

## Massive Rally by Left, Democratic Forces at Khammam

# Defeat BJP in 2024 Elections: CPI

Ram Narsimha Rao

*"Our Constitution, secularism, federalism and democracy are all in danger, hence the need now is to unite all secular and democratic forces in order to defeat BJP- RSS combine in the forthcoming 2024 elections," said D Raja, general secretary, Communist Party of India, while addressing a massive public meeting on January 18, 2023 at Khammam in Telangana state on the occasion of foundation meeting of Bharath Rashtra Samithi (BRS).*

In the beginning D Raja saluted and paid tributes to the veterans of glorious historic Telangana armed struggle, Ravi Narayana Reddy, the great Urdu poet Makhdoom Mohiuddin, Giri Prasad and many other martyrs. He also congratulated BRS president and Telangana chief minister K Chandrasekhar Rao (KCR) for organising such a huge public meeting in order to bring the left and democratic forces together. On the dais were K Chandrashekara Rao, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal, Punjab chief minister Bhagwatsingh Mann, Socialist Party president and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav and D Raja.

D Raja in his address stated that Telangana is the only state where people need not confront power cuts. KCR is giving good governance in innovative ways to people of Telangana by supplying adequate drinking water, Agriculture Investment Support Scheme, Rythu Bandhu, Dalit

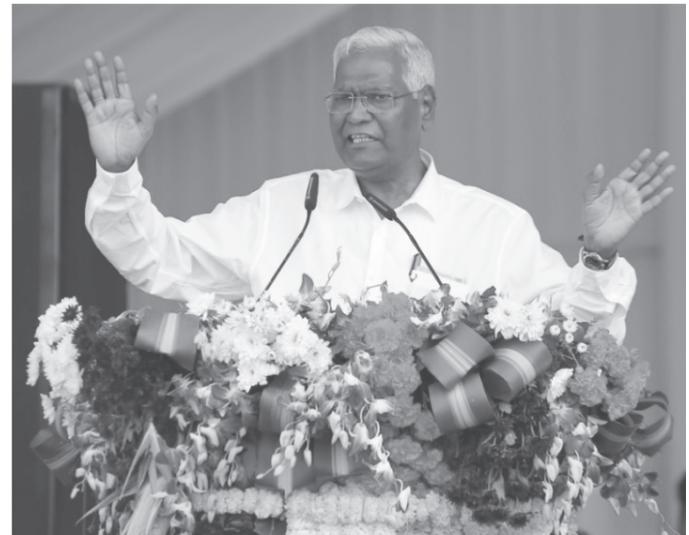
Bandhu and many other schemes. He also thanked KCR for inviting the Left and democratic parties to Bangalore programme. He also wished KCR success in all his endeavours in the coming days.

The CPI general secretary said that people of our country are going to celebrate the Republic Day within a few days. The BJP-RSS combine is making a disastrous move to convert the secular country of ours into a theocratic state. They want to change our Constitution that defines our

country as secular, democratic and welfare state. Our Constitution also says that our country is a federal state. But the BJP-RSS combine wants to remove the very basic tenets of our Constitution and impose medieval social order on our people.

Dr BR Ambedkar had stated that if India is converted into a Hindu Rashtra, it will be the biggest calamity and that is now happening. We have to stop this. Telangana chief minister KCR has taken several steps on people's issues like education, healthcare, employment, housing, right to food, etc. He appealed to other chief ministers and leaders also to take up the basic issues people are facing. Let us together fight to resolve all these issues.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi often says that 'Sab ka Saath, Sab ka Vikas' is the



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the mammoth rally

main thrust of his government. But Modi is not with the workers, nor with farmers, he is neither with poor nor common people, D Raja pointed out. In fact Modi is with Adani and Ambani. Though our country is a federal one, one can see what is happening. Telangana state governor is confronting with the democratically elected KCR, the chief minister. In the same way the Lt Governor of Delhi is in-

terfering in the governance of Arvind Kejriwal, the governor of Kerala is creating hurdles to Pinarayi Vijayan, chief Minister of Kerala. In the same way the governor of Tamil Nadu is also interfering in the administration of democratically elected chief minister MK Stalin.

Our country is based on unity in diversity, but the BJP does not believe

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A view of the public meeting at Khammam

## Editorial

### Conclave is over, Questions Remain...

Stating that there are nearly 400 days left for the 2024 elections, prime minister Narendra Modi masked himself by exhorting the BJP cadres to keep aside electoral aims and work for all sections of people. He was addressing the recently concluded national executive meeting of the BJP.

It is one example of how the RSS-BJP and their cadres have been tempered by the fascist ideology. The two-day conclave was devoted totally towards elections and all its deliberations were focused on the electoral victory of the BJP. In fact, the RSS spearheading the BJP has begun the election work since last year itself. Setting up a target of one lakh new shakhas for the RSS, their goal was to activate the BJP work in all the polling booths of the country. While many other political forces were engaged in various other important and unimportant activities, RSS was silently doing their work concentrating only on elections. It shows the political sharpness of the fascist ideology.

Once the National Executive meeting is over, the electoral plank of the BJP is clear before the people. They are going to face the elections based on the same subjects that helped the BJP to reap rich dividends in the past. There is nothing new in the ideological or political storage of the Party, which is committed to represent the class interests of the super-rich and extreme right. They follow the footsteps of fascism in Germany, molded by Adolf Hitler during second World War. With all fervor, RSS-BJP has put into practice the racial pride which serves as the founding principle of their cultural nationalism. The national executive convincingly revealed that BJP is going to hide all their failures under the glorious carpet of consorted propaganda. Ram temple is going to be the highlight of their campaign. Lord Ram is again drawn into the realm of power politics. This may be unthinkable for the God-fearing doctrines of real faith. But for the power mongering faith of RSS-BJP, it has become their habit. To give their campaign a political shade, the Presidency of G20 is going to be widely utilized. From the very beginning, BJP was depicting the G20 Presidency as a special honor bestowed on Modi's India by the rest of the world. But the simple fact is that it is only a routine rotation that made India the President of G20!

The next and the most important point of the campaign would be the welfare of the poor, as the poor constitute the major chunk among the voters. The quintessence of the resolutions and statements discussed by the National Executive was to win over the common people to gain one more innings.

It is not without any purpose that the finance minister, during recent times, talked too much about the middle class. RSS-BJP strategists have understood the significance of wooing the middle class as they are the crucial opinion makers in urban and rural areas. The facts of life have proved that the BJP rule since 2014 has only betrayed the large segments of the population right from the lower middle class down to the lower strata that include Dalits, Adivasis and the underprivileged. As part of their election strategy, the BJP leadership has intensified a political offensive against all its opponents. In fact the BJP is scared about its future. It can not ignore the growing discontent among all sections of the society. Everyone is expressing anger in various forms throughout the country. All the promises given to them are thrown to the wind, even the BMS and Swadeshi Jagran Manch are critical about the economic policies of the government. Ideological framework of cultural nationalism and religious slogans like Ram temple are used and reused to pacify those elements of resentment. In this background, the inequality report, 2023 published by Oxfam has aggravated their worries for the future. The Oxfam report throws light to the real living conditions of India. "It shows that the impact of inequality is especially stark at the margins of the Indian society, with some communities such as the Scheduled Tribes (STs) and Scheduled Caste (SCs) suffering from physical remoteness and systematic exclusion from the means to achieve vertical mobility. It reveals some stark findings proving that the gap between the rich and the poor is indeed widening. Following the pandemic in 2019, the bottom 50 per cent of the population have continued to see their wealth chipped away. By 2020, their income share was estimated to have fallen to only 13 per cent of the national income and have less than three percent of the total wealth. Its impact has been exceptionally poor diets, increase in debt and deaths. This is in stark contrast to the top 30 per cent who own more than 90 percent of the total wealth. Among them, the top 10 per cent own more than 80 per cent of the concentrated wealth. The wealthiest 10 per cent own more than 72 per cent of the total wealth, the top 5 per cent own nearly 62 per cent of the total wealth, and the top 1 percent own nearly 40.6 per cent of the total wealth in India. The country still has the world's highest number of poor at 228.9 million. On the other hand, the total number of billionaires in India increased from 102 in 2020 to 166 billionaires in 2022. The combined wealth of India's 100 richest has touched INR 54.12 lakh crore. The wealth of the top 10 richest stands at INR 27.52 lakh crore – a 32.8 per cent rise from 2021".

When these facts and figures stare at India, the stormtroopers of the BJP spend their

energy to propagate the greatness of 'Modinomics', which is full of hollow rhetoric. While using aggressive language against the opposition, the BJP spokespersons were consciously silent about their taxation policies. The report further mentions, "Before the pandemic, in 2019, the Central Government reduced the corporate tax slabs from 30 per cent to 22 per cent, with newly incorporated companies paying a lower percentage (15 per cent). This new taxation policy resulted in a total loss of INR 1.84 lakh crore and had a significant role in the 10 per cent downward revision of tax revenue estimates in 2019-20. To increase revenue, the Union Government adopted a policy of hiking the Goods and Services Tax (GST) and exciseduties on diesel and petrol while simultaneously cutting down on exemptions. The indirect nature of both the GST and fuel taxes make them regressive, which invariably burdens the most marginalized". Even at the national executive the BJP was silent about the proportion of a wealth tax. BJP's economic policy is to transfer the burden of crisis on the poor and marginalized and safeguard the unending greed of the super-rich. In that frenzied move, swadeshi RSS-BJP has become the faithful followers of FDI. They owe an explanation to their own followers, the reasons for the boundless subservience to the foreign and domestic capital. They should explain the reasons for skipping away from the promise of legal guarantee of MSP to the farmers. They should also tell the marginalized the reasons for diminishing layout for projects like MNREGA and other social security measures.

