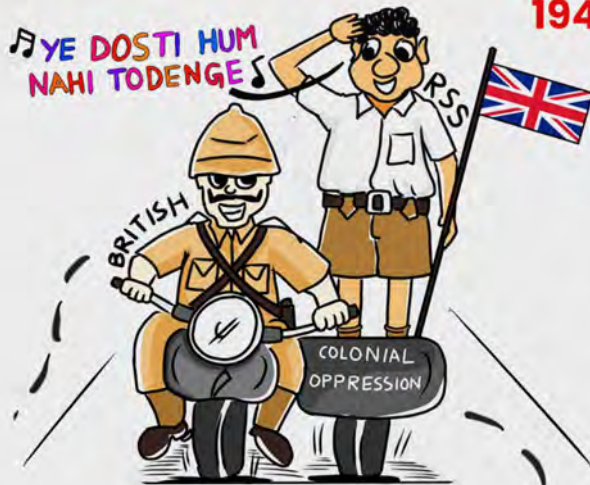


Liberation

CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)



1940 Members of Sangh [RSS] were encouraged to join the Civil Guard (a special measure to quell 'Quit India' protests) in greater number by RSS.

-Home Dept. Note, 02 Dec 1940

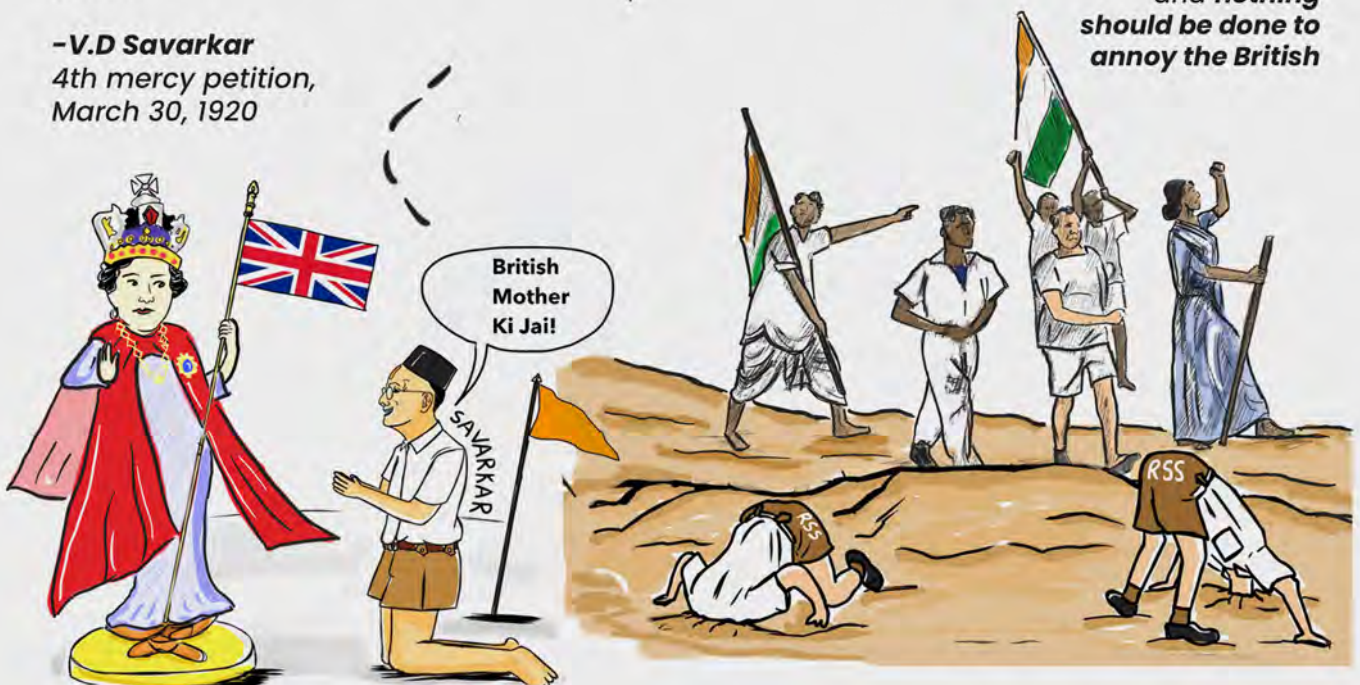
1920

Every intelligent lover of India would heartily and loyally co-operate with the British people in the interests of India herself.

-V.D Savarkar
4th mercy petition,
March 30, 1920

1942-1947

M.S. Golwalkar issued instructions (1942) that the RSS's routine work should continue and **nothing should be done to annoy the British**





Hate, Communal-Casteist Violence, and Impunity Define Yogi Regime in Uttar Pradesh

While Chief Justice of India B.R. Gavai, in an elaborate speech at a seminar in Mauritius, emphasized that “the Indian legal system is governed by the rule of law, not by the rule of the bulldozer,” in Uttar Pradesh the BJP has turned this principle on its head. The state has plunged into absolute lawlessness and state-sponsored anti-Muslim violence.

On Sunday, October 5, in a horrific case of caste atrocity, a 38-year-old Dalit man named Hariom, a resident of Fatehpur district, was lynched by a mob in Raebareli district, amid a so-called panic over “drone thieves.” Hariom was mercilessly beaten to death, in full view of the camera, with belts and sticks. This comes on the heels of a Hindu neighbour brutally killing a seven-year-old Muslim child, Shahzeb, in Azamgarh district, and hanging his severely mutilated body in a gunny bag on his gate to “teach a lesson to the Mullahs.” Video footage of Hariom’s lynching shows one of the attackers declaring, “Everyone here is with Baba” — a chilling display of the emboldening of communal-casteist forces under the Yogi Adityanath regime.

This atrocity occurs alongside a coordinated campaign of state-sponsored violence against Muslims across Uttar Pradesh. For several days, the police and administration unleashed brutal repression against the ‘I Love Mohammed’ protests, where people were expressing their dissent against the arbitrary and discriminatory actions of the authorities targeting the Muslim community. Weeks of arbitrary bulldozer demolitions, carried out in direct violation of Supreme Court orders, have targeted several of Muslim

households in Bareilly, Sambhal, and other areas. Families have been displaced, homes demolished, and numerous individuals arrested, tortured, and publicly humiliated.

The scenes of rampant bulldozing of homes; people from marginalized communities being harassed or lynched while police act as mere spectators; arrested Muslims being shot by police, paraded humiliatingly before the media, and seen limping out of police stations have become horrifyingly routine. The administration is playing the role of judge, jury, and executioner. Amid the communal-casteist violence, Uttar Pradesh under the Yogi regime is also ranked top in crimes against women, as revealed by the recent NCRB report further exposing the state’s grim reality.

The state, under the Yogi regime, has waged a violent, targeted, and vile campaign of terror against Muslims, Dalits, and all marginalized sections of society. CPI(ML) strongly condemns the lynching of Hariom and the ongoing bigoted violence against Muslims and bulldozer injustice in Uttar Pradesh, and calls upon the democratic-minded people of UP to unite against this demolition of the Constitution and democracy.

Recalling the Chief Justice of India’s assertion about the “rule of law,” we urge the Supreme Court to take immediate suo motu cognizance of the state-sponsored campaign of bulldozer injustice and all unlawful administrative acts that threaten the life, limb, and liberty of individuals.

Resist and Defeat the Communal-Casteist terror in Uttar Pradesh! No to BJP’s Bulldozer Fascism! ■

Liberation

New Series Vol. 31 No. 07
NOVEMBER 2025

CONTENTS

BIHAR ELECTIONS	
Profile of CPI(ML) Candidates	04
COVER FEATURE	
RSS Centenary and Challenges before Modern India	08
RSS at 100: A Diagnosis	09
COMMENTARY	
JNU's Fight for Survival in a Fascist State	13
Atrocities on Dalits and Assault on Ambedkar's Constitution	17
IN FOCUS	
IT Workers & Layoffs	18
India-UK Trade Deal	20
INTERNATIONAL	22
REPORT	25
TRIBUTE	33

Editor-in-chief

Dipankar Bhattacharya

Editor

Arindam Sen

Editorial Board

V. Shankar

Sanjay Sharma

Sucheta De

Ajit Patil

Clifton D' Rozario

Maitreyi Krishnan

Akash Bhattacharya

Editors' e-mail:

liberation@cpiml.org

Design: V Arun Kumar

Manager: Prabhat Kumar

Phone: 704287713

Website: liberation.org.in

E-mail: manager.liberation@gmail.com

36 pages including covers

Annual Subscription Rates

India Rs. 300

Abroad US\$ 60

Digital Subscription Rs. 200

Online Payment: liberation.org.in

Pay By Bank transfer:

Account Name: Liberation Publications

Account No.: 90502010091855

IFSC Code: CNRB0019050

MICR Code.: 110015388

Bank: Canara Bank

Bihar Assembly Elections 2025: Remember The Martyrs and Advance Their Mission

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA



Many of our activists and well-wishers were expecting the list of CPIML Liberation candidates in Bihar elections to be a bit longer with a few more names from a few more districts. That did not materialise but we are glad that we have been successful in ensuring a slightly bigger coalition this time with the participation of a few more parties.

We had decided that there would be no 'friendly fight' in any seat. On our part we have stuck to that principle in spite of having a limited tally of only twenty seats. We hope the INC and RJD and any other party currently locked in a possible 'friendly fight' situation are able to sort out their seat-sharing problems and ensure complete unity by the time of withdrawal of candidates.

Our list obviously suffers from several imbalances and we could not give an opportunity to many deserving comrades. Balancing the local constituency-level aspirations with the larger question of representation is a very tough ask, especially with such a limited number of seats and within the constraints of a coalition arrangement. Hope all our comrades and friends will understand the situation and extend their generous support to all our candidates in this crucial electoral battle.

Elections are a form of collective struggle where an individual plays the role of a candidate only with the hard work and united untiring effort of hundreds of activists and becomes successful only with the goodwill of thousands of citizens and the support and participation of tens of thousands of electors. And for a communist party like ours every form of struggle comes with attendant risks and persecution of the powers that be, and elections are all the more so.

To take the example of Bhore(SC) in Gopalganj, Comrade Jitendra Paswan, our proposed candidate from Bhore(SC) was arrested after filing nomination and we had to field Comrade Dhananjay, former president of JNUSU as our eventual candidate to carry forward the battle for justice in Bhore on behalf of all victims of political vendetta, state repression and feudal-communal violence. In 1995 Comrade Umesh Paswan was our first candidate from this seat who had polled nearly 16,000 votes and finished third, but died a martyr only two years later.

In 2020, Comrade Jitendra polled more than 70,000 votes but victory still eluded him by a narrow margin of 400-odd votes. And soon after the election he was implicated in a false case, and much like Comrade Manoj Manzil, our 2020 MLA from Agiaon (SC) in Bhojpur, he too faces the threat of electoral disqualification in the event of a possible conviction. The CPI(ML) election campaign is not about seat sharing and electoral engineering - it is about withstanding this repression and overcoming serial hurdles in an extremely unequal battle.

The right to vote that many of our comrades could exercise for the first time in 1989 came with the price of a big massacre. Every victory since then has been won at a great price of martyrdom and repression. From the TADA sentence inflicted on Comrade Shah Chand and others in Arwal after the February 2000 elections to the martyrdom of Comrade Anil Barooah in Assam while addressing an election meeting in Dibrugarh in February 1998 and the assassination of Comrade Mahendra Singh in Jharkhand after filing his nomination in January 2005 - our journey in the electoral arena has been full of sacrifices.

Remember the martyrs and advance their mission. We shall fight, we shall win. ■

CPI(ML) Candidates for Bihar Assembly Elections 2025

The Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation has announced its list of 20 candidates for the upcoming Bihar Legislative Assembly Elections 2025, contesting as part of the INDIA Alliance – Mahagathbandhan.

1. Bhore - SC (103): Comrade Dhananjay



Former President of JNU Students' Union, Dhananjay joined the AISA in 2014 during the struggle against the Four-Year Undergraduate Programme (FYUP) at the University of Delhi. He is currently pursuing a PhD at the School of Arts and Aesthetics and has been part of several student and workers' movements, from the campaigns for the Red Bus Pass to the Reopen JNU and Unlock JNU protests.

A cultural activist, Dhananjay was part of Sangwari, a Delhi-based cultural troupe, and has performed street theater in solidarity with DTC workers, Pricol workers of Tamil Nadu, and in working-class neighbourhoods across Delhi. He is contesting from Bhore after the proposed CPI(ML) candidate Comrade Jitendra Paswan was arrested and jailed in a fabricated case.

2. Ziradei (106): Comrade Amarjeet Kushwaha



Amarjeet Kushwaha is the sitting CPI(ML) MLA from Ziradei and the former President of the of Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) in Bihar. Known for his fearless leadership in defending Dalit and landless labourers, he was arrested in a fabricated case in 2013 after protecting Dalit families in Chilmarva village, who were being violently threatened by landlords backed by local political forces.

Despite such repression, he has remained at the forefront of struggles for land rights, social justice, and workers' dignity. In the 2020 Assembly election, Amarjeet won Ziradei with 69,442 votes, capturing 48.11% of the total vote.

3. Darauli - SC (107): Comrade Satyadeo Ram



Satyadeo Ram for Darauli Assembly: Satyadeo Ram, sitting CPI(ML) MLA from Darauli, is a CC member and the President of the AIARLA in Bihar. A veteran leader of Dalit and rural labour struggles, he won the 2020 Assembly election from inside prison, where he was falsely accused in a politically motivated case for defending landless Dalit families. He secured 81,067 votes (50.5%), reflecting strong support of the people. He previously served as MLA from the erstwhile Mairwa constituency in 1995 and 2000, and from Darauli in 2015.

4. Daraunda (109): Comrade Amarnath Yadav



Amarnath Yadav is a veteran CPI(ML) leader and former MLA, currently serving as the Bihar Vice President of the AIKM. A long-time leader of farmers and rural workers' movements in Siwan, he has been at the forefront of people's struggles in the region. In the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections, he contested from Daraunda, securing 60,614 votes (37.15%) and finishing second. He earlier represented the Darauli constituency as MLA during 1995–2000 and 2005–2010.

