

Call for Solidarity with Victims of Violence

CPI OBSERVES MANIPUR DAY ON JULY 25

The Communist Party of India units all over the country along with mass organizations observed solidarity day with people of Manipur on July 25 at the call of the party national council. There was good response from everywhere. CPI general secretary D Raja who was in Chennai on that day inaugurated the protest meet there and addressed the participants.

D Raja in his address said that 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. The present ethnic conflicts took place due to long negligence of the state and Union 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 and other burning problems.

Kerala

In response to the call of the national council thousands took part extending solidarity with the people of Manipur, braving the incessant rains. Party state assistant secretary P P Sunir inaugurated the programme near the martyrs' column in Thiruvananthapuram city. In Kanyakulangara, former state secretary Pannian Ravindran, in Kilimannoor party state executive member Advocate N Rajan and in Kamaleswaram district secretary Mangode Radhakrishnan inaugurated the solidarity meeting.

In Kollam party national



CPI general secretary D Raja inaugurating the Manipur solidarity day in Chennai

executive member Advocate K Prekash Babu, in Kasaragod party state council assistant secretary E Chandrasekharan MLA, in Kozhikode and Kannur, party national executive member Annie Raja inaugurated the solidarity programme.

In Ponnani party national council member K P Rajendran, in Palakkad state executive member Rajaji Mathew Thomas, in Ernakulam state executive member K K Ashraf, in Pathanamthitta state executive member Mullakkara Ratnakaran, in Kottayam C K Sasidharan, in Thodupuzha, Idukki district secretary K Salimkumar and in Moolamattam, state council member K K Sivaraman inaugurated protest-cum-solidarity meeting. In Alappuzha night marches were organized at 100 centres. In Takazhi, Alappuzha district secretary T J Anjalose and in Thirunallur AIYF state

Our Special Correspondent

secretary T T Jismon inaugurated the programme. In Thrissur various local committees organised the programme. Party state council member Sheela Vijaykumar, K P Sandeep and AITUC district president K Sudeesh inaugurated the programme.

Telangana

CPI and CPI(M) leaders accused the Manipur chief minister of instigating and encouraging riots with the support of central leaders of BJP. They wondered whether attacking women community is the part of 'Beti Padao, Beti Bachao' programme. They appealed to secular and democratic parties and forces to unite and wage militant battles in order to dethrone BJP from power, which is making an attempt to get benefitted through communal riots.

A joint procession was taken from Liberty Center to Ambedkar statue at Tankbund carrying red flags and black flags demanding 'Curb riots in Manipur', 'Protect the lives of innocent people of Manipur', and 'CM of Manipur should resign'. CPI national council secretary Dr K Narayana, addressing on the occasion said that through the borders of Manipur, terrorists are entering into India with their arms. But the Central and Manipur state governments are indifferent to the horror of the situation. He demanded that terrorists be arrested and their weapons seized without any further delay. BJP is not allowing debate in Parliament on crucial issues of people. He also stated that the Manipur BJP government is making an attempt to hand over prime lands to its corporate friends and already 54,000 acres of land are being handed over to Adani.

Hence the Central and state governments are encouraging riots in Manipur.

Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, Telangana state council secretary in his address made it clear that the BJP government headed by Modi is conspiring in order to perpetuate its government at the Centre and in certain states. BJP is trying to bag more votes in their ruled states by creating communal tensions and inciting riots. More atrocities and attacks on women, communal riots, and huge number of such disruptive incidents are taking place in BJP ruled states.

Syed Azeez Pasha, CPI national council secretary in his address questioned Modias to what he is contributing to 'betis' though he frequently talks about 'Beti Padao, Beti Bachao'. He expressed anger that though riots are taking place in Manipur for the last three

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The entire video was asmeared reflection of our own selves, expressing how far the criminal within us can go down. And that is not all. How long it takes to listen to the victims' tearful cries also matters. One among the victims was a mother of a four-year old, and she dared to plead to the demons for her life as her death could be the death of her child too. Their assent to it was conditional. "Disrobe yourself or die."

It was not the only episode. There were many, unnoticed, unlamented, unavenged. For the women of Manipur, not only the country, the entire world stands stunned.

Our composite culture, Constitution, and the democratic ethos are also under threat. Never had India witnessed such barbarity. And such unbridled violence against women, as even their physicality is under attack, symbolize the macabre conflict as a message. The absence of any motivation to take action is also part of it. Despite the FIR registered against the accused two months back, only now the authorities are waking up to it. The violence continues, relentlessly. As the unrest between the Meitei and Kuki communities continues unabated in north-east India, authorities remain quiet. Silence may lead to action and both sides warn of civil war. With a population of three million, Manipur, a state in north-east India, has been witness to continued violence between the majority Meitei community and the minority Kuki tribe. In the recent flare up, since May 3, more than 142 people have been killed. More than thousand have been reported injured. More than seventy thousand have lost their home and livelihood. There have been set up 272 relief camps and people in their own country have turned refugee looking for shelter, security, food and medicine. Several thousands have taken shelter in neighboring states. Some have come to Delhi also. The unrest started with the solidarity rally by various tribal groups underlining the issues

Manipur Calling

of social status and tribal rights. It provoked distrust in communities especially between Meities and Kukies. Two months are gone but turmoil continues and peace remains elusive.

The BJP governments in the state and Centre have failed the people in the state. The ethnic violence has erupted only after people had to undergo absence of rights. The long indifference towards their problems and failure to address the complex issue of land, identity of social and cultural issues among different communities, misuse of forest lands, unemployment, equal access to education to all ethnic groups, poppy cultivations, containment of different underground

Editorial

groups in valley and hill areas, unchecked infiltration from Mynmar among many other issues. The continued campaign of RSS launched to divide the people on religious lines, and to top it all with the role of the Assam chief minister towards the conflict must be condemned. The utter failure of the BJP government in Manipur is the leading factor in this entire tragic situation. Steps must be taken to get the resignation of the chief minister, disarming of all terrorist groups and individuals, possessing arms illegally to be arrested. Poppy cultivation in the reserve forest areas also must be stopped. The decision to give land to the Adani group for mining and other commercial activities that could change the character of land and harm the ecological balance irreversibly, must be stopped. People must get rehabilitated, compensated. They must get livelihood in a time bound period. All highways must be opened to provide the essentials to people. The cases against the fact finding team of NFIW

leaders have also been filed on fabricated grounds and hence must be withdrawn without delay. CPI also reiterates its position towards the territorial integrity of Manipur and unity of their people.

India's north-eastern states have a history of ethnic rivalries dating back to before the country became independent in 1947. In Manipur, violence has erupted between the Meitei and the Kuki communities several times before. The government was accused of pursuing policies that discriminated against Kukis, including forced evictions that threatened the security of their land.

Tensions have recently flared between the two communities again, driven in part by the Meitei-controlled state government. The violence was sparked by a court ruling in March that granted the majority Meiteis the right to buy land in the hills, where the Kukis predominate live, further fuelling fears that their lands, jobs and opportunities would be taken away.

This prompted protests, mostly by Kuki student groups, which were met with violence. By early May, it had escalated into all-out violence between Kuki and Meitei groups. The state was swiftly bifurcated along ethnic lines, with the Meiteis in the valley and the Kukis in the hills, each defending their territory on their own. To enter the territory of the opposing tribe was soon considered to be a death sentence.

Though the state and central government, both ruled by the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP), have claimed that the situation has begun to calm down, intermittent clashes have continued to erupt and those fighting on both sides have warned that Manipur remains on the brink of civil war.

We all share the pain and suffering people in Manipur are undergoing. We abide by our Constitution, and would never allow our composite culture to die. Hence, on July 25, CPI has decided to have exclusively our Manipur Day!

June Inflation at Three-Month High

After slowing for four months in a row, retail inflation accelerated faster than expected to a three-month high of 4.8 per cent in June due to rising food prices from a 25-month low of 4.31 per cent in May, potentially delaying the likelihood of monetary easing.

Economists said vegetable price shocks may result in inflation exceeding the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Monetary Policy Committee forecast of 5.2 per cent for second quarter

of the financial year. June retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index had been expected at 4.3-4.6 per cent by economists.

"We anticipate that the committee will retain its hawkish tone in August 2023, keep the repo rate unchanged and signal that a pivot to rate cuts remains distant," said Aditi Nayar, chief economist, ICRA.

