

# Liberation

CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)

## RECLAIMING THE REPUBLIC

I have been out here  
every night with  
my 3yr old -  
no one **MAKES**  
us come but  
this is the  
only way to  
make this  
government  
LISTEN!

It's not  
easy with  
all the  
shops  
shut...  
no  
vegetables...





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Kashmir Caged:

## SCs Issues Toothless Orders, As Chief of Defence Staff Flaunts Atrocities

The Supreme Court response to petitions challenging the Constitutional validity of the Kashmir lockdown and all related issues is an exercise in dishonesty. An editorial in The Hindu called the SC order on internet curbs in Kashmir, “eloquently reticent”. It observed, “If enunciating the law and laying down norms for the exercise of executive power were the only functions of a constitutional court, the Supreme Court’s verdict on the prolonged lockdown in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) is indeed admirable. However, the apex court is also a court of justice, one duty-bound to enforce fundamental rights. ...When it says Section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure ‘cannot be used as a tool to prevent the legitimate expression of opinion or grievance or exercise of any democratic rights’, it makes a comment worthy of being treasured in these times of frequent resort to that section. Yet, the court does not go beyond directing the authorities to review all their orders and restrictions forthwith.”

In a commentary in the Scroll titled “Kashmir judgement: Supreme Court threw down a straw but it was hailed as a lifeline”, Vijay Hiremath and Veena Gowda wrote that “The verdict must be read in the larger context of Kashmir and the court’s response to pleas in other issues related to the revocation of the region’s autonomy.” The writers pointed out that “five months on, the Supreme Court is yet to hear the challenge to the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A. During that time, the state has been split into two Union territories, various human rights institutions have been abolished, dozens of laws repealed and new laws applied. The Court specifically refused an interim stay when the matter was heard before the changes came into effect on October 31. When the Supreme Court finally hears the petitions challenging the constitutional amendments, the exercise may be more academic than practicable, given the far reaching and irreversible nature of the changes that have been brought about on the ground, despite a pending legal challenge.

“In the habeas corpus petitions, after considerable delays, the Supreme Court merely gave orders for some

family members and well-wishers to meet the detainees and nothing more than that. Thus, after more than five interminable months, political leaders and lawyers still remain under preventive detention with no date of release mentioned by the authorities.”

The SC accepted two reports submitted by the High Court Juvenile Justice Committee stating that children had not been illegally detained: “This is in stark contrast to many credible reports from the media and other independent quarters based on interviews with families of minors and even some released minors, which reiterate that children were detained, heckled and beaten.”

Meanwhile, a report in the Indian Express has found that “In at least 2 villages of Shopian residents say it has become a regular practice for the Army to call owners of commercial and private vehicles and use their vehicles at night for free. Residents have no idea why and for what purpose are the vehicles used.” What if these cars are being used by some Davinder Singh for a false flag terror operation?

Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat has shocked the world by proposing that Kashmiri children be detained in “de-radicalisation camps.” Legal researcher with extensive experience in Kashmir, Shrimoyee Ghosh explained that “General Rawat’s remarks on detention centres for ‘de-radicalisation’ may well be based on the Chinese model, and will make this detention/ ‘re-education’ connection more explicit and systematic, but it develops on a well entrenched system involving police, army and civil authorities. Children and young men are the largest single class of ‘dangerous’ individuals detained (indefinitely) under the draconian Public Safety Act. After PSA detentions, detainees are made to undergo ‘counselling’ or ‘debriefing’ sessions at joint interrogation centres before release. This is all not to say the General’s remarks are not horrifying — he is calling specifically for the internment of children which the PSA at least on paper disallows, and creation of such special camps - but to point out the context and continuities that enable this horror.” □



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## Republic Day 2020:

The Republic's Biggest Crisis  
Has Produced the Most  
Vibrant Resistance

Republic Day 2020 marks the 70th anniversary of the Republic and the Constitution which proclaimed it. Never before in these seventy years has the Republic faced the kind of grave internal challenge it is facing today from the very executive which is entrusted with the power and responsibility of administering the rule of law in accordance with the Constitution. The basic character of the Constitution is today under attack. But Republic Day 2020 is also witnessing a massive countrywide awakening and assertion of 'we, the people of India' determined to save the Constitution and foil the fascist CAA-NRC-NPR design. This alertness, unity, and fighting zeal of ordinary Indians, with the youth and women in the forefront, constitute the biggest bulwark of the Constitution today.

The Modi-Shah regime has unleashed a serial Emergency. It began in August when the government's abrupt announcement deactivating Article 370 and robbing Kashmir of its statehood was accompanied by an indefinite lockdown subjecting the entire state to digital darkness and despotic governance. In December when the regime carried out the Citizenship coup in Parliament, it simultaneously resorted to a brutal crackdown on popular protests. UP in particular became a graveyard of democracy with the CM calling for revenge against protesters and the police and Sanghi goons unleashing a combined reign of terror. The police in UP is recruiting volunteers from private Sanghi militia like the Hindu Yuva Vahini and now Delhi Police have been granted Emergency powers to detain anyone under the draconian NSA. The trappings of a fascist dispensation are becoming visible quite rapidly.

On the CAA-NRC-NPR front, the government continues to dish out lies on a daily basis. On seeing the scale of protests against the NRC-CAA, it began to obfuscate about the NRC. Modi went to the extent of saying that nothing had been decided yet about an all-India NRC. The CAA has been pitched as a measure to grant citizenship to refugees and NPR is being camouflaged as an innocuous exercise to collect information for Census preparation and better implementation of welfare schemes. On the fourth and least discussed component of this ominous design, the detention camps, the Prime Minister shamelessly denied their very existence even as one more death was reported from Assam's notorious

horror chambers, taking the detention camp death toll to 30.

Each of these lies has been exposed and the people being bombarded with the regime's lies must be armed with the truth. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has sought to refute the anti-Muslim discriminatory nature of the CAA by furnishing figures of people from Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who have been given citizenship during the last six years of Modi government. According to her, 2,838 refugees from Pakistan, 914 from Afghanistan and 172 from Bangladesh have got Indian citizenship during this period and this includes quite a few Muslims. This fact actually refutes the very rationale of the CAA. If refugees were getting citizenship under the erstwhile provisions of the citizenship Act, where was the need for the present Amendment? Likewise, there can be no hiding the fact that the NPR is just the foundation for NRC. What is particularly ominous about the NPR exercise is the arbitrary power given to the NPR staff to mark people 'doubtful'. Let us not forget that it is this 'doubtful' tag which has disenfranchised people in Assam and sent them to rot and die in detention camps.

The very project of CAA, NRC and NPR is based on a massive and mischievous lie. All through the last seventy years of our existence as a constitutional republic, every

ten years we have had census and every five years we have had elections. Governments have issued ration cards, drawn up BPL lists and in recent years we have witnessed huge exercises to issue voter photo identity cards and Aadhaar cards. Why is the government now asking Indians to prove their

***The time has come when 'we, the people of India' must decisively assert to defend the Constitution and reclaim the republic.***

***This Republic Day, let us resolve to intensify the battle for repeal of CAA and stopping the NRC-NPR-detention camp exercise.***

citizenship? If non-citizens have voted the government to power, then the government has no right to occupy office. We have an elaborate apparatus and mechanism in place to guard our borders and regulate the entry of foreigners into the country. What then is the basis of this whole talk of a huge influx of 'foreigners', with the apex court even invoking terms like foreign invasion or external aggression? The Assam NRC excluded close to two million people and the BJP is now talking of dumping it because

it is widely believed that the overwhelming majority of these excluded people are Indians. Yet, Amit Shah continues to talk about deporting crores of 'infiltrators' and the West Bengal state president boasts about banishing one crore Bangladeshi Muslims from West Bengal alone!

If the rhetoric of influx of foreigners is a big lie, the concern being shown suddenly for refugees who have not got their rights for all these years is also nothing but crocodile tears. Government's own intelligence top brass put the figure of such deprived refugees at a little more than thirty thousand before a Parliamentary Committee dealing with the Citizenship Amendment Bill. Refugees and activists who have consistently fought for their rights have first hand experience of winning their rights from voting rights to ration cards through relentless struggle. It was not the law but the bureaucratic apathy and lethargy and lack of sensitivity of successive governments that has delayed the process of effective empowerment and comprehensive rehabilitation of the refugee population.

This Republic Day, let us resolve to intensify the battle for repeal of CAA and stopping the NRC-NPR-detention camp exercise. The time has come when 'we, the people of India' must decisively assert to defend the Constitution and reclaim the republic. □

# Government of the Goons, For the Goons, By the Goons

**I**mages of brutal attacks on JNU students and teachers by a group of masked young men and women armed with sticks, iron rods and sledgehammers have once again brought the whole world face to face with the growing fascist violence in India. More than the intensity of the violence, it is the pattern of this whole operation which should be an eye-opener for anyone still believing in the 'all is well' Modispeak.

Screenshots of WhatsApp messages exchanged before the attack clearly point to the planned nature of the attack and the involvement of both insiders and outsiders, including known ABVP activists from JNU and DU. There are video clips of masked men roaming the streets and leaving the campus in style in the presence of police after carrying out the attacks, making it fully clear that the operation was carried out in connivance with the police and the university security. The attackers also appeared to have chosen their targets quite selectively. Left student activists and Muslim and Kashmiri students were specifically targeted, rooms with posters or books suggesting BJP affiliation were conspicuously left out. The police intervened later only to block off the roads leading to the JNU campus to stop Delhi citizens from rushing to the rescue of the students under attack.

The response of the Modi government and the JNU administration to this terror attack has been along predictable lines. While condemning the violence in abstract terms, Modi ministers, especially JNU alumni like Nirmala Sitharaman and Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, tried to blame the JNU

students for all that happened. The administration has gone ahead filing FIRs against the JNUSU President Aishe Ghosh in connection with the ongoing agitation against fee hikes, and if one cares to look at the time when the FIRs were filed that was exactly when the attackers were in full swing! And now that sections of the pro-Modi media are also finding it difficult to carry on with the concocted Sanghi narrative, a new fringe outfit has been pressed into service to take responsibility for the attack. A video clip issued by a so-called Hindu Raksha Dal not only claims responsibility for the JNU attack but threatens to carry out similar attacks on other universities!

The January 5 masked attack on JNU has been preceded by relentless adverse propaganda against the university and a ceaseless war on the environment of debate, democracy and academic excellence that made JNU a distinguished institution of higher education and research with an international reputation. The use of terms and expressions for JNU students like tukde-tukde gang, freeloaders feeding on public money and the portrayal of JNU as an anti-national den of evil have all been aimed at defaming the institution in public perception and facilitating and legitimising the kind of organised violent attack that we saw on 5 January evening.

The JNU incident has come in the wake of a series of attacks on other universities like Jamia Millia Islamia in Delhi, Aligarh Muslim University and Jadavpur University and a brutal crackdown on peaceful mass protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act which has taken a toll of at least

three dozen lives in Uttar Pradesh, Assam and Bihar. Rattled by the scale and intensity of the anti-CAA protests and the loss of power in the crucial states of Maharashtra and Jharkhand, the Modi-Shah regime has now unleashed brutal all-out war on all kinds of protests. The changing mood of the country is perhaps best reflected among the youth and in universities and other institutions of higher education and the government. If the Modi-Shah regime thinks it can get away with all its disastrous, divisive and unconstitutional policies by unleashing war on students, it is living in a fool's paradise.

The CAA had already triggered a countrywide mass awakening with the Preamble of the Constitution emerging not just as a vision statement but as an action manifesto for 'We, the people of India'. The attacks on the students of Jamia and JNU right in the heart of Delhi have only strengthened this mass resolve with increasing outpouring of spontaneous support for the fighting students and rise in anger against the repressive rulers who are out to divide and destroy the country. The all India general strike called by trade unions against privatisation and denial of labour rights on January 8 has already been endorsed by wider sections of the people with farmers, rural labourers and students all pledging their wholehearted support. The unity and determination of an awakened people always proves to be more powerful in the ultimate analysis than the repression and arrogance of an autocratic regime. Let 2020 bring home this basic lesson of democracy to the Modi-Shah regime. □



# Notes From India's Pro-Democracy Movement

(It is impossible for the editors of Liberation to keep pace with the breadth, width, and depth of the ongoing movement to safeguard India's democracy from the NPR-NRC-CAA regime imposed by the Modi Government. We bring you reports from some of the thousands of significant protests that are underway currently. - Ed/-)

## Shaheen Bagh no Longer Just the Name of a Place

**S**haheen Bagh is no longer just the name of a place. It is a movement, and there are many Shaheen Baghs across the country now!

In Delhi itself, along with Shaheen Bagh, women are on indefinite dharnas at Seelampur, Khureji, Indralok, and hold daily dharnas at Jama Masjid. AIPWA Secretary Kavita Krishnan and CPIML CCM

leader Sucheta De, and AISA leader Kawalpreet Kaur have participated in these dharnas. AICCTU comrades have begun helping women hold an indefinite dharna at Mandavali in East Delhi.

As we go to press, the police have removed the tent at Shaheen Bagh and forced Sikhs distributing food to leave. But within half an hour a tent was back up and women remain at their stand!

## Park Circus, Kolkata

A dharna against the Citizenship Amendment Act has been going on since 7 January at the Park Circus Maidan in Central Kolkata. Led by the women of Park Circus, this dharna is inspired by the dharna in Shaheen Bagh which has been going on since December 2019. These women are protesting against CAA-NRC and the brutal attacks on students at JNU, Jamia and AMU.

Park Circus has an abundant Muslim population. The dharna by the women is being held in a Maidan outside a local Masjid. The protests at other places in Kolkata are being attended mainly by students and people from middle and upper classes but in Park Circus most of those attending are from the working class. Hundreds of women, posters and placards in hand, are gathering there with their children. Gradually people from other parts of Kolkata are beginning to join them. The aim of the protesters is to sit on an indefinite dharna at least until 22 January. On that day the Supreme Court will be hearing the petitions challenging CAA. People attending the dharna say that the leadership of this dharna is in the hands of the common people. The national tricolor presides over the dharna.

In the afternoon of 8 January a truck full of women wearing burqas



Shaheen Bagh, Delhi

reached the venue. As they alighted from the truck and walked towards the dharna venue, women raised the slogan 'Freedom from Communal Politics!' Wearing a black burqa and dark goggles, 44 year old Tabassum Akhtar from Iqbalpur in South Kolkata was leading the slogans. She said, "We are very angry. We have no direct relation with the students of JNU, but they are everything to us".

