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Hyderabad: Scores of rights activists, including revolutionary writer Varavara Rao and Jeetan Marandi, folk artiste from Jharkhand, were taken into preventive custody after they tried to hold a seminar here Sunday.

Pratyamnaya Raajakeeya Vedika (Forum for Alternative Politics), a loose conglomeration of different mass organisations and individuals, wanted to mark the 10th anniversary of the formation of the CPI (Maoist) with a seminar at the Sundaraiah Vignana Kendram followed by a rally and a public meeting at the Indira Park in the city on Sunday.

In a pre-emptive strike, the police arrested Varavara Rao, who heads the forum, and shifted him to the Kanchanbagh police station in the wee hours. They also detained activists, coming in from different parts of the State and country to participate in the programmes, at railway and bus stations.

DCP VB Kamalasan Reddy, defending the police action, pointed out that the Hyderabad High Court had denied permission for the forum's meeting and seminar in the city. "The police imposed some restrictions and took into custody 180 activists as a preventive measure. The forum is a frontal organisation of the CPI (Maoist) and any activity of the outfit is illegal," he said.

The DCP also claimed, "There are reliable inputs that in the guise of participants, some underground cadres of the CPI (Maoist) are likely to reach Hyderabad. Their very presence in Hyderabad poses a serious security threat." Varavara Rao was initially placed under house arrest while writer Kalyan Rao was arrested late Saturday night itself at Macherla in Guntur district. Varavara Rao's wife P Hemalatha, who visited the Kanchanbagh police station to meet him, said, "In the past 30 years, this is the first time that the State government has denied permission for a public meeting. The Telangana government is acting in an undemocratic manner by suppressing civil rights associations." Varavara Rao's family members had to argue

with the police for half-an-hour to meet him. The forum members said the police had arrested at least 500 activists. After the denial of permission for the rally and public meeting, the organisers wanted to go ahead with the seminar.

A few hours before the seminar, there was an indication from the police that they would not allow even the seminar. Surprised at this, the organizers said, they had approached bigwigs in the government and the ruling TRS, including the Home Minister, and got an oral assurance that the seminar would be allowed without any hindrance. They alleged the assurances turned out to be false and the arrests so coordinated that not only the government of Telangana but also the government of Andhra Pradesh began intercepting and arresting people who were coming to Hyderabad. They termed it unconstitutional.

Three points raised by the Forum for Alternative Politics

- Chief Minister and TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao time and again in the past openly said he would follow and implement the “Maoist agenda.” The forum wanted to hold the seminar just to discuss the Maoist agenda, not even follow or implement as he used to say.

- KCR stirred a controversy when he was the Union minister in 2005 when he visited Varavara Rao in the Chanchalguda jail after the latter was arrested for being a Maoist interlocutor in 2004 talks between the Maoists and the government. He set aside the protocol to meet a Maoist representative in jail, but within nine years, Varavara Rao was arrested on the same charge and his visitor held the power to arrest him!

- Repression of people’s movements in general and the Naxalite movement in particular is not new. But most of those whose rights were suppressed today were part of the Telangana movement and all through, its leaders were promising a ‘golden, free, just and peaceful Telangana’ that would respect democratic rights. Within no time, the government that emerged out of a people’s movement proved itself to be hindrance to people’s rights.

<http://www.newindianexpress.com/states/teelangana/No-Room-for-Alternative-Politics-in-TS/2014/09/22/article2443706.ece>