The central bank will likely hold the benchmark rate at 6.5 per cent for the third consecutive time at the

next MPC meeting scheduled for August 8-10, according to economists. It had raised rates by 250 basis points (bps) last year to control inflation.

"More caution will be expressed on the inflation front," said Madan Sabnavis, chief economist, Bank of Baroda, noting that the "inflation trajectory can be expected to move upwards given the fact that food prices are on the rise."

Food prices and the progress of the monsoon will

be key factors. "With high inflation for basic food items like rice, pulses, vegetables and milk, the central bank will be concerned about the adverse impact on household inflationary expectations," said CareEdge chief economist Rajani Sinha. "Progress of the monsoon in July would be specifically critical. If the spatial distribution of rainfall remains skewed, it could have an adverse impact on kharif sowing and further aggravate food inflation

going forward."

Prices are expected to rise further this month. "July CPI print is expected to be elevated due to the surge in vegetable prices, in particular tomatoes," said Gaura Sengupta, India economist, IDFC First Bank. "Indeed, in the first half of the month, tomato prices are higher by 175 per cent. Preliminary estimate for July CPI is tracking at 6.5 per cent, assuming some moderation in vegetable prices in the second half of the month."

The Communist Party of India 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). The CPI does not consider it necessary at all now and has called for keeping the ongoing exercise at abeyance for the time being.

The CPI does not oppose delimitation as per se because it is a Constitutional Process. CPI opposes the way the entire delimitation has been undertaken by the ECI. Section 9(1) A of the Delimitation Act 2002 is violated by the Election Commission of India. The ongoing exercise also has not been undertaken using the proper methodology. It does not have objectivity also. The BJP is seeking to use the delimitation for its own political advantage. The ruling party is also trying to whip up communal passion on the issue. It is violation of the provision of People's Representative Act of 1950, 8(a), dividing the constituencies into three categories in the name of 'population density' to communally divide the whole process. It is grossly unconstitutional as the Act has no provision for this kind of categorization. The National Council meeting of the Communist Party of India totally condemns this effort.

The Chief Minister of Assam, Himanta Biswa Sarma has been trying to spread a false sense of optimism among the indigenous communities on the issue. He has been repeatedly asserting that the draft document, if implemented will, safeguard the indigenous communities of Assam. CPI state unit of Assam does not agree with the argument and asserted that chief minister of Assam is making false claims. Infact,

the number of Legislative Constituency (LAC) seats dominated by the indigenous people would decrease if the draft gets implemented. The Lahowal Constituency, where the Mattok Community has a major influence, will cease to exist. Sivasagar district, dominated by indigenous communities will lose one Legislative Constituency or (LAC). There are other such examples as well. So, where is the question of the indigenous people benefitting from the delimitation? The draft published by ECI itself is one example of it. The number of Legislative Constituencies in Barak Valley will get reduced by two even as the population in that region has increased. It is totally illogical.

Moreover all sections of people of the state from Barak Valley to North Bank are annoyed and full of anguish. Everywhere protest is going on.

Our President, on the request of all the political parties of Assam, deferred the delimitation exercise in Assam on February 8, 2008 inter-alia on the ground that the NRC in respect of Assam is yet to be completed. The situation today is the same as was on February 8, 2008. The CPI opposes delimitation before the completion of the NRC work. In addition, the delimitation exercise is being undertaken on the basis of the 2001 census data, which is absurd because data thus collected would be obsolete. The 2001 census figures do not reflect current demographic reality. If in 2021, census of Assam population would have been taken, it might have been about 350 Lac or so. Delimiting Constituencies now based on

2001 census data means keeping about 100 Lakh people out of the delimitation process, which is undemocratic and unfair.

The Communist Party of India added that as this delimitation is carried out on the basis of 2001 census data, the number of Legislative Constituencies in Assam will remain unchanged during post delimitation. The total number of constituencies should increase during delimitation. But the ongoing process does not have the provision to increase seat. It only entails the exchange and merger of areas among constituencies. Therefore this delimitation will turn out to be futile exercise. The population of Assam has gone up and basis may be latest census data 2011 or may be 2021. In that case, since population would become larger, the number of Assembly and Parliamentary Constituencies will also go up. We are striving for that only.

As Country wise delimitation process will be undertaken in 2026, according to 24th amendment of the Constitution. The present proposed delimitation in Assam, which appears suspicious, is not considered at all now. At that time, the number of constituencies will also increase in all the states. So the delimitation exercise in Assam should be kept in abeyance for the time being and is should be done along with the rest of the country on the basis of latest update of census data.

CPI added, "Let the NRC exercise get over. And then undertake delimitation in Assam, along with the rest of India as per the latest census data."

Munin Mahanta

Furthermore CPI alleged that the BJP is interfering with the ECI work that has prepared the draft proposal which the Election Commission published recently either with some changes or no change at all. The nature of the draft proposal and the general feeling in the state is that the draft proposal has been prepared by the ruling BJP party under the direction of chief minister, Assam.

Party is forced to assume so, because even though the ECI is an independent Constitutional body, under the current Narendra Modi led dispensation there has been a serious dilution in the autonomy of various institutions. The BJP government has been interfering in the work of such institutions and bodies. Besides the Chief Minister had met Union Home Minister Amit Shah just days before the publication of the draft and called for fast tracking delimitation. And within days the ECI released the draft document. We are of the opinion that ECI has ceased to be independent body.

The issue still remains that of delimitation process being deferred in three North Eastern States and J&K taking in data from 2008. However, the Election Commission of India has recently completed the delimitation in J&K using 2011 census data, which is normal. But it is a request to justify why in case of Assam for same delimitation process, 2001 census data are used, though 2011 census data for Assam are available. This deviation in case of Assam, needs clarification.

The proposed new constituencies should be of

convenient geographical shape consistent with the aforesaid provisions as Section 9(1)(a) of Delimitation Act, 2002. The recently published draft is not a reflection of this sound and logical principle, CPI asserts.

Some eminent personalities of Assam have already approached the Supreme Court against the delimitation exercise. The matter relating to delimitation is pending before the Supreme Court as the matter was challenged in a batch of petitions led by writ petition. The matter has been listed for final hearing. The ECI should not have published the document till the case is settled.

The eleven political parties, among them Assam Pradesh Congress Party (APCC); Rajgor Dal; Assam Jatiya Parishad; Assam Trinamool Congress; Indian National Congress, The state committees of Communist Party of India, Communist Party of India (Marxist), Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Janata Dal (United) Assam Pradesh Committee, and representative of the above mentioned opposition parties have visited various places and taken views of the citizens and prepared the joint memorandum based on feedback received from the masses to hand over the Election Commission of India and meet the national leadership of the aforesaid 11 political parties. Accordingly, they visited CPI office too and satisfied and requested our leadership to adopt a resolution and release to the press.

As July 11, 2023 is the last date for submitting objection to the Election Commission

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CPI MP Opposes Sarva Sewa Sangh Demolition

The following is the text of the letter to prime minister Narendra Modi, written by Communist Party of India national council secretary and leader of Parliamentary group of CPI, Binoy Viswam, on July 23, 2023 urging him to stop immediately bulldozing of Sarva Sewa Sangh in Varanasi:

I write this letter to convey to you about the distressing developments in your own Lok Sabha constituency. It seems that the information about such dis-

turbing activities are yet to reach you, or of which you have not taken note of. The campus of the Sarva Sewa Sangh in Varanasi is being demolished by the administration. Among those protesting the move were several followers of Mahatma Gandhi, leaders of political parties, academicians and civil society activists and they were all arrested. The administration wishes to demolish the seven-decades old campus which houses a publishing house, a library, a free pre-school, a Khadi Bhandar and

a statue of Mahatma Gandhi to build a guest house in its place.

The Sarva Sewa Sangh was founded back in 1948 by luminaries like Acharya Vinoba Bhave, Dr Rajendra Prasad, Kaka Kalelkar and Jayaprakash Narayan to unite “all constructive workers engaged in different fields in the country to achieve Swaraj based on the philosophy of Sarvodaya” as dreamt by Gandhiji. The Varanasi campus of the Sarva Sewa Sangh came into existence through the efforts of Vinoba Bhave, Lal

Bahadur Shastri, Babu Jagjivan Ram and Jayaprakash Narayan to organize publishing activities to propagate Gandhian ideals to the people of the country. An organization with such rich history and contribution being demolished in your own constituency is a clear betrayal of Gandhian ideals.