The BJP national executive was desperate in its statement, that it has to win all the nine state elections scheduled to take place in 2023. It is evident that the party of the extreme right led by the fascist ideology would use all the weapons in their armory to come back to power. Such a situation is dreadful for the secular democratic foundations of India. BJP'S victory was always possible due to the divide among the opposition votes. The same would be their approach in the coming elections- to divide the opposition votes and rule the country once again. It is high time for all those forces in positions who are committed to the constitutional philosophy of secular democracy to understand the gravity of the situation and work out their strategy for the coming elections. This is a life and death moment not only for the BJP but also for the opposition. The Communist Party with all its clarity has tried to tell the nation the urgency of a broad unity of secular, democratic, left forces to fight and defeat the fascist threat looming over the country's future. The time has come to unite the masses and to wage the battle.

## Bihar CPI State Council Elects Executive, Secretariat

# Call for Satyagraha to Unseat BJP at Centre

**PATNA:** "In order to save the country, the BJP government at the Centre has to be removed in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The country, the Constitution and democracy are in danger under Narendra Modi's government at the Centre," said general secretary of the Communist Party of India D Raja while addressing the meeting of Bihar State Council of the CPI that met here for two days at Janshakti Bhawan.

The meeting was presided over by Ramchandra Mahato, Professor Sanjay Kumar Singh and Prabhakar Singh. State Secretary Ramnaresh Pandey presented the work report. CPI general secretary D Raja spoke on the decision of the national executive. National council secretary Nagendra Nath Ojha was present as an observer. In the meeting, new audit committee was organized and secretariate, state executive and state council were elected. The meeting also decided to launch a mass satyagraha campaign from March 27 to 29, 2023 at the district headquarters on the question of unseating the Narendra Modi government from power at the Centre.

Addressing the meeting, D Raja said that the Lok Sabha elections are not far away, so the party workers should vigorously prepare for the coming elections. The CPI should take up the burning issues of women, dalits, minorities and youth, said D Raja, as the Party is com-

mitted to resolve them. The strategy for the Lok Sabha elections will be chalked out in the meeting of the national council that would be held in February. He said that Narendra Modi's government has proved to be a failure on all fronts. Inflation is touching the skies. The price of petrol and diesel is con-

*Kiranesh Kumar*

ister Narendra Modi had said that farmers' income will double in 2022, but 2023 has started and there has been no improvement in the financial condition of the farmers. On the contrary, the problems of the farmers have only increased.



*Party leaders felicitate Chinta Devi, a veteran party comrade and retired sanitary worker, on her being elected as deputy mayor of Gaya corporation*

tinuously going up, which in turn is affecting the price of common consumer goods. He said that the economy has collapsed under the Modi government. The rupee is continuously depreciating against the dollar. He pointed out that the loan of ten lakh crore rupees given to the capitalists has been written off. In the Modi government, the capital of the capitalists is continuously increasing, while the poor are becoming poorer. Farmers are not getting minimum support price.

The cost of fertilizers is continuously increasing. Farmers are not getting fertilizers at the fixed price. Prime Min-

Fertilizers, seeds are not available on time. The attitude of the Modi government is completely negative towards the farmers. The BJP-RSS alliance is on the offensive to implement their communal fascist agenda of Hindu Rashtra backed by corporate houses. Corporate communal fascism is threatening the unity and diversity of the country. It is clear that only the communists are posing a sustained political, ideological and social challenge to the nefarious design of the RSS to destroy the Constitution and the secular fabric. CPI has called for forging a broad coalition of democratic and progres-

sive forces to oust the RSS-BJP from power and to intensify and take forward the mass struggles on livelihood issues. Narendra Modi's government sitting at the center is working in the interest of the capitalists, not the poor. Whatever decision the government takes, it takes in the interest of the capitalists. This government is anti-poor. To save the country, Modi government has to be removed from power.

State secretary Ramnaresh Pandey said that by January 31, the work of membership renewal has to be completed and more than one lakh new members have to be added in Bihar. The State Council decided to organize a militant and effective Jan Satyagraha against the anti-people and fascist policies of the Central Government in all the district headquarters of Bihar from March 27 to 29.

Presenting the resolution, Ramnaresh Pandey said that the mass Satyagraha campaign from March 27 to 29 is to be launched with demands to oust the BJP-led Narendra Modi government from power at the Centre for its anti-people policies and to abolish the post of governor. In order to ensure the success of this campaign and maximum public participation, the real character and anti-people, anti-constitutional and anti-national policies of the present *Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh*-BJP led central government are to be strongly ex-

posed among the general public by running a village-to-village public contact campaign.

He said that the present Central government is strangling the democracy and also the Constitution of India, which emerged from the Indian freedom struggle. The public sector, which was set up with the hard earned money of the public, is giving it as a gift to some of its corporate friends at the cost of a penny. Ports, airports, railway stations, banks, Life Insurance Corporation and all Navratna companies and Mahanavaratna companies are handed over to their corporate friends. Employment opportunities are destroyed rapidly in a planned manner and the young generation is losing its direction that makes it easy to divide and rule. The society here is sitting on a pile of gunpowder due to the shortage of daily employment. The cost of agriculture has increased manifold in the last eight years. Farming is being affected due to non-availability of fair price. The farmer is cursed to commit suicide. The agricultural produce they buy for themselves is sold at many times higher price. Then there is the backbreaking inflation.

In the two-day meeting of the Bihar State Council, the state secretariate, and the Executive Committee were formed and some new comrades were invited to

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# DUJ Blasts Increasing Policing of Journalists and Flashing Hate Speech

The Delhi Union of Journalists (DUJ) has expressed grave concern not only against increasing policing of journalists and journalism in India in the past year as reflected in the Human Rights Watch Report of 2023 released last week - but also against the increasing tendency of flashing hate speech against communities specially targeting of minorities as pointed out by Supreme Court which has even questioned the dithering of the News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBDSA).

In a joint statement today, the President of the organization S.K.Pande and the General Secretary Sujata Madhok while calling for a halt to press bashing have suggested on a priority basis the setting of a Media Council of India to replace both the toothless Press Council and the NBDSA which more than often is a prisoner of indecision.

The DUJ is of the view that the Human Rights Watch's World Report 2023 released this week reflects the increasing policing of journalists and journal-

ism in India today. According to the report, several journalists were arrested during the year including Mohammed Zubair and Rupesh Kumar Singh while others like Siddique Kappan continued to languish behind bars.

As the report states, the situation in Kashmir was the worst with the arrests of Fahad Shah and Sajad Gul. The Human Rights Report says "35 journalists in Kashmir have faced police interrogation, raids, threats, physical assault, restrictions on freedom of movement, or fabricated

criminal cases for their reporting," since August 2019.

Most damningly, the Report says the government has "intensified and broadened their crackdown on activist groups and the media". The Report refers to the use of Pegasus spyware to target media persons besides other assaults on the media.

DUJ further notes with concern that 2022 also witnessed the hostile takeover of the news channel NDTV and the consequent spate of resignations from the channel, starting with the

independent anchor Ravish Kumar, followed by group president Suparna Singh, chief strategy officer Arijit Chatterjee and chief technology and product officer Kawaljit Singh Bedi. This spate of resignations could multiply as the Adani group takes full control of the NDTV group.

DUJ notes that NDTV was one of the last channels that reported somewhat independently, instead of merely mouthing government and corporate propaganda and amplifying

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## *What the Others Say...*

### **Revenue imbalance**

Data released by the Ministry of Finance last week reaffirmed the healthy growth in the central government's tax collections this financial year. At the aggregate level, the government's direct tax collections up to January 10, 2023, stood at Rs 14.71 lakh crore, almost 25 per cent higher than over the same period last year. Adjusting for refunds, collections were up almost 20 per cent. To put these numbers in perspective – direct tax collections have already touched almost 87 per cent of the budget target of Rs 14.2 lakh crore for the financial year 2022-23. However, even as tax revenue growth has been healthy, there are concerns over the government's non-tax revenues and proceeds from disinvestment.

For 2022-23 the Union budget had pegged non-tax revenues at Rs 2.69 lakh crore, down from Rs 3.13 lakh crore (revised estimates) in 2021-22. Of this, it had pegged the dividend/ surplus of the central bank, the nationalised banks and financial institutions at Rs 1.13 lakh crore. While this was already lower than the revised estimates of Rs 1.47 lakh in 2021-22, so far this year, the Centre has garnered only Rs 68,254 crore. There is a possibility that the surplus available with the RBI for transferring as dividend to the government is likely to remain low in the current financial year. At the aggregate level, while the budget had pegged non-tax revenue to GDP to fall from 1.35 per cent of GDP in 2021-22 to less than 1 per cent in 2022-23, as per some analysts, non-tax revenues are likely to be even lower than budget expectations by around Rs 50,000 crore. A similar trend is observed in disinvestment proceeds. While the budget had already lowered the disinvestment target from Rs 78,000 crore in 2021-22 to Rs 65,000 crore for 2022-23, so far, total revenue through this route has been only around Rs 31,106 crore. This includes Rs 20,516 crore garnered through the sale of the government's stake in LIC. Some transactions are in the pipeline. However, despite that, analysts expect disinvestment proceeds at the end of the financial year to trail the budget target by a significant margin.

*Courtesy: The Indian Express*

### **Be wise, Centre & SC**

Union law minister Kiren Rijiju's letter to CJI DY Chandrachud seeking representation for GoI in the collegium, and consultations with states, signals another front being opened in the Centre-Supreme Court standoff. The collegium system is the outcome of the Third Judges Case of 1998, which envisioned procedures for appointment of SC and high court judges. Subsequently, a Memorandum of Procedure (MoP) was finalised following consultations between the Centre and SC. The only way GoI's new proposal can be implemented is if SC agrees to revisit the Second and Third Judges Cases. But this is a bad idea: It is Parliament that must do the law-making.

