

NOVEMBER 2020

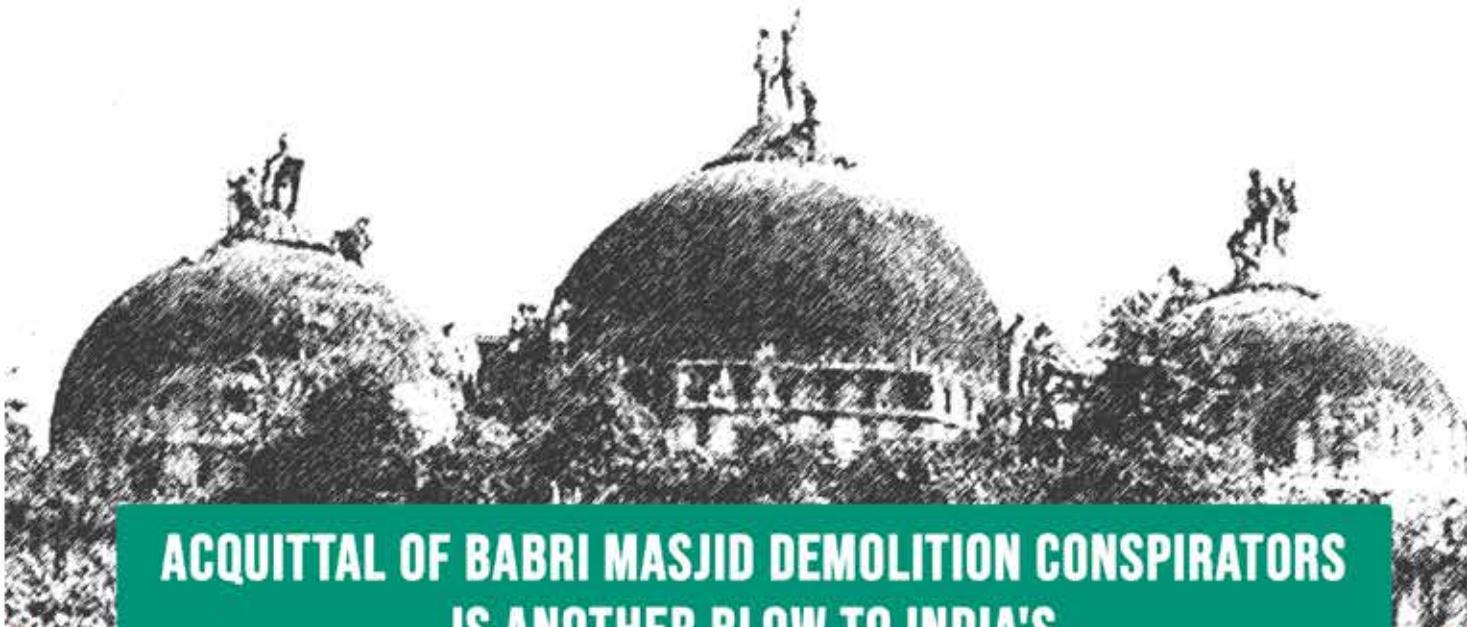
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Liberation

CENTRAL ORGAN OF CPI(ML)



CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT!
TRANSFORM BIHAR!



ACQUITTAL OF BABRI MASJID DEMOLITION CONSPIRATORS IS ANOTHER BLOW TO INDIA'S SECULAR CONSTITUTION AND SOCIAL FABRIC

PRESS RELEASE | 30 SEPTEMBER 2020

A CBI court has just acquitted all those accused of conspiring to demolish the 16th century Babri Mosque in Ayodhya on 6 December 1992. This verdict, coming on top of the Supreme Court verdict handing over the mosque site to the Ram Temple Trust, is the final nail in the coffin of justice for victims of hate crimes in India. These verdicts are an incentive for perpetrators of hate crimes, assuring them that they can enjoy the political and material fruits of such crimes with total impunity.

The accused had included senior BJP leaders LK Advani who had led a Rath Yatra (chariot procession) building up a frenzied demand for a Ram Temple to be built at the exact site where the mosque stood. This demand had the demolition embedded into its structure, and the Rath Yatra was accompanied by Hindu supremacist violence against Muslims which took many Muslim lives. Advani stood and watched as the supporters amassed by him used sophisticated tools to bring down the mosque. Yet, Advani has been cleared of conspiracy charges. In fact the CBI Court has endorsed the BJP's open lie that the demolition was spontaneous and not the result of a planned conspiracy.

Uma Bharti and Murli Manohar Joshi were caught on camera celebrating as they watched the mosque being demolished. They boasted of their role in the demolition. Yet they stand acquitted. Sadhvi Rithambhara's poisonous speeches calling for the massacre of Muslims and demolition of this and other mosques, are a matter of public record. Yet she stands acquitted.

As BJP and RSS cadres demolished the Babri mosque they cried "Ek dhakka aur do" (strike yet another blow). Those blows were aimed not only at the mosque but at India's Constitution and India's secular social fabric. This verdict is "yet another blow" to the same end.

- Dipankar Bhattacharya
General Secretary, CPIML Liberation

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EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

EDITOR

ARINDAM SEN

EDITORIAL BOARD

KAVITA KRISHNAN

V. SHANKAR

SANJAY SHARMA

EDITORS' E-MAIL: LIBERATION@CPIML.ORG

ART: V ARUN KUMAR

MANAGER

PRABHAT KUMAR

PHONE: 7042877713

WEBSITE: WWW.CPIML.NET

E-MAIL: MANAGER.LIBERATION@GMAIL.COM

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ANGRY WITH NITISH RAJ, FEARFUL OF YOGI RAJ: PEOPLE OF BIHAR WANT CHANGE



DIPANKAR BHATTACHARYA

Power-hungry BJP which hijacked power in Bihar in 2017 by colluding with Nitish Kumar against the emphatic anti-BJP 2015 mandate of the people of Bihar, had thought it could steal the Bihar elections again by using Covid19 and the lockdown as shields for the NDA. But the anger and determination of the people on the ground against the arrogant misrule and betrayal of the Nitish Kumar government has clearly rattled the BJP and the party is trying to scare the people against the RJD-Left-INC Mahagathbandhan and especially the presence of the CPI(ML) in the alliance.

What makes the BJP so jittery and desperate? The BJP clearly has no answer to the questions that are uppermost in people's minds in these elections. It needs bogeys to divert the attention of the people and it hopes it can invoke the CPI(ML) as a bogey to cover up the fear the BJP has spread throughout the country through its disastrous policies, hate-filled politics and cruel and repressive governance. The people of Bihar have reasons to fear the BJP for all that it is doing in neighbouring UP where Yogi Adityanath Raj is marked not by peace and prosperity but rapes and repression, mob lynching, fake encounters and complete collapse of rule of law.

What has been the track record of the CPI(ML) in the electoral arena? The CPI(ML) made its mark in Bihar in the late 1980s as the party which resisted booth-capturing and inspired and empowered the landless poor and disenfranchised Dalits to exercise their right to vote. Dalits had to face a massacre in Bhojpur after their first vote, but they succeeded in sending Comrade Rameshwar Prasad to Parliament as the first ML MP in 1989. The other CPI(ML) leader to have been elected to Lok Sabha in four consecutive elections was Dr. Jayanta Rongpi from the Autonomous District constituency in Assam.

Who have been the CPI(ML) MLAs in Bihar and Jharkhand? Comrade Ram Naresh Ram, the iconic communist leader of Bhojpur who won three successive elections from Sahar; Comrade Yogeshwar Gope, legendary leader of state government employees movement in Bihar, Comrade Mahendra Singh, the boldest voice of the people in Jharkhand who was assassinated during the 2005 elections just after nomination, well known peasant leaders like Chandradeep Singh, Amarnath Yadav, Rajaram Singh, Arun Singh and Sudama Prasad; agricultural labour leader Satyadev Ram; popular communist leader of Seemanchal, Mahboob Alam, popular Jharkhand leaders like Vinod Singh and Rajkumar Yadav - such has been the team of CPI(ML) members in Bihar and Jharkhand Assemblies.

Many BJP MLAs and MPs would mark an ignominious contrast to this illustrious list. Rape accused and convicted MLAs of the likes of Kuldeep Sengar, the likes of terror accused Pragya Thakur who glorifies Gandhi's assassin Godse, or Ministers like Giriraj Singh celebrating notorious massacre mastermind Brahmeshwar Singh as Bihar's Gandhi, and chief minister Yogi Adityanath misusing his position to drop all criminal charges against himself - the BJP can boast of such shameful examples that will go down in history as a disgrace to India's democracy.

The BJP is afraid of the poor and the oppressed finding a voice. Bihar knows how the BJP has all along stood with massacre perpetrators seeking to drown the oppressed and deprived people's quest for dignity, democracy and development in blood. The BJP just cannot stomach the fact that the poor have managed to withstand and defy this design and emerge as a fighting force energising Bihar's ongoing battle for change.

The 'mahagathbandhan' or grand alliance in Bihar marks the coming together of communist, socialist, and Congress streams of India's glorious movement for freedom. The ideological and organisational predecessors of BJP betrayed the freedom movement then by collaborating with the British rulers. Today they are trying to rule India like the 'bhure angrez' (brown sahibs) Bhagat Singh had warned us against - imposing a new company raj by turning Indian economy into an Adani-Ambani empire and silencing the voices of dissent and democracy with cruel draconian laws and repressive governance exactly as the

colonial rulers did.

We have the inheritance of the freedom movement and democracy. We are the heirs of Bhagat Singh and Ambedkar who blazed the trail for social equality and people's emancipation. The RSS which was inspired by Mussolini and Hitler and wanted the Manusmriti to become the Constitution of modern India, remains fiercely opposed to India's secular, democratic inheritance and the quest for justice, freedom, equality and fraternity cherished in the Preamble to the Constitution.

Let the BJP dread the assertion of the poor and the oppressed people for their rights, and the coming together of forces in defence of democracy and the Constitution. Bihar is determined to punish the betrayers of the 2015 mandate, the destroyers of India's economy and the cruel and sadist architects of the lockdown that caused limitless pain and humiliation to the people of Bihar. The decisive hour for change has arrived and Bihar is ready to fight and win this battle. □



**THE BJP IS AFRAID OF THE
POOR AND THE OPPRESSED
FINDING A VOICE.**



CHANGE THE GOVERNMENT – TRANSFORM BIHAR!



The forthcoming elections to the Assembly of Bihar are taking place in the shadow of the Covid-19 epidemic with major restrictions on election campaigning and gatherings of people. Huge parts of Bihar are still reeling under floods. Bihar will be the first state in India to undertake a major electoral exercise amid such restrictions. We had requested the Election Commission of India to schedule the polls keeping this abnormal situation in mind so the participation of the people did not get adversely affected. The EC has however announced the dates as per the regular schedule. We appeal to the people to ensure their energetic participation while observing necessary Covid-19 precautions and regulations.

Development and good governance are still loudly proclaimed as the guiding goals of the Nitish Kumar government, but these goals have been starkly delinked from the fundamental premise of democracy and now these much touted phrases have turned into empty rhetoric or a cruel joke much the same way as Modi's 'achchhe din'. The 2015 elections had given an emphatic mandate for a non-BJP government, but the BJP's limitless lust for power and total control coupled with the unabashed political opportunism of Nitish Kumar made a complete mockery of that mandate and meted out an unprecedented insult to the electorate. The power-grabbing machinations of the BJP have now even split its own coalition with the LJP moving out of the coalition and dozens of BJP leaders taking the

LJP route to take on the JDU.

