten with shoes and belt. He was attacked even when he was eating.

This attack on a social activist and elected people's representative should be widely condemned. The case against Phagram should be withdrawn and strict action should be taken against all those responsible for the attack on him.

BD, New Delhi