

CALL TO FIGHT AGAINST COMMUNALISATION OF EDUCATION



CPI general secretary D Raja addressing the meeting

The 30th national conference of All India Students Federation (AISF) was held successfully from September 28, 2023 to October 1, 2023 in Begusarai, the Leningrad of Bihar. The conference gave a clarion call to fight against commercialization, centralization, and communalization of education in India and constant struggle for enacting Bhagat Singh National Employment Guarantee Act (BNEGA). The conference was attended by 520 delegates from 26 states.

The inaugural session began with a huge student rally attended by thousands of students. The huge rally went through the roads of Begusarai, decorated with AISF flags and wall writings, and concluded at G D College. The public meeting was inaugurated by Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary D Raja. AISF national president Shuvam Banerjee presided over the programme. AISF national general secretary Vicky Mahesari, national girls'

committee convenor Sanghamitra, All India Youth Federation general secretary R Thirumalai, CPI Rajya Sabha MP P Sandhosh Kumar, CPI national council secretary Rama Krushna Panda, CPI Bihar state council secretary Ram Naresh Pandey, CPI MLAs Ram Ratan Singh

and Surya Kanth Paswan also addressed the gathering of nearly six thousand people.

In his inaugural address D Raja reminded how Shaheed Bhagat Singh is a great inspiration to fight against RSS. Bhagat Singh fought against colonialism and laid his life for India. The slogan of AISF is to study

Our Correspondent

and struggle. It is the duty of every AISF activist to study and equip themselves with knowledge. Bhagat Singh fought to liberate the country from imperialist forces. AISF has been now assigned with a similar duty

of carpenter will only become a carpenter. BJP is controlled by RSS, which follows a communal fascist ideology. D Raja concluded his address by conveying the revolutionary greetings to the conference from the side of CPI.

The delegate session began on September 29,

was assassinated by Congress goons for his role in organising CPI and progressive movements in Begusarai. It was the great sacrifices of such great people that helped to build the communist movement in Bihar. The delegate session was inaugurated by Prof Hargopal, renowned social activist and former dean of the School of Social Science at the University of Hyderabad. He was slapped with UAPA by the Andhra Pradesh state government alleging Maoist relations.

A vocal critique of the Narendra Modi-led Union government, he spoke about the BJP government's plan to privatize education in our country through the New Education Policy (NEP-2020). He also condemned Union government's imprisoning and killing of dissident political activists making use of the draconian UAPA. He severely criticized the privatization policies of the Union government resulting in the loot of national and natural assets.

2023 with the hoisting of AISF Flag. The flag was hoisted by AISF national president Shuvam Banerjee. This was followed by paying floral tributes to the martyrs' column and sloganeering by the delegates. CPI MLA from Tegra Ram Ratan welcomed the delegates on behalf of the reception committee. The delegate was addressed by Prof Hargopal, eminent poet and scientist Gauhar Raza and CPI national council secretary and former AISF national president Rama Krushna Panda.

In his welcome address, Ram Ratan remembered former MLA Chandrashekhar Singh who

30th AISF National Conference



—to fight against RSS-BJP and save the country.

NEP 2020 is a sinister game of BJP to bring privatization, commercialization and communalization in education sector. This education policy is envisaged to concretize casteism in which son of a barber will remain a barber and a son



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As the summer with its heat is receding and winter, with its horror of ice cold nights shivers even in these warm days, India's majority population, jobless, hungry, goes to bed to spend a night of miseries. It is October again, and on its second day was born the father of our nation, Mahatma Gandhi. Bapu, as he was called, is a presence that has always been there. For more than a century, it was always like in any crisis, we were confident of his protective aura. We earned our independence, we built our political system that was democratic, secular and socialist, we had our education system, health care, nationalization to slowly get rid of private ownership, and finally our composite culture that got evolved, and nurtured by the Constitution. And yet, there was the right, growing stronger all the time.

But when the BJP formed the government in 2014, a fault line started emerging. We had been the world's largest democracy and once again there are serious attempts to put a wedge in our composite culture. We are a collective and also have individual identity, both alive and closely woven in the multiplicity that has been part of our culture since centuries. But today it is threatened, confronting a political project that seeks to promote Hindu authoritarianism along the lines of Nazi anti-Semitism. The project is premised on the same old idea that India is a Hindu state and minorities must subscribe to Hindu primacy – a position that threatens the very foundation of its democracy in which all citizens of every faith and all Hindus of every caste have equal standing.

As in the past, Hindu supremacists today belong to RSS and its large family of affiliates as well as organizations, that have mushroomed in the last couple of years under the rightist ideological umbrella, are full of contempt for minority communities. They look to Narendra

Gandhi Lives

Modi, a long-time member of the RSS who now heads the government, as the deliverer of Hindu Rashtra.

There are all out efforts to organize discourse in which Muslims would be treated as second class citizens. Government has been pursuing Hindutva majoritarian attacks. The most evident of them has been the Citizenship Amendment Act that came as a blow on our basic planks of democracy. Secularism has been stretched over to extreme negativism. It has been replaced by bare and barbaric Citizenship Amendment Act. For the first time, while defining and granting citizenship, religion has been made a criteria. It is almost the basic factor to spell out who is Indian citizen. It was an attack on our vision of India,

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and also on our Bapu, everything that he stood for, and along with him, on us all. The attacks are aimed at wiping out whatever we held with our entire democratic ethos, actually the reflection of the power Gandhiji held over the masses.

The Citizenship Amendment Act fast-tracks Indian citizenships to non-Muslim immigrants from three neighboring countries. The bill provides citizenship to religious minorities from Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. The government of Hindu nationalist forces led by BJP says this will give sanctuary to people fleeing religious persecution. Critics say the bill is part of BJP agenda to marginalise Muslims. It has been also called anti-Muslim law, which is open only to Hindu, Christian, Sikh, Buddhist, Parsi and Jain.

The act prompted widespread protests in the

country especially in northeastern region which borders Bangladesh. The Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) revises the 64 years of Indian citizenship law which prohibited illegal migrants from becoming Indian citizens. It defined illegal immigrants as foreigners who entered India without a valid passport or valid documents, or stayed beyond the permitted time. Illegal immigrants could be deported or jailed. The new Act also amends the provision which says a person must have worked for the federal government for at least 11 years, before one can apply for citizenship. Now there will be an exception for members of six religious minority communities if they can prove that they are from Pakistan, Afghanistan or Bangladesh. They will only have to live and work in India for six years to be eligible for citizenship or nationality of the country.

Efforts continue to make Muslims in the country the "other". So are the attacks on them. The moment has come when the country feels the imperative need to rediscover Gandhi. Bapu could never be reined in because in his life time itself, he had comprehensively countered the project of Hindu Rashtra forcing its advocates, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) and Hindu Mahasabha, to the margins of Indian politics. It was only Gandhi who could do it with his immense moral power and his all-out efforts as the supreme leader of the anti-British struggle that in a short span after Independence, the validity of the vision of a secular and democratic nation seemed beyond question. It rose above the turmoil of the time and became the unifying principle of the post-Independence India. It was this secular project of Independent India that was sought to be derailed by the assassination of Gandhi. Though the battle-lines are emerging again, Gandhi lives. So does our composite culture.

Caste Survey Helps to Form Right Policies: CPI

Communist Party of India general secretary D Raja has issued the following two twitter messages:

The Caste Census in Bihar is revealing the composition of society. This data will help the government in making policies accurately with concrete understanding of deprivations. Such exercises are needed in other states too for scientific and evidence based policy making.

On Crackdown on Media

BJP's crackdown on media has already brought India among the bottom 20 countries in press freedom.

Delhi Police under the direct control of Union ministry

of home affairs raided the residences of journalists Urmilesh, Bhasha Singh, Abhisar Sharma, Paranjoy Guha Thakurta and others and seized laptops and phones.

These journalists questioned the government on issues like Manipur crisis, Adani revelations and communalisation of society. They are being intimidated and punished for holding the government accountable.

Muzzling of press is to hide the Union government's failures of the last nine years. People see through this condemnable act.

Tributes to Doyen of Agrarian Movement

Implement Swaminathan Panel Recommendations

A year back I was travelling to Bhopal from Delhi in a train and met a few farmers in my compartment. While introducing myself, I casually asked them if they know Dr Swaminathan. Immediately two of them nodded affirmatively and said: “Swaminathan sipharishon ko lagu karo”! (Implement the recommendations of Swaminathan Commission.

Farmers around the country know Dr Swaminathan not only for Kalyan Sona, a high yielding dwarf wheat, but also for his pro-farmer recommendations, including on crop MSPs. That is the legacy of green revolution's doyen. For increasing food production from 0.5 crore tonnes in 1950 to nearly 33 crore tonnes in 2023, I remember two of his famous slogans — “you can buy guns but never grain” and “future of nations belong to those with self sufficiency in food production”. It's really a sad day that we lost a patriotic scientist with his vision and mission who had banished famines and brought food security.

During my primary school days in late '60s and early '70s, there used to be a severe shortage for food grains in the country. People used to discuss about availability of rice or wheat in ration or kirana stores depending on arrival of American ships to Indian ports carrying grain under humiliating PL-480 agreement. That was hand to mouth existence for the nation.

