

NO TO S.I.R. SPECIAL INTENSIVE REVISION





The resolve of July 28

On July 28 we pay our most respectful homage to Comrade Charu Mazumdar, one of the greatest revolutionaries in the history of India's communist movement founder General Secretary of CPI(ML), on his fifty-third martyrdom anniversary. On this occasion we also salute all our departed leaders and great martyrs who gave their all for the advance of the communist movement.

July 28 is also the day of reorganisation of our party after the setback of the early 1970s. We rededicate ourselves to the task of carrying forward the unfinished mission of Comrade Charu Mazumdar, Comrade Jauhar and Comrade Vinod Mishra, the three General Secretaries who built and led our beloved party through the challenging formative phase in the face of severe state repression and amidst a hostile environment.

Right now we are faced with an unprecedented votebandi drive in Bihar which threatens to unleash mass disenfranchisement and reduce universal adult franchise, the crucial cornerstone of our Constitution to a restricted and selective franchise.

As already witnessed in Assam, the process creates a whole category of vulnerable and disempowered people who are dubbed doubtful voters with names removed from the electoral roll and citizenship register, many languishing in detention camps and even getting deported to foreign countries.

In Maharashtra we faced a hugely rigged election where the pattern and scale of rigging became clear only after the elections were over and stolen. In Bihar we can see it all happening in front of our eyes. Saving the voting right and the elections must therefore be taken up as an urgent agenda of mass resistance. The SIR exercise has only begun with Bihar and is all set to be extended to the whole of India. We must therefore take it up on a countrywide scale as the biggest assault on the Constitution, citizenship and the fundamental right to vote.

While Bihar faces the SIR strike, migrant workers from West Bengal are facing a systematic attack in state after BJP-ruled state, being harassed, beaten up and detained as suspected illegal Bangladeshi immigrants. Massive

demolition drives are going on targeting Muslims and other marginalised groups and poor people in Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi. The potential of worker-peasant unity witnessed in the July 9 all-India strike campaign must now be directed squarely against this fascist offensive.

The party has been strengthened in recent months through two major unification moves in Jharkhand and Maharashtra with the erstwhile Marxist Coordination Committee and Lal Nishan Party organisations merging into the CPI(ML). We must consolidate this unity and channelise the unified energy of the entire party towards more resolute efforts, vibrant initiatives and greater victories in the coming days. The whole country is now looking to Bihar to give a fitting rebuff to the Modi regime and the party must play its fullest role in the process. The entire party must rise to the occasion and help Bihar comrades in every possible way.

-Central Committee,
Communist Party of India
(Marxist-Leninist) ■



New Series Vol. 31 No. 04

AUGUST 2025

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Editor-in-chief

Dipankar Bhattacharya

Editor

Arindam Sen

Editorial Board

V. Shankar

Sanjay Sharma

Sucheta De

Ajit Patil

Clifton D' Rozario

Maitreyi Krishnan

Akash Bhattacharya

Editors' e-mail:

liberation@cpiml.org

Design: V Arun Kumar**Manager:** Prabhat Kumar

Phone: 7042877713

Website: liberation.org.in

E-mail: manager.liberation@gmail.com

36 pages including covers

Annual Subscription Rates

India Rs. 300

Abroad US\$ 60

Digital Subscription Rs. 200

Online Payment: liberation.org.in**Pay By Bank transfer:****Account Name:** Liberation Publications

Account No.: 90502010091855

IFSC Code: CNRB0019050

MICR Code.: 110015388

Bank: Canara Bank

The Monsoon Session of Parliament and the Battle for the Future of the Republic of India

On July 21, the monsoon session began in both Parliament and Bihar Assembly. While the sinister SIR drive remains the biggest immediate concern in Bihar, the issue of the glaring security failure and complete abdication of accountability of the Modi government reflected in the Pahalgam terror attack and its aftermath is bound to emerge as a key debate in Parliament. India's foreign policy derailment also stands glaringly exposed with India's total isolation in the international arena and the mortgaging of India's national interests and foreign policy to the US-Israel axis inflicting genocide and military aggression. True to his evasive imperious style, Narendra Modi delivered a 18-minute-long monologue outside the Parliament before the beginning of the session, terming the monsoon session a victory celebration of Operation Sindoor, but this cannot silence the people or Parliament. The fighting spirit and mood of the people reflected in the July 9 strike of the trade unions will surely energise the INDIA bloc in the parliamentary arena.

It has now been ninety days since the Pahalgam terror attack and the perpetrators of this ghastly carnage still remain free, away from the reach of the proverbial long arm of the law. The Prime Minister who cut short his visit to Saudi Arabia in the wake of the attack cared neither to visit Kashmir nor attend the post-Pahalgam all-party meeting in Delhi. The government ignored the opposition demand for an urgent special session of Parliament and now just ahead of the monsoon session we had a media interview by the LG of the Union Territory of J&K taking responsibility for the Pahalgam security lapse. What does taking responsibility mean without resignation and course correction? After reducing the state to two Union Territories, the Union Government took over the entire security command in its own hands. The failure of security is the failure of the Modi Government and its Kashmir policy. Accepting responsibility, the LG and the Union Home Minister must resign and the government must immediately restore the statehood of Jammu and Kashmir.

Operation Sindoor was projected as a campaign for securing justice for the victims of Pahalgam, but with the perpetrators not yet captured where is the justice? Additionally, Operation Sindoor caused military losses and loss of military and civilian lives and properties, none of which has yet been duly acknowledged, far less



Fifty years ago, it was the disqualification of a Prime Minister's election that had unleashed the suspension of democracy in the Emergency era, today it is the threat of disenfranchisement of the average elector and the consequent creation of a whole vulnerable group of second grade citizens which reveals the unmistakable spectre of fascist subversion of the Indian polity.

compensated, by the government. The ceasefire or pause in the operation has been another issue on which the government is yet to come clean. The government attempt to present it as a bilateral understanding urged by Pakistan has been exposed as a big lie right from the outset when Trump broke the news and India and Pakistan merely confirmed it. Since then, Trump has been busy presenting it as a success story of US mediation at every opportunity while Modi has been conspicuously silent on the subject.

In a bid to drum up support for India, Modi government sent seven multi-party delegations of MPs and officials to different parts of the world, but while the delegations returned empty-handed, Pakistan secured big loans from international financial institutions. Precisely at this juncture, Pakistan also got majorly recognised in the international arena, including the presidency of the UN Security Council for the month of July 2025, as part of Pakistan's two-year term as a non-permanent member of UNSC which began in January 2025. In stark contrast to the Sangh brigade narrative of India's enhanced international profile in the Modi era and Modi's carefully cultivated fictitious image as a

global leader, the spotlight now is on the Modi government's massive loss of face and acute isolation in the global arena.

It is important to understand this isolation in the context of the developing world situation. The onset of Trump 2.0, though electorally much more emphatic than Trump's first victory eight years ago, is being keenly contested in America's domestic political context. The continuing genocide of Palestinians by the Netanyahu regime with the fullest backing of the Trump Administration and the extension of the US-Israel war of aggression to Iran has evoked greater international opposition than any time in the past three decades of post-Soviet world order. At this juncture, India under Modi has abjectly capitulated to the US-Israel axis, silently accepting every humiliation by the Trump Administration and refusing to utter any word of condemnation against Israel or express any solidarity with the Palestinian cause. India had already abandoned SAARC, now it has begun to distance itself from SCO and limit its role in BRICS. No wonder India is facing growing isolation across Asia and beyond in the global arena.

The inaugural day of the monsoon session also coincided

with two other major developments. While the submission of the EC's reply to the Supreme Court ahead of the next hearing on the SIR petitions on 28 July was already scheduled, the resignation of Jagdeep Dhankhar from the Vice President post was absolutely sudden and surprising. We will have to wait for subsequent developments to make a sense of the Vice President's sudden resignation and what it holds for power equations within the Sangh-BJP establishment. The outcome of the SIR petition has much more fundamental implications for the future of the Indian republic in its 75th anniversary. If the Supreme Court allows the SIR to run its course in Bihar and set the template for the electoral roll for the rest of the country, it will trigger a veritable redesigning of the republic with major implications for the structure of citizenship and the process of elections. Fifty years ago, it was the disqualification of a Prime Minister's election that had unleashed the suspension of democracy in the Emergency era, today it is the threat of disenfranchisement of the average elector and the consequent creation of a whole vulnerable group of second grade citizens which reveals the unmistakable spectre of fascist subversion of the Indian polity. ■

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Special Intensive Revision of Electoral Roll Is a Surgical Attack on the Constitution and the Voting Right of the People

With only a few months to go for the elections to the Bihar Assembly, the Election Commission of India has suddenly launched what it calls a "Special Intensive Revision" (SIR) of the electoral roll. The last time Bihar had such an intensive revision was in 2003, when there were no elections approaching. The size of the electorate then was about 50 million people, and it took months to complete the revision process. This time round, the size of the electorate is around 80 million and the Election Commission plans to complete the house-to-house enumeration process within just one month. And the month in question is July, a busy agricultural month when Bihar experiences heavy monsoon rainfall and even floods, and out-migration too remains very high.

The logistical impossibility of reaching out to 80 million voters through house-to-house enumeration within one month is something that would strike everyone at first sight. But what makes the SIR truly sinister is the conspiratorial manner of its announcement, and its terms that are different from every previous electoral roll revision exercise conducted by the ECI during the last seven decades. The preparatory process for the Bihar elections has been underway since early this year with the ECI even holding a major workshop in Delhi involving activists of recognised parties from all districts of Bihar. At no stage did the ECI even give a hint about conducting an intensive revision before the Assembly elections. Only a year has elapsed since the

2024 Lok Sabha elections and all that Bihar needed was an updating of the electoral roll used for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections.

But in the name of a Special Intensive Revision, announced on 24 June without any consultation with any political party and deemed to have been launched from the very next day, the ECI has returned to the electoral roll dated 1 January, 2003 as the foundation. Names appearing in the 2003 roll will be presumed to be correct, while all electors added subsequently will have to prove their citizenship by giving documentary evidence of their dates and places of birth, in most cases along with similar proofs for their parents as well. All these years electors only had to give an affidavit stating their citizenship while the ECI had the right to scrutinise and delete names if the claims made by applicants were found to be wrong. Now the onus is shifted to the elector to prove their citizenship. Through just one circular, the ECI has reversed the terms of electoral roll preparation that have been followed since the enactment of the Representation of the People Act, 1951 and the beginning of parliamentary democracy in India.

The ECI order explains the need for a Special Intensive Revision by invoking factors like urbanisation, migration, inclusion of new voters and possible existence of illegal voters. None of these factors can be treated as a sudden development warranting an emergency revision of the roll. Why did the ECI wait for more than two decades and then choose to go for this sudden revision just before the Bihar Assembly

elections? If the ECI has reasons to doubt the integrity of the electoral roll used since 2003, how does the ECI validate the outcomes of elections conducted on the basis of flawed electoral rolls? There already exist legally laid down provisions in the election conduct rules followed by the ECI to delete names by issuing show cause notices to concerned electors and giving them time and opportunity to answer such notices. The SIR campaign of the ECI now summarily discards entire rolls of electors registered after 2003!

The sudden and arbitrary nature of the ECI's Special Intensive Revision had an uncanny resemblance to Narendra Modi's announcement of demonetisation on 8 November 2016. Indeed, the special intensive revision ordered by the ECI is akin to a devoterisation or "votebandi" campaign, whereby the current voter list will be junked and a new electoral roll will be drawn up on the basis of documents collected in the course of just one month. It is the responsibility of the state to register every birth and death. Yet we know that a large number of births still go unregistered in India, especially in a state like Bihar where institutional healthcare coverage is still quite limited in rural areas. How can the ECI expect such records for common electors born a few decades ago? Documents like land ownership records and school leaving certificates are also quite rare in a state like Bihar where the incidence of landlessness is very high, and going by the caste survey report tabled in November 2023, only about 15% of people have cleared matriculation examinations. In many

ways, the SIR seems to be akin to the traumatic National Register of Citizens (NRC) exercise conducted in Assam a few years ago. The Supreme Court monitored exercise took six years in Assam to cover 33 million applicants, where nearly 2 million applicants failed to furnish necessary documents. While the undocumented citizens and those whose documents were not accepted have since been living in a state of anxiety, harassment and insecurity, the Assam government is not even ready to consider the final NRC list as a conclusive record of citizenship. The Himanta Biswa Sarma government claims it has powers to 'push back' any individual or family on sheer suspicion of being foreign nationals even if they have cleared the NRC test in Assam. Recently we have seen cases of Indian citizens being returned to India by Bangladesh after such a 'pushback' operation.

The only difference between the NRC in Assam and the SIR or undeclared NRC in Bihar is that Bihar has a cut-off date of 1 January 2003

while Assam had a much earlier cut-off date - 24 March, 1971. But what happened in Assam over a period of six years is being sought to be done in Bihar, which is more than double in population size, in a period of just three months: one month for the preparation of the draft rolls and two months for finalisation of the same. Only time will tell us how many electors will be eliminated and disenfranchised in the process. The Constitution introduced universal adult franchise in India - without any educational, social or economic discrimination among electors. This has been one of the most basic rights that distinguished citizens of modern India from the colonial and feudal past. Even when we had to fight hard in Bihar to make this universal adult franchise a reality for the oppressed poor, the *de jure* right of these citizens to vote was never in question. By putting this most basic right in jeopardy, the SIR threatens to pave the way for largescale exclusion of disenfranchised voters from a whole range of other rights and benefits from livelihood and social security to reservation in the spheres of education

and employment.

It is a cruel irony of history that the SIR has been launched on 25 June 2025, the 50th anniversary of the promulgation of Emergency, now rechristened as the Constitution Murder Day by the Modi government. By endangering the most fundamental right of the common people of Bihar, the Election Commission handpicked by the Modi government seems to have just delivered the biggest blow to the already embattled Constitution in our beleaguered republic in its 75th anniversary. And the EC has made it clear that the SIR will be conducted across the country in the coming months. The whole country must therefore join Bihar in opposing this sinister SIR drive and protecting the Bihar elections and the Constitution from this fierce attack. Elections must be held on the basis of a normal updating of the electoral roll and not this dubious Special Intensive Revision. Bihar must not be allowed to be turned into a laboratory for a wholesale robbery of universal adult franchise, the cornerstone of India's democratic republic. ■

The Dark Signs

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

(An abridged version of an article published in The Hindu, July 9, 2024)

It is no wonder that the people of Bihar have begun calling the SIR as 'votebandi' after the popular Hindi term 'notebandi' to denote demonetisation. An estimated 50 million voters of Bihar are being subject to a harsh 'eligibility test' in order to prove their citizenship and voting right.

In Bihar, filled-in enumeration forms and accompanying enabling documents are to be collected from all, in just a month's time. And the

month in question is July when the monsoon is vigorous, and when large parts of north Bihar are likely to be flooded and seasonal migration is at its peak. While the sheer scale and circumstances of this sudden operation make it clear that it is going to be a logistical nightmare, what makes it an insurmountable hurdle race for large numbers of Bihar electors is the list of 11 enabling documents that the Election Commission of India (ECI) wants as proof of electoral eligibility.

Documents commonly available with the people such as the Aadhaar card, voter card, ration card, job card or even the driving licence are not acceptable to the ECI. Instead, the documents it demands — birth certificate, matriculation degree, land or house ownership record, caste certificate, passport — are rarely available with the common man in Bihar. How on earth are they going to prove their eligibility or citizenship?

What makes matters

inordinately more difficult is the high out-migration from Bihar. Almost every family has a member who is studying or working outside the State. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the lockdown in 2020 saw the shocking spectacle of migrant Biharis trekking back home over thousands of kilometres. Now many of these migrant Biharis are liable to be removed from the revised rolls on the spurious grounds that they no longer 'ordinarily reside' in Bihar.

