

25th State Conference of Tamil Nadu CPI

Tiruppur Reverberates Resolve to Defeat BJP in 2024



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the Tamil Nadu state conference

Vahidha Nizam

A red sky is beautiful to behold. Magnificently accoutred in red, the city of Tiruppur blew a red whirlwind on August 9, 2022 when the 25th state conference of CPI in Tamil Nadu culminated in a mammoth public meeting. The conference was held for four days from August 6 to 9, 2022.

Gripped in the revolutionary zeal and enthusiasm, more than one lakh people, clad in red, painted the city red adding to the thousands of red flags fluttered high, scaling the skyline of the Banian city of Tiruppur. Paintings and portraits of communist leaders adorned the walls, arches and hoardings radiating and reflecting a deep sense of commitment that communism as a system must expand to maintain its momentum, to save humanity from exploitation, to establish a socialist society.

The new energy of the militant and passionate 'Red Army' of young girls and boys holding aloft the red flags and marching on the streets resonated a message, loud and clear that the CPI shall tune in this new energy successfully to accomplish its political task to overthrow the evil political force of RSS-BJP. The political essence of the conference reflected in the political resolution adopted in the conference, the seminar on 'Communal harmony and federalism' held on August 6 with the participation of leaders from the Secular

Progressive Alliance, the discussions and addresses of the central leadership of the party gave out a call to 'Blow, Bugles, Blow', burst like a ruthless force to defeat BJP in the 2024 general elections.

The 25th state conference of CPI in Tamil Nadu began on August 6, in Tiruppur. The city of Tiruppur bears a resounding significance for its eminence of being the very land where

Kumaran, the revolutionary freedom fighter succumbed to the brutal lathi-charge of police for holding the Indian flag. In 1932 the British had banned the Indian flag adopted in 1931, an ensign of the Indian National Army. Holding or hoisting of the flag was meted out with harsh punishment. The young Kumaran, only 28, protested against the British and held the flag high on his chest while falling dead on the ground. He was honoured with the epithet, 'Kodi Katha Kumaran', (Kumaran who protected the flag).

Kodi Katha Kumaran stands erect as the symbol of the true Indian patriotism. The ideals of patriotism and nationalism that symbolise are reflections of a progressive revolutionary zeal as against the marauding mobs of BJP workers carrying the tricolour, while lynching minorities thereby insulting and disrespecting the na-

tional flag. It is an irony of extreme kind that those who do not even know or learn to respect the national flag shamelessly propagate the 'har ghar tiranga' programme as 'true patriotism', a sham of another breed that solely aims at spreading hatred and suspicion among people.

The inaugural address of D Raja, party general secretary set the tone and tenor of the conference. With the best of his eloquence in Tamil to an ostentatious precision of placing facts his address bore the potential grit to build, expand and strengthen the party to defeat the BJP in the general elections of 2024. Speaking on the Draft Political Resolution of the party, he emphasised the need to build a broad unity of the secular democratic forces to take on the BJP. Unleashing a scathing attack on the virulent spread of the communal and casteist

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Editorial

On the 75th year of Independence, Prime Minister Narendra Modi as usual was eloquent in his rhetoric. He minced no words to impress upon the people of India by preaching his government's commitment to the men and women of the country. Though he addressed the 'countrymen' at definite intervals, women were not completely forgotten. A small portion of his speech was specially devoted to 'Nari Shakti', where verbal adorations were ornamentally reserved for women empowerment. At the same time, in Gujarat the BJP government was unmasking a different face of their concern for women's rights.

Eleven convicts of the Bilkis Bano rape case were set free from the Godhra sub-jail the same day. 'Nari Shakti' of Modi brand is blind to the plight of the women if they are Muslims or poor. The country cannot forget the incident that happened in Godhra on the fateful days of 2002, following the communal riots that engulfed Gujarat.

Atrocities were unleashed against the hapless Muslim women in various parts of the state. In the Bilkis Bano case, apart from the heinous crime of rape, seven members of her family were killed including a three-year old child. Following the investigation and trial the accused were convicted for life imprisonment. Because of the particular nature of the case, the investigation as well as the judicial process was long and complicated, the hearing was shifted from Gujarat to Maharashtra. Even though human right activists and India's secular conscience were always on the vigil, it took six years for the Judiciary to complete the trial.

Bilkis Bano Case, Yet Another Eye-opener

From 2008 onwards, when they were put behind the bars the Parivar forces and Gujarat government were anxious about their freedom and well-being. Now, after their 'long wait' the rape convicts are walking out to the world of freedom created by the guardians of Parivar.

Fifteen years after their conviction and serving the minimum sentence legally possible, the script for the release of the rape convicts was carefully drafted under the guidance of the bigwigs in the Parivar. The trajectory of the rape case, from the date of its occurrence throws light to this connection. An application was filed for the remission of their punishment in the Supreme Court in May this year. The Supreme Court ordered the Gujarat Government to look into the matter, which subsequently formed a committee which gave a unanimous decision to release the convicts as per their behaviour during the sentence and 'nature of the crime'! The wheels of justice swiftly moved into action releasing them through a 'special remission policy' as part of Azadi ka Amrit Mahotsav. The partisan spirit of the committee was manifest on the same day evening. A hero's welcome was accorded to them in the VHP office.

In stark contrast to this, as per the India Justice Report 2020, 68 per cent of the prisoners inside the jails are under-trials and some of them have been jailed without a single charge-sheet being filed. The custodial death of Tribal activist Stan Swamy who was arrested in the fabricated Bhima Koregoan case and was denied even a

sipper to drink water on medical grounds, continues to haunt the nation.

The message RSS-BJP government wants to convey is crystal clear that Azadi in this country, under their rule, has a special care for such kind of people who are close to the rulers and their politics. The basic doctrines of rule of law and equality before law are thrown to the dustbin. The lives and rights of minorities, Dalits, women, and the poor are passing through a series of violations. The government's move to amend the criminal laws, in this background signals new challenges before the oppressed. The committee entrusted with the task is having only five members, all of whom are categorically selected from the upper caste.

In the present conditions of India, the new lawmakers cannot be expected to do justice to the under-privileged and voiceless. 'Azadi' is not a concept meant only for celebrations and rhetoric, it is a great promise of history before the people that their country will safeguard them from all kinds of suppression. It is a promise of freedom from hunger, poverty, social and sexual exploitation. That was the idea of free India which the freedom movement shared with the people of India. The present ruling dispensation is quite unaware of it, as they have no role in the freedom movement to shape the destiny of India. The Bilkis Bano case reminds the men and women of India that they have miles to go to reach the goal of freedom and equality.

Writers Urge President to Support Free Expression

Over 100 notable international writers and artists on August 15, 2022 expressed concern over the state of freedom of expression in India and called on President Droupadi Murmu to support democratic ideals, says a report.

The group of 102 writers, including Marina Abramovic, Paul Auster, J.M. Coetzee, Jennifer Egan, Jonathan Franzen, Azar Nafisi, and Orhan Pamuk, joined the writers' organisations PEN America and PEN Inter-

national in signing the letter to Ms. Murmu, a statement by PEN America said.

"As India celebrates 75 years of independence, the state of free expression is under grave threat and is being mourned rather than celebrated," said PEN America's director of Free Expression at Risk Programs Karin Deutsch Karlekar.

The joint letter, which was signed by PEN America and PEN Inter-

national in signing the letter to Ms. Murmu, a statement by PEN America said. 100 prominent writers, urged Ms Murmu to support free expression in the spirit of India's Independence.

"Free expression is the cornerstone of a robust democracy. By weakening this core right, all other rights are at risk and the promises made at India's birth as an independent republic are severely compromised," the letter said.

The statement added that in a separate initiative, PEN America had brought out a collection

of original writings titled India at 75 by 113 Indian and Indian diaspora writers, including Salman Rushdie, whose writing was shared before the attack on him on August 12. The authors included Jhumpa Lahiri, Abraham Verghese, Shobhaa De, Rajmohan Gandhi, Romila Thapar, Aakar Patel, Anita Desai, Geetanjali Shree, Perumal Murugan, P Sainath, Kiran Desai, Suketu Mehta and Zia Jaffrey. The pieces re-

flected on the state of freedom of expression in India as it celebrates its 75th Independence Day.

"Together, the two initiatives represent a rallying cry to uphold the freedom to write, and to encourage writers and public intellectuals to continue their key role in contributing to India's once vibrant democracy. Threats against free speech, academic freedom, and digital rights have accelerated in India in recent years," the PEN America statement read.

75 Years of Freedom and Communist Party

As the nation is celebrating the 75th year of independence, the Communist Party of India has called upon all its units to celebrate the same. Poster exhibition, cultural programmes and poets' meets are being organised and freedom fighters and their families are being honoured at different party districts. At the same time booklets and articles are being written to emphasise the important role played by the party and its cadres in our freedom movement.

At the outset it must be proudly mentioned that it was the Indian working class and its first national organisation, All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), which gave the first call 'for complete independence' in the year 1923 and the Communist Party which was the first party of the working class, continued this struggle, in the beginning, as groups and later as party since its formation in 1925, on December 26.

However, since its inception the British government banned the Communist Party and Marxist literature and also lodged several cases to suppress the cadres. The leaders of the party were arrested as they were implicated in various conspiracy cases, like Kanpur Conspiracy Case, Meerut Conspiracy Case, Peshawar Case among others that are some well-known cases which tell the story of repression and bravery of the communist leaders.

It is to the credit of communists that workers, peasants, tribals and

toiling masses got involved in the freedom struggle as it emerged to become entire people's movement, along with the contribution of Mahatma Gandhi, who influenced the sections within the Congress and also those who were without with the common masses in the centre.

Communists took lead in the formation of

Dr B K Kango

threatened the entire humanity. For them it was a broader universal struggle for human emancipation and thought it was their duty to oppose the then fascist challenge. The days of second world war had caused immense suffering for the masses in the

and associates of Shahid-e-Azam Bhagat Singh like Ajoy Ghosh and leader of Ghadar Party like Sohan Singh Josh and many others later joined the communist party.

