

# New Age

Central Organ of the Communist Party of India

Weekly

Vol. 71 No. 30 (Total Pages 16) New Delhi July 23-29, 2023 Price: Rs.7

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## CPI National Council Meet Call

# PREPARE FOR GENERAL ELECTIONS, OBSERVE JULY 25 AS MANIPUR DAY

The following is the communiqué issued by Communist Party of India General Secretary D Raja at the press conference on July 16 at the conclusion of the three-day National Council Meeting held at New Delhi on July 14, 15, and 16, 2023:

The meeting was presided over by Sambasiva Rao, Member, National Executive and secretary of Telangana State Council of the Party. BJP led Govt Help Corporates Grow Stronger

Party General Secretary D. Raja placed the draft report on political, and economic developments, proposals for future campaigns, and on organizational tasks. In a strongly worded document, the general secretary of the Party exposed the anti-people, anti-constitutional activities of the BJP government. The BJP government and Modi's rule in its 9<sup>th</sup> year have caused serious damage to the secular, democratic fabric of India. Caste-based atrocities and discrimination against minorities have increased. He also exposed the anti-federal nature of the government and severely criticized the anti-people economic policy of the present government.

The draft report was adopted after discussions by the members of the national council. After deliberations, the following decisions were taken:



CPI general secretary D Raja briefing the media. Also seen are CPI national council secretaries Binoy Viswam, Atul Kumar Anjaan, Dr K Narayana and Dr B K Kango

### Observe July 25 as Manipur Solidarity Day

Party has decided to observe July 25<sup>th</sup> as Manipur solidarity day all over India. The situation in Manipur is grave and the party has expressed its concern over violence, arson, and killing of people. The Party condemned the role of BJP state and union governments in aggravating the situation. The silence of the Prime Minister on this issue is inexplicable. It shows callousness and insensitivity from the side of the government. The Party has condemned the filing of the FIR against Annie Raja, general secretary of NFIW and national executive member of CPI, Nisha Siddhu, national secretary, NFIW and leader of CPI in Rajasthan and Deeksha Dwivedi, independent lawyer, who were part of the NFIW led fact-finding team to Manipur. The Party de-

mands immediate withdrawal of FIR.

### Elections

In the year 2023 assembly elections will be held in Telangana, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, and Mizoram. The Parliamentary elections will be held in 2024. Party has decided to contest all these elections and concerned state units have been asked to prepare themselves by identifying constituencies and candidates. They have also been directed to prepare the election machinery and do fund collection. Our objective is to defeat the BJP and increase our party's presence in the assemblies and Parliament.

### Attack on Federalism

The action of dismissing a minister by the governor of Tamil Nadu, the Union government's directing Food Corporation of India

(FCI) not to sell grains to the states in the open market scale scheme (OPSS) with a view to scuttling Karnataka state government's scheme of distribution of rice and issuing an ordinance to nullify the decision of the Supreme Court upholding the right of elected government of Delhi to control the bureaucracy are some of the examples of anti-constitutional, anti-federalism actions of the Union government. This is an attack on the federal principles of governance and an attempt to centralize all power, undermining the state governments.

### Economic Situation

The Party has expressed serious concern about rising unemployment and inflation. It also demands the withdrawal of the recent circular issued by RBI to allow wilful defaulters of the banks to have compromise solutions on their loans. This is noth-

ing but legalizing the loot of public money.

The income of the farmers was to be doubled by 2022 but this has not happened. Instead, the expenditure of farmers on inputs has increased.

The economy continues to be sluggish. Modi's policies have exposed their class character. In recent years the number of billionaires has gone up in conjunction with the rise in number of poor.

The government has an aggressive privatization policy. Modi spoke in one meeting: 'Hamare Desh me public sector ka marne ke liye hi Janma hota hai'. The trade unions are resisting against these measures. The agitation by bank unions resulted in the de-escalation of privatization to an extent. In the context of the upcoming election, the government may temporarily roll back the policy but its agenda of help-

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# Significance of Storming the Bastille

India's prime minister was in Paris to celebrate the end of monarchy in France.

It was July 14, 1789. Thirty four years after the discovery of steam power. Feudalism was in tatters and the age of capitalism was ushering in. Bourgeoisie was in the grip of deep discontent for not having a share in power, hegemony was still in the hands of the royalities. Workers were dissatisfied as the price of bread was ninety percent of their wages. They could not afford any other essentials like clothes and shelter or health and education. Peasants were sick of the shackles they were chained in to follow every whim of the feudal lords.

Steam power was changing everything, from infrastructure to hegemony. It was an age of transition, from fields to factories. Change had its price. In Paris, it was the storming of the Bastille that signaled the new beginning, a Revolution, after which a republic was established based on the ideals of "liberty, equality, and fraternity". But days were unusual. The entire superstructure, the agrarian system and blind feudal rule had started crumbling. King and queen were no more the divinities. People had no faith in Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette. There was one glaring fact that brought extreme suffering with no end in sight, and that was all pervasive hunger. People were hungry, and hence angry. Another basic fact, which was even on its own was enough to bring the storm was bankruptcy, hovering over France. It was then that in May, 1789, political uncertainty and economic hardship had both aggravated. The situation was getting volatile. Slowly were emerging the signs of a new society, with new thinking. There was growing need of representative government, based on individual rights, and equality. France was not alone to shape the ideas of democracy, entire developed world was awaiting the new dawn. It was the rule of capital identified by not only France, but also was inspired by the American Revolution.

Then the rumor started floating in the morning of July 14, that the troops had been ordered by the king to surround Paris. The response was not fear and betrayal, it was strong and loud. The moment was historical and was followed by a shift that changed the world. Against the royal tyrannical rule, Bastille, a living symbol of feudalism, was attacked by huge fearless masses. The governor of the fort tried to negotiate, but failed and became almost the first victim. His head was cut and taken on a spike, people roamed around the streets. They were not intoxicated with power that they had now over those who always crushed them, but it was the holy anger that kept simmering along with them. The Revolution had begun. French Republic was declared in September, 1792. On January 21, 1793, Louis XVI was tried by the revolutionaries. Monarchy came to an end. It was considered the Year 1 of the French Republic, and was declared so. He was called by people as Louis the Last.

## Editorial

The king, Louis XVI, was placed under the guillotine. With his death, the feudal system started coming to an end. No king ever lived in the Palace of Versailles.

The results of revolution were amazing, but not unexpected. Change is eternal and is led by evolution, of tools. In this case, it was steam power. Slowly industrial age was ushered in, with new machines, and a democratic set up to rule over. The revolution at this level brought a new component with it, the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen". First time in the history, human rights were recognized. That brought the struggle for real liberation to a new level. It was struggle for social justice.

Protests are still carried on, with new slogans, interpretations. The system has kept the issues alive. The issues that signaled basic shifts. One

example is Pension protests. Then there were the recent riots over the killing of a teenager by police.

It is the same occasion, the same storm over the Bastille, that had once signaled a new dawn. India has joined in their celebrations. Standing at the threshold of a new age, ruled by not monarchy but finance capital, promoting the rightist forces.

There is anniversary of BJP-RSS rule, coming when the BJP has coined its slogan as 'Sewa, Sushasan, Garib Kalyan'. In both the two general elections, held in 2014 and 2019, the Modi government has simply used its power to impose the thinking and ideas of the RSS on the country. The principles and ideals of the Constitution are alien to the forces that are in power, supportive of the finance capital. The Storm over Bastille was the beginning of the process of Capitalism, with that came the industrial age, which promoted corporatization. The system got involved in dismantling relentlessly the constitutional principles, riding roughshod over people's aspirations and stifling their voices. The ambition is to build a majoritarian system that would usher in a dictatorial, majoritarian state crushing the working people, religious and linguistic minorities, and finally destroying the democratic system, violating the rule of law to reach its target.

For the corporate sector, it is through concentrating all power into the hands of the Centre, and putting all the medieval regressive ideas into practice, offering a second class status for so called 'lower' castes, for women, and generally for all those who slog to produce wealth, but do not possess it. To achieve this, it needs to leave the Constitution bereft of its rules that are replaced by a monolithic regime. The "Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen" that was brought after Bastille was stormed, has lost its meaning under this regime. Human Rights are getting subverted in the past nine years.

## CPI MP Serves Notice on Manipur Violence

CPI Rajya Sabha MP and leader of the parliamentary party Binoy Viswam served a notice under Rule 267 of Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Rajya Sabha to have a discussion on the disturbing developments in the state of Manipur over the last three months. The situation in Manipur remains highly volatile with incidents of violence, arson, rioting, and

killing being reported frequently. It is a matter of grave concern for the entire country that the strategically located state of Manipur has been pushed into deep crisis which remains unresolved after claiming hundreds of lives and displacing thousands. Both union and state governments have failed to contain violence and strife in Manipur resulting in the complete collapse of normal life in the state. Binoy Viswam had ear-

lier visited Manipur with the delegation of CPI-CPI(M) MPs. They visited relief camps, interacted with victims, and stressed on the need for peace and restoration of Law and order in the state.

The delegation of CPI-CPI(M) MPs had promised the people of Manipur to raise their voices in Parliament, furthering the promise Binoy Viswam served a notice.

The notice said, "A thorough discussion is needed to comprehend the political crisis, efforts made by the Union and State Government, and what needs to be done to restore peace and normalcy in Manipur." Binoy Viswam said that the Prime Minister of the country has been busy visiting countries around the globe but has failed to visit the state of Manipur or even utter a word about Manipur. While the Government

proudly advertises the Motto of G20 "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" or "One Earth One Family One Future" he has conveniently forgotten the future of thousands of families displaced in Manipur. He called upon all Members of Parliament across Party lines to discuss the alarming situation in Manipur in order to come up with a solution to restore peace and harmony in Manipur.

*The following are the texts of the resolutions adopted by the national council during its three-day meeting held in New Delhi on July 14, 15 and 16, 2023:*

### **On Chandrayan 3**

The National council of the Communist party of India proudly takes note of the successful launching of Chandrayan 3. The party whole heartedly congratulates the entire team of ISRO scientists, employees and workers who tirelessly worked for this great achievement. Chandrayan 3 marks a great step forward in India's historic voyage in space expedition. CPI on this occasion remembers the contributions rendered by legends like Vikram Sarabhai, who took the spirit of the freedom movement to the realm of science and technology. The party always stood with their dreams with the committed position of 'space for peace'.

