

PM's Speech from Red Fort on Aug 15

Independence Day Turns into Poll Campaign Event



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the meeting

The meeting of the Tamil Nadu State Council of the Communist Party of India was held in Salem from August 14 to 17. General Secretary of the party D. Raja guided the meeting and met the press also.

Here is a summary of what he said to the press.

“Prime Minister Modi, speaking at the Independence Day function, did not speak with the dignity and responsibility of being the Prime Minister. He turned it into an election campaign meeting of BJP. He has termed the Independence Day meeting as a meeting to whip the opposition parties.

People know that the country is in a state of disarray after 9 years of BJP rule. What happened to the promises made by Prime Minister Modi? Specifically, two crore jobs per year, black money will be brought out, every citizen's bank account will be deposited with Rs. 15 lakhs of money. What happened to all those promises, people ask.

There should be peace in Manipur which is a part of India. People are killed in that civil war. Women are subjected to unspeakable violence.

The silence of the Prime Minister will not solve the Manipur issue. The tension still continues there. The Chief Minister of Manipur should be sacked. But PM Modi and home minister Amit Shah are not ready for that. In Manipur they want to pitch one part of people against another to seek political gain.

The Parliament election is nearing. Prime Minister Modi's speech at the Independence Day function was nothing but election campaign. All the secular, democratic and left parties joined together and formed

T. M. Murthi

the INDIA alliance to save the country and oust the BJP from power.

The opposition is united. The first meeting of the INDIA alliance was held in Patna after the Karnataka elections. The second meeting was held in Bangalore. The third meeting is scheduled to be held in Mumbai from August 31 to September 1.

There has been an improvement in the functioning of all parties and the alliance in harmony, between one meeting and another. We are making consensus on accommodating the parties and working out strategies to face the communal forces backed by enormous money in the general elections. These meetings have raised expectations. All this has scared Prime Minister

Modi. Their shock and helplessness get exposed and could be seen in the Prime Minister's reply to the non confidence motion in the Parliament.

Narendra Modi's speech on independence from the Red Fort is rhetoric and full of empty promises. He expressed his hope of becoming the Prime Minister again. How can he decide for himself? It is up to the people to decide. And more than that, that was not an election campaign, but an Independence Day speech of the Prime Minister of India. He should not address there like a BJP or RSS leader. Prime Minister should speak keeping his higher status in his mind and speak with the dignity of a Prime Minister. The figures given by the Prime Minister in his lengthy speech were all false and fabricated.

They are in a fear of failure and create a riotous

atmosphere through violence. Why create violence in Haryana when the situation is so bad in Manipur?

They want to poison the minds of the majority Hindus to boycott minorities socially.

Their hatred politics gone to the extent of persuading Hindus that they should not buy anything in Muslim shops and not eat in Muslims hotels. Their religious zeal to the point of Politics is gone. Dividing the people across the communal lines will not happen anymore. The parties in our fold have the political maturity to choose a prime ministerial candidate. But now our aim is to topple the BJP regime. The immediate duty is to protect the country. Who is the leader is not the problem. When the situation comes to overthrow the BJP and form an alternative government,

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Horrors of a Plunder Revealed

As the masses in the country are suffering from extreme deprivation, under the dark shadows of unemployment and no earnings even to meet the basic needs, there comes the horrific revelation that under Ayushman Bharat, 7.5 lakh beneficiaries were registered with a single mobile phone number. According to the CAG report tabled in the Parliament, insurance claims for fresh treatment were paid against 88,670 already dead persons. There is no exposure on who has been paid the money as it has not gone to the beneficiaries.

In fact from Ayushman Bharat to Dwarka Expressway, there have been seven scams that have been brought to light by the CAG. In reply, there is nothing but silence. The money that belongs to people, returns of their toil, which they pay as taxes, has been squandered, reports CAG.

There have been serious irregularities spotted in the audit of the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) health insurance scheme. The Comptroller and Auditor General of India has revealed that Rs 6.97 crore was paid for the treatment of 3446 patients. All these patients receiving the care and getting treated are actually non-existent, since in the database, they all have been long dead.

The scheme was started in 2018. It was meant to give succor to poor and helpless in rural and urban areas for gaining their health back. During the performance audit, the heading carries the information, "Treatment of beneficiary shown as 'died' during earlier claim/treatment, the CAG identified that patients earlier shown as 'died' in TMS (the transaction management section of the scheme) continued to avail treatment under the scheme". The audit noted that there were 3,903 such claims. Madhya Pradesh had 403 such patients for whom Rs 260,09,723 were paid for their treatment. Such reports have

been available from other states as well. According to the guidelines, if a death is there after admission in the hospital, and that too before discharge, payment to the hospital is made only after audit. "During the desk audit (in July 2020), audit had reported to National Health Authority (NHA) that the IT system (TMS) was allowing pre-authorisation request of the same patient who was earlier declared dead under the same system availed under the scheme. NHA while acknowledging the audit comment, stated in July, 2020, that necessary check(s) have been put in place on April 22, 2020 to ensure that PM-JAY ID of any patient who has been shown as 'died' in TMS is disabled for availing further benefit under the scheme," said CAG report.

According to the report, when the CAG flagged that the necessary checks were not followed, the NHA stated in August 2022 that

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"back date of admission is allowed in the system for various operational reasons". The reply of the CAG over the explanation was that "the reply was not tenable, as pre-authorization initiation, claim submission and final claim approval by the State Health Authority for 'beneficiaries already shown as died during treatment earlier, indicate flaws in application and make it susceptible to misuse at user level.'" The faults in the database of AB-PMJAY include invalid names, unrealistic dates of birth, duplicate health IDs and unrealistic family sizes, the government's auditor said in a report tabled in Parliament.

Amidst the saga of plunder pours out, another one comes tumbling down. According to the CAG report, it has been revealed that the money meant for the pensions was spent on the publicity campaign of the Swachh Bharat Fortnight in 19 states.

Even the old age people, the widows and the

physically challenged people who were entitled to pensions from the rural development ministry were not spared as the money meant for them was diverted and spent on the publicity of some other schemes of some other department.

According to reports released by the government's auditor earlier this month titled 'Toll Operations of National Highways Authority of India in Southern India', toll collection at five toll plazas led to an "undue burden" of Rs 132.05 crore on commuters. For this report, the CAG conducted an audit of 41 randomly selected toll plazas in five southern Indian states.

Among the other findings are the allegations revolving around the Dwarka Expressway and Ayodhya development project, besides the Bharatmala Pariyojana. The Centre's flagship road development scheme, Bharatmala Pariyojana and the cost of its construction has doubled to over Rs 32 crore per km from Rs 15.37 crore per km, according to the CAG report on 'Implementation of Phase-1 of Bharatmala Pariyojana' released last month.

About the flaws in process of tender, no detailed project report was submitted. Rs 3,500 crore was diverted from the Escrow accounts. There were no safety consultants appointed. In its audit of the tourism ministry's Swadesh Darshan scheme, the CAG pointed out irregularities in the 'Ayodhya Development project', which the Opposition cited to allege that the project is "riddled with scams".

Money has been issued to contractors who are not even registered. GST payments are coming their way. Who are these people? What are they doing? How come the tendering process is so flawed?

These were the revelations made by the CAG based on audits and tabled in the Parliament, not any random allegations.

Independence Day...

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the leaders in our team will meet and take a decision. Let's create a common minimum program. Let's lay down the guidelines for how the government works."

D. Raja while responding to another question, said, "Prime Minister Modi is talking about making two

crore women Lakshathipati. Women will not believe this. He vowed once that let us protect our daughters and make our daughters study! What is the fate of daughters today? Why does PM Modi not open his mouth about the brutality that happened to women wrestlers and mothers of Manipur?

BJP has a majority in Parliament. In spite of that, why has the bill to provide appropriate reservation for women in Parliament and legislatures not been passed into law? Will the Prime Minister come forward to pass that bill and give due reservation to women? D. Raja questioned.

Picketing at Union government offices all over state for 3 days

The state council meeting unanimously resolved to picket the Union government offices in every district, taluk capitals and industrial centres condemning the Union government for its pro corporate, anti people

detrimental policies which are responsible for manifold price rise, increasing unemployment, disturbing the unity of the people, forfeiting rights of the state governments, imposing Hindi on the non Hindi speaking people, destroying the country by selling the public sector properties and deciphring funds of the public sector banks by writing off the corporate loans.

