

SINISTER DESIGN OF BJP-RSS BEHIND UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

"I measure the progress of a community by the degree of progress which women have achieved," declared Dr Ambedkar nearly a century back to a gathering of over 3000 women in 1927. This statement made by Dr Ambedkar still remains a good yardstick to gauge the progress of any society, including ours. Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently made a fervent pitch to "Indian Muslim sisters and daughters" to support the Bharatiya Janata Party claiming that it is the party that delivered gender justice to Muslim women by abolishing the practice of Triple Talaq.

In the same voice, he made the case for a Uniform Civil Code for the entire country, saying that there cannot be two laws in one family. When reports of open discrimination with minorities are common and many members of the BJP have made divisive statements, the Prime Minister's concern for the minorities and especially for minority women is surprising. He could have also asked the RSS-ecosystem to stop peddling systematic hatred towards minorities. None the less, his rhetorical delivery in Bhopal has sprung many questions about the Uniform Civil Code, Personal Laws and Gender Justice.

The Uniform Civil Code is part of every BJP election manifesto since 1989. After the BJP was decimated in the 1984 elections, they shunned all shades of moderateness and started pursuing an aggressive Hindutva policy for polarization and electoral gains. BJP's hounding of the Ram Janmabhoomi in Ayodhya created fractures in the society and fuelled riots across the country. The Uniform Civil Code also

became a divisive ploy at around the same time. In the 1989 manifesto, there was no reference made towards gender justice when the BJP promised to "prepare a draft with a view to evolve a consensus for a uniform Civil



Code." It is not a coincident that the Uniform Civil Code entered BJP's lexicon of divide and rule at a time when they have given up even the semblance of constitutional morality and started on a path of naked demonization of minorities to gain political power. These developments are intertwined aimed at polarization by portraying minorities as foreigners, regressive and

D Raja

with doubtful allegiance to the Indian nation. The history of BJP and Uniform Civil Code, is thus, not directed towards gender justice but towards

fuelling hatred towards minorities. This history makes us question the intent of the prime minister behind the 'sagely' advice to "Muslim sisters and daughters".

Coming to gender justice and the RSS-ecosystem, there hardly was a time when they supported any progressive measure aimed at

the draconian Rowlatt Act. Swami Karpatri Maharaj linked the Hindu Code with the caste of Dr. Ambedkar and suggested that an untouchable like him has no place in law-making! For them, the sole authority for legislation were the Dharmshastras or religious texts, which discriminated against women. Opposition of Bharatiya Jan Sangh members inside the Parliament and RSS members on the streets to gender justice was naked even without a thread to cover. Their idea of family is not of parity between members but strict patriarchal hierarchy where

is not to Muslim women or to gender justice. It is solely towards Hindu men, while giving them nothing but promising to take something from the minorities. It's highly unfortunate that the RSS is trying to create a sadist Hindu society, which should feel elated to see minority rights being snatched, while its own members suffer from unemployment, inequality and price-rise. The Uniform Civil Code pitch is an attempt to divert the attention of the electorate from the colossal failures of governance in the past nine years, with milestones like demonetization and recently, the aflame state of Manipur. The groups that will be most affected by the UCC are tribal communities and they have registered their opposition to any such exercise. BJP leaders like Sushil Modi have asked exceptions to be made for the North East and Tribals, indicating clearly that the proposed law limits it only to Muslims, Christians and Parsis. Not offering gender justice to Tribal women itself proves that the PM Modi's UCC has nothing to do with gender justice, and has everything to do with polarization before 2024 general elections. Opposition unity has made the BJP camp uncomfortable, and it is a desperate and shameful attempt to create cracks in the society for electoral advantage.

The Prime Minister also tried to admonish the oppo-

women are only to serve their father, husband and son. After this questionable history of opposing social reforms and gender justice, the RSS progeny's talk of gender justice to minorities is astonishing.

As many commentators have suggested, the PM's pitch for Uniform Civil Code is directed towards the 2024 general elections. His appeal

From Amrit Kaal to Kartavya Kaal

We are facing the wall today, where there is no beyond and also no future. Right to free speech has been suffocated since criticism is taken as an anathema. Also our rulers today do not endorse the way people lived in all these post independence years. With democratic institutions, like secular, sovereign, socialist Constitution, conceived and created with commitments towards the welfare of our people and country, the establishment finds inconsistency, hence the need for dilution of the fundamentals of our Constitution.

Dilution was rationalized as rights were found to be irrelevant, and needed to be abolished, since to quote from one of our PM's speeches, "talking about rights, fighting for rights are simply wasting time." Managing some apparent humility, he said the struggle for rights could be alright in some particular circumstances but "...forgetting one's duties completely has played a huge role in keeping India weak." It was then urged that everyone must "walk on the path of duty, if we really want to see the country achieve new heights". In the emergency era, ten fundamental duties were introduced in 42nd amendment, in 1976. The 11th was added through the 86th amendment in 2002, when Atal Bihari Vajpayee was leading the BJP rule. All these duties were introduced to stop the citizens from wasting time, especially while struggling to achieve implementation of our fundamental rights. In the context of fundamental duties, imperative for all the citizens in the country, prime minister himself is not an exception. He has also his duties as a citizen and also as the head of the state in a democracy. According to Constitution, one is expected to follow the ideals, institutions, respect the National Flag and also the National Anthem. Our prime minister had pointed out that the time wasted on fighting for fundamental rights has made India 'weaker'. In the preamble of the Constitution itself, three fundamental rights have been enumerated.

Among them are: to justice, liberty and equality. Each one is fundamental to keep democracy alive. Calling it 'waste of time' is denial of any right to assert for them. In the last nine years of BJP rule, there have been incidents of violation of federalism, secularism, social justice, freedom of speech, media and assembly, freedom from arbitrary arrest among many.

So far as National Flag is concerned, the body of a lynching accused was draped in National Flag as well as that of the BJP. No action was taken. About National Anthem, Russian hosts in Moscow had restrained him when our prime minister started walking off as the Anthem was being played. The BJP rulers have also been selective about who should be honored as martyrs in India's freedom struggle. One example is the removal of the names of 387 Mappila martyrs from the list of honour in the Dictionary of Martyrs of India's Freedom Struggle, 1857-1947.

Editorial

The Jallianwala Bagh memorial, paying tributes to those who lost their lives in the grim 1919 carnage by British forces, reconstructed revising historical facts was inaugurated by the prime minister himself. According to the experts, it has been turned into a site without historicity. It has been an assault on the sacred memorial for the martyrs there.

In August, 2019, Article 370 was stricken down along with the special status granted to the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir. Along with that was taken away the autonomy promised to the people of J&K in the Instrument of Accession. By locking up political leaders and activists, bringing the region under the Union government's direct control and imposing a lockdown and communications blockade, the prime minister and his government opted to disenfranchise, imprison and humiliate a section of the people they were

meant to serve. The system has been busy popularizing the 'Hindu khatremehai' narrative by the Sangh Parivar to promote Hindutva extremism flourishing largely unchecked. The strength of unity and federalism face destruction and even the rights of the states are also encroached upon.

Though always pretending to be brave, our government had no explanation when the Chinese army took over parts of Indian territory. In fact, it was the absurd policy of total denial with claims of no intrusion at all despite the multiple previous statements from the armed forces and the regime itself that were otherwise.

Then there was the irresponsible response to the COVID-19 epidemic as a 'war'. The zero-notice lockdown that brought immense sufferings to the masses, the communalization of COVID-19 which his government and party encouraged, and absence of planning a proper medical response eventually led to millions of preventable deaths in this 'war'. The problem only got worse when four ministries of his government couldn't find a way to cooperate and solve the problem.

The promise that has been violated most often has been the attacks against minorities, lynchings, violence, online bullying, daily discrimination have been actively promoted by BJP leaders across the country, and the response has been only silence.

There has also been efforts to destroy our diversity in unity. One example is efforts to impose Hindi on the entire country.

Our composite culture has always been the target as the government institutions keep tailoring our history according to the preferences of the ruling regime. It is written as demanded, without any concern for scientific knowledge. The historical contributions of Muslims to Indian culture has been almost totally omitted. Islamic monuments, among them even Taj Mahal, are projected as symbols of the subjugation of Hindus.

CPI Condemns FIR against Fact Finding Team of NFIW

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on July 11, 2023:

The Communist Party of India strongly condemns the FIR filed against Annie Raja, general secretary of NFIW

and member of CPI national executive, Nisha Sidhu, national secretary of NFIW and leader of CPI in Rajasthan and Deeksha Dwivedi, independent lawyer. All of them were part of the NFIW led fact-finding team to Manipur. The FIR

filed at Imphal on July 8, 2023 is clearly vindictive and malicious without any element of truth in it. This invocation of criminal proceedings against reputed women leaders is a clear indication of the abuse of power by the local compo-

nent of the 'double engine government'.

The CPI views the criminalization of the democratic process of fact-finding as an assault on our constitutional ethos. The double-engine government of BJP seems keen on es-

caping all manners of transparency and accountability to the citizenry of this country.

