

50th Memorial meeting of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh emblem of revolutionary discipline and purposiveness



Massive gathering at Rani Rashmoni Road, Kolkata on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Memorial meeting on 5 August defying torrential rain

Weather forecast was that it would rain heavily on 5 August last in Kolkata particularly central Kolkata. Our comrades, supporters and sympathizers were aware of it. But never has any natural calamity mar the revolutionary spirit of the students of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder of the SUCI(C) and an outstanding Marxist thinker of the era. They had heard their revered leader, teacher and guide saying: "...can revolution be achieved in comfort? For revolution, people have to go without food for days

on end. They have to suffer hardship in rains, in the scorching sun. Does revolution wait for rains, for the heat? Did not the people of Vietnam accomplish revolution, staying in forests in company of tigers and snakes? It goes without saying that you are suffering difficulties. But where lies the difference between men and animals? The difference is that animals are driven about restlessly by natural instincts, while man decides his duty using his intellect and with a

level head he discharges his responsibility and goes about it, no matter any natural inclemency, adversity or a thousand difficulties whatsoever... if we can work together with calm and composure amid difficulties and hardship, calmly persuade each other and work in discipline, that goes not only to augment our powers, ability and character, that also serves to teach people many things.... If you suddenly come face to face with difficulties that never cropped up earlier, or you

are in danger which you never faced before, or you fall in trouble you never before had to handle — if you face all this, and go ahead with your task, enduring it and bringing it under control unitedly in a disciplined manner then how much you will learn and how manyfold your powers will increase! How much power you would acquire to exercise control over your mind, your character and conduct! You need to master all this. Else,
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On recent glorious student movement at Jantar Mantar

"The journey was not easy. Some people were injured and some faced police lathis. Even after receiving pain and facing difficulties, nobody lost hope. Nobody stepped back. Everyone stayed united and continued the struggle with courage and determination. Watching this, it gave me strength and taught me the real meaning of standing together for what is right. This experience changed the way I think. It taught me that real change is possible when people stand together with honesty, courage and determination."

This small excerpt from the anecdote of a young student is a reflection of all the students and youth who became a part of the historic movement at Jantar Mantar, Delhi, to Save Education and Society. These are not the words of a leader

or a theorist. They are the words of an ordinary student who walked into a protest site and walked out as a changed person. That change, from an isolated individual into a conscious part of a collective, is itself one of the biggest achievements of this movement.

What the entire nation has witnessed in the recent period is a reflection of the immense courage and determination of the students, youth and common people. Not only at Jantar Mantar, but in various parts of the country, the oppressed countrymen have once again proved that 'united unwavering struggle of the suffering masses for a just cause cannot but be victorious'. It was the united protest of the youth overcoming all obstacles and disdaining the red eye of the fascist

autocratic government that forced the authorities to bow down. No one could imagine a month back that a powerful Union Education Minister of this authoritarian regime would be compelled to resign. The activists of our student and youth fronts were wholeheartedly involved in this people's movement for a just cause.

Chief Justice of India Surya Kant used the terms "cockroaches" and "parasites" during an open court hearing on 15 May last reportedly targeting the individuals who lack employment or a proper place in a profession, and become media figures, social media users, or RTI activists to attack the system. The comments sparked immediate public outrage and comparisons to demeaning language, and the social media was flooded with protests,

either direct or in a satirical form. The struggle was never just about that derogatory comment. It expressed years of accumulated anger. A remark like this does not create anger; it merely gives a name to already accumulated wrath. Founded online as a satirical swipe at the establishment, the movement rapidly gained millions of followers and catalysed real-world protests regarding systemic job crises and repeated leaks of vital examination question papers. At least, between 89 and 152 occasions, papers were leaked over the last 10 years of the BJP-led regime. And despite such leaks, the National Testing Agency (NTA), officially assigned the responsibility for the core task of setting, developing, and finalizing
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revolution will not come about just through talking about it."

This invaluable teaching was during the historic youth conference in Suri, West Bengal, in 1975, held amidst torrential rain. There was no proper accommodation for thousands of delegates. Every place including the venue was flooded with rain water. But the conference was held as scheduled and Comrade Shibdas Ghosh called upon the delegates to steel themselves with the revolutionary ability and audacity to move ahead braving all odds.

With this clarion call reverberating in their hearts, comrades, supporters and sympathizers from every nook and corner assembled at Rai Rashmoni Road, to observe the 50th death anniversary of their leader, teacher and guide, on 5 August last. The venue where the dais stood high up along with a lofty red tower, where a big portrait of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh was installed with white flowers on all its side, was flooded with rain water. But no one moved. With umbrellas unfolded on their

heads, they heard the speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh, our beloved General Secretary, with rapt attention. It was a rare spectacle of revolutionary discipline and purposiveness.