Very recently, while unveiling a bust of Mahatma Gandhi in Hiroshima you said: “The Gandhian ideals of peace and harmony reverberate globally and give strength to millions.” Looking

at the destruction of an organization which is committed to spread the same Gandhian ideals, it seems that you remember Gandhiji only on foreign trips while dismantling his work and thoughts at home.

In this context, I urge you to stand up to the occasion in solidarity with the people of Varanasi, immediately stop the bulldozing of Sarva Sewa Sangh and protect the organization so closely linked with Mahatma Gandhi.

What the Others Say...

Never ending saga

The legal wrangling between the Centre and the Delhi government over the contours of their respective powers is a never-ending saga. In the latest round, the legality of the recent ordinance to create a new scheme to regulate services in Delhi will be scrutinised by a Constitution Bench. It will be the third such five-member Bench to examine the respective powers of the two warring entities in the last few years. The crux of the issue is that the ordinance has sought to nullify a recent Constitution Bench verdict that ruled that the subject of ‘Services’, covered under Entry 41 (State List), will fall under the executive and legislative domains of the Delhi government, and not that of the Centre. The Court’s earlier reasoning was simple: Article 239AA, which governs the affairs of the NCT of Delhi, excluded only three subjects from the Delhi government’s purview — police, public order and land — and that it could exercise control over the remaining subjects. As ‘Services’ was not one of the excluded subjects, it upheld the Delhi government’s remit over appointments, postings and transfers. It ruled that any attempt to expand the Centre’s ambit by excluding the subject of services would go against the constitutional scheme of Delhi’s governance.

The three-judge Bench that referred the ordinance matter to a Constitution Bench has noted that the creation of a new ‘Authority’ to regulate ‘services’ effectively amends Article 239AA of the Constitution because it becomes a fourth subject in the list of excluded ones. However, this may not necessarily invalidate it. Clause 7 of Article 239AA allows Parliament to enact laws “for giving effect to, or supplementing” the Article. Further, it stipulates that such a law would not be deemed an amendment to the Constitution, even if it has such an effect. While the Court has conceded Parliament’s power to enact such a law, it has indicated that it can examine whether the exercise of such power is valid. The Court has also noted a contradiction: while it appears from one clause that the existing governance structure of Delhi cannot be

altered, another clause seems to allow this. This, it says, requires a ruling. On the legal side, the larger Bench may be able to delineate the contours of Parliament’s power to make laws under Clause 7, and rule whether while exercising such a power, it can abrogate the governance principles of Delhi.

Courtesy: The Hindu

What is up with the ban?

Good intentions can only take anybody so far. It’s been over a year since the Union environment ministry notified rules to prohibit the manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of several single-use plastic items. The list of items was sensible insofar as their “high littering potential” was concerned. But even among those who have heard of this ban, heeding it has been patchy. The state pollution control boards that hardly cover themselves in glory when it comes to enforcing other environmental standards, did not sweat over this one either. Some state governments do take the issue seriously.

Karnataka banned SUPs in 2016 and Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike has been active with both awareness drives and punitive measures. Yet, progress remains unsatisfactory. That’s because SUPs are integral to too many small businesses. The alternatives need to compete on cost, convenience and mass availability. This needs to be a governmental priority. Increase support for the most promising recyclable/ compostable innovations and help them reach scale.

Of course, the environmental dangers rise during the monsoon, as plastic waste is a significant risk-multiplier for flooding. In Delhi, kilometres long drains can be seen choked with garbage even in the dry seasons. Mumbai has the same problem, only it drains a lot of the plastic into the sea. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation has reported that plastic waste comprises as much as 70 per cent of material desilted from water bodies and nalas. Remember that once cities properly collect all this waste, they would next face a massive landfill challenge. Reducing usage is the only sustainable solution. But commerce’s massive dependency on these plastics cannot just be wished away.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Since 1984, multinational corporations operating in the agriculture industry have realized that with the increase in human population, the need to produce more food items will go up. This creates a great possibility for profit if steps are taken to establish control over the food industry. Hence the GATT meeting held in 1987 in Uruguay collapsed as multinationals and their supporting governments in developed countries insisted to expose agriculture to a free market via multi-lateral negotiations through reversing protectionism and other structural measures which could not be done with GATT. Soon after GATT was abandoned, and its place was taken over by WTO in 1995.

But as most developing countries wanted to protect their farmers along with their people and maintain their self-reliance in the food supply, they opposed these measures and certain concessions were given to them till 2010. But the integration of the food industry into international trade became a reality and most governments were compelled to take steps to face this and create policies to facilitate the integration of the food industry to multinational trade under the concrete control of multinationals. It was previously assumed that developed countries are industrially advanced and hence agribusiness is not their forte. But it is clear from trade discussions between US and China that the main interest of the US is in selling soya and other agricultural products to the huge Chinese market. It was the main part of the discussion.

Similarly, multinational industries, supplying hybrid or modified seeds, fertilizers, and pest control medicines, are also interested in targeting agriculturally dominant, developing, and under-developed countries. Besides this, there are about eight to ten big multinational firms that control the prices of bananas, maize, coffee, cocoa, rice, and other agricultural products in the market and dictate the prices. India

which has a huge agriculture business is of special interest to them. Hence our country is a targeted hub for the profit making food industry, particularly multinational and big business. Indian farmers



in the early days of independence struggled against Zamindars and big landlords for the distribution of land. 'Land to the tiller' was a popular slogan and many state governments particularly the left government of Kerala and West Bengal successfully implemented land distribution. Communist-led Kisan Sabha was very powerful in raising this demand. Slowly feudal ownership in most states started giving way. The policy pursued by the government resulted in creating a new capitalist section that particularly grew commercial crops. However, the famine of 1966 exposed the weakness of these orientations. The dependence on foreign countries for food also came to light. This

paved way for a strategy for self sufficiency in food. Green revolution assisted by new hybrid seeds, irrigation facilities and credit support assisted by bank nationalization to farmers transformed India into a self-sufficient country and an exporter of grains.

The importance of the role of government in this should be emphasized as at present there is a trend to undermine it and promote

privatization. The role of government in MSP and controlling mandis is also to be remembered. Now after the WTO formation in 1995, multinationals along with big Indian monopolies are targeting MSPs and insisting on the privatization of Mandis in the name of competition. Farmers, particularly from Punjab, West Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, and some parts of Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan are aware of these designs and have so far resisted the moves to dampen MSP and the role of Mandis and hence they fought against the BJP government's move to bring three farm laws to facilitate the takeover of Indian agriculture by multinationals. The farmers struggled for more than eleven months and

succeeded to get the move foiled.

The experience of farmers after the withdrawal of three farm laws by the BJP government is contrary to their expectations. It was proclaimed that by 2022 the farmers' income would be doubled. This has not happened. On the contrary, due to the rise in the prices

of input, their income is adversely affected. Though there is a marginal rise in MSP, it has not become a law and may be withdrawn any time. Recently, the Maharashtra state government has declared that instead of rations, cash subsidies or food coupons will be given to the people. This is a clear cut danger that can adversely destroy the public distribution system for which MSP is important. Hence, farmers' organizations are determined to continue their struggle and the trade unions who fought for the public distribution system are actively with the farmers.

The world vision of countries except China is of the agriculture industry being

dominated by multinationals and big industrial houses in their homeland. In this vision, the farmers will be subordinated as workers and vendors instead of treating them as the owners of the land. As more than sixty percent of our population is dependent on agriculture and related industries, such a policy will be disastrous. We need a different policy in which the independence of farmers and their right and ownership over their land and product is protected. For this, it is necessary to provide them with finance and technology to compete internationally. The role of government in this is vital.

Because of farmers' suicides and protests ignited by these events, many governments including the state and Union governments are assisting farmers through financial benefits. It is high time that the Indian government also invests in providing technology to farmers and competes internationally, to increase productivity. The Left forces must use their influence in pressurizing the government to implement such a policy and combat the multinational takeover of Indian farming.

Otherwise, BJP's US model of scrapping the public distribution system and replacing it with food coupons or cash subsidies to help multinationals will be implemented. This would be a catastrophe for farmers and ordinary people of the country.

The present BJP government which is subservient to the international and domestic capital interests cannot be expected to play this role of protecting Indian farmers. Hence, defeating BJP in 2024 is necessary for farmers' and workers' interests.