The governance model of Nitish Kumar has all along been dominated by the bureaucracy with little role for elected people's representatives on various levels and absolutely no respect for the legitimate demands and agitations of different sections of the people. Over the years this bureaucracy-centric arrangement has turned increasingly arbitrary and dubious, with cliques calling the shots in many departments and regions, and officers not toeing the line being harassed and victimized for not being loyal to dominant leaders and interests. The fabled 'sushasan' of Nitish Kumar is now marked by scams like Srijan, horrific state-led crimes like the Muzaffarpur shelter home rapes and murders of girls and riots across the state from Chhapra and Madhepura to Aurangabad and Jahanabad.

The BJP, which has been steadily increasing its penetration and tightening its grip by using Nitish Kumar as its face, is now desperate to appropriate all power for itself. Concentration and centralization of power has emerged as the hallmark of the Modi regime. And the power it is amassing is being used entirely for the benefit of the Adani-Ambani empire at the cost of India's farmers and workers and the common people. Nitish Kumar has waxed eloquent about getting special state status for Bihar, but the Modi government has been systematically demolishing India's federalism. A constitutionally recognized special state like Jammu and Kashmir has in fact been stripped of not just its special status

but its very statehood and reduced to two Union Territories. The rhetoric of cooperative federalism can no longer camouflage the bulldozer of coercive centralization. Looking at the Narendra Modi and Nitish Kumar regimes we can well rephrase the famous saying 'absolute power corrupts absolutely': 'with absolute power comes absolute arrogance and absolute aggression'. The 'double engine' government which is bulldozing Bihar must now be voted out.

In the 1970s, Bihar was a key battleground for democracy. The 1974 student movement mentored by Jayaprakash Narayan played a big role in reclaiming democracy and ending the Emergency regime. In the early 1990s, Bihar again led the battle for social justice and secularism against the feudal-communal aggression of the Sangh brigade. Today Bihar will again have to pool all its strength, energy and resolve to stop Modi's fascist bulldozer, save the Constitution, reclaim democracy and win the rights of the people. CPI(ML) in Bihar arose as the party of the most oppressed and marginalized sections of Bihari society, and has since its inception five decades ago continued to brave feudal violence and state repression to hold high the banner of democracy, dignity and social transformation. CPI(ML) MLAs in Bihar Assembly have been tireless in their campaign for justice and people's rights. At this critical political juncture in the history of Bihar and India, CPI(ML) is determined to pour all its energies into strengthening the emerging broad-based unity against the fascist offensive of the Modi government and the Sanghi conspiracy to hijack Bihar and turn it into a laboratory for feudal-communal-patriarchal violence, bigotry and hate as it is doing in neighbouring Uttar Pradesh.

Despite tall claims of economic growth and infrastructural development, Bihar still remains trapped in chronic poverty, persistent economic backwardness and abysmally weak public education and public health facilities. The pain

suffered by millions of migrant workers and students of Bihar in the lockdown has revealed before the whole world the reality of jobless growth and the continuing migration of workers and students in search of better employment and education opportunities. The agenda of development in Bihar cannot be reduced to an assortment of sundry schemes that do not even impact the surface and shy away from addressing the roots of any major and persistent problem. The agenda of development must be firmly anchored in the context of people's empowerment and social



transformation and guided by the constitutional commitments of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity. With this forward-looking vision of hope and change, CPI(ML) presents its 2020 poll manifesto as a charter of the party's enduring commitment to a better deal for the people of Bihar.

CPIML CHARTER FOR CHANGE

The charter presented by CPIML in the 2020 Bihar Assembly polls is in continuity with demands raised in the course of long struggles by the people of Bihar. Our charter reflects Bihar's aspirations and determination to struggle for change. We hope that a new Government will be elected in the 2020 polls, which will work in the direction of this change. The CPIML is committed to struggling for the implementation of this people's manifesto for change.

LAND AND AGRARIAN REFORMS

Implement the recommendations of the D Bandopadhyay Commission report in order to:

- i. lower and standardise the land ceiling, strictly enforce ceiling laws so as to redistribute ceiling-surplus land to every landless family
- ii. protect all poor households from eviction from Bhoodan and other lands on pretext of lack of pattas; immediate regularization of all

settlements of the poor and the oppressed

- iii. restore Bhoodan Committees which the Nitish Government disbanded
- iv. provide 10 cents of homestead land for all those without shelter
- v. ensure registration of all tenants/sharecroppers, regulation of rent and protection of the right to cultivate and extension of necessary assistance to tenants/sharecroppers to help them develop their agriculture.

AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT AND FARMERS' WELFARE

- i. Enact a law through the state legislature to counteract the worst effects of the anti-farmer Farm Laws passed by the Modi regime. State law must mandate government procurement of produce at Minimum Support Price at one and half times the outlay costs in state agricultural markets; and introduce penalties for actions by corporations that hurt farmers' interests or food security.
- ii. Increased public investment in agriculture and allied sectors
- iii. Cheap credit
- iv. Assured power and water at affordable rates
- v. Assured and affordable irrigation facilities
- vi. Timely supply of subsidized inputs
- vii. Procurement centres at every panchayat
- viii. Improving and expanding cold storage facilities
- ix. Veterinary hospitals at every block
- x. New agricultural universities to be set up

INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

- i. A special package to ensure reopening of closed mills and revival of sick units in the public sector
- ii. promotion of employment-intensive agro-based and other small- and medium-scale industries

Right To Employment

- i. Fill all pending vacancies in government jobs without delay

- ii. Improved MNREGA with 200 days of work per person instead of per family, at an assured minimum wage
- iii. Urban Employment Guarantee Act providing 300 days of work at a living wage to all adults
- iv. In the backdrop of Covid-19, immediately introduced a Decentralised Urban Employment and Training scheme under which the state government issues 'job stamps' to public institutions which provide work to workers, who can then exchange the stamps for a minimum wage provided by the government.



Launch of CPIML Liberation Manifesto for Bihar Election at Patna

MIGRANT WORKERS' RIGHTS

- i. Robust arrangements including a permanent helpline on part of the Bihar Government to ensure safety, dignity, care for Bihar's migrant workers working in other states and countries
- ii. Registration of all migrant workers from Bihar
- iii. Bihar Assembly should pass a resolution demanding a new stringent Central legislation in place of the present toothless Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act.

EMPLOYEES RIGHTS

- i. Bihar Government must struggle to get the 2005 New Pension Scheme scrapped, and to restore the Old Pension Scheme
- ii. Regularise all scheme workers, contract-honorarium-outsourcing and daily wage employees and teachers, and make permanent appointments on all vacant seats
- iii. Recognise "jeevika" (livelihood) workers,

ASHA and anganwadi workers, mid-day meal workers as government employees and ensure monthly minimum wages of Rs 18000

iv. Permanent appointments and promotions on all long pending seats

v. Release the dearness allowance and dearness relief amounts that have been stopped in the name of Covid-19

vi. Restore payment of bonuses for state government employees

vii. Retirement Benefits & Service Rule: No employee will be retired before his/her scheduled time; order mandating retirement for employees above the age of 50 to be scrapped. All institutions to have service book rules, all retirement benefits to be given on the day of retirement

viii. Welfare boards to be constituted in different industries/occupations to ensure housing, healthcare, education and pension benefits for unorganized workers and their families including domestic workers and agricultural labourers, and adequate compensation for all accident victims.

ix. Enact a Domestic Workers' Welfare and Social Security Law, fix minimum wages for domestic workers

RIGHT TO EQUITABLE AND QUALITY EDUCATION FOR ALL

i. Complete implementation of the recommendations made by the Muchkund Dubey Commission on Common School System in its report submitted in June 2007 to ensure free, equitable and compulsory education for all within the 0-14 years age-group

ii. In keeping with the CSS commission recommendations, ensure 60,000 additional schools in Bihar (26,000 primary schools, 15,500 middle schools and 19,000 senior secondary schools). Also restore the schools closed down by the Nitish Government.

iii. Bring the teacher-student ratio to 1 teacher for every 30 students in primary school and 1 teacher for every 35 students in middle school.

iv. Scrap the contract-honorarium model of teacher recruitment, ensure equal pay for equal work, regularise all teachers, providing job security and adequate training to improve the quality of teaching.

v. Regularization and upgradation of Madarasas and Sanskrit Vidyalayas

vi. Introduce teachers for fine arts, computers, and sports in all schools

vii. Introduce constitutional morality classes at every level in schools, including age-appropriate curriculum teaching students to recognise and resist gender, caste, and communal prejudices and discrimination.

viii. Absorb Shiksha Sevaks (Tola Sevaks and Taleemi Markaj) in the concerned schools, pay them wages instead of honorarium, compassionate appointments of family members on the death of an employee

ix. Recognise mid-day meal workers as full-time government employees

x. Rectify the existing anarchy in Bihar's higher education: ensure regular sessions, fill vacancies in teaching and staff positions, hold regular students union elections

xi. Investigate higher education scams and punish the guilty

xii. Pursue the demand to make Patna University a Central University

xiii. Bihar Assembly must pass a resolution against the New Education Policy 2020

PUBLIC HEALTH

i. Make the right to healthcare a justiciable right through the enactment of appropriate legislations at the State level for the people of Bihar. Such a legislation should ensure universal and free access to good quality and comprehensive health care including the entire range of primary, secondary and tertiary services for the entire population of Bihar.

ii. Bihar's current Government Health expenditure per person per year is the lowest of 20 states in the country according to the National Health Accounts Estimate. The Total Health Expenditure per capita in Bihar is Rs 2047, out of which Out of Pocket Expenditure is Rs 1685 – constituting 82% of Total Health Expenditure. Government of Bihar spends only around Rs 14 per person per year on drugs and diagnostics: ensure free drugs and diagnostics in government health facilities to all people in Bihar by increasing this expenditure to Rs 50. Allocate 10%

of the budget for healthcare

- iii. Abolish user fees in all government hospitals
- iv. There is shortfall of 91% in Community Health Centres, 48% in Health Sub Centres and 39% in Primary Health Centres according to Rural Health Statistics Bulletin of Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India. Develop a time-bound road map to meet the shortfall in physical health infrastructure in Bihar.
- v. Equip PHCs to provide experienced emergency care, to prevent maternal and natal/neonatal mortality.
- vi. Fill all the vacant posts of medical officers, specialist doctors, nurses, ANMs, pharmacists, radiographers and other frontline health workers at various government hospitals and health programmes within a stipulated time. Make appointments through permanent recruitments, not short-term contractual appointments.
- vii. Recognise ASHAs, anganwadi workers as Government employees and regularised.
- viii. Institute a protocol and comprehensive measures for ensuring the safety of all health, sanitation and relief workers during Covid-19 and other disasters and epidemics.
- ix. A participatory system of community-based monitoring, grievance redressal and planning needs to be implemented to ensure that people in Bihar would be able to access appropriate health services as their right with accountability mechanisms, seek effective action on complaints, and have a strong voice for improved functioning of health services.
- x. Open fully staffed and equipped Urban Primary Health Centres at every 30000 population in towns and cities of Bihar. Appoint USHA (Urban Social Health Activists) on the pattern of ASHA in each Urban PHC to ensure effective linkages between the community and the health facility. In addition, set up mohalla clinics in urban bastis and slums in all towns and cities
- xi. Stop all forms of privatization of Public Health Services, eliminate Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) which weaken public health services
- xii. Universalise ICDS programme and expand it to cover under-3 children through community

based management of malnutrition and day-care programmes

- xiii. Scrap the unconstitutional requirement for mandatory Aadhaar link to access health or health-related services or schemes

WELFARE AND AMENITIES

- i) Flood-control, Water Management and Disaster Management
 - Immediate implementation of short-term and longer-term measures for flood-control, water management and rehabilitation of flood victims.
 - Construction of elevated roads and elevated platforms in flood-prone areas
 - Safe storage of foodgrains
 - Flood-resistant housing
 - Provision of fire brigades at every block
 - District-level disaster-management planning and availability of trained personnel for prompt execution of such plans
 - Rejuvenate and protect Bihar's traditional water bodies (aahar, pokhar, pyne, wells etc)
- ii) Electricity and Internet
 - No privatisation of power
 - Increased production capacity of electricity
 - Promote decentralized renewable energy
 - 100 units of electricity free to rural poor households
 - Subsidised power for irrigation purposes
 - Free WiFi in all educational institutions including schools, colleges, and hostels, and creation of village libraries with WiFi
 - Free laptop scheme for students
- iii) Roads and public transport
 - Construction and regular maintenance of rural roads
 - Comprehensive network of all-weather motorable roads throughout the state, with provision for timely and regular maintenance