Congratulating the historic achievement of ISRO and scientific community, the CPI national council reiterates its resentment at the policy of the Union government in opening up space for corporate investments.

### **CPI Opposes Assam Delimitation Draft**

The CPI has opposed the draft proposal for delimitation of assembly and parliamentary constituencies of Assam published on June 20 by the Election Commission of India (ECI) and called for keeping the ongoing delimitations in abeyance for the time being.

The party does not oppose delimitation per se because it is a continuous process. We oppose the way the entire delimitation exercise has been done by the ECI violating section 9(1) a of the Delimitation Act of

2002. The ongoing exercise has not been undertaken using proper methodology and is not objective. The ruling party is seeking to use the delimitation for its own political benefit. BJP is also trying to whip up communal passion on the issue. People's Representatives' Act of 1950 8 (A) is being pushed away. They divided the total constituencies into three categories to maintain 'Population Density' in order. Hence, they communally divided the whole process. In the Act, there is no provision to divide the constituencies into three categories. The act of Election Commission is completely unconstitutional.

Chief minister of Assam HB Sarma has been repeatedly asserting that the draft document, if implemented will safeguard the indigenous communities. The chief minister is making false claim. In fact, the number of legislative assembly constituencies (LACs) and Lok Sabha seats dominated by individuals will decrease if the draft gets implemented. The Lahowal Constituency of Dibrugarh, where the Motok Community has a major influence will cease to exist. Sivasagar district, dominated by the indigenous communities will lose one constituency. There are so many other such examples as well. So, where is the question of delimitation benefiting the indigenous people?

The total number of constituencies should increase during delimitation. But the ongoing process does not have the provision to increase constituencies. It only entails the exchange and merger of areas among constituencies.

This delimitation, therefore, will turnout to be a futile exercise. Look at the draft published by ECI. The number of LACs in the Barak valley will get reduced by two, even as the population in that region has increased which is totally illegal.

The President of India, on public demand deferred the delimitation exercises in Assam on February 8, 2008 inter alia on the ground that the national registration of citizens (NRC) in respect of Assam is yet to be completed. The situation today is the same as it was on February 8, 2008.

The Election Commission of India has recently completed the delimitation in Jammu and Kashmir using 2011 census data, which is normal. Then why in the case of Assam the same delimitation process using 2011 population data cannot be done.

The proposed new constituencies should be of convenient geographical space constant, with the aforesaid provisions of Section 9(1)9 of the delimitation Act 2002. The recently published draft is not a reflection of sound and logical principle.

Countrywide delimitation process will be undertaken in 2026 as per 24<sup>th</sup> amendment of the Constitution.

The CPI national council meeting is of firm opinion that the present proposal for delimitation in Assam, which appears subspicious, is not at all needed now.

The meeting demands that the delimitation exercise in Assam should be kept in abeyance for the time being and should be done along with the rest of the country

in 2026 on the basis of the latest updated census data.

### **On Floods**

Himachal Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Uttarakhand and other states are under unprecedented floods. These floods have led not only to the huge losses of agriculture crops, cattle and property but also have caused loss of human lives. People's daily life is very badly affected. The relief measures by the Central and respective state governments are inadequate. Affected people are left to the mercy of the flood waters. The Central government led by BJP and Prime Minister Narendra Modi have not rushed even sufficient NDRF teams to the affected areas. People are not even being given relief material. They are not getting even food, drinking water, milk, medicines, etc.

The CPI national council demands that food, drinking water, milk, medicines, etc, must be rushed to the affected people.

All losses of agricultural crops, cattle, properties must be compensated by the Union and respective state governments in realistic terms. The families of all those who lost their lives due to unprecedented floods, must be given realistic compensation. Agricultural loans must be waved off.

The Union government and state governments as per the federal character of the nation must plan and do adequate infrastructure improvement in the management of flood waters to avoid future flood. In this matter short term and long term planning needs to be done.

Observe July 25 as Solidarity Day with People of Manipur

The national council expresses its grave concern on the situation in Manipur, which is a strategic and sensitive state in North East region, bordering with Myanmar. From May 3 till date, over 142 lives were lost, over 1,000 individuals were injured, and more than 70,000 people displaced. So cruel and pathetic, that they find shelter in about 272 refugee camps in their own country. A few thousand people also took shelter in neighboring states and also in Delhi.

The violence started on May 3 with the solidarity rally organised by different tribal groups.

The question of tribal status and tribal rights were engineered in such a way that led to the distrust between both the communities, which resulted in violence between Meiteis and Kuki communities. Two months have passed but till now Manipur is in turmoil and peace remains elusive.

The BJP governments in Manipur and at the Centre have totally failed the people of Manipur and their right to have a peaceful prosperous life. Present ethnic conflicts took place due to the long negligence of the state and Central governments and their failure to address the complex issue of land, identity of social and cultural issues among different communities, misuse of forest lands, unemployment, equal access of education to all ethnic groups, poppy cultivations, containment of different underground arms groups in Valley and hills

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## CPI Delhi State Delegation Visits Flood-Affected Areas

A delegation of Communist Party of India visited the flood-affected areas of Delhi and handed over relief materials to suffering people. The delegation comprised CPI national secretaries KNarayana and Ramakrishna Panda, CPI Delhi state council secretary DineshVarshney, All India KisanSabhana national president R Venkaiah, AISF general secretary Vicky Mahesari, AISF national council member Siva Reddy and CPI Delhi state council member Baban Kumar Singh. CPI South Delhi activists Muslim Mohammed and Shailendra Malakar were also part of the delegation visiting Jaitpur.

Among the other places that the team visited were flood-affected areas of 1<sup>st</sup> Pushta, and 5<sup>th</sup> Pushtaneer Bhajanpura and flood-affected people at Signature

**Baban Kumar Singh**

Bridge, Wazirabad areas, etc. While visiting the flood-



affected areas the delegation noticed that water and mud are still logged in their localities. In Garhi village

area, water is still over five feet level and water logging persists in Yamuna Bazar. People have lost their properties and belongings.

Medical facilities are inadequate and people are yet to be catered in the best of the humanitarian manner.



On July 18, 2023, the delegation along with comrades of CPI South Delhi district distributed relief materials to the flood victims at Jaitpur.

Ongoing construction was noted in the flooded area near the Yamuna River. CPI demands that water should be

pumped away at a war scale by the Delhi and Central governments, essential commodities must be given to all affected people, and flood relief and post-flood works, planning, and rehabilitation should be carried out in a scientific manner.

### *What the Others Say...*

#### **The primacy of liberty**

The Supreme Court's endorsement of liberty in a case involving a stringent law is significant. If the criminal justice system forms the skeletal frame of any democratic society and its functioning, then the fundamental right to liberty of every individual must be considered its spine because it is this logic that recognises the full personhood of an individual and limits the powers of the otherwise formidable State.

Unfortunately, in India, this spine has been afflicted by a disease called lengthy pre-trial detention that militates against the constitutional right to liberty and paints a damning picture of a criminal justice system that is stacked against the common person. The Supreme Court recognised this too last week in an order when it held that an accused could not be made to remain behind bars for an indefinite period under the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act just because the law requires a court's satisfaction that the person is not guilty.

A bench of justices Surya Kant and Dipankar Data held that even in the case involving the tough anti-narcotics law, the liberty of an individual would take precedence over the statutory embargo in a particular statute, and that the period of incarceration of an accused shall remain a relevant factor.

The pronouncement affirmed Article 21 of the Constitution that accords to all individuals the fundamental right to life and personal liberty. Through a raft of top court judgments, the right to speedy trial has been acknowledged as an extension of Article 21.

It also underlines the importance of procedural safeguards in proceedings under such stringent laws; in the present case, for example, despite the accused being incarcerated for three-and-a-half years, the statements of only one of the 19 witnesses were recorded.

*Courtesy: Hindustan Times*

#### **The stress signals**

Even as the Indian economy is growing at a seemingly healthy rate, and the RBI expects growth at 8 per cent in the first quarter (April-

June) of the ongoing financial year, more and more individuals/households are seeking work under the NREGS.

In June, the number of households that availed work under the scheme touched 3.04 crore. This is 10 per cent more than those who did so over the same period last year. In fact this is only the third time since April 2014 that the monthly number of households has crossed three crore.

Some have attributed this sharp rise to the uneven rainfall pattern in June which could have affected kharif sowing. However, the data also points to a steady rise in the number of individuals seeking and availing work under the scheme over the years. This is a worrying sign.

In 2015-16, the number of individuals who worked under MGNREGA stood at 7.2 crore. By 2019-20, this number had risen to 7.88 crore. Demand for work under the scheme surged during the pandemic years, of course, touching 11.19 crore in 2020-21 and 10.61 crore in 2021-22. However, while it fell thereafter to 8.76 crore in 2022-23, it remained higher than the pre-pandemic level, pointing towards a trend of more and more individuals relying on the scheme. In 2022-23, the average wage rate per person per day under the scheme was Rs 218 — this has risen to Rs 233. Considering that earnings of casual labour, engaged in works other than public works, were Rs 368 during April-June 2022 as per the periodic labour force, the high demand for work under MGNREGA is an indicator of the limited avenues for more productive forms of employment in rural areas.

There are signs of stress in urban areas as well. Even as the unemployment rate has fallen from the highs observed during the pandemic, it remains high among the youth.

During January-March 2023, the unemployment rate for those in the age group of 15-29 years stood at 17.3 per cent in urban areas, as per the periodic labour force survey. Among males, it was estimated at 15.6 per cent, while for females it was pegged to be higher at 22.9 per cent.

Going ahead, these areas, where signs of stress are clear and visible, need to be closely monitored.

