

Liberation

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CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)

MINISTRY OF
EDUCATION



NOT AN INCH BACK, DHARMENDRA PRADHAN MUST GO!



On Jharkhand Rajya Sabha Elections

Jharkhand Rajya Sabha voting outcome makes it clear that Congress failed to secure the support of all its own MLAs. Before pointing fingers at others, larger parties should first look within. Those making such statements to protect their party or leadership are damaging the credibility of CPI(ML) and all those legislators who voted in good faith for the Congress candidate. This is not merely an attempt to malign CPI(ML), but an effort that harms the image of the entire INDIA alliance.

Regarding the speculation being spread about voting in the Jharkhand RS election, we wish to state with full responsibility that both our MLAs voted in favour of the Congress candidate, in accordance with the decision taken beforehand. The votes cast by CPI(ML) Liberation MLAs were duly verified by two party authorised agents for election- Polit Bureau member Comrade Haldhar Mahato and Central Committee member Comrade Geeta Mandal.

- CPI(ML) Liberation

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The U.S. Retreats From Iran, the World Will Now Have to Stop Israel



After fifteen weeks of Operation Epic Fury, Donald Trump has staged an Operation Epic Retreat by signing a fourteen-point 'peace deal' with Iran. Of course, it is still a draft memorandum of understanding and the final agreement will be signed after sixty days. Meanwhile, Israel does not agree to the deal and its continuing military attack in Lebanon can derail the peace plan. For the peace agreement to materialise, several points of the MoU have to become immediately operational: ceasefire on all war fronts including Lebanon, lifting of the US naval blockade and withdrawal of US armed forces from Iran, free international passage through the Strait of Hormuz till Iran and Oman decide on the future administration and maritime services, waivers for export of Iranian crude oil and petroleum products and associated banking and transportation services and release of Iran's frozen funds.

Trump signed the deal on 17 June, 2026 at a G7 dinner hosted by French President Emmanuel Macron at the Palace of Versailles. Observers immediately drew a historical parallel with the 1919 Versailles treaty that Germany had to sign with the Allied Powers taking full blame for World War I. For the US, the current juncture is however not yet so humiliating as for Germany after World War I. Trump himself invoked another moment from the history of the twentieth century to justify the US retreat. He said he would not be liked to be remembered as Herbert Hoover who was the US President at the time of the Great Depression of 1929. The Hormuz blockade and the escalating energy crisis could land the US and the global economy into another Great Depression, feared Trump. For more recent parallels, the world remembered the American

defeat in Vietnam and the collapse of the US design in Afghanistan where after two decades of war and occupation the US withdrew its forces in 2021 handing over the reins to the Taliban.

After kidnapping President Maduro of Venezuela, Trump thought that regime change in Iran was the next low-hanging fruit. After the sudden US-Israel invasion of Iran on 28 February and the assassination of Iran's supreme leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, the US-Israel war machine thought Iran would collapse within days. But then the world saw Iran's spectacular resilience and fightback - the Iranian missiles and the Hormuz masterstroke have not only foiled the regime change conspiracy but also forced the US into an ignominious retreat. For the US to agree to respect the sovereignty of Iran and to withdraw not just the ongoing naval blockade and military intervention but also the decades-old economic sanctions and restrictions on Iranian deposits is a massive victory for Iran and setback for US imperialism's blueprint of unchallenged American domination in a unipolar world.

Indeed the Iranian resistance has also encouraged domestic opposition within the US and cracks in Trump's MAGA base for dragging the US into yet another war, this time at the behest of Israel. Ahead of the 250th anniversary of the foundation of the USA, anger against the tyrannical Trump presidency runs high across the country. After the victory of Zohran Mamdani in the mayoral election in New York City, two other young democratic socialists appear likely to become Mayors in two iconic

American cities - Nithya Raman in Los Angeles and Janeese Lewis George in Washington, D.C. Defying all exercises in mass distraction, the shocking Epstein Files that exposed the depth of depravity of the Trump-Netanyahu nexus refuse to get erased from the public memory. The regime change operation that Iran managed to defeat may well become a reality for the US now reeling under Trump's tyranny.

The Iran war has also eroded the American domination over the western world. For the first time in decades, America's European allies refused to go the whole hog in support of another US-Israel military expedition. Marco Rubio's attempt to invoke racist nostalgia for colonialism along with shared Christian heritage and values to reinforce the strategic cohesion of NATO did little to cement the growing cracks. Pope Leo XIV, the first US-born pontiff, actually opposed the US-Israeli invasion of Iran as an unjust war and Trump's condemnation of the Pope's stance only added to the widening rifts between the US and Italy. It should be noted that Italy has a powerful working class movement which strongly opposes the genocide in Gaza and stands in open support for Palestine. Italy's far-right Prime Minister Georgia Meloni who used to be a great admirer of Donald Trump seeking to bring Europe closer to the US under Trump's second presidency, is now having a running feud with Donald Trump.

The Modi government's foreign policy of capitulation to the US-Israel axis of aggression has only rendered India more vulnerable against this changing

international backdrop. Relentless tariff and trade blows apart, India is having to deal with humiliating racist treatment of Indian immigrants, including those with valid documents, and US missile attacks on Indian ships and seafarers near the Strait of Hormuz. While countries like Pakistan and Qatar have played a role in ceasefire negotiations, the Modi government did not have the courage to take a stand against the war even when it hurt India's own interests in so many ways.

The growing irrelevance of India's foreign policy in the Modi era is now starkly underlined by Modi's awkward hugs, handshakes and endless giggles in the company of foreign heads of states, and his photo ops and PR exercises in global summits like his clueless guest appearance in the G7 summit. He did not even have the courage to demand an apology from Donald Trump on the issue of the killing of Indian seafarers by US navy, and his mention of the issue of safety of seafarers only met with an insensitive and curt reply from Trump describing seafaring as a 'rough profession'. To keep Modi and his bhakts happy Trump said the US will stand by India in the event of any attack as long as Modi was at the helm. Iran's ability to assert its sovereignty in the face of a war even after the assassination of its leader serves as a stark contrast to India's growing loss of international stature and strategic autonomy under Modi's megalomaniac foreign policy of self-promotion at the cost of the country's interests and dignity. ■

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Delisting and Dispossession: Hindutva's War on Adivasi Unity

▲ CLIFTON D ROZARIO

On May 24 this year, the Janjati Suraksha Manch organised a massive 'Janjati Sanskritik Sangam' (tribal cultural confluence) near Delhi's Red Fort to commemorate the 150th birth anniversary year of Birsa Munda. Reportedly, more than 1.5 lakh Adivasis participated in the event, where the primary and central demand was the delisting of converted Adivasis (specifically those who have converted to Christianity or Islam) from the Scheduled Tribe category. This rally, and demand, is part of the larger political project that concerns the cultural and religious identity of Adivasis. Incidentally, the Janjati Suraksha Manch is a constituent of the Sangh Parivar family of organisations affiliated with the Vanvasi Kalyan Ashram, which was formed in 2006, with the sole agenda of mobilising and agitating for delisting.

The sheer scale of the mobilisation points to the growing organisational penetration of the Sangh Parivar into Adivasi regions, but more importantly, the acceptance of its political project to reshape Adivasi consciousness. The Sangh Parivar rejects the term "Adivasi" and after toying around with "Vanvasi," (forest dweller) has settled for 'Janjatiya' (belonging to a tribe). This is not a semantic difference, but reflects a deeper ideological project. 'Adivasi' implies original inhabitants and is a political assertion of historical rights over land, forests and resources, whereas 'Vanvasi' or 'Janjatiya' reduces indigenous peoples to a subset of a larger Hindu civilization.

For decades, organizations

affiliated with the RSS have worked to assimilate Adivasi communities into a broader Hindu identity. Educational institutions, cultural programs and religious campaigns have been used to reshape Adivasi consciousness. This project serves both ideological and political purposes. It expands the social base of Hindutva while undermining autonomous Adivasi religious practices and identities and has introduced religion as a tool for communalising and dividing the pan-Adivasi identity. Thus, Christian Adivasis have increasingly become targets of violence, discrimination and campaigns of "reconversion". The violence in Dangs (Gujarat), Kandhamal (Odisha), attacks on churches and repeated allegations of forced conversions reveal how Adivasi communities have become battlegrounds for competing ideological projects.

Adivasis, Constitution and Religion

For generations, Adivasi identity has never been defined solely by religious affiliation. It has been shaped by a shared relationship with land, forests, community life, culture and history. Diverse faith traditions have coexisted within Adivasi society without eroding this shared identity. The Oraons and the Mundas have those who practice the Hindu, Christian and Sarna faiths. Among the Bhils of Central India, one finds practitioners of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, just like the Siddis of Karnataka. Besides Sarna, scores of Adivasi communities practicing other traditional tribal religions that have historically challenged Brahminical authority,

and live side by side with members from their communities practicing other established religions. While their religions differ, they share common cultural traditions.

No surprise then that the Constitution conceptualised Adivasi communities as historically distinct peoples requiring protection because of geographical isolation, exploitation and exclusion from governance rather than because of their religious preferences. The Constitution, in fact, adopts fundamentally different approaches to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. While Scheduled Caste status is conditioned by the Constitution (Scheduled Castes) Order, 1950 upon profession of specified religions, no comparable limitation exists in relation to Scheduled Tribes. This article argues that Adivasi identity under Article 342 is founded upon descent, ethnicity, customary institutions, community acceptance and historical disadvantage rather than religious profession. This has been repeatedly laid down by the courts, and the Supreme Court has recently reiterated that conversion does not automatically extinguish Scheduled Tribe status. (judgement dated March 24, 2026 in the case of Chinthada Anand vs. State of Andhra Pradesh and Ors).

Delisting as a part of the Hindutva project

Even as anti-Muslim sentiment remains the central narrative underpinning Sangh Parivar's attempts at consolidating Hindu majoritarianism, attention is also towards the Christians with a particular focus on Christian

Adivasi communities. RSS's broader interest in Adivasi communities is related to the threat that it perceives from the Christian and other non-Hindu communities to its Hindu Rashtra project. Hindu nationalists use the bogey of 'forced conversion' imperilling the numbers of the Hindu majority as a key tool to vilify the Christians and engaged in graphic violence against Adivasi Christians from the 1990s onwards which saw the burning and destruction of churches throughout Adivasi districts of Gujarat in 1998, the rape of nuns in an Adivasi district in Madhya Pradesh, again in late 1998, and the gruesome murder of Graham Staines, a foreign missionary and his two young sons in an Adivasi district of Orissa in early 1999. Thereafter, the biggest pogrom against Christians came in another Adivasi district, Kandhamal in Orissa where scores of Christians were killed, hundreds of Churches and thousands of houses burnt and nuns were raped followed by forcible campaigns of like 'ghar vapasi' (homecoming) or shuddhi (purification) of Adivasi Christians. Based on the premise that Adivasis are inherently part of the Hindu fold and that conversions to Christianity represent a loss of their original identity, it presented the framework of "reconversion" as a return to an ancestral faith. Beyond religious conversion, ghar wapsi and Shuddhi serves a broader ideological purpose: the incorporation of distinct Adivasi identities, cultures and belief systems into a homogenised Hindu nationalist framework, thereby weakening autonomous assertions of Adivasi religion and self-determination.

Thus, Adivasi Christians and Muslim traders in Adivasi-dominated areas are characterized by Hindu nationalists as being outside the bounds of the Hindu nation, creating a threat to Hindu

society; and Adivasis are urged to assert their Hindu-ness and defend their threatened religion. While the focus on Christian communities among Adivasis invokes the issue of conversions, it is also driven by the desire to encompass the entire Adivasi community within the 'Hindu fold', which yet remains an unfulfilled task of the Hindu nationalist movement.

In recent years, Christian Adivasis, particularly in Chhattisgarh, have faced an escalating campaign of intimidation, social boycott, violence and forced displacement orchestrated by organisations affiliated to the Sangh Parivar, in particular the Janjati Suraksha Manch. Christian Adivasis are assaulted and threatened with expulsion from villages unless they renounced their faith. The discrimination extends beyond physical violence. Christian Adivasis have repeatedly been subjected to social and economic boycotts, including denial of access to common water sources, restrictions on harvesting crops, exclusion from village institutions and pressure to abandon their faith. In several villages, Christians have been prevented from using community burial grounds and even their own private land to bury their dead, whereas in some others, buried bodies are being exhumed. In February this year, the Supreme Court passed interim order restraining the forcible exhumation and relocation of the bodies of tribal Christians from their village burial grounds in villages of Chhattisgarh. A particularly disturbing feature of the persecution has been the use of village institutions and Gram Sabha resolutions to legitimise expulsions. Provisions of the Panchayats (Extension to Scheduled Areas) Act (PESA) were misused to pass resolutions banishing Christian Adivasis who refused to renounce their faith. Christian families were issued

ultimatums to either return to Hinduism or forfeit their right to reside in their ancestral villages. This escalation to mobilisation is carried out under the banner of the Janjati Suraksha Manch, which they are able to do with total impunity and with state support.

Rather crucially, this is happening at a time when Adivasis are facing the most grave threat, at the hands of the Union government, to their very way of life and existence.

The Modi government has launched an unprecedented assault on the Adivasis that aims to annihilate their distinct identity, existence and cultural autonomy. The promises made at the time of independence, that Adivasis, the original inhabitants and protectors of the lands, lie shattered. Alongside the cultural homogenisation project driven by its Hindutva agenda, the Modi regime has subjected Adivasi communities to unprecedented displacement and economic exploitation. The symbolism of the appointment of the first Adivasi as the nation's President has coincided with an abject decimation of Adivasis' lives, livelihoods and culture, and, Operation Kagar, a veritable war on Adivasis in the name of fighting Maoists. More than ever before, lands and forests of Adivasis are being handed over to the corporates, laws meant to protect Adivasis from displacement and exploitation, are being systematically dismantled.

