

## M.J. Akbar's new magazine Covert is out

A month after his 15-year association with The Asian Age ended, eminent journalist and author M.J. Akbar's new political magazine Covert hit the news stands Wednesday.

'The ideology of the magazine is the ideology of my own profession - journalism. There should be space for every viewpoint as long as there is logic and rationale and it is not a rant,' Akbar told IANS.

The first issue of Covert begins with Akbar's 'Byline', a column readers looked forward to when he was editor of The Asian Age.

In his 'Byline' for Covert, Akbar has talked about political wannabes like Akhilesh Das, former MP from Uttar Pradesh, and Hillary Clinton, the 'woman who wanted White House', as well as Mayawati and her constituency of Dalits, who the author says are the 'blacks' of India.

Akbar has also talked about himself and his brief stint in politics.

'I am familiar with the face of defeat - not least my own in 1991, when I failed to get re-elected in the general election, during my brief departure into politics,' Akbar has written.

The magazine was launched Tuesday night at a quiet party at his office, attended by his numerous political and media friends.

Priced at Rs 20, the first issue of the 72-page fortnightly covers a range of subjects - the Congress party's strategy in the 2009 Lok Sabha elections, a cover story indicting Agriculture Minister Sharad Pawar for concealing the enormous wealth he has amassed, a column by Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) general secretary Prakash Karat stating why his party was not a 'stooge' of China.

Covert has on board 18 columnists, including its chairperson Akbar, editor Seema Mustafa, Bharatiya Janata Party's (BJP's) former minister Yashwant Sinha, former MP and party-hopper Arif Mohammad Khan, former Rajya Sabha MP and columnist Kuldip Nayar, adman Suhel Seth, former Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) director Joginder Singh and activist Teesta Setalvad.

'The key to this magazine is information which, to me is critical for my audience. They are decision makers which increasingly include these days younger people,' said Akbar, the founder editor of The Telegraph, Asian Age and magazine Sunday.

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