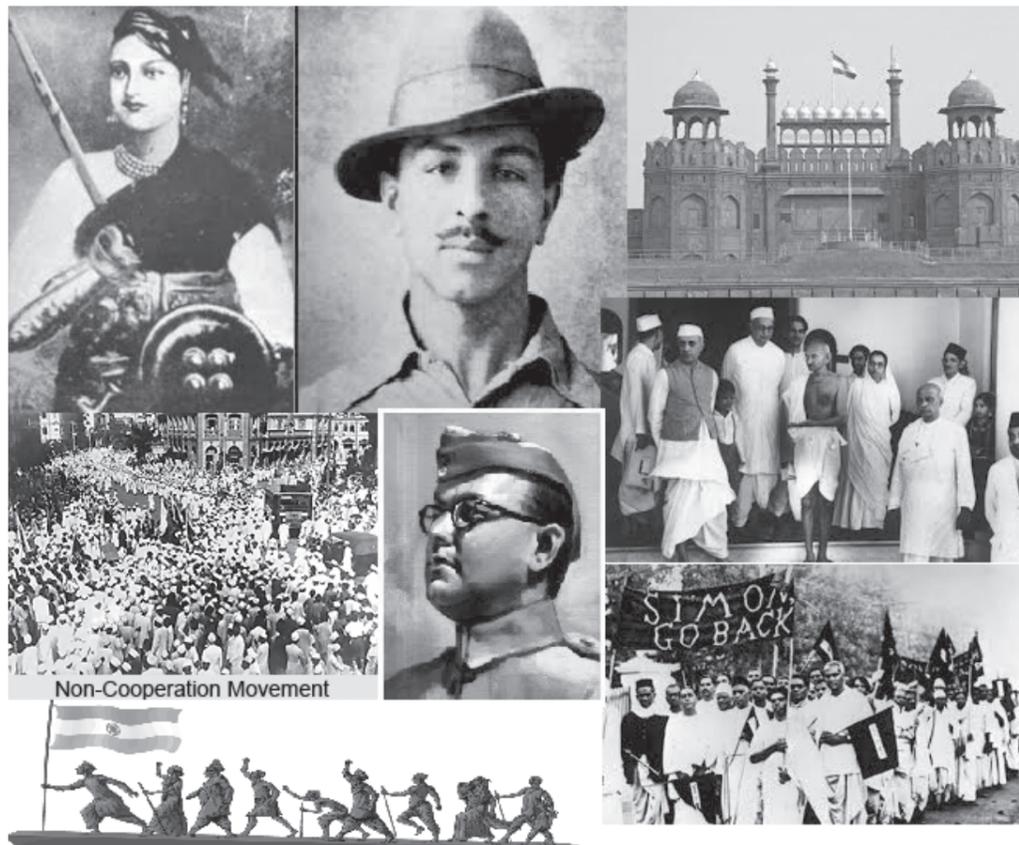
Role of Communists during Naval Mutiny of 1946 is also to be noted with pride. It is necessary to remember that struggle for Indian inde-

state governments to pass land ceiling act and land to the tiller act. This was a fatal blow to feudalism in India.

Today, as we celebrate 75th year of independence, the 'Idea of India' developed during the struggle for independence is under threat. The privileged sections of the society who were threatened by democratic upsurge of people inspired by the world wide movement of workers and peasants especially the Russian revolution in 1917, felt the need for getting organised intensely. Thus was born an organisation like Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh (RSS) to protect their vested interest.

RSS developed a concept of 'Balshali Bharat' which means a strong India but this strength comes from protecting the privileges of upper caste and upper class, particularly big monopoly and international capital at the cost of toiling masses. Hyper nationalism under the garb of cultural nationalism (Hindutva) with emphasis on strong military is the backbone of this concept.

Hence, today when we celebrate with pride the 75th year of Indian independence it is necessary to go back to the idea of India which meant that independence is for empowerment of people and real democracy which will help in world human emancipation and not dominance. Independence is for the people and not people for the nation as propagated by the fascist and right reactionary forces.



All India Students Federation, All India Kisan Sabha, Progressive Writers Association and Indian People's Movement to mobilise students, writers, peasants and artists in freedom movement. All these organisations were formed in 1936, when the clouds of fascism had started darkening the skies.

The enemies of the Left frequently harp upon non-participation of communists in the Quit India movement in 1942 without defining the context which involved their decision to fight against the fascist forces, who

world.

It must be noted that despite the fact that Congress and its supporters were not unaware of fascist danger, they felt that an independent India would play a major part against fascists and hence did not support the policy of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose to treat fascists as friends against the fight with British for independence.

It is also to be noted that most stalwarts of Quit India movement in 1942, like Aruna Asaf Ali, Com. Krantisinh Nana Patil and their colleagues of 'Toofan Sena'

pendence was for democracy and empowerment of people and hence communists played a leading role in the struggle against Indian feudal lords who were ruling in 571 principalities along with British. Communists organised people's struggle for democracy. Particularly communists struggle against Nizam of Hyderabad is to be mentioned as the communists distributed land to peasants and landless in 3000 villages of Telangana. Feudal jagirdars had to flee.

The struggle subsequently compelled the

IPTA Should Inspire and Enthuse People

CPI Telangana state council secretary Chada Venkata Reddy said that IPTA should inspire and enthuse people so that they launch struggles at the grass roots. It should take the failures of the Modi government down below to the people. He was addressing the participants after inaugurating the third state conference of IPTA. The conference took place on August 7, 2022 at Satyanarayana Reddy Bhavan, Hyderabad and was presided over by Padala Nalini, treasurer, state IPTA. Kandimalla Pratap Reddy, national vice-president, IPTA, hoisted the IPTA flag.

Chada Venkata Reddy in his address recalled that it was the IPTA, which has inspired the people to join the Telangana armed struggle. Many young

people joined the *dalams* (armed squads) to fight out Nizam's private army and landlords. IPTA which was formed in 1943 itself had attracted many people into the freedom struggle of our nation. At present the BJP govern-

Ram Narsimha Rao

tor industries like Railways, BSNL, banks, steel factory etc. By bringing in four labour codes, Modi is attacking the rights of the working

many lost their jobs due to closure of industries. The youth is suffering from acute unemployment. In this situation, IPTA should go to people at the grass roots with revolutionary songs and art forms and inspire them to come against the

sovereignty, democracy, secularism and above all our Constitution.

R Sudershan state general secretary, Progressive Writers Association while addressing pointed out that writers and artists both should work together.



CPI Telangana state council secretary Chada Venkata Reddy addressing the state conference

ment headed by Modi is injecting communal venom and polarising people on communal lines in order to perpetuate their regime.

It is also selling away profit-making public sec-

class, with three new agricultural Acts it is creating a lot of troubles to farmers of this country. Modi prior to elections had promised to create two crore jobs per year but as a matter of fact

policies of the Modi government.

Kandimalla Pratap Reddy, while addressing stated that IPTA was formed in those days in order to inspire youth to join freedom struggle. At present, IPTA has to inspire people to defend the freedom, national

The conference was also addressed by Palla Venkata Reddy, CPI state assistant secretary, Kalaveni Shankar, state secretariat member, IPTA leaders Srinivas, Palle Narsimha, Vuppalaiah and Laxminarayana and others.

What the Others Say...

Death by inequality

On August 13, as the nation prepared to commemorate its 75th Independence Day, a nine-year-old Dalit child from Rajasthan's Jalore district succumbed to his injuries, allegedly inflicted by a person who should have given wings to his dreams — his teacher. The FIR in the case should be read as a sobering reality check on the terrible inequalities that continue to afflict and debilitate the nation as it aims to become the "destination," where as Prime Minister Narendra Modi said from the ramparts of Red Fort, "aspirations are met". "Indra was a child. He didn't know that the matki (earthen pot) that he drank from had been kept separately for the savarna jati (upper caste) teacher"... "the teacher abused him with casteist slurs and beat him up, resulting in internal injuries", the FIR says. These words should prick the nation's conscience, and remind policymakers of unmet promises and unfinished tasks, as India begins the "Amrit Kaal" to the centenary of its Independence.

That casteist violence is a grim lived reality — at odds with India's constitutional principles — for a large section of the country's SC and ST communities is borne out by numerous reports and surveys. National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data show that a crime was committed every 10 minutes against a person from an SC community in 2020. Rajasthan along with Bihar, UP and Madhya Pradesh accounts for two-thirds of such crimes though these four states constitute about 40 per cent of the country's population. Cases registered in Rajasthan under the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act went up from around 6,000 in 2018 to more than 8,500 in 2020.

From the lack of enabling measures that force thousands of SC & ST students to drop out of institutions of learning every year to the persecution that can drive a young scholar like Rohith Vemula to take his own life, the discrimination faced by Dalit

youth is endemic and deeply ingrained. Swift action in the case of the atrocity at Jalore will signal the state's resolve to stamp out the oppression that bedevils the aspirations of its young. That should also be an urgent imperative for a nation aspiring to be a knowledge hub.

Courtesy: The Indian Express

Job for Bihar

The new Bihar cabinet started by playing a wearingly old tune: CM Nitish Kumar has promised plenty of jobs, 20 lakh to be precise. Voters don't believe politicians when they promise jobs. They don't seem to punish them for failing to keep those promises either. To take the most notable example, BJP has made plenty of job promises, failed to keep them and has an excellent win record. But maybe, just maybe, Bihar's voters may run out of patience this time. Tejawhi Yadav rallied young voters by vowing 10 lakh government jobs in 2020 and Nitish had faced repeated heckling. Young Biharis are among the most anxious job seekers in the country, as the intensity of the Agnipath agitation showed.