The CPI also condemns various other malicious FIRs against tribal students' organizations and their functionaries, rights activists

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Manipur Has no Respite

Concerted Political Initiative: Need of the Hour

People used to call Manipur the Jewel of India. Later, the government also borrowed that word to decorate their advertisement hoardings. The history, culture and arts of Manipur were evolved through periods of time in which the people played their due role. Meiteis, Kukis and Nagas form the population of the beautiful territory. Meiteis are in large numbers followed by Kukis and Nagas. Facing the odds of life, they were living in peace and harmony.

It doesn't mean that there were no disputes and clashes in the past. Whenever such incidents occurred, political initiatives and their own wisdom helped them to settle the differences amicably and move forward. Whenever the people of Manipur brought colours to their socio-cultural life it was this feeling of commonness that paved the path for them. That Manipur no more exists today. Everything the people achieved collectively have been shattered to pieces by the divisive policies of the BJP.

The BJP government in Manipur and Centre has totally failed the people of Manipur and their right to have a peaceful prosperous life. It began with the masterplan of the RSS who established their control over the strategically important North-East of India. After bringing the state of Assam under its hold, the BJP leadership in Delhi earned Manipur with their strategy of hook and crook. In the election of 2017, the BJP tried and failed to win the major-

ity in the assembly. But with a political aid from Delhi and the support of huge money bags they could purchase MLAs and could cook up an artificial majority through which they ruled for five years.

In 2022 elections, the BJP put their hands on the shoulders of the Meiteis and Kukis and used all their usual practices to manage the comfortable numbers. Both the Meiteis and Kukis could not understand their long-term strategy of divide and rule. Once the RSS-BJP began their operations the people of Manipur had to pay heavy prices for it. Under the BJP rule the crisis was worsening in Manipur as it happened elsewhere. Issues of unemployment, price rise, land and development were hounding the population of Manipur also. Following the RSS ideology, the BJP government was cunningly telling both the Meiteis and Kukis that the 'others' are responsible for their hardships and they are the enemies. The question of tribal status and tribal rights



Binoy Viswam

were engineered in such a way that led to the distrust between both the communities. All those happenings on May 3 were the explosion of this discontentment.

That was only the beginning. Following the clashes, arson and firing on May 3, the situation worsened all over the state. After Imphal in the valley, Churachandpur and the hills became the epicentre of the unending conflicts. Violence spread to Bishnupur, Tengnoupal, Kangpokpi, Moreh etc. Extremist elements from both the Meiteis and Kukis were in the forefront of killings and arson which is the norm of riots. The poor, the innocent and the weak are the victims of the violence unleashed according to the gameplan of the ruling circles with the blessings of the RSS-BJP. We, the delegation of left MPs, could feel the suffering of the innocent people in

all the relief camps.

Both in the camps of Meiteis or Kukis, the sorrows are the same. Women and men, old and young — they are there in thousands (according to government sources 50,648 people are lodged in 349 relief camps but the real numbers are much more). They may be getting food for hunger there. But their basic essentials like healthcare, sanitation, sanitary pads, proper nutrition for kids among others, are lacking. The education system has completely collapsed as most of the children are in the camps and many of their schools burnt. The government call them as 'relief camps', but one gets the feeling that it is for the refugees. People are forced to live as

refugees in their own country. We could see number of churches and temples and houses that have been burnt to ashes and the people at the surroundings looking at us with burning anxiety in their eyes. All these scenes are testimony to the level of mutual distrust and rage which is the natural outcome of racial hatred that rulers have succeeded in fanning up to any levels.

Seeing the painful plight of Manipur today, the people of India naturally ask 'where are the state and the Central governments?' In Manipur, people can only see a zero government. The slogan of maximum governance and minimum government was a big lie. The leader with 52-inch chest and long tongue was behaving like a 'mouni baba' throughout these days. He did not utter a single word about the wide spread crisis

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FIR against NFIW Fact Finding Team

Gross Suppression of Democratic Rights

Communist Party of India national secretariat member and leader of the CPI parliamentary groups wrote the following letter to N Biren Singh, Chief Minister, State of Manipur, expressing serious concern over the suppression of democratic rights and practices in the state of Manipur:

I write this letter to express my serious concern over the suppression of democratic rights and practices in the state of Manipur under your government. Manipur is grappling with violence for over two months now and the state-machinery is failing in upholding law-and-order in the state. Disturbing developments from Manipur have perturbed people all over the country and many sections have voiced their concerns while aspiring for peace and normalcy to prevail in the state. It is extremely unfortunate that such democratic voices are being suppressed by the government and even those offering assistance in peace-building are being targeted.

People of the country naturally feel disturbed looking at the loss of lives, property and the fractures in society that have surfaced violently over the past few months. Democratically minded people also wish to share the sufferings of the people of Manipur and contribute to restoration of normalcy in Manipur. Internet is unavailable for months and I have seen the pain of Manipuri people, as member of a joint CPI and CPI(M) delegation comprising of five Members of Parliament. Similarly, a fact-finding committee of the National Federation of Indian Women visited Manipur and interacted with victims of violence, displacement and arson. The delegation comprising of NFIW General Secretary Annie Raja, Nisha Sidhu and Adv. Deeksha Dwivedi also visited relief camps and made suggestions about improving the conditions of people who are staying there, especially women, children and the elderly.

Through a grossly undemocratic act, members

of the delegation were charged with sedition, provocation with intent to cause riot, assertions of prejudices to national-integration and promoting enmity between different groups at Imphal police station.

This FIR is nothing but an attempt at suppressing democratic voices and curtailing criticism. Continuation of violence in the state is an indictment of the failure of state-government in maintaining harmony, and the FIR registered against NFIW activists is an undemocratic attempt to intimidate voices critical of the government over its handling of the crisis. Peace will be restored by taking all stakeholders in confidence, not through a crackdown on democratic voices. Therefore, I urge you to immediately rescind the fabricated charges against NFIW activists and stop suppression of democratic norms in Manipur.

Law Reforms For Gig Workers

A gig worker is anyone who is paid for a job or role, generally for a musician or a performer, and any job, that is temporary. Another definition is that a 'gig worker' is a person who performs work or participates in a work arrangement and earns from such activities outside of a traditional employer-employee relationship.

The “work” is normally describing a full-time job with set working hours, including approved benefits. This job began to change with changing economic conditions and

Madabhushi Sridhar

continued technological advances, and the change in the economy created a new labour force characterized by independent and contractual labour. In the 2000s, the digital transformation of the economy and industry developed rapidly due to the development of information and communication technologies such as the Internet and the popularization of smartphones. As a result, on-demand platforms based on digital technology created jobs and employment forms that are differentiated from

existing offline transactions by the level of accessibility, convenience, and price competitiveness.

Proposition 22 which was approved in California declared that the gig workers are contractors. Gig workers are independent contractors, online platform workers, contract firm workers, on-call workers, and temporary workers. Gig workers enter into formal agreements with on-demand companies to provide services to the company's clients. The Rajasthan government announced that it would introduce the Rajasthan Platform-

based Gig Workers (Registration and Welfare) Bill 2023 aimed at the regulation of the gig economy in the state.

The problem is that the gig economy has employed around 8 million people in India who faced challenges such as lowered incentives, uncertainty of work, and lack of employee status. The Rajasthan government has aimed at ensuring the welfare of gig workers and introducing strict provisions to punish errant aggregators.

This bill will set up a Platform-based Gig Worker's Welfare Board. It will function as a mothership for the over three lakh employees of online service providers in the state. This bill has a unique ID with a three-year validity that would be generated by the Board for each

worker registered with one or more aggregators in the state.

There are several punitive provisions in the proposed Bill for aggregators who did not adhere to the rules including barring them from functioning in the state. They also have provisions for integrating the data of gig employees with the Board and sharing the data of all transactions that took place on the platform, violating these clauses could be fined Rs 10 lakhs for the first offence and up to Rs 1 crore for further offences. The Board will also recommend the temporary or permanent suspension of the operations of an online service aggregator in the state.

This bill was described as the first of its kind in India

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What the Others Say...

Numbers game

In the last four months, three members of the PM's economic advisory council have independently expressed concern about the quality of official statistics. The critique of the statistical system is now coming from within the establishment. It's pertinent because it provides a sense of the challenges of economic policymaking. In the absence of reliable data, policymaking is akin to flying blind.

India has built an impressive structure to capture administrative data by governments that can then be fed into the statistical system. However, this mode of data collection needs to be complemented by the official statistical system generating primary data through surveys to fill the gaps. It's the survey data, where our statistical system was a pioneer in the 1950s, that has proved to be problematic. Unless this challenge is addressed urgently, we run the risk of opting for wrong policies not because the future is unknowable, but because past data is unreliable.

There are two main problems today with the statistical system. One, timetables to generate primary data are not followed rigorously. The most serious of these is the indefinite delay in the Census. It's unprecedented and has left a big hole in the data system. There are also delays in the consumer expenditure survey and the economic census. Among critical measures affected by these delays are the monthly inflation readings and the GDP data. Two, there are complaints from the users about the quality of data. Put together, delays and doubts about quality have left India data poor. None of these problems is of recent origin. They have been building up over time.

