

LATEST NEWS

Arunachal Pradesh must investigate killing of protesters



AT News · 05:58, 6 May 2016 · 8119 views · 4 min read



Authorities in Arunachal ([/taxonomy/term/2194](#)) Pradesh must conduct a prompt, impartial and independent criminal ([/taxonomy/term/2493](#)) investigation into the killing of two protesters in police firing in the town of Tawang in the northeastern state ([/taxonomy/term/2332](#)).

“Firing live ammunition into a crowd when there is no apparent threat to life amounts to excessive use of force. This loss of life cannot be justified,” said Abhirr VP, Senior Campaigner, Amnesty ([/taxonomy/term/1698](#)) International India ([/taxonomy/term/2367](#)).

On the afternoon of May 2, a group of monks and people from the Save Mon Region Federation (SMRF), a group campaigning for ecologically sensitive development, gathered outside the Tawang police station to protest against the arrest of Buddhist monk Lobsang Gyatso, the secretary of the SMRF.

Lama Jha, a monk from the Tawang monastery who was present at the protest, told Amnesty International India, “When we were protesting outside the police station, the police called three people and let them inside through a small gate. The police then beat them up. The crowd got angry. We started pushing the gate. Some threw stones. And suddenly the police opened fire at us without any warning. Some of us ran for our lives.”

Lama Pema Gyatso, another eyewitness, said, “There is some distance between the police station and the gate, which is near the boundary wall (/taxonomy/term/2319)...The people started pushing the gate and throwing stones. They broke part of the gate...The police didn’t give us any warning and started firing.”

Two people were shot dead: 21-year old Nyima Wangdi, a monk from Tawang who was shot twice, and 31-year old Tsering Tempa, a 31 year-old resident of Jangda village who was shot in the forehead. Seven others were injured.

The Director General of Police, Arunachal (/taxonomy/term/2194) Pradesh, said that the police fired in self-defence. He told Amnesty (/taxonomy/term/1698) International India (/taxonomy/term/2367), “The police did warn the protesters. We did fire tear gas (/taxonomy/term/1599) shells. When 1,000 to 1,500 protesters storm the police station with stones and beer bottles what do you do?”

Lobsang Gyatso was released on personal bond later on [2](#) [May](#). He told Amnesty [International India](#) [\(2367\)](#), “This is an attempt to tarnish the protests. I was inside the lockup when I heard the police shout about taking the ammunition out.”

The situation in Tawang remains tense. The state [\(2332\)](#) government has ordered a judicial inquiry.

“The police must use lethal force intentionally only as [\(2291\)](#) a last resort, when it is strictly unavoidable and in order to protect life. They must always distinguish between peaceful protesters and those using violence. Any police personnel found [\(1802\)](#) to have used excessive force must be held accountable,” said Abhirr VP.

BACKGROUND:

Authorities have approved the setting up of 160 hydropower projects across Arunachal Pradesh, including 50 projects between the Tawang and the neighbouring Kameng river basin. As the secretary of the SMRF, Lobsang Gyasto has been at the forefront of the mobilization against dams being built in the Mon-Tawang region of Arunachal Pradesh..

Some of these dams have attracted criticism for allegedly violating environmental impact assessment policies, and for impacting culturally important sites. On 7 April, the National Green Tribunal, a dedicated environmental court, suspended the environmental clearance of the 780 MW Nyamjang Chhu project in response to a petition filed by SMRF, for not considering its impact on a threatened bird species which is of cultural significance to the locals. It also asked for fresh public consultations.

Lobsang Gyatso was arrested by the police on April 26 for organizing a protest and later released on bail. He was arrested on April 28 for offences including “promoting enmity between different groups” and “outraging religious feelings” for his criticism of the stand of the abbot of the Tawang Monastery on anti-dam protesters. The abbot had asked monks to stay away from protests against (/taxonomy/term/1929) hydropower projects.



AT News

Assam Times Staff. editor@assamtimes.org

Original URL: <https://assamtimes.org/article/arunachal-pradesh-must-investigate-killing-of-protesters-16823> |
Published: 6 May 2016 | © 2026 Assam Times