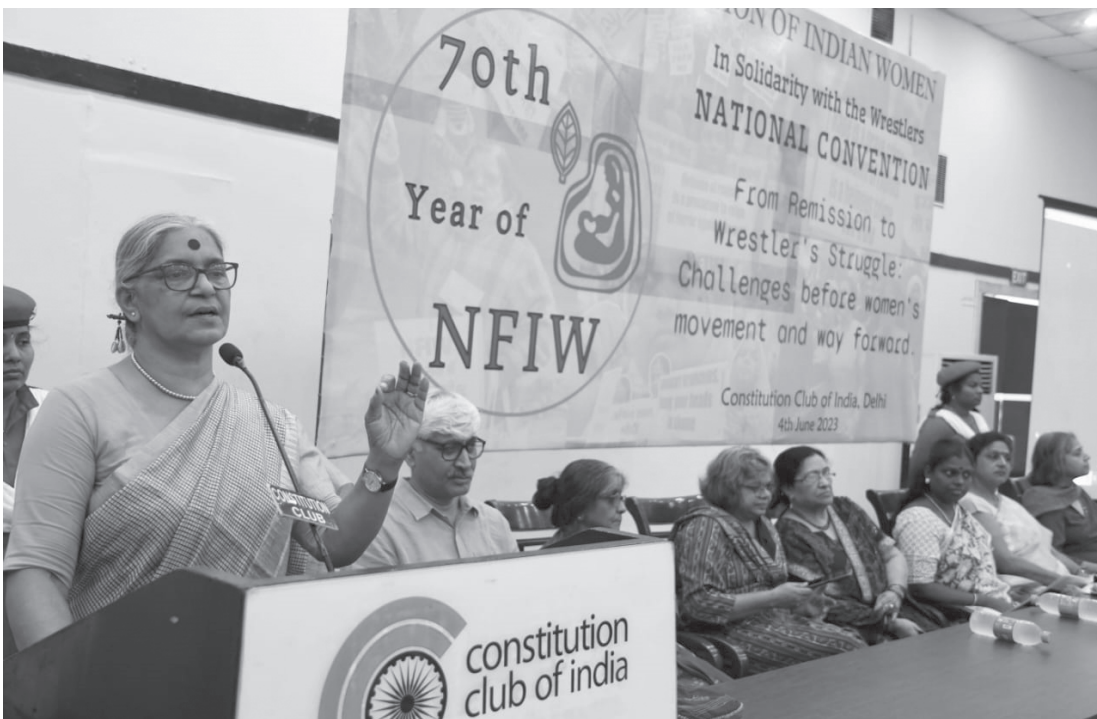


NFIW Calls to Defeat Anti-women, Anti-people BJP Govt

WILL ORGANIZE ONE LAKH PUBLIC MEETINGS BY AUGUST 15, 2023



NFIW general secretary Annie Raja addressing the meeting

On June 4, 2023, 408 women from 20 states assembled at New Delhi to celebrate the 70th year of foundation of National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW). They were from Kashmir to Tamil Nadu, North East to Maharashtra, coming and joining the celebrations from all walks of life, from different strata of society.

They came from the battlefield; the battle to safe-

guard what the women of India have achieved with much effort, the battle to protect their dignity, the battle to claim and ensure their rights as citizens of the Secular Democratic Republic Of India.

The programme was conceptualised as a National Convention titled, 'From Remission to Wrestlers' Struggle: Challenges before the Women's Movement and Way For-

ward'. In the convention, rich tributes were paid to those veterans who founded the organization on June 4, 1954 and built it defying all opposition.

Amongst the founders of the organisation were such stalwarts as Aruna Asaf Ali, Renu Chakravarty, Hajrah Begum, Geeta Mukherjee, Anasuya Gyanchand, Vimla Dang, Vimla Farooqi, all tall leaders of women's movements

Annie Raja

in India and well known freedom fighters.

Those veterans who are among us made it a point to attend this historic event. Alka Prasad, daughter of late Girija Kumar Sinha and Dinesh Kumari Sinha came along with her sisters Shobha Chandra, Archana Sinha, Aruna Sinha and Amita Sharma and her daughter Sushobhita, her son Navendu and his wife Lakshmi. Along with Navendu came K V Sharma, wife Nishi, and Manish and Bharat, their sons, to participate and witness the celebrations.

Sudesh Kumari, Ramesh Kumari, Veena Jammu, Sumitra Kumari, daughters of (Late) Comrades Kailash Wanti and Jai Chand, were also among the participants.

Many mothers brought their daughters and some of them even grand daughters to be there to share the historic moment.

The statement of 92-year old Ranjana Ray, the senior-most leader of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW), said, "All citizens, even if they are law makers or agricultural workers, rich or influential, are equal before the law," was received by all with slogans and huge applause.

The young volunteers in uniform from Chhattisgarh, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab among others added to the enthusiasm and determination of each of the participants to carry forward the struggles and campaigns for a Gender just, democratic, secular and peaceful country.

The celebration

The programme began with a welcome address by Aruna Sinha, national secretary of the NFIW. While delivering her inaugural speech, Aruna Roy, President, NFIW, highlighted the wide-ranging rights-based work done by the organisation over the last

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A continual process of struggle in unity: NFIW honours veterans



Volunteers from states

On June 1, there had been reports that the law panel backed the penal provision for the offence of sedition, saying repealing it altogether could have adverse ramifications for the security and integrity of the country. The offence of sedition has been stretched up to even "...mere inclination to incite violence or cause public disorder rather than proof of actual violence or imminent threat to violence" and would be sufficient ground for punishment.

The government has sought time to submit its response to petition challenging the constitutional validity of section 124 A of the Indian Penal code dealing with the offence of sedition. In the light of rising number of cases under sedition law, which has gone up to 28 percent, adding 559 cases, a rapid increase in the years of 2014-2020, the apex court had intervened in 2021.

The CJI has questioned why a colonial law used against Mahatma Gandhi and BalGangadharTilak continues to survive in law book even after 75 years of independence. The CJI said that sedition or section 124 A of the IPC was prone to the misuse by the government. Sedition law were enacted in 17th century England when lawmakers believed that only good opinions about the government should survive, as all bad observations were detrimental to the government. The law was originally drafted in 1837 by Thomas Macaulay, the British historian politician, but was inexplicably omitted when the IPC was enacted in 1860. Section 124 A was inserted in 1870 by an amendment introduced by Sir James Stephen when it felt the need for a specific section to deal with the offence. Today Sedition is a crime under section 124 A of the IPC, defined as an offence committed against the ruling regime.

The Law Commission of India has recommended enhancing the jail term in

Threat to Republic

sedition cases from a minimum of three years to seven years, contending that it would allow courts greater room to award punishment in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed. In a report on the 'Usage of the Law of Sedition', the Commission said its earlier report had termed the punishment for Section 124A (law of sedition) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) "very odd" as it has provisions for either life imprisonment or a three-year jail term, but nothing in between.

The minimum punishment under the sedition law is paying fine.

"A comparison of the sentences as provided for offences in Chapter VI of the IPC suggests that there is a glaring disparity in

Editorial

the punishment prescribed for Section 124A," the Commission said.

Chapter VI of the IPC deals with offences against the state.

"It is, therefore, suggested that the provision be revised to bring it in consonance with the scheme of punishment provided for other offences under Chapter VI. This would allow the courts greater room to award punishment for a case of sedition in accordance with the scale and gravity of the act committed," the report said.

The Commission also suggested changes to the phrasing of Section 124A and added words "a tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder".

The current Section 124A of IPC reads as follows: "Sedition-Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffec-

tion towards, the Government established by law in India, shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment which may extend to three years, to which fine may be added."

However, the law commission has now recommended to alter the Section as: "Whoever by words, either spoken or written, or by signs, or by visible representation, or otherwise, brings or attempts to bring into hatred or contempt, or excites or attempts to excite disaffection towards, the Government established by law in India, with a tendency to incite violence or cause public disorder shall be punished with imprisonment for life, to which fine may be added, or with imprisonment of either description for a term which may extend to seven years, to which fine may be added, or with fine."

The Commission said the expression 'tendency' would mean mere inclination to incite violence or cause public disorder rather than proof of actual violence or imminent threat to violence. The report of the Law Commission has been completed and submitted to the concerned minister.

In fact Law Commission's backing of Section 124 A of the Indian Penal Code (IPC), pertaining to sedition, in itself shows that the BJP government has been planning to make the law more "draconian". The government is keen to convey the hard message before the next general election. There is allegation that the BJP would be using the sedition law as a tool of "subversing, subjugating, and silencing dissent". There is also the question raised why the government has gone on to make the law more stringent when the Supreme Court has been rendering it inoperative. Law commission has underlined that there will be a distance between the ruler and the ruled, and through this law, the foundations of the republic will be uprooted.

CPI to Extend Issue-Based Support to Karnataka Govt

Communist Party of India national council secretary Binoy Viswam MP said that the party will extend an issue-based support to the Siddharamaiah led Congress government in Karnataka. On fulfilling the promises of the government to the Anganwadi, Asha and mid-

day meal workers, there would be complete support. He was addressing party workers and sympathizers in Bengaluru.

He added that the government should also not forget its promise on the issue of eight-hour shift for the toilers.

Harish Bala

The CPI state council had met in Bengaluru and had a detailed discussion on the Karnataka elections. Party urged the people to be vigilant about the RSS-BJP politics that is based on communal divisive ideology.

'Soorigagi Samara', the struggle for land and shelter, would be continued. The state council called upon the party units to support the struggles of the youth and students for employment and secular education with scientific temperament.

State secretary

Saathi Sundaresh presented the report and Umesh presided over the proceedings. The council also demanded the newly elected government to withdraw the laws like anti-conversion law, beef ban law, land reforms amendment law and others which were passed by the previous BJP government.

LDF Govt Strides Towards Progress and Social Security

May 2, 2023 marks the second anniversary of the present LDF government which came to power with sound electoral backing of the people of Kerala. The incumbency which the Left government received in Kerala is the result of accomplishing the electoral promises made by the LDF government that came to power in 2016. The manifesto also included a vow to provide an annual report updating the public on the extent to which election pledges had been achieved. The submission of the progress card of government to the people motivated the administration machineries to completely abide to the plans envisaged by the LDF government and meet the promises. The openness to people's auditing increased the approval of people towards the first LDF (2016-21) government. This initially facilitated the advent of the 2nd LDF government.