Dr B K Kango

Take Remedial Steps to Save Tirupur Hosiery: CPI

Communist Party of India Lok Sabha MP K Subbarayan demanded immediate remedial measures to protect the hosiery industry as it is facing basic existential problems. He was speaking in the House on July 20, 2023, under Rule 377 as he called for protective measures to rescue it.

He told the House that the Tirupur hosiery industry is facing unprecedented problems. More than half of the companies are closed. Reasons for the severe collapse include demonetization, GST, unstable and spiraling costs, increased electricity charges, etc. Tirupur is a major hosiery hub and has export trade networks to all five continents. He pointed out that the Tirupur industry earns substantial foreign remittance and creates extensive

employment opportunities. It provides employment to migrant workers from several states. The closure of MSMEs has severely impacted the socio-economic



fabric of this area.

He urged the Union government to take immediate remedial measures to protect the hosiery industries of Tirupur.

Infuse Funds to Textile and Apparel Sectors

In a letter to Piyush Goel, Union minister for Textiles

on July 23, 2023 K Subbarayan demanded to imbue funds to protect the textile and apparel sector.

The textile and apparel sector in India is facing a

historically unprecedented financial crisis. This sector provides for major employment only next to agriculture. The textile ministry reports say that 45 million people are directly employed and 60 million are employed in the allied industries. A crisis in these sectors affects not only the economy but also the socio-economic lives of

millions of people.

Since 2014 the textile sector has stagnated. The apparel sector has suffered a severe setback. The global market share of textiles and apparel has declined significantly. This is due to the government's topsy-turvy policies and ongoing neglect of the industry.

Demonetization, GST, high cost of power, and fluctuating cost of cotton and polyester yarn have caused the crisis. The 11 percent import duty imposed on cotton has created uneven competition in the international market. The crony capitalist policies on the polyester manufacturing sector and man-made fiber add to the crisis. Russia – Ukraine clashes, international financial crisis, and inflation have impacted export-intensive industries.

Banks refuse fresh credit to textile mills at the juncture where they most need financial support.

The following demands were put forward to the ministry by K Subbarayan for the rejuvenation of the Textile and allied sectors.

1. Provide capital influx to NTC mills to produce cotton yarn and value-added products. All the NTC mills are closed and the government's contention that they cannot be run due to the non-availability of working capital is unacceptable. The public-sector mills should be made viable with capital infusion.

2. It is contradicting when the cotton yield in the country is equivalent to the world average the textile sector suffers due to price hikes. A viable proposition to optimize the total production capacity of the cotton production-oriented NTC mills in the country can help in producing the required yarn. This will help develop cotton production too.

Monolithic View of RSS: Threat to Public Education

In the final session of the national convention on "Crisis in Higher Education in India" held at JNU, CPI Rajya Sabha MP Binoy Viswam said that the monolithic view of RSS is a threat to public education as their view calls for the arrest of dissent and dialogue. The convention was organized by Federation of Central Universities Teacher's Association (FEDCUTA). Various sessions headed by most eminent thinkers and academicians like Nivedita Menon, S.K. Thorat were the highlights of the convention. In the final session themed

"Towards an Alternative Vision and Strategy for Higher Education in India", the speakers were MPs representing different political parties.

In his key note address on the theme Binoy Viswam said that the structural crisis of public education is resulting from the step-motherly treatment from the BJP government. Public sector education which made India self-reliant in all sectors is a victim of this design to make education a purview of a few who can pay. Nearly 45 percent of all college enrolment is now in private



unaided colleges, 21 percent in private aided college. Al-

most 72.5 percent of professional course students are

in private sector.

Every second month a student commits suicide in an IIT as per official records. Institutions say that academic pressure causes such incidents, however those who crack the most difficult exams to get into these institutions are confronted with lack of humane values. Education which is the tool for imparting the best heritage of mankind to future generations is now building cogs for the machinery of exploitation and alienation. Academic freedom is now subject to ideological censures. RSS' continuous battle with the past is resulting in rewriting of history and making education unscientific. Zero-tolerance for

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Manipur: Severe Academic Disruption Feared

With almost all quality institutions of learning concentrated in the valley, students from the hill areas are afraid of re-joining their classes in the disturbed state of Manipur. Academic disruption in strife-torn Manipur may prove more damaging than that caused countrywide by COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021.

During COVID-19, a partial saving grace was online teaching. In Manipur, the immediate imposition of a ban on internet use, which is continuing, has ruled out online teaching and learning. This is the shared view of an overwhelming majority of panic-stricken students and teachers at this juncture, as after the summer vacation, institutions of learning are to reopen in a matter of days.

The disruption immediately followed widespread ethnic clashes on May 3. So far, hundreds of lives have been lost, not to mention the damage to moveable and immovable property that has forced thousands of people, including many students, to take shelter in relief camps started by the Bharatiya Janata Party-led (BJP) ministry.

Narrating the tragedy and the uncertain future that stares at the face of the students, the Kuki Students' Organisation (KSO) wrote a letter on July 19 to the chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC). The organisation urged the UGC chairman to seriously consider relocation of students and scholars of Manipur University and Dhanamanjuri University to other Central universities and permit them to continue their education without a break.

KSO also demanded that original certificates be issued to all victims whose certifi-

cates were burnt/destroyed in the incidents of vandalism and arson that continued for days together since May 3.

If KSO's letter is an appeal to the UGC chairman, the statement of the Federation of Central Universities Teachers' Associations (FEDCUTA) sounds like an indictment of the Centre and the state government "for a palpable administrative and political failure" in a sensitive border state.

That it's a reflection on them is borne out by the fact that "the Supreme Court of

"as individuals have the right to express their opinion on the complex situation in Manipur."

LakhonKma, a professor and president of the North Eastern Hill University Teachers' Association, believes that students' careers will be jeopardised unless the authorities show their determination to resolve the violent stand-off with a firm hand while showing much-needed humanitarian considerations.

The violence and destruction of many buildings,

Manipur towns were witnesses to severe anger and scorn vented by a large number of organisations, including those run by women, over the barbaric attack perpetrated on the two women of the Kuki community allegedly by radicalised Meitei youths, who also killed the father and brother of the younger of the two women.

Deemed university will ruin higher education in Andaman

Opposition is mounting against the proposal to form



India has taken suo motu cognisance and directed the authorities to submit an action taken report." The statement referred to the "deeply disturbing" visuals of sexual assault and violence on women, which surfaced on July 19 after being under wraps since May 4, when the crimes were committed.

With educational institutions reopening after the summer break, students wanting to return are unable to do so in the absence of safe transport from out of the state. FEDCUTA has pledged solidarity with Kham Khan Suan Hausing, a scholar on the history and politics of the North-East and a faculty at the Central University of Hyderabad,

including schools and colleges, threw academic activity out of gear since May 3. Schools were ordered to be reopened some days back, but attendance remains low. With hundreds of students being forced to shift with their families to relief camps, where living conditions are less than ordinary, it will be tough ask if students have to attend classes in the prevailing abnormal circumstances.

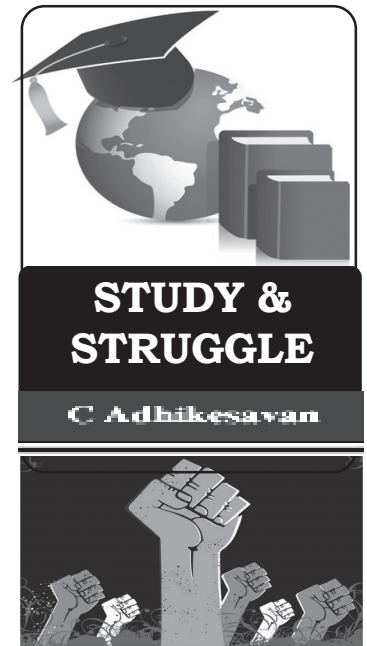
It is strongly believed that the situation would not have been as bad if the authorities had foresight and moved tactfully to diffuse the strident face-off. He suspects the role of 'non-state' actors in influencing decision-makers.

Imphal and other

a deemed university in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands to govern seven colleges. The students maintain that the formation of the deemed university will result in expensive education, putting poor residents of the islands at peril.

The Union Territory administration recently published the draft notification for amendment in the memorandum of association for changing the name of Andaman and Nicobar Islands Legal Education Society to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose Institute of Higher Learning Deemed University. Currently, the colleges are affiliated to the Pondicherry University.