Making Parliament into a bystander while the executive proposes and the judiciary decides how to frame the law is bad form. This newspaper has argued for a National Judicial Appointments Commission and believes it deserves another chance. The constitution bench, that scrapped NJAC, did so without having the benefit of seeing it work. GoI, surprisingly, hasn't made another attempt to re-enact NJAC. Perhaps, SC can be persuaded this time to watch NJAC at work before inevitable legal challenges to it are taken up. After all, such wait-and-watch has been the SC modus to challenges against demonetisation, electoral bonds, Article 370, CAA, etc.

An alternative course is to revise the MoP as directed by the five-judge NJAC bench in a subsequent order. This order laid special emphasis on making the collegium more transparent through appropriate revisions to the MoP through recording minutes of collegium discussions including dissension, setting up secretariats for each HC and SC for better management of the process, clear eligibility criteria for appointment to HCs and SC, and a mechanism to deal with complaints against judgeship candidates. Since Centre's primary concern about the present collegium system appears to be the lack of transparency, the MoP revision, which has stalled for over six years over relatively minor disagreements, should be revived. The current standoff is creating unnecessary tensions, and mustn't affect filling of judges' vacancies. May wise judgment prevail.

*Courtesy: The Times of India*

# Joshimath Sinking is not Natural, It is Man made

It appears that nothing short of a total disaster will convince authorities, especially under the present government, that reckless development without addressing environmental or social issues, does not lead to progress. The unfolding tragedy in Joshimath, considered a holy town for being the gateway to the hill shrine of Badrinath, is but the latest in a long series of disasters in the Uttarakhand Himalayas caused by unrestrained construction, infrastructure and urbanisation in these fragile mountains. These human-induced calamities, in the western Himalayas in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand, have been in the recent past, exacerbated by the effects of human-induced climate change like extreme rainfall leading to floods, landslides and so on.

Joshimath, at an altitude of 6000 feet, has now been badly hit by land subsidence, that is, sink-

ing of the land, causing large cracks and structural damage of roads, buildings and other infrastructure affecting almost a quarter of the town. Over 720 houses have so far been assessed

*D Raghunandan*

awaiting similar arrangements.

Meanwhile affected inhabitants of Joshimath

through evacuation, compensation and shifting to temporary shelters, adding to the long list of "development refugees" in India where people lose their

the fragility of the mountain ecosystem and its vulnerabilities, must also be addressed. Whereas decisions regarding immediate response measures in the aftermath of the Joshimath disaster were taken at a meeting of state and central government officials, the National Disaster Management Authority, Geological Survey of India, and the National Institute of Hydrology, numerous earlier reports by these very institutions and the Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology raising danger signals have been ignored. Study reports by these institutions, including high-powered committees set up by the state government dating back to the famous MC Mishra Committee report of around 50 years ago, and other experts have underlined the geomorphological, geological and seismic fragility of the region and the consequent dangers



as severely damaged in four

badly affected zones, and 89 buildings including residences and hotels have been earmarked for immediate demolition as being unsafe for inhabitants and for nearby buildings. Several hundred inhabitants have been shifted to safer locations, while others are

are up in arms at the destruction of their town despite repeated earlier warnings, and at the casual manner in which the district administration, the state government and even the central government has approached the disaster. Their approach is one of dealing with the immediate problem of damaged buildings

homes, savings and livelihoods while contractors and commercial ventures reap the harvest of destructive development. All those affected by the Joshimath disaster, who are victims of wilful governmental negligence, must be fully rehabilitated and given due compensation im-

## CPI On Climate Crisis in Joshimath, Karnaprayag

*The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on January 14, 2023 expressing concern over situation in Joshimath and Karnaprayag and to plan for the future rehabilitation of People:*

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India expresses deep concern about reports of heavy damages to houses in Joshimath and Karnaprayag. Himalayas are comparatively new mountains without solid rocks and hence all development projects in the area need to be planned carefully taking into consideration fragile mountain and sustainability of environment. The present state and central government approach in this area

about development does not take into consideration the environmental concerns and sustainability and hence needs immediate course

correction. Compensation given to citizens is not adequate and rehabilitation plans must be made taking people in confidence.

Happenings in Joshimath and Karnaprayag are a warning to the development projects pushed ahead without sustainability of environment consideration. The CPI appeal to keep the sustainability of the environment while undertaking development projects.

All party meeting should be called to discuss the situation and plan for the future.



mediately so that they too do not have to wait indefinitely as supplicants for what is due to them.

However, the longer-term issue of on-going and continuing construction activities related to roads, hydro-electric projects and haphazard urbanisation without taking into consideration

of major construction activities.

These experts have pointed out that Joshimath, and many other towns in the region, have been built over very weak and unstable soil and stone substrate consisting of loose material left behind by glacial

## Kerala Model of Public Distribution

# An Alternative to Neoliberal Assault on Food Security

(GR Anil, state executive member of Kerala unit of the Communist Party of India, and also the minister for Food and Civil Supplies, Consumer Affairs in the present Kerala government shared his views and opinions regarding the public distribution system (PDS) and the challenges it faces from the BJP government at the Centre. While speaking to *New Age*, he is discussing on how the Kerala model of PDS, food security, and market intervention can be an alternative to the assault of neoliberalism on food security and the concept of universal food distribution.)

**New Age:** UPA government introduced the National Food Security Act in 2013 almost subverting the Public Distribution System in various states. How was Kerala able to withstand the catastrophic changes?

**GR Anil:** NFSA 2013 was introduced to assure food security to all the people over the country but even before this Kerala had ensured greater food security to its people. The 1957 CPI ministry in Kerala had a

vision regarding this and the succeeding communist governments worked on achieving this. Due to the commitment of Left governments to enhancing the public distribution system, we were able to cater to the people with the food items they required. It is to be noted that a statutory distribution system existed here. Kerala is basically a consumer state. The cultivation here is mainly focused on cash crops which bring good remittance from foreign countries. In Kerala, 4.57 lakh metric tonnes of rice is produced and this amount is not sufficient to be distributed to all our people. So, the state must depend on the central government for rice.

Before 2013 the Central government gave 14.5 lakh metric tonnes of rice to the state. After the enactment of NFSA 2013 the quantity of rice allotted to the state was reduced. This happened because the act reconstructed the distribution pattern of rice and goods. The cen-

tral government decided to limit the rations to BPL families. From a state which distributed rice and goods to all people, NFSA converted Kerala to a state which allot ration to only 44 per cent of its people. At least 57 per cent of people are now distributed with the goods purchased by the state government additionally.

**NA:** FCI warehouses and various other assets are now a part of the National Monetary Pipeline which leads the assets to be handled and utilized by private players. Your comments on this regarding how this can affect us.

**GR Anil:** The prime target of the BJP government is to privatize every resource and infrastructure that belongs to the people. They have been privatizing every national asset. The very core idea of neo-liberalism is to install free-market capitalism and for that it demands the government to wash off its hands of the responsibilities systematically. BJP is moving this pattern. The central government by including the FCI go-downs in NMP is withdrawing from its responsibility of storing the food items. The BJP government had sabotaged the concept of "food for all" as a part of their neoliberal policies. When the government repeals its responsibility, the opportunity is provided to the private players who only aim at creating profit.

In the context of Kerala, new storage houses under government control are very essential. Earlier we had a system where private intermediaries would lift



GR Anil, minister for food, civil supplies and consumer affairs with *New Age* correspondent Alan Paul

goods from FCI. Now it is completely under the state government. The government's machinery lifts the goods from FCI go-downs, stores them in NFSA go-downs, and distributes them to the people. Door-to-door delivery and other distribution systems are fully performed by the government.

So, to galvanize and enhance these distribution systems the state requires more warehouses and units for storing and distributing through PDS, entities under agriculture, cooperative portfolios. Since the central government is not ready to deviate from its anti-people policies the state government is planning its own measures.

**NA:** It is to be noted that the central government exhibits a kind of animosity towards the non-BJP states. Those states are subjected to cutting short of funds in the union budgets. This is evident from 2014. The special ration that was provided to orphanages and old age homes was unilaterally rolled back by the Central government. But the Kerala government allocated its own funds to compact the hurdle. What are the plans for the Kerala Civil Supplies ministry and the state government to surpass the crisis that

arise due to the policies of the Central government?

**GR Anil:** As the minister of Civil Supplies of Kerala I along with Binoy Vishwam, Rajya Sabha MP met the Union minister of the Civil Supplies portfolio to raise some demands. The most important is to reinstate the two lakh metric tonnes of rice that was provided to Kerala. It is to be noted that we are not demanding a new allocation but to allocate what you have repealed from us. The antipathy towards non-BJP states should be condemned. Even though Kerala is increasing its production of food items, due to various reasons we are unable to produce the amount that would be sufficient for the state.

In the backdrop of the Central government's policy to deny what we deserve rightfully Kerala is creating the "Left Alternative" against the sabotage by the Central government. The LDF government of Kerala is dedicated to ensuring that no one remains hungry. Every welfare institution like old age homes regardless of whether they are registered or not with the ministry of social welfare in Kerala will be provided with rations by the

### CPI Condemns Move to Stop Food Grains to Deprived

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on January 17, 2023:

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India expressed its deep concern about the recent government decision to stop giving food grains being given to the poor under the Food Security Act.

The decision will adversely impact the poor and compel them to go to market for their food grain requirements. At the same time, it indicates that the government will discontinue MSP practice in future when farmers are demanding an Act to assure that MSP would continue.

The Communist Party of India demands that the decision of the government to stop food grain supply under Food Security Act must be reversed.

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# The Govt Must Draft Inclusive Policies For All in Education

*Fee hike across legal institutions, discrimination are among many issues that students face in the education sphere.*

The recent fee hike at the premier institution of legal education National Law University, Delhi from ₹1,63,000 to ₹3,65,000 is a manifestation of a larger policy issue. In India, at least since the mid-1930s, policymakers in the legal education sector have been prioritising the issue of poor quality of legal education. Whereas, the issue of access to legal education has – except during the 1960s and 1970s when assembly-line law schools sprang up – been on the back burner.