5. Digha (181): Comrade Divya Gautam



Divya Gautam has been associated with AISA since her student days. In 2012, she contested the Patna University Students' Union elections and narrowly lost by a small margin. After clearing the BPSC examination, she voluntarily resigned due to her commitment to social causes and began teaching at Patna Women's College. Alongside her political work, Divya has been actively involved in social and cultural initiatives. She is a member of the state CPI(ML)

Gender Justice and Sensitisation Cell and has consistently intervened on issues related to women's rights and equality.

6. Kalyanpur - SC (131): Comrade Ranjeet Kumar Ram



Ranjit Ram is an RYA activist, and has been active in struggles of agricultural workers. On 16 August 2003, as a student in Darbhanga, he and three other AISA activists had shown black flags to the then Home Minister LK Advani, for which they had been booked under the draconian sedition law and spent several months in jail. He contested Kalyanpur in 2020, securing 62,028 votes (33.0%) and coming second.

7. Warisnagar (132): Comrade Phoolbabu Singh



Phulbabu Singh began his political life as an AISA activist and is now a leader in the AIARLA and RYA. He contested Warisnagar in 2020, securing 54,555 votes (28.71%) and coming second.

8. Rajgir - SC (173): Comrade Bishwanath Chaudhary



Bishwanath Choudhary, a retired Chief Engineer by profession, is actively involved in the engineers' union in Bihar. He has been at the forefront of movements for SC/ST rights and social justice.



9. Phulwari - SC (188): Comrade Gopal Ravi Das



Gopal Ravidas, sitting CPI(ML) MLA from Phulwari, is the Bihar Secretary of the All India Agricultural and Rural Labourers Association (AIARLA) and a Central Committee member of CPI(ML). He has led movements for the rural poor, especially women, against extortion and harassment by microfinance agencies. In the 2020 Assembly election, he won Phulwari with 91,124 votes (43.57%).

10. Paliganj (190): Comrade Sandeep Saurav



Sandeep Saurav, sitting CPI(ML) MLA from Paliganj and a member of the party's Central Committee (CC), will be contesting the 2025 elections from Paliganj. Former JNUSU General Secretary and ex-General Secretary of AISA, he has been at the forefront of youth and student issues in Bihar during his tenure as MLA, including movements against unemployment and for students' rights. In 2020, he won Paliganj with 67,917 votes (43.73%). Though selected as an assistant professor in Bihar, he chose to dedicate himself to organising and working for the poor and marginalized in his home state.

11. Arrah (194): Comrade Quyamuddin Ansari



Coming from zone of anti-feudal struggle, Quyamuddin Ansari, was an AISA leader in its formative period in the 1990s and is also Bihar secretary associated with Insaf Manch, the platform campaigning to help innocent persons falsely framed, accused and incarcerated by the police and investigative agencies in terror cases. He contested the Assembly Elections in 2020 from Arrah receiving 43.9 % votes with 68,779 votes, coming at second place against BJP candidate who bagged 71,781 votes.

12. Agiaon- SC (195): Comrade Shiv Prakash Ranjan



Comrade Shiv Prakash Ranjan, current MLA from Agiaon, was elected in the 2024 by-election after CPI(ML) leader Manoj Manzil was convicted in a politically motivated case.

He is Bihar State Secretary of the Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) and a member of the CPI(ML) Bihar State Committee.

Alongside Comrade Manoj Manzil, he has led several movements in Agiaon, including the historic Sadak Par School campaign for improving local education.

13. Tarari (196): Comrade Madan Singh



Madan Singh, a veteran CPI(ML) leader, joined the party in 1987 and has been actively involved in struggles of the poor and marginalized in Bhojpur. He spent 9 years in jail for his political activism but continued to fight for the rights of workers, peasants, and oppressed communities.



14. Ghosi (217): Comrade Ram Bali Singh Yadav

Incumbent MLA Rambali Singh Yadav is the Vice-President of the AICCTU in Bihar and a well-known leader of workers' and employees' struggles in the state. He has been at the forefront of struggles of teachers and scheme workers in the state.

In the 2020 Assembly election, he won Ghosi with 74,712 votes (49.07%).

15. Dumraon (201): Comrade Ajit Kumar Singh

Ajit Kumar Singh, the incumbent MLA from Dumraon, is a Bihar State Committee member of CPI(ML). A prominent youth leader, he has consistently championed the struggles of young people. In the 2020 Election, he won with 71,320 votes, securing around 47.9% of the vote share. He has been at the forefront of youth and student movements against unemployment, steadfastly raising these issues both inside the Assembly and on the streets.

16. Sikta (09): Comrade Birendra Prasad Gupta

Birendra Prasad Gupta, incumbent CPI(ML) MLA from Sikta, is a Central Committee member and is associated with the All India Agricultural and Rural Labourers Association (AIARLA) in Bihar. He has led struggles against feudal oppression in West Champaran and has faced jail and attacks for his activism. In the 2020 Assembly election, he secured 49,075 votes.

17. Balrampur (65): Comrade Mahboob Alam

Mahboob Alam, sitting CPI(ML) MLA from Balrampur and Central Committee member, is a dedicated communist leader widely respected by the poor, landless, and homeless for his consistent leadership in their struggles. He has previously represented the Barsoi constituency in 2000, and the Balrampur constituency in 2015. In the 2020 Bihar Assembly elections, he again won from Balrampur, securing 104,489 votes and defeating his nearest rival by a margin of 53,597 votes.

18. Pipra (42), Supaul: Comrade Anil Kumar

Anil Kumar, who resigned from his job as an agricultural scientist, is contesting from Pipra constituency in the Supaul region as a CPI(ML) candidate in 2025. He has been a prominent voice for agrarian justice and the rights of marginalized farmers.

19. Karakat (213): Comrade Arun Singh

The incumbent MLA of Karakat, Arun Singh, is associated with the All India Kisan Mahasabha and is a Central Committee member of CPI(ML). He is a popular leader known for his role in farmers' struggles. In the 2020 Assembly election, he secured 82,700 votes (48.19%), defeating the BJP candidate. He had earlier represented the constituency as MLA in 2000 and 2005.

20. Arwal (214): Comrade Mahanand Singh

The incumbent MLA, Mahanand Prasad, is a prominent state-level leader of CPI(ML) and has led struggles of unorganised workers and sanitation workers in his district. He joined the student movement AISA in the 1990s and was also active in Jan Sanskriti Manch, the cultural front.



RSS Centenary and Challenges before Modern India

Every year, the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh observes Vijaya Dashami as its foundation day. This year the foundation anniversary, which also marked the centenary of the organisation, fell on the second of October, the day India always celebrates as Gandhi Jayanti. On October 2 this year we thus had one of the most telling and bizarre ironies of modern India - celebration of the legacy of India's best-known international icon and glorification of the very organisation which was banned for its role in his assassination. What makes the irony all the more glaring is the role reversal inflicted on the Indian state between then and now.

In February 1948 independent India's first Home Minister Sardar Patel banned the RSS immediately after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi declaring the need and the Indian state's resolve "to root out the forces of hate and violence that are at work in our country and imperil the freedom of the Nation and darken her fair name". And in 2025, the Modi government led the RSS centenary celebration from the front, turning it into a state-sponsored celebratory occasion, issuing a postage stamp and a commemorative coin and unleashing a laudatory publicity blitzkrieg by various government departments and institutions. Narendra Modi, who had termed the RSS as the biggest NGO in the world in his 2025 Independence Day address, used the centenary celebration platform to eulogise the organisation as the contemporary actualization of India's eternal

national consciousness.

Modi also made a ridiculous attempt to link the RSS with India's freedom movement. He cleverly mentioned the fact that Dr Keshav Baliram Hedgewar had gone to jail during the freedom struggle but omitted the crucial fact that his first stint in the jail had happened in 1921-22 when he was associated with the Congress and the RSS was yet to be founded, and during his subsequent arrest in 1930-31 he had made it clear that his participation in the satyagraha was in his individual capacity and not on behalf of the organisation. Among the other well known Hindutva icons of that period, Savarkar is infamous for his mercy petitions and alleged role in the Gandhi assassination plot while Shyama Prasad Mukherjee collaborated with the British colonial rulers during the 1942 Quit India movement.

During the Vajpayee era an attempt was also made to link Vajpayee with the 1942 movement and project him as a hero of 1942 because of his arrest from his ancestral village Bateswar in Madhya Pradesh and incarceration for twenty-odd days. But when reports indicating his collaboration with the police began to surface, Vajpayee denied any association with the movement and preferred to describe himself as a spectator and not participant, as just part of the crowd. The history of India's freedom movement in every part of the country presents the same picture of RSS aloofness from the movement. It was a well thought out strategy of the RSS to avoid any confrontation with the colonial state

and use all its time and energy in building the organisational network and spreading the RSS ideology of Hindu supremacism. But today from the vantage position of state power, the Sangh brigade is busy rewriting history to bring Hindutva centre stage and push secular nationalism to the margin.

This desperation to win the battle of history is also reflected in the relentless RSS attempt to retrospectively isolate and discredit Nehru and hijack other major influential icons through selective misappropriation of their messages and historical roles. Gandhi and Ambedkar are two of the most striking targets of this Sangh strategy of misappropriation. We have seen the repeated use of Gandhi in the recent past as a symbol of 'swachhta' or cleanliness. Now with the Trump tariffs hitting India's foreign trade, there is a renewed attempt to use the Gandhian metaphor of 'swadeshi' and 'swavlamban' - self-sufficiency and self-reliance. While Gandhi's overt use of Hindu religious metaphors makes him an attractive target of acquisition, his relentless invocation of Hindu-Muslim unity and communal harmony as the foundation of India's strength and national unity surely remains total anathema to the Sangh's ideological discourse.

More than any other figure of history, the Sangh seems desperate to distort Ambedkar and blunt the edge of his egalitarian appeal and harness the appeal of the Constitution to subserve the fascist agenda. Former President Ramnath Kovind mobilised his Dalit

identity and the legitimacy that comes from having occupied the presidential office to declare RSS compliant with the Ambedkarite ideology. Quoting a Vajpayee speech of 2001, he said that not Manusmriti, but Bhimsmriti, the Constitution, will continue to guide India's journey. He even described the RSS as a Bhimvadi or an Ambedkarite organisation. Ambedkar, who had identified caste as the biggest anti-national obstacle, called for annihilation of caste and described the prospect of Hindu Raj as the greatest potential calamity India faced, is today being invoked by RSS ideologues as a proponent of social homogeneity and administrative centralisation.

The constitutional safeguards for cultural diversity, federal powers, minority rights and civil liberties are being systematically curtailed and even reversed to rob the Constitution of its egalitarian and democratic thrust and turn it into a weapon of majoritarian rule, hyper nationalism, over centralisation and invasive surveillance. The empty lip service to Gandhi and Ambedkar, the rewriting of the history of the freedom movement and the constant abuse of the Constitution in the name of its enforcement, is the most sinister move of the Sangh-BJP establishment in the RSS centenary. The organisation which had explicitly rejected the Constitution at the time of its adoption, denounced the tricolour as a bad omen and fomented hate and violence that resulted in the assassination of Gandhi and vilification of Ambedkar, is today busy reconstructing India according to its own ideological imagination. This is perhaps what Modi indicated by quoting Hedgewar, "Take people as they are, shape them into what they should be". If India has to realise the constitutional vision of a sovereign socialist secular democratic republic, we the people of India will have to reclaim the Constitution and the radical inclusive and transformative legacy of the freedom movement and push the RSS back to the periphery where it belonged for much of its century-old existence. ■

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh at 100: A Diagnosis

▲ AKASH BHATTACHARYA



Genesis

The centenary of the RSS is understandably an occasion for celebration for its leaders, members, sympathizers and sycophants. However, among those who find themselves at odds with its project of Hindu Rashtra – and they constitute India's majority – the occasion is hardly a happy one. For those resisting the RSS's majoritarian, divisive and violent politics, the RSS centenary is yet another milestone in India's path away from equitable development, freedom, justice and progress.

Several factors have contributed the ascendancy of the RSS to a position of dominance. Working in partnership with its political wing – the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) – and its multifarious front organizations, the RSS has utilized the crisis of capitalism, the weakening of liberalism, the political vacuum created by the setbacks to 20th century socialism, post 9-11 Islamophobia, and other national and international circumstances, to cement its place in Indian society and politics.

The recent success however has a long back story, which is crucial for understanding its current dominance. How did a political and ideological project clearly at odds with India's diverse character, pluralist traditions, and progressive currents, manage



“

As freedom came nearer, the RSS increasingly infused the political sphere with its communally divisive and violent ideas, contributing in no small measure to the 1947 partition.

to systematically damage each of these?

Founded in 1925, the RSS right from its inception sought to build a Hindu majoritarian state in India, inspired by European fascism. This majoritarian project was culturally rooted in Hindu conservative responses to modernization, and in a deep-rooted Islamophobia among sections of Brahmins who resented the political power of Muslims in pre-colonial India.

This Hindu conservative reaction began with the early 19th century Dharma Sabhas and continued through the revivalist movements later in the century. While these created certain potentialities for Hindu majoritarian politics, the RSS was quintessentially a product of 20th century transformations.

The Morley Minto Reforms (1909) introduced an overlap between religious identities and political communities, and enabled the imagination of a Hindu political community within a modern electoral politics.

The rise of mass nationalism in the 1920s further activated the freshly constituted Hindu and Muslim political communities, this time on an unforeseen scale. MK Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru preferred to mobilize these communities on pluralist and secular lines. However, the RSS adopted the opposite approach, choosing religion as the singular basis for political identity formation.

The RSS conveniently and opportunistically de-prioritizing the freedom struggle, instead focusing its energies on reshaping India into a Hindu Rashtra. As freedom came nearer, the organization increasingly infused the political sphere with its communally divisive and violent ideas, contributing in no small measure to the 1947 partition.