22 year old Rafeeqa Hayat told us that she chanted slogans for the very first time in her life on 7 January. Hayat has recently finished her graduation from Shivrath Shashtra College. Until a few months ago she had no interest in politics. She used to spend all her internet data on Instagram and Facebook. Now she reads the newspapers regularly and watches video tracks of CAA and NRC to educate herself.

A large space in the Maidan has been cleared for the women. Cotton and thin foam mattresses have been spread on the floor. Apart from the protesters there were about 100 volunteers at the venue who ensured

an unobstructed flow of blankets, Chinese food, biriyani, and tea as and when required.

55 year old Musarrat Parveen is a widow with three sons. She said that she had rarely stepped out of her home before this but now she feels there is no option other than coming out on the streets. "We have to do something to save the country," she said. Parveen came here in the evening of 7 January at the start of the protest, and returned home the next day at 8.30 in the morning. She then cooked for her family and did housework the whole day and returned to the dharna venue at 11.30 at night. When we spoke to her on 9 January she told us she had not slept for the last 2 days. She said, "I am unable to sleep and I have hope that Prime Minister Modi will understand what we are turning our Hindustan into, what we are doing to our land". Other women also said that they are housewives and are coming out on the streets for the first time. They said that Prime Minister Modi's work has 'forced' them to come out.

Some women told us that they are daily wage workers and are sacrificing their work for the sake of the protest. A 50 year old woman told us on condition of anonymity that she lives just a few meters away from the dharna venue and cooks food for families in nearby Malik Bazaar. She is the mother of three daughters and is able to earn about Rs 5000 per month. "We have come here for our rights. Why should we leave India? We have to stop Modi from implementing CAA and NRC".

Wearing a brown burqa and blue shawl, Firdaus Saba is raising slogans on the microphone. The people standing behind her join in the slogans. Saba is a student of Physics at Aliya University in Kolkata. When she left her hostel on 8 January she told the authorities that she would not be coming back until the next day. She spent the entire night chanting the slogan 'Halla Bol'.

Saba tells us, "I wanted to join the protest at Shaheen Bagh. I could not do so, but at least I could take part in the Shaheen Bagh of Kolkata.



Park Steet, Kolkata



We are not Indians by coincidence; we are Indians through our own will and liking. In 1947 we rejected the 2-Nation theory, we rejected an Islamic nation. Today our Hindu brothers and sisters will reject a Hindu nation. We did not choose Islamabad, Karachi or Bangladesh. We chose India because it is a secular and democratic country”.

Saba said, “The founders of independent India gave people the right to speak. Why are we being stopped from speaking? Equality is our right. Why is it being snatched away from us? Why is the Constitution being broken? We have not come here as Muslims; we are Indians. We have not come here to save ourselves. We will leave this place only after the Constitution is saved”.

## Shanti Bagh, Gaya

Thousands of people from all communities, women outnumbering men, have gathered here in the extreme cold. They are singing, reading poems, and listening to speeches. They have a common aim: to save the Constitution. In the biting cold of January, Dulari Devi and Saziya are sitting together under the open skies and singing the national anthem and songs of Faiz

Ahmed Faiz and chanting slogans. This protest which has been going on day and night since 29 December and in which women and students are more in number has got huge support from the citizens of Gaya. This is the same town where Buddha achieved Nirvana. This is a unique protest against CAA-NRC-NPR in Bihar and has already completed 15 days.

Housewife Dulari Devi who lives near Shanti Bagh says, “I’ve been coming here every day for the last 2 weeks. CAA and NRC are not just unconstitutional; they are against the fundamental rights of citizens. I will not go from this place until the government revokes CAA-NRC”. There are other women like her here—Nusrat Hassan, Mamta Devi, Nagma Parveen, Fatima Khan, Karuna Kumari, Mariam Farhad, Suman Shaurya, Roji Khatoon and others who attend this protest for hours together. Young men sitting at a small podium are raising slogans of Inquilab Zindabad; Ladenge Jeetenge; we shall fight, we shall win; Long Live Revolution; Hindustan Zindabad! Various speakers are giving speeches, and the dharna venue has been festooned with posters, placards and banners.

Another protester Shazia says,

“Singing the national anthem, Faiz and other poems in this cold weather generates anew warmth within us”. Nagma, who has covered her head for protection against the cold, says, “This protest is about Hindu-Muslim unity and peaceful protest. If we have Nagma, Farzana, Parveen, Kahkashan and Wasim Nayyar Ansari here, we also have Mamta Devi, Suman Shaurya, Mukesh Kumar, Munni Devi, Rajendra Yadav and Mukesh Chaudhury”. Karuna Kumari says that it is totally wrong to say that only Muslims are opposing CAA-NRC. “Hundreds of Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians are part of the protest and I am also one of them”.

This dharna under the banner of Samvidhan Bachao Morcha is creating a new history in Gaya. At any given point in time, around 4000-5000 are present at the dharna venue. The number is much higher on Saturdays and Sundays. More than 200 students and young people are present here even at night. The dharna has been addressed so far by Nikhil Kumar, Jitan Ram Manjhi, Uday Narayan Chaudhury, Tejasvi Yadav, many Left leaders and many local leaders. Kanhaiya Kumar and Kannan Gopinathan are scheduled to address the dharna.

## Roshan Bagh, Allahabad

The women of Allahabad, like the women of Shaheen Bagh, have been sitting on a dharna at Mansoor Ali Park in Roshan Bagh against CAA and NRC. Despite all their attempts, the police and administration have not been able to break up their dharna. Large crowds and opposition have foiled the attempts of the administration.

The protesters are holding up placards saying, ‘Inquilab Zindabad’; ‘This land, nurtured by all, is as much

Bihar MLAs protesting CAA inside Assembly





mine as it is yours'; 'India will not allow violation of the Constitution'.

The special thing about this protest is that it is led by Muslim women, and with them are small children as well as men. The women sit all night under the open skies, read Namaz here, and raise their voice against the government from here.

Roshan Bagh resident Rubina says that she is not against any party or the government. She is opposed only to the fact that attempts are being made to tamper with the secular character of India. Sabina says that she has proof of her citizenship but there are many who were not so aware and so did not have such documents made. The woman who works in their home also is among those who do not have documents; so do such people have no right to live in the country?

The protest is getting support from many opposition parties and Left organizations. The protest was started by about 100 women at Mansoor Ali Park, and when the police got to know of it they tried to disrupt the dharna but did not succeed, despite calling in the PAC. The police thought that the dharna would end by night but that did not happen, and the women are still firm in their protest. The parties and organizations supporting the Mansoor Ali Park dharna include CPIML, AISA, AICCTU, AIPWA, CITU, AIDWA, Bharat ki Janwadi Naujawan Sabha and SFI District Committees.

## Lakhminiya Chowk, Beguserai

An indefinite dharna protest has been going on since 11 January 2020 at Lakhminiya Chowk in Ballia Block, Beguserai District to demand repeal of CAA-NRC-NPR. Organized under the banner of the Ambedkar Sangharsh Vichar

Manch at the initiative of CPIML, thousands of people are attending the dharna, including people from nearby villages, agrarian workers, poor farmers, small shopkeepers, students, youth, people from Hindu and Muslim communities and large numbers of women.

Protesters sitting on dharna say that they will not end the dharna until the government agrees to their demand and revokes CAA-NRC-NPR. They said they are willing to die to save the country. The dharna has got support from RJD, Congress, CPI, CPM, social organizations and activists and democracy-loving citizens. There is great outrage against the fascist repressive conspiracy by the Modi-Shah government.

The dharna expresses solidarity with the anti-CAA protests going on across the country and condemns the violent repression of democratic voices. The anti-people anti-minority face of the Nitish Kumar government is also being thoroughly exposed and there is strong opposition to his failure to say that NPR will not be implemented in Bihar. The dharna pledged to protect the Constitution, democracy and secular India.

The protesters' morale is boosted by the constant presence of CPIML

District Secretary Diwakar Kumar, Ballia Block Secretary Noor Alam, AISA leader Watan Kumar, Comrade Indradev Ram, Prashant Kashyap, Ajay Kumar, Abhishek Kumar and other leaders. The Lakhminiya Chowk dharna is another shining link in the chain of protests inspired by Shaheen Bagh.

## Bus Padav Maidan, Samastipur

Inspired by the Shaheen Bagh protest, a Satyagraha has begun in front of the Samastipur Collectorate on 10 January 2020 against CAA-NRC-NPR under the banner of Samvidhan Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, whose convener is CPIML District Committee member Comrade Surendra Prasad Singh. Led by the CPIML, this Satyagraha has the support of CPI, CPM, RJD, RLD, VIP, HAM, Congress and other parties. The Satyagraha program is getting increasing support day by day. AIPWA Secretary Kavita Krishnan addressed the protesters on 14 January and the Satyagrahis pledged to continue the protest until CAA-NRC-NPR is revoked. Despite notice of the indefinite Satyagraha being given, the administration tried to pressurize the protesters



Darbhanga

into ending it after just two days and the Collector issued a notice to vacate the Satyagraha spot, but the Satyagrahis did not give in and the Satyagraha is continuing on its 6th day.

## Phulwarisharif, Patna

An indefinite dharna against CAA-NRC-NPR has been on for the past 5 days at Phulwarisharif in Patna where Bajrajg Dal and BJP goons perpetrated attacks and murdered Amir Hanzla who was carrying the national flag during the Bihar Bandh on 21 December 2019.

The dharna began on 12 January amidst biting cold weather. Despite the bitter winter, large numbers of women, children and youth joined the dharna and the number is ever increasing. The dharna is being organized by citizens' groups and CPIML, CPI, Imarat-e-Sharia, Insaf Manch and other social-political organizations. Comrade Gurudev

das (CPIML), Janab Rizvi Saheb (Imarat-e-Sharia), and CPI leader Mahesh Rajak have played a leading role in organizing the dharna.

The dharna has so far been addressed by insaf Manch leader Anwar Hussain, MLA and leader of CPIML Legislative group Mahboob Alam, former MP Ali Anwar, former Assembly Speaker Uday Narayan Chaudhury and AIPWA General Secretary Meena Tiwari.

As the number of people joining the dharna is steadily increasing, the venue may be shifted to the Main Phulwari-Khagaul Road. The speakers and protesters at the dharna demanded the repeal of CAA and notification from the Nitish Kumar government that NPR (the first step to NRC) will not be implemented in Bihar.

Indefinite dharnas have also been started at Sabzi Bagh and Lal Bagh in Patna.

supporters tried unsuccessfully to disturb the rally held in support of the countrywide strike.

The meeting at Dakbangla Chowk in Patna was presided over by CIYU leader Ganesh Shankar Singh. The meeting was addressed by Dharendra Jha, Shashi Yadav, Saroj Chaube, Ranvijay Kumar and leaders from other organizations including the State Secretaries of CPI and CPM. Dharendra Jha said that this fight is People vs. BJP, Constitution vs. Manusmriti; it is a fight against fascism and anti-worker, anti-farmer policies. Instead of addressing the dismal economic recession, this government is attacking the rights of workers through amendments in the Labor Laws. Kisan Sabha leader Shivsagar Sharma said that Home Minister Amit Shah must resign after the attacks on JNU which were obviously at his behest. ASHA leader Shashi Yadav and Rasoiya leader Saroj Chaube pointed out the betrayal of scheme workers by the Central and State governments; they said that not paying minimum wages to ASHAs and Rasoiyas is illegal and a violation of labor laws. Earlier, the Rasoiya Sangh and All India Scheme Workers Federation had organized a rally from Buddha Smriti Park which was attended in large numbers by scheme workers. Workers in many companies joined the strike led by AICCTU leader Ranvijay Kumar. The strike was effective in bank, insurance and other sectors also.

At Jehanabad CPIML activists held a march from Jehanabad Station to Kargil Chowk. Marches were organized at Block HQs and Chatti Bazaars in Gaya District. Farmers joined the Bandh in Patna Rural under the banner of All India Kisan Mahasabha. CPIML activists also came out on the streets in support of the countrywide strike at Gaya, Ara, Arwal, Siwan, Darbhanga,

## All India General Strike For Democracy And Workers' Rights

**T**he countrywide Bharat Bandh on 8 January 2020 called by central trade unions, agrarian workers and farmers' organizations, was a resounding success in all parts of Bihar including capital Patna. CPIML and other Left parties came out on the streets in support of the strike and expressed their solidarity with the working class. A massive rally was organized from Gandhi Maidan in Patna which culminated in a meeting at Dakbangla Chowk. The Revolutionary Youth Association marched on the streets and demanded a National Register for the Unemployed and scrapping of CAA.

AISA and other student organizations had announced a students' strike in Patna which

was which got a huge response despite brutal repression by the administration. Two student activists at the College of Commerce were arrested and false cases slapped on them, but they were later released due to the pressure of the general strike put on the administration. The RPF arrested and slapped false cases on AISA State President Mukhtar and AISF State Secretary Sushil Kumar, whereas this area does not come under the Railways in any way. The police also brutally lathi charged the students seriously injuring AISA leader Akash Kashyap. CPIML State Secretary Kunal condemned this saying that this is a peaceful people's protest and cannot be crushed through repression and brutality. In Kaimur District also, BJP



Muzaffarpur, Purnea, Nalanda, Nawada, Gopalganj, Katihar and many other places.

Protest marches were organized at 8 Block HQs in Patna District, responding to the call by All India Kisan Sangharsh Samanvay Samiti and raising slogans of 'Save Fields, Save Farmers; Save Villages, Save the Country' and 'Down with Corporate Loot Raj'. Thousands of workers and farmers put aside their work and came out on the streets for the success of the bandh. Farmers at Naubatpur, Bihar demanded a Land Conservation Act to be enacted in Parliament; loan waiver and 1 ½ times purchase price for farmers' crops; Rs 5000 monthly pension for farmers and sharecroppers above the age of 60; immediate withdrawal of anti-people, anti-Constitution CAA-NRC-NPR; construction of Kadwan Dam and modernization of Sone Canal.

The farmers' march in Mansa, Punjab was led by AIKMS National President Ruldu Singh, National Executive member Gurnam Singh and other leaders. The Mansa Bazaar remained fully closed. Farmers in several villages put

aside their work in the fields and joined the bandh in large numbers. Farmers came out on the streets in support of the bandh in dozens of Districts in Punjab.