States are of course in no position to offer a huge number of government jobs. And in some states, any job creation has to be over a vicious cycle. Bihar is a prime example. Agriculture employs 76 per cent of its workforce. There are 1.83 crore landless labourers, and the average landholding size of 0.39 hectares means its 1.64 crore farm holdings are unviable. Nitish had abolished APMCs way back in 2006. But that hasn't helped because low urbanisation and poor facilities majorly discourage private trade.

This cycle can be broken if labour-intensive manufacturing sets up shop. Given Bihar's low wages and its abundant supply of women workers, a smart and determined state government can use these advantages and add on SEZs as a further incentive. SEZs that successfully deliver unencumbered labour laws, guaranteed power supply and in-house basic infrastructure can, given low wage costs, change the depressing employment situation in Bihar. But that won't be enough in a state with India's lowest per capita income. Bihar still needs internal migration, lots of it, to employ its young.

Courtesy: The Times of India

75 Years of Independence

Health is Not a Fundamental Right Even Today

Since independence our country has progressed in many fields. The British colonial rulers squeezed our economy and left the nation with poor education and health status. According to Sanjay P Zodpey and Preeti H Negandhi as per the 1951 Census, India's population was 36.1 crores. Only 18.33 per cent of the total population was literate then, of which female literacy was 8.86 per cent. Out of every 11 women, only one was able to read and write.

The overall life expectancy was 32 years. The infant mortality rate (IMR) was 145.6 per 1000 live births. Maternal mortality ratio (MMR) in the 1940s was 2000 per 100,000 live births, which apparently came down to 1000 in the 1950s. There were only 50,000 doctors across the country. The number of primary health-care centres in the country was only 725.

In the pre-independence period Indian society was largely dependent on the traditional medicines, faith healing and belief system. Modern health planning in India started after the Joseph Bhore committee recommended in 1946 that "the health programme should be developed on a foundation of preventive health work" and that "if the nation's health has to be built, such activities should proceed side by side those concerned with treatment of patients".

No individual should be denied to secure adequate medical care because of inability to pay. Medical services should be free to all without any distinction and doctor should be a social physician. The committee also observed that health and development are inter-dependent and improvement in other sectors like water supply, sanitation, nutrition, employment lead to improvement in health status.

In the first few decades of post-independence period the direction of the healthcare was influenced by these principles. During that period much of the health care was developed in state sector with an emphasis that modern scientific healthcare should reach the remotest rural areas.

Sensing the need for cost effective drugs, Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru went forward to establish drugs manufacturing in the public sector. He had said: "The drug industry must be in the public sector... I think an industry of the nature of the drug industry should not be in the private sector anyhow."

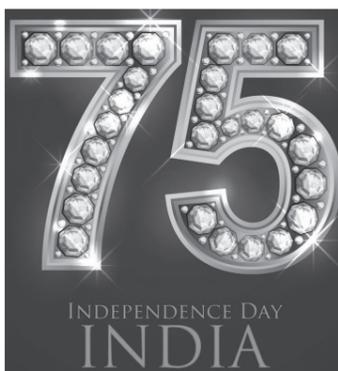
There are far too much exploitation of the public in this industry". Indian Drugs and Pharmaceutical Ltd (IDPL) was established in 1961. IDPL played a major role in the strategic National Health Programmes. Recognising its role, the World Health Organisation commended that "IDPL had achieved in 10 years what others have in 50. IDPL products have been examined for quality very carefully by the developed countries and many of them want to buy from here."

But after the shift in economic policies and neo-liberal model of development, the whole scenario changed. From the holistic perspective there occurred a policy

Dr Arun Mitra

shift towards health, that treats health as 'techno-dependent and amenable to commodification'. The shift was seen in the approach of WHO also. Thus, in our country we find that the public sector is now responsible for the preventive services while the private sector is profiteering from the advanced tertiary care.

The effect on medical education too is evident. At the time of independence, there were 20 colleges out of which only one was in private sector. Presently there



are 612 medical colleges with 92,652 seats. Out of these 313 are government colleges while the rest 299 are run by the trusts or the private sector. Tuition fee in the latter group is exorbitantly high to the extent of over a crore rupees for 4.5 years of MBBS course in some of them. Thus, there is complete denial of admission in these colleges to the students from lower-and-middle income group.

We have seen huge growth of corporate hospitals in health sector. The advanced care has become out of reach of low and even middle-income group. Health is being projected only as a curative thing with little talk to improve health determinants like

improved sanitation, clean drinking water supply, housing, job security and increase in capacity to spend on nutrition.

No wonder the government recognises the fact that every year 6.3 crore people are pushed below poverty line because of out of pocket expenditure on health. But the remedy being offered is rather further pushing the people into debt. The whole healthcare concept is insurance based, which fail to provide comprehensive healthcare. Senior citizens are the worst affected. Even the Ayushman Bharat covers only 50 crore while the rest about 90 crores are left out. It is applicable for indoor care only, whereas 70 per cent of the out of pocket expenditure on health is on OPD care. Moreover, there are several conditions attached to get registered with this scheme. Eligible people also find it very hard to make the card.

Other state-run insurance schemes offer a limited benefit. For a person to get insured with private or public sector company, she/he has to shelve huge amount. The ESI started in 1952, CGHS in 1954 and ECHS in 2003 provide comprehensive healthcare to the employees to an extent. There is a move to dilute the ESI. The government is planning to handover district hospitals to the private sector to open medical colleges. In these hospitals 50 per cent patients will get free treatment while the rest will have to pay. The free patients will have to get authorisation from a designated authority, thus

creating several hurdles for them.

To encourage education among the children from deprived families, the National Program of Nutritional Support to Primary Education (NP-NSPE) was launched as a centrally sponsored scheme on August 15, 1995 in 2,408 blocks in the country for enhancement of enrolment, retention, improvement of attendance and quality of education and improving of nutritional levels among children. To care for the children of working people, Aaganwadi was started in 1975. ASHA worker scheme was started in 2005. They worked as frontline workers during the pandemic. But till date they have neither been regularised nor been given the status of worker.

The concept of universal comprehensive healthcare was first of all realized by the Soviet Union who in the Soviet constitution 1936 guaranteed that the Citizens of the USSR have the right to health protection. The NHS was launched in the UK on 5 July 1948, by the then Health Secretary, Aneurin Bevan. This gave huge benefit of free healthcare to the population. The Cuban government adopted the concept of social medicine into practice. Its effect is well recognised globally. India has 1:1075 doctors of modern medicine.

India spends around Rs.1753/- on the health per capita in the public sector. India is one of the 15 countries with ignominious distinction of public spending of less than or about 1% of the

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New Age Weekly

CPI leader Sandosh Kumar P wanted the government to focus on higher education and research to arrest brain drain from the country. He was participating in the discussion on the Central Universities (Amendment) Bill, 2022 in Rajya Sabha on August 08, 2022.

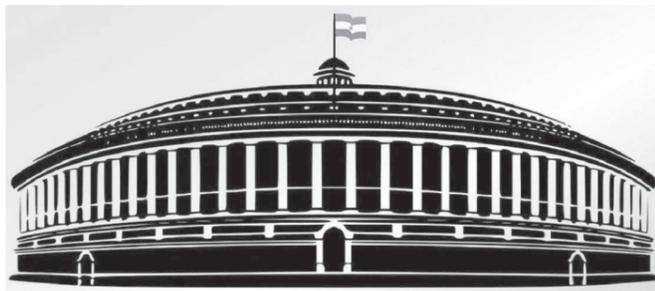
He pointed out that we have 126 deemed universities in this country, according to available statistics. He wanted the government to spell out the criteria in selecting a particular university to enhance its position to that of a Central University.

In Kerala, for example, there is a renowned institution which was established in the year 2007, that is, the Indian Institute of Space Science and Technology. Luminaries like Dr APJ Abdul Kalam were at the helm of affairs of that university. The government it is understood is trying to enhance the status of a university, which was established only in the year 2018 to that of a central university, he observed. So, there must be a criterion.

Unfortunately, by doing so the government is

Focus on Higher Education, Research to Stop Brain Drain: CPI

actually trying to undermine the interests of other states and other important universities. This is very sad and the government has to put an end to it, he said. Secondly, in the Statement of Objects and Reasons of the Bill, there is a mention about



CPI IN PARLIAMENT- RAJYA SABHA

the brain drain. It is important to note that the government has acknowledged the fact that there is brain drain in this country. So, to stop brain drain, it has to enhance higher education and the research works, he underlined. We are spending just 0.7 per cent of the GDP for research purposes whereas the international average is around two per cent.

Thirdly, our universities are facing a lot of problems. Higher educa-

tion is in a kind of mess. Most of the vacancies are unfilled, teachers' posts are lying vacant and reservation is not being followed. The government is interested in fragmentation of the university education. This must be immediately

stopped as this will only undermine the nobility of university education. He urged the government to think seriously about that. The best thing about the Central Universities is that the governments are fortunately having no role in it, he observed. That is the best thing, fortunately.

He wanted the government to open a branch of the proposed multi-purpose university of the Railways in Kerala.

Bidding Fond Farewell

CPI national council secretary Binoy Viswam recalled the personal bonds that were created by Rajya Sabha chairman V Venkaiah Naidu through his friendly and considerate behaviour. Participating in Rajya Sabha on August 08, 2022, in the farewell to the Rajya Sabha, he said that these moments are really such moments where we feel that each word is so valuable. We find it difficult to find apt words to express our hearts.

He recalled that when he was only designated to become a member of Rajya Sabha, he was fortunate enough to meet the chairman in his residence and talk with him for 40 minutes. "You talked about your past, your RSS days, the days in which you walked barefooted through the villages of Southern India — Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Andhra, of course. Then you told

me that ideologies might differ, but the man, greatness of humankind should remain."