Despite its growing influence, the RSS's Hindu-centric vision occupied a marginal space in Indian politics on the eve of independence. The partition of the subcontinent along religious lines undoubtedly strengthened the potentiality of Hindu majoritarian politics in India, but the RSS's Hindu Rashtra project did not fit easily with the historical, social and cultural realities of post-colonial India.

The rhetoric of cultural revivalism, espousal of Brahminical values including untouchability, opposition to the Indian constitution, and association with Gandhi's assassination, put the RSS at odds with the prevalent moods of democratization and decolonization, especially with

socialist, secular, modernist and developmental ideas which held sway over the entire world in those times.

The Hindu Rashtra project was also plagued by definitional problems. On the religious plane, the 'Hindu' in the Hindu Rashtra did not connote a uniform set of doctrines and religious practices. Besides, the majority of people who were Hindu by faith did not subscribe to the notion of a singularly Hindu political community. The RSS therefore needed to create a modern Hindu religious identity, and a Hindu political community coeval with it.

Among a host of strategies that it adopted to perform these tasks, two in particular paid the RSS handsome dividends in the long run: refiguration of Hinduism as culture rather than as a doctrine, and a functional distance of the RSS from electoral politics.

Strategic Choices

The RSS de-emphasized doctrinal Hinduism and favoured a cultural Hinduism more suited to the modern times. The daily routine at shakhas, the syllabi in Sangh sponsored schools, and everyday activities in its front organizations, presented Hindu religious doctrines and practices in a condensed and ritualized form, prioritizing emotional association with ostensibly Hindu cultural pasts over intellection.

The RSS of course launched the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) in 1964 to consolidate ostensibly Hindu sects and communities, but it continued to delink modern religio-political Hindu identity from strong doctrinal identification. This emphasis on cultural and symbolic modes enabled the Sangh to use diverse means – from television

to social media – to populate the public sphere with its ideas.

The refiguration of religion as culture also enabled the Sangh to appeal to the new post-liberalization professional classes. Economic liberalisation had enriched these classes, but it had also left them searching for roots and a cultural identity in a globalized world. From India's towns and cities to the American Silicon Valley, the RSS was able to pull a substantial chunk of these classes towards itself through its model of cultural nationalism.

At a doctrinal and practical level, distinct communities that the RSS brand of Hinduism claims under the Hindu umbrella are diverse and hierarchically differentiated. Many do not even identify as Hindu, viz. Lingayats, Adivasis. De-emphasizing doctrinal association and insisting on cultural and political unity has allowed RSS to downplay these internal contractions in Hinduism.

The RSS's functional distance from politics has been rightly criticized as double speak: the RSS claims to be a cultural organization but its Hindu Rashtra project has always been deeply political and it has used its front organizations to push this forward. But behind this double-speak lay a carefully chalked out strategy rooted in the core character of the RSS.

The Sangh always believed in the restoration of a Hindu political order. The founders of the Sangh belonged to a region that gave birth to the last and probably the only empire – the Marathas – which invoked Hinduism to legitimize itself. The political nostalgia of the early RSS leaders indeed had a historical basis.

However, under the historical

circumstances of decolonization and democratization, a theocratic state was impossible to build. Unlike the Communists, the Sangh did not have a revolutionary theory that could structure their approach to politics. Politics was essential to build a Hindu Rashtra but it was a terrain that they had to tread with caution.

The RSS therefore floated a separate political wing – the Bhartiya Jan Sangh (BJS) in 1951 and the Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) in 1980. While the BJS and the BJP's importance was never in question, the Sangh did not necessarily accord it unquestioned primacy over its other wings. This allowed them to influence politics without getting subsumed by its vicissitudes, and enabled them to maintain a large cadre base outside the sphere of electoral politics. Neither did the RSS want to unilaterally control the BJS/BJP: granting partial autonomy to the political wing has been a key part of the Sangh's strategy and that continues till date.

Through the use of BJS/BJP, the RSS made membership of the political community incumbent on specific demands rather than a comprehensive program. Right from the BJS days, the RSS formulated and stuck to three main demands – Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, enactment of a Uniform Civil Code and the abrogation of Article 370. These three represented three distinct but interconnected facets of the Hindu majoritarian ideology: Hindu reconquest of sites associated with Muslim political rule, a Brahminical personal code, and opposition to Muslim political power. These demands continued to the cornerstone of the BJP as well.

Notably, the BJS/BJP never

espoused an economic program. It has always been economically opportunistic, espousing Swadeshi and Gandhian socialism till the time those ideas had some salience, then embraced neoliberalism, and subsequently championed crony-capitalism. The project of Hindu Rashtra has always lacked a proper economic agenda, and hence the Sangh Parivar has done its level best to weaken critical economic discourse as a register of politics.

The Unfinished Democratic Revolution

The RSS – with its roots in Brahminism – has consistently subverted or opposed policies and laws that favour equality; be they affirmative action for backward castes, personal freedoms for women, labour rights, and so on. Its discomfort with the Indian constitution stems from the constitution's programmatic espousal of a democratic agenda which, if implemented in letter and spirit, would strike at the heart of the caste order. This is a veritable counter politics to what the constitution espouses.

Notwithstanding its clever tactical adjustments, the rise of the RSS to a commanding position would not have been possible if the soil had not been left fertile for the growth of such counter-politics. This is where Babasaheb Ambedkar's pertinent observation about the challenges we faced in implementing the constitution becomes pertinent. He had remarked during the adoption of the constitution that its promise of political equality might fall flat in the face of a deeply unequal socio-economic landscape. This discrepancy might enable Brahminical and capitalist forces to sidetrack the democratic process, he had feared.

A look at the memorandum 'States and Minorities' which Ambedkar had prepared on behalf of the All India Scheduled Castes Federation in 1947 gives us a glimpse into the kind of transformation he envisaged to democratize the base of Indian society. In this memorandum Ambedkar described India as United States of India, and promised for all its citizens a set of fundamental rights with comprehensive judicial protection against executive tyranny, unequal treatment, discrimination and economic exploitation.

The memorandum wanted the state to organize the main spheres of economic life including agriculture on socialist lines through comprehensive nationalization and collectivization, within the framework of parliamentary democracy. To lend stability to state socialism it wanted the Constitution to guarantee it in a way that every government would have to abide by it. A universal affordable public education was another of these guarantees. These transformations in the spheres of education and economy would potentially create a level playing field in all spheres of life as well as a sense of public morality based on equality, fraternity and other equalizing values.

Article II Section III of 'State and Minorities' provided a whole range of protection for minorities: against a communal executive, against social and official tyranny, against social boycott. It granted substantial power to governments to spend money for any purposes beneficial to the minorities. The idea behind was to not only protect but also empower to minorities and create a bulwark against majoritarianism of all kinds.

Most of these provisions found a place in the non-enforceable

parts of the Indian constitution. Even enforceable parts were implemented only partially, which meant that interconnected structures of caste, class and gender inequality and oppression were far from being substantially uprooted. This left the door open for the rise of a counter-politics to try and undo certain aspects of the post-colonial democratic transformations, and to damage the democratic structure itself.

Notwithstanding the current dominance of the RSS, it must be noted that the RSS is still struggling to become the hegemonic force that it so wishes to become. The rise of RSS might have caught India's democratic forces by surprise but their combined power is bound to overwhelm the RSS and undo its impact over a period of time. The Saffron counter-politics is a twisted testament to India's significant democratic achievements, but it also carries a warning about allowing a democratic deficit to persist.

We are faced with a twin task today – to save the constitution and to bring about a democratic renewal: a reaffirmation of faith in the constitutional principles and their implementation to the fullest possible extent. At the ideological level, this requires a consolidation of peoples' democratic traditions – Gandhian ideas, Dalit Bahujan Adivasi traditions, Marxism, feminism, democratizing currents within religions (e.g. Bhakti, Sufi etc.), progressive regional traditions, and so on. There is a need to identify their strengths and bring them together. and isolate the Savarkar-Golwalkar tradition. ■

JNU's Fight for Survival in a Fascist State

▲ SMRITI CHOUDHARY

In October 2025, students of JNU were subjected to a series of violent assaults by the ABVP-BJP-RSS nexus in an attempt to cancel union elections. The ABVP attempted to replicate the national playbook of democratic erosion in JNU as well. Ultimately, the successful resistance by JNU students demonstrates a crucial truth for our times: democracy survives not because institutions protect it, but because people organize and fight for it against all odds.

The question is, why JNU's union elections inspire such a violent, coordinated attack from the ruling nexus. The answer lies in the university's unique democratic structure.

The student-run system at JNU, which the ABVP sought to dismantle, stands as a powerful exception to the national trend of democratic erosion. What distinguishes JNUSU elections is that students themselves elect the Election Committee that conducts their union elections. Unlike universities where administrations control electoral machinery, JNU's system ensures that those who oversee elections answer only to the student body, not to administrative authority or external political pressure.

The process begins with outgoing JNUSU calling for General Body Meetings (GBMs) across JNU's various schools. These GBMs are the first step toward union elections, spaces of direct

democracy where every student can participate and vote.

These GBMs became primary targets of violent assault.

The assault began on October 14 at the SIS GBM, where ABVP heckling and physical obstruction rendered the democratic proceedings impossible, forcing an adjournment. The violence escalated on October 15 at the SSS GBM. For an entire night, ABVP orchestrated a spectacle of hatred, physically attacking the JNUSU President and holding him and other office-bearers hostage for ten hours. Multiple students were beaten, and female students were groped and sexually assaulted. This was accompanied by a torrent of targeted casteist, queerphobic, and Islamophobic abuse, all while JNU security and police officials watched in silence.

Consequently, the SSS GBM also failed to elect an EC. On October 16, ABVP replicated these tactics at the SL GBM, but students stood firm and successfully elected an independent EC. This success proved pivotal. On October 17, the SSS and SIS GBMs were recalled. Despite the preceding days of extreme violence, the student body's collective resistance prevailed, and they successfully elected their independent EC.

Following the campus violence, JNUSU called for a march to Vasant Kunj police station to file an FIR against the perpetrators, as Delhi Police had refused to register complaints. As soon as the march

exited the university gate, police immediately attacked the students without provocation. The police, dressed in plain clothes to obscure accountability, assaulted students, resulting in serious injuries.

Twenty-eight students, including women, were detained and held in police custody throughout the night. In response, hundreds of students marched to the police station, demanding our comrades' release. The detained students were finally released after fourteen hours, at 9 AM the following morning.

In a bitter inversion of justice, six students had FIRs filed against them. The police filed FIRs against the victims of ABVP's assault—the very students who had sought justice—while ABVP members faced no consequences for their violence.

Time and again, JNU administration along with the police has acted as a silent partner in ABVP's communal project by normalising the impunity given to them. If those responsible for campus safety watch ABVP's rampage unfold in silence, then why must we not see them as complicit in this violence?

The convergence of interests between JNU Admin and ABVP is transparent. ABVP seeks to prevent democratic elections through violence. The administration benefits from the absence of an elected union that stands for students' rights. Both share a common investment in turning

JNU's democratic structures inoperative. The result is a campus where authority operates without accountability.

The state has ensured that there is no legal recourse, no neutral arbiter, no space outside the BJP-RSS dispensation's control. Therefore, law enforcement serves not as protector but as enforcer of BJP-RSS-ABVP's dominance.

This open complicity on campus is a symptom of a much larger national disease: the top-down capture of every institution meant to guarantee fair play and protect civic rights.

This grim national backdrop is what makes the struggle of the JNU students so significant. While democracy is being dismantled from the top down, JNU demonstrated how to successfully defend it from the ground up.

Despite days of systematic violence—casteist and misogynist abuse, serious physical injuries,

sexual assault, numerous hostage situations, and police brutality—JNU students successfully elected an independent student Election Committee.

What ABVP feared was not the procedural act of electing representatives but what that act symbolized—that JNU's democratic culture possesses resilience stronger than the violence aimed against it.

A JNU made of Dalit, Bahujan, Adivasi, Muslim, women, and queer students shatters ABVP's Brahmanical fantasies because it demonstrates the possibility of egalitarian politics in practice. ABVP's politics requires the maintenance of traditional hierarchies—caste supremacy, patriarchal authority, Hindu communal dominance—as the natural order of social organization. Therefore, in targeting students at JNU, ABVP is not merely attacking individuals. Following the line of

their RSS-BJP masters, they are attacking a plural, inclusive, and egalitarian student movement that the students of JNU have built through decades of resilience.

What is happening in JNU exemplifies what defending democracy during a time of fascist assault actually requires. When democratic norms are systematically destroyed, one can no longer adhere to them. When institutions become captured or complicit, they forfeit all trust. When the state shields the violent and prosecutes the just, legal appeals are pointless. Defending democracy, therefore, requires a collective refusal to allow democratic space to be eliminated by violence, no matter what.

What the students of JNU defend is not merely their own union elections but also the very existence of democratic space and the right to dissent in a nation where both are under attack. ■

Protest in Delhi Against Exploitation of JNU Workers

On 9 October, contractual workers of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) and other institutions staged a protest demonstration at Shrameva Jayate Bhawan in Delhi, the office of the Deputy Central Labour Commissioner, demanding an end to the theft of workers' bonus, extortion, and fraudulent salary practices. The protest was led by All India General Kaamgat (AICCTU) and several organisations joined in solidarity.

The protest highlighted that contractualisation has become a

tool to deny workers their basic rights. Under the Payment of Bonus Act, 1965, every worker is entitled to a bonus of 8.33 percent of their salary. Despite assurances from the JNU administration last year, contractual workers have yet to receive the legally mandated bonus.

Protesters also exposed widespread extortion and corruption. Several officials, including the sanitation inspector of JNU and staff of Rakshak Securitas Pvt Ltd, allegedly demanded bribes ranging from Rs

50,000 to Rs 70,000 to secure employment. Economically marginalised Dalit workers have been particularly targeted. Complaints have been filed with the police and JNU administration, but no inquiry or action has been taken. The protest further condemned the misuse of the Biometric Attendance System, which has resulted in illegitimate reductions in attendance and salaries of workers.