As per Section 3 of the University Grants Commis-



STUDY & STRUGGLE

C Adhikesavan

sion Act, through a gazette notification the central government can declare any institution of learning, other than a university, a deemed university if it has achieved higher standards of research.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands, has been mobilising students to oppose the deemed university proposal. The existing experience of deemed universities have been horrific for poor students.

"Even though the draft notification has changed rules regarding receiving of fee under Clause 4h, there is no clarity whether there will be any monetary support from the Union government. If they are really keen on transferring the affiliation to the new body, why don't they strive again for a central university for us? Then the fee will be cheaper and employees will have their employment and social security.

When Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to the islands, the administration put the deemed university status under the list of announcements but they did not calculate the economic cost. They may get the initial funding but the operating cost has to be taken care of after five years. Who will bear it? Ultimately, the quality of education will deteriorate along with increased fees. We had a similar experience with Andaman college where not a single person could be hired after forming it seven years back.

Glimpses of CPI Protest



Against Atrocities in Manipur



CPI Observes Manipur...

From Front Page

months, the Central and Manipur governments are not bothered. He demanded that Manipur government must be dismissed and president rule imposed there.

Tammineni Veerabhadram, CPI(M) Telangana state secretary in his address stated that communal riots are taking place wherever BJP has grown up. Influence of BJP is increasing due to communalization of society through riots and communal tensions. Manipur riots are part of political strategy.

ET Narsimha, state secretariat member, CPI presided the protest meeting while B Chaayadevi city secretary proposed vote of thanks. DG Narsimha Rao state secretariat member, CPI(M), and MalluLaxmi, CPI(M) also addressed. VS Bose, state secretariat member, CPI, B Venkatesham, state secretary, AITUC, Stalin and KamathamYadagiri city assistant secretaries, CPI, UstelaSrujana, president, state unit of NFIW, Dharmendra, state general secretary, AIYF, Marupaka Anil Kumar state general secretary, Dalit HakkulaPorataSamithi, Nalini, Saleem, NerlakantiSreekanth also participated.

West Bengal

The day was marked across the state holding street corner meetings, marches, demanding immediate resignation of the chief minister. Expressing anger against the oppression of women in the matriarchal Manipur society, the leaders condemned the indifference of the prime minister.

The state and Central governments have failed to provide security to the people of Manipur. The Modi government is encouraging ethnic riots and is handing over Manipur's natural resources to the corporates. If the BJP succeeds in Manipur, Deuchapachami will not survive. The tribals of Purulia, Bankura, Jhargram, WestMedinipur will lose all their rights.

The day was observed in every district of the state. Notable places are Bowbazar, Dhakuria, Shyambazar in Kolkata, Siliguri in Darjeeling, Sankrail, Andul, Shibpur in

Howrah, Panshkura, Nandigram, Kanthi in PurbaMedinipur, Jhargram, Kanchrapara, Dumdum in Uttar 24 Parganas, Medinipur, Khargapur in PaschimMedinipur.

Left Front Sit-in Protest: A sit-in protest programme called by the Left Front was held at Maulali Crossing in Kolkata on July 24 to protest against the heinous and barbaric events in Manipur and to demand the immediate resignation of the chief minister. The impact of the Manipur incident is gradually spreading towards Mizoram, Nagaland and Arunachal Pradesh. It may gradually spread to the entire North Eastern states, various speakers expressed the fear at the rally. Eventhough there is a double engine government in Manipur, both the state and Central governments have failed to bring normalcy.

Biman Bose, chairman of the Left Front, presided over the rally. He said Manipur has a glorious history. Today in that glorious state women are being subjected to hellish oppression. We have to stand by Manipur.

CPI state council secretary Swapan Banerjee said that protests against Manipur incidents are going on across the country. The BJP governments at the state and Centre are remaining silent spectators. Peace must be brought back to Manipur. Corporate hands are behind this incident in Manipur. The cycle of plundering the precious natural resources of the hill region is active there.

CPI(M) state secretary Mohammad Saleem, Suryakant Mishra, Manoj Bhattacharya, Jhuma Das, Shivnath Sinha, Mihir Bain, Prabir Ghosh and Ashish Chakraborty also spoke. Apart from Swapan Banerjee, Kalyan Banerjee, Tapan Ganguly, Gautam Roy, Prabir Deb, Amitabh Chakraborty, Arun Chatteraj were present on behalf of CPI.

Karnataka

In response to the national call, protest demonstrations were organized in various places in Karnataka. CPI Karnataka state council secretary Saathi Sundaresh, assistant secretary Amjad, treasurer Shivraj Biradar, Bengaluru district secretary M Satyanand,

AIYF Karnataka state president and Bengaluru district CPI assistant secretary, Harish Bala, Premachandra, Shantraj Jain participated and addressed the gathering.

Saathi Sundaresh said that Manipur riots are the conspiracy to displace the tribals from forests and allow the corporates to loot the wealth of the forest.

In the protest demonstration organised at Tumkur, district secretary Girish and NFIW state president and CPI state secretariat member Jyothi A participated. AIYF state secretary and CPI state secretariat member Santosh HM participated in the protest demonstration organized at Harpanahalli.

Protest demonstrations were held at various other places including Bellary, Kalburgi, Mysore, Davangere, Kudilgi, Kotturu and Huvinahadugali. Addressing the protest demonstration held in freedom park in Bangalore party state council secretary Saathi Sundaresh accused the central government and the state government of fomenting communal clashes in Manipur. He said that the Central government has thus far turned a blind eye to the raging ethnic conflict and the state government is openly practising majoritarian policies to the detriment of the tribal community. Instead of practising 'Raj Dharma', the state and Central governments are fishing in troubled waters for petty political gains.

Amjad, assistant secretary of state council also addressed the demonstration and said that the situation in Manipur is grave, with shutdowns of internet and of schools and colleges, loss of lives and personal property and mass displacement of citizens. The CPI Bangalore district council demands the resignation of the chief minister, immediate action for seizure of arms/weapons from private militia, immediate stop of poppy farming, provisions for necessary commodities and services for the displaced communities and families.

Tripura

The CPI Tripura state council and mass organizations — NFIW, AIYF and AISF — conducted week-long movement in

support and extending solidarity with the people of Manipur.

On July 22, the CPI, NFIW, AIYF and AISF units jointly held a candle light protest march wearing black ribbon in protest of the heinous and horrific atrocity on two women who were paraded naked and later gangraped by hooligans.

CPI workers gathered near Agartala City Centre with flags and candle wearing black ribbons on mouth and protested against the heinous incident. The protest was led by CPI state council secretary Dr Yudhisthir Das, CPI state assistant secretary Milan Baidya, CPI leader Bibhas Bhattacharjee, NFIW leader Tulsi Das Kapali, Jaya Biswas, Susmita Nandi and others.

On July 25, the CPI Tripura unit observed Manipur solidarity day and demanded the resignation of chief minister Biren Singh, Prime Minister Modi's statement in Parliament and to restore peace in Manipur.

The solidarity programme was led by party state council secretary Dr Yudhisthir Das, assistant secretary Milan Baidya, AIKS leader Rashbihari Ghosh and others.

On July 12, NFIW state council held a press conference condemning the harassment and FIR on NFIW national fact finding team that visited Manipur led by NFIW general secretary Annie Raja. NFIW Tripura state leadership strongly condemned the action of Manipur state government and demanded the resignation of chief minister Biren Singh and asked to withdraw cases on NFIW fact finding team and restore peace in Manipur.

Puducherry

A massive joint demonstration was held at Com Jeevanandam Square, Saram, Puducherry on the forenoon of July 25. The demonstration was presided over jointly by S Sedhu Selvam, assistant secretary of CPI state council and RRajangam, state secretary of CPI(M).

I Dinesh Ponniah, national council member, R Viswanathan, former minister, MA mudhastate executive member spoke from CPI and V Perumal executive committee member, TMurugan, Sudha Sunderaraman spoke from CPI(M). Thundering slogans were raised against the failure of the state and Central governments to contain the

atrocities unleashed upon the vulnerable sections of Manipur people and demanded the resignation of the chief minister. More than 500 people participated.

On July 13 a demonstration was held in Puducherry by INSAF against the government of Manipur for being inactive in controlling the violence and the negligence of the Union government. CPI state council secretary AMSaleem inaugurated the protest. People belonging to Christianity and Muslim communities participated in a grand way.