Adivasis continue to languish at the bottom of the country's development pyramid as successive governments, at the Centre and States, have betrayed the belief that Adivasis would receive their due share in an independent India. On the one hand, Adivasis struggle for the most basic daily needs, while on the other, State-sanctioned corporate plunder of natural resources and forest conservation

policies are dispossessing Adivasis of their forests and lands, and destroying their culture and identity. However, beyond poverty and a livelihood crisis, what the Adivasi communities are facing in India today is an existential crisis. There is no doubt that the Adivasis as a whole have gained least and lost most from seven decades of democracy and development in India, and the past decade establishes that they have been let down by the various institutions of democracy.

It is in the face of this unprecedented attack that a concerted effort is being made to subsume Adivasis into the Hindu fold by erasing their distinct religious identities and customs in an aggressive Hindutva push in Adivasi regions. Delisting has emerged as another front of the war on Adivasis where Adivasis as the original custodians of forests and these lands are up against the Sangh Parivar conceptualisation of them as Janjatiyas or Vanvasis.

Clearly then, there is no larger Adivasi welfare at the heart of the delisting drive, rather an ideological war embedded in Hindutva, an assault on the constitutional promise of Scheduled Tribe (ST) status irrespective of religious beliefs and an obvious endeavor at creating division among Adivasis and distraction from the fight for jal-jangal-jameen.

Birsa's Legacy Betrayed: The Sangh's Delisting Agenda

An inescapable aspect is the blatant effort of the Sangh Parivar to claim legitimacy for this ideological war by foregrounding Birsa Munda. At the recent Janjati Sanskritik Samagam, Union Home Minister Amit Shah repeatedly portrayed Birsa Munda as a leader who defended "faith, forests and identity" and who called upon tribal communities to protect their religion from



outside influences, adding that Birsa spread the message that "this is our country, our religion is the true religion, and no one can occupy our forests".

Birsa Munda's early life, like most Adivasis of his time, was marked by poverty, displacement and the relentless oppression of landlords and colonial authority. Forced to move from village to village in search of livelihood, Birsa grew up witnessing the daily humiliation and suffering of his people. His life brought him into contact with diverse religious and social currents—he was baptised into Christianity, educated in mission schools, influenced by Hindu reformist traditions and local spiritual leaders, and eventually returned to the indigenous beliefs of his community. Yet what shaped him most profoundly was not religion, but the growing crisis facing Adivasi society. The dispossession of land, the destruction of traditional institutions and the indifference of colonial rulers convinced him about the need for a militant and determined struggle of his people. Rooted firmly in the aspirations of the oppressed, Birsa transformed himself from a

religious reformer into a political leader, uniting Mundas, Oraons, Kharias, Christians and non-Christians alike around the central question of land and justice. For Birsa, the real enemies of Adivasis were the British colonial state, the zamindars, the exploitative ruling elite and all those who benefited from the dispossession of indigenous communities. Birsa's legacy is therefore one of militant anti-colonial resistance, collective self-determination and the struggle for jal, jungle and jameen.

Yet, the Sangh Parivar seeks to portray Birsa as merely an opponent of Christian missionaries obfuscating Birsa's struggle that was directed against all forms of oppression. While missionaries came under criticism because of their proximity to colonial power, Birsa was clear that poor Christians and ordinary non-Adivasis were never the targets of the movement. His call was not for religious conflict but, for liberation from exploitation and the restoration of Adivasi control over land and society.

Birsa Munda led one of the most powerful anti-colonial uprisings in Indian history. He fought against land alienation, forced dispossession, exploitation by moneylenders and landlords, and the colonial state that facilitated this plunder. His struggle was directed against those forces that enriched themselves through the oppression of Adivasis. He mobilised people against exploitation and domination—not against fellow Adivasis because they worshipped differently.

The Sangh Parivar's endeavour, this, is not merely a distortion of history; it is a political ploy, another instance of rewriting history to suit its agenda.

Conclusion

Post independence, Adivasis have been up in arms against the displacement of Adivasi communities from their ancestral lands, decimation of forests, handing over of natural resources to corporate interests and towards achieving a degree of statutory protections in the form of PESA and the Forest Rights Act.

It is this unity that the politics of Hindutva seeks to fragment them through religious polarisation. Thus, instead of larger unity and struggle against displacement, dispossession and corporate loot, the possibility of the collective resistance is frustrated by the divisive agenda of delisting.

As a commentator points out, the danger extends far beyond the demand for delisting. What is being introduced into tribal regions is the same poisonous politics that has already scarred much of Indian society. A politics that thrives on suspicion, hatred and division. A politics that encourages people to see neighbours as enemies and fellow victims of exploitation as adversaries.

Defeating this project is the need of the hour. Were this project to succeed, struggles over land, livelihoods, self-governance and constitutional rights will be displaced by conflicts manufactured around religious identity. That would represent a historic betrayal of Birsa Munda's legacy.

Instead, the greatest tribute to his memory is in uniting Adivasis across faiths in defence of their land, forests, resources, constitutional rights, dignity and self-rule. That alone would be a fitting tribute to Birsa Munda, to redirect Adivasi struggles away from vacuous questions of religious identity and communal division towards land, forests, resources and self-governance. ■

Resistance, Renewal and the Future of the INDIA Bloc

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

The INDIA bloc needs a new impetus rooted in democratic resistance, unity, humility and renewed political purpose

It is perhaps the first time that Congress leader and Leader of the Opposition in the Lok Sabha Rahul Gandhi has released his speech delivered at a meeting of Indian National Developmental Inclusive Alliance (INDIA) bloc leaders to the public. While his focus on building a united resistance to the Sangh-Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)'s assault on the constitutional foundations of the Indian republic, as well as on the liberties and livelihoods of millions of Indians, is welcome, a few constructive observations may be in order in the interest of building a truly powerful and sustained resistance.

This writer has attended all INDIA bloc meetings, including the formative gathering in Patna, Bihar, in June 2023 before the alliance adopted the INDIA name. Mr. Gandhi's impassioned speech, delivered at a time when the BJP's 'double-engine'/ National Democratic Alliance (NDA) governments span over 20 States and Union Territories, was both reassuring and somewhat concerning. While it would have resonated strongly at a Congress meeting, parts of it seemed somewhat discordant in a gathering of 23 parties representing diverse ideological streams united in defence of India's sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic.

Mr. Gandhi is right in reminding

us that the Congress became a movement of resistance after Purna Swaraj (complete independence) became the official goal of the Congress. The resolution, introduced in the 1927 Madras session, and adopted two years later in the 1929 Congress session in Lahore, did propel the Congress into the leading position in India's freedom movement, with communists, socialists, and what is now known as the Phule-Ambedkar-Periyar stream serving as other prominent stakeholders. We must not however forget that the Purna Swaraj idea was first presented in the Ahmedabad session of the Congress in 1921 by two communist delegates, Maulana Hasrat Mohani and Swami Kumarananda. And Bhagat Singh and his comrades made a clear and bold ideological statement with the launch of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Association in 1928.

The Battle Against Authoritarianism

The battle today is between the only ideological stream that stayed away from, and often opposed, the freedom movement and the diverse ideological currents that fought for and won India's independence. The INDIA alliance represents a regrouping of these forces against the Hindutva school of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)-BJP, which is seeking to reshape state institutions and the architecture of parliamentary democracy to advance its ideological agenda.

If the BJP gets a free hand in its

push for 'one nation, one party', the Congress will suffer no less than other political parties; indeed, it has often proved more vulnerable. For all our glorious chapters from the history of the freedom movement, there is no accumulated ideological insulation or immunity for any party in the face of today's all-out fascist offensive and ideological assault. The BJP itself is filled with leaders who were in the Congress not long ago. Even as Mr. Gandhi emphasised the need to resist the BJP, the Congress's Chief Minister in Telangana was proudly invoking Hitler while defending Hyderabad's controversial demolition drive.

If institutions are captured and the electoral system manipulated — from voter rolls to vote counting and the declaration of results — what option remains for the people who inherited a Constitution that envisions India as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic? Mr. Gandhi is absolutely right in arguing that the only answer is resistance — not sporadic or symbolic opposition, but sustained, broad-based and determined democratic resistance.

Towards a Just Republic

We can no longer afford policies that have proved disastrous for the country and the vast majority of its people. An economic model of crony capitalism that transfers all of India's resources to a handful of corporations while impoverishing the masses and damaging the environment will have to go. A foreign policy that mortgages the strategic autonomy of India to the United States-Israel axis of aggression even as Indian sailors are killed by U.S. missiles needs immediate change. The assault on Adivasi land and forest rights,

and attempts to rob them of their constitutional protections, must stop. A governance model that glorifies bulldozers and encounters while criminalising dissent has no place in a democratic republic. Equally, the ideology of cultural nationalism that defines nationhood through religious supremacy and exclusion must be rejected. Finally, an electoral system that sacrifices credibility and transparency needs urgent and comprehensive reform.

To be sure, such resistance is already underway. Farmers forced the Narendra Modi government to abandon the land acquisition ordinance in 2014 and, seven years later, repeal the three farm laws. The Shaheen Bagh-led movement against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) in 2019 sparked nationwide opposition to what many saw as a threat to constitutional values. More recently, workers' protests across north India against rising workloads and diminishing wages have highlighted growing economic distress. Student demonstrations, led by organisations ranging from the National Students' Union of India (NSUI) or left student organisations such as the All India Students' Association (AISA) and the Students' Federation of India (SFI) or the new digital phenomenon called the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), are demanding accountability for the deepening crisis in the education and examination system.

We must also acknowledge the price people have paid for this resistance. More than 700 farmers died during the historic farmers' protest at Delhi's borders. Father Stan Swamy died in custody. Activists such as Surendra Gadling, Umar Khalid and Sharjeel Imam, among others linked to the Elgar Parishad and

INDIA Bloc Meeting in Delhi Adopts Five-Point Plan

The INDIA Alliance meeting held at the Constitution Club in New Delhi on June 8 unanimously agreed on a five-point plan to intensify coordination on key democratic, educational and economic issues facing the country.

CPI(ML) Liberation General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya and Polit Bureau member Ravi Rai participated in the meeting, which was attended by around 23 constituent parties of the alliance, including the Congress, CPI, CPI(M), RJD, VCK, AIFB, RSP and others. The meeting decided that a letter will be sent to the Chief Justice of India on the issue of Special Intensive Revision (SIR) and the electoral disenfranchisement.

The INDIA parties also demanded the immediate resignation of the Union Education Minister over recurring examination paper leaks. The meeting said that repeated paper leaks have exposed the deep crisis in the education and examination system and have caused immense distress to students and youth across the country.

The alliance further demanded that the Union Government immediately convene an all-party meeting to discuss the worsening economic situation. The meeting underlined the need for urgent discussion on price rise, unemployment, the agrarian crisis and other issues affecting the lives and livelihoods of the people.

It was also decided that INDIA Alliance parties will meet once every two months to ensure regular political coordination. The next meeting will be held in Hyderabad in August, with the exact date to be finalised soon.

The meeting also resolved that during the Monsoon Session of Parliament, alliance parties will hold daily coordination meetings at the office of the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament.

CAA protests, have been languishing for years. Workers and activists are facing imprisonment for demanding basic rights and fair wages. Activist Sonam Wangchuk appears to be a rare exception, having been released after months of detention under the National Security Act without any clear explanation. Journalists, too, have faced severe pressure, with Prabir Purkayastha among the few to secure relief after prolonged legal action.

Contrast this record of courage and perseverance among the people with the disturbing state of political parties, many of which are splitting or imploding under the pressure of intimidation or the lure of power. It is a reminder of how humble we must be when speaking of building resistance. The challenge before the INDIA bloc is to connect with these ongoing struggles, tap into the reservoir of public disillusionment, anger and aspiration, amplify demands for justice, and strengthen the collective struggle for democracy.

Reenergise the Opposition

The impact of two successive powerful struggles such as the equal citizenship campaign, the historic farmers' movement, the message of the Bharat Jodo Yatra, and a series of encouraging electoral outcomes — from the BJP's narrow escape in Bihar in 2020 to its defeats in West Bengal (2021) and Karnataka (2023) — created the ideal backdrop for the emergence of the INDIA coalition in 2023. Despite the exit of the Janata Dal (United) and the Rashtriya Lok Dal and the absence of electoral coordination in States such as West Bengal, Kerala and Punjab, the INDIA bloc came close to defeating the BJP-led NDA in 2024. The results in Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu — and, to some extent, Bihar — demonstrated INDIA's electoral potential, raising the Congress tally to 100 seats and the alliance's total to 234. Since then, a series of electoral setbacks — beginning with the defeats in Maharashtra and Haryana in 2024 and Delhi in 2025 — has eroded the INDIA bloc's strength and influence. These reverses, aided by multidimensional electoral frauds, have further tightened the BJP's stranglehold over what remains of India's electoral democracy. The INDIA bloc clearly needs a new impetus and a turnaround. Mr. Gandhi has a crucial dual role to play in this context — reenergising the Congress and facilitating the broader INDIA platform by ensuring mutual respect, trust and accommodation of parties with diverse histories and ideological inclinations. If India as a country can grow only on the basis of unity in, or rather through, diversity, the same also applies to INDIA as a political coalition.

(This article was originally published in The Hindu on June 16, 2026.)

Killing of Indian Sailors in Hormuz, and a Criminal Surrender at Seva Teerth



Why are only Indian seafarers being targeted by the United States? This is the question being asked by Indian sailors aboard merchant vessels trapped in the Strait of Hormuz after a series of US strikes on Indian-crewed ships that have already claimed Indian lives. Nothing exposes the hollowness of the Modi regime's claims of national pride and global prestige more brutally than its response to these attacks. When Indian citizens were killed by US missiles and denied even the most basic humanitarian assistance at sea, the Modi government found neither its voice nor its spine. Instead, it continued to genuflect before Washington and deepen India's subordination to the US-led imperialist axis.