- Safe, affordable public transportation systems providing connectivity all over Bihar

iv) Safe Drinking Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

- Free and universal access to safe drinking water and sanitation
- End water pollution; free drinking water from dangerous effluents and chemicals
- Stop coercion and mob violence in the name of Swacch Bharat: instead, adopt a policy of persuading people to give up caste-based prejudices about toilet-use, and on building eco-friendly toilets that people are actually willing to use.
- End manual scavenging, ensure the safety, wages and rights of sanitation workers

v) Debt Relief

- Loan waiver for farm loans
- Loan waiver for SHG members (mostly women)
 - Make clusters of SHGs as required and ensure means of livelihood; guarantee procurement of SHGs' products
 - Interest-free group loans for SHGs
 - Relief on repayment of MFI loans, government may make arrangements with companies for repayment of loans as needed
 - Moratorium on entry of MFI agents into villages and/or demands for debt repayment pending economic revival post Covid-19 and lockdown
 - Regulation of Micro Finance Institutions to prevent extortion and harassment by their agents
- Strict penalties for any kind of public humiliation, coercion or extortion against loan defaulters

vi) Rations and PDS

- End Aadhaar linkage for rations and any other welfare schemes
- To tackle the widespread hunger and malnutrition caused by Covid-19 and the lockdown, universalise PDS, provide 50 kgs of food grains at

Rs. 2 per kg and 5 litres of kerosene oil at Rs. 2 per litre to all, expand commodity coverage under PDS to include all items of essential consumption including pulses, edible oil, as well as soaps and detergents, as is provided in southern states

- Door to door delivery of rations

DEMOCRATISING GOVERNANCE

- No urban slum demolitions, or demolitions of rural settlements
- No evictions of urban poor and street vendors; provide permanent housing and shops/space for handcarts to urban poor and street vendors
- Ensure independence of bureaucracy: end social discrimination, political victimisation, punishment transfers
- Janlokal to end corruption
- End to extortion and violence against shopkeepers, traders
- A community based, participatory public health model to tackle alcoholism; freeing the thousands of poor incarcerated under the draconian prohibition law; provide free de-addiction care for alcoholism and drug addiction; and strict regulation of the production and sale of alcohol
- A transparent sand policy, sand mining to be brought under government control, cracking down on sand mafia
- Six-monthly social audit of all shelter homes, old age homes, JJ (juvenile justice) homes, protection homes, beggars homes, observation homes, schools and hostels to prevent abuse

SCHEDULED CASTES AND SCHEDULED TRIBES

- A robust system of monitoring the implementation of the Prevention of Atrocity Act
- Expanded provision of scholarships to SC/ST students
- A time-bound white paper on the condition of Ambedkar Hostels, Kasturba Vidyalyas and SC/ST hostels and schools, towards all-round overhaul of infrastructure and amenities
- Protect and fully implement SC/ST/OBC/PH reservations, fill all vacant reserved seats

without delay

v. A government-run campaign to counter discrimination and oppressive practices against SC and ST communities

MUSLIM MINORITIES

i. Effective and time-bound implementation of the recommendations of Sachar Committee and Ranganath Mishra commission

ii. Time-bound expansion and execution of the ongoing multi-sector development programmes for minorities with special emphasis on the community's education, healthcare and employment needs

iii. Senior bureaucracy and police officials will be held accountable for timely action to punish communal hate speech, and prevent violence against minorities

iv. A government-run campaign to counter communal prejudices and promote inter-faith harmony and unity

WOMEN

i. Helplines providing advice and immediate legal help and social support for victims of sexual abuse, domestic violence, and "honour" crimes respectively

ii. Short stay homes for survivors wanting to escape abuse conditions, and for inter-caste or inter-faith couples facing violence

iii. A government-run campaign building public support for women's autonomy and rights, and inter-caste, inter-faith marriage

iv. Nutritious meals for pregnant women, health checks for pregnant women, supply of medicines and health care for pregnant women and provisions for safe deliveries

v. Compensation and rehabilitation of victims of sexual violence

TRANSGENDER PERSONS

i. All manner of protections and welfare measures for transgender persons as mandated by the NALSA judgement will be implemented while respecting the right of trans persons to self-determination and self-identification, without having

to submit any kind of proof of identity to the District Magistrate

ii. Bihar Assembly must pass a resolution demanding a rollback of the regressive Transgender Persons (Protection Of Rights) Act, 2019

Persons With Disabilities

i. Time-bound plan to make all public places and institutions in Bihar accessible to Persons with Disabilities (PwD)

ii. Free of cost aids and appliances, medicine and diagnostic services and corrective surgery to persons with disabilities

iii. 5% reservation in higher education and 4% reservation in jobs for PwDs

SENIOR CITIZENS

- Monthly pension of Rs 3000

- free healthcare facilities

- provision of old-age homes and special care centres in every block for all senior citizens from low income communities

- No Aadhaar requirement for accessing pensions or any other welfare measure

Children:

- Survey of all child labour and street children in Bihar towards their urgent rehabilitation

- supplement the income of families of child labourers or street children by at least Rs. 3000 per month, and ensure their enrolment and retention in schools.

JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS

i. Commitment by Bihar Government not to implement the unconstitutional National Population Register NPR (which is nothing but a prelude to the NRC and CAA which threaten the citizenship rights of the poor and minorities)

ii. Demand the release of students, activists, and intellectuals unjustly arrested by the Modi regime and various BJP State Governments; no use of UAPA to implicate dissenting voices in Bihar; protect innocents in Bihar from persecution by NIA, police and other agencies; free all political prisoners

and innocent people in Bihar

- iii. Bring the perpetrators of massacres of Dalits, oppressed castes and Muslims to justice.
- iv. Compensation and rehabilitation of victims of communal and caste violence, as well as disasters
- v. Strengthen the scope and powers of the various State Commissions: for women; SC/STs; minorities and human rights
- vi. Implementation of the 11 Supreme Court directives to prevent mob lynchings: including appointing a senior police officer as a nodal officer in each district to take appropriate measures; broadcasting warnings against mob violence; appointing designated courts for lynching cases; preparing a lynching/mob violence victims and their families compensation scheme.
- vii. Police reform to hold the police force accountable to the Constitution; cleansing policing in Bihar of the scourge of custodial torture and arbitrary violence; implementation of Supreme Court directions in the case of every custodial death
- viii. Time-bound plan to release under-trial prisoners on bail in as many cases as possible, ensuring that “bail not jail” remains the norm, release of poor and destitute under-trials on Re 1 bail amounts.
- ix. Comprehensive prison reform, ensuring basic human rights of prisoners. Ensuring that the detailed observations and recommendations of the “Prisons of Bihar: Status Report-2015” for every prison in the state, are addressed and implemented. Medical facilities for all prisoners. Special emphasis on conditions of women and transgender prisoners, including medical and psychiatric help. Prevention of discrimination and violence inside prison against vulnerable minorities, especially under-trials in terror cases. Free legal aid and counsel to under-trials.

CULTURE, LANGUAGE, SPORTS, TOURISM

- i. Protection and development of Bihar’s languages including Bhojpuri, Magahi, Maithili, Angika and Bajjika.
- ii. Auditoria and cultural centres should be set up in all district headquarters as a tribute to eminent poets and writers like Nagarjun, Ramdhari Singh Dinkar, Phaniswarnath Renu, Bhikari Thakur, Rahul Sankrityayan, Gorakh Pandey, Noor Fatima, and Vindhyavasini Devi.
- iii. Adoption of a sports policy to encourage rural sports; ensure availability of sports teachers and training facilities at every school and spot and groom budding talents at the grassroots level. A properly built sports stadium in every block and a well-equipped sports complex in every district/subdivision headquarter.
- iv. A comprehensive tourism development plan for Bihar to protect and promote places of historical importance and natural beauty

Vote, Support, Elect CPIML Candidates!

Vote, Support, Elect Mahagathbandhan Candidates!



(Released by the Grand Alliance Partners at a Press Conference where CPIML was represented by Comrade Shashi Yadav)

We commit to:

1. Filling the lakhs of vacancies in government jobs lying pending in 15 years of NDA rule, and beginning the process of creating new permanent posts to ensure time-bound recruitments in 10 lakh jobs, with the first signature in the first Cabinet meeting
2. Making forms for recruitment exams free of fees for Bihar's youth and ensuring that their journey from their home district to the exam centre within Bihar will be free
3. Creating a 'Karpoori Migrant Support Centre' in every state in the country, so that the Bihar Government can be on hand to offer help and support to migrant workers and their families in every kind of crisis or need.
4. Improving MNREGA to ensure 200 days of work per person instead of 100 days of work per family, at an assured minimum wage, and introducing an Urban Employment Guarantee scheme
5. Ending the contract system to implement "Equal Pay For Equal Work", ending privatisation in all departments, and providing regular and stable jobs
6. Scrapping the 2005 New Pension Scheme and restoring the Old Pension Scheme
7. Expanding the rights of Karyapalak Sahayaks, Sankhyiki Swayamsevaks, Tola Sevaks and Taleemi Markaj, ASHA workers, Anganwadi Sevikas and Sahayikas, Midday Meal Cooks, rural health workers and Jeevika workers. This will begin by doubling the current honorarium amounts for scheme workers.
8. Regularise Jeevika workers, double their honorarium to equal at least Rs 4000 a month, and income to the jeevika workers. Ensuring loan waiver for women and members of SHGs, and interest-free loans in the future. Stopping any kind of harassment in the name of loan repayment
9. Reopening closed sugar, jute, paper and other mills and reviving sick units in the public sector as a priority. Setting up food processing industries and units, government godowns near every market, cold storage units and warehouses.
10. Stopping rampant corruption in police stations and block offices
11. Stopping the drive to evict and demolish the homes of rural and urban poor and shops of street vendors; regularising such settlements/slum clusters/shops.
12. Implementing short-term and longer-term measures for flood-control, water management and rehabilitation of flood victims, and putting in place

district-level disaster management plans

13. Enacting a law through the state legislature to counteract the worst effects of the anti-farmer Farm Laws passed by the Modi regime, which will mandate government procurement of produce at Minimum Support Price at one and half times the outlay costs in state agricultural markets; setting up procurement centres in every panchayat

14. Waiving agricultural loans and rent on agricultural lands, providing cheap loans, electricity, water, fertiliser, seeds to all farmers including sharecroppers

15. Building super speciality hospitals in all divisions, providing free dialysis care to poor patients through dialysis centres at all district hospitals

16. Spending 12% of the budget on education; raising the teacher-student ratio in Bihar to 1 teacher for every 30 students in primary school and 1 teacher for every 35 students in middle school, ensuring permanent jobs and regular training to all teachers

17. Introducing teachers for fine arts, computers, and sports in all schools, a time-bound white paper on the condition of Ambedkar Hostels, Kasturba Vidyalayas and SC/ST hostels and schools, towards all-round overhaul of infrastructure and amenities.

18. Repair and restoration of infrastructure in colleges and Universities; ensuring regular sessions and exams; addressing the problems of teachers and employees in unaided educational institutions

19. Freeing bureaucracy from political control as a priority, introducing a merit-based SOP for transfers, with emphasis on abilities, departmental assessment, and performance

20. Lowering the current electricity rates. Currently electricity is being sold at the steepest cost in the poor state like Bihar; these policies will be changed to bring relief to consumers

21. Clean drinking water, electricity, pucca roads in every village/tola and every home. A house under the proposed Ambedkar Awaas Yojana to every poor family. Free computer centres in every panchayat. Solar powered community centres with LED screens. Solar powered tubewells.