CPI DELEGATION IN VIOLENCE RAVAGED MANIPUR

A high level delegation of the Communist Party of India led by general secretary and former member of Parliament D Raja is in violence affected Manipur. The entire state of Manipur is in flames for more than three months now and people in the state are under great distress. Other members of the delegation are party national council secretaries Binoy Viswam MP, Dr K Narayana, Rama Krushna Panda and Asomi Gogoi, senior CPI leader from Assam. The delegation reached Imphal on August

21, 2023 and met the victims of violence to share their grief since entire state of Manipur stands ravaged. On August 22 the delegation visited various relief camps in Churachandpur and Moirang and listened to the grievances of people forced to live in relief camps. The delegation assured them all support. Loss of lives, destruction of property and displacements had been heart wrenching.

In Moirang, the delegation paid respects to Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose at INA War

Memorial.

The delegation will leave Manipur on August 24.

The delegation called on Governor Anusuiya Uikey and appraised her of the ground reality.

On August 23, the delegation took part in the 75th Foundation Day meeting of the party, recalling CPI leader Jan Neta Hijam Irabot's contribution to the unity of Manipur remains unparalleled.



Call to Unite against Communal Forces: J&K AIPSO



CPI national secretariat member Azeez Pasha and national executive member Annie Raja at AIPSO meeting

All India Peace and Solidarity Organisation (AIPSO) has called upon all peace loving progressive and democratic forces of the country to come together and fight against all those bent upon polarizing people on communal lines for electoral

benefits. The call was made from a platform of AIPSO, which organised a public function in Jammu on August 20, 2023 to spread the message of strengthening brotherly bonds among different communities.

Rakesh Sharma, general

secretary of AIPSO welcomed the participants.

Addressing the function Harchand Singh Bhatt, general secretary of AIPSO assured the gathering that people of India are in solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He said

Madhavi Rampal

that the people of Jammu and Kashmir have great history of patriotism and have fought for the development and progress of Jammu and Kashmir and for the country. He demanded that article 370 of the Constitution of India

maintenance of peace is essential for the development and progress of the world.

Roshan Lal Moudgil, vice-president of AIPSO expressed serious concern about the ongoing conflict among Russia and Ukraine and said that it is impacting the world economy adversely.

Former Rajya Sabha



be restored immediately and free and fair elections in J&K be held as soon as possible. He further said that

member Azeez Pasha said that democratic process should be restored

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What the Others Say...

The failure of hope

Hope is what humans use to define the future: the promise of a better tomorrow that makes life bearable even when the present is infused with suffering. Assaults on the possibility of hope are therefore the unkindest of cuts. The recent incident in Nanguneri town in Tamil Nadu's Tirunelveli district, where a Dalit teenager and his sister were brutally hacked by schoolmates belonging to an intermediate dominant caste is demonstrative of the failure of hope for a whole generation of a community living on the margins. In this case, teenagers, all caste Hindus and schoolmates of the boy and his sister, barged into the house of the siblings in a Dalit locality and attacked them, leaving them lying in a pool of blood. The attack was said to be revenge for the Dalit boy daring to give a complaint against his classmates for relentlessly harassing him as being 'lower-caste'. The school then issued a warning to those whom he had complained against. Angered by this, three of the boys from the intermediate community attacked the siblings on the night of August 9. While the boy had to have a complex hand surgery, his sister continues to be hospitalised. The attackers and their associates have been arrested and lodged in the government observation home.

It is the unceasing nature of caste hatred, how caste pride is being infused in generation after generation that fells the hope of a better, caste-free society. Clearly, the much-touted Dravidian Model inspired by Periyar, to overcome caste hegemony and facilitate inclusion of all citizens in development, has not been uniform in implementation. So far, attempts to handle caste conflict have only been band-aids to violent outbursts, and a consistent effort to address the root of the problem has been lacking. The government has now established a one-man commission headed by retired judge K Chandru to suggest steps to stamp out caste differences among students. It would be a pity if Nanguneri does not serve as a wake-up call; a catalyst for destroying caste

hierarchies, restoring peace and equality, and, hope.

Courtesy: The Hindu

Three in one

Elections are around the corner in three states with rich resources and poor people — Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh. All three have rich mineral deposits. All three have major illegal mining problems, including crippling sand mining in Rajasthan. All three have severe ecological crises centring around illegal felling of trees, polluted rivers, and flattening of hills. MP and Rajasthan have high outbound migration rates. All three have been for decades in the bottom 10 on the state per capita income list. All three remain in the bottom 10 on multidimensional poverty measures, although there are improvements. A third of the population in all three states are deprived of nutrition; 22 per cent of MP's people don't have access to drinking water; in Rajasthan, the percentage of people deprived of housing has increased.

Areas surrounding the mining sectors have typically the poorest people, largely tribal communities who form 7-9 per cent of these states' population, and are mining's low-skill labour; their livelihood and nutrition needs are further stymied by restricted access to forests. Agriculture remains the lifeline for all three states even as farming delivers steadily dwindling incomes, and there's less arable land and water. Governments in all three states appear to find it impossible to lift them out of edge-of-poverty levels on health, education and incomes, despite the gains made.

Rajasthan recently launched welfare policies for underprivileged and app-based unorganised workers. Laudable initiatives, these are however limited measures for any government unable to create meaningful local employment opportunities for the long term. Tourism is a key sector for Rajasthan. Covid was a cruel blow but fact remains that growth in services has mostly been in low-wage, low-productivity forms in the informal sector. Central India states should learn from the competition between Karnataka and Tamil Nadu to get big ticket industrial investment. Industry and industrial employment are tickets to a better future. Pity these issues barely figure in politicians' promises or voters' demands.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Doctors Can Play Positive Role in Correcting Social Aberrations

Recent happenings in several parts of the country have shaken the consciousness of saner elements in the society. At the time of independence, education level was very low, poverty was at its peak, GDP was a mere Rs 2.7 lakh crore for a population of 34 crore which accounted for nearly three per cent of world's total GDP. At that time the people of India chose to adopt a Constitution based on secularism and democracy. This was despite that there were large scale communal riots and biggest ever migration of population in the world at the time of partition. These events did not deter people's decision for a harmonious society. Barring a few incidents in between, people of the country have lived together without any hatred towards others since then.

Now, when we have grown in all spheres and are aspiring to be a five-trillion economy a section of our people are surcharged on communal lines and hatred against others and have developed bias and prejudices in their minds. This mentality which a section of the society has developed is against the very concept of humanism that India has always stood for.

The people are being carried away by the bigotry, false propaganda and manufactured history. Hatred against others based on caste, religion, tribes, ethnicity can lead to serious repercussions. It leads to loss of empathy and compassion for others. History is on record that over 25 lakh people died during communal riots at the time of partition of India. They belonged to all the three

communities, the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims.

Hatred breeds mistrust which gets further aggravated into violence against each other. We witnessed it in 1984 during the anti-Sikh riots, anti-Muslim pogrom in Gujarat in 2002. Similar situation developed in Kashmir when minority Kashmiri pandits were forced to migrate under terrorist threat and state government's attitude.

What is happening in India at present is therefore not a new phenomenon but a continuation of what such forces have been trying to do in the past. There is a systematic campaign against the minorities who are being perceived as a threat to the majority 80 per cent population of Hindus. Myths like the appeasement of Muslims, they grow like mushrooms and marry four wives and they would soon overtake the Hindu population are injected into the minds of the people.

This hate campaign lacks logic or evidence. These absurd ideas are spread through electronic TV media, social media, print media and also whisper campaigns. Several TV serials which are said to be historical serials are in a very subtle manner being used to spread falsehood and hatred.

Women and children are the worst sufferers in such situations. Woman's body has been used as a tool in the conflicts. Incident of Manipur where women were paraded naked and molested is to be seen with aversion, anger and as a reflection of serious aberration in our social order. State's complete insensitivity to the situation raises scepticism

Dr Arun Mitra

whether these events have been well planned with some ulterior motive under the state patronage.

Hate campaigns do not stop on their own. Now there have been engineered communal riots in Haryana. The hate campaigners are roaming around free while the victims are being persecuted. There are similar incidents in UP, Delhi and other parts of the country. If not checked right now, this can lead to large scale violence of the level of Gujarat or Manipur.

The forces who spearhead such hate campaigns always experiment as to how they can win over masses to their side. The incident of statue of Lord Ganesha drinking milk throughout the country in 1995 was a very successful trial. This message spread across the country in no time even though there was no social media network at that time. It stopped instantaneously when it was felt that the whole myth would be exposed. It is to be noted that violence in Gujarat occurred after that. It is astonishing that such unprecedented violence took place in the land of Mahatma Gandhi.

Doctors can play a positive role in containing such situations. As the custodians of health of the society doctors are duty bound to speak and call spade a spade. They have to come out and make outreach programmes to preach harmony, love, brotherhood and sisterhood. Doctors can be a great instrument in developing

confidence among the aggrieved in such situations.