During the period 2016-2021 Kerala witnessed remarkable growth and development despite the vulnerabilities and shocks caused by the pandemic on the state's socio-economic sector. In recent years, Kerala was hit hard by several natural catastrophes and tragedies. The people of Kerala have been presented with a daunting task. The state's residents and leaders have shown remarkable fortitude and resilience in the face of mounting challenges since 2016. The LDF government, also responsible for development and welfare, didn't withdraw from the fight for survival despite the hardships. The government's successful preparedness and response to the covid epidemic and other tragedies received applause nationally and internationally. This endorsement ensured the LDF government's continued popularity and electoral success in the most recent

election. The government successfully vanquished the political torpedo fueled by BJP, Congress, and other opposition parties during the crisis.

The government of Kerala has made inexorable progress by confronting intractable problems. The non-BJP governments are under financial duress, while Prime Minister Narendra Modi claims to be the actual implementer of corporate

R Ajayan

in a loss of tens of billions of rupees in yearly income for Kerala.

During the 15th Finance Commission, the proportion of net tax receivable by Kerala was 1.925 per cent due to a change in state apportionment standards. The deficit in revenue for 2021–22 restricted the grant. The state is approximately 6700

economic development in the agriculture-related sector in 2021–2022 stood at 6.7 per cent. In the past year, the industrial-related sector witnessed the highest growth rate, at 17.3 per cent. The prosperity in the state economy is proof of the victory of the LDF government's revenue generation strategies. When Amartya Sen and Dr KN Raj devised the Kerala Development Model in the 1970s, one of its characteristics was

Targeted measures aimed at expanding the domestic production sector were one of the government's most noteworthy achievements during this time. Investing in social security sectors can energise the Kerala development model even further. Kerala has chosen a particular path for its economic development, while the federal government has embraced globalisation. A component of privatisation is the disposal of publicly held companies. For example, the Central government handed over the Centrally Controlled Industries and State Airports to Adani-Ambani for a pitiful sum. While Kerala government assumed control of the Vellore newsprint factory, and production was commenced, the state government tried to take over the airport also in Thiruvananthapuram but failed due to Adani-Modi nexus. All of this demonstrates that Kerala provides a genuine contrast to the Central government's regressive economic policies. While the BJP led Union government's failed policies and actions resulted in increase in price rise and inflation, Left led Kerala government is pushing to tackle its effects through exceedingly circumspect measures which no government had dared to do. Kerala has been always able to keep inflation under control through comprehensive and multifaceted measures. The state in India with the lowest inflation is where the Central government employs policy measures to undermine the system in the eyes of the general public. Its persistence demonstrates



LDF Govt. issues Land Rights to Muthanga Protestors After two Decades of Struggle

federalism. Ajoy Ghosh, former general secretary of CPI had called for the dissolution of India's federal finance framework during the National Integration Meeting in 1957. In every submission to constitutional finance panel, CPI and other socialist parties kept pressing this demand because neither the present BJP administration nor the centrally located Congress government has handled Kerala fairly. The final allocation from the 10th Finance Commission found that Kerala will get 3.875 per cent of the total allocation. However, as of the 15th Finance Commission, this percentage was lowered to 1.925 per cent. These changes have resulted

crores rupees short because the Central government eliminated this line item. According to Article 275 of the constitution the Union government is obliged to provide grant to states for reducing revenue to debt gap. But the non-delivery of this has made the state suffer a loss of Rs 6700 crores. This year, 7,000 crores will be drained due to the termination of the GST compensation. Due to the reduction in the state's market borrowing limit, there is a shortfall in resource mobilisation of approximately Rs. 4,000 crores. Despite these challenges Kerala's GDP increased by 12.1 per cent at constant values in 2021-22. Eco-

that our state attained a very high human resource development despite having a meagre per capita income. In the indices of life expectancy, infant mortality rate and the sustainable development index, Kerala outperforms other developed federal states and Indian states. Kerala's ability to accomplish this distinction results from its Renaissance tradition and the social and political interventions of Communist Party of India.

The paradox or crisis that Kerala has been enduring for a long time is that despite all these accomplishments, there has been no increase in domestic income derived from the production sector.

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Labour Market Recovery Faces Multiple Crisis

The global jobs gap in 2023 would be 453 million, which amounts to 11.7 per cent, more than double the level of current gap. It would be much higher among women at 14.5 per cent than men at 9.8 per cent. This level of global unemployment is certainly below the pandemic level, but it would reflect stronger-than-expected resilience in high-income countries rather than a generalized recovery in the labour market.

While providing this data encapsulated by the ILO's jobs gap indicator, the latest ILO Monitor on the World of Work, has said that various global shocks and risks are holding back labour market recovery, especially in low- and middle-income countries. In developing countries, responding to the current multiple crises in

Dr Gyan Pathak

constrained by a combination of high inflation and high interest rates, along with a

453 million includes both the 191 million unemployed people and an additional 262 million who want employment but do not qualify as unemployed. Those without a job but not classified as



growing risk of debt distress.

The global jobs gap of

unemployed include, for instance, people who are

discouraged from searching and those currently unable to take up employment at short notice, such as persons with care responsibilities.

On the other hand, progress has been slow in improving access to social protection, the report says. A decade has passed since the Social Protection Floors Recommendation,

half of the world's population lacks access to any form of social protection.

Precipitated by the war in Ukraine and the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, the ongoing cost-of-living crisis has hurt incomes and livelihoods around the world, especially in developing countries, the report underscored. Moreover, the global GDP growth is expected to decelerate to 2.8 per cent this year, down from 3.4 per cent in 2022. This slowdown masks a significant divergence between advanced and developing economies.

Without action on jobs and social protection, low-income countries will be left further behind, the report has warned referring to low-income countries in Africa and Arab States which are in very bad shape even now, and are unlikely to recover to pre-pandemic levels of unemployment this year.

2012 (No. 202), was adopted, yet still more than

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What the Others Say...

Tragic track

The rail accident in Odisha, involving the collision of three trains, is a tragic reminder of the challenges that India faces in modernising and expanding its rail services. At least 275 people were killed and over 900 injured. But an accident of this kind had been foretold, as recently as February this year when a collision between two trains was averted at Hosadurga Road Station in the Birur-Chikjajur section of the Mysore division of the Railways, thanks only to an alert loco pilot and the moderate speed of the train, which could be brought to a stop. The accident in Balasore, it now appears in a preliminary inquiry, followed the same disastrous sequence of mechanical failures and human errors.

The Indian Railways carries nearly 15 million passengers every day now compared to the peak of 23 million a day the year before the Covid-19 pandemic. India has an ambitious plan to improve its rail infrastructure, and in the year 2023-24, Rs 2.4-lakh crore has been allocated for capital expenditure. Accidents per million train kilometre have fallen over the last decade, but poor maintenance of tracks and the rolling stock and overstretched staff are problems that the Railways can no longer camouflage with glitzy facades. Safety measures including anti-collision systems are expanding, but evidently not at an adequate pace. In 2021, the Prime Minister announced that 75 new semi-high speed trains labelled Vande Bharat would be started over 75 weeks, and several have been started already. Speed should be strived for, but safety is paramount. Sabotage is not ruled out in the Balasore accident, which will be probed by the CBI. More important will be the corrective measures by the Railways at the operational and planning levels. It will have to find more resources to modernise and rationalise its priorities.

Courtesy: The Hindu

Migrants' ride

In 2017, government of India's annual economic survey sprung a surprise. For long, the debate on migration within the country was head-

lined by the puzzling phenomenon that it was rather slow-paced. The decennial census, which represents a snapshot at the end of every decade, didn't quite capture what was happening. The economic survey used unreserved railway travel as a proxy for economic migration between 2011 and 2016 and concluded that annual average inter-state migration was close to nine million, way more than what the census had captured. Buried in that dataset was another message, trains have a bigger impact than what's conventionally measured.

Trains are the lifeline for a bulk of India's poorer economic migrants. Their ability to move and improve their economic prospects has a positive impact on their home states through remittances. Government of India's annual jobs data in 2020-21 (PLFS) tried to gauge the cause for migration. For men, an overwhelming 43 per cent of migrants said it was linked to employment. While the railway data showed that traditional magnets for migrants such as NCR, Maharashtra and Gujarat continue to exert a strong pull, the emerging flows are from north and east to the south. Long distance routes such as the one served by Coromandel Express play a vital role here.

When seen in isolation, railway finances are an example of messy cross-subsidisation between different revenue sources, common to other government-controlled areas such as electricity distribution. However, this view understates the larger economic impact that railways have by providing a cost-effective mode of transport across long distances. If anything, some of these long-distance migrant routes are underserved. For example, economic historian Chinmay Tumbé estimated that Kerala, before the pandemic, had about two million migrants from UP and Bihar.

In politics, language is a combustible issue. However, when it comes to migration, the economic survey pointed out that language is not a barrier. In that sense, railways play a unifying role that is rarely acknowledged. Indian Railways has received considerable budgetary support in the last few years. This positive development needs to be backed by reorienting priorities within the railways. India's economic performance will be influenced by the efficiency of its rail network and its safety.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Balasore Tragedy

CAG Report 2022 Contradicts Modi's Claims

The train tragedy in Balasore in Odisha has stunned the entire world. But it has not been long since such a big train disaster happened in the country. We have not forgotten the migrant workers who were killed in the train accident during the pandemic lockdown. In the past, when such incidents occurred, the government used to take moral responsibility, conduct a thorough investigation along with the resignation of the railway ministers.

But the BJP government is trying to portray the tragedy an isolated incident and narrow down the issue with the technicalities of the investigation. After the accident, the government is eloping from the moral and political responsibility by providing publicity stunt to the media to convince that they have no responsibility in the incident. No matter how many PR stunts are done, some hidden facts will come out.

The 102-page CAG report titled as Report on Derailment 2022, points to some of the economic policies of the Central government that are responsible for train accidents. CAG's analysis of railway accidents between 2017 and 2021 indicates that of the

total 2017 accidents during this period, 69 percent were derailments like the one in Orissa. The salient findings of this report are as following:

1. 30-100 percent reduction in inspection of track



recording cars (TRC) required to assess geometrical and structural conditions of railway tracks.