22. Strengthening infrastructure in Bihar: bridges, roads, highways, airports to ensure Bihar is counted among the developed states; equipping tourist spots with world-class facilities. Improving law and order, providing police with world-class training and modernising the police force

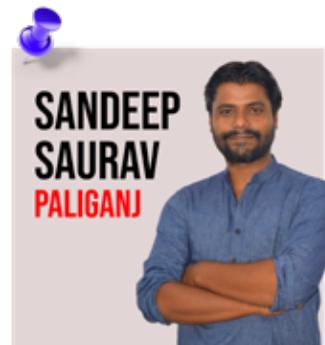
23. Smart Village Scheme to ensure a clinic with a qualified doctor and fully trained nurse in every panchayat.

24. Time-bound development of towns, civic bodies in keeping with the master plan.

25. Commitment to protect the endangered constitutional rights. We affirm that governance is strengthened not weakened by people's movements and people's criticism. We are committed to ensuring a government that holds talks with movements. No activist or innocent citizen will face harassment and false cases in Bihar. The Bihar Assembly will pass resolutions against unjust cases and arrests being imposed on students, intellectuals, journalists, activists in India. □

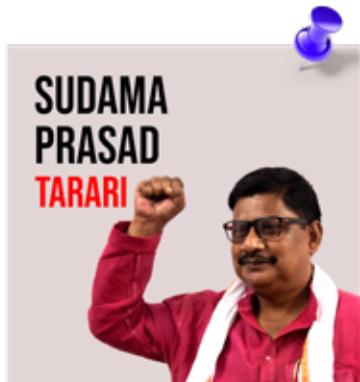
MEET THE CPI(M) CANDIDATES FOR THE BIHAR ASSEMBLY

Paliganj: Sandeep Saurav, AISA General Secretary and former JNUSU General Secretary, an experienced organiser and leader of struggles for the rights of students, youth, oppressed and backward groups.



Ara: Qayamuddin Ansari, who was an AISA leader in its formative period in the 1990s, and is now the Bihar Secretary of Insaf Manch, the platform campaigning to help innocent persons falsely framed, accused and incarcerated by the police and investigative agencies in terror cases.

Agiaon: Manoj Manzil, National President of the Revolutionary Youth Association, who has pioneered struggles for the rights of poor and Dalit students for education. He began his activism by leading struggles of students against the unsafe and unsanitary conditions of Bihar's Dalit hostels. His "Sadak Par School" (Schools on Streets) campaign highlighted the hunger for schooling and education that the poor have, which is betrayed by the neglect of Government schools and privatisation of education.



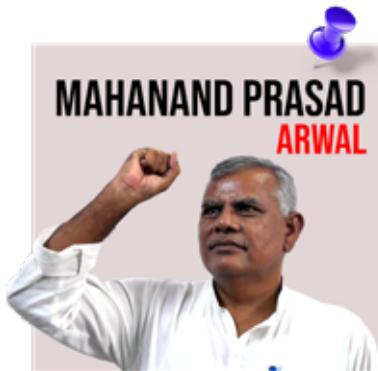
Tarari: The sitting MLA from Tarari, Sudama Prasad is contesting once again to retain the seat. While MLAs from then ruling formation evade accountability, Comrade Sudama has set an example by publishing a thick "report card" of his term as MLA: accounting for every paisa spent and every decision taken.



Dumraon: Ajit Kumar Singh, the Bihar President of the Revolutionary Youth Association, and a very popular student-youth leader. Ajit also led relief efforts during the Covid-19 lockdown crisis.

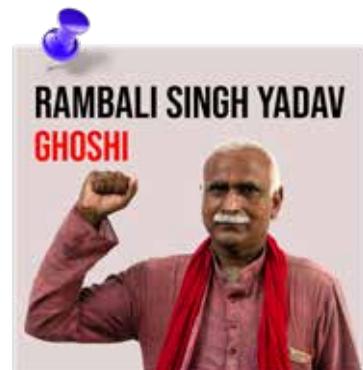


Karakat: Former MLA from Karakat, Arun Singh is also the National Vice-President of All India Kisan Mahasabha. He is known as a popular leader of farmers' struggles. He is a Central Committee member of CPIML.



Arwal: Mahanand Prasad is a prominent state-level leader of the CPIML, and has led struggles of unorganised workers and sanitation workers in his district. He joined the student movement AISA in the 1990s and was also active in Jan Sanskriti Manch, the cultural front.

Ghoshi: Rambali Singh Yadav is the Vice-President of the AICCTU in Bihar, a very popular and well-known leader of struggles of employees and workers in the state. He has led campaigns for the rights of contract teachers to enjoy equal pay for equal work, and for scheme workers to be recognised and remunerated as permanent government employees.



Bhore: Jitendra Paswan is the Vice-President of the Revolutionary Youth Association in Bihar. He participated in the march from Ahmedabad to Una against the flogging of Dalits in the name of “cow protection”. He has led efforts in Bihar to ensure relief for those affected by floods, lockdown, and for stranded migrant workers.



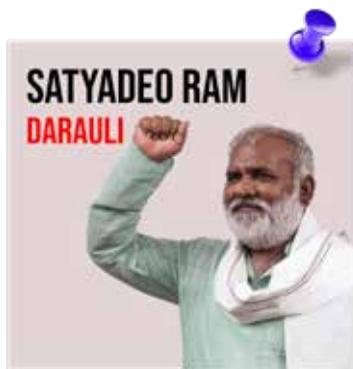
Jeeradei: Amarjeet Kushwaha, honorary President of the Revolutionary Youth Association, has been in prison for the past five years, thanks to false cases slapped on him and on Satyadeo Ram (the sitting Darauli MLA) in July 2013 following a violent terrorist assault on Dalit landless labourers in Chilmarva village to try and evict them from homestead land that was rightfully theirs. Chilmarva village is in Guthni block, in the Darauli constituency. As is common all over Bihar, gairmazarua land had been declared by the block administration in 2012 as land that should be allotted to the Dalits for homesteads, but the said land remained under control of Brahmin landlords backed by the BJP.

Under the banner of the CPI(ML), Dalits occupied the gairmazarua land and built homesteads on it. On 5 July 2013, a violent mob led by the local BJP MLA Ramayan Manjhi, the Brahmin landlords and criminal goons from neighbouring Eastern UP, massed outside Chilmarva village, threatening violent eviction of the Dalits from their rightful land. CPI(ML) leaders Comrades Satyadeo Ram and Amarjit Kushwaha were on the spot. The DM arrived, promised to protect the Dalits, and asked CPI(ML) leaders to disperse. The ASP's official records note that the CPI(ML) leaders did indeed leave the spot.

But the next day's events showed that the district administration was in fact colluding in what could have been a horrific massacre of the Dalits. As this video recorded by a TV channel shows (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4JjtxAh-t5A>), the police and district administration stood watching while the landlords and armed criminals fired at the Dalit villagers in an attempt to recapture the gairmazarua land. The villagers – left completely at the mercy of the feudal mob by the police – defended themselves. In the process, two of the criminal assailants (both outsiders to the area) were killed while CPI(ML)'s Comrade Srinivas Ram was injured.

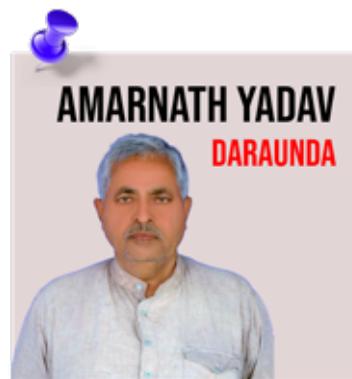
Interestingly, this video exposes where the BJP MLA Ramayan Manjhi and 'independent' MP Om Prakash Yadav, who later became the MP from the BJP, stood on the issue. The channel's own footage clearly shows shots being fired by assailants on the most desperately poor men and women trying to escape the bullets as they defend their hutments. Belying this reality, both the BJP MLA and MP refer to the assailants as 'aam log' (common people) who are 'victims' of CPI(ML) supporters!

While Comrade Satyadeo Ram secured bail in the case, Comrade Amarjeet continues to remain in jail.



Darauli: Satyadeo Ram, the sitting Darauli MLA, is the honorary AIARLA State President from Bihar. He contested and won the last election from inside prison – after being arrested in the case false case as Comrade Amarjeet.

Daraunda: Amarnath Yadav is the Bihar VP of the All India Kisan Mahasabha. A former MLA, he has polled over 2 lakh votes in the Siwan Parliamentary seat, and is a very popular leader.



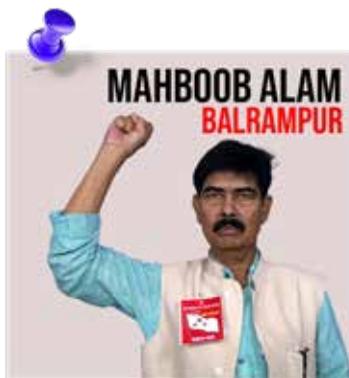
Digha: Shashi Yadav has been an activist since her student days. She was an AISA leader since the organisation's formation in 1990. Shashi has been a familiar figure in all people's movements in Bihar and nationally since the 1990s: facing police batons in the march against GATT-WTO in Delhi, and in student-youth marches in Delhi in that decade. She is a popular leader of scheme workers, mostly women who, far from being recognised as Government employees, are not even paid wages for their labour as the backbone of rural health and education. She is the National Convenor of the Scheme Workers' Federation, and the Bihar State Secretary of the ASHA Workers' Association (Gope Faction). She is the Bihar State Secretary of AIPWA and a Central Committee member of the CPIML.

Phulwari: Gopal Ravidas is the Bihar Secretary of the All India Agricultural and Rural Labourers Association. He is a Central Committee member of the CPIML. In recent times, he led movements of rural poor, especially women, against extortion and harassment by microfinance agencies in the name of loan repayment.





Sikta: Virendra Prasad Gupta is the President of the All India Agricultural and Rural Labourers Association in Bihar. He is known for leading struggles against the feudal “estates” of West Champaran, facing physical attacks and false charges resulting in jail for extended periods of time.



Balrampur: Mahboob Alam, the sitting MLA from Balrampur, enjoys great popularity in the area as a dedicated communist leader on whom the poor, landless and homeless can always count to courageously lead their struggles.



Warisnagar: Phulbabu Singh began political life as an AISA activist, and is now a leader of the AIARLA and RYA.



Aurai: Aftab Alam is a young activist who enjoys the confidence and warm support of people in Aurai and Muzaffarpur district, because he has been taking up social causes for the past decade and a half. He has worked for flood relief in the region, and taken up the cause of the rural poor who want the rickety and unsafe bamboo bridges replaced with stable ones. A founding member of Insaf Manch, he has waged many struggles for justice: for victims of murders by vested interests, as well as for innocents falsely framed by the police. In August, he had led a sit-in to secure justice for Dilip Rai, a young man who was suspected to have been killed by liquor mafia elements. After filing his nomination for the Assembly seat, he was arrested in connection with the sit-in, which the police claimed amounted to “obstructing a government officer in the performance of their duty.”



Kalyanpur: Ranjit Ram is an RYA activist, and has been active in struggles of agricultural workers. On 16 August 2003, as a student in Darbhanga, he and three other AISA activists had shown black flags to the then Home Minister LK Advani, for which they had been booked under the draconian sedition law and spent several months in jail.



WHY ECONOMIC RECOVERY ELUDES INDIA

 ARINDAM SEN

The pandemic scenario in our country - - indeed on our planet - - is stubbornly refusing to move out of dangerous territory.

