

## India and G-20

# RHETORIC AND REALITY

The Group of 20 (G20), which India is chairing with much fanfare, was formed in 1999 to deal with broader issues concerning global economy. It was formed when neo-liberalism was widening its influence world over, but the group failed to keep track with economic trends and could not avert the financial meltdown of 2008. Consequently, the G8/G7 groups became more and more prominent when it came to influencing the policies in turbulent times.

When charges of exclusion were raised on these very limited groupings, G20 again became a platform which was apparently inclusive, though quite restricted when

compared with the United Nations. The Non-Aligned Movement or the G77 grew out of NAM and currently has a membership of 134 developing countries. India's Presidency of the G20 has both domestic and international implications and we must look at both in terms of how much it would benefit people, at home and abroad.

To begin with, the BJP and media have transformed this routine transfer of chair into a mega-event and an evidence of India's growing clout at international level. People are being fed with the myth that prime minister Modi's personal charisma and clout are turning diplomatic tides

**DRaja**

the Indian way. The sober fact, that India got the chairmanship only because of rotation, in itself is not a major accomplishment for India.

According to the G20's group system, India was supposed to become the Chair last year only. Prime minister's achievement here, if any, is deferring it for one year and schedule it for 2023, when nine states will go for assembly elections and the 2024 general elections will only be months away.

Rallying foreign dignitaries all over the country for various G20 meetings with large hoardings of the prime

minister greeting them will make a great electoral springboard for the BJP. Expenses would be on Exchequer only. Prime minister elaborated on the stated agenda of chairing the G20 in a blog-post. The discord between rhetoric and reality is most evident here. His words were "India is a microcosm of the world" with "immense diversity of languages, religions, customs and beliefs". This diversity has been India's greatest strength over the years, but under the Modi regime, it has been facing unprecedented strain.

The RSS-BJP are obsessed with homogeneity and try to flatten out diversity and differences proactively. Whether it is imposition of Hindi or discrimination against religious minorities, lynching people for what they eat or targeting them for their clothing, the RSS' idea of uniformity ever remains active. Dismantling the federal structure of the country has been a consistent feature of the Modi government.

Further, PM wrote, "India contributes to the foundational DNA of democracy," while the democratic character of India is being stormed against by majoritarian aggression. Parliament is

being made redundant and judicial independence is encroached upon. Central agencies are being used against opposition and media is made to look the other way.

Dissent is being criminalized and civil liberties gasp for breath. Draconian laws are invoked against those who dare question the regime and expose them. The basic secular, democratic and argumentative DNA our freedom struggle intended to inculcate is under threat. Critical questions about the corporates like Adani and the role of finance capital were not allowed to be raised in Parliament. This gag has been worrisome for the "foundational DNA of democracy" and shows again the huge gap between rhetoric and reality.

'One Earth, One Family, One Future' is the mantra PM gave to the G20 summit. This slogan is also a good yardstick to gauge the Modi administration. A family does not discriminate amongst its members.

Under Modi, discrimination with minorities has become institutionalized. The controversial Citizenship

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CPI general secretary D Raja and national council secretary Pallab Sengupta raising slogans after garlanding the portrait of Karl Marx on his 205th birth anniversary at CPI central office, Delhi

# Manipur Unmasks the True Face of BJP

Manipur was like trump card for the BJP. Since their first ascendance to power in 2017, with the calculated plan of a conquest they treated Manipur as their spring board for North East. BJP's gaining of power in the state itself was through crooked ways. It had only 21 MLAs in the 60 member Assembly, where as the Congress had 28 members. Purchasing MLAs and manipulation of Governor's office helped BJP to manage their foot hold in Manipur. From there they extended the tentacles of hatred politics to nearby states one after another. A new narrative was cooked up in their factory of lies that the religious minorities and tribal population have become devout supporters of BJP. North to South, East to West that manufactured story was propagated by the storm troopers. Now it is this story that has shattered into pieces. The real face of the BJP in connection with the minorities, tribals and other sections of the society stands exposed and the state was thrown into turmoil. During the most challenging days for the people in the North East, India witnessed the prime minister of the country ploughing for votes in the southern state of Karnataka.

The trigger for the orgy of violence engulfing the entire state of Manipur was a high court order which directed the state government to submit a recommendation for the inclusion of Meitis in the ST list. This was protested by the tribal population of the state and soon, violent clashes, arson and rage enveloped the entire state. The high court may have triggered the violence but it's clear that BJP's policy of dividing people under several labels and pitting one against the other is responsible for the turmoil in the state. BJP's tendency to centralise power

and not to maintain dialogue with stakeholders has pushed the state into this abyss of violence, which has claimed more than 60 lives and rendered thousands homeless. Dividing people paid handsome dividends to the BJP electorally but the disastrous consequences of divisions in the society are long-term and the BJP must be held responsible. Their hunger for capturing power has disfigured not only Manipur, but the entire North East. Learning nothing from this unrest, when people of Manipur were in tears, the entire BJP leadership was hovering over Karnataka doing what they do; dividing the people. The seeds of hatred and division BJP is sowing are poisonous for our soil which is rich with sacrifices from all sections of society.

## Editorial

Restoration of normalcy and lasting peace in Manipur is the foremost task before the country and the government today. However, BJP's narrow understanding of the issues concerned is resulting in an understanding that this is a mere law-and-order issue. Heavy deployment of armed forces will not address the matters at the core of violence. Deep seated frustration with the government is resulting in violence and it should be addressed politically and societally. All stake-holders, their representative organisations and political parties should be consulted and taken into confidence and the CPI had demanded this from the Union Government. Though Union Home Minister Amit Shah agreed to discuss the high court order recommending ST status to Meities, the scope remains narrow to the order itself. Consultations should go beyond the immediate trigger point and must address issues of long-term societal stability. How and why hatred has found

a breeding ground in Manipur should be investigated and forces responsible for this should be exposed. Immediate and human rehabilitation of those who were displaced should be prioritised. Generous compensation for those who lost their lives and injured in the spiral of violence must be ensured.

It is becoming increasingly visible to the country that the BJP-RSS, by their ideological disposition itself, are unfit to rule the country. BJP-RSS create fractures in the society for electoral gains and this is disastrous for the society. A diverse country like India cannot be governed without dialogue, especially in critical areas like Kashmir and the North East, but the BJP-RSS are ideologically in favour of heavily centralised and unidimensional flow of power. This ideological design is resulting in a calamity for peace and harmony in the country. Dissatisfaction is all pervasive in the BJP rule and those responsible are in a perpetually election mode with little time or patience to attend to the demands of the people. After the abject failure of BJP's Kashmir policy, now we are seeing the episode being repeated in the North East. Before situation escalates further, peace building will have to be prioritised and bonds between people will have to be strengthened through united efforts. People have to be reached and sensitized with the secular ethos of our Constitution and inclusive heritage of our freedom movement. RSS-BJP rule is based on the hatred created between our countrymen. This hatred must be defeated and replaced with love, compassion and sympathy to herald our country into an era of peace, progress and prosperity.



***Darwin Gets Excluded from School Syllabus***

**Children Getting Denied Rational Knowledge**

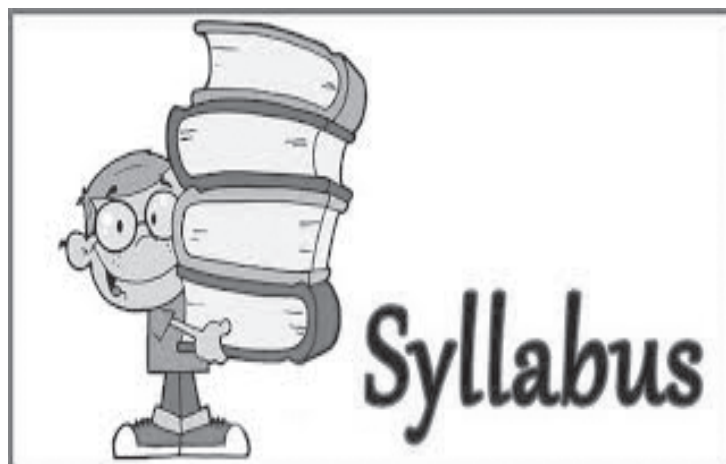
Several scientists, educators raised serious concern last week about NCERT removing theory of evolution from science syllabus in class X curriculum of CBSE. The letter said, "Understanding the process of evolution is crucial in building scientific temper". And depriving students of this exposure is depriving them of rational knowledge. Sadly, the list of deleted science topics include, Charles Darwin, molecular Phylogeny, Evolution and tracing evolutionary relationships.

The scientists appealed against exclusion of theory of evolution from curriculum and demanded it to be restored without delay. The signatories include prominent scientists from IITs, IISER, ICAR, TIFR, CSIR and other central universities. Knowledge and understanding of evolutionary biology is important not just for biology, but also for understanding tapestry of life and place of man in the nature. Evolutionary Biology helps to analyse array of problems we face in daily life in society from human diseases to epidemiology, ecology, environment to drug discovery.

We though do not realize in our busy daily life that Natural selection had played a major role in analysing the genome of recent COVID viral pathogen, it's gradual evolution and mutation to various strain sub types. These scientific investigations have helped epidemiology in containing further spread of the pandemic. Viral genome evolutionary studies greatly helped to

understand the various disease causing genes and enzymes in pathogen that eventually led to discovery of different vaccines that saved millions of human lives.

Our planet is populated with diversity (different



species) of animals, plants, microbes. Understanding Biodiversity and existing relationships between different species only helped scientists to hybridize related plants and come out with high yielding, better adopted crops, that helped to increase food production and save our planet from starvation. Darwin's theory of Origin of species helped us to understand how the gradual transformation of different plants and animals to other species takes place for better survival when challenged with threats in the environment. Biology taught us that all living creatures share a common structure of DNA or RNA, metabolism, physiology, and inheritance of common genetic code (programme of life). Genetics, is an area of biology that flourished after Darwin's epoch making theory of evolution and helped to

*Dr Soma Marla*

draw similarities and interrelationships among different animals using Tree of life. Frederic Engels, in an essay on 'The Part Played

by Labour in the Transition from Ape to Man', analyses evolution of man to present civilized stage and hails role played by human labour in their process of evolution.