The cruel reality that forces millions to seek a livelihood outside Bihar now renders them 'outsiders' for purposes of the electoral roll. Even as the slums built by migrant Bihari workers are being bulldozed in Delhi, the electoral rolls being prepared in Bihar threaten to evict them in their own State. The spectre of mass disenfranchisement is now an undeniable reality. The ECI recently gave us an electoral roll in Maharashtra exceeding the adult population of the State. Unable to explain this statistical scam, has the ECI now chosen Bihar for a 'balancing act' where millions are liable to be removed from the

electoral roll for no fault of theirs?

According to the ECI's declaration, the Bihar SIR template will be replicated across the country in the months ahead. What we are witnessing is a fundamental disruption of the electoral democracy that has been practised in India since the adoption of the Constitution and enactment of the Representation of the People Act 1951. Amid the chaos that has been triggered by the 'votebandi' drive in Bihar, are at least three warning signals for India's beleaguered democracy.

The onus of proving citizenship is being shifted from the state to the citizen. The empowered elector has become a doubtful voter and the onus to clear this doubt and pass the eligibility test lies on the suspect and document-deficient voter. This is akin to a reversal of the fundamental principle of natural justice that one is innocent till proven guilty. This is a huge disaster in the making.

The ECI tells us that being a citizen is a constitutional prerequisite for becoming an eligible elector, and all that the SIR is doing is a verification of that eligibility.

Electors on the 2003 roll are being presumed to be India's citizens, and, hence, rightfully eligible voters; all the others will have to prove it. Even if we accept that those eliminated from the electoral roll will still be considered 'citizens', we are now looking at a permanent category of disenfranchised citizens. In other words, India will have millions of second grade and absolutely insecure citizens who will, henceforth, be at the mercy of the state or the majority of empowered first-grade citizens. The implications are alarming and clear.

In many countries, vast sections of 'excluded' and 'disempowered' people, on grounds of race, ethnicity, class and gender, had to fight for decades in order to secure equal electoral rights.

In India we won universal adult franchise at one go with the attainment of freedom and the adoption of the Constitution. Now, in Bihar, with the insistence on submitting educational certificates and ownership records, are we now looking at a new order of restricted or selective franchise? ■

Foil the Fascist Design of Restricted and Selective Suffrage for India

▲ DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

The SIR exercise in Bihar is getting murkier and murkier. Pushed onto the back foot by the growing protests in Bihar, especially the July 9 chakka jam which evoked a great mass response across the state, the Election Commission has now sought to take steps to limit the scale of deletion of voters at the draft stage. After the first ten days of the SIR drive when only 14% enumeration forms had reportedly been collected, the EC realised that

at this rate some 40 to 50 per cent voters might easily get eliminated at the draft stage itself. Hence the EC relaxed the time frame for submission of supporting documents and asked the administration to collect forms without documents and even photographs. The entire enumeration form distribution and collection exercise has now become a mockery.

Contrary to the EC's assurance of three BLO (Booth Level Officer) visits to every house and supply

of two enumeration forms to every elector, one for submission and one for retention as acknowledgement receipt or record, many households have not yet had a single visit and most electors have got only one form. There are reports of BLOs being suspended for telling the truth about the absence of documents and the unbearable pressure of work, at least one BLO succumbing to death, a BDO tendering resignation alleging harassment by the concerned ERO

(a sub-divisional officer) and now a case being filed against renowned journalist Ajit Anjum for reporting the truth about the SIR drive. Instead of responding to this ground reality, EC 'sources' are busy planting stories in the media about BLOs discovering large numbers of foreign nationals - from Nepal, Bangladesh and Myanmar - in Bihar's villages!

We do not know how the Supreme Court will respond to all the constitutional and legal issues raised in the petitions. Many in Bihar are applying for domicile and caste certificates, but whether they will get them on time for submission as supporting documents by the end of August is anybody's guess. This will of course mean quite a large number of enumeration forms submitted without documents and the ECI announcement giving discretionary powers to the EROs to deal with such cases on the basis of so-called 'local investigations' and 'available documents' only lends credence to apprehension about erroneous deletions and insertions, whether inadvertent or deliberate.

Four decades ago, the rural poor of Bihar waged a heroic battle to defeat booth capturing and break the feudal stranglehold over the election process. Today when Musahars of Bihar risk being branded as illegal refugees from Myanmar and Bihar's migrant workers and Muslims are liable to be lodged in detention camps as Bangladeshi infiltrators,

Bihar will have to fight hard to foil this fascist conspiracy of targeted disenfranchisement and defend the universal adult franchise, the crucial cornerstone of the Constitution of India we won through India's freedom movement.

In Assam, for years we have been seeing the phenomenon of a section of voters being branded D-voters (dubious or doubtful voters), with some of them being put in detention camps and some even deported to Bangladesh. The Assam government does not recognise the NRC prepared in Assam under Supreme Court monitoring and has started picking out people from the NRC to refer to the foreign nationals tribunal. In Bihar, the State Assembly had unanimously resolved against any introduction of the NRC in the state on 28 November 2021, but today the indicative list of supporting documents includes the NRC as one of the eleven listed items and the EC says people who cannot produce the required documents will be referred to foreign national tribunals. From doubtful voters to disenfranchised citizens, and detention camps to deportation to foreign countries - the trauma that has been haunting millions in Assam is now all set to become a feature of life in Bihar.

What has been happening in Assam has now come to Bihar via the SIR route and the SIR express is scheduled to travel to every other state of India. Bihar's eastern

neighbour West Bengal, where elections are due next summer, is already reported to have been identified as the next target. There are reports of Bengali-speaking migrant workers from West Bengal - Muslims as well as Hindus - being harassed with accusations of being 'Bangladeshis' in state after BJP-ruled state. Assam CM Himanta Biswa Sarma says if Assam's Muslims records Bengali as their mother tongue, it will help Assam government to identify Bangladeshis.

In 2019, the Election Commission of India had told Parliament that there were hardly any cases of foreign nationals on the electoral rolls, with none reported in 2016, 2017, and 2018, and only three cases in 2019. But with the BJP's seat tally coming down from 303 in 2019 to 240 in 2024, suddenly there is talk of large-scale infiltration of foreigners in India's electoral rolls. The classic fascist paradigm of a permanently disenfranchised and vulnerable group of second grade citizens is being sought to be developed through invasive surgery of the electoral roll in state after state. After more than seven decades of universal adult franchise, India is being sought to be pushed back to a state of restricted and selective suffrage. The democratic republic of India must foil this ominous fascist design.

(A version of this article appeared in The Wire on July 15, 2025.) ■

CPI(ML) Delegation Meets Chief Election Commissioner, Demands Withdrawal of SIR Process in Bihar

A delegation of the CPI(ML) Liberation met the Chief Election Commissioner on July 22 at the ECI office in Delhi and submitted a detailed memorandum expressing strong objections to the ongoing Special Intensive Revision (SIR) of electoral rolls in Bihar.

The delegation, comprised of Rajaram Singh (MP,

Karakat and CPI(ML) Floor Leader in Lok Sabha), Sudama Prasad (MP, Ara), Shyam Chandra Chaudhary (Secretary, Bihar State Committee) and Sanjay Sharma (Central Headquarters, CPI(ML), raised serious concerns about procedural violations, exclusionary practices, and the danger of mass disenfranchisement of poor, migrant, and young voters.

Below are the main issues raised in the memorandum:

1. Contrary to the assurances given by the EC about house-to-house visits by BLOs and distribution of two enumeration forms to every elector, it is widely observed that many households and electors have never been visited even once, and most electors have received only one form. There are any number of reports of forms being submitted without distribution or without being signed by concerned electors or in the names of electors who have long passed away. Reports of corruption and charging of fees are also quite widespread. In Patna and some other corporation areas of Bihar there are reports of municipal corporations distributing unauthenticated forms. We are afraid the whole process has been reduced to a farcical statistical exercise of submission of papers and production of numbers.

2. While our own field reports and independent media coverage suggests flagrant violation of the EC's stipulated norms, we are deeply disturbed by certain media reports attributed to EC 'sources' and some of the communiques issued by the EC. We would like to draw your attention to two major points:

a) On 13 July 2025 reports appeared widely in the media about BLOs coming across large numbers of foreign nationals from Bangladesh, Nepal and Myanmar in their house-to-house visits. May we remind you that on 10 July 2019 Parliament was informed by then Law and Justice Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on the basis of EC's own response that in the four-year period of 2016-19 there were only three cases of reported foreign nationals in India's electoral rolls - one each from Telangana, Gujarat and West Bengal in 2018. The Lok Sabha elections held just a year ago and even the special summary revision of the electoral rolls undertaken after the 2024 polls noticed no such cases in Bihar. This story of sudden discovery of large-scale influx of foreign nationals in Bihar therefore defies credulity.

b) Even as enumeration forms are being submitted and the phase of scrutiny and disposal of claims and counter-claims is still awaited, the EC press release of 18 July mentions large numbers of death (1.61% or 12,71,414), relocation (2.3% or 18,16,306) and duplication (0.75% or 5,92,273) indicating a likely deletion of some 3.69 million names from the rolls. This number shot up to 4.39 million in the EC press release issued yesterday. Did the summary revision fail to note this and revise the rolls accordingly? Or these deaths, relocations and duplications are all recent developments pertaining to the revised rolls? The EC expects political parties to help trace the electors whose enumeration forms have not been submitted yet. With only four days left for the submission of enumeration forms, how can it be possible to contact and verify such a large

number of electors?

3. The EC has belatedly come out with newspaper advertisements that migrant workers can submit forms online. But how will the overwhelming majority of migrant workers working in sectors like agriculture and construction even get this information and access this online facility? The least the EC should have done is to organise an effective information campaign and arrange easily accessible enrolment camps for migrant workers.

4. You have repeatedly reminded the electors that they will have to submit supporting documents within August. It is however well known that large numbers of electors do not have the documents mentioned in the EC's indicative list of eleven documents. Even applying for possible documents like domicile certificate or caste certificate has now become inordinately difficult and in all likelihood millions will not be able to submit any documents unless the EC accepts the Supreme Court suggestion of including Aadhaar cards, ration cards or voter cards. Leaving it to the EROs to decide about all such cases on the basis of local investigations would leave the electoral roll susceptible to all kinds of bias and arbitrary administrative errors and possible manipulations and thus render the integrity of the electoral roll highly suspect.

5. On the basis of our experience of the first four weeks of the SIR drive in Bihar, we are afraid that mass disenfranchisement remains a very real danger for Bihar's poor, women, migrant workers and young electors, with all its alarming consequences.

6. By asking all post-2003 electors who have voted in five Assembly and five Lok Sabha elections in the 2004-2024 period to prove their eligibility on the basis of supporting documents the SIR conflates the electoral roll with the controversial idea of a citizenship register. The EC must be aware that even after two rounds of intensive examination of documents under Supreme Court monitoring through two rounds spread over six years, the Assam government does not accept the validity of the NRC in Assam. On 25 February 2020, the State Assembly of Bihar adopted a consensus resolution ruling out any NRC in Bihar. Yet the EC's indicative list mentions a non-existent NRC as an acceptable document and for all practical purposes, the SIR has subjected the common electors of Bihar to the combined trauma of hugely disruptive exercises like demonetisation and NRC.

7. We therefore once again urge the EC to withdraw the SIR circular and conduct the forthcoming Assembly elections of Bihar on the basis of a duly updated version of the electoral rolls used for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Universal adult franchise remains central to the democratic republic envisioned in the Constitution of India. There must be no weakening of this crucial cornerstone of our constitutional democracy. ■

Hindutva's New Ploy: Appropriating Lord Murugan in Tamil Nadu

▲ BALASUNDARAM

It is alleged that more than a lakh of devotees joined the conference of Devotees of Lord Muruga on 22 June, organised by the Hindu Munnani (Hindu Front), an off-shoot of RSS in Tamil Nadu, after a prolonged court battle for permission and with heavy downpour of money power. It was considered to be a conference of Hindu uprising and spiritual revolution.

As the BJP and RSS realised that “Ram” of North India is not going to help them to promote the politics of hate in Tamil Nadu and the south, they have now chosen the Tamil God Murugan to incite communal passions. The conference is a clear-cut attempt to appropriate the Lord Murugan to serve its politics of Hindutva and communalism. The BJP, being an alien party to the culture and politics of Tamil Nadu, is trying to internalise itself in the state by appropriating popular symbols and Gods like Muruga. The Lord Muruga is being attempted to be transformed into a communal symbol. Thirupparangunram hills, a place of worship of Muruga in Madurai, is chosen to incite communal passions and to divide Hindus and Muslims to elevate BJP's communal brand of politics, as a centuries-old Sufi shrine and a mosque are also located in another side of the same hills. Unlike the Lord Ram, Lord Murugan is considered to be a god of middle castes. The so-called devotees' conference is also a design of communal forces to penetrate among the majority

backward castes and to isolate them from the Dravidian parties.

The conference was left with the imprint of the union government as the Tamil Nadu Governor RN Ravi, Maharashtra Governor CP Radha Krishnan and Union Minister of State L Murugan and the Deputy Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh Pawan Kalyan also visited the site to offer prayers to Lord Murugan. Gurumurthy, an ideologue of RSS from Tamil Nadu, has also agreed that RSS, BJP and Hindu Munnani left no stone unturned to hoist the saffron flag in the city of Madurai, famous for the development of Tamil in the ancient period.

AIADMK leaders, blessed by Edappadi, also silently joined the conference which was claimed to be a Murugan Devotees' conference and not the BJP conference. When the sound system cried “Come Muruga, to destroy the evil forces”, the images of Periyar, Annadurai and Karunanidhi were displayed on the LED screen implying the above three of leading the evil forces in the state. But, the former ministers of AIADMK (All India Anna Dravidia Munnetra Kazhagam) who were present on the occasion, pleaded ignorance saying that the LED screen was behind their back, to escape the criticism of betrayal by another Dravidian party named after Annadurai. The walls were decorated with posters inviting Lord Muruga with his weapon, the spear, to destroy Dravidianism. The communal forces have launched a veritable ideological war against

Dravidianism, using people's faith and spirituality and describing it as a force of destruction and Hindutva as a force of creation.

Resolutions of the Conference

The first resolution of the conference, with the slogan to protect the god Murugan and the hill (worshipping site), was to light the lamp on the mast of the temple in a winter month of Karthikai. The conspiracy to continue the debate on communalising Thiruparangunram hills (a place of worship of Murugan) throughout the year was obvious in the first resolution itself. It is an attempt to continue the “Vel Yatra” launched by the Union Minister Murugan and Annamalai (former state president of BJP) as a communal-political movement like Ayodhya. The RSS man Gurumurthy himself calls it a conference of Hindu spiritual nationalism laced with politics.

The second resolution congratulates the Modi regime and the army for the Operation Sindoor which offered death as a gift to the terrorists who ‘snatched away the sindoor’. It was resolved to establish a rule of Hindu spiritual nationalism in Tamil Nadu akin to the rule of the BJP-RSS at the centre.

The third resolution pledges to protect the Thiruparangunram hill in Madurai and its purity and accuses Muslims of destroying it and thus intends to promote a communal division of Hindus and Muslims. It is also resolved to kindle Hindu uprising by saying that all hills are owned by Murugan and thus it belongs only to Hindus and none else.

The fourth resolution asserts that the temples are the centres of spiritual, cultural and social solidarity and not the centres of commerce and trade. It condemns the building of educational and commercial

complexes in the hills in order to protect the purity, contradicting its own action of converting Ayodhya into a centre of corporate trade and commerce. The resolution also says that the income of temples cannot be used for any public cause and should be used only for spiritual purposes and for the welfare of pandits. They have coined a slogan to liberate temples from the clutches of the government and its department which is a governing body for administration of all temples in the state. They demand that the temples shall be handed over back to religious institutions or trusts, liberating from the control and administration of the Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowments department and the associated act.

The fifth resolution calls for “No Vote to Enemies of Hindus and the Nation”, explains that No Vote to Anti-Hindu politicians, precisely not to the DMK led INDIA in Tamil Nadu and also indicates that Udayanidhi, the Deputy Chief Minister, Kanimozhi, DMK MP, Thirumavalavan, a leader of a Dalit party VCK and A Raja, a dalit leader of DMK, are the anti-Hindu

politicians.