In Tamilnadu, AICCTU independently and jointly with other unions organised a month long campaign by means of distributing pamphlets, street corner meetings, rallies Gate meeting and conventions through out the state for the success of the January 8th General Strike. Affiliated unions of Civil Supplies Corporation, Electricity Board and other factories served their strike notices with gate meetings. AICCTU was part of 4 regional level conventions organised by joint central trade unions and other sector wise federations in Chennai, Trichy, Erode and Madurai.

On the day of strike, AICCTU participated in Rail and Road Roko agitations jointly with other CTUs in more than 25 centres of 15 Districts. In Kooduvancheri near Chennai, more than 100 AICCTU and RYA cadres were arrested after a scuffle with police when trying to block rail traffic. Comrade Iraniappan, Honorary State President of AICCTU

led the agitation, while State President of AICCTU Comrade Sankarapandian courted arrest at Tirunelveli, and AICCTU State General secretary Com.Desikan was arrested at Chennai in a joint all TU protest. Comrade N.K.Natarajan, State secretary of CPI ML courted arrest at Karur in a Road Roko protest.

AIARLA and AIKM activists courted arrest in rural areas of Tamilnadu in joint Agricultural labour and Peasant organisation programmes.

The Strike was total in major Industrial centres and there was a massive participation of workers in Chennai in Road Roko agitation. 10 minute stoppage of all traffic was implemented in Chennai at various centres by workers and Police arrested the striking workers. The Strike was almost total in state and central PSUs and shut down of Banks and Insurance companies. There was a huge participation by Transport sector workers also, but the Government managed few services with reserved contractual staff. Railway workers staged a massive demonstration on the eve

All India Strike in Champaran



of strike. Participation by scheme workers are remarkable and also huge participation by unorganised workers particularly construction workers.

In UP, protest marches and meetings were held at Ballia, Ghazipur, Sonbhadra, and Mirzapur. The bandh at these places was led by left parties including CPIML. They were joined by Kisan Sangharsh Samanvay Samitai, AIARLA, and Kisan Mahasabha. In Kanpur AICCTU organized a rally in the Dadanagar-Panki Industrial Area which was attended in large numbers by women workers. The bandh was also effective in Phulpur, Allahabad where IFCO Phulpur Coontract Workers Union affiliated

to AICCTU held a meeting at Gate No. 2 of the fertilizer factory. Speakers addressing the meeting condemned the anti-worker policies of the government and the state-sponsored violence on students across campuses. Meetings organized by Left parties were also held at other places in Allahabad city.

Protest marches and meetings were organized in other towns of UP including Varanasi, Moradabad, Mathura, Rae Bareli, Lakhimpur Kheeri, Sitapur, Azamgarh, Devaria, Kushinagar, Gorakhpur, Mau, Chandoli, Pilibhit, Bhadohi and Gonda. Memorandums addressed to the President were submitted to the administration at these places.

with lathis and bullets, and illegally jailing protesters and leaders, especially in Uttar Pradesh. He demanded that the Jharkhand government should not allow CAA-NRC in the State.

Comrade Vinod Singh said that the BJP is attacking and trying to destroy our Constitution which was built 70 years ago and enshrines our democratic and secular values. Comrade Rajkumar Yadav said that Babulal Marandi fought and won the recent Assembly election against BJP but joined the BJP after he won; therefore, he should resign from the post of MLA. The meeting was also addressed by Sitaram Singh, Gita Mandal, Ashok Paswan, Usman Ansari, Bahadur Singh and others.

Five resolutions were passed at the meeting: the people of the country and Jharkhand are against CAA-NRC-NPR and the Jharkhand government should not allow CAA-NRC in the State and should stop NPR work as this is the first step towards NRC; CPIML will work for a new wave of people's struggles for livelihood, housing, employment, pension and workers' security; CPIML salutes the people of Jharkhand for overthrowing the BJP and its anti-people anti-poor anti-Adivasi policies and wrong domicile policy through overturning CNT-SPT; the Soren government should take steps without delay to alleviate Jharkhand from the destructive policies of the previous BJP government and take action against the incidents of mob lynching and starvation deaths and end violence against women; the Jharkhand government should form a Migrant Workers Directorate for workers' safety and rights, guarantee proper and equitable compensation for farmers evicted from GT Road, and revoke all the anti-people policies and decisions

## On Comrade Mahendra Singh's Martyrdom Day

### Massive Rally Pledges To Defend the Constitution Against NPR, NRC, CAA

**M**ahendra Singh was a people's leader who always fought for the poor, farmers and the common people. Only by following the path he showed can we claim and get our rights—this was the message at the Sankalp Sabha held at Bagodar on the 16th Martyrdom Day of Comrade Mahendra Singh.

A spontaneous flow of people surged to the Sankalp Sabha (memorial meeting) to pay tribute to their beloved leader Mahendra Singh on 16 January 2020. Thousands of people marched in different rallies to converge at the meeting from all directions including Bagodar, Rajdhanwar, Birni, Sariya and other places. They carried traditional weapons and played on traditional instruments like drums as they marched and pledged to fight against the fascist-communal anti-people anti-national policies of the BJP-RSS.

The Sankalp Sabha started from Mahendra Singh's ancestral village Khambhra where his statue was garlanded by Mahendra Singh's wife Shanti Devi, CPIML General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya, MLA Vinod Singh and others. Reminiscing about Mahendra Singh, Shanti Devi said that he was totally dedicated to the people and today 16 years after his martyrdom he still lives in the heart of the people.

Addressing the meeting at the Bagodar Bus Terminus, Dipankar Bhattacharya said that the BJP is afraid even of Mahendra Singh's statue, which is why they do not want his statue to be put up here; but Comrade Mahendra Singh's statue will definitely be put up at Bagodar Bus Terminus. He said that the Constitution gives us the right to protest, but BJP is crushing protests against CAA-NRC brutally





of the Raghubar government.

Led by Comrade Vinod, the entire gathering stood and read out the Preamble of the Constitution,

pledging to defend the secular and democratic promise made by India's people to themselves through the Constitution.

## Save the Constitution Rally in Madhubani

A 'Save the Constitution' rally was organized on the occasion of the 6th Madhubani District Conference on 18 January 2020. Addressing the rally, CPIML General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said that Modi-Shah's agenda is to destroy the Constitution and impose fascist Sanghi-Hitler rule in India. With this agenda they have brought CAA-NRC-NPR but the people will not allow them to change the Constitution and to choose who will be a citizen and who will not. Protests are taking place across the country led by students, youth, minorities and women. Shaheen Bagh has spread to every corner of the country. The PM and HM are afraid of going to Assam, Bengal and other states. The people have understood the malicious intent of NRC; the Assam NRC is a disaster which has snatched away the citizenship of 19 lakh people

out of whom most are Hindus and 55,000 migrant families from Bihar are also included in this. He said that Nitish Kumar should stop his deceitful games and immediately stop NPR in Bihar. The economy of the country is in a shambles, workers' rights are being snatched away and ASHAs and Rasoiyas are being made to work without wages. The people will give a befitting reply by throwing out these anti-people governments at Delhi and Patna. The rally was also addressed by PB member and Mithilanchal in-charge Dharendra Jha, District Secretary Dhruv Narayan Karn and leader of CPIML Legislative Party Mahboob Alam who said that an ultimatum has been given to the Bihar government to immediately stop NPR, otherwise face bigger and sharper protests.

Earlier, Comrade Dipankar Bhattacharya met the protesters

sitting on an indefinite Dharna in front of the Madhubani Collectorate and expressed solidarity with them.

## Dharna against CAA in Haldwani

A massive dharna was organized in Buddha Park, Haldwani under the banner of Samvidhan Bachao Manch against the CAA-NRC-NPR package. Attended by a huge number of people, the dharna demanded that the Modi government should stop attacking the Constitution and revoke the CAA-NRC-NPR package.

Addressing the dharna, Raja Bahuguna said that the people of India have asserted their values and come out on the streets against the Sangh Parivar's communal-fascist agenda. He said that we will not step back until the Central government revokes CAA and stops the NPR process due to start from 1 April. Syed Irfan Rasool said that the government's duty is to solve the people's problems but the Modi government has become the biggest problem for the people. Advocate Kailash Joshi said that the Modi government is brutally silencing all voices of dissent and murdering

democracy; it is the duty of every democracy-loving citizen to protest against this government. GR Tamta pointed out that the architect of the Constitution Babasaheb Ambedkar had cautioned that to make India

into a Hindu Rashtra would be equal to disaster. Councilor Shakeel Ansari said that the women of Shaheen Bagh have shown the way and now Shaheen Bagh has spread to all corners of India.

## Samvidhan Bachao Jan Chetana Yatra attacked in Mewar

**T**he Samvidhan Bachao Jan Chetana (People's Consciousness for saving the Constitution) Yatra began in Mewar Division as scheduled on 19 January 2020 from the Shaheed Smarak at the Town Hall by paying tribute to martyrs. The aim of the Yatra is to heighten people's consciousness about the anti-Constitution and anti-democratic character of CAA-NRC.

When the Yatra reached Bhatevar village crossroads at about 1 pm, some people threatened violence, tore banners and surrounded it, saying that they would not let it proceed. Despite this the Yatra proceeded and when it reached Kheroda Bus Stand it was again surrounded and threatened. They abused the protesters as 'Pakistanis' and removed the tricolor and tore the Preamble put up on the bonnet. They also tore pamphlets and parchas and attacked from behind with lathis.

The people in the Yatra then went

to Udaipur Collectorate to demand legal action against this entire episode and action against the persons who insulted the national flag and the tore the Preamble of the Constitution. The Additional SP registered a case and assured that action would be taken.

CPIML leader Saurabh Naruka said that the BJP-RSS want to implement the two-nation theory of Jinnah-Savarkar through the communal CAA. They are following the British Raj trick of 'divide and rule'. Rajesh Singhvi (CPM), Mohd Anees (Bahujan Kranti Morcha), Prof Hemchandra Chandaliya, Dinesh Dave and others also spoke on the occasion.

Notice of this Yatra with a route chart had already been given to the Collector's office, Udaipur and to the Divisional Commissioner. Information has been received that Thana Officer Ranjit Singh has informed by telephone that a case has been registered, following up

on the memorandum submitted to SP Udaipur on the attack on the Samvidhan Bachao Jan Chetana Yatra. The details are: FIR NO. 16/2020 and the sections under which the case is registered are Section 2 of the Prevention of Insults to National Honor Act 1971, Section 143, 149, 341, 427 and 506 of IPC.

## Save Constitution Campaign in Champaran

Western Champaran, the land of Mahatma Gandhi's Satyagraha struggle, is vociferous in its protest against the anti-Constitution anti-democracy CAA-NRC-NPR. The protests in the District began with a rally on 23 December 2019 under the banner of Left parties at Chanpatiya, attended by people from all faiths. The Samvidhan Bachao Desh Bachao Sangharsh Samiti was constituted. A massive public meeting was held on 27 December at Betiya despite obstacles and attacks and appealed to the Supreme Court to take action to revoke the unconstitutional CAA. The meeting also demanded the shutting down of detention centers in Assam.

A huge rally was organized on 4 January 2020 at Sikta to demand withdrawal of CAA-NRC. Further, a Save the Constitution-Save the Country-Save Citizenship people's unity conference was organized on 11 January at the Shaheed Bhagat Singh Khel Maidan in Bairiya.

## 'Hamari Aawaz' at Muzaffarpur

A 'Hamari Aawaz' (People's Voice) program was organized on 15 January at Mehdi Hasan Chowk under the banner of Insaf Manch, addressed by leaders including AIPWA Secretary Kavita Krishnan. Comrade Kavita pointed out that NPR-NRC-CAA affects not only





Muslims but other people also, including dalits, adivasis and the poor. She added that Nitish Kumar must be pressurized into issuing a notification banning NPR, as NPR is the first step in the NPR-NRC-CAA ladder which threatens to strip the poor as well as other vulnerable sections of people, and Muslim minorities of citizenship. She said that the people have elected the government; the government cannot now be allowed to select the people and voters.

A large number of people, both men and women, attended the program addressed by Insaf Manch State Vice President Aftab Alam, Prof Aravind Kumar, Prof De, CPIML District Secretary Krishna Mohan and others.

## Convention at Millat Colony, Patna

AIPWA and Insaf Manch organized a convention at Millat Colony in Patna at the behest of women from the colony. The convention discussed the divisive

and communal CAA, women's issues and their struggle for rights, and sang 'Hum Dekhenge', 'Kagaz Nahin Dikhaenge' and other songs. AIPWA General Secretary Meena Tiwari said that this country belongs to the shared heritage of Fatima Shaikh, Savitribai Phule and Rani Laxmi Bai, and we will not allow fascist-communal people to break and divide us. The convention concluded with spirited slogans of 'We shall fight; we shall win!'

## Protest March at Naugachhiya

A protest march was organized at Naugachhiya Bazaar, Bhagalpur on 15 January 2020 against CAA-NRC-NPR led by District Secretary Bindeshwari Mandal, Block Secretary Ramdev Singh, Sitaram Rai (CPI) and Ajit Vidrohi (CPIM). The march traversed all the main roads of Naugachhiya and culminated in a meeting at Vaishali Chowk. A large number of people attended the protest march and meeting.

a large part of Kanwar Lake in Beguserai but instead of evicting them the Nitish government is targeting the poor.

Everyone wants environment conservation and clean drinking water in Bihar but this will be possible only if the government takes steps to revive and maintain water bodies like rivers, ponds and lakes. However, the government is not doing this but only making a hypocritical show by organizing a human chain. The Aurangabad cement factory and other factories in Bihar, for instance, have been given free license to guzzle ground water and emit huge pollution. The need of the hour is to revive the dying Ganga and other rivers and solve the problem of siltation. Nitish used to say this problem is because of Farakka but today when his government rules in both Delhi and Bihar, he is silent on this issue. The rivers of North Bihar are being destroyed by building embankments on them.

Moreover, Nitish Kumar, while claiming to oppose the NRC, had voted for the CAA and was implementing the draconian and anti-democratic NPR. The CPIML called upon people to expose the anti-poor and anti-democratic intent of the human chain, the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali scheme, and the NPR-NRC-CAA package.