That day he told about the glorious past of the communists in the Parliament of India, mentioning the names of communist leaders Bhupesh Gupta, Indrajit Gupta, Jyoti Basu and Hiren Mukherjee. He also acknowledged that the Opposition has a role to play in democracy. He also argued that there is a need for communist unity so that they can play a better role in the democracy setup of our country. Similarly, there are so many such fond memories, Binoy Viswam added. "It is true that we differ on so many issues, but the man in you, I should tell, is a man, which should be mentioned always in capital letters. Once you made an open call to the public that the public should teach a lesson to all the members who make ruckus in the House."

He said he was forced to write an article opposing the viewpoints. In that article, I wrote: "You might have scolded us; you might have differed with us. But you always felt that we are your people and you treat this House as your own house, and we feel that you are the guardian of this House."

He concluded his speech by referring to the Press Gallery, which is empty. During the Covid days, it was okay, but now, there is no Covid. He appealed to the chairman to do whatever he can so that the House is opened for the media. Without the media, without the public debates, without taking the message to the public, there is no meaning for the Parliament.

Delhi Tops List of World's Most Polluted Cities

Delhi and Kolkata are the two most polluted cities in the world in terms of average annual population-weighted PM 2.5 exposure, according to a new report, Air Pollution and Health in Cities, released by the Health Effects Institute's (HEI) State of Global Air Initiative.

Mumbai was ranked 14th. No other Indian city features in the top 20. In terms of the highest disease burden from a PM 2.5-related ailment, though, Beijing, with 124 attributable deaths per 100,000 people was the worst. Delhi came in at 6th, with 106 deaths per 100,000 and Kolkata at 8th with 99. Five Chinese cities were in the top 20.

A total of 7,000 cities were covered by the study, although only 103, the most populous across six regions were considered for the ranking.

In terms of NO₂ exposure, Shanghai was the worst in terms of average exposure, and no Indian city was in the top 20.

A large number of global cities across the world exceeded the World Health Organization's (WHO) norms for both PM 2.5 and NO₂. The report found Delhi's average PM 2.5 exposure to be 110 micrograms per cubic metre in 2019, which is 22 times the WHO benchmark of 5 micrograms per cubic metre. Kolkata had an av-

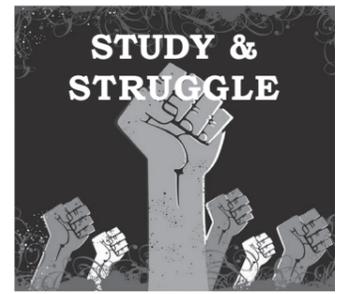
erage exposure of 84 micrograms per cubic metre.

Shanghai had average NO₂ exposure of 41.6 micrograms per cubic metre, followed by Moscow in Russia (40.2 micrograms per cubic metre). The WHO standard for NO₂ exposure is 10 micrograms per cubic metre. The report said in 2019, exposure to pollutants in 86 per cent of the more than 7,000 cities included in the report exceeded WHO's standard, therefore impacting around 2.6 billion people.

In terms of absolute numbers, the study attributed 29,900 deaths in Delhi in 2019 to be due to PM 2.5 exposure; 21,380 in Kolkata; and 16,020 in Mumbai. In comparison, Beijing saw 26,270 deaths in 2019 on account of PM 2.5 exposure.

The report, which used data from 2010 to 2019, also found that global patterns for exposures to the two key air pollutants, NO₂ and PM 2.5 were strikingly different. While exposures to fine particulate matter was found to be higher in cities located in low and middle-income countries, exposure to nitrogen dioxide, or NO₂ was high across cities in high-income as well as middle-income countries. NO₂ is primarily released in the form of emissions from vehicles and through power plants.

Indian Students Fly in Search of 'Healthier' Study Destinations



C. Adhikesavan

In what seems to be a post-pandemic brain drain, Indian students are not only opting to go abroad for better academic opportunities, but also better healthcare management and living conditions.

Students are taking loans to pursue a diploma in Canada as opposed to a degree in India. The depreciating value of the rupee, major changes in the education system and widespread chaos during Covid-19 has made them look at options abroad. Even though my family could not afford to pay the fee, they thought it's better to take a loan and study where jobs and lifestyle are better than India.

The teenagers are not a standalone example. Experts believe the rise in the number of such students is not just because of the pending demand due to travel restrictions during Covid-19, but owing to the better healthcare systems abroad.

In 2019, as many as 5,86,337 students flew abroad, while in 2020 due to the pandemic, only 2,59,655 Indian students could go abroad. In 2021, with relaxed travel guidelines, the number doubled to 4,44,553,

whereas, in the first half of 2022, as many as 2,45,601 have already taken admissions abroad. The admissions for the September session are yet to begin and the number of admissions is already at par with 2020, according to data offered by the Ministry of External affairs.

backgrounds and those from tier-2 and tier-3 cities, say experts.

Better quality of education, robust pedagogy, upward economic mobility of households, better healthcare and living conditions are the major factors contributing to the rise in the number of

People are increasingly looking for meaningful college experiences. Clearly, the relatively better student experience and lower disruptions to learning have also contributed to it. The demand for excellent tertiary education in India is growing faster than the supply of new

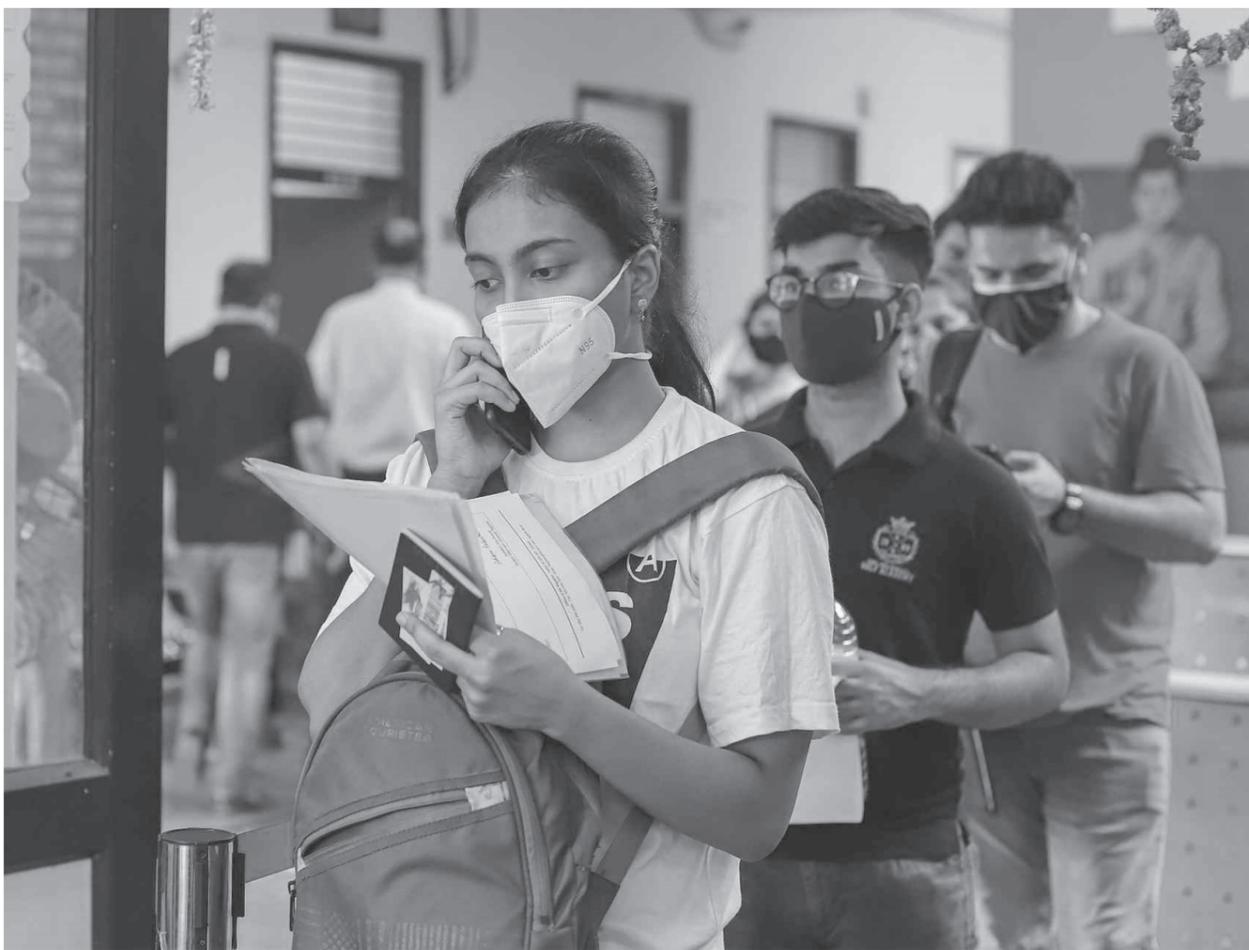
and returned to India bringing the best principles, thoughts and practices from around the world with them," he said.

According to a study by Prodigy Finance, a U K - based FinTech company, there has been a 98 per cent growth in study-abroad loan applications in the first three months of 2022 for Indian students alone.

As per Indian edtechs, most of the loans are from metro cities. Leverage Edu - a study abroad guidance and finance providing platform claims to have seen over 500 per cent rise in education loan

applications in the first half of 2022. Most of these applications are from metro cities.

A large majority of students from tier-2 and tier-3 towns prefer not to take education loans. They either opt for other traditional financing options or use savings for the first few semesters and then look for a part-time job there. Students and parents from large towns that still make up a majority of education loan disbursals."



Apart from the usual destinations namely USA, UK, Canada and Australia, newer locations, including Germany, the Phillippines, Russia, and Singapore, are emerging as preferred study hubs for Indian students, as per the government data.

These emerging destinations are comparatively cheaper and cater to the emerging young Indians aspiring to study abroad, especially from middle-class

students intending to study abroad.

Better quality of life has always been a critical factor for students studying abroad. However, the pandemic amplified its importance. Students are now also looking at how countries dealt with the pandemic when choosing their study abroad destination. There is an increasing number of international schools mushrooming in tier-1 and tier-2 Indian cities.

great universities being built.