A National Statistical Commission was constituted in 2006 as an apex body for statistical activities and to set standards. It was meant to be empowered by legislation. Seventeen years later, the legislation hasn't been passed and the official statistical system at both Centre and states is in trouble. Among the in-house recommendations to empower NSC was one that wanted its members picked through a committee

represented by a wide spectrum of parliamentarians. A mechanism to ensure financial autonomy was also suggested. These suggestions remain valid.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Amid the downpour

The southwest monsoon had recorded 52.6 per cent rainfall deficiency during the first two weeks of the season that runs from June to September. It has made remarkable progress since — not only covering the entire country by July 2 (six days before schedule) but also turning the cumulative deficiency into a 2.3 per cent surplus as on July 10. Only eastern India, Maharashtra and South (barring Tamil Nadu) remain in the red zone, although the past one week and more have seen even many of these areas receive good showers. On the whole, it has not been a bad monsoon so far. The delayed onset had sparked concerns about farmers having to possibly plant short-duration varieties, as against those grown and yielding more over a longer period subject to the timely arrival of rains. The surge from the second half of June has largely addressed that worry.

The monsoon's pick-up has meant that the total area sown under kharif crops reported till July 7 was only 8.7 per cent below last year's for the same period. Given that the window for plantings extends right up to the month-end, any significant acreage gaps should be covered within the next couple of weeks. But there are two crops that are still cause for concern. The first is rice, where public stocks, together with those of wheat, are just about comfortable and the progressive area covered is 23.9 per cent lower compared to last year at this time. Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Bihar, and Jharkhand are major rice-producing and consuming states. Their not getting much rain —

in contrast to Northwest India — can pose problems down the line. The second potential pain point is pulses, whose acreage is down 25.8 per cent on account of deficient rainfall in Karnataka and Maharashtra. It's not clear how much of these shortfalls can be offset by Punjab and Haryana (in rice) and Rajasthan (in pulses).

Courtesy: The Indian Express

A state-level convention of left and democratic parties was held in the common hall of A block of Darulshafa in Lucknow on June 27, 2023. Activists of left parties from each district of the state participated in the convention. The convention decided to work together to oust the RSS-BJP combine from power.

Every district in the state was represented by Left activists in the convention that decided to work jointly to oust the anti-people government of the RSS-BJP combine from power in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

When the meeting was held to prepare for the Lucknow convention, the date for the Patna convention of the opposition parties was not announced. However, the opposition parties' meeting in Patna on June 23 and the decisions provided ideological directive to the Lucknow convention on June 27.

A presidium consisting of CPI national executive member Dr Girish, Loktantrik Janata Dal state president Zuber Ahmed Qureshi, CPI(M) state secretariat member Madhu Garg, CPI(ML) state secretariat member Ramesh Sengar, All India Forward Bloc state secretary Udaynath Singh, and national president of Jan Ekta Manch DK Yadav was elected. CPI state council secretary Arvind Raj Swarup, CPI(M) state secretary Dr Hiralal and CPI(ML) Liberation state secretary Sudhakar Yadav were also present in the dais. Arvind Raj Swarup on

the request of the presidium conducted the proceedings of the convention.

Preparations for the conference were well done. Considering the capacity of the hall, it was decided to limit the number of participants. The enthusiasm of the comrades was visible when the conference hall was over fulfilled with delegates from far-flung districts of the state. Women representatives and student-youth representatives were also present in the convention. Around 300 delegates participated in the convention. Breakfast and lunch packets were also provided for the participants.

CPI(M) state secretary who submitted the basic paper on the aims of the convention said that the BJP government at the Centre led by Narendra Modi and the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh led by Yogi Adityanath are moving ahead aggressively in implementing the neo-liberal policies. Loot of national assets and large scale privatization of public sector continue indiscriminately. Communal corporate nexus has strengthened and dictatorial attacks are on the rise. The BJP government is engaged

UP Left Parties' Joint Convention

Arvind Raj Swarup

in furthering the fascist, RSS agenda and is threatening our constitutional structure. The neoliberal and privatisation policies of the BJP government have increased the profits of the capitalists while they have put the general public in unprecedented difficulties.

In the last 10 years, 40 per cent of the increase in the country's wealth was with one per cent of the population and only three per cent was available for 50 per cent of the population. In the last two years, the number of billionaires increased from 102 to 166. On the other hand, the number of hungry people in India has increased tremendously.

Rising inflation and price rise have made life difficult for the masses. According to World Bank, India ranks first in the world in terms of youth unemployment. Every family is troubled by the burden of unemployment. The BJP government is getting black laws passed in the Parliament against the interests of toiling people, labourers, farmers, farm laborers. Labour Codes, Agriculture Law Amendment Bill are some examples of such steps.

The Constitution, secu-

lar democracy, social justice and federal structure are under attack by the BJP government and the RSS so that they can implement the agenda of communal Hindutva. Changes are being made in the course of history to establish the ideology of Hindutva against India's diversity and unity. New education policy has been brought for centralization, marketing and communalization of education. In order to implement the anti-people, communal policies, the BJP government is crushing democracy and moving towards the path of dictatorship. Using ED, CBI and stringent laws, the process of sending opponents to jail is going on. Efforts are being made to make the Election Commission and the Judiciary in favour of the BJP government.

Bulldozer police state prevails in Uttar Pradesh. The chief minister taking law into his hand directs the police to punish the accused and claims to restore law and order through fake encounters. Maximum number of rapes is taking place in the

state. Minorities, Dalits and women are the victims of unrelenting attacks. The poor in villages and cities and the tribals in forests are being uprooted. Agricultural crisis has increased and work in MNREGA has stopped. Despite the high cost of electricity, flat rates for farmers and weavers have been abolished. Meters are being installed on tube wells. Due to the policies of the Yogi government, stray animals have destroyed entire farms.

In the recent elections to the Karnataka legislative assembly, the people rejected the BJP and it could not win even one-third of the seats. Uttar Pradesh has been made the centre of communalism. In order to divert the attention of the people from the burning problems, the BJP has put its full force on continuing with the issue of Mandir Masjid.

The basic paper further said that the left democratic parties in Uttar Pradesh have decided that a campaign will be launched to mobilize the people against the anti-people, communal and dictatorial policies and ideology of the BJP governments. Under this, a big rally will be organized in

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CPI UP state council secretary Arvind Raj Swarup addressing the convention

UP Left Parties' ...

From Page 05

Lucknow on October 11, 2023. The convention appealed to workers, farmers, weavers, employees, students, youth and women to support the campaign and make it successful in order to protect life, livelihood, secular democracy and the Constitution.

The basic paper indicated that before the October rally, the following campaigns will be held:

- District level conventions in some major districts like Varanasi, Ghazipur, Mirzapur, Allahabad, Sultanpur, Kanpur, Moradabad, etc.

- Padyatras, jathas, village gatherings, leaflets, cultural programme, etc, etc will be held to take the message of the rally to people.

- In July, a meeting of the left democratic parties in the districts will be held to prepare the outline and the campaign will be run both jointly and independently.

- Local issues will also be raised prominently during the campaign.

- At the end of September, joint press conferences will be organized by the state leadership of the parties.

After the presentation of the basic paper, the leaders expressed their views in support of it.

CPI national executive member Dr Girish presenting his views said that it is a matter of great satisfaction that the Left parties are sitting together. There used to be a time when they did not sit together but circumstances have changed and all have come together. Supporting the basic paper, he said that the BJP government is anti-women. He sarcastically said that the bulldozer did not go against the sexual

exploitation of women players and those who bet on their reputation. He said that if the bulldozer moves in one direction, then the workers of the left parties will stop it by holding it. He said that the new Parliament House was built in place of the old one because the BJP and RSS never participated in the freedom movement. The new building was inaugurated keeping aside the values enshrined in the Constitution. He said that when there will be a change of power in 2024, then the then government will have to think carefully about this new building as well.

In his address, he appealed to the workers to strive to stop the attempts to change the Constitution. To defeat the communal alliance, the left democratic forces will have to unite. He also said that if other democratic parties in Uttar Pradesh had not ignored the left, the situation would have been different today. He said that there is still time and in



UP also in 2024 the BJP can be defeated and for that the democratic parties will have to be friendly with the Left parties by keeping an open mind.

CPI(ML) Liberation state secretary Sudhakar Yadav supporting the basic paper said that the convention has special significance in this critical period. The left and demo-

cratic parties will have to work united to change the present circumstances. The workers will have to create an atmosphere of peace and unity in the society. It is pos-



sible that the BJP can be defeated in 2024 in the circumstances that have been created in the country.

Supporting the basic paper, CPI state council secretary Arvind Raj

and RSS have destroyed the dignity of human being. It has divided the society into different castes and religions. These circumstances can be changed by the joint work of left and democratic parties. That is why this convention is being organized

and a huge rally will be organized in October.

On this occasion, the regional president of Loktantrik Janata Dal Zubair Ahmed Qureshi said in his address that democratic

forces will have to establish unity with the Left. He said that the Samajwadi Party will have to come forward for this work and when the red flag will move along with the democratic forces in the districts, then the political balance will also change and the manner in which Muslim minorities are being targeted by the government due to communal policies. All secular parties need to come

together for this task. He also supported the basic paper.

AIFB state general secretary Udaynath Singh said in his address that the people of the country and the state should not forget Netaji Subhash Chandra

Bose. When Netaji was fighting for the freedom of the country, the RSS was opposing Netaji. The left and democratic forces will defeat these communal forces in the 2024 elections and the All India Forward Bloc will join hands with its full strength.

Jan Ekta Manch regional president DK Yadav appealed to the left parties and democratic forces to jointly unite to defeat the BJP.