The sixth resolution calls for reciting Kantha Sashti Kavasam (a devotional song in praise of Lord Murugan) on the memorial day of Murugan, to build the unity of Hindus.

Six resolutions were adopted in the conference of devotees of Lord Murugan, who is said to have six avatars and six places of worship in the state, aimed at transforming hundreds of years of history of the politics of secularism and social justice into a history of communalism, social injustice and sanatan. The communal forces have begun to play politics around the Tamil God Murugan after their failed experiments with Ram and Ganesha in the state. They are consciously avoiding the most popular Tamil devotional songs and insist on reciting the same song with Sanskrit lyrics with a clear purpose of sanskritisation and imposition of Hindi.

The communal forces cannot be defeated by upholding “Tamil God” Murgan against “Hindu God” Murugan. Murugan is being used as a shield by Hindutva forces against Dravidianism. They adopt a metaphor

of Murugan as Hindutva and asuras (demons) as Dravidianism. This must be tirelessly countered at ideological and political level. They attempt to target Dravidianism with a spear, the weapon of Lord Murugan. They launch a war, using the Murugan's spear, against egalitarianism, women's liberation, independence of language, the elimination of caste, and the destruction of Manu Dharma.

Pavan Kalyan has delivered his speech saying that Lord Murugan is a revolutionary leader who destroyed injustice and established equality. He wanted to use Murugan to inverse the centuries old tradition of Dravidian and Left movement that fought for equality against disparity and for justice against injustice. One cannot be victorious by engaging in competitive communalism but for waging a comprehensive and consistent struggle for democracy and equality. The spirituality should not become a politics and the politics should not surrender before spirituality. Only a consistent struggle for such a democracy can be a weapon to defeat the forces of communalism. ■

Inequality in India Is Too Glaring to Be Hidden behind Numbers

▲ AKASH BHATTACHARYA

Whichever way one looks, through data, through the naked eye, or through experience, the picture is clear: India is a highly unequal country, and inequality is worsening.

The media was recently awash with stories claiming that India is the fourth most equal country in the world, attributing the finding to a recent World Bank report. This is a serious misrepresentation.

Here's what the World Bank Brief says:

“India's consumption-based Gini index improved from 28.8 in 2011–12 to 25.5 in 2022–23, though inequality may be underestimated due to data limitations. In contrast, the World Inequality Database shows income inequality rising from a Gini of 52 in 2004 to 62 in 2023. Wage disparity remains high, with the median earnings of the top 10

percent being 13 times higher than the bottom 10 percent in 2023–24.”

Surbhi Kesar writes in her article in The Wire on 5 July:

“The PIB picks out the 25.5 figure – which measures consumption inequality – and uses it to compare India to other equal countries whose rankings are based on income inequality. This is a basic and critical statistical error.

Note, the consumption

inequality as an index is usually lower than income inequality for countries. This is because the rich save a large part of their income, so consumption, as unequal as it is, at least looks more equal than income. So, when the PIB compares India's consumption Gini of 25.5 with other countries' income Ginis, it's comparing apples to oranges. In fact, the World Bank brief also does not make any such comparisons based on these numbers since they are not comparable, even though PIB seems to claim it does.

A fair comparison would either be to compare India's income inequality with other countries' income Ginis, or compare India's consumption inequality with other countries' consumption Ginis – which the World Bank brief does not provide.

India's Gini index for income inequality, comparable with other countries, is 61 (in 2019 and 2023), according to the world inequality database, and as also stated in the World Bank brief. This inequality has been consistently increasing since the 1990s, placing India as a highly unequal country (the higher the index, higher the inequality). Ranking countries based on how equal they are in terms of the income Gini, we find that India is ranked 176 out of a total of 216 countries in 2019, while its rank was 115 in 2009 – thereby becoming much more unequal, relative to other countries, over time. The wealth inequality Gini index as per the world inequality database for India is even higher, at 75 in 2023 (and 74 in 2019).

Let's turn our attention towards comparable consumption inequality figures. First, the World Bank does not compare India's consumption Gini index with any other country. Worse still, the World Bank brief explicitly cautions that India's consumption inequality may be underestimated due to data limitations; specifically

it notes "International poverty estimates for India are derived from the 2011-12 Consumption Expenditure Survey (CES) and the 2022-23 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey, using the modified mixed reference period and a spatially and intertemporally deflated welfare aggregate. Changes in questionnaire design, survey implementation, and sampling in the 2022-23 survey represent improvements but present challenges for making comparisons overtime. Moreover, sampling and data limitations suggest that consumption inequality may be underestimated." And those limitations are substantial. The survey methodology for the 2022-23 Household Consumption Expenditure Survey underwent considerable changes from the earlier 2011-12 CES, making direct comparisons unreliable. This has been widely discussed by Indian economists and statisticians.

To make some reasonable comparisons of consumption inequality, we can look at inequality in per capita calorie intake, which also reflects food consumption disparities. According to data from the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations and processed by Our World in Data, we find that India ranked 102nd out of 185 countries in 2019 – a worse position than in 2009, when it ranked 82nd. So, by this measure too, India's relative performance has deteriorated over the past decade."

Now coming to other facts and figures, the Oxfam Report of 2023, helps us explain the reasons behind this inequality with reference to India's taxation policy.

Impact of India's Taxation Policy:

(a) Reduction in Corporate Taxes:

1. In 2019, the Central Government reduced the corporate tax slabs from 30% to 22%, with newly incorporated companies paying a lower percentage of 15%.

2. These tax cuts resulted in corporate tax collections declining by approximately 16% in their first year and resulted in a total loss of INR 1.84 lakh crore. Corporate tax collections were 82% of the collections in 2019-20 and 68% of the collections in 2018-19.

3. In 2020-21, the projected revenue foregone by the government in the form of incentives and tax exemptions to corporates is INR 1,03,285.54 crore.

4. Consequently, the burden of taxation has shifted away from the corporates towards the individual income taxpayer.

(b) Increase in Indirect Taxation:

1. To increase revenue, the Union Government adopted a policy of hiking the GST and excise duties on diesel and petrol while simultaneously cutting down on exemptions.

2. Since 2020-21, the share of indirect taxes in the state exchequer has risen by 50%.

3. Since the implementation of GST, the share of direct taxes out of the total gross tax revenue receipt declined by 5% by 2020-21. Similarly, revenue from corporate taxes as a percentage of gross tax revenue declined by 8%. Under the GST regime, there is a decline in the proportion of corporate taxes in the total revenues of the government.

4. The bottom 50% of the population at an All-India level pays six times more on indirect taxation as a percentage of income compared to top 10%.

5. GST: Of the total taxes collected these food and non-food items, 64.3% of the total tax is coming from the bottom 50%. A little less than two-third of the total GST is coming from the bottom 50%, one-third from middle 40% and only 3-4% from the top 10%.

6. Simultaneously, increase in excise duties on diesel and petrol

when the price of oil barrels fell to record lows (INR 1,722 a barrel in April 2020). Between 2014-15 and 2021-22, the excise duties on petrol increased by 194%, while the excise duties on diesel were hiked by 512%.

In October 2021, PRS Legislative Research reported that taxes made up 54% of the price of petrol (of which 31% were central excise duties and 23% were States' Sales Tax/VAT). For diesel, taxes comprised 49% of the retail price (of which 34% were central excise duties and 15% were States' Sales Tax/VAT).

7. While income tax is based on the income they earn, extracting more from individuals with higher income, an indirect tax like GST and

excise of diesel and petrol would tax all individuals the same amount, irrespective of their income. In this way, a person with a lower income would end up paying more as a percentage of their income.

8. Of the Total GST collected,

1. 64.3% of the total GST is from the Bottom 50%, i.e., almost 2/3 of the total GST is coming from the bottom 50%

2. 1/3 from middle 40% and

3. Only three to four % from the top 10%.

9. The poor pay a larger part of their income towards taxes than the rich.

(i) The bottom 50% spends 6.7% of their income on taxes for food and non-food items.

(ii) Middle 40% spends half of that at 3.3% of their income on food and non-food items.

(iii) The top 10% wealth group spends a mere 0.4% of their income on food and non-food items.

(iv) The bottom 50% of the population at an All-India level pays six times more on indirect taxation as a percentage of income compared to top 10%.

Whichever way one looks at the data, the picture is clear: India is a highly unequal country, and inequality is worsening. The intervention needed for a massive redistribution, including taxing the rich, is urgent. Misleading data cannot hide this reality. ■

Foil Attempts to Dilute the Civil Nuclear Liability Laws

The National Alliance of Anti-nuclear Movements (NAAM) has submitted a memorandum to political parties, parliamentarians, activists and civil society members to oppose the Modi government's plans to dilute the provisions of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962 and Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010. We are reproducing the text of their memorandum:

The Indian government is planning to amend the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010 in order to facilitate private companies' participation in the construction and development of nuclear reactors in India, and to fetch foreign direct investments for the nuclear industry.

According to Section 3 of the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, the "Central Government shall have power" "to produce, develop, use and dispose of atomic energy either by itself or through any authority or Corporation established by it or a Government company and carry out research into any matters connected therewith;" "to manufacture or otherwise produce any prescribed

or radioactive substance;" "to buy or otherwise acquire, store and transport any prescribed or radioactive substance;" and "to dispose of such prescribed or radioactive substance."

If this particular stipulation in the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, is changed, it will pave the way for the entry of private players not just as equipment suppliers but also as operators of nuclear power plants and Small Modular Reactors all over India. Having private companies as 'operators' is rather dangerous given the unique nature of nuclear energy, emanation of fissile material, accumulation of nuclear waste, and various threats posed to the overall safety and security of the public.

As far as the Civil Liability

for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, is concerned, the definition of "nuclear damage" is rather vague and does pose practical challenges in the interpretation of certain provisions. Nonetheless, it does provide a mechanism for victims to claim compensation for damages caused by nuclear incidents and creates a clear legal framework for dealing with nuclear liability in India.

The Act puts the entire onus of providing compensation on the 'operator' of nuclear power plants and lets the 'supplier' go scot-free. And the right of recourse provisions allow the operator to seek compensation from the supplier only if such right is included in a written contract, or when a nuclear incident results "as a consequence of an act

of supplier or his employee,” or “from the act of commission or omission of an individual done with the intent to cause nuclear damage.” All of this literally means there is hardly any possibility of getting any supplier liability at all.

As per the Liability Act, 2010, the operator of a nuclear facility is liable for damages from a nuclear incident, and the operator is primarily responsible for paying compensation. Operators are required to have insurance or other financial security to cover their potential liability. The Nuclear Power Corporation of India Ltd. (NPCIL) is the operator of all our reactors right now and this public utility will end up paying compensation to the public with their own tax money.

Even as it is, we are unhappy with the Liability Act because it caps the total liability amount to 300 million SDRs (Special Drawing Rights). This works out to just about a paltry US\$ 460 million (Rs. 3,910 crores) per accident. We find it inconceivable

and outrageous that any cap, let alone such a meager one, be placed on the total liability, regardless of the scale of disaster.

This paltry sum of \$460 million is even less than the compensation amount of US\$ 470 million given to the victims of Bhopal Gas Disaster way back in 1989, which was a gross under-assessment of liability even then. Given the fact that a major nuclear disaster could very much dwarf the Bhopal disaster, the proposed nuclear liability cap appears to be truly a slap on the face of the people of this country.

Further, the Act pegs the “liability” of the ‘operator’ at Rs. 1,500 crores per incident, with the further proviso to lower it down to even paltrier Rs. 300 crores for spent-fuel reprocessing plant accidents. Even in case of an accident in a privately-operated nuclear power plant, the amount of “liability” exceeding the “cap” will have to be paid by the Indian taxpayers. And a lower “cap” for a private ‘operator’ would

only further strengthen its intrinsic propensity to cut corners in the realm of “safety” with nightmarish prospects.

This is an unabashed move towards helping profiteering corporations while penalizing the unsuspecting Indian public. In fact, putting a cap on nuclear liability violates the very ‘Right to Life’ as enshrined in Article 21 of the Indian Constitution.

It is indeed shocking that even this inadequate and unsatisfactory liability law is going to be diluted without open, transparent and fair public consultations with the people of this country, whose health and well-being, safety and human rights, and life and futures are being put directly in danger.

For all the above reasons, we strongly oppose any attempt to amend the Atomic Energy Act, 1962, and to dilute the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act, 2010, and that too without widespread public debate on the subject. ■

Forward With a Legacy of Struggles

▲ UDAY BHAT

Dr. Datta Samant, a militant trade union leader came into contact with Lal Nishan activists during the time of organizing the stone quarry workers. He had a clinic in Ghatkopar area where Raghunath Nalawade, a victimised Post and Telegraph worker and full time LNP activist, used to take quarry workers for treatment. He acquainted Dr. Samant with the inhuman conditions of the workers and their perilous existence under the threats of mafia quarry owners. Dr. Samant joined the struggle to organise and wrest better working

conditions and compensation.

This early relationship was strengthened during the Godrej incident and the aftermath. Dr. Samant was democratically chosen as leader by the workers of Godrej at Vikhroli. The Godrej family refused to accept him and brought in the Shivsena to overturn the workers mandate. Shivsena who rode on the slogan of justice for the Marathi youth had the backing of the ruling Congress and the capitalist class. The Shivsena was nurtured to break the left dominated unions, and it had proved its unflinching class

allegiance in the murder of militant communist leader Krishna Desai. A riot was instigated at Godrej using the Shivsena and a police inspector died in the riot. Datta Samant was arrested in the case. Lal Nishan activists led Sarva Shramik Sangh was a major force in the industrial belt from Kurla to Thane. The activists stood by Datta Samant for his release and honouring the democratic choice of the workers.

By the time I graduated Dr. Samant had entered the textile area, taking it by storm. The image as an uncompromising and militant leader

which had a basis in reality was liked by the textile workers. They stood by him in unison. The reasons lay in the objective reality on the textile front. The textile workers union under the leadership of Com. Dange didn't fight for the real issues of the workers, he had withdrawn the strike prematurely in 1974 and the support he gave to the emergency was not liked by the workers. They were in search of a new leadership and even tried enlisting the Shivsena for some time. Frustrated with SS they urged Datta Samant to be their leader in December 1981.

The historic textile strike commenced on 18th January 1982. The Textile workers union led by the Lal Nishan activists stood resolutely with the strike and the textile workers throughout the struggle. Our activists continue to stand by the workers for their rightful struggle for a house in Mumbai as part of their share in the mill lands.

I was working when the strike began. After office hours I participated in the meetings of the textile workers. I covered the news for 'Shramik Vichar', a daily published from Pune. My interaction with Comrade D S Kulakarni intensified during this period culminating in my giving up the job and becoming a full time activist and to begin with I was given responsibility in the Kamani Employee's union. Over a period of time I became an activist on the textile front. On the 8th of August 1983 I was jailed during the textile worker's jail bhara.

As the strike prolonged the workers' movement scaled newer heights. Datta Samant took the lead and formed the Kamgar Aghadi Paksh. Datta Samant who once believed that politics has damaged the interests of the working class and championed economism, learnt his lesson in class politics in the

workers' university!

It reminds me of the historic election in Sangli. Vasantdada Patil, freedom fighter turned Sugar baron had to fight an election to continue as the CM. All the other parties including the progressive ones shirked away from contesting the election. The textile workers, Datta Samant and LNP decided to make it a battle of the workers and farmers and Santaram Patil, a freedom fighter and a leader of the sugar factory and sugar cane cutter workers, contested the election. The entire movement and LNP forced Vasantdada to come out and campaign on his home turf against an outsider. I had joined other comrades in actively campaigning in an election lost by us by a few thousand votes.

The new party was thus spreading its wings in the cities and rural hinterland. LNP leadership recognised the need to build a sound footing and made efforts to strengthen bonds with the textile workers who had returned to their villages. The Congress party in power unleashed the oppressive NSA to arrest activists, ban meetings and the media was used to malign the textile strike and Datta Samant. LNP stood behind Datta Samant unflinchingly. The strike forced the nationalisation of 13 sick mills in 1983 and as a result their workers received satisfactory terminal benefits.