It is also being noticed a trend where scholars are coming back to India after working abroad for a couple of years. There is a trend of such graduates wanting to translate some of their cross-cultural learnings and experiences to India by joining the start-up workspace. Our founding fathers, including Jawaharlal Nehru, Mahatma Gandhi or B R Ambedkar, all studied in top universities abroad

K Murugesan: Builder

K Murugesan, also known as 'Nagai' K Murugesan, was born on January 10, 1909 at Nagai, Nagapattinam, Tanjore district in Tamilnadu, the then Madras Presidency. His father Kuppuswamy hailed from a middle agriculturist family.

Murugesan received his primary and high school education in Nagapattinam itself. He did his SSLC in April 1927. His father had nationalist leanings, and told stories about freedom movement. Murugesan developed a disliking for British rulers. Once Gandhiji visited Nagapattinam and described atrocities in Punjab. This was conveyed by father to son.

On May Day, 1927, Railway Workers' Union, Nagapattinam, held a big meeting, witnessed by Murugesan. Some spoke about Marx, Engels and Lenin, and of the consciousness of working class in their speeches. Murugesan got interested in the working class.

Impact of Sacco-Vanzetti Case, 1927

Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti were Italian migrant worker-leaders in USA, who were falsely accused of murdering a guard and a paymaster in April 1920 in a shoe factory in Massachusetts. The case was deliberately dragged on for seven years. They were ultimately sentenced to death, and were electrocuted in electric chair in Charlestown State Prison in 1927. On the 50th anniversary of their execution, the then governor of Massachusetts Michael Dukakis issued a proclamation

that they had been unfairly tried and "any disgrace should be forever removed from their names."

The case made a deep psychological impact upon Murugesan. There was widespread anger all India and world among the intelligentsia and the workers.

Active participation in politics

During those days, South Indian Railway (SIR) workshop was situated in Nagapattinam, and was a centre of railways workers' movement. Murugesan got actively involved in it. Later, the SIR Company built a workshop at the Golden Rock, Trichy. There was a wave of anger among the workers, as thousands of them were threatened with retrenchment. Therefore, SIR Workers' Union served strike notice, which led to massive and historic solidarity strikes throughout Madras Presidency.

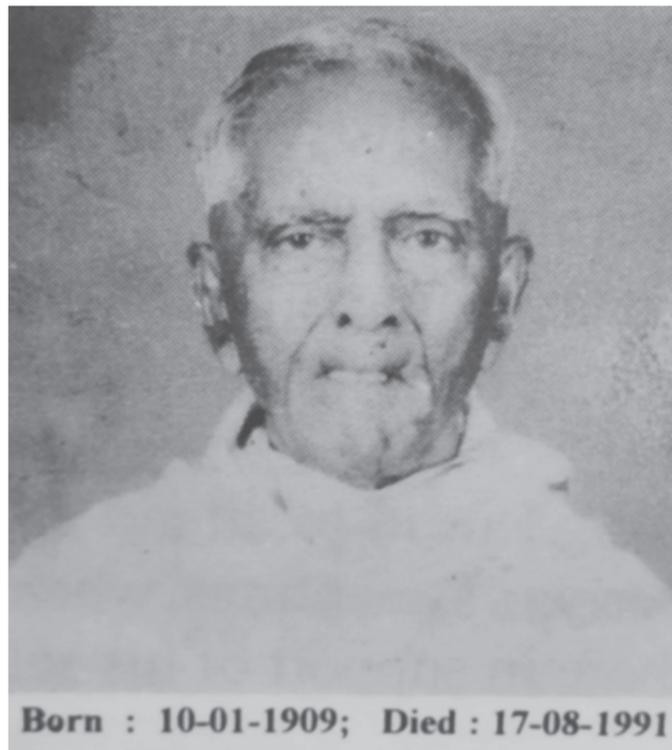
Murugesan watched the events closely.

Murugesan used to attend almost all the public meetings during those days, including those of 'EVR' Periyar. Murugesan soon joined his 'self-respect movement'.

Murugesan did not pursue studies further after passing the SSLC. He became a full-time worker for the people's cause, and joined the Self-Respect Movement (SRM).

On being conveyed of

his decision by Murugesan, his father suggested that first he should cross the age of 18 and only then decide. Murugesan also convinced his mother. He repeated Periyar's arguments to his mother saying animals were free to walk in any street but not the people from depressed classes! Why? His father himself was a



Congressman and all his family used to wear khadi only. So Murugesan was greatly helped by the attitude of his family.

Justice Party of Madras Presidency was formed in 1916, a party leading the non-Brahmin movement. In 1925 the provincial Congress conference was held in Kanchipuram. M Singaravelu hoisted the national flag. Periyar moved a resolution calling for caste representation and reservation. Differences cropped up and became sharp. Periyar and sup-

porters walked out.

K Murugesan initially supported Periyar but subsequently demarcated on several questions.

Impact of Russian Revolution

Anniversary of Russian Revolution was observed on November 7, 1927, and a big meeting was held in Nagapattinam. Russian Revolution played a big part in converting Murugesan to revolutionary politics, in

Periyar and his SRM supported the Simon Commission. Therefore, there was no question of Murugesan cooperating with them. Periyar also opposed the civil disobedience (CD) movement led by Gandhiji in early 1930s. Consequently, Murugesan distanced himself from Periyar's SRM.

Murugesan, T N Ramachandran, Swaminathan and others soon joined the CD movement. A big CD movement took place led by Govind Swami, secretary of Nagapattinam Congress Committee. He was arrested and sent to Trichy Central Jail, where he met Batukeshwar Dutt and Bhai Mahavir Singh of HSRA (Hindustan Socialist Republican Association). They, in jail, used to run political classes on Marxism and socialism for Congress prisoners. Govind Swami took notes of the lectures and smuggled them out. Murugesan and his colleagues copied them and published them in the newspaper 'Kudi Arasu'. Later they were published as a collection under the title 'Principles of Communism'.

K Murugesan opined about Gandhi-Irwin Pact of 1931 that Gandhiji knew what was correct. Gandhiji tried his best to save Bhagat Singh, and it was wrong to suggest he betrayed Bhagat Singh. This was a foolish statement, said Murugesan.

Leading figures of the SRM, such as Swaminathan, GN Ramachandran and Murugesan came out openly in favour of national movement led by Congress, and were also

addition to the May Day and Periyar meetings. He also was influenced by the underground revolutionary youth movement based upon armed struggle.

Murugesan also took active part in students' strikes, and arrested and given a good lashing, but was released soon.

Self-Respect Movement (SRM)

Simon Commission arrived in India in 1927 and by 1928 it was touring all over the country. In Madras, big movements were organized against the Commission. Unfortunately, EVR

of CPI in South

attracted towards communism. It was Swaminathan who translated The Internationale song into Tamil.

The younger leaders in the SRM took a more forthright stand, and established a 'Self-Respect Samadharma Party', with P Jeevanandam as secretary. EVR Periyar's hatred towards Congress led him to the position of "British rule is better than Congress rule". The new organization veered round towards socialism. Some leading figures in the SRM like R Kissen and Murugesan, along with others, organised a separate 'self-respect conference' in Thiruthurai pundi (Tanjore) in February 1936. They decided to form an independent Socialist Party of Self-Respectors.

In the meantime the organizers met Ghate, ASK, Sundarayya and others. The first Self-Respect Socialist Conference was held in Tiruchirapalli on November 1, 1936. It was inaugurated by S.A. Dange and presided over by Dr M Krishnaswamy. At the conference, the Self-Respect Socialists decided to join Congress Socialist Party (CSP).

In 1934, Murugesan with some others came to Madras to start a newspaper. He sought the help of Singaravelu, stayed with him and used his big library. He learned much from Singaravelu about communism.

Ramachandran had given him 2000 rupees when coming to Madras. With this money Murugesan started a Marxist monthly called

'Pudu Ulagam' (new world). Murugesan was its editor and Ramachandran honorary editor. Its first issue was published on May 1, 1935.

'Ten days that shook South India'

Murugesan actively took part in the famous railway strike of 'Ten days that shook South India'. A railway workers' union had been formed in Nagapattinam as early as 1918. VP Pillai, Dr P Varadarajulu Naidu, Thiru Vi Ka, among others, addressed

Indian Railways. Signalmen and running staff carried the message everywhere. A mammoth procession was taken out in Trichinopoly on June 30, 1928. A strike notice was delivered and the strike began on July 19, 1930.

This historic strike lasted ten days. The government recorded it as the most important event of that year. Railway workers of all categories joined and held up passenger and mail trains, disconnected couplings, blocked level crossings, lay down on the tracks to

Biographies of Communist Leaders - 71

— Anil Rajimwale —

them. Even Mahatma Gandhi addressed them in March 1919. Nagapattinam became a nerve centre of railway workers' struggles in the subsequent years. Railway workers of Nagapattinam and other centres repeatedly went on strike during 1927-28.

By April 1928, the railway management announced retrenched of 5000 workers. The management tried various methods to weed out workers, including trade test and higher gratuity to some. But the workers refused to take the bait. A Central Strike Committee was formed under the chairmanship of D Krishnasami Pillai. It included Singaravelu and Mukund Lal Sircar.

The management locked out Nagapattinam, Pothanur and Golden Rock workshops. The news spread throughout the South

stop trains run by the administration, etc. Police resorted to lathi charge, bayonet charges, and firings on peaceful demonstrators.

The management suspended all the trains on July 21st. By July 27th, the entire executive of the Railway Labor Union and the strike committee were arrested, as also hundreds of workers. Union offices were ransacked. The Union journal ('Thozhilali' or worker) office was also raided. Thousands of workers came out in procession in Madras. The British government was able to break up the strike, but not the spirit of the workers.