At many places in Bihar, young people joined the human chain with placards opposing the NPR, NRC, and CAA and calling out Nitish Kumar's and the Bihar Government's doublespeak on the issue.

More than 30 landless families settled for over 200 years on land in Tilath village, Piro Thana, Bhojpur have been issued eviction notices under the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali scheme. It should be noted that these families are landless and have settled on this land for want of any other place to live. Instead

## Nitish Making Hypocritical Pretense of Environment Protection

**T**he CPIML has for long demanded the protect of traditional water-bodies in Bihar. Needless to say these water bodies are threatened, not by the poor living by the side of and using those water bodies, but by the wealthy and powerful people of dominant communities who have captured these water bodies and lands around them. The Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali (water-life-greenery) scheme launched by the Bihar CM Nitish Kumar is nothing but a hypocritical pretense of environment protection and protection of the water bodies. In reality it is a conspiracy to evict the poor from lands they have long been

settled on, while no action is being taken against wealthy dominant sections that have captured the lands and the water bodies. The scheme is a conspiracy to evict the poor settled for many years on pokhar-aahar-chaur lands (lands adjoining traditional water bodies) across Bihar without alternative arrangements. Eviction notices have already been issued to dalits and the poor in Eastern Champaran, Bhojpur and other districts. It is a known fact that the entire Bihar is in the clutches of dominant sections and the government is afraid to touch them in any way. For example, dominant sections have captured

of giving them parchas for the land they have been living on for so many years, the Nitish government has issued them eviction notices.

The people of the village held a protest march coinciding with the human chain under the Jal-Jeevan-Hariyali scheme that is razing down the homes of the poorest of the poor and riding rough-shod over their homes.

## Public Meeting at Darbhanga

A massive public meeting was organized on 15 January 2020 at Laheriyaserai in Darbhanga under the banner of the 'Save Constitution-Save Democracy-Save the Country' campaign. The meeting was addressed by CPIML PB member Kavita Krishnan, renowned poet Imran Pratapgarhi and Uroosa Arshi, a Kolkata-based poet, presided over by former Councilor Nafees Ul Haq Rinku and conducted by Riyaz Khan Qadri.

Comrade Kavita said that in a democracy the people of a country elect their government, but the Modi government and BJP are planning to select the people and tailor the voter-base through CAA-NRC-NPR. The people of the country will not tolerate this. She further said that this draconian regime will strip not only Muslims but also crores of dalits and poor of citizenship, turning them into stateless people at the mercy of the government. People across the country are united in their protest against this anti-Constitution, anti-democracy law and will not rest until it is repealed. She said that NPR is the first step in the NRC ladder and by implementing NPR in Bihar the Nitish government is carrying forward the BJP agenda. Instead of playing this double game, Nitish should refuse to implement NPR in Bihar.

Addressing the meeting, well-known poet Imran Pratapgarhi said that the government is bent on murdering the country's democracy but the people of the country will unite across religions and castes and foil this evil intent. He saluted the protests going on across the country in the face of brutal state repression, and recited a poem in praise of the protesters, saying that one Shaheen Bagh would defeat the entire state machinery of the Modi government. Uroosa Arshi from Kolkata said that the people of the country are saying loud and clear in one voice that they will not accept the draconian CAA-NRC-NPR and the Modi government must listen to the voice of the people and repeal this law or face even greater protests.

## Indefinite Dharna in Begusarai

An indefinite dharna protest against CAA-NPR-NRC, under the banner of Ambedkar Sangharsh Vichar Manch is underway Ballia Lakhminiya Chowk in Begusarai. The protesters took the pledge that the dharna would continue until the government accedes to the demand of repealing CAA-NRC-NPR. Thousands of people from minority communities, dalits, women, secular parties, social activists and the poor have come together to give a befitting reply to the fascist repressive attacks by the Modi-Shah government and to condemn the brutal repression of peaceful democratic protests. Speakers at the dharna also demanded that Nitish-Modi government in Bihar must pass a resolution against the implementation of NPR in the State, else its talk of opposing the NRC is hypocritical.

CPIML State Committee member and District Secretary Diwakar,

Ballia Block Secretary Noor Alam, Indradev Ram, AISA leaders Watan Kumar, Prashant Kashyap, Ajay Kumar and Abhishek Kumar shared the stage with the protesters to keep their morale high. The historic protest at Shaheen Bagh and other heroic protests across the country by youth, students, and intellectuals against state repression and fascism have become a source of inspiration to the people of India.

## AIPF condemns Repression of Democratic Rights in Uttar Pradesh

All India People's Forum and a delegation of citizens held a symposium on 20 January 2020 and met the Collector and submitted a memorandum against the repression of democratic rights and the deportation of former IAS officer Kannan Gopinathan from Allahabad airport back to Delhi on 18 January 2020 when he was scheduled to speak at a symposium organized at Sardar Patel Institute at Opalibagh. The AIPF symposium passed a unanimous resolution condemning the behavior of the administration with the following demands: the guilty officials should apologize to the organizers of the event and the people of Allahabad; democratic peaceful protests against CAA-NRC-NPR should be given protection and security; unnecessary slapping of false cases against protesters in the name of Section 144 should be stopped; false FIRs registered should be withdrawn; the administration should guarantee that such incidents are not repeated in Allahabad; stopping Kannan Gopinathan from speaking is against the 'Ganga-Jamuni Tahjeeb' (composite culture) of Allahabad.

The delegation comprised former



MLA Anugrah Narayan Singh, former MLC Shiv Sewak Singh, Ganga, Dr Kamal Usri, Ram Sagar, Risheshwar Upadhyay, Subhash Pandey, Vinod Tiwari, Om Prakash Pal, Anil Verma, Akhil Vikalp, Annu

Singh, Anand Malaviya, Tariq Anwar, Arif Siddiqui, Rajan Pandey, Avinash Mishra, Bhupendra Pandey and other distinguished citizens of Prayagraj.

People and other groups.

This march was held with an aim to appeal to the Supreme Court to strike down the “communal and unconstitutional” CAA.

Young India also marched in 50 centres including Mallapuram, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Delhi, Pune, Ahmedabad, Patna, Kolkata, Allahabad, Varanasi.

In Hyderabad, noted actor Prakash Raj, news editor Amir Ali Khan, Professor Vishweshwaraiah joined the march. Prakash Raj said the NPR-NRC-CAA were similar to laws imposed by Hitler in Germany, adding about Modi: “Those who do not have proper degree certificates are today asking for documents and conducting pariksha pe charcha (talk about exams).”

Professor PL Visweshwaraiah asked PM Modi to attend the protests to learn about Constitution. While the nation needs data about unemployed youth, the PM and home minister were more interested in collecting the data on religious lines, he said. Amir Ali Khan said that about 40 crore people in the country do not have valid documents – they would all be at risk of being sent to detention centres. □

## Young India Marches For Constitution Ahead of Supreme Court Hearing on CAA-NPR-NRC

On 20 January, young people under the banner of ‘Young India against CAA-NRC-NPR’ (comprising over 100 youth organisations, student unions, student groups and civil society organisations in the country) marched at 50 centres all over India to publicly declare their intention to defend the Constitution, and urge the Supreme Court also to do so.

In Delhi, Young India was joined by civil society and political activists in a march from Mandi House to Jantar Mantar.

Social activist Harsh Mander saluted protesters saying they should be proud that they had come out on the streets to stop the government’s “conspiracy to divide the country on hate”. “Many people asked if we would succeed. I believe

we have already succeeded,” he said.

United Against Hate activist Umar Khalid saluted the protesters at Shaheen Bagh and attacked the government, arguing that it was asking for documents from citizens, but had removed transparency from electoral bonds.

CPIML General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya joined the march in Delhi and said that the countrywide resistance was India’s pro-democracy movement, against fascism.

In Delhi, the protesters were supported by Jamia Coordination Committee, ANHAD, JNUSU, Joint Forum for Academic and Social Justice, Karwan-e-Mohabbat, Shaheen Bagh Protest Committee (United Youth Brigade), We the



# Reign of Terror in Uttar Pradesh

Activists visiting UP as part of fact-finding visits report a frightening situation where the lives, property, and liberty of Muslim minorities, as well as anti-CAA protestors and rights activists, are under assault by the Uttar Pradesh police and paramilitary, egged on by openly inflammatory language by the Chief Minister Ajay Singh Bisht (who styles himself Yogi Adityanath). Bisht has declared it 'sedition' to raise slogans demanding 'freedom', and has declared that his forces will take "revenge" on anti-CAA protestors.

CPIML PB member and AIPWA Secretary Kavita Krishnan was part of a Ham Bharat Ke Log fact-finding team to Meerut, and she and AISA General Secretary Sandeep Saurav participated in the Karwaan-e-Mohabbat fact-finding team to Muzaffarnagar.

## Key Findings of Ham Bharat Ke Kog Team

Uttar Pradesh is under a reign of terror. Uttar Pradesh government is employing unlawful and lethal tactics to harass and intimidate the citizens that are protesting against Citizenship Amendment Act ("CAA") and National Register of Citizens ("NRC"). The authorities are brazenly targeting Muslims, besides all peoples movements and human rights activists, throwing democratic norms, constitutional rights and the due process of law to the winds. The goal is not just to suppress all dissent against CAA/NPR/NRC in Uttar Pradesh, but to send a signal to anyone who may dare to raise a voice against anything.

Under this regime, UP police has acquired a notorious reputation for repeatedly breaching the due process of law, including over 3,500 'encounters'. But ever since the beginning of the anti-CAA/NPR/NRC protests, UP police has crossed all limits of a constitutional democracy. There is little doubt that all this is happening under the personal direction, sanction and supervision of the Chief Minister. He publicly announced a doctrine of revenge against the protesters. In a shocking audio tape in wide circulation, a senior police official can be heard saying that he has the CM's instructions and full immunity to beat the violent protesters to pulp, so as to teach everyone a lesson. Sadly, none other than the Prime Minister has openly supported this wanton cruelty and breakdown of law and order.

Worse, the government has made it very hard to gather information about what exactly is happening

in Uttar Pradesh. Internet has been shut down for good part of the last week almost all over the state. Media persons, human rights activists and even lawyers have been detained for trying to find out about the detainees. Opposition leaders have been prevented from visiting the places affected by police atrocities. Therefore we still do not quite know the extent of police repression. But we can see a pattern in what we have learnt so far from various reliable sources. (detailed report based on information from nine districts enclosed). It is clear that the police and authorities in Uttar Pradesh are guilty of the following:

- **Denial of constitutional rights to legitimate, democratic and peaceful protest.**

Authorities clamped down on anti-CAA/NRC protests even before it could begin. Permission for peaceful assembly and demonstration were summarily denied, Section 144 was used indiscriminately and activists who could have launched a protest were detained without any basis. This, while the police failed to prevent violent protests by supporters of CAA / NRC (in particular, demonstrations led by members of BJP).

- **Curtailling of information flow.** Authorities have imposed internet shutdowns and limits on transportation to prevent peaceful protests against CAA / NRC.

- **Unlawful Mass Detentions/Arrests.** Police have undertaken mass detention and arrest of protestors using outdated colonial era laws (Section 144). Human rights activist and himself a retired Inspector General of Police, Shri S R Darapuri, currently under treatment for cancer, has been arrested. Magsaysay Award winner Sandeep Pandey was placed under house arrest. A score of other social activists are under arrest. There are several cases of police detention without production before a magistrate as required by law. As of December 25, UP police said that they had arrested 925 people and preventively detained more than 5,500 others. We still do not have a full picture of the number of persons detained without a charge or those who are missing. Indiscriminate detentions and arrests are going on and Muslim localities spend nights in fear of midnight knock.

- **Reward posters:** All over the state, 'reward



posters' have come up with pictures of the protesters, without any attempt to establish their guilt, offering rewards to anyone who offers information.

- **Inappropriate Charges.** Review of FIRs against detainees shows that the authorities have charged detainees with crimes that are not warranted by the alleged facts in the relevant FIRs, including charged like attempt to murder, rioting armed with a deadly weapon and criminal intimidation. Large number of FIRs have been lodged with anonymous accused running into more than 30,000 persons. This gives police the license to arrest anyone at any stage..

- **Torture during custody:** while a fuller picture of the treatment of those detained and arrested is yet to emerge, there are reports that they have been subjected to merciless beating and torture of various kinds. The same treatment was meted out to juvenile detainees in Mujaffarnagar who were placed with adults in violation of the law.

- **Intimidation of Detainees' Friends and Family.** It has been reported that friends, family and counsel of detainees, who have approached authorities, have faced serious harassment, intimidation and in some cases detention.

- **Excessive, Deadly Force.** Police are using excessive (often deadly) force against CAA / NRC protestors. At least 18 protestors, all Muslims, have died since the protests started, including an 8-year old boy. Every available evidence points to police firing as the cause of these deaths. Yet the police claim that except in one case people died from crossfire from locally made weapons and that the police only fired rubber bullets and teargas shells. However, a video from Kanpur showing a policeman firing from his revolver at the protestors belies these claims.

- **Denial of treatment to injured and dignity to the dead:** The victims of police firing were denied medical aid by private hospitals on orders from the authorities. Post-mortem was delayed. Families of the dead have not received post-mortem reports. Relatives of the deceased were pressurized not to bring the dead body home and were rushed into burying it outside their family burial ground. No compensation has been offered to any injured or to the family of the deceased.

- **Punitive action targeted at Muslim Community.** There are more than one reliable reports of the police raiding Muslim colonies,

entering homes, ransacking them, and detaining people indiscriminately. In several places, state authorities have sealed shops and commercial establishments owned by Muslims. Notices have been issued to Muslims unrelated to any protest or violence to compensate for the damage to public property.

## Press Note: People's Tribunal on State Action in UP

At a People's Tribunal organised by Karwaan-e-Mohabbat and many other associated organisations in Delhi including AIPWA, where members of the jury included Justice A P Shah, Justice Sudarshan Reddy, Justice V Gopala Gowda, Shantha Sinha, Prof Irfan Habib, Deb Mukherji, Chaman Lal, Dr. N C Saxena, and Anirudh Kala, testimonies were presented by victims of police brutality, various activists both present and who have since met victims, and experts on the various issues that the tribunal exposed.