*Courtesy: The Indian Express*

# Obscurantists Try to Tarnish Success of Science

Successful launch of Chandrayan 3, the latest mission of Indian Space Research Organisation to moon, is a remarkable scientific endeavour. It took off from the Satish Dhawan Space Centre at Sriharikota in Andhra Pradesh state on the afternoon of July 14, 2023. With the successful launch, India is bidding to become the fourth country to execute a controlled landing on the moon and first to touch down the unexplored, rugged southern pole surface of Moon. The journey will take over 40 days (one moon day is equal to four earthen days) and Chandrayan 3 is expected to land on moon in August.

However, a day before the launch of Chandrayan 3, a team of leading ISRO scientists took the rocket prototype to Tirupati temple and put it at the feet of Lord Venkateswara, seeking blessings. This act of pseudoscience has tarnished the success story of moon mission and outraged many Indians.

Chandrayaan-3 mission holds immense possibilities for India's future space exploration missions. By showcasing its technological capabilities, ISRO, India, is ambitious to establish itself as a prominent player in the global space community.

Chandrayaan-3 comprises of three essential components: the lander module Vikram, the propulsion module and a robot rover. The lander enables soft landing on the Moon, deploying the rover for collecting scientific information. The robot lander will walk on the southern (pole) surface of moon for 14 days and collect vital scientific

*Dr Soma Marla*

data. The rover has powerful instruments such as the Alpha Particle X-ray Spectrometer (APXS), which will analyze lunar soil and rocks for elemental composition, and the Laser Induced Breakdown Spectroscopy (LIBS) to examine the chemical makeup of the lunar surface. The lander is also equipped with Surface Thermophysical Experiment (ChaSTE), which will pro-

about lunar atmosphere to help prospects for future manned missions and possible habitation in near future to enhance our understanding of the lunar surface.

Chandrayan was blasted off to the lunar orbit by LVM-3, the propulsion module capable to lift very heavy payload of 2,148 kg Chandrayan 3. The launch vehicle LMV-3 was supported by a powerful liquid fuel cryogenic engine, built indigenously by India.

Launching of earlier two

Vikram Sarabhai, had successfully got separated from the orbiter in preparation for a landing on the moon. Of course, the major goal of Chandrayaan-3 is to land safely on the lunar surface.

It should be noted that the budget of Chandrayan 3 mission was nearly Rs 650 crores, much less than Rs 700 crores, spent on making the recent Bollywood religious film Adipurush.

With successful launch of Chandrayan 3 and better controlled landing on moon,

USSR had extended all its technical support and guidance to Indian space programmes since inception of Indian Space Research organization (ISRO) in 1969.

Till now India has launched different satellites like INSAT series to support its telecommunications, mobile, Internet network Spectrum data, remote sensing for agriculture, fisheries, weather forecasting. India has also supported Agni missiles and other defence related applications. However, with successful launching of Mangalyan, Chandrayan and other missions in future to Mars and Venus, India is entering into basic space research.

## Religious Obscurantism

Religious obscurantists in the country led by right wing forces have been disturbed by the success of Chandrayan 3, and attempted to tarnish the image of space programmes. It also opposed the support by science. Already themes such as Darwinism, Periodic table, Euclidian geometry, environment and several parts of Indian history have been recently deleted from school text books by ministry of education. The war on science is deliberately waged to suppress questioning, rationalising and critical thinking among budding young Indians with an aim to drag the country back in to ancient dark ages.

The successful launch of moon mission and execution of soft landing would mark a significant milestone in India's space achievements and pave the way for future space missions. Achievements in space research and science should be directed to address daily needs of people and not for profit seeking space tourism and military advances. Any attempt by religious obscurantists to tarnish spirit of scientific enquiry should be resisted strongly by sensible Indians.



vide vital information on the moon's thermal conductivity and temperature. Also equipped are Instruments for Lunar Seismic Activity (ILSA), aims to detect moonquakes. The Langmuir Probe will estimate the density and variation of plasma in the moon's environment, and the embedded sensors in the Laser Retroreflector will enable precise distance measurements using laser technology. The collected sophisticated data will be sent back to ISRO in India for further research investigations. Additionally, the equipment collects data

moon missions - Chandrayan 1 (2009) and Chandrayan 2 (2019) immensely helped to design and execute Chandrayan 3 voyage. Chandrayaan-2 in 2019, faced a crash during its soft landing attempt, resulting in a major setback for ISRO. However, this time scientific team of ISRO led by Sundarsan, Vetuvelu, Ritu Srivatsava and others used this setback as an opportunity for improving and designing better landing of Vikram lander on rugged southern moon surface. The lander 'Vikram' named after the father of India's space programme, the late

India has become a fourth nation after United states, former USSR (Russia), and China. United States is luring India to join its NASA led space explorations in countering China and Russia. During PM Modi's recent visit to USA, he agreed with President Biden to collaborate with NASA led space explorations. It should be remembered that only two decades back USA had refused to provide cryogenic liquid fuel technologies, fearing India's emergence as a global player in space research, whereas erstwhile

# Resolutions Adopted...

## From Page 03

area, unchecked infiltrations from Myanmar and many other issues.

The malicious campaign of RSS for long time to divide the people on religious line and the role of Manipur chief minister in this conflict should be condemned.

The utter failure of the BJP government in Manipur is responsible for such a dire situation. CPI national council demands immediate resignation of the present chief minister to meet the demands from the cross sections of the Manipuri people.

The national council feels that when mistrust and hatred exist among all sides and violence is continuing, then the priority must be first to restore peace and tranquility in Manipur. A political solution to the crisis should be reached by taking all opinions and people into confidence through dialogue and reconciliation can only bring a solution to this ongoing crisis.

In this context the initiative of National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) to send a fact finding mission and later the visit by CPI and CPI(M) MPs to Manipur are to be appreciated as serious attempts to understand the situation and to build confidence among all communities in Manipur.

The national council believes that to create a conducive atmosphere for dialogue and reconciliation following actions must be taken immediately:

- Resignation of the chief minister

- Disarm all terrorist groups and individuals who possess arms illegally to be arrested immediately.

- Stop infiltrations from Myanmar. Army and

Border Security Force should take appropriate steps in this regard.

- Stop Poppy cultivation in Reserve Forest land and scrap the decision to give 65,000 acres of land to Adani group to do mining and other commercial activities which will change the character of the land.

- Considering the magnitude of sufferings, grievances and loss caused to the people from all sides special package of compensations, relief, rehabilitation, resettlement and livelihood in a time bound manner for the affected people must be ensured by the state and Central governments without any bias and discrimination.

- All Highways in Manipur must be opened for free movement of necessary goods and medicine.

- Withdraw cases filed against Annie Raja, general secretary and Nisha Sidhu, secretary of NFIW and Deeksha Dwivedi, practicing advocate in Delhi, since they are farcical and fabricated.

While demanding the above, CPI once again reiterates its position towards the territorial integrity of Manipur and unity of the people.

Party condemns the continuous silence of the Prime Minister on Manipur situation confirming that the double engine government of BJP is responsible for the present situation. This has invited criticism from across the world showing our country in poor light.

Party calls upon all its units to observe July 25 as a solidarity day with the people of Manipur and to protest strongly against the FIR made against the party leaders and other individuals.

## Hold Early Election to Cantonment Boards

Cantonment Boards are local bodies under the Union ministry of defense for which elections are to be held once in five years.

Elections for the last time were held in 2015. The term of the elected members of Cantonment Boards expired in 2020. Thereafter the period was extended for another year to the erstwhile elected members and that too expired in 2021. Now there are no elected representatives to Cantonment Boards. The Cantonment Boards are now run by the officials with the advice of ruling BJP nominees. Running local bodies without holding elections is unconstitutional.

There are 61 Cantonment Boards in India, which are run by the ruling BJP through back door. The BJP government is delaying the elections for political considerations. It seems the BJP is delaying elections under the pretext of the excision of Cantonment Boards. Excision of Cantonment Boards without conducting any sort of public debate or discussing the issue with stakeholders like various political parties, residents, and employees is undesirable.

Annexing Cantonment Boards with neighboring state governments may take several years even if all factors are conducive. Keeping a local government without elected representatives is undemocratic and unconstitutional.

The national council meeting calls upon the government of India to hold early elections to Cantonment Boards based on 'Universal Adult franchise' and uphold the spirit of the

panchayat system and to drop further action for excision of Cantonment Boards without holding public debate.

## Remove Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi from His Position

In non-BJP ruled states, governors appointed by the Union government run parallel governments against the state governments elected by the people.

RN Ravi, Governor of Tamil Nadu, has been acting in a controversial manner since his inception.

Once he freaked out that India was ruined because of Karl Marx. Sanatanam is what unites the country, he said. He described the great humanists like Thiruvalluvar and Vallalar as the pinnacle of sanathana.

He said that all countries depend upon religions, so India is a Hindu Nation. He is openly working against secularism, completely violating the Constitution of India. He shelved more than 13 bills passed by the Tamil Nadu legislative assembly for several months without giving approval.

The Enforcement Directorate arrested a minister named Senthil Balaji. He is being treated in the hospital as a heart patient. When the chief minister shared his portfolios with other ministers, the governor, who initially refused to give his approval, signed it only the next day. He arbitrarily dismissed that minister the next day and then announced that he would be suspended, expecting legal opinion.

Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha members from eight parties, DMK, Congress, CPI, CPI(M), MDMK, VVK, Indian Union Muslim League and Kongu People's National Party signed a letter to the President demanding Ravi's removal, several

months ago. No action has been taken yet.

Tamil Nadu chief minister M K Stalin wrote a 19-page detailed letter to the President demanding the recall of governor Ravi.

The CPI national council urges that the President should consider the letter of the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, the letters of the members of Parliament and take immediate action to remove governor RN Ravi from that responsibility.

## On Suspension of Four Faculty Members and Students of SAU

South Asian University (SAU) has been witness to a creeping process of autocratisation that is the necessary component for commercialization and saffronisation of higher education. The Union government has undermined the South Asian character of the university.