The memorial meeting began with offering floral tributes to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh by available Polit Bureau and Central Committee leaders, State Committee members and the leaders of class and mass organizations. In absence of scheduled President of the meeting, Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, veteran Polit Bureau member who fell sick and needed hospitalization, Comrade Debashish Roy, Central Committee member, presided over. After guard of honour by Komsomol braving incessant downpour, Comrade Provash Ghosh rendered his valuable speech befitting to the occasion.

After dwelling briefly on the international and national scenarios, he, among other things, lauded the

recent exemplary youth movement in Delhi, and in other big cities almost all over India, which compelled the union education minister to resign. He also referred to the historic peasant movement in Delhi which also forced the government to withdraw three anti-peasant bills. He said that people's power is indomitable. No amount of coercive measures can deter the struggling masses fighting for a just cause. He mentioned how the present decadent moribund capitalist system and its servitor parties are neck-deep with corruption. Even large scale money-laundering has been reported from Ayodhya Ram Mandir which the ruling BJP used to garner Hindu votes fomenting religious blindness. The political independence we achieved in 1947 did not usher in desired emancipation of people but engendered a ruthlessly oppressive capitalist system with the national bourgeoisie assuming the state power. The compromising forces

within the freedom movement had dominated while the uncompromising revolutionary trend could not come to the fore. Unless people understand politics and the correct revolutionary leadership guides the mass struggles, many glorious movements would not reach their logical culmination. People must understand that politics controls every sphere of their life and hence refusing to understand politics would only allow the ruthlessly oppressive capitalist rulers to continue turning their life into a nightmare. Vote will not beget any permanent solution to the misery and progressive pauperization of the toiling millions. Desired emancipation can be achieved only by overthrowing the exploitative capitalist system by revolution. And to accomplish that revolution, the need is to intensify class and mass struggles along correct revolutionary line conducive to anti-capitalist socialist revolution. Full text of his speech will be published later.

The meeting started with rendition of the song composed on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and ended with *Internationale*.

50th Memorial meeting of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh in Kolkata

50th Memorial anniversary of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh observed with revolutionary solemnity



Comrade Provash Ghosh, beloved General Secretary, paying revolutionary tribute at Shibpur Party Centre, West Bengal



Comrade Swapan Ghosh, Polit Bureau member, (inset) addressing at Bhubaneswar, Odisha



Comrade Chandidas Bhattacharjee, Polit Bureau member, (inset) addressing in Patna, Bihar

[More photos of observance of 5th august will come in the next issue of the P. Era - ed.]



Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, veteran Polit Bureau member, paying tribute at Salt Lake centre, Kolkata



Comrade Satyawan, Polit Bureau member, addressing in Delhi



Comrade Amitava Chatterjee, Polit Bureau member, addressing in Guwahati



Comrade K Radhakrishna, Polit Bureau member, speaking in Chennai



Comrade K Radhakrishna, addressing in Bangalore



Comrade Arun Singh, Central Committee member, addressing in Bhopal, MP

Assam flood, natural calamity or a man-made disaster?

On 19 July last, people in 16 districts of Upper Assam were suddenly hit by an unthinkable devastating deluge. Sivasagar, Charaideo and Jorhat are the worst affected districts. Altogether 45 revenue circles comprising 794 villages have been submerged and nearly 10 lakh people are affected. The flood struck with terrifying speed and force, leaving people with no time even to call for help. Hapless flood victims tried to somehow save themselves by taking shelter on rooftops and trees. But, in many cases the floodwater swept even over rooftops. Before realizing what was happening, incalculable harm was caused.

According to government figures, the death toll is 88. Unofficial sources claim that at least 1,000 lost their lives. But there is no report of how many people are missing. One can easily guess the fate of the missing people. In some places, there is no trace of entire families. Innumerable livestock and pets have been swept away. The affected families have lost both their home and belongings. They only had clothes they were wearing. Even after 2 weeks the affected villages remain in a state of utter devastation. Those who visited the spots felt so shocked that they could not hide their tears.

Why such a devastating deluge?

Lower Assam in the Brahmaputra valley faces flood every year. But upper Assam, which is situated at a relatively high altitude, is not flood prone. Then how could such a deluge come about? On the fateful night when disaster struck, upper Assam people were caught by surprise. Sudden torrents of flood water carrying huge amount of silt, sand chips, rock debris and mud, had wreaked havoc. In absence of any prior warning, they could not take any precautionary measures. So arises the question—is this a natural calamity or a man-made disaster?