Delhi

Three protest programmes were held in Delhi. In the morning a demonstration was held at and around Subzi Mandi GhantaGhar led by Shankarlal, CPI national council member, Sanjeev Kumar Rana secretary CPI North Delhi district, Dharampal, Sajda Begum, Devendra, Islam, Baban Kumar Singh, CPI Delhi state council member.

In the afternoon a protest was held outside Lakshmi Nagar Metro station gates led by Kehar Singh, secretariat member CPI Delhi state and secretary of East Delhi district.

At 8 pm in the night onwards candle light protest was held in K, L and M blocks of Mangolpuri. It was addressed by Shankarlal, Mukesh Kashyap, CPI district executive member and AITUC deputy general secretary of Delhi state, Rajesh Kashyap CPI district assistant secretary and Rammurthy AITUC leader.

All speakers while addressing strongly condemned the Union government and Manipur government for their failure. They condemned both the governments because women in Manipur are paraded naked and killed. Women are being targeted. Situation was allowed to worsen to the level that one community against another is fighting.

Punjab

A massive rally was organized by CPI Ludhiana district along with Punjab Istri Sabha Ludhiana district, Indian Doctors for Peace and Development, Bharat Jan Gyan Vigyan Jatha and other such social organizations. Despite the fact that the situation was deteriorating day by day, the prime minister com-

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Smart Cities must be Based on Equality, Justice

Dr. Arun Mitra

Wide discussions are being held on changing 100 cities into smart cities in the country. The concept is based on digitalization, beautification, high-rise buildings, big flyovers, wide spaces for cars to run on the roads, luxury parks, etc. Little is being said about issues that relate to the needs of the common man. With the urban population in India at 35.39 per cent in 2021, there is a need to develop the cities to meet the socio-economic requirements and improve the quality of life of all sections of society.

The concept of a smart city varies from person to person and among different strata of society. For a rich man, the beautification of the city, big malls, wide roads to ply their cars, shining bright lights with glaring nightlife, big flyovers and underpasses, and decorated entry points to the city is the meaning of the smart city. But for a poor man and hut-met dweller, a moderate house, clean drinking water, sanitation, unbroken roads, regular electricity supply, footpath to walk on the roadside, lane for accident-free cycling & two-wheeler ride would be a better city. A vendor would want, clean vending zones free from the threats of the Mafia and unnecessary glitches caused by the local body administration. A poor/low-middle-income family

would be happy with a job and wage to be able to purchase a piece of land to live. For senior citizens, security is the most important in view of the everyday increasing incidents of violence against them.

There is large-scale migration to the cities in search of jobs and livelihood. They

sanitation facilities, facilities for all types of waste management, good public transport, unbroken roads, and low-cost housing should be the priority. A common

of India. We have witnessed how there is water logging in the cities including the

100 proposed smart cities, there are 640930 villages in India that need to be brought under the focus but are completely out of the government's priorities.

Under the circumstances when the government admits abject poverty in the country and has to distribute five kg grains and one kg lentil (dal) to 80 crore people, uneven spending so much amount to make a few big cities smart is completely unwarranted. It is time that the government reorients its priorities towards even development for all the cities and villages instead of focusing on a few big cities to provide facilities to the corporate business model.

The concept of "smart cities" should be reshaped based on the ethics of equality and justice. There should be a focus on urban poverty, inequality, creation of stratification as these evils can produce erosion and derailment of productivity and prosperity in the long run of smart cities. The policy-making should also be rural-centric as the development of villages and rural population is substantial in achieving inclusive and sustainable growth.



need a place to live but in the absence of any government support they have to live in shanties in totally sub-human unhygienic conditions. A smart city should ensure proper housing for them all. It is therefore important that the concept of a smart city should be reconceptualized in a manner that caters to the needs of all citizens. The basics like clean drinking water supply, electricity,

man also needs good hospitals to meet health needs at affordable cost and needs schools for affordable quality education.

There is also a need for parks with green cover in all types of colonies. Subsidized solar panels on buildings, so that everyone could afford their installation is the need of the hour. Footpaths for the disabled and ordinary pedestrians, braille linked mobility facilities for the visually handicapped are essential. Digitalization, which in modern times is essential for governance and communication should supplement and facilitate the above.

But all the above is far from a dream in the cities earmarked to be smart cities. Rains that inundated several parts of the northern region of the country have exposed the claims of the smart cities project conceptualized by the government

capital of the country. With broken roads, the commuters met with accidents. Several houses got submerged in the dirty water of sewerage drains. The smart city claim has been thus washed away in the rains.

The government of India has allocated nearly 500 crore per city to make them smart by June 2023. This deadline has already been missed. Along with the

Monolithic View ...

From Page 06

anything that is different, critical, or diverse is targeted killing the vibrancy of university campuses – Binoy Viswam said.

Narrating his personal experience, he said that for query raised to the Press Information Bureau (PIB) he received the vaguest answers from the concerned minister. This makes it evident that there is no forum for appeal, there are no domain experts and there are no independent members to determine the veracity of anything.

The address was concluded with a reminder that in the tussle between truth and official propaganda, though both are active, it is the government that says the last word, officially.

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Unemployment to Rise Over 8.4 per cent by July End

Unemployment rate in India has been rising this month. As on July 21, unemployment rate on the basis of 30 days moving average rose to 8.4 per cent which is over 0.4 per cent more than the last month, according to the latest CMIE data, which indicates that the month of July may end with employment rate higher than 8.4 per cent. Graduates are now most worried lot with unemployment rate is over the double the national average for all unemployed people.

On the basis of a CMIE survey of pan-India household, a study by Natasha Somayya K has estimated that the unemployment rate among graduates was at 16.95 per cent in the quarter ending on June 30, 2023 which was more than double the average unemployment rate of 8.16 per cent. Despite high labour participation among graduates, the share of people who were able to secure employment is not very impressive. The starkly higher-than-average graduate unemployment rate is concerning, the study warned.

The CMIE data has revealed that in the first quarter of the financial year 2023-

Dr Gyan Pathak

24 (April-June) the workforce was dominated by poorly educated people. Among all employed, 47.6 per cent of the workforce in India were educated upto only 9th standard, followed by 39.6 per cent 10th-12th standard

made the cost-of-living crisis even bitter for majority of unemployed workforce. Moreover, the lack of any social security coverage has exacerbated their already miserable condition.

Incidentally, the G20 Labour and Employment Ministers had been meeting on July 20-21 in Indore, which was hosted by India, under its G20 presidency for

policy options regarding the third.

However, it would mean social protection would continue to suffer due to lack of funds in the near future.

“At present, the global employment divide is deepening in the face of global shocks and risks, with low-income countries being left further and further behind,” said the ILO Director-Gen-

eral, Richard Samans, the ILO’s Sherpa to the G20 and Director of the ILO Research Department. “In a turbulent time, ‘investment in people’ restores the trust in institutions and helps build a new social contract. Therefore, massive investment in skills is needed more than ever, as we face the need to achieve socially just green and digital transitions,” he added.

But to make further progress, and to tackle gender inequality in particular, action must focus on promoting more and better employment for the youth by investing in economic sectors with high youth employment potential and improving the quality of employment to provide incentives for labour market participation, underlined the ILO Director-General. Investments in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) and quality apprenticeships and combining active labour market policies with income support are also very important to reach the most disadvantaged youth, he added.

The ILO has called for a common language on skills and qualifications to facilitate cross-country comparability and mutual recognition of skills. The ILO, with the OECD, will launch a feasibility study for a global skills taxonomy that will be available by the end of 2026.

India must work hard on the ground, since the big words are of no worth for the unemployed youth, both male and female, if they are not getting job opportunities. Skill and education level of our workforce must be made relevant and upgraded in the present context of fast changing



and only 12.8 per cent graduates and above.

India must be concerned on such a trend in the labour market, at a time when inflation has been rising again since April 2023 which is likely to cross five per cent in July. Food inflation and spiralling food prices have

the current year to focus on three main topics: addressing the global skills gaps, extending social protection to platform and gig workers, and sustainable financing for national social protection system.

India suffers from all the three – there is a large skill gap, not even a single provision for social security coverage for about 76 per cent of the workforce, and there is little funding for the national social protection system.

India had called for the ministerial purportedly to accelerate progress on the three issues, addressing skills gaps, extending social protection, and sustainable funding for it, and the good news is that Ministers of the G20 nations have agreed on specific policy priorities on the first two of these challenges and only a set of

eral, Gilbert F. Houngbo to the assembled Ministers at the Indore meet.