Mid term parliament election was called for after the murder of Indira Gandhi as the textile strike was nearing its two years. Datta Samant contested the election from the textile area. As an independent candidate he defeated ex-MP Roza Deshpande (Comrade Dange's daughter) and BJP candidate Wamanrao Mahadik. The media was flush with anti-Datta Samant propaganda blaming him for the prolonged strike and predicted

that he would lose his deposit. But despite the sympathy wave for the Congress nationally, the textile workers gave a major victory to Datta Samant and significant votes in other constituencies. The following Assembly elections saw a victory of three candidates from Kamgar Aghadi from the same area. Comrade Dattu Atyalkar, a textile worker from LNP was one of them. This was the last major struggle of the LNP with Kamgar Aghadi.

The government later came out with substantial changes in the policy framework to allow the textile mill owners to shift their mills outside, sell, and develop the mill lands with high rises, hotels, malls etc. and came with a narrative that with new rules Mumbai would be transformed into a city like Hongkong or Singapore. Then came the policies of liberation and privatisation. The mill and other industry owners used newly framed development control rules to the hilt. Datta Samant opposed these policy changes calling them detrimental not only for the textile workers but the entire working class. Corporate media tried hard calling him obstinate and anti-development, but Datta Samant stood his ground and continued to firmly oppose the new policy. He was the main obstacle in rolling out this policy. The obstacle was removed by his murder on 16th January 1997.

The BJP-SS coalition was in power then. After Datta Samant's murder, industry including the textiles lost no time in closing down their factories and in collusion with the developers minted money out of the land parcels in their possession. The politicians were hand in glove with them, with some even becoming builders themselves.

Now the new emergent working class in Mumbai is unstable, almost everyone on contract, working hours

increased, and having no social security. The wages are extremely low. This is the heavy price paid by the working class. Datta Samant with the active involvement of the LNP

activists had noted the changed scenario and taken steps to organise the workers in the new situation. We have continued the legacy and with the merger of LNP with CPI(ML)

Liberation, this militant legacy has strengthened further. We in the erstwhile LNP will cherish our legacy and vow to continue on the path well chosen by us. ■

Assam Evictions: BJP's War on the People

CPI(ML) has demanded an immediate halt to the ongoing eviction drives and police violence unleashed by the BJP-led Assam government on the aggrieved victims of eviction drive. Under the guise of forest protection and targeting of so-called illegal infiltrators, the government is waging a ruthless campaign of corporate land grab and ethnic cleansing, targeting Muslims and other marginalised communities.

The July 17 killing in the Paikan area of Goalpara, where police opened fire on protesting residents, killing two persons exposed the inhumanity and complete impunity with which the BJP regime is executing this eviction drive.

On 16 July a CPIML fact-finding team visited Ashudubi village in the same district where more than 1100 houses were demolished by employing at gunpoint more than 60 bulldozers. The team consisted of Member of Parliament Sudama Prasad, party's Assam State Secretary Bibek Das, central committee members Manoj Manzil, ex-MLA from Bihar, and Balindra Saikia along with Pankaj Kumar Das, Anant Hazarika and Subhash Singh. The team observed that many trenches had been dug by bulldozers surrounding the village to prevent any humanitarian help for the homeless villagers. The victims are poor peasants and working class Muslim families who were living in this village for 60-70 years. It is also reported that one person Sheikh

Monirul Islam committed suicide under desperation after the eviction notice was served to him. Another person, Anaruddin Sheikh died of a heart attack while his house was being demolished.

The team said that the eviction drive on 12 July 2025 was conducted in a war like manner in violation of the Guwahati High Court directive that prohibits evictions without any rehabilitation measures. The area under Ashudubi has been inhabited for many decades also housing so many government buildings, but to justify evictions this was renamed Paikan only to associate it with the reserve forest of the same name.

Over the past two months, the Assam government has launched a renewed, aggressive campaign of evictions, violently displacing Muslims and indigenous communities from lands they have lived on for decades. In Goalpara, Dhubri, Charuabakhra, Chirakuta, Karbi Anglong, Dima Hasao, Kamrup (Rural), Kokrajhar, and other regions, thousands of families are under threat of being uprooted without any legal process, rehabilitation, or basic humanitarian support. Homes, Anganwadi centres, pharmacies, schools, mosques, madrasas, Eidgahs, and even government infrastructure have been bulldozed, shattering lives and livelihoods.

How did so many areas, where people have lived for decades and where government schemes, welfare services, schools, and public

infrastructure have existed, suddenly become "illegal"?

Communal Ploy and Corporate Plunder

These widespread demolitions clearly shows that all talks of illegal infiltration are a ploy by the BJP regime to stroke communal polarization and divert focus from its plans to evict poor, indigenous communities and Muslims for corporate land grab. By repeatedly invoking the bogey of 'Bangladeshi infiltrators', the Himanta Biswa Sarma government is trying to instil fear, communalise the atmosphere, and silence all voices against the inhuman eviction drive.

In the last four years of Himanta Biswa Sarma government thousands of families, mostly Bengali speaking Muslims, have been evicted with over 1.19 lakh bighas (160 sq km) of lands having been cleared. Many people have lost lives during these eviction drives and lakhs are rendered homeless. Himanta's islamophobic hate campaign by invoking land jihad continues with the open declaration of changing the state's demography.

It is important to note that the evictions escalated aggressively after the Advantage Assam 2.0 investor summit in February and the Rising Northeast Investors' Summit in May.

It is no coincidence that these demolitions are concentrated in areas where major corporate projects are now being planned. In Dhubri and Goalpara, 4,000 bighas are being cleared for a 3,000-MW thermal

power plant by the Adani Group. In Dima Hasao, land is being handed over to Adani for a cement factory. In Kokrajhar, Adani is constructing a power project. In Karbi Anglong,

Reliance is setting up compressed biogas plants.

These eviction drives must be stopped and the government must provide full rehabilitation

and humanitarian assistance to all displaced families. A court-monitored high-level inquiry be initiated into the police violence, and all perpetrators be brought to justice. ■

Illegal Detention of Assamese and Bengali Migrant Workers Using an Arbitrary MHA Order

On 21 July 2025, a two-member CPIML Delhi team comprising of Adv. Supantha Sinha and Shayeri Mukhopadhyay visited Gurugram, after receiving news of detention of scores of migrant workers purportedly for ascertaining their citizenship.

The team found a makeshift detention center in Sector 10 of Gurugram and found 75 male workers detained there for the last three days. The SHO of the Sector 10 Police Station reluctantly agreed to let the team meet a few workers.

After talking to the workers, the team learnt that over the last three days, 75 workers living in different parts of Gurugram West Zone had been detained. 65 of them were from Assam while 10 were from Nadia and Murshidabad districts of Bengal. Detained during late evening hours on 19 July, the workers are being forced to live in a small hall under extremely unhygienic conditions. Similar exercises had been conducted in other parts of Gurgaon as well, with some zones housing over 200 detainees currently.

The detained workers are all migrants, working in sanitation, garbage sorting, construction and other informal sectors. Some of them are security guards while others are rickshaw pullers. Most of them seem to have their voter cards, PAN cards and Aadhar cards. The Assamese workers the team spoke to, have

their NRC certificates in addition to the other documents. Notably, some of them lost some documents when their colonies were demolished over the last one year.

These detentions appear to follow a Ministry of Home Affairs order issued in early May, directing states, UTs, and district authorities to submit “credential reports” on suspected foreigners within 30 days. During this period, such individuals are to be confined in holding centers. If no report is received, the Foreigners Registration Office may initiate deportation.

This order is arbitrary and in violation of fundamental rights, including protection from unlawful detention and the right to livelihood. Detaining individuals under suspicion alone, especially in overcrowded and unsanitary conditions, imposes serious health risks and economic harm, with no compensation for lost earnings.

More importantly, document verification and citizenship status can be determined through standard police verification processes within fixed timeframes. Detention is not a necessary or justifiable step. The 30-day holding period further compounds the risk of wrongful deportation, particularly given the recent history of hasty and error-ridden verifications.

Be it through the SIR in Bihar or arbitrary citizenship verification process directed against Bengali-

speaking migrant workers, the government is sparing no means to deprive migrant workers of their rights. Muslim migrant workers, especially those who speak Bengali, are doubly vulnerable to the communally motivated government campaign in the name of Rohingyas and Bangladeshis.

The MHA order should be immediately withdrawn, the government should stick to regular processes identifying foreigners, detained workers should be compensated for the loss of livelihood and for mental harassment not only in Gurugram but all across India, and the harassment of Bengali speaking migrant workers must immediately stop. ■

Enact a Law to Protect Migrant Workers

The CPIML West Bengal unit sent a memorandum to the President of India, Draupadi Murmu, on July 14, 2025, urging for immediate legislative action to protect migrant workers from atrocities, discrimination, and insecurity based on their linguistic, religious, and ethnic identity.

The memorandum by Abhijit Majumdar, WB State Secretary of the party, brings to the fore the growing climate of hate and systemic violence faced by migrant workers across various parts of the country. The party expressed deep concern over the plight of Bengali-speaking and other marginalised workers, who continue to face social exclusion and economic exploitation, particularly in BJP-ruled states including Odisha,

Gujarat, Maharashtra, Haryana, and Delhi.

Citing recent instances of illegal detention and custodial torture, the memorandum highlights that as many as 444 Bengali-speaking migrant workers were wrongly detained in police stations in Jharsuguda, Paradwip, Bhadrak and elsewhere in Odisha under the false pretext of being Bangladeshi nationals, despite providing valid identity documents.

"This is a gross violation of their constitutional rights under Articles

14, 15, 19, and 21," the memorandum states. It underscores the need for a central legislation titled the "Prohibition of and Protection Against Atrocities on Migrant Workers Act", aimed at penalising acts of discrimination and violence against migrants.

The CPIML further demanded the formation of special commissions and tribunals at both state and national levels to deal specifically with cases of violence and injustice against migrant workers. The proposal includes provisions for legal

aid, healthcare, economic and social rehabilitation, and livelihood security for affected persons.

The party also called for mass awareness programmes to sensitize government officials and communities, pressing for immediate action to uphold the constitutional values of equality and justice.

"We humbly appeal for your urgent attention to this subject," the letter concludes, appealing to the President to advise the Union Government for prompt enactment of the proposed legislation. ■

Stop Communalising Jai Hind Camp Housing Issue, Ensure Dignified Housing for All

On July 15, a fact-finding team by CPIML visited the Jai Hind Camp in Masoodpur, Delhi to investigate the ongoing crisis being faced by its residents.

The residents of Jai Hind Camp, numbering around 5000, have been living without electricity for the past eight days. With Delhi reeling under sweltering summer heat and continuous rainfall, the situation in the camp is dire. Infants, pregnant women, the elderly and the sick are being forced to suffer without even the basic relief of a fan. The rains have worsened the situation, turning the area into a mosquito-infested zone, increasing the threat of disease and infection.

The power cut is reportedly the result of a land ownership dispute between the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) and local landowners. Caught in this political and legal crossfire are working-class families, primarily from West Bengal, UP, and Bihar, who migrated to the capital for a better life.

Ravi Rai added that Godi

media is painting the majorly Bengali speaking Hindus and Muslims of Jai Hind Camp as Bangladeshi encroachers to build a narrative that justifies their dehumanisation and displacement. In reality, the Jai Hind Camp houses a Mandir and a Masjid only a few meters from each other and the residents live in harmony with each other undivided by their religious faith. A majority of the residents have been living in the area for the past 30 years. They work as mechanics, sanitation workers, domestic workers and tea stall vendors to earn a living in the capital city where they migrated seeking better employment and facilities for themselves and their families.

"The labelling of the working poor as "illegal", "encroachers" and a "burden" is a characteristic aspect of the communal and anti-poor politics of the BJP that has now consolidated its power in Delhi," added Shweta Raj.

The threat of demolition at Jai Hind Camp has been preceded by the demolition drives at Wazirpur, Bhoomiheen Camp, Govindpuri and Okhla that have all targeted

Delhi working poor. The slogan of 'Jahaan Jhuggi, Waheen Makaan' before elections and 'Jahaan Jhuggi, Waheen Bulldozer' after elections has become the reality of Delhi working class areas.

"The passing of the anti-worker labour codes that threatens the livelihood of the labouring class has been accompanied by the BJP government's bulldozer taking away the people's right to shelter. The BJP seems to have mastered the technique of false promises to voters before elections followed by immediate land grab, displacement and attacks after elections," said Akash Bhattacharya.

The fact-finding team comprised of CPIML Delhi State Secretary Ravi Rai, AICCTU Delhi council member Akash Bhattacharya, AIPWA Delhi President Shweta Raj, AILAJ Delhi committee member Sagarika, and AISA President Neha.

While the legal battle of the people of Jai Hind Camp is on, the citizens of Delhi must stand in solidarity with the migrant workers' right to shelter and livelihood. ■

Devanahalli Farmers' Historic Victory

A Milestone in Democratic Resistance

▲ CLIFTON D' ROZARIO

Over three years since the national farmers' movement forced the Modi government's rollback of the three farm laws, Karnataka's farmers have now won a major battle of their own. The Congress-led State Government, under pressure from sustained protest, has cancelled the plans to acquire 1,777 acres of fertile agricultural land in Devanahalli. Commonly dubbed as Bengaluru's nutritional and food lifeline, Devanahalli's fertile lands have supplied fruits, vegetables and other essentials to the city for decades. The farmers were firm and unyielding in their demand: they resolutely expressed that they have no intention to part with their land, and that they wish to continue their farming in the region which has sustained lives and livelihoods for generations.

This glorious victory belongs to the Devanahalli farmers and their 1198 days of determined struggle; those who have stood in solidarity this struggle, especially over the past month, can take pride in their supportive role.

Among the lessons from this struggle, the principal one is reaffirmation that once a people are committed to better their lives, no force under the sun can stop them. This is the longest ever farmers protest in Karnataka, and farmers from all communities stood united under the banner of 'Bhoosvadhina Virodhi Horata Samithi' (Anti-Land Acquisition Struggle Committee), with Karahalli Srinivas, a leader with the Dalit Sangarsha Samithi, at the forefront. The Devanahalli farmers

refused to engage in any legal battle and instead trusted their unity and struggle. Their indefinite dharna over 1198 days was spirited, even when they faced disappointment and isolation; even when support and solidarity was ebbing. They faced relentless repression and criminalisation of their democratic struggle with the police targeting protesting farmers have scores of criminal cases. They have braved many a police brutality as well – on 15th August 2022, the police used brutal force against the protesting farmers in Devanahalli, assaulted and arrested them, injuring protesting farmers, including a 32-year-old Pramod who suffered a serious eye injury.

With the issuance of the final notification in June, the struggle took a big turn with the Samyukta Horata call for "Devanahalli Chalo" on June 25th, which was met with brutal police excess and detention of leaders and activists of farmer, working class and Dalit organisations. This only resulted in an intense phase of struggle culminating in two meetings with the Chief Minister. In the first meeting on July 4th the Chief Minister sought for 10 days' time to assess the options for overcoming supposed legal hurdles to the cancellation of this land acquisition. This perception of helplessness in the face of the law was debunked immediately by the All India Lawyers Association for Justice (AILAJ), which released their detailed statement, clarifying that there were no legal impediments to the State Government withdrawing from the Devanahalli land acquisition, and

any helplessness portrayed by the Karnataka State Government in this regard was unfounded in law.

Between these meetings, hectic efforts were made to derail the struggle and break the unity of the farmers. A counter group of farmers were mobilised to meet the Chief Minister and declared their readiness for acquisition if compensation was higher. A package was offered by the State government – drop about 495 acres from acquisition and give increased case compensation or developed sites for the remaining land acquired. The protesting farmers braved this storm as well. They intensified the struggle in each of the 13 villages against land acquisition and conducted a village-wise enumeration revealing that an overwhelming majority of farmers were unwilling to acquiesce with the land acquisition and exposed the falsity of any claims to the contrary. The Government's offer of higher compensation in lieu of their lands, and offer to reduce 495 acres of land from what they initially sought to acquire was resoundingly rejected by the farmers.

