

Mushrooming insurgency in Garo Hills, a menace for govt employees!



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Saidul Khan 2 January 2014 7790 views

Samarjit Areng (name changed), a youth working in a block in Meghalaya's East Garo Hills district is worried. He fears retaliation by outfits operating in Garo Hills, as he has failed to listen to their diktat.

Nobody is being spared in Garo Hills region as rebel groups are looking for ransom - be it 'poor' or 'rich'. The modus operandi of these outfits are very simple - if one is not being able to pay. They ask the entire office to collect money and give them. Infact, outfits are negotiating on the amounts.

Government employees working in remote areas of the region are the worst sufferers. They don't have much option - it is like pay or you are under their scanner. Not many are willing to speak against such outfits, as they fear for their lives.

It is learnt that both Garo National Liberation Army (GNLA) and the breakaway faction of Achik National Volunteers Council (ANVC - B) are involved in serving demand notes. In December last year, Samanda Block in East Garo Hills was served with a demand note amounting to Rs. 80 lakhs.

Not just government employees even tea shops and panwallas are not spared.

"Yes! we are paying every month to the outfits as protection money. Because, if we don't pay, they threaten us with dire consequence. We are poor people and nobody is willing to come forward to help us", said a vendor in Rongjeng.

Some say that a large part of this problem is due to poor policing. Most of the police stations and beat houses in remote areas are ill-equipped to handle such cases. To add to the woes, police stations are located at a far away distance.

A senior police official, who didnot wanted to be identified disclosed on the motive of such outfits and their recruiting model. He said, "Militants will go on a distribution spree to win the hearts of the people. Than they will seek for small favours like medicine and food".

Taking advantage of the villagers innocence, the outfits will later seek shelter, which poses threat, as they will be looked at by the police agencies as 'sympathizer'. Left with not much option, many villagers will than take up arms for their survival.

He further says that this has led to huge militancy problem in remote areas, as their strength are increasing by day.

Looks like - that Meghalaya police has a huge role to play to tackle insurgency in Garo Hills. It is the beginning of the year and police should tightened up its strategies to handle the situation.

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BY SAIDUL KHAN

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