Contrary to the universal understanding of Evolution, former BJP

Union minister for Human Resources development (January, 2018), not only challenges Darwin's theory of evolution, but said, "It was never seen how apes turned into humans." He said further that Darwin's theory (of the evolution of humans) is scientifically wrong. It needs to be removed from school and college curriculum." So, today's exclusion of Darwin's Evolutionary theory, Eucladian geometry and replacing them with fictional Dashavatars and Vedic mathematics and endorsement of Theory of Creativity is no surprise in this background. RSS and present regime have been targeting science, rational thinking so as to subvert 'Critical thinking and Questioning' from the minds of the students. This is part of a larger

design to drag modern India back to the dark ages of ignorance, especially under the domination of Manusmriti and casteism.

Considering the huge destruction that such steps would cause, nearly 1800 prominent scientists, educators from IITs, IISER, ICAR, TIFR, CSIR and other Central and other Universities appealed against exclusion of theory of Evolution from Curriculum and demanded its immediate restoration. The signatories include prominent scientists from all over the country.

People should join the scientists in demanding the NCERT and Union Ministry of Human Resource Development to immediately restore the excluded content from school syllabus.

**Use of Force No Solution, Start Talks: CPI**

*The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on May 5, 2023 on the Manipur situation:*

Reports of violence and arson coming from the state of Manipur are matters of serious concern for the entire nation. The ongoing turmoil in Manipur is a direct result of the policy of dividing the people pursued by the so-called 'double engine' government of the BJP. Divide and strife between people were encouraged for electoral gains and has resulted in strategically located state like Manipur being engulfed by all-encompassing violence. This violence has a background of divisions and it cannot be controlled enduringly by using force. This is testimony to the failure of the Manipur policy pursued by the Union home ministry and the state

government.

Many people have lost their lives and a greater number is displaced. Burning of houses and shops is widespread. Conflict is reaching alarming levels of violence. This is disheartening and shows that the people of Manipur are losing their confidence in the state.

CPI understands the conflict as a political and social one and not merely a law and order issue. The CPI demands of the Union home ministry and the state government of Manipur to reach out to all stakeholders and political parties for the immediate cessation of hostilities. A political solution to the crisis should be reached by taking all opinions and people into confidence and restoring normalcy and peace in Manipur. CPI appeals to all sections of the people of Manipur to maintain peace and tranquility.



# Patna to Host National Conference of BKMU

**PATNA:** The state council meeting of Bihar state Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union (BKMU) was held at Janashakti Bhawan, Patna on May 10, 2023. In the meeting, it was decided to hold the National Conference of the Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union on November 2-5, 2023 in Patna.

On this occasion, a huge rally will be organized on November 2. 'Save MNREGA' protest will be held at Delhi's Jantar Mantar on May 30, regarding the questions of MNREGA. The meeting was presided over by BKMU state president and MLA Suryakant Paswan.

The meeting was addressed by CPI state secretary Ramnaresh Pandey, national general secretary of BKMU Gulzar Singh Gorla, general secretary of Bihar state unit of BKMU, Janki Paswan, deputy general secretary

Puneet Mukhiya, treasurer Satyendra Singh, secretary Arjun Ram.

Addressing the meeting, Gulzar Singh Gorla said that the people of the country are devastated by the anti-



people policies of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre. Inflation is skyrocketing. Workers are being continuously attacked. Unemployment has risen to unprecedented limits. The budget for MNREGA is continuously facing cuts in the Modi government.

The amount of

**Gulzar Singh Gorla**

welfare schemes is being reduced and at the same time the debts of the monopolies are being written off. Modi government is taking the

country on the fascist path. To save the country and democracy, the BJP has to be removed from power at the Center in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. For this, the people's struggle has to be intensified. Common people are troubled by the huge unemployment in the country. Despite promising employment to the youth, the central

government is busy in implementing its anti-labour and anti-capitalist policies instead of providing employment.

Due to the continuous struggle and agitation of the Khet Mazdoor Union, an ambitious scheme like MNREGA got the status of a central law. The central government is conspiring to end MNREGA. MNREGA has been drastically cut in the general budget. Workers and farmers are troubled and devastated due to the impact of inflation, as a result, workers and farmers are committing suicide in different parts of the country.

CPI state secretary Ramnaresh Pandey said that the Modi government is selling all the institutions of the country to the capitalists. There is a need for the Khet Mazdoor Union organization to organize a vigorous movement by organizing the labourers

of rural and urban areas. The country and the state cannot be run by

creating hatred. He said that the Central government has to be thrown out of power in 2024 on the issues of the hardworking farmers and laborers.

There is a need to wage a strong struggle on the question of restarting the closed industries of Bihar, arranging houses for all the homeless, giving five decimals of land to the homeless landless, guaranteeing minimum wage of Rs.600 and 200 days of employment in a year. A historic rally will be held in Patna on November 2. Maximum number of farm labourers have to participate in the Jana Satyagraha and Jail Bharo movement organized against the anti-people policies of the Modi government at the district headquarters on June 8 and 9.

## What the Others Say...

### Ball Is in Courts

The Bar Council of India and state bar councils on April 23 asked the Supreme Court to avoid a decision in an ongoing hearing seeking legal recognition of same-sex marriages in India. The bar councils want the matter to be left to the legislature as they believe law is essentially a codified societal norm reflecting the collective conscience of the people. This is another way of expressing majoritarianism, which rests on the idea that the numerical majority always should have the decisive say.

The issue before the SC is a legal one. The petitioners' case is that when statutory laws do not recognise same-sex marriages, they violate fundamental rights. The touchstone here is the Constitution whose underlying principles are inconsistent with majoritarianism. It's these constitutional principles that have protected laws aimed at social reforms against many social "norms". For example, the Madras Temple Entry Authorisation Act, 1947, which opened access to all groups was upheld by the SC. As a vision document, the Constitution is not constrained by social "norms" that usually change at a glacial pace. It prioritises an individual's fundamental rights.

That's why the Constitution is so important in a democracy where the right to govern is decided by a parliamentary majority. However, by being steadfast in its adherence to constitutional principles, SC has provided succour to many oppressed individuals. The disquiet of the bar councils has its roots in a landmark SC judgment of 2018. A constitutional bench struck down Section 377 of IPC and decriminalised consensual same-sex relations. The ongoing hearing on same-sex marriages is a logical extension of that landmark ruling.

Fifty years ago, SC delivered its most consequential judgment to date in the Kesavananda Bharati case. The majority in a 13-bench evolved the basic structure doctrine that limits Parliament's power to wholly change the essential features of the Constitution. Its consequentiality stems from the shield it offers fundamental rights. The Indian Constitution was ahead of its time. For instance, universal adult franchise, which today is taken for granted, wholly ignored regressive social views of that era. This is one of the Constitution's greatest gifts. It needs to be nurtured.

Courtesy: The Times of India

### Every Drop Counts

In a first-ever count of its kind, a census has recorded an overwhelming disparity between rural and urban areas in terms of water bodies. The report highlights that cities and towns have less than three per cent of these reservoirs. Conducted by the Jal Shakti ministry, the survey included natural and human-made water repositories like ponds, tanks, and lakes. With nearly 7,50,00 water bodies, West Bengal tops the list. The country's most populous state, Uttar Pradesh, is a distant second with about 2,50,000 repositories. At a time when stressed aquifers pose difficult ecological, economic and policy challenges — including for the government's flagship scheme of providing drinking water to every household — the significance of this database cannot be overstated.

The Centre has been conducting a census of minor irrigation structures every five years since 1986. Much of the data indirectly compiled from the population Census by government agencies has also focused on minor irrigation works. The irrigation-centred approach was, to an extent, a fall out of the inclination of successive governments to view tanks, ponds, and canals as economic utilities, rather than critical resources for human and ecological well-being. In the past two decades, there have been some attempts at course correction. The UPA government, for instance, launched the Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies scheme in 2005 and MGNREGA works have focussed on reviving traditional water bodies.

But the lack of a comprehensive database has meant that these projects have not done sufficient justice to their objectives. The significance of the current study is underscored by the fact that it counted nearly five times the number of repositories enumerated by the last minor irrigation survey in 2013-14. The past studies did not have much data on urban centres.

That said, such enumeration initiatives will not do adequate justice to their objectives if they remain top-down affairs. Making panchayats, municipalities, and other local bodies the nodal points for future water body surveys as well as roping in civil society groups in the endeavour could help policymakers arrive at a better picture of the water crisis, and frame solutions.

Courtesy: The Indian Express



## Nine Years of Job Crisis without any Let Up

# Needs Urgent Redressal

*Rise in unemployment rate in India again in April 2023 should serve as a wake-up call for PM Narendra Modi led ruling establishment, since it shows the upward trend since the beginning of 2023, a year when both the domestic and global economies have been projected to decline to a new low.*

CMIE data shows that unemployment rate increased in 2023 to 8.11 per cent from 7.8 per cent in March 2023, and 7.14 per cent in January 2023, on moving 30 days average basis on current weekly status. It means workers are desperately seeking jobs that has swelled the workforce to 467.6 million, which was an increase of 25.5 million in a month.

Labour market could not accommodate them and hence the rise in unemployment rate. The number of unemployed workers rose from 34.5 million in March to 37.9 million in April. Unemployment in rural India was as high as 7.34 per cent while in urban India it increased to 9.8 per cent.

All these are indicative of very difficult days ahead for the workforce in India, that has been suffering from a grave unemployment crisis in the country for the last eight years under Modi rule, particularly after his infamous demonetization of November 2016 that devastated the labour market which never recovered thereafter.