At that time Dr M S Swaminathan and other scientists from Indian Council for Agricultural Research were mandated by Union agricultural ministry to find solutions from the food shortages. At that time

Dr M S Swaminathan contacted Dr Norman Borlaug, an American scientist at the International Wheat Centre in Mexico who recently developed high yielding but red and dwarf Mexican wheat varieties.

Dr Swaminathan contacted Dr Borlaug and brought a few seeds of Mexican wheat and tested their suitability for Indian fields. The field trials conducted at both IARI farm in New Delhi and Ludhiana Agricultural University yielded much better than Indian wheat, up to nearly five tonnes per hectare). Emboldened by these initial results, Dr Swaminathan and his team of crop breeders from genetics division of IARI in Pusa attempted different crosses between Mexican and Indian desi wheats.

After a few years of back breaking crosses and field research they came out with iconic wheat varieties such as Sonara 64, Sonalika and later iconic Kalyan Sona varieties. In no time these high yielding wheat varieties were accepted by farmers of Punjab, Haryana, MP and other states spread across northern India.

Similarly Dr Swaminathan led a rice yield improvement project as well. High yielding Taiwanese Mahsuri type TN1 and IR rice varieties were crossed with tall and low yielding native Indian rice varieties. The crosses again performed wonderfully and high yielding IR8, Jaya and other iconic varieties too yielded very high. With hard work of our farmers and public sector research, scientists in no time spread the high yielding dwarf varieties across fields like wild fire. By late '70s yield of wheat and rice

Dr Soma Marla

increased and nation stopped food imports.

Major credit for this success story for turning a starved nation depending on food imports to a self secured, food self sufficient nation goes to the visionary planning of Dr M S Swaminathan. That is the power of public sector farm research, which of course can never be expected from profit-mongering corporate agri-business.

In 2004, the then UPA government alarmed with serious farm crisis and increasing number of farmer suicides appointed a



Farmers Commission under the chairmanship of Dr Swaminathan and asked to suggest ways to come out of this rural crisis. His commission consisted of Atul Kumar Anjaan, president of left wing All India Kisan Sabha to Joshi of rightist Setkari Sanghatana from Maharashtra. He was open minded and accommodated the issues genuinely in favour of farmers' welfare.

After a detailed study, in 2008 the Commission came out with important recommendations to raise farmers' incomes and farm productivity. Significant ones being recalculation of

crop support prices, environment friendly cultivation, equal wages and land ownership rights to women farmers and implementation of land reforms to name a few. Both the UPA government and the present one though accepted but never sincere in implementing the Commission recommendations. The present government came to power in 2014 promising in its election manifesto to implement farmers' commission recommendation but never walked the talk.

The present government even declared in the Supreme Court that it's not in a position to harm the markets by paying just support prices to crop produce. Subsequently, farmers' discontent rose and tragically six farmers were killed in Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh during their agitation for better crop prices. Farmers led historic Nashik and Parliament marches culminating with nearly year and half long Delhi agitation demanding scrapping of pro-agribusiness three farm laws.

In 2011, Dr Swaminathan, as a member of Rajya Sabha, proposed a private members bill seeking equal land property rights to women farmers. Unfortunately the bill was not passed due to lack of support.

There was a trade off. Much heralded green revolution brought food self sufficiency to the nation but eroded soils, water bodies and did not benefit much small and landless farmers. Instead fertilizer, pesticide, machinery industry and trader lobby benefited mainly from the underlying

agenda of green revolution. But for this, the blame should go to successive governments that acted in favour of rich farmers and transnational corporate agribusiness syndicates.

Dr Swaminathan completed his education in agriculture from agricultural college, Coimbatore and Indian Agricultural Institute, Pusa in Delhi and proceeded to Netherlands and England to complete his doctoral and post doctoral research. The man-made tragic Bengal famine convinced him to return to India and work in agricultural research. During his nearly four decades of service with Indian Agricultural Research Institute and later as its director with his visionary planning heralded crop breeding and brought invaluable improvement in yields of wheat, rice, potato and several other crops.

He was a recipient of several awards beginning with World Food prize, Padma Vibhushan, Ramon Magsaysay award and several others. After retirement he founded MS Swaminathan Research Foundation and worked effortlessly for biodiversity, conservation of sea coast mangroves, welfare of women rice farmers. One notable aspect of his personality was that in spite of his high profiled stature, he was accessible to all starting from a small farmer, a struggling research student to top government official at his Chennai residence.

A real tribute to Dr Swaminathan would be to recalculate crop support prices and convene a special session of Parliament exclusively to discuss recommendations of Farmers Commission to improve livelihoods of farmers and farm labourers.

Provide Pucca Houses for Shelterless: CPI

Communist Party of India national council secretary Syed Azeez Pasha said on September 27, 2023 that failure to provide pucca houses to the shelterless people is nothing but violation of human rights. The poor people are flocking towards towns and cities in search of employment. They are unable to pay huge rents in cities. They are compelled to live in slums and that too in rented huts. They are living there without dignity, proper civic amenities and without social security.

Syed Azeez Pasha was addressing as the chief guest a largely attended convention which was held on 'Problems of poor and solutions' at Tirumala Function Hall in Badangpet of Ranga Reddy district at the outskirts of Hyderabad. The convention was presided over by R Gopal, social activist and Telangana state president of ISCUF.

Thousands of poor people attended the convention with placards and raising slogans 'Give us vacant land, we will erect huts'. Among them many are burqa clad Muslim women. R Shankar Nayak, Telangana state president of

Ram Narsimha Rao

address stated that though several parties have come to power, the living standards of the poor have not improved. The anti-people



Sarvodaya Mandali, Muneer Patel, state president of INSAF, Chandu Nayak, senior leader of CPI, Faimida, state vice president of NFIW, Jillela Krishna, Mahaboob, Papaiah Goud, leaders of CPI and others participated in the convention.

Syed Azeez Pasha, in his

policies of successive governments have made the poor poorer. Though governments are constructing limited number of double bed room houses for the poor, certain brokers are making every effort to see that the poor do not get double bed room houses, Azeez Pasha pointed out with

concern. The ruling circles remember the poorer sections of population only at the time of elections. After coming to power through getting votes from them, the ruling class forgets the poor conveniently.

He made it clear that the allotment of double bed room houses, provision of drinking water, electricity and other basic amenities are the responsibilities of the government. He urged Sabita Indra Reddy, the minister elected from Maheshwaram constituency to ensure that the poor are

allotted double bed room houses along with all basic amenities.

R Gopal, state president, ISCUF, in his presidential remarks stated that denial of double bed room houses to the poor and attacks on the poor will not be tolerated. He also reminded that in the past, many government lands were occupied and erected huts on those lands. Also pressure was on the government through various forms of struggles which resulted in the construction of pucca houses. Due to the negligence of the government, many Bhoodan, Wakf and government lands are being occupied by land sharks. Such lands must be seized from them and distributed to the shelterless poorer sections. People should also bring pressure on the government through various united massive forms of struggles.

What the Others Say...

Data anarchy

The Bihar government has released the first cut of the results on its caste survey – even as the Supreme Court is hearing petitioners challenging the legality of the exercise. In August, the Patna high court upheld the Bihar government's right to carry out this survey. Leaving aside the legal challenge, the survey and announcement of the results are an unfortunate development. This is the wrong way to address challenges related to governance.

Let's unpack the issue. Bihar's caste survey has been presented to the state assembly and the judiciary as an attempt to collate data needed to frame welfare packages. 'Development with justice' is how it was portrayed in the state assembly. In this respect, Bihar is not an exception. Neighbouring Odisha this year kicked off a survey on the social and educational status of backward classes. This trend is almost sure to spread as election season approaches.

While state governments represent the exercise as a step towards evidence-based policy, it's important to keep in mind that caste continues to be the building block of electoral coalitions across India. These exercises will always be politically coloured.

Drill deeper to look for a common thread binding the clamour for caste-based data across India and it leads to the data void on economic and social indicators that's been building up over the last few years. The Bihar survey results said the state's population is about 130 million — it was 104 million according to Census 2011. Shouldn't we have got a more accurate number on the state's population from Census 2021 and not a survey? The indefinite delay in a national census has come on the heels of other gaps in the government of India's database. For example, we haven't been given a consumption expenditure survey for over a decade, which undermines other important data.

GOI's tardy approach to data has left gaps that states are trying to fill through crude measures that are tinged by political motives. For sure, effective governance needs to be based on empirical evidence. Thus far, that evidence was provided by the overarching national level data put out by GOI, which was then supplemented by states looking for data to meet specific needs. In the absence of timely national data, we are quickly descending into a phase of disaggregated data collection that will lead to more problems than solutions.

Courtesy: The Times of India

Tread cautiously on the age of consent

Can the law strike a fair and judicious balance between protecting children from sexual exploitation and abuse, and their right to not be criminalised for consensual relationships that are normal for adolescents? This was the question in front of the 22nd Law Commission that submitted its report to the Union law ministry last week. In its report, the panel headed by former Karnataka high court chief justice Ritu Raj Awasthi favoured a careful approach, eschewing more radical suggestions to lower the age of consent across the board, or carve out elaborate exceptions for people between 16 and 18.

The Commission was clear that any lowering of the age of consent could create a cascading stream of legal consequences and ultimately hurt the fight against menaces such as child sexual abuse, marriage and exploitation. Therefore, it recommended allowing judges more discretion in sentencing, diluting the mandatory minimum provisions baked into the Protection of Children Against Sexual Offences Act.