The protest called for immediate enforcement of workers' rights, accountability of corrupt officials, and rollback of fraudulent attendance systems. ■

Free Sonam Wangchuk! Grant Statehood and Sixth Schedule Safeguards to the People of Ladakh!

The Modi government has dubbed Sonam Wangchuk, renowned climate activist and innovator from Ladakh, a threat to national security and put him in solitary confinement in a jail in Rajasthan's Jodhpur. The arrest happened after the September 24 police crackdown in Leh which killed four people - Jigmet Dorjay (25), Stanzin Namgyal (23), Rinchen Dadul (20), and Tsewang Tharchin (46), a former serviceman - and injured several others. In the wake of the youth upheaval in Nepal, the spectre of Gen Z has started haunting the Modi government. The crackdown and witch hunt in Ladakh only exemplify the insensitivity, incompetence, arrogance and brutal coercion that have become the hallmarks of BJP rule across India from Kashmir to Manipur and Haryana to Bihar.

We all remember how Sonam Wangchuk and the people of Ladakh had welcomed the new arrangement in Jammu and Kashmir following the deactivation of Article 370 when Ladakh was declared a Union Territory alongside Jammu and Kashmir. The people of Ladakh had hoped that the UT status for this ecologically fragile and strategically sensitive Himalayan region would give greater say to the indigenous people and pave the way for greater devolution of powers. But experience has shown that Ladakh has lost whatever powers it had in the erstwhile arrangement - if Leh found Srinagar distant, Delhi turned out to be all the more so. Union Territory status without any legislature has reduced Ladakh to a

glorified centrally administered and remote-controlled municipality shorn of any decision-making authority for sustainable development or recruitment power to provide jobs for the jobless local youth.

The demand for separate statehood and safeguards under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution of India has emerged from this bitter experience of the people of Ladakh. Initially the BJP too had endorsed the demand for granting Sixth Schedule status to Ladakh. But as the demand took the shape of a popular movement in both Buddhist-dominated Leh and the Muslim-dominated Kargil regions and Sonam Wangchuk emerged as the most credible and charismatic face of the movement, the Modi-Shah regime developed cold feet and adopted a policy of complete denial. Movement demands put forward in major popular agitations like several climate fasts, the Leh-Delhi padyatra in September 2024 sponsored by both the Leh Apex Body and Kargil Democratic Alliance, and now the hunger strike this September, were brazenly ignored by the Union government.

The September 24 vandalism and violence resulted from this frustrating lack of response to any of the core demands of the people of Ladakh and the utter mismanagement and police high handedness with which the administration sought to handle the peaceful protests. But even as Sonam Wangchuk withdrew the protests in the face of the chaos and police crackdown, the entire agitation is being portrayed as a

'foreign conspiracy' hatched by India's neighbours including Pakistan, Nepal and China. The fact that he attended a climate conference in Pakistan and that his NGO received some foreign donation for projects dealing with 'food sovereignty' is now being held as 'proof' of Sonam's alleged role as a 'foreign agent' instigating the peaceful people of Ladakh. An innovator who designed eco-friendly solar heated tents for Indian Army personnel stationed in the cold Himalayan terrain of Ladakh is now being dubbed an enemy of India and left to languish in solitary confinement.

The Article 370 misadventure of the Modi government is now unraveling in both Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh. The terror attack in Pahalgam debunked the Modi government's claims of making the valley more secure. The plans of the Modi government revolve around increased corporate plunder of the region by suppressing the aspirations of the local people whether in Jammu, Kashmir valley or Leh and Kargil. While books on the history of Kashmir and various facets of the Kashmir crisis penned by renowned authors are being banned, the grazing lands of Ladakh are being sought to be reserved for the so-called green energy plans of the Adani group. The sense of alienation that has long run so deep in the valley has today spread to both Jammu and Ladakh where people are feeling increasingly betrayed and taken for a ride. Whoever had expected the abrogation of Article 370 to open a new chapter for the people of Ladakh must today demand the immediate and unconditional release of Sonam Wangchuk and stand with the people of Ladakh in their struggle for separate statehood and constitutional safeguards under the Sixth Schedule. ■

The Maharashtra BJP Government's New Battle front against Adivasis

▲ CLIFTON D'ROZARIO & AJIT PATIL

The BJP government in Maharashtra has declared its intention to introduce a law “enabling” Adivasi farmers to lease out their land directly to private parties for agricultural purposes or mineral excavation. This declaration has come in for serious critique with threats of state-wide agitations if the State BJP government were to go ahead with this proposal.

As the law stands today, Adivasi lands are protected from alienation to non-tribals by constitutional mandate and statutory diktat. This is true for Schedule V areas across the country, and also in most States which have legislations prohibiting such transfers. It is this protection that the Maharashtra State BJP government wants to altogether do away with. The consequences of this disastrous policy on the Adivasis is not difficult to foresee.

Extractive developmental policies witnessed the commodification and exploitation of forests and minerals only to take a rapacious form with the advent of neoliberal economic policies, accompanied by the concomitant displacement of Adivasis, the primary guardians of the forests, has resulted in widespread devastation of Adivasi communities and their social, political and cultural rights. Here lies the continuity of State policies with the British colonial powers which facilitated large-scale plunder of forests and displacement of Adivasis, increased taxation, the advent of settlers and money

lenders leading to landlordism and indebtedness, and subjugation of Adivasis through legislations such as the Permanent Settlement of 1793 and the Criminal Tribes Act of 1871. History bears witness to the widespread Adivasi revolts, from the Halba rebellion between 1774-7 to the Tebagma Movement of 1946-47.

Determined struggles of the Adivasis, and an acknowledgement of their plight, resulted in the post-independence recognition of Adivasis as a distinct social category given special Constitutional and statutory protections. Notwithstanding the same, the independent Indian state unleashed its might on Adivasi communities, expropriating their lands, and committing plunder of the natural resources central to the very identity of Adivasis, all in the name of the nation's development and progress. Alongside these were the forest laws and conservation policies that effectively privatised the forests away from the Adivasis only to be handed over to entrenched private commercial interests. The adoption of neo-liberal economic policies has accelerated this aggressive loot of forest and minerals, and market-driven tourism-oriented conservation policies, resulting in their systematic alienation from their forests and other natural resources. The systematic dismantling of these protections has been one of the hallmarks of the Modi regime.

Removing Adivasis from the forests has become essential in the pursuit of the Modi government's

pro-corporate policies. This is resulting to massive land alienation of Adivasis, within and beyond the Fifth and Sixth Schedule Areas, and the protections of special legislations safeguarding the land of Adivasis, like PESA, Chhotanagpur Tenancy Act, Santhal Pargana Tenancy Act, etc. that prohibited transfer of lands from Adivasis to non-Adivasis, is consciously diluted. The implementation of the Forest Rights Act, 2006, enacted to undo “historic injustice” to Adivasis, has been weak and partial, at best, with wholesale rejection of land claims of Adivasis, and their continued eviction and removal from forest lands reaching alarming proportions. So-called conservationists and environmentalists have challenged the FRA in the Supreme Court, which is still pending. The ongoing pressure to use forest areas for mining, tourism and other alleged development projects, among other reasons, has left the Adivasi people's rights over the forest in a precarious position.

Even so, the existing constitutional and legal framework reflecting the historical basis for their protection, serves as a yardstick to measure the transgressions of the state. Moreover these have served as tools for organisation and struggle in the hands of the Adivasi communities. The history of the Adivasi communities in the country is one of struggle to protect their culture, beliefs, language, social and political systems, and, central to all this, their stewardship of jal, jungle, jameen. Ensuring the implementation and strengthening of this legal framework is a part of the larger Adivasi struggle for protection of their forest lands, which serve as their ancestral home, means of subsistence, and cultural cradle.

When viewed in this context, the BJP government's proposal in Maharashtra to "permit" lease of Adivasi lands to corporate entities, is a new front being opened to deprive Adivasis of their traditional forests and lands. Driving Adivasis out of their traditional lands does not only serve the BJP's corporate cronies, but also aids in the persistent project of the Sangh Parivar to deny the distinct culture of Adivasi communities. The Sangh Parivar refuses the use of "Adivasi" and instead has adopted the term "vanvasi" mirroring its rejection of the belief that Adivasis are the original inhabitants of the country. In fact, a key feature of the Sangh Parivar's fascist project is assimilation of Adivasis into the Hindu mainstream because of their belief that Adivasis are yet to conform to the framework of caste Hindu society and overcome their general 'backwardness'. Moreover, even as anti-Muslim sentiment remains the central narrative underpinning Sangh Parivar's attempts at consolidating Hindu majoritarianism, attention is also towards the Christian adivasi communities using the bogey of 'forced conversions'. Thus, even as Adivasi lands and resources face the assault of an aggressive pro-corporate policies, their very identity as "Adivasis" faces its biggest challenge yet.

The Adivasi communities have repeatedly demonstrated their resilience and struggle against forces threatening their way of life and their very existence. The fight against this fascist assault may yet represent a defining moment in the battle to save India's democracy and Constitution.

Atrocities on Dalits and Assault on Ambedkar's Constitution: Unmasking of the Manuwadi Face of the Modi Regime

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

The attempted hurling of a shoe at the Chief Justice of India right inside the Supreme Court is an alarm bell for India's beleaguered republic that India cannot afford to ignore. The shoe thrower was no crazy intruder or outsider, but a senior advocate and a member of the Bar Association. The act too was not a sudden impulsive one, but the result of an orchestrated campaign against the alleged anti-Hindu bias of the judiciary in general and the CJI in particular. And even though CJI Gavai preferred to ignore the act and not get distracted, the offender expressed no regret whatsoever for his act, rather sought to justify it as a divinely ordained move.

The shoe hurling by septuagenarian lawyer Rakesh Kishore happened on October 6. The immediate trigger behind this act is suspected to be a comment made by CJI Gavai on September 16 when he had dismissed a public interest litigation asking for restoration of a mutilated Vishnu idol in a Khajuraho temple. The CJI had dismissed the petition as a publicity interest litigation and directed the petitioner to contact the Archeological Survey of India, the custodian of the temple complex. Reportedly the CJI had also asked the petitioner to invoke his devotion and pray to the deity. Such light-hearted comments made by judges are fairly routine in the culture of jurisprudence worldwide, but in this particular case the Hindutva hardliners made it into an example of alleged insult to Hinduism or Sanatan, to use the term currently preferred in Sanghi parlance.

As a result of the Hindu right's celebration of the shoe-hurling advocate and his appearances on various media channels, it however became clear that his grudge against CJI Gavai was not just because of this one comment but also because of his remarks against bulldozer raj and his well known Ambedkarite Buddhist beliefs. His mother's refusal to accept an invite to grace an RSS centenary event with her presence may also have intensified the urge to teach CJI Gavai 'a lesson'. The AI-generated video that was shared as a digital accompaniment to the physical assault gave away the unmistakable casteist character of the whole episode. The video showed the CJI with a blue face and an earthen pot hanging around his neck, depicting a cruel casteist practice that portrays a Dalit's spit touching the ground as a crime.

The Chief Justice who was the victim in this assault may have preferred to move on, in order to deny those responsible the oxygen of publicity craved by frivolous petitioners or perpetrators of casteist mischief, but that in no way diminishes the gravity of this hate crime or the sign it holds for the future of our judiciary. The Sangh brigade is now out to openly intimidate and silence the judiciary to rule out any possibility of judicial restraint on the actions of a tyrannical executive. And when the CJI happens to be from a Dalit background and the Buddhist community, in only the second instance of a Dalit Chief Justice in the history of independent India, the Sangh brigade feels all the more emboldened and empowered, fuelled by

the Manuvadi hatred so central to its ideology.

Around the same time that the Chief Justice was attacked inside the Supreme Court, Dalit IPS officer Y Puran Kumar of Haryana became a victim of institutional murder, leaving an eight-page suicide note, which should actually be seen as a charge sheet against "blatant caste-based discrimination, targeted mental harassment, public humiliation and atrocities" perpetrated by senior officers in the police hierarchy of Haryana. Just a few days earlier on October 2, when the world remembered Mahatma Gandhi on his 156th birth anniversary and the Sangh brigade backed by the full power of the Modi regime was busy celebrating the centenary of the foundation of the RSS, a Dalit man Hariom Valmiki was lynched to death in Raebareli district of Uttar Pradesh.

Atrocities on Dalits are evidently increasing in diverse forms across India, especially in BJP-ruled states. A staggering 57,789 cases of atrocities on Dalits were registered in 2023 according to the latest figures released by the National Crime Records Bureau. The top four states are Uttar Pradesh (with 15,130 cases), Rajasthan (8,449), Madhya Pradesh (8,232) and Bihar (7,064), accounting for nearly 70% of the registered cases of atrocities in the whole country. Ironically, the voice of the biggest Dalit party of yesteryear, the Bahujan Samaj Party led by Mayawati, remains utterly mute in the face of the growing atrocities on Dalits or the intensifying assault on the Constitutional foundation of the rule of law. Addressing a rally in Lucknow on the 19th death anniversary of Kanshi Ram, the founder of the BSP, Mayawati thanked the Yogi Adityanath government for the upkeep of the parks and memorials dedicated to social justice icons while remaining completely silent about the increased atrocities on Dalits in Yogi's Uttar Pradesh or Modi's India.

Fighters for social justice and constitutional rights cannot brook such capitulation and collusion. As the Manuvadi character of the Modi regime becomes increasingly manifest, the forces of social justice must resist the regime with greater unity, determination and vigour. Today, the upcoming Bihar Assembly Elections provide the most urgent platform for the fighting forces of democracy and justice to demonstrate their unity and defeat the Manuvadi fascist regime. ■

The Human Cost of Corporate Realignment: TCS Layoffs Expose the Perilous Cycle of IT Boom and Bust

▲ SATYAM

The sleek, glass-and-steel facades of India's IT giants have long symbolized stability, growth, and boundless opportunity. For decades, companies like Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) were not just employers; they were engines of social mobility, promising secure careers and a place in the global digital revolution. But the recent quarterly report from TCS has sent a seismic shock through this carefully constructed narrative. The revelation that its total employee count plummeted by 19,755 in the quarter ending September 30, 2025, is more than a statistic; it is a stark testament to a broken covenant between corporate India and its workforce.