Today, when National Law Universities ('NLU') stand tall with a formidable reputation for their quality education, the exclusion of deprived groups is visible even more starkly with increasing fee amounts. Exclusion takes place on the basis of financial status among other grounds such as disability, caste, religion, etc. Importantly, it takes place both at the pre-admission and post-admission stage.

Pre-admission stage refers to the transitional phase in the educational process during which students step up from intermediate education to higher education that law schools offer.

The Diversity Studies conducted at the Jamia Millia Islamia's Faculty of Law and the top law school National Law School of India ('NLSIU') University, demonstrates that students from middle or low-income families attend traditional law schools such as Jamia (and other central and state

universities) which charge about ₹10,000 per annum (excluding hostel charges).

Such law schools remain more accessible to students from weaker financial backgrounds in comparison to the NLUs where students pay about ₹2,00,000 to ₹3,00,000 per annum.

The numbers are remarkable at Jamia where half of the entire student body at 49.9 per cent had a family income of less than ₹50,000 per month. Such students at the NLSIU were



less than even half of that at 18.9 per cent. Students with a high family income of more than ₹3,00,000 per month were a mere 2.54 per cent at Jamia. But, almost six times more at NLSIU at 14.86 per cent. Those with an income of more than ₹1,00,000 per month were 21 per cent at Jamia and NLSIU 53.09 per cent. Students with annual family income of less than ₹25,000 per month were 6.55 per cent and 4.5 times more at the NLSIU at 29.9 per cent.

Such a pattern in the financial background has been documented across the NLUs. Yet, student protests against the hikes are not uncommon. In the middle of this year at Dharmashastra National Law University, Madhya Pradesh, students protested against the fee that was charged for remedial classes that were taken by

those appearing for re-examination.

In 2019 at the NLSIU, students staged protests against the ₹50,000 yearly fee-hike that was imposed. During the same year students at Himachal Pradesh National Law University protested against, among other things, the exorbitant fee of ₹2.5 lakhs that the law school charged.

But if students from high-family-income groups are studying at the NLUs, why do they protest?

The protests signal that many students at the NLUs face post-admission exclusion, ie, after they take admission, they remain excluded from everyday life at the campus. Usually, such exclusion takes place when students find the campus environment is not accepting of their identity: their gender, caste, religion, sexual orientation, disability status, or even financial status.

**Richest 1% own 40.5% of India's wealth, says a report**

India's top 1 per cent owned more than 40.5 per cent of its total wealth in 2021, according to a new report by Oxfam.

In 2022, the number of billionaires in the country increased to 166 from 102 in 2020, the report said. Meanwhile, it added that the poor in India "are unable to afford even basic necessities to

survive". The charity called on India's finance minister to levy a wealth tax on the ultra rich to tackle this "obscene" inequality.

The report - Survival of The Richest - was released as the World Economic Forum began in Davos, Switzerland.

The report highlighted the large disparity in wealth distribution in India, saying that more than 40 per cent of the wealth created in the country from 2012 to 2021 had gone to just 1 per cent of the population while only 3 per cent had trickled down to the bottom 50 per cent.

In 2022, the wealth of India's richest man Gautam Adani increased by 46 per cent, while the combined wealth of India's 100 richest had touched \$660bn.

In 2022, Mr Adani was ranked the second richest person in the world on the Bloomberg's wealth index. He also topped the list of people whose wealth witnessed the maximum rise globally during the year.

Meanwhile, the country's poor and middle class were taxed more than the rich, Oxfam said.

Approximately 64 per cent of the total goods and services tax (GST) in the country came from the bottom 50 per cent of the population, while only 4 per cent came from the top 10%, the report said.

India is unfortunately on a fast track to becoming a country only for the rich.

The country's marginalised - Dalits, Adivasis, Muslims, women and informal sector workers are continuing to suffer in a system which ensures



**STUDY & STRUGGLE**

C Adhikesavan



the survival of the richest.

The rich, currently, benefited from reduced corporate taxes, tax exemptions and other incentives, the report added.

To correct this disparity, the charity asked the finance minister to implement progressive tax measures such as wealth tax in the upcoming budget.

A 2 per cent tax on the entire wealth of India's billionaires would support the nutrition of the country's malnourished population for the next three years, the report said.

A 1 per cent wealth tax could fund the National Health Mission, India's largest healthcare scheme for more than 1.5 years, it added.

Taxing the top 100 Indian billionaires at 2.5 per cent or taxing the top 10 Indian billionaires at 5 per cent would nearly cover the entire amount required to bring an estimated 150 million children back into school, Oxfam said.

It's time we demolish the convenient myth that tax cuts for the richest result in their wealth somehow 'trickling down' to everyone else. Taxing the super-rich was necessary for "reducing inequality and resuscitating democracy.

# Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose: His Vision of India

*In this era of statue politics, whether of political figures or mythological deities, the recent installation of the statue of Subhash Chandra Bose, the most popular freedom fighter of our country in his military uniform at the prime location of India Gate in Delhi raises several questions. We need to explore the intention of the ruling dispensation, ideologically a distinct right-wing formation, behind this act of appropriating a true patriot with definite leftist inclinations, whose idea of India is contrary to what we are watching today. There is also an attempt to re-write history denying the existence of extensive writings on the theme.*

The armed struggles that were fought against feudal and colonial exploitation in the country have also been dealt, but from a view other than those existing. Their advocacy of militarism of Subhash through his Azad Hind Fauj is part of their select narrative on his life and contribution, the objective behind this projection is to move focus from Gandhi and Nehru, and concentrating on the earlier rift of Subhash with the Congress.

However, whatever happened between Gandhi and Subhash after Tripuri Congress session of 1939 is a fall-out of the ideological differences between the right-wing and left-wing within the Congress and outside. When Subhash was re-elected as President of Tripuri Congress session in 1939, against the official or Gandhi's candidate Pattabhi Sitaramaiyya, relationship of Subhash with both Gandhi and Nehru got tense. At that juncture, Gandhi under the pressure of the right-wing stalwarts opposed the candidature of Subhas even ignoring the request from Rabindranath Tagore. Subhas was also extremely shocked at the neutral position undertaken by Nehru who was with the leftists and ideologically close to him. It needs to be remembered that Subhash in his Presidential election in

Gargi Chakravartty

started to stagnate. Soon after, Subhash resigned as President of All India Congress Committee in Calcutta.

Question arises as what made him formulate the path of an armed struggle with the help of foreign powers? It was true that he was disillusioned with Gandhian strategy of non-violent struggle and the casual attitude of the national leaders. However, there is another point totally overlooked so far is his failure to convince both Jinnah, President of the Muslim League and Savarkar, President of Hindu Mahasabha to form a united front to bargain with the British. His suggestion to Jinnah in a couple of interviews for a united struggle proved meaningless. Jinnah even did not give any importance to Subhas's proposal that "in the event of such a united struggle taking place, Jinnah would be the first Prime Minister of Free India." Similarly, Subhash was disappointed with Savarkar about whom he wrote in his book, 'The Indian Struggle', "Mr. Savarkar seemed to be oblivious of the international situation as he was only thinking how Hindus could secure military training by entering Britain's Army in India." On the basis of these interviews, Subhash concluded that "nothing could be expected from either the Muslim League or the Hindu Mahasabha." Subhash realised, "There are no doubts that pro-British parties among both Mohammedans and Hindus are organised as religious parties. But they should not be regarded as representing people."

Being disgusted with the national situation, as he realised that Indian independence would not

come as "a gift from a future Labour government of Britain", he chalked out a plan to escape from India to launch an armed struggle with the help of a foreign power to overthrow the British. It was on the night of January 16, 1941, in the disguise of Muhammad Ziauddin, he finally escaped to Europe via Kabul which took everybody by surprise.

## Secular Ethos in Subhash

Before narrating the story of his Azad Hind Fauj, it is absolutely necessary to describe his vision of united India with secular ethos till the end of his life. This aspect of Subhas remains unknown. Secularism in a multi-religious country like India never meant absence of religion but state neutrality to religion, and that means acceptance and space for all religious groups. Subhas in his article, 'Free India and its Problem' talked about his vision for Free India with "no state religion", and will "guarantee complete religious and cultural freedom for individuals and groups...."

As a deeply religious person and influenced by Swami Vivekananda's preachings, he kept his belief within his private domain and never used it in public for mass mobilization. As a student of philosophy, he studied various religious doctrines and imbibed inspiration from the essence of all. In an article, titled 'My Faith (Philosophical)', he conclusively felt that "the essential nature of reality is LOVE. LOVE is the essence of the universe and is the essential principle in human life." As early as in 1928, he spoke on the idea of 'cultural rapprochement' with all religious communities. In an address at Poona, he said, "Fa-



naticism is the greatest thorn in the path of cultural intimacy and there is no better remedy for fanaticism than secular and scientific education." It is clear that Subhas was neither allergic to the concept of secularism nor intermixing between the religious communities. This address he delivered at a time when tension and bitterness surfaced at the all meetings of the Party. He regretted that 'as things stand today, the different communities inhabiting India are too exclusive'.

There are many unknown anecdotes in his life which show how he had implemented his idea of bringing Muslims closer in practice. As the Chief Executive Officer of Calcutta Corporation in 1924, Subhas appointed twenty five Mussalmans out of thirty three posts for which he was openly criticised by the Right-wing Hindus of that period. He, however, defended his position by asserting that Hindus had been enjoying in "a sort of monopoly so far." Nobody could dare to say Subhas was appeasing the Muslims! His action was appreciated by Gandhi who commented that his act was a "creditable performance". Gandhi's political message to ally with the Muslims and all other communities struck an empathetic chord in Subhas. His Presidential address at Haripura Congress session in 1938 and many of his speeches stressed on the need to improve Hindu-Muslim relationship.