India had been suffering from unemployment crisis even before PM Narendra Modi came to power in 2014. In the year 2012-13, the Labour Bureau Survey Report of the Union Ministry of Labour and Employment had put the unemployment rate as high as 4.7 per cent. Everybody found it unacceptably high, including Narendra Modi, who campaigned against the UPA government led by PM Manmohan Singh of the Congress.

During the election campaign, Narendra Modi, first assured 1 crore jobs a year, but soon started talking about work with dignity for all hands, which was interpreted as 2 crore jobs as per requirement of the country to accommodate all unemployed.

PM Narendra Modi is keeping mum now when in his premiership unemployment stood at 8.11 per cent in April 2023 as against 4.7 per cent prior to his becoming prime minister of this country. Obvious he has went back on his promise. Much worse, he does not want to address the unemployment crisis of his own making in the right earnest. He has been organizing employment fairs, but only to cover up his failure in keeping his own words.

Much worse, he shows little concern about the crisis. For example, the 46th session of the Indian

*Dr Gyan Pathak*

Labour Conference, which is the higher tripartite body for labour related policies, held in 2015 has recommended that India must have a National Employment Policy (NEP) to address the unemployment crisis. However, Centre has no plans to have any National Employment Policy in the country, as the Union Ministry of Labour has informed the Parliament of India.

After the implementation of demonetization, when unemployment started rising, the Centre announced that the "employment data collection in India will soon undergo a major revamp. A high level expert panel had recommended an end to the five-year employment surveys by NSSO.

NSSO came with the news data for 2017-18, which found the usual unemployment rate in the country had increased to 6.1 per cent on usual status basis, which was 45 years high since 1972-73, when it was 1.6 per cent, which has risen from 0.7 per cent in 1961 as per a World Bank study.

Usual status of unemployment always remains low, which was 6.1 per cent in 2017-18, as per the first Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS). However, current weekly status of unemployment at that time was as high as 8.8

per cent. A World Bank study has put the weekly rate at 4.3 per cent in 1972-73 and daily rate of unemployment at 8.3 per cent. Centre's PLFS gives us only usual and current weekly statuses.

Current Weekly Status (CWS) unemployment rate for 2018 was 9.1 per cent which stood at 9 per cent in 2019 when PM Modi returned to power for the second term. In 2021, it rose to 9.3 per cent. Government attribute it to COVID-19 pandemic but, it has just worsened the worse unemployment crisis already prevailing before the outbreak of the pandemic.

During October-December 2021, CWC unemployment rate for all ages was 8.8 per cent which improved to 7.2 per cent during the same months in 2022. For all the workers above 15 years of age the unemployment rate in the last quarter of 2022 was 7.2 per cent, as per the government data of PLFS. CMIE says it stood at 8.11 per cent in April 2023, which clearly indicate that that unemployment crisis has worsened.

Youth unemployment rate has reached a frightening level. PLFS data puts it at 18.6 per cent for October-December 2022, and the later quarterly data for January-March 2023 is awaited. Youth male unemployment during this period was 16.6 per cent while female youth unemployment stood at

25.1 per cent.

It is a very dangerous trend. The Centre must not hide this frightening ground reality under Modi's rhetoric during his employment fairs and election campaigns, since the unemployment along with cost of living crisis could have devastating effect on working households.

As for the employment rate is concerned, it fell from 37.1 per cent in December 2022 to 36.7 per cent in March 2023. In absolute terms, 26 lakh workers lost their jobs during this period. Most of the job loss, about 22.7 lakh was in March, which reflects the grim situation prevailing in the job market. Such a loss in a single month also indicates the volatility of the labour market, in which people somehow getting jobs of very low quality and then losing in the subsequent months.

Workers in the construction sector suffered the worst. The sector shed 95.8 lakh jobs in March. The sector employed 723.4 lakh workers in February, which declined to 627.6 lakh in March. It is a matter of serious concern, since the sector suffered worst fall since May 2021 in the midst of the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. At that time about 116 lakh workers lost their jobs in construction sector.

The second worst fall was witnessed in the retail trade. About 80 lakh

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# CPI Leaders Meet Protesting Wrestlers

Communist Party of India general secretary D Raja along with party national council secretary Pallab Sengupta and party Delhi state council secretary Dinesh Varshney met the protesting women wrestlers at Jantar Mantar in the national capital on May 6, 2023 and expressed full support to their agitation. They were accompanied by other party leaders of Delhi, including Babban Kumar Singh and Mohd Muslim.

The internationally acclaimed Indian wrestlers were protesting against sexual harassment by their coach and president of Wrestling Federation of India Brijbhushan Singh MP.

D Raja personally met the protesters Sakshi Malik, Bajrang Poonia and others and extended full support to them. In his address he said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi instead of speaking only on his 'Man ki Baat', should have immediately spoken in support of the agitating sportswomen who have brought honour to the

nation. He condemned the strong arm tactics of Delhi police against the agitating wrestlers.

## CTUs Extend Support

The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions issued the following statement on May 8, 2023 extending support to wrestlers' agitation:

The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions – INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC expresses its whole hearted support to the justified demand of young women wrestlers for stringent action against Brijbhushan Sharan Singh, BJP MP and the chairperson of the Wrestlers Federation of India, who, as per the two FIRs registered against him, harassed them sexually.

The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions demands that he be arrested immediately so that the enquiry proceeds without his being able to influence it. These young wrestlers, who

brought laurels to the nation by winning medals with their hard work, were treated shabbily by creating all inconveniences to them at Jantar Mantar. The worst of it happened when during the May of My 3, they were attacked by police just because they were trying to protect themselves from rains and shifting their mats and arranging to get some cots.

The police manhandled a woman journalist Sakshi Joshi, whose clothes were torn in the process. She, on getting the information of police action, had reached the spot for reporting facts from the site.

The voice raised by the wrestlers is the voice for justice to all our female folk who face harassment and are not only not heard, but are further made to face the torture and wrath of the society when the perpetrator is in a position of power.



D Raja addressing the protesting wrestlers

We all stand with these young fighters and urge upon our trade unions at all levels to extend support, organise solidarity actions, send their support messages to the protesters. The voice of sanity would prevail, the victory of these fighters would be victory

of common citizens.

The trade unions reiterate their demand that the government immediately arrest Brijbhushan Sharan Singh and the actions on the FIRs be proceeded with as one of the FIR invokes even the POCSO Act.

## NFIW Launches Nationwide Signature Campaign

# Arrest BJP MP Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh

As part of the joint call by the left women organisations, the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) is successfully organising signature campaigns across the country demanding immediate arrest of BJP MP in Lok Sabha Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, who is an accused in the sexual harassment case filed by women wrestlers.

NFIW has given a memorandum to Om Birla, speaker of Lok Sabha demanding immediate suspension of the accused Brij Bhushan.

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The Delhi Police have registered two FIRs against BJP MP. He holds the position of president of Wrestling Federation

Annie Raja

of India (WFI). One FIR is registered under POCSO, and is based on

the sexual harassment and criminal intimidation complaint of a minor wrestler and the other FIR also arises

from similar complaints of sexual harassment under POSH Act, filed by other young women wrestlers.



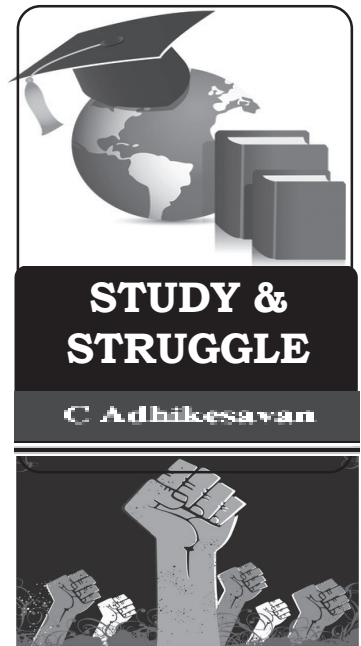
The complainants, including a minor, are those young women who have brought national and international laurels for India. They have consistently represented India over many years, and won medals in the Commonwealth games and in the Olympics too.

These young women worked hard, with determination and put in their best with their

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# Government Wants to Hide Reality of Vulnerable Children from G20 Meet



*The 'rescue' operations are aimed at scaring parents so they would not keep their children at home and the G20 delegates would not see them on the roads. The schools are the best place to take care of vulnerable children. However, the government has neglected the public-funded schools.*

The National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights has asked the states to map the hotspots of street children and rescue them, that is, return them to their parents or send them to children's homes. A social activist called it an "ad hoc measure", being adopted to hide the real condition of Indian children from G20 delegates who have been increasingly visiting the country in the run-up to the G20 summit, scheduled here in September.

The advisory came in a letter that Priyank Kanoongo, chairman of the NCPCR, the statutory body set up to protect vulnerable children, wrote on April 13 to the departments responsible for child welfare in all the states. It cited Supreme Court directives issued in 2021 and 2022 that asked the states and the Union Territories to submit plans to rehabilitate street children.

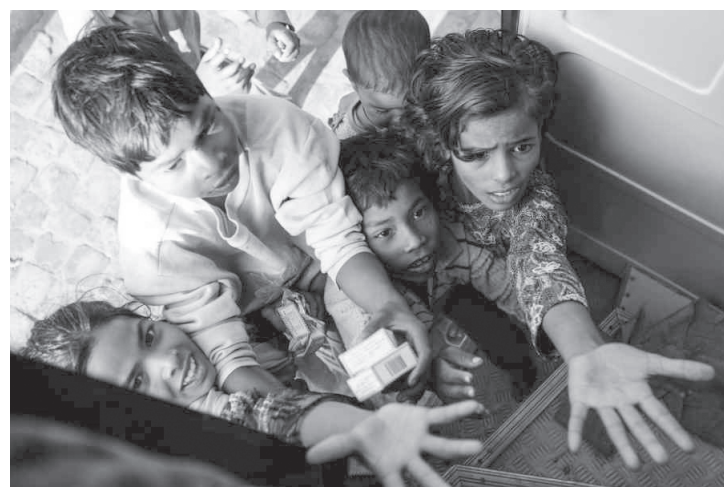
In this regard, you are requested to provide a list of identified hotspots in your concerned states/ UTs. Further, you may also provide calendar for undertaking the rescue operation in each of the districts for children in street situations from May 1-31<sup>st</sup>, 2023, so that the commission could depute its official(s) to monitor the rescue of children in street

situations, the letter says.