It became famous in history as 'Ten days that shook South India'. South Indian Railway Conspiracy Case was instituted against the leading figures of the

strike. Installation of Congress ministry in Madras in 1937-39 enabled the release of the prisoners.

From 1935 onwards, a new leadership of workers emerged, which included K Murugesan, Jeevanandam, ASK and others.

Unsung hero

K. Murugesan decided to take full plunge into political work. He moved to Madras where he met Singaravelu, and stayed in his sprawling bungalow. Singaravelu introduced him to trade union work among the press workers, tram workers, toddy tappers' union, street hawkers' union etc. Murugesan was a key office bearer of several trade unions including being secretary of many of them, along with A.S.K. Iyengar, P. Jeevanandam, P. Ramamoorthy, etc.

K. Murugesan was imprisoned for a total of 16 years of jail sentence on 20 occasions. S.V. Ghate stayed in Tamil Nadu from 1936 to 1940, and groomed K. Murugesan and others in trade union work. K. Murugesan did not marry, just like A.S.K.

K. Murugesan was an unsung hero, who dedicated his life to Communist and trade union movement. He was the member of first CPI branch started in Madras in 1936, consisting of P. Ramamoorthy, A.S.K. Iyengar, P. Jeevanandam, B. Srinivasa Rao. C.S. Subramaniam was the first secretary. K. Murugesan was instrumental in sending 250 books of Singaravelu to Moscow, where they are preserved in Moscow Lenin Library.

Murugesan did not support the idea of armed struggle.

CPI at that time was a very methodical

organisation; no other party had such a strong organisation. Even among the Army the party had 500 units.

During the Second World War, Murugesan was jailed, to be released in 1942. Murugesan and others protested the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi and, as a result, were arrested. In 1942, he was arrested again and confined to Allipuram Camp Jail, and later was sent to Vellore Central Jail and Tanjore jail. He was released only after there was big workers' agitation.

In the jail, Murugesan many Congressmen and others to join the Communist Party.

Murugesan along with others joined the celebrations of independence on August 15, 1947.

Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated on January 30, 1948. This created widespread anger and attacks on RSS members. RSS was later banned. RSS cadres and leaders in Mylapore, Triplicane and other places distributed sweets 'celebrating' the murder of Mahatma Gandhi. This angered the people, who attacked the RSS swayamsevaks. The Red volunteers came out to oppose the latter's provocations. Communists also foiled attempt to generate frenzy by trying to attack the Muslims. Murugesan was of the opinion that Gandhiji was not given sufficient protection which led to his being attacked and murdered.

K Murugesan played an active part in party activities in Tamilnadu and party centre in New Delhi, where he worked in various capacities, including with Dr Adhikari. After split in 1964, he remained with CPI. He passed away in 1991.

Tiruppur Reverberates ...

From Front Page

divisive agenda of the RSS-BJP combine, Raja rightly said that the communal ideology and politics is the terminal illness that is spreading the deadly tentacles in the entire spectrum of government and society, maligning and tearing the secular fabric that was meticulously woven and thwarting the stellar idea of India with the transition towards violent, exclusionary nationalism of spiteful idea. "The 2024 elections are crucial for India", he echoed as the truest and the most factual political statement. Emphasising the need for the unity of the left in India, Raja said that the Left together should rally the other secular democratic forces.

"Indian economy is in shambles", he said while lambasting the economic policies of the BJP that herald privatisation and outright sale of public sector. Dwelling on the Nehruvian model of mixed economy that saw the infant independent India tread on a path of progress, Raja said that the present capitalist model dominated by the global finance capital is wilfully embraced by the BJP for the commitment towards neo-liberal ideas go along with the propagation of Hindutva values. To confront and defeat BJP that has assumed the near dimension of a fascist party, Raja said CPI has to grow stronger, mobilise and strengthen struggles for social emancipation.

From the party centre, members of the national secretariat, Amarjeet Kaur, Narayana and Binoy Viswam MP and Annie Raja, member of the national executive participated in the conference. Amarjeet Kaur and Narayana, along with the general secretary Raja stayed throughout the

conference providing guidance at every stage. Their physical presence during the entire period enhanced the morale and conduct of the conference.

On August 6, the day when the conference began, Tamil Nadu government made an announcement conferring the honourable award of 'Thagaisal Thamizhar' (Venerable Tamilian) upon the veteran leader of our party R Nallakannu. R Nallakannu is 97. He is the most respected communist leader and a freedom fighter. It is a pride and honour to the CPI. Chief minister M K Stalin will present the award to R Nallakannu on August 15 at the Independence day celebrations. The conference was imbued with a sense of joy and pride. Nallakannu was a delegate attending the conference radiating that sense of delight in all.

The seminar on 'Communal Harmony and Federalism', witnessed the best of unity of the Secular Progressive Alliance (SPA) under the leadership of DMK. As the proverb goes, "a lot of different flowers make a bouquet", the SPA sustains successfully with diversity, equity and inclusive political culture. It was

heartening that leaders from all the political parties in the alliance, Congress, CPI (M), VCK, MDMK, IUML, CPI (ML), MMK were present. TNCC President K S Azhagiri, VCK leader Thol Tirumavalavan MP, K Balakrishnan of CPI(M), K Veeramani of DK and other leaders addressed the seminar. In a very rare and synchronising unison, all in one voice said the Hindutva ideology of BJP can only be fought by the communist ideology. The ideological struggle against communalism is a long haul that has to be under-



Red volunteers--girls

taken unitedly. The common element of the seminar ran through consistently holding the BJP=RSS combine the most malignant combination that is destructive and ought to be defeated.

Chief minister M K

Stalin addressed the seminar via video conferencing. Since he had recovered from Corona infection recently, the doctors had advised him to refrain from outstation travel for some more time. Stalin hailed the contributions of R Nallakannu and stated that in honouring him with the Tamil Nadu state award, he as the chief minister felt honoured. With a deep sense of concern, the Chief Minister spoke of the growing religious and communal animosity. Delving deep on the deliberate assault of the BJP on the federal structure of the country, the chief minister urged on the need to fight against this besiege of fiscal federalism and state autonomy.

Speaking on the Dravidian model of development that his government has embarked upon, the chief minister said that this model would be the guiding light for all states in India as this model works on socio economic development and infrastructure development as two sides of the same coin that would add value to the system. It is sure to establish an inclusive growth and result in the uplift of the so far deprived sec-



Red volunteers--boys



Tamil Nadu state secretary R Mutharasan addressing the conference

tions. Sending his greetings to all for the 75th Independence Day, the chief minister exhorted for securing equality, unity and fraternity and dedicate to protect secularism.

It was yet another day when our hearts swelled with pride. The chief minister made an announcement that a memorial would be constructed at the Siravayal in Tiruppathur Taluk of Sivaganga district where Mahatma Gandhi met the communist leader P Jeevanandam. A few days back the state secretary R Mutharasan had met the chief minister personally and requested to raise a memorial to commemorate the historical meeting of Gandhi with the reformist and the young communist leader P Jeevanandam.

Vaiko, leader of MDMK addressed the conference in its delegates session on August 8.

In the fondest memory of the day when the Quit India movement was launched, which witnessed the fervour of the common masses for freedom, the national flag was hoisted by general secretary D Raja on August 9. The 'do or die' slogan that Gandhi gave out for the 'Quit India movement' proved to be the final push that made the British quit. This slogan makes the most relevant reverberation in today's India when we take a pledge to free India from the ominous clutches of the communal BJP and preserve democracy that is in peril and the secular ethos that is in the deepest pit fall.

On Page 12

Foodgrain Crisis to Aggravate in India in Coming Months

Foodgrain crisis is set to further aggravate in India. Earlier, the heatwave conditions impacted the wheat crop leading to less production and procurement enforcing wheat export ban on May 13, and now deficit rainfall has caused a decline of rice cultivation by about 13 per cent so far.

The shrinkage in rice cultivation area to the smallest in about three year is ominous at a time when the country is grappling with soaring food prices and inflation. The deficit in rainfall is being suffered by a large part of the country including the West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh, which account for a quarter of India's rice production.

Any decline in rice production would further complicate the matter of availability of foodgrain in the country at affordable price both in India and the world, since India is presently the biggest exporter of rice accounting for about 40 per cent of the global rice trade. The world has also been undergoing a severe food crisis with rising prices and inflation, and therefore any shortage of wheat and rice in India will also impact the global foodgrain supply chain.

It should be noted that the government's wheat procurement till May 14, just after the wheat export ban on May 13, reached on 18 million tonne, which was less than 36.7 million tonne compared to the corresponding period of the previous year. Wheat procurement target was

then revised to 19.5 million tonne from earlier target of 44.4 million tonne for the year 2022-23. Wheat procurement was down by 53 per cent to 182 lakh tonnes by May 24. Total wheat production was officially projected in May to be 106.41 million tonne registering a 4.41 per cent decline. It triggered the price of wheat to a record high in India despite the

Gyan Pathak

already lowered the allocation of wheat, replacing it with additional rice volume, under its various domestic food security programmes from May 2022 onwards. It has increased the domestic rice consumption. For the Indian market year 2021-2022, rice con-



export ban, which was selling at Rs 23,547 per tonne in the local domestic market by July end. It was up by about 12 per cent from recent low in May, just before the export ban.

However, the Foreign Agriculture Service (FAS) of the government of the US has lowered its estimates for the Indian market year 2022-23 (April-March) wheat production forecast to 99 million metric tonnes (MMT) compared to the pre-harvest forecast of 110 MMT. Subsequently, the wheat exports forecast is lowered to six MMT and ending stocks to 8.5 MMT due to tightening of supplies. Government of India has

sumption estimate is raised by FAS to 109.5 MMT and ending stocks lowered to 36 MMT.

The FAS estimate about production of wheat is much less at 99 MMT as against the estimates of the government of India at 106.41 MMT. Even the global trading firms are of the view that the actual wheat production might have been around 95 MMT, even less than the FAS estimate. No one believes in the government of India estimate. India was the world's second-largest wheat producer in 2021, with a production of 109.59 MMT.

