



man'. 'He should be completing his research on a rice species in Kashmir valley, instead he is inside prison facing charges of terrorism.' He clearly says the police 'are lying'. He is also not sure whether his son would receive a fair trial or not and whether he has been provided an able prosecution to defend his case or not.

Pervez's jail diary, which has appeared in a section of the media, puts further light on his plight. In his letter asking to 'Save My Career, As I Am Innocent' he poignantly asks 'Am I not Indian, if I am Kashmiri. Why this discrimination. When tall claims are being made by the govt of India, by media, that before law all citizens are equal.'

Of course it would not be cliché to state that the story of the metamorphosis of a student of Zoology into a 'bomb-man' is not the only one of its kind. In fact not a day passes when one does not hear about the illegal detention of a youth from the minority community on some frivolous charges.

Just a day before *Mail Today* carried the above mentioned story about Pervez, it had provided details of a case involving a 'terrorist' gutkha manufacturer getting bail (*Mail Today*, March 5, 2008). According to the report filed by Piyush Srivastava, 'Barely six months ago, 35-year-old Imran Ismail Memon was termed as a terrorist, gangster, a hawala racketeer, a smuggler and a manufacturer of adulterated Gutkha.' Imran Ismail Memon, a resident of Thane in Maharashtra was arrested by the Rae Bareilly police on August 25, 2007. Police said he was part of a "terrorist module" and had started an "illegal and adulterated gutkha factory" as a cover-up to stay in the district. Lucknow bench of the Allahabad highcourt granted bail to him because of lack of evidence. It also added that 'the police could not even prove the power theft charge against him.'

May it be the case of Aftab Alam Ansari, an employee of the Calcutta Electricity Supply Corporation who was arrested on 27th December 2007 as 'main accused behind the serial blasts in no of courts in UP' or for that matter the case of a poor fruit vendor from Kashmir who was presented before the media as a 'prize catch' responsible for blasts on the eve of Diwali in Delhi two years back, it is clear to any layperson that with the ascendance of the Hindu right forces in the Indian polity and in the ambience which has been created the world over post 9/11 such targeting of innocents from the minority community has become all the more common.

A biggest irony of the whole situation is that while terrorist acts committed by Hindutva organisations are not even reported or all attempts are done to cover them up, innocents from the minority community are apprehended claiming them to be associates of this or that dreaded terrorist organisation. The media which is supposed to be a watchdog of democracy also joins the malicious campaign where it has no qualms in calling all such people as terrorists rather than accused awaiting trial in court. It does not bother it that such trial by media is not only unethical but also violates the basic ethics of responsible and fair journalism.

To be very frank, this is not to condone any of such terrorist acts if they occur in any part of the country, rather one would want that the law of the land should be equally applicable in all such cases and it should not appear that it is favouring/targeting a particular community.

Things have reached such a pass that it would not be an exaggeration to say that it is a new trend where 'terrorisation' and 'stigmatisation' of the minority community is reaching menacing proportions. The pattern of mindless arrests for the sake of branding innocent persons as terrorists and resorting to relentless torture is coming under increasing scrutiny. And it is quite natural that it is giving rise to perceptible anger all across the country.

Perhaps the recent decision of the UP government asking a retired judge to ascertain whether two persons arrested for the court blasts in state are indeed terrorists or not, is an indicator of the pressure governments are facing over repeated complaints that the state police is implicating Muslims as terrorists. The case involves the arrest of Khalid Mujahid and Tariq, claiming them to be members of Harkat-Ul-Jehadi (HUJI) who were implicated for executing the serial blasts that left 14 people dead. If one searches the record of the Jamia Tul-Salahat Madarsa in Jaunpur where Khalid used to teach, it becomes clear that not only he was present on the day (23 Nov) in the Madarsa but had also checked the copies of the students. The judge has been asked to cross-check the UP police story which says that Khalid landed in Lucknow in a bus on November 23 morning, met other accomplices, bought new cycles, planted bombs in Lucknow court premises and returned immediately to Jaunpur.

One can just go on narrating instances of the highhandedness of the police and the callousness of the polity in turning a blind eye towards continuous stigmatisation of a particular community. As already mentioned this is an understanding which has received a new boost in the aftermath of 9/11 and the 'war against terror' unleashed by the US regime, to further its imperialist ambitions.

Any impartial enquiry into the state of affairs would make it clear that the need of the hour is to understand that 'terrorism' cannot be the monopoly of a particular community. It is a product of the typical circumstances which societies encounter or find themselves in and the nature of the dominant or dominated forces in operation in those societies and their larger worldview.

There is no denying the fact that civil society at large at some level has accorded legitimacy to all such actions by the police. If that would not have been the case there would have been an uproar at the national level when it was revealed that how 'intelligence bureau operatives colluded with Delhi police to brand two of its own informers as dreaded terrorists'. It was sheer coincidence that the matter reached CBI which exposed the dark machinations of the dirty tricks brigade.

A writeup in *Times of India* 'IB, cops in murky frame-up' (By Sachin Parashar, New Delhi, 13 September 2007) had presented all relevant details of the case :

*New Delhi : The CBI has found that Intelligence Bureau operatives colluded with Delhi Police special cell sleuths to 'plant' RDX on two youths who were arrested as 'Al Badr terrorists', TOI has learnt. The shocking conclusion comes a month after the agency told the Delhi High Court that the special cell's probe into the murky affair "didn't inspire confidence".*

*Top CBI sources told TOI on Wednesday that the seized RDX appeared to have been planted on the two 'terrorists' Mohd Moarif Qamar and Irshad Ali.*