The consequence of this grit and determination is the welcome decision of the State Government to drop the land acquisition in its entirety. Ofcourse the State Government has, while doing so, has also stated that it will consider taking the lands of farmers willingly parting with their lands. This is a face saver at best and red herring at worst. The State cannot pretend to be a real estate agent going around and picking up available property. It

is bound to the rule of law, and the sole manner in which it can secure lands for industrial or any purposes, is to notify the said lands, which under the present circumstances is not possible. Ofcourse, if the State Government were to choose this path, it does so at its own peril and risks the wrath of not only the farmers, but also of all organisations standing in solidarity with the farmers and any democratic-minded person in the State.

Immediately after this announcement by the State Government, BJP MP Tejasvi Surya strongly criticized the Karnataka government's decision to withdraw from this land acquisition declaring that this would set back the state's potential to attract industry and create employment. Incidentally and unsurprisingly, coming from a legacy of mercy petitioners, he deleted this post on X (formerly Twitter) within a few hours. Given BJP's history of anti-farmer policies and the fact that it is their government that initiated the acquisition process in Devanahalli, these statements of Tejasvi Surya are hardly unexpected. BJP are committed to serve their corporate masters at every turn.

The BJP has maintained a loud silence throughout the period that the Devanahalli farmers intensified their struggle against the Karnataka Congress government. Since Modi's victory in 2014, fascist forces have relentlessly pursued anti-farmer

policies and its agenda to prioritize big corporate interests in agriculture, as against the interests of India's peasants. Despite being forced to withdraw the 3 farm laws, the Modi government is seeking to reintroduce its pro-corporate agricultural policies under the guise of the new draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing. Even their promise of doubling the income of farmers has proven to be a wholesale jumla. The people of India have resisted these attacks without fear. The sustained nation-wide struggle of farmers and Adivasis stopped the Modi government's attempt to amend the 2013 Land Acquisition Act. The epic agitation by farmers on the borders of Delhi compelled the Modi government to withdraw the 3 farm laws. Recently, farmer organizations across the country have united in large-scale protests demanding freedom from debt and better minimum support prices for agricultural produce.

In Karnataka, the previous BJP Government under Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai passed a slew of amendments including to the Land Reforms Act and the APMC Act, throwing open the agricultural sector to corporate companies. In its 2023 election manifesto, the Congress party had made several assurances to farmers including repealing the anti-farmer amendments to various laws brought by the BJP, withdrawing politically motivated cases against

farmers, implementing MSP, declaring interest-free loans, etc. In fact, ahead of these elections, then Leader of Opposition Siddaramaiah had categorically assured the Devanahalli farmers that the land acquisition initiated by the BJP government would be dropped if the Congress came to power. There has been a noticeable lack of urgency in the Congress Government's efforts to realise these promises. Even the Devanahalli farmers had to continue their indefinite struggle to compel the Congress State Government to drop this land acquisition.

The success of the Devanahalli struggle must become driving force for more united and determined struggles of the toiling masses against the neo-liberal policies of the Congress State Government and to ensure it keeps up to the various promises it made in the run-up to the 2023 Assembly Elections. BJP's role throughout the Devanahalli struggle has exposed their undemocratic core and subservience to corporate interests, and must serve to reason enough to reject the BJP.

The success of the Devanahalli struggle in building a fighting unity between farmer, Ambedkarite and Left traditions could provide a strong foundation for strengthening grassroot struggles, fostering unity and building a consensus among the toiling masses of the need for a Left-Democratic alternative, as part of the larger anti-fascist struggle. ■

“We Must Fiercely Defend Our Agricultural Land”

Interview with Ramesh Chemachanahalli, core committee member, Bhoo Swadina Virodhi Horata Samiti (Anti-Land Acquisition Struggle Committee) about the historic Devanahalli struggle

1. The Karnataka government has withdrawn the Devanahalli land acquisition notification after 1198 days of struggle by the farmers. What is your message to the people of Karnataka?

We are delighted about the victory. It is not just our victory but of the people of entire Karnataka. It's reassuring to know that when people stand up for their rights, other concerned organisations and people will

surely join in solidarity. It's a relief and joy to know that the farmers here have saved their livelihood.

Our message is that, if there is agriculturally productive land, it has to be fiercely defended. There is no alternative to agriculture. Industries and agriculture have to go hand in hand not one overlapping the other. Hence agriculturally productive land has to be kept out of the purview of acquisitions. Society isn't stagnant water and organic development keeps happening which is well and good but changes which are brought in by bulldozing the lives of people against the people's will has to be opposed and land acquisitions shouldn't happen like real estate business and if such things are made by the Government, concerned farmers have to come together and resist such moves by the Government. Build movements which is inclusive of everyone, only then these struggles can achieve victory.

2. Can you tell us more about the Devanahalli struggle?

The preliminary notification for land acquisition was issued in August 2021, but we got to know only around September through social media. It is only in first week of January 2022 that we received notices from the Government. Once we got the notices, we panicked at the very thought of losing our land. This was not the case of just few farmers; majority of the affected farmers in all 13 villages felt this way, but at that time not everybody was in touch with each other. In my village Murthy, Mukund and I were speaking amongst ourselves regarding what to do. We knew that we did not want to give up our ancestral lands, but we did not know what to do to save them. Initially we tried different efforts, we discussed our issue with Clifton D' Rozario [CPI(ML) State Secretary] contemplating approaching the Courts, but he advised us to concentrate on building a movement against this land acquisition rather than approaching courts, since that is where we stood the best chance of victory.

In the beginning we concentrated on approaching the authorities by writing to them about our serious objections to the land acquisition including writing to the Deputy Commissioner (Collector) of our district. We also got in touch with Lawyer Siddharth who had fought to protect the land rights of Dalits in our area, and he helped in co-ordinating and getting us in touch with people across the 13 villages. We came in touch with Karalli Srinivas who have been guiding us throughout the protest. We then organised a meeting of representatives from all 13 villages, where we firmly resolved to fight to save our lands.

We began our protest by burning the notices issued by the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board. This was at the end of January 2022 and it was a gathering of about 100 - 150 farmers. That is how our movement began. The representatives of the District Administration and the KIADB came and assured us that they would communicate to the higher ups about our demands to drop the acquisition. We gave them a warning that if nothing would happen within 3 months, we would start an indefinite protest against the Government. In February that year, we held a massive tractor rally from Channarayapatna to the office of the Deputy Commissioner (Collector), during which we faced severe police repression. Despite that our rally was a massive success and hundreds of farmers participated. We then got in touch with state leaders such as Mavalli Shankar and Badgalpura Nagendra who came to the rally. We met Chukki Nanjundaswamy, Bayyareddy, Mavalli Shankar and other state leaders of Samyukta Horata.

3. It was a long struggle, spanning more than 39 months. What were the challenges amid the protracted struggle and how you all were able to navigate them?

One thing what was deep rooted in the minds of the farmers was that it was not going to be easy to change the Government's decision. However, relentless propaganda and meetings among the affected villages began to create the belief that we stood a fighting chance and this gave us immense confidence. The gathering at our indefinite protest site and various programmes began increasing rapidly as farmers started developing more and more confidence. It was not easy to sustain this long. There were ups and downs where people felt difficulties since it was a long struggle. There were very few people who wanted to give land and for genuine reasons of poverty and there were real estate agents and other vested political interests working since day one to convince people to give up their lands.

Like the urban poor, there are a lot of farmers who are in crisis. There are many people willing to buy the lands off these farmers. Land is a means of production and security. It cannot ever be bought again by these farmers. People who sell land will have to do agriculture only, only this time as landless labourers. Real estate brokers had started a trend of preying on poor farmers during demonetization itself. We are sure that these real estate brokers surely had an idea then itself that there would be acquisition in these areas, so they would give a loan of say 5 lakhs to some poor

farmer and get a General Power of Attorney from him to take control over this land. So when the acquisition happens from the Government these brokers would approach the farmers for double the money or make sure they go to court to honour the agreement and this is how they arm twist the farmers. This is a very fraudulent agreement. This trend has been happening in previous acquisitions and is continuing in other acquisitions too. Still we were able to overcome these challenges in our area in this battle to save our lands.

Also, there was police repression against the movement. Elderly women have been manhandled, Farmers have been hit by lathis and have suffered wounds but none of these acts the Government/police accept. Criminal cases have been filed against scores of us. During a preventive detention against us, my friend Pramod suffered a serious eye injury at the hands of police. He has not fully recovered even after 2-3 surgeries.

Many organisations and individuals came in support of the struggle through Samyukta Horata (Coalition of farmer, Dalit and Trade Union organisations in Karnataka), especially since that June 25 “Devanahalli Chalo” protest. This gave us a big boost. Scores of national-level organisations came in our support. All sorts of farmers, leftist and Dalit organisations came in our support. Along with them were many individuals and artists who contributed in the way they could for the movement. Everybody played their role with utmost dedication and that is why we could see the movement succeeding.

4. Tejasvi Surya, the BJP MP, criticised Siddaramaiah for dropping the land acquisition. What do you have to say about this?

The BJP's viewpoint on development is different from ours. For them development means some large corporates companies and capitalists coming and setting up industries. This is their concept of development. This is skewed and is contrary to the development of the people. Recently they waived off Rs. 34,000 crore tax to Reliance company, whereas the loan of entire farmers of Karnataka is estimated around 60,000 cr. On one side industries like Reliance get their loans and taxes waived off by the Government, on the other side the same Government does not provide any such loan waiver, not even subsidies for seed, irrigation and agricultural equipment to increase production. They do not have the idea or vision of improving people's living standards. They only see its income generation by having crony ties with industries and does not care about the people.

If you increase the living conditions of the farmers they can pay the tax indirectly by consuming products and contribute to the GDP. If they want farmers to compete with industries in paying direct taxes, let the Government first ensure that regular income is generated by agricultural labourers and small land-holding farmers then we can talk about farmers paying income tax. ■

- Liberation Desk

**Interview with Sharath, an activist
of Devanahalli struggle and Bengaluru
District Committee Member of CPIML**

Devanahalli movement went on for 39 months and you were also involved in the struggle. Can you share your experience?

It was on Day 75 of the 1198-day Devanahalli farmers' movement when I learnt about the acquisition and the farmers' protest from Comrade Clifton. So, few of us went to Devanahalli to offer our solidarity. On that day, there was a call for 'Devanahalli Bandh'. Shops were closed and the common people of Devanahalli town closed their shutters in full solidarity with the farmers' protest. There was a procession rally taken out by farmers inside the town. It was a successful bandh and there was a tussle with the police also on the day. Farmers were quite militant and enthusiastic, because they were directly impacted by this acquisition and had to defend their lands.

I got to know that entire villages surrounding Devanahalli were previously acquired to build the Bangalore International Airport, and all those displaced persons were eventually left in penury. Today no one knows where most of them are or what they do. The first thing that hit me in the village was that it was acres and acres of fertile lands which was slated for acquisition. It was a beautiful sight, and one can only wonder how the government could take away fertile lands for developmental projects.

I was in touch with the farmers who were part of the core committee, i.e., Ramesh and Pramod. We would discuss legal and strategic aspects. Police notices were regularly issued when they were protesting in Devanahalli.

On August 15, 2023 the farmers were holding a protest march and wanted to hoist the national flag in a field nearby. The message that they wanted to send was that farmers had not got freedom against these land acquisitions. However, there was brutal crackdown by the police on the day. One of the farmers was injured

in the eye and lost vision. Elderly and women farmers were brutally beaten. Police were walking in the village in mufti and picking up anyone who was in a gathering of four or five people. They were picking up people randomly in black Innova cars. In fact, I had stayed back in the protest site that day and at 4.00 a.m., the cops raided the protest site and picked up the farmer leaders and me. There was a scuffle and in that I was injured too.

Any significant point in the protest that stands out?

I remember the farmers burning the notices of acquisition in front of Bangalore Rural In-charge Minister and MLA from Devanahalli KH Muniyappa's home. The government authorities had stuck notices in two villages saying final notification for the acquisition has come, and that the farmers have to give up their lands in a stipulated time. The farmers burnt these notices in protest.

The other thing is, time and again elderly women farmers - Narayanamma, Munivenkatamma, Venkatamma - withstood police brutality and challenged the government authorities to protect their land and not allowing it to be forcibly acquired. These women fought to get their land allotted to them. They are Dalits who got land allotted for their dignity and now were protecting it. Narayanamma and Munivenkatamma challenged the Tahsildar and Police once, saying that they are trespassing on their lands and that they will not let it be acquired and will defend themselves and their lands at all costs. This was very inspiring. ■

- Lekha Adavi

Gaza Under the Microscope: Youth under the War of Extermination

[As the Israeli genocidal war in Gaza intensifies, the world bears witness to a humanitarian catastrophe of unimaginable proportions. The Gaza Strip, one of the most densely populated areas on earth, has become the epicentre of destruction, where entire neighbourhoods have been levelled, families torn apart, and civilian life shattered. Amid the rubble and relentless bombardment, Gaza's youth and children—who make up more than half the population—have become deliberate targets of Israel's war machinery. In this article, Ahmad Abu Halima, Head of the Palestinian Democratic Youth Union (PDYU) in the Gaza Strip, offers a searing first-hand reflection on this grim reality. It is a testimony from a generation under siege, yet defiantly clinging to dignity, resistance, and hope. – Ed.]

When we write from Gaza, as we live through these harsh realities, we're seized by a strange feeling—a loss of appetite for writing in the face of the hell surrounding us. And we're haunted by a critical question: do our words even reach those with a conscience? Does the world really care about our cause?

The answer came when several youth and student organizations around the world requested translations of some articles I had written earlier, so they could help share our story and show their audiences the real Gaza.

In Gaza, where life itself becomes a test of survival, daily life no longer resembles anything we once knew or what anyone else might experience on this planet. War has become an everyday reality; fear, a constant companion; destruction, part of the natural landscape. With the continued bombardment and attacks, lives are lost and homes demolished—but the deadliest blow is unseen: the collapse of dreams, the fracturing of spirits, and the assassination of the future.

In the heart of this hell, Palestinian youth stand exposed

before an uncertain fate, trying to cling to what remains of a dream—or even the faintest seed of hope, if it still exists.

Aspirations Stolen Away

This generation was meant to be the most ambitious, the most prepared to change reality. Gaza's youth possess tremendous energy, bold ideas, and ambitions that stretch beyond borders. But the war has stolen more than the lives of their loved ones; it has also robbed them of their dreams and closed off the doors to the future.

Instead of investing in creativity and education, they now search for survival and for a single moment of calm in a sea of bloody noise.

The harsh details of daily life push young people to walk the razor's edge of pain: their daily routines constantly threatened by bombardment, living with the knowledge that every morning could be their last, and that every moment of quiet could suddenly turn into a nightmare.

They spend hours trying to secure basic necessities rather than develop themselves, and the siege and destruction have made even

going to work or stepping out for leisure nearly impossible.

Education: A Distant Dream

With schools and universities bombed, and with constant power and internet outages, education has become an unattainable luxury. Many universities can no longer receive students, libraries have turned to rubble, and many teachers have displaced or been killed.

Students look for alternatives that simply don't exist, and some have been forced to abandon education altogether to look for a piece of bread.

Cultural Isolation and the Loss of Social Life

There are no playgrounds, youth centers, cultural events, or spaces to unwind. The absence of sports and recreation has left this generation, who should have been pursuing hobbies, living in suffocating isolation.

There are no gatherings with friends; shelling and displacement have scattered families and separated

friends, wiping out the beautiful moments.

The warmth of sitting together has disappeared, and phones and Facebook have become the only outlet—if the internet is available, which it often isn't.

Hunger and malnutrition

With farmland destroyed and a crippling economic blockade, food quality has plummeted.

Youth now rely on limited, nutritionally unbalanced food aid—and with border crossings closed, even this aid has stopped arriving. As a result, a person's daily portion has shrunk to a single, insufficient meal.

Chronic hunger has spread, and many go to bed without enough food. This hunger is not just a physical need—it deepens the sense of humiliation and deprivation.

