

## Sri Ram Sene Leader Puts Bounty On Activist Amulya Leona, Police Fail To Take Action

Sukanya Shantha/The Wire

Mumbai: The Karnataka state police have been using different yardsticks to handle cases involving objectionable content generated in favour and against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA). It took the Bengaluru police less than a few minutes to slap a case of sedition against a 19-year-old anti-CAA activist Amulya Leona Noronha and take her into custody for saying "Pakistan Zindabad" at a protest rally last week. But it has been over two days since the Sri Ram Sene, a right-wing militant group, declared a bounty of Rs 10 lakh for anyone who kills Noronha in an "encounter". The police are still "figuring out" the appropriate action against the men who openly threatened violence. On February 24, the district superintendent of police, C.K. Baba, told The Wire that his police had decided to file a non-cognizable complaint instead of an FIR against the accused.

"We can't initiate any action just like that. We need to take court permission to file an FIR. We will file an FIR once we receive a go-ahead from the court," Baba said. He, however, did not elaborate on the reasons to seek the court's permission to register an FIR in a case where an organisation has openly terrorised and indulged in issuing a death threat to a 19-year-old student. The law too doesn't demand the procedure that the superintendent was claiming to follow in handling this criminal incident.

In a video that has been circulated extensively across social media platforms, Sanjeev Marady, a Sri Ram Sene leader from Bellary district, is seen warning the police against releasing Noronha on bail. He says, "We request the government to not allow the student Amulya to be released on bail. She said Pakistan Zindabad... and should not be released. And if she is released, we announce a reward of Rs 10 lakh to whoever kills her in an encounter." Marady, flanked by several other men, wearing a BJP scarf, made this statement, clearly wanting to kill a young woman.

The Bellary police have not initiated any action against Marady or the Sri Ram Sene.

DSP Baba told The Wire that the police are looking into the videos and are in the process of "gathering" more videos. "We have heard that there is more than one video and we don't want to take any hasty action," Baba said.

When asked about what the police is doing to ensure that no violent attack happens against Noronha or her family, he said, "All I can say is we are looking into this." Baba did not have an answer for the reasons for the delay in initiating police action.

Another Sri Ram Sene member, Siddalinga Swamy, has offered Rs 3 lakh as "bounty" for the tongues of three Kashmiri students in Hubballi who were arrested on charges of sedition. The statement was made in Gadag, during a programme commemorating Shivaji Jayanti. Siddalinga had said, "We will pay Rs 1 lakh for each tongue which is cut." The police have not initiated any action against Swamy either.

Sri Ram Sene is a well-known right-wing militant group which originated in the southern districts of Karnataka and soon spread its roots to other parts of the state. The group operates in a similar fashion to the Bajrang Dal, another right-wing, Hinduva outfit and with an equally violent track record.

In 2009, Ram Sene made it to

national headlines after it targeted young men and women for "violating the Indian tradition" by going to pubs in Mangaluru in Dakshina Kannada district and attacking them. After the attack, several organisations and political parties had demanded arrests of Sri Ram Sene activists and immediate steps to proscribe the organisation's activities. Demands to ban the organisation were made too.

The state did not take any concrete action against the men, and in March 2018, all accused, including the organisation's chief Pramod Muthalik, were acquitted of all charges.

As the protests against CAA and two other impending exercises, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR), continue to intensify across the country, cases have been registered against protesters in many places. The number of cases and instances of police violence have, however, been much worse in BJP-ruled states.

In December, the Mangaluru police had fired indiscriminately and lathi-charged Muslim men who had gathered to protest against the CAA. The police are accused of killing two bystanders and also injuring several other men.

Similarly, the Bidar police harassed kids as young as six years and arrested a young girl's mother and her teacher after a complaint was registered by a right-wing man against an anti-CAA play at Shaheen educational institute. Children from the school, all belonging to the Muslim community, had performed a play on how the newly passed law may affect the community. The police stopped harassing the children only after the child rights commission intervened.