All these mean the decline in rice cultivation would reduce its pro-

duction at a time when consumption of rice in India has been on the rise. Additionally, the lack of availability of wheat at affordable price has further increased rice consumption in the country. The concern is also reflected in jump in the price of rice in the country. The prices of some varieties have increased by more than 10 per cent in the past two weeks in

shortfall, because sowing rarely happens in India after mid-July. However, there is still hope because of the normal rain forecast for the month of August and September.

Food prices in India have been increasing fast and inflation has already crossed the Reserve Bank of India's (RBI's) tolerance limit of six per cent. CPI inflation in April was 7.79 per cent followed by 7.04 per cent in May, and 7.03 per cent in June. As for food inflation, it was 7.92 per cent in May, and 6.73 per cent in June.

Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has said in Rajya Sabha on August 3 that the government and RBI are trying to keep inflation under the RBI's tolerance limit of six per cent. We have a 2-6 per cent inflation band but we are at 7 per cent with some efforts, she said, indicating the efforts are failing to keep the inflation in tolerable limit, and the steps are not "enough" even if she said so in the Rajya Sabha responding to a debate on price rise.

In this backdrop, India urgently needs to ensure food security for the people reeling under loss of jobs and earnings, rampant unemployment, unaffordable price rise and intolerable inflation. Food security must be ensured at household levels and the logic of self-sufficiency of the country at national level would do no good to the common people from the middle class and the poor. Millions of people, especially women and children, are already suffering from malnutrition and related problems.

Health is Not a Fundamental....

From Page 05

GDP on health; other similarly placed countries spend twice the amount while developed ones spend 10 times more – says K Sujatha Rao in her book 'Do We Care'. Cuba spends up to 15%. It is no surprise therefore, that the secretary general of the United Nations, Ban Ki-moon, during a visit to Cuba hailed its healthcare service as, "a model for many countries".

Our major health indicators are still not up to the mark. Our MMR is 103 (2019) for every 100,000 live births and IMR at 30 per 1000 live births. We ranked dismally low in the current Hunger Index, at 101 out of 116 countries.

Quality healthcare is a dream for an average Indian. The inability to pay is pushing our population to buy loans for health or sell the assets. To make the things further worse obscurantist ideas like astrology, Gau Mutra and Tantriks are being highlighted under the present regime.

There is need for reversal of these policies to make healthcare a social responsibility with state taking effective intervention at all levels to ensure healthcare for all. It is the duty of the public health and social activists to educate people on the issues of their rights to health in proper perspective. Health should be declared as a fundamental right. "The focus on our health policies should be grounded in the ideology of human welfare and to achieve the three basic goals of health systems – equity, efficiency and quality" – K Sujatha Rao.

In September 2019, a High-Level Group on the health sector constituted under the 15th Finance Commission had recommended that the right to health be declared a fundamental right. This if implemented, will strengthen people's access to healthcare.

On the 75th year of independence let the country take effective measures for health. Promise to take positive steps so that governments promote, finance and provide comprehensive Primary Health Care. Enhance public spending on health from 1% to 5% of GDP immediately. Put an end to privatisation of public health services and ensure effective regulation of the private medical sector.

Assure safe drinking water supply through piped water; sanitation in all households and localities, and enforce complete safeguards against air, water and soil pollution by industries, mines and other developmental projects. Eliminate Malnutrition by implementing National Food Security Act 2013. Promote people's spending power by ensuring sufficient wages so as to meet their nutritional needs. There is need to implement a Rational Drug Policy. Ensure improved availability, accessibility and affordability of drugs including vaccines and sera in the public health system and promote manufacture of drugs in Public Sector Units to make cheap bulk drugs. Medical education should be in the state sector only.

New Age Weekly



A view of the massive public rally

Tiruppur Reverberates ...

From Page 10

Amarjeet Kaur in her brief address in the delegate session dwelt with a serious concern of building the party organisation in an uncompromising communist principle. She in her emphatic tone quoted Lenin, "Marxism is the doctrine of class struggles" and went on to delineate that Marxism emphasises the centrality of class struggles as the principal determinant of social change. Communist party is the vanguard of the proletariat, its leading contingent in every phase of its revolutionary class struggles and during the subsequent period of its transition to socialism.

Making a serious reference to the onslaught of BJP on the lives and livelihood of people she emphasised the importance to uphold the moral authority of the party, its members and its leaders at all levels based on personal examples, starting from the proven ethical, political and ideological qualities and constant touch with the masses. She went on to give a glance of the serious challenges that confront the communist movement worldwide with the rapidly increasing shift towards the political right. Contrasting this with the growing consolidation of the political left in the Latin American countries and the

decisive development in France, the reasonably optimistic Amarjeet Kaur sounded the delegates with hope and confidence to proceed to build a party organisation with uncompromising communist values.

Binoy Viswam and Annie Raja also addressed the delegate session.

The huge gathering of



around one lakh people in the public meeting on August 9, overwhelmed the hearts of all those committed communists with impeccable pride and passion for belonging and being in this party that alone can transform the world. While a sense of commitment and responsibility gripped the heart, the deep resolve strengthened more than ever before to work with the party ideals and move forward militantly towards the objective.

National executive member K Subbarayan MP presided over the public meeting. D Raja, Amarjeet Kaur, K Narayana, M Veera Pandian, T M

Murthi addressed the massive crowd.

The conference elected a state council of 101 members in an election held as per the party constitution. The state council elected R Mutharasan as the state secretary unanimously. He is elected for the third consecutive term. A seven-member state Control Commission was also elected. The Commission met to elect K Subbarayan as its chairman. One hundred delegates for the forthcoming 24th Party Congress in Vijayawada have been elected. The conference adopted more than 50 resolutions.

The conference gave out a clarion call to organise 30th August as a protest day against the skyrocketing price rise. Protest demonstrations will be held in front of Central government offices in all the districts.

The historic 25th conference came to an end with renewed vigour and vibrant zeal. The echo and refrain of the conference: "Priority to build and strengthen the organisation and consistently carry forward the struggles; Defeat the BJP to save Indian democracy and its socialist and secular ethos; March towards the historic objective of socialism".

Global Unemployed Youth on the Rise

*Diary of
International
Events*

C. Adhikesavan

The rise of global unemployed youth is adding large number of young workers into frustration and putting them into greater hardships. Recovery in youth employment is still lagging, according to a new report by the International Labour Organization (ILO), which confirms that the COVID-19 pandemic has hurt young people more than any other age group.

The report finds that the pandemic has exacerbated the numerous labour market challenges facing those aged between 15 and 24 years, who have experienced a much higher percentage loss in employment than adults since early 2020. The total global number of unemployed youths is estimated to reach 73 million in 2022, a slight improvement from 2021 (75 million) but still six million above the pre-pandemic level of 2019, the report says.

The share of youth not in employment, education or training (NEET) in 2020 – the latest year for which a global estimate is available – rose to 23.3 per cent, an increase of 1.5 percentage points from the previous year and a level not seen in at least 15 years. This group of young people are at particular risk of seeing their labour market opportunities and outcomes deteriorate also over the longer-term as “scarring” effects take hold.

Young women are worse off than young men, exhibiting a much lower employment-to-population ratio (EPR). In 2022, 27.4 per cent of young women globally are projected to be in employment, compared to 40.3 per cent of young

men. This means that young men are almost 1.5 times more likely than young women to be employed. The gender gap, which has shown little sign of closing over the past two decades, is largest in lower-middle-income countries, at 17.3 percentage points, and smallest in high-income countries, at 2.3 percentage points.

The global youth unemployment rate is



projected to be 14.9 per cent in 2022. The report highlighted the differences in youth unemployment between the regions.

In Europe and central Asia, the rate is predicted to be 16.4 per cent, “but the actual and potential shocks of the war in Ukraine are highly likely to affect the results”.

The rate in Asia and the Pacific is set to match the global average at 14.9 per cent; In Latin America, it should hit a “worrying” 20.5 per cent; while in North America the figure should be 8.3 per cent.

The 12.7 per cent rate in Africa “masks the fact that many youths have chosen to withdraw from the labour market altogether”.

But the Arab states have the highest and fastest-growing unemployment rate of young people world-

wide at 24.8 per cent – a figure that hits 42.5 per cent for young women in the region.

On the positive side, the report said young people were well-placed to benefit from the expansion of the so-called green and blue economies, centred around the environment and sustainable ocean resources.

The study said an additional 8.4 million jobs could be created for young people by 2030

through green and blue investments, notably in clean and renewable energies, sustainable agriculture, recycling and waste management.

The report estimates that achieving universal broadband coverage by 2030 could lead to a net increase in employment of 24 million new jobs worldwide, of which 6.4 million would be taken by young people.

The report also estimates that investments in care sectors would create 17.9 million more jobs for young people by 2030.

Visualizing major layoffs at U.S. corporations

Hiring freezes and layoffs are becoming more common in 2022, as United States of America businesses look to slash costs ahead of a possible recession.

Understandably, this has a lot of people worried. In June 2022, Insight Global found that 78 per

cent of American workers fear they will lose their job in the next recession. Additionally, 56 per cent said they aren't financially prepared, and 54 per cent said they would take a pay cut to avoid being laid off.

Ford has announced the biggest round of layoffs this year, totalling roughly 8,000 salaried employees. Many of these jobs are in Ford's legacy combustion engine business. According to CEO Jim Farley, these cuts are necessary to fund the company's transition to EVs.

Hiring freezes and layoffs are becoming more common in 2022, as U.S. businesses look to slash costs ahead of a possible recession.

Here's a brief run-down of these layoffs, sorted by industry.

Speaking of EVs, Rivian laid off 840 employees in July, amounting to 6 per cent of its total workforce. The EV startup pointed to inflation, rising interest rates, and increasing commodity prices as factors. The firm's more established competitor, Tesla, cut 200 jobs from its autopilot division in the month prior.