In the span of four days, the US military attacked three Indian-crewed ships in the region. The first strike, on June 8, targeted MT Marivex, and the Ministry of External Affairs responded with nothing more than a routine demarche to the US envoy. This was followed by an attack on MT Settebello on June 10 in the Gulf of Oman, when a US missile struck the vessel's engine room, killing three Indian seafarers — Patnala Suresh, Aditya Sharma and Shivanand Chaurashiya. Yet even as Indian sailors lay dead and missing after the vessel was hit by American firepower, Prime Minister Modi was busy declaring that he looked forward to further advancing India-US ties. He uttered no words on the killing of Indian citizens. The very next day, another Indian-crewed vessel, MT Jalveer, came under attack off the coast of Oman. Even after three attacks on Indian-crewed

ships and the deaths of Indian mariners, the Modi government restricted itself to diplomatic formalities and generic appeals for de-escalation, refusing to unequivocally condemn the United States for attacks that had already cost Indian lives. The MEA statement further noted that the vessels were under "US sanctions", as though the sanction status of a ship somehow diminishes the value of Indian lives or excuses the killing of Indian seafarers. Even at the G7 meeting in Switzerland, where Prime Minister Modi was seen speaking to U.S. President Trump about Indian seafarers, the phrase "His Excellency" was used more frequently than references to the safety of Indians, with no visible condemnation from the so-called "56-inch" Prime Minister.

The conduct of the United States following these attacks was no less criminal. Despite the presence of American naval assets in the vicinity, no assistance was extended to the stricken crews. International maritime law, long-established maritime conventions and centuries-old customary obligations impose a clear duty to render assistance to persons in distress at sea. Such obligations have been recognised even during periods of armed conflict and have long been considered among the most basic principles governing conduct at sea. Of course, no one expected the United States, a state with a long record of violating international law and trampling upon the most elementary norms of humanity, to uphold these obligations. However, the silence and passivity of the Modi government in the face of such actions reveal with equal clarity where this regime stands when the lives, dignity and safety of Indian citizens come into conflict with its strategic alignment with Washington.

Thousands of Indian seafarers currently remain stranded

aboard merchant vessels in and around the Strait of Hormuz as a direct consequence of the illegal American naval blockade and the imperialist aggression unleashed against Iran by the US-Israeli axis. The attacks on Indian-crewed vessels are only one aspect of the crisis confronting these workers. Equally shameful has been the complete indifference displayed by Indian authorities towards the welfare and safety of Indian sailors trapped in the region.

On June 11, Uirthanathan, a 35-year-old second officer aboard MT Celestial Sea, died on the vessel despite repeated appeals for medical evacuation. For days, as his condition deteriorated, his comrades raised urgent distress calls through every available international protocol. Appeals were made to the Marine Rescue Coordination Committee, messages were sent to the vessel's management company, Romana Shipping Company, and requests were directed to the authorities at Oman's Duqm port. For more than three days, he remained critically ill aboard the vessel, located not far from the coast and within reach of assistance, while desperate efforts were made to secure medical care. Despite mounting urgency, no effective intervention and no evacuation was secured in time. Uirthanathan ultimately died after suffering for days without access to the medical treatment that could have saved his life. Even after his death, his colleagues were forced to resort to rudimentary methods to slow the decomposition of his body while continuing to plead for assistance. It was only after the crew released a video exposing their ordeal that Indian authorities finally moved to organise an evacuation.

This tragedy raises a simple but devastating question. What is the purpose of PM Modi's foreign trips, the photo ops, the embraces, the handshakes and the endless

chest-thumping about India's global stature if Indian citizens in distress abroad cannot receive even the most basic assistance when their lives are on the line? The only beneficiaries of Modi's globetrotting trips are Adani and other big corporate interests that reap the rewards of strategic partnerships and commercial agreements while ordinary Indians are left to fend for themselves in moments of crisis.

These actions and inactions expose the Modi regime's complete contempt for the lives and safety of Indians. It is the same contempt that was visible when Indians were deported by Trump from the US in handcuffs and shackles while the government remained silent. It is the same contempt that repeatedly surfaces whenever the interests of ordinary Indians collide with the regime's desire to preserve its strategic partnership with the United States. This is the inevitable price of mortgaging India's strategic autonomy and national interests to the US-Israel imperialist axis.

The families of the deceased seafarers deserve justice and full compensation. The government must immediately take all necessary measures to ensure the safety and welfare of Indian seafarers stranded in the region and pursue every available diplomatic and legal avenue to secure accountability for the attacks on Indian-crewed vessels and the deaths of Indian sailors.

The Modi government recently renamed the PMO as Seva Teerth, but what we are witnessing is "Seva" for Trump and nothing for the people of India. Modi's meek surrender before the United States, and before Trump, even in the face of crimes committed against Indian citizens, will neither be forgotten nor tolerated. ■

Why Is the Rupee Falling and What Does It Mean?

▲ SURYO

“The country is disappointed today because the government is neither concerned about the economy nor the falling rupee,” said Narendra Modi, then Chief Minister of Gujarat, in 2013, when the value of the Rupee had slid to 64 against the dollar. He added, “I do not think that the government will be able to strengthen the rupee against the dollar. In the last three months, the value of the rupee has been falling and the government has not taken any measures.” Now, Narendra Modi has been at the helm of the Central Government for 12 years and the value of the rupee currently stands at 95 rupees to the dollar, with the dollar having strengthened by 10% in the last year alone.

The weakening of the rupee is not merely a consequence of currency adjustments. It reflects India's increasingly insecure external economic position. Persistent import dependence, growing geopolitical instability, declining exports relative to GDP, weaker foreign investment and dependence on the dollar-dominated international financial system have all contributed to increasing pressure on the rupee. The weakening of the rupee must therefore be understood as a symptom of the weakening Indian economy.

In May 2026, the Prime Minister called on Indians to brace for austerity—buy less gold, take fewer foreign vacations, and work from home to reduce fuel consumption. The move towards austerity is not aimed at commodities across the



board, and rather is meant to be selectively applied to gold, oil, and foreign expenditure, i.e., consumption that requires foreign currency. These appeals reveal official concern about India's external position. Gold imports, petroleum imports and foreign travel all require foreign exchange. Calls to reduce such expenditures implicitly acknowledge the pressure that rising demand for foreign currency places on the balance of payments.

One of the widely talked about reason for the Prime Minister's appeal has been the rising costs of petroleum imports due to the war between US-Israel and Iran. The rise in India's oil expenditure is itself a product of the Modi regime's several diplomatic failures. Instead of standing for India's economic sovereignty,

the Prime Minister subordinated India's autonomy in determining from whom India buys oil to the President of the United States.

The Modi regime abandoned Iranian (and Russian in 2025) oil imports under US sanctions despite Iran having been a long time friend and important supplier. The Modi government is culpable in not taking a diplomatic stand against Israel in its genocide in Palestine and its war of aggression on Iran along with the United States, the recent casualties of which have been three Indian civilian seafarers killed by US strikes. This also serves as a lesson to those who often questioned why India should oppose Israel's actions that are in violation of international law. Not that there aren't more import reasons to oppose Israel's actions—such as the genocide

in Gaza—the fact remains that actions in another part of the world eventually always affect Indian lives—most recently, through the unavailability of cooking gas, rising fuel prices, and three civilian deaths.

India's dependence on the dollar is a political choice the Modi government has consistently reaffirmed. Despite frequent rhetoric about strategic autonomy, the government has also not pursued meaningful alternatives to dollar dependence. When the rest of the BRICS countries spoke about the desire to establish a BRICS currency to break the hegemony of the dollar, the Indian External Affairs Minister cowered, and quickly clarified to a complaining US administration that India would not support any efforts towards a BRICS currency or any attempt to break the dollar dominance over international trade. Progress towards trade settlement in regional currencies could have reduced India's exposure to fluctuations in the dollar and lowered some of the pressures arising from dollar-denominated trade.

Oil prices, the war in West Asia, and international financial dependence, however, are not the only drivers of India's worsening balance of payments and the sliding rupee, which are also a consequence of an unhealthy macroeconomy and an uncompetitive export sector. The biggest source of foreign currency is usually exports. Since India exports goods in world prices, they earn dollars, which are then exchanged for rupees, thus, driving up the price of the rupee. When Manmohan Singh left office in 2014, India's exports, including both goods and services, stood at 25.4% of the GDP—an all time high. Over the next decade that share had already contracted—instead of growing—to 21.2% in 2024, down

to levels prevalent pre-2006. In 2025 and 2026, this number is expected to have fallen sharply due to the tariffs imposed by the United States, impacting several key export sectors such as textiles, fisheries, and leather. Such a large contraction (nearly a fifth) of exports relative to the GDP has imposed considerable constraints on the supply of dollars and thus depreciated the rupee.

Another substantial source of foreign currency is foreign direct investments (FDI). When foreign investors decide to invest in Indian firms or when foreign companies move production to India, they bring with them dollars that are then converted to rupees before being meaningfully invested in India. In 2014, Narendra Modi inherited an economy that generated net FDI inflows at 1.5-2.5% of its GDP. By 2024, FDI inflows had fallen to a mere 0.7% of India's GDP. The war in West Asia has also worsened portfolio investments globally. For India, this meant more stresses when foreign indirect investments (FII) were already at a low, with both 2023 and 2024 having experienced net FII outflows.

The simultaneous contraction of exports and FDI reveals grave patterns in India's macroeconomic health. The Modi government has time and again boasted about Make in India, which should have boosted exports, and about improving India's Ease of Doing Business, which should have brought in more foreign investments. Instead, both exports and FDI have contracted, implying that India's export sector is unable to grow relative to domestic demand, and foreign investors are more hesitant—for one reason or the other—to invest in India. This is particularly concerning because the only advantage, among many

disadvantages, of a depreciating currency is that it makes exports more competitive and FDI more attractive—something Finance Minister Nirmala Sitaraman has used as justification for the falling rupee in the past. Yet the Indian economy appears unable to reap even these limited benefits. Despite a sharply weaker rupee, exports have failed to increase their share of national output and foreign investment has declined relative to GDP. The depreciation of the rupee may therefore be characterized better as a symptom of deeper structural weaknesses than as a mechanism of economic adjustment.

The contraction of the rupee against the dollar has serious implications for ordinary Indians. Currently, imports make up nearly a fourth of the Indian GDP, which means that for every hundred rupees that an average Indian earns, they spend 23.5 rupees on imports. This includes imported goods purchased by consumers, such as automobiles or LPG, but also includes industrial input such as chemicals or petroleum.

Due to dollar's hegemonic role as the global reserve currency, the rupee weakening against the dollar means the cost of all these imported goods increases. This ultimately hurts households and leading to severe erosion purchasing power directly through oil and gas prices, but also indirectly through inflation, wage stagnation, and unemployment arising due input cost-induced low revenue in firms.

The political economy behind the rupee's slide cannot be reduced to global headwinds alone. Under the Modi government, it reflects policy choices and economic priorities that consistently treat the lives and livelihoods of ordinary people as secondary. ■

Quit Writing Our obituaries, We Aren't Dead Yet

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

The results of the Assembly elections in Assam, West Bengal, Kerala, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry have reinforced the myth of the BJP's invincibility in the age of Modi. And we are being offered this myth bundled with a whole set of obituaries as free gifts: an obituary for Dravidian politics in Tamil Nadu, an epitaph for regional parties and for the INDIA coalition as a whole, and of course a eulogy for the good old legacy of the Left.

The myth of invincibility was almost (but not quite) demolished in 2024 when the BJP's own tally stopped at 240, thirty-three short of a simple majority. Modi 3.0 was made possible only with the backing of two regional parties, the JD(U) and the TDP.

Since that partial setback, the regime has perfected the art of insulating elections from anti-incumbency shocks and manufacturing magical majorities by combining brazen systemic manipulation with meticulous social engineering. From Maharashtra, Haryana and Delhi to Bihar and, most recently, Assam and West Bengal, we have seen this strategy at work in election after election.

While the Sangh's post-2024 election strategy awaits an effective counter, the obituaries for the Opposition also need a reasoned rebuttal. For instance, let us consider the wishful obituaries that are being written for regional parties. The DMK-led coalition has surely suffered a big defeat, but it is not the BJP nor its ally AIADMK that replaced it. Instead, we witnessed the rise of yet another regional party



in Tamil Nadu, the TVK, which seemed to live up to the meaning of its name (the Victory Party of Tamilakam).

The BJP may now be in power in 22 states and Union Territories, but in six of them, it still shares power with regional parties.

If the defeat of the DMK and

TMC is being presented as the beginning of the end of regional parties, the LDF's defeat in Kerala is being exaggerated as a sign of the Left's marginalisation in India's political landscape. It is true that since 1977, the Left has always been in power in at least one of three states (West Bengal, Tripura and Kerala).

West Bengal witnessed uninterrupted Left rule for 34 years (1977-2011), Tripura for 25 years (1993-2018) and Kerala for 10 years (2016-26). But unlike West Bengal and Tripura, Kerala always had an alternating pattern where governments changed every five years (the 2021 election being an exception).

The defeat of the LDF was therefore an expected outcome, and any talk of the Left's 'irrelevance' or 'obsolescence' simply because no state has a Left government is absurd. Communists were the first non-Congress trend to come to power in any state but, until 1977, the Left was essentially seen as a movement-based oppositional current.

In electoral terms, the concern for the Left should therefore be not so much the loss of power in a state, but its decline in vote share in states where it hitherto commanded a sizeable base. In this sense, the CPI(M)-led Left Front has suffered the biggest decline in West Bengal — from a little above 41 per cent in 2011 to just around 5 per cent in the recent elections.

The 2011 defeat of the Left Front was perfectly understandable after a prolonged stint of 34 years, especially in the wake of a major rupture and erosion in the Left's rural base following the unpopular land acquisition drive in the name of industrialisation. It is the dramatic rise of the BJP from a vote share of just around 10 per cent and three seats in 2016 to nearly 46 per cent and 208 seats in 2026 that should be the greatest concern not just for the CPI(M) but the entire Left.

Over a period of just ten years, the BJP has moved from the fringe of West Bengal politics to centre stage. For all the elements of electoral purge and electoral fraud which massively inflated

the BJP's scale of victory in the 2026 elections, it is the underlying organic spread of the Sangh's toxic ideology of communal hate, bigotry and divisiveness in West Bengal that should worry not just the Left but every rational, progressive Indian.

A quick look at the unfolding scene in West Bengal in the first month since the BJP's ascent to power in Kolkata will tell us that the Sangh is in a great hurry to enforce its aggressive agenda.

