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Editorial

One year



CHIEF Minister, Omar Abdullah has completed one year in office. True, one year is not sufficient to judge performance of any government but there can be no denying that on the development front he has his bag of achievements and also deficiencies. Many new schemes have been introduced that are yet to show their results but for pulls and pressures of the coalition partners the government has not shown much progress on revamping the administration and also in bringing equitable progress between various regions and districts.

With government failing to address their problems the unrest in employees continues and the 'culture of extensions' in the services of retired employees has touched new heights. The state in fact has become a sanctuary for retired officers belonging to the elite All India Services and also having proximity to some ministers in the coalition government. There also has not been much forward movement on the political front. Appreciating the achievements registered by the government as highlighted by its PR department it needs to be reminded that it has not lived up to its promise of creating a free political atmosphere, allowing the voices of dissent right to assemble and freedom of expression. Many 'dissenting' leaders belonging to different organization including sixty percent of Hurriyat (G) continue to remain behind the bars and many opposition leaders were denied to hold public meetings during the year gone by. It is an admitted fact that compared to previous years there was improvement in the human rights situation in the state but one of the scars that continues to ooze even to this day is the heinous crime against a school going girl and a young woman of Shopian. This ugly incident of 'rape and murder' that took place in May will continue to remain as a huge blot on the one year old Omar Abdullah government unless the criminals are brought to justice.

It cannot be denied that after initial flippancy, the Chief Minister has been open-minded about conducting of an enquiry in the 'rape and murder' of two women but for the various political forces at play in the state the truth has so far become a causality. It is no secret that with various reports prepared by a one man judicial commission headed by a retired High Court Judge, the Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Department and a couple non-governmental women's organization from outside the state people have not accepted the report made public by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI). The 'drowning in shallow waters' story, as the CBI report is now called has been rejected by the Shopian Majlis-e-Mushawarat as well as by the opposition parties in the state. In this bizarre situation a valuable suggestion has come from the International Peoples Tribunal.

The tribunal has written a letter to Chief Minister seeking his permission for roping in "internationally reputed experts" in the fields of anthropology, forensic science, medicines and experts on gender to analyses and inquires into the findings by various institutions permitted by the Jammu and Kashmir government. The Tribunal with Dr Angana P Chatterjee, Prof Anthropology at California Institute of Integral Studies as its convener, Gautam Navlakha and some other eminent intellectuals in the capital associated with it have during past couple of years established some credibility with the people and it has been for that reason the Majlis-e-Mushawarat, seeking justice in the case approached on December 30 last year the Tribunal pleading for inquiring into the incident.

It is heartening to note that the Chief Minister Omar Abdullah is not averse to the idea of getting the matter probed by the Tribunal that comprises none but some local human rights activists and some eminent Indian nationals. On the issue of Shopian he needs to take the same stand as he took on Bomal, that had won him a lot of credibility. It is good that Chief Minister wants to take Home Minister and Prime Minister on board but law and order being a state subject he needs no clearance from the Union Ministries for allowing the Tribunal to conduct an inquiry into the gruesome crime. An enquiry by an independent tribunal will not only put at rest the controversy over the "twin rape and murder" but would also be a good beginning for him for starting second year in office.

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CRPF man killed, 10 injured
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GK NEWS NETWORK

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Updated at 1450 Hours IST

Srinagar, Jan 6: A paramilitary CRPF trooper was killed and ten persons including three CRPF men were injured in the militant strike at Lal Chowk on Wednesday, sources said.

They said intermittent exchange of firing is taking place between militants and the troopers. "Militants are hiding inside a hotel and have engaged the forces."

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Militants strike in Lal Chowk

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