Apart from the prominent office bearers, other left leaders also kept their views. Prem Nath Rai, Madhu Garg, BL Bharti and Babu Rao Yadav from CPI(M), Phoolchand Yadav from CPI, Mahendra Rai, Ramesh Singh Sengar from CPI(ML), Sunil Kumar Maurya, Ayush Srivastava were prominent among them.

At the end of the convention, the delegates unanimously adopted the basic paper amidst shouting slogans.

There is dissatisfaction with Indian higher education institutions and are ascribed it, broadly speaking, to the absence of corporate practices of hiring and management in public universities.

India has a vast network of private institutions, enrolling 70 per cent of all tertiary students. Why have they not transformed the dismal scene?

With a handful of exceptions, they are run by a reductive mechanical model of the management regime favoured by some: At factory floor level, shall we say, rather than the inspired heights where unicorns graze. These institutions might hire a few star faculty, but most teachers carry out routine teaching at cut-price rates, often within a kind of gig economy. At most places, taking time off for research is discouraged. The best of these institutions purvey sound formal training in set professional skills; many cannot deliver even at that level.

The few exceptional private universities offer faculty much more security (including tenure), and assured facilities like research grants and sabbatical leave — the benefits common to universities across the free world, including central universities in India. (State universities usually offer much less.) Quality is ensured, in both private and public institutions, not through invasive monitoring by “regulators and funders” but by free exchange and collegiality among the faculty themselves.

Funds for public universities, especially those at state level, are not routine handouts. In the heyday of the UGC, when independent India’s university system was being put in place, UGC funding was a reward for enterprise. Virtually all research grants

Free Higher Education From Profit Motive

were routed through project-based schemes. They involved project writing, a defence, and periodic review before each release of grants. The other great source of funds was the Five-Year Plan. Although Plan funding was a regular feature, the quantum of funds was not: It was determined by past performance and the merit of the proposals. No doubt there were undeserved awards (and undeserved rejections) but from much experience of both ends of the exercise, I can testify it was no push-over.

Hence, the wide disparity in standards between public universities — success bred success. The one major complaint might be that lack of success was not adequately penalised. The public university system started to falter when the ambitious professional classes opted out, seeking more exclusive access to jobs and ascendancy through privatised higher education. The decline in status of the public universities inevitably translated into a decline in funding. Today, the UGC and plan funding have both vanished. The Rashtriya Uchchar Shiksha Abhiyan is a scaled-down and unreliable substitute.

What, in this context, are the “market forces”? Presumably they are not thinking of income from fees, though their advocacy of “for-profit HEIs”, including foreign universities make us wonder. More likely they mean demand for the kinds of training the job market requires in a market-driven economy. Gainful employment is very reasonably the first aim of virtually all students, and HEIs must cater to it. But what kind of employment,

within what ecosystem?

“Knowledge economy” can be defined at many levels. It can mean the application of skills across the manufacturing and service industries. It can more fitly mean industries where advanced knowledge is a major input, like pharmaceuticals or information technology. But a knowledge economy in the fullest sense is where knowledge is not only the input but the output: where knowledge is harnessed to yield more knowledge.

Knowledge is its own “market force”. This is the most basic market to which HEIs must cater, creating jobs in teaching and research. Universities and research centres are usually not floated on the stock exchange, but the instruments traded there ultimately draw on the knowledge market. Hence, nations with a long-term commitment to capitalism — the US above all — foster autonomous centres of learning where knowledge is generated from knowledge, at its own speed, in its own congenial milieu. These centres expand the reserves of knowledge, a fundamental asset. It can then be invested in more conventional forms of wealth creation.

Such knowledge centres call for rigorous standards of productivity and accountability. But they do not operate by the hire and fire, stick and carrot, supply and demand tactics of a ground-level consumerist market, let alone a gig economy. To define one market in terms of the other is to distort and misdirect it. The rhetoric of management science cannot be glibly evoked.

Yet left to itself, might the knowledge economy not

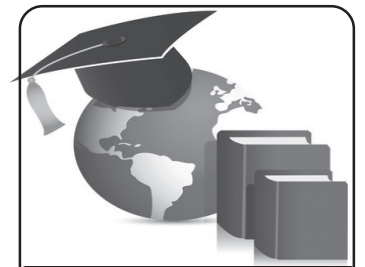
foster indolence, waste and irrelevance? Yes, of course, just as economies of other types embrace loss, greed and aggression. Neither kind of entropy can be prevented by external regulation beyond a point. It is for the players themselves to act with skill and probity.

It is usually best to leave a system to ensure its own viability. When the UGC sought to regulate teaching appointments by designing an Academic Performance Index, it proved to contain an almost inbuilt mechanism to eliminate the best candidates, especially in the humanities. Laying down the details of every syllabus has curbed the teacher’s freedom to teach and the student’s to learn. Both provisions have prevented some damage, but worked a great deal more.

The only valid question should be this: Does the current dispensation, with much mechanical regulation ineptly factored in, offer more or less chance to a student to acquire knowledge and lead a rewarding life than the untidy order it is supposed to rectify? There is no easy answer either way.

Classrooms is being made a place of Hindutva propaganda

Knowledge centres call for rigorous standards of productivity and accountability. But they do not operate by hire and fire, stick and carrot, supply and demand tactics of a consumerist market. Education or knowledge should not be treated as products and services which are bought in the open market. Further, the classrooms are becoming prisons of thought and expression. Without the freedom of honest speech,



STUDY & STRUGGLE

C Adhikesavan



the classroom will no longer be a place of genuine and open learning. It will instead become a space for propaganda. Campuses and classrooms serve as laboratories of ideas. Teachers encourage students to speak their minds here because where else would they get such an opportunity? Inhibitions and censorship exist in every aspect of society, starting from the family.

The classroom is built on an unspoken contract between students and teachers, based on mutual trust. Just as students are allowed to present their views freely, teachers are also free to present their views. Their role is not to act as umpires in the game of ideas; rather, their training and position impose a more onerous responsibility on them. It is their duty to teach students how to think and how to think responsibly.

If a teacher is constantly forced to doubt the intentions of her students and fears that anything they say might be broadcasted or that the authorities will be called upon them, then the classroom becomes an extremely tense environment.

Without the freedom of honest speech, it will no longer be a place of genuine and open learning. The classroom will instead become a space for propaganda. This is precisely what Hindutva organisations want the classroom to become. But is this what students also want?

Cooperative Federalism

Rhetoric and Contrasting Practices

The rhetoric of cooperative federalism has been continuously reiterated by the BJP, but their government and its representative office in the state, the governors, practice just opposite. The term “cooperative federalism” was used by Granville Austin in his famous book “The Indian Constitution: Cornerstone of a Nation.”

Contestable nature of Indian Constitution

The nature of the Constitution of India, whether it is federal or unitary, or quasi-federal, is a contestable even today. Some jurists believe that the Indian Constitution is the federal Constitution in its historical context, and in this sense, different from the dominant form of a federal state, that is, the United States of America. Some other jurists believe that the Indian Constitution is federal in spirit but unitary in its form. Similarly, the most prevailing view of the nature of the Constitution is given by the chairman of the Drafting Committee, Dr BR Ambedkar, which is enshrined in Article 1 of the Constitution of India that India is ‘the Union of States’ which means according to judicial interpretations ‘the Union is not breakable, but the states are breakable’ in compelling context of “unity, integrity, and development.” In other words, the Union of India does not result from the states’ agreement. Hence the Union cannot be broken by the states. Still, the existence of states can be altered by the Union through ordinary legislation. This feature itself is, argued by some jurists, as a feature of a unitary constitution where the Union has the upper hand in all spheres of state power. The jurist like Granville Austin maintains that the Indian Constitution provides for an amicable settlement to address several issues in the form of

“cooperative federalism” which is one of the contestable ideas.

Constituent Assembly Debates and Governors

The Constituent Assembly of India, which was tasked with drafting the Constitution of India, indeed had extensive discussions on various aspects of the office of the governor. One of the primary concerns during these debates was to strike a balance between “the authority of the governor and the autonomy of the states,” which is an essential feature of federal structure.

There were differing opinions on whether the governor should be appointed by the President of India or elected by the state’s people. Some members of the Constituent Assembly argued for an elected governor to ensure greater accountability. In contrast, others supported the appointment process to maintain the governor’s impartiality and objectivity and the relative supremacy of elected government in a parliamentary democracy. That is why the latter option was preferred on the line of the president’s office. Furthermore, the assembly debated the relationship between the governor and the Council of Ministers in the states. The objective was to establish a system that ensured cooperation between the governor and the state government while maintaining the governor’s constitutional responsibilities.

Amit Kumar

Ultimately, the debates led to the inclusion of provisions related to the office of the governor in the Constitution of India. The governor was designated as the constitutional head of the state (titular head to act according to aid and advice of the council of ministers), representing the President of India. He was granted powers and functions in line with their role as the guardian of the Constitution and the states.

These provisions have been subject to interpretation and amendments over time through judicial pronouncements and constitutional amendments. Thus, on the line of the power of the president, the power of the governor is limited to ‘act according to aid and advice of the council of ministers’ except in certain cases of appointment of chief minister after the election, in case of a hung assembly, etc. (Shamsher Singh v. State of Punjab, 1974).