It added that the commission had already held meetings with the states and Union Territories and made the same request, but had received no information about any progress.

Street children, to the authorities, are those that spend a huge amount of their time on the streets – a wide category that includes child beggars and homeless, abandoned or orphaned children, as well as children who don't go to school but loiter on the streets.

The government response to the problem of street children has always been superficial;



there's no rehabilitation mechanism.

They occasionally conduct rescue operations and keep the rescued children at children's homes before returning them to their parents. (The latest directive) is an ad hoc measure aimed to hide the real picture of street children from G20 delegates. The rescued street children are often ill-treated at the children's homes, which have limited facilities anyway.

Sometimes the "rescues" are eyewash, he alleged, citing how district authorities and the NCPCR recently "rescued" many children from Delhi's R.K. Puram area while

they were playing on the streets. The parents approached the authorities and got their children back.

Public schools in rural areas have hardly 50 per cent attendance on any given day. Children of migrant workers are often not enrolled in school, while many children spend their time just moving here and there. The government needs to improve the quality of teaching and care in its schools. These street rescues will not help because the children will be returned to their parents, who lack the wherewithal to provide them with quality schooling.

The 2011 population census counted 4.13 lakh beggars and vagrants in India, with Bengal topping the chart with 81,244. Of the 4.13 lakh, 61,311 were children aged up to 19 years. Uttar Pradesh had 14,599 child beggars and vagrants followed by Rajasthan (8,976), Bihar (4,485) and Bengal (4,323).

### Save education from privatisation, commercialisation

There has been a lot of concern recently regarding the direction of education policy in India, particularly regarding the Union Government's National Education Policy 2020 (NEP). Educationists,

teachers, students and educational organisations are apprehending that NEP is misdirected from aim of really educating the marginalised children.

After much struggle, the Right to Education Act 2009 (RtE) was enacted by Parliament, giving effect to the 86th Constitution Amendment via Article 21A, assuring free and compulsory education for all children in the 6-14 years age group. However many challenges still remained in the education sector, such as low public expenditure, low teacher-student ratio, urgency of improving quality of education and high drop-out rates in school especially impacting girls, SC/ST and poor rural students. Higher education institutions (HEI) also suffered from many new and old problems.

Regrettably NEP has not addressed these issues, and instead Implementation of NEP is rapidly pushing the country's education system in retrograde directions with serious consequences.

The NEP is being pushed without being placed before or passed by Parliament, despite numerous contradictions with the legislated RtE Act. Various states have not been adequately consulted. More specifically, this declaration states that under NEP, extending a NITI Aayog policy to "rationalise" infrastructure and expenditures, thousands of schools have been closed or merged all over the country, with many thousands more to come. This will undoubtedly reduce access to schooling, especially in

rural areas since many students will have to travel even greater distances than at present, and would increase drop-out rates, particularly among girls, as already being witnessed.

Further many government schools are being privatised outright or handed over to private management, both with higher fees, further impacting access and exacerbating inequity. In a country desperately crying out for increased public expenditure on education, currently languishing at under 3 per cent of GDP, which is much lower than comparable developing countries and emerging economies, further reduction of public expenditure cannot be the answer. There is call for strengthening the public education system rather than reducing public investment and encouraging privatisation in different ways.

The NEP puts enormous and undue emphasis on distance, on-line, informal, home and volunteer-based education, especially in school years. Experience during the Covid pandemic, including through numerous surveys, clearly showed that the vast majority of students, especially from rural and poor backgrounds, could not access or effectively utilize on-line classes due to the lack of adequate smart phones in families.



# Chandrashekhar Singh:

*Chandrashekhar Singh was an extremely popular mass speaker and leader of Bihar, close to the masses, who helped growth of CPI into a mass party. He also accomplished memorable achievements as minister in SVD government of 1967.*

Chandrashekhar was born on December 26, 1915 in Bihat, Begusarai (Bihar). His father Ram Charitra Singh, was a famous Congress leader of Bihar, and his mother was Chandravati.

## Education

Chandrashekhar received his initial education in Bihar Vidyapeeth, Sadaqat Ashram, Patna, a hotbed of nationalist movement. It was the Congress headquarters, and was the centre of non-cooperation movement led by Gandhiji. His father was the principal of the Vidyapeeth, who got arrested during movement.

Chandrashekhar was deeply influenced by Congress. He shifted to Muzaffarpur, studying in the Collegiate School. He passed his Matric in 1933. Later, he was admitted in BHU (Benaras Hindu University). His father got him married in 1934, but his wife did not survive for long.

## Debates in BHU

Benaras was an important political centre. In a debate on 'What is Gandhism', Rustom Satin, the future CPI leader of UP, spoke against and Chandrashekhar in favour. Later, both became close friends, Rustom providing him Marxist literature. One day, Rustom told him that an important Communist leader was to come and stay in Chandrashekhar's room. Chandrashekhar was very eager, as he had not 'seen' a Communist earlier. The leader in

question was RD Bhardwaj. Chandrashekhar found him simple beyond belief!

Bhardwaj spoke in a meeting of about a hundred Communists on the terrace, also a surprise: so many Communists! His speech brought Chandrashekhar nearer to Marxism and Communism.

Chandrashekhar was asked to move to Patna and take admission in Patna College to organize party. At first, he was refused by the British principal, who questioned him on activities in BHU. Then Shri Babu, chief minister of the province at the time, telephoned the principal and Chandrashekhar was admitted.

## Formation of Students Federation

Indradeep Sinha, the future Communist leader, was also there, and both of them began to organize Students Federation in Patna and Bihar. The committee of students, which welcomed the formation of Congress ministry in 1937, was later converted into the Students Federation of Bihar at the suggestion of Kishori Prasanna Singh of CSP.

Patna Students Federation (Chhatra Sangh) was founded in 1937, and Bihar State Students Federation (Bihar Rajya Chhatra Sangh) in 1938. Chandrashekhar was elected its first secretary. In the course of time, Chandrashekhar met PC Joshi, general secretary of CPI, and was deeply

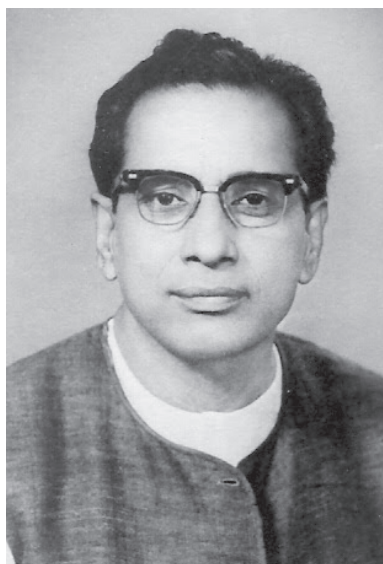
impressed by him.

In February, 1938, the students of Bihar Vidyapeeth went on hunger strike. Chandrashekhar and Jagannath Sarkar met them.

Chandrashekhar's father Ram Charitra Singh simultaneously emerged as an important leader of Congress, of civil disobedience movement and salt satyagraha.

## Foundation of CPI in Bihar, 1939

Bihar provincial unit of CPI was formed on October 20, 1939 in Munger, attended by 18



comrades, with Sunil Mukherjee as the first secretary. It was attended by RD Bhardwaj on behalf of the Polit Buro. Chandrashekhar joined a little later, and was to emerge as a crucial link in its leadership.

Chandrashekhar got married a second time in February 1940 to Shakuntala Devi.

Chandrashekhar Singh played an active role in getting RD Bhardwaj into the Congress pandal in Ramgarh congress in 1940, and in getting him out of it, helping him escape police. Gandhiji and Nehru too played a crucial role in his escape. Later Chandrashekhar himself got arrested from

Law College PG Hostel, Patna, along with others.

He was put in Hazaribagh Jail, along with about 90 other Communists. Along with Chandrashekhar, They organized lectures, classes and discussions. Both the father and son were in different jails at this time!

There and later, Chandrashekhar proved to be a very good teacher in the party schools.

Chandrashekhar was released in 1942. He used to sell party paper Lok Yuddha (People's War) near Gandhi Maidan.

## In 1942 movement

Chandrashekhar along with Rahul and Indradeep Sinha took part in students' conference in Naugachhia in August 1942. They heard about Mahatma Gandhi's arrest, and rushed to Patna. Students were in revolt and all the educational institutions were on strike, with AISF giving a call for protest strike. They gathered at Secretariat building on August 12, led by Bihar SF general secretary Chandrashekhar Singh. Lathi charges and firings followed, in which seven students were killed. Protests engulfed entire Bihar.

## Relief work in famine, 1943

Widespread famine broke out in Bengal and Bihar in 1943, with millions dying. Chandrashekhar Singh was made the secretary of an all party relief committee. Communist Party cadres went house to house collecting relief material and enrolling volunteers.

Chandrashekhar Singh attended the party district meeting in March

Anil Rajimwale

1944 as provincial observer along with Sunil Mukherjee. He met Chaturanan Mishra for the first time. Chandrashekhar Singh also attended the district party school in Madhubani in 1945 and delivered simple and fine lectures.

## 1946 elections

Provincial elections were held in January 1946 in British India to elect members to the legislative councils. Provincial assemblies thus elected, in turn elected the Constituent Assembly to prepare Indian Constitution.