Viktor Frankl, an Austrian psychiatrist, who was a holocaust survivor, did a great job to motivate prisoners in the Nazi concentration camps to never lose hope for a better future. With his persistent efforts he was able to save many from dying and survive after Hitler lost the war. Our voice matters but our silence can be intriguing and dereliction of duty.

Despite continued threats by the hate campaigners and the dubious role of the state, there is a change. Many scientists who were till date quiet, have started challenging the myths and unscientific ideas. The doctors who clapped and banged thaalies have now realised that that was not the scientific way to get rid of the Covid. Ultimately we had to fight out the pandemic at the cost of 1,600 doctors' lives. No amount of gaumutra or cow dung campaign worked. Many doctors understand this, but now is the time that they should develop courage to speak.

Hate campaigns have to be countered both politically as well as at societal levels. Doctors have not to sit quiet but find out means to bring the country out of this imbroglio. Doctors can communicate with their

patients and in soft tone talk of love and compassion which is a part of our profession. Then follow up with them in their language. We must not shirk to identify the forces, which are out to disturb harmony.

We have to understand that such violence is an epidemic health problem and thus plan as we do for other diseases.

Primary prevention approach: To stop situation from getting worse and stop violence before it starts to happen.

Secondary prevention: To target the at-risk populations and underlying risk factors.

A collective effort is needed because violent behaviour is contagious process and has to be dealt with in a similar manner. Social harmony is to be promoted through emphasizing love, sympathy, empathy and care for others. Expose the falsehood being spread. Talk on logic and evidence. Be humble to the vulnerable and deprived and be firm against the fringes in our society that are trying to disturb the delicate equilibrium of social harmony in our country.

It is time we break the silence!

Never whisper in the presence of wrong!

CPI Congratulates ISRO

Communist Party of India general secretary **D Raja** congratulated the scientists, engineers and workers and in particular the team that made India and all Indians feel proud at the successful landing of Chandrayaan-3 on Moon.

D Raja pointed out that the best investment for our country is in education and promoting scientific temper. We must prioritise them for the benefit of humanity.

Tamil Nadu State Conference of BKMU

Pledge to Defeat BJP in 2024 Elections



BKMU general secretary Gulzar Singh Gorla inaugurating the conference

The city of Rajapalayam in Virudunagar district of Tamil Nadu was witness to the spectacular and mammoth public meeting of more than 25,000 agricultural workers converging on the grounds of Rajapalayam named in honour of Comrade P Sethuraman. This marked the massive culmination of the state conference of the Tamil Nadu Agricultural Workers Union held for three days from July 28 to 30, 2023. R Mutharasan, CPI Tamil Nadu state council secretary and Gulzar Singh Gorla, BKMU general secretary addressed the public meeting. The irresistible zeal and enthusiasm of the participants only demonstrated the unquestionable faith on the organization and the

ideology that leads it.

The seething rage against the policies of the BJP, the incense anger against the apparent apathy of the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the decisive determination to overthrow the noxiously casteist BJP were evidently displayed in the uproaring response of the crowd to the speeches of leaders. This crowd should send shivers down the spine of the BJP, for this is the beacon of the rural proletariat that will lead the political fight against the BJP shoulder to shoulder with the working class. T Ramasamy, former MLA presided over the public meeting.

N Periasamy former MLA and president of Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union (BKMU), G PalaniSamy, former MLA,

N Periyasamy

M Selvaraj MP, P Lingam, former MP, K Marimuthu MLA and DMK MLAs, ARR Srinivasan and S Thangapandian also addressed the gathering.

The 13th conference of Tamil Nadu Agricultural Workers Union started with the traditional flag hoisting by the veteran leader of the union G Palanisamy, former MLA on July 28 amidst thunderous sloganeering by over 1,000 delegates. The beats of 'parai' reverberated the air. 'Parai', the drums that have the roots in folklore is the integral part of the lives of the rural masses in Tamil Nadu. Beating 'parai' historically means beating against the shame and servile, beating against the oppression. Parai is

considered the cultural empowerment of the common masses. The high decibel synchronized with the mood of the conference. The classical Nadaswaram too accompanied the celebrations.

The red flag march of the office bearers of the union from Villupuram where the 12th Conference was held was received by veteran leader Thanjai G Krishnan. Memorial torches brought from Sivagiri and Ramanathapuram by K Chellaiah, M Thangavelu and P Ponnusamy were received by the general secretary of BKMU Gulzar Singh Gorla and K Samudram.

P Lingam, former MP and secretary of the reception committee rendered the formal welcome address. K

Thangaman former MLA and president of Tamil Nadu Agriculture Workers Union, P Padmavathy former MLA, vice presidents of the union V P Palanisamy, A L Rasu, S Pongodi constituted the presidium of the conference. Gulzar Singh Gorla inaugurated the conference. In his impressive inaugural address in English, translated by A Ramamurthy in Tamil, Gulzar Singh Gorla painted a picture of the dangerous policies of the BJP government that have played havoc in the lives of the agricultural workers and the small and medium farmers of this country. He emphasized the need for the agricultural workers to prepare for a political fight along with the working class to defeat BJP in the coming general elections.

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CPI Tamil Nadu state council secretary R Mutharasan greeting the conference

DU Students Protest Against Fee Hike

The Delhi University (DU) arbitrarily without consulting the students Unions has increased the fees for entrance examinations and courses. The students' unions have openly come out against the hike in fees and they organised a one-day strike demanding reduction of the registration fees for entrance-based courses.

Several student organisations gathered in front of Arts Faculty, Delhi University and organised a protest demonstration against the university administration's inability to solve the discrepancy in the registration fees for entrance-based courses for Other Backward Castes (OBC) and Economically Weaker Section (EWS) categories. They also raised the issue of fee hike in several colleges of DU and protested against it. The students' organisations that the registration fees for OBC category has been set at Rs 750, while the registration fees for the EWS category is Rs 300. The OBCs have been oppressed culturally, socially, and educationally for centuries. Can they equate them to the general category?

The students' organisations have demanded that the registration fees for OBC students be decreased to Rs 300, and the university administration apologise for the inconvenience caused to the students. Apart from that, they have demanded that the registration fees for the unreserved students be reduced to Rs 500. A Vice-Chancellor, who cannot differentiate between OBC and general category, does not deserve to be put in charge of a university and should apologise publicly. The students have also demanded that the administration refund the extra fees that that has been

collected from the students.

The increase in entrance fee is not the only issue that has drawn flak from the students. The other issue raised by the students participating in the hunger strike was the fee hike in several colleges of Delhi University. Many colleges, including Ramjas College, St Stephen's College, Sri Venkateswara College and SGTB Khalsa College, are revising their fee structures from the current academic year, citing shortage of funds.

The colleges have introduced a hike ranging from Rs 2,000 to Rs 8,000. In Gargi College, the fee for BA (Hons) Business Economics has been

the entrance process, effectively undermining the very purpose of public funded education. We therefore demand that you address these issues at the soonest.

Academics express solidarity with Sabyasachi Das

Ashoka University has been criticised for its handling of the situation, as the varsity had publicly distanced itself from Sabyasachi Das's paper after the political backlash. There have been numerous violations of academic freedom in universities and colleges across India. But the Ashoka teaching community's response to



increased to Rs 41,220 from the previous amount of Rs 26,875. As per the guidelines of the University Grants Commission (UGC) draft notification 2017, the central universities and colleges were asked to follow the 70:30 funding formula, where 30 per cent was the internal revenues of universities and colleges.

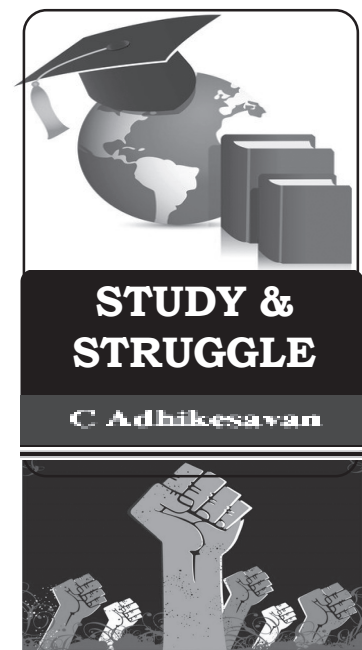
These attacks on social justice will have far reaching implications, as the online computerised examination, fee hike combined with the other arbitrary rules will effectively exclude a large portion of students from marginalised sections from

Sabyasachi Das's resignation deserves praise.

In perhaps the first of its kind, the academic community of an Indian university—that too a private one—is prepared to go on strike for the cause of academic freedom. It should be regarded as a significant moment in the history of higher education in India as academic freedom has never been an issue important enough for teachers or students to take this extreme step of halting their work.