From the cow-slaughter ban that delivered a massive blow to the rural economy to the indiscriminate eviction of street vendors and railway hawkers without any rehabilitation; from attacks on Opposition leaders and offices to the demolition of statues, memorials and shops and the herding of helpless people into detention camps benignly christened 'holding centres'. What West Bengal has ushered in is not 'paribartan' (change) but a reign of chaos and violent siege.

The idea is clearly to overturn everything that defined Bengal's progressive heritage, liberal ethos and syncretic culture. For the new 'conquerors' of West Bengal, power implies insatiable vengeance and aggression, not responsibility and accountability. History reminds us that it was the East India Company's conquest of Bengal that heralded the period of colonial rule through a 'permanent settlement' with feudal power.

The BJP's conquest of Bengal is analogous: signifying not just heightened politico-cultural aggression, but also the quest for a new 'permanent settlement' for today's 'West India Company'. Amidst the assault on small businesses and livelihoods, the waves of disenfranchisement and dispossession, it is not difficult to hear the boots of corporate acquisition and accumulation marching in.

For the Sangh brigade, West Bengal was a long-awaited 'last frontier'. The BJP's victory in Bengal closes the chain of BJP-ruled states around Bangladesh from Tripura and Meghalaya to Assam and West Bengal. It also completes the 'Anga-Banga-Kalinga' circuit with BJP chief ministers in the three states of Bihar, West Bengal and Odisha. Emboldened, the BJP will now accelerate its 'one nation one party' expedition.

Delimitation and 'one nation, one election' are intended to put India's electoral system firmly within the BJP's vicious grip. Yet, if we look at the economy, governance or international relations, the Modi government has hit rock-bottom. Not even the regime's smoothest apologists can deny it any more.

So, how does the government tackle multiple crises? It presses the bulldozer button harder. It puts workers demanding better wages in jail. It dubs students demanding re-evaluation of exam results 'Pakistani'.

Activists are called cockroaches by the Chief Justice of India. And when the angry youth hit back digitally by launching a Cockroach Janata Party, a rattled government blocks their social media handles.

For the last one hundred years, communists have been one of the most vibrant, committed and consistent voices of freedom, justice and people's rights in India. Today more than ever before, Indian democracy needs Indian communists to rise to the occasion and build a second freedom struggle from the ground up. The revival of the Left and the survival of democracy are now two sides of the same coin.

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From Digital Explosion of Anger to the Generation of Collective Hope And Change

The Cockroach Janata Party storm continues to rage across digital platforms, and now, with its founder Abhijeet Dipke returning to India, it has taken to the streets along with various student groups, including AISA and SFI. Today, the movement is continuing in Delhi's Jantar Mantar with an indefinite protest, following earlier demonstrations in Delhi, Nagpur, Bengaluru, Lucknow and Jaipur, which witnessed scores of students, youth, and parents joining to amplify the demands.

While the storm rages and observers watch and discuss the phenomenon—with many drawing parallels to the 2011 anti-corruption movement, the launching pad for both the rise of AAP and the ascent of Narendra Modi to power in 2014—a few points perhaps can and need to be made at the outset. There would have been no Cockroach Janata Party had Chief Justice of India Suryakant not contemptuously used terms like “cockroach” and “parasites” for dissenters who use social media platforms and tools like RTI to demand greater transparency and accountability.

And the storm would not have perhaps acquired this intensity had we not experienced yet another paper leak affecting the future of more than 22 lakh NEET applicants and their families.

We have seen this digital revolt grow in a few hours and days from an idea of an individual to a concerted digital initiative amplified by millions of netizens. Beyond the immediate triggers let us also not lose sight of the larger environment that made the

CJP strike such a massive chord with India's GenZ - the puncture of the Modi government's balloon of promises of ushering in '_achhe din_' and turning India into a global power, systematic successive stealing of elections, crumbling of India's institutions, especially the dominant media and the judiciary, and the stark decline of the Aam Aadmi Party experiment.

We have witnessed digital amplification of physical struggles and vice versa in the recent past.

We can also clearly see a rattled Modi government and the Sangh brigade are trying to deal with this digital revolt by blocking the X handle of the CJP, demonising it as a destabilising conspiracy against India by foreign-based elements and threatening it with metaphorical extermination by spraying black and red 'Hit' cockroach repellents.

The five-point 'manifesto' of the CJP focuses on five most deeply felt maladies of our times and their solution - safeguarding the fundamental right to vote for all eligible voters, protecting the freedom of the press and autonomy of institutions, the judiciary in particular, 50% reservation for women in legislatures and cabinets and a 20-year disqualification to check defection by elected representatives and stop the BJP washing machine.

The immediate campaign demand for resignation of Union education minister Dharmendra Pradhan endorses a point already being raised by students across India along with more basic questions like the dismantling of NTA and scrapping of the centralised NEET examination system.

The point of course remains as to if and how this digital anger and action would translate into palpable collective pressure for change. We have witnessed digital amplification of physical struggles and vice versa in the recent past. For example, the equal citizenship movement popularised the reading of the preamble to the Constitution as a manifesto or the singing of 'Ham Dekhenge' or 'kagaz nahi dikhayenge' as anthems. The historic farmers movement gave rise to tractor and tricolour marches and solidarity convergences of diverse struggles.

Will the digital anger now manifesting itself in the shape of the CJP connect with the workers' protests for living wages and eight hour work, with the pains of the common people reeling under enforced austerity, with the demand for release of all prisoners of conscience or for stopping the bulldozers that are demolishing homes and shops and destroying lives and livelihoods or the hate campaign targeting millions of Indian Muslims? It is for activists who are already connected with all these struggles to connect the dots and strengthen the links whereby digital anger and resolve can grow into collective hope, confidence and solidarity. ■

Not an Inch Back, Dharmendra Pradhan Must Go!



After days of scorching heat, Delhi witnessed a fierce dust storm and rain on Tuesday. But an even bigger storm was already gathering at Jantar Mantar. Hundreds of students and youth under the banner of the Cockroach Janta Party have built an encampment at the protest site, which entered its fourth day on June 23 with one unwavering resolve: not an inch back until Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan resigns.

The legacy of Shaheed Bhagat Singh, Dr Ambedkar, MK Gandhi, Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, along with the values of the Constitution, is visible across the protest site. The heavily barricaded, police-paramilitary dotted and constantly surveilled stretch of Jantar Mantar reverberates with cries of "Inquilab Zindabad" and the determination of a generation refusing to surrender its future.

While the CJP phenomenon was triggered by the "cockroaches and parasites" remarks of the CJI, the encampment at Jantar Mantar is the expression of a much deeper anger. It is the accumulated rage of a generation that has witnessed paper leak after paper

leak, corruption after corruption, and the systematic destruction of public education.

When CJP founder Abhijit Dipke returned to India and addressed a gathering at this very site on June 6, alongside several student organisations, he issued a clear warning. If Dharmendra Pradhan refuses to vacate his chair, the youth will not vacate Jantar Mantar. The movement will remain where it is until the Education Minister walks out of the ministry. He also warned against attempts by those in power to divide the youth through the poison of communal politics, declaring that the youth of the country will defeat every such attempt.

As the youth protest continues with creative zeal, activists from the All India Students' Association (AISA), along with other Left-democratic student organisations, have extended their support to the movement. This adds to the already brewing larger student movement in the country against attempts to turn education into a machine that produces irrational and unscientific minds, corporate slaves and communal storm troopers.

Speaking at the protest, AISA

President Neha said that in this country the future of 22 lakh students is ruined by an incompetent Education Minister and the corruption-ridden National Testing Agency, which conducts examinations that decide the future of lakhs of young people.

"So what right does the Education Minister have to remain at the helm of the ministry?" she asked.

"So today the youth are on the streets with a clear demand: Dharmendra Pradhan has to go."

She added that what we are witnessing across the country is a complete disregard for the lives and livelihoods of youth, students, workers, women, farmers and all toiling sections of society by the Modi regime.

"Students are committing suicide because of paper leaks. Students are being lathi-charged and tear-gassed for asking for trains to reach examination centres. Is this the India that our freedom movement and freedom fighters envisioned?"

"We, the people of India, build this country, but we see our dreams and our future being pushed into darkness and crushed under the boots of the police. If we ask questions, the government, its IT Cell and the Godi media brand us anti-nationals. We refuse to be silenced and we refuse to tolerate this system of corruption and non-accountability because we follow the legacy of Shaheed Bhagat Singh."

As the movement spreads, the BJP-Sangh ecosystem has gone into overdrive to delegitimise and discredit it. The familiar script is being repeated once again. Protesters are branded "Pakistanis", "anti-nationals" and "foreign-funded agents", accused

of sabotaging Modi's Viksit Bharat vision and conspiring to create anarchy. Whenever the youth raise questions, those in power reach for the language of fear and division.

"Whose vikas are they talking about?" asked Danish Ali, Joint Secretary of JNUSU and AISA leader. "The only vikas taking place is that of the paper mafia and education thieves. The development we are seeing is only for Adani, Ambani and the corporates."

"Today, every examination is shadowed by uncertainty. Students spend years studying, families spend lakhs of rupees and many take loans to sustain coaching and education. Yet when the day of the examination arrives, students are left wondering whether their hard work will matter at all or whether another paper leak will render their efforts meaningless."

She added that a staggering 89 incidents of paper leaks have been reported over the past ten years. From JEE Main 2021, NEET-UG 2024, UGC-NET 2024 and several other examinations, the NTA has repeatedly demonstrated incompetence and utter disregard for students' education and hard work. Year after year, the saga of paper leaks continues across competitive examinations, but no serious action has been taken by the government. Instead, the corrupt and incompetent NTA continues to be shielded and provided political immunity.

On the evening of June 22, a candlelight vigil was held to pay homage to NEET aspirants who lost their lives to a corrupt education system. Initially, the police refused to allow candles to be brought inside the protest site, but the youth resisted the move and the police were forced to back off.

At least 93 NEET-linked student suicides have been recorded across India since 2021. This includes at least 14 student

deaths reported in the first half of 2026, with a sharp spike during the stressful period following the examination's cancellation and subsequent re-examination.

Since the NEET paper leak controversy erupted in May, more than 12 NEET aspirants have taken their lives. The NEET examination itself has been at the centre of controversy, including its centralised structure, extreme seat scarcity, commercialised coaching culture, and the immense anxiety and psychological distress it has generated among aspirants and their parents.

This is not the first time the police have attempted every possible tactic to stop the movement. On the first day of the protest, the police resorted to multiple measures including threats of large-scale deployment, blowing whistles continuously in an attempt to disrupt the protest, restricting access to water, electricity and toilets. After failing to suppress the protest, the police eventually withdrew these aggressive manoeuvres.

Many have asked why the police retreated when they are otherwise notorious for wielding lathis and tear gas even against small acts of dissent. According to sources, this was because the movement, which emerged from social media and channelled the growing anger among the youth, proved difficult to predict even for the authorities and intelligence agencies, who were uncertain about the consequences of any heavy-handed crackdown.

The protest is also witnessing an increasing intersection with struggles of different sections of society. Workers' struggles, issues concerning transgender communities and several other people's movements are finding expression from the stage at Jantar Mantar.

As Neha says, every struggle of oppressed and suffering people is interconnected, and such solidarity

strengthens the larger cause of justice.

On June 21, comrades from the All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICTTU) were welcomed on stage. Comrade Sucheta De, AICTTU leader and former JNUSU President, extended solidarity to the ongoing Jantar Mantar protest demanding the resignation of Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan over repeated examination leaks and the betrayal of India's youth.

Referring to the recent struggles of workers in Manesar and Noida, she stressed that students and workers are confronting the same system of exploitation and unaccountability. While workers are forced to fight for wages and dignity, students are compelled to fight for education and a future free from corruption.

Comrades Urmila, Shyam Kishore and other workers joined in solidarity with the students' demands and shared the experiences of workers' struggles.

"Indefinite protest will continue until Dharmendra Pradhan is shown the door," declared AISA leader Anjali. She added that this is the same country where farmers fought unitedly against pro-corporate farm laws and compelled the government to withdraw them. "The need of the hour is that all struggling people - workers, farmers, students, teachers, Muslims, women and all marginalised sections of society - unite and resist the onslaught on their lives, rights and livelihoods."

Today at Jantar Mantar, this idea of unity among struggling people is taking concrete shape, block by block, slogan by slogan and struggle by struggle. As the encampment enters another day, the message from the youth remains unchanged and uncompromising: not an inch back, Dharmendra Pradhan must go. ■

The First Month of West Bengal's First BJP Government

It has been around one month since a BJP government was sworn in for the first time in West Bengal. This one month has taught the people of West Bengal much more about the BJP than they could ever learn watching the party rule in other states or at the Centre. The BJP came to power championing the slogan of 'change'. Its election campaign promised to end 'fear' and inspire 'trust' in public life. But for millions of people in West Bengal, the experience of the first month under BJP rule in West Bengal has been all about fear and insecurity.

For many who lost their votes in SIR, the ordeal has just begun. Hundreds are being herded into detention camps rechristened as 'holding centres'. Children, women, old and ailing people are being forcibly pushed across the India-Bangladesh border only to be pushed back by the Bangladesh border forces. From voteless, they have now become stateless. Many others who may not yet have come close to this line of detention and deportation, have started losing a whole range of rights and cash transfer benefits.

Across the state, bulldozers are on the rampage, demolishing houses and shops, evicting millions of people from their homes and livelihoods. Without any rehabilitation, often without any notice, bulldozers are arriving at night to uproot and dislocate people and destroy livelihoods. In station after station, colony after colony, this is now the harsh reality for the urban poor and toiling masses in the greater Kolkata region. Life has become utterly uncertain and insecure for tens of thousands of

railway hawkers, street vendors, small shopkeepers.

At one single stroke, OBC reservation in the state has been reduced from 17 to 7 percent. Every caste certificate issued since 2011 is now subject to mandatory recertification. Indigenous people too are being sought to be divided on the basis of religion. The BJP is now bent upon turning the constitutional right to reservation that belonged to all socially and educationally backward groups into an exclusive Hindu right.