Now this limited role of the office of governor is changing and becoming the office of the political and ideological head which is antagonistic to the concept of federalism. Federalism is not a means to divide powers between two levels of the government but rather a constitutional scheme to secure the rights of the diverse citizenry and their practices. It aims against ‘uniformity and homogeneity’ and protects ‘diversity and heterogeneity.’

A Saga of Misuse – Articles 356 and 153

Article 356 of the Indian Constitution empowers the President of India to impose

the president’s Rule or central rule in a state if there is a breakdown of constitutional machinery in that state under Article 356 of the Constitution. However, the provision has been a subject of debate and criticism due to instances of its alleged misuse by the central government to dismiss state governments on political grounds. It is to be noted here that the office of the governor under Article 153 itself is regarded as one of the unitary features of the Indian Constitution.

The frequent misuse of Article 356 and the office of the governor for political gains undermine democracy and federal structure. Several committees including Dr P.V. Rajamanar Committee (1969) by then DMK Government of Tamil Nadu, Justice Sarkaria Commission (1983), 2nd Administrative Reforms Commission (2005), Justice Madan Mohan Punchy Commission (2007), had recommended the “exceptional use or use as a last resort of Article 356” to save constitutional democracy and the federal structure itself.

Role of Courts in Interpreting and Limiting Misuse

Over the years, several cases have challenged the invocation of Article 356 before the Supreme Court of India. The Supreme Court has played a crucial role in interpreting and limiting the discretionary power of the central government under Article 356 to prevent its abuse.

In the landmark case of State of Rajasthan v. Union of India (1977), popularly known as the “Hindu Rao case,” the Supreme Court

laid down essential guidelines and principles to prevent the misuse of Article 356. The court held that the power under Article 356 should be ‘used sparingly and as a last resort’ when all other alternatives to restore constitutional machinery have failed. It emphasized that the court has the authority to review the subjective satisfaction of the president or the governor. The imposition of the president’s rule can be struck down if found to be ‘arbitrary or based on irrelevant or extraneous considerations.’

In subsequent cases, such as S.R. Bommai v. Union of India (1994), the Supreme Court further strengthened its position on the limited scope of Article 356. The court held that the majority enjoyed by a state government on the floor of the legislative assembly is a relevant factor in determining the government’s legitimacy. It also stated that the power of judicial review extends to examining whether the material relied upon by the president or the governor was relevant and justified for invoking Article 356.

The Supreme Court’s decisions in these cases have curtailed the arbitrary use of Article 356 and established clear guidelines for its invocation. The court has emphasized the need to protect the federal structure of the Indian Constitution and maintain a delicate balance between the central government and the states. It is important to note that the Supreme Court’s decisions have partially eliminated the misuse of Article 356. However, they have acted as a significant check on the arbitrary exercise of power,

On Page 12

The following is the text of the representation sent through email by Communist Party of India Puducherry state council secretary A M Saleem to the Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman ahead of her visit to Puducherry highlighting the root cause of the financial crises of Union Territory and the way out:

The economy of Puducherry is now in the doldrums. Unemployment is at the peak. Manufacturing sector is at the decline. Government PSUs and cooperative institutions have become defunct. Rural economy is at cross roads.

Through this representation we would like to describe the root cause that led to the present financial crises and also solicit the government of India to take some immediate steps enlisted below that are inevitable for retrieving Puducherry from crises ridden economy and for its future growth.

During the French Indian Freedom struggle, the government of India issued a press communiqué to clarify the misunderstandings with the policy of the government of India concerning the future of the French settlements in India in the event of them joining the Indian Union. In the communiqué it was stated that the government of India will provide adequate funds for carrying on the administration of the French Indian possession and that they would be administered as autonomous units in direct relations with the Central government.

As per Article 1 of the Treaty of Cession of French Establishments, government of India after merger of French settlements of Puducherry, Karaikal, Mahe and Yanam with the Indian Union provided maintenance and development cost from its consolidated fund of India till consolidated Fund of Puducherry was created in the year 1987. Since then, liberal grant, loans, and

maintenance cost were reduced which led to economic instability.

The economic crises situation further worsened after the opening up of a separate public account and open market borrowing in the year 2007 due to shift of financial management policy of the Centre. Seventy per cent of the central grant was reduced to 30 per cent. Thirty per cent loan provided by the Centre was stopped and 70 per cent funds were allowed to be borrowed from open market.

At the opening of the public account, the previous debt amount of Rs 1,750 crores was not waived. Instead, it was fixed as the opening balance.

The public loan borrowed by the Puducherry administration between 2007 and 2023 had increased three fold than the prior 50 years of debt.

The introduction of Goods and Service Taxes had further aggravated the situation. Sales tax and excise taxes are the main resources under the tax revenue. But, in GST the state government does not have the right to determine the tax percentage.

The taxes collected by the Union government from Puducherry go to the central pool of the consolidated Fund of India, But for the purpose of assigning funds from central pool, Puducherry is not treated as State for devolution to be recommended by Central Finance Commissions.

The National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and the Madras School of Economics stated in their

reports that Puducherry suffers Rs 1,500-2,000 crores of notional share from Central pool due to non-inclusion in Central Finance Commission.

The Puducherry Union Territory since having legislature is treated as a state for Tax Reforms and FRBM Reforms purposes, but for the purpose of grants and Finance Commission awards it is treated at par with UTs without legislature.

This contradiction in legal interpretations in favour of the Union government deprives Puducherry's financial self-reliance.

Therefore we request the government of India to:

- Include Puducherry in the Fifteenth Central Finance Commission for devolution of Funds from the central pool of Consolidated Fund of India.

- Provide Central Finance Commission funds for panchayats and municipalities of Puducherry.

- Provide grants under Art 275 of Constitution of India.

- Repayment of Rs 1,750 crores stood accumulated as debt on the date of the opening of public account in the year 2007.

Further, we bring certain issues hereunder for favour of consideration and action.

Textile Industries: PM MITRA Scheme

The capital city of the U.T. of Puducherry was predominantly an Industrial city due to the presence of three composite Textile Mills started during the French Capitalists during the Colonial rule.

After Independence, during the 1970s two mills,

Include Puducherry in 15th Central Finance Commission

Sri Bharathi Mills and Swadshi Cotton Mills were vested with the National Textiles Corporation to avert their closure. Later on, in the year 1985, Anglo French Textiles which remained closed for three years was taken up by the Pondicherry Textiles Mills by way of a Legislation.

In due course, the two NTC mills had lost the status of composite mills and functioned merely as spinning mills. Due to mismanagement, lack of competitive business plan, irrational investment all the three Textile Mills started incurring losses and now the present Government had categorically stated its stand to close down these industrial establishments.

The Textile industry in Puducherry if offered proper patronage will flourish to cater to the Socio-Economic development of this state. The disintegrated nature of Textiles Industry is one of the reasons for its failure to develop.

An integrated Textiles value chain starting from spinning to manufacturing at a single location would be more viable.

Establishing a Textile park in Puducherry with the abundantly available lands, infrastructure and labour force is a long pending demand of trade unions and political parties of Puducherry.

Therefore, we request to include Puducherry as one of the States to get PM MITRA Parks, inspired by the 5f vision, which would include large scale investment to augment employment opportunity and development of the state.

We also request to waive off the debt pending for payment by the State Government to the National Textiles Corporation on account of transfer of properties of Sri Bharathe and Swadeshi cotton mills during the year 2004.

State Government undertakings and Co-operative Institutions

There are 43 state Government undertakings and Co-operative Institutions in Puducherry. Which all had catered to the employment needs of a sizeable section of the people of Puducherry in a successful way. Around 10,000 families in Puducherry were relying upon these establishments directly for their livelihood.

These institutions were functioning profitably and viably for a long period. Some institutions had even provided dividend to the Puducherry government.

But due to mismanagement, corruption, over staffing, lack of business strategies, 40 institutions are in shambles. The worst affected are the employees. They were not paid salaries for a long period ranging from 13 to 114 months.

Many workers had succumbed to their illness as they could not afford to their medical needs. Even some of them had committed suicide insurance policies had prematurely lapsed due to nonpayment of premium.

The livelihoods of the employee's families are greatly affected. The economical demands of the employees had culminated into a social issue.

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‘Black Soil’ : A Device For National Integration

The book launch of the novel “Black Soil” written by renowned pan-Indian Tamil writer Ponneelan was held at Rabindra Bhawan of Sahitya Academy in New Delhi. The novel originally named “Karisal” was published in Tamil in 1976 when the author was just 26 years old. Since it tells about a mass movement by the farmers in the Deccan region of Tamil Nadu where the soil is dry and black, the name Black Soil was given. The English translation of the book was done by J. Priyadarshini granddaughter of Ponneelan.

The novel enchanted the young Priyadarshini, since her schooldays so much that she would translate its parts into Tamil for her friends. That passion eventually led her to translate the novel into English. Noted literary critic

Manish Srivastava

Vishwanath Tripathi summed up the occasion as a moment of national integra-

tion.