The members of the academic fraternity, strongly

condemn the forced 'resignation' of Das, Assistant Professor in the Department of Economics, Ashoka University. Das's paper 'Democratic Backsliding in the World's Largest Democracy' which analysed the probability of electoral manipulation by the BJP in the 2019 elections came under significant flak from the party. The University issued a statement dissociating itself from the research. Following this, from what has emerged in the public domain, the Governing Body decided to 'evaluate' the 'merit' of his paper. Dr Das subsequently resigned. It is clear from this sequence of events that what was at stake was not the academic merit of his paper, but the threat it posed to the ruling party. There has been no detailed academic counter to this paper, only ad hominem attacks in the



statement asking for a charter on academic freedom created in 2021 to be implemented, including a committee on academic freedom.

The students and teachers of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) protested in 2016 after its students were attacked during a protest. But after that we have seen how academics watched anxiously while their colleagues were being attacked, penalised, and even jailed to defend their right to academic freedom.

The JNU incident was treated more as a political reaction to a political attack even when we know that it was essentially a matter of academic freedom. Students like Kanhaiya Kumar, Umar Khalid, Anirban Bhattacharya, Rama Naga and others were attacked for having organised a meeting at the campus on the subject of Kashmir. However, beyond its strong and vocal protest, we have not seen the teaching community convey to the authorities that teaching is meaningless if academic freedom is compromised. So, if a teacher is persecuted for his research, teaching cannot go on as usual.

It is this step that makes the protest by Ashoka University's academic community extraordinary. It centres the question of academic freedom in a way not done before. Ashoka University's academic community needs to be supported for its spirited defence of Sabyasachi Das.

PM's Independence Day Speech

A Smokescreen of Ground Reality

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech is neither evidence-based nor fact-based, but is just a reflection of his rhetorical dexterity and adroitness. His pompous claims of performance cannot be corroborated with facts and figures but rather a smokescreen of the ground reality especially of the suffering of the masses.

He decried corruption/nepotism, dynastic politics, and appeasement as three sins and called for getting rid of them. But the question is: if he is against dynastic politics why he did not stop the same practice in his own party? Dynastic politics is not confined to Gandhi family only. It is nurtured by many politicians in India irrespective of political affiliation. He is trying to appease majoritarian Hindus by exploiting their religious sentiments.

Further, if any corrupt leader joins his party, they will suddenly become clean and will be exempted from all punishment. What is reprehensible is that provision of electoral bonds is helping the ruling party to get funds in an opaque manner. Even a major portion of political donations goes to the BJP.

Corruption and nepotism have grown more during Modi's regime as revealed by the Corruption Perception Index. India is ranked 85th among 180 countries in Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI), 2021. In the 2020 Index, India's position has worsened by six slots from 80 to 86.

Based on the CAG report, some opposition

leaders say PM Modi-led Centre "has broken all the records of corruption over the past 75 years". The CAG of India, in an audit report on the 'Implementation of Phase-1 of Bharatmala Pariyojana' from 2017-18 to 2020-21 has

highlighted the cost escalation in constructing the 29.06 km Dwarka Expressway from Rs 18 crore per km to Rs 250 crore per km.

Similarly, under the Bharatmala Pariyojana, 75,000 km of roads were to be constructed at the rate of Rs 15 crore per km. However, the Modi government increased the cost to Rs 25 crore per km, thereby committing a scam worth Rs 7.5 lakh crore in the project.

What is rarely discussed is that banks have written off bad loans worth Rs 14.56 lakh crore in the last nine

*Dr Santosh Kumar
Mohapatra*

financial years starting 2014-15. Out of that written-off amount, only 13-15 per cent is recovered. Then who are the beneficiaries? Is it not a humongous scam by another name? Can anyone get off scot-free without the support of the ruling class?

PM Modi compared various expenditures with the previous UPA government in nominal terms. But nothing is compared in

debt, which was Rs 374,484 crores in 2013-14 has doubled to Rs 7,48,895 crores in 2022-23.

India's public health expenditure is one of the lowest in the world as a percentage of GDP. Education has become unaffordable for larger sections of society due to privatization. India's tax-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world with the burden of taxation falling on the poor. In its report published on January 15, 2023, Oxfam India claimed that indirect

came to power, India was ranked the 10th best economy in the world and today it is fifth and will become third-largest economy in the next five years. This is a mathematical certainty. India's emergence as the world's third-largest economy in this decade has been forecast for quite some time now — whichever party forms the next government. However, India has been the third-largest economy in terms of purchasing power parity since 2011 too.

What is disconcerting is that in the 1980s, China's economy was the same as that of India. But now China's economy is more than five times. If we compare the nine years of the Modi government (2014-15 to 2022-23) to the 10 years average performance of the UPA government (2004-05 to 2013-14), the performance in terms of GDP growth has been somewhat subdued in the Modi era compared to the UPA.

The new data release shows that GDP growth during the UPA years averaged 6.7 per cent during UPA. But the old series had pegged these at about 8.1 per cent and 7.46 per cent respectively in UPA-I and UPA-II. In comparison, the current government has witnessed an average GDP growth rate of around 5.7 per cent only during nine years of its term.

While trumpeting supercilious growth, the Prime Minister should not forget that India ranks very low in per capita income. The ignominious fact is that India ranks 139th in the world

India's public health expenditure is one of the lowest in the world as a percentage of GDP. Education has become unaffordable for larger sections of society due to privatization. India's tax-GDP ratio is one of the lowest in the world with the burden of taxation falling on the poor. In its report, Oxfam India claimed that indirect taxes are being taken disproportionately from poor and middle class as compared to the rich

absolute or nominal terms. Inflation is to be taken into account. Every expenditure should be compared as a percentage of GDP. Our budget size is declining as a percentage of GDP even less than half of many developed countries. But Prime Minister Narendra Modi did not tell how the debt has grown and now seems to be unsustainable.

The Central government's debt was Rs 58.6 lakh crore (52.2 per cent of GDP) as of March 31, 2014, which went up by 174 per cent to Rs 155.6 lakh crore (57.1 per cent of GDP) as of March 31, 2023. More importantly, the government's external

taxes are being taken disproportionately from the poor and the middle class as compared to the rich.

The Prime Minister said that our inflation is low compared to other countries. But retail inflation soared to 15 months high of 7.44 per cent in July from June. Food inflation that cripples the poor has hit double digits. India's inflation outpaced major economies and rose faster than many large economies as well as key emerging marketing peers.

The Prime Minister trumpeted India's growth story and said that in 2014, when his government first

in terms of per capita income, which means it is below 138 countries even Bangladesh. Similarly, in terms of per capita income (purchasing power parity), India ranks 127th in the world, which means it is below 126 countries.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the world is watching us because of our commitment. But the reality is different as India is home to the largest number of hungry, poor and homeless people in the world. Around 97 crore people are deprived of healthy food. Crores of people do not know when and where from their next meal will come.

India's reputation is affected in foreign countries as it ranks abysmally in various international indexes. India ranks human development index 2021-22 (132nd out of 191 countries), World Happiness Index 2023 (126th out of 149 countries), World Hunger Index 2022 (107th out of 116 countries), World Peace Index 2022 (136th out of 163 countries), and Sustainable Development Index 2022 (120 out of 163 countries) indicate that growth does not reflect improvement in the standard of living of the people.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also talked of women-led development. But India has one of the lowest female labour participation rates. India ranks abysmally at 135 out of 146 countries in its Global Gender Gap (GGG) Index for 2022. India also ranks 95th out of 129 countries in a new gender equality index that measures global gender equality looking at aspects such as poverty, health, education, literacy, political representation, and equality

in the workplace. Further, over a 15 per cent rise in crime against women in 2021 portends how women are treated shabbily in society.

It is true that there is no easy method to solve all problems. But can any ruling class talk of 'Amritkaal' when crime and suicide, are growing and society is torn asunder with the institution of marriage crumbling? The NCRB-2021 notes that the burden of deaths by suicide has increased in India by 7.2 per cent from 2020 with a total of 1,64,033 people dying by suicide in 2021. The report follows a 2021 Lancet study that noted India reports the highest number

demography, democracy and diversity. In the past, he has described Indian democracy as a mother of democracy. But now all pillars of democracy are weakened. The pro-ruling class people are entrusted with the responsibility of various important institutions.

Enforcement Directorate, CBI, and some other investigating agencies are used against opposition and curb dissent. Society is polarised and problems of religious fanaticism, linguistic antagonism, and communal skirmishes are looming large and threaten the unity and integrity of the nation

an important ingredient of the success and survival of democracy. But the credibility of Indian media is now questionable. India is ranked abysmally 161 out of 180 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. India was ranked 140 in 2014. It means India's position has declined by 21 slots since 2014.