2. Analysis of 'Investigation Reports' of 1129 derailment accidents in 16 Zonal Railways (ZRs) identified 24 factors contributing to derailment in accidents. The total damage/property loss in these cases is Rs 32.96 crore.

3. The responsibility of a total of 422 derailments falls on the 'Engineering Department'. The main factor responsible for derailment was related to 'track maintenance' (171 cases),

Alan Paul Varghese

followed by 'variation of track parameters beyond permissible limits' (156 cases).

4. In 63 percentage of cases, the 'Investigation Reports' were not submitted to the Competent Authority within the stipulated time. In 49 percent cases, there was a delay in getting the reports approved and received by the authorities.

5. In 2017, a fund called Rashtriya Rail Sangharsa Kosh (RRSK) was formed to strengthen the safety systems of railways. The overall expenditure on Priority-1 works from RRSK was decreased from 81.55 per cent in 2017-18 to 73.76 per cent in 2019-

20. The fund for track renovation works underwent a haircut from Rs 9607.65 crore (2018-19) to Rs 7417 crore in 2019-20. Funds allocated to track renovation works are also not fully utilized. Out of 1127

level crossings targeted for elimination during 2018-21, only 2059 (70 percent) level crossings were eliminated.

The 4th and 5th points in the above show the hollowness of the central government's PR works. The report also throws light into how the privatization austerity measures has created great damage on Indian Railway.

In 2013, a proposal was made to either utilize railway resources or outsource the maintenance of tracks. But the CAG report found that these posts are lying vacant and no outsourcing has taken place. It was found that the level of outsourcing was not sufficient for the required number of workers of civil engineering department. Vacancy percentage in civil engineering category ranges

derailments during 2017-21, 289 derailments (26 per cent) were related to track renewal.

6. Out of 2908 manned

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Rush Relief to Rail Tragedy Victims, Families

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on June 3, 2023 demanding all support to the injured and adequate relief to the families of the deceased in the rail accident:

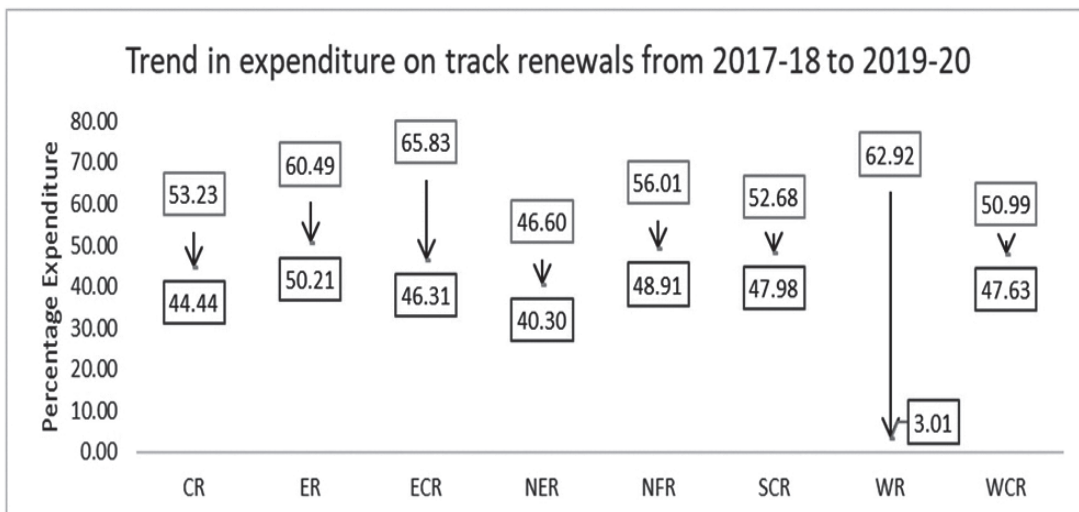
The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India expresses its shock and grief over the train accident on June 2, 2023 in Odisha that has already taken away the lives of around 300 and left hundreds of survivors, badly injured. The number of the victims is all likely to rise further.

The party has been since long pointing out that any reform without a human face will result in human disaster. The Narendra Modi government which has no concern for the people has been introducing bullet trains and also hiked the running speed of most trains. It never bothered to improve the rail tracks nor other related infrastructure setups.

The party demands a thorough probe into the cause of the accident, capacity of our rail infrastructure including tracks, etc, and also any negligence on the part of the railway administration.

The National Secretariat urges the Union government to extend all support to the injured and rush adequate relief to the families of the diseased.

Trend in expenditure on track renewals from 2017-18 to 2019-20



Will Organize One Lakh Public...

From Front Page

seven decades for social, political and economic equality. She recounted the history of the movement that was the history of standing with the most marginalized in every other section of the society to strengthen struggles for justice and against communal violence of any kind. NFIW has taken battles from streets to courts to secure constitutional rights and justice.

Gargi Chakravarty, senior Vice President of NFIW, said that the women's movement has to make its priority to vote out of power the present RSS-BJP regime which is aggressively poisoning the country with vicious anti-minority propaganda, communal hatred through distortion of history and misinformation at all levels.

Annie Raja, general secretary, NFIW, said that the women of India are passing through a war like situation. Increasing violence, visible and invisible, with unprecedented brutality, impunity to the mighty and powerful, rich and influential and, political patronage to the perpetrator, all have become the new normal under RSS-BJP regime. While greeting the participants she said that the struggles are not for us only but for every woman of India. She reminded them of the ceaseless work of our founders and other leaders to bring together a large number of women's organisations and women's rights groups to work unitedly and how it has contributed to the vibrancy of women's movement in India.

It was followed by two

panels, which were coordinated by Kanwaljeet Kaur and Nisha Siddhu, national secretaries, with activists from different organisations working with cross-sections of women. They all condemned the apathy and anti-women stance of the present Modi led government, as well as pointed to the real challenge today to pull the country out of the bigoted, patriarchal, misogynist, fascist quagmire that it is sinking in today. Through a 30 minutes visual history, Dr Supriya Chottani recalled the history of the tremendous work done in the past and the present struggles launched by the organization by way of social and legal reform, on question of sexual violence against women, abolition of dowry, foreducation, employment, health, food security, communalism, international peace and solidarity and political equality.

Felicitations

The celebrations included felicitation of the senior and veteran leaders of NFIW. In spite of their ill health and age related issues, around twenty five veteran leaders were present in the programme. They include Asha Mishra, Sushela Sargam, Sushela Sahai, Kushal Bhaura, Philomina Cardoz, Kamal Sadanandan, Rema Chatterjee, P Padmavathy and others.

Solidarity

Along with solidarity messages, women leaders from AIDWA, AIDMAM, AIMSS, PMS, JWP, and democratic organisations PUCL, ANHAD and academics Dr. Lianboi Vaiphei

and Prof. Apoorvanand, senior journalist Pamela Philipose, well known activist Navsharan Kaur, Nishat Husain, general secretary of AIYF Thirumalai Raman and others reiterated their resolve to continue their work towards a gender just society.

Poster Releasing

As part of the year-long celebrations, NFIW has decided to conduct legal education for one million young women by June 4, 2024. A poster on this was released during the national convention.

New Challenges

Alongside celebrations, NFIW has taken up this occasion to express its deepest and continuing solidarity to the struggling wrestlers and to the cause of strengthening and strict implementation of POSH and POCSO Acts related to sexual harassment of women and children respectively.

Since April 24, 2023, NFIW units across the country are consistently organizing protest programmes in solidarity with the struggling wrestlers. NFIW members collected lakhs of signatures demanding immediate arrest of Brij Bhusha Sharan Singh, BJP MP and the then President of the Wrestling Federation of India, against whom the Women Wrestlers, including a minor, have filed complaints of sexual harassment.

The state, instead of helping the wrestlers who have won many laurels for India, remained silent and allowed the accused to intimidate and threaten and influence the government to even amend the POCSO Act so that he

can escape from being arrested. Prior and post filing of FIRs, that too after the direction from the Supreme Court, the Modi government allowed the police to blatantly violate the Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Work Place (POSH Act) and the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO Act).

Before this criminal sabotage of the above mentioned Acts in Wrestlers case, it was on August 15, 2022, on the 75th anniversary of Independence Day, remission had been granted to eleven life convicts who had been sentenced in multiple murders and gang rape of Bilkis Bano during the communal riots in Gujarat in 2002. In both the cases the culprits and the accused enjoy the shameful support from the ruling RSS-BJP government at the Centre.

The masses in the country are facing unprecedented unemployment, unchecked price rise, hunger, poverty, malnutrition and especially for women, the situation is even worse.

While any move to assert the right to dissent and protest is punished, the madness of the Sangh Pariwar outfits have become a menace. They are encouraged by the authorities in their attempts to divide people on the basis of caste and religion. On the pretext of telling facts, history is being distorted and rewritten; syllabi is being changed to suit the agenda and ideology of Manu wad, in the name of saving culture, science and scientific temper is being distorted; finally even keeping the President of India away and instead inviting all 'sadhus' for the

opening up of the new Parliament building and following up of a ritual of upholding Sengol, a feudal relic of the Rule of kings that too in a country built on democratic and secular traditions. All these point to the fact that Modi regime is fast moving forward to declare rule of 'Hindu Rashtra'.

Way Forward

Seven decades of the working among the masses, sharing their plight, launching struggles and making sacrifices, NFIW has commendably made contributions to the socio-economic and political life of Indian women.

But as it enters into the 70th year of its foundation, new challenges pose grave threats to the very survival of our democracy and secular fabric. To be victorious, the organization will have to rejuvenate and re-educate all its members to defeat these majoritarian challenges with courage and conviction. We should continue to unite not only women organizations but all democratic and progressive forces. To safeguard the constitutional values of Justice, Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, women's movement needs to be strengthened by uniting all democratic and secular organizations and movements. To defeat the fascist forces, it is an imperative.

Call of the Convention

The convention celebrating 70th foundation day calls for organizing one lakh public meetings to expose and create awareness regarding the vicious agenda of the anti-women Manu wadi majoritarian fascist Modi government by August 15th, 2023, which marks one year of remission.

The Rashtriyaswayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) is against the periodic table basic elements or the sources of various energies and chapters on evolution from the curriculum. All that the RSS wants us to believe through its BJP government at the Union level that life is either magical or mysterious yet and the sources of energy is proved by the Hindutva mythological gods and goddesses. How both elements and evolution have been made irrelevant? Whole chapters on sources of energy and the sustainable management of natural resources have also been removed. A small section on Michael Faraday's contributions to the understanding of electricity and magnetism (electromagnetism) in the nineteenth century has also been stripped from the class-10 syllabus.

Why science is important? It is to develop the scientific temper, humanism and the spirit of inquiry and reform. These words were crafted in 1976 in an amendment to India's constitution. The constitution's writers rightly saw the pursuit of evidence, reasoning and humanity as the responsibility of every citizen as India emerged from arguably the most tumultuous period in its history since gaining independence from Britain nearly three decades earlier.

So therefore, the Union government through the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) has cut the periodic table and the evolutionary theories from the school textbooks. The actions of the communal BJP government have baffled the experts and rational and scientific intellectuals. Followed thousands of them signed a petition in protest. More than 4,500 scientists, teachers and science communicators have signed an

RSS is against Scientific Temper in Students

appeal organized by Break-through Science Society, to reinstate the axed content on evolution.

The government's action is insensitive and irrational that it will no longer teach these subjects to under-16 students. RSS-BJP is not only science they also distorting political history of the country along with other foundational topics such as sources of energy and environmental sustainability. Younger learners will no longer be taught certain pollution- and climate-re-

lated topics, and there are cuts to biology, chemistry, geography, mathematics and physics subjects for older school students.



Everything related to water, air pollution, resource management has been removed. There is no logic to see how conservation of water, and air [pollution], is not relevant for the human-

ity. It's all the more so currently. A chapter on different sources of energy — from fossil fuels to renewables — has also been removed.

That's a bit strange, quite honestly, given the relevance in today's world. NCERT has not responded to the appeal. And although it relied on expert committees to oversee the changes, it has not yet engaged with parents and teachers to explain its rationale for making them. In non-science content, chapters on democracy and diversity; political parties; and challenges to democracy have been scrapped. And a chapter on the industrial revolution has been removed for older students.

Researchers, including those who study science education, are shocked. Anybody who's trying to teach biology without deal-

ing with evolution is not teaching biology as the world currently understand it. It's that fundamental to biology. The periodic table explains how life's building blocks combine to generate substances with vastly different properties and is one of the great intellectual achievements of chemists.

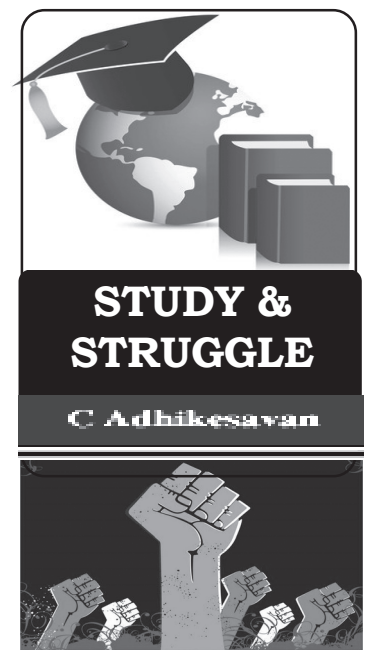
In explaining its changes, NCERT states on its website that it considered whether content overlapped with similar content covered elsewhere, the difficulty of the content, and whether the content was irrelevant. It also aims to provide opportunities for experiential learning and creativity.

NCERT announced the cuts last year, saying that they would ease pressures on students studying online during the COVID-19 pandemic. The science teachers and researchers expected

that the content would be reinstated once students returned to classrooms. Instead, the NCERT shocked everyone by printing textbooks for the new academic year with a statement that the changes will remain for the next two academic years, in line with India's revised education policy approved by government in July 2020.

The idea [behind the new policy] is that it make students ask questions, but the removing fundamental concepts is likely to stifle curiosity, rather than encourage it. The way this is being done, by saying 'drop content and teach less', "that's not the way you do it".

Science educators are



particularly concerned about the removal of evolution. A chapter on diversity in living organisms and one called 'Why do we fall ill' has been removed from the syllabus for class-9 students, who are typically 14–15 years old. Darwin's contributions to evolution, how fossils form and human evolution have all been removed from the chapter on heredity and evolution for class-10 pupils. That chapter is now called just 'Heredity'. Evolution is essential to understanding human diversity and "our place in the world".

Class 10 is the last year in which science is taught to every student. Only students who elect to study biology in the final two years of education (before university) will learn about the topic. The curriculum revision process has lacked transparency. But in the case of evolution, "more religious groups in the country are beginning to take anti-evolution stances. Some members of the public also think that evolution lacks relevance outside academic institutions.

The changes to the curriculum are being driven by a mass-membership volunteer organization parental ideological association with the ruling regime BJP. The RSS since its foundation wanted to establish India to Hindu Rashtriya and that Hinduism is under threat from India's other religions and cultures.

Basic Features of the Constitution

SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPACT

2023 is the Golden Jubilee year of 'KeshavanandaBharathi' – the Constitution Bench Judgment of the Supreme Court that prescribed the doctrine of basic structure. The verdict that was divided 7:6, in nutshell holds that the Parliament has wide powers to amend the Constitution but it cannot alter its basic structure or fundamental features. In the last 50 years this judgment has been debated extensively and recently this has intensified again. Even Vice-President of India has come forward to openly criticize the judgment and the doctrine of basic features. No doubt, the verdict was subjected to severe criticism by many in the past also, especially before the Emergency, and even by those who themselves believed in the core values of the Constitution but the attack has never been like today. The argument of the critics has been that the Parliament being the representative of the will of the people should have absolute power to amend the Constitution. They also invoke the principle of 'separation of powers' to argue against the verdict that holds that the power of judicial review can be used to strike down any amendment in the Constitution that destroys or emasculates its basic elements or fundamental features.

The Constitution should be flexible or rigid, this has been a subject of intense discussion in the Constituent Assembly that was given the task to frame the Constitution. Many saw the provision of Article 304 of the Draft Constitution (present Article 368) that prescribed two third majority of the members of the Parliament present and voting to pass any Constitutional amendment to be too rigid. They were of the view that amendment in the Constitution should be made easier. Their argument was that the 'future Parliament' that was to come into being on the basis of 'Universal Adult Franchise' could not be treated as inferior in Constitutional status to the Constituent Assembly that was elected on a restricted franchise and then indirectly by the Provincial Assemblies on separate electorate. However, Dr. BR Ambedkar, the Chairman of the Drafting Committee in his speech delivered in the constituent assembly on September 7, 1949 summed up the aforesaid debate in following words:

"... The Constitution is a fundamental document. It is a document which defines

the position and power of the three organs of the State – The executive, the judiciary and the legislature. It also defines the powers of the executive and the powers of the legislature as against the citizens, as we have done in our chapter dealing with Fundamental Rights. In fact, the purpose of a Constitution is not merely to create the organs of the State but to limit their authority, because if no limitation was imposed upon the authority of the organs, there will be complete tyranny and complete oppression. The legislature may be free to frame any law; the executive may be free to take any decision; and the Supreme Court may be free to give any interpretation of the law. It would result in utter chaos...."

No doubt, this debate took place in a different context but from the above observation of Dr Ambedkar it is clear that our founding fathers never intended to give unfettered power to the Parliament to amend the Constitution.

Before the drafting committee was given the task to prepare the draft Constitution, the Constituent Assembly had deliberated upon the resolution re: Aims

and Objects moved by Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on December 13, 1946. This resolution sets out the aims and objects for the constituent assembly, which, according to Pt. Nehru, 'describes an outline of the plan and points the way which we are going to tread'. Besides declaring its firm and solemn resolve to proclaim India an independent sovereign republic, securing justice, social, economic and political; equality of status, of opportunity and before the law; freedom of thought, expression, belief, worship, vocation, association and action and providing safeguards for minorities, backward and tribal areas, and depressed and other backward classes etc. were set out as some of the aims and objects for the constituent assembly. While emphasizing that the resolution 'lays down only certain fundamentals', Pt. Nehru said in his speech in the Constituent Assembly, "It is a resolution and yet, it is something much more than a resolution. It is a declaration. It is a firm resolve. It is a pledge and an undertaking and it is for all of us I hope a declaration...."

These very fundamentals contained in the resolution

re: aims and objects later found place in the Constitution of India also. As a matter of fact, these fundamentals which can be called the 'core values' of our Constitution had evolved during our freedom struggle. Therefore, though, the term 'basic feature or basic structure' is not used anywhere in the Constitution, however, it is not very difficult to have a clear feel of the fundamental features of the Constitution from its provisions and spirit both. Thus, as observed by the Supreme Court in 'Bhanumati etc. Vs. State of Uttar Pradesh', like many issues in our constitutional jurisprudence that have evolved out of doctrine of silence, the basic structure doctrine vis-a-vis Article 368 of the Constitution has also emerged out of this concept of silence in the Constitution.

After independence many states enacted land reform laws. These legislative actions were indeed in consonance with the pledge that was taken by our founding fathers, who were aware of the fact that the 'Caste' and 'Zamidari' systems have been the source of inequality, exploitation and oppression in Indian Society since centuries. The Indian liberation movement, thus, was not merely a struggle for freedom from foreign rule and imperialist exploitation but was also a struggle for freedom from this socio-economic inequality, exploitation and oppression emanating from the Caste and Zamindari system. They also knew well that justice-social, economic and political was sine qua non for a just and free society. In his famous interview with journalist Louis Fischer,

Ashwani Bakshi

Mahatma Gandhi had strongly advocated for distribution of land among peasants on the principle of 'land to the tiller'. The Indian National Congress had also committed itself for agrarian reforms. The Communists had gone a step further. They organized peasants and muzaras and waged militant struggles against Zamindari oppression and exploitation in various parts of the country, which were particularly intense in Telangana, Tebhaga, PEPSU etc.