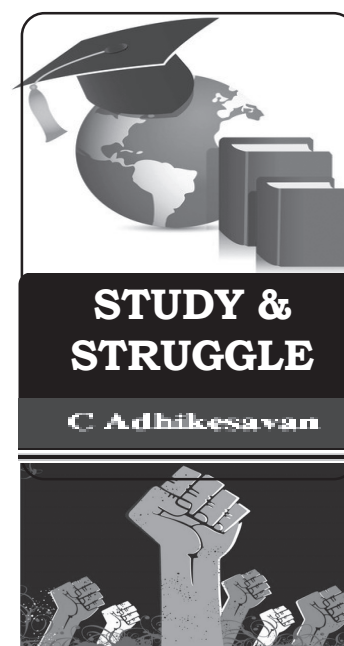
Last year students of South Asian University began a protest against reduction of monthly stipends. The administration of SAU failed to pay heed to these protests and instead sought to brazenly crush them.

A wide cross section of faculty members of SAU wrote a letter to their administration asking for a constructive solution to the crisis. Instead of constructive solution, the administration of SAU began to target the faculty members by accusing them of instigating students.

In order to maximize the autocratic impact of this attack on democratic rights, the attack on faculty members of SAU was selectively done as the four teachers targeted were the ones who had been to the administration to have a dialogue on the plight of the students.

*On Page 10*

# NEP-UG, A Policy to Deepen Inherent Inequalities



The Central Universities Entrance Test (CUET-UG) for the undergraduate students was envisaged during the Covid period in 2020 as a novel way to the peculiar problem in Indian higher education of sky high cut-offs, triggered by a deluge of students across various state and central boards registering near-perfect scores, but the results show the policy has been introduced at the cost of the downtrodden communities.

Academics and students point finger at the National Education Policy or NEP 2020. Amongst those who registered, close to 25 per cent students failed to take the CUET examination formulated under the NEP on of the selection of students for undergraduates, giving up on their chance to apply for Central Universities. In case of Scheduled Tribe students, close to 50 per cent finally did not take the examination finally, while that of SC/OBC is almost 25-30 per cent. This steep drop-out rates are because of issues of affordability - preparation for a centralised test through coaching, tedious exercise of reaching the centre and inaccessible format of the examination. The digital divide could have played a role in the low attendance among underprivileged sections. It is also because of the lack of access to technology. Another possible reason is the lack of understanding and communication regarding the entire process, particularly among first-generation learners. Who will remove these obstacles? CUET-UG is creating inequalities in the society, if not, why such high rates of absentees? The examination itself was marred by several technical glitches.

It would be good to know how many women students dropped out of the exami-

nation. Gender-wise break up is concerned, 73.83 per cent of female candidates appeared for the test while 74.91 per cent of male candidates to it. Currently, there are 71,000 UG seats available spanning over 78 programmes in 68 Delhi University colleges. The normalisation process comes from the CUET UG itself being held in different shifts, which means exams for the same subject can be held on different days and in different sessions thus affecting the difficulty level and raw score of students from each session. In order to put all students on the same footing, the normalisation process was introduced

Category	Appeared	Absent	Registered
EWS	53219	11987	65206
General/Unreserved	513155	165323	678478
OBC-NCL	380784	118342	499126
SC	115215	35484	150699
ST	53645	52642	106287
Total	1116018	383778	1499796

where the score of each student comes from an 'equi-percentile method'. As universities begin the admission process, students complain about the normalisation process, and demand for 'more fair analysis'.

It is also important to note that while close to 15,00,000 registered and 11,00,000 took examination, they are competing for only 1.5 lakh seats in Central Universities. A large proportion of students seeking admission to general undergraduate courses came from financially disadvantaged rural families and were not well acquainted with the use of computers.

One in four applicants skipped the Common University Entrance Test

(CUET) for undergraduate admission to general courses this year, with some academics suggesting the computer-based model had deterred many poor and rural students and calling for a switch to pen-and-paper mode. The National Testing Agency (NTA), which conducted the exams from May 21 to June 23, 2023 declared the results. Of the 15 lakh students who had applied, 11.16 lakh actually took the exams, marking an absenteeism of around 25 per cent.

Among Scheduled Tribe students, about 52,500 of the 1.06 lakh applicants stayed away, representing an absenteeism of nearly 50 per

cent. When the CUET was introduced in 2022, it witnessed an overall absenteeism of about 40 per cent.

In contrast, the absenteeism figures range between 5 and 10 per cent in the national entrance exams for undergraduate professional courses such as the Joint Entrance Examination Main (engineering) and the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (medical and dental admissions).

A large proportion of students seeking admission to general undergraduate courses came from financially disadvantaged rural families and were not well acquainted with the use of computers. This may have discouraged many from taking the test. To provide a

level playing field, pen-and-paper tests should be held.

If the NEET could be conducted in pen-and-paper mode despite attracting almost 15 lakh candidates, so could the CUET. All the 45 central universities and over 200 state, private and deemed universities have decided to admit undergraduate students through the CUET this year. Unlike last year, when technical glitches had forced several papers to be postponed, the exam was glitch-free this year. The CUET was held in 13 languages, and 2,305 question papers were prepared with 148,520 questions. However, candidates complained about errors in the provisional answer keys and mounted 3,886 challenges.

The National Testing Agency said it had shared each candidate's results with the universities to which the candidate had applied. The NTA has converted the CUET UG exam from a talent and intelligence based exam to 'luck-based test'.

### Educational inequities worsen for minorities

On one side the Union government's dear slogan is "betipadao, betibachao" and on the other the government is not concerned about the recent reports highlight drop in Muslim girls enrolment across all educational institutions. In the pursuit of a just and inclusive society, access to education plays a crucial role in empowering marginalised communities.

However, in India, the educational landscape remains stratified with the Muslim minority grappling with numerous hurdles that impede their educational progress and perpetuate social disparities. Recent academic revelations on the declining enrolment of Mus-

lim students in education and higher education are concerning. The contentious "ban" on hijab (a matter still before the Supreme Court), an all pervasive intimidatory socio-political environment coupled with a push back from sections of the religious clergy are contributory factors. Amid the broader challenges faced by Muslims, Dalits, and Adivasis (tribal) there rages a fierce need for reasoned debate, further push for more equitable policies and concerted action. It is ultimately a matter of choice and Article 14 [equality before law] and 19 [freedom of speech and expression]. The enrolment of Muslim students dropped by 8 per cent from 2019-20 – that is, by 1,79,147 students.

While the enrolment of Dalits, Adivasis, and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) has increased, the decline in Muslim enrolment is particularly alarming. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes currently constitute 14.7 per cent and 5.6 per cent of the total enrolment, respectively, while OBCs make up 37 per cent of the student population. In contrast, Muslim students account for only 5.5 per cent of the overall enrolment, with other minority communities comprising 2.3 per cent. It is worth noting that teachers from the Muslim minority group represent 5.6 per cent of the total.

*Biswanath Mukherjee*

# A BUILDER OF COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

Biswanath Mukherjee was born on April 17, 1915 in Tamluk, East Midnapore, West Bengal, in a nationalist patriotic middle class family. He was the youngest among his brothers and sisters. His elder brother Ajay Mukherjee was a renowned Congress leader, later to become the chief minister of W Bengal in 1967 in the first non-Congress government. They shifted from Uttarpara to Tamluk.

Biswanath studied in Hamilton School, Tamluk, a historic school in every way, including being associated with Khudiram Bose and Matangini Hajra.

Along with some of his colleagues, Biswanath set up a small Students' Samiti and a library in Tamluk. He was present at the all Bengal Students conference in 1930 as the representative of the Samiti.

He joined the salt satyagraha at Tamluk and attended mass meetings. He and friends signed up in the list of volunteers and toured neighbouring areas. He made his first political speech when studying in the class tenth.

He and colleagues organized common religion in all the institutions.

They organized protest demonstrations against the Round Table Conference that was being held in London after the end of the Civil

Disobedience movement. Black flag demonstrations were organized. Section 144 was enforced in Tamluk. Large number of Pathan, Punjabi and other police were deployed, creating an

atmosphere of apprehension. Biswanath was given responsibility of leading the procession; they were surrounded by the police from all sides. They pounced upon them and beat mercilessly. He and colleagues were arrested and sentenced to six months' imprisonment. This was his first imprisonment.

## In Congress

After the end of the CD movement, Biswanath decided to give up studies and join the peasants in their struggles and movement, and not to go back to school or home. "It was a turning point in my life", said Biswanath Mukherjee. He was in Dum Dum Jail.

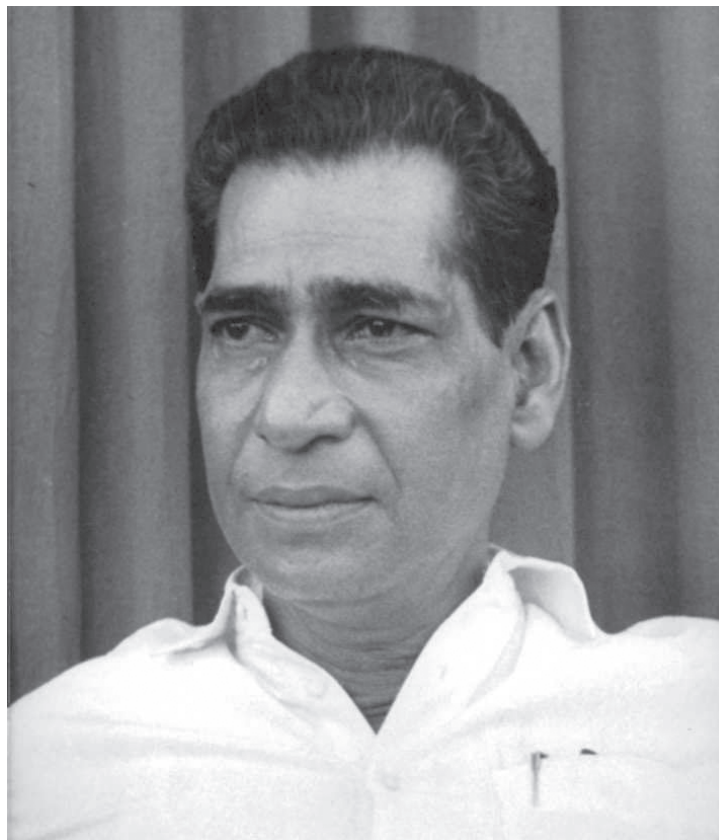
Biswanath and his co-workers used to go house to house in the villages and collect rice and used to cook it and eat 'chai bhat' (rice with tea)! They used to go barefoot and in almost tattered khadi clothes. They used to inspire the peasants to take part in the freedom movement.