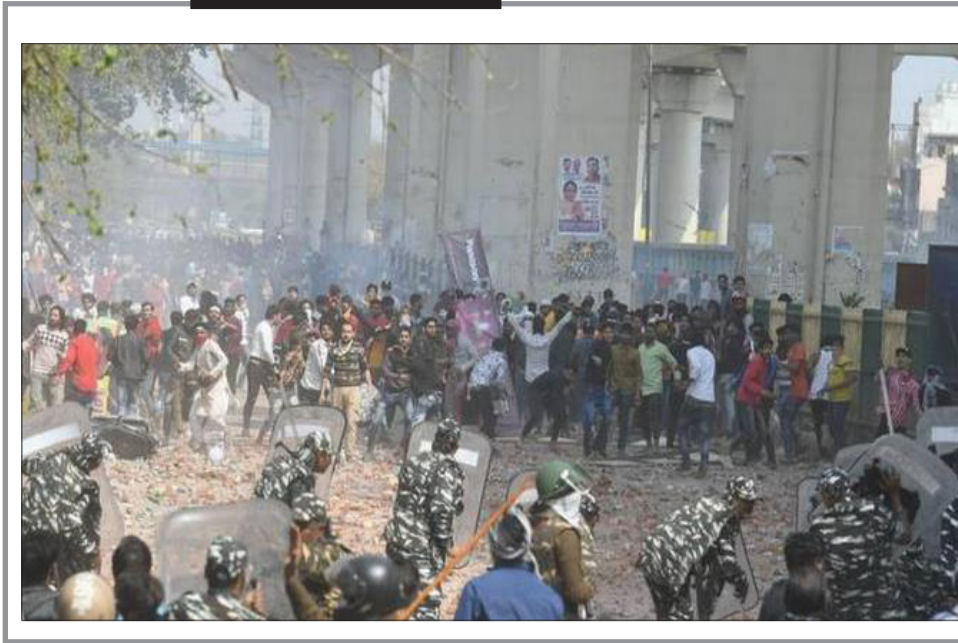
A photo, now viral, which shows police interrogating a child along with school authorities in Bidar, Karnataka. Another minor student, whose face is visible in the original, has been edited out of the frame. Photo: By special arrangement

Several protesters in Bengaluru have been booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code for unlawful assembly, provocation and even sedition. In Mysore, a student was booked for sedition for carrying a "Free Kashmir" placard during a protest against the violence unleashed on JNU students by the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) activists. In another incident, poet Siraj Bisaralli is facing sedition charges for using the podium of Anegundi Utsav, organised by the Koppal district administration, to recite his poem against the CAA and NRC.

The police have, however, taken a lenient stand against a school that engaged its students in a 'drama re-enactment' of the demolition of Babri Masjid.

In mid-December 2019, a group of over 100 minor students had re-enacted the demolition of the masjid for the annual day event at the Sri Rama Vidyakendra High School in Kalladka at Dakshina Karnataka. Young students, dressed in a white and saffron combination costume, rushed towards a poster of Babri Masjid and tore it down as the narrator announced, "Bolo Shri Ramchandra Ki... Jai. Bolo Bharat Mata Ki... Jai."

Following a complaint filed by a Popular Front of India (PFI) leader, Aboobacker Siddique, the police had registered a complaint against the school's owner and RSS's south-central region executive committee member Kalladka Prabhakar Bhat. But the police are yet to initiate any action against Bhat or other school employees.



## Violence In Delhi As Anti & Pro CAA Groups Clash; Cop Killed

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi Police constable was killed and several others, including a DCP, were injured Monday as clashes broke out in northeast Delhi for the second consecutive day as pro and anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protesters pelted stones at each other. Several vehicles and houses were set on fire in Jaffrabad and Maujpur as police had to fire tear gas shells to disperse the protesters. Section 144 of CrPc has been imposed in the affected areas.

Hitherto peaceful sit-in protests against the CAA-NRC-NPR triad in various Delhi localities, mainly led by women, suddenly saw turning violent after inflammatory speech by a BJP leader near the protest site in North East Delhi on Sunday.

BJP MP Kapil Mishra gave inflammatory speeches against anti-CAA protesters in North-

east Delhi localities—Maujpur, Jaffrabad and Chand Bagh stoking tension and violence that later led to heavy stone-pelting between two groups.