Thus, when land reform laws were passed by the states in order to achieve the objective of social and economic justice, the same were struck down by the High Courts of the respective states at the instance of land lords on the ground that they violated their right to property and other fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution, the Parliament passed the first amendment to the Constitution in the year 1951 whereby Articles 31-A, 31-B and 9th Schedule were inserted in

the Constitution to save the agrarian laws from Article 13 of the Constitution that declares laws that contravene the Fundamental Rights to be void. This first Constitutional amendment came to be tested before five Judges Bench of the Supreme Court in 'Shankari Prasad's case (Shankari Prasad Singh Deo & Others Vs. Union of India & Others dated October 15, 1951). In this case the court held that Parliament's power to amend any part of

the Constitution was untrammelled. Thus, the first constitutional amendment was held to be constitutionally valid. The aforesaid view was later affirmed in Sajjan Singh's case (Sajjan Singh Vs. The State of Rajasthan Dated October 30, 1964) wherein under challenge was the Constitution (17th amendment) Act, 1964 whereby some more land reform legislation were included in the 9th Schedule. Ninth Schedule that was inserted in the Constitution by the first constitutional amendment in 1951 contains the list of central and state laws which cannot be challenged in courts. Sajjan Singh's case was decided with the majority of 3:2. However, it was the minority opinions in this case that gives us early origins of the basic structure doctrine in India. Justice Mudholkar had to say this about the Constitution and the intention of the constituent assembly that framed it in his minority opinion:

"Above all, it formulated a solemn and dignified preamble which appear to be an epitome of the basic features of the Constitution. Can it not be said that these are indicia of the intension of the Constituent Assembly to give permanence to the basic features of the Constitution?"

It is also a matter for consideration whether making a change in the basic feature of the Constitution can be regarded merely as an amendment or would it be, in effect, rewriting part of the Constitution; and, if the latter, would it be within the purview of the Article 368?"

However, soon after 'Sajjan Singh' came 'Golak Nath' (I.C. Golak Nath and Others Vs. State of Punjab and Others- 11 Judges

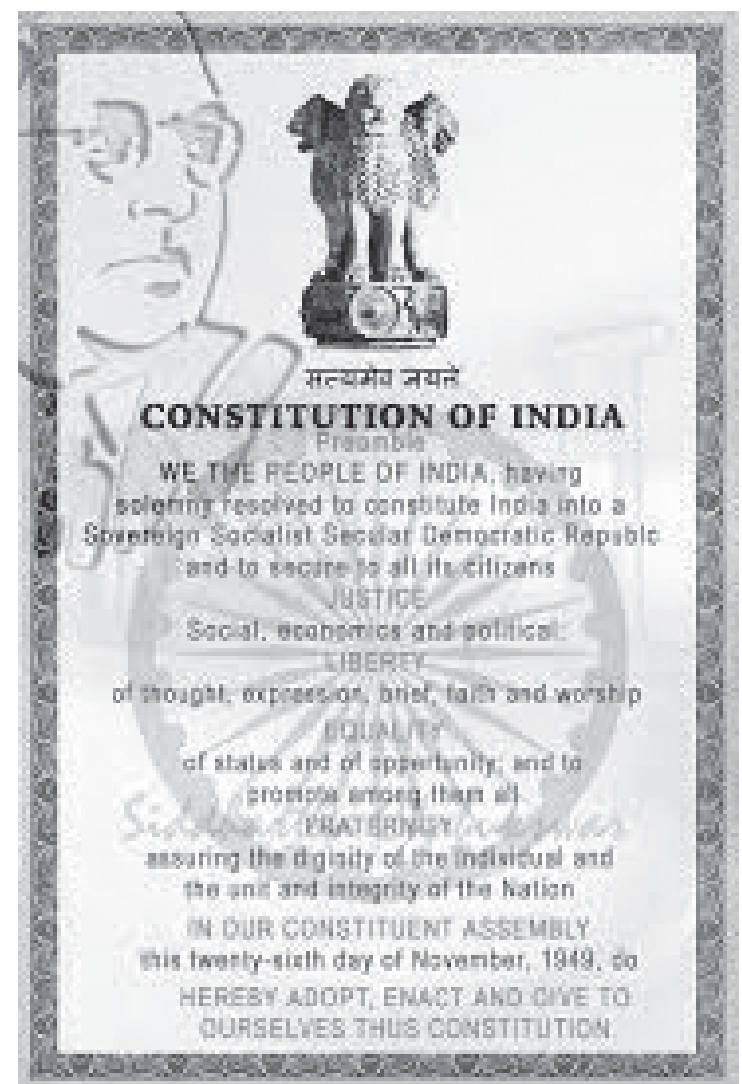
Bench, February 27, 1967) that overturned 'Shankari Prasad' and 'Sajjan Singh' both, holding that even a Constitutional amendment was subject to Article 13 of the Constitution. That meant that land reforms laws could be challenged and struck down by the courts on the ground that they violated land holders' right to property and other Fundamental Rights. Thus, the 6:5 verdict in Golak Nath's case placed substantive limitation upon the power of the Parliament to amend the Constitution by giving precedence to Right to property and other Fundamental Rights over Social and Economic Justice. Therefore, to overcome 'Golak Nath', the Parliament passed the 24th and 25th amendments in 1971 to dilute the right to property and remove restrictions upon Parliament in its exercise of the amendment power. In 1972 itself, the Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1969 and the Kerala Land Reforms (Amendment) Act, 1971, certain provisions of which were struck down by the Kerala High Court, were included in the 9th Schedule to grant them immunity from challenge in court vide the Constitution (29th Amendment) Act, 1972. All these amendments were challenged in 'Keshavananda Bharathi vs. State of Kerala' (dated April 24, 1973). The petitioner, who was the Mathadhipathy of Edaneer Matt in Kerala, pleaded in his petition filed in the Supreme Court that the aforesaid legislations were violative of his Fundamental Rights under articles 25, 26, 14, 19 (1)(f) and 31 of the Constitution and that the land reform bill was introduced in the Kerala legislature in 1968 by the United Front government then in power in the state, 'dominated by the

Marxists', for making radical changes in the principal Act that is The Kerala Land Reforms Act, 1963 'in order to carry out its political ideology'.

The bench delivered its landmark judgment in the case on April 24, 1973. While overruling 'Golak Nath', the court upheld the validity of 24th amendment and held that all Articles including those relating to Fundamental Rights can be amended by the Parliament, provided that the basic structure and framework of the Constitution is not altered. Supremacy of the Constitution, Republican and Democratic form of Government, Secular and federal character of the Constitution, separation of Powers between the legislature, the executive and the judiciary, the unity and the integrity of the nation, the sovereignty of India etc. were identified as certain basic features of the Constitution by the members of the bench in their respective judgments. Khanna J. illustrated his view as following:

"It would not be competent under the garb of Amendment, for instance, to change the democratic government into dictatorship or hereditary monarchy nor would it be permissible to abolish the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha. The secular character of the State according to which the State shall not discriminate against any citizen on the ground of religion cannot likewise be done away with."

Thus, we see that the doctrine of basic structure has emerged in the cases involving right to property as in first few decades after independence conflict was between the Fundamental Rights of the propertied classes and the Constitutional object of securing social and economic justice



for poor, downtrodden and oppressed. Where various high courts initially gave precedence to property and fundamental rights over Social and Economic justice, the Supreme Court turned the scale in favor of the latter in 'Shankari Prasad' and 'Sajjan Singh' cases. However, soon after 'Sajjan Singh', came 'Golak Nath' wherein the Supreme Court again turned the tide in favor of propertied class.

This compelled the Parliament to pass 24th Constitutional amendment, validity of which was upheld in 'Keshvananda Bharathi' with the rider that the Parliament in the course of amending the Constitution cannot destroy its basic structure. Several judgments of the Supreme Court that have come thereafter show how the doctrine of basic structure has played a role in the evolution of Constitutional jurisprudence in favor of democracy, secularism and citizens' fundamental rights. This doctrine has been applied and reiterated thereafter in cases involving questions related

to elections, democratic rights, appointment of judges etc.

The first case wherein the aforesaid doctrine was applied after 'Keshvananda' involved rights based on democracy. The election of then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to the Parliament came to be set-aside by a single Judge of Allahabad High Court on June 12, 1975 in an election petition titled 'State of Uttar Pradesh Vs. Raj Narain'. To nullify the said verdict, 39th Amendment to the Constitution was passed by the Parliament excluding the election of the prime minister from judicial review. The said amendment became the subject of challenge in Indira Nehru Gandhi Vs. Raj Narain (Dated November 7, 1975). While holding that the Fundamental Rights are part of basic structure of Constitution which cannot be changed, the Supreme Court underlined that it was Constitution that was supreme and not the Constituent power. Similarly, in 'Minerva Mills Ltd. And Others Vs. Union of India;

On Page 12

Central Party School in Tirupati Concludes

TIRUPATI: *The central party school for student cadres in English was held here from May 1 to 9 (2023) at the district party headquarters in Bairagipatteda. It was attended by 33 comrades from Manipur, Punjab, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tamilnadu and Kerala. It was almost from all over the country and among them six were girls. AP sent the largest group of students, followed by Manipur. Comrades from Manipur arrived after facing great difficulties. It took four days to reach here for them. As they left after completing the school, the conditions in Manipur were deteriorating further. Despite the disturbances back home, they had kept their cool and their dedication and discipline were appreciated by all.*

Inauguration

The school was inaugurated by the CPI national secretariat member Dr K Narayana, who greatly helped holding of the school. He hoisted the Party flag amongst slogan shouting and songs, and soon after addressed a well-attended press conference. In his inaugural speech, he welcomed the participants and emphasized on the great importance of party school. He said this is being underestimated in the process of movement. In the present complicated situation in the country, it is all the more

needed to equip the cadres with Marxism-Leninism along with history of freedom struggle and other contemporary issues. He wished them all the success.

The session was well-attended, and included the comrades of Tirupati district CPI and AISF, press, participants, AISF leaders Vicky and Shubham, party school teachers Krishna Jha, YugalRayalu, and principal of the school Anil Rajimwale.

Subjects

Following subjects were taught by various teachers:

Anil Rajimwale

What is Marxism (2 sessions), by Krishna Jha; World Communist Movement, and Basic Concepts of Political Economy, by Amit Kumar; Imperialism and Finance Capital, and Marx, Gandhi and Ambedkar, by Dr YugalRayalu; Varna, Caste and Class by Prof Rajsekhar; Social Media by Kapil; CPI History (2 sessions), by Anil Rajimwale; CPI Program and Policies, and Communal Fascism, by Dr Kango; Party and Mass Organizations by Azeez Pasha; Environment, Technology and Society by M Vijayakumar; New Education Policy and its Critique by Ramesh Patnaik; Cultural and Philosophical Traditions of India, by Mahendran; Constitution and Question of Identity, by Viraj; AISF History by Shubham Banerjee; AISF Program, Policies and Organisation by Vicky Maheshwari.