The official Covid graph has crossed the peak. On the national scale it is now dipping staggeringly, even as in some states caseloads are rising. However, reliability of the data is extremely suspect, what with allegations of low testing, manipulation of caseload and death figures, non - recording of Covid-induced deaths and so on. Then there are concerns like the inevitable rise in infections during the festive season (think the major spike in Kerala following the Pongal festival) and in North India, including the national capital, during the smoggy polluted winter, not to speak of other worries like chances of a second wave --already declared/alleged in Kerala and Karnataka -- in many parts of the country. It is also very clear that availability of the vaccine will be delayed and limited. All these worries implore us to prepare for a long and bitter battle against the invisible enemy, which would also entail a high economic cost.

Meanwhile, in spite of the government's refusal to publish

the relevant data, it has been revealed by independent agencies like the Nomura Group, Tokyo, that the first flush of post- lockdown business activities seem to be petering out. One may expect another spurt during the festive season, but that also is destined to be temporary unless sustained with adequate doses of income support to the working people.

Why is this so important? Because economic recovery is predicated on normalisation and growth of effective demand, which in turn depends on the people's purchasing power, which has taken a very big hit during the oppressive lockdown and in its aftermath. A vast majority of Indians are still suffering from job losses, wage cuts and fall in other incomes. Tens of lakhs of households that have had the misfortune of being visited by the unfriendly virus remain saddled with obligations to repay the loans they took for the costly treatment. The burden of debt weighs heavily on a much larger number of poor households which were compelled to borrow in order to cope with various medical and other exigencies or simply to make both ends meet. As if all these were not enough, overall inflation has risen from 6.69% in August to 7.34% in

September, with an even higher 10.68% inflation in the food segment (vegetables running higher at 20.73%). In a word, people are, somehow , just eking out a living. They urgently need income support and loan waiver before they can provide the extra push for a gradual economic revival.

In the face of an unprecedented situation like this, other major economies in the world are implementing serious stimulus packages to come out of the recession. But the Indian Regime continues with its old game of statistical jugglery and mass deception. After Narendra Modi's bombastic 'Rs. 20 lakh crore package' miserably failed to revive the sinking economy, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced yet another 'stimulus package' on October 12. Basically, it has two components. First, a couple of schemes for central government employees. They can spend their tax-exempt travel concessions on goods and services attracting at least 12% GST (which means they are not allowed to spend the money on food and certain other essential items with zero or low GST.) Another program allows them to receive a part of their wages in advance to spend on festive shopping before the end

of the current financial year. So, in 'national interest' perhaps, the government is now instructing its employees about when to spend their money, and on what goods and services.

The other component consists in an additional 25000 crore rupees for capital expenditure on roads, defense, water supply, urban development and domestically produced capital equipment; plus an offer of 12000 crore rupees in long-term interest-free loans to state governments for infrastructure spending before March 31, 2021.

It is easy to see why all this is mere bakwash. The first tranche of the package clearly does not envisage any additional allocation. It only involves (a) diversion of an amount already earmarked for LTC (leave travel concession) to another kind of expenditure, i.e., purchase of high- GST goods and services and (b) an advance payment of wage - - something akin to an interest-free loan - - for festive shopping. To call it a stimulus is just a bad joke, the more so because it bypasses the overwhelming majority of Indians, particularly the poor, who have a greater marginal propensity to spend.

As for the second part of the package, there is every reason to suspect that the government would, as it frequently does, cut spending on other heads to fund these programs. It is also very doubtful as to what extent the state governments would be able to spend the loan amount offered to them within a short time frame.

Clearly the latest jumala is yet another shrewd attempt to

disorient people with dazzling figures and bogus claims. It is so worthless that even bourgeois experts have branded it as grossly inadequate.

"Overall, the amount of demand stimulus is underwhelming," said Sonal Varma at Nomura Global Markets Research soon after the package was announced. "With the previous rounds of budgetary fiscal support around 1% of GDP", She added, "today's demand stimulus measures take total fiscal support (on budget) to about 1.2% of GDP, which is small compared with the size of the growth hit, and reflects India's weak fiscal starting position".

According to Jahangir Aziz, head of emerging markets economics at JP Morgan, income support is urgently necessary so that when the infection becomes more manageable and restrictions are lifted, consumers and businesses would have the financial stability to borrow and invest. He believed "that is the only way India can avoid a scenario where damaged balance sheets and mounting bad debts will blunt the recovery. "...what you need right now is serious amount of income support and we've known countries who do, who've done that," he added, referring to Brazil as an example.

With the stupid, insensitive, anti people government in place, the immediate future looks bleak. Not surprisingly, in line with the various rating agencies, the World Bank in October revised its projection of India's GDP contraction in 2020-21 from a previous estimate of 3.2% to 9.6%. Days later, the RBI itself came out with an estimate of 9.5% contraction.

The IMF's estimate in October is a 10.3% contraction, compared to a 4.5% contraction predicted in June. According to Malhar Nabar, the Fund's Division Chief, Research Department, the Indian government needs to "tilt the composition of the fiscal support towards more of the direct spending and tax relief measures and to rely less on the liquidity support measures". Gita Gopinath, Chief Economist of IMF, has also suggested that India needs to give direct support, and not loans, to low income households and MSMEs.

Is Narendra Modi listening? Presumably not, for he does not seem to have ears to hear.

Anyway, to view our economic prospects in perspective, we need to take a look at how, at this moment, India compares with her South Asian neighbours.

According to IMF's World Economic Outlook October 2020, Bangladesh's per capita GDP in dollar terms is expected to grow 4 per cent this year to \$1,888. India's per capita GDP, on the other hand, is expected to decline 10.5 per cent to \$1,877 – the lowest in the last four years (the GDP figure for both countries is at current prices). This makes India the third poorest country in South Asia, with only Pakistan and Nepal reporting lower per capita GDP, while Bangladesh, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Maldives would be ahead of India.

Is Narendra Modi seeing in what direction the country is heading under his 'care'? Presumably not, for he does not seem to have eyes to see. □

THE HATHRAS MOMENT IS DIFFERENT FROM THE DELHI 2012 MOMENT



 KAVITA KRISHNAN

In the wake of the Delhi bus gangrape in 2012-13, hundreds of young Indians joined the anti-rape movement. Through their rage and exhaustion ran a bright thread of hope: a promise of social awakening and institutional change. For the first time ever, society was tuning into the women's movement's concerns about rape culture, victim blaming, and attacks on women's autonomy in the name of safety. It seemed that the State might, at long last, be forced to acknowledge that existing laws defining sexual violence excluded a whole range of victims' experiences.

In 2020, with countrywide movements around the alleged gangrape and murder of a young Dalit woman in Hathras, the situation is both similar to 2012 in some ways, and grimly different in others.

This time, too, there is a welcome social awakening to the ugly reality of caste-based atrocities and rapes. But this time, the movement is about keeping alive the flame of social change, of anti-caste and anti-patriarchal awakening in the face of an openly Manuvadi regime determined to snuff out that flame.

In 2012, the Delhi government, the UPA government at the Centre, and the ruling party — the Congress — put on the defensive by protests, responded by trying to show they cared for the victim and her family, and for the larger issue of sexual violence. Party leaders met the victim's family, acknowledging their grief and sense of betrayal. The Manmohan Singh-led government set up the Justice Verma Committee, which listened patiently to feminists of all kinds: feminist scholars

and activists, Dalit feminists, LGBTQ feminists, feminists working in conflict areas, organising against sexual harassment in workplaces, and so on. The Verma Committee recommendations set forth a resounding Bill of Rights for women, challenging governments to address every area of gender-based injustice and violence from the vantage point of what Dr B.R. Ambedkar described as constitutional morality, rather than conservative social morality and mob frenzy. The changes in the law recommended by the Verma Committee were only partially implemented by the government at the time, but still, the legal changes were, with some crucial exceptions, largely a step in the right direction.

In 2020, in Uttar Pradesh and at the Centre, you have a government that feels no need even to make a token gesture towards implementing the constitutional liberties and rights of women and Dalits. Instead, what we have is UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath using the full force of the state machinery to impose a Manuvadi caste patriarchal order and punish the anti-caste, anti-rape movement.

Opposition leaders, Dalit and women's groups are meeting the victim's family to show solidarity — as they should. But the same media that acted as cheerleaders for opposition parties that participated in anti-corruption and anti-rape movements targeting the UPA government, now accuses the opposition of "playing politics" over rape.

In 2012, the Congress with all its faults, did not try to deny rape, brand the victim a liar, or to

spread communal narratives. In 2020, in contrast, the ruling BJP is responding with its classic communal whataboutery. It digs up instances of rape where the accused are Muslim, and asks why we are not protesting on those cases. It asks why we do not protest a rape that happened in a Congress-ruled state.

Naturally, people have protested all those instances of rape. But the reason for the intensified outrage at Hathras lies in the state government's shameful attempts to cover up the crime itself. In those other instances, have there been community and faith-based panchayats defending those the victim accused of rape? No, that is the hallmark of Yogi-ruled Hathras. Did the police and district administration supposedly use petrol to burn the victim's body, preventing a dignified cremation by her loved ones and destroying evidence? No, that too is a Hathras hallmark. In those cases, did the government besiege the victim's family and the Dalit hamlet, preventing them from speaking to reporters and others? Prevented anti-rape protests but allowed and encouraged violent masculine displays of Thakur caste supremacy in defence of the rape accused? No, that too is a Hathras hallmark. Did the ruling party, in those cases, use taxpayers' money to engage a PR company to brand the victim a liar and deny the rape and attempted murder by four Thakur youths?

The outrage over Hathras is against the brutal rape and killing, and over the crimes committed by

the state government to cover up the very fact of the alleged caste-supremacist rape committed by Thakur men. The outrage is at UP having a chief minister who has made no secret of the fact that he endorses the Manusmriti's decrees of the subordination and subjugation of women and Dalits.

In 2012, feminist and anti-caste activists protesting rape would not generally face charges of sedition and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (unless of course they worked in conflict areas, which

WE ARE UP AGAINST A SYSTEM THAT IS BENT ON DEFENDING ORGANISED CASTE SUPREMACY AND ISLAMOPHOBIC TERRORISM WHILE TREATING FEMINIST, ANTI-CASTE AND EQUAL-CITIZENSHIP ACTIVISM AS A CRIME EQUIVALENT TO TERRORISM.

previous governments too treated as exempt from constitutional protections). But now, we are up against a system that is bent on defending organised caste supremacy and Islamophobic terrorism while treating feminist, anti-caste and equal-citizenship activism as a crime equivalent to terrorism. We have seen this in Bhima Koregaon. We are seeing it in the Delhi Police 'riots probe' where equal-citizenship activists including Pinjra Tod feminists have been jailed under the UAPA.

And now, the Hathras police has filed FIRs accusing anti-rape and anti-caste protesters of being

part of an 'international plot' to foment caste riots and defame the UP chief minister. They have arrested a journalist and three student activists who were visiting Hathras, and charged them with the draconian UAPA.

We often witness the phenomenon of victim blaming in rape cases: where the victim rather than the perpetrator is held guilty for the crime. Under the BJP, victim-blaming has become the template for responding to every instance of caste-based, communal or patriarchal crimes.

In Bhima Koregaon, the Sanghi groups that attacked Dalits go scot-free while Dalit and human rights activists are in jail under UAPA. Likewise in the Delhi violence, the Muslim victims are arrested and charged with UAPA while the BJP leaders who openly instigated and led violence are free. And now in Hathras, too, the Dalit victim is being branded a liar, her family members are being blamed for her death, anti-rape, anti-caste protestors are being accused of "conspiracy" to instigate caste violence; while the perpetrators of the caste violence against a Dalit woman are allowed to openly display caste supremacy and threaten local Dalits.