Speaking of the novel, which is hailed as the first social novel in Tamil, Vishwanath Tripathi underlined the essence of great



tion, bridging the barriers of language and region, a legacy and historical task of the Progressive Writers' Association (PWA) of which Ponneelan is the national

literary works: it must detail the daily lives and struggles of people. It is this detail that allows people from across regions and languages to relate to the literature. The

novel is very rich in detail to the extent that land, seasons, animals, sky, and other elements of nature grow on you as characters. With similar care, the novel describes the farmers' movement growing like a crop. It is organic and patient and not impulsive. It nurtures on its own. There are no big lead-

and working president of PWA said that in a multilingual society like India, translation is an important tool of cultural exchange and national integration. He hoped that a Hindi translation of the novel as beautiful as the English translation comes out soon.

Presiding over the launch event, Ram Sharan Joshi said that in our times, when the lives of ordinary people are at risk, particularly the farmers an event on Black Soil is important. The novel deals with the everyday happenings in the agrarian crisis that was going on in India during the 1950s to 60s. It is a story of India's transition from being a colony to an independent nation, from a feudal society to a democracy. This transition is expressed through the sensitivities and emotions of relationships between people and the evolution of the movement. Today, we have an institutional structure of democracy, of course under threat, but the feudal mindset persists. Black Soil is certainly a novel of contemporary relevance.

Expressing happiness over the fact that his granddaughter has translated his first novel into English, Ponneelan shared incidents related to the novel. Reflecting on his long literary life, he told the audience that he often listens to people till late in the night and then writes about it.

Among the audience were many noted personalities CPI General Secretary D. Raja, noted playwright Asgar Wajjaht, well-known painter Savi Savarkar, theatre director Lokesh Jain, and performance artist Inder Salim. Poet and national secretary of PWA, Vineet Tiwari moderated the proceedings. G.C. Bagri joint secretary of PWA, Delhi delivered the vote of thanks.

The novel Black Soil is published by Penguin India.

Delhi NFIW Decries FIR Against Fact Finding Team

Condemning the actions of Manipur Government, Delhi state unit of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) issued the following statement on July 11, 2023:

Delhi state unit of the National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) condemns the FIR charged by the Manipur state government against NFIW fact-finding delegation. The state and central government is suppressing those voices which expose their brutality and inactions. We also congratulated NFIW national general secretary Annie Raja, national secretary Nisha Sidhu, and Adv. Diksha Dwivedi, the 3-member delegation of NFIW that visited riot-affected areas of Manipur. The team met refugees and people from both communities living in various refugee camps in Manipur from June 28 to July 1, 2023.

On one hand, BJP-led states and the Central governments are destroying the states by depriving the people, of their

fundamental and constitutional rights by plunging them into discrimination and communal violence. On the other hand, they are trying to silence the people who raise their voices against these atrocities. Manipur has been riot-ridden for several months and both Center and state governments have failed to establish peace. NFIW has a strong unit in Manipur like all over the other states of India. How can the government press charge against our delegation who enquired about the condition of our colleagues and bring forth the information about the government's inaction?

Once again Delhi unit of NFIW congratulates and thanks these comrades for their bravery and demands the government to immediately withdraw this baseless and absurd FIR registered against them. In the absence of withdrawal, the government should be ready to face nationwide protests.

Ensuing July 19 marks the successful completion of 54 years since the major privately-owned banks were nationalized in our country. Thus, July 19, 2023 marks the 55th Bank Nationalisation Day. It is an important occasion for us to celebrate because we have played a crusading role in fighting and achieving the nationalization of banks.

Thanks to the vision of the founding fathers of AIBEA, this demand was in the womb of AIBEA right from its founding in 1946. For more than two decades thereafter, AIBEA campaigned, agitated and after a bitter struggle, achieved this demand of very significant political importance. That is why we celebrate this achievement.

It is very important to recall the role played by CPI and AITUC in guiding and inspiring AIBEA in this struggle. Leaders like S ADange, Bhupesh Gupta, S M Banerjee, A K Gopalan, N K Krishnan, Indrajit Gupta and many others were championing this demand inside and outside the Parliament. Of course, Prabhat Kar who was a Member of Parliament from CPI and also general secretary of AIBEA played a leading role in raising the demand repeatedly in the Parliament and also building up a big struggle by the bank employees.

In our country which is still a developing economy, banking plays a crucial role in propelling development and growth. Since all the banks were in private sector and the major private banks were controlled and owned by the big capitalists, they were concerned only with their profits and not bothered about the country's needs.

For needy segments and needy sections, banking service, particularly banking credit was not accessible. Thus private banks were just profit-making machines for the capitalists and industrial houses. Hence arose the patriotic demand to nationalize the banks to make them

subservient to broad-based economic growth and progress.

This demand was ridiculed by many as not achievable. Many others were sceptical. Industrial houses, capitalists and owners of the banks were angry. Government was unhappy and irritated with the demand. But AIBEA was determined to fight for the demand.

From our Trivandrum Conference held in 1964, AIBEA declared a massive struggle. Prabhat Kar and Parvana gave the clarion call for a sustained struggle. Bank employees were in peak of agitation all over the country demanding nationalization of banks.

In 1966, Congress Party lost power in many states because there was increasing distress in rural areas and people were losing faith on Congress party. Hence Indira Gandhi took decisions to address these issues. But these progressive measures were being opposed by many leaders within the Congress party.

Around 1969, the problems within the Congress party between Indira Gandhi and Morarji Desai widened and Indira Gandhi announced various progressive decisions. This created a congenial political situation to pursue our demand. Communist Party, AITUC and other progressive forces also echoed our demand.

Prabhat Kar was a Member of Parliament from 1957 to 1967. He used to raise the demand inside the Parliament on every occasion and mobilized support of various political parties and MPs.

The time was ripe.

Nationalised Banks are Nation-Building Institutions

Privatising Banks Is Anti-people

CH Venkatachalam

Madam Indira Gandhi plunged into the decision and on July 19, 1969 her government promulgated the Ordinance.

The Banking Companies (Acquisition and Transfer of Undertakings) Bill, 1969, clarifying the objective and



reasons for bank nationalisation, mentioned as under:

“The Banking System touches the lives of millions and has to be inspired by large social purposes and

Swathantra Party (does not exist now) and Jan Sangh (former name of BJP). Thus AIBEA scripted a golden chapter in the political events of our country.

Bank nationalization transformed the banking sector in a big way. Branches were opened in rural villages. Bank loans were given to hitherto neglected sector on a priority basis. Common masses could access banking services. People's money in the banks became safe and guaranteed. After five decades, the nationalized banks have become the main engine driving our economy.

| | 1969 | 2023 |
|--|-------|--------|
| No. of Branches | 8,200 | 87,000 |
| Branches in rural and semi urban areas | NIL | 52,000 |
| Priority sector loans | NIL | 40% |

| | Deposits | Loans |
|---------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|
| 15 th Aug 1947 | Rs 1,019 crores | Rs 424 crores |
| 1969 | Rs 5,000 crores | Rs 3,500 crores |
| 2023 | Rs 183 lakh crores | Rs 139 lakh crore |

has to subserve national priorities and objectives, such as rapid growth in agriculture, small industries and exports, raising of employment levels, encouragement of new entrepreneurs and the development of the backward areas. For this purpose, it is necessary for government to take direct responsibility for the extension and diversification of banking services and for the working of the substantial part of the banking system.”

For AIBEA it was a vision come true. The whole country and all political parties hailed this progressive measure except

- Strengthen and Expand Public Sector Banks.
- Stop Privatisation of Banks.
- Nationalise All Private Banks.
- Recover Corporate Bad Loans.
- Take Criminal Action on Wilful Defaulters.
- Stop Haircuts, Write Offs and Concessions.
- Increase Rate of Interest on Deposits.
- Reduce Service Charges
- Introduce 2-tier system in co-op banks.
- Merge RRBs with Sponsor Banks.
- Adequate Recruitments in All Banks

We have to continue our

The growth, sweep, and contributions of nationalized banks have been phenomenal. But under pressure of the corporates, the government wants to privatise our banks and hand them over to the capitalists so that they can loot and plunder the public savings available in the banks. This is the danger today.

Just as we fought for nationalization of banks, today it is our patriotic duty to defend public sector banks and fight to defeat the attempts of privatisation. This is our prime task. Our main demands are:

campaign and struggle against privatisation of banks. Banks are nation-building institutions and they must remain so. We should allow banks to be privatised and handed over to the greedy corporates. People's money should be utilised for people's welfare and not for private corporate loot. National savings should be utilised for broad-based national development and not for embezzlement by the private corporate defaulters.

Save Public Sector Banks — Save Economy — Save People — Save Nation!

Law Reforms For...

From Page 04

and was necessary because of the lack of an employer-employee relationship in the gig economy. The proposed legislation by the Rajasthan government could serve as a model to be emulated by other states in order to support the 80 lakh gig workers in India. However, employees in the sector were affected by unfair employment, variable and poor wages, and denial of social security. Similarly, the Madhya Pradesh Government has expressed interest in introducing similar legislation to protect the gig workers employed in the state.

The laws of Thailand and Malaysia were enacted to ensure that gig workers were entitled to health and accident insurance as well as other social security benefits which were financed by a two percent levy on each transaction. The Social Security Code introduced by the union government as one of the four new labour codes has also provided social security benefits for gig workers. However, the scheme had not yet been properly implemented.

Rhetoric and Contrasting...

From Page 08

ensuring that the provision is used only in exceptional circumstances and with justifiable cause, but what if the office of the governor becomes the “political and ideological head” instead of “constitutional and titular head?” This grey area has yet to be seriously reflected upon by the judiciary as a political question.