The vision of Subhash about a Free India is hardly being talked about. Apart from the idea of secularism and scientific education, he also visualised a socialist structure. He wrote, "After the attainment of political independence, Leftism will mean Socialism and the task before the people will then be the reconstruction of national life on a Socialist basis." However, in the same article, he said, "Socialism or socialist reconstruction before achieving our political emancipation is altogether premature."

Even during his getting Azad Hind Fauj in armed struggle, his vision of communal harmony is not being highlighted by the Right-wing historians and politicians. Before embarking in south east Asia, the flag of his Army carried the image of a 'springing tiger', reminiscent of the emblem of Tipu Sultan who died fighting the British in the Battle of Srirangapatnam. Later in south east Asia, Gandhi's Charkha became the emblem on the Indian National Army's flag. But Tipu's springing tiger remained as the emblem on the tricolour shoulder pieces on the uniforms of the soldiers. Selection of Tipu's springing tiger emblem by Subhash was not accidental.

Similarly, another incident needs to be mentioned which also reflects that he never considered the Mughals as foreigners. He chose the tomb of the last Mughal Emperor, Bahadur Shah Zafar in Rangoon as the venue of a ceremonial parade to convey his message of I.N.A.'s 'March to Delhi.' On that occasion, on September 26, 1943, Subhas said, "We Indians, regardless of religious faiths, cherish the memory of Bahadur Shah... because he was the man under whose flag fought Indians from all provinces, Indians

professing different religious faiths..." The proclamation with the formation of Provisional government of Azad Hind in Singapore also guaranteed religious liberty, equal rights and equal opportunities to all its citizens. During his I.N.A. period, while recruiting soldiers for I.N.A, Subhash was firm in having them from all religious communities. He not only introduced inter-dining and cultural intimacy among the soldiers, but also delivered lectures on 'Unity of India, Past and Present' in which he spoke how the Hindus and Muslims lived as brothers during the Mughal rule.

### **Ideological Position of Subhash during War**

Subhash was aware of the brutalities of German Nazis, but being a die-hard opponent of the British imperialists, he wanted to take advantage of the war crisis to overthrow the British. His ideological position to take help from the Japanese Prime Minister Tojo, an ally of the Nazi powers, was not approved by leftist Congressmen and particularly by the Communists, who considered German Nazism and Japanese Fascism as more dangerous than British Imperialism. As the Allied Forces joined the war and the Soviet Union too got involved against Hitler, the position changed for the Communists all over the world. The change of position from Imperialist War to People's War was not very clear to Indian masses. P.C. Joshi, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of India, in retaliation to the argument of Subhash, wrote, "...the peoples of India and of the colonies in the east, who have learned by their experience that freedom cannot come as a gift from imperialists, also know well that it can nei-

ther come to them on the point of the blood-stained swords of the Japanese Fascists." Joshi pointed to the danger of Japanese Fascism looming large on the eastern border of India and used strong words against Subhash's strategy of aligning with the Japanese. At the eastern border of Bengal, Chittagong was bombed 44 times, similarly Calcutta, Visakhapatnam were also bombarded in early forties. Joshi expressed his worry when Subhash moved his provisional government from Singapore to Rangoon and announced his path of march to Delhi via Chittagong. In fact, despite warnings from his old friend, the Burmese freedom fighter, Bo-Aung San about the brutal and horrific nature of Japanese Government, Subhas was not willing to change his position and considered the Japanese as friends of India.

Subhash, however, was in touch with India's National Movement, extended his wholehearted support to Gandhi's Quit India Movement. Though he understood the limitations of the movement as it failed to draw the general Muslim communities, Subhas called upon progressive elements of different Muslim groups including Krishak Praja Party, to form a broad patriotic front. He was in touch with Indian people through his Azad Hind Radio. He never sustained any ill-feeling for Gandhi and other leaders of the Congress, rather he named his regiments as Gandhi Brigade, Azad Brigade, Nehru Brigade. Women Brigade was called Rani Jhansi Regiment. He sought blessings from Gandhi through his broadcast over Rangoon Radio on July 6, 1944 where he was the first one to address him as the 'Father of our Nation'. He ended his speech with these words, 'In this holy



war for India's liberations, we ask for your blessings and good wishes. Jai Hind!'. In fact, 'Jai Hind' as a national greeting was coined by Subhash during this phase.

With the fall of Berlin on May 9, 1945, came the end of War and defeat of Hitler. Subsequently, with the defeat of Japan, Subhas had to retreat in August, 1945. His death in a plane crash was a huge loss for the people of India. His last companion Habibur Rahman and the nurse in the hospital were the sole witnesses of this tragedy. However, three days before his death, on 15 August, 1945, his message to Indians reflects his indomitable spirit. He considered the retreat as 'temporary failure' and remained optimistic. Gandhi was impressed of his self-sacrifice as he wrote in Harijan: "My Praise and admiration can go no further." He felt reassured when he came to know that in one of his last messages, Subhash asked the I.N.A. veterans on their return to work for national unity in a non-violent manner under the direction of the Congress.

Attempts are still made to highlight acrimonious relationship of Subhash with the Congress. Unfortunately, he was not alive to see the Congress leader Nehru along with Bhulabhai Desai defending the three I.N.A. war veterans, one each from Hindu, Sikh and Muslim communities in the 1946 trials. Subhash had ideological differences with Gandhi and Nehru but his differ-

ences with the Right-wingers within the country and the leaders of the religious parties were much more serious and deep-rooted. It is an irony of history that Right-wing dispensation like BJP is today appropriating Subhash!

### **As a Romantic**

Subhash needs to be also remembered as a romantic lover who had a deep relationship with his Austrian stenographer Emilie Schenkl, whom he married secretly on December 26, 1936. Being uncertain of his future, Subhash wrote to her, "...but believe me you will always live in my heart, in my thoughts and in my dreams. If fate should thus separate us in this life, I shall long for you in my next life."

Today when in India, laws are initiated in some states to ban inter-faith relationships, we need to remember Subhash who never opposed such relationships and chose to love a woman of a different country, different religion, different customs, different language and his love was eternal. Their only child Anita bears the symbol of that love.

Let the people in India remember him not only for his widely recognised Armed struggle of I.N.A. but also for his vision of a united India with socialist structure and secular ethos. And finally, let him also be remembered for his eternal love for Emilie, to whom he wrote, "You are the first woman I have loved. God grant that you may also be the last. Adieu, my dearest."

## Call for Satyagraha...

From Page 03

the State Council. Following are the details:

Ramnaresh Pandey, Janki Paswan, K Rajendra P Singh, K Omprakash Narayan, Pramod 'Prabhakar', Ramchandra Mahato, Rambabu Kumar, Ajay Kumar Singh, Sanjay Kumar, Ramlala Singh, and Nivedita Jha were elected as members of the Secretariate, while Jabbar Alam, Vijay Kant Mishra, Prabhashankar Singh, Awadhesh Kumar Rai and Shatrughan Prasad Singh (Chairman, State Control Commis-



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the Bihar state council meeting

sion) were elected for the Executive Committee. Sudhir Sharma, Vijayendra Keshari, Surendra 'Saurabh', Surendra Singh 'Munna', Ajay Kumar, Prabhat Kumar

Pandey, Irfan Ahmed Fatimi, Omprakash 'Kranti', Braj Mohan Singh and Sushila Sahay were elected permanent invitees of the state executive. Sushila Sahay and Ahmed Ali (West

Champan) were elected on the two vacant seats of the state council.

member audit commission was also elected.

Dr AK Gaur, Rambabu Singh and Vidyadhar Mukhiya were elected members of the audit commission and Dr Gaur was elected its coordinator.

On this occasion was celebrated the election of an old party member, Shrimati Chinta Devi as the deputy mayor of Gaya city corporation. She was felicitated by the CPI general secretary D Raja and state secretary Ramnaresh Pandey at the state council meeting. After retiring from the post of sweeper in the corporation, she became a vegetable vendor. She was also a leader in the union.

## Joshimath Sinking....

From Page 05

movement and earlier landslides. This limits the carrying capacity of settlements which have, however, grown haphazardly and to over-burdened size in terms of residents and

increasing numbers of tourists. The region is classified as seismic Zone-V, the highest level of vulnerability to earthquakes and seismic activity, which can be exacerbated by heavy construction activity such as blasting and tun-

nelling as done in the area. Blockage of natural drainage by poorly planned construction can also cause instability and exacerbate landslides. As a result, satellite data reveal that Joshimath has been sinking at a rate of 6.5cm per year.



## An Alternative ...

From Page 06

state government. In order to make sure that every family in tribal areas receives rations the civil supplies ministry has initiated door-to-door delivery in special vans. The "Janakeeya Hotel" scheme was introduced by the state government in 2021. The hotel outlets are set up by Kudumbasree function in a decentralized manner focusing on districts, and municipalities.

Recently the government has taken proactive steps to eradicate extreme poverty. A survey would be conducted by experts with the help of local self-governments to find the people who toil in extreme poverty. Then the government will alleviate them using different socio-economic programs.

We prioritize people over money. The market interventions done by the Kerala government cannot be replicated by any state government in India. 13 essential daily-use products are still sold for the same price from 2016 via the PDS. The products are sold for a price much below their cost at the production Centers. In the past six years, 10,000 crores were spent by the government on market interventions.

The chief minister of the BJP government of Uttarakhand, Pushkar Singh Dhami, has misleadingly described this as a "natural disaster" while, on the other hand, construction activities at the NTPC's Tapovan-Vishnugarh "run of the river" hydel project, whose tunnelling work has been undertaken close to the town, and the Joshimath-Badrinath highway, have been halted in response to local anger. Blasting has been prohibited in the area, but locals have pointed to sign-boards announcing schedules for blasting in different construction pockets.