Politics has become only rich people's game. Democracy has been confined to only the right to suffrage. Money and muscle power are playing a dominant role in electoral battle. There is growing hatred against critics and criminalization of politics.

lakh posts are lying vacant in central government departments as on March 1, 2021. Central PSU jobs have declined by over 2.7 lakhs in the past decade. Over 2.4 lakh posts remain vacant in A, B, and C posts of Railways.

The theme for Independence Day 2023 is 'Nation First, Always First'. But now rich, powerful corporate behemoths are treated first. The system is rigged to favour them at the cost of the poor. The corporate tax has been cut, wealth taxes are abolished, real interest rates are kept low, and stock markets are manipulated to help corporate behemoths to amass wealth. Further, while the rich and powerful have kept their black money in tax havens to hide their ill-gotten wealth and evade taxes, savers are made to pay taxes on hard-earned savings and even on insurance premiums.

The rich getting richer reflects that how the government is taking the side of the rich. The 2022 World Inequality Report showed that the gap between the rich and the poor in India is at a historical high, with the top 10 per cent holding 57 per cent of national income — more than the average of 50 per cent under British colonial rule (1858-1947).

The Prime Minister urged Indians to re-elect him in the next 2024 Lok Sabha election. But he did not tell what promises he had made before the 2014 elections and how much same have been realized. Not a single promise of the economic front has been fulfilled except resorting to publicity blitzkrieg.

(The author is an Odisha-based economist and social thinker)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the situation in Manipur is improving. Each time, for any crisis, he says things will be solved. But the responsibility of his government is to prevent such happening. Nobody has seen tomorrow. In the long run, everybody is dead. Those who are killed will not get back their lives nor who are raped will get back their dignity

of suicide deaths in the world.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the situation in Manipur is improving. Each time, for any crisis, he says things will be solved. But the responsibility of his government is to prevent such happening. Nobody has seen tomorrow. In the long run, everybody is dead. Those who are killed will not get back their lives nor who are raped will get back their dignity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi highlighted the nation's unique distinction as the world's largest democracy and cited that we are lucky to have

especially our cultural diversity.

Democracy is sliding in India as India is dubbed as an electoral autocracy. India ranks 108th in the Electoral Democracy Index of the V-dem Democracy Report 2023. India has also been named in the top 10 autocratising countries in the last 10 years. India is also ranked 46th on the 2021 Global Democracy Index of the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU) and has been classified as a flawed democracy. India also ranks awfully at 119 out of 165 countries on the Human Freedom Index.

Freedom of the press is

According to a report released by the ADR, 43 percent of the present Lok Sabha MPs have a criminal background, and the candidates with a criminal background have more chances to win the election. Further, the average assets of Lok Sabha MPs are around Rs 20 crore while that of Rajya Sabha MPs is Rs 55 crore.

Prime Minister also said that he has full faith in the power of youth. But many youth are roaming on the street without jobs and working in IT cells of various political parties where they are used to create hatred against others. Around 9.79

Petrol at Rs 15 per litre Proposal before Election 2024 is Another Jumla

Foodgrains for Industries Would Ruin Food Security for Poor

In a rally organized in Pratapgarh on July 4, 2023 in the poll-bound state Rajasthan, the Union minister of road transport and highways of India Nitin Gadkari, has said that an innovative proposal has been made to reduce the price of petrol to Rs 15 per litre. On that day petrol was being sold in Rajasthan at Rs 113.48 per litre, and hence attracted the attention of the people who understood Gadkari's statement implying that if the Modi government returns to power after the 2024 general election petrol will be sold at Rs 15 per litre.

Is it an election 'jumla' again? The intention behind this statement seems not only to attract all who use petrol but also the 70 per cent of the population who are dependent on agriculture for their livelihood is clear, since he also said that the petrol prices would be brought to Rs 15 a litre by producing ethanol from foodgrains and then blending it on an average 60 per cent in petrol. Through it, India would save a massive import expenditure of Rs 16 lakh crore that would be redirected towards the farmers' households.

There is a parallel from 2014 election campaign that turned out to be a 'jumla'. The BJP's prime minister candidate Narendra Modi had promised to bring back all the black money of Indians stashed in foreign banks and deposit Rs 15 lakh into every citizen's bank account. Later, party chief Amit Shah has said that it was a 'jumla'.

Dr Gyan Pathak

In 2018, an RTI was filed in the PMO asking for exact date when the money will be deposited, the PMO said that this cannot be considered 'information' under the rules of RTI. Now everyone knows that Modi government has utterly failed in bringing back the black money, and citizens can't even hope for the promised Rs 15 lakh in their accounts.

Then there are other issues involved, such as issue of ethanol blending. As per the 'Roadmap for Ethanol Blending in India by 2020-25', India intends to reach a blending of 20 per cent of ethanol by 2025-26. However, the government is even faster than its roadmap, on February 6, 2023, the Centre rolled out 20 per cent ethanol blending at select petrol pumps in 11 states and Union Territories as part of the programme to increase use of bio-fuels to cut emissions as well as dependence on foreign exchange-draining import of petroleum.

Ethanol is produced from sugarcane, foodgrains and other bio-sources. India gives subsidies for agricultural produce in the name of welfare of farmers and the poor people, but the Centre diverts huge amount of 'food subsidies' to industries. Poverty stricken people are left in the lurch and subsidies on their foodgrains are actually provided to the business and industries, a fact that cannot be said an 'honest' act for the common people.

There is a recent example of refusing even sale of rice

at Rs 34 per kilogram to Karnataka, the state where the Congress has thrown the BJP out of power. The new Congress government had announced 10 kg rice to all poor households, but the Modi government was not ready to provide the state the subsidized rice at Rs 20 a kg. The state government then asked for rice from free market scheme of the government at the rate of Rs 34 a kg. Even though Food Corporation of India (FCI), after initially agreed, finally refused to sell rice to the state even at the offered price of Rs 34 a kg intended to feed poor people in Karnataka.

As part of the politics, the Centre has even refused to supply food to some BJP ruled states to balance its act, to appear politically neutral, but it could not veil the cruelty of the government of refusing rice to the poor even at offered price of Karnataka at Rs 34 a kg, but supplied huge quantity of rice to industries for ethanol production at subsidized rate of Rs 20 per kg.

Some 81,044 tons of FCI rice was allocated in the ethanol production during ethanol supply year (December-November) 2020-21, as per the date presented by the Union ministry of consumer affairs, and it was priced at Rs 20 per kg. It should be noted that the foodgrains are procured from the farmers at unfair MSP rates for the purported purpose of food security, but was diverted to industries.

It should also be noted that the government fixes the prices of ethanol produced from different bio-sources. The Centre had priced the ethanol produced from rice and maize at Rs 51.55 per

litre during 2020-21 for which it had allocated over 81,000 tons of rice. It is simply a fraud against farmers and the people of the country when one procures foodgrains at very cheap MSP in the name of food security but actually divert it to industrial production.

Gadkari said that Rs 16 lakh crore to be saved from 60 per cent of blending would be transferred to farmer households, why his government is not transferring the profit already being made by ethanol production? Obviously, they don't intend to. They are promising they would do when prime minister Narendra Modi led BJP government would return to power for the third time. It is simply a cheating of the people of the country.

It is irony that the Centre is not even ready to give remunerative MSP to farmers, but promising them Rs 16 lakh crore if government reaches 60 per cent of ethanol blending. Centre's launching 20 per cent blending for 11 states and UTs now is now several months old, and all India 10 per cent average blending was achieved by June 2022. Government saved lakhs of crore rupees from import of oil, but where the money has gone? Of course, not to the farmers, since farmers are still agitating for a fair MSP and its legal guarantee, and the Modi government has been denying it.

Oil companies had procured 80.09 crore litres of ethanol up to January 30, 2023 for blending in petrol during 2022-23 and six crore litres of bio-diesel for blending with diesel during the year. However,

the profits went to big business and corporate houses, not farmers.

Prime minister Narendra Modi had promised doubling of farmers income by 2022, but it remains a dream. Even in the last crop season, many farmers were compelled to sell their potatoes and onions at Rs 1-2 per kg, which was a shame. Farmers continue suicides across the country. Poor in extreme poverty are going empty stomach. The latest Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) atlas of the World Bank says that 134 million people were under international poverty line in 2019 and the number exceeded tremendously during the Covid and 800 million people survived on five kg free rice. The atlas reveals that 68.5 per cent people in India that is 973 million were not able to afford healthy diet in 2021.