During the proceedings, testimonies were presented on the deeply troubling violent reaction of the police in response to the anti-CAA protests in December 2019, the role of the CM and senior leadership in inciting this violence, the role of medial officers who were complicit in perpetrating violence and the effect on victims themselves.

During various fact-finding missions conducted by civil society organisations in Muzaffarnagar, Meerut, Sambhal and Firozabad, from January 2 to 12, 2020 prior to the tribunal it was noted that all the violence was directed toward Muslim residents of these towns are now filled with immense grief and unimaginable fear. The scale of the violence is many times greater than this, but following is an account of the preliminary findings of the Karwan e Mohabbat fact-finding team:

### 1. Police firing

We visited families of the dead in these 4 towns – totalling 16. All of the 16 killed in Western UP are young men from Muslim working class families. Almost all their families said that they were not part of the procession, they were at the wrong place at wrong time. They died of bullet injuries. Of the 16, for which we have information, 14 of them were hit above waist – on chest, face, head, neck.

In Meerut,

- Mohsin, 28, shot in the chest
- Zaheer, 40, bullet went through one of his eyes.

- Aleem, 23, shot in the head
- Asif, 20, bullet hit his chest
- Aasif, 33, a bullet landed on his back

In Sambhal

- Bilal, 31, shot under the lower lip
- Shehroze 19, shot in the stomach

In Muzaffarnagar,

- Noora 25, hit on chest

In Ferozabad

- Mukeem, 19, daily wage earner, hit in the stomach
- Rashid, 27, bullet hit on head
- Armaan, 24, daily wage worker, shot in the chest
- Haroon, poor man, hit in the jaw
- Shafiq, 39/40, daily wage worker, hit near the ear

Some of these men died on the spot, others while being shifted from one to the other hospital.

## 2. Attacks on property

We visited homes which were ransacked and destroyed beyond repairs. In Muzaffarnagar, in house after house we visited in the two Muslim localities which were attacked by police on the night of December 20, – there was a pattern in destruction - the police had attacked only the most affluent houses, in each of the 4 houses we visited, everything that could be broken was thoroughly destroyed, systematically – the police pulled down kitchen cabinets breaking every piece of china, overturned groceries, smashed sinks and pulled open taps leading to flooding of the kitchens; broken bathroom fittings, wash basins, they smashed television sets, fridges, coolers, washing machines, furniture, switch boards; they upturned cupboards, and cars in all houses were vandalised and in one place upturned while police chanted Jai Shri Ram. Family jewellery was looted, and cash stolen from two houses.

The completely shattered members of families who visibly bore the signs of traumata and deep distress told us that the attacking police told them that they will live in their houses now as Muslims will have to leave. The police had interpreted the citizenship law as giving them license to force Muslims to Pakistan.

The attacks were led by local police, in some places joined by plainclothes miscreants. This is a new trend where police is not a silent spectator in attacks but turns into a marauding mob. We saw police broken batons in two houses and a police cap left behind.

People have not filed any FIRs for their loss.

## 3. Custodial Violence

The level of torture in the four towns in police custody was extremely high. Police did not even spare the children - **in Muzaffarnagar** police arrested 40 minors from an orphanage madrasa and beat the children. The Maulana of the Madarsa was beaten so badly that his legs and limbs were broken.

Police stripped the minors inside the police station and they received injuries on their behind.

**In Sambhal**, one young person, X - name changed - was brutally beaten and tortured by the police only because they found out that he was a Jamia student. The police beat him brutally in the custody and stripped him naked and beat him with belts and batons.

**In Ferozabad**, police took away 14 people from different places to Rasoolpur Police Station and from there to Makkhanpur Police Station. At first, the police beat and tortured them inside the Rasoolpur Police Station and then again in the Makkhanpur police station. City residents told us that these police stations are well-known butcheries.

The level of brutality was such that despite knowing the fact that one of the injured was a cancer patient (Ahmed Nabi) and a fractured leg, police beat him with extreme brutality and brought him to a hospital only after three days of his arrest. In the name of treatment, the medical department just gave him some pain killers and no plaster. The family of the victim approached the court, his chemo session was due that week, and even after the court order, the police didn't admit him to the hospital. It was only after the third court order directing the police to admit the victim to the hospital and under pressure from the media, the police admitted him to the Agra Medical College. We say an X-ray of his leg broken in two piece, without plaster almost 11 days after the incident.

Amir, a labourer was beaten so brutally that he received serious internal injuries. The police denied him medical treatment inside the custody and gave him third-degree treatment despite the fact that he was not even part of the protest.

**In Meerut**, police had arrested more than 100 people and they still roam around in the night in the Muslim localities in order to intimidate the local residents threatening to arrest more people.

**In Muzaffarnagar**, horrors unfolded as we spoke to Jameel. Frail and visibly shaken even after nearly twenty days, he narrated the details of his captivity. While he was looking for his brother in the chaos, he



landed in the hands of the police who after beating him mercilessly, used a hot iron rod to inflict burn injuries in his hands. He was then put in a car and further beaten. Kept in illegal detention in the barracks, for two days he was not given any food – and this is the story of all in police stations. He was beaten badly in the first night as they repeatedly asked him to “give them hundred names”. He witnessed several other detainees being most brutally beaten, particularly those wearing kurta pajamas and having beard.

Daanish (minor, name changed) and his father were picked up from Meenakshi chowk. The minor was released only after two days allegedly in exchange for money and he narrated as to how he witnessed 4-6 masked men (not police) being let inside the police compound. Detainees would be taken out of lock up for them to be beaten up by the masked men to their heart's content. He said that only after the information reached the higher ups and when Priyanka Gandhi said she would visit the torture chambers, he was hurriedly released even without the usual protocol of their family members being called.

Families said that pain caused from brutal beating, made the detained very vulnerable. We were told their finger prints were put on desi pistols in police custody, if they refused, they were tortured more.

## Hate Speech by Police

During our tour we heard in several places that police encouraged, persuaded and in a few cases even compelled the Hindu mob to burn and loot Muslim shops and houses and instead of controlling violence, police invited more violence. In Ferozabad, police chased the protesters into Hindu dominant mohalla and said to Hindu onlookers, ***Hum Hindu hai, tum bhi hindu ho, maro*** [We are Hindu, so are you, kill them]! This is when a cancer patient who was there to fill his prescription was caught by a mob and brutally beaten and his leg broken. They also heard saying: ***“ye to Miyan bhaiyon ko humare Hindu bhaiyon ne muh laga rakha hai, warna inki auqat nahi hai ki ye kuch bolen”*** [Our brothers have kept these Mian (Muslims), otherwise they do not have the right to say something]. Further, the police said, ***“hume to abhi do ghante diye hai agar do din de den to inhe bata de ki hum kaun hai”*** [We have been given two hours now, if we give two days, then tell them who we are].

On 20th December 2019, Meerut Superintendent of Police (SP) Akhilesh Narayan Singh was caught on camera threatening Muslims. ***“Kahan jaoge? Is gali ko main theek karoonga*** [Where will you go? I will

set this lane straight]. To the group of people wearing skull caps, he also said that ***“Jo kaali patti aur neeli patti baandh rahe ho unko keh do Pakistan chale jaayein*** [These black and blue badges you people are wearing, tell them to go to Pakistan]. Further he also threatens the people by saying that ***“Desh main agar nahin rehne ka mann hai to chale jao bhaiya... khaoge yahan, gaoge kahin aur ka Yeh gali mujhe yaad ho gayi hai. Aur jab mujhe yaad ho jaata hai toh mein naani tak pahunch jaata hun*** [If you don't want to live here, go to Pakistan...you eat here but sing praises of some other place. I am now familiar with this lane. And once I remember, I can even reach your grandmother].”

In Sambhal, the locals told that they have an audio recording of the District Magistrate of Sambhal asking some Hindu journalists why they were helping the Jihadis.

The tribunal witnessed testimonies from various human rights activists who were themselves victims of such brutality. Among these were:

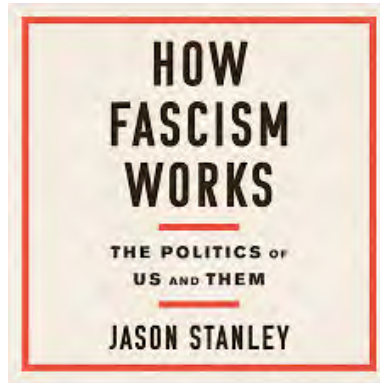
1. Sadaf Jafar (political activist)
2. Rajiv Yadav (member of human rights group Rihai Manch)
3. Sandeep Pandey (social activist and Magsaysay award winner)
4. S R Darapuri (Ambedkarite activist and retired IPS officer)
5. Deepak Kabir (theatre activist and poet)
6. Adv. Akram Akhtar Choudhry

The jury of this People's Tribunal expressed deep worry and dismay at the testimonies placed before it. It was convinced that the entire state machinery, led from the top, acted with gravely culpable and unfortunate prejudice and violence clearly targeting one community alone, the state's Muslim population.

The jury also observed that the role of the police has become a weapon in the hands of the communal agenda of the government. The Jury noted that UP stands out state authorities were active perpetrators of violence themselves and pressurised the health system to act against medical ethics and Supreme Court decisions in providing medical aid, most importantly emergency medical services. It further acknowledged the looming anxiety within the families of those affected by this violence, for whom all the agents of the State that were meant for their protection have turned against them. □

# Reading 'How Fascism Works' In Modi-ruled India

We know that fascism differs from totalitarian dictatorship in that fascism is a movement, enjoying the support and participation of a significant section of people. *How Fascism Works: The Politics of Us and Them*, a 2018 book by Professor Jason Stanley, deftly identifies ten key methods used by fascist politicians to achieve such support. Rich with examples from history as well as contemporary world politics, this book helps us analyse India's contemporary reality. Reading this book, we can easily see how Modi's regime takes many a leaf from the fascist copybook. *Liberation* will summarise the ten features of fascist politics identified in this book, with brief notes on how the Modi regime and the RSS and BJP politics tick those ten boxes.



*to translate into a total reality, we subordinate everything.*

Stanley observes, “Here, Mussolini makes clear that the fascist mythic past is intentionally mythical. The function of the mythic past, in fascist politics, is to harness the emotion of nostalgia to the central tenets of fascist ideology—authoritarianism, hierarchy, purity, and struggle.” Stanley adds, “The fascist mythic past exists to aid in *changing the present*.”

Stanley's observations on the centrality of the patriarchal family in the fascist myth are especially relevant to the RSS tactics in India. Stanley observes:

“The patriarchal family is one ideal that fascist politicians intend to create in society—or return to, as they claim. The patriarchal family is always represented as a central part of the nation's traditions, diminished, even recently, by the advent of liberalism and

cosmopolitanism. But why is patriarchy so strategically central to fascist politics?

In a fascist society, the leader of the nation is analogous to the father in the traditional patriarchal family. The leader is the father of his nation, and his strength and power are the source of his legal authority, just as the strength and power of the father of the family in patriarchy are supposed to be the source of his ultimate moral authority over his children and wife. The leader provides for his nation, just as in the traditional family the father is the provider. ...By representing the nation's past as one with a patriarchal family structure, fascist politics connects nostalgia to a central organizing hierarchal authoritarian structure, one that finds its purest representation in these norms.”

In an essay titled ‘India's Democracy: Contest For The Nation's Core’, (*Indian Democracy Origins, Trajectories, Contestations*, Edited by Alf Gunvald Nilsen, Kenneth Bo Nielsen and Anand Vaidya, Pluto Press, 2019), *Liberation* editor Kavita Krishnan noted how the RSS deploys metaphors of home (ghar) and its sister-term family (parivar) “to valorise the patriarchal family and subjugation of women – even to the extent of justifying wife-beating as

## I – The Mythical Past

In this chapter Stanley discusses the BJP's own use of this tactic of constructing a mythical past. He quotes a 1922 speech at the Fascist Congress in Naples, where Benito Mussolini declared:

*We have created our myth. The myth is a faith, a passion. It is not necessary for it to be a reality....Our myth is the nation, our myth is the greatness of the nation! And to this myth, this greatness, which we want*



necessary chastisement of erring wives.” She pointed out that “Leaders of the Rashtra Sevika Samiti, the RSS’s women’s wing, describe themselves as “familyist not feminist”, and feminist assertions of women’s autonomy are painted as Western-inspired disruptions of the harmonious Indian family. Oppressive social practices are all rationalised as having evolved to “protect” women from rapacious Muslims.” Moreover, “Ghar is also invoked to describe Hinduism as the home for Dalits and Muslims, and to prescribe and order ghar wapsi, a return to the home of those who have converted to other faiths. Parivar is used to recast relations between workers and bosses as harmonious relations within the “industry family”, thus justifying erosion and dilution of labour laws. ...Labour laws and unionising are cast as disruptions of the “industry family”. Parivar is also used to recast India as the global home of Hindus in the draft Citizenship Amendment Bill...a Hindu Rashtra Bill by the backdoor, seeking to cast Hindus as having a greater natural right to citizenship than non-Hindus.”

Stanley comments on the debt owed by the RSS to European fascists Hitler and Mussolini:

“According to adherents of the Hindutva movement in India, Hindus were the indigenous population of India, living according to patriarchal customs and with

strict puritanical sexual practices until the arrival of Muslims, and subsequently, Christians, who introduced decadent Western values. The Hindutva movement has fabricated a version of a mythic Indian past with a pure nation of Hindus, to dramatically supplement what is regarded by scholars as the actual history of India. India’s dominant nationalist party, Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), adopted Hindutva ideology as its official creed and won power in the country using emotional rhetoric calling for a return to this fictional, patriarchal, harshly conservative, ethnically and religiously pure past. BJP is descended from the political arm of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), an extremist, far-right Hindu nationalist party that advocated the suppression of non-Hindu minorities. Nathuram Godse, the man who assassinated Gandhi, was a member of RSS, as was current Indian prime minister Narendra Modi. RSS was explicitly influenced by European fascist movements, its leading politicians regularly praised Hitler and Mussolini in the late

1930s and 1940s.”

But if the fascists glorify and mythologise the past, why do they run down historians and historical research so much? Stanley offers this insight:

“The strategic aim of these hierarchal constructions of history is to displace truth, and the invention of a glorious past includes the erasure of inconvenient realities. While fascist politics fetishizes the past, it is never the actual past that is fetishized. These invented histories also diminish or entirely extinguish the nation’s past sins. It is typical for fascist politicians to represent a country’s actual history in conspiratorial terms, as a narrative concocted by liberal elites and cosmopolitans to victimize the people of the true “nation.””