Thus, more than a dozen

teachers lectured. Some new teachers and subjects were also introduced.

Discipline and study

This time the level of interest and discipline was much better, and English medium did not bother much. There were a lot of questions and group discussions. All the books were sold out, unusual for students' school. The school monitor was Varsha, from Tamilnadu AISF. The evenings were devoted to group discussions on various subjects in the school.

Class on Social Media generated much interest among the students. They learnt how to form groups, ask questions and answer them on the mobile. As a result, teachers at the end of each lecture circulated questions, which the students were to answer on their mobiles. Most of the participants did quite well in the examinations, in which they took part enthusiastically.

Excursion

Tirupati is a historically important city, full of forts, palaces, museums, science museum, temples, Tirumala itself with its natural beauty such as green hills, forests etc. Therefore, a day was set

aside for excursion to some of these places. The students were taken to Chandragiri Fort, Science Museum, some temples, hill-side etc. Some of them went to Tirumala too. Time was very short. They enjoyed the trip and learnt quite a few things.

Review and end with 'The Internationale'

There was an encouraging review session at the end of the school. The district party leadership including the district CPI secretary K Murali also attended. The local IPTA group sang a few encouraging songs. In fact, they presented songs on some of the other days too. Students too participated in cultural activities.

The students generally reviewed the school in a positive manner. They were highly encouraged and learnt a lot about Marxism. They wanted more time for the school. Some of the lectures used PPT method. It was suggested that this be used more often.

The school ended with the singing of 'The Internationale'.

Students' school in Bihar

A two-day party school was held in Janshakti Bhavan, Patna, the state headquarters of CPI, on May 13 and 14. It was attended by about 50 students. The in-charge of state party education Jabbar Alam was present and inaugurated it. Vijendra Kesari introduced the topics and explained the nature of the school as also the subjects.

The lectures were delivered by Anil Rajimwale on What is Marxism and CPI History, Jabbar Alam on Caste and Class, Vijendra Kesari on AISF History and its policies and organization.

A lot of literature was sold, and there were lively discussions with questions and answers. It was decided that the participants for central party school for students would be selected from among this group.

Rising Levels of Ozone, A Danger To Life

The Centre for Science and Environment has cautioned against rising ozone levels in Delhi in the summer months. If allowed to go unchecked, this dangerous pollutant, which is difficult to trace, could create a serious public health crisis. CSE said the areas in the city most affected by ozone were South Delhi and New Delhi.

CSE pointed out that the current policy and public attention is nearly fully focused on particulate matter pollution and has neglected the mitigation of toxic gases. Inadequate monitoring, limited data and other drawbacks have weakened the understanding of this growing public health hazard.

"Learn from the advanced economies. After controlling particulate pollution, they are in a crisis over nitrogen oxides and ozone," said Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director, research and advocacy, CSE. "India should avoid this trap, but the standard practice of the Central Pollution Control Board averaging out the data of all weather stations to determine the daily AQI cannot capture the public health risk from this short-lived and hyper-localise pollutant."

Based on CPCB stations, CSE determined that between 2019 and 2023, ozone standards breached safe standards in March-May in each station in the NCR. There are two sets of standards for ozone: an eight-hour norm of 100 micrograms per cubic metre and one hourly stan-

dard of 180 micrograms per cubic metre. CSE noted the ozone data of CPCB is capped at 200 microgram per cubic metre, leaving it impossible to determine the concentration beyond that.

Avikal Somvanshi, senior programme manager, CSE, said, "Compliance requires that the standards are met for 98 per cent of the time annually. It may exceed the limit on two per cent of the days, which means just eight days in a year, but not on two consecutive days."

Speaking of risks, CSE's analysis said that age-standardised rates of death attributable to ground level ozone was among the highest in India and the seasonal eight-hour daily maximum concentrations have recorded one of the highest increases in the country between 2010 and 2017 — about 17 per cent.

The analysis said New Delhi and South Delhi were worst affected by ground-level ozone pollution. Nehru Nagar in South Delhi was the most chronically affected, having exceeded the standard on 75 days in March-May. It was followed by Aurobindo Marg, Karni Singh Shooting Range and Mandir Marg.

Mandir Marg in New Delhi registered the highest increase, 63 per cent, in exceedance days compared with the average of the last four summers. It was followed by Gwal Pahari in Gurgaon and Patparganj in east Delhi, both recording 51 exceeding days.

May the 28th 2023, will be remembered for three reasons. Firstly, the new building of the Parliament was inaugurated in which saints were ensured to be present to bless and guide the prime minister. Second, the 'Sengol' a symbol of victory of a king over the enemy was installed by the prime minister in Parliament with a 'DandwatAasana'. Third reason to remember is the way outside the Parliament, the women wrestlers who brought glory to the country by winning medals were beaten up and dragged away from JantarMantar by the police because they were sitting on Dharna to demand justice for being victims of sexual harassment by BrijBhushanSharan Singh, a member of Parliament from the ruling BharatiyaJanata Party and former president of the Indian Wrestling Association. It is important to analyse these three events because they can have long lasting impact on the health and structure of our country and society in the future.

In the ancient times, when science was not much developed, contemporary saints and sages were considered to be the seat of knowledge. They used to be the guides of the kings and were present at the time of 'Raj Tilak' in the 'Sabha' to bless the King. They used to decide how to conduct the state. Since right to education was strictly reserved for a section of society, people from other classes/castes were prohibited from getting any education. Therefore, only the 'Sant Mahatmas' were the seat of knowledge.

As the times changed Monarchy has been replaced by democracy and science, instead of sermons, has become the guiding force for various activities in life. Conduct of the state too has been influenced by these changes. Bringing the saints to the Parliament during the inauguration is a very subtle move to eulogise the monarchy and to push society into obscurantism. This is a great challenge to the country, Constitution and social cohesion, is contrary to the ideology of secularism and is negation of science.

It is now common knowledge that the 'Sengol', which is being continuously propa-

gated was given to the kings in Tamil Nadu when they achieved victory on the enemy and were installed as the King. This was presented to the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru along with many other gifts. At that time, the people of India had defeated the British Empire and vowed to establish secular democratic Constitution in the independent India. But what victory Narendra Modi has achieved? To praise Sengol is to glorify the monarchy and is a very deep conspiracy to arouse sectarian feelings and push people to feudal mind-set era.

The conspiracy became evident the very time when women wrestlers on Dharna, demanding justice were dragged and pushed out from JantarMantar and later arrested.

Scientific temper contributed a lot in the freedom struggle of our country. There are many statements of Shaheed Bhagat Singh on this. The communists and the progressive forces during the freedom struggle and after the independence talked of importance of scientific temper for the development of the country and the society. Jawaharlal Nehru, the first

Prime Minister of the country, laid great emphasis on scientific thinking. He stressed in the Parliament that we will get light from science for the development of the country. He labelled scientific feats as the modern Temples, Gurudwaras, Mosques or Churches. Science has made it possible to look at traditional beliefs in a new light based on facts. Science should be an integral part of our life. That is why in our Constitution we decided to keep religion as a personal affair separate from the state.

A large section of our freedom fighters and post-independence politicians of the country realized that there was a strong need in the country to break the shackles of social and economic backwardness, superstitions and traditional way of life in which the country was enmeshed. The base of the country should be Science and technology which has to be developed further. Only scientific method and approach can change human life. The idea of the role of science in nation building is reflected in the National Scientific Policy resolution adopted by the Indian Parliament on March 4, 1958.

Whereas it is necessary to develop logical and scientific thinking, it is not necessary that only with the development of science and technology, the scientific outlook and thinking will develop among the people. Therefore, it is necessary that the social consciousness

From Science to Myth

Will Saints Draft the Constitution Now?

Dr Arun Mitra

is brought to such a level that a person can distinguish between right and wrong and is able to decide whether to accept something or not with logic and develops rational thinking. Accepting something just because it is a tradition is antithetical to scientific thinking. There have been many attempts in the context of developing this scientific thinking. Many non-governmental organizations have made efforts to create public awareness. The government also supported several such initiatives.

But now time has changed. The people in power are obsessed with obscurantist ideas. Since they had no role in the freedom struggle, they do not know the meaning of the nation. Therefore, they want to keep people eulogising only the achievements of ancient times. They are out to propagate and strengthen outdated customs. Continuous efforts were made by them to achieve these. Rituals were widely publicized through television. Hatred towards other religions was spread. Dalit are only being used. They hate Ambedkar but use his name. Gandhi's passion for love, non-violence and freedom. Their icon Savarkar even labelled Gandhi's ideas of humanity as impotence.

Their hollowness of their thought became evident when Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in 2014 that in ancient times, India

had 'UdanKhatolas' and that surgery in India was so advanced that we could transplant an elephant's head on a human body. A Rajasthan High Court judge said that Peahen gives birth to offspring only when she drinks the tears of Peacock. Former Vice Chancellor of Andhra Pradesh University Nageswar Rao had said that the stem cell technique in India was so advanced that 100 Kaurava could be born through this. When COVID had just spread, Narendra Modi, referring to Mahabharata, said that we will defeat Corona in just 21 days. He asked the people to clap their hands, light lamps, bang thalis and play Shankh to get rid of the Pandemic. Use of Cow urine was preached for the treatment of Novel Corona infection. The absurd idea of application of cow dung on the body was told to treat COVID and that it would also prevent from Atomic rays in case of a nuclear exchange. But the experts of veterinary science not only denied this but also said that consumption of cow urine can be harmful to the body as it could cause infection. Now the teachings of Darwin have been deleted from the school books.

These are challenging times. Such absurdities do not last long but can cause damage which may take long time to recover. We have to ensure that science remains the guiding force in modern times. Knowledge of science is the persistence to reason. This has to be strengthened through conscious effort.

LDF Govt Strides ...

From Page 3

the government's humane dedication to the cause.