CPI set up Karyanand Sharma as its candidate from North Munger (Begusarai) and Brahmadeo Sharma from South Munger. In the restricted franchise only those could vote who had passed their Matric or paid at least 12 annas as 'chowkidari tax'. PC Joshi also came and Chandrashekhar Singh was at the forefront of the campaign.

Their meeting in Rajapur, Begusarai was under threat of attack by armed goondas. Chandrashekhar Singh protected Joshi by giving a long and absorbing speech listened to with rapt attention for one and half hours. In the meantime, Joshi and others slipped away along with Jagannath Sarkar.

## Post-independence period

Bihar CPI welcomed India's independence enthusiastically. Unfortunately, soon the country and Bihar got engulfed in communal riots.



# Outstanding Mass Leader

In 1948, the first provincial conference of CPI in Bihar was held. Chandrashekhar Singh was elected to the party state (provincial) secretariat. It was the period of the suicidal 'BTR Line'. Party was declared illegal in March 1948. Chandrashekhar Singh was staying underground in his father's quarters, when the latter was irrigation minister in the state Congress cabinet. Police force came early in the morning to arrest Chandrashekhar. Ramcharitra Singh gave

1949. Chandrashekhar Singh and Jagannath Sarkar called a secret meeting of the leadership of AIRF. The strike failed completely due to the ill-conceived adventurist policy of BTR leadership.

Both of them were arrested in mid-August 1949 from workers' settlement. Chandrashekhar was brutally beaten and bloodied, particularly on his head. They were taken to Patna in that condition in steamer.

Chandrashekhar's younger brother

himself was irrigation minister while Chandrashekhar himself led the protest movement.

He also went round the coal mines of south Bihar along with SA Dange.

## 1955 Firings, Patna

There was massive all Bihar movement of students and people against police firings in BN College, Patna, in 1955 in which Dinanath Pande was killed. Chandrashekhar Singh addressed students' mass meeting in Patna Hospital grounds. He also led the funeral procession.

## Mid-term election, 1955

Chandrashekhar Singh was set up as CPI candidate in by-elections to the assembly from Begusarai after the death of Congress MLA. All the major state CPI leaders campaigned, among them were Indradeep Sinha and Habibur Rehman. CPI general secretary Ajoy Ghosh also participated. Chandrashekhar won a thumping victory as the first CPI MLA in Bihar.

He lost the assembly seat in 1957 elections in an intensely fought contest in which the vested interests, administration and the ruling party used every means to terrorise the people. Chandrashekhar Singh was attacked and beaten on several occasions. 'Booth capturing' was used for first time by the ruling party on a large scale.

But he wrested back the seat in 1962 elections with a resounding victory.

## Students' upsurge in Bihar, 1965

Massive state-wide movement erupted in

Bihar, beginning on August 9 against rise in school fees led by AISF. First state level demonstration took place in Patna in front of the Secretariat, and a huge mass meeting was held in Gandhi Maidan. Students were brutally lathi-charged, fired upon and run over by mounted police. The movement then spread all over Bihar. Police attacked the public meeting in Gandhi Maidan, in which Chandrashekhar Singh and Karpooori Thakur were brutally lathi charged. Chandrashekhar Singh fell down unconscious and was given up for dead. Some people rushed Chandrashekhar Singh to hospital and he somehow survived the assault and soon re-emerged as a roaring lion!

The movement led to a resurgence of student movement in Bihar.

## Minister in 1967 cabinet

Chandrashekhar Singh was irrigation and electricity minister in the SVD government in 1967. Congress lost 9 out of 17 states in the elections. CPI joined the non-Congress SVD governments in Bihar and some other states. Chandrashekhar Singh along with Indradeep Sinha and Tejnarayan Jha were the CPI ministers. As a minister he left a deep impact on the politics of Bihar.

On one occasion, he addressed the leadership of Bihar State Electric Supply Workers' Union, as they had been proposing to go on indefinite strike regarding the Industrial Tribunal Award.

There was pin-drop silence as he spoke.

Chandrashekhar Singh stated that the workers and union were fully justified in their demands. The government had decided to implement the Award by raising their minimum wages by Rs 24 and 35 paise with immediate effect. He said he would see the Board did not go bankrupt.

His announcement was greeted with prolonged and loud cheers and clapping. It was unbelievable! The strike was withdrawn.

Com Chandrashekhar Singh was deeply loved by people and was aptly called 'Red Star of Bihar'.

## Party congress in Patna, 1968

Chandrashekhar Singh was a leading figure in organizing this party congress, devoting almost his entire time. He emerged as a brilliant organizer.

## Positions in the party

Chandrashekhar Singh was member of state secretariat for a long time. He was elected to the national council of CPI in Patna congress (1968).

## Death

He fell seriously ill in Delhi in 1976. His health was always precarious since the British days, with beatings, jails, bad food, lathi charges etc. He was taken to AIIMS but he soon left without completing medical examinations to attend programs in Begusarai. He travelled in his old dilapidated jeep all the way from Delhi to Begusarai, participated in padayatra, but had to be hospitalized mid-way as he vomited lot of blood. It was raining heavily that night as he was taken to Patna in an unconscious state. He could not be saved and passed away on July 20, 1976.

## Biographies of Communist Leaders-86

a stinging lecture to the sub-inspector of police, asking how did he dare to come! In the meantime, Chandrashekhar escaped to the nearby quarters of Vinodanand Jha, the then minister in the government. Chandrashekhar put on police uniform and disappeared!

In the meantime, Chandrashekhar Singh was blessed with a son on May 25, 1948. After sometime, he got a secret letter from his wife Shakuntala, who asked him to choose between her and party. Put in a dilemma, he replied: 'You are my wife, party is my mother; how can I leave any one of them?'

In December 1948, he went to meet his mother in his village after a long gap, as he was underground.

Party had given a call for all India railway strike beginning March 9,

Chandraprakash also became a member of CPI in 1946, and actively worked in AISF.

Communists worked hard during the cholera epidemic of 1950-51, with Chandrashekhar in the forefront. Dr Piyush Gupta became a well-known party doctor helped by Chandrashekhar Singh.

## General elections, 1952

Chandrashekhar Singh was set up as CPI candidate both for Lok Sabha and assembly, from Begusarai and Bakhri constituencies respectively. He lost but emerged as an effective and popular mass speaker drawing huge crowds.

After elections, the government doubled the irrigation rates. Chandrashekhar's father Ramcharitra Singh



**കാൽനൂറ്റാണ്ടായി ക്ഷീരകർഷകരുടെ ഉത്തമ വിശ്വാസം**



**സുരക്ഷിതമായ പാലിനും ആരോഗ്യമുള്ള പശുവിനും**

**ഗുണമേന്മയിൽ വിട്ടുവീഴ്ചയില്ലാതെ കേരള ഫീഡ്സ് മുന്നോട്ട്...**

ബ്യൂറോ ഓഫ് ഇന്ത്യൻ സ്റ്റാൻഡേർഡ്സ് നിഷ്കർഷിക്കുന്ന മാനദണ്ഡങ്ങൾ പാലിച്ച് നിർമ്മിക്കുന്ന സമീകൃത കാലിത്തീറ്റ



**ഡയറി റിച്ച് പൂസ്**  
പ്രത്യേക രേഖപാൻ പോറ്റിൽ അടങ്ങിയ എക്സ്ട്രാ പ്രീമിയം കാലിത്തീറ്റ



**കേരള ഫീഡ്സ് എലൈറ്റ്**  
അത്യന്തപാരമ്പര്യമുള്ള അത്യുൽപ്പാദനമുള്ള പ്രീമിയം കാലിത്തീറ്റ



**കേരള ഫീഡ്സ് തിരവ്**  
മാതൃമണ്ഡല സമ്പന്നമായ സമീകൃത കാലിത്തീറ്റ

- ☞ കാലിത്തീറ്റയുടെ പോഷകാലസന ചാക്കിൽ രേഖപ്പെടുത്തുന്നു.
- ☞ ഇന്ത്യയിൽ നിർമ്മിക്കുന്ന ഉൽപ്പന്നങ്ങളുടെ പരമോന്നത ഗുണമേന്മ അംഗീകാരമായ ISI ചിഹ്നം ഇനി കേരള ഫീഡ്സ് കാലിത്തീറ്റയുടെ ചാക്കുകളിൽ അച്ചടിക്കുന്നു.
- ☞ 2023 ജനുവരി 16 മുതൽ കമ്പനിയുടെ എല്ലാ യൂണിറ്റുകളിലും ബാധകമാക്കുന്നു.
- ☞ കേരള ഫീഡ്സ് എലൈറ്റ്, തിരവ്, ഡയറി റിച്ച് പൂസ് എന്നീ കാലിത്തീറ്റകൾക്ക് ബാധകം

**കേരള ഫീഡ്സ്**  
സമീകൃത കാലിത്തീറ്റ

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## Needs Urgent Redressal...

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jobs were lost in March, which was also worst since May 2021 during the second wave of COVID-19 pandemic. Retail trade sector was employing 757.5 lakh workers in February, which the number fell to 676.5 lakh.

There was very distressing scenario in the non-agriculture sectors was obvious. Unemployment rate in the urban areas have been even higher than in the rural areas since January 2023. It was because of this reason that large number of workers who lost their

jobs in towns and cities in non-agriculture sector shifted again to agriculture sector, though it has been less remunerative. It resulted into swelling in the number of workers employed in agriculture was 172.3 lakhs in March. It means only a fraction of the workers lost their jobs in non-agricultural sectors could be able to get work in agriculture. The CMIE report says that such an increase in agriculture workforce was highest since 2016. Only about 150 lakh increase was registered in March 2023, a year ago.