The pain is certainly not being felt by all. There are many who are ready to justify and welcome this pain being inflicted on the socially and economically deprived as a necessary price for 'progress' or 'development'. The dominant media is busy manufacturing consent for 'bulldozer raj'. Many who are not yet cheering for the rampaging bulldozer as the new symbol of governance are willing to wait and watch. Meanwhile, the BJP washing machine is working overtime. Ousted from power, the TMC establishment is now clearly vulnerable to the BJP's tried and tested 'carrot and stick' strategy and the 'Operation Lotus' dynamics. From panchayat and municipality level representatives to MLAs and MPs, the swelling numbers of TMC turncoats now appear to have reduced the official TMC to a minority.

With the TMC turncoats making a beeline for the BJP, a Congress-TMC rapprochement is now very much visible and understandable. It, of course, remains to be seen if and how the TMC-Congress bloc reinvents itself as an opposition on the ground. The imperative before

the Left in West Bengal is to get its act together as the tribune of the crisis-ridden toiling people of the state at this critical juncture. The energy witnessed in the anti-eviction resistance campaign of the united Left is quite encouraging. The initiative unleashed by activists of the CPI(ML) and civil society groups and human rights organisations to reach out to the disenfranchised people of West Bengal is another important step. As the BJP government unleashes its divisive and deceptive agenda and bares its repressive fangs, the Left must be there on the ground with the people at every step.

The unprecedented scale of the BJP's victory in West Bengal is a result of several factors. There are unmistakable elements of electoral

CPI(ML) Liberation has filed a Public Interest Litigation in the Calcutta High Court on June 19 challenging the unconstitutional declaration of re-verification of all caste certificates issued to Dalits, Adivasis and OBCs in Bengal over the last fifteen years [WPA(P)/304/2026].

The petitioners in this case, on behalf of the Party, are State Secretary Abhijit Majumdar and State Committee member Malay Tewari. The party has stated that having completed the "SIR to snatch voting rights," the BJP government is now launching an "SIR to snatch reservation rights."

Instead of properly implementing the existing process of scrutinising fake certificates and conducting vigilance, genuine SC-ST citizens are being subjected to interrogation and harassment.

In effect, the BJP-RSS wants to undermine the identity of the entire young generation of the Dalit-Adivasi-Bahujan community, and the constitutional rights resting upon that identity.

Linking inclusion or exclusion of a name in the SIR as a condition for caste certificate verification is also completely illegal.

- CPI(ML), WB State Committee

fraud along the entire election process right from the preparation of electoral roll to the counting of votes and declaration of results. But more ominous is the BJP's actual growth on the ground and its ability to channelise the anger of the people against the TMC misrule towards the Sangh brigade's Hindutva agenda. We remember how in the wake of the Gujarat carnage of 2002, Narendra Modi turned Gujarat elections into an anti-Pakistan vote. The BJP in Assam, Tripura and West Bengal is working on a similar strategy using Bangladesh, particularly the growing influence of Jamaat-e-Islami in Bangladesh politics, as a constant target of attack.

The challenge before the Left and democratic forces of West Bengal is to defeat this communal design of the BJP. The answer lies in upholding the class interests that combine Hindus and Muslims, advancing the agenda of social justice that concerns every deprived and marginalised group, strengthening the inclusive culture that has sustained and empowered generations in the region since the colonial period. The BJP's attempt to turn the festive occasion of Eid into a theatre of hate and conflict failed quite spectacularly when the predominantly Hindu cattle-traders and dairy farmers of West Bengal rose against the cattle slaughter ban. The syncretic culture of West Bengal has been rooted in close ties of economic interdependence and social coexistence that defied every attempt to divide the people on communal lines. In the early years after partition, the Left in West Bengal grew through the struggles for agrarian reforms, refugee rehabilitation, equitable education, and dignity and security for the oppressed and the marginalised. Electoral victories and a prolonged stint in power came riding on this basic identity and strength of the communist movement. Today once again communists will have to fight back by summoning this basic strength and glorious legacy. ■

CPIML MP Demands Immediate Halt to Railway Eviction Drives against Hawkers in West Bengal

CPI(ML) Liberation Lok Sabha MP from Arrah and Member of the Standing Committee on Railways, Sudama Prasad, has written to Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw strongly opposing the indiscriminate eviction of railway hawkers from platforms and station premises across West Bengal without any rehabilitation. In his letter dated June 4, Sudama Prasad registered strong protest and deep concern on behalf of concerned citizens, organisations, unions and representatives of railway hawkers and informal workers of West Bengal.

He said that for decades, thousands of small hawkers, tea sellers, book vendors, food vendors and petty traders have earned their livelihood in and around railway stations through honest labour. These workers, he said, are an integral part of the railway ecosystem and provide affordable services to lakhs of passengers every day.

Sudama Prasad pointed out that many of these hawkers come from economically vulnerable sections, including Scheduled Castes, minorities, women-headed families and migrant workers, and their families are entirely dependent on these occupations for survival.

The CPI(ML) MP said the ongoing eviction drive is being carried out in an arbitrary and inhuman manner, without any rehabilitation programme, alternative vending arrangement, social security protection or meaningful consultation with the affected families. Such action, he said, is pushing thousands of people towards starvation and unemployment.

He expressed serious concern that while poor traditional hawkers are being removed in the name of "modernisation" and "beautification", railway station premises are increasingly being handed over to large commercial chains and corporate retail outlets such as Big Bazaar, Spencer's, Kalyan Jewellers and Pizza Hut.

In his letter to the Railway Minister, Sudama Prasad demanded an immediate halt to all eviction drives against railway hawkers in West Bengal until a transparent and humane rehabilitation policy is formulated. He also demanded recognition of the livelihood rights of traditional railway hawkers and vendors through formal certification.

The letter further called for a comprehensive rehabilitation package, including alternative vending zones, licensing mechanisms, financial assistance and social security measures. Sudama Prasad also demanded the constitution of a consultative committee comprising representatives of hawkers' organisations, trade unions and civil society groups to devise a fair and inclusive policy. He also underlined that the constitutional right to livelihood guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution must be protected.

Sudama Prasad urged the Railway Minister to intervene immediately and ensure that Indian Railways adopts a humane, democratic and socially responsible approach. He said the Railways must not deepen inequality and economic distress among the poor, and called upon the Ministry to take urgent corrective measures and initiate dialogue with all affected stakeholders. ■

The Sangh Brigade's Myth-Making Campaign around Shyamaprasad Mookherjee

▲ SHUBHAM SHARMA

Swapan Dasgupta's latest application of his polemical skills appeared in the English-language newspaper *The Telegraph*. In his piece "Myth Punctured," he makes three major arguments. First, a composite Bengali culture is a myth; the intelligentsia, including both the bhadralok and the Left, are chiefly responsible for creating and maintaining this myth; Shyama Prasad Mookherjee, the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, is the real hero of what is today West Bengal.

Of the three, the third point can be dismissed with some historical heavy lifting. Judgments of political personalities can be made by how they were seen and treated by their far more prominent contemporaries. Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whom Mahatma Gandhi, despite their political differences, called the 'prince among patriots', not only despised Shyama Prasad Mookherjee but also threatened to use 'force' against him and his party, the Hindu Mahasabha, in Bengal. As a matter of fact, during the Calcutta Municipal Corporation elections, Balraj Madhok records in his biography of Shyama Prasad, "Subhas Bose's men would break up all Mahasabha meetings and beat up its candidates. As a result, the Mahasabha candidates got so terrified and demoralised that they would not hold any meetings at all." Madhok and the current servitors of Hindutva claim that Subhas Bose and Shyama Prasad

had developed mutual respect for each other. This is far removed from the truth. Netaji, in his book *The Indian Struggle*, clearly wrote against the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League, calling them both communal organisations. He wrote: "In accordance with the time-worn policy of *divide et impera* (divide and rule), the (British) Government greatly encourage these parties — just to spite the Indian Nationalist Congress and try to weaken its influence." He also wrote: "The Hindu Mahasabha, like its Moslem counterpart, consisted not only of erstwhile Nationalists, but also of a large number of men who were afraid of participating in a political movement and wanted a safer platform for themselves."

Subhas Bose was absolutely spot on. In December 1939, when the Hindu Mahasabha was officially launched in Calcutta, a jubilant Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, wrote to London:

Gradually emerging, and with considerable vigour, as something approaching a political force. (Hindu Mahasabha) have just held a monster-meeting here from which there has emerged a series of resolutions highly communal in character and condemnatory of the Congress...I will not be surprised, things being as they are, if the Mahasabha were to succeed in stealing a certain amount of Congress thunder.

In the 4 May 1940 weekly *Forward Bloc* that Subhas Bose edited, he again referred to the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League as 'communal organisations' and added that 'these communal organisations have become more communal than before.' Through archival sleuthing of the *Anandabazar Patrika*, Snigdhendu Bhattacharya, in his book *Mission Bengal: A Saffron Experiment*, has shown that exactly eight days later, on 12 May 1940, Subhas Bose again lashed out at the Hindu Mahasabha at a public gathering in Durga Maidan, Jhargram. The *Anandabazar Patrika* quoted Subhas Bose's speech in their 14 May 1940 issue as:

Hindu Mahasabha has sent out trident-carrying monks begging for votes. Hindus bow whenever they see the trident and the saffron clothes. Hindu Mahasabha has emerged in the political scene, using religion to pollute it. Remove these traitors from the national life. No one should listen to them...No lie is greater than saying Hindus and Muslims have different interests. Floods, famines, and epidemics spare none.

Shyama Prasad's political career and nationalist credentials were so distinguished that the British never felt the need to imprison him. The idea of making him the new hero of West Bengal is also churlish. Before his death in 1953, during the 1951-52 assembly elections, the Bhartiya Jan Sangh (the new front of the Hindu right, established on 21 October 1951 under the leadership of Shyama Prasad) lost handsomely. The post-partition, predominantly Hindu population of West Bengal overwhelmingly rejected the communal Jan Sangh and its leader, Shyama Prasad. In Bengal, the Jan Sangh won only nine seats. During the 1962 assembly elections, a bigger disaster struck the Jan Sangh. All twenty-five of

its candidates lost their deposits. On the other hand, the Communist Party of India increased its vote share in the state from 10.76% in 1952 to 17.81% in 1957, and to 24.96% in 1962.

In choosing their heroes, the Bengalis will never be swayed by Dasgupta's myth-making about Shyama Prasad. The Andaman Cellular Jail is adorned with the names of many anti-imperialist Bengalis who were imprisoned there. They were the real heroes of Bengal, alongside the enduring legacy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, whose very name made the imperialists tremble.

Dasgupta's point about the myth of Bengali syncretism is all the more disappointing. Despite a PhD in history from Oxford, Dasgupta has shown scant regard for the fact that nations, communities, ethnicities, and other social groupings evolve over long periods. In their making, the idea of perpetual enemies and perpetual friends is a matter of conscious choice. Politics also plays a major role in shaping national imaginations. Before American independence, the colonists self-identified as 'New Englanders', Virginians, Pennsylvanians, etc. After independence from Britain, an 'American' identity was forged. The English began identifying themselves as 'British' after the 1707 Union. The vast imperial possessions also reinforced this new self-identification. In India, national identity emerged from the struggle against the British. The secularists imagined a composite, plural idea of 'Indianness' in which all communities co-existed, whereas the jaundiced eye of the communalists saw eternal strife and mutual enmity among religious communities. The latter group, the communalists, were largely pro-imperialist, whereas the former struggled to free India from British rule. In Bengal too,

both visions clashed. On the one hand, Bankim, in *Anandmath*, wanted Bengali Hindus to fight Muslims and cooperate with the British; on the other, Rabindranath saw the need for Hindu-Muslim dialogue. In his foreword to Maulvi Abdul Karim's book (*A Simple Guide to Islam's Contribution to Science and Civilisation*) in 1935, Tagore wrote why he felt the need to open a department of Islamic Culture at his university, Visva-Bharati:

One of the most potent sources of Hindu-Muslim conflict is our scant knowledge of each other. We live side by side and yet very often our worlds are entirely different. Such mental aloofness has done immense mischief in the past and forebodes an evil future. It is only through sympathetic understanding of each other's culture and social customs and conventions that we can create an atmosphere of peace and goodwill. With this end in view, I started a department of Islamic Culture in Visva-Bharati a few years ago.

Subhas Bose also remained a strong proponent of Hindu-Muslim syncretism. Coming from a family of Kayasthas, who, unlike the sacerdotal elites, the Brahmins, served as the literati of royal courts in Bengal, Bose understood Indian history not as a rule of one religion suppressing others, but as a composite blend of all religions. It was a "misnomer," Subhas Bose later wrote in his unfinished autobiography, "to talk of Muslim rule when describing the political order in India prior to the advent of the British," as "the administration was run by Hindus and Muslims together...further, the consolidation of the Moghul Empire in India was affected with the help of Hindu commanders-in-chief. The Commander-in-Chief of Nawab Sirajudowla, whom the

British fought at Plassey in 1757 and defeated, was a Hindu." Subhas Bose's own ancestors served the pre-Mughal Muslim sultans in Bengal. One of his ancestors, Mahipathi, was given the title Subuddhi Khan (Subuddhi meaning good counsel) by the Sultan. Mahipathi's grandson, Gopinath Bose, became a minister in charge of finance and the navy during the rule of Sultan Hussain Shah (1493-1519) and acquired the title of Purandar Khan.

Buoyed by the BJP's victory, Dasgupta is trying to carve out a new self-image for Bengal, one of a constant war between Hindus and Muslims throughout history. This myth is being solidified by the new government's decision to celebrate 20 June as West Bengal Day. On 20 June, the Bengal Legislative Assembly voted to partition Bengal into two. The western flank became West Bengal, the eastern, East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). On the face of it, there is no reason to feel joyful about the passage of the bill to divide the province and the country. India does not celebrate its independence on 18 July 1947, the day the Indian Independence Act was passed. It is even more nonsensical to give Shyama Prasad credit for the 20 June 1947 vote. More than 90% of the Hindu members of the Bengal Assembly were Congressmen. The partition of Bengal was a fait accompli that no one at the time could resist. Even Sarat Chandra Bose's efforts for a unified, independent and sovereign Bengal had no serious takers, including the Forward Bloc.