Psychological Depression and Loss of Prospects

Depression has become common among young people, along with feelings of helplessness and futility. In the absence of work

and education opportunities, youth are left in an existential vacuum.

With no mental health support, no specialized institutions, and no psychological aid campaigns, the overwhelming internal pressure makes them feel as if they're fighting a daily battle inside themselves.

Hope and Joy: Resistance

Yet despite everything, we still hold on to hope. Young people write messages of love and peace on the walls of destroyed homes. Small youth initiatives are quietly emerging in hidden corners, even amid ongoing shelling. There remains a deep determination to learn, create, and express themselves online—even if the world isn't listening.

Gaza's youth are not waiting for someone to give them life—they are creating it amid the ruins. Their small joys—a photo on Instagram, a joke among friends, reading a book by candlelight—are victories over the machinery of war. These young people are not just fighting to stay alive, but so their dreams won't be erased and their voices won't be forgotten. ■



Draconian New Measures Against Palestine Protests and a New Left Initiative

Notes from the Belly of the Beast

With deliberate mass starvation taking hold in Gaza as the latest face of Israel's US- and UK- backed genocide, instead of heeding the popular movement demanding an end to its complicity, the British government doubled down on its strategy of repressing and silencing the Palestine solidarity movement at the end of June, with an unprecedented ban on Palestine Action, an organisation which has played an important role in the movement. Palestine Action is a non-violent direct-action organisation which targets weapons manufacturers providing arms to Israel, aiming to physically disrupt the supply chains for genocide. It has been particularly effective in forcing several sites in Britain owned by Elbit Systems (Israel's biggest arms manufacturer, with which Adani collaborates on lethal Hermes drones) to close down. The proscription of Palestine Action places it in the same category as organisations previously banned in Britain under draconian terrorism legislation, a list which already includes most of the armed groups resisting the US-Israel axis in West Asia, making expressions of support for Palestine's right to resist a risky endeavour in Britain. However, this new move for the first time directly targets a non-violent solidarity organisation based in the UK itself under anti-terror legislation, making even public expressions of support for Palestine Action punishable with a jail sentence of up to 14 years. The Starmer government cynically pushed the ban through Parliament by clubbing Palestine Action with two little-known Neo-Nazi groups, seeking a ban on all three.

The ban came into force on 5 July amidst mass protests proclaiming 'We are all Palestine Action' and multiple legal challenges. A few days later the first of many groups of protestors tested the new conditions by carrying placards stating 'I Oppose Genocide, I Support Palestine Action' leading to the spectacle of police publicly arresting people holding these signs including an 83-year old retired Christian priest, Sue Parfitt, and charging them with terrorism offences. As was the intention, the ban is being interpreted by the police as applying far beyond Palestine Action itself, and the wider aim is clearly to have a chilling effect on pro-Palestine protests. Meanwhile, the Filton 23, members of Palestine Action, remain incarcerated and denied bail in a case predating the ban, relating to alleged actions at the main Elbit research and development site in Filton, Bristol. They include students, teachers and health workers; the youngest, Fatema Zainab Rajwani, is a 20-year-old student of Gujarati heritage, who has been remanded in jail for almost a year to date, and has faced acute Islamophobia and racism from the prison authorities.

In Parliament the banning of Palestine Action was opposed vigorously by a small section of Left MPs including the independent group led by Jeremy Corbyn, some left MPs who remain in the Labour Party, (several of whom are currently suspended after voting against the government's slashing welfare benefits and its refusal to end the coercive two-child benefit cap which has left many households struggling), and some Green Party MPs. The day after the Parliamentary debate on the proscription, Zarah

Sultana, the young, outspoken and popular MP for Coventry South, resigned from the ruling Labour Party and announced plans to launch a new party which would be jointly led by herself and Jeremy Corbyn. For many this is an initiative long overdue, at least since Corbyn's resignation as Labour leader in 2019 after a concerted smear campaign by pro-Israel groups. It is all the more necessary as the Starmer government lurches further and further to the right in a hopeless attempt to win back voters who have turned in large numbers the far-right Reform Party, by regurgitating the latter's racist anti-migrant propaganda and policies, even as its pro-corporate policies deepen unemployment and poverty in the very 'belly of the beast' of imperialism. A recent speech by Keir Starmer referred to Britain becoming an 'island of strangers', directly echoing an inflammatory 1968 anti-immigration speech by notorious racist demagogue Enoch Powell. As another summer of far-right riots looms, Starmer's government is only doubling down on this desperate mimicry.

72,000 people signed up in the first three days to participate in the new initiative announced by Zarah Sultana and polls are currently suggesting that the potential new party, if launched, could attract votes on par with the Labour Party. But it is still unclear whether the coming weeks will see an effective consolidation of a new political force bringing together left independent, ex-Labour and progressive Green MPs and grassroots activists on a platform of economic justice, anti-racism, and committed anti-imperialism. ■

- London Correspondent

Yogi's Bulldozers Demolish Hundreds of Madarsa, Mosques, Mazaar and Eidgah in UP

CPIML and Insaaf Manch Fact-Finding Report on Bulldozer Action in Uttar Pradesh's Terai Region

After last Lok Sabha elections, when BJP came second to SP in the Uttar Pradesh, Yogi government along with a whole battery of Sangh outfits has started a vicious communal campaign targeting places of worship of Muslims and Mughal era buildings on the pretext that they were built over the ruins of Hindu temples, brazenly violating Places of Worship Act 1991. A nearly 500 year old mosque in Sambhal was targeted and a survey order was acquired from a lower court to 'search' for the remains of a Kalki Avatar temple. This followed a communal gameplan where Muslims were subjected to severe repression and police atrocities leading to the killings of many Muslims and hundreds of them were sent to jail under various criminal charges. Various RSS outfits have made similar claims on hundreds of places of Muslim worship all over the country including the famous Khwaza Moinuddin Chisti shrine in Ajmer. The government in Uttar Pradesh is conducting another campaign more viciously up to the villages and towns by renovating temples located in minority dominated neighbourhoods and encouraging people to go there in large numbers for worship.

Simultaneously propaganda around the Modi government's Waqf Amendment Bill is also going on, especially by the media, spreading a false narrative that the new amendment will facilitate handing over of Waqf properties to Hindus.

The BJP is desperately trying to further deepen communal divide in the state of UP in order to remain in power. Since last April, a very intense and widespread campaign of demolishing Muslim places of worship and Madrasas has begun which is more intense in Terai region districts of Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri, Baharaich, Shravasti, Balrampur, Siddharth Nagar and Maharajganj. These districts have a sizable Muslim population which poses electoral challenges for the BJP. The demolitions are underway on various flimsy pretexts like non-renewal or non-recognition of Madarasas, lack of documents of places of worship and illegal construction etc. Another reason reported was 'security concerns' because they are situated near the Nepal border! The closure of madarasas and bulldozer demolitions are going on a large scale.

This terai region is also known for the rich legacy of Buddha, places like Shravasti and Kapilvastu are revered for their message of peace and harmony for all humankind. But now chief minister Adityanath himself is directly involved in building a polarising political narrative of Gazi Mian versus Suheldev.

A CPIML and Insaaf Manch joint team visited Baharaich, Shravasi and Siddharth Nagar districts on 20-22 June to investigate this communal bulldozer campaign. The team consisted of Afroz Alam, Insaaf Manch Uttar Pradesh Convenor, Rajesh Sahni, CPIML State Standing Committee member, CPIML State Committee Member Ram Laut and Jamal Khan from Insaaf Manch. They were helped by many concerned citizens and local activists. We present here a summarised version of their findings.]

Baharaich: Demolition of Baba Lakkad Shah Shrine

On 20 June the team met Hamza Shafiq, a leader of the Congress party, in his party office. He said the administration started serving eviction notices in the month of April. This followed the visits of District Minority Officer Sanjay Mishra to the madarasas, where he used to threaten Hafiz and Maulavis, teachers in madarasas, asking very annoying questions ranging from 'Why you teach prayers in the madarasa' to 'Why you



teach Urdu'. He made videos of these 'visits' and posted them on social media hence starting a vicious campaign against madarasas.

Mihirpurva block under Motipur tehsil and Ruaidiha and Nawabganj under Nanpara saw maximum madarsa closures and demolitions of dargah, mazaar, mosques and madrasas. This region is near India-Nepal border, although some demolitions were also done in Kaisarganj block which is at some distance from the border.

The fact finding team visited Motipur to meet Md. Shamim and Md. Faizal. They said around 1500 inhabit in a densely populated locality where a 75 year old mosque and a 40 year old madarsa institution is situated along with many temples on a stretch of 92 bigha land, which is barren. The demolition notices are served to the mosque and the madarsa, but not to the hindu temples. Locals have filed a petition in the court against this notice.

Just five kilometers away from Motipur is Hasuliha village where a mosque and a madarsa stood for more than 50 years. The total population in this village is 500 and the education of about 100 children are taken care of by the madarsa. A notice was served on 22 May, the madarsa was razed to the ground in the presence of a very heavy police presence. Madarsa committee chairperson Shabbir Ahmad says, "The police force was present in such huge numbers that no one dared to oppose the demolition fearing an immediate arrest. The madarsa was bulldozed very quickly. Somehow the mosque is still standing."

Notices were also given in another nearby village Badhainpurava to the mosque and madarsa both. The madarsa has been closed. One more madarsa was sealed in Darogapurava of Mihirpurava town in Motipur tehsil, while a madarsa in Churva was bulldozed.

There was a very famous and revered shrine (Mazaar) of Saiyad Hashim Ali Shah @ Lakkad Shah in the jungle after Mihirpurava along with 5-6 other smaller shrines of the followers of this saint. All

these shrines were bulldozed to the ground in the dark of night of 8-9 June in presence of large police posse. Here a notice was served on 5 June, and a hasty survey was done on 6 June. It is important to note a civil suit is going on in the High Court for Baba Lakkad Shah Mazaar, but the administration did not care to wait for a matter that is sub-judice. Senior advocate Shakil Kidwai is fighting this case in the court. He said this was a 500 year old place of historic importance and the founder Guru of Sikh religion Guru Nanak himself had given Saiyad Hashim Ali Shah a new name Lakkad Shah. According to the Places of Worship Act 1991, this shrine should not have even been served a notice, let alone the demolition. This was an open violation of the law of the land.

The team then reached Mihirpurava village in Nanpara tehsil near the Indo-Nepal border. A madarsa was demolished here while the matter was subjudice. Mohammad Salman Khan Asharfi was involved in running this madarsa. He said, "SDM sahab said to us we want to demolish this madarsa, so let us do it. If you object then we'll demolish the whole basti which is situated on the land of the Gram sabha. And the madarsa was razed." There was another madarsa in the nearby village Ranjit Bojh which is now closed down.

Nidhi Nagar village under Panchpakadi panchayat is also not very far and the team also went there. A fifty year old mosque, Kadri Masjid, was bulldozed. Here the notice and bulldozer both came together making a mockery of the law. When people tried to protest, they were told that the government had issued an order to demolish all the mosques near the India-Nepal border.

The team moved on along the road a little further near the Chakia forest where Sota Shah Baba mazaar once stood along with few other mazaars. Now there are none, all bulldozed.

Another mazaar of Baba Marha Shah located in this area was also demolished without even serving a notice.

A hundred year old Eidgah in

Rupaidiha is protected under the Places of Worship Act 1991, but was served a notice and now the matter is in the court. A mosque in Nibia village under Sahajana panchayat has also been given notice. A penalty has also been served for a monetary fine of Rs. 6 crore 57 lakhs on the Rupaidiha Eidgah and of Rs. 10 crores on the mosque in Nibia. The tehsil administration has imposed penalties on almost all mosques and madarasas and now pressurising the villagers to demolish mosques and madarasas themselves, else the administration will collect the penalty money from the villagers.

The fact finding team returned to Baharaich in the evening at the house of Advocate Shakil Kidwai who is looking after the court cases of all above mentioned places. The senior advocate informed that the notices served in all cases are under section 67, which mandates a 15-day time for reply and after that if a decision was reached then another 30 day time period of filing an appeal as per the Supreme Court guideline. This was violated in all cases in the Baharaich district, he said. People were either not given notices under prescribed procedure nor were they given proper time for filing a reply. Moreover, owing to the prevailing atmosphere of fear in many cases people themselves refrained from approaching the judiciary. The administration was using a very disproportionately huge police force and never allowed any kind of opposition or protest to happen.

Advocate Shakil Kidwai said this is a huge conspiracy going on in the district. The place of worship of popular Sufi saint Hazarat Saiyad Hashim Shah alias Lakkad Shah Baba in the forest of Motinagar is registered in the records of the Sunni Central Waqf Board at the serial number 108. The forest officer of Baharaich conducted demolition of this shrine violating the High Court order in the night of 8-9 June, because on 10 June the next day this was scheduled for hearing in the High Court.

He also told about the shrine of



CPI(ML) called for a state-wide protest day 30 June in Uttar Pradesh

Saiyad Salaar Masufad Ghazi said to be 1008 years old. Local BJP MP Anand Kumar Gaur is demanding a survey of this place after propagating a narrative that a temple existed at the same place. This Mazar of Ghazi Miah is a symbol of Hindu-Muslim unity and more Hindus came to worship here than the number of Muslims.

Shakil Kidwai and Aziz Khan, both advocates, have sent a memorandum to the President of India demanding a stop to this communal bulldozer campaign. Shakil Kidwai has also given a complaint in writing to the Superintendent of Police in Baharaich against the defamatory communal remarks made by MP Anand Kumar Gaur on Ghazi Miah.

Shravasti: Madarsas Under Attack

The team spent the next day 21 June in Shravasti district. In Jamunaha tehsil more mosques, Eidgahs and madarsas were demolished than any other place. Now only two madarsas are running in this tehsil out of nearly 100, the rest are either closed down or sealed by the administration.

Islamia Darul Huda madarsa in Harvandhapur village is functional. Hafiz of this madarsa Md. Salman Sheikh and a teacher Baba Deen Verma said the closure of such a large number of madarsas is wrong. This has left thousands of children without any education, along with a number of teachers rendered unemployed. Baba Deen Verma further said the madarsas want to renew their registration but the government has refused to do so, and this is not justified.

The team came to know that the notices have been served to all madarsas

and mosques in one single day, on 25 April. The affected people went to meet District Magistrate on 27 April, and also with the concerned officer of minority affairs as well as the SDM of Jamunaha, but to no avail.

Md Salman Baig told the team "We also went to Lucknow and met with Maulana Rashid Firangi Mahali. He talked to the Chief Minister and also helped us in filing the cases in the High Court. But the bulldozers could not be stopped."

In Shravasti district 32 madarsas, Eidgahs and Mosques have been demolished till now and 130 madarsas were forcibly closed down without even serving formal notices or sealing orders. In the district there were nearly 300 madarsas of which only 9 are running now, rest have been closed down.

After serving notices under the Section-67 the Tehsildar rejects all petitions within 4-5 days without any satisfactory hearings and then bulldozers arrive without waiting for a 30 day appeal time.

The team visited Harbanshpur and then Baghmari where an Eidgah was bulldozed and a fine of Rs. 2 lakhs was also imposed. Later in Hasanpur the team went to the site of the debris where a two story madarsa stood a few days back. This 30 year old madarsa which caters to hundreds of children, was given a notice on 8 May and on 19 June demolition was done.

The Arabia Islamia Talimul Kuran madarsa has been running since 1975 in Kunda village. Currently there are 128 students in this. Despite the fact that this duly recognised madarsa was built on the land provided by Insan Khan, Mohammad and their brothers, it was demolished forcibly and the ongoing construction of a mosque on the same land was stopped

by the police. The manager of the madarsa Hafiz Abdul Kuddus said they have filed a petition in the High Court against these illegal actions.

A madarsa running in Bangai since 1960 is duly recognised as a school by the BSA office since 1974. The land where madarsa is situated is duly registered in the name of the school. This is the biggest madarsa in Shravasti district with a two story building, 32 rooms and 400 students. The administration claimed this is not recognised by the government and sealed it. The management went to the High Court which ordered on 14 May to open the madarsa, but the seal was somehow taken off only on 28 May, just a day before when the next hearing in the HC was scheduled.