Given the skills gap in India, the high rate of unemployment among the educated, both due to lack of sufficient jobs and poor schooling as well as the mediocre quality of education on offer at most colleges, India must take seriously some of the recommendations made at the G20 Ministerial. It is important since employability rate of college students have less than 50 per cent, and for arts and commerce it is less than 30 per cent. A UNICEF report had said that nearly half of all undergraduate students, which are 80 per cent of all college students, study in the least employable disciplines.

“Regions where skills gaps are pervasive are also more likely to experience

CPI Opposes Delimitation...

From Page 03

of India, the representation of the eleven parties decided to visit Chief Election Commissioner. Accordingly we sent letter for appointment at any time during July 6 to 8, 2023 according to their convenience. The entire delegation awaited the appointment. But The Chief Election officer continued to keep mum. So it was decided to hand over the memorandum physically to ECI. Meanwhile, the barricades were put up to stop us from meeting CEO. We sat in the reception and staged Dharna. As we started Dharna, one officer was sent to take the memorandum. We handed over the memorandum to CEO.

CPI national council meeting expressed deep concerns at the attitude of the Chief Election Officer which was in no way called for.

The occasion of 70th anniversary, on July 26, a failed military operation on July 26, 1953 led by Fidel Castro set the irreversible beginning of the Cuban revolutionary process. In Cuba, commemorative activities began on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks, led by Fidel Castro with the aim of overthrowing the dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista who was backed by the United States. A setback can become great victory.

The Heredia Theater in Santiago de Cuba was the venue for an artistic gala to celebrate the 508th anniversary of the founding of the city and the 70th anniversary of the assault on the Moncada and Carlos Manuel de Céspedes barracks.

This activity was attended by the President of the island, Miguel Díaz-Canel, among other Cubans. The event was attended, among others, by the Youth Symphony Orchestra of the Esteban Salas Conservatory and dance students from the José María Heredia Professional School of Arts.

Actors Maikel Eduardo and Dalia Leyva declaimed the poem “Bandera Mía”. During the gala, emblematic landscapes of the eastern Cuban province were projected.

In addition to this activity, foreign cultural groups will offer traditional shows, it was reported.

The event that was considered the beginning of the struggle against the Batista dictatorship, which culminated in 1959 with the triumph of the revolution led by Fidel Castro, is scheduled to take place in the

Moncada Barracks Assault: Setback Can Lead to Victory

province of Santiago de Cuba.

The Cuban president said as long as the United States insists on trampling on the national unity, the Cubans have a Moncada to assault, referring to the revolutionary feat.

Regarding the current situation in his country, Díaz-Canel severely criticized the

other uses it to navigate the murky waters and swim around him, says a Reuter report.

They hope this painstaking work, part of a new project that trains local citizens to restore seagrass meadows in the Baltic Sea, can help tackle climate change. The meadows act as vast natural sinks that can store millions of tonnes of

lost one third of its seagrass areas between the 1860s and 2016, one 2019 study found, releasing carbon into the atmosphere and speeding up global warming.

While there are other initiatives to restore the plants worldwide, the Sea Store Seagrass Restoration Project in Kiel, run by the GEOMAR Helmholtz Centre for Ocean Research, is



U.S. blockade and described it as one of the main factors that have been limiting the economic development of Cuba for more than six decades.

Citizen Divers Restore Seagrass to Save Climate

Just off the coast of Kiel in northern Germany, scuba divers use hand trowels to dig up emerald green seagrass shoots complete with roots from a dense underwater meadow, delicately shaking off the sediment before placing them in yellow bags. Back on land, they store the shoots in large cooling boxes, before heading out the next day to a barren area further north to replant them in circles. One diver holds a line, and the

carbon, but they have reduced sharply over the last century due to worsening water quality, scientists say.

“It’s like underwater gardening,” said Lea Verfondern, 21, a veterinary assistant who was part of the first batch of citizens to attend the training in early July. “Everyone should make a contribution to protecting the environment because it... affects us all,” said Verfondern, before donning a full wet-suit with a hood.

Seagrasses store more than twice as much carbon from planet-warming carbon dioxide (CO₂) per square mile than forests do on land, according to a 2012 study. The plants also help support fisheries and protect coasts from erosion. Europe alone

one of the first that aims to enable citizens to do so autonomously. Verfondern, 6 other divers and some land volunteers planted some 2,500 plants during the weekend course in July.

Re-Greening the Sea: Leading the Baltic Sea seagrass initiative is Angela Stevenson, a post-doctoral researcher at GEOMAR who planted three test fields in recent years, discovering shoots were more resilient than seeds. Stevenson developed the course, encompassing an online presentation as well as hands-on training, to speed up the planting. Maritime conservation group Sea Shepherd fielded the first round of volunteers and organised gear, food, shel-

Diary of International Events

C. Adhikesavan

ters and permits.

“Our aim is to scale it up after this pilot period,” said Stevenson. “The ultimate goal is to re-green the Baltic Sea.” Martin Lampe, 52, one of the volunteers, said the Baltic Sea had changed so much since he went diving there in his youth that he felt he had no choice but to help out.

“Days like today show me we really can get a handle on the situation if enough people contribute,” the IT technician said. Stevenson said the GEOMAR team was also researching how resistant seagrass was to temperature rises. It hopes to breed more heat-resistant strains since, unlike fish, seagrasses cannot migrate to cooler climates as the oceans warm.

The team also continues to pick flowering seagrass to harvest seeds, and experiment with planting them on the seabed. If it can find a way to do this successfully, it would offer a far less laborious method of restoration. Using its current approach, it would take half a million divers, planting shoots for 12 hours a day for an entire year, to restore all the lost seagrass in the Baltic Sea along Germany’s coast, Stevenson estimated.

Even then, their efforts would only account for a tiny fraction of German emissions. “We will have to think up new technologies that help us remove (carbon) artificially too,” she said. “But if we have the nature-based solutions for storing carbon already, we might as well use it.”

CPI Observes Manipur...

From Page 10

pletely ignored the crisis-ridden situation. When a very important state like Manipur was burning, he was busy on foreign tours.

It is now fully clear that the government was well aware of the horrific violence of the naked parade of women and rape on May 4. But they hid it. It is a symbol of their mentality towards women. The National Commission for Women received an email about the incident on May 9. It is hard to believe that the prime minister was not informed. His continued silence shows his implicit support for violence.

It is highly condemnable that the Prime Minister of India who always talks about Beti Bachao Beti Padhao behaved like this. It is reminiscent

of Gujarat in 2002 when they kept a complete silence on the violence that led to the massacre that killed around 2,500 people. At that time also there was BJP government in Gujarat as well as at the Centre. Speakers said that the double engine government has no right to continue after the hooliganism and violence in Manipur. The central government's silence on Manipur is a symbol of tacit support for violence. The state and Central government should be dismissed. Time has come to unite to overthrow this totally insensitive government.

A large number of citizens participated in the protest march from Punjabi Bhawan to Mini Secretariat. The effigy of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was burnt. Through an e-mail to the President of the country, a demand was made to dismiss the

Central government and the state government. Speakers included DP Maur, party district secretary, Dr Arun Mitra, M S Bhatia, Chamkaur Singh, Vijay Kumar, Kewal Singh Banwait, Gurmelmeldey, Vinod Kumar, Avtar Chhibber, Dr Gurcharan Kaur Kochhar, president of Punjab Istri Sabha Ludhiana, Kusum Lata, general secretary of Bharat Jan Gyan Vigyan Jatha, Sushma Oberai, Anu Bhatti, Kulwant Kaur, Shakuntala Devi, Amritpal Singh, Harbans Singh Gill, Sikandar Sidhu, Babu Balkaur Singh Gill, Dr B S Aulakh, Malkit Singh Malra and others.

Assam

Several district units organised different ways of solidarity programmes in Assam. State council secretary Kanak Gogoi sharply criticised both the Union and state gov-

ernments led by BJP which is so called double engine government due to their failure to control the turmoil situation in Manipur and the prime minister's silence. He has also criticised both the governments for their negligent attitude regarding all burning issues for of Manipur. The inhuman torture of women, killing people and burning houses and property by each other community has shocked the people throughout the country.

He explained about the root causes for the outbreak of that incident and the whole situation in Manipur before the gathering at Nazira of Sivasagar district and demanded resignation of chief minister, disarm all terrorist groups, stop infiltration from Myanmar, stop poppy cultivation in forest land, withdraw cases filed against the leaders of NFIW, etc.