Dasgupta's article was an attempt at myth-making. It is erroneously titled 'Myth Punctured'. I am sure that the people of Bengal will reject Dasgupta's and his government's designs.

(The author is an MPhil World History, University of Cambridge, UK.) ■

The Stadium of Struggle: World Cup and the Politics of Football

▲ AKASH BHATTACHARYA



global football's restructuring by capital, its effects on the shape and form of the beautiful game, and why football must remain a site of resistance despite such corporate dominance.

Football's links with capital have developed hand in hand with the larger shifts in the global economy. The 1960s witnessed the assertion of newly independent Asian and African countries in the world of football. Administrators allied with corporations to expand the reach of the game, but also paved the way for global businesses to profit from the game's wide appeal; both at one and the same time.

FIFA, UEFA and the Money Game

In 1974, the Brazilian businessman and sports administrator Joao Havelange launched a successful bid for the FIFA Presidency, with the promise of accommodating Asian and African interests and taking the game to new frontiers. Coca Cola and Adidas emerged as willing sponsors of Havelange's promise of an expanded 24-team World Cup and new tournaments like the FIFA Youth World Cup.

The first 24 team World Cup was held in 1982, featuring 34 official sponsors, marking the tournament's first organized corporate sponsorship program. Coca-Cola served as the cornerstone of the sponsorship package, while Adidas supplied the official match ball, the Tango España. By the 1986 World Cup held in Mexico, advertisement and television rights had replaced the returns from ticket sales as the mainstay of FIFA's revenues.

The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) and the big European clubs were the next to capitalize on the commercial potential of football and the aspirations of the post-colonial world. Up until 1992, UEFA's European Cup was a competition between the champions of the

The 2026 FIFA World Cup is heavily defined by political controversies, driven by U.S. immigration policies under President Donald Trump, the geopolitical tension between the United States and Iran, and the escalation of corporate control over the beautiful game.

Football's working-class roots, emotional appeal and widespread popularity made it a site of social and political struggle from its inception. The tussle became vastly unequal with the entry of corporations, which allied with powerful states to amplify their profits at the cost of the fans and, as we shall suggest, the game itself. In the process, they

have corporate-washed crimes of politicians and dictators.

The 2026 tournament has faced widespread criticism for visa denials affecting fans, officials, and even a designated referee, as well as accusations of using the event for political posturing by Trump. All of this is being corporate-washed by sponsors, who have priced fans out of the game through astronomically high prices for ticket, food, water, parking and every other thing that can be charged.

The corporate dominance that we see today is the culmination of a long process. In this article we examine the long history of

European domestic leagues. In 1992, UEFA rebranded the European Cup as the UEFA Champions League, with major changes in revenue arrangements.

In the rebranded competition, the participating clubs ceded the broadcasting rights of their matches to UEFA, which in turn arranged for centralized broadcasting through its new media partner Team Marketing AG. In return, the clubs received fixed payments for participation which increased with qualification for each successive stage of the competition.

The new media partner, through aggressive and innovative marketing, maximized the revenues from the competition, vastly improving the prize money, which made participation in the Champions League a profitable affair for the clubs. However instead of distributing the profits equitably, UEFA allowed the leading European clubs to absorb a large share of the profits by granting a larger percentage of the Champions League spots to the national leagues of Spain, Italy, England, and Germany.

Earlier, each club had to win their domestic league in the previous season in order to gain entry into the European Cup for the next season. By permitting multiple entries from the big leagues, UEFA virtually guaranteed the participation of big clubs such as AC Milan of Italy, Real Madrid and FC Barcelona of Spain, Manchester United of England and Bayern Munich of Germany. With the huge prize money on offer, they could buy the best playing and coaching talents of the world, regularly finish in the top end of their domestic leagues and repeatedly compete in the Champions League, emerging as faces of the competition.

Europe Shines, Others Decline

The huge influx of money raised the game's profile and improved the lives of many working-class footballers. At the same time, the concentration of resources and talent in a few top European clubs had a detrimental effect on the game in other parts of the world. It relegated localized organic football traditions to global football's periphery, which eventually altered the character of international football. The decline of the much-vaunted Brazilian tradition is a case in point.

The Brazilian 'Joga bonito' tradition appears to have emerged towards the middle of the twentieth century, following the national team's debacle in the 1950 World Cup. Brazilian footballers, often coming from impoverished working-class families barely had the strength to play hard-tackling football like the Europeans. So, they became tricksters – the 'malandro' of Brazilian folklore – who broke rules without being caught. Through shrewd body movements, clever dribbling, back-heel passes and bicycle kicks, Brazilians dazzled their way to victory in the World Cups of 1958, 1962 and 1970.

Brazil won the World Cup again in 1994, but this time they played what many of their countrymen called 'bureaucratic football' – more muscular and tactical than artistic and freestyle. There have been sparks and flashes since then, but the 'Brazil of old' is now a largely nostalgic term in football. This relation between this decline and the power shift towards Europe since the 1980s is unmistakable.

The 1982 World Cup was the last time Brazil truly displayed the art of the 'malandragem'. At this point, only one of the 22 players in the squad played his club football in Europe. In comparison, the star

players in the next generation – Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho, Kaka, and Neymar – all departed for Europe in their early twenties. While these star players retained key elements of the Brazilian style, Brazilian players of the next generation completely integrated themselves into the playing styles and cultures of European clubs, hardly displaying classical Brazilian flare.

Notably, after 1994, the only time Brazil won the World Cup was in 2002. That team featured all-time great talents such as Ronaldo, Rivaldo, Ronaldinho and Roberto Carlos. Since then, Brazil has been knocked out by arguably the first tough European team they faced. Other Latin American teams such as Argentina dazzle on the international stage only when they have exceptional players such as Lionel Messi.

Effects of the 'Leg Drain'

The former World Bank economist Branco Milanovic argues that when players from different continents play together for the European clubs, poor countries can capture some of their 'leg drain' and harness the forces of efficiency unleashed by globalization for their benefit. This hardly holds true for Latin American teams. It was the vibrant football traditions of Latin America that had historically enabled them to beat Europeans with ease; these now stand drastically weakened by football's Euro-centrism.

The argument about turning the 'leg drain' upside down does not quite hold true for Asia and Africa either. On the one hand, African teams, with many of their players based in European clubs, have managed to trouble European and Latin American teams in international tournaments since the 1990 FIFA World Cup. Memorably, Senegal, with 20 out

of 22 squad members based at French clubs, beat France 1-0 in the opening match of the 2002 World Cup. This defeat eventually sent France, the defending champions, out of the World Cup after the first round.

On the other hand, doubts arise as to whether Africa has really joined the party. African teams reached the quarter final on only two other occasions since 1990 (when Cameroon reached the quarter final) – Senegal in 2002, and Ghana in 2010. Only once in all these years has an African team (Morocco) reached a semi-final; it happened as late as 2022. This is meagre return for decades of 'leg drain'. As for Asia, South Korea remains the only Asian team to reach the World Cup's last eight (in 2002, when they were the hosts).

In order to offset the 'leg drain', FIFA and the regional football associations have promoted the use of football for 'social development'. In 2007, FIFA and the football governing bodies of North, Central and Latin America signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) to jointly invest in projects for the development of life skills among youth, violence prevention and the improvement of education and employment opportunities.

Such efforts, though valuable in themselves, tend to whitewash the role of FIFA and the big European clubs in unjust practices such as child labour. While FIFA and the International Labor Organization (ILO) have vowed to wave a 'red card to child labour', Nike and Adidas – key football sponsors – are widely reported to indulge in such practices.

While there have been scattered efforts to constitute alternative football cultures away from mainstream football, episodes of dissent in the top tier of football against the state-corporate nexus are rare. Occasional statements against racism from a Gary Lineker or an Ian Wright, or pro-Palestine statements from Pep Guradiola, are rare instances when leading football figures speak out. These episodes give us a glimpse of what might be, if footballers were to exercise their power for progressive, democratic causes. ■

Uttar Pradesh: A Reign of Riots and Repression

▲ LAL BAHADUR SINGH

With less than a year to go before the Uttar Pradesh Assembly elections, the state has, amid relentless propaganda by the godi media, emerged as a centre of riots, repression, and authoritarian governance. A win for BJP in the 2027 elections will not only compensate for the decisive loss of 2024, but will give it a much needed confidence towards 2029. In the meantime it is busy breaking other parties at national level to acquire a required majority to amend the constitution. Delimitation and One Nation One Election are on its agenda which it could not do in absence of such a majority.

Uttar Pradesh, the largest state, brought the BJP down to 240 in the last Parliamentary elections – 32 seats less than simple majority. The BJP will use its victory in the forthcoming UP assembly to legitimise all its misdeeds, and to brutally crush whatever is left of democracy in our country. On the other hand, a BJP defeat in UP will enthuse the opposition to defeat it in 2029 general elections too.

Today the Yogi government is facing multiple challenges. In the assembly election it will not only be answerable for its own misdeeds but also for the disastrous policies of the Modi government. All round failures of the Modi government regarding price rise, unemployment, overall economy, foreign policy etc. have become crystal clear.

Obviously BJP is banking on its communal agenda as it has nothing to showcase as its achievement in the elections. Muslims are being targeted and persecuted, even petty quarrels involving Muslim community members are being blown into full fledged communal clashes. Yogi's bantoge to katoge type hate speeches continue. Recently on the occasion of Eid Yogi, while warning Muslims not to perform Namaz on roads, said otherwise we know other methods to stop you. Such statements are given to frighten and threaten Muslims and thus consolidate Hindu majority. Such statements by a person holding the post of constitutional head of a state are opposed to the values of democracy and secularism. People like Akhil Bharatiya Sant Parishad chief Yati Narsinghanand often spew communal venom but never any strict action is taken against them.

It is worth remembering that in the 2014 victory of Modi, Muzaffarnagar riots of 2013 played a crucial role. Then it was the SP government in UP. Around one hundred people were killed and nearly one lakh were displaced from their homes. The Akhilesh Yadav government could not efficiently stop the riots which resulted in communal

polarisation all over the state. Combined with other factors BJP succeeded in securing 72 out of 80 seats. It seems once again BJP is trying for similar polarisation to gain a majority in the centre on its own. Tension around the Shahi Mosque in Sambhal continues, and in the name of Krishna Janm Bhumi communal build up is going on in Mathura. The western UP is most vulnerable in this respect as there is a sizable Muslim population in many districts.

In eastern UP many houses of the poor were demolished. On opposing such bulldozer actions many activists including CPIML state secretary Sudhakar Yadav had to face arrests.

The unorganised workers' struggle for wage hike in Noida and other places was brutally crushed by the government. Many workers and activists are put in jail. NSA was invoked against journalist Satyam Verma and Akriti Chaudhary, a student of Delhi University. Though under the pressure of the agitation, the Yogi government was forced to increase the minimum wages of the workers. In the meantime students and youth are on streets agitating against paper leaks and other irregularities. In Allahabad, a major centre of competitive exams, students are sent to jails and repression is launched against coaching centres.

All sections of the people are agitating for their bread and butter issues, braving Yogi's bulldozer which is hell bent on suppressing all democratic aspirations. If the opposition succeeds in leading sustained mass struggles on issues that directly affect people's lives, such as unemployment, inflation, agrarian distress, education, and public services - it could alter the political balance in Uttar Pradesh and pose a serious challenge to the BJP in the 2027 Assembly elections. ■

Workers Convention: Raise Wages, Stop Repression



“Workers have no other option but to unite and agitate, otherwise we will be made into slaves,” said Comrade Vivek, a 24-year-old worker who was recently released on bail after being put behind bars for merely protesting for minimum wages in Manesar. He was addressing the All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AICCTU)-organised "Raise Wages, Stop Repression" convention at Surjeet Bhawan, New Delhi, on June 12.

“Whatever repression is unleashed upon us will not break our spirit. We will continue to resist the attempts to impose this modern slavery on the workers,” declared Vivek.

The one-day convention witnessed struggling workers, teachers, students, lawyers, trade unionists and democratic activists uniting in solidarity with the ongoing workers' struggles in Noida, Manesar, Panipat, Surat and other industrial centres.

The convention began by saluting the resolve of the struggling workers and felicitating comrades Vivek and Rajkumar, who were recently released on bail by a court in Gurugram. The entire hall reverberated with the slogans of "Inquilab Zindabad", saluting the indomitable spirit of the struggling workers and declaring: Increase the Wages, No to Repression.

Sucheta De of AICCTU, welcoming workers and activists from across various democratic circles, said that since the Modi government came to power, there has been a complete derogation of workers' rights, with a slew of new laws such as the labour codes being brought in to turn workers into modern slaves and take away their right to strike. Despite all the repression and brutality unleashed by the state-corporate nexus, the struggles of workers from Manesar to Noida, Guwahati to Ahmedabad, have shown that the working class cannot be silenced.

From April 13 to 15, Manesar and Noida in the Delhi-NCR region witnessed a massive workers' uprising protesting against the pittance given to workers in the name of wages, while the state governments turned a blind eye to the large-scale exploitation of workers. In Haryana, minimum wages were last revised in 2015, and when wages were revised on April 1, 2026, the increase was negligible, disregarding the demands of unions that had called for a substantial hike in view of soaring inflation and the rising cost of living.

"We were being given a pittance and even when minimum wages were increased, we were not paid the revised wages. When we protested for the revised minimum wages, we were branded as anti-nationals and put behind bars," said Raj Kumar, who along with Vivek spent around one and a half months in jail.

Most of the protesting workers in these regions are contract workers across key sectors such as energy, automobiles, garments and associated industries, where large production units employ thousands. They are deprived even of statutory minimum wages, which themselves are insufficient to meet basic monthly expenses given the rise in prices of essential commodities and inflation. Working conditions remain exploitative and degrading, with 12-hour shifts often without breaks and workers required to remain standing throughout. Legally mandated provisions such as double wages for overtime and weekly holidays are frequently denied. In cases of workplace injury or illness, workers often bear medical expenses themselves. A significant issue raised by women workers in Noida concerns sexual harassment and the absence of effective internal complaints mechanisms.