New Political and Ideological Role of Governors

The reason behind stating historical background is

to examine the nature of changes in using the office of governor by the Union Government. According to media reports and RTI information, most of the president’s rule (48 president rules) was imposed during Indira Gandhi’s tenure as a prime Minister of India. The least was set (5 president rules till now) during current Indian Premier Narendra Modi. The question concerns something other than the number of president rule to undermine federalism in India. Instead, the focus should

Include Puducherry in...

From Page 09

Therefore, we request the Government of India to dole out a comprehensive financial package to revamp these institutions and payment of salary dues to the employees, in the larger interest of the U.T. of Puducherry. The proper functioning of these establishments would fetch more revenue as happened in the past. Revenue from Karaikal Port Pvt Ltd

The port at Karaikal was commissioned during the year 2009 under PPP mode by an agreement between the Puducherry administration and Marg Constructions of Companies.

Since the Marg Constructions had taken loan to the tune of around Rs.3000 crores from various creditors and could not repay the same, the National Law Company Tribunal approved the proposal of Adani Group to pay Rs.1,485 crores to the creditors as up front infusion amount and the port is now transferred to Adani Ports and special Economic Zone.

Karaikal Port is the only all Weather deep water major port between Chennai and Tuticorin and its strategic location allows

it easy access to industrial rich hinterland of Central Tamilnadu.

Six hundred hectares of land in Karaikal are leased out to the port on a revenue sharing basis. Since the Port Commissioned in the year 2009, the Puducherry government, according to known sources, had received only Rs.133.45 crores under various heads.

Now since the ownership was transferred the agreement signed with Marg company has become infructuous. The rail connectivity in the post agreement period had enhanced the utility of the Port. The Adani Group in its Website had revealed its plan to invest Rs.850 crores to upgrade its infrastructure and double the capacity in the next 5 years.

Therefore we request the Government of India to persuade the state government to rework the concession agreement to enter into a deal for a fair percentage of dividend of the total turnover, which would ensure financial responsibility for the development of Karaikal and employment opportunity to the Youths of Karaikal and Puducherry districts.

be on how other provisions relating to the office of the governor are used to undermine the principle of federalism.

Distinguished from the nature of the use of the office of the governor during the previous regime, the current usage of the office of the governor against the elected government in the opposition-ruled states are significantly different ways.

Firstly, the office of the governor has become more ‘ideological and political’ rather than ‘impartial and objective.’ They are becoming the official spokespersons of the ruling BJP and RSS and make controversial statements publicly against the elected governments. The tussle between governors and elected governments has increased. The recent case of a tussle between the Lt. Governor of Delhi and the government of Delhi, Tamil Nadu’s Governor R.N.

Ravi’s decision to act against the advice of the council of ministers, are examples which are showing new lethal trends in running the office of governor.

Secondly, the office of the governor has become a means of implementing the ideological agenda of the ruling party and its ideologue RSS. In many states like Kerala, Tamil Nadu, and Bihar, especially in opposition-led states, the governors are actively involved in promoting the policy and programs of the governments, which was not seen during the president’s rule in previous regimes. The office of the governor is becoming a parallel political government in the states against the elected governments. The progressive legislations by the opposition governments are seen to threaten the ideological narrative of BJP and RSS, and the office of the governor seriously undermines these initiatives and

hence, negatively impacts the federal structure.

Thirdly, the office of the governor is frequently used by the ruling government to bring and execute the policy of uniformity in terms of promoting the agenda of ‘one country, one language; uniform civil code, the narrative of the civilizational state which is entirely against the core values of federalism and unity in diversity. The office of the Governor has become a place where all anti-constitutional values are being challenged, resulting in serious undermining of the federal structure of the Constitution even without imposing the president’s rule.

The practice of Modi’s government is neither cooperative federal nor federal, but rather non-cooperative federal and unitary in approach, especially in the opposition-ruled states. The demand to abolish the post of governor needs serious examination.

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NATO Fails to Give Timetable for Ukraine Membership

Diary of International Events

C. Adhikesavan

The leaders of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) failed to set a timetable for Ukraine’s membership of the alliance, following the first day of the NATO summit in the Lithuanian capital Vilnius.

NATO Secretary Jens Stoltenberg said allies have agreed on a package of three elements to “bring Ukraine closer to NATO.” However, he clarified that an invitation for Ukraine to join the alliance will be issued “when allies agree and conditions are met.”

“It’s unprecedented and absurd when a time frame is not set either for the invitation or for Ukraine’s membership. While at the same time vague wording about ‘conditions’ is added even for inviting Ukraine,” said Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky, who attended the inaugural meeting of the new NATO-Ukraine Council. NATO members have been divided on how to bring Ukraine closer to their bloc. While some Eastern European members are pressing for an explicit commitment on when Ukraine will join, the United States and Germany are reluctant to clarify.

Stoltenberg said NATO leaders have also approved the “most comprehensive defense plans since the end of the Cold War,” and endorsed a new defense action plan.

Under the new plans, NATO aims to have 300,000 troops fully ready for action. NATO allies have also made an “enduring commitment” to invest at least 2 percent of their gross domestic product (GDP)

annually in defense, although after “nine consecutive years of increased defense spending” since 2014, only 11 out of 31 NATO members have reached or exceeded this target.

Critics argue that such an emphasis on militarization fosters an arms race among member states, diverting resources away from social and economic development and negatively impacting citizens’ quality of life.

Swedish expert Jan Oberg said NATO’s pledge to ask its members to invest a minimum of 2 percent of

Peace and Future Research.

Analysts have also warned that NATO’s expansion and its responses to the Ukraine issue may seriously threaten global security.

Sevim Dagdelen, a member of Germany’s lower house of Parliament, told Xinhua in a recent interview that NATO is not a defense alliance, although that is the constant refrain of Western leaders.

At the same time, the military pact is engaged in an aggressive arms drive and is thwarting all negotiation efforts regarding the Ukraine

expansion.

Ahead of the summit, protests against NATO have been held in several European countries. Underlining that the summit will see “calls for further escalation” of the Ukraine conflict, the Stop the War coalition organized a day of peace protests across Britain on Saturday.

Meanwhile, in Paris, a march against the military alliance drew hundreds of people, with many calling for France to withdraw from NATO.

Israel to build new settlement units in

from each other.”

Earlier in the day, the Israeli Haaretz newspaper reported that Israel is advancing a plan to build 450 housing units for Jews in East Jerusalem.

The plan for a new Jewish neighborhood between the Palestinian villages of Umm Lisan and Jabal Mukkaber in East Jerusalem is being pursued by a real estate company run by a right-wing activist, according to the report.

“The Israeli government is racing against time in implementing its expansionist map of interests at the expense of the Palestinian land and deepening the annexation of Jerusalem,” the Palestinian diplomats said.

“These plans also aim at imposing Israeli law on East Jerusalem and separating it from its Palestinian surroundings,” they added, accusing the Israelis of sabotaging and undermining any opportunity to implement the principle of the two-state solution and to “establish a viable, sovereign, and geographically contiguous Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.”

The Israeli settlement issue is the most prominent aspect of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and one of the main reasons for the breakdown of the U.S.-sponsored peace talks in 2014.

The Palestinians demand the establishment of an independent state alongside Israel on all Palestinian territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including the West Bank and Gaza Strip, with East Jerusalem as its capital.



First they supplied him with weapons and then they killed him.

First they supplied him with weapons and then they killed him.

First they supplied him with weapons and then (to be continued...)

GDP annually on defense was “absurd.” A military budget “should be decided according to a comprehensive threat analysis, followed by a priority discussion, and never be tied to a country’s economic ups and downs,” Oberg added.

“What we are seeing is a rampant, exclusivist militarism that doesn’t care about the other side or about the consequences of its own provocative policies,” said Oberg, director of the Transnational Foundation for

crisis, she said, accusing NATO of fighting a proxy war against Russia by supplying military aid to Ukraine.

On Tuesday, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov accused NATO of treating Russia like an “enemy.” “We are clearly talking about the summit of an association, which has a pronounced, concentrated anti-Russian nature,” Peskov said, adding that Moscow has witnessed repeated waves of NATO expansion towards its borders, and the West does not understand the risks of this

East Jerusalem

On Tuesday, Palestine rejected an Israeli plan to build 450 new settlement units in East Jerusalem, saying the plan has disregarded the countries that support the two-state solution.

Israel’s plan is “disregarding the countries that reject the settlement,” the Palestinian Foreign Ministry said in a press statement, adding the plan “aims to separate Palestinian neighborhoods, towns, and communities in Jerusalem

Concerted Political...

From Page 03

in the border state passing through an explosive situation for about two and a half months. All branches of government both in the Centre and also in the state are totally paralysed as the natural result of this colossal political inaction. Manipur speaks voluminously about the failure of the government for which the people are paying the price through miseries and uncertainty. For the Manipur crisis, if there is a primary culprit, that will be the governments led by the BJP.