It must also be understood in the

backdrop that agricultural works are by and large very low paid jobs or the workers returning after losing jobs in other sectors just contributed in their family agricultural activities, which amount to almost joblessness. Moreover, by definition, if someone finds one hour of work in a week is counted as employed, and therefore the employment figures does not reflect the horrible ground level situation. The works found in MGNREGA even for a single day also increase the employment numbers. All these conceal real

unemployment levels.

However, the agriculture sector has not the capacity to absorb the sudden increase of workers. For example, agricultural activities increased last year in March 2022 by 10.4 per cent, but 3 per cent lost their employment in April, 6 per cent in May and further 6 per cent in June. Therefore, the 12 per cent increase in March 2023 is temporary, and the agriculture sector is bound to shed lakhs of employment in coming months, because there would be little or no agricultural activities.

The labour participation rate which was 40.1 per cent in 2021-22 had fallen below 40 per cent in 2022-23, which fell

further in March 2023 to 39.8 per cent is a serious concern. The fall in employment rate to 36.7 per cent in March is also an ominous sign.

Average monthly unemployment rate in 2022-23 had remained elevated at over 7 per cent in each quarter, while average monthly unemployment rate rose to 7.6 per cent, and for the March 2023, it was even higher at 7.8 per cent. Urban unemployment rate was 8.51 per cent in March 2023, while rural unemployment was 7.47 per cent. At present, rural unemployment is around 6.72 per cent, it is most likely to increase sharply, after sharp decline in agricultural activities in the summer.



The following are excerpts on priority sector lending, microfinance and financial inclusion during 2004-2019 from the book 'Towards Transforming Banks as Public Utility Institutions' by Dr R Bandyopadhyay, former director of National Institute of Bank Management (NIBM), Pune. The book published by People's Publishing House, New Delhi contains many such features on various aspects of Indian banking and will be of immense help for anyone who wants to know more about the banking sector.

#### Editor

In post-independent period the evolution of Indian banking system can be usefully studied in the following four phases.

**Phase-1 (1947-'69):** This is the pre-nationalisation period culminating in exploring the efficacy of social control policy bringing about the desirable transformation of existing class banking to mass banking. Social control policies did not achieve the desired structural transformation of banking. These aspects have been discussed in Chapter 3.

**Phase-2 (1970-'90):** After the 1st phase of nationalisation of major banks in July 1969, attention was given towards bringing structured change in credit flow and also increasing banking presence in hitherto unbanked and under-banked areas. Special stress was given towards augmenting flow of credit to priority sector consisting of agriculture, small, medium and export sector. In a period extending two decades considerable progress was achieved in these areas. These aspects have been discussed in Chapter 4.

**Phase-3 (1991-2003):** During this period neo-liberal financial reform measures as recommended in Narsimham Committee I and II were introduced. These reform measures did put a brake on the momentum generated in respect of bringing about change in the structural flow of credit achieved during the first two decades of first phase of nationalisation. Between 1991-2003 share of small and marginal farmers in the total of all land holdings increased from 81 per cent to 86 per cent. However, share of operational holding of small and marginal farmers increased from 34 per cent to 44 per cent.

In spite of these increases the share of number of credit accounts of these groups declined (instead of increasing in proportion to increase in operational holdings) from 77 per cent to 69 per cent and disbursement of credit to these group of farmers declined from 54 per cent to 48 per cent. Other group of farmers whose share of operational hold decreased during this period but in respect of share of credit it enjoyed increase. Thus, immediately after the neo-liberal financial reform, small and marginal farmers were at a disadvantage. These aspects have been discussed in Chapter 5.

**Phase-4 (2004-'19):** In this section, we have discussed the nature of credit flow and character of priority sector lending during this period.

A conscious effort was made to increase the flow of credit to priority sector in general and agricultural credit in particular. The policy was to double the credit to agriculture during the period of three years from 2004-'05. This would help to expand the reach of formal finances.

#### Certain facts need to be noted:

(i) Priority sector lending (PS) was basically a major policy intervention aimed at directing credit flow towards sectors of national priority. Basic objective was to ensure that there was adequate access to required credit for weaker and vulnerable sections of the society engaged in agriculture, MSME and tiny industry.

(ii) Number of small and marginal holdings is rising constantly. In 1970-'71 the number of small marginal holdings were 49,632,000 and by 2015-16 this number increased to 125,695,000. This consistently increasing fragmentation of land holding results in severe diseconomies of scale. Ultimately, this means that higher credit will be required. A few innovative steps were taken during this period:

(a) The Kisan Credit Card was launched as a financial product in 1988 so that farmers may be provided with hassle free credit.

## Banks as Public Utilities

(b) In 2003-'04 Ground Level Credit (GLC) scheme was introduced. As a result, targets for agriculture and allied activities have to be announced in the Union Budget every year. These targets were to be achieved by banks during the financial year.

(c) Interest Subvention Scheme (ISS) for short term crop loans was introduced in 2006-07.

(d) Business Correspondents (BCs) and Business Facilitators (BFs) schemes were introduced for the first time by Reserve Bank of India in order to extend further the cause of 'Financial Inclusion'.

(e) In addition, for SHG-Bank Linkages NABARD introduced the Joint Liability Group (JLG) model. The purpose was to reach out to tenants and share croppers with access to credit.

Priority sector lending targets in the post-nationalisation era was meant to bring about structural transformations of banking from class-banking to mass-banking, which can also be termed as financial inclusion. The PSL efforts were supplemented and complemented by well formulated Lead District schemes and Service Area Approach. This along with various co-ordinating and monitoring structures introduced in the form of Block Level Credit Committee, District Credit Committee

such schemes. Aggregate loan waiver by states (in 2016-17) was Rs 2.4 trillion. It may be noted this amount is significantly large compared to earlier waiver of Rs 60,000 crores.

Since 2014-'15 broadly speaking there is greater focus on co-operative credit institutions at state-level. Most programmes cover short term crop loans and generally prescribe an upper limit for amount of relief to be granted.

Continuous farmers' distress ultimately led to the setting up of the National Commission on Farmers' by UPA during its first five year of rule. This commission is usually known as Swaminathan Commission in the name of its chairman the famous agricultural scientist Dr M S Swaminathan. The report of the commission was submitted during UPA regime. However, the recommendations of it commission were not implemented. NDA government in the campaign in 2014 promised to implement the recommendations of the report on being elected. However, till date nothing very tangible had been done in this respect. The report of the commission was comprehensive and based on a holistic approach. To implement all aspects of recommendations demanded strong political will. We may briefly examine the salient aspects of the report.

It suggested extensive land reforms throughout the country to correct the structural problem of non-viability of size. It also suggested distribution of surpluses over the ceiling. Similarly, the commission suggested distribution of 'wastelands'.

It wanted immediate stoppage of diversion of prime agricultural land and forest areas to corporate sector for non-agricultural purposes.

Similarly, grazing rights and access to common property particularly for landless, small and marginal farmers must be adequately ensured.

The commission felt that it was essential to achieve higher agricultural productivity, which can only be achieved with substantial increase in public investment especially in irrigation, drainage, soil conservation, soil testing (and thereby determining deficiencies in micro nutrients and taking appropriate remedial measures).

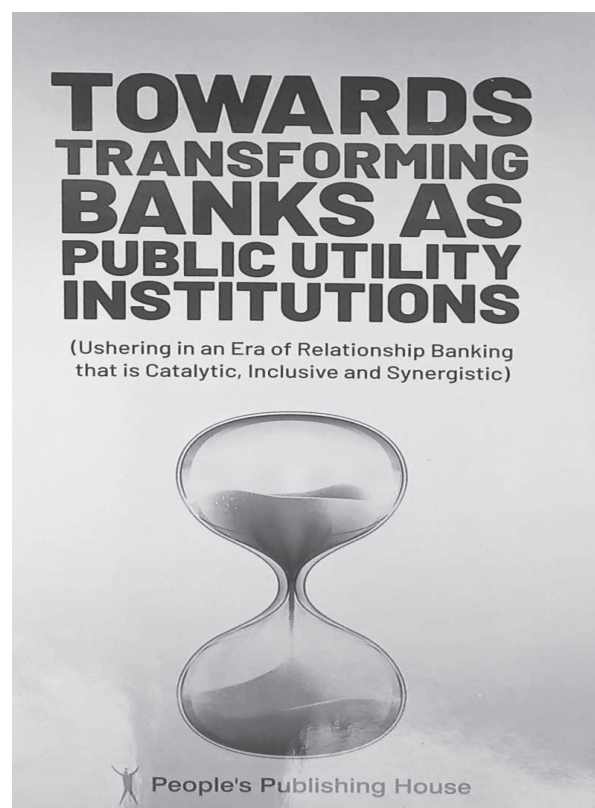
Appropriate and efficient management of ground water and surface water sources to be effected so that sustained and equitable access to the water sources is ensured.

As regards insurance coverage, the commission suggests an integrated credit cum livestock, human health insurance package for the entire country and for all crops with affordable premiums along with an 'Agricultural Risk Fund' to provide relief to farmers in case of natural calamities.

The commission also made specific recommendations for women farmers. These recommendations were not only for Joint Land Holding Patterns but also to give recognition to women farmers for eligibility to Kisan Card and other programmes of central and state governments.

It recommended that MSP should be at least more than 50 per cent of the weighted average cost of production. Recently there is a clear trend towards centralization and modernization of agriculture. These called for more resources and inputs which in turn created demand for more funds. Net result of all these was significant increase in number of large loan of more than Rs 10 crores. This flow of large credit was consistent with the government's policy of encouraging 'Capital Intensive Agriculture' and export oriented production pattern.

Further, there was an increasing trend towards corporatization of agriculture credit. This trend of corporatization and urbanization of agriculture basically meant that bulk of priority sector based agricultural credit was diverted towards urbanized dealers and corporate organisations engaged in agriculture and related businesses. This trend was further strengthened when the distinction between direct and indirect credit was completely abolished.



and SLBC at the State Level were all well intentioned attempts at ensuring adequate and reasonable flow of credit to priority sector in every region of the nation. These institutional initiatives did produce good results from 1970 to '90.