Munin Mahanta led a procession and explained the resent situation of Manipur in

Morigaon district. Asomi Gogoi state secretary of NFIW of and Phani Das state secretary of construction workers' union led the program in Guwahati, Piku Moni Dutta and Horen Bora led the programme in Golaghat district, Ragendra Das in Karimganj district, Girindra Upadhyaya in Lakhimpur district, Ratul Bora in Nagaon district and Mahesh Rai led in Dhruburi district the solidarity programme.

Gujarat

AIPSO Surat and Surat Mahila Sangh (NFIW) submitted a memorandum to the district collector regarding the burning issues facing Manipur people.

The solidarity programme was observed in Patna in Bihar, Sagar in Madhya Pradesh as well as in Lucknow, Agra, Sultanpur, Sonbhadra and other places in Uttar Pradesh.

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Government Data Reveals Discrepancies in Railway Safety

The recent union government data has revealed the pathetic condition of safety measures in the Indian Railway. The Union Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnav in response to the parliamentary query raised by CPI national council secretary and leader of the parliamentary group Binoy Viswam informed that only 121 locomotives in the country are safeguarded by the Kavach

protection system, and the expenditure made on installing Kavach is 350 crores. Despite spending 350 crores, not even 0.01 percent of the total 13,215 locomotives that functions in the country have not been equipped with the Kavach system. Three companies have been involved in the installation of this safety system.

The low proportion of

locomotives equipped with the safety system is highly alarming. Binoy Viswam said that this has revealed the criminal negligence of the union government. He critiqued that the government had failed in ensuring the safety of common people and stated that the 121 locomotives equipped with the Kavach safety system will be the selective locos that are availed only by the rich.

The safety of trains became a hot topic of discussion after the Balasore Train Tragedy that happened in Orissa. The Kavach System was a highly echoed promise of the BJP-led government in the 2022 union financial budget. It was one of the top-layer declarations under Atmanirbhar Bharat. The system was under development since 2012 under the name Train Collision

Avoidance System (TCAS), which was later renamed for political speculation by the BJP government. The full-fledged installment of the system in an effective manner can prevent train collisions and other accidents. But the clumsy inaction of the union government can impede the Railway from ensuring the safety of its passengers.

On Record ...

In what is perhaps the strongest and harshest criticism made of the Prime Minister's handling of the crisis in Manipur and his refusal to speak on the subject in Parliament, the well-known and highly regarded historian and political commentator, Ramachandra Guha, has said "He's (Modi) a coward afraid to face Parliament – it's absolutely shocking". He explained: "As PM he's accountable to Parliament". Guha also spoke of "the failure of the Prime Minister at a time of grave national crisis". Guha added: "Modi lives in a bubble of his own hoping he can ride it out." In a 35-minute interview to Karan Thapar for *The Wire*, based upon an Op-ed he wrote for *The Telegraph* yesterday (24/7), the arguments of which he has taken considerably further in this interview, Guha said Narendra Modi would show "moral growth" and "redeem himself" and also provide "some sense of atonement" for his failure to contain the riots of 2002, when he was chief minister of Gujarat, if now he would sack Biren Singh as Chief Minister of Manipur. – *thewire.com*, July 25.

The crisis in Manipur has been seen by many as a law-and-order problem, where an incompetent Chief Minister has failed to contain the violence. It is also being argued that once the crisis slipped out of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s hand, it decided to use it for political gains and pursue the communal and polarising game. The argument has some merit.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi maintained silence on the issue for more than two months, and when he did speak (after the video of sexual violence went viral) he spoke for just 36 seconds. Even in that statement Modi equated Manipur with the sexual



violence in two Congress-ruled states, Rajasthan and Chhattisgarh. By any stretch of imagination this comparison was absurd. – *The Deccan Chronicle*, July 25.

Historically, punishment has proved to be the biggest deterrent to crime. Proof of a crime is crucial in awarding punishment, so the fear of getting caught on camera can stop even the most dreaded criminal from committing the most heinous acts. Internet shutdowns must be viewed in this context, especially in a violence-ravaged region: A blanket ban gives a perpetrator a sense of impunity that his targets are fair game without any mechanism for surveillance.

Manipur teaches us more, just as previous instances of bloody violence within India and elsewhere have taught us. The wanton killings in the state and the weaponisation of gang rape to spread a reign of terror have come to light very late. It needed a video from May 4 of two Kuki women stripped and taken away by a large group

of males belonging to the rival Meitei community for the government to wake up and scream national shame. It proves the power of technology and its judicious use. – *The Indian Express*, July 24.

18.3% unemployment rate in J&K; 29,000 posts filled since Art 370 abrogation. On a question whether unemployment rate in J&K among educated youth has reached 46.3%, Rai said in his written reply, "From the results of Periodic Labour Force Survey (PLFS) conducted by the National Sample Survey Office (NSSO), estimates of unemployment rate is not available specifically for the educated youth in Jammu and Kashmir for the period April-June 2021." The unemployment rate among the persons of age group of 15-29 years in Jammu and Kashmir was 18.3%, the ministry of home affairs (MHA) said in Parliament. – *The Hindustan Times*, July 26.

Compiled by: C Adhikesavan



CPI general secretary D Raja inaugurating the N E Balaram- P P Mukundan memorial lecture

LIBERATE COUNTRY FROM BJP RULE: CPI

KANNUR: Communist Party of India general secretary D Raja called for waging united struggle to liberate the country from the rule of RSS-BJP combine. He was addressing a mass gathering of party comrades, supporters and sympathizers after inaugurating the NE Balaram-PP Mukundan memorial meeting here on July 23, 2023.

D Raja pointed out that the country is passing through not one problem but several. The Parliament is

not functioning for the last several days. This has happened when there are several burning issues to be discussed in Parliament. The reason behind the non-functioning of the Parliament is the turmoil in Manipur.

The CPI general secretary said Prime Minister Narendra Modi was silent while Manipur was set aflame, and spoke, though only for thirty six seconds, after the reports regarding forcing of two women to parade without clothes and behave with them with un-

Our Special Correspondent

precedented barbarity came out. The double engine Modi government failed in solving the Manipur crisis only because it does not want to find a solution. Their agenda is to divide and rule. That is the reason the Modi government is keeping its eyes shut when two sections of people are fighting each other. The people who never bothered about gender equality and social justice are now keen

on enacting unified common code. They believe in Manu Smriti.

D Raja observed that communists can be put behind bars, betrayed and murdered but cannot be defeated. Our aim should be to oust BJP from power in the ensuing general elections in 2024. When we remember N E Balaram and P P Mukundan and the sacrifices they made for the country and people, we must think seriously about the present situation in the country, he said.

CPI Kerala state council member and chairman of NE Balaram Trust chairman C N Chandran presided over the function. CPI national executive member and NFIW general secretary Annie Raja, national executive member P Sandosh Kumar MP, former Kerala state council secretary Pannian Ravindran, state control commission chairman C P Murali and others also addressed the gathering. Party district secretary C P Santosh Kumar welcomed the participants to the memorial meeting.

Real Rural Wages Shrink for 16th Month

The rural recovery may be some time away given real wages in the hinterland contracted for 16 straight months to March. High inflation has hurt rural incomes crimping purchasing power.

Moreover, unemployment seems to be relatively high with the demand for work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) increasing in June. About 44.23 million individuals opted for work in June, up 2.3 per cent year-on-year, preliminary data from the rural development ministry shows. Demand for these jobs had also risen in May.

The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy put out data that showed unemployment in rural India hit a two-year high of 8.73 per cent in June pushing up total unemployment for the month to over eight per cent. While June is a lean season for the agricultural sector, the increase is worrying. To be sure, there are some signs of a revival in the rural economy. For instance, tractor sales have been reasonably good rising seven per cent year-on-year between January and May. Also registration data from Vahan shows sales of two-wheelers were up seven per cent in June.

However, wholesale dispatches from

Hero Motocorp, which sells about half its production in rural markets, were down close to nine per cent year-on-year in June. Analysts were expecting bigger dispatches from the two-wheeler maker but this did not materialise.

Pranjul Bhandari, chief economist, HSBC India, believes rural growth may be the area to monitor carefully. "To the extent that a lot of the inflation problem is addressed via timely imports instead of higher domestic production, rural incomes can hurt. In fact, rural terms of trade have been on the weaker side for a while," Bhandari said.