Mishra posted a video of himself warning the Delhi Police that "they will not stop" after US President Donald Trump leaves the country. Mishra earlier gave an ultimatum to the Delhi police to clear protest sites within three days.

In several videos doing the rounds on Monday, senior police personnel could be seen standing and listening to Mishra's speech. Even when his supporters were seen attacking the anti CAA protesters, video footage shows police personnel standing by. In at least one video, making rounds on social media, cops are seen pelting stones at anti-CAA protesters. Shadaab, who is part of

anti-CAA sit-in at Chandbagh, claimed that at about 10:20 am, "people from the RSS came along with the police, and began a lathi charge at the protest site". Some of them even raised slogans like "Jai Shree Ram" while charging at the sit-in.

When people at sit-in responded police fired tear gas shells and also resorted to lathi-charge, they said. Violence in the national capital is taking place on the day US President's maiden visit.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted that he has urged the LG and Home Minister Amit Shah to restore law and order situation.

Even as violence engulfed areas of the national capital on Monday, Delhi's LG Anil Bajjal took to Twitter and said that he has instructed Delhi Police to ensure that law and order in North East Delhi.

## Shaheen Bagh Protests: Interlocutors File Report In Sealed Cover In SC

**New Delhi:** Court-appointed interlocutors on Monday filed their report in a sealed cover in the Supreme Court on the ongoing protests at Shaheen Bagh here against the Citizenship Amendment Act.

Advocate Sadhna Ramachandran, who was appointed an interlocutor along with senior advocate Sanjay Hegde, placed the report before a bench of Justices SK Kaul and KM Joseph.

The bench, which took on record the report, said it would peruse it and the matter would be



heard on February 26.

The bench made it clear that the report of interlocutors would not be shared

with the petitioners and counsels representing the Centre and Delhi Police at this stage. PTI

## After 'Baahubali' Tweet, Trump Celebrates 'Genius' Of Bollywood, Remembers 'Ddlj' And 'Sholay'

US President Donald Trump on Monday reached out to Indians by hailing the "genius" of the Hindi film industry and recalling two all-time favourites, "Sholay" and "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" (DDLJ).

Addressing the 'Namaste Trump' event at the Motera Stadium in Ahmedabad, the US president said people "take great joy" in watching Bollywood films and understanding Indian culture through them.

"This is the country that produces nearly 2,000 movies a year from the hub of genius and creativity known as Bollywood," he told the gathering of about 100,000 people packed into the stadium.

All over the planet people take

great joy in scenes of bhanga, music and dance, romance and drama, and classic Indian films like 'DDLJ' and 'Sholay', Trump said.

While the 1975 multi-starrer "Sholay", labelled a "curry western" by many, is an action-adventure film that has stood the test of the decades, the 1995 Shah Rukh Khan-Kajol-led "DDLJ" is an out and out romance.

This is not the first effort by the US president to use popular culture to strike a chord with movie loving Indians.

Ahead of his maiden visit to India, Trump shared a video in which his face was superimposed on the hit movie-character Baahubali.

"Look so forward to being with my great friends in INDIA!" Trump tweeted on Saturday alongside the

81-second clip.

Before that, Trump praised Ayushmann Khurrana's latest release "Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan".

On a tweet complimenting the movie for celebrating a same-sex love story on the celluloid, Trump last week commented "great".

Former US president Barack Obama also referenced "DDLJ" during his 2015 visit to India when he quoted Shah Rukh's famous dialogue from the iconic film.

"Last celebration here we celebrated festival of lights in Mumbai. We danced with some children. Unfortunately, we were not able to schedule any dancing in this visit. 'Seniorita, bade bade desho mein'. You know what I mean," Obama said while addressing a town hall event in Delhi.

## Scolding Woman Employee To Get Work Done Isn't Sexual Harassment: Madras HC



The Madras High Court has observed a solitary allegation of intemperate language against a woman employee does not constitute an offence under the law on sexual harassment at the workplace and the act cannot be allowed to be misused with exaggerated or non-existent charges.