"Red Salute to all the struggling workers," declared Rajiv Dimri, General Secretary of AICCTU, saluting the determination and courage of the working class. "They were merely protesting for bread and what the BJP government gave them was batons, tear gas and jail. This system of corporate-fascist nexus must be brought to an end," he added.

Rajiv Dimri further said that amid the working-class upsurge across the country, the Central Trade Unions and Samyukt Kisan Morcha have stood unitedly with the workers and will continue to strengthen the movement of the toiling masses.

On the call of AICCTU, an All India Protest Day was observed on April 17, 2026, against the brutal repression faced by workers in Noida, Manesar, Faridabad, Ghaziabad and across the Delhi-NCR region while protesting against starvation-level wages.

AICCTU has also submitted a demand letter calling for raising minimum wages to at least Rs. 42,000, with calculations based on rising inflation, cost of living and other factors that must be taken into consideration while determining minimum wages.

Comrade Rakhi, a veteran trade union activist, said that while the Indian government projects the country as becoming a trillion-dollar economy, workers in the Delhi region face repression for merely demanding wages. She said it was alarming that more than 1,100 workers had been arrested under various laws, including charges of attempt to murder and even the draconian National Security Act. The arrested workers, including women, were subjected to severe custodial torture. Even today, governments have not provided complete information regarding the number of workers arrested.

She added that workers have opened the battle lines with their resolve and determination, and the Central Trade Unions must strengthen this movement.

Advocate Kawalpreet Kaur, who is defending jailed activists in Noida, highlighted how contractualisation has become a tool to suppress workers' rights and prevent unionisation. The labour codes brought in by the Modi government are aimed at continuing this exploitation and turning workers into modern slaves of the corporates.

She condemned the criminalisation of workers and activists while employers violating labour laws continue to enjoy impunity. Kawalpreet also pointed out how

the government is imposing fresh cases against workers currently in jail to ensure that even if they obtain bail in one case, they continue to remain incarcerated in others, creating a vicious cycle of repression through the law. Even artists who went to express solidarity with workers were arrested and jailed.

The convention also witnessed solidarity from workers across various sectors, many of whom are fighting a dual battle for their basic labour rights while also trying to save homes built with their sweat from illegal bulldozer actions by the state.

Shabana, a domestic worker and resident of Dhobi Ghat, saluting the workers of Noida and Manesar, said that it is their toil and hard work that builds this country, yet they are denied basic rights and dignity.

"We may be poor, but we are fighters who struggle every day to survive. We are not disposable!" she added.

"My message is: Don't be afraid, fight!" said Shabana.

Ravi, General Secretary of the RML Hospital Union, which spearheaded a long struggle against the termination of contract workers at RML Hospital in Delhi, said that today workers are witnessing a complete derogation of their rights by a system comprising the government, employers and the Godi media.

"Our only solution to fight this system and win our rights is to unite and strengthen our voices," he said.

Sunil Valmiki, a security guard from JNU, said that recent developments have shown what workers' unity can achieve. He said that when the security contract in JNU changed, workers were forced to pay bribes to new contractors to retain their jobs, while the JNU administration remained complicit in this corrupt practice.

"We united with the students of JNU and resisted this corruption, and we won. This shows the power of working-class unity!" he said.

Expressing solidarity with the struggling workers, Purushottam Sharma of the All India Kisan Mahasabha (AIKM) said that today worker-farmer unity is challenging the corporate-government conspiracy to take away the rights of the toiling masses. The farmers' movement at Delhi's borders demonstrated that unity remains the strongest weapon in the face of coordinated repression.

Teachers and students also joined the convention, saluting the spirit of the working class. Professor Nandita Narain of Delhi University, expressing gratitude to the workers, spoke about DU students Yogesh Meena and Aakriti Choudhary, who were abducted by the police and jailed for standing with workers. She added that the draconian NSA is being used against activists and workers merely for raising demands for fair wages, while a narrative was peddled that the protests were part of a Pakistani conspiracy.

Danish Ali, Joint Secretary of JNUSU and AISA leader, said that the Modi regime has unleashed repression against workers, youth, women, farmers and every section of society that it seeks to turn into cogs in the wheel of exploitation, a machine run by Adani and Ambani. "We take inspiration from the workers and farmers and their movements. Today the youth are also on the streets against the corruption-ridden education system and paper leaks," she said.

"The struggles of the workers are the struggles of all," Danish declared, saluting the workers' movements.

The convention ended with a unanimous demand for a substantial increase in wages, an end to repression, withdrawal of all false cases against workers and activists, and the immediate release of all those jailed for participating in democratic workers' movements. ■

Coca-Cola Workers' United Struggle Forces Management to Accept Key Labour Rights



The three-day struggle of workers at SLMG Beverages, the Coca-Cola plant in Buxar, concluded on May 13 after positive talks with the company management in the presence of the District Labour Superintendent.

A delegation of the agitating workers was led by CPIML leader and former Dumraon MLA Dr. Ajit Kushwaha. The delegation held discussions with company officials under the mediation of the District Labour Superintendent, Buxar.

In the meeting, various demands of the workers were discussed seriously. Following the talks, the company management gave several important assurances. The management agreed that all workers will be paid the legally fixed minimum wages according to their qualification and nature of work. It also assured that if workers are made to work beyond eight hours, they will be paid double overtime wages as per rules.

The company management also agreed to provide salary slips to all workers. The slips will include full details of wages, EPF, ESI and other deductions. Timely payment of bonus and proper ESI facilities were also assured.

During the talks, it was also decided that no worker who participated in the movement will face victimisation, discrimination, harassment or removal from job. After the positive talks, the workers returned to work. The workers said that if the company management respects their rights and dignity, they too will contribute to the development of the company with hard work and honesty.

Dr. Ajit Kushwaha said that this positive development became possible because of the unity of workers and their democratic struggle. He appreciated the mediation of the District Labour Superintendent and expressed hope that all legal rights of workers will be ensured in future.

The struggle has shown once again that when workers unite and fight democratically, managements are compelled to recognise their rights. CPI(ML) and RYA have said that the legal rights, dignity and livelihood of workers cannot be left at the mercy of corporate managements, and that every violation of labour rights will be resisted through organised struggle. ■

Central Committee Resolutions



Resolutions Adopted by Central Committee of CPI(M) Liberation on 31 May 2026 in Chennai

1. Forcible Land Acquisitions and Corporate Land Grab

The Central Committee expresses strong opposition to the series of forcible land acquisitions and corporate land grab throughout the country under the Modi government. The present regime is undermining all legal safeguards won through powerful mass resistance in past decades including Social Impact Assessment, Gram Sabha consent, rehabilitation, resettlement, and fair compensation, environmental protections, etc and is attacking the livelihoods of farmers, agricultural workers, Adivasis, Dalits, and rural communities.

The proposed large-scale acquisition of thousands of acres of agricultural land in Bihar in the name of satellite cities, highways and real estate driven development must be opposed by the people to save the livelihoods of lakhs of people in the state.

The adivasi community in the Sijimali region of Odisha are resisting the proposed bauxite

mining project of Vedanta Limited. The state has deployed its machinery to suppress people's democratic resistance in order to facilitate corporate extraction of land, forests, and natural resources. Reports of police violence, arrests, intimidation, drone surveillance, fabricated consent manufacturing and the violation of protections guaranteed under the Forest Rights Act, PESA Act, and other constitutional safeguards represent a grave assault on the rights of Adivasi communities.

2. Irregularities, Corruption and Paper Leaks in Major Exams

The Central Committee raises serious concern over the repeated irregularities, corruption and paper leaks in major examinations, including NEET, CBSE Class XII results, SSC-GD, and CUET. These incidents have shattered the dreams of millions of students and exposed the government's failure to ensure a fair, transparent, and credible examination system. At a time of increasing privatisation of education, reducing opportunities of dignified employment, repeated paper leaks, exam result controversies, and administrative

lapses have created deep frustration among the youth. This house demands removal of Dharmendra Pradhan from the Education Ministry, scrapping of NTA, inquiry into the incidents of paper leak and strict action against those responsible. The future of Indian Youth can no longer be taken for granted.

3. SIR & the Erosion of the Constitutional Right to Vote

The Central Committee reiterates CPI(M)'s deep concern over the Election Commission's Special Intensive Revision (SIR) process, which has been used to remove large numbers of genuine voters from electoral rolls particularly targeting the poor, marginalized, migrant workers, Dalits, and majorly, Muslims. The BJP is increasingly relying on the manipulation of democratic institutions like the EC and electoral processes to ensure its electoral victory in face of growing disenchantment against the ruling regime. This systemic manipulation of the electoral rolls through SIR for electoral victory has first been observed in Bihar and now more aggressively in West Bengal. The way 'logical discrepancy' has been invented as a category to exclude millions of voters in West Bengal is truly unprecedented in independent India's history. The recent validation of the SIR process by the Supreme Court has further intensified concerns over the erosion of the constitutional right to vote of millions of Indians.

4. Military Aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran

The Central Committee strongly condemns the ongoing military aggression by the United States and Israel against Iran. We express our complete solidarity with Iran and its people in their

brave resistance against this imperialist attack. The restricted traffic through the Strait of Hormuz as a consequence of this war is not only threatening regional peace but has also triggered a global crude oil and energy crisis, severely affecting countries like India. It is the Indian people and its working class that is paying the price of US-Israel's military aggression. This House expresses deep concern over the Modi government's submissive foreign policy, which has repeatedly aligned itself with U.S.-Israeli strategic interests betraying India's long standing solidarity with Palestine and our historic relation with Iran. This House calls for an immediate end to US-Israel's military aggression against Iran, respect for Iran's sovereignty, and demands that the Indian government formulate foreign policy based on international justice, respect for sovereignty of countries and the interests of the Indian people.

5. Deepening Economic Crisis in India

The Central Committee expresses grave concern over the deepening economic crisis marked by a weakening rupee, rising inflation, growing pressure on foreign exchange reserves, increasing unemployment, and PM Modi's recent call to Indian people to follow austerity. This call is made in the wake of reduced supply of oil and gas due to ongoing war against Iran, to hide the already existing structural weaknesses in the Indian economy created by a regime of pro-corporate, anti-people economic policies, reckless privatization, and declining public investment. Now the burden of this crisis is being shifted onto ordinary citizens through rising prices, cuts in public expenditure. The CPIML demands a complete reversal of these corporate-driven policies, stronger public investment,

protection of livelihoods, measures to control inflation, and an economic framework that prioritizes increase in income of workers, farmers and the Indian masses.

6. Historic Upsurge of Workers

The Central Committee expresses its unflinching solidarity with the historic upsurge of workers across Manesar, Gurugram, Noida and other industrial centers against massive exploitation and complete decimation of all working class rights in the country. The workers are fighting against low wages, unsafe working conditions, denial of working class rights, and increasing state repression.

The ongoing movement has also highlighted the deepening cost-of-living crisis and the widening gap between workers' earnings and the basic requirements of a dignified life. Despite long working hours and harsh conditions, millions of workers continue to survive on wages that are grossly inadequate to meet essential needs.

This house strongly condemns the arrests, intimidation, lathi-charges, false criminal cases, and other forms of repression unleashed against protesting workers and activists. We note with serious concern that an attempt to murder case has been filed against 17 workers in Manesar. While four workers have been granted bail following the intervention of AICCTU and other trade unions and their legal efforts, the remaining workers are still in jail. Hundreds of workers and activists arrested in connection with these protests also remain incarcerated in many states.

We demand immediate release of all arrested workers and activists, withdrawal of all fabricated cases against them and an end

to police repression, intimidation, and criminalisation of workers' democratic struggles.

We also demand a statutory minimum wage of not less than Rs. 42,000 per month for all workers with regular revisions and protection of Trade Union rights and Right to Strike of the workers. Strict adherence to 8 hours of work with weekly day off must be implemented.

The Central Committee calls upon all democratic organisations, trade unions, intellectuals, students and citizens to extend active support to the workers' movement and demand an increase in wages and end of repression.

7. Institutionalisation of Discrimination Against Religious Minorities

The Central Committee expresses grave concern over the growing institutionalisation of discrimination against religious minorities through exclusionary laws, targeted state action, hate campaigns, economic boycotts, demolitions, vigilante violence and discriminatory administrative practices, creating conditions akin to an apartheid-like order that reduces sections of the population to second-class citizenship. Such majoritarian policies which undermine the constitutional principles of secularism, equality and equal citizenship, threaten democratic rights and social cohesion, and strengthen authoritarian rule must be opposed.

8. Erosion of the Independence and Impartiality of State Institutions

The Central Committee expresses grave concern over the growing erosion of the independence and impartiality of key institutions of the Indian State, including the

judiciary, bureaucracy, police and security forces, and central agencies such as the ED and CBI. The increasing alignment of these institutions with the communal-corporate agenda of the Sangh Parivar and big capital undermines constitutional governance, democratic rights and the rule of law.

9. Build Popular Resistance against the Ongoing Bulldozer Raj

The Central Committee calls upon the broader masses to build up popular resistance against the ongoing bulldozer raj model of governance run by the Modi government. The growing use of bulldozers for demolitions and forced evictions across India, have become a serious threat to the livelihoods, right to house and dignity of the poor and working people.

Recent developments in West Bengal, where large-scale eviction drives have targeted hawkers and street vendors who have provided essential services to commuters for decades, are part of a broader pattern visible across the country. The BJP approached the Assam election riding on islamophobic bulldozer demolition. In Bihar too, bulldozer demolition has displaced thousands across Darbhanga, Patna, Samastipur and other places. In Delhi bulldozer demolition has become a regular occurrence displacing slum dwellers without any rehabilitation. Similar demolition drives have taken place in Assam and several other states. Such actions are almost always carried out in violation of established legal safeguards, including the requirement of prior notice and rehabilitation before eviction.

The bulldozer raj represents not only an attack on homes and livelihoods but also an erosion of the rule of law. In many instances, demolitions have

been accompanied by communal narratives to divide the slum dwellers at the receiving end of the bulldozer.