This fits in exactly with what the RSS does to India’s best historians, and to history-writing in India.

## II – Propaganda

Why do fascists need propaganda? Stanley writes: “It’s hard to advance a policy that will harm a large group of people in straightforward terms. The role of political propaganda is to conceal politicians’ or political movements’ clearly problematic goals by masking them with ideals that are widely accepted.”

Anti-corruption is a favourite plank for fascists. Referring to Trump’s (false) claims of “draining the swamp” (i.e. cleansing Washington of



Credit: Rohan Chakrabarty

corrupt corporate lobbyists), Stanley writes that “Fascist movements have been “draining swamps” for generations.”

Stanley notes that “anticorruption campaigns are frequently at the heart of fascist political movements. Fascist politicians characteristically decry corruption in the state they seek to take over, which is bizarre, given that fascist politicians themselves are invariably vastly more corrupt than those they seek to supplant or defeat.” This is certainly true of Modi and the BJP, who rode to power in the wake of the Anna Hazare-led anti-corruption movement, but have proved to be vastly more corrupt than the UPA Government they ousted.

The historian Richard Grunberger’s observations on the Nazis in his book *The 12-Year Reich*, cited by Stanley, sound uncannily familiar to us in India today:

“Having dinned it into the collective consciousness that democracy and corruption were synonymous, the Nazis set about constructing a governmental system beside which the scandals of the Weimar regime seemed small blemishes on the body politic. Corruption was in fact the central organizing principle of the Third Reich—and yet a great many citizens not only overlooked this fact, but actually regarded the men of the new regime as austere dedicated to moral probity.”

The Modi Government’s erosion of the independence

of the press, the judiciary, the Election Commission and various investigative and watchdog agencies is also a favourite fascist tactic. Stanley writes, “In the name of rooting out corruption and supposed bias, fascist politicians attack and diminish the institutions that might otherwise check their power.”

The mere fact that Trump, Modi and Bolsonaro were elected, does not make them less fascist. According to Stanley, “Historically, fascist leaders have often come to power through democratic elections. But the commitment to freedom, such as the freedom inherent in the right to vote, tends to end with that victory.”

A quote from the Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, cited by Stanley is a particularly striking: *“This will always remain one of the best jokes of democracy, that it gave its deadly enemies the means by which it was destroyed.”*

### III: Anti-Intellectual

The vicious attacks by Sangh stormtroopers and police on JNU, DU, Jadavpur University, HCU, Jamia and AMU are very much in line with the classic fascist modus operandi.

When the Modi regime was reelected in May 2019, BJP General Secretary Ram Madhav wrote a triumphant op-ed saying that in this second term, liberals would “be discarded from the country’s academic, cultural and

intellectual landscape.” Stanley puts his finger on why the Sangh and BJP are equally invested in saffronising syllabi and schools while attacking and destroying liberal campuses: “Education ... either poses a grave threat to fascism or becomes a pillar of support for the mythical nation. It’s no wonder, then, that protests and cultural clashes on campuses represent a true political battleground and receive national attention. The stakes are high....Fascist politics seeks to undermine the credibility of institutions that harbor independent voices of dissent until they can be replaced by media and universities that reject those voices.”

Stanley’s description of the fascist animus towards intellectuals sounds like a description of the Sangh’s attacks on JNU and what they deride as the ‘award-wapsi gang’, ‘Khan Market cabal’ or ‘urban Naxals’ today:

*“Whenever fascism threatens, its representatives and facilitators denounce universities and schools as sources of “Marxist indoctrination,” the classic bogeyman of fascist politics. Typically used without any connection to Marx or Marxism, the expression is employed in fascist politics as a way to malign equality. That is why universities that seek to give some intellectual space to marginalized perspectives, however small, are subject to denunciation as hotbeds of “Marxism”... Student protests are misrepresented in the press as riots by undisciplined mobs, threats to the civil order. In fascist politics, universities*

*are debased in public discourse, and academics are undermined as legitimate sources of knowledge and expertise, represented as radical “Marxists” or “feminists” spreading a leftist ideological agenda under the guise of research. By debasing institutions of higher learning and impoverishing our joint vocabulary to discuss policy, fascist politics reduces debate to ideological conflict. Via such strategies, fascist politics degrades information spaces, occluding reality.”*

The Sangh has always referred even to liberal historians as ‘Leftist’ or ‘Marxist’. And now all dissenting voices, even those of Gandhians, are referred to as ‘Maoist’ or ‘urban Naxal.’

#### IV: Unreality

In what sounds like a perfect description of ‘Modified’ television in India today, Stanley writes, “Fascist politics transforms the news from a conduit of information and reasoned debate into a spectacle with the strongman as the star.”

#### V: Hierarchy

We have seen how the anxieties of the dominant Hindu upper caste men (the notion that they are ‘victims’ of caste-based reservations, that Muslims are ‘taking over’; and even that ‘men’s rights’ and ‘family’ need to be ‘saved’ from westernised women) have provided fertile grounds for the RSS. Stanley explains how this works:

“Hierarchy benefits fascist politics in another way: Those

who are accustomed to its benefits can be easily led to view liberal equality as a source of victimization. Those who benefit from hierarchy will adopt a myth of their own superiority, which will occlude basic facts about social reality. They will distrust pleas for tolerance and inclusion made by liberals on the grounds that these pleas are masks for power grabs by other groups. Fascist politics feeds off the sense of aggrieved victimization caused by loss of hierarchal status.”

The caste system and Brahminical patriarchy in particular make Indian society more hierarchical than most – and therefore especially vulnerable to fascist politics.

#### VI: Victimhood

Stanley discusses how “increased representation of members of traditional minority groups is experienced by dominant groups as threatening in various ways.”

Here, Stanley helps make the distinction between anti-colonial nationalism and chauvinistic nationalism. He points out that “Anti-colonialist struggles typically take place under the banner of nationalism; for example, Mahatma Gandhi employed Indian nationalism as a tool against British rule. This kind of nationalism, the nationalism that arises from oppression, is not fascist in origin. These forms of nationalism, in their original

formations, are equality-driven nationalist movements.”

However, Stanley rightly cautions: “Equality-driven nationalism can rapidly turn oppressive itself, if one is not paying enough attention to shifts in power. Some problematic nationalist sentiments arise from perfectly genuine histories of oppression.” This certainly applies to the ways in which the Indian and the Chinese states have deployed “nationalism” away from its original anti-colonial and egalitarian goal, to justify discrimination and repression. That India won freedom from colonial rule does not mean that Indians are not replicating colonial attitudes in Kashmir.

Stanley could well be talking about caste-based reservations which are attacked with the casteist argument of “merit” when he writes:

*“Fascist politics covers up structural inequality by attempting to invert, misrepresent, and subvert the long, hard effort to address it. Affirmative action at its best was designed to recognize and address structural inequality. But by falsely presenting affirmative action as uncoupled from individual merit, some of its detractors recast advocates of affirmative action as pursuing their own race- or gender-based “nationalism” to the detriment of hardworking white Americans, regardless of evidence.”*

In India, then, we need to make a distinction between an equality-driven nationalisms, and nationalisms that define themselves in contrast with



vulnerable minorities cast in the role of the “dangerous Other.” The same nationality movements that are progressive when they assert themselves against a discriminatory and oppressive State, can themselves become communal and xenophobic when they cast the migrant labourer from linguistic and religious minorities as the enemy. As Stanley puts it:

*“Nationalism is at the core of fascism. The fascist leader employs a sense of collective victimhood to create a sense of group identity that is by its nature opposed to the cosmopolitan ethos and individualism of liberal democracy. The group identity can be variously based—on skin color, on religion, on tradition, on ethnic origin. But it is always contrasted with a perceived other against whom the nation is to be defined. Fascist nationalism creates a dangerous “them” to guard against, at times to battle with, to control, in order to restore group dignity.”*

## VII: Law and Order

Stanley writes: *“Fascist law-and-order rhetoric is explicitly meant to divide citizens into two classes: those of the chosen nation, who are lawful by nature, and those who are not, who are inherently lawless.”*

This observation is especially useful to understand the BJP’s attempts to imply that all Muslims are inherently “infiltrators”, “troublemakers who can be identified by their clothes”, and “terrorists.”

## VIII: Sexual Anxiety

In passages describing how fascist politics portrays the ‘Other’ as a source of sexual danger, Stanley specifically notes the connections between Nazi anti-Semitism in Germany, white supremacy in the US, and Islamophobia in Myanmar and India.

Stanley notes how “fascist propaganda” sexualizes “the threat of the other,” citing the example of Nazi policies against ‘race-mixing’, and the lynching of black men in the United States on the pretext of “defending the purity of white American women.”

He also notes how “the genocide against the Rohingyas” in Myanmar “has been fueled by paranoid theories” by Buddhist fascist groups about “Muslim sexual schemes to prey on Buddhist women.”

Stanley also discusses India in detail:

“In India, Hindu nationalists have regularly stoked anti-Muslim sentiment with campaigns calling attention to the supposed threat Muslim men pose to Hindu masculinity. Most recently, this took the form of a panic about a supposed “love



Credit: Ita Mehrotra

jihad.”

The way in which the “law and order” and ‘love jihad’ rhetorics combine in Sangh propaganda are extremely apparent in BJP President Amit Shah’s speeches in western UP in 2014, where he justified anti-Muslim violence by saying, “when a community violates the honour of our daughters and sisters, and the administration does nothing, people are forced to riot.” (‘Amit shah’s Hate speech at Jat sabha in Shamli, West UP’, posted by NewsClick, YouTube, 7 April 2014, [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttk\\_ZYdevoM](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ttk_ZYdevoM))

India is going through a Modi-made economic disaster and unemployment crisis. While this can and does translate into anger against the Modi regime, the RSS and BJP try hard to use patriarchal sentiments to turn the anger against “a community that violates the honour of our daughters and sisters” or against feminists and women students who are described as purveyors of “free sex”. Women’s freedom and inter-faith love are both demonised by the Sangh as threats to the caste and patriarchal hierarchy.

Stanley’s analysis helps us understand why and how. He writes:

*“Patriarchal masculinity sets up men with the expectation that society will allow them the role of sole protectors and providers of their families. ...Fascist politics distorts male anxiety, heightened by economic anxiety, into fear that one’s family is under existential threat from those*

*who reject its structure and traditions. Here again, the weapon used in fascist politics is a supposed potential threat of sexual assault."*

## IX: Vilifying Urban Cosmopolitanism

Why did Mohan Bhagwat blame rape on cities? Perhaps because the Sangh seeks to appeal to hierarchical rural communities by displacing their natural resentment at marginalisation and crisis unleashed by neoliberal policies, onto liberal urban campuses, intellectuals and youth who are portrayed as 'elite' and morally corrupt.

Stanley explains: "Fascist politics highlights the wrongs a globalized economy does to rural areas, adding to it a focus on traditional rural values of self-sufficiency supposedly put at risk by the success of liberal cities culturally and economically.

Fascist ideology rejects pluralism and tolerance. ...The diversity, with its concomitant tolerance of difference, in large urban centers is therefore a threat to fascist ideology."

Ironically while fascist politicians may portray JNU and DU students, and trade union activists like Sudha Bharadwaj as liberal 'Khan Market' elites, they describe their own stupendously corrupt, super-rich corporate cronies (Ambanis and Adanis) as 'wealth generators' rather than elites!

## X: Work Sets You Free

Remember how BJP MP Tejasvi Surya jeers at Muslims as 'puncture repair walas', and Amit Shah refers to them as 'termites' (i.e parasites)? Stanley's writing could help explain why they deploy such rhetoric:

*"In fascist ideology, in times of crisis and need, the state reserves support for members of the chosen nation, for "us" and not "them." The justification is invariably because "they" are lazy, lack a work ethic, and cannot be trusted with state funds and because "they" are criminal and seek only to live off state largesse. In fascist politics, "they" can be cured of laziness and thievery by hard labor. This is why the gates of Auschwitz and Buchenwald had emblazoned on them the slogan ARBEIT MACHT FREI—work shall make you free. In fascist ideology, the ideal of hard work is weaponized against minority populations."*

Stanley offers an important insight about the relationships between libertarian and fascist ideology:

*"The fascist vision of individual freedom is similar to the libertarian notion of individual rights—the right to compete but not necessarily to succeed or even survive.... Though fascism involves a commitment to group hierarchies of worth that is flatly incompatible with true economic libertarianism, which does not generalize beyond the individual, both philosophies share a common principle by which value is measured."*

Remember how the BJP tries to recast the labour-boss

relationship as the 'Industry Family'? Turns out that too is a classic fascist ploy which also shares much with corporate ideology. Stanley observes:

*"Hitler was correct that in a democratic society, there are tensions between the varied practices and structures of families, workplaces, government bodies, and civil society. Fascism promises to solve this by eliminating such differences. Instead, in fascist ideology, all institutions, from the family to the business to the state, would run according to the Führer Principle. The father, in fascist ideology, is the leader of the family; the CEO is the leader of the business; the authoritarian leader is the father, or the CEO, of the state. When voters in a democratic society yearn for a CEO as president, they are responding to their own implicit fascist impulses."*

## Epilogue

Is it not an exaggeration to claim India is descending into fascism? This is a question that is often asked, especially by liberal commentators who still want to claim that things are not so bad. In the epilogue, Stanley discusses this issue:

*"What normalization does is transform the morally extraordinary into the ordinary. It makes us able to tolerate what was once intolerable by making it seem as if this is the way things have always been. By contrast, the word "fascist" has acquired a feeling of the extreme, like crying wolf. ...Normalization means precisely*

that encroaching ideologically extreme conditions are not recognized as such because they have come to seem normal. The charge of fascism will always seem extreme; normalization means that the goalposts for the legitimate use of “extreme” terminology continually move.”

The book which outlines fascist tactics and acknowledges how powerful and persuasive fascist politics can be, still ends on a note of hope. As we look around us at the movement that has sprung up against the NPR-NRC-CAA, we may cautiously say that we, in India too, must nurture some of this hope.