Even now, despite the ban on construction, TV channels have reported that, in the absence of any monitoring, some sort of construction activity is taking place in the area. This total lack of regulation and enforcement is characteristic of infrastructure construction in the region. The famous Char Dham Highway linking major religious sites was allowed by the Supreme Court to be widened and proceed unhindered, with no regulation imposed. Joshimath is today paying the price for this "development at any cost" approach.

It is likely that other parts of Joshimath town

will also suffer from subsidence in months and years to come. Other towns and locations in the region are also similarly vulnerable. The valley town of Rudraprayag has already reported cases of major cracks in residences and other buildings.

It is clear that, whatever measures are taken to tackle the current Joshimath disaster, a comprehensive review is required of infrastructure and other construction activities in the fragile western Himalayan region. What is required is a well conceived pathway towards environmentally sensitive development minimising harm to local residents and visitors.

# What is Wrong in Labour Codes -VI

*Payment of Gratuity: Gratuity shall be payable to eligible employees by every shop or establishment in which 10 or more employees are employed, or were employed, on any day preceding 12 months. But although payment of gratuity was expanded in the S.S. Code, it still remains inaccessible for a vast majority of informal workers.*

1. Informal workers face several challenges in availing any social security. First of all, there are no definite and unambiguous provisions for social security to informal workers. Experience shows that there is an awful lack of awareness among informal workers; they find it difficult to furnish all documentary papers required as part of registration process; furnishing proof of livelihood and income details in the absence of tangible employer-employee relationship becomes an insurmountable problem for them; online registration places a further challenge as most of them lack digital literacy and connectivity; net result of all this is that such requirements deter them from completing the registration and they continue to remain outside the social security net. The S.S. Code does not provide a way out from such wrangling. One can really wonder if there is any provision for social security in Chapter 9 (the chapter meant for unorganized workers) of the Code other than the abstract and very general direction that “the central/state governments shall formulate and no-

tify, from time to time, suitable welfare schemes for unorganized workers”.

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2. Informal workers face several challenges in availing any social security. First of all, there are no definite and unambiguous provisions for social security to informal workers. Experience shows that there is an awful lack of awareness among informal workers; they find it difficult to furnish all documentary papers required as part of registration process; furnishing proof of livelihood and income details in the absence of tangible employer-employee relationship becomes an insurmountable problem for them; online registration places a further challenge as most of them lack digital literacy and connectivity; net result of all this is that such requirements deter them from completing the registration and they continue to remain outside the social security net. The S.S. Code does not provide a way out from such wrangling. One can really wonder if there is any provision for social security in Chapter 9 (the chapter meant for un-

R S Yadav

organized workers) of the Code other than the abstract and very general direction that “the central/state governments shall formulate and notify, from time to time, suitable welfare schemes for unorganized workers”.

3. Despite much noise about social security to informal workers in the Code, it fails to provide any meaningful social security to them. The unorganized workforce is all-compassing, minus the small miniscule regular workforce of organized sector (which is less than 7 per cent of the total workforce of India). Unless there is a universal coverage, there is hardly any avenue of social security to informal workers. The S.S. Code should have provided a framework for universal social security with firm entitlements and defined timelines. The Code has failed in this respect. The Code has failed to be a step up from the Unorganised Workers' Social Security Act, 2008.

4. ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) and Anganwadi workers, who have been at the frontline of the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, have been kept out of the ambit of the Code. Do they not require social security?

5. The Code has completely missed the issue of “Unemployment Allowance” as a measure of social security, even though the definition of “social security” (section 2 (78)) does include income security against

unemployment as a component.

6. Gig workers and Platform Workers: The concept of “gig workers” and “platform workers” is very recent, and propaganda has been made that they are very independent, and they don't have any employer as they are themselves masters of their job. The Code doesn't provide any credible protection to these workers. Despite all sorts of lip service about providing social security to the workers, the Code on Social Security is dumb about gig workers and platform workers.

7. “Personal residential construction work” which forms a large component of daily wage workers is excluded from the Code.

8. The Code makes it easier to flout legally required social protection for workers. For instance, there is no stringent penalty for no-contribution of P.F. dues by employer/contractor.

## **The occupational safety, health and working conditions Code, 2020**

The Occupation, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, 2019 was introduced in the Lok Sabha on July 23, 2019. It was referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour. The report of the Standing Committee was placed before both the Houses of the Parliament on February 11, 2020. The Bill was reintroduced as The Occupation, Safety, Health and Working Conditions Bill, 2020 and has been passed by the

Lok Sabha on September 22, 2020, and by Rajya Sabha on September 23, 2020. The Code received the assent of the President on 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020. Draft Rules for the O.S.H. Code were published on 19<sup>th</sup> November, 2020.

The stated objective of the Act is to amend the laws regulating the occupational safety, health and working conditions of the persons employed in an establishment and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto. The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code is to replace and repeal the undernoted Acts:

1. The Factories Act, 1948;
2. The Plantations Labour Act, 1951;
3. The Mines Act, 1952;
4. The Working Journalists and other Newspapers Employees (Conditions of Service) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1955;
5. The Working Journalists (Fixation of Rates of Wages) Act, 1958;
6. The Motor Transport Workers Act, 1961;
7. The Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966;
8. The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970;
9. The Sales promotion Employees Act, 1976;
10. The Inter-State Migrant Workmen (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1979;

## CPI Units Observe....

*From Last Page*

riages, the burqa system, superstitions, etc. She collected thousands of signatures demanding women's reservations and organized several dharnas and demonstrations in front of Parliament. The real tributes to Com Geetha Mukherjee will be to launch a militant massive struggle against discrimination, violence, atrocities on women and for women empowerment and above all for one-third reservations to women in all legislative bodies, Amarjeet Kaur observed.

CPI Telangana state secretariat member E T Narsimha, state president of NFIW Ustela Srujana, working president Sadalaxmi, general secretary Nedunuri Jyothi, state assistant secretary NFIW, Md Famida, assistant secretaries of the party unit at the city Stalin and B Chaaya Devi, Karuna Kumari of Working Women's Forum, Marupaka Anil Kumar, national secretary AIYF, Dr. Syed Valiullah Quadri state president, AIYF and others partici-

pated in the commemoration.

### Andhra Pradesh

National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) national secretary Penumatsa Durga Bhavani, after paying floral tributes to the portrait of Com Geeta Mukherjee said that women have to launch united massive militant struggles for women's empowerment drawing inspiration from Com Geeta Mukherjee who fought relentlessly inside and outside the Parliament. The celebration was held under the Vijayawada city unit of NFIW at Dasari Bhavan.

Durga Bhavani further stated that as a result of struggles by Com. Geeta Mukherjee the then government had appointed a committee that toured the entire nation and submitted a report in favor of one-third reservation to women in all legislative bodies. The report was submitted 25 years ago but still remains on paper

The program was attended by Panchadarla Durgamba, secretary, Orsu Bhararathi, president, of the NFIW city

unit. Thammina Durga, Durgasi Ramanamma, Chintaada Parvathi, Mooli Indira, Nakka Rajyalaxmi, D Seetharam Amma, D Pushpavathi, URahelamma and others also participated in the programme.

### Bihar

A memorial meeting in Patna observed that the struggles of our older generation are behind the rights that women have today. Com Geeta Mukherjee was a strong voice who stood for women's rights. She fought a long struggle and gave a new vision to women of the country. She knew that no struggle can happen without an organization. After completing her education in Bengali literature in Kolkata, she continued to work for women and children. She loved to write and used to write diaries. Her diaries were documents of the political and social events of the time. She first came into the limelight in 1945 during the strike of postal workers. On July 19, 1945, she addressed a rally. After that, she participated in various movements including the movement of women beedi workers.

She had a special affection for children and wrote a book for children (Indian sub-fiction). She was also very fond of poetry. She used to recite poems of Kazi Nazrul Islam and Rabindranath Tagore to children. She is remembered as a fighting and courageous woman.

She played an important role in making the Women's Reservation Bill. On the hundredth birthday of Com Geeta Mukherjee, speakers spoke about her contributions while addressing the seminar organized at Gandhi Museum, Patna. Shyamoshree Das of NFIW said that Comrade Geeta Mukherjee's life was of high ideals. She fought relentlessly for women's rights and left a rich legacy for us. We can fight the difficulties of the present time only by sticking to this heritage.

The seminar was organized by Bihar Mahila Samaj on January 10 with the theme 'Geeta Mukherjee – The strong voice of Women'. She was the chairperson of the Joint Committee on Women's Reservation in Parliament in 1996. This committee had by placing its report on the table of Parliament advocated

reservation for women in the Vidhansabha and Lok Sabha, but even after 26 years, the Women's Reservation Bill is pending to be enacted. On this occasion, Sushila Sahai, president of Bihar Mahila Samaj, recalled Com Geeta Mukherjee's visit to Bihar in the '80s and said that one should learn from her how simple leaders should be. Prof Chandana Jha said that women all over the world had to fight a long battle for their rights. She expressed the hope that the result of the long battle for women's reservation would come in favour of women.

Earlier, introducing the topic of the seminar, Nivedita Jha, Executive President of Bihar Mahila Samaj, said that a better world can be created for women only by following the path of struggle shown by Com Geeta Mukherjee. The general secretary of the organization, Rajshree Kiran said that Geeta Mukherjee had fought for women's empowerment, both inside and outside Parliament. On this occasion, the president of Bihar Mahila Udyog Sangh Usha Jha said that whenever women come into leadership, they also inspire other women to become self-reliant.

## DUJ Blasts Increasing Policing...

*From Page 04*

divisive, communal hate speech. DUJ also welcomes the Supreme Court's recent observations on the role of TV channels in causing rifts in society and its directives to state governments and police to take action against those who promote hate speech.

The Supreme Court is hearing several petitions against hate speech including the "UPSC Jihad" campaign by Sudarshan News TV, the Corona Jihad campaign in the media and the Dharam Sansad meetings where anti-Muslim statements were openly

made. The Court has commented on the irresponsible comments made by some anchors, saying, "Therefore, if there is a fine on anchors, people will understand that there is a cost associated with it. Anchors can also be removed."

