

# 'Arrests a conspiracy to restore waning charisma of Modi'

STAFF REPORTER

MADURAI, SEPTEMBER 03, 2018 00:00 IST

## Protection of Constitution stressed

The recent arrests of five renowned activists across the country for allegedly conspiring to assassinate Prime Minister Narendra Modi were nothing but a conspiracy to restore the waning charisma of Mr. Modi and hide the complete failure of his government, said T. Lajapathi Roy, an advocate practising at the Madras High Court.

“The government is blaming the activists for hatching a conspiracy. But the real conspiracy is by the government,” he told the media at an event organised here on Sunday, in which a number of activists, lawyers, academicians and writers came together to condemn the arrests of activists Sudha Bharadwaj, Varavara Rao, Arun Ferreira, Vernon Gonsalves, Gautam Navlakha.

‘A successful ploy’

Mr. Roy said the same ploy had ‘successfully’ been used many times by the BJP when Mr. Modi was Gujarat Chief Minister.

Terming the allegations made in the first information report against the activists fictitious, senior counsel M. Ajmal Khan blamed the government for attacking anyone voicing their support to Dalits, religious minorities and people from other marginalised sections.

Stating that there was a dire need to safeguard the Constitution, freedom of speech and secularism, he said it was high time that all progressive forces came together for the cause.

Henri Tiphagne, Executive Director, People’s Watch, alleged that Pune police had no substantial evidence to prove the conspiracy.

Letter

“The purported letter, which is supposedly the clinching evidence, has not been submitted to the court by the police. Why are they hesitant when they leak it to select media?” he asked.

R. Murali, State general secretary of People’s Union for Civil Liberties, questioned the reason for the police organising a press meet to character assassinate the activists. “If they have evidence, let them file a charge-sheet and conduct the trial,” he said.

The government was terming the activists ‘Urban Naxals’, writer A. Muthukrishnan said, adding the real ‘Urban Terrorists’ were Hindu right wing organisations that were involved in violence and assassination of activists like Narendra Dabholkar and Gauri Lankesh.

Writer Libi Aranya and former Tamil University Professor Mu. Ramasamy spoke on the need for democratic and progressive forces to come together, keeping their minor differences aside.

The participants of the meeting demanded the immediate release of all the activists and a Supreme Court-monitored investigation into the cases related to Bhima-Koregaon violence and the alleged conspiracy to kill the PM.