Maulana Mairaz, manager of a madarsa, told the team, "The tehsildar served a notice on 8 May accusing the madarsa is constructed on navin parti land and imposed a fine of Rs. 3,84,720. On 24 May Tehsildar concluded arguments in his court and gave his judgement against the madarsa. A displacement notice was issued on 28 May and served on 29 May. We appealed in the DM office on 5 June, the proceedings on this appeal were concluded within a week and a decision was made against the appeal. On 18 June the madarsa was bulldozed." Many villagers including Bashir Ahmad and Narendra Verma expressed their unhappiness over this act.

Many of them met with the DM demanding a stop to these actions but their appeals were not heard. People also went to local Samajwadi Party MP Ram Shiromani Verma asking for help to stop the bulldozers. The MP said he has sent a letter to Akhilesh Yadav ji informing details of this matter, but did not bother to meet the DM himself or even visit the site of now demolished madarsas.

People also said CPIML is the first political party to hear their voices and visit the sites of demolitions.

The fact finding team also visited a madarsa with 300 students, run by Abdul

Muhid on his private land in Bangai. This was sealed on 27 April. The Jamia Rajbia Shamshul Uloom madarsa at Haridutt Nagar in Jamunaha tehsil has also been bulldozed.

Md. Soharab of Ekauna tehsil told the team of 3 madarsas now sealed and almost all other madarsas in this tehsil have been closed after giving notices or even without them. The Eidgah of Ekauna has been demolished.

A mosque in Bheipur village under Minaga tehsil was also bulldozed.

A list of demolished Madarsas, Mazars, Eidgahs and Mosques in Shravasti District:

Madarsa: (1). Nasirganj (2). Pratappur (3). Maukpurava (4). Kunda (5). Sonpur (6). Nagai village (7). Ranipur Bankatwa (8). Khalifatpur (9). Manshpurava (10). Aala Gaon (11). Bhela Gaon (12). Imalia Karanpur (13). Banthihawan (14). Khawa Pokhra (15). Alinagar (16). Purebale (17). Ashrafnagar (18). Rampur Basti (19). Keshavapur Jogia (20). Karimpurava Jabadi (21). Maharu Murtiha (22). Bangai (23). Hardutt Nagar Girant.

Mazar : (1). Persona Mazar (2). Gulara Mazar.

Mosque : (1) Bhojpur Bhinaga Eidgah : (1) Baghmari (2). Ekauna

Siddharth Nagar:

The fact finding team reached Etwa and Soharatgarh tehsils in Siddharth Nagar district on the third day. Dr. Shakur Alam and Md. Salim joined them from Etwa.

At Jhakaiyya Md. Arshad and many others expressed their anger against the bulldozer campaign by the state.

The team visited Siswan @ Shivmari village situated near Dhebarua police station. A 90 year old mosque and a madarsa running inside it were not only razed to the ground on 12 June, the debris

after the demolition was also removed from the spot and the land was made even. Abdul Mobin and Anarullah are involved in the matters of judicial proceedings with respect to this mosque. They said "The 90 year old mosque was demolished calling it illegal construction on government land, but this land is well on records in the 1359 fasli register in the name of Subedar. The mosque was constructed on his private land. Later, when chakbandi was done in the area this was wrongly recorded as a barren land. All records before chakbandi clearly show the existence of the mosque as well as madarsa. But the Tehsildar court, without hearing our arguments, issued a notice of demolition on 7 May. We filed an appeal under the Section 101, which pertains to the land exchange law that allows 1.5 times land in exchange for the existing land where the mosque existed. The Tehsildar court accepted this case hence demolition notice automatically became ineffective as per the law. Without waiting for a decision on the land exchange case the mosque and madarsa were demolished on 27 May. Now villagers have filed a case in the High Court against this brazenly illegal act of the administration." There is a dalit basti near the mosque. When a member of the fact finding team asked a woman from that basti about her feelings on the demolition of the mosque, she shared her fears saying the land of her basti and the mosque bears the same number on land records and now the whole basti's existence is also under threat.

A two story madarsa in Tola Narkatia which has 200 students, was served a closure notice on 11 June. One madarsa with 200 students in Pipra village was demolished on 2 May after serving a notice on 26 April. There is a small temple over the same land but that was neither given a notice nor demolished. People asked Tehsildar why the temple was left untouched, he only replied you give us a complaint in writing only then this can be considered. Village Pradhan Shamshulla, and many others called this

a ploy by administration to divide Hindus and Muslims in the village. We don't want the demolition of both madarsa and mandir, they replied to the officials.

People in Romin Dei and Mishravalia villages have gone to court against the notices served for two madarsas and a mosque. But in Bijua people were forced to demolish a madarsa after giving them a notice. In Malgahiya a madarsa was also demolished which was running since 1962.

People contacted SP MLA of Etwa Mata Prasad Pandey who is also the leader of opposition in the Assembly for help. He called on phone some administrative officials but could not stop the demolitions.

Pilibhit

CPIML leader Afroz Alam said that the bulldozer campaign is also gaining speed in Pilibhit district. Notices have been given to mosques in Bhagwantapur, New Area Mallapur and Dharmangatpur villages in Kalinagar tehsil. One madarsa in Dagga was also given a notice. Villagers have approached the judiciary against these notices.

In Puranpur tehsil a mosque which was situated on the leased land had to be demolished in Shastri Nagar. Most of the lands are leased lands in this area and there are hundreds of temples and Gurudwaras in this area, but only the mosque was targeted. One mosque in Kabirganj has been served a demolition notice.

CPI(ML) and Insaaf Manch leaders noted that the Yogi Adityanath government is blatantly violating the constitutional rights of Muslims to practice their religion and access education. They demanded the immediate dismissal of Bahraich's District Minority Welfare Officer for acting with communal bias and called for an end to the campaign against madrasas and religious sites across the Terai districts. They further demanded the immediate lifting of the freeze on madrasa recognition and renewal and called for steps to regularise and support these institutions instead of targeting them. ■

Founding Conference of Vyavsayi Mahasangh (Traders' Association) in Bihar

The founding conference of Vyavsayi Mahasangh (Trades Association), Bihar was held on July 13 at Rabindra Bhawan, Patna. CPI(ML) General Secretary Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya addressed the gathering and said that the country is passing through a deep economic crisis. Due to the present economic policies, the condition of the poor is worsening while the wealth of big corporates is increasing massively.

He said that small traders must unite with farmers and workers against corporate loot and the new labour codes. The triangular unity of farmers, workers and small traders can strengthen the struggle.

Comrade Dipankar said that today small shops are shutting down, government jobs are vanishing, and the condition of farmers and workers is deteriorating. In Bihar too, there has been no concrete initiative for small shopkeepers, farmers or workers. The focus remains on overbridges, metro and airport projects while small markets, local industries and trade receive no support. He emphasized that peace, harmony and brotherhood are

essential for any business to thrive. But today, crime, frenzy and anarchy dominate society, which is extremely harmful for trade.

He further said that the Constitution is under direct attack today. Only the rule of law and the Constitution can stop injustice. The country earned freedom with dignity, but now the government is bowing before American arrogance. Also the decisions like demonetisation and GST have devastated the economy. In Bihar, loan recovery is becoming a tool of exploitation of women, and incidents of suicide are rising.

Com. Dipankar said that Bihar needs a change and the present government must be removed. He described the double-engine government as a "fraud bulldozer" which is becoming a barrier in the path of development.

CPI(ML) MP from Karakat, Comrade Rajaram Singh, addressing the conference, said that crime must be resisted and an atmosphere of peace and fraternity must be built for trade to grow and be safe. He attacked the Modi government for wrecking

the economy to benefit a few big capitalists and attempting to bring back autocracy. The people of Bihar will never accept this.

The conference concluded as a significant intervention on the issues of security, dignity and survival of small and medium traders. CPI(ML) MP from Arrah, Sudama Prasad took the lead in this initiative. He demanded the formation of a Business Security Commission as the first and foremost demand. He cited the murder of businessman Gopal Khemka in Patna, which has shocked the entire business community.

The presidium of the event included Comrade Sudama Prasad, former operator of Lemonchus Factory Patna Shambhunath Mehta, furniture trader Surendra Singh, president of Bhojpur Brick Kiln Association Umashankar Yadav, cement trader Poonam Devi, footpath vendor leader Shehzade Alam, CPI(ML) MLA from Sikta Virendra Prasad Gupta, Shiv Ganga Bus driver Ishwar Dayal Singh, grocery trader from Forbesganj Ranjan Bhagat, Hindustan Tyres owner Ganga Sah, and Rice Mill Association representative Sachchidanand Rai. ■

Statewide Bandh in Odisha Over FM College Student's Self-Immolation Case

CPI(ML) Liberation has strongly condemned the tragic death of a second-year integrated B.Ed. student of Fakir Mohan Autonomous College, Balasore, who succumbed to severe burn injuries after attempting self-immolation on July 12. The self-immolation act was in protest against prolonged mental and sexual harassment by an assistant professor of the college.

According to reports, the student had filed multiple complaints with the college principal and the grievance redressal committee. However, the administration failed to take any action to ensure her safety or justice. On the day of the incident, instead of supporting her, the college principal allegedly pressured her to compromise with the accused, Sameer Kumar Sahu. Facing institutional apathy and deep trauma, she

immolated herself in front of the principal's office. She sustained 95 percent burns and was rushed to AIIMS Bhubaneswar, where she was declared dead late on the night of July 14.

CPI(ML) described the incident as a glaring example of the institutional failure in Odisha and a serious deterioration in the conditions of women's safety and justice. The party demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident and strict punishment for all those responsible, including college authorities who failed in their duty. There are disturbing reports that the student's death was not declared immediately, possibly in connection with President Droupadi Murmu's visit to Odisha on the same day. It has been reported that the autopsy was conducted at night, violating standard procedures, and

that her body was sent to her village under suspicious circumstances.

The student was affiliated with the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP). According to reports, her family had earlier faced pressure from BJP leaders and the state administration to withdraw the complaint.

CPI(ML) Liberation has called for intensified protests and urged democratic and progressive sections of society to stand with the victim's family. On July 14, eight political parties including CPI, CPI(M), CPI(ML) Liberation and the All India Forward Bloc issued a joint statement demanding immediate judicial intervention. A candlelight vigil was held on the evening of July 15.

A statewide Odisha Bandh was organised by opposition parties, including CPIML on July 17 to demand justice for the victim and accountability from those in power. ■

Heinous Killing of Five in the Name of Witchcraft in Bihar

After so many years of us becoming independent, an utterly shameful and heinous killing of five people in Bihar should have forced the government to introspect. The horrific mass killing in Tetgama village under Rajiganj Panchayat of Purnia district on the night of 6 July 2025, between 9 and 10 PM, in the name of superstition has shocked the entire region. Five members of a single family were first brutally beaten and then burned alive after being accused of witchcraft and black magic.

The CPIML sent a five-member fact-finding team to the village on 10 July. The team included Sulekha Devi, Islamuddin, Mokhtar, Sangeeta Devi, and Sita Devi. The team visited the site, spoke with the victim's family and local residents, and investigated the facts.

The deceased include: Kato Devi (wife of late Sitaram Oraon, age 75), Babulal Oraon (son of late Sitaram Oraon, age 55), Sita Devi (wife of Babulal Oraon, age 52), Manjeet Oraon (son of Babulal Oraon, age 25), and Rani Devi (wife

of Manjeet Oraon, age 23). All of them belonged to the same family.

The incident was rooted in superstitious beliefs. A few days earlier, a 10-year-old boy in the village died due to illness. On that very day, someone reportedly said, "These people must be killed and thrown away." Later, on 6 July, when another boy complained of stomach pain, a woman from the victim's family was accused of being a witch, which led to this gruesome act.

The main accused in the incident are Ramdev Oraon, Chhotua Oraon, Nakul Oraon, Santlal Oraon, and Keshav Oraon - all residents of the same village, along with a mob, they burned the five victims alive and disposed of the bodies. Later, with the help of police sniffer dogs, three bodies were recovered.

Kato Devi is survived by four sons - Khubilal Oraon, Arjun Oraon, Jitendra Oraon, and Jagdish Oraon. They reported that the entire family has been living in terror since the incident. They are being

continuously threatened and warned that if they testify, they too will be burned alive.

The CPI(ML) has demanded immediate arrest and strict legal action against all perpetrators involved in this massacre, protection for the surviving family members, particularly eyewitness Sonu Oraon, Rs. 50 lakh compensation for the victim's family, and a permanent and safe house for Sonu Oraon in a secure location. Additionally, the team also called for enacting a strong anti-witch-hunting law to prevent such incidents in the future, immediate provision of basic amenities like roads, electricity, water, and schools in the village, and a state-wide awareness campaign against superstition.

The investigation team said this incident is also an outcome of organised violence and deep-rooted social injustice prevailing in the society. Even after 78 years of independence, villages like Tetgama continue to lack essential services, and Dalit-Adivasi communities are being targeted in the name of superstition. The state government must take this incident with utmost seriousness and ensure speedy justice and concrete action. ■

Sigachi Factory Tragedy Exposes Deep Rot in Industrial Safety Regime

Following the deadly explosion and fire at the Sigachi Chemical Factory in Pasha Mylaram, Sangareddy district, which has claimed the lives of at least 42 workers and left 33 others injured, the CPI(ML) Liberation has condemned the incident and blamed both the factory management and government authorities for the disaster.

A delegation of CPI(ML) Liberation, led by Central Committee Member Nainalasetti Murthy, visited the factory site on 3 July. The team, comprising leaders from the AICCTU also met the families of deceased and injured workers and collected details from the ground.

Nainalasetti Murthy denounced the gross negligence of safety standards by the factory management and described

the tragedy as a direct consequence of industrial deregulation. He termed the authorities' failure to maintain proper records of contract workers a "grave injustice" to the families of the victims.

Comrade Murthy demanded a thorough and independent investigation into the incident and stressed the urgent need for effective enforcement of safety protocols. "Without regular departmental inspections, strict penalties for violations, and accountable workplace safety systems, such disasters will only multiply," he said.

CPI(ML) Liberation Telangana State Secretary Mamindla Ramesh Raja, AICCTU State Secretary Royyala Raju, and AICCTU State President Akkenapalli Yadagiri were also part of the delegation.

On 5 July, CPI(ML) Liberation Member of Parliament and Politburo Member Rajaram Singh visited the site of the tragedy along with former Bihar MLA and CPI(ML) Central Committee Member Manoj Manzil, and Nainalasetti Murthy. The delegation met families of the deceased and visited injured workers undergoing treatment.

Rajaram Singh sharply criticised the central government's labour policies, calling them "pro-corporate" and "anti-worker." He said, "This incident is not an isolated failure. It reflects the systematic dismantling of labour protections. The labour codes passed by the Modi government empower factory owners while stripping the working class of its hard-earned rights. If this continues, more Sigachi-like tragedies will follow."

Describing the blast as "the most tragic industrial accident in recent

times,” Rajaram Singh demanded that Sigachi factory management be held fully accountable. He also flagged inconsistencies in the official death toll and demanded full disclosure of names and details of all deceased and missing workers—particularly migrant labourers from four to five different states—many of whose families remain uninformed.

“The government cannot simply wash its hands of this responsibility.

Alongside corporate compensation, it must provide substantial ex-gratia relief and take a clear stand in defence of workers,” the CPI(ML) MP said. He also called for improved medical care for the injured and stronger regulatory oversight of industrial zones.

CPI(ML) asserted that the Sigachi factory disaster highlights the vulnerability of contract workers and the dangers posed by deregulated industrial policies.

The party reiterated its commitment to stand with the affected families and to fight for justice both on the streets and inside Parliament.