This is a welcome first step. But any move towards judicial discretion in sentencing will need to be monitored with robust oversight to ensure that innocent adolescents are not being criminalised. Research has shown that a significant chunk of cases under PocsO are filed by families and the police against consensual relationships that parents don't approve of. To prevent this subversion of the 2012 law, the Law Commission's suggested measure will need to be bolstered by adequate focus on implementation and a shift in both prosecutorial and judicial mindsets.

Courtesy: Hindustan Times

Drastic Policy Changes to Ensure Health for All

The declaration on health at the G20 summit has highlighted several objectives. These include food security, pandemic preparedness; equitable access to vaccines, therapeutics, diagnostics, and other medical counter-measures. Concern was shown for growing Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR), mental health problems and the impact of climate change on health. The declaration also gives importance to the potential role of evidence-based traditional and complementary medicine. The summit took up serious debate over the increasing use of narcotics around the world. In this background, the declaration emphasized that to achieve better health of the citizens the global health architecture is to be strengthened.

Since nutrition is the basic requirement for health, it is important to gauge the status of nutrition around the world and in our country. As many as 828 million people were undernourished in 2021 globally. Poverty, inequality, inadequate governance, poor infrastructure, and low agricultural productivity contribute to chronic hunger and vulnerability. South of the Sahara in Africa and South Asia are the regions with the highest hunger levels and are most vulnerable to future shocks and crises.

According to Bhavani R V in *The Hindu* dated January 1, 2023, the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation's (FAO) report on 'Food Security and nutrition in the world' puts the number of people undernourished in India in 2019-21 at 224.3 million that is 16 per cent of 1.4 billion population. India is 107 among 121 countries in the Global Hunger Index (GHI).

The countries which fall below this are Sierra Leone, Uganda, Djibouti, Congo Rep., Sudan, Afghanistan, Zimbabwe, Timor-leste, Haiti, Liberia, Zambia, Madagascar, Chad, Yemen Rep. and Central African Republic.

The countries of the global south need food security for their citizens, but under the neoliberal economic policies and the diktats of the World Trade Organisation (WTO), many countries had to dismantle programmes for food security. This has adversely affected nutritional status of the people. Situation is so pathetic that in India 800 million people were provided



with five kg of grain and one kilo of cereals. This may fill their stomach but lacks the micro nutrients essential for physical and mental growth.

Equity in the supply of medicines, vaccines and other counter-measures has been a big challenge. The big vaccine producing companies exploited the situation during Covid pandemic. They even forced the small counties to mortgage properties of their embassies as a guarantee for the supply of vaccines.

These vaccine making companies made huge profits at the cost of human needs. Pfizer made nearly 37 billion dollars (27 billion pounds) in sales from its Covid-19 vaccine in 2021—making it one of the

Dr Arun Mitra

most lucrative products in history. The US drug maker's overall revenues in 2021 doubled to 81.3 billion dollars, says Julia Kollewe in the article published in *The Guardian* on February 8, 2022.

The Indian government's free-market approach to vaccine distribution too has ensured profit to the companies over lives of the people. Aparna Gopalan in an article in *The Intercept* published on June 19, 2021 has pointed out that for each dose sold to private hospitals, Serum made profits of up to 2,000 per

cent and Bharat Biotech up to 4,000 per cent, what might be considered as "superprofits". In India, 38 new billionaires were minted in the first year of the pandemic, while the combined wealth of the country's 140 billionaires went up by 90.4 per cent.

In the G20 there is ample opportunity for India to highlight the health problems facing the developing world in general and India in particular. This is also time to set the direction for global equity in health care.

As per the WHO there were 6,943,390 deaths globally till June 14, 2023. Unofficial figures could be even higher. During the pandemic, the problem of unavailability of drugs,

equipment and vaccines has been very acute. Smaller countries that lacked resources and knowhow to make vaccines or drugs suffered the most.

Developing countries which have so far been faced with pressure of communicable diseases, are now feeling the burden of the non-communicable diseases as well. India is hub to both communicable and non-communicable diseases. According to Global TB Report 2022 released by the World Health Organisation (WHO) there were 505000 deaths due to Tuberculosis in India in 2021 which comes to 1,383 deaths per day.

The Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) too are at alarming level in India. Indian Council of Medical Research's India, Diabetes (ICMR-INDIAB) study, found prevalence of diabetes among 11.4 per cent population. The new study published in *The Lancet* puts the prevalence of hypertension at 35.5 per cent; general obesity at 39.5 per cent and dyslipidemia (lipid imbalance which can cause heart diseases) at 81.2 per cent. One in every three Indians has hypertension and two in five are obese.

Based on the above it is important to envisage the steps required to bring down the disease burden. Disease prevention and control programmes have to be designed accordingly.

It is important to develop policies for inclusive growth which ensure jobs with proper remuneration and means of livelihood to all. Purchasing capacity of the people has to be improved to meet the nutritional requirements. To utter dismay the government has fixed floor level wage at Rs 178 per day or Rs

5,340 per month in the wage code bill approved by the Union cabinet. Trade unions have however demanded Rs 26,000 as the minimum wage to ensure healthy living.

To promote equity it is important to make necessary changes in the WTO. The Intellectual Property Rights and the Patent Laws at present benefit the big companies. The issue whether the drugs should be patented has to be reviewed. The founder of ORS, Dr Dilip Mahalanabis never patented his product saying that this is for public good and not for making profits. Will the companies and the governments follow suit? Many public health experts agree that a temporary waiver of the World Trade Organization's Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, or TRIPS, provision is a necessary first step toward increasing vaccine production and access and creating a more competitive pharmaceutical industry worldwide. Drug pricing policy has to be streamlined effectively to check exorbitant profits.

With Africa inducted into the G20 there is a good chance to develop communication between India, Africa nations, Argentina and Brazil to forcefully take up the matter of bringing changes in the TRIPS. The developing countries should exchange the technical knowhow to check mate the pressures from the developed world. The clause of compulsory licensing in the WTO should be used more frequently.

Finance allocation to health in our country has to be increased substantially. It has been hovering around 1.2 per cent of the GDP as against the minimum required

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Bank Employees to Go on Strike On Demand for Staff Recruitment

Banking is a very important public utility service, serving large number of customers, account holders and general banking public. After nationalization of Banks in 1969, bank branches have been opened in all parts of the country including in remote rural villages. Commensurate with this branch expansion, employees were being recruited by the banks.

But in the recent years, while the number of customers of the banks has increased manifold, while the total volume of business has gone up enormously, while the consequent workload on the employees has increased unbearably, there is no adequate recruitment in the banks. The vacancies arising out of retirements, promotions, deaths, etc, are not being filled up. Additional staff is not being provided in branches to cope up with the increase in business.

More and more schemes of the government are being implemented through the bank accounts. In the name of financial inclusion, more than 50 crores of Jan Dhan Yojana accounts have been opened by public sector banks. All these also add to

the workload on the employees in the branches.

This acute shortage of staff in the branches is adversely affecting the satisfactory customer services and due to reduced staff or lack of adequate staff, employees are unable to extend proper service to the customers. This is unwarrantedly resulting in friction and complaints from the customers.

There is a deliberate attempt on the part of the government and banks to reduce the number of workmen employees in clerical and subordinate cadre in the banks and to increase the number of supervisory staff. The idea is very clear that they want less number of workers who are governed by the Industrial Disputes Act.

Similarly we also find that there is a naked attempt to outsource the regular and permanent jobs in the banks on contractual basis with a view to avoid the payment of wages as per our bipartite settlement. Because of this, the recruitment of clerical staff in the banks has come down drastically year after year and there is a virtual ban on appointment of subordinate staff and

C H Venkatachalam

safaikaramchari employees. This has resulted in large number of persons being employed on temporary and casual basis without proper remuneration. The deliberate attempt to deny adequate recruitment in the banks and thus weaken the ability of the public sector banks to effectively serve the people is also to subserve their agenda to encourage private sector banking and privatisation of public sector banks.

Hence, All India Bank Employees Association has decided and accordingly given the call for agitational programme which include the following strike actions:

" **December 4:** All India Strike in PNB, Punjab & Sind Bank & SBI.

" **December 5:** All India Strike in Bank of

Baroda and Bank of India.

" **December 6:** All India Strike in Canara Bank and Central Bank of India.

" **December 7:** All India Strike in Indian Bank and UCO Bank

" **December 8:** All India Strike in Union Bank of India and Bank of Maharashtra.

" **December 11:** All India Strike in all private banks.

" **January 2:** Strike by all employees of all banks in Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka, Puducherry, Andaman & Nicobar, Lakshwadeep.

" **January 3:** Strike by all employees of all banks in Gujarat, Maharashtra, Goa, Dadar, Daman, Diu.

" **January 4:** Strike by all employees of all banks in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh.

" **January 5:** Strike by all employees of all banks in Delhi Punjab, Haryana, J & K, Ladak, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh.

" **January 6:** West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, Manipur, Nagaland, Mizoram, Arunachal Pradesh, Sikkim.

" **January 19 and 20:** Two days continuous All India Strike in all banks.

These agitational programmes would affect the normal banking services on account of the strike action. Banking public is requested to appreciate that our agitation is only to demand and provide adequate staff in the bank branches so that better customer service can be rendered by the staff. Hence we appeal to the people at large and banking public in particular to extend their support to our demand and agitation.