The News Broadcasting and Digital Standards Authority (NBSDA) was questioned by the Court which told the NBSDA lawyer, "Unfortunately you are doing nothing". NBSDA's sole defence was that Sudarshan TV and Republic TV were not its members. "Our code ought to be incorpo-

rated into the programme code so that it would be applicable everywhere," the NBSDA counsel has suggested.

The DUJ welcomes the Supreme Court's observations, but is the firm view that:

"The long term answer, in its opinion lies both in Parliament taking steps to have a statutory broad based Media Council, comprising the entire wide spectrum media to replace the Press Council with some more powers rather than giving the government policing powers or overriding powers to any

other body'. It notes further that various governments in the past, both the Congress and later the BJP government with Sushma Swaraj as Information Minister, had recommended a Media Council with more teeth, years ago.

It may be recalled as has been reported on January 13<sup>th</sup> 2023, the Supreme Court observed that television channels in India are dividing society because they are motivated by agendas, competing to sensationalize news, and follow the instructions of their funders. This observation came after the Supreme Court bench of Justices KM Joseph and BV Nagarathna heard a

number of petitions regarding incidents of hate speech and actions to be taken over them. The above-mentioned petitions filed were filed in the Supreme Court highlighting the various instances wherein hate speeches were made against the Muslim Community, namely the "UPSC Jihad" campaign by Sudarshan News TV, the "Corona Jihad" campaign in response to the Tablighi Jamaat issue and the Dharam Sansad meetings where allegedly anti-Muslim statements were made in Uttarakhand. These petitions had further urged the Supreme Court to formulate such broad guidelines to curb hate speech.

# Inequality is Destroying Humanity

*Global inequality has gotten worse, with the richest 1 per cent grabbing nearly two-thirds of the 42 trillion dollar of wealth newly-created since 2020. Inequality is destroying society and it is not inevitable; it is a choice that reveals us as lacking in both empathy and imagination. Our leaders need to imagine new economic processes and structures to create a fairer, more equal world and to save our planet.*

The “average” billionaire has gained roughly 1.7 million dollar for every 1 pound of new wealth earned by a person in the bottom 90 per cent. The collective wealth of the world’s super-rich is increasing by 2.7 billion dollar a day. Yes, really. You may want to read that again. These numbers feel staggering, at a scale that is almost beyond comprehension. Most of us have difficulty imagining what one billion of anything actually is.

Here’s what inequality really means... Inequality is the accumulation of wealth and power in a few hands. It has corrupted and polarized our politics and media. It is corroding our democracies.

It is widening the gap between races and genders. It fuels the unrelenting extraction and monetization of our natural resources, driving conflict and climate change. Emissions from a billionaire’s investments produce a million times more carbon than the average person.

We can only conclude that the elite own the rules and their functionaries fight to rig them in their

interests, especially on tax, labour rights, monopolies and intellectual property; on land control, planning and extraction rights, and union-busting.

## Global Economic Slowdown Puts Pressure on Decent Working Conditions

Current global economic slowdown is likely to force more workers to accept lower quality, poorly paid jobs which lack job security and social protection, so accentuating inequalities exacerbated by the COVID-19 crisis, ac-



According to a new International Labour Organization (ILO) report. Faltering global employment growth and the pressure on decent working conditions risk undermining social justice, according to the ILO’s World Employment and Social Outlook: Trends 2023 report.

The ILO’s report also projects that global employment growth will be only 1.0 per cent in 2023, less than half the level in 2022. Global unemployment is slated to rise slightly in 2023, by around 3 million, to 208 million (corresponding to a global unemployment rate of 5.8 per cent). The moderate size of this projected increase is largely due to tight labour supply in high-income countries. This would mark a reversal of the decline in global unemployment seen between

2020-2022. It means that global unemployment will remain 16 million above the pre-crisis benchmark (set in 2019).

In addition to unemployment “job quality remains a key concern”, the report says, adding that “Decent Work is fundamental to social justice”. A decade of progress in poverty reduction faltered during the COVID-19 crisis. Despite a nascent recovery during 2021, the continuing shortage of better job opportunities is

likely to worsen, the study says.

The current slowdown means that many workers will have to accept lower quality jobs, often at very low pay, sometimes with insufficient hours. Furthermore, as prices rise faster than nominal labour incomes, the cost-of-living crisis risks pushing more people into poverty. This trend comes on top of significant declines in income seen during the COVID-19 crisis, which in many countries affected low-income groups worst.

The report also identifies a new, comprehensive measure of unmet need for employment – the global jobs gap. As well as those who are unemployed, this measure includes people who want employment but are not actively searching for a job, either because they are discouraged or be-

cause they have other obligations such as care responsibilities. The global jobs gap stood at 473 million in 2022, around 33 million above the level of 2019.

The labour market deterioration is mainly due to emerging geopolitical tensions and the Ukraine conflict, uneven pandemic recovery, and continuing bottlenecks in global supply chains, the WESO Trends says. Together, these have created the conditions for stagflation – simultaneously high inflation and low growth – for the first time since the 1970s.

Women and young people are faring significantly worse in labour markets. Globally, the labour force participation rate of women stood at 47.4 per cent in 2022, compared with 72.3 per cent for men. This 24.9 percentage point gap means that for every economically inactive man there are two such women.

Young people (aged 15–24) face severe difficulties in finding and keeping decent employment. Their unemployment rate is three times that of adults. More than one-in-five – 23.5 per cent – of young people are not in employment, education or training (NEET).

“The need for more decent work and social justice is clear and urgent,” said ILO Director-General, Gilbert F. Houngbo. “But if we are to meet these multiple challenges, we must work together to create a new global social contract. The ILO will be campaigning for a Global Coalition for Social Justice to build support, create the policies needed, and prepare us for

## Diary of International Events

C. Adhikesavan

the future of work.”

“The slowdown in global employment growth means that we don’t expect the losses incurred during the COVID-19 crisis to be recovered before 2025,” said Richard Samans, Director of the ILO’s Research Department and report coordinator. “The slowdown in productivity growth is also a significant concern, as productivity is essential for addressing the interlinked crises we face in purchasing power, ecological sustainability and human well-being.”

In 2023 Africa and the Arab States should see employment growth of around 3 per cent or more. However, with their growing working-age populations, both regions are likely to see unemployment rates decline only modestly (from 7.4 to 7.3 per cent in Africa and 8.5 to 8.2 per cent in the Arab States).

In Asia and the Pacific and Latin America and the Caribbean, annual employment growth is projected to be around 1 per cent. In Northern America there will be few or no employment gains in 2023 and unemployment will pick up, says the report.

Europe and Central Asia are particularly hard hit by the economic fallout from the Ukraine conflict. But while employment is projected to decline in 2023, their unemployment rates should increase only slightly given the backdrop of limited growth in the working-age population.

# What is Wrong in Labour Codes -VI

From Page 11

11. The Cine-Workers and Cinema Theatre Workers (Regulation of Employment) Act, 1981;

12. The Dock Workers (Safety, Health and Welfare) Act, 1986;

13. The Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996.

## Issues of concern

1. The Code excludes many branches of economic activity, most notably, the agricultural sector which employs more than 50 per cent of total workforce of our country. Further, the employees in other unorganized sectors such as

small mines, hotels and eating places, machinery repairs, power loom, fire-works, etc and also those employed as informal workers in organized sector including new and emerging sectors such as IT and IT-enabled services, digital platforms, e-commerce have also not found coverage.

2. The Factories Act, 1948 defined a factory as any premises where manufacturing process is carried out and it employs more than: (1) 10 workers, if the process is carried out using power, or (2) 20 workers, if it is carried out without using power. The Code has increased the threshold to more than: (1) 20 work-

ers, if the process is carried out by using power, or (2) 40 workers, if it is carried out without using power. This increase in threshold will exclude a substantial number of workers from the rights, entitlements and facilities of safe and healthy working conditions etc. hitherto available to factory workers.

3. Work hours: No worker shall be allowed to work in an establishment for more than six days in any week (section 26(1)). No worker shall be allowed to work more than eight hours in a work day (section 25(1)). Weekly work hours will not be more than forty-eight hours. However,

hours of work for below ground mine workers have not been specified. This has been left to be notified by the appropriate Government.

4. The spread over of work: Section 28(1) of the Draft Rules has specified that "the period of work of a worker shall be so arranged that inclusive of intervals for rest, shall not spread over for more than twelve hours in a day. The spread over of work hours upto 12 hours will overburden the workers and will be detrimental to their health. A great injustice has been inflicted upon the workers by this 12 hours spread over. The Facto-

ries Act, 1948 (section 56) provided that inclusive of interval the spread over shall not be more than ten and a half hours in any day.

5. Limit for overtime hours not specified: Section 27 of the Code provided extra wages for overtime, which will be twice the rate of wages, but it has not prescribed the limit of overtime hours in a day or week. This has been left "to be prescribed by the appropriate Government". Sub-sections 1, 2, and 3 of section 56 of the Draft rules have dealt with "extra Wages for overtime under section 27" of the Code. Here also the limit of overtime work has not been specified.

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## Defeat BJP in 2024...

**From Front Page**  
in diversity. It believes in unitary system and that is why they talk of one nation, one culture, one nation, one religion, one nation, one election, one nation, one tax, one nation, one party, one nation, one world leader. They do not believe in the federal system. The CPI general secretary said that all these are causing danger to our country and people. We have to stop this trend and that is possible only by defeating BJP in the 2024 elections. If India is to be saved, if this Republic is to be saved, if Indian people have to be saved, BJP has to be dethroned

from power. This message must be communicated from this platform of Khammam, which has always been a revolutionary center.