The ongoing movement demands justice and change — not revenge. And it is clear that Yogi Adityanath, in the seat of UP CM, is actively promoting injustice and a regressive Manuvad as state policy. This is why sacking him is the first condition for creating the possibility of justice and change. ◻

THE CALL OF THE WORKING CLASS OF THE COUNTRY!

GEAR UP TOWARDS 26 NOV ALL INDIA STRIKE!



The Modi led BJP government has declared a veritable war on the working class. The first round of the battle of complete scrapping of labour laws and declarations of privatisation are over in Parliament. Now, the battlefield has shifted on to the streets and to the states. 26 Nov all India strike called by the platform of central trade unions in the country is only a beginning of a long-drawn battle against the corporate fascists in power.

SCRAPPING OF LABOUR LAWS

The country and its history are pushed back by 100 years. Indian people and the working class shed their blood to enact the labour laws that were just scrapped and pro-corporate, pro-bourgeoisie codes enacted by the Modi led BJP government in power, in the monsoon session of Parliament, to facilitate brutal, inhuman exploitation by the capital.

They are not labour law amendments any more but a complete reversal and scripting a modern slavery. They can only be called as “corporate bourgeoisie laws” to deny workers their hard-earned rights, wages, service conditions and benefits. “Turning crisis into an opportunity” is the catch-word for Modi and RSS. Now, the opportunity of Corona is fully exploited to enact jungle laws in the Parliament. Labour laws are

not meant to protect labour from rogue capital and exploitation but to facilitate rampant exploitation by removing all protections. The most significant component of democracy is the rule of law. The same is being transformed into the rule of corporates and to facilitate super profit. Profit through production and competition is being converted into profit through intense exploitation and denial of rights and wages.

WAGE CODE TO DENY WAGES

The Wage Code has already made minimum wages a non-mandatory category by introducing the concept of floor wages. While the penal clauses for violation of payment of wages are removed to support capital and also by renaming Inspectors into facilitators, the penal clauses are introduced to punish union leaders.

RIGHT TO STRIKE SNATCHED

The Industrial Relations Code has effectively snatched away the right to strike. Strike notice of 60 days is made mandatory for all categories of establishments and is made illegal during pendency of dispute and also to some period after its conclusion. Penal clause of fine upto 50,000 or imprisonment is also introduced for workers participating in a peaceful strike. The trade unions are also allowed to be punished upto cancellation of registration. The right to collective bargaining

is made a mirage. Right to organise and forming trade unions also remain only on paper and are made most cumbersome with several riders.

FTE – ANOTHER NAME FOR HIRE AND FIRE

By allowing irregular workers in the name of ‘Fixed Term Employment’, the concept of regularisation and permanency is done away with and the system of ‘Hire and Fire’ is institutionalised and legalised. Labour relations are made anarchic by legalising individual contract with individual workers rather than streamlining the same through collective bargaining and collective agreements arrived at via trilateral mechanism involving labour officials of the government. The definition of industry has excluded many industries that were covered earlier and the threshold limit of 300 for applicability of laws regarding retrenchment, closure, lay-off, etc has excluded vast majority of labour force from any coverage or protection.

OSHC – A PRO-BOSS PRESCRIPTION

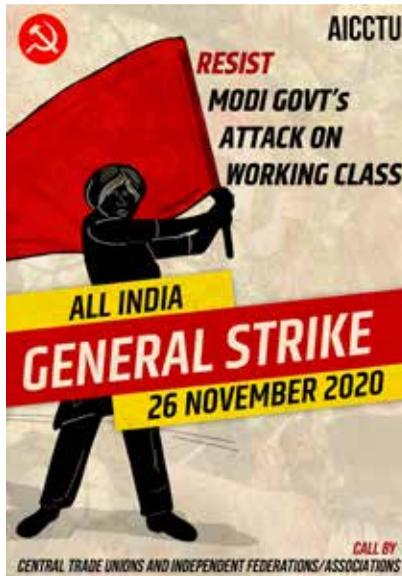
Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code – Factories Act – Increases threshold from 10 to 20 (with power) and 20 to 40 (without power). Layoff, Retrenchment, closure, etc., are made easy and no need to seek permission if less than 300 are employed.

The contract workers are covered only if more than 50 workers are recruited under a single contractor and blanket licences are issued to recruit contract worker for all type of categories and for endless tenure are issued. Equal wages and service conditions and other mandatory benefits are done away with. The worse still is that sanitation workers, security workers, scheme workers, etc., are categorised as non-core areas and are denied consequential benefits. The long-drawn battle of trade union movement for social security and regularisation for a vast section of workers are flatly denied. The concept of 'principal employer' and 'employer' are made ambiguous and principal employers are relieved of their responsibilities towards contract workers. Contractors are given a free hand to act according to their whims and fancies. Migrant labour are left in the lurch and even the minimum legal protections are given a go by.

SOCIAL SECURITY: THE RESPONSIBILITY OF WORKERS

The Code on Social Security has dealt a body blow to the concept of the responsibility of the employer to take care of the welfare of one's own employees. Increase in threshold limit has also excluded a vast majority of workers from the ambit of coverage. The tall talks of expansion of coverage to unorganised workers is nothing but a Goebbelsian propaganda. Now, the responsibility social security, including ESI, PF, gratuity, etc., are nothing but the responsibility of workers themselves. Neither the employer

nor the government are held accountable. Even the proposed pension scheme is worse than the NPS the trade union movement has been opposing. Old pension scheme is not applicable for anyone. Pension, its quantum, applicability, etc., are all dependent on the amount you are willing to part with for the purpose. Here too, the government and the employer are relieved off of their responsibility.



NO SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR WOMEN WORKERS

Women workers are allowed to work in hazardous industries without any safety and their security and welfare are thrown to the winds. Even maternity benefit is being snatched in the name of guaranteeing it. Women workers are facing the risk of retrenchment in the event of pregnancy and child birth. Vast majority of women workers are being denied the status of 'workers' even leave alone their wages and benefits. The present changes can only result in more and more informalisation of women workforce and is also

dangerous enough to push them into four walls.

Its not about 'Minimum government and Maximum governance' but about 'No Government and Only Corporates'. The Modi led BJP government has become a government of corporates, for the corporates and by the corporates. The entire wealth of the country, wealth of the people is being handed over on a platter to corporates. Ambanis are earning 90 crores per hour. The working class is losing every penny. Soon, we are going to witness Ambani trains running on Adani tracks. The passenger are to alight at Tata stations. The poor in the country are being denied affordable rail transport. Bank, insurance, oil, all modes of travel, coal, steel, space, land water, ecology everything is being sold out. Only left out is the breeze and air which is systematically being polluted.

DA is frozen. Wage cut and retrenchment has become the norm. Old pension schemes are scrapped ruthlessly. Employees are forced to sent home prematurely. Permanent workers are forced to compete with contract and irregular workers for wages and service conditions. Bondage, servitude and modern slavery has become the 'new normal'.

The list is endless...

RESISTANCE STRUGGLE

The Supreme Court judgement in a case against the Gujarat ordinances was welcome because it pin points the violation of fundamental rights of workers. Provides scope for challenging the anti-

workers, pro-corporate codes too. But, it can only be short-lived because new Codes may be enforced by April next year.

Another effective model we witnessed was that the Karnataka ordinance against workers, passed by legislative assembly, was defeated by the opposition parties dominated legislative council, the upper house. The third possibility of opposition state governments denying implementation of code or tinkering with rules still remain a possibility as the labour is in concurrent list but its veracity is yet to be seen. Now, the contours of the movement are being redefined and are being effectively shifted to the states. The working class in the country has a greater role to throw the codes into the dustbin and rise up against the brutal corporate attack by the capitalist class and its agents of RSS and BJP in power at the centre.

SOLIDARITY WITH 26-27 NOV DELHI CHALO OF FARMERS

Farm Bills have pushed farmers of the country to the margins and is a clear-cut ploy to corporatise agriculture. Farmers are being denied MSP and are thrown at the mercy of corporates and agri-corporate cartels. Disadvantaged farmers are forced to resort to distress sale because of the new farm acts. The situation in the country is conducive for a worker – peasant unity to fight the Modi government at the centre. AICCTU whole-heartedly supports the 26-27 Nov Delhi Chalo call of farmers of the country.

STALL THE WHEELS OF THE COUNTRY ON 26 NOV.

AICCTU calls upon the working class in the country to make 26 Nov strike a grand success, which is only a prelude to the impending waves and waves of long battles. AICCTU also calls upon all opposition parties to support the strike and make it a Bharat Bandh on 26 Nov against the corporate agents of Modi led BJP and RSS. The corporates and its political agents have scrapped all labour laws and declared a war. It is now for the working class of the country to rise up to the occasion to counter the capitalist war comprehensively and in all its dimensions. This war can only end by scrapping the anti-worker codes and fighting back other attacks including the shameless sell out of country’s assets. Let’s stall the wheels of the country on 26th November.



FARMERS RISE IN RAGE AGAINST THREE ANTI-FARM BILLS

Farmers and farm workers on 25 September rose up in rage and gave the clarion call for a countrywide struggle against the three anti-farm Bills passed forcibly and treacherously without vote, making farming and the right to food slaves to corporate and multinational companies. More than 2 crore people participated in the Bharatg Bandh protests at the call from farmers’ organizations across the country including Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Telengana

and Madhya Pradesh. The bandh was actively supported by labor organizations, students, youth, women, poets, writers, artists and political parties.

All India Kisan Mahasabha (AIKM) conveyed revolutionary greetings and congratulations to farmers of the country for the unprecedented and resounding success of the Bharat Bandh and thanked civil society for their support. AIKM reiterated that the people of the country will never allow farmers and farming to be enslaved and handed over to corporate and multinational companies. Farmers in Punjab and Haryana have started the boycott of BJP and its allies who forcibly passed these anti-farmer Bills without vote. This boycott will spread

to all other parts of the country also.



Punjab: RYA members participating in the protest

All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) had called for a countrywide protest on 28 September (Bhagat Singh Jayanti) against the three anti-farm

Bills and other anti-farmer measures like petrol-diesel price hike and Electricity Bill 2020. Bhagat Singh had said replacing White Sahebs with Brown Sahebs would change nothing. BJP-RSS is acting like Brown Sahebs. They are allowing private Mandis to operate which will eventually have a monopoly over crop procurement and will procure at a very low price. All governmental procurement, storage and distribution will be ended. The Modi government is cheating farmers by calling the Mandi Bill 'price assurance' and the contract farming Bill 'income assurance'. In the end farmers will become slaves and their lands will go to the hands of usurers.

where AIKM National President Ruldu Singh said that farmers would give the Modi government a befitting reply to this attack on them. The rally at Bhikhi was addressed by Punjab Kisan Union State Secretary Gurnam Singh.



Cartoon: Satish Acharya

AIKSCC said that the Right to Food has also been attacked through these Bills. Food grains, pulses, oil crops, potatoes and onions have been removed from the list of essential goods. In truth this is an Act to give free license to black-marketing and 75 crore ration-beneficiaries will be forced to buy food grains from the open market.

The greatest effect of the Bandh was seen in Punjab where 31 farmers' organizations came together to make it a resounding success. Their Rail Roko agitation began on 28 September and went on till 20 October after it succeeded in getting a law passed by the Punjab Assembly countervailing the three anti-farmer laws. The farmers received unequivocal support from all sections of society. People arranged langars at various places for the farmers. Many trains were cancelled and the chakka jam was a huge success. The bandh was particularly successful in Mansa

On 11 October protest was dedicated to the 10th martyrdom day of young kisan leader Prithipal Singh Chakk Alisher who gave his life for farmers' struggles. He was martyred on 11 October 2010 when he was killed by usurers, moneylenders and their goons during his struggle to save the land (about 1 ½ acres) belonging to a poor farmer Bhola Singh (Hiro ke Kalan village) from being auctioned off.