In this backdrop, the Centre not supplying food for the poor while procuring in the name of food security and diverting to industries at subsidised rate is unethical. The government intends to raise blending to 60 per is therefore dangerous for food security for the people, which Modi government intends to reach in his third term if comes to power after 2024 election.

Modi's three controversial farm laws that intended to bring corporates to farms, that was fought tooth and nail by the farmers, due to which Prime Minister Narendra Modi had to withdraw them should now be understandable what the government really wants. Farmers are still demanding remunerative MSP and its legal guarantee, and the people demanding subsidised food, but they are refused while industries are being supplied the same at subsidised rates.

Crisis in Our Democratic Structure under BJP Rule

“The BJP government is undermining the very democratic system in the country and prime minister Narendra Modi is serving the interests of corporate bosses,” said Communist Party of India national council secretary Binoy Viswam, MP, while addressing as chief guest the centenary celebrations of late Gujjula Yellamanda Reddy, former national president of Bharatiya Khet Mazdoor Union (BKMU).

The celebrations were inaugurated by Binoy Viswam in Bachchala Balaiah Kalyana Mandapam in Ongole of Prakasham district in the presence of CPI Andhra Pradesh state council secretary K Ramakrishna, A Rammurthy, national secretary of BKMU, Parakala Prabhakar, writer and political analyst, Jalli Wilson and P J Chandrashekar Rao former MLCs, Gujjula Eashwaraiyah CPI state secretariat member, Avula Eashwer, state general secretary of BKMU, on August 13, 2023.

Later a memorial lecture was held under the chairmanship of Gujjula Eashwaraiyah, CPI AP state secretariat member on ‘Indian Parliamentary Democracy: Election Reforms and Necessity of Proportional Representation Method in Elections’.

Binoy Viswam MP giving the memorial lecture stated that Modi has handed over Indian democracy into the hands of a few corporate forces. It is shameful that BJP and RSS which have

not participated in the freedom struggle are today posing themselves as patriots. RSS which had worked overtime to serve the interests of British imperialism is boasting as veteran of armed struggle.

Binoy Viswam also emphasised that the need of the hour is strengthening of parliamentary democracy, election reforms and above all adopting proportional representation method in the elections. People’s problems will be solved as and when common people enter Parliament and as well into legislative bodies. Nowadays the election system has gone into clutches of corporate forces. Contesting candidates are spending hundreds of crores of rupees.

Corporates are giving huge amounts to such candidates so that once elected they will work for the corporates’ benefits. Adanis and Ambanis are giving donations to ruling parties. Proportional representation method alone can bring the change in society. Atrocities, attacks, corruption, irregularities and murders will stop as and



AP state council secretary K Ramakrishna addressing the memorial meeting

when common people enter into legislative bodies. Leaders have to advance forward with the inspiration of Gujjula Yellamanda Reddy and bring change among people, Binoy Vishwam observed.

Parakala Prabhakar, writer and analyst, while addressing stated that India needs parliamentary democracy with debate. How three new agricultural Acts were approved in Parliament without debate? How the same Acts were scrapped without any debate. We do not need such government. The BJP government has come to power with mere 38 per cent votes and is playing game with lives of common people after coming to power. Our Indian economy is being dismantled with demonetisation.

People of this country

and parties should not remain passive towards the happenings in Manipur, Gujarat and Bihar. People have to develop questioning the anti-people policies of the government. People should have questioned and not remained silent while the central government waived off loans to the tune of Rs 15 lakh crores to the corporate houses. The Central government’s snatching away the powers of the states is nothing but deterioration of democracy.

Andhra Pradesh CPI state council secretary K Ramakrishna in his address stated that prior to Modi’s coming to power, India’s debt was mere Rs 55 lakh crores and in just ten years the debt amount has touched Rs 100 lakh crores. As per the orders of RSS, BJP is creating communal tension and riots. India is a citadel for various religions, cultures, castes, languages, regions, etc. Though Uttar Pradesh has 18 per cent minorities, surprisingly there is not even either single Muslim MP or MLA. This is clear indication of BJP’s hatred towards Muslim minorities. He also stated that centenary celebrations took place in Ongole, which is commendable.

K Ramakrishna pointed out that after Jaganmohan Reddy’s coming to power, development of the state has gone 10 years back. Exposing the anti-people policies of state and Central

governments, APCPI state council is organising bus yatra from August 17. Yatra will be flagged off from the gate of Vizag steel plant and culminate at Tirupathi with a huge public meeting. Centenary celebrations of Yellamanda Reddy will take place year long. K Ramakrishna appealed to party workers to march forward with his inspiration.

AIKS national president Ravula Venkaiah while addressing shared his experiences of 50 years working with Yellamanda Reddy who has launched many struggles of agricultural labourers and organised huge national and state level rallies of agricultural labourers. Though he got elected as MP and thrice as MLA, he did not own a house.

Gujjala Eashwaraiyah, party state secretariat member while addressing reminded that Yellamanda Reddy had resigned from the post of MP in the agitation for Vizag steel plant.

The seminar was also addressed by Ram Murthy, national secretary, BKMU, Avula Shekar, Ravindra, sons of Yellamanda Reddy, Ravulapalli Ravindranath president of AITUC, Sivareddy and Nagendra of AISF and AIYF, M L Narayana, district secretary, CPI, Konda Reddy, leader of CPI(M), DVN Swamy, leader of CPI (ML) among others.

– Ram Narsimha Rao



CPI leaders paying tributes to Com. Yellamanda Reddy

Re-evaluate Policy on Generic Medicines: CPI

Communist Party of India national council secretary Binoy Viswam MP has written the following letter on August 22, 2023 to Union minister of health and family welfare Dr Mansukh Mandaviya urging him to re-evaluate the policy on generic medicines:

I write this letter to you drawing your attention to a matter that significantly impacts the health and financial well-being of our citizens. Many sections of society have raised concern about the promotion of generic medicines over branded medicines, particularly about the directives issued by the National Medical Commission's board of ethics. The directives ask doctors to prescribe generic medicine, but they seem to be in contravention to our existing drug policies. It has been pointed out that if the government is genuinely inclined towards promoting generic medicines, the first step should be to limit or ban branded medicines. Without such a decisive action, chemists will be at discretion of selling any brand, undermining the very purpose of this directive.

I must emphasize that India, with its robust pharmaceutical industry, has been a leader in producing quality generic medicines. Our public sector units, like the Indian Drugs and Pharmaceuticals Ltd (IDPL), have consistently reduced the cost of treatment domestically and internationally. Unfortunately, these units now appear to be non-functional or considerably less active. Additionally, the difference in price between the maximum retail price (MRP) and the purchasing price of branded generics is alarmingly high. This not only burns a hole in the pocket of our citizens but also raises concerns about the profit margins and pricing strategies of pharmaceutical companies. I've also learnt that a report concerning the rationalization of trade margins in drugs was submitted in December 2015, but no substantive action seems to have been taken on the same.

Given the condition, I urge you to delve deep into this matter. Our primary responsibility is the well-being of our citizens. To that end, it is essential to re-evaluate our policies regarding generic medicines, strengthen our public sector pharmaceutical units, and reassess the pricing of branded generics. I hope these issues will find your consideration.

Call to Unite against Communal Forces...

From Page 04

immediately and statehood be granted to Jammu and Kashmir. He appealed to all the democratic and progressive forces to come forward unitedly to fight the policies of polarization and divide pursued by the BJP government.

Annie Raja, general secretary of National Federation of Indian Women, who recently visited Manipur to assess the situation said that what happened in the region is a black chapter in Indian history and demanded that peace should be restored immediately. She said that

a strict action must be taken against those involved in killings and damaging the property of people.

Among others who also addressed the event included senior National Conference leader and former minister Ajay Sadhotra, former Rajya Sabha member Sheikh Rehman, senior Congress leader Raman Bhalla, CPI(M) leader Hari Singh and others.

The meeting passed a resolution strongly condemning the ongoing violence in Manipur, where women had to face barbaric assault. The meeting demanded that the chief

minister of Manipur should immediately resign and peace be restored. Culprits should be strictly punished.

The meeting also condemned the government of Haryana for indulging in demolition of properties of a particular community and or indulging in imposing collective punishment.

The meeting was attended by many eminent personalities including lawyers, academics, civil society members and others.

While concluding the meeting, president of AIPSO J&K Ashwani Kumar gave vote of thanks.

Conference of BKMU...

From Page 06

N Periyasamy, the general secretary placed his report in the most succinct manner. His 60 minute long report captured the depth and dimension of the dangers and challenges that confront the agricultural workers. On the issues of denied livelihood which is economic terrorism and social oppression which is an affront to the Constitution, the agricultural workers under the banner of TNAWU are destined to lead a relentless fight against this and establish a society where their rights are ensured. This was the essence of the general secretary's report. The gripping and meaningful address set the tone of the conference.