This dramatic reduction, which brings the Q2FY26 headcount to 593,314 from 613,069 just three months prior, follows an initial announcement in July of plans to lay off approximately 12,200 to 12,261 employees. The gap between the announced layoffs and the final attrition figure hints at a deeper, more systemic churn. The company's official rationale is one we have become all too familiar with: a "restructuring strategy" to become a "future-ready organization," focused on realignment and heavy investment in technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI). While the business logic may be sound on a balance sheet, it masks a brutal human reality one of shattered lives, precarious futures, and a reckless corporate cycle of hire-and-fire that treats people as disposable assets.

The Anatomy of a Workforce Reduction

To understand the scale of what has transpired at TCS, one must look beyond the headline number. A reduction of nearly 20,000 employees in a single quarter is not mere attrition; it is a strategic purge. The initial announcement of 12,200 layoffs, roughly 2% of the workforce, was likely just the publicly disclosed, involuntary part of the equation. The remaining thousands likely departed through a combination of forced resignations, performance improvement plans (PIPs) used as a pretext for termination, and a freeze on hiring that naturally amplified attrition.

What makes this round of layoffs particularly alarming is the profile of those affected. Reports and internal sources

indicate that a significant portion of the employees let go were moderate to senior-level techies. These are not fresh recruits who failed to onboard effectively; these are experienced professionals with a decade or more of expertise. Their exit reveals the true, dual-edged nature of the "restructuring." While it is framed as an investment in the future (AI and automation), it is simultaneously a brutal cost-cutting exercise. Senior employees command higher salaries, and in the cold calculus of corporate finance, replacing them with a smaller number of junior AI-specialized engineers or leveraging automation to handle their workload is a straightforward path to fatter profit margins. The guise of being "future-ready" provides a convenient smokescreen for what is, at its core, a financial decision aimed at pleasing shareholders.

A Symptom of a Larger Sickness: The Reckless Boom and Bust Cycle

The TCS layoffs are not an isolated incident but a symptom of a profound sickness within the global IT sector. This is the culmination of a perilous cycle of aggressive, often reckless, hiring followed by equally aggressive and reckless firing.

During the pandemic-induced digital gold rush, IT companies went on a hiring spree. Believing the hyper-growth would continue indefinitely, they onboarded tens of thousands of new graduates, offering inflated packages and creating a bloated workforce. TCS itself saw its employee numbers swell dramatically during this period. This hiring was not always driven by sustainable, long-term project pipelines but by FOMO (Fear Of Missing Out) and the need to show growth to the market.

However, the market is a

ruthless corrector. As global economic headwinds gathered strength, client budgets tightened, and the initial surge in digital transformation projects began to normalize. Concurrently, the very technologies these companies are now betting on AI and advanced automation began to mature. Tools that can auto-generate code, manage cloud infrastructure, and test software are now capable of displacing the very roles that were so aggressively filled just a few years prior.

The result is the current, painful reset. Companies that hired with short-term optimism are now firing with short-term panic. The human resource is treated with the same disposability as outdated hardware acquired en masse during a boom and discarded during a bust. This cycle demonstrates a fundamental lack of strategic foresight and a callous disregard for the societal and human capital that these companies so heavily depend on.

The Human Fallout: Lives Left in Limbo

Behind the sterile corporate jargon of "workforce optimization" and "strategic realignment" lie thousands of individual stories of anxiety, disruption, and despair. The human cost of these layoffs is immense and multifaceted.

1. **The Psychological and Financial Limbo:** For an employee, a layoff is not just the loss of a job; it is a profound personal crisis. The sudden severance of a stable income plunges individuals and families into immediate financial insecurity. Mortgages, children's school fees, medical expenses, and daily living costs become sources of crushing anxiety. The job market for experienced tech professionals is currently saturated, meaning

the search for a new role is long, demoralizing, and often comes with a significant pay cut. The term "limbo" is apt a state of suspended animation where future plans are put on hold, and the present is dominated by uncertainty.

2. **The Great Displacement:** The IT sector in India is concentrated in specific hubs like Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, and the National Capital Region. Many employees relocate to these cities, often with their families, investing in homes and building communities. A sudden layoff forces a brutal choice. Do they stay in an expensive city without an income, hoping to find another local job? Or do they uproot their family, pull their children out of school, and return to their hometowns, often where tech opportunities are scarce? This "reverse migration" is a deeply disruptive process, tearing apart social networks and imposing significant emotional strain on entire families.

3. **The Erosion of Trust and Morale:** For the employees who remain at TCS and other companies engaging in mass layoffs, the impact is also severe. The psychological contract—the unwritten agreement of loyalty and job security in exchange for hard work—is shattered. Morale plummets. Employees become risk-averse, less innovative, and constantly fearful of being the next target. This "survivor's guilt" and pervasive anxiety can cripple productivity and creativity, ironically hampering the very "future-ready" transformation the company claims to be pursuing.

4. **The Devaluation of Experience:** The targeting of moderate and senior-level employees sends a dangerous message: experience is a liability. This devalues the very institutional

knowledge that is critical for mentoring junior staff, navigating complex client relationships, and architecting robust, large-scale systems. A company cannot become "future-ready" by discarding the wisdom that built its present.

Beyond the Balance Sheet: A Call for Ethical Responsibility

The fundamental failure exposed by the TCS layoffs is the myopic view that decisions can be made based solely on balance sheets, with human consequences treated as an externality. Corporate leadership and investors cheer cost-cutting measures, and stock prices may see a temporary bump, but the long-term damage is profound.

There is a pressing need for a more ethical and sustainable approach to corporate restructuring. This includes:

- **Transparent and Compassionate Communication:** Instead of sudden, brutal layoffs, companies should offer longer notice periods, substantial severance packages, robust outplacement services, and career counseling to help transition employees.
- **Upskilling as a Default, Not an Exception:** A "future-ready" strategy should prioritize retraining existing employees for new roles in AI and automation. Investing in human capital is a more sustainable, and ultimately more loyal, path than disposal and re-hiring.
- **Government and Regulatory Oversight:** Policymakers must examine the social impact of these large-scale layoffs and consider stronger worker protection laws, ensuring that corporate "restructuring" does not become a euphemism for social irresponsibility.

The 19,755 employees who left TCS in the last quarter are more than a line item in a financial report. They are parents, partners, and providers. They are individuals who placed their trust in a corporate titan, only to be cast adrift in the name of progress. The story of TCS's restructuring is a cautionary tale for the entire IT industry. A company's worth is not measured by its stock price alone, but by the well-being of the people who build it. Until that balance is restored, the pursuit of a "future-ready" organization will continue to leave a trail of broken presents in its wake.

The author is a member of the Convening Body of the IT and ITes Democratic Employees Association (IIDEA), affiliated with the All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU). Article Credit: Workers Resistance. ■

The India-UK trade deal – Economic Milestone or Diplomatic Theatrics?

▲ SURYO

The Indian government is framing the India-UK trade deal as a major economic pivot. Mainstream media outlets are touting the deal as if it is a solution to the debacle caused by the fallout of the India-US trade deal and Trump's tariff hikes. Ministers in both London and New Delhi have presented it as a "win-win" situation: one that will unlock investment, create jobs, and supposedly insulate India from the disruptions caused by Trump's tariff hikes and the ongoing fracturing of global supply chains. But these claims require serious scrutiny. What are the actual benefits and challenges for India's industries and workers posed by this agreement?

The India-UK Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement, finalized in 2025 after thirteen negotiation rounds, reduces or eliminates tariffs on roughly 85% of Indian exports to the UK and 90% of UK exports to India. Let us consider the facts of the matter. Before the agreement, most commodities exported by the UK to India had extremely large tariffs, typically larger than 100% the price of the commodities. The trade deal slashes these tariffs. British alcohol which had a 150% tariff prior to the deal will only have 75% tariffs. Automobiles and electric vehicles which had tariffs of 110% would be slowly brought down to 10%. Meanwhile, before the deal, the UK had nominal tariffs on Indian commodities, typically in the 5-10% range, which are now being done away with.

Trade between India and the UK is fundamentally unequal. While India exports cheap textiles and pharmaceuticals, the UK exports luxury automobiles and expensive alcohol. The trade deal adds a layer of asymmetry. The slashes on British imports are large, a 75% reduction in tariffs in some cases while nearly halving of the market price in others. On the contrary the reduction in tariffs on Indian goods is nominal, because the tariffs on Indian goods to the UK were low to begin with. If government and media claims in India are to be believed, then these nominal tariff gains will increase demand for Indian

goods and offset the diplomatic failure on the American front. These are extremely unlikely to happen. Most Indian exports to the UK are already extremely cheap, and the volume of exports to the UK are a fraction of the volume of exports to the US. Furthermore, the British economy is relatively stagnant and has not recovered from the post-Brexit slump. It is not likely that a marginal reduction in the prices of Indian commodities would create the demand boost required to offset the crisis caused by large scale contract cancellations in a much larger economy like the US. However, the large slashes on tariffs on British commodities, could not only dry up government revenue in India but could cause problems for competing Indian producers.

Alcohol: One of the sectors most likely to be impacted is alcohol, as British whisky and gin will see a massive drop in prices as tariffs slide from 150% to 75%. This could considerably strain the Indian manufactured foreign liquor (IMFL) industry. Indian alcohol producers have already registered complaints about this but the complaints have fallen on deaf ears.

Automobiles: The automobile industry is another major stakeholder in the trade deal. Finished automobiles and electric vehicles imported from the UK will see their costs nearly half over time as tariffs are planned to decrease from 110% (current) to a nominal 10%. This will ease the entry of British companies to India. The media claims that this will give Indian consumers better access to expensive alcohol and luxury automobiles. Even if this can be called a benefit at all, it will only benefit the elite classes of Indian society. On the contrary, workers of all classes will be impacted by

the entry of British goods to India. In the context of automobiles, this will not only affect the workers of automobiles companies but workers along the supply chain. The auto parts industry is one of India's most important manufacturing industries and employs millions in several MSMEs. As fully finished cars from Great Britain enter India, domestic manufacturers will see lower demand, MSMEs will shut down, and workers in Hosur will bear the brunt of London's gains. This is above and beyond the losses already caused by tariff hikes by the US, which was 29% of India's auto part export market. Thus, instead of relieving India from the crisis caused by the Trump-tariffs, the trade deal with the UK may worsen the crisis for the automobile sector.

Textiles: The textile and apparel industry was the worst affected by the hike in tariffs by the US. India is one of the largest textile exporters in the world. As India's products became costlier, competing textile manufacturers in Bangladesh and Vietnam who have lower tariffs substituted Indian products in the United States, which led to huge cancellations in contracts of Indian textile manufacturers and cost countless jobs. The Indian government is thus pinning their hopes on the India-UK trade deal to revive the textile industry. However, whatever nominal benefits due to the deal, if any, will not recover the losses caused due to the American tariffs. Until a few months ago, the US imported five times as much textiles from India as the UK. The tariff increases from the US were large (50%) while the tariff reductions from the UK have been low (5-10%).

Pharmaceuticals: The pharmaceutical component of the trade deal best exposes it for its

hollowness and contradictions. India exports a large volume of pharmaceuticals to the UK already, most of which are priced cheaply and have nominal tariffs. However, they make up a small share of UK markets. The biggest exporters of pharmaceuticals to the UK are other European countries who sell expensive branded pharmaceuticals. India does not export similar products to the UK and cannot outcompete Europe as they produce different segments. India exports cheap generic drugs (Eg: paracetamol, aspirin), where it already leads exports to the UK. Therefore, not only is there less room for growth of Indian pharmaceutical exports to the UK, it is also very unlikely that a nominal cheapening will cause any meaningful increase in demand for generic drugs.

Moreover, the agreement simultaneously pushes for "TRIPS-plus" intellectual property enforcement. The deal explicitly encourages voluntary licensing instead of compulsory licensing. Legally, India has provisions for compulsory licensing, which means that if there is a patented foreign drug that is unable to cater to demand in India or refuses to price their drugs according to India's affordability standards, the government can license other domestic firms to produce these drugs cheaply without running into barriers with intellectual property regulations. Voluntary licensing, which the trade deal encourages, gives British companies the power to block other producers from producing patented drugs cheaply. The push towards voluntary licensing, tighter IP provisions, including stronger data exclusivity and extended patent terms, could restrict India's use of compulsory licensing and erode the generic

industry's competitiveness. This is especially concerning as Indian firms face rising regulatory scrutiny in Western markets. The supposed export opportunities may thus come at the expense of India's policy autonomy in public health. Voluntary licensing may also make basic needs like medication exorbitantly expensive for Indian consumers.

Thus far from being the respite that the deal claims to be for Indian workers and consumers, it only entrenches India into the age old neocolonial structures of unequal exchange, allowing British manufacturers greater access to Indian markets costing domestic companies and more layoffs in India, with marginal benefits to Indian exporters, if at all. Still in the face of the fallout with the United States, the Indian and British governments are forcing a rhetoric of the deal being a successful economic partnership. In the best case, this is merely a diplomatic maneuver, allowing politicians and the mainstream media to chest thump in the face of the embarrassment caused by the fallout of the India-US trade deal. In the worst case, this leads to large layoffs, increased unemployment, and sets a pattern of less protection for Indian producers, greater liberalization easing foreign players to take over Indian markets, and a slippery slope towards voluntary licensing in healthcare restricting access of a billion people to basic necessities. ■

Ceasefire in Gaza – A Temporary Respite?

As the first phase of the ceasefire agreement in Gaza took effect, tens of thousands of people once again began the journey towards Gaza City in the north of the besieged strip. The sight of waves of Palestinians, men, women, children and elderly people crossing the Wadi Gaza bridge, speaks about the determination of generations of Gazans who survived the most horrific genocide in the recent history of humanity. It was just a few months back, in January 2025, that similar scenes unfolded over Wadi Gaza bridge when a temporary ceasefire was implemented. But this time, many who crossed the Wadi Gaza in January-February 2025, only to be displaced once again, may not have survived to return to their homes in the north.