Farmers and shopkeepers in Punjab, including Punjab Kisan Union and Traders' Association of Mansa are also holding sit-ins and blockades at Reliance petrol pumps, retail stores and Easy Day chains.

Protests and chakka jams were witnessed across Bihar on 28 September, including capital Patna where CPIML General Secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya and other leaders addressed the protests. Protests were also held at Jehanabad, Begusarai, Patna District, Nawada, Kaimur, Purnea,

Aurangabad, Bhojpur, Arwal, Siwan and other Districts.

The Bandh received resounding success in Haryana and Rajasthan. Protests, road jams, effigy burnings and other programs were also held at various Districts in Tamil Nadu including Salem, Shivangai, Dindigul, Kalladaikuruchi, Thiruvannamalai, Thenkasi, Mayiladudurai, Thanjavur, Cuddalore, Madurai, Dharmapuri, Karur, Truchy and Pudukottai. Farmers' organizations associated with AIKSCC participated in the Bandh in Karnataka at various places including Bengaluru, Bellary and Koppal. AICCTU, AIARLA and AIKSCC played an important role in the success of the Bandh in Karnataka.

Protests were also held and Bandh was observed in various other States including Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Maharashtra, Delhi, Tripura and Assam.

ATTACK ON AIKM LEADER COMRADE GORA SINGH

All India Kisan Mahasabha National Executive member and Punjab Kisan Union State Vice President Comrade Gora Singh was attacked by opponents on the night of 11 October 2020. He was returning home to Bhaini Baggha at 7.30 pm after many days at the kisan dharna in Mansa. Report of the attack was made immediately to top police officials. The attack on the kisan leader has been severely condemned by the AIKM as well as all other agitating farmers' organizations.

On the night in question, the assailants were standing on both sides of the road. As soon as Gora Singh's motorcycle approached, they

attacked him from both sides with stout dandas (sticks). One stick hit him on his right jaw and the other on his left arm. The force of the assault made him fall prone on the ground along with his motorcycle. He has received a severe injury on his jaw. A report has been filed with the police naming the accused persons.

Comrade Gora Singh is a popular leader of the Punjab Kisan Union and one of the leading progressive farmers in Mansa. On 12 October kisan leaders AIKM Secretary Purushottam Sharma, Prem Singh Gehlawat and CPIML CC member Rajvinder Singh Rana visited him at the Mansa hospital.

LOAN WAIVER FOR WOMEN RALLY IN PATIALA

CPIML organized a 'Loan Waiver for Women' rally in Patiala on 8 October 2020 at the Punda grounds attended by thousands of women, farmers, workers and youth.

CPIML has accused the Modi government of imposing Corporate Raj in the country in the name of nationalism. That is why the 3 new anti-farm Acts have been passed and the road opened for handing over farming to the corporates. Big corporate houses and companies have got huge loan waivers while poor women, workers, farmers and small traders facing Lockdown and recession have been given no relief.

The rally was led by State Secretary Gurmeet Singh Bakhtapur, CC member Rajvinder Singh rana, AIKM National President Ruldu Singh Mansa, and Mazdoor Mukti Morcha State President Bhagwant Singh Samaon. The rally was also addressed by Sukhdarshan Singh Natt, women's loan relief organizations and leaders of various

organizations.

Comrade Bakhtapur said that on the one hand the Modi government is weakening all constitutional institutions; while on the other hand they are selling off natural resources and national assets to private hands. Bhagwant Singh Samaon demanded that the Punjab government should fulfill its promise and waive all loans of women's SHGs from finance companies. Action should be taken against agents who go to women's homes and pressurize them for installments. Comrade Ruldu Singh said that if the Modi government does not withdraw the anti-farm laws, the farmers and workers of the contry will ensure their exit from power. Rajvinder Singh Rana appealed appealed to revolutionary and Left parties to come together and fight the anti-farmer fascist Modi government.

The following resolutions were passed at the rally:

1. We demand a probe into the post-matric dalit scholarship scam amounting to crores of rupees and resignation of Cabinet Minister Sadhu Singh Dharmasot responsible for the scam.

2. Add puaal (straw) management works to MNREGA to generate employment for the rural poor and to reduce pollution.

3. Release all political prisoners, leaders, intellectuals, thinkers and journalists arrested in the Bhima Koregaon case and the Delhi riots case.

Present at the rally were leaders from AIPWA, AISA, Kisan leaders and labor leaders.

LEFT PARTIES PROTEST FOR CM YOGI'S RESIGNATION

CPIML, CPM, CPI and other Left parties organized statewide protests

in Uttar Pradesh on Gandhi Jayanti 2 October and Delhi on 15 October against the increasing violence and rapes against women including the horrific gang rapes and murders of Hathras and Balrampur, and demanded the resignation of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

In Lucknow, the police arrested Left leaders and cadres protesting near the Gandhi statue at Hasratganj in the capital Lucknow. The arrested leaders included CPM State Secretary Hiralal, CPIML State Standing Committee member Ramesh Sengar, State Committee member RS Maurya, Manju (AIPWA), Madhu Garg (AIDWA), Rajiv Kumar (RYA), Chandrabhan, Madhusudan (AICCTU) and Ravi Mishra (CITU). The police took them all to Eco Garden where the protesters resumed their dharna. In the evening they were all released.

Through the statewide protests Left parties are demanding the resignation of Chief Minister Adityanath, strict punishment for the perpetrators of the Hathras and Balrampur incidents, and strict action against the officials who ordered the mid-night cremation of the Hathras victim without the presence or consent of the family, the DM who intimidated the girl's family, and the SP who was negligent in taking action.

Joint protest programs were also held at Ballia, Devaria, Gorakhpur, Azamgarh, Ghazipur, Chandauli, Varanasi, Mirzapur, Sonbhadra, Prayagraj, Ayodhya, Rae Bareli, Gonda, Sitapur, Lakhimpur Kheeri, Pilibhit, Jalaun, Moradabad, Mathura and other Districts.

Earlier, on receiving news of the Hathras victim's death on 29 September the CPIML Uttar Pradesh unit issued a statement in Lucknow conveying deep grief and anger against the heinous gang

rape and the death of the victim during treatment at a Delhi hospital. CPIML holds the Yogi government accountable for the growing violence and barbaric acts against women, especially dalit women. Savarna feudal forces and dominant sections are sky high in confidence under the Yogi regime and policies. These forces are attacking weaker sections, especially dalits. CM Yogi's police are continuing and escalating their insensitive attitude in matters of violence against women; and when it is a matter against dalit women, getting a hearing and action becomes even more difficult.

The Party statement also pointed out that while the entire country was grieving over the horrific gang rape and barbaric murder of the Hathras victim, another heinous gang rape and murder of a 22 year old dalit girl at Balrampur shocked the entire nation. Dalit women have been the target of rape and murder in both these cases. Government records show that Uttar Pradesh under Yogi rule is the topmost in the country in cases of violence against dalit women. The NCRB (National Crime Record Bureau) confirm these statistics.

The role of the police and administration in the Hathras case is extremely suspicious. The reluctance to register an FIR and the way in which the body was burnt in the middle of the night without the presence or consent of the family points to a criminal attempt to white-wash the truth and destroy evidence. A judicial enquiry must be conducted to bring the truth to light. The time for demanding that the Chief Minister improve the law and order system is past; now is the time to demand resignation of the Chief Minister. We need to remove the Yogi government in order to save our daughters.

AIPWA also organized strong

protests against the perpetrators, police, administration and Yogi government and paid tributes to the victim at Banaras, Lakhimpur Kheeri and Devaria.

CPIML TEAM MEETS FAMILY OF HATHRAS VICTIM

A CPIML team visited Bulgarhi in Hathras on 7 October 2020 and met the family of the gang rape and murder victim. The team consoled the family and supported their demand for justice through an enquiry into the entire incident by a Supreme Court judge.

CPIML State Secretary Sudhakar Yadav released a report of the visit on 8 October. Earlier, on 7 October the team led by CPIML State Committee member and Western UP in-charge Nasir Shah met the victim's mother Rama Devi, father Om Prakash, brother Satyendra, uncle Ramvir and neighbors, and submitted the team's report late in the evening to the Secretary.

The CPIML team report says that the family members of the victim are in considerable fear. The family is poor. Their poverty and the caste dominance of the accused have resulted in negligence as well as deliberate whitewashing by the administration. Neither was an FIR registered on time and nor was proper and timely medical treatment given. Despite this the Aligarh Medical officer has said that there are injuries showing rape.

Moreover, the victim's body was

burned in the middle of the night by the administration without the consent or presence of the family. The DM not only threatened the family, but also kicked family members. With the intent of hushing up the matter, initially opposition leaders and media were not allowed to meet the family. The entire village has been turned into a police post, but supporters of the accused persons are mobilizing and intimidating the victim's family. The BJP leadership is standing in support of the accused persons. All this is happening at the behest of the government.

State Secretary Sudhakar Yadav said that the Yogi government is alleging a so-called international conspiracy to defame the UP



CPIML held protests against Hathras Incident in at various places in UP

government in order to divert attention from the government's abysmal handling of the Hathras case. They are filing FIR upon FIR, and even journalists are being targeted. This is nothing but sheer oppression and tactics of diversion. He appealed to the people not to get diverted and intensify their fight for justice for the Hathras victim.

Based on the team report, the State Secretary made the following

demands: FIR against the DM and the then SP (now suspended) and punishment for them; strict punishment to the guilty persons; proper security to be provided to the victim's family; stop mobilization of the supporters of the accused persons and the victim's family being intimidated and threatened by them; withdrawal of cases filed against political workers who protested against the incident; stop repression of journalists; resignation of CM Yogi who has failed miserably to ensure security of women in the State, as seen by the heinous incidents at Hathras, Balrampur, Bhadohi, Azamgarh and other places.

The CPIML team comprised State Committee member Nasir Shah, AIKM State Vice President Nathilal Pathak, Tara Singh, Rakesh Chaudhury, Manoj Kumar, Salim Khan, RYA leaders Aman and Vishnu Sharma. The administration stopped the team about 1 km from the victim's home and allowed only 5 members of the team to meet the family.

CPIML TEAM VISITS FIRE-DAMAGED DHOBIGHAT JHUGGI IN ASHBAGH, LUCKNOW

A fire broke out at about 1 am on 11 October 2020 at Dhobighat Jhuggi Basti situated in Lucknow's Ashbagh. Many jhuggis were caught in the flames, although no lives were lost. Four goats were charred to death in the fire. The basti is mostly populated by the poorest sections of society, including a large number of daily wage earners, artisans and women working as domestic help.

On 14 October a 5-member CPIML fact-finding team visited the spot. The team comprised District Secretary Ramesh Singh Sengar, Chandrabhan Gupta, Atul Upadhyay, Shivam Safir

and Ayush Shrivastava. The team members met the people of the basti and assured them that they would work for getting them help from the administration and ensure their rehabilitation.

According to the people present at the spot, chaos erupted in the area at around 1 am on 11 October when some gas cylinders allegedly exploded. It is said that about 10 to 15 cylinders allegedly exploded in the basti. By the time people woke up, the fire had spread to a large area. People just managed to save their lives and the lives of their children; but about 5 dozen homes were charred to ashes.

Mohd Qamar present at the spot said that his daughter's wedding had been fixed for 30 October. The sewing machine he had purchased as a gift for his daughter was burnt to ashes in the fire, as also all the other things he had stored as preparation for the wedding, as well as cash. Another resident, Najma showed the team the burnt remains of her Battery rickshaw and said that this was the sole means of sustenance for the family; now that this rickshaw is burnt, we do not know how we are going to manage. Chand Sah told the team that his Rs 10000 in cash was burnt to ashes. Rita said that the roof that provided shelter to her family is gone, and they are at a loss to know where they could live now.