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of six. Allocation to R&D in health has to be increased.

There is need to revive the manufacture of drugs, vaccines and medical equipment in the public sector so as to produce them at lower cost with quality control.

Health education of the people on scientific grounds is important so that they do not fall prey to the unscientific, non-evidence based treatment modalities like the use of Gau Mutra (Cow Urine) or Cow Dung.

To ensure equitable health services it is important to take bold initiatives. State should own the responsibility of healthcare to its citizens. Insurance based healthcare benefits only the insurance companies. Senior citizens are worst affected in such cases as they are unable to pay hefty premiums.

India can play a big role if our approach is not limited to mere electoral gimmickry. Time only will tell whether the Indian government stands up to its commitment. The civil society however should continue to put pressure.

Alarming Rise in Hatred and Violence against Minorities: CPI

Communist Party of India national Council Secretary Binoy Viswam wrote the following letter on September 28, 2023 to Union home minister Amit Shah on continuing lynching:

I write to you about an incident that has caused pain and anguish to the democratically minded and secular people of the country. A fruit vendor's disabled young son was cruelly beaten to death in North East Delhi's Sunder Nagri. The perpetrators also shamelessly recorded the incident on camera. It was told that the mentally ill boy from the Muslim community stole 'prasad' from a stall near a temple and could not provide answers when confronted by attackers. As a result, he was tied to a pole with a saffron cloth and was beaten mercilessly with fists, kicks and sticks till he passed away.

This heinous incident of lynching has again brought to fore the extreme poisoning of our society with communal venom. People from the minority community are demonised to such an extent in public discourse that law-and-

order and the foundational values of our Republic are in shred. Our Republic was based on the values of secularism and fraternity but the atmosphere is now full of hatred and divisions resulting in such abominable incidents. These unfortunate incidents are not one off but in a chain of events with misinformation, communally charged propaganda and divisions as constituents.

In this background of alarming rise in hatred and violence against minorities, I urge you to take this incident very seriously as the outcome of extreme communalisation of society for political gains. The law and order administration of Delhi is directly under your charge and its deterioration to such an extent should be a cause of concern for everyone. The kin of the victim of this hate crime should get generous compensation and perpetrators should be brought to justice under stringent provisions of law.

I hope this shocking incident will find your immediate attention.

LDF's Kudumbashree Brings 46 Lakh Women Back to Schools

Already the Left Front Democratic (LDF) rules Kerala state the highest literacy rate in India at 94 per cent. The government has come up another campaign related with the education of women in the state. A new campaign is launched with the aim of strengthening the three-tier structure of Kudumbashree and forequipping the women to take up novel ventures in tune with the changing times.

As part of a new initiative by Kudumbashree poverty eradication and women empowerment mission of Kerala, as many as 46 lakh Kudumbashree women, even those in their seventies, came back to school as 'students'.

Kudumbashree has unveiled the 'Thirike Schoolil' (Back to School) campaign, marking the largest training programme in its history. The campaign was inaugurated by MB Rajesh, Minister of the Local Self Government Department, Government of Kerala, at KB Menon Memorial Higher Secondary School in Thrithala, Palakkad, on October 1, 2023 according to a state government report.

The campaign will bring 46 lakh Kudumbashree members back to classrooms on holidays until 10 December 2023. The campaign is launched with the aim of strengthening the three-tier structure of Kudumbashree and for equipping the women to take up novel ventures in tune with the changing times.

On the inaugural day alone, approximately four lakh Neighbourhood Groups (NHG) members actively participated across the state.

As part of the campaign being conducted in collaboration with the General Education Department, the NHG members are coming to the schools under the respective CDSs during available holidays from October 1 to December 10, 2023, to gain knowledge on various subjects.

Over 2,000 schools in the state have been sanctioned for the campaign. The campaign activities have been designed in a way that is reminiscent of the school days, with classes running from 9.30 am to 4.30 pm.



The Assembly is from 9.30 am to 9.45 am. Kudumbashree's Mudra Geetham (Anthem) will be sung during the Assembly.

The lesson topics include Organisational Strength Experience Lessons, Vibrancy of NHG is in Mathematics, Community-Life Security Our Happiness, Livelihood-Ideas Projects and Digital Age.

Moreover, there will be a 10-member team of Resource Persons in each district which includes two Kudumbashree Training team members, two Auxiliary Group members, two Micro Enterprise Consultants, District

Programme Manager in charge of Organizational Strengthening, Assistant District Mission Coordinator and 2 Gender team members. There are Resource Persons in the Block level as well as in the CDS level.

Ad-hoc displacement of teachers at DU

Silence of the DUTA President on the matter is a betrayal! Apoorvanand Jha, the higher education teacher in Delhi University said that ad hoc teachers were being sacked "mainly to appoint RSS people". His allegation was that it is being done on the recommendations of the

RSS office, RSS functionaries and RSS channels like the National Democratic Teachers' Front (NDTF). The academic credentials of the people being appointed are suspect. The contributions made by the existing (sacked) faculty members are being ignored."

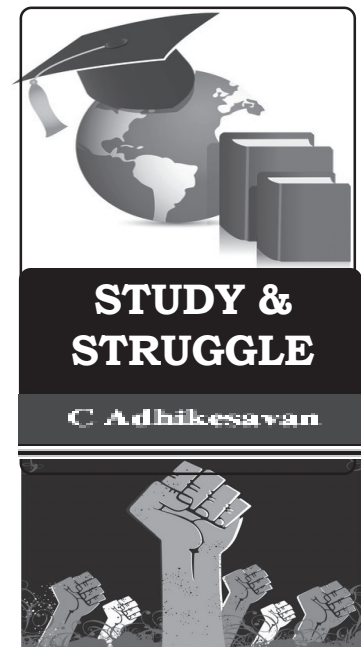
He added: "The university and the colleges must explain how people who had served for five or ten years were suddenly found unsuitable. A generation of students will suffer because of such (questionable) appointments. In Jawaharlal Nehru University, they have appointed such people.

Now they are doing it in DU colleges." The displacement of ad-hoc teachers at DU is resulting in "an attack on public education" say the displaced teachers.

Delhi University's (DU) Indraprastha (IP) College sacked five ad-hoc faculty members yesterday, October 1, from the Sociology Department, and replaced them with permanent faculty, allegedly with fewer qualifications and belonging to a certain ideology. While several news reports have highlighted the ideology angle, the displaced faculty members mention that the debate over ideology is

clouding over a larger issue — the displacement of ad-hoc teachers at DU, resulting in "an attack on public education".

"It is not about ideology. It is about academia, credibility, education, training, and exposure. It is about the students," says one of the displaced faculty members, on the condition of anonymity, while speaking to EdexLive. According to the students and faculty, the displaced teachers were the founding members of the Sociology Department at IP College, which started in 2017. It was functioning with the five sacked teachers till date. "We have given our



blood and sweat to raise the department to its present level. IP College is one of the most reputed colleges at DU, and it secured the eighth position among the top ten colleges, based on the results of the last semester," the teacher said.

As such, the faculty members question, "How are the new recruits better than us, it is we who've contributed to the growth and development of the Sociology department?" They also allege that some of the new recruits are fresh Master's students with little to no experience, while they are PhD holders with many years of teaching experience. "If we are being displaced, the ones recruited in our place should have better qualifications, but it is not so," the faculty says.

Another concern of the displaced faculty members is students' education. "It is in the middle of a semester that the replacement of faculty is being made. The National Education Policy (NEP) has also been introduced this year. It is difficult for the students to adapt to these changes," the teacher explains.

According to the teachers, ad-hoc displacements have been going on at DU over the past few months, after the recruitment drive began. Before IP College, ad-hoc faculty at Satyawati,

Women's Reservation Bill

While introducing “The Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam” in the first-ever session of Parliament in the new Parliament building on September 19, 2023, Prime Minister declared that he had been ordained to perform certain duties that are sacred, imperative. Our Prime Minister in a way promoted himself as a prophet! But the initial steps for this bill were already in public domain when it was brought for discussion in the international arena back in 1975.

The United Nations declared 1975 as International Women's Year with an aiming aspiration of the beginning of an international effort to rectify the wrongs of history. In countries around the world, the status of women began to be documented.

In our country also, a Status Committee was formed under the leadership of Dr. Phulrenu Guha. All leading stakeholders of our country in the women's movement, including NFIW, AIDWA, Mahila Dakshata Samity, Centre for Women's Development Studies, Young Women's Christian Association, Joint Women's Programme, expressed their views against reservation for women in election. The status committee furnished its report titled as “Towards Equality”.

In consecutive four International Women Conventions during the decade of 1975-1995, declaration against the inequality suffered by women – CEDAW was adopted. In the 4th International Women Convention that took place in Beijing in 1995, decisions taken in the 3rd International Women Convention, that had taken place in Nairobi in

1985 and CEDAW were reviewed and declaration on furthering the issue of development of women to EMPOWERMENT was adopted.

The women reservation system in Panchayat and Municipal elections in India was appreciated in the Beijing convention and in the programme decided in the convention it was said that such reservation system should be implemented in the legislatures of all countries. Amidst such developments in the international arena women organisations in our country expected from the political parties that more and more women would be nominated as candidates causing a remarkable increase in the participation of women in the legislatures.