The first phase of the ceasefire in Gaza marks a long-overdue respite for a people who have endured unimaginable suffering under nearly two years of relentless, US-backed Israeli bombardment, siege and forced starvation. Since the beginning of Israel's genocidal assault on Gaza in October 2023, more than 68,000 Palestinians have been killed, according to health-authorities in Gaza and multiple independent estimates. Thousands more remain missing, thousands lie buried under the rubble, children and women make up the vast majority of the dead, and the infrastructure of life: homes, hospitals, schools, roads, water and sanitation systems lies in ruin. In recent months, Israel created a colonial famine in Gaza, leaving nearly one in every four children suffering from severe acute malnutrition. The US and Israel-run so-called aid distribution centres became killing fields for Palestinians.

The scale of devastation in Gaza has no recent parallel: entire neighbourhoods flattened; hospitals and ambulances bombed; children starving; the means of living stripped away. Independent analysis shows that over 60% of health facilities, over 40% of water facilities, and nearly 70% of education facilities were functionally or structurally destroyed. Today, Gaza has the most child amputees per capita in the world.

Ceasefire Agreement

Just a few days into the ceasefire, Israeli forces bombed several areas in Gaza, killing at least 45 people. Despite Netanyahu formally agreeing to the truce, Palestinians and observers worldwide remain cautious, aware that the far-right Israeli regime will likely use every means at its disposal to derail the agreement and return to war. For Netanyahu, continuous conflict in the region is essential for his political survival. As the ceasefire took effect in Gaza, Israel simultaneously intensified its military operations in the occupied West Bank and along the Lebanese border.

The current ceasefire has come about through pressure from U.S. President Trump, whose primary focus at present is waging war on people at home and in the Latin American and Caribbean region, which he considers the United States' 'backyard,' rather than spending vast sums

to sustain Israel's genocidal war machine, a machine that relies entirely on U.S. backing.

This phase of the agreement, widely dubbed by genocide supporters as the "Trump peace plan for the Middle East," is presented as a "peace framework," but in reality, it consolidates Israel's colonial expansion while imposing severe conditions on Palestinians. It ties humanitarian relief and reconstruction to the disarmament of Hamas and the acceptance of U.S.-monitored governance structures, effectively subordinating Palestinian self-determination to international oversight that favours Zionist colonial priorities. While hostages have been released and some Palestinian prisoners kidnapped by Israel have been freed, with their condition on release exposing once again the vast torture networks of the Israeli state, the plan leaves enormous leverage in Israeli hands, including control over crossings, enforcement of redeployment lines, and the power to veto governance decisions. In fact, seasoned war criminals such as Tony Blair, the former UK Prime Minister whose tenure was marked by his participation in the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, in which he was responsible for hundreds of thousands of civilian deaths, have been proposed to oversee Gaza's transitional governance.

The current ceasefire, accepted by Palestinian groups, largely reflects the terms that Palestinians themselves had proposed to mediators in May 2025. Palestinian factions, including Hamas, agreed to the first phase primarily in the

interest of the people of Gaza, seeking an immediate end to the genocidal attacks and providing a breathing space for humanitarian relief.

However, the second phase is expected to be far more contentious. Palestinian groups have made it clear that their weapons, as part of the struggle against occupation, cannot be arbitrarily surrendered and that armed struggle for self-determination is legitimate under international law. They have noted that any disarmament must be conditional on the establishment of a Palestinian state run and governed by Palestinians themselves, ensuring that sovereignty and self-determination are preserved. The current agreement, however, provides no pathway toward a sovereign Palestinian state.

Furthermore, despite initial agreement calling for the release of prominent Palestinian leaders, figures such as Marwan Barghouti, one of the most unifying figures across Gaza and the West Bank, and Ahmed Saadat, leader of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, have not been released by the Netanyahu regime.

While the current ceasefire has provided a temporary breather for the people of Gaza amid relentless bombing and genocide, Palestinians and their supporters remain vigilant. The quest for justice, liberation, and a homeland for Palestinians will continue to intensify. The people of Gaza have shown the world that even under the ruins, the struggle for dignity and liberation cannot be bombed out of existence. ■



The Orwellian Peace Prize: María Corina Machado

As Donald Trump waited impatiently for his long dreamed-of Nobel Peace Prize, flanked by U.S. naval armadas, nuclear submarines, and armed marines encircling Venezuela, the Norway-based Nobel Committee made its announcement. The 2025 Peace Prize, in an act that would have made Orwell proud, was awarded to María Corina Machado, the far-right Venezuelan politician who has long worked hand-in-glove with Washington to overthrow the Bolivarian revolutionary process in her country. Within minutes of receiving the prize, Machado dedicated her award to Donald Trump, calling him her ally in the “fight for democracy”.

Machado’s political career has been built on betrayal of her own people. In April 2002, she was one of the 400 individuals who signed the so-called “Carmona Decree”, which briefly removed President Hugo Chávez from office, dissolved the National Assembly, and annulled the Constitution. That coup, backed by the Venezuelan elite and sections of the US establishment, was defeated by a massive popular uprising.

Her NGO, *Súmate*, received funding from the US-linked National Endowment for Democracy, an organisation long associated with CIA-backed regime change operations. For more than two decades, Machado has been part of Washington’s efforts to destroy the Venezuelan revolution from within, first under Chávez and then under President Nicolás Maduro.

In 2018, Machado openly appealed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the architect

of genocide in Gaza, to “liberate” Venezuela, calling for military intervention to overthrow a sovereign government.

Only a few months before receiving her Nobel award, in an interview with Donald Trump Jr. in February 2025, she declared, “Forget about Saudi Arabia; we have more oil, infinite potential. We’re going to privatize all our industry. Venezuela has huge resources: oil, gas, minerals, land, technology. And we have a strategic location, hours from the United States.” She further added, “This country, Venezuela, is going to be the brightest opportunity for investment of American companies, of good people that are going to make a lot of money.”

Venezuela possesses the largest proven oil reserves on Earth. For decades, U.S. corporations reaped vast profits from these resources, until the country’s oil industry was nationalized by leftist President Hugo Chávez, who launched the Bolivarian Revolution in 1999. His project used oil wealth to address poverty and assert national sovereignty, an act that made Venezuela a permanent target for Washington and the global corporate elite.

While Machado spoke enthusiastically about privatisation and profit, she had nothing to say about the millions of Venezuelans whose lives have been devastated by US-led sanctions.

The economic blockade against Venezuela, first intensified under Barack Obama in 2015 and further expanded by subsequent

administrations, has crippled the country’s economy and social services. According to the Centre for Economic and Policy Research (CEPR), over 40,000 Venezuelans died between 2017 and 2018 as a result of these sanctions. Yet, Machado has repeatedly called for these same sanctions, describing them as a necessary tool to “restore democracy”. In reality, sanctions are a form of collective punishment aimed at pushing people of Venezuela back into corporate slavery.

After the failed attempt to install Juan Guaidó in 2019 in Venezuela, the US and its allies have shifted their strategy, using “democratic” rhetoric and international institutions to legitimise intervention. The Nobel Committee’s decision to honour Machado must be seen in the context of renewed US-led imperialist encirclement of Venezuela and the Caribbean and is a shameful gesture of support to far-right forces globally. ■



We Want Safety, Not Surveillance:

AIPWA Protest in Kolkata Against Durgapur Medical College Rape Incident

In protest against the gang rape of a medical student in Durgapur, the insensitive remarks made by the Chief Minister, and to demand an end to victim-blaming and rape culture, the All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) organized a street protest meeting on October 14, opposite Smart Bazaar near Sealdah Station in Kolkata, West Bengal.

AIPWA leader Comrade Indrani Dutta said that the gang rape of a medical student at a private medical college in Durgapur once again exposes the grim reality of women's insecurity in the state. She stated that Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's comment that "women should not

go out at night" blames the survivor instead of the rapists, reinforcing a patriarchal rape culture that justifies violence against women.

"Women have the right to step out at any time. The cause of rape is not a woman's dress, movement, or lifestyle. The purpose of rape is control, to deny women their personhood and treat them as objects of domination. From Nirbhaya to the Take Back the Night movement, the slogan has been clear: We demand safety, not surveillance. We demand unconditional freedom, not control," added Indrani Dutta.

Reports indicate that the survivor, a student at Durgapur College, was lured outside by a

classmate and then gang-raped on Friday night, 10 October 2025. Private colleges charging exorbitant fees in the name of quality education have failed to ensure safety, while the ruling Trinamool Congress (TMC) continues to allow a climate of gender-based violence across educational institutions.

Comrade Chandrasmita Chowdhury, condemning sexual violence against women, said that across the state the culture of rape, intimidation, and insecurity is being hidden under the pretext of blaming the survivor, an attempt to evade administrative accountability.

Archana Ghatak of AIPWA, AICTU leader Sheela De Sarkar, and gender activists Soma Marik and Shatabdi Das also addressed the meeting. The protest was conducted by Mitali Biswas, with protest songs performed by the cultural group Naihati Agnibeena. ■

Justice for Kunj Bihari: Sit-in into Hunger Strike Against Police Inaction in UP

On the seventh day of the indefinite sit-in at Rampur Nayagaon (Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh), Shahri Gareeb Morcha (Urban Poor Forum) announced that, as the district administration has shown complete insensitivity and taken no concrete steps to address their demands in regarding the killing of Kunj Bihari Nishad, they will begin a hunger strike from October 14.

Kunj Bihari, a 35-year-old resident of Rampur Nayagaon, had gone on 23 August to recover money owed for building materials from a local man, Himalaya Pandey. There, he was allegedly beaten by

Pandey, Abhishek Pandey, and their associates. He was admitted to Mary Gold Hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries on 26 August.

Family members allege that police did not allow them to see the body, lathi-charged the crowd, and later filed false cases against several locals. Despite repeated appeals to the District Magistrate, SSP, and Chief Minister, no action has been taken against the accused. The protestors are demanding compensation for the family of Kunj Bihari Nishad, withdrawal of false cases against local residents, and justice for the victims. ■

Those who will join the hunger strike include Bajrangi Lal Nishad of Shahri Gareeb Morcha, Ramchandra Nishad (father of Kunj Bihari Nishad), Rinki Nishad (wife of Kunj Bihari Nishad), and five local residents. They stated that the fast will continue until the administration fulfills their demands.

CPI(ML) State Standing Committee member Rajesh Sahni said that the district administration must abandon its discriminatory attitude and take immediate steps to ensure justice. He also called upon all social and political organizations to join this struggle for justice.

The protest noted that the fight is not only for one family's justice but for the dignity and safety of all working-class residents of Gorakhpur's urban poor settlements. ■

Protest in Kolkata Against Israeli Attack on Global Sumud Flotilla and Genocide in Gaza



On 4 October 2025, a massive march was taken out in Kolkata (West Bengal) waving Palestinian flags at the joint call of Left parties. The march, which began from Rabindra Sadan and concluded at the Lenin Statue on Dharmatala, demanded an immediate end to

the ongoing genocide in Gaza and condemned the Israeli attack, detention, and arrests of activists aboard the Gaza-bound humanitarian aid flotilla, Global Sumud.

Comrade Atanu Chakravarty, CPI(ML) Liberation State Committee member, speaking at the rally, said that the Israeli assault on the flotilla

and the relentless bombing of Gaza are part of a genocidal campaign carried out with full backing from US imperialism. He said that while people across the world are standing up for Palestine, the Modi government has chosen to surrender India's independent foreign policy to the US-Israel axis.

Condemning the attack on the flotilla and the genocide, he said that the people of India, who carry the historic legacy of the anti-colonial freedom movement, will always stand with the liberation of Palestine. He said that the Indian government must rescind all military, trade, and diplomatic agreements with apartheid Israel.

Saluting the participants of the Global Sumud Flotilla, an international act of people-to-people solidarity, the rally called for intensifying the international struggle to break the siege on Gaza, end the genocide, and end the occupation. The march also denounced the silence of the Indian government amid the escalating genocide against Palestinians. ■

CPIML MP Raja Ram Singh Slams Illegal and Arbitrary Mass Layoffs in IT Sector

CPIML Member of Parliament, Comrade Raja Ram Singh, has written to the Union Minister of Labour and Employment, demanding urgent intervention to halt the "illegal and arbitrary mass layoffs" being executed by major IT companies, including TCS, across India.

In his strongly worded letter, Comrade Raja Ram highlighted the distressing reports of over 12,000 IT and ITeS employees being

terminated in July 2025 alone. He condemned these actions as a blatant violation of labour laws and a ruthless prioritization of corporate profits over worker livelihoods.

"The IT sector, a source of national pride, was built upon the immense hard work and skill of lakhs of Indian employees. It is deeply condemnable that these very companies, nurtured by Indian talent, are now discarding workers

illegally in pursuit of higher margins," CPIML MP stated in the letter.

The CPIML MP urges the Government to act immediately by:

1. Halting all illegal retrenchments and directing companies to explore alternatives like reskilling and redeployment.
2. Reiterating the applicability of labour laws to IT/ITeS establishments and initiating suo motu action against violations.
3. Withdrawing exemptions that give preferential treatment to IT employers under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act.

4. Creating a grievance redressal mechanism for coerced resignations and ensuring justice for affected workers.

5. Guaranteeing severance packages, extended health benefits, and job transition support

for retrenched employees.

6. Mandating trilateral consultations (government, employers, and employee unions) before any restructuring.

Comrade Raja Ram Singh emphasized that the government

cannot remain a mute spectator while thousands of families are thrown into financial insecurity due to corporate greed. "It is the fundamental duty of the state to protect its workforce from exploitative and illegal practices," he asserted. ■



CPIML Demands Judicial Probe into Police Atrocities in Uttarakhand's Kashipur

CPIML State Committee member Comrade K K Bora visited the Alli Khan locality of Kashipur in Udham Singh Nagar district of Uttarakhand on 7 October 2025 and met residents affected by police repression and harassment. The area had come into focus after police lathi-charged and filed serious cases against local youths who were taking out a procession with an "I Love Mohammad" banner on 21 September 2025. Later, the police carried out arbitrary arrests and launched a repressive campaign to collectively punish the Muslim community.