This house also notes the brave resistance against the bulldozer governance from West Bengal to Bihar to Delhi and other places of the country. We demand an immediate halt to forced demolitions, rehabilitation before eviction, protection of livelihoods, and strict adherence to constitutional and legal safeguards.

10. BJP's Vendetta Politics and Misuse of State Institutions Against Opposition

The Central Committee strongly condemns the BJP's continuing politics of vendetta and misuse of state institutions against opposition leaders and parties. The recent ED raid on the residence of former Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, followed by the attack on TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee during his visit to the family of a victim of post-poll violence in West Bengal, reflects a dangerous pattern of intimidation aimed at silencing political opponents. Instead of addressing the pressing concerns of the people, the ruling establishment is weaponizing investigative agencies and encouraging a climate of political hostility to weaken democratic opposition. CPIML demands an end to partisan use of state institutions, an autonomous procedure of appointments and transparency in functioning where those close to power and involved in corruption and crime are not set scot free.

11. Adani's Capture of FCI Silo Contracts & Assault on Food Security

The Central Committee strongly condemns the removal of the 'Anti-Monopoly' clause to facilitate the handing over of Food Corporation of India (FCI) silo contracts to Adani Agri Logistics Ltd and Leap India Food & Logistics Pvt Ltd. The FCI had originally proposed an anti-monopoly clause to prevent any single company from dominating this strategically important project. However, the NITI Aayog and the Department of Economic Affairs reportedly compelled the removal of this clause in 2022. Subsequently, bidding resulted in these two companies securing contracts worth approximately ₹16,500 crore out of the programme's total value of ₹20,000 crore. Together, they now control 46.5 lakh metric tonnes (LMT) of the project's total 60 LMT storage capacity, amounting to 77.5% of the total planned capacity. The FCI was established on 1 January 1965 under the Food Corporations Act, 1964, enacted by Parliament to procure, store, transport and distribute foodgrains, support remunerative prices for farmers, and safeguard the country's food security and price stability. This backdoor privatisation and monopolisation of FCI's grain storage infrastructure constitutes a direct attack on India's food security and sovereignty and threatens to undermine the objectives and gains achieved through the Food Corporations Act, 1964. ■

Punjab: Left, Ambedkarite Forces Resolve to Resist SIR, Bulldozer Raj and ONOE



A Lok Sunwai Convention (People's Hearing Convention) was held at Ambedkar Bhavan, Ludhiana (Punjab), on June 7 against the arbitrary Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls and the growing attacks on democratic and constitutional rights under the Modi government.

The convention, marked by the presence of red and blue flags, brought together Left, Ambedkarite and other democratic forces fighting for social transformation. Despite the intense heat, political activists, workers, peasants, women and youth from Ludhiana and several districts of Punjab participated in large numbers.

The convention was presided over by Comrade Ruldu Singh Mansa and Comrade Rattan Singh Randhawa. It began with tributes to innocent people killed in imperialist, expansionist and racist wars and attacks across the world, as well as those who lost their lives in the Delhi hotel fire tragedy.

CPI(ML) Liberation General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya and Revolutionary Marxist Party of India (RMPI) General Secretary Comrade Mangat Ram Pasla were the main speakers.

Addressing the gathering,

Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya said that after Bihar and West Bengal, Punjab is likely to be the next state to face the attack of SIR. He said the experience of these states shows that the deletion of names from voter lists is the first step towards depriving citizens of their constitutional rights. He said that along with exclusion from electoral rolls, people are being denied ration and welfare benefits, while bulldozers are being used to demolish homes, shops and livelihood resources. In the most inhuman form of this policy, people are being pushed into detention camps, he said.

Calling upon the people of Punjab to remain alert and organised, Comrade Dipankar said the state's militant democratic traditions must be upheld to resist arbitrary SIR, bulldozer raj and deceptive slogans such as "One Nation, One Election". Punjab must stand firmly in defence of democracy, federalism, secularism and unity in diversity, he said.

He also criticised the Aam Aadmi Party government in Punjab for failing to fulfil its promises to peasants, workers and unemployed youth. He said the Modi government was trying to bring back pro-corporate farm laws through the back door, weaken the Food Corporation of

India, and open India's agriculture and retail sectors to corporate and imperialist interests.

RMPI General Secretary Comrade Mangat Ram Pasla said the Modi government, guided by the RSS agenda, is moving to destroy the Constitution, democracy, secularism and federalism in order to build a hardline Hindutva Rashtra. In the name of strengthening the Centre, it is trying to impose a communal, casteist and authoritarian political order, he said.

Comrade Pasla warned that the BJP's next major political target is Punjab. He said that in the coming Assembly elections, the BJP would use every method — money power, manipulation, repression and deceit — to capture power in the state. He said the Modi government is imposing foreign trade agreements with the United States and other imperialist countries that will damage Indian agriculture and retail trade and deepen neo-colonial dependence. He called for broad people's mobilisation against these destructive policies.

The convention declared that Left parties, Ambedkarite organisations and other like-minded democratic forces would work together with full strength to oppose arbitrary SIR, defend voting rights, resist bulldozer raj and build a strong pro-people political alternative in Punjab.

Eminent Ambedkarite thinker Advocate S.L. Viridi, RMPI State Secretary Comrade Pargat Singh Jamarai, senior CPI(ML) state leader Comrade Sukhdarshan Singh Natt, Samajik Sangharsh Party national president Harwinder Kaur and Bharat Mukti Morcha State General Secretary Dalwinder Singh also addressed the convention. The proceedings were conducted by Professor Jai Pal Singh, while Comrade Chittaranjan welcomed the leaders and participants. ■

Tragic Fire in Lucknow Coaching Centre

CPI(ML) has expressed deep grief over the tragic fire that broke out at a coaching centre in Aliganj, Lucknow, claiming the lives of at least 14 people, including 10 students. The party said the death toll could rise further and demanded a high-level and impartial probe into the incident.

In a statement issued on June 22, the Uttar Pradesh State Committee of CPI(ML) extended its condolences to the bereaved families and expressed solidarity with the parents, relatives, friends and well-wishers of those who lost their lives in the tragedy.

The party demanded that the government take full responsibility for ensuring proper treatment of all those injured in the fire and provide adequate compensation to the families of the deceased. It also called for strict legal action

against those found responsible for the incident.

CPI(ML) said that the loss of 14 lives in a coaching centre located in one of the busiest areas of the state capital raises serious questions about safety regulations, administrative oversight and emergency preparedness. It said an investigation must determine whether fire safety norms were being followed at the institution and whether the monitoring mechanisms of the authorities were functioning effectively.

The party further demanded an immediate fire safety audit of all coaching institutes, educational establishments and commercial buildings across the state. It stressed that stringent action must be taken against institutions violating safety norms to prevent such tragedies from recurring.

Calling the incident deeply

disturbing, CPI(ML) urged the state government to ensure accountability and take urgent steps to strengthen fire safety measures in educational institutions and public buildings. ■



Gas Leak Kills Women Workers in Tiruvallur Factory

CPI(ML) has expressed deep grief over the death of at least six women workers, most of them migrant labourers, following a suspected ammonia gas leak at a seafood processing factory in Tiruvallur district of Tamil Nadu on June 21.

In a statement, the party said the tragedy once again highlighted the alarming state of industrial safety in workplaces across the country. Referring to the recent gas leak incident at the Chennai Port complex, CPI(ML) noted that repeated industrial disasters point to a growing disregard for workers' lives and safety.

The party said that negligence on the part of employers

and regulatory authorities, combined with the weakening of labour protections and safety regulations, has contributed to the rise in workplace accidents and industrial disasters in recent months. It criticized the Central Government's labour codes and the dilution of safety norms, arguing that these measures have further undermined workers' rights and protections.

CPI(ML) extended its condolences to the families of the deceased workers and expressed solidarity with all those injured in the incident. The party demanded that the Tamil Nadu government ensure proper medical treatment for the injured, adequate compensation for the

families of the deceased, and all necessary support for those affected by the disaster.

The party also called for a thorough investigation into the incident, fixing responsibility on all those found accountable. It stressed that those responsible must face stringent action and warned against any compromise on workers' safety in the name of "ease of doing business."

CPI(ML) said that the recurring loss of workers' lives in industrial accidents underscores the urgent need for stricter enforcement of workplace safety standards, stronger labour protections, and greater accountability from both employers and government authorities. ■

CPIML Fact-Finding Team Visits Families of Dalit Youths Lynched in Nalanda



A fact-finding team of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation on June 23 visited the families of Shравan Paswan and Pintu Paswan, two Dalit youths who were lynched at the Jhunkiya Baba Temple in Rajgir during the Malmas Mela on June 15, and also met those affected by the recent repression unleashed on the movement demanding a Degree College in Nagarnausa.

The team comprised CPI(ML) Liberation Central Committee member and former MLA Gopal Ravidas, former MLA Manoj Manzil, Nalanda District Secretary Shrinivas Sharma, District Committee member Sunil Kumar, Kishore Sao and several other party leaders.

The delegation met the families of the deceased and gathered details of the incident. The team expressed its deepest condolences and assured the families of full support in their struggle for justice.

Family members told the delegation that Shравan Paswan and Pintu Paswan were asked their caste identity inside the Jhunkiya Baba Temple and were then brutally assaulted. Their hands and legs were tied before they were

mercilessly beaten. They stated that the temple priest, along with local criminals and goons, carried out the mob lynching. The families also informed the team that the main accused responsible for the killings has still not been arrested.

The CPI(ML) leaders condemned the lynching and demanded the immediate arrest of all those responsible. They called for a speedy trial and the strictest punishment for the perpetrators. The party also demanded compensation of ₹50 lakh each for the families of the deceased and government jobs for eligible family members.

The fact-finding team also took note of the recent repression against the democratic movement in Nagarnausa demanding the establishment of a Degree College and reiterated its commitment to stand with the people in their struggle for education, dignity and justice.

CPI(ML) Liberation stated that the lynching of Shравan Paswan and Pintu Paswan in Rajgir has exposed the continuing reality of caste oppression and violence in Bihar. The party demanded swift justice, accountability, and concrete action to ensure that such atrocities are not repeated. ■

Chennai Sanitation Workers Demonstrate for Regularisation Under New TVK Government

Hundreds of sanitation workers employed under the National Urban Livelihoods Mission held a massive demonstration near the Chennai District Collectorate on May 20, demanding that the newly formed Vijay government immediately regularise their jobs and fulfil their long-pending demands. The protest was organised under the banner of Uzhaippor Urimai Iyakkam, affiliated to AICCTU-LTUC.

A workers' delegation met Greater Chennai Corporation Commissioner G.S. Sameeran and Minister Aadhav Arjuna and placed the demands before them. The officials assured that the issues would be considered, but the workers made it clear that they will not accept empty assurances. If concrete orders are not issued soon, the movement will enter a sharper phase in June and July.

The workers said that Chennai's cleanliness rests on their labour, but they continue to be denied job security, proper wages, safety equipment and dignity at work. Along with wage enhancement, they demanded the withdrawal of criminal cases filed against workers during their long struggle in 2025.

The workers also demanded that the TVK government must stop every attempt to privatise sanitation work. They warned that privatisation will further destroy job security, weaken workers' rights, and hand over essential public services to contractors and private profiteers. ■

OBITUARY

Comrade Nand Kishore Prasad (Jamunaji)



Comrade Nand Kishore Prasad, popularly known as Jamunaji, passed away on the night of June 19 in Patna's Medanta Hospital where he had been undergoing treatment since 28 May following a severe brain haemorrhage and subsequent respiratory and other complications. Despite sustained medical efforts, his condition continued to deteriorate and he eventually succumbed to multi-organ failure. He would have turned 79 on the forthcoming 9 August.

One of the core members of the founding generation of CPI(ML) leaders in Bihar, Comrade Jamunaji played a pivotal role in building and expanding the party in Bihar over several decades. He was among the key leaders who, alongside Comrades Jauhar, Vinod Mishra and Ramnaresh Ram, helped organize the historic peasant movement in Bhojpur. Living and working among Dalit and landless rural communities, he contributed significantly to the growth of the party and mass movements in Bhojpur and later in the Patna rural region. He also played an important role in the party's expansion in the Champaran-Gopalganj-Siwan region during the 1980s and 1990s.

In 1997, he was elected to the Central Committee of CPI(ML) Liberation at the Party's Sixth Congress held in Varanasi. The Central Committee subsequently elected him to the Polit Bureau, of which he remained a member for many years.

Comrade Jamunaji later served as the Bihar State Secretary of CPI(ML) Liberation from 2006 to 2012, a particularly critical period in the party's development. Following the setback in the 2010 Bihar Assembly elections, when the party lost its representation in the Assembly and was compelled to shift its state office from the MLA Flats area to its present premises in Kadamkuan, he provided steady leadership and helped guide the organization through a difficult phase. Under his stewardship, the party continued to advance important struggles and expand its mass base across the state.

Because of declining health, he was unable to undertake regular organizational responsibilities in recent years. Yet he remained deeply engaged with the party's work and continued to participate in major campaigns and events whenever possible. He attended the party's recent Bihar State Conference in Darbhanga from 16 to 18 May. Soon after returning

from the conference, he suffered a brain haemorrhage and was brought from his hometown Ara to Patna for treatment.

News of his passing was met with profound grief throughout the party. His mortal remains were kept at MLA Flat No. 213 in Patna for comrades, friends and well-wishers to pay their last respects. Senior party leaders, cadres and activists from across Bihar gathered to bid him farewell. Leaders of the Mahagathbandhan, Left parties and various political and social organizations also paid tribute, including Tejashwi Yadav, Mangani Lal Mandal, Uday Narayan Choudhary, Rajesh Ram, Ramnaresh Pandey and several others.

Red Salute to beloved Comrade Jamunaji. Deepest condolences to his family and countless comrades in Bihar and across India who drew inspiration from his warmth, humility, political commitment and caring personality. His contribution to the revolutionary movement and to the growth of CPI(ML) Liberation in Bihar will be remembered for generations. More power to the revolutionary legacy of Comrade Nand Kishore Prasad. ■

UNITE AGAINST BJP'S COMMUNAL-BULLDOZER POLITICS IN WEST BENGAL



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