Biswanath worked in Congress. In January 1932, the British government swooped down upon the Congress leaders and workers. Jawaharlal was arrested, so was Gandhiji as soon as he landed at Bombay Port. Hundreds of Congress workers were arrested. Within a short time, around 80 thousand Congress workers were arrested. The houses of some of them were demolished by the British government.

Biswanath had taken part in the Karachi Congress as a delegate. As a student he

participated in the civil disobedience movement of the early 1930s. His first prison term was at the age of 15 in 1930. He was brutally caned. By 1934 he was introduced to such outstanding leaders like Somnath Lahiri, Ranen Sen and others.

After release, he did not return home as he no longer felt like leading a usual family life. After release he became



a full time worker of the Congress and worked among the peasants.

## In Ramkrishna Mission

Biswanath's family was religious. He used to go to the Ramkrishna Sevashram as a child. He took 'Diksha' (initiation) from Mahapurush Maharaja, the last disciple of Ramkrishna Paramhansa. Biswanath also joined the Ramkrishna Mission. He used to recite Sanskrit shlokas for hours together, standing in water. But he did not get any peace of mind!

His brother Ajay Mukherjee then brought him to Uttarpara.

## Towards Marxism

Biswanath happened to get some Marxist books and literature about the Soviet Union from one of the learned lawyers. This initiated him into Marxism. He also came in contact with one Lalit Singh of Calcutta, who had a bookshop there in the

Correspondence'.

Meanwhile he was arrested along with many other youths accused of murdering Medinipur Jail superintendent Barge Saheb. The conditions in the Sub-Jail were most horrible, and Biswanath got severe dysentery.

He was shifted to Hijli Additional Jail, a temporary prison and another hell. It was fenced with barbed wire and had thatched bamboo walls. It had snakes and crabs too! A large number of political leaders were there. They had political discussions and classes including by Ajay Mukherjee.

He came to Calcutta on January 1, 1934 and became a communist. From 1935 to 1940, he became a leading figure in the student movement.

In 1934-35, a small district committee of Communist Party was formed with Hrishikesh Bannerjee as secretary and Biswanath as his secretary. Somnath Lahiri moved to Bombay and became general secretary of CPI, and soon was arrested.

He even had to face a Party enquiry committee in 1934-35 for the so-called 'reformist deviation', which was found to be false. The Bengal party withdrew the allegations in 1937.

## As student leader

Biswanath was an effective orator and mass speaker, who could rouse the students into action.

All Bengal Students' Association was established in September 1928 in a four-day conference presided



over by Jawaharlal Nehru. Subhash Chandra Bose was the guest of honour.

Biswanath Mukherjee, along with Nripen Chakravarty and some others, established Bengal Youth Student Association. On December 25, 1935, another organization called Bengal Provincial Students' League (BPSL) was established, in which Biswanath Mukherjee played a prominent role as its general secretary, in 1937.

BPSL was formed at the end of 1935 at a conference in Albert Hall chaired by Prof Hiren Mukherjee. Biswanath got it affiliated with the newly formed BPSF, formed in November 1936 in Shradhanand Park, Calcutta. KM Ahmed was its first president and Kali Mukherjee the general secretary.

Biswanath actively joined the movement for the release of Andaman Prisoners in 1937. It was in fact started by the RCPI leader Soumendranath Tagore. The movement quickly spread far and wide. A Student Movement Committee based on schools and colleges was formed. He was appointed the general secretary of the BPSF. Its provincial conference was held in December 1937.

#### ABSA and BPSA

It was decided to hold the second session of the ABSA in Mymensingh. This city was the stronghold of Jugantar Dal. At that time, there was intense rivalry between the revolutionary groups of Anushilan and Jugantar, which was also reflected in the student movement. Later, there was rivalry between the groups led by JM Sengupta and Subhash Bose. Rebati Barman was the president of the reception committee. His inaugural speech contained strong references in favour of Marxism-Leninism. Presi-

dent was Dr Alam. He paid tribute to Jatin Das in an emotional speech and urged the students of Bengal to prepare for the coming struggle. His speech reflected a sharp attack on communalism.

The atmosphere in the conference was very strained, and by the second day the proceedings became acrimonious. Apprehending trouble, the chairman declared the conference closed. The dissidents thereafter held their separate conference, a little later. A section formed Bengal Provincial Students Association or BPSA. Biswanath Mukherjee emerged as one of the prominent leaders of the BPSA. It was dominated by the members of Jugantar.

The association included many non-partisan student activists and leaders, in addition to the activists of Anushilan and Yugantar Dal.

**It was under his leadership that a successful student strike was organized in the Scottish Church College, Calcutta to exercise the right to invite Subhash Bose to address students' meeting. It was under the leadership of Biswanath Mukherjee that the AISF joined the literacy campaign that was organized by Calcutta University Institute in the neighbouring villages.**

Most of the members of the executive committee were not members of any party and cannot be called supporters of any particular party. The All Bengal Student Association became the center of conflict between Anushilan Samiti and the Yugantar Party.

Biswanath Mukherjee welded the BPSF into an all powerful organization affiliated to the AISF. Its office was situated in the College Street, Calcutta, in a small room in the first floor of a building next to Presidency

College and behind College Street YMCA.

It was under his leadership that a successful student strike was organized in the Scottish Church College, Calcutta to exercise the right to invite Subhash Bose to address students' meeting.

It was under the leadership of Biswanath Mukherjee that the AISF joined the literacy campaign that was organized by Calcutta University Institute in the neighbouring villages. The Institute became the centre of progressive youth activities.

The AISF brought together such diverse personalities as Dr Radhakrishnan, Prof Hiren Mukherjee, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee of Hindu Mahasabha, Ispahani of Muslim League, Prof Humayun Kabir and others to discuss India's freedom struggle. Biswanath played an important role.

He got admission in Vidyasagar College. At that time the University vice-chancellor was Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee. Students

## Biographies of Communist Leaders-90

Anil Rajimwale

refused to salute the Union Jack during the UTC or University Training Corps march. Students owing allegiance to MN Roy took the lead, and Biswanath organized a protest on a big scale. The vice-chancellor, Dr Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, ordered action against the students.

He went underground during the Second World War.

#### In the CPI

In late 1938, the illegal CPI in Bengal held its secret provincial conference in the

Kalyani Mukherjee (later Kumarmangalam) was the niece of the famous student leader, Biswanath Mukherjee. Biswanath and Geeta Roy Chowdhury (Later Mukherjee) got married in 1942.

#### Post-independence period

Biswanath Mukherjee was elected to the CC of CPI at its second Congress held in 1948.

He was president of West Bengal unit of the AIKS and a vice-president of the AIKS.

He was elected to the national council of CPI at its 7<sup>th</sup> congress held in Bombay after the split. He was included in the CEC elected at the 8<sup>th</sup> congress in Patna in 1968. He remained a CEC member till April 1988 when he left the post due to failing health.

#### Elective legislative posts

Biswanath Mukherjee was elected to the WB state legislative council in 1966. He joined the first non-Congress ministry along with Somnath Lahiri in W Bengal formed in 1967. He was elected to the assembly in 1968 from Midnapore after the dissolution of the legislative council, and was elected to the assembly from Tamluk in 1977, 1982 and 1987.

Biswanath Mukherjee passed away on September 12, 1991 in New Delhi in Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital.

## Lawyers Submit Their Views on UCC

# Discrimination, not Difference at Roots of Inequality

The 22nd Law Commission of India has invited public opinion on the issue of the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). The Indian Association of Lawyers is an organization founded by the Judges, Jurists, Lawyers, Law Teachers, and Law students. The founding members of the organization were the renowned Judges of the Supreme Court, Justice PN Bhagwati, Justice ES Venkatramaiah, Justice O Chinnappa Reddy, Justice DA Desai, Justice VR Krishna Iyer to name a few. In response to the 22nd Law Commission's call seeking opinion of the public, we, from the Indian Association of Lawyers submit our views on the issue of the Uniform Civil Code as below:

The Government of India, through a reference in

**Muralidhara,  
R S Cheema**

June 2016, entrusted the task of addressing the issues concerning a Uniform Civil Code to the 21st Law Commission of India, chaired by the former Judge of the Supreme Court, Justice BS Chauhan. The Commission, after a detailed study of all personal laws prepared the consultation paper which exhaustively referred to existing personal laws which took away the privileges for women. The Commission was of the view that it is the discrimination and not the difference which lies at the root of inequality. The Commission suggested a range of amendments to the existing family laws and also suggested codification of certain

aspects of personal law so as to limit the ambiguity in interpretation and application of these laws. The consultation paper presented by the Chairman of the 21st Law Commission of India, Justice BS Chauhan dealt with all facets of personal laws historically, constitutionally and meticulously. The Commission was also alive to the view of Dr BR Ambedkar on the issue. The Commission, referring to a passage from the case of TMA-Pai Foundation v/s State of Karnataka opined:

“Thus a “united” nation need not necessarily have “uniformity” it is making diversity reconcile with certain universal and indisputable argument on human rights”.

The 21st Law Commission, having done an exhaustive and commend-

able study stated that:

“Uniform Civil Code is neither necessary nor desirable at this stage”. The Law Commission further opined that: “Reforms in family laws of different communities would provide better guarantee of securing rights of women and children than bringing in Uniform Civil Laws”.

The fact that the issue regarding Uniform Civil Code (UCC) finds place in the Directive Principles of the State Policy, essentially provides insight into the reflections of the framers of the Constitution. It furnishes a mandatory guideline for interpreting the provision. A plain reading of Article 44 also lends clarity. Article 44 requires the State to strive to secure for the citizens of India a Uniform Civil Code throughout India. It is manifest that the UCC is a futuristic objective. It is apparent from the use of expression ‘endeavor’ in Article 44 that extensive

planning, all-out preparations and a strong effort would be required. The word ‘endeavor’ cannot be equated with the attempt of the requisite majority in the Parliament to enact the law regarding the UCC. As per the vision of the framers of the Constitution, such a Code would be put in place when the time is right for the same. India is a vast country with an astounding range of diversity.