Granting relief to a senior Central government official who was accused of sexual harassment by a woman officer, it also said the administrative head or the chief has every right to extract work and he or she has his or her own discretion and prerogatives.

Allowing a petition by V. Natarajan, Deputy Registrar of Trade Marks and GI, Intellectual Property of India, Chennai, a bench of Justices M. Sathyanarayanan and R. Hemalatha quashed orders of the Central Administrative Tribunal and the district local complaints committee (LCC) against him.

"The complainant, it appears, made a futile attempt to settle her personal score with the petitioner. Every officer has to maintain certain decorum and women employees cannot be allowed to go scot-free without completing their assignments," the bench said in a lengthy order on Saturday.

If a woman employee was discriminated against due to her inefficiency or for any other official reasons, the recourse for her is not the one taken by this complainant, it said.

"Though the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013, is intended to have an equal standing for women in the workplace and to have a cordial workplace in which their dignity and self-respect are protected, it cannot be allowed to be misused by women to harass someone with exaggerated or non-existent allegations," the bench added.

The woman officer had lodged a complaint on December 2, 2013, against the petitioner with the Registrar and Controller General of Trade Marks and GI and Patents and Design, accusing him of high-handed and arrogant behaviour, causing hurt to her self-respect.

The Registrar and Controller Gen-

eral set up an internal complaints committee (ICC) as per the act.

Subsequently, she made another complaint, narrating many incidents about the "rude behaviour" of Natarajan, in which she mentioned the word "sexual harassment" at several places.

Later, she wrote to the Tamil Nadu State Commission for Women, expressing apprehension the ICC would not render justice as her complaint was against the head of department.

Subsequently, based on an inquiry by the district social welfare officer who found a prima facie case, the LCC had recommended a detailed departmental inquiry against Natarajan.

Meanwhile, the CAT allowed a plea by the complainant, challenging the constitution of the ICC. The petitioner's appeal was dismissed by the tribunal, following which he moved the Madras High Court.

The court said the woman's first complaint in 2013 was general and its essence was "intemperate" language used by the officer and 'bias' shown against her. But the February 17, 2016, complaint before the LCC smacked of "tutoring" and talked about "physical advances" and "lewd remarks" though it did not mention any date or sequence of events in support.

"This also appears to be an afterthought. Therefore, a solitary allegation of intemperate language against a female employee does not constitute an offence" under the act, the bench said.

"It gives an appearance that instructing a woman employee to do something officially or even scolding a woman employee itself is sexual harassment," it said.

It held the CAT erred in concluding that the petitioner was the employer as defined under the legislation and therefore the ICC would not have any relevance while the LCC gave an erroneous decision with a non-speaking order, which was also ex-parte.

The court also faulted the woman officer for "defiant attitude" in not attending the ICC hearing and for approaching the state commission for women.

## Dr Kafeel Khan's Maternal Uncle Shot Dead In Uttar Pradesh

The maternal uncle of Dr Kafeel Khan, who was recently arrested for allegedly making inflammatory statements during anti-CAA protests, was shot dead in front of his house at Bankatichak in Rajghat area, police said on Sunday.

Dr Nusratullah Warsi aka Dada (55), a property dealer, was shot dead on Saturday night at about 10:45 pm and an FIR against two people was filed in this connection on a written complaint of his family members.

According to police, it appears to be a case of murder due to monetary and property dispute and they are searching for both the accused.

Dr Kafeel Khan, suspended doctor of Gorakhpur BRD Medical College, was last month arrested under charges of giving a provocative speech during a protest against the CAA and NRC at Aligarh Muslim University and was later charged with the National Security Act.

Warsi on Saturday evening had gone to his lawyer Siraj Tariq's house, a few metres away from his

own house, and was returning home on foot when a man shot him in his head, killing him on the spot.

"On the written complaint of family members, case of murder against one Imamuddin and Anil Sonkar has been registered and police has initiated probe and is searching for both the accused. Police met the women in their house and is interrogating them," Circle Officer VP Singh said.

Prima facie it appears to be a case of property and money dispute, he said, adding, three teams have been constituted to investigate the case and soon the accused will be caught.