However, after a decade of submission of remarks against reservation to the Status Committee, women organisations came to witness a scenario that was just opposite. The rate of participation of women MPs in the Lok Sabha during the decade was: 1977 – four percent, 1980 – five percent, 1984 – eight percent, 1989 – six percent, 1991 – seven percent, 1996 – seven percent.

Reflection of this grim situation became evident with a resolution for one-third seat reservation for women in parliamentary and assembly elections moved by Comrade Geeta Mukherjee, a leader of NFIW, in the Patna Party Congress of CPI in 1986. The resolution was adopted in the Party Congress. By this time increasing participation and leadership of women in the Panchayat Elections came as a ray of hope. In the 11th Lok Sabha,

UPA government was formed with the support of the left parties and CPI was a part of the central government. In such a situation, following the declaration of reservation for women in the Beijing Convention, CPI leader and MP, Comrade Geeta Mukherjee placed a private bill in the Lok Sabha demanding 33 percent reservation for women.



The same bill, with the honour of 81st Constitution Amendment Bill, was placed by the Devegowda government in the Lok Sabha on September 12, 1996. The rest is the history of struggle for long years. A Joint Select Committee comprising 31 members with Comrade Geeta Mukherjee as Chairperson was announced for the bill. Within seven days of such announcement, Comrade Geeta Mukherjee organised a meeting of the committee and issued notification for opinions on the bill.

Altogether 102 memoranda were submitted to the committee for and against the bill. The

committee met and collected opinions from various organisations, women organisations and political parties. Thousands of appeals in favour of implementing the bill reached the committee. Women from all quarters—students, housewives, service holders—sent postcards written in blood with the text, “In this letter written with my blood I am

Shyamasree Das

even on the day when I K Gujral led government fell, women from all states of our country had been continuously demonstrating, demanding on the roads of Delhi for Women Reservation Bill under leadership of women organisations.

NDA government tried to place the bill in the Parliament thrice in 1999, 2002 and 2003. UPA-1 government placed the bill at Rajya Sabha on May 6, 2008 and then the bill was sent to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on May 9, 2008. The Standing Committee submitted report on December 17, 2008. After approval from Central Cabinet in February 2010, the bill was accepted in the Rajya Sabha by the UPA government with a majority of 186 – 1 on March 9, 2010.

However, the bill was not even placed in the Lok Sabha for the sake of so-called “lack of consensus” and thus was not discussed at all there in the Lok Sabha. On September 18, 2023 the bill was suddenly approved by the cabinet of Modi Government after the demand of the opposition in the all-party meeting.

Our question is why the title of the bill was changed to “Narishakti Vandan Adhiniyam”?

Our demands are the following:

(1) Stop deceiving women under the cover of worship as goddess. We as human beings want to seat together with all in the row as representatives. Thus we are strongly opposing the use

and Com Geeta Mukherjee

of the word – ‘Bandana’.

(2) Clause 5 of the bill states that the bill will be implemented after the delimitation of seats in the Lok Sabha, which means the bill remains in limbo. It will take till 2029 to reconfigure the seats. So what was the need for this “political gimmick”? Isn’t the aim of BJP just to try to cheat the people on the verge of upcoming Parliamentary elections in 2024?

(3) Why is the bill silent regarding reservations for Rajya Sabha and Legislative Council? What about the participation of women there?

(4) The bill mentions the National Capital Region of Delhi. But other Union Territories are not mentioned. Then will there be no reservation for women in the Union territories?

(5) How will seats for women be reserved in states that have three or less Lok Sabha seats? There is no mention of the matter in the bill.

But Comrade Geeta Mukherjee, during her tenure as the Chairperson of the Select Committee in 1996, submitted a report to the Government of India with specific recommendations on all these questions. Now we see everyone raising the demand for reservation of seats for OBCs.

Comrade Geeta Mukherjee has given the answer to all of these issues. She said that only SCs, STs and BCs will be saved if they are reserved in the original electoral system. Why it was not preserved in the legislature when there was a movement on the recommendations of the Mandal Commission? Why

was the claim not raised at that time? Everything is just an excuse. It is only a strategy to block the scope of empowerment of women by muddying the water.

Today after 27 years the bill has been passed. Comrade Geeta Mukherjee’s apprehension was that the bill through few inclusion/exclusion and discussion should had to be passed anyway. Otherwise, women would never be able to reach to the legislature. During that time, Geetadi managed to convince the Devegowda government to allow up to 25% reservation. But the bill could not be passed due to the non-cooperation of some left-wing women’s organizations during the discussion on this bill.

That’s why Geetadi feared that women’s empowerment would be too late. The price of that day’s indiscretion was to be counted for 27 years. Geetadi’s wish of that day has been fulfilled on 20th



September 2023. We, on behalf of NFIW, Paschim Banga Mahila Samity (PBMS) thank all of you for passing the Women’s Reservation Bill in Parliament. History will definitely remember Geetadi for preparation of this bill,



organising movement around all the provinces to form public opinion in favour of the bill, discussing with all political parties, organisations, eminent persons and recommending correction of the errors in the bill and above all her rational sharp responses to the various excuses made against women (problems in attending legislature away from home, women are

extreme opposition, Comrade Geeta Mukherjee was asked to join the Central Government as Minister for Women and Children Welfare which she rejected. Geetadi’s efforts to fight for gender equality will be inextricably linked with the Women’s Reservation Bill.

NFIW has continued struggle for this bill with demonstration, signature campaign. Recently a writ

would be raised. On September 5, 2023, a bench headed by Supreme Court Justice Sanjeev Khanna questioned the central government about its reluctance to file its response as to why it is not introducing the bill in the Lok Sabha. There would always be alive the reflection of all these hurdles in the passing of the bill.

Although the central government itself forgot Comrade Geeta Mukherjee, many MPs including those from DMK, NCP mentioned Geetadi in their discussion on the bill in Lok Sabha. The truth cannot be kept secret for long.

That is why the Trinamool Congress and the BJP also had to recall the pioneering contribution of Comrade Geeta Mukherjee in relation to this bill in the discussion before the bill was passed in the Lok Sabha. On behalf of the NFIW and Paschim Banga Mahila Samity, we salute all the individuals, organizations and MPs who fought for this bill.

Long live Comrade Geeta Mukherjee!

unsuitable with the competence of the legislature, their participation in the struggle for women’s rights will be reduced). Above all, when the Devegowda government was not able to bring the bill in the Lok Sabha due to

petition was filed in the Supreme Court on the Women’s Reservation Bill and the Supreme Court sent notice to all political parties. Such efforts of NFIW will definitely go into the annals of history whenever the reservation of women issue

Fight against Communalisation...

From Front Page

The address of Gauhar Raza was filled with poems critiquing the fascist regime. He also spoke about the dangers of National Education Policy 2020, divide and rule politics, rampant price hikes, rising unemployment problems, communal, caste violence, and state-sponsored violence in Manipur and other parts of the country. All the speakers in their addresses urged the delegates to fight against the BJP government.

Fraternal delegates from foreign countries also greeted the delegates. They spoke about the importance of solidarity and internationalism. Mangala Madduma from Revolutionary Students Union of Sri Lanka, Arati Lama, president of All Nepal National Free Students Union, Binay Shah, leader of Nepal Youth Federation and vice president of World Federation of Democratic Youth, Smriti Baral, standing committee member and foreign department head of ANNFSU and Deepak Shil, president of Bangladesh Student Union greeted the delegates and expressed the message of fraternity and internationalism.

Arati Lama of ANNFSU said that individuals may come and go but the ideology remains immortal. As student organizations that believe in scientific socialism and internationalism AISF and ANNFSU should carry on the struggle. Mangala

Madduma talked about the onslaught of imperialism in Sri Lanka and the importance of anti-imperial struggle in the present context. All the foreign delegates were felicitated and given a token of gratitude and solidarity. The fraternal delegates from Nepal gifted the national council caps with the flags of AISF and ANNFSU imprinted on them.

The announcement of the steering committee, the election of the presidium, resolution committee, minutes' committee, and credential committee succeeded after the addresses and felicitations. The political and organizational report was presented by AISF general secretary Vicky Mahesari. In his speech, he reminded the relevance of the conference in the context of upcoming general elections and urged the delegates to critically examine the reports and engage in fruitful discussions and debates. AISF national executive member Viraaj Devang presented the Report on the Status of Education and People's Policy of Education.

A document of People's Policy of Education prepared jointly by AISF and All India Forum for Right to Education (AIFRTE) was presented and distributed among the delegates.

After the presentation of the draft political and organizational report, the delegates discussed in detail

the draft report. The evening session was completely dedicated to cultural programmes. Artists from various parts of Bihar came for the evening session and displayed a variety of arts and dance performances.

The third day of the conference began with a discussion of the reports. Designated delegates from each state presented the state units' views, criticisms, and suggestions on the political and organizational reports.

This was followed by greetings by the leaders and representatives of other youth and student organizations, who conveyed revolutionary greetings and solidarity. All India Youth Federation (AIYF) general secretary R Thirumalai, SFI general secretary Mayukh Biswas, AISA Bihar state secretary Sabir Kumar, AIDS general secretary Saurav Ghosh, and PSU general secretary Nowfal Md Safiulla were present to extend greetings to their respective organizations. All of them focused on the importance of broad left unity and the need for a joint struggle against NEP 2020. Mayukh Biswas said that like the lyric of a famous film song "teri jeet, meri jeet, terihaar, meri haar" the failure of any organization among the Left is the failure of all of us.