The concept of unity in diversity constitutes one of the foundational principles of the polity. National unity in India contemplates respect for diversity, pluralism, tolerance and harmony. An appropriate UCC must truly represent the aspiration of all Indians irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, culture, ethnicity and political philosophy. On the one hand, such a Code shall provide gender equality, justice for all, equal human rights for all; while on the other, it shall

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## Resolutions Adopted...

**From Page 06**

The fact finding committee had recommended their suspension on the charges of inciting students against the SAU during the students' protest. Finally, these four faculty members were suspended on June 16, 2023 making the situation more complicated. All the four faculty members have been meted with humiliating treatment of not to leave the station without permission, vacate their offices, return their office computers and identity cards and register their attendance on all working days in the office. Some students were also suspended and expelled without reason and rhyme.

Intolerance for constructive criticism is becoming administrative culture of the university in Modi regime.

The move by the SAU administration is being seen as completely undemocratic and in violation of all rules and norms. Their authoritarian stance has tarnished the image of the university formed with the high ideals of integrating neighbouring SAARC countries. The enquiry conducted by the fact finding committee was motivated and was a mere camouflage of the hidden undemocratic agenda of governance to stifle all vestiges of democratic voices.

This CPI national council demands that the external affairs minister and SAARC secretary must unconditionally roll back all these illegal moves against teachers and students of SAU. CPI demands withdrawal of suspension of four faculties immediately and extension of justice to the aggrieved stu-

dents of the campus.

### **Withdraw Anti-Forest, Anti-Environment and Anti-Forest Conservation Bill, 2023**

On March 29, 2023 the Union government has placed a Bill named Forest Conservation (Amendment) Bill 2023 in the Lok Sabha to amend the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980 (FCA).

Through the Bill the government has tried to redefine the existing forest land and forest.

The forest survey of India in its report called State of Forest Report 2021 stated that the total forest cover of India is 7,75,288 square km out of which 1,20,783 square km which is 10 per cent of the total forest land comes under unclassified forest. In some states a large part of the for-

est also comes under this category. From the point of environment this unclassified forest is very sensitive and important. But the proposed amendment in the Forest Conservation Act 1980 says to keep this huge track of unclassified forest out of conservation. This means in the name of development these huge forest land and forest resources will be available for corporates. There will not be any need for taking permission for diversion from forest department.

To please corporate companies, the Union government has made up a conspiracy against our forest and environment. This will ruin utterly our forest resources and adversely affect the rights and livelihood of our people particularly tribals and forest dwellers living in those forest areas for generations. To oppose the

bill both inside and outside Parliament many objections were raised. After huge agitations Forest Bill was sent to the Joint Parliamentary Committee.

The CPI and few other parties, many organisations and 60 members of Parliament and individuals had submitted their suggestions to the committee.

Ignoring all these valuable suggestions the joint Parliamentary Committee cleared the controversial bill without proposing any changes. The proposed bill infringed on the rights of the state government.

In the last nine years, the Union government has taken steps to amend and dilute Indian Forest Act 1927, Conservation Rules, Forest Rights Act 2006 etc. These attacks on our forest, natural resources and livelihood cannot be tolerated and should be defeated.

# Four Faculty Members, Students Face Rustication Democracy in Peril in SAU

South Asian University (SAU) is an International University sponsored by the eight member states of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC). Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka are member countries. SAU was established in 2010. The university was established on the proposal of then prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh in the 13<sup>th</sup> SAARC Summit held in Dhaka in November, 2005. It was established to provide world class facilities and professional faculties to students and researchers from SAARC member countries. Inter-Governmental Agreement for establishment of SAU was signed in the 14<sup>th</sup> SAARC summit and decided that SAU would be established in India. SAU was formed and established with the high ideals of integrating neighboring SAARC countries in the fields of higher education.

But the SAU campus is in turmoil from last four five years. The academic environment is seriously vitiated posing serious question marks on the government structure. Democratic rights of students and teachers are being ignored. Right to express and dissent is being thoroughly suppressed by the university administration. SAU administration has always been committing unacceptable, unjust acts to intimidate the teaching and student communities.

The exploitative attitude of the university administration started coming into focus after reopening of the university after Covid-19 phase. Post graduate students of PG Department and research scholars requested the university administration to hike the monthly stipends. Students of post graduate depart-

ments demanded Rs. 7000 as stipend in place of Rs. 5000 per month and Research Scholars requested to maintain parity with the scholarship of JRF (Junior Research Fellowship). Getting repeated requests and pressure from the students, SAU administration, instead of increasing, slashed down the amount of monthly stipend from Rs. 5000 to Rs. 4000 showing its biased attitude towards the students. The gross injustice angered and frustrated the students as well as teachers. Respond-

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*Arun Kumar*

started a series of complications and the matter became more complicated.

A Fact Finding Committee (FFC) was formed to investigate all these issues.

This FFC selectively issued notice and targeted four faculty members, (one from Sociology, two from Economics and one from Law Department) on May 19, 2023 and asked them to provide hand written answers to over a hundred

illegal and undemocratic suspension notice, they were also directed not to leave the station without permission, vacate their offices, return their office computers and identity cards, and register their attendance on all working days in the offices of their respective deans.

This unprecedented harassment and intimidation of the SAU faculty by the administration was condemned by the large sections of teaching and student community of entire country. But still, the news and reports of expulsion, suspension, and finally the rustication kept coming incessantly. These notices of expulsion and rustication have put the students under tremendous stress, both mentally and physically. No doubt the suspension of four faculty members by the SAU administration is a rude attempt to intimidate and silence both the faculty and the students who dared to raise their voice against the arbitrary, authoritarian actions of the administration. This action of SAU is completely against the right to expression, right to dissent and protest.

SAU has been witness to a creeping process of autocratisation that is the necessary complement of the commercialization and saffronisation of higher education. The current Union government of India has undetermined the South Asian character of the University. The FFC report was motivated and a mere camouflage to the hidden undemocratic agenda of governance to stifle all vestiges of democratic voice for asking for rules and regulations to protect the academic

**On Page 12**



ing to it, about 15 to 20 faculty members wrote letter to the University administration requesting a justified solution to the issue that is threatening them with gross deprivation.

After the decision to slash the stipend amount, students became agitated and sat on Dharna in the campus in the month of September, 2021. But the university administration paid no heed to the problems nagging the students and started crushing their protests through various means.

Faculty members extended moral support to the justified demands and again requested the SAU admin-

istration to follow and maintain the democratic norms of the university. But university administration failed to resolve the problem and started to suppress the democratic voices. Finally students started hunger strike in the campus of SAU. University administration started suspension and expulsion of the agitating students and finally called police administration to disperse and force the students to end the protest.

This was the first time in the history of SAU, police was invited by the authority

questions sitting in front of Committee members. The faculty raised objections to the process and wrote to FFC and SAU administration but they received no reply. On the contrary they were served with suspension orders on June 16<sup>th</sup>, 2023 by accusing the faculty members of 'inciting and leading the students and outsiders and getting involved in 'anti-social acts' among other things. They were also accused of teaching Marxist Philosophy to the students, which is already part of the syllabus of SAU. They accused them without following the due process of investigation. On top of these

## Prepare for General Elections...

### From Front Page

ing corporates remains solid.

In banks, we know huge concessions and write-offs are offered to corporates. Last month, RBI announced that the banks can write off the loans that were availed by wilful defaulters who deliberately cheated the banks. Instead of stringent actions, the government is giving them concessions.

July 19<sup>th</sup> marks the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of bank nationalization. Our party played a big role in this context inside and outside the Parliament. Prabhat Kar, the then general secre-



tary of AIBEA, was an MP of our party who fought vehemently for bank nationalization.

### Uniform Civil Code (UCC)

Recent attempts by the Prime Minister and the rul-

ing party to politicize and communalize the Uniform Civil Code issue for petty political gains are condemned and the party urges the Union government to not negate the diversity of the society. All stakeholders

should be consulted in the matter.

The 21<sup>st</sup> Law Commission had clearly opined that the Uniform Civil Code is not required. The present Law Commission has disregarded this and has invited

the opinion of people about UCC without even giving a proper draft and discussion. Our Party stands for gender equality. Uniformity is not equality.

### Condemn the Statement of Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma

The national council condemned and commented that the statement of Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma accusing Muslim merchants of high vegetable prices is nothing but an attempt to spread hatred and communalize the atmosphere in the state and elsewhere in order to hide their inefficiencies in controlling prices.

## Discrimination...

### From Page 10

strengthen emotion al integration. To achieve this objective narrow political expediencies and polemical debates would have to be discarded.

Unfortunately, the prevailing political and social climate in India is certainly not conducive to free and meaningful deliberations on this complex question which is likely to vitally affect our lives. It is undeniable that for the last few years a concerted and calculated drive for communal polarization has resulted in widespread fear, isolation of minorities and alienation of large sections of our population. Majoritarianism has been on the rise while there has been a marked decline in the quality of democratic institutions and the state of human rights is a cause for concern.

It is indisputable that the issue of UCC is being orchestrated through beat of drums by the ruling dispensation. It has

turned into an electoral issue. It is obvious that influential sections are preparing to turn the question into a referendum. Such a campaign is in headlong conflict with the letter and spirit of our Constitution. It shall be relevant to recall the observation of the Supreme Court in case titled as Sarla Mudgal (Smt.), President, Kalywani and Others Vs. Union of India and Others:

(1995) 3 SCC 635, which are as under:

“The desirability of uniform code can hardly be doubted. But it can concretize only when social climate is properly built up by elite of the society, statesmen amongst leaders who instead of gaining personal mileage rise above and awaken the masses to accept the change”.