Many families have similarly suffered heavy losses, and a livelihood crisis is also hanging over their heads. So far the administration and government have not rendered any help to them. Some mohallas are arranging shelter and food for them, but this is far from enough. The residents of the jhuggis say that the real issue is that they need to get back the homes which had provided them shelter. They want the government to re-build their jhuggis for them.

After finding out the facts of the incident, the CPIML team feels the need for the following:

4. The government should give a compensation of Rs 50,000 to each victim family as immediate relief.
5. Adequate rations should be arranged for their immediate sustenance.
6. Pucca houses should be built at the same spot for the victim families.
7. Preventative disinfectants should be sprayed immediately in the area so that pandemic/diseases and mosquito-borne illnesses can be prevented.

POLICE-ADMINISTRATION REPRESSION AT RAJASTHAN

A memorandum was submitted to the Chief Minister through the Divisional Commissioner regarding the indiscriminate way in which the police and administration are targeting innocent people after the violence that erupted during ST teacher recruitment movement at Kakri Dungri in Dungarpur District, Rajasthan and the need to maintain peace in the area.

Speaking on the occasion, General Secretary of Dr Ambedkar Welfare Society PR Salvi said that ST candidates have for the past one year been demanding recruitment to the 1167 General category teachers' posts lying vacant; currently from 6 December they had been protesting peacefully at Kakri Dungri. When the government remained insensitive and refused to listen to democratic ways of protest, the protesters came out on the highway on the 18th day and violence erupted, which is unfortunate. Though the violence was incited by outsider elements, we

demand a free and fair enquiry and compensation to those who suffered losses due to the violence.

Senior CPIML leader Shankarlal Chaudhury said that the police are slapping cases and arresting totally innocent persons which is illegal and a violation of human rights and must be condemned strongly. Human rights activist Rinku Parihar said that more than 24 FIRs have been registered naming 7000 persons, many of whom were not even present at the spot. Bhim Army leader Dinesh Rayakwal said that innocent people including school children are being targeted due to local politics. AICCTU leader Saurabh Naruka said that so many FIRs naming such a huge number of people arouse suspicion prima facie. Adivasi Kranti Morcha leader Babulal Kalasua said that students, teachers and even doctors from the adivasi community are being targeted who have nothing to do with the violence. One student who was in Udaipur for the B.Ed exam has also been named in an FIR. CPI leader Himmat Chhangwal said that the administration is clearly trying to create an atmosphere of fear and intimidation in order to prevent people from protesting for their just demands. Retd Prof RN Vyas said that BJP and its affiliated organizations are raising the bogey of 'Naxalism' and 'outsiders' in order to defame the movement and create a divide in the adivasi community. We condemn this strongly and demand that the State government should stop police repression on the just demands and movements of the adivasi community.

STRUGGLE FOR JUSTICE FOR WORKERS KILLED IN GUNUPUR MINING ACCIDENT

Three mining workers died in a mining accident near Gunupur. AICCTU Vice President and Secretary CPIML Liberation, Tirupati Gomango, took up the matter and demanded an enquiry. The Sub Collector, SP and DM reached the spot, and found that the workers died due to a mine blaste, and that no safety arrangement had been provided to the workers. CPIML demanded cancellation of illegal mining, immediate arrest of the contractors and Rs 10 lakhs compensation for those killed, Rs 50,000 for injured persons and suspension of officers responsible for the negligence. The district administration approved Rs 3 lakhs to the family members of the workers who had been killed and Rs 10, 000-20,000 for the injured persons. Some of the concerned officials are being investigated.



An injured miner in hospital

MAHARASHTRA GOVERNOR KOSHIYARI MOCKS SECULARISM: SACK HIM

The Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshiyari sent a letter to Maharashtra CM Udhav Thackeray chastising him for failing to open up temples (which are closed due to the Covid-19 pandemic). To make matter worse, Koshiyari added a taunt: he asked Udhav Thackeray, "Have you suddenly turned secular?"

It is common for BJP IT Cell trolls to use "secular" as a term of abuse. But for a Governor to do so marks a new low, since "secularism" is enshrined

in India's Constitution to which the Governor has to swear allegiance.

Thackeray responded by asking Koshiyari, "Isn't secularism a key component of the Constitution, by which you swore while taking oath as the state governor?" He also added the obvious point that opening temples would put the lives of (Hindu) devotees at risk: "While considering the sentiments and beliefs of the people, it is also important to take care of their lives and it is wrong to impose or lift the lockdown in a sudden manner."

Since Koshiyari sees "secular" as a term of abuse or mockery, he has no right to remain Governor. He is free to grace the Sangh shakhas – but should quit the Governor's seat.



On October 12, 2020 Musa Mondal of Barpeta, Assam, hanged himself on being declared a foreigner by the Foreigners Tribunal. Mondal hailed from Kayastha Para village that falls under the jurisdiction of the Sorbhog police station in Barpeta district. He became the 107th person to lose his life over the citizenship crisis created by the NRC listing process in Assam.

A report in Sabrang (run by Citizens for Justice and Peace), noted that in 2018, “Musa received a foreigner’s notice from the 8th Foreigners’ Tribunal (FT) in Barpeta. After this he approached a lawyer and paid her a huge sum of money to fight his case. It was difficult for the unlettered man to organise the funds as he is the only earning member in his impoverished family of four. However, shortly afterwards, his lawyer met with an accident and had to be hospitalised. After 10 days in a coma, she was bed ridden for about 9 months. As she couldn’t appear before the FT during this period, Musa Mondal was declared foreigner by ex-parte judgment.

“Musa Mondal, who was living on a small piece of government land in Kayastha para, along the banks of Naljhora river, which flows into India from Bhutan, lost his mental balance as the Advocate informed him that he needed to pay a further Rs 80,000 to knock the doors of Gauhati High Court to challenge the order of the FT. He was quite upset about the development and was trying to gather money for filing a petition, challenging the order of the Foreigners’ Tribunal and proving himself to be Indian. For the last one and half years, he tried to gather some money but failed.

“After a point he could not deal with his distress any more. On October 11, 2020 he left his home and became untraceable. He returned briefly, but left again. Sometime later, he was discovered hanging nearby.”

As this NRC horror story continues to unfold, the NRC authority in Assam is adding a fresh injustice and arbitrariness. In a directive to 33 deputy commissioners and District Registrar of Citizen Registration (DRCR), NRC state coordinator Hitesh Dev Sharma called on them to submit a list of 'ineligible persons' accompanied with reasons to remove their names from the updated NRC that is yet to be notified by the Registrar General of India.

'Ineligible persons' are those who are declared foreigners (DF), doubtful voters (DV) and individuals who have cases still pending in front of Foreigners Tribunals (PFT) and their respective descendants. Foreign Tribunals are quasi-judicial bodies set up to opine over whether an individual is considered an “illegal foreigner” under The Foreigners Act, 1946. They issue notices to suspected individuals or those persons who have been marked 'D' (Doubtful) voters by the local election office.

This order means that the NRC list declared by the Supreme Court is by no means the last word. The Assam authorities and BJP Government will continue to keep those on the list, and those off the list, in a powerless and helpless state. These developments only prove how the NRC list exercise pioneered and monitored by the Supreme Court was a doomed exercise from start to finish: it was a misguided delusion that the NRC process could bring closure to Assam’s people and lay to rest the doubts about who is a citizen and who is not. The fact is that the doubts over citizenship are born of prejudices – and the NRC process has only fed those prejudices and brought them alive. It has opened rather than closed a Pandora’s box.



A growing wave of student-initiated pro-democracy protests have been sweeping Thailand since February. They have united a new generation of activists with former Red Shirts and even some disaffected people from the Yellow Shirt movement demanding: 1) the resignation of the Prayut regime and new, free and fair elections, 2) democratic constitutional changes, 3) reforms to put the monarchy under the rule of law, curb its privileges, and end the use of the draconian lese-majeste laws to silence dissent.

Former general and current PM Prayut Chan-O-Cha declared a “severe” state of emergency on October 15 which bans gatherings of more than five people and the “publication of news, other media, and electronic information that contains messages that could create fear or intentionally distort information, creating misunderstanding that will affect national security or peace and order.”

Following this, police and military were sent in to violently disperse the protesters. Police attacks on this latest protest began on the evening of October 13 when democracy activists arrived in Bangkok from the poor north-east of the country and set up makeshift shelters on street corners. The police tore down these shelters and about 20 people were arrested. The police also staged pre-dawn raid on October 15 to disperse the protesters at the Government Building.

Several leading movement activists have been arrested and there are serious concerns about further repression.

WE STAND IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PROTEST MOVEMENT IN THAILAND AND DEMAND:

- An immediate lifting of the ‘state of emergency’ and respect for the right of the people to protest
- Immediate release of the pro-democracy movement activists and all political prisoners
- An end to the military-dominated rule and for free and fair elections for a democratic government
- Democratic constitutional change
- Abolish feudal powers and stop the use of repressive laws including the lese-majeste laws to silence dissent.

15 October 2020

Endorsed by:

Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation, India | Partido Lakas ng Masa (PLM), Philippines | Socialist Party of Malaysia (PSM), Malaysia | Sedane Labour Resource Centre (LIPS), Indonesia, and others (full list available at thinkleft.net)

TRIBUTE



VISHWANATH SOREN

Comrade Vishwanath Soren passed away on 14 October early in the morning. He was 55. He succumbed to a brain haemorrhage in Bangur hospital, Kolkata. Comrade Vishwanath was a founding leader of the Adivasi Adhikar Aur Adhikar Manch in Hooghly district, and a fighting leader of the adivasi movement. He was a member of the party's Polba Dhanekhali area committee. Red Salute to Comrade Vishwanath Soren!



PRABIR BAL

Noted cultural activist of the Pashchimbanga Gana Sangskriti Parishad, **Prabir Bal** passed away on 2 October. He had been a people's movement singer, song writer and composer since the early 1970s. He formed the Poobar Awaz team, and issued a cassette 'Ami Manush' in 1995. Jan Sanskriti Manch and CPIML activists in Kolkata paid him tributes in a condolence meeting held in his memory.

Red Salute to Comrade Prabir Bal!



NILANJAN BHATTACHARYA

Comrade Neelu, a member of the party's Odisha State Committee and a leading organiser in the Kalahandi district, passed away of a sudden heart attack at his home in Gogordanga, North 24 Parganas. He was 47. He joined the party in his student life, and remained a wholtime activist all his life.

Red Salute to Comrade Neelu!



AMITABH SARKAR

Amitabh Sarkar succumbed to renal failure on 6 October. He helped form the Thakurnagar Sanskritik Parishad ballet and mime team. His untimely loss (he was in his 30s) has left his family and comrades grieving. Red Salute to Comrade Amitabh Sarkar!



Nyay March' (March for Justice) to the Raj Bhawan in Ranchi

'MARCH FOR JUSTICE' IN RANCHI FOR FATHER STAN

All major non-BJP political parties and people's movements held a massive 'Nyay March' (March for Justice) to the Raj Bhawan in Ranchi demanding the release of Father Stan Swamy, the 83-year-old human rights defender who has spent most of his life working for the rights of adivasis in Jharkhand. He inspired activists to research the status of under-trial adivasis arrested as "Maoists", and petitioned the court for their release.

Protesting the UAPA and demanding the release of Father Stan and the others in the Bhima Koregaon case, CPIML, CPI, CPIM, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, as well as organisations like Jharkhand Janadhikar Mahasabha, Jan Mukti Sangharsh Vahini, Manaveey Ekta, National Domestic Workers Movement, Right to Food Campaign, Visthapan Virodhi Jan Vikas Andolan, Singhbhum Adivasi Samaj, and Sajha Kadam participated in the rally.

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EDITORIAL OFFICE

CHARU BHAWAN, U-90, SHAKARPUR, DELHI - 110 092 PH.: 91-11-22521067

email : liberation@cpiml.org ; website : www.cpiml.net

Facebook, Twitter, Instagram & YouTube: @cpimliberation

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