Comrade K K Bora observed that the entire police and administrative action reflected a communal bias and amounted to persecution. After the incident, the police conducted

house-to-house searches in the name of verification, spreading fear among Muslims in the locality and across the city. The police filed cases naming three individuals and 400–500 others as unidentified accused, a move that clearly opens the door for arbitrary targeting of innocents.

Without any prior notice or order, the municipal corporation's bulldozers demolished steps in front of Muslim shops built over drains. The arrests were carried out in violation of Supreme Court guidelines, and the police filmed the detainees in a humiliating manner and circulated the videos on social media.

Comrade Bora noted that police presence continues at the main intersection of the locality. Alli Khan's western end connects

with Kila locality and its eastern end with Maheshpura, both of which are densely mixed Hindu–Muslim areas. No communal tension exists in these neighbourhoods, but the bulldozer action carried out only in Alli Khan exposes the communal conduct of the police. Residents remain hesitant to speak openly as they fear further persecution in an environment where attacks on Muslims have become routine under the Modi government.

CPIML demands the formation of a high-level judicial commission to investigate the 21 September incident and the communal conduct of the police. The party also demanded the immediate release of all innocent youths and minors and an end to police, administrative, and municipal harassment of the Muslim community. The Uttarakhand Dharm government must stop its politics of intimidation and violence against Muslims in Kashipur and guarantee the restoration of their civic rights. ■

AISA Condemns the Sexual Assault on a Female Student Inside BMS College of Engineering, Bangalore

All India Students' Association strongly condemns the heinous crime of rape of a female student in BMS College of engineering, Bangalore. This incident raises the concern of women safety across educational institutions in the country.

The incident reportedly took place on 10th of October. A fifth semester student Jeevan Gowda raped a female student inside the men's washroom on the sixth floor of the campus building. Gowda was arrested on October 15 and has been remanded to judicial custody until October 30. As of now, the student has been suspended and a disciplinary committee has been formed to take necessary actions. The police reported that there was

no CCTV on the sixth floor of the campus where the crime had taken place. This is a serious negligence on the behalf of the management despite the institutions claim that all the college floors have CCTV cameras. This exposes the institution's failure and carelessness in ensuring proper surveillance and safety of the students. Even the proctor who was assigned to the female student was unaware of the incident.

This systemic negligence puts the assigned student at risk and tries to shift the blame away from the institution. The university Principal Bheeshma Arya claimed that the university has a robust student support system, yet there's no Gender Sensitization Committee against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH) in the

college with student representation.

In the wake of such a heinous crime against a female student, we stand in solidarity with the affected student and put forth the following demands-

1. The perpetrator must be charged with stricter laws and brought to justice
2. College must constitute a Gender Sensitization Committee Against Sexual Harassment (GSCASH) with elected student representatives
3. College must ensure that the CCTV cameras of all the floors are working for the safety and security of the students
4. The decisions and actions taken by the disciplinary committee of the college must be openly disclosed

5. Male students must mandatorily be sensitised on gender

Resist the patriarchal crimes against women! ■

Bhojpur Flood Victims Demand Immediate Relief, CPIML Calls for Urgent Rehabilitation

A delegation of erosion-affected families from Jawainiya village, Shahpur block, Bhojpur (Bihar) on September 30 met the District Magistrate to demand urgent relief and a comprehensive rehabilitation plan. The delegation was led by Ara MP Comrade Sudama Prasad, along with Comrades Abhyuday and Gayamuddin Ansari of CPI(ML) Liberation and Insaf Manch, Bihar.

The memorandum submitted to the DM highlighted the catastrophic Ganga river erosion that began on 18 July 2025, which destroyed nearly 350 houses and left over a thousand

families homeless. A temporary embankment constructed earlier collapsed, worsening the destruction. Hundreds of families have been living on makeshift shelters on the Damodarapur embankment for over two months, facing snakes, scorpions, and harsh conditions. The village's 10+2 school, with over 1,500 students, was also washed away, halting education. Nearby villages including Chakki-Nauranga in Ballia have been severely affected.

The delegation demanded immediate construction of a permanent concrete embankment

from Buxar to Koilwar, strict action against illegal sand mining, and a comprehensive rehabilitation plan. Each affected married household should receive Rs. 25 lakh compensation, land, housing, schools, roads, electricity, drinking water, and healthcare facilities. Priority employment for displaced families, temporary schooling arrangements, community kitchens, and 24x7 medical and sanitation facilities were also demanded. Interim compensation of Rs. 1,20,000 per family was sought without procedural delays.

Earlier, on September 27, a CPIML delegation led by General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya visited the affected areas along with Ara MP Sudama Prasad, Bihar Secretary Comrade

Kunal, acting Bhojpur secretary Comrade Abhyuday, party MLAs Comrades Shiv Prakash Ranjan (Agiakon), Ajit Kumar Singh (Dumraon), and Arun Singh (Karakat), Insaf Manch Bihar secretary Comrade Qayamuddin Ansari, AILAJ convenor Amit Kumar Bunty, retired chief engineers Viswanath Chaudhary and Shyam Nandan Singh, environmentalist Rajendra Prasad Gupta, and editor of Samkaleen Lokyudh Santosh Sahar. The delegation assessed the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts and interacted directly with affected families.

Comrade Dipankar noted that more than two months since the disaster, no minister of the Nitish government has visited the area, and the DM has made only a single visit. Although the village mukhiya submitted an initial list of 227 affected families, only 111 families have received the meagre compensation announced by the government. The Jawainiya 10+2 school, destroyed in the disaster, has forced students to travel up to eight kilometres to continue their education, severely disrupting schooling.

MP Sudama Prasad also raised the issue in Parliament, demanding urgent relief and a special rehabilitation package for the devastated families. However, the CPIML delegation pointed out that the state government has so far remained indifferent, taking only token measures despite the scale of the disaster. ■

IREF's Fourth National Convention Concludes in Varanasi

The fourth national convention of the Indian Railway Employees Federation (IREF) was held with great enthusiasm and renewed energy on 21–22 September 2025 at North Eastern Railway, Varanasi. The proceedings began with flag hoisting and tributes to martyrs, followed by the open session. Later in the evening, the delegates' session commenced.

The two-day convention, marked by a strong turnout, was addressed by several prominent speakers. Among them were CPI(ML) MP and Railway Standing Committee member Sudama Prasad, AICCTU national general secretary Rajiv Dimri, national president V. Shankar, national vice president Shashi Yadav, JNU economics professor Dr. Atul Sood, and president of Bihar State Non-Gazetted Employees Federation (Gope) Rambili Prasad. Leaders from various fraternal unions working in the railways and from IREF-AICCTU affiliated zonal unions also spoke. Their addresses centered on policies affecting the railways and the country, helping delegates grasp the current and future challenges and possibilities.

During the discussion on the outgoing committee's general secretary's report, office-bearers from all zonal unions presented their respective reports. These highlighted the present conditions of railway employees and put forward their demands. After thorough deliberation, the convention adopted several important resolutions. Chief among them was the demand to immediately stop corporatization, privatization, outsourcing and the contract system in the railways, which are worsening operations and increasing the distress of contract workers. The convention also demanded immediate recruitment to more than 300,000 vacant posts, restoration of the Old Pension Scheme in place of the New Pension Scheme, formation of the Eighth Pay Commission, and calculation of PLB bonus as per the Seventh Pay Commission. Other key demands included extension of medical and pass facilities to employees' parents, improvement of working conditions for women employees, implementation of an 8-hour duty roster instead of the inhuman 12-hour system, and scrapping of the four labour codes brought in by the government.

Around 400 delegates from nearly all railway zonal unions and production units across the country participated. After unanimously adopting the general secretary's report, the convention elected a 77-member National Executive, including 37 office bearers. Sarvjeet Singh was elected national general secretary of IREF and Akhilesh Pandey was elected national president. Other office bearers include Rajiv Dimri as honorary president, Amreek Singh and Santosh Kumar Paswan as working presidents, Mrityunjay Kumar and Durgesh Pandey as additional general secretaries, and Jumerdeen as organizational secretary.

The newly elected executive hailed the trust shown by railway employees in the recent union recognition elections and resolved to work with full dedication and fresh energy for the welfare of employees and the improvement of the railway system. It pledged to further strengthen the organization at the grassroots and affirmed that IREF is prepared to defend the rights and dignity of railway employees at every level, from the streets to Parliament. The convention was not just a meeting but the beginning of a new movement, united in determination to face every challenge ahead. ■

Youth Struggle Forces Uttarakhand CM to Announce CBI Probe into Recruitment Scam

Under the pressure of the ongoing youth movement in Uttarakhand, the Chief Minister has finally been compelled to announce a CBI inquiry into the recruitment exam scam. The disciplined and united way in which the youth carried forward their struggle is commendable. The solidarity extended by democratic and pro-people forces in Uttarakhand also contributed greatly in strengthening this movement.

At the same time, the youth and all democratic, pro-people forces must remain vigilant to ensure that there is no betrayal of the spirit of the movement. It is also a fact that almost every recruitment process in Uttarakhand over the past 25 years is under suspicion and all of them require a CBI probe. Further, those Assembly Speakers who

were responsible for the Assembly recruitment scam must also be held accountable. The Chairman of the Uttarakhand Subordinate Services Selection Commission, G. S. Martolia, who has failed to ensure clean and transparent examinations, must be removed from his post immediately.

From the very beginning, the Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami, along with the BJP and the entire administrative machinery, tried to present the scam as a case of malpractice at a single exam centre and even refused to acknowledge the fact of paper leaks. The Chief Minister went so far as to claim that those demanding a CBI probe were actually trying to stall recruitments in the state. Today, with his own announcement of a CBI probe, it

is clear that this is a victory of the youth movement.

It is extremely disturbing and shameful that the youth activists and their supporters were trolled, defamed and targeted with false propaganda on social media. The smear campaign against Rajni, an activist young woman, activist-journalist Trilochan Bhatt and others who supported the movement is utterly condemnable. Strict action must be taken against those who spread these false rumours. The Chief Minister himself attempted to communalize the issue by using the phrase “nakal jihad,” which is deplorable and an insult to the dignity of the constitutional office he holds.

We demand that the state government establish a strong and effective mechanism to ensure that all competitive examinations in Uttarakhand are conducted in a fair, transparent and impartial manner.

– *Indresh Maikhuri, State Secretary, CPI(ML) Uttarakhand*

Women’s Freedom from Debt Becomes Key Bihar Assembly Poll Agenda

On 18 September 2025, hundreds of women led by AIPWA welcomed Comrade Shashi Yadav at Jamui’s Kachhari Chowk in Bihar. After garlanding the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar, a spirited march was held raising slogans such as “10,000 is not enough, only debt waiver will do” and “Stop the atrocities of microfinance companies.” The march culminated in a large Women’s Debt Liberation Convention.

The convention was presided over by AIPWA district convenor

Kiran Gupta and conducted by CPI(ML) youth leader Babu Sahab Singh. Addressing the gathering, Comrade Shashi Yadav said the INDIA alliance has promised Rs 2500 per month support to women, which if implemented properly, will provide a regular income source.

She pointed out that 64 percent of families in Bihar earn less than Rs 10,000 per month, insufficient even for basic meals. With government schools and hospitals being systematically dismantled, poor families are pushed into private

institutions and forced to borrow. “If women are not freed from debt, Nitish government’s Rs 10,000 promise is nothing more than cumin in a camel’s mouth,” she said.

Explaining how microfinance institutions exploit women, she noted that loans are taken not for income generation but for survival, with installment payments sucking out household income. She reiterated the major demands of the movement: total debt waiver, guaranteed employment for all women, strict regulation of microfinance institutions, provision of loans up to Rs 2 lakh at 2 percent annual interest, and a monthly assistance of Rs 2500.

Darbhanga Conference

Under the banners of CPI(ML), AIPWA and AIARLA, thousands of women entangled in microfinance loans gathered on 12 September 2025 at Moin Mahua's Gami College in Hayaghat constituency (Darbhanga) in Bihar for a massive Women's Debt Liberation Convention. Women from across villages and panchayats came together to raise their voice against the crushing burden of microfinance debt.

Addressing the convention as the chief speaker, Shashi Yadav, National General Secretary of Scheme Workers Federation and MLC, said that the Modi-Nitish government has trapped Bihar's women in the vicious grip of microfinance companies. "Women are being driven to suicide and entire families are forced to flee their villages because of unbearable debt. This will not continue. Women will no longer commit suicide or run away. They will resist these companies and throw out those who pushed them into this trap," she declared.

She assured that if the Mahagathbandhan government

comes to power, women's loans up to three lakh rupees will be waived. CPI(ML) district secretary Baidyanath Yadav stressed that women must unite to fight this injustice, while AIPWA leaders Shanichari Devi and Sadhana Sharma said Darbhanga's women are rising to struggle and ready to teach a lesson to the BJP-Nitish alliance. CPI(ML) state committee member Abhishek Kumar pointed out the hypocrisy of the Modi government that writes off lakhs of crores for Adani and Ambani but refuses to waive the modest debts of poor women.

The convention was also addressed by AICCTU district president Ramnarayan Paswan Bhola, district secretary Umesh Prasad Singh, Asha Workers Union president Sabita Kumari, AIPWA leaders Rani Singh, Shobha Devi, Shakila Khatoon and others.

The conventions in Darbhanga and Jamui made it clear that debt liberation is now a burning agenda for Bihar's women, who are determined to fight back against the microfinance trap and the NDA government's betrayal. ■

Appeal of Manoj Manzil Dismissed Under Political Pressure

On October 7, former CPI(ML) MLA from Agiaon Manoj Manzil and others did not get relief from the Patna High Court as their appeal against the district court verdict in the Badgaon case of Bhojpur was dismissed and the court upheld the sentence.