The consultation paper presented by the Chairman of the 21<sup>st</sup> Law Commission of India is a valuable document wherein the question has been exam-

ined exhaustively and with fair deal of objectivity. Along-term ideal mandate a long-term perspective. The mere fact that a period of three years or little more has elapsed after the release of consultation paper, does not furnish a valid ground for a fresh exercise. IAL is of the

considered opinion that any half-backed attempt to insert UCC without extensive consultation, dispassionate evaluation of the vast data requiring deep research; and building of a genuine countrywide consensus, shall not only be against the letter and spirit of

the constitutional provision but also has the potential of generating and strengthening fear, distrust and divisive opinions.

(Muralidhara is General Secretary, while RSCheema is President of Indian Association of Lawyers)

## Democracy in SAU...

### From Page 11

interests of the University community. The undemocratic action by the authority is an indicator of functioning of private University that keeps damaging our image. After the BJP government came to power, almost all the universities are facing crisis of funds, lack of faculties, abolition of democratic rights of the working class, including University teachers, employees and students. After implementation of NEP-2020 it has become a regular affair in the campus. The adverse effects of NEP-2020 are slowly coming to the surface which is destroying the Public Education System of India and killing the autonomy and

democratic environment of the campus. What JNU, CU of Hyderabad, JU, MU Aligarh, DU and many other universities are facing, SAU issue is also in the series of them. AIFUCTO, FEDCUTA, JNUTA along with JFME have expressed their anguish and resentment against the undemocratic actions beyond rules and norms against teachers and students by SAU administration. They have also written to External Affairs Minister Jayshankar and SAARC authority to look into the matter and immediately withdraw the suspensions of four faculty members and cancel expulsion/rustication/suspension of the aggrieved students and also extend

justice to them at the earliest.

Many members of Parliament including Binoy Wishwam (MP) of CPI have raised the issue in Parliament and wrote letters to the External Affairs Minister of India and the SAARC President to resolve and settle the issue immediately.

Outcome is awaited. Meanwhile, all teachers' organisations are coming together to protest at state level across the country against the undemocratic and heinous action taken by SAU against teachers and students. We are committed to Save Education, Save Campus and Save Nation. Finally it is our struggle to save Constitution, save democracy and save nation.

## International Community Denounces US Blockade on Cuba

### EU Parliament Resolution Slams Violence in Manipur

More than 150 social activists from over 20 Latin American, Caribbean, and European countries denounced the six-decade-long U.S. embargo on Cuba. Despite decades of US economic blockades could not stop Cuba from marching ahead.

The blockade affects Cuba's access to medicines, technology and the international market which is a criminal policy must end.

People internationally stand "against the U.S. embargo on Cuba," calling the island "a beacon in the world's fight for peace and justice."

The activists will attend the celebrations of the 70th anniversary of the assault on Moncada Garrison (viewed as the beginning of the Cuban Revolution) in the eastern province of Santiago de Cuba, scheduled for July 26 this year.

The Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples, thanked solidarity movements for their support to the Caribbean nation. The people strongly believe in the right of peoples to be sovereign.

The U.S. embargo on Cuba, first imposed in 1962, was further reinforced by former U.S. President Donald Trump's administration, which added more than 240 economic measures against the island.

Among said measures are the banning of U.S. flights to Cuban cities except for Havana, barring U.S. cruise ships and yachts from visiting Cuba, and limiting remittances that Cuban Americans send to their families on the island.

According to the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the damage caused by this six-decade-long blockade amounts to more than 150 billion U.S. dollars.

Setting aside the serious criticism of India internationally is a serious matter for India. The European Parliament slammed the violence in Manipur as BJP's 'nationalist rhetoric'. India never liked the foreign interference in the internal affairs of India but what the foreign countries are raising is based on merits.

When Indian prime minister visited United States last time former US president Barack Obama said that India might "pull apart" if the

Indian states called Manipur is on the verge of civil war. In the last two months, more than 250 churches have been torched, more than 100 people killed, and more than 40,000 people displaced. Yet Narendra Modi hasn't said a single word in public about it—let alone visited the conflict-ridden region.

The world has largely remained silent about the unrest in Manipur between the predominantly Hindu Meitei, who form a bare majority in the state, and the mostly Christian Naga and Kuki tribes.

The EU Parliament in its resolution has further called for the controversial Armed

European Parliament resolution on India, the situation in Manipur" has called for the European Union to "place human rights and democratic values at the heart of its engagement with India".

Condemning the violence, loss of life and destruction of property in Manipur, the EU Parliament in its resolution said that it "denounces in the strongest terms nationalistic rhetoric deployed by leading members of BJP."

While the Indian government responded by saying that the issue is an entirely internal matter, the EU Parliament, in its scathing critique of the circumstances in the



rights of the religious and ethnic minorities are not upheld. Obama expressed concern about the rights of vulnerable sections in Indian society and emphasised that the Biden administration should discuss these issues "honestly" with Prime Minister Modi. And then, dozens of US lawmakers asked Biden to raise democracy, rights concerns with Modi, saying that they do not endorse any particular Indian leader or political party, but they do stand in support of the important principles that should be a core part of American foreign policy.

While Narendra Modi is visiting France, one of the

Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) to be withdrawn from the region as well as the restoration of internet services.

As Narendra Modi heads to France, the European Parliament adopted a motion on the Manipur violence and said that it "denounces in the strongest terms nationalistic rhetoric deployed by leading members of the BJP party".

The debate on the ethnic clashes in Manipur was included in the Parliament's agenda for a debate on cases of breaches of human rights, democracy and the rule of law during its ongoing plenary session in Strasbourg, France. The "motion for a

country, said that "minorities, civil society, human rights defenders and journalists regularly face harassment; whereas women in particular face severe challenges and violations of their rights often related to tribal and religious backgrounds, including sexual violence and harassment".

The resolution pointed out that in October 2020, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights had appealed to India to safeguard the rights of human rights defenders, raising concerns over shrinking space for civil society and has taken note of accusations made by human rights organisations against the BJP of "divisive

ethnonationalistic policies."

"Whereas violence in India's Manipur state has erupted along ethnic and religious lines between the mainly Hindu Meitei community and the Christian Kuki tribe. Whereas Manipur has previously faced secessionist insurgencies in which serious human rights abuses were committed. Whereas, in the latest round of violence human rights groups have accused the BJP led government in Manipur and nationally of implementing divisive ethnonationalistic policies which oppress in particular religious minorities," the resolution said.

The EU Parliament called on India and local authorities to "to allow unhindered humanitarian aid to those effected, and for independent monitors to carry out investigations", for political leaders to cease inflammatory statements in order to re-establish trust and play an impartial role to mediate the tensions and the initiation of mediation efforts by both the Centre as well as the state government."

The Parliament further called for the controversial Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) to be withdrawn from the region as well as the restoration of internet services.

The parliament further proposed that the EU and India jointly develop a strategy to address human rights issues, particularly those concerning ethnic and religious minorities and freedom of religion and belief and that a "regular EU-India Human Rights Dialogue at the highest level establishing firm criteria and benchmarks for progress" be set up.

## Regularise Services of ANMs...

From Page 15

the services of ANMs and NHMs, pay wages on par with the regularised employees and pension along with other retirement benefits.

R Krishnaiyah, member Rajya Sabha of YSR Congress Party in his address stated that while ANMs and NHMs have expressed their miserable conditions about their low wages, state health minister Harish Rao of Bharat Rashtra Samithi party had arrogantly asked the workers to leave the employment if payment is not adequate.

He wanted the minister to express apology for his derogatory remarks.

Narsimha Motte, deputy general secretary of Telangana state AITUC, while addressing made it clear that if demands are not met within 15 days, the movement of ANMs and NHMs will be intensified. They must be paid salaries at the rate of Rs 40,000 per month along with insurance cover of Rs 10 lakhs. Unfortunately if any employee dies, apart from the compensa-

tion of Rs 10 lakhs, compassionate employment must be provided to one member of the family of deceased. They are working for 16 hours a day, and are maintaining 36 records and 18 mobile apps.

Badeti Vanaja, president, Gandla Madhurima, general secretary, Chidumoori Vijaya organising secretary, Manjula, vice president of the state union, Pushpalatha, Praveena, Sharada, Swapna, Chandrakala, Tulasi, Aruna, Sarala and Sangeetha led the dharna.

## Withdraw FIR against NFIW Fact Finding Team

Harish Bala

National Federation of Indian Women (NFIW) and All India Youth Federation (AIYF) held a joint protest at Freedom Park in Bengaluru condemning the failure of Modi led BJP Union government to bring peace in Manipur and also demanding the withdrawal of FIRs registered on NFIW national leaders who visited Manipur.

NFIW national leaders formed a fact finding committee which visited Manipur from June 28 to July 1, 2023 to understand the inherent causes that led to riots in Manipur. NFIW general secretary and member of the national executive of the CPI, Annie Raja, NFIW national secretary Nisha Siddhu and Deeksha Dwivedi were part of the fact finding committee. This committee has brought out the real issues in Manipur and the failure to resolve them on part of the state and Union governments. FIR has been registered against the members of the committee by Imphal police for visiting Manipur. Condemning this anti-democratic act of Manipur government and also demanding the withdrawal of the cases and in solidarity with Manipur people, NFIW and AIYF held a protest demonstration at Freedom Park, in Bengaluru on July 17, 2023.

NFIW state president Jyothi A, AIYF state president Harish Bala and others addressed the gathering. Slogans were raised condemning the failure of Modi government to bring peace in Manipur.

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# Regularise Services of ANMs: CPI

Communist Party of India Telangana state council secretary and former legislator Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao demanded that services of auxiliary nurse midwives (ANMs) as well as service personnel of National Health Mission (NHMs) be regularized, who are working for the last 16 years as contract employees in Telangana. He was addressing as chief guest a dharna in front of the office of state commissioner of health department of the government of Telangana on July 10, 2023, demanding regularisation of services, pensions after retirement, etc.

Telangana ANMs are being called as second ANMs. The name itself indicates discrimination towards them and they are being degraded. All

**Ram Narasimha Rao**  
recognise the services of workers who have worked

and NHMs are having same educational qualifications and doing the same job there is discrimination in the salaries and other emoluments.

tals with empty hands, without either retirement benefits or pension. This injustice cannot be tolerated any longer.