Last but not least is online used car retailer, Carvana, which cut 2,500 jobs in May. The company experienced rapid growth during the pandemic, but has since fallen out of grace. Year-to-date, the company's shares are down more than 80 per cent.

Fearing an impending recession, Coinbase has shed 1,100 employees, or 18 per cent of its total workforce. Interestingly, Coinbase does not have

a physical headquarters, meaning the entire company operates remotely.

Around the same time, JPMorgan Chase & Co. announced it would fire hundreds of home-lending employees. While an exact number isn't available, we've estimated this to be around 500 jobs, based on the original Bloomberg article. Wells Fargo, another major U.S. bank, has also cut 197 jobs from its home mortgage division.

The primary reason for these cuts is rising mortgage rates, which are negatively impacting the demand for homes.

Within tech, Meta and Twitter are two of the most high-profile companies to begin making layoffs. In Meta's case, 350 custodial staff have been let go due to reduced usage of the company's offices.

Many more cuts are expected, however, as Facebook recently reported its first revenue decline in 10 years. CEO Mark Zuckerberg has made it clear he expects the company to do more with fewer resources, and managers have been encouraged to report “low performers” for “failing the company”.

Also in July, Twitter laid off 30 per cent of its talent acquisition team. In fact, just a few days ago, trading platform Robinhood announced it was letting go 23 per cent of its staff. After accounting for its previous layoffs in April (9 per cent of the workforce), it's fair to estimate that this latest round will impact nearly 800 people.

CPI Marks Day...

From Last Page

Delhi

In the national capital, Delhi state council and all its district councils marked the day with full enthusiasm. All the offices were decorated and party leaders hoisted the tricolour. In the Asaf Ali Road party office, Jung Bahadur hoisted the flag in the presence of Babban Kumar Singh and Sanjeev Kumar Rana.

In party state council office in Jama Masjid Urdu Bazar, Ram Prasad Atri hoisted the tricolor in the presence of party state council members Ajay Malik, Babban Kumar Singh, Ikram, Sanjeev Kumar Rana, Raj Kumar and others. In East Delhi district party office, Com Bhupesh Gupta Bhawan,

Bramanand Sharma hoisted the tricolor. Party district leaders Kahar Singh, Shashi Kumar, Papriya De and others were present. Later Kahar Singh addressed the gathering.

In West Delhi district party office. Surjit Gandhi unfurled the tricolor. Party district secretary Shankarlal, Rajesh Kashyap and Mukesh Kashyap along with others took part in the celebrations. The day was also marked by North Delhi district party by hoisting the tricolour at Sabzi Mandi Ghanta Ghar office.

Andhra Pradesh

The Andhra Pradesh state council of the party as a part of its celebrations felicitated the family members of the freedom

fighters, who dedicated their lives for the freedom struggle.

In Vijayawada where the celebrations took place party state council secretary K Ramakrishna hoisted the tricolour in the premises of state council office Dasari Bhavan.

Addressing the participants Ramakrishna said that the BJP and RSS who do not have any role in the freedom struggle and rather worked as puppets of the British imperialists are now claiming to be patriots. Prior to the public meeting, a huge procession was taken out from Lenin Centre with a 75-metre flag which attracted passers-by. The meeting was presided over by G Koteswar Rao, Vijayawada city party secretary.

Telangana

In the state party headquarters at Makhdoom

Bhavan in Hyderabad, party's former general secretary S Sudhakar Reddy hoisted the tricolour in the premises. Addressing the party comrades who assembled there, he said that our party had played a glorious role in the freedom struggle. But today RSS and BJP are trying to hijack history by claiming credit for their role in the struggle.

State council secretary Chada Venkat Reddy presided over the meeting. On the dias were were Kandimalla Pratap Reddy and Yetukuri Krishnamoorthy, freedom fighters, Syed Azeez Pasha, party national executive member, Palla Venkata Reddy, state assistant secretary, Pasya Padma, N Balamalles, VS Bose, state secretariat members, K Sreenivas Reddy, national council member and Bommagani Prabhakar, state executive

member.

Sudhakar Reddy pointed out that that even after so many decades the fruits of independence are not reaching crores of poor people in the country. Wealth is being concentrated in only a few individuals in the country. This wealth should be redistributed among all. Communists should get ready for another freedom struggle on the occasion of Azaadika ka Amrit Mahotsav, in order to redistribute the wealth. In independent India, everyone should get food, education and medical facilities. Dalits, Adivasis and other backward classes should also get equal rights politically, economically and socially, he added.

The day was also observed in Gujarat, Rajasthan, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and other places.

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Bilkis Bano Case

AITUC Demands Re-arrest of Rapists

All India Working Women Forum of AITUC registers the most vehement condemnation on the release of the rapists of Bilkis Bano. Gujarat government has released the 11 criminals serving life sentence for the heinous crimes of rape and murder in the infamous Bilkis Bano gang rape case.

The release that was recommended by the committee under the Gujarat remission policy is in violation of the Union government's guidelines for remission. These guidelines exclude those who are

convicted for rape and murder for the benefit of remission. They, in any yardstick, do not deserve consideration for early release. AIWWF of AITUC, while condemning the release, very strongly urges upon the Union government to intervene to withdraw the release of these convicts.

In a weird dichotomy of sorts the Prime Minister, in his Independence Day address from the ramparts of the red fort, talks of respecting 'nari shakthi', on the same day his own party led government releases the

rapists. The Machiavelian manoeuvres of Prime Minister Narendra Modi scale newer heights day by day. Deceptive double talk of 'beti bachao' is flagrantly exposed yet again.

This release is a double jeopardy of gender and religion. Odious blend of gender prejudice and communal hatred of the Hindutva ideology has reached a crescendo. Yet, the prime minister masquerades as the messiah of the masses shamelessly.

Nothing that happens is casual. Everything is conscientiously done

with the knowledge of the prime minister. This is dangerous for the country. He must take the moral responsibility and owe an apology to the nation before setting right the wrong done in the release of the criminals.

Ironically this is the real face of the 'New India' that Modi boasts of. This is indeed a disgraced and ignominious reality that India is dishonourably faced with.

The premature release of the rapists brings more outrage now than the wretched pain and deso-

late anguish of the blood curdling act of gang rape of Bilkis Bano, a pregnant woman and the brutal killing of her family including her three-year old daughter.

This release is an affront against the doctrine of justice and a slur on the constitutional commitment to protect women. All India Working Women Forum terms the release of the rapists and murders as shameful, outrageous and condemnable and demands immediate and unconditional withdrawal of the release and re-incarceration of the criminals.

On Record ...

The Delhi high court pulled up yoga guru Ramdev for "misleading the public" with his claims over Covid-19 vaccines and allopathic medicines, directing him to refrain from making unsubstantiated claims while speaking in favour of Patanjali product Coronil. "You are welcome to have your followers and disciples and people who believe you but don't mislead the public by saying more than what is official... My concern is to save the good name and reputation of Ayurveda. My aim [also] is nobody should be misled against allopathy," justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani observed.

The court made the observation while hearing the suit moved by various doctors' associations, accusing Ramdev of misleading the public by questioning the efficacy of interventions such as Covid vaccinations. - *The Hindustan Times*, August 18.

Two days after the 11 men convicted of gang-raping her and murdering seven members of her family during the Godhra riots in 2002 were set free under the Gujarat government's sentence remission policy, Bilkis Bano issued a statement saying the decision had shaken her faith in justice. In the statement, Bano said that no one had enquired about her safety before deciding to release the men, and appealed to the Gujarat government to reverse its move.

"Two days ago, on August 15, the trauma of the past 20 years washed over me again. When I heard that the 11 convicted men who devastated my family and my life, and took from me my 3-year-old daughter, had walked free. I was bereft of



words. I am still numb," said the statement, released on Wednesday by advocate Shobha Gupta on behalf of Bano.

The Supreme Court held that a working woman cannot be denied her statutory right to maternity leave for her biological child only because her husband has two children from previous marriage and she had availed the leave to take care of one of them.

The top court said that the grant of maternity leave is intended to encourage women to join and continue in the workplace but it is a matter of harsh reality that despite such provisions, women are compelled to leave their place of work on the birth of a child since they are not granted leave and other facilitative measures. According to rules, a female employee with less than two surviving children

can seek maternity leave. - *The Hindu*, August 17.

Tamil Nadu Finance Minister Dr P Thiaga Rajan hit out at the Centre over its stance on freebies. Dr P Thiaga Rajan questioned why the Central government should determine what other state governments can do. "Either you must have a constitutional basis for what you are saying or you must have some expertise that tells us that you know better than us. Or you must have some performance track that shows that you have grown the economy, brought down the debt, you have created jobs, and then we listen. When neither of this is true, why should we listen to somebody's view?," Dr P Thiaga Rajan asked. - *India Today*, August 18.

- Compiled by C. Adhikesavan

75th Year of Independence

CPI Marks Day with Nationwide Celebrations



DELHI

CPI general Secretary D Raja hoisting the national flag



DELHI



TELANGANA



KERALA



ANDHRA PRADESH

Our Special Correspondent

The 75th year of our independence on August 15, 2022 was celebrated all over India by CPI units by hoisting the National Flag in the premises of party offices. This was followed by public meetings, holding of seminars etc. The call for marking the day was given by party national council in its last meeting.

CPI general secretary D Raja hoisted the tricolour at the premises of the central party headquarters, Ajoy Bhavan, New Delhi. Addressing the participants who assembled there, he said that RSS which had no role in the freedom struggle is now trying to appropriate all credit. In fact, it goes to the credit of the communists that they played a historic role in the freedom struggle. The communist party sacrificed many of its comrades fighting against the British and its agents. He urged comrades to be ready for any sacrifice to safeguard our hard-won freedom, democratic rights and the very Constitution.

On Page 14

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