Dr Kafeel Khan had last month raised apprehension in a Mumbai court about being killed in an "encounter" by the Uttar Pradesh police after claiming that he had been "falsely" implicated in the case by them.

The paediatrician had come to the limelight in 2017 when a controversy broke out after the death of over 60 children in less than a week at the BRD Medical College in Gorakhpur in Uttar Pradesh, where he was posted.

## NEWS MAKERS

### 'To My Great Friend Modi': No Gandhi In Trump's Sabarmati Visitors' Book Entry

US President Donald Trump has started the 'engagements leg' of his India visit on an arguably embarrassing note! After his arrival at the Ahmedabad Airport on Monday, Trump and Prime Minister Narendra Modi went straight to Sabarmati Ashram, the residence of Mahatma Gandhi.

In his entry in Sabarmati Ashram's visitors book, Trump wrote, "To my great friend Prime Minister Modi, Thank you for this wonderful visit!". As is obvious, the entry contains no reference to Mahatma Gandhi.

Sabarmati Ashram trustee Kartikeya Sarabhaj told ANI, "US president was happy to visit the ashram. While leaving, he



said that it was a very peaceful experience and appreciated the simple living style of Gandhiji."

On his departure from Sabarmati Ashram, Trump was presented with several gifts including Mahatma Gandhi's biography, a Charkha (spinning wheel) and a marble statue of 3 monkeys sym-

bolising 'see no evil, speak no evil and hear no evil'.

Trump was shown Hriday Kunj, the room in Sabarmati Ashram where Gandhi lived.

Not surprisingly, the absence of any reference to Gandhi in Trump's entry was noticed. Congress MP Manish Tewari tweeted about what then US president Barack Obama wrote about Gandhi in his visit to Rajghat in 2015. Obama had written the "spirit of Gandhi is very much alive in India today. And it remains a great gift to the world."

Modi has taken multiple world leaders to Sabarmati Ashram: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, Japan PM Shinzo Abe and China's President Xi Jinping.

During his visit to Sabarmati Ashram in January 2018, Netanyahu wrote in the visitors book that it was "an inspiring visit to the hearth of one of humanity's great prophets of inspiration—Mahatma Gandhi".

In September last year, during Modi's visit to the US, Trump had referred to the prime minister as being the 'father of India', a term usually associated with Mahatma Gandhi.

"I remember India before, not intimately, but I remember India before, it was very torn, it was a lot of fighting and he brought it all together. Like a father would bring it together. Maybe he is the father of India. We will call him the father of India. He brought things together, you don't hear that anymore," Donald Trump told mediapersons.

### Taj Mahal Gets A Facelift Ahead Of Trump Visit

Authorities at the Archaeological Survey of India had "advanced the dates" for mud-pack treatment for the graves of Mughal emperor Shah Jahan and wife Mumtaz Mahal at Taj Mahal in view of US President Donald Trump's planned visit to the famed mausoleum on Tuesday, an official said.

The 17th-century monument to love, built over a period of nearly 20 years by Shah Jahan in memory of his wife after her death in 1631, is being refurbished to welcome the American leader and US First Lady Melania Trump.

"The red sandstones of the Taj complex are being cleaned of stains from weather, fountains

have been spruced up and extra stock of shimmering flowers added in gardens to enhance the glory of the monument," ASI Agra Circle Superintending Archaeologist Vasant Swarnkar said.

The ASI official said the world heritage site was also getting ready to welcome Trump just like Agra was being decked up for his visit on Tuesday evening.

"We have already done the mud-pack treatment of the two royal graves. It is done with 'multani mitti' and takes a couple of days," Swarnkar told PTI. "After the treatment, it is cleaned with distilled water. It was done in the last few days." Asked if the special treat-

ment was being given after a long time, he said such works were carried out regularly and its date was due in coming time.

"But, we preponed the mud-pack dates keeping in view the visit of the US president," the official said.

Swarnkar said the Taj Mahal would be closed to visitors in the second half of the day, adding the tickets would be issued till 11.30 am and it will be cleared of visitors by noon.

According to Agra District Magistrate Prabhu N Singh, PTI. "After the treatment, it is cleaned with distilled water. It was done in the last few days." Asked if the special treat-