He appealed to all secular and democratic parties present in the meeting and also to those who are not present to understand the threat and disaster we are facing and throw BJP-RSS combine out of power if the Republic has to be saved. He recalled that when our country was a British colony, we fought together against the British imperialists and achieved freedom. "We have to fight together

against the BJP-RSS combine and throw them out of power and that is not impossible, the CPI general secretary observed. We had made supreme sacrifices and achieved freedom. Now when our country is facing a crisis, we must fight unitedly and defeat the BJP. This huge meeting should convey a message of unity," said D Raja.

"After the Republic Day we will be observing Mahatma Gandhiji's martyrdom day. The message given by Gandhi is 'Ishwer Allah tere naam, Sab ko Sanmathi De Bhagwan' (You are our Ishwar and Allah both. Each one of us should have the same thinking. Give good sense to all). Good sense

needs to be given to Narendra Modi, Mohan Bhagwath and Amit Shah. When our country is at a critical juncture and our Republic and Constitution are facing threat, all secular and democratic parties and forces should unite and fight against BJP. "Let us take a pledge from this rostrum to defeat BJP in 2024 and let this message reach people."

The meeting was also addressed by Pinarayi Vijayan, Arvind Kejriwal, Bhagwat Singh Mann, K Chandrashekar Rao, chief Ministers of Kerala, Delhi, Punjab, Telangana, respectively and Akhilesh Yadav, former chief minister Uttar Pradesh.

The meeting was attended by Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao and Tamminen Veerabhadram, state secretaries, CPI and CPI(M), Puvvada Nageshwer Rao, CPI senior leader, Vineet Narayan and Gurnam Singh national leaders of Bharath Rashtra Samithi, Keshav Rao, leader of BRS parliamentary party, Nama Nageshwer Rao, leader of BRS Lok Sabha group, state ministers Puvvada Ajoy Kumar, T Harish Rao, and Vaddiraju Ravichandra, Parthasarathi Reddy, Maalothu Kavitha, MPs, MLAs, MLCs, and chairmen of several corporations. Cultural squad of BRS enthused the audience.

### On Record ...

Union Minister of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Narayan Rane could not have chosen a worse timing or venue for his statement that India might see recession towards mid-year.

"There is a global recession and it is in many countries. This is what I have gathered from discussions at meetings of the Union government. The recession is expected to hit India after June," Rane said, while speaking to the media after the G20 event in Pune, adding that the government was working towards lessening its impact. - *The Indian Express*, January 17.

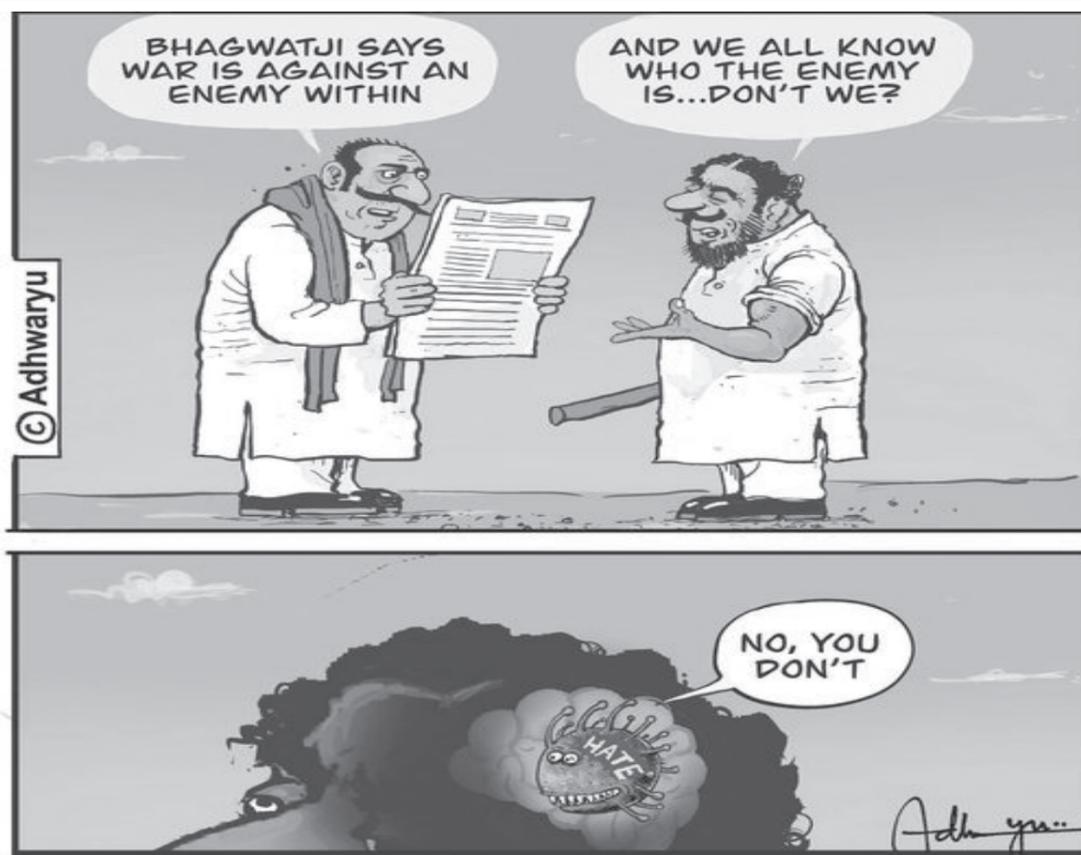
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The Supreme Court asked the Centre why states like Arunachal Pradesh, which too has a BJP government, and centrally-administered Union Territories like Jammu and Kashmir and Lakshadweep were not responding to its query seeking views on demands to enforce the law that religious and linguistic minorities should be identified at the state level.

"Jammu and Kashmir is administered by you at the moment... Arunachal is the same regime... Your own regimes are not responding... What is this? Lakshadweep also," Justice SK Kaul, presiding over a three-judge bench, told Attorney General R Venkataramani as he sought more time to get the views of the states and UTs which are yet to respond. - *The Indian Express*, January 17.

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Jawaharlal Nehru University Teachers Association (JNUTA) raised concerns over



an alleged attack on a JNU professor, Dr Satiya Brat Das, last week. As per the varsity body, the professor was 'attacked by a gang of 6-7 men', who circled the professor's car in Delhi's RK Puram and hurled abuse at him.

According to the JNUTA statement, the professor rushed his car to the JNU campus and the gang chased him to the campus. The incident took place on January 14. The statement further says that when university security guards tried to stop the miscreants, they even abused and attacked security guards. - *India Today*, January 17.

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The Central government told the Supreme Court that it was contemplating bringing a

"comprehensive" amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure to deal with hate speech and hate crimes. The top court said what was required was a "will and a pure heart" to enforce the existing laws and deprecated the visual media for not behaving responsibly and airing programmes that did not reflect different views during live debates.

The top court's observation on the way the existing laws are being enforced and the irresponsible way certain visual media outfits were conducting themselves came in the course of the hearing of a batch of petitions seeking curbs on hate mongering and hate crimes. - *The Asian Age*, January 14.

- Compiled by C. Adhikesavan

# Celebrations on Com Geeta Mukherjee Centenary

Communist Party of India units all over the country celebrated the birth centenary of Com Geeta Mukherjee and recalled her contributions. The following are reports from various states:

### West Bengal

On January 8, 2023, the birth centenary of Com

disciplined organizer.

The demand for 33 per cent reservation for

political career, Com Geeta Mukherjee also wrote several books for children, which include Bharat Upakatha (Folktales of India), Chhotoder Rabindranath (Rabindranath for Chil-

Wolves' into Bengali.

At a time when many women could not even think of entering politics, she became a stalwart politician. Her political career began with the student movement. The hundredth birthday celebration of Comrade Geeta Mukherjee started with the garlanding of her portrait tby CPI state council secretary Swapan Banerjee at the state party headquarter, Bhupesh Bhawan. Paschim Banga Mahila Samiti organized a seminar at BB Ganguli Street to pay homage to Com Geeta di. A Com Geeta Mukherjee Birth Centenary committee was also set up. Leaders of different women's organizations paid homage and spoke about her

movement of the country. All the district councils observed the day in a befitting manner.

### Telangana

AITUC general secretary Amarjeet Kaur was the chief guest of a meeting commemorating the centenary birthday of Com. Geeta Mukherjee at Dr. Raj Bahadur Gour Hall at Himayatnagar in Hyderabad on January 8. After garlanding the portrait of Com Geetha Mukherjee Amarjeet Kaur said that she was a renowned parliamentarian and senior CPI leader who fought relentlessly for women's empowerment and to ensure one-third reservations to women in all legislative bodies. She also fought for the eradication of il-



West Bengal

Geeta Mukherjee, the veteran communist leader, eminent parliamentarian, leader of the women's movement, and leader of the masses was celebrated throughout the state of west Bengal. The undisputed leader of the left movement in India, Com Geeta Mukherjee was born in Calcutta on January 8, 1924. She was an outstanding orator, affectionate and dutiful leader. She was also a

women in the Indian Parliament was raised by Com Geeta Mukherjee. She was a member of the West Bengal state council of the party. She was also a member of the national executive of the party. In 1942 she got married to the legendary CPI leader Biswanath Mukherjee. Her positive role in the reservation of seats for women in the Lok Sabha brought her into the limelight. Besides her

dren), and Hey Atit Katha Kou (Oh, Past



Telangana

please Speak) and she translated Bruno Apitz's book 'Naked Among

leadership and affection to her comrades. In Bhupesh Bhawan the portrait of Com Geeta Mukherjee was also garlanded by Kalyan Banerjee, Saikat Giri, Sanjay Das, Nihar Ghosh, Anupam Dasgupta, and others. Swapan Banerjee said that she was not only the pride of the party but was the pride of the working people, especially of the women's

literacy and advocated for women's employment.

With her commitment to the working class, she became MLA four times and was elected to parliament seven times. She believed that women's survival and development are possible only if they are given political and social rights. She also fought against child mar-

On Page 12



Bihar

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