What caused this unprecedented flood

One of the neighbouring states of Assam is Nagaland. It is situated at a higher altitude. There is a district called MON which is adjacent to Assam. It had been raining there incessantly. On 19 July, heavy rainfall, caused severe landslide killing 11 persons on the spot. Moreover, the rivers Dhikhow, Janji, Taokak, Nadan etc., were flowing much above the danger level. The government agencies like disaster management, civil defence etc. were well aware of a distrous eventuality. But they did not take any preventive measures.

Secondly, five of the seventeen districts of Nagaland have huge coal deposit. Rampant illegal mining using most unscientific methods has been continuing for a long period, obviously

under patronage of some profit-hungry business mafias in connivance with the unscrupulous power-monger. It is alleged that ruling party satraps are also involved in this illegal operation.

Thirdly, since Nagaland comes under article 371A, where a community or a group of people can own a hill, every law of the land is not applicable here. That is why illegal mining and stone blocks cutting are rampant. Due to unscientific extraction of coal, large water bodies are formed at different altitudes. This rampant illegal and unplanned, unscientific extraction of coal and deforestation (“about 800 sq. km of forest was extinguished during 2013-2023, now it’s much more”. Assam Tribune 31.07.26) played foul with nature and nature revolted. In the present case, the government, in a bid to suppress the truth, attributed cause of heavy rainfall to a huge cloud burst and hence the concomitant flood and landslides were natural calamities. But the fact is the water bodies (big lakes) created due to illegal mining overflow breaching the banks and water rushed down with a very high speed. In the process, the surface run-off flows to water bodies of the lower altitude also breached the banks. The cumulative effect has been so devastating.

Moreover, for construction purpose, stones are extracted cutting the hills by the realty mafias with unscrupulous political leaders in tow. Recently, to construct a four lane National Highway, earth, sand and stone were supplied by cutting the hills and reckless deforestation. Apart from this, excessive sand is being excavated illegally from the Dhikhow river which disturbed the ecology of the river and thus changed its course. Excessive extraction of earth and stone causes soil softening. Further, the rivers transport lots of silt, causing river bed levels to progressively rise and reducing water carrying capacity entailing floods when it pours heavily. In the present case, at many places the silted mud deposit is more than four feet high. So, most of the houses are under piled up mud and hence the occupants are prevented from returning home. Many dead bodies have been recovered from the silted mud.

Mischievous role of Governmental bodies

What can be said of utter callousness and irresponsible functioning of the government and its agencies like Disaster Management, weather forecast etc. In 2016, the hill ecology was more or less balanced. But in last ten years, situation was made to worsen speedily. A PIL was filed in the Gauhati High Court by a former MLA. The Court directed stoppage of unscientific coal mining and deforestation. But the directive

was violated. No action was taken. As per the report of the ‘Global Forest Watch’, within a time span from 2001 to 2025, 3.6 lakh acres of land were deforested.

The local people from their own age-old experiences could sense wrong as the forests were changing colour from green to brown. This fact could come to the fore after people opened their mouth after the devastation. Recently one former MLA wrote a letter to the Government of Assam explaining the possibility of the natural disaster. But that too fell on deaf ears. Pertinent to note that the satellite picture clearly indicated the possibility of a devastating flood. But the weather forecast department simply ignored it. It was reported that the weather officials were busy enjoying the World Cup final match. Will the concerned authority take preventive proper action in future and bring the culprits to justice?

The embankment Nexus

Another noteworthy issue is that after the devastating earthquake in 1950, the flood situation and erosion of the river Brahmaputra the duty of Government was to declare it as a national problem and act accordingly. Alas! Nothing has been done so far. Rather a Nexus has been developed involving the contractors and so called politicians. Assam’s primary response to flooding has been the construction of embankments, now totalling nearly 4,800 km. Every year there is construction or repair of these embankments after or before the flood.

It’s revealed that urban flooding largely results from unplanned growth and encroachment of wetlands to construct large infrastructure projects and inadequate drainage management.

As per the Assam governments own admission no long-term measures have been implemented so far to mitigate the flood and erosion problem of the state.

Amit Shah’s customary ‘jumla’

Before 2021 assembly election, the Union Home Minister Amit Shah promised to the people of Assam that the BJP : “...wants to make Assam flood free.... Modi ji wants to make Assam flood free. ...The work in this