In his inspiring address, AIYF general secretary R Thirumalai highlighted on the problem of unemployment. He said that Narendra Modi



CPI national council secretary Rama Krushna Panda addressing the public meeting

had promised two crore employment opportunities annually in his 2014 general election mandate. But he has not kept his promise and unemployment rose to a high level. A strong student and youth movement should be launched to defeat the BJP government.

A seminar was held around NEP-2020 and its impact in the second half of the day. PB Prince Gajendra Babu, an eminent educationist and CPI leader from Tamil Nadu and Shathrugnan Prasad Singh were the speakers. Gajendra Babu spoke about how capitalism is ruining the lives of human beings. He lectured immensely on the existing education system which has been morbid due to capitalist and communal policy. His speech focused on the issue of social justice and reminded the participants about the need to safeguard the very idea and tools of social justice. He related it with education and how NEP 2020 will pave the way for uprooting social justice and catering to inequalities. Shathrugnan Prasad Singh also came down heavily on NEP 2020. He also focused on the importance of the anti-fascist struggle and the need to defeat the BJP in the upcoming elections.

The political, educational, and organizational commissions were constituted after the seminar. On the final day on October 1, the discussions of commissions were held thoroughly. The suggestions

provided by the delegates in the discussions were collected by the respective conveners and leaders and presented in the commission report.

General secretary Vicky Mahesari gave brief answers and appreciation to the discussions held on the draft reports. The report was adopted unanimously by the conference incorporating the suggestions.

Two amendments were made to the constitution of AISF. The amendments are as follows:

■ One should be above the age of 12 and below the age of 35 to be a member of AISF.

■ One should be below the age of 35 to be a member of the national council of AISF.

Credential report and resolution report were placed by the respective conveners.

A new national council of 81 members was elected unanimously in the conference.

Dinesh Seerangaraj was elected by the council as the general secretary. Vicky Mahesari was elected as the president of the national council. Viraaj Devang was elected as treasurer.

Sanghamitra Jena, Ashok Stalin and Mahesh Kunjam were elected as vice presidents. Siva Reddy, Amin Hamza and P Kabeer were elected as secretaries.

The newly formed national council felicitated the outgoing national council, office bearers and the reception committee members.



A view of the rally

Janasevadal Must Defend Secularism, Democracy: CPI

Communist Party of India national council secretary Dr K Narayana said that Janasevadal volunteers should relentlessly defend secularism and democracy in the country. As Army is defending the country from enemies, Janasevadal volunteers should work as red army to protect the people and the country from communal forces, he added.

He was addressing the concluding session of 10 days all India Janasevadal camp at Khammam of Telangana state. Janasevadal volunteers (in-charges) from different states participated in the training camp. On this occasion Dr K Narayana, Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, Telangana CPI state council secretary, CPI, Bhagam Hemanth Rao, party state secretariat member and Potu Prasad, party Khammam district secretary, received salute from the Janasevadal volunteers who got the training.

Dr K Narayana, in his address stated that communal forces are trying to dismantle democracy and secularism in the country. They are making repeated attempts to include several clauses which serve the interests of communal forces and corporates. In this background Janasevadal volunteers have to strive hard to serve the interests of people in general and downtrodden in particular.

Janasevadal concept was the brainchild of late Com Chandra Rajeshwera Rao, which is a paramilitary organisation to protect the communist party and poorer sections. There are two sides of attack on communists. One is through government of BJP on guidelines of RSS. Another is from RSS on people through various organisations. On the occasion of inauguration of centenary celebrations of

foundation of CPI, one lakh redshirt volunteers (Janasevadal) parade will be held through streets of Delhi on December 26, 2024. He appealed to the Janasevadal volunteers to defend the democratic rights and work in support of people's movements.

Dr K Narayana recalled that in the period of Telangana armed struggle,



CPI national council secretary Dr K Narayana at Janasevadal camp

communists have fought against excesses of land lords and redistributed 10 lakhs acres of land. RSS is preaching for prevailing of sanathana dharma. That means varnashrama dharma should prevail and lower castes be servants of upper castes. We have to fight against the obscurantist fundamentalists. In order defend secularism, democracy and constitution of this country we have to protect communist party and people's movements as well. Hence we have to build up a one lakh strong army. Party has also decided to organise such camps in every state and districts in the near future. Apply your mind and try to make success one lakh red army parade through streets of Delhi on December 25, 2024 as part of year-long celebrations.

Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao, CPI Telangana state council secretary, while



Janasevadal volunteers

addressing stated that society can be changed only by the youth. Half of the

Change in the attitude of ruling classes will come only through struggles. Youth

opportunities. He also asserted that Janasevadal is just like army of communist party.

On this occasion leaders handed over certificates to trained Janasevadal volunteers. The programme was attended by Dandi Suresh, party district assistant secretary, Mohd Moulana, party state control commission member, Narla Venkateshwer's Rao, Mekala Srinivas, Mohd Salam, Siddineni Karuna Kumar, Ravi Shiva Ramakrishna, Thota Ramanjaneyulu, Nanabala Ramakrishna, Itikyala Ramakrishna, and Shravan.

– Ram Narsimha Rao

population of youth is in disgust as there are no employment potentialities.

have to build up strong movement for employment potentialities and job

Manufacturing at Five-month Low in Sept: Survey

India's manufacturing activity in September grew at the slowest pace in five months after new factory orders softened from their high in August, a private survey said.

The purchasing managers index (PMI) fell to 57.5 in September, compared with at 58.6 in August, 57.7 in July, 57.8 in June and 58.7 in May, according to S&P Global. A figure of 50 separates expansion from contraction.

"Growth of new export orders softened from August's nine-month high, but remained sharp," the survey said.

"September data showed a let-up in the recent surge

in costs faced by Indian goods producers," it said, as inflation receded to its lowest in over three years during the month.

S&P said that despite softening of new orders, Indian firms noted new business gains from clients in Asia, Europe, North America and the Middle East.

"India's manufacturing industry showed mild signs of a slowdown in September, primarily due to a softer increase in new orders which tempered production growth," said Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at S&P Global Market Intelligence.

"Manufacturers held a strongly positive outlook for production, as they expect demand to strengthen over the course of the coming 12 months," she said, adding that upbeat forecasts, which includes initiatives to replenish input stocks and continued job creation efforts, pointed Indian manufacturing towards a favourable trajectory.

The S&P survey pointed out that driven by higher labour costs and demand strength, average prices charged by Indian manufacturers during September rose at a solid and faster rate than previous months.

Bihar Caste Census Report Exposes BJP's Claims

Bihar Caste Census Report released on October 2, 2023 has exposed the weaknesses of the BJP's so called social engineering. Caste Dynamics from now onward may change BJP's political prospects in Bihar, and is likely to escalate in other states too with the demand of more reservation for OBCs, in governance and in politics.

Now the caste census has put the population of OBCs at 63.1 per cent out of them BCs 27.1 per cent are OBCs and 36 per cent are EBCs. People in general categories are 15.5 per cent, Scheduled Tribes 1.7 per cent and Scheduled Castes 19.7 per cent. Obviously, OBCs will be demanding more reservation and political space in the state since they have more population than any other communities but are suffering from social injustices with less reservation and space than they deserve.

To understand the political space for all the communities we just need to see the population of various communities — Yadav,

Kushwaha, Kurmi, and Bania form the Backward Classes in Bihar. Yadav are 14.26 per cent, Kushwaha 4.21 per cent, Kurmi 2.87 per cent, and Bania 2.31 per cent.

All these communities have occupied more political space than the Extremely Backward Classes in the state which are Kevart 0.2 per cent, Kevat 0.71 per cent, Mallah 2.6 per cent, Teli 2.81 per cent, Nai 1.59 per cent, Dhanuk, 2.13 per cent, Gangota 0.4 per cent, Chandravanshi (Kahar) 1.64 per cent, Noni 1.91 per cent, Prajapati (Kumhar) 1.40 per cent, Badhai 1.45 per cent, and Bind 0.98 per cent. Each of the community will demand for their rightful political space in every political party.

Many of these EBC communities had been aligned chiefly with the BJP in the name of Hindu, while they have not been given their proper political representation within the party. These communities had been feeling neglected by even JD(U) and RJD, who had larger support base

Dr Gyan Pathak

among the four Backward Classes. Yadavas were dominantly with RJD while and Kushwaha, Kurmi, and Bania are largely with JD(U). A large section of Kushwaha was aligned with NDA with its leader Upendra Kushwaha.

Within Scheduled Caste — Chamar, Mochi, Ravidas, and Charmkar are 5.25 per cent; Dusadh, Dhari, and Darahi are 5.31 per cent; Mushahar are 3.08 per cent; Pasi are 0.98 per cent; and Mehtar are 0.19 per cent. BSP has considerable support among the Chamar, Mochi, Ravidas, and Charmkar who form 5.25 per cent of the electorate. Pasi's are chiefly with LJP. Other communities more or less feel neglected, though, some of the leaders have been with BJP or with their leaders in NDA.

In General, unreserved category, Brahmin are 3.65 per cent, Rajput 3.45 per cent, Bhumihar 2.87 per cent and Kayastha 0.60 per cent. These have more political representation in various political parties than their share in the state's population.

Now, when the exact population share is known, every community would demand fair political space in the parties they support. It would create problem to every political party, and ultimately, the caste dynamics would change the politics in Bihar, which may trigger similar exercise in other states too. Here the BJP would have to deal with very difficult problems.