How can a government respond in such a naive manner to a very serious socio-ethnic-political violence luring over its territory? It would be difficult even for the BJP cadres to answer this question. Then came the statement from Eric Garcetti, who is the US ambassador to

India, he was extending US support for India to 'resolve' the Manipur conflict. It urges the people of India to associate government inaction in India and the US offer for support. All over the world wherever US has intervened, they have only complicated the situation. Palestine and Afghanistan are the closest examples before our eyes. The CPI and the Left are categorically clear in the matter that Manipur should not be further complicated through any sort of US involvement. The

'atmanirbhargovernment' of Narendra Modi should have the courage to prevent any sort of foreign attempts, from near or far, to convert Manipur as their playing field.

In Manipur during our visit the Left MPs could interact with people from all segments of life — intellec-

tuals, civil society organisations, priests of Hindus, Christians, places of worship, who belonged to both Meiteis and Kukis. They had differences in understanding the situation. But they echoed in one voice their feeling that the government has failed. They all demand the resignation of Biren Singh from chief ministership. A study of Manipur crisis would tell us that it is closely interlinked to the land and the wealth beneath it. The hills of Manipur are immensely rich with the presence of various natural resources. That region is generally protected by the Tribal right laws.

Mostly the Kukis live there since time immemorial with their tribal customs and practices. It is true that in the valley due to growing population there is scarcity of Land. Those common Meitei masses who demand tribal status might

only be dreaming for a piece of land. But there are political forces and their cronies in the corporate world, who have a nefarious plan to loot the forests and the mineral wealth there. When a party committed to their greed runs the government in Delhi and

Imphal, its 'corporate cousins' think that their time has come. Behind the divide and rule policy, all those forces of darkness join together and make Manipur a boiling pot. Only a concerted political initiative with people's participation can save Manipur.

CPI Condemns Farcical ...

From Page 02

and intellectuals like Prof Kham Khan Suan Hausing of the University of Hyderabad. The ruling dispensation remains true to its fascist drive by attempting to crush dissent, criticality, dialogue, and even the very right to speech.

For almost three months now, the state of Manipur is undergoing severe crisis and instability with an unprecedented loss of life and property. While several factors are at play in the current situation that are exacerbating the violence, the most glaring and unacceptable one is the absolute State apathy and inaction. The silence of the prime minister and incompetence of the incumbent chief minister stand antithetical to all Constitutional values. The action as well as the inaction of the governments in the current crisis displays the RSS-BJP combine's pro-corporate agenda. The experiences of Gujarat are before us of how these right-wing forces in power have made use of the fissures in society to push through with their divisive anti-people policies.

The CPI and the democratic forces will stand up before any kind of intimidation and fight legally and politically to uphold truth and justice.

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Sinister Design...

From Front Page

sition by misinterpreting their reservations to the Uniform Civil Code exercise. While creating a bogey of Muslim men enjoying personal laws, PM tried to convey that the parties who support minority rights should be questioned. PM has tried to create a strict binary. Those who question the UCC are all supporters of the privileges of Muslim men and thereby, anti-Hindu. The question is much more nuanced and needs historical perspective. When Article 35 (now Article 44) of the draft Constitution was debated in the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar made the position of the framers of the Constitution very clear. When some Muslim members raised apprehension about a common civil code, he detailed the history behind the evolution of personal laws and suggested that “in the initial stage the application of the Code may be purely voluntary,” suggesting the law be evolved and not imposed.

On the question of gender justice, the contrast

between the position of the RSS and other fundamentalist bodies and the Left is worth noting. Supporting the Hindu Code, Prof Hiren Mukherjee of the CPI said in Parliament that “the introduction of the daughter as a simultaneous heir along with the son and the widow is really a matter of very great importance, and for this, not only women but all progressive and democratic sections of society have been agitating for so long”, and it was at the same moment that RSS supported bodies were gheraoing the Parliament opposing this. When the Parliament legislated to overturn the Shah Bano judgement to the disadvantage of Muslim women, Gurudas Dasgupta of the CPI opposed that tooth-and-nail in the Parliament and fought against religion being the criterion of law-making by saying “when religion is being made the basis of law-making, we strike at the very root of our Constitution, at the foundation of the Indian Republic.” Many BJP leaders have gone to the extent

of shamefully supporting the Sati Custom. Left’s position on gender justice is consistent in favour of a just and equal society. However, the RSS opposed the reforms being introduced to Hindu society by Dr Ambedkar and are trying to use gender justice merely as a ploy to further demonise minorities.

Laws deriving their sanctity from religion often work against the interest of women in society. For our Secular-Democratic Republic, the basis of law-making should also be secular and pro-people. There is a need to arrive at a consensus to strike at the very root of discriminatory laws and practices transcending different religions and communities, upholding the secular character of the State. That consensus has to be evolved, as Dr. Ambedkar suggested, and not imposed. When it comes to gender justice, RSS-BJP’s record is abysmal.

CPI MP Geeta Mukherjee heralded the Women’s Reservation Bill to ensure women representation in Parliament and State Assemblies and was finally

cleared by the Rajya Sabha in 2010. Such is Modi’s concern for gender justice that the Bill has not seen the light of the day in his nine year rule. Images of women wrestlers protesting sexual harassment being dragged on street by the Delhi Police are still fresh in public memory. We all know of instances when BJP protected rapists. With this track-record in protecting women’s rights, it’s natural to question the BJP’s intent behind bringing UCC.

Article 44 on UCC is not the only instruction of Directive Principles of State Policy. Chapter IV of the Constitution begins by assigning to the State the responsibility to promote a social order “in which justice, social, economic and political” is central. DPSP also asks for elimination of income inequalities, participation of workers in management of industries and right to work. These progressive measures conveniently escape the attention of the Prime Minister, while he and the RSS ecosystem tries to hide their sinister agenda behind the DPSPs of the Constitution. As said before, Modi’s the-

atrics were only to polarize the society having nothing to do with gender justice. Nine years of RSS rule has resulted in concentration of wealth with few, reinforcement of caste hierarchies and subjugation of women.

CPI Decries US Envoy’s Comment on Manipur

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued the following statement on July 8, 2023:

Communist Party of India condemns the US Ambassador to India Eric Garcetti’s statement that if asked the US is ready to assist India in dealing with the violence in the North Eastern state of Manipur at a press conference in Kolkata on July 7, 2023.

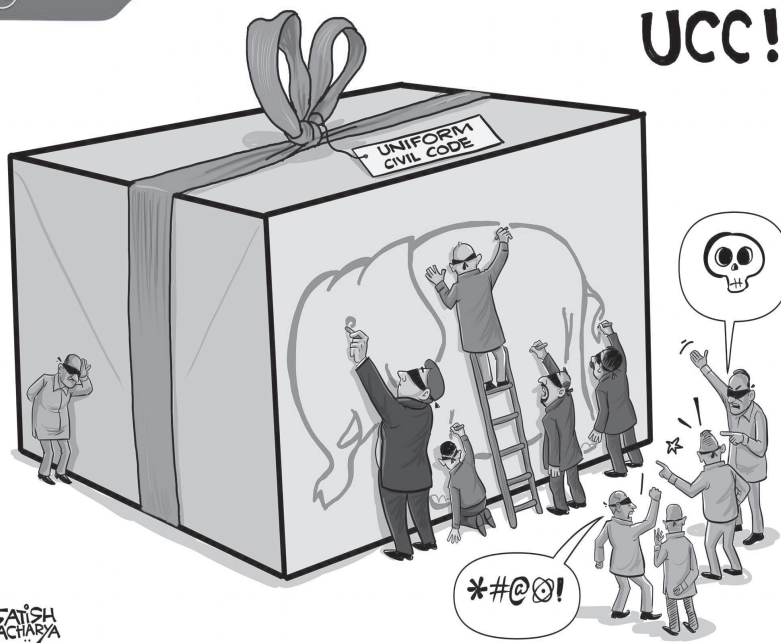
CPI deplors such interference into the internal affairs of India and strongly objects to such meddling into India’s domestic affairs.

On Record ...

India, as a multi-cultural and multi-religious society, celebrates unity in diversity and its over 200 million Muslims make the country the second largest population of the community in the world, President Droupadi Murmu said on July 12. Welcoming Muslim World League Secretary General Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, who had called on the President at Rashtrapati Bhavan, Ms. Murmu said India appreciates the role and objectives of the Muslim World League in promoting tolerant values, moderation of consciousness and inter-faith dialogue. – *The Hindu*, July 12.

The Trinamul Congress was disappointed on Saturday that it was on the receiving end of Opposition parties in many pockets where alleged electoral malpractices and violence occurred. This was a marked departure from polling days in local body elections in recent memory. Since the notification-filing phase, till the end, at least 22 people had died in

M molitics.in



UCC!

across the state. – *The Telegraph*, July 12.

Hundreds of scientists protested government efforts to restrict educational access to Western science theories, including Darwin’s theory of evolution, in June 2023 in India. Similarly, scientists in Mexico participated in a research strike in May 2023 to protest a national law they claimed would threaten the conditions for basic research. And during the same month in

Norway, three scientists were arrested for protesting the

political violence, including 10 related to the ruling party. At least 17 were added to the toll, including seven from Trinamul.

Not since the panchayat elections of 2008, which showed the first signs of Trinamul’s significant electoral rise in the final years of the Left regime, has the state witnessed such an instance of an Opposition fight-back in numerous places

nation’s slow-moving climate policy.

As these among many other actions show, scientists today are speaking out on a variety of political and social issues related to their own research fields and in solidarity with other social movements. – *The Hindu*, July 8.

Compiled by: *C Adhikesavan*

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