Reverting India to the Dark Ages

By staging a gathering of priests and monks at the inauguration of the new Parliament building of the largest democracy in the world, the BJP has tried to display India's great traditions to the world. By situating the scepter, a symbol of monarchical and feudal power, directly behind the Speaker's chair, the BJP has made an effort to convince the world of their allegiance and dedication to Manu Smriti. This is the historic rejection of the masses' intense struggle for the advent of democracy in the nation. The objective and responsibility of the national movement were not limited to repelling foreign forces. In addition, it sought to abolish the monarchy and feudal systems and establish democracy.

Nothing else could be expected from the BJP-RSS led Central government which actively opposed this performance. Homa, Yoga, Yajna, and Pujas performed exclusively by Hindus during the inauguration of the Parliament of this country of composite culture with multitudes of people of other religions is an act that destroys the country's pluralism. It is the height of duplicity on the part of the government to include interfaith supplication. Secularism is the condition in which neither religion nor politics interfere with the other. The President and Vice President were removed from the inaugural ceremony, leaving the Prime Minister as the sole participant. In addition, this event was transformed into a Hindu ritual, and a false history was created to justify the institution of the transfer of the scepter.

The BJP's delusion that it can capture the hearts and minds of the Tamil people through this strategy will fail. Numerous opposition leaders abstained from the anti-democratic, anti-constitutional, and anti-secular inauguration ceremony of the BJP and the Prime Minister and are conveying to the government the protest and outrage of the Indian people. Opposition parties have once again embraced the conviction that there is a need for greater unity and struggle against Hindutva extremism, attempting to eliminate modern democratic secular values.

(The Author is Editor, Navayugom)

Significance and Impact...

From Page 09

Others' (dated July 31, 1980), wherein subject of challenge was the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976, the Court applied the doctrine of basic structure to protect fundamental rights enshrined in the Constitution. This amendment gave unrestrained power to the Parliament to amend the Constitution, without judicial review and also gave precedence to Fundamental duties over Fundamental Rights. The Supreme Court held that Clauses 4 and 5 of Section 55 of the Constitution (42nd Amendment) Act, 1976 was void as it destroys basic structure of the Constitution. While holding that 'Directive Principles' cannot have supremacy over 'Fundamental Rights' and Judicial Review is part of basic structure, Chandrachud J., who spoke for the majority observed as under:

"The conferment of the right to destroy the identity of the Constitution coupled with the provision that no Court of law shall pronounce upon the validity of such destruction seems to us a transparent case of trans-

gression of the limitations on the amending power."

In State of Rajasthan Vs. Union of India (AIR 1977 SC 1361) independence of the judiciary, Judicial Review and separation of powers were held to be the basic features of the Constitution. Similarly, in 'Indira Sawhney Vs. Union of India' (Dated November 16, 1992) secular feature of the Constitution was held to be part of its basic structure, which was later reiterated in 'SR Bommai and Others Vs. Union of India and Others' (Dated March 11, 1994). Bommai also reiterated that democracy, federalism, Fundamental Rights enshrined in Articles 15, 16 and 25 to 30 of the Constitution also form part of basic structure of the Constitution. Thus, it will not be an exaggeration if we say that the doctrine of basic structure is responsible for India continuing as a democracy over the last 50 years. It grants the fine balance between flexibility and rigidity that should be present in the amending powers of any Constitution.

We know that the Vice President might have criticized the doctrine of basic structure now but practically

basic structure or fundamental features of our Constitution, whether it is federalism, parliamentary democracy, secularism, fundamental rights of the citizens; especially right to free speech and expression, or the Independence of judiciary, all are under direct attack since 2014 when the present regime came to power in the center and in various states. Therefore, we, the citizens of India need to stand up against this attack and in defense of the Constitution. Former Judge of the Supreme Court Justice Madan B Lokur has opined in a recent interview that if the 'basic structure doctrine' goes, all our inalienable and fundamental rights will also go sooner than later. The Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud has also come in defense of the doctrine very

strongly. He said, "The basic structure of our Constitution, like the North Star, guides and gives certain direction to the interpreters and implementers of the Constitution when the path ahead is convoluted". There could not have been a better reply to the critics of basic structure doctrine than what the CJI has said.

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AIYF Protests...

From Last Page

a protest march was taken out in the municipal town demanding justice for the agitating women wrestlers harassed by WFI chief Brij Bhushan Singh.

Realizing the seriousness of the issue, CPI Coimbatore district joint secretary J James took part in the protest and urged the participants to be ready for more militant agitations to save women from RSS-BJP goons. Party town secretary

S Shunmugasundaramaso addressed the protesters.

It was a joint protest in which other organization leaders also participated. Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam district president D Ramachandran, Thanthai Periyar Dravidar Kazhagam district secretary Chandrasekhar, and others addressed the protesters.

CPI district leaders UR Palaniswamy, M Velgiri and others addressing the protesters urged the Union government to arrest imme-

diately Brij Bhushan Singh.

West Bengal

In Kolkata a protest demonstration was held on June 5 under the leadership of district secretary Indrajit Mallik. Addressing the protesters who sat on the road in protest, he said that the Modi government is protecting the accused Brig Bhushan Singh. Also the Delhi police is harassing the agitators. He demanded immediate arrest Brij Bhushan Singh MP.

US Fails to Break India-Russia Ties, Reveals Pentagon Secret Reports

*Diary of
International
Events*

C. Adhikesavan

All efforts by the United States and its allies to pressure India into joining their campaign against Russia have been in vain, but India chose to pursue a balanced and independent foreign policy. Thus the US fails to break Russia-India ties according to a leaked Pentagon report. The leaked documents further reveals on how Washington snoops on allies and foes alike to further its unipolar world agenda. A cache of classified US documents leaked online recently has shed light on American intelligence gathered about other countries. Images of the covert files initially appeared on the messaging app Discord in January, but went unnoticed until March.

Despite the failure the Western pressure on India continues. The policy in this regard is being openly formulated by the US – it's about tearing India away from Russia. Maintaining age-old friendly relations with Russia is in the national interests of India. India should not sacrifice the good old relations between both countries at somebody else's whims and whips.

It must be noted that amid Russia's standoff with the West over Ukraine, New Delhi has been pursuing a balanced policy, demonstrating independence in decision-making. The tactics of political pressure from the US aren't working with it. Since the outbreak of the conflict in Ukraine in February 2022, India has been reluctant to relent to demands by the US and EU to condemn Moscow or to join Western sanctions.

During a meeting with Ukrainian President Vladimir Zelensky at the G7 summit last month, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that New Delhi would do "everything we can" to help resolve the crisis between Moscow and Kiev.

Meanwhile, India has boosted economic ties with Russia, with trade turnover standing at 39.8 billion dollar last year. The two nations had previously aimed to

an elaborate timeline, dozens of military acronyms, including some items marked "top secret," which give a detailed picture of the conflict in Ukraine, raging since February 24, 2022.

"Top secret" is the highest level of classification. Some documents also contain the marking NOFORN, or "Not Releasable to Foreign Nationals," meaning they cannot be shared with foreign intelligence agencies,

superpower" as far as India is concerned, while Washington pursues a unilateral hegemonic agenda. The Pentagon report illustrates that India has no intention of taking sides in the standoff over Ukraine, as New Delhi's actions have demonstrated.

India's consistent outreach towards Russia – despite growing US pressure – came to the fore during National Security Advisor Ajit Doval's visit to Moscow



cross the 30-billion dollar mark by 2025.

Russia has become India's largest supplier of oil, with deliveries increasing twelvefold in 2022 and reaching 24 million tons. It's important that the sides are interested in long-term contracts and not only when it comes to oil.

Moscow and New Delhi are "creating and perfecting mechanisms that allow to continue cooperating regardless of the unilateral anti-Russian sanctions.

One such mechanism is switching to national currencies in bilateral trade and further India "obviously sees risks linked to foreign currencies."

The documents consist of

including the Five Eyes alliance – the US, Canada, UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Consider the documents' take on India, which has been keeping its distance regarding the Ukraine conflict, and refusing to condemn its traditional ally Russia's actions on global forums, including the United Nations (UN).

The leak claims that the US influence on New Delhi is on the wane. India's stance echoes those of other emerging powers such as Brazil and Egypt, amid Washington's face-off with Russia and China.

The US no longer reserves the bragging rights of an "unchallenged

in February, the leaks revealed. Doval met his Russian counterpart Nikolai Patrushev on February 22, and assured him of New Delhi's "support for Russia in multilateral venues".

Doval purportedly told Patrushev that India was working to ensure the Ukraine conflict would not come up in talks during the G20 foreign ministers' meeting in New Delhi on March 1 and 2, despite "considerable pressure" to for the issue to be raised (India holds the rotating presidency of G20 and the summit will be held in New Delhi on September 9 and 10). Doval also told Patrushev that India "would not deviate from the principled position it had taken in the past."

India has been reluctant to invite Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelensky to the G20 summit, despite Kiev's relentless efforts to get him on the elite globalist list. Besides, Russia-India ties have gained a new lease of life through growing trade. India and China have emerged as two biggest importers of Russian seaborne crude oil, breaking historical records, and cocking a snook at US-led sanctions. The leak has also shown that the US is a flagrant offender when it comes to eavesdropping on its key allies such as South Korea, the UAE, Israel and Ukraine, much to Kiev's disappointment.

Leading economies – from China and India to South America and the Arab world's most populous nations Brazil and Egypt, along with Russia – were all also in the crosshairs of US snooping. The US appears to have hit a stumbling block in its attempts to "punish" Russia for the Ukraine conflict, resist China's growing maritime muscle in the Indo-Pacific, and to take an aggressive stance against "authoritarian" regimes.

Meanwhile, Pentagon officials have admitted that the documents are real. The FBI swung into action and arrested Jack Teixeira, a 21-year-old Massachusetts Air National Guard member. However, the accused's audacious leak could inadvertently decide the outcome of the Ukraine conflict, and the US foreign policy overdrive might take the rap for a potential defeat.

Rollback Privatisation Policy of Railways: AITUC

AITUC secretariat has issued on June 3, 2023, the following statement on Odisha rail accident:

AITUC is of the firm opinion that the central government has been neglecting the basic infrastructure of Railways, such as the required manpower, maintenance of assets, railway tracks, signaling system while flagging off Vande Bharat trains for propaganda purposes.

This has created a high end railway system while making it precarious for the common people — a formula to denigrate government owned services and then to privatise them. The BSNL and MTNL are the notorious examples. The hidden agenda is of course to privatise the Railways. The Odisha accident is a direct consequence of this policy.