Stanley writes:

“How do we maintain a sense of common humanity, when fear and insecurity will lead us to flee into the comforting arms of mythic superiority in vain pursuit of a sense of dignity? ...We can take comfort in the

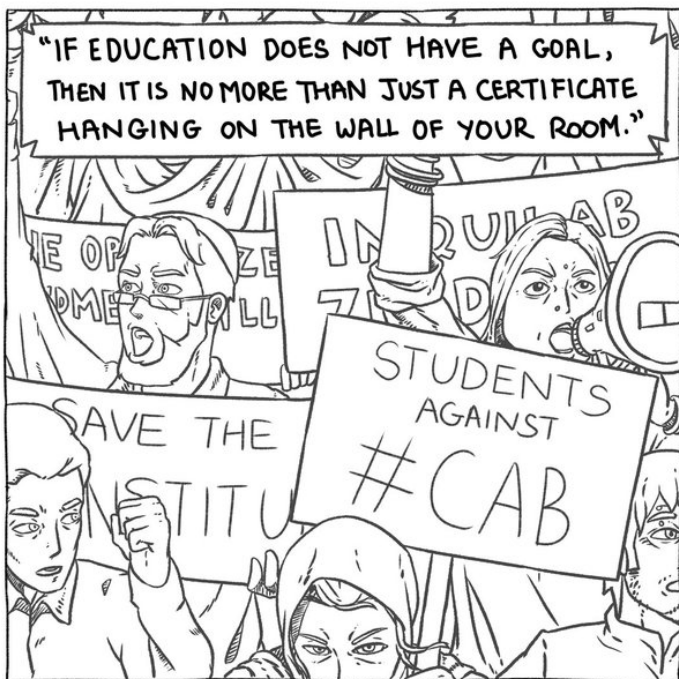
histories of progressive social movements, which against long odds and hard struggle have in the past succeeded in the project of eliciting empathy.

“In the direct targets of fascist politics—refugees, feminism, labor unions, racial, religious, and sexual minorities—we can see the methods used to divide us. But we must never forget that the chief target of fascist politics is its intended audience, those it seeks to ensnare in its illusory grip, to enroll in a state where everyone deemed “worthy” of human status is increasingly subjugated by mass delusion.”

This is perhaps the insight that resonates most in these times. While Muslims are certainly the most vulnerable targets of the NPR-NRC-CAA, we must never forget that the non-Muslims who are the intended audience for its Islamophobic

hate-speech, are also targets and victims whom the Modi regime is seeking to delude. NPR-NRC-CAA will place the vast majority of Indians (including the non-Muslim poor) at the mercy of an all-powerful State that can control them with the ever-present threat of marking them as “doubtful citizens” and stripping them of citizenship and humanity. So Stanley warns against demonising even the majority who have become loyal *bhakts* of the Trumps and Modis:

*“Those not included in that audience and status wait in the camps of the world, straw men and women ready to be cast into the roles of rapists, murderers, terrorists. By refusing to be bewitched by fascist myths, we remain free to engage one another, all of us flawed, all of us partial in our thinking experience, and understanding, but none of us demons.”* □





# Data Dictatorship

## Disguised as Data 'Protection' Bill

*Radhika Krishnan*

**I**n the perfectly justified outrage over the Citizen Amendment Act which was passed by both houses of the Parliament in December 2019, another upcoming piece of legislation has missed the attention it deserves. In December 2019, the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY) tabled the Personal Data Protection Bill (DPB), and this bill is currently being scrutinized by a Joint Parliamentary Committee.

The nomenclature of this legislation suggests that it seeks to 'protect' data that is generated by and belongs to individual persons. In a sense, this legislation is meant to be designed as the (much needed) Indian version of globally accepted legal safeguards to ensure individual privacy. The European Union, for instance, has the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). The DPB, along with its counterparts in countries across the world, exists at a moment in history when data (including very personal data) has emerged as one of the most highly monetized and coveted 'goods' in the market, even as this data remains one of the main ways through which governments control and manage their citizens. We will discuss the ways in which personal data lends itself to wide-ranging social engineering later on in this piece; let us first understand the various provisions of the DPB.

### Trajectory of the DPB

As a piece of legislation meant to protect personal data (from both businesses as well as

governments), the DPB's self-defined central task is fairly well articulated. It has to reach a balance between three important functions and needs – the need to foster trade and industry in an increasingly data-driven world, the need to ensure that the State can meet its responsibility towards providing welfare and goods for its citizens, and the need to ensure civil personal rights. We shall see that the DPB, in its present form, has taken great care not to allow for substantive provisions to ensure individual rights.

Debates around this Bill began in July 2017, when the MEITY set up a committee to study issues related to data protection. This committee, chaired by retired Supreme Court judge Justice B. N. Srikrishna, submitted the draft Personal Data Protection Bill, 2018 in July 2018. Several provisions of this draft Bill were contested by a range of actors, including civil society bodies, protection of privacy activists and companies in the IT sector. The government received several depositions, and has since reworked some of the provisions of the original draft. What we have now is the Personal Data Protection Bill 2019 (which I shall refer to as DPB 2019 in this piece). What we need to understand at this point is that the DPB 2019 has actually diluted some of the crucial data protection and privacy provisions which were included in the draft DPB 2018. Essentially, the government has done two things in DPB 2019: it has given itself even more power to

intrude on and utilize our personal data, and it has provided some leeway to IT companies thus blunting the sharp dissent from the IT sector.

### Key Concerns and How the DPB 2019 Addresses Them

#### (Mis)Use of Personal Data

The primary concern around data usage has been to restrict the collection and processing of personal data. This concern is all the more important at a time when modern technology has created a data dystopia of sorts. As cyber-intelligence analyst Pukhraj Singh argues, we are currently in a bizarre situation where ownership, possession and control of data do not necessarily overlap (<https://www.medianama.com/2018/07/223-data-protection-bill-comment/>). The DPB 2019 states that the processing (collecting, recording, analysis and disclosure) of personal data should be done only for "clear, specific and lawful" purposes. The problem lies in the very definition of what is clear, specific and lawful. What qualifies as 'necessary' data is a matter which is wide open to interpretation. As of now, the DPB envisages an authority, the Data Protection Authority (DPA), which will be tasked with clearing the air about the definition of 'necessary' data. Chances are, unfortunately, that this definition will be kept loose and vague so as to allow for

flagrant violations of privacy by public and private actors.

Privacy provisions in DPB 2018 have already been diluted in DPB 2019; and there is literally no right an individual has to ask for a reasonable explanation for decisions/acts that are committed on the basis of data collected from her. There is a 'right to erasure' – a right to demand that specific data generated by an individual be forgotten/erased from the records after the purpose for which it is collected is served. There is also a provision which allows that an individual can ask for 'correction' of data related to her. However, the efficacy of this right will be tested only when the regulations for DPB 2019 are notified. The devil, after all, is in the details and the fine print of the final regulations drafted by the DPA. The protection against data breaches are also quite weak. In the case of data breaches (such as leak of Aadhar data to unauthorized users), the individual whose data has been exposed need not even be warned. Only the DPA will receive this information.

## Overarching Powers of the State

The DPB 2019 says that personal data can be processed by the State without consent, if it is necessary for the State to perform any of its "functions". In other words, this allows various agencies of the State sweeping powers of access over our personal data. The State can collect any data it wants, and can even deny rights if this data is not made available to it. Moreover, in its latest avatar, the DPB 2019 gives the State the right to exempt any of its agencies from the ambit of the Act, in the course of performing its duties and protecting 'national security'. This problematic

exemption can for instance be provided by the government in the name of "interests of prevention of crime". This will lead to a regime of anticipatory surveillance, where data can be collected and processed without having to site a specific investigation (criminal or otherwise). The requisition and use of WhatsApp data to profile supposed "stone pelters" in Kashmir is a case in point here. Anything and everything can be justified as a "preventive" measure, such as membership of an organization or participation in an event. The weak provisions under DPB 2019 also make it possible for governments to use the data collected from private citizens for its own political purposes, to create profiles of communities, areas, regions, individuals etc.

## Data Localization

Where can personal data be collected, processed or used? The DPB 2018 had recommended that all personal data – including data which is generated, processed or used in India – would need to be stored in servers located in India. Also, DPB 2018 had said that 'critical' personal data will only be processed in India. Moreover, the processing and use of 'sensitive' personal data such as passwords, financial data, sexual orientation, biometric data, religion or caste would require explicit consent based on the data processor declaring the purpose of processing. The DPB 2018 argued that Indian authorities should have control over data that is managed inside the country, especially when it comes to crucial data. Indian authorities should not have to ask for (and possibly be denied) access to data from say businesses such as Facebook located in the US or Europe. For businesses whose

operations depend on processing personal data, this was a veritable economic blow since huge amounts of investments would now be required to keep copies of all data they use on Indian servers. This clause would effectively mean that smaller companies and startups would be pushed out of the market, and even large companies would struggle to maintain current levels of profitability. Business interests lobbied hard with the government, and it looks like they have extracted some concessions. According to the DPB 2019, only 'critical' and 'sensitive' data now needs to be stored in Indian servers. And only such data would be subject to stringent provisions of explicit consent and the like. As of now, the definition of 'critical' data has been left wide open, and it is now up to the Data Protection Authority (DPA) to do so.

## An All-powerful Data Protection Authority (DPA)?

The DPB 2019, as it creates a Data Protection Authority (DPA), allocates a whopping 40+ crucial jobs to this authority. The DPA now has multiple tasks: settling disputes over data protection and leakages, framing rules and regulations (make of which have been mentioned in this piece), advising the government as well as other data processors on data protection matters, and executing regulations drafted by it. There have been two central concerns regarding the DPA – first concerning its composition and the second concerning its technical competence. If the DPA has to perform its role well, the first concern is crucial. Structures have to be put in place to ensure that the DPA is independent

from government and business interference. This should have been a given basic minimum condition. However, the DPB 2019 has further diluted the independence of the DPA compared to the provisions in the DPB 2018, even as it has vastly expanded the powers and scope of the DPA. The structure and composition of the DPA now has to get the green signal from the government, in essence curtailing its independence. We are likely to see the DPA becoming an extension of the government, with no teeth to oppose flagrant violations of privacy.

What we have now is a draft legislation which will place huge powers in the hands of government bodies, even as it will not be able to control non-State actors effectively. It does not for instance ensure accountability for intelligence agencies, does not prevent the use of illegally obtained 'evidence'. Coming close on the heels of the Cambridge Analytica scandal, the DPB was an opportunity to put some safeguards in place. It now seems like a lost opportunity.

## The Chinese Model: Data Dystopia and Surveillance State as the New Normal?

The DPB, as we can see, has the potential to allow an extensive programme of mass, state-sponsored profiling and surveillance. We do not have to look too far, in fact, to realize that this could lend itself to a programme of social engineering of vast proportions. The Chinese 'Social Credit' system has some lessons for us here. Developed by the Chinese government, this system subjects every single citizen to elaborate surveillance by the State. At the end, each citizen

is awarded a 'score', which then becomes (or not) the citizen's ticket to availing of a variety of rights and services. In other words, the social credit system is the government's way of punishing certain kinds of behavior, and rewarding others. Nothing possibly can be more authoritarian and symptomatic of the kind of 'Big Brother Is Watching You' dystopia imagined by George Orwell in the novel 1984.

In theory, the social credit system tracks and evaluates citizens for 'trustworthiness'. It uses facial recognition systems and big data analytics for this purpose. And how is 'trustworthiness' mapped? One could receive negative ratings for a range of (state-defined) deviations: playing loud music, eating inside metros, violating traffic rules, making reservations at restaurants or hotels but not showing up, fraudulently using other people's metro cards etc. Lists of 'good' behavior have also been made; donating blood, volunteering to community services can earn positive points.

Clearly, the State can (and will) use this means to punish any dissent, any contrary opinion, any public display of protest against itself. In June 2019, some 6 million Chinese citizens were put on a blacklist and denied train and bus tickets for being "untrustworthy". Blacklisted citizens are publicly named and shamed and deliberately exposed to mass punishment from prospective employers, neighbours and the like. There are reports that even children have been punished under this regime of mass control. Unless democratic opinion in India forces the government to backtrack on the DPB and instead work on a better, more substantive model of data protection, we are in danger of following the Chinese route of social control. □

## No to the US War on Iran *CPIML Condemns the Murder of General Qassem Soleimani*

CPIML condemns the murder of General Qassem Soleimani for which US President Trump has claimed personal responsibility. This unprovoked killing of a very prominent figure in the Iranian military and state, along with Abu Mahdi al-Muhandis, deputy commander of the Popular Mobilisation Forces (an umbrella group of Iran-backed militias) and at least six other people has clearly been carried out in order to escalate an imperialist war on Iran.

The US and in particular Israel have long wanted to eliminate the Iranian state which stands as a countervailing force to the apartheid Israeli regime and the ongoing US-Israeli plunder of the region. A US war on Iran will deepen the conflict in the entire region and generate immeasurable suffering and loss of civilian lives. Further the fact that since Trump unilaterally undermined the nuclear deal with Iran, this could potentially be a conflict between two nuclear armed powers means that such a war could threaten survival on an unimaginable scale.

The current US moves and its military escalation in the region will inevitably intensify the oppression of all progressive forces fighting for democratic rights, including those in Iran and notably the ongoing popular protests in Iraq, which are opposed to Iraq being made the battleground between the US and Iran.

The murder of General Soleimani is also clearly calculated to boost Trump's upcoming election campaign which will be fought on a platform of imperialist triumphalism, fascistic nationalism and further escalating Islamophobia.

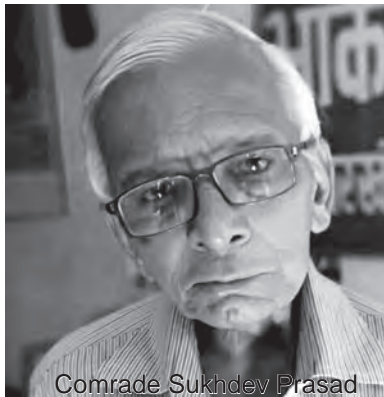
We stand with the people of Iran, Iraq and the region and demand that the Indian government reflects the will of its people and condemns Trump's criminal act, and stands firmly against any forthcoming war on Iran by the US government.