V Amirthalingam, general secretary of All India Agricultural Workers Union, Balasundaram, general secretary of All India Agricultural Rural Workers Union, M Radakrishnan, general secretary of TN AITUC, P S Masilamani, general secretary of TN Farmers Union and M Veerapandian, general secretary of Tamil Nadu Oppressed People Rights Association greeted the delegate session. R Mutharasan, CPI Tamil Nadu state council secretary also addressed the delegate session.

As a part of the conference there was a seminar on Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act: Success and Challenges. T M Murthy, secretary of AITUC presided over. G Palanidurai, professor, Gandhi Gramin University, Vahidha Nizam and A Baskar Panchayat President, Tiruthurai poondi participated.

After very meaningful and constructive discussions and deliberations the general secretary summed up the report incorporating the suggestions placed by the delegates. The report was adopted unanimously. C Chandrakumar, treasurer placed the accounts which was also unanimously approved.

The delegate session ended with adoption of resolutions and constituting a state council of 101 members. The council met to elect a 21 member executive committee with N Periyasamy former MLA, as president, K Marimuthu MLA, P Padmavathy former MLA, A Varadarajan as vice presidents, A Baskar as general secretary, V P Palanisamy, J Prathaban and Su Mahendran as assistant secretaries and C Chandra Kumar as treasurer.

The delegate session came to end with vote of thanks rendered by the Virudunagar district secretary of the union A Varadarajan.

The conference resolved to mobilize agricultural workers and participate in the Gram Sabha meetings that will be held on August 15, 2023.

A resolution demanding minimum 200 days work with Rs600 as defined daily wage was unanimously adopted. The conference gave out a call to hold meetings at all levels to propagate the resolve and carry out campaigns, meetings and agitations to win the genuine demands.

The 13th State Conference, in essence sent out a firm and undisputed message that they demand their constitutional rights and not alms.

Countries with the Highest Unemployment Rate

In 2021, South Africa had the highest unemployment rate in the world, at 29.8 percent. Of the 10 countries with the highest unemployment rates, eight were in Sub-Saharan Africa.

What exactly is unemployment?

The unemployment rate is the number of people in the workforce currently looking for jobs but not working. This number does not include students and retirees, as they are not looking for work, nor does it include people who have given up on finding a job (known as discouraged workers). Comparing international unemployment rates can be problematic, however, as different countries use different methodologies when classifying unemployment. For example, Niger records the third lowest unemployment rate in the world, despite often being listed as the least developed country worldwide - this is because the majority of the population engage in subsistence farming, with very little opportunity for paid employment.

A major driver in unemployment in these countries is conflict. In particular, internally displaced persons (IDPs) want to work, but moving to another part of the country disrupts their business network and moves them into a local economy with different labour demand. Countries with low levels of economic development, as roughly indicated by a low GDP per capita, often have fewer labour market opportunities, leading to high

unemployment rates.

The statistic reflects the seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in member states of the European Union in June 2023. The seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in Spain in June 2023 was 11.7 percent. The unemployment rate represents the share of the unemployed in all potential employees available to the job market.

The unemployment rate is an important measure of a country or region's economic health, and despite unemployment levels in the European Union falling slightly from a peak in early

jobs in some of the countries which have particularly dire unemployment rates, creating a beacon of hope. However, some industries such as information technology, face the conundrum of a deficit of qualified workers in the local unemployed work force, and have to hire workers from abroad instead of helping decrease the local unemployment rates. This skills mismatch has no quick solution, as workers require time for retraining to fill the openings in the growing science-, technology-, or engineering-based jobs, and too few students choose degrees that would help them



2013, they remain high, especially in comparison to what the rates were before the worldwide recession started in 2008. This confirms the continuing stagnation in European markets, which hits young job seekers particularly hard as they struggle to compete against older, more experienced workers for a job, suffering under jobless rates twice as high as general unemployment.

Some companies, such as Microsoft and Fujitsu, have created thousands of

obtain these positions.

Worldwide unemployment also remains high, with the rates being worst in the Middle East and North Africa. Estimates by the International Labour Organization predict that the problem will stabilize in coming years, but not improve until at least 2017.

Indigenous national strike in Ecuador

The Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE)

backed by more than 53 social organizations, started a national indefinite strike in Ecuador to force the government to respond to a plea based on ten demands.

The strike occurred a year after Guillermo Lasso took office as the President of Ecuador, who was accused of not fulfilling his electoral campaign promises. In the recent history of Ecuador, the indigenous people only go to strike when their situation is desperate. Therefore, lord have mercy when it happens, it wouldn't be the first time the indigenous discontent would topple a government.

At the root of the strike lies the continuous increase of poverty and inequality in a country harshly beaten by the pandemic and years of liberal policies implemented

Diary of International Events
C. Adhikesavan

countries in the region to a very dangerous one.

The Indigenous petitions oppose the government neoliberal agenda, which includes freezing the fuel prices; a credit moratorium for more than 4 million people who are experiencing difficulties in repaying their debts; improving the precarious current working conditions; or preventing the privatization of state companies. During the second round of the 2021 presidential election, Lasso obtained the support of some indigenous organizations, what's more, Lasso's party contributed to and backed in the indigenous candidate in gaining the presidency of the Legislative. While it cannot be denied that at first the indigenous peoples and Lasso collaborated, this relationship gradually deteriorated.

Leonidas Iza, one of the most prominent leaders of the indigenous movement opposed Lasso's government from the beginning. He was on the front line of the protests against Lasso's predecessor, Lenin Moreno, in October 2019. At this time, a high toll was paid in lives - there were 11 deaths, over 1200 people injured, during the 10 days of the riots which broke out all over the country. In the aftermath, the Ombudsman Office created a Truth Commission that described the actions of the state forces as crimes against humanity. Back then, Lasso portrayed the protesters as vandals and criminals in public statements.

Democracy at Peril...

From Last Page

Ravula Venkaiah, National President, AIKS, said in his address that Kisans have launched long standing militant struggle and succeeded in their struggle. In the same way Vizag steel plant workers also will succeed in their struggle against privatisation.

Muppalla Nageshwera Rao, state assistant secretary, CPI, stated in his address that if there would have been members of left parties in the state assembly, they would have stopped the exploitation of natural resources. In forthcoming elections people have to defeat state and central governments.

JV Satyanarayana Murthy, state assistant secretary, CPI, while addressing stated that Modi's rule is good only for Ambanis and Adanis. Gangavaram port has been handed over to Adanis. Gangavaram people were displaced once at the time of construction of steel plant and second time again at the time of construction of the port. Government has closed the doors for fishing. People of Vizag will not keep quiet if Gangavaram port stops the raw materials to Vizag steel plant, JV Satyanarayana Murthy warned.

Akkineni Vanaja, national executive member,

CPI, Adinarayana, national Vice president and G Obulesu, state general secretary, AITUC, also addressed. Paidiraju, district secretary, CPI, welcomed guests. Ayodhya Ram, CITU, Mantri, Rajashekar, INTUC, KVV Prasad, state general secretary, AIKS, PHarnath Reddy, state secretariat member AJ Stalin, CPI, A Vimala, state working president, NFIW, Lenin Babu, Johnson Babu, state leaders of AIYF, AISF, Chandranayak, state general secretary, IPTA, Achyut Rao, district secretary, AITUC were also present. Audience was enthused with the cultural performance of IPTA squad.

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Violence in Manipur, a Major Public Health Issue: IDPD

The Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD) issued following statement on the situation in Manipur that we, the doctors associated with Indian Doctors for Peace and Development (IDPD), strongly condemn in unequivocal terms the unabated violence in Manipur for the last over three months. In a statement, IDPD president Dr Arun Mitra, general secretary Dr Shakeel Ur Rahman, president, Mnaipur chapter Dr Moirangthem Nara Singh together released the document that said the following:

In situations of conflict, women and children are always the worst affected. In this spree of violence, many people have lost their lives and livelihood; houses have been burnt/destroyed, thousands of people have been displaced and forced to live in refugee camps. The

incidents which started from May 3, 2023 continue unabated till date. This has taken toll on both physical and mental health of the people which will have long standing impact on their lives.

These happenings are mainly due to the glaring failure of both the Central and state governments. The Central government was silent for more than two and half months till a viral video came out in social media wherein it was brought to light the heinous atrocities committed. The Central government should come out with a full factual report on the on-going Manipur violence and proposed approaches to find a peaceful and lasting solution.

