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'Time for movement to democratise State, society'

Campaign to highlight 'rights violation' in Maudhani case

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THIRUVANANTHAPURAM: The time has come for a common movement to democratise the State and society so as to prevent violation of human rights as it happened in the case of the People's Democratic Party leader, Abdul Nasir Maudhani, and S.A.R. Geelani, the rights activist and Supreme Court lawyer, Nandita Haksar, said.

Ms. Haksar, who is here to participate in a seminar on the Coimbatore bomb blasts case, told *The Hindu* here on Monday that although all major people's movements in the country had democratisation of State and society as their basic concern, the situation in the country today did not allow the launching of a common movement to achieve this goal. "There is large-scale cooption of human rights

movements, women's movements, indigenous people's movements, and so on, into the imperialist agenda, resulting in de-politicisation of issues. Therefore, what we have today are issue-based struggles, each separated from the other," she said.

Ms. Haksar, who played a pivotal role in the Geelani case, said that it would be imprudent on the part of social movements to depend too heavily on the judiciary to achieve their goals. She referred to the slain labour leader, Shankar Guha Niyogi, as one who used the judiciary "creatively."

She pointed out that there was a tendency among social movements to neglect their popular campaigns once they moved the courts.

The judiciary was part of the State and although some relief

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could be had from the courts, it was the campaign and the people's movement that really produced the long-term goals, she said.

A national campaign would soon be set in motion to highlight the human rights violations involved in the Maudhani case. Ms. Haksar said she did not think it was solely an issue of the State.

A signature campaign had been launched and it would be soon extended to the whole country for his release.

In her opinion, the shifting stance of political parties and the Kerala Government on the Maudhani issue had to do much with the larger question of what was happening to Muslims and Muslim leaders who tried to rally the poor among the minorities.