- CPIML Central Committee



## Obituary

### Comrade Sukhdev Prasad



Comrade Sukhdev Prasad

Very few people in the Party knew that the original name of Comrade Sukhdev Prasad was Rathindranath Chakrabarty and that he hailed from Murshidabad district of West Bengal. For almost the entire duration of his revolutionary career spanning nearly five decades, he worked as a Party organiser in Bihar and Jharkhand where he acquired a completely new identity as Comrade Sukhdevji. During the first two decades of his long and arduous revolutionary life, when the Party functioned in underground state, Sukhdevji devoted himself to the task of building the Party organisation in Patna. As secretary of the Patna town committee, he used to maintain close daily contact with comrades in every neighbourhood with just a bicycle as his only means of transport. Much later in the closing years of 1980s, a modest secondhand moped would replace the bicycle. His living ties and integration with comrades and his tireless work ethic will remain a model for every secretary of a Party Committee.

In the early 1990s as the Party came overground, Sukhdevji got a new responsibility to develop Party organisation among railway employees. Here too he became the most living link among railway

workers spread over different zones and departments. With the formation of Jharkhand, Sukhdevji was entrusted with the responsibility of expanding and consolidating the Party in this new state. From the Giridih-Kodarma belt to the Santhal Pargana region, wherever he worked he motivated and guided comrades with his thoroughgoing and painstaking work style. In the last five years after he underwent surgery for jaw cancer, his movement became restricted and talking too became difficult. He took over the responsibility of the work of Office Secretary in Ranchi. The smartphone became his new weapon, and written words became his new mode of communication. With the same old intensity and dedication, he started collecting and compiling reports of struggles and other organisational activities and became a regular correspondent for all our journals from Lok Yuddh and Shramik Solidarity to Liberation and ML Update.

Nobody who visited the Ranchi office ever heard him discuss his health conditions or his enormous past experience, he always lived in the present and fought for the future. Never making any demands for his own self, he was always the first to look after the well-being of his fellow comrades and whoever visited the office. At the time Sukhdevji was diagnosed with cancer, he was busy caring for his wife who too was suffering from cancer. There was a period when both of them were undergoing treatment for cancer in a Patna hospital and Sukhdevji would ask his visitors to go and visit his wife who was then in terminal stage. Circumstances changed, his own health conditions deteriorated, but Sukhdevji retained the same degree of revolutionary zeal and dedication to work. He will remain a role model for not just his selfless hard work and close concern for fellow comrades, but also for the adaptability and resilience with which he faced changing conditions and adverse circumstances.

### Comrade Mathura Paswan

Comrade Mathura Paswan's sudden demise is shocking and unbelievable for comrades in Delhi. He passed away in his sleep in the night of 7-8 January in his village in Paliganj, Bihar, where he had gone a few days ago and was expected to come back before the 8 January All India strike. He had informed of his delay in returning owing to bad health, but no one expected to lose him so soon.

Comrade Mathura Paswan, 68, was the Delhi State Vice President and CWC member of AICCTU and



Comrade Mathura Paswan

CPIML Delhi State Committee member and Secretary of Wazirpur Industrial Area committee. He joined the CPIML in his early youth in Patna rural district in Bihar and played his role in building the movement of landless peasants during early 80s. He played an important role in developing a social base in the Dulhin Bazar area. Those were the days the party worked underground to defend the rural poor from feudal oppression and state repression. Mathura ji, as he was popularly known, was active in many struggles for land and dignity of rural poor. He also organized people against the feudal-communal onslaught on minority community in his area and not only stood firmly against the capture by feudals of common land reserved for a kabristan (graveyard for Muslims), he had also mobilized common masses in their support.

Compelled by livelihood compulsions he later migrated to Delhi in late 80s and joined as munshi (clerk) in a firm in Azadpur Sabji Mandi. This could not contain his political activism for long and he was able to mobilise and unionise Mandi workers. The Hira Singh Fruits & Vegetable Mandi branch of All India General Kamgaar Union became one of the most consistent unions in Delhi. He remained President of this union till his last. Mathura ji was later victimized and retrenched by his employer in 2007, but he continued to lead the union and also got himself involved with the party work in Wazirpur industrial area among workers. He led many militant and successful working class struggles in Wazirpur which proved crucial in building and expanding party in that area. He along with other local comrades used to play a key role in organizing and mobilizing for all India general strike calls in the Wazirpur Industrial Area which saw a rising participation of workers in unions and strikes turning this area into an important center of working class struggle. He contested from

Outer Delhi constituency for the Lok Sabha in 2009 election as CPIML candidate.

Comrade Mathura Paswan was revered and liked even outside party circles for his hard work and humility. He inducted a large number of members into the party many of whom are now leading cadres in his area. His commitment to the people and the party was exemplary which will remain a source of inspiration for the newer comrades.

The Wazirpur Industrial area in Delhi stood united with the call of general strike on 8 January unexpectedly without the presence of comrade Mathura ji. Thousands of assembled workers stood for two minutes in silence to pay tributes to their beloved comrade at the rally. At the Shaheed chowk in Delhi where central trade unions activists had gathered for the strike, all paid him tributes by observing silence. Bihar CPIML Secretary Kunal and Politburo member Amar accompanied him in his last journey along with hundreds of comrades and supporters on 8 January 2020 in his village.

Long live comrade Mathura Paswan!

## Comrade Lalu Oraon

Comrade Lalu Oraon passed away in the early morning of 17 December 2019. Comrade Lalu

lived in the Chapatti crossing at Sachindra Chandra Tea Garden. A former Darjeeling District Committee member of the CPIML, he was one of the organizers of the tea garden workers' union, the Tarai Sangrami Cha Sharmik Union. As AICCTU's fighter leader in the Tarai region in the tea workers movement in Darjeeling district, the contribution of Comrade Lalu to the establishment of the newly formed Tea Workers' Union cannot be forgotten. The garden authorities always feared the workers' protests led by Comrade Lalu, whose popularity among the adivasi tea workers was immense. Comrade Lalu participated in the last Party Congress of CPIML at Mansa. The depot line, Chapatti crossing, Faujiot, Bhatajot, Lakshman Singhjot, Ambari of the tea garden at Kharibri block were all areas where Lalu organised workers and led memorable struggles.

Red Salute to Comrade Lalu Oraon!

## Comrade Nirmal Mukherjee (Panchu)

On January 5, at three o'clock in the afternoon, CPIML's Dumdum branch member Comrade Nirmal Mukherjee (Panchu), breathed his last at his own home on Dumdum Durgabari Road of the North 24 Parganas district. He was 68. He



Comrade Lalu Oraon

had been suffering from shortness of breath for several days.

Comrade Nirmal Mukherjee, who was inspired by the Naxalbari peasant movement, worked as an all-time activist and was involved in the activities of the South 24 Parganas district while our party was underground. He was associated with the state office team for several days after the party started mass, over-ground work. Party members Dilip Dutt from Barasat, Pavan, Sagnik Chakraborty from Belgoria, Surjit Dutt from Dumdum participated in his funeral procession, along with his two daughters and other relatives.

Red Salute to Comrade Nirmal Mukherjee!

## Long Live the Revolutionary legacy of Com. Mujibar Rahman

Com. Mujibar Rahman, the centenarian leader of Naxalbari Peasant upsurge passed away on December 29, 2019 evening at his residence in Naxalbari. During 'Quit India' movement in 1942 he was put to jail for few months in Dacca, his birth place. His first brief visit to Darjeeling district was made in 1939. He shifted to Siliguri

before partition, and started off as a job assistant at Government Saw Mill. Here he came in contact with communist activists like Com. Keshab Sarkar, Com. Anil Saha and became a member of the workmen's union.

In the late 1940's his early association with the East Pakistan Communist Party had proved instrumental in helping the founder-members of the newly formed CPI in Darjeeling district. In 1955 he was commissioned to organize the landless and poor peasants in Maniram area of Naxalbari block. There he had worked with Com. Chunilal Goala, Panchanan Sarkar, Jogen Mukherjee et al.

In 1967 when the sharecropper Bigul Kishan had rebelled against the henchmen of the notorious Jotedar Buddhiman Tirkey, he was brutally beaten. But the local thana refused to receive an FIR against Buddhiman since he was the brother of the then Congress leader Iswar Tirkey. Next day, Com. Mujibar led a large number of peasants and laid siege before Tirkey's house in spite of his intimidation with a gun. Under the leadership of Terai Kishan Sabha a petition was lodged by Bigul kishan in Calcutta high Court and it saw the first legal victory against the jotedar. That really set

off lots of energy and building of strength among the poor masses, spearheaded by the kishan sabha. On May 24, 1967, the day the cruel Police Sub-Inspector Sonam Wangdi succumbed to popular wrath at Jhoru jote in Naxalbari, Com. Mujibar had organized undaunted a large rally against the police excesses at Maniram.

Com. Mujibar Rahman was felicitated along with the other veteran leaders of Naxalbari Movement like Com. Khokan Majumdar, Khudan Mallick, Dulal Chanda, Shanti Munda, Nemu Singha, Khemu Singha, Siril Oraon on 19 November 2016 at the outset of 3-days Jana Jagaran Yatra across Naxalbari-Khoribari-Phansidewa block to mark the 50th anniversary of historic Naxalbari Movement. He remained faithful to Communist party and was very popular to rural masses till his last breath.

Long live Com. Mujibar Rahaman!

## Comrade D S Deshpande

The Central Committee of CPIML joins our comrades from the Lal Nishan Party in paying homage to Comrade D S Deshpande, a revolutionary comrade, freedom fighter and trade union leader of the municipal workers in Pune.

Comrade Deshpande, 93, joined the freedom struggle as a volunteer in the Rashtra Seva Dal and soon joined the revolutionary movement as an activist of the Navjivan Sanghatana. This nucleus transformed into the Lal Nishan Party. He stood up for the revolutionary path and remained a Marxist-Leninist till the end.

We join you all in raising a last revolutionary salute to the departed comrade. We solemnly resolve to carry forward the revolutionary legacy left behind.

Red Salute Comrade D S Deshpande!



Comrade Mujibar Rahman (R) with com. Shanti Munda



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## UK Labour MPs Express Deep Concern about CAA

A meeting organized by Ambedkar International Mission (UK) and the South Asia Solidarity Group in the UK Parliament (House of Commons) on 20th January, on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Register of Citizens and National Population Register and the protests against them across India, saw several Labour MPs express their concern about the legislation, its implications for human rights and potential for mass disenfranchisement of Muslims, and the situation in India more generally.

Introducing the meeting, Amrit Wilson of South Asia Solidarity Group highlighted the scale of the protests by students, women, Muslim communities, Dalits, urban and rural workers and many others and the violence which had been unleashed on protestors. Announcing the UK release of the jury report from the People's Tribunal on State Action in Uttar Pradesh, she noted that it documented appalling violence against Muslims by the police accompanied by armed thugs affiliated to the ruling party and that this was a direct response to directions from the Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath who had called for 'revenge' to be carried out against the Muslim community for protesting.

The meeting which was sponsored by Stephen Timms MP, was addressed by lawyer and legal scholar Gautam Bhatia who is currently involved in the Supreme Court challenge to the legislation. He explained the potential for extensive exclusion from citizenship under the NRC which in combination with the discriminatory CAA is likely to result in the selective mass disenfranchisement of Muslims, and why the CAA undermines the Indian citizenship guaranteed by the Constitution.

Satpal Muman, chair of the UK's largest Dalit organisation, CasteWatchUK, reminded the audience of B.R. Ambedkar's warning that 'Hindu Raj' would be a calamity for India, and expressed solidarity with the millions on the streets in India defending their fundamental freedoms. He also noted the active role of the Hindu Swamysevak Sangh and other overseas Hindutva organisations in blocking legislation in the UK which would make caste discrimination illegal.

Stephen Timms, MP for East Ham in east London said, 'I have been struck by the diversity of the people who are protesting against these measures in India in my constituency. Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs are all coming together'. He stated that he has written to the UK Foreign Office urging it to take a stand and has also written to the Indian High Commission expressing his deep concern about the CAA-NRC-NPR and their impact. He also recounted that he was a frequent visitor to a Hindu temple in his constituency, but he was shocked when some of his Indian constituents told him that they had been told at the temple that

they were 'not allowed' to vote Labour during the 2019 UK elections.

Rupa Huq, MP for Ealing Central and Acton also expressed her concern about the impact of the legislation and raised the question of how NRIs' citizenship may be affected. In response Gautam Bhatia explained that the new legislation also gives the government more powers to cancel OCI status and that this change was partly a response to the increased criticism the Modi government is facing from the diaspora.

Claudia Webbe, MP for Leicester East pledged to call on PM Modi to revoke the discriminatory CAA which violates human rights. She also spoke about the 'unprecedented hate campaign' she faced in the UK election 2019 (during which Hindutva organizations used whatsapp messages and other tools to portray the Labour party as 'anti-Hindu' and anti-Indian). Despite this she was elected from her constituency which has a large Indian community.

Pat McFadden, MP for Wolverhampton South East (Labour) expressed his concern about the way the Conservative Party had blocked the implementation of legislation outlawing caste discrimination in the UK, under pressure from pro-Hindutva organisations.

Several of the MPs said that they would table an Early Day Motion in Parliament calling for the CAA and NRC/NPR to be discussed in Parliament.

The members of the audience who had come from all over the country and represented a wide range of sections of the Indian diaspora in the UK also highlighted that the Modi government can be seen as part of the current global rise of Fascism and the Far-Right which also included Brazil's Jair Bolsonaro (who has been invited as Chief Guest to this year's Republic Day Celebrations), Boris Johnson, Donald Trump and Binyamin Netanyahu. They emphasized the importance of sending a message to Modi about the opposition of the diaspora to these discriminatory measures by organising large scale protests and raising awareness in the wider community.

Saturday 25th January will see a National Demonstration Against Fascism in India on the eve of Republic Day which brings together many different diaspora organizations in solidarity with the resistance to the CAA, NRC and NPR. This rally at Downing Street and March to the Indian High Commission has been called by: South Asia Solidarity Group, CasteWatch UK, Tamil People in the UK, Coordinating Committee of Malayali Muslims, Kashmir Solidarity Movement, SOAS India Society, Indian Workers Association (GB), Ghadar International, Indian Muslim Federation(UK), Federation of Redbridge Muslim Organisations(FORMO) & other diaspora groups. □

HEAR THE WOMEN OF SHAHEEN BAG WHO'VE CLUTCHED  
THE STREETS FOR JUSTICE, THEIR VOICES CUTTING  
THROUGH THE CAPITAL'S COLD.



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