We strongly condemn all forms of violence, including armed conflicts, attacks on civilians, and human rights abuses in the region. We also

call upon the Central and state governments to facilitate a meaningful dialogue aimed at addressing the root causes of the conflict involving the all parties involved. We demand that the government of Manipur shall take such suitable steps towards ensuring accountability in a transparent manner for the innumerable and horrible human rights violations and promoting justice and reconciliation.

We emphasize the importance of upholding the rule of law and protecting the rights of all individuals, regardless of their ethnicity or religious background. We call for surrendering of arms held by civilians and at the same time demand that the military and state police should not be partial. Encourage the establishment of community-based conflict resolution mechanisms to address local

grievances and disputes. Advocate for the protection of women, children, and vulnerable populations, ensuring their safety and access to essential services.

Promote education and awareness programs that foster tolerance, respect for diversity, and understanding among communities in Manipur.

Support initiatives for economic development and job creation in the region to address underlying socio-economic issues. Advocate for the involvement of civil society organisations and local community leaders in the peace-building and reconciliation process. Promote sustainable development and environmental conservation efforts to address natural resource related conflicts in the region.

Indian Doctors for Peace and Development firmly believes that Violence of any

kind has no place in any civilized society anywhere in the world. In 1996 World Health Organization (WHO) Resolution at World Health Assembly (WHA), has declared violence a major and growing public health problem across the world. The Resolution talks of Sexual Violence and Collective Violence among the several other forms of violence that have damaging consequences for health. In terms of deaths (mortality) and physical illnesses, disabilities and mental anguish (morbidity); on healthcare services and health infrastructure; on access to basic services such as nutrition, water, shelter, sanitation and transportation.

It is high time that above mentioned steps are taken to safeguard health of the people, ensure peaceful life and promote development in the region.

On Record ...

Chief Justice of India D. Y. Chandrachud on August 22 said one of the missions of the Supreme Court Collegium was to ensure that the richness and diversity of India were represented in the top court. Terming the Supreme Court people-centric and not just poly-vocal, the Chief Justice said, "this is not the Supreme Court of Maharashtra or Delhi. It is the Supreme Court of India and our aim here is to reflect that this court reflects the diversity of India". – *The Hindu*, August 22.

Delhi University's decision to charge a fee of Rs 1.90 lakh per annum for its self-financing five-year integrated BALLB programme has sparked outrage among students and faculty members.

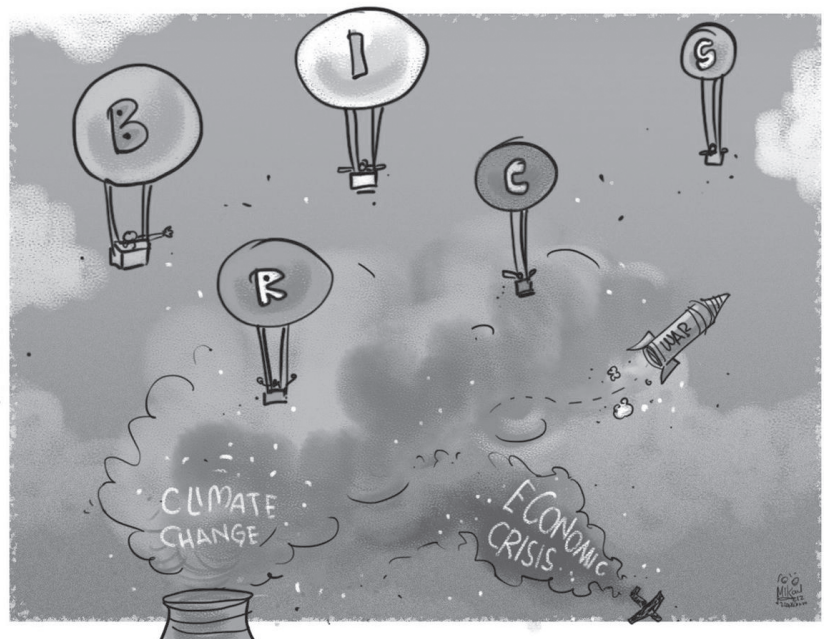
Law education in India is very expensive. Law education in India is very expensive. The CLAT exam costs around Rs 5,000. The fee hike would disproportionately affect marginalised students. DU's faculty of law used to offer three-year LLB and LLM courses with nominal fees between Rs 5,000 and Rs 7,000 annually.

Fear and uncertainty has gripped Muslims in Nuh with more than 750 structures

demolished as part of a crackdown in the wake of the recent communal violence.

The crackdown that continued for four days until the Punjab and Haryana High Court ordered the government to halt it on August 7 – erased homes and shops of hundreds of people. News laundry learnt that most of the people who lost their property belonged to the Muslim community. They were allegedly served a notice about the action merely half-an-hour before the demolition, and were denied any time to remove their belongings. Another resident of Nuh, advocate Ramzan Chaudhary alleged that bulldozers were being used by the government to "make Hindus happy". – *news laundry*, August 19.

ABJP-friendly NRI businessman's proposal to NitiAayog paved the way for the creation of a task force that authored a report pushing for corporatisation of agriculture as a way to double farmers' income, documents reveal. Sharad Marathe, who hooked NitiAayog with his proposal, isn't an expert on agriculture, farming or any allied subject but a businessman



running a software company.

Documents obtained by The Reporters' Collective reveal NitiAayog moved quickly and eagerly to push the businessman's questionable vision: a future where farmers lease out farmland to corporate-style agribusiness companies and effectively work as their cogs. Aayog later appointed the businessman on the task force, which consulted mostly big corporations involved in agriculture commodities trade, such as the Adani Group, Patanjali, BigBasket, Mahindra Group and ITC. – *reporters-collective.in*, August 16.

Compiled by: C Adhikesavan

DEMOCRACY AT PERIL IN BJP RULE: CPI

“BJP government is dangerous for the entire country. This to be realised by people of this country. People here will have safety provided Modi is dethroned. Modi government is bent upon dismantling entire public sector. The struggle against this is patriotic one. Struggle of Vizag steel plant do not belong to steel plant workers alone as a matter of fact it is the struggle of entire public sector workers of the country against the sale of public sector companies,” stated, Amarjeet Kaur, national council secretary, CPI, while inaugurating the Bus Yatra, at Vizag steel plant defence committee camp against privatisation of Vizag steel plant, at Koormanna Palem, Vizag on August 17, 2023.

She further stated that Modi government has become dangerous to the nation. Democracy is at peril. Wealth of the nation and its assets are being handed over to corporates whereas 80 crore people of the country are living in poverty. Minimum necessities like medical, drinking water, education facilities are not in the reach of common man. The government has made several changes in the syllabus in order to saffronize the education system. Prior to elections Modi has promised creation of two crores jobs every year and depositing of 15 lakhs in bank accounts of every citizen of the country. Modi government has left these promises unmet and handed over public sector undertakings in throw away



CPI national council secretary Amarjeet Kaur flagging off the yatra

prices to corporate bosses.

Amarjeet Kaur also has stated that because of anti-people policies of Modi people are suffering but Modi is enjoying. This is clear indication of him being big sadist. As prices of vegetables and essential commodities are sky rocketing, people are suffering intensely. As employment potentialities are deteriorating younger generation of the country is suffering a lot. Wages of workers are being reduced and number of suicides are increasing as per records of crime bureau. Attacks and atrocities on women are continuously increasing. During Covid period lakhs of people have suffered a lot. They could reach their native villages only by walking hundreds of kilometres. But there was no response from Modi government. Modi has not opened his mouth on Manipur riots till the questions were raised in the Parliament. He has not even visited Manipur. Whatever he spoke from Red Fort on

Ram Narsimha Rao

Independence Day are total lies. This address was resembling to elections speech in view of forthcoming 2024 elections. He has declared himself as future prime minister. In a democracy how can he declare prior to elections, questioned Amarjeet Kaur.

In her speech she said Modi does not have faith in democracy. He feels Election Commission is in his pocket. Inequalities between rich and poor are widening.

Incomes of rich are increasing while incomes of common people are going down. Media of the country has gone into hands of the family of Modi and members are Adanis and Ambanis. They manage to publish what they like and never write or show about people's struggles. Modi is cheating people through telling lies with rhetorics. People must take steps to dethrone him in 2024 elections, appealed Amarjeet Kaur.

K Ramakrishna, CPI state secretary, Andhra Pradesh, in his address

stated that recently 26 parties gathered at Bangalore against Modi and again they are going to meet in Mumbai. Vizag steel plant is continuing in public sector. Ramakrishna said that several demands like special status to Andhra Pradesh, Completion of Polavaram Project, development of Uttarandhra, Railway zone at Kadapa are all awaiting fulfilment. These were all promises made by Modi and Jagan governments together, he said.

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