Since 1991 it was given less priority and slowly but surely it was felt that these efforts in the form of Lead District Schemes, SAA and SHG-Bank Linkages must be supplemented and complemented by other innovative institutional arrangements. We therefore find the evolution of MFIs and NBCs in rural lending and priority sector lending.

Small and marginal farmers, tenant farmers and farm households not having clear land titles had no other way than to depend on non-institutional credit and rural money lenders and to obtain credit at exorbitant interest rate. This costly credit coupled with rising input costs along with requirements of more inputs (fertilizers, water, seeds, pesticides) are increasing cost of production. This is happening when our agriculture is facing opening up to global market. Thus, the margin for domestic agricultural products got squeezed significantly.

When the stress became very large, banks stopped financing because of non-payment of debt. To relieve the stress in the sector government introduced loan waiver schemes.

Since then, however the instances and scales of farm loan waiver have witnessed significant increase. Various state governments have announced



## Celebrations on...

*From Last Page*

attack of capitalism in different countries of the world. He said that even though the Soviet Union collapsed, the socialist movement, Marxism and its ideals remain unhurt. Marxism is ongoing and is conducive to the development of human civilization.

At the end of the talk, many of the audience wanted answers to their queries through questions. The speaker satisfied them with answers.

All the district councils observed the 205<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Karl Marx. Marxism and Communist manifesto have become more and more relevant and necessary in the modern world. Capitalism has turned to crony capital to escape its continuing crisis. Crony capital's rat race is going on in our country too. It can be even seen in our state too.

Many philosophers throughout the ages have explained

the statues of Marx and Engels at SurendraNath Banerjee Park in Kolkata. Left Front Chairman BimanBasu, state secretary of CPI, Swapan

portraits of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels were garlanded by SwapanBanerji in the presence of state secretariat members.

paid rich tributes to the great philosopher. On this occasion, party state council secretary Ram Naresh Pandey, CPI(M) state secretariat member Sarvoday Sharma, CPI leaders Rambabu Kumar, Ramlala Singh, Vijay Narayan Mishra, G a z a n f a r N a w a b , Jitendra Kumar, IrfanAhmed Fatmi and others garlanded the portrait of Karl Marx and took a pledge to take forward his teachings.

Addressing the gathering state council secretary Ram Naresh Pandey said that Karl Marx is such a great thinker, who gave a new direction to the entire world. He is well known as a philosopher, revolutionary, economist, historian and political ideologist and has left indelible impressions on the history of mankind. In the present situation in our country, the relevance of Marx and his teachings assume special significance.



*Ram Naresh Pandey paying tributes to Marx*

inequality in society. But Marx showed in the Communist Manifesto that this situation can be changed.

On May 5, the leaders of Left Front garlanded

Banerjee, Suryakant Mishra, Manoj Bhattacharya, Naren Chatterjee, PrabirDev, Gautam Roy, Kalyan Banerjee and other leaders were present. In BhupeshBhavan, the

### Bihar

The Bihar state council of the Communist Party of India observed on May 5 the 205<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Karl Marx in Janashakti Bhavan and

## Rhetoric and Reality...

*From Front Page*

(Amendment) Act (CAA) openly discriminates with a section of people on the basis of their religion. The CAA was also a test of Modi's foreign policy as this discriminatory law brought international condemnation for India, followed by the Delhi riots. The high-priest of the RSS, MS Golwalkar said even before independence and partition that the minorities "may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu Nation, claiming nothing, deserving no privileges, far less any preferential treatment not even citizen's rights."

It is on this divisive and communal foundation that RSS-BJP is trying to build 'family' in the country. Under the RSS-BJP rule, communal,

casteist and misogynist elements have got emboldened and pursuing their future goal of building up a unitary, theocratic and hierarchical Hindu Rashtra. Is it difficult to imagine what the 'One Future' would look like?

India rose to prominence in global affairs when it followed a non-aligned approach. However, in the last few years, India's growing proximity with the US-led Western group has created multiple problems for us and we can notice the erosion of traditional goodwill of many nations in the Global South.

Prime Minister chaired an all-party meeting immediately after assuming the presidency of G20. In that meeting, there were references from Government side about

the Global South and reforming and reorienting global financial institutions. But there was no clarity what this would mean for India as the Chair of G20. However there are indications coming from G20 Expert panel on Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs). The panel would come with possible skeptics that its report would recommend measures that could make critical difference, including new mechanisms to raise private capital, and also for specific investment and spending priorities (evolution of the World Bank Group 2023).

Leaders of our freedom movement were very vigilant about forging and extending solidarity and support to those who needed it.

Post-independence,

this legacy of unity of the oppressed institutionalized itself as the Non-Aligned Movement and India emerged as the most significant voice for decolonization, Afro-Asian unity and peace.

These credentials are being watered down with India moving closer to the West and being drawn into US-led military alliances. This policy is resulting in a failure to take meaningful positions on important issues and precludes a unity between countries of the Global South against western hegemony. Over the years, India's foreign policy priorities have become narrow.

Instead of pursuing a policy of cooperation, solidarity, peace and progress, the energies of our diplomatic corps are being invested in only propagating and protecting the larger-than-life image of the

leader. It is appalling that when foreign policy of other countries is focused on concrete deliverables, our foreign policy discourse is not focused on taking into consideration the independent foreign policy positions India is expected to pursue.

One of prime minister's favorite phrases, 'Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam' does have a message of belonging harmoniously. And it is for the entire world as one family. The verse says further, "this person is mine, and this one is not- is made only by the narrow-minded". The G20 chair is one way for the regime to show that they are capable of magnanimity and start treating people equally as family. A larger family of the Global South awaits us. It is on us to walk the talk on V a s u d h a i v a Kutumbakam, both at home and abroad.



# CIA and US War Crimes Remain Unabated

*Diary of International Events*

*C. Adhikesavan*

The strong United States have been doing injustice to the weak since its emancipation and the weak have to suffer due US wrongdoings. In the name of war on terror the US has done uncountable and innumerable crimes throughout the world. The International Crime Court was silent on the US war crimes. US's own CIA or Central Intelligence Agency is the most barbaric organisation which has record in killing human beings.

For the past two decades, the International Criminal Court has concentrated on the war crimes and criminals who have operated in Africa.

Over the past month, however, the court has issued an arrest warrant for Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Commissioner or Children's Rights. The Department of Justice is even considering a federal indictment of Syrian leaders responsible for the torture and execution of an American human rights worker. There is no indication, however, that the ICC or the Department of Justice will take on the war crimes committed by the United States during its Global War on Terror in the wake of the 9/11 attacks in New York City and Washington.

The mainstream media has been giving increased attention to the issue of war crimes as well as the 20th anniversary of the start of the Iraq War, but there has been no attempt to link the issues. The war itself could be labelled a war crime or a "crime against the peace,"

which was the charge against Germany introduced at the Nuremberg Trials in 1945 and 1946. The most prominent war crimes were the Central Intelligence Agency's detentions and renditions programme as well as the sadistic programme of torture and abuse, which have been devoid of any accountability whatsoever. One of the leaders of the programme, Gina Haspel, even became Donald Trump's CIA

it out of reach of the U.S. legal system. A federal appeals course is still dealing with the issue of whether the Gitmo prisoners have due process rights under the Constitution, but the relevant opinions have not been released because they reportedly contain classified information. Once again, we are witnessing the application of security classifications to hide embarrassing information.

The most unusual and bizarre defense of the

measures and even lied to the White House about specific details of the programme, particularly the fact that many of the techniques were being used at once.

Cole never mentioned the more unconscionable aspects of CIA's torture and abuse such as "rectal feeding" and "rectal hydration" that involved a "pureed" blend of hummus and raisins that was "rectally infused." The CIA justified these techniques as "medically necessary," and never acknowledged that such



director.

Nor has there been any focus on the U.S. military's role in renditions and detentions, including the detaining of individuals suspected of involvement in 9/11. There are many reasons for closing down the wartime prison at Guantanamo Bay, but the obvious one deals with prisoners there who have never been charged with a crime over a period of 20 years and/or were subjected to numerous forms of torture and abuse. It was Vice President Dick Cheney who convinced President George W. Bush to locate the prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba in an effort to put

CIA's programme came from the current national legal director of the American Civil Liberties Union, David Cole, who wrote an exculpatory brief for the CIA in the New York Times in 2015. Cole, the first recipient of the ACLU's prize for contributions on civil liberties, argued that the CIA got a "bum rap" from the Senate intelligence committee's comprehensive report on torture and abuse, and concluded that the CIA was "treated unfairly" in the report. Nowhere did Cole mention that the CIA began its various tortures before the Department of Justice issued its so-called Torture Memoranda that "sanctioned" certain

techniques were performed in some cases on individuals who were probably innocent. There also were examples of rectal plugs inserted into innocent captives upon capture, which led to their claims of being raped.

Three former CIA directors (George Tenet, Porter Goss, and Michael Hayden) as well as former deputy directors (John McLaughlin and Steve Kappes) testified that these techniques worked; they didn't. Cole makes no mention of CIA director John Brennan, who explained that "The president told us to do it, and we did what we were told." That should have had an obvious Nuremberg

ring to a constitutional scholar such as Cole.

The CIA even fast-tracked a deceitful book on the torture and abuse programme that allowed five former CIA directors and deputy directors as well as other senior officers to make their case for "enhanced interrogation techniques," the CIA euphemism for torture. The book, titled "Rebuttal," was designed to challenge the Senate intelligence committee's authoritative study of torture and abuse that CIA director Brennan did his best to kill.