CPI(ML) State Secretary Kunal described the High Court decision as regrettable. He also said that the verdict appears to have been influenced by political pressure. In the case in which Manoj Manzil and other comrades were convicted, everyone was falsely implicated. Even though the body of the person they are accused of killing was not recovered, all were sentenced to life imprisonment. An appeal against the Patna High Court order has been filed in the Supreme Court.

On February 13, 2024 Manoj Manzil along with 22 other comrades were convicted and sentenced to life imprisonment in a politically motivated murder case. In the case, 90-year-old Comrade Ramanand Prasad was also sentenced to life imprisonment. The case was filed on the eve of the 2015 Assembly elections and Comrade Manoj had to fight the polls from within jail. He still polled more than 30,000 votes and finished a close third.

The CPI(ML) State Secretary appealed to the people of Bihar and Bhojpur to teach a strong lesson in the upcoming elections to the forces that conspired to punish leaders of the poor and to continue the struggle for justice. ■



Uttarakhand: Bagjala Sit-in Marks Bhagat Singh's Birth Anniversary



On the 42nd day (September 28) of the indefinite sit-in at Bagjala, the All India Kisan Mahasabha organized a programme to mark the birth anniversary of Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh. The event began with the resounding slogan of “Inquilab Zindabad,” Bhagat Singh’s favorite call. Participants pledged to carry forward his vision and to spread people’s awareness against the deliberate promotion of communal frenzy across the country.

Cultural performances including songs like Sarfaroshi ki tamanna, Ladna hai bhai ye to lambi ladai hai, and Mera rang de basanti chola filled the gathering with revolutionary spirit. Alongside, the protesters reiterated their eight-point demands which include granting ownership rights to Bagjala residents, lifting the ban on construction, and restoring the right to panchayat elections.

Addressing the programme, CPI(ML) district secretary Dr. Kailash Pandey said, “The situation in the

country today makes Bhagat Singh’s ideas even more relevant. His words fit the Modi government precisely—that when any government attacks the basic rights of the people, it becomes the people’s fundamental right and duty to overthrow that government.” He condemned the destruction of youth aspirations through exam paper leaks, the loot of public resources, rising violence against women, Dalits and minorities, and the deepening communal divisions. He called upon workers, peasants, youth, students, women, small traders and all marginalized sections to unite in the struggle to uproot this anti-people regime.

Congress SC Cell district president Inder Pal Arya said that the sacrifices of martyrs like Bhagat Singh have given us the right to breathe freely today. “Only by walking together on their path of unity can we achieve our rights. If we work as one fist, the government will have to listen,” he added.

Dr. Urmila Raiswal underlined that Bhagat Singh’s ideas are a source of inspiration for building a new India based on equality and justice, free of discrimination. “We need policies not for the profits of corporates but for the interests of workers and peasants,” she said. Vimla Devi added that at a time when caste and communal divisions are deepening and violence against women is rising, the relevance of Bhagat Singh’s socialist vision is greater than ever.

The protest in Bagjala, is based on an eight-point charter of demands:

1. Cancel all notices served to villagers under the pretext of encroachment removal.
2. Lift restrictions on construction works.
3. Repair damaged roads and construct pucca roads in place of kutchha roads.
4. Immediately resume the Jal Jeevan Mission’s Har Ghar Nal, Har Ghar Jal scheme.
5. Restore the right of Bagjala residents to participate in panchayat elections and include them in the voter list.
6. Pass a proposal in the assembly to grant ownership rights to Bagjala residents on existing possession and declare it a revenue village without delay.
7. Ensure government purchase of cattle at fixed prices under the Cow Protection Act to stop losses faced by farmers, cattle rearers and commuters.
8. Grant ownership rights to all residents of forest and nazul land in Nainital district, including Bagjala. ■

A Tribute to the Rebellious Soul, Zubeen Garg

▲ BIBEK DAS



Zubeen Garg taking part in anti CAA rally at Latasil playground in 2019, singing, "Politics nokoriba Bandhu". Credit: UB Photos

Zubeen Garg was neither a statesman nor a hero who broke down the old society to build a new one. Yet, his death sparked a mass outpouring of grief and protest.

Renowned poet Hiren Bhattacharya once said: "Death too is an art, a selfless sculpture carved on the hard stone of life."

In Zubeen's case, it feels more apt to say: Death is a mass insurrection; waves of sorrow can roar like the ocean.

Zubeen sang songs, but his music resonated far beyond the ordinary. After Bhupen Hazarika, it was an artist who could command such a heroic farewell. By turning the sea of grief into a procession of communal harmony, what Hazarika had celebrated as "Mahabaahu Brahmaputra, the pilgrimage of great confluence", he paid tribute to Hazarika and challenged the politics of the status quo.

His popularity cut across

generations, communities, and classes, though it unsettled the ruling establishment. For over 33 years, Zubeen consistently delivered around 38,000 songs, filling the void left by Bhupen Hazarika in Assam's musical sky. While many mourned Hazarika, the new generation had already embraced Zubeen, finding life in his songs.

The generational divide was evident. The youth of today, shaped by post-liberalization class conflicts, educational pressures, employment uncertainty, and the tension between freedom and conservative societal norms, found their voice in Zubeen. His songs expressed love, frustration, and defiance. His acts, rejecting caste hierarchies, tearing his hymn-thread (logun), advising Hima Das to eat beef for running, and using words like "Ghenta", turned him into a hero of rebellion. His tragic death sparked a Gen Z movement in Assam.

Zubeen liked to call himself a communist and took pride in calling himself a follower of Bishnu Rabha. In that sense, he was like Eklavya, a communist disciple without a formal guru. In an interview, he called himself a socio-leftist, and I think that is the most appropriate term, where all potentials of revolutionary transformation were latent, which the left-wing could not discover. As a result, while Zubeen's songs and actions contained a jihad against the old society, the outline of a new society did not emerge.

Zubeen's artistic essence was inseparably integrated with his social identity, and this aspect differentiated him from other artists. From forming the Sur Bahini for flood-affected people to participating in the anti-CAA movement, from joining movements against tree felling to establishing the Kalaguru Foundation, from singing at charity events to providing personal help – all bore testimony to this. With his magical voice and melody, Zubeen entered the hearts of people of all ages, singing for a diverse spectrum of people, all genres of songs, from devotional to folk.

While almost all of Zubeen's contemporary artists pledged allegiance to the BJP, Zubeen never sought refuge in the BJP. Instead, he consistently criticized government policies, right up to the recent case of Jayanta Mall.

Zubeen's songs were like the tears of a tormented society and, simultaneously, a protest against it. Thus, his songs became like solace. In the absence of a real revolution, Zubeen thus became a symbol of rebellion against this tormented society. The true tribute to Zubeen would be to prepare for a great cultural rebellion against this tormented society and to advance the sea of great communal harmony. ■

Uncompromising Socialist: G.G.Parikh

▲ GUDDI

The name in the title of this piece encapsulates the very essence of this article. While I was at Sevagram, my friend Chandan called me early in the morning on 2nd October, Gandhi Jayanti, informing me that GG had passed away. I couldn't believe what I had anticipated had actually happened. It's almost as if GG orchestrated his own passing away on Gandhi Jayanti while I was at Sevagram, so I wouldn't regret not being in Mumbai.

The noise I felt in GG's presence has turned to silence today. The Satyagrahi who fought for our country's freedom, the jail returned who dreamed of what this country would be like after independence, the socialist who experimented with building a society based on the values of the freedom movement, the person who worked tirelessly for the environment with an eye on the future, is no longer with us. An Editor of Janata Weekly, Dr.G.G.Parikh embodies unwavering commitment to justice, equality, and Gandhian values.

Dr. G. G. Parikh, a Socialist, Freedom Fighter, Medical Practitioner, and true Living Gandhian, was born on 30th December 1924 in Surendranagar, Gujarat. Educated in Saurashtra (Rajasthan), Kanpur (Uttar Pradesh) and Mumbai (Maharashtra), he participated in the 1942 Quit India Movement as an 18-year-old cadet inspired by Yusuf Meherally's fiery speech at St. Xavier's College. Imprisoned for ten months for his

role in the movement, he went on to dedicate his life to socialism and public service—helping found and lead several socialist parties from the Congress Socialist Party to the Janata Dal. As a medical practitioner in Mumbai since the 1950s, he combined healing with activism, establishing the Yusuf Meherally Centre (YMC) in 1961 at Gowalia Tank to foster communal harmony and national integration.

The very first friend I made in the development field is gone. I had a 22-year long friendship with GG. In the past 22 years, I've spent more time with GG than with my own family. When I first met him, I didn't know anyone of his age. There was a 62-year age difference between GG and me. 62 years is like a generation or two. GG never allowed this difference to be felt in any discussions or debates we had or any decisions we made.

Those who have met GG know that he was deeply influenced by Gandhiji and had the courage to fight for the values of the freedom movement, and prided himself on being an uncompromising socialist. After independence, when many of his colleagues sought to change society through power, GG, along with Gandhiji's Antim Aadmi, sought to bring about this change from the ground up. This thought led to the creation of the "Yusuf Meherally Centre." GG's laboratory of socialism and Gandhi's vision of Hind Swaraj, in which the Karta and Vahak are tribals, Dalits, women, and youth. The Yusuf Meherally

Centre experimented with the concept of alternative development in the 1960s, sparking debates on environmental conservation, organic farming, water conservation, small dams, and other such issues. He continuously conducted numerous programs through Yusuf Meherally Centre for the last 65 years, on education, health, khadi and village industries, skill development, women's empowerment, and youth camps.

It is not known whether GG was a believer or an atheist, but we never easily heard the line "It is his will or God will take care of it." After the firing on the farmers' protest in Multai in 1998, while he was on his way there, he got off at Murtazapur (Maharashtra) station to get tea and while trying to board a moving train, fell on the railway track. The train ran over him, injuring his leg. But he used to say that even then he did not remember God. I can't say whether GG believed in spirituality, but he considered the "spirit of service" to be a crucial part of transforming humanity.

GG, from 1942 until his death, was associated with socialist ideas, organizations, institutions, parties, and individuals. Throughout his life, he worked with countless associates. He made many socialist initiatives an integral part of his life, including two significant ones: the regular organization of the peace march held by "42 Augusters" on August 9th, August Kranti Din in Mumbai. The second, the management and editing of the socialist magazine "Janata Weekly," published by the socialists since 1946. He was a lifelong admirer of the Rashtra Seva Dal. He served as Chairman of the Yusuf Meherally Centre, Managing Trustee of the Janata Trust, President of the S.M. Joshi Socialist Foundation, the

Yusuf Meherally Memorial Education Society, the Vaikunthbhai Mehta Research Centre for Decentralized Industries, and the Mumbai Khadi and Village Industries Association.

We have seen Mumbai through GG's eyes; he was an eyewitness to every event of the freedom movement in Mumbai. There were many stories that he used to tell us while passing through the streets, squares, buildings, and grounds over the years. He was on the streets in the workers' struggles of many trade unions and was a part of the cooperative movement. In the last several decades, seeing the common man leaving Mumbai, he used to say repeatedly, "Whose is Mumbai? Of the common man, and the same man is living 50-60 kilometers away." He would always explain to the middle class that Mumbai's development is happening at the cost of the poor people. He didn't like the current form of Mumbai at all.

GG's specialty was that whoever he met, became one of his own. He used to talk for hours, without any hesitation with people even younger than me. Listening to him, I felt like GG was a part of that "Gen Z" generation. GG had immense patience to listen to everyone; he could listen to his colleagues and workers for hours. I am one of those colleagues who considered GG as their "confession box" to express their views. I could share my daily matters and many secrets with him.

GG was not alone; his family also supported him in his struggle and sacrifice. GG met his wife Mangalaben during the 1942 movement, and both were imprisoned. During the Emergency, GG, Mangalaben, and their daughter, Sonal, were imprisoned. GG registered his marriage on August 9th, took over his only home at



Ganesh Prasad on August 9th, started his practice on August 9th, and also opened his clinic on August 9th. Every program or initiative he planned would be held on August 9th. His energy and willpower at the age of 101 is an inspiration to all of us. As the saying goes, when someone does something amazing, the common expression is "What an incredible miracle." In GG, we have witnessed such a miracle with our own eyes. Mumbai will never forget the miracle that was GG.

There is nothing final about GG even in death. There is much to write about him, but I am not in a position to write while the loss is so recent. There will be more write-ups in the future on the innumerable discussions I've had with GG because many of his ideas and views deserve to be documented and shared with a wider audience. ■

Comrade Kumar Mathuresh Prasad

Comrade Mathuresh Prasad, a courageous leader of the employee movement in Bihar's Kosi region, passed away following a sudden heart attack. Beginning

his career as an additional clerk in the Registry Office, he dedicated his life to organizing over seven thousand additional clerks and securing their regularization and pensions.

A veteran of many struggles under IPF and CPIML in Saharsa, Supaul, and Madhepura, he faced dismissals from service but fought back each time with determination. Even after retirement in his village Naugachia, he remained deeply connected to the movement.

Red Salute to Comrade Mathuresh Prasad. ■



On 8 October, hundreds of women from across Delhi-NCR participated in a Women's Rights Panchayat organized by AIPWA at Jantar Mantar, raising their voices for free bus services, social welfare, and respect for migrant women workers.

AIPWA condemned the government for restricting free bus services to permanent residents, calling it anti-women and anti-people, as a large population of migrant women contribute significantly to Delhi's economy. The organization demanded unconditional free bus service for all women and urged the government to honour promises of monthly allowances and gas subsidies.

EDITORIAL OFFICE

CHARU BHAWAN, U-90, SHAKARPUR, DELHI - 110 092

PUBLISHED BY:

Dipankar Bhattacharya for the Central Committee, CPIML
from Charu Bhawan, U-90, Shakarpur, Delhi - 110 092

EDITOR: Arindam Sen

PRINTED BY: Lekhraj Singh Chauhan at Graphic Print,
383, F&E, GF, Patparganj Industrial Area, Delhi - 110 092

liberation@cpiml.org

www.liberation.org.in

PH.: 91-11-42785864