For example, the Brahmin, Rajput, Bhumihar and Kayastha have occupied disproportionate political space in the BJP within general category and also in respect of others from OBC, EBCs, STs, and SCs. All these four category politicians would have make rooms for other communities,

which will be their loss. Additionally, these four communities have also been trying to make themselves dominant in general category, and hence would not be easily ready to lose. Many leaders of general categories are also with other political parties and the same would apply to all. For example, we have recently seen the class between Rajput/ Thakur versus Brahmin leadership when Manoj Kumar Jha of RJD recited a poem "Thakur ka kuan". Rajput leader Anand Mohan has also set the stage for potential clash between Rajputs and Brahmins.

BJP will have tough time to reset its social engineering and the suitable policies not only in Bihar but also in other states. Bihar BJP chief Samrat Chaudhary's statement is indicative of that when he said: "We will first study and analyze the details of the caste-based headcounts, and then make our statement on policy perspectives".

There is also a possibility that the Central BJP leadership may act on Rohini Commission's recommendation regarding equitable allocation of reservation quotas among backward castes and EBCs

in Central government.

BJP will have to initiate some other steps for resetting its social engineering in Bihar and across the country since, all efforts of mentioning Muslims in the country by BJP leaders including Prime Minister Narendra Modi to polarized Hindu votes in their favour seem not working. In case of Bihar, BJP has also said that JD(U) and RJD governments in the past had included upper caste Muslims in the EBCs, and therefore the Caste Census report of Bihar is faulty. It also has failed in winning OBC sympathies towards BJP.

As the BJP stands today, it would need to rework its social engineering, in Bihar and elsewhere, in the light of Bihar Caste Census and the aftermath. The party that was once known as the party of Brahmins and Banias, had extended their support base to Caste Hindus, that is general category people, and then accommodated many OBC leaders under Hindutva politics to upset the OBC politics of social justice, in now in need of next level of social engineering in Bihar and across the country.

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CPI Decries Deaths in Maharashtra Govt Hospitals

*The National Secretariat of the Communist
Party of India issued on October 5, 2023 the
following statement:*

Reports of death in government hospitals at Aurangabad and Nanded in Maharashtra state are disturbing. They expose the government's neglect and the poor health services. Communist Party of India is constantly demanding that the government should spend more on health services and improve quality and accessibility.

While extending condolences to the family of the deceased the party demands adequate compensation and also strict action against those who are responsible for these deaths. It further demands that the system of drug purchase and distribution must be streamlined and the model adopted by Tamil Nadu state government should be followed.

China-India to Develop Space Tourism

Diary of International Events

C. Adhikesavan

China, the Asian country is on track to offer paid space travel starting in 2025, led by the government-backed company CAS Space. Despite the hostility between the two neighbouring countries there is a significant understanding among them in the field of space science.

China and India have not only made significant strides in exploration, from Mars to the Moon, but are also investing in the development of space tourism through various projects. Last August, Indian scientists made history by becoming the first country to successfully land on the lunar surface. China, on the other hand, has explored the Moon's far side, reached Mars with a rover, and established its own space station.

Moreover, now China is on track to offer paid space travel starting in 2025, led by the government-backed company CAS Space. According to CAS Space founder Yang Yiqiang suborbital trips are expected to be available within three years, allowing passengers to experience weightlessness for 10 minutes at an altitude of over 100 kilometres.

Prices could range from 285,000 to 427,000 US dollar, but CAS Space aims to make them accessible to the majority. The company, which separated from the China Academy of Sciences, has been compared to companies like Blue Origin and SpaceX, with its first test flight scheduled for 2023.

This effort aligns with China's ambition to become a leader in commercial space tourism by 2027, according to Yang. China has experienced rapid growth in the commercial space industry, with over 370 related companies registered as of last year.

Additionally, Hainan Island in southern China is promoting a different form of space tourism, this time from Earth, as part of its strategy to become the country's space capital. They aim to attract people who want to witness rocket launches and experience the thrill of space.

India's landing on the lunar surface with the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft, where the Russians had failed just a few days earlier, has further emphasized its

Furthermore, the Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) is designing an ambitious prototype to demonstrate the capability of manned spaceflight, scheduled for late next year. The Gaganyaan project aims to launch a three-member crew into a 400-kilometer orbit "for a three-day mission and their safe return to Earth, landing in the waters of the Indian Ocean," as stated on ISRO's website. The planned unmanned test

and Stella.

The following letter was sent from the Communist Party of United States of America (CPUSA) Labour Commission to attendees of a "Solidarity with auto workers" event, hosted one day before the UAW's contract was set to expire. The letter was addressed to fellow workers. It was great to see you at the "Solidarity with auto workers" online meeting last week.



space plans, which include a commitment to developing space tourism.

The country is participating in two pilot projects with the goal of offering commercial trips beyond Earth in the future. The country is providing facilities for balloon experiments to the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) in Hyderabad, as part of a project by the Spanish company Halo Space.

Halo is in the process of developing a project to offer commercial flights to the stratosphere starting in 2025. On December 7th, Halo conducted its first test flight, reaching an altitude of 37 kilometres using a stratospheric balloon carrying a full-scale prototype of an unmanned capsule.

missions include aerial drop tests, mission abort tests on the platform, and vehicle tests. While this project does not yet include space tourism, ISRO hopes that the development of such missions will contribute significantly to future sustained manned spaceflight activities.

CPUSA Stands with the UAW

The United Auto Workers strike against Detroit automakers has spread to dozens of facilities nationwide. And the walkouts are deepening. Ford, General Motors lay off 500 US Auto workers due to strike. It is not a direct target for work stoppage by the workers. The UAW launched a targeted strike on September 15 on GM, Ford

We wanted to share with you some resources for solidarity action.

Many folks are introducing resolutions of support in their unions or other organizations. Here's a link to a good model from the North Dakota AFL-CIO.

There was a powerful video by UAW president Shawn Fain. It's only 4 minutes and well worth your time. It explains the union's strategy and links to UAW's history. It's great to show to any gathering, too.

Of course, People's World has up-to-the-minute coverage. The banner on the top of the People's World web page takes you to all the articles covering the strike.

We all want to support

the picket lines in person. To find out how to find one in your area, you can contact me — you saw me in the video at a meeting — and I'll work with you. Contact me directly by emailing laborcommission@cpusa.org, and I'll get right back to you.

The United Auto Workers launched a major strike at select plants of all the Big 3 automakers. Some 13,000 auto workers were on strike in Ohio, Michigan, and Missouri. The UAW expected to announce more strike targets on September 22, turning up the heat on the companies.

The members' demands include:

- § Eliminating tiers on wages and benefits, plus double-digit raises for all

- § Restoring cost-of-living adjustments, which were suspended during the Great Recession

- § Restoring the defined-benefit pension and retiree health care for all; workers hired since 2007 have neither

- § Increasing pensions for current retirees; there's been no increase since 2003

- § The right to strike over plant closures

- § Making all current temps permanent employees, with strict limits on the future use of temps

- § Increasing paid time off

Labour Notes is covering this rapidly developing strike in depth, with multiple reporters out on the picket lines. Unlike the mainstream media, our coverage doesn't feature CEOs or their apologists. We're focused on workers' creativity and insights, and we're building on decades of coverage of auto worker organizing and the bottom-up.

One Must Watch Movie or Read Book

Today all over the world state repression and anti-democratic trend is on the rise. Fighting this fascist trend is a must for all progressive forces. But the most important question today is why ordinary men and women are supporting such an anti-human trend!

'Ordinary men' a film on Netflix based on book of the same name written by Christopher tries to answer the question.

Thousands of Germans, who were not Nazi members worked as police in German-occupied territories and indulged in

horrible atrocities committed against Jews or people of occupied territories. The book and movie speaks to them and we are surprised as most of them do not have remorse for what they did but justify their actions by claiming to be victims of anti-German conspiracy. This perception creation undertaken by Nazi propaganda machine and ideology is very important if we want to understand why this happened.

Germany was defeated in the First World War and humiliating conditions were imposed on it by allied

Dr B. K. Kango

forces. This was exploited by Nazi Party to create a feeling of hatred and to hurt feelings. Also at the same time a perception of great German Aryan race was created. This great nation or culture was defeated because of Jews and progressive forces particularly Marxists who were mostly Jews and hence their extermination was justified and so was war against enemies. Thus most Germans harboured 'hurt' feelings and superiority complex which in turn gave

strength to Nazi Party.

RSS since its inception is doing the same. Telling people that great Hindu culture and nation have been defeated by foreigners like Muslims and Christians and were assisted in this task by progressive forces, who criticize Hindu culture. This hurt feeling is then used to justify anti-Muslim stand. Acts like love jihad, anti-conversion laws and Acts like ban on beef eating or cow killing are passed to sustain that feeling or to help police to harass minorities. Similarly terms like urban

naxals and anti-national are used against progressive forces. Hence it is not an accident when Rajnath Singh, Kangana Ranawat or likes tell us that we got independence in 2014.

Another notable thing is rise of big capital during this period as all demands of farmers and workers are put under the carpet. To work without expectations or complaints is considered as *Desh Bhakti*.

Perception creation of this sort is a big challenge before all progressive forces and this is the message of the book and film.