"Rebuttal" was part of a full-court press that the CIA adopted to have an impact on public opinion, which was a violation of the CIA's charter that doesn't permit this type of propaganda campaign at home. Tenet created a website called CIASAVEDLIVES.com, and former deputy director Michael Morell wrote a book titled "The Great War of Our Time" to defend torture and abuse. He noted that only National Security Adviser Condi Rice objected to one of the CIA's techniques that couldn't be used because it "crossed the White House's moral line." I shudder to think about what that could have been.

In addition to charges that could have been brought, one proper punishment for these former CIA officials would have included being forced to watch the 92 torture tapes that recorded the sadistic techniques that were used.



# Arrest BJP MP Brij Bhushan ...

From Page 06

blood and sweat, to make India proud. The prime minister not only congratulated these wrestlers but appealed to the entire nation to celebrate the victories of these young enthusiastic women.

Our Constitution and legal system ensure that even verbal abuse is penalized and justice is delivered to the aggrieved. However, all systems continue to be patriarchal, and corruption and even physical violence are used to deny justice to

women in all walks of life.

The entire nation should be ashamed that women wrestlers, who



brought fame and recognition to India and Indian women

internationally have been denied a proper hearing with due process and have been forced to come to the streets, to stage protests day and night for

justice. Despite several months of protest in Delhi seeking justice, the

issues raised by them have been ignored by the government. The incident does not promote confidence in women either in the government of India, or to trust and expect justice from the police, legal system and the parliamentarians.

Delhi police is delaying and moving in snail's pace in its preliminary legal process and procedures. Through the signature campaign, NFIW is mobilising support for the wrestlers who are staging day and night

protest at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, the capital city of India.

Under the leadership of Delhi state secretary Deepti Bharti, NFIW Delhi unit is regularly participating in the protest along with the wrestlers.

The signature campaign will culminate on May 20, 2023 when the collected signatures would be sent to prime minister Narendra Modi, demanding immediate intervention and action from him to uphold women's dignity and constitutional rights, so that women can regain some confidence in Parliament and in the criminal justice system.

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# AITUC Decries De-recognition of Postal TUs

*The National Secretariat of AITUC on April 27, 2023 issued the following statement condemning the drastic action taken by the department of posts in derecognising National Federation of Postal Employees (NFPE) and All India Postal Employees Union (Group C):*

It is noted with deep concern and shock that the department of posts of the government of India has issued an order dated April 26, 2023 derecognising two major trade union organizations of the postal employees which represents more than 70 percent of the postal

employees. There is a long history of struggle by the postal employees under the banner of NFPTE right from Britishers' period to achieve the legitimate trade union rights.

It is understood that the draconian action has been taken by the department of posts based on a flimsy complaint made by a rival union against the NFPE and the AIPEU. The department in its order has stated that the NFPE and the AIPEU have extended financial assistance to the farmers' agitation (Kisan Movement), CITU and CPI(M) from the

accounts of these organizations. It is nothing new in India that trade unions extend support, solidarity and financial help to the struggling sister unions and workers of different sector. There is no illegality or misconduct in this internationally accepted solidarity actions.

It is most unfortunate that in a vindictive manner the recognition of a major trade union and federation is withdrawn in the most undemocratic manner. We fail to understand how a recognized central trade union like CITU can be branded as a

political party. This shows the blatant vindictiveness and biasness of the government towards a union which has got an established and verified membership of more than 70 percent. Government should realize by such type of undemocratic acts and decisions the workers cannot be silenced.

AITUC condemns the drastic and undemocratic decision taken by the department of posts to withdraw the recognition of a major trade union. AITUC calls upon the entire working class of the country to resist and protest such

type of drastic attacks on the trade unions. AITUC urges upon the government of India to immediately withdraw its decision and to restore the recognition of National Federation of Postal Employees (NFPE) and All India Postal Employees Union.

AITUC has also written to the labour minister and the minister for communication protesting against the undemocratic decision of the postal department and have also requested to restore the recognition of National Federation of Postal Employees (NFPE) and All India Postal Employees Union (Group-C).

## On Record ...

In 2016, 7105 women went missing; 7712 in 2017; 9246 in 2018; 9268 in 2019; and 8290 in 2020. The state of Gujarat has reported over 40,000 missing women over a span of five years, says the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data. In the NCRB data (2022), the total missing report amounts to 41,621 in Gujarat alone. Former IPS officer and member of the Gujarat State Human Rights Commission Sudhir Sinha said that a missing case is not taken as seriously as a murder case. - *The Siasat Daily*, May 7.

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As the situation in Manipur remains tense, many people are rushing to leave the capital city Imphal as they wish to go to their hometown in Kolkata. The air ticket on the Imphal-Kolkata route has spiralled almost 7-8 times and is touching Rs 30,000 per ticket. There was a long queue outside Imphal airport as thousands of passengers scurried to leave for Kolkata.

Airlines that operate between Imphal and Kolkata said all their flights were running full. The situation is likely to remain the same in the coming few days, the authorities said. The airlines are also looking to increase the number of flights on the Imphal-Kolkata route looking at the demand. - *timesnownews.com*, May 8.

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"One male identified as Samarveer s/o Satyadev r/o Village Molki, Distt. Bara Rajasthan, age-33 years (unmarried) was found hanging from ceiling fan with a bed sheet." This was how the press release of Delhi Police reported the tragedy. The matter-of-fact banality of the report, of course, was par for the course.

However, the tragic death of the young man was not simply a statistic - it was a reflection of the deep malaise that pervades our institutions of higher education, in this case, University of Delhi (DU), which is celebrating its centenary this year. The situation in the university is such that a tragedy like this was just waiting to happen. - *The Indian Express*, May 6.

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The Government of India has postponed the decadal census, which was due in 2021, indefinitely. The last official report of the Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) conducted by the National Sample Survey Organisation (NSSO) - the basis of calculating poverty estimates

- in the public domain dates back to 2011. The nationwide Socio-Economic Caste Census (SECC) was last conducted in 2011-12!

Once known globally for its statistical prowess, India today confronts the embarrassing reality of a statistical vacuum. In recent months, economists of all hue, have dared to step into this vacuum to conduct all manner of complex gymnastics routines to arrive at an "estimate" of poverty in 2023 using 2011-12 data. The sophistication of these routines varies, as do the conclusions. Thus, depending on your priors, poverty in India has increased, decreased, or all but disappeared. - *Deccan Herald*, April 30.

Compiled by: C Adhikesavan





# CELEBRATIONS ON 205<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF MARX

## Our Special Correspondent

Communist Party of India units observed 205<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Karl Marx all over the country with great enthusiasm and vigour on May 5, 2023. Party general secretary D Raja garlanded the portrait of Karl Marx at party headquarters, Ajoy Bhawan in Delhi. It was followed by party leaders and comrades assembled there offering flowers to the portrait of Karl Marx.

Paying rich tributes to Karl Marx, D Raja said that the best way to honour the great philosopher and social reformer is by intensifying our struggles to establish scientific socialism and to end exploitation. He pointed that our country is passing through a very critical period when the rightist fascistic forces are bent upon to destroy our hard won freedom, to subvert our Constitution and wreck our democratic setup.

### West Bengal

Marxism is the science of development of human civilization, its historicity and also the dialectics. It traces the socio economic formations through their basis and superstructure. The modern phase that began with industrial revolution, also evolved the capitalist system and along with that the harbinger of socialism, the proletariat. Every phase has its own crisis and capitalism is today facing the same. The only way to salvage the situation comes through the ideology and philosophy of Marx, which also keeps taking new forms as the change is the ultimate for Marxism. With these words, Marxist philosopher Prof Saurin Bhattacharya initiated the discussion with

elaborating on the methodology of Marxism along with its philosophy.

The meeting was organized on the occasion of the 205<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of Karl Marx on May 5 and the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Communist Manifesto, by the West Bengal State Council of the Communist Party of India and the Kalantar,



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the participants

strengthening the movement for social change by underlining the relevance of Marxism and commemorating the 175<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Communist Manifesto. After starting discussions at the state level, efforts will be Prof Bhattacharya in

the discussion of Marxian theory is necessary, so is the discussion of its practical application. Otherwise, party leaders and workers may get confused as the theoreticians give importance to the theory. So both Marxist

world of 1848. At that time, the capitalist system of production was truly dominant only in Britain. Outside of Britain, the modern proletariat, the class of wage-workers employed in large mechanised industrial and commercial enterprises, constituted only a tiny fraction of the population in the rest of the world. Most of the world's peoples were peasants exploited by pre-capitalist landowners headed by despotic, successive monarchs. Today, the wage earners compelled to sell their labour power consist over 80 percent of the economically active population in the developed capitalist countries. Urban and rural wage earners and their dependents now constitute the world over a majority of the total population.



CPI West Bengal state secretary Swapan Banerjee garlanding Marx's portrait

state party organ, at the Lahiri-Mukherjee auditorium of Bhupesh Bhavan. Eminent writer Kapil Krishna Thakur presided over this meeting. He greeted the speaker with a floral bouquet while state secretary Swapan Banerjee handed over the memento to the honourable speaker.

Inaugurating the meeting, Swapan Banerjee said that the national council of the CPI had called for

his speech pointed out that the application of Marxism would be varied according to the context prevailing in the countries. In each of the country, application of Marxism would be based on its culture, way of life, social, economic and political issues. It is on the principles of Marxism, that the strategy to fight against capitalism would have to be based. So, this weapon has to be applied properly at the right time. According to him, just as

philosophy and its application are equally important.

In the 175 years since the Manifesto was written there have been tremendous changes in the world, but none of them refute the basic ideas contained in the Manifesto. Indeed, the "really existing" capitalist world today is much closer to the "abstract" model of capitalism that is portrayed in the first section of the Manifesto than the actually existing

Prof Saurin Bhattacharya, while analyzing the theory of Marxism and Marxism in the Russian Revolution of 1917, discussed various aspects of applying Marxism and its ideology against the exploitation of the working class and the

On Page 12