The dharna was held under the auspices of AITUC and was led by Thota Ramanjaneyulu. In

contract workers in the state are being discriminated. The onus lies on the state and Central governments to

tirelessly during the difficult period of Covid pandemic. He also criticised the government that though ANMs

He also expressed concern that even after working 20-25 years, after retirement they are leaving the hospi-

The CPI state council secretary recalled that the Supreme Court of India had on many occasions given verdict directing principal employers to regularise the services of contract workers if they have worked more than 240 days in a year with breaks or without. There is also a favourable judgment with regard to equal pay for equal work. All employers in government and private service will have to honour court verdicts. Hence he pointed out that both the Central and state governments will have to take immediate steps to regularise  
**On Page 14**

## On Record ...

The CPI(M) and an Independent Rajya Sabha MP lodged police complaints against Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, alleging that the BJP leader has made a "hate speech" against the 'Miya' community on the previous day.

The state Trinamool Congress has written to Chief Justice of India D Y Chandrachud seeking judicial action against Sarma also for the same remark against the 'Miya' community, a term used for Bengali-speaking Muslims of Assam.

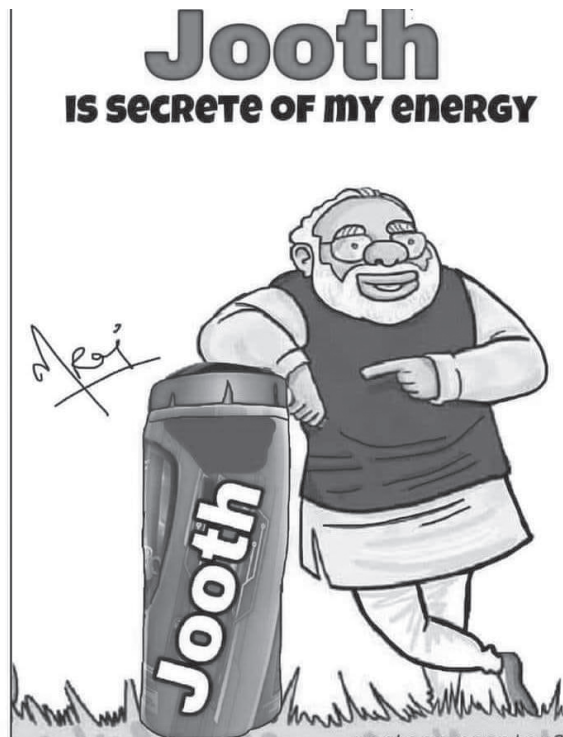
AIUDF chief and Lok Sabha MP Badruddin Ajmal has also been named in one of the complaints for making 'hate speech' while commenting on the Uniform Civil Code (UCC). - *India Today*, July 20.

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With Covid-19 receding and, hopefully, with Russia-Ukraine War coming to an amicable end soon, India needs to chalk out her future strategy of growth. The broad objective must be to raise the per capita income, estimated in 2022-23 at 2,379 dollar, by almost six times over the next 25 years. That will enable people to have a higher standard of living and eliminate poverty. The critical question now is to identify the challenges that the country will face in reaching this goal and the actions it needs to take to overcome them.

In short, what is needed is a continuous growth of 7 per cent for the next 25 years. As-

suming an incremental capital-output ratio (ICOR) of 4, this will require a Gross Fixed Capital Formation rate of 28 per cent. However, the ratio of 4, which is often assumed, is on the basis of improved efficiency in the use of capital. During the high-growth period in the early years of this century, the ratio was low. It has subsequently increased. Excluding two outlier years namely, 2019-20 and 2020-21, the average ICOR over



five years from 2016-17 to 2022-23 is estimated to be 4.65.

\*\*\*

Memory is the biggest weapon against fascism, a journalist who spent more than two years in Uttar Pradesh jails without trial told a Calcutta audience.

"Don't forget anything. One tool works best against fascism: it is memory. We must remember everything that has happened to us," Siddique Kappan said in his first public interaction outside his home state of Kerala since walking out on bail on February 2 this year.

Kappan had spent 28 months behind bars after being detained near Mathura while travelling to Hathras to report on the alleged gang rape and murder of a Dalit teen. He was accused of planning to foment social unrest and violence, and booked for terror and sedition. He denies all the charges. - *The Telegraph*, July 17.

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Even as the Indian economy is growing at a seemingly healthy rate, and the RBI expects growth at 8 per cent in the first quarter (April-June) of the ongoing financial year, more and more individuals/households are seeking work under the rural employment guarantee scheme. In June, the number of households that availed work under the scheme touched 3.04 crore. This is 10 per cent more than those who did so over the same period last year. In fact, as reported in this paper, this is only the third time since April 2014 that the monthly number of households has crossed three crore. Some have attributed this sharp rise to the uneven rainfall pattern in June which could have affected kharif sowing. However, the data also points to a steady rise in the number of individuals seeking and availing work under the scheme over the years. This is a worrying sign. - *The Indian Express*, July 18.

Compiled by: **C Adhikesavan**

**26 Opposition Parties Meet at Bangaluru**

**INDIA TO TAKE ON BJP  
IN 2024 GENERAL ELECTIONS**

*Our Special  
Correspondent*

The opposition parties had its second meeting in Bangaluru on July 17 and 18, 2023. The two-day meeting attended by 26 opposition parties decided to set up India National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) to take on the ruling BJP in the ensuing general elections in 2024. The leaders were certain that such an alliance will be able to oust BJP from power that will enable in saving the Republic, Constitution, democracy and federalism.

The 26 opposition parties that participated in the meet are Indian National Congress, Trinamool Congress, Dravida MunnetraKazhagam, Aam Aadmi Party, Janata Dal (United), RashtriyaJanata Dal, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, Nationalist Congress Party, Shiv Sena, Samajwadi Party, RashtriyaLok Dal, Apna Dal (Kamerawadi), Jammu and Kashmir National Conference, Peoples Democratic Party, Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, Revolutionary Socialist Party, All India Forward Bloc, Marumalarchi Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (MDMK), Viduthalai Chiruthaigal Katchi, Kongunadu Makkal DesiaKatchi, Manithaneya MakkalKatchi, Indian Union Muslim League, Kerala Congress (M) and Kerala



Congress (Joseph).

Addressing the meeting CPI general secretary D Raja said that we had our first meeting in Patna where we resolved to fight together to defeat BJP in the general elections and save the nation. ‘Bharat Bachao’, ‘Nation Bachao’ was our slogan then. The Bangaluru meeting is two steps forward. This time there are 26 parties that joined together and this is a positive sign.

D Raja said that there are many critical issues facing the country. Manipur is in turmoil. All central agencies are being misused to intimidate non-BJP parties and non-BJP governments in the states. Economy is in bad shape. Unprecedented price rise and growing unemployment are making miserable the lives of the masses. There are so many such burning issues that need to be solved. Hence the meeting can either adopt separate resolutions on each of the crucial problems or come out with a joint declaration.

The opposition meeting after deliberations adopted a joint declaration unanimously declaring their steadfast resolve to safeguard the idea of India as enshrined in the

Constitution. The following is the text of the joint declaration:

We, the undersigned leaders of India’s 26 progressive parties, express our steadfast resolve to safeguard the idea of India as enshrined in the Constitution. The character of our republic is being severely assaulted in a systematic manner by the BJP. We are at a most crucial juncture in our nation’s history. The foundational pillars of the Indian Constitution — secular democracy, economic sovereignty, social justice and federalism — are being methodically and menacingly undermined.

We express our grave concern over the humanitarian tragedy that has destroyed Manipur. The silence of the Prime Minister is shocking and unprecedented. There is an urgent need to bring Manipur back on the path of peace and reconciliation.

We are determined to combat and confront the continuing assault on the Constitution and on constitutional rights of democratically elected state governments. There is a deliberate attempt to weaken the federal structure of our polity. The role of Governors and LGs in non-

BJP ruled states has exceeded all constitutional norms. The brazen misuse of agencies by the BJP government against political rivals is undermining our democracy. Legitimate needs, requirements and entitlements of non-BJP ruled states are being actively denied by the Centre.

We reinforce our resolve to confront the grave economic crisis of ever-rising prices of essential commodities and record unemployment. Demonetisation brought with it untold misery to the MSME and unorganised sectors, resulting in large scale unemployment among our youth. We oppose the reckless sale of the nation’s wealth to favoured friends. We must build a fair economy with a strong and strategic public sector as well as a competitive and flourishing private sector, in which the spirit of enterprise is fostered and given every opportunity to expand. The welfare of Kisan and Khet Mazdoor should always get the highest priority.

We have come together to defeat the hatred and violence being manufactured against minorities; to stop the

rising crimes against women, Dalits, Adivasis and Kashmiri Pandits; to demand a fair hearing for all socially, educationally and economically backward communities; and, as a first step, implement the Caste Census.

We resolve to fight the systemic conspiracy by BJP to target, persecute and suppress our fellow Indians. Their poisonous campaign of hate has led to vicious violence against all those opposed to the ruling party and its divisive ideology. These attacks are not only violating constitutional rights and freedoms but also eroding the basic values upon which the Republic of India is founded — Liberty, Equality and Fraternity and Justice — Political, Economic and Social. The repeated attempts by the BJP to vitiate public discourse by reinventing and rewriting Indian history are an affront to social harmony.

We pledge to present to the nation an alternative political, social and economic agenda. We promise to transform both the substance and style of governance that will be more consultative, democratic and participative.

Printed & Published by D. RAJA on behalf of the Communist Party of India at BFL Infotech Ltd (Media Division), C-9, Sector-3, Noida, Dist. Gautam Budh Nagar, UP & Published from Ajoy Bhavan, 15-Com.Indrajit Gupta Marg, New Delhi-110 002. Ph: 011-2323 0762.  
Editor: BINOY VISWAM, Deputy Editor: KRISHNA JHA \*E-mail: newagemukti@gmail.com - Layout: JANARDANAN. R