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CPI MP Decries Raids on Journalists, Activists, Authors

The Delhi police raided residences of several journalists, activists, authors and satirists and engaged in search and seizure of books, journals, magazines, laptops and mobile phones, allegedly without any warrant, on the morning of October 3, 2023. It was reported that houses of journalists Urmilesh, Paranjay Guha Thakurta, Bhasha Singh, Abhisar Sharma, Prabir Purkayastha, Aunindyo Chakravarty, historian Sohail

Hashmi, social activist Teesta Setalvad, author Gita Hariharan, satirist Sanjay Rajoura and scientist D Raghunandan were raided, with the Delhi police giving no clarity on the reasons behind this crackdown and widespread search and seizures.

The common thread between the persons who were raided is their well-known critical approach towards the wrongdoings of the Modi government, instead of compliance as

desired by the BJP. These journalists and activists have questioned the Modi regime on several critical issues like the mishandling of the Manipur crisis, the

Adani-Hindenburg revelations, spread of fake news, communalisation of society and media, Pegasus snooping issue, corruption in the Raphael deal, etc. It is publicly known that the BJP did not allow even the Parliament to discuss the Manipur crisis or the Adani revelation and used different

tactics to avoid discussion on these critical issues, including by causing repeated disruptions.

The raids conducted on October 3 should be seen in this context and they are concerning for the future of independence of press and freedom of speech. Muzzling of criticism and curbing free flow of information are detrimental for democracy. Reacting to these concerning developments, CPI national council secretary Binoy

Viswam said: “Modi government’s crackdown on press has already brought India among the bottom 20 countries in the World Press Freedom Index. Several journalists are in jails under draconian charges for reporting the truth. BJP’s contempt for a democratic society is visible to all. These raids are condemnable desperate attempts to hide gross mis-governance, corruption and failures of the last nine years.”

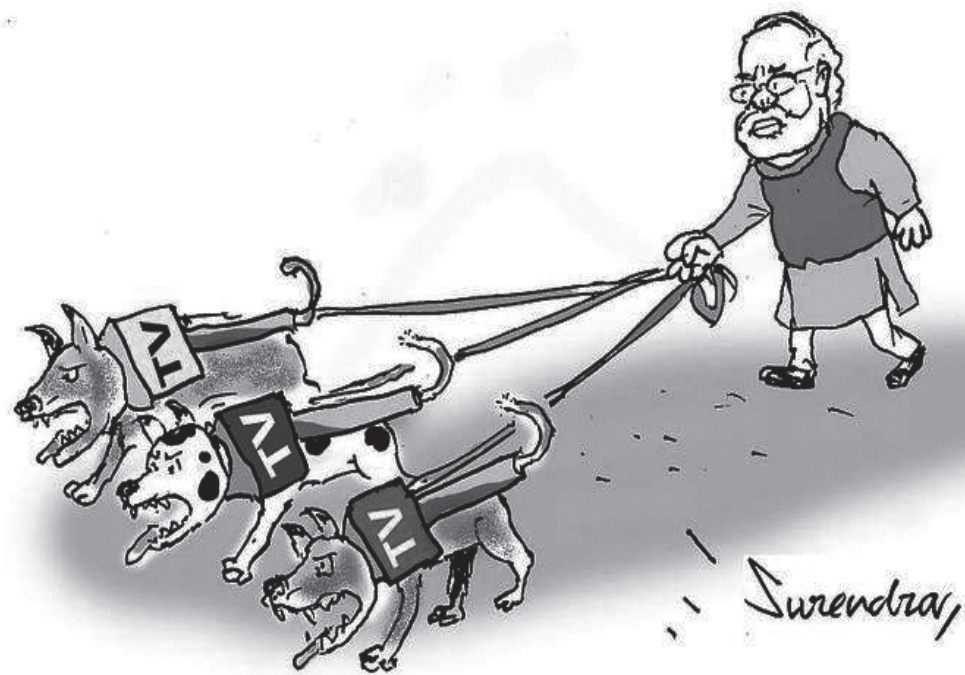
On Record ...

A State Department spokesperson added the US strongly supported “the robust role of the media globally, including social media, in a vibrant and free democracy”. The US government has seen reports of NewsClick’s alleged links to China and is aware of concerns around it though it can’t independently comment on the veracity of those claims. But, as a general principle, the US continues to urge Indian government as well other governments across the world to respect the human rights of journalists, including freedom of expression online and offline. – *The Hindustan Times*, October 4.

Peoples Democratic Party Chief Mehbooba Mufti condemned the Delhi police raids on the premises of NewsClick, saying, “speaking the truth in AmritKaal is the biggest crime”.

Speaking to ANI, the former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister said, “We condemn it. In BJP’s ‘AmritKaal’, speaking the truth is the biggest crime.”

“They (NewsClick) were questioning the government. They were asking questions about the 2 crore jobs, 15 lakh, which was to be deposited in the bank accounts of people, inflation, women athlete protests and the MP (Brij Bhushan Singh, who has been accused of sexual harassment by female wrestlers) who is walking free,” she said.—*ndtv.com*, October 4.



KTR gave examples of former allies such as Shiv Sena (UBT), Shiromani Akali Dal that left the NDA, and asked BJP ‘who’s with you except CBI, ED, I-T?’ KT Rama Rao, working president of Bharat Rashtra Samihi (BRS), gave a sharp response to Prime Minister Narendra Modi moments after he claimed that Telangana chief minister K Chandrashekar Rao wanted to join the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), saying that BRS was ‘not mad enough’ to join the alliance led by the saffron party. “Have we been bitten by a mad dog that we will join NDA?” he asked while countering PM Modi’s claim. – *The Hindustan Times*, October 3.

A total of 107 MPs and MLAs have hate speech cases against them and 480 candidates with such cases have contested elections in the

last five years, according to poll rights body Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR).

The ADR and National Election Watch (NEW) have analysed the self-sworn affidavits of all the incumbent MPs and MLAs, besides the unsuccessful candidates in the Assembly and Lok Sabha polls held in the country in the said period.

The analysis reveals that many of the MPs and MLAs, who are designated lawmakers, have actually declared cases related to “hate speech” against themselves. The analysis is based on the affidavits submitted by the MPs and MLAs prior to the last election they contested. – *The Indian Express*, October 3.

Compiled by: **C Adhikesavan**

Workers, Farmers Observe Black Day over Kheri Killings

DEMAND ARREST OF UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR HOME

Our Special Correspondent

The Central Trade Unions (CTUs), independent Federations/ Associations and Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) observed nationwide Black Day on October 3, 2023, demanding dismissal and prosecution of Ajay Mishra Teni, the minister of state for home affairs, the alleged main conspirator of the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre of farmers.

The farmers and workers across the country observed the Black Day.

Reports have been pouring in of the protest demonstrations, effigy burning and public meetings at district and tehsil headquarters across the country. The call had been given by the All-India Joint Convention of Farmers and Workers held on August 24, 2023 at Talkatora Stadium in New Delhi on behalf of Samyukta Kisan Morcha and Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral Federations/Associations.

The main demand of the protest has been the consistent demand for dismissal and prosecution of the alleged conspirator of the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre of farmers on October 3, 2021, the Union minister of state for home affairs Ajay Mishra Teni. The minister and his son Ashish Mishra Teni were allegedly the masterminds of the massacre and four farmers Nakshatra Singh, Gurvinder Singh, Lavpreet Singh and Daljeet Singh and one journalist Raman Kashyap were killed in the attack.

The massacre was part of the design by the BJP to suppress the united farmers'

struggle against the three pro-corporate Farm Acts aimed at corporatisation of agriculture. However, the united farmers' struggle that was actively supported by the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Federations and other sections of the society, succeeded to force Prime Minister Narendra Modi to tender an apology and repeal the three Farm Acts in the Parliament. In this historic movement, the protesters had braved all severe weather conditions, faced oppression and worst abuses but they were steadfast in their battle for justice and 735 farmers were martyred in this agitation.

Ajay Mishra Teni continues in the cabinet with blessings of the prime



minister though his name was registered in the FIR. Only after the Supreme Court intervened in the matter and directed to arrest the culprits, the BJP led state government in Uttar Pradesh arrested Ashish Mishra Teni and other accused. Some innocent farmers have also been arrested and imprisoned by the state government.

This black day observance symbolises protest against all incidents

of repression/ attacks on the democratic movement of the toiling people and onslaughts on their rights with a determination to combat and resist such repressive designs. This government had brought notorious Essential Defence Services Act criminalizing the strikes not only by the defence sector but all related services and even those who support strike.

The BJP government at the Centre and the right-wing state governments are highly undemocratic, unleashing repression and terror and evoking draconian laws including UAPA against the workers, farmers and other sections of the people who are raising their voice for their rights and entitlements and against anti-people policies. Today we get the news of raids in the houses of journalists who question the wrong doings of the government, whereas

many of the false cases lodged against the farmers during the historic kisan struggle are yet to be withdrawn.

The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions, sectoral Federations/Associations and the Samyukta Kisan Morcha have pledged in their joint convention to strengthen their struggle against the pro-corporate, anti-farmer, anti-worker and anti-national policies of the Narendra Modi government.

Delhi Marks Black Day

On the joint call of United Trade Union Forum and United Kisan Morcha, on October 3 2023, workers and farmers jointly celebrated Black Day at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi.

Today's programme was organized in front of Bank of Baroda on Sansad Marg.



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