

THE NEW FACE OF TERRORISM

The New Year dawn on India was smeared with blood and tears. More than sixty people, men, women and children lost their lives and dozens were injured when remote-controlled bombs were exploded by the terrorists in the crowded market places in New Delhi. The crowded markets were booming with the people who were shopping to celebrate the most popular Indian festival of Diwali which was to be followed by the popular Muslim festival of *Eid*.

The nation was mourning the deaths of the innocents when the news of the brutal murder of a professor by an unknown terrorist outside an international science conference venue in Bangalore, Indian Science Institute, came sending the shock waves among the academic community across the country. That the academics, scientists and scholars would be at the receiving end of the terrorists and militants became clear during the turmoil in Kashmir. The abduction of the noted Islamic scholar and Vice Chancellor of Kashmir University and his subsequent brutal murder at the hands of the militants, the murder of a professor of medicine of Medical College in Srinagar and the killing of a professor of law during the broad daylight in the Kashmir University campus were some of the most brutal killings committed during the ongoing militancy in Kashmir. However, the international outcry against these assassinations had generated the hope that terrorist would spare, at least, this community from targeting them.

The killing of the IT professor in Bangalore has, however, proved that anything can be under the sway of a terrorist. The murder of the IT professor has other dimensions too. The experts on terrorism have been maintaining that this murder has two dimensions. One, the location of the attack. The location has not been facing any problem of terrorism or violence. In fact the peaceful and climate friendly environs of Bangalore have made it an attractive place for IT professionals and it abounds in IT companies and professional institutions. It also attracts a large foreign investment. The terrorist attack is seen as a signal to target these institutions and equally scaring away investors. That amounts to using terrorists to attack the economy of the country in a major way. This is a new challenge which has the trappings of the tragic events of 9/11. That this methodology can be used anywhere should awaken the international community to this new face of terrorism.

The second dimension of the tragedy in Bangalore is that the identity of the killer/killers or the perpetrators of the crime has remained a mystery so far. The identity of the terrorist group responsible for the crime remains elusive. The hypothesis is being advanced which points to the hiring of criminals to commit terrorist attacks. The engagement of criminals for monetary considerations as mercenaries in terrorism is well established. But the engagement of criminals to carry out specific and limited

tasks of terror and fear is a new phenomenon. These new dimensions of terrorism should engage the experts and analysts in addressing this new threat.

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We wish our readers a Peaceful New Year !