AITUC demands adequate compensation to the dependents of the deceased and a roll back of the privatisation policy.

CAG Report 2022....

From Page 05

from 9-36 percent. According to the CAG report, there has been a significant reduction in track renewal works with the introduction of RRSK in 2017. There has been a significant lapse in the funds allocated to these track renewal works. From 9607 crores in 2018-19, it has been reduced to 7417 crores during 2019-20. The report states that various railway zones were reluctant to use the funds provided. The percentage difference between the amounts given to different railway zones for track renewal can be understood from the figure given.

A survey conducted among maintenance and safety staff was also included in the report. The summary said that the lack of knowledge in the field among the contract workers has been affecting the work. Also there is non-availability of necessary sys-

tems creating hurdles. In the past Railway Budget was presented separately along the financial budget. In 2017, the Modi government merged the railway budget with the general budget. With that, the considerations that were specifically received by the railways disappeared. Similarly, the Parliamentary Standing Committee Report on Railways mentioned safety and problems on the tracks in their report. But the government ignored them.

According to the CAG report, many of the Priority 1 works under Head 3100 of the Ministry of Railways in the budget could not be carried out due to obstacles in funds. Considering these facts, the austerity policies by the government has played a role in lowering the quality of the railways. In the light of these facts, and the statements made by the Modi government after the Balasore tragedy are contrary to the findings of the government's own auditor.

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Labour Market Recovery...

From Page 04

Low-income countries will be facing the largest jobs gap rate at 21.5 per cent, while the rate in middle-income countries, the category in which India falls, would be slightly above 11 per cent. High income countries register the lowest rates, at 8.2 per cent. Low-income countries are the only country income group that has seen a long-term rise in jobs gap rate, from 19.1 per cent in 2005 to 21.5 per cent in 2023.

Low-income countries in debt distress face a jobs gap of 25.7 per cent in 2023, compared with 11 per cent in the developing countries, indicating that financial and fiscal constraints are ham-

pering their policy responses, further worsening labour market conditions.

Some countries are facing particularly complex and cascading crises, which interact with broader global challenges and exacerbate labour market impacts. They range from natural disasters (e.g. the earthquakes in Türkiye and Syrian Arab Republic) to multiple economic shocks (e.g. in Sri Lanka), which have come on top of the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and the global cost-of-living crisis.

Significant social protection policy gaps remain in developing countries, especially in low-income countries, including in regard

to old-age pensions. Only 38.6 per cent of older persons in lower-middle-income and 23.2 per cent in low-income countries receive an old-age pension. Investing in national social protection systems based on equitable and sustainable financing from taxes and social contributions and complemented by international support where needed, is necessary and will bring economic, social and employment benefits.

The ILO's new estimates confirm that building a national social protection floor, for example, through expanding basic old-age pensions in developing countries would increase GDP per capita in low- and lower-

middle-income countries by 14.8 per cent within 10 years. Such basic old-age pensions in developing countries would also reduce the share of the population living below the US\$2.15 PPP poverty line by 6 percentage points and increase the income share of the bottom 40 per cent of the income distribution by 2.5 percentage points. Furthermore, the induced effects of basic pensions would reduce the gender gap in labour income by 3.6 percentage points, equivalent to the global progress registered in the last 15 years.

The report pointed out that the required financial resources for expanding basic old-age pensions are large but not insurmountable. For developing countries,

the annual cost of providing basic old-age pensions at the level of national poverty lines is equivalent to 1.6 per cent of GDP (2.3 per cent and 1.5 per cent of GDP for low-income and lower-middle-income countries, respectively). For sub-Saharan Africa, the cost would be US\$23.3 billion, or 1.4 per cent of GDP and approximately 12.5 per cent of global annual official development assistance.

The UN Global Accelerator on Jobs and Social Protection, and the Global Coalition for Social Justice, can build global resources to achieve basic old-age pensions, as one part of a reform of the international financial architecture to better address the needs of lower-income countries, the ILO monitor concluded.

On Record ...

The Education Commissioner of Maharashtra has written a letter to the Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB), urging it to conduct an open inquiry into the conduct of 40 officials. Complaints have been received against these officials, and some of them have been caught in bribery cases, Commissioner Suraj Mandhare stated. The officials under scrutiny hold ranks of education officers and above. – *India Today*, June 7.

The wedding procession of a Dalit groom was attacked with canes and stones allegedly by people belonging to another caste because he was riding a horse on Monday in Madhya Pradesh's Chattarpur district. The police force reached the spot and the rest of the procession travelled ahead safely, police said, adding that three police personnel were injured in the incident. "A case has been registered against at least 50 people of Churai village in the district under 353 (using criminal force to deter public servant from discharging their duty), 147 (rioting), 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 506 (criminal intimidation) and 294 (using obscene language) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and provisions of Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. 20 people have been detained. – *The Hindustan Times*, June 7.

A 22-year-old Dalit student has alleged he was brutally thrashed by police at Greater Noida's Beta-2 police station last year, adding the officials made him consume urine after arresting him in a "fake" extortion case. The complainant, Jeetu alias Jitendra Kumar, a law student from Aligarh, uploaded many videos on Twitter claiming he was picked up in a fake case.

'KAVACH'

SATISH ACHARIA



In the video, in which UP DGP and Gautam Buddha Nagar Police commissioner has also been tagged, a group of people can be heard slapping and abusing a person. Gautam Buddha Nagar police said. – *The Indian Express*, June 7.

The UP Governor and chancellor of state universities, Anandiben Patel, removed Saurabh Mishra who is an RSS man was arrested by the Maharashtra police recently on charges of fraud, from the executive council (EC) of the Lucknow University (LU). The EC is the apex decision making body of the university and Mishra was nominated as member by the chancellor on April 6. When contacted, LU registrar Sanjay Medhavi said, "Saurabh Mishra was EC member as a chancellor's nominee. We are following the directions of Raj Bhawan. The university has no role in his removal."

Mishra was arrested from his residence in Jankipuram and presented before a Thane court on June 2, in connection with a case of cheating, fraud lodged by Thane-based entrepreneurs on the pretext of allotment of government tender to a tune of several crores, police said. – *The Times Of India*, June 6.

The Indian Railways is reeling under a crushing staff shortage with 3.12 lakh non-gazetted posts lying vacant across the country, spread across 18 zones, as on December 1, 2022. This was disclosed by Ashwini Vaishnaw, Minister of Railways, Communications, Electronics and Information Technology, in response to a starred question in the Rajya Sabha. The maximum posts are vacant in the northern zone (38,754), followed by the western (30,476), eastern (30,141), and central zones (28,650). In late November last year, the National Railway Mazdoor Union (NRMU) of the Central Railway staged a peaceful protest at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus in front of Divisional Railway Manager's office after duty hours to express discontent over the vacancies. In the Central Railway, of the 28,650 vacant posts, almost 50% of the vacancies (14,203) are in the safety category that primarily include operating and maintenance staff, such as inspectors of various kinds, drivers, train examiners, shunters, amongst several others. – *thehindu.com*, January 30.

Compiled by: C Adhikesavan

AIYF PROTESTS IN SUPPORT OF WRESTLERS



All India Youth Federation (AIYF) organized protests all over India on June 4, 2023 in support of the agitating women wrestlers at JantarMantar in the national capital. The agitating wrestlers have been demanding immediate arrest of former president of Wrestling Federation of India BrijBhushan SinghSharan, accused of sexually harassing the sports women. Instead of rendering justice to the harassed women wrestlers, the Delhi police on May 28 arrested the protesting wrestlers along with their NFIW supporters and did not allow them to protest at JantarMantar. This unjust action angered all democratically minded people including All India Youth Federation leaders who decided to observe nationwide protest.

Delhi

In the national capital AIYF Delhi state committee organized a protest meeting at JantarMantar in which Federation national leaders also took part.

Addressing the protesters, AIYF general secretary Thirumalai Raman said that even after the intervention by the Supreme Court of India, the Delhi police has not yet

Our Special Correspondent

registered a FIR against Wrestling Federation of India president BrijBhushan Singh only because he was



a sitting BJP member of Parliament and the government is scared to act against him. Had such allegations been made against any ordinary citizen, the police would have arrested him immediately and put him behind the bars. He pointed out that the BJP government led by NarendraModi raises the slogan, BetiBachao, BetiPadhao but does not arrest its own party MP accused of harassing the young women wrestlers, who have brought fame to the country by their outstanding performance in international sports arena.

Communist Party of India Delhi state council

secretary Dinesh Varshney, addressing the protesters, said that if the government thinks that with the help of police it will remove the agitators from JantarMantar and thus put an end to the agi-

tation for justice, it is mistaken. The fight for justice will definitely continue till it is achieved.

AIYF state president AmritaPathak and state joint secretary AkashLodhi also addressed the protesters. Uttar Pradesh AIYF leader



Advocate Dhirendra Tiwari who was present at the protest meeting said that as an advocate he can easily understand that the charges leveled against WFI chief call for his immediate arrest and putting behind bars. Unfortunately Delhi police did not act in that way.

NFIW Delhi east Delhi secretary Priya De, Poonam, Tabassum and others also addressed the protesters. AIYF Delhi state secretary Advocate Sasi Kumar Gautam conducted the proceedings of the protest. CPI Delhi state council leaders DrKehar Singh,

SanjeevRana and others also addressed the protesters.

Kerala

Protest meetings were held in many places in the state. A report from Payyanur says that a protest march was taken out in the assembly

constituency by the local AIYF committee in support of the agitating women wrestlers. AIYF district president R Chandrakant inaugurating the protest meeting said that the women wrestlers are not alone and the entire India is with them in support of their just cause. Rejeshled the march. CPI secretary M Ramakrishnan AIYF leader Sreejit Mohandas, P Binu and others participated in the march.

Another report from Mannarkkad in Palakkad district says that a protest march demanding justice for the agitating women wrestlers was taken out in the town. AIYF leader Ajit presided over the protest meeting. AIYF Mannarkkad area secretary Bobby Joy Onakkur welcomed the participants and district president P Naushad inaugurated the programme. AIYF leaders Suresh, Bharat Cherukulam, Shahina and others also addressed the protesters.

Tamil Nadu

Protests in support of the agitating women wrestlers were held at many places in the state. A report from Mettupalayam in Coimbatore district says that

On Page 12