CPI(ML) Liberation warned that unless the recently enacted labour codes are repealed and stronger workplace protections are restored, the country risks facing more such preventable tragedies in the future. ■

Eviction Notice to Poor and Transgender Families in Bihar’s Koilwar

Koilwar, a nagar panchayat on the banks of the Sone river in Bihar, is connected to the Patna-Delhi main railway line by the Abdul Bari railway bridge. To the south of Koilwar railway station, around 300 people have been living on railway land since 1989, in makeshift homes built with harvesters and scrap. Among them are landless labourers, sand workers, construction workers, and dozens of transgender persons.

These families, most of them poor and working class, have built their lives here over decades. Their homes are the result of years of savings and labour. For them, this land is not just shelter but the foundation of their children’s futures.

On 26 June 2025, the East Central Railway pasted a general notice in the area, ordering removal of so-called encroachments from the southern end of the station. The notice directed residents to vacate the land by 3 July 2025.

The CPI(ML) Koilwar block office, which is also located on this stretch of

railway land, hosted a joint meeting of the affected families and party leaders, including members of the transgender community. The meeting condemned the government’s arbitrary and anti-poor eviction drive and resolved to launch a protest.

On 4 July, a one-day dharna was held before the District Magistrate of Bhojpur under the leadership of CPI(ML) and Khegramas. The main demands raised were that no eviction should take place without alternative arrangements, each family should be given five decimals of land, and permanent housing should be guaranteed.

CPI(ML) Central Committee member and former Agiaon MLA Comrade Manoj Manzil said that the government must ensure alternative arrangements for the poor and provide them with land and permanent houses.

Transgender persons, who have been residing on the railway land for over 20 years, participated in large numbers. Khushboo Kinnar said, “We

have always faced discrimination. If our homes are demolished, where will we go. The government must provide five decimals of land and permanent houses for us.” She expressed fear over the exclusion of transgender persons from the ongoing voter list revision and demanded inclusion in the electoral rolls and issuance of Aadhaar cards. “We don’t have our parents’ documents. Does that mean we have no right to live in this country.” She declared that they would resist demolition without alternative arrangements, even if the government brings bulldozers.

The dharna was presided over by CPI(ML) Koilwar block secretary Vishnu Thakur and conducted by Comrade Bhola Yadav. Local transgender residents Manju, Priya, Khushboo, Kalpana and Sheela addressed the protest.

After nearly five hours of protest, the SDM of Arrah Sadar held talks with the protesters and assured that no homes would be demolished and no land would be forcibly cleared. He further said that land would be provided to all and houses would be constructed under the housing scheme. ■

Kolkata Protesters Demand Justice in Gang-Rape Case, Face Assault by BJP Goons

The CPI(ML) Liberation has strongly condemned the gang-rape of a law student inside South Calcutta Law College by a TMCP (Trinamool Congress Chhatra Parishad) leader and his associates. The incident took place on 24 June 2025 in

Kolkata’s Kasba.

In a statement issued on 27 June, the party noted, “This brutal incident in a college located in the Chief Minister’s own constituency once again brings the question of women’s safety to the forefront. The

recurrence of rape in educational institutions, particularly with alleged involvement of TMC leaders, is extremely alarming.”

CPI(ML) expressed concern that political affiliation may be used to shield the accused, and demanded exemplary punishment from the highest levels of state administration. The party announced protest programmes in response. ■

On the same day, the All India Progressive Women's Association (AIPWA) also issued a statement, asserting that the **gang-rape was a reflection of emboldened patriarchal power under the TMC regime**. AIPWA pointed out that the main accused is closely associated with TMC leaders, and that this political protection contributes to a culture of impunity, where consent is routinely disregarded.

The organisation highlighted the absence of democratic mechanisms in college campuses, such as student union elections and functioning Internal Committees (ICs). AIPWA saluted the survivor's courage in filing a complaint despite threats of video circulation, and affirmed full solidarity with her. It demanded that educational institutions and public spaces be made safe and accessible for women.

BJP Violence on Justice Seeking Protesters

On 30 June 2025, during a protest held in front of South Calcutta Law College by the Reclaim the Night, Reclaim the Rights platform, demonstrators were attacked by BJP supporters.

The protest was organised to demand immediate justice for the survivor in South Calcutta Law College case and to condemn the increasing normalisation of sexual violence in campuses under political patronage. The protesters also raised slogans demanding the arrest of Kartik Maharaj of Bharat Sevashram Sangha in Beldanga, Murshidabad, who is accused of rape. They connected the incident at Kasba with the long list of such crimes that have seen little or no justice, from Hathras to RG Kar.

At the same time, a BJP 'Central Fact-Finding Team' arrived at the site, accompanied by a group of BJP supporters. When the protest slogans began to include demands for punishment for Kartik Maharaj and justice for victims of sexual violence under various regimes, including cases in Unnao and Hathras, the BJP group attacked the protesters.

The BJP supporters, including men, physically assaulted women participants, including activists of the AIPWA and Reclaim Movement. One protester's clothes were torn and several were pushed and shoved in an incident that bore resemblance to mob violence.

AIPWA condemned the attack as an attempt to silence democratic protest and intimidate women's voices seeking justice. ■

Karchhana Incident is a Conspiracy Against the Dalits

A delegation of CPI(ML), AISA and RYA visited Karchhana, in Prayagraj district, and released the report on the cruel incident of 29th June 2025 in Lucknow on 2nd July 2025.

On the night of April 12, Dilip Singh alias Chhuttan took Devishankar of the victim Dalit family from his house on the pretext of carrying a load of wheat, where he was savagely beaten to death by 8 people and the corpse was burnt after soaking the clothes in alcohol. The victim's half burned body was found on the morning of 13 April 2025. The infuriated members of the family of the deceased did not allow police to take the body for postmortem for at least for two hours. After the post-mortem, on the night of April 13, the police forcibly cremated Devishankar. No compensation or remedy was provided by the government after this horrific incident.

ASP Member of Parliament Chandrashekhar was not allowed to visit the grief-stricken dalit family of Karchhana and was stopped at the circuit house, Prayagraj by the administration. As per the findings of the report, the news of not allowing Mr. Chandrashekhar's visit to the village caused discontent among the villagers and the

supporters. People blocked the road and started shouting slogans. Thousands of Dalit youth and activists from the surrounding area were registering peaceful protest against preventing Chandrasekhar to come to Isauta village. There, the casteist and feudal forces who own the shops in that area, threw stones at the peaceful protesters. The police present at the time didn't take any action against the shopkeepers.

The police took unilateral action against Dalits on this entire incident and filed cases against 55 identified and 550 unidentified people. Till now approximately 70 young men have been arrested and the search is still going on.

Even the family members of the victim Devishankar were arrested. Many such youths are being picked up after being identified by the upper caste feudal people and sent to jail.

The investigation team held the Yogi government's anti-Dalit and upper caste feudalistic policies fully responsible for the incident in Bhadevra, Karchhana, Prayagraj. The upper caste feudal elements who were involved in pelting stones on the protesters,

vandalism and arson, were helped by the police administration. The investigating team's report raises some serious questions. Does a sitting MP have no right to visit the victim's family? Is this BJP's model of democracy?

A viral video from Karchhana police station shows Dalit youths detained inside, seated in rows and holding their ears. This is inhumane and an open violation of human rights. This reflects the anti-Dalit mindset of the police administration.

The CPIML has demanded:

1. Strict punishment against the instigators,
2. withdrawal of the false criminal cases filed against innocent Dalit youth and their release from jail.
3. Stop police raids in Karachhana, Prayagraj villages, as they have created an atmosphere of fear,
4. Provide proper compensation, land for housing, and a government job to a member of deceased Devishankar's family.
5. Conduct a high-level judicial inquiry into the entire matter.

The investigation team included CPI(ML) State Committee member and RYA State Secretary Sunil Maurya, Joint Secretary Sonu Yadav, AISA State President Manish Kumar, and Vice President Vivek Kumar. ■

National Conference of Jan Sanskriti Manch

The 17th National Conference of Jan Sanskriti Manch was held on July 12 and 13, 2025, at the Social Development Center in Ranchi (Jharkhand). The Conference pledged to fight for the freedom of expression and creation against the divisive culture of fascism and chalked out an action plan. More than three hundred writers, artists, and intellectuals from states including Bengal, Odisha, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Bihar, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, and Maharashtra participated.

Inaugurating the conference, social activist Dr. Navsharan Singh stated that today there is a multifaceted attack of fascism to the extent that gathering and sitting together can also be considered a criminal activity. If a person is filled with intellect and reason, they have already entered the realm of crime. Umar Khalid has been imprisoned by fascists for five years. The brutal use of tools of oppression and division is being carried out by the power, but at the same time we have witnessed the women's movement against the CAA and the farmers' movement which intensely exhibited people's resolve and the culture of unity and struggle. We will defeat the hatred of fascists with our heritage, mutual love, and unity.

The outgoing national president of Jan Sanskriti Manch Ravi Bhushan said that divisive forces were never so strong in independent India before 2014, but after BJP's ascent to power all democratic and constitutional institutions have been subverted and all pillars of democracy have collapsed.

Renowned documentary filmmaker Biju Toppo mentioned that Jharkhand has a long history of anti-displacement movements, indicating that it is a land of struggle. Jharkhand has a rich legacy of fighting against fascism through our songs, poetry, and plays in the struggle to save water, forests, land, language and culture.

Mahadev Toppo from Progressive

Writers' Association stated that in the absence of adequate resistance to the violence against women, Dalits, and Adivasis being perpetrated for centuries, the situation has laid out a red carpet for fascism. The cases from Umar Khalid to Father Stan Swamy reveal the brutal face of the surveillance state.

Professor Rashid from Jammu University said that today we are witnessing things happening that could not have been imagined a few years ago. The water being sold in the market and the flow of rivers being stopped. He also spoke about Israeli genocide in Gaza and imperialist attacks on Iran.

Documentary filmmaker Sanjay Kak shared his experiences and said when we began making documentary films on public issues, they attracted bigger crowds in auditoriums, however, the ruling powers gradually started imposing restrictions and screenings were stopped. Now we must use new platforms like YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook to reach today's generation to counter right-wing activism on these platforms.

M. Z. Khan from Janwadi Lekhak Sangh stated that we are going through delicate times where people are unable to speak out under the reigns of communal fascism, nourished by capitalism. A particular community is being targeted, hatred is being spread openly through religious assemblies, and there is silence everywhere. He emphasized that the country needs a strong cultural movement today.

Shailendra from IPTA quoted Gramsci and said the ideological hegemony of fascists, being nourished by the Brahminical exploitation system, must be resisted. A strong cultural movement should counter the thoughts and behaviors being dictated by the market and corporations. Narendra Modi also is a political product of corporations.

While conducting the inaugural session, Professor Ashutosh Kumar termed fascism as a cultural counter-revolution.

Today, devotion and servitude are being established in place of freedom, and patriarchy and caste hierarchy are being established in place of equality. We must defeat this counter-revolution.

Professor Uma expressed gratitude and called for solidarity for the release of Umar Khalid. Professor Sudhir Suman read a condolence proposal, and the session concluded with a minute of silence.

The second day of the conference was the organizational session in which General Secretary Manoj Kumar Singh presented a report. More than two dozen representatives from various states expressed their views, and many suggestions were made. The presidium of this session included Siyaram Sharma (Chhattisgarh), Ahmed Sagir (Bihar) and Kaushal Kishore (Uttar Pradesh). Prem Shankar conducted this session. Incorporating the suggestions provided by the representatives, the house passed the report.

Senior theater artist, poet and writer Jahoor Alam was elected as the new president, writer and journalist Manoj Kumar Singh was reelected as General Secretary. The conference also elected Shivmurti, Ramji Rai, Madan Kashyap, Bharat Mehta, Laltu, Surendra Prasad Suman and Kaushal Kishore as vice-presidents; and Sudhir Suman, Anupam Singh, Roopam Mishra, Ahmed Sagir and Rajkumar Soni as secretaries, K.K. Pandey as the treasurer. A 52-member National Executive Committee and a 213-member National Council were also elected.

Cultural programs held in the evenings of both days, along with various sessions, featured musical presentations of songs, dance, plays, and poetry by cultural teams and artists from states such as Jharkhand, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, and Telangana, which were a major attraction of the conference. The conference concluded with the singing of "We Shall Overcome" and a commitment to intensify the cultural campaign against fascism in their respective fields. ■

Comrade Mithilesh Singh

We are deeply saddened to share the passing of Comrade Mithilesh Singh, a stalwart of the working-class movement in Jharkhand and a close comrade-in-arms of Comrade A.K. Roy. Comrade Mithilesh passed away on July 11 morning while en route to Ranchi. He was a towering leader of the coal miners of Jharkhand and a lifelong revolutionary who remained at the forefront of the struggle for socialism and workers' rights until his final days.

Comrade Mithilesh Singh played a pivotal role in the historic unification of the Marxist Coordination Committee (MCC) and the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation. A fierce advocate for the working class, he remained actively engaged in mass struggles even while undergoing dialysis. His indomitable spirit was reflected in his leadership of the Bihar Colliery Kamgar Union (BCKU), and most recently, in his courageous participation in the All-India Coal Workers' Strike on July 9. Red Salute to Comrade Mithilesh Singh!



Comrade V. S. Achuthanandan

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) expresses deep sorrow at the passing of Comrade V. S. Achuthanandan, a lifelong fighter for the working class and oppressed, and one of the founding members of the Communist Party of India (Marxist).

Born in 1923, Comrade Achuthanandan began his political journey as a coir worker and trade union organiser. He was an active participant in the 1946 Punnappa-Vayalar uprising, a landmark struggle of workers and peasants against feudal oppression and princely rule in Travancore. Arrested and tortured during this period, he emerged with greater resolve and went on to dedicate his life to the people's cause.

Over the decades, he helped build and lead mass movements in Kerala for land reform, labour rights, and social justice. As Chief Minister of Kerala, he took bold steps to reclaim encroached land in Munnar, exposed the lottery mafia, and stood firm against corruption and misuse of public resources. He remained committed to secularism, public welfare, and democratic values throughout his life, and continued to support people's struggles even in his later years.

The CPI(ML) pays tribute to Comrade Achuthanandan's lifelong service to the people and joins the people of Kerala and the broader Left movement in mourning his passing. Red Salute to Comrade V. S!



Comrade Azizul Haque

Comrade Azizul Haque, veteran leader of the Naxalbari movement in West Bengal, passed away on July 21 in a Kolkata hospital. He was 83. Long years of incarceration and torture had badly impaired his health. Comrade Haque spent long years behind bars, enduring brutal incarceration and torture that severely impacted his health.

Even after stepping back from active party politics, he continued to wield his pen and voice sharply against religious bigotry, the rise of right-wing forces, and the fascist projects of BJP-RSS combine until his final days. He was one of the most prominent faces of the 1970s Naxalbari movement in West Bengal. Red Salute to Comrade Azizul Haque!



Comrade Ajay Kumar

Comrade Ajay Kumar, one of the founding leaders of Jan Sanskriti Manch and a well-known figure in the world of progressive literature and art, passed away on July 10. He was regarded as a bridge between the worlds of Hindi and Urdu literature. He translated several works of Vamik Jaunpuri into Hindi.

He played an important role in translating progressive literature from foreign languages, especially Chinese literature. Notably, he translated the works of renowned Chinese writer Lu Xun into Hindi. He also wrote extensively about world cinema, with a particular focus on Iranian films.

Comrade Ajay Kumar was closely associated with the CPI(ML) since the 1980s. His home served as a space for party activities and as an important political centre. His life and work reflected his unwavering commitment to the struggles of the toiling masses and marginalized sections of society. Red Salute to Comrade Ajay Kumar.



POSTING DATE : 27-28 OF EVERY MONTH
PUBLISHED ON 26TH OF EVERY MONTH

R.N.I. NO. 55777/93
P. R. NO. DL(E)—11/5156/2021-23
POSTING AT NEW DELHI G.P.O.

All India General Strike, 9 July 2025



Bihar



Delhi



Tamil Nadu



West Bengal



Uttar Pradesh



Jharkhand

EDITORIAL OFFICE

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

PUBLISHED BY:

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

EDITOR: Arindam Sen

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

liberation@cpiml.org
www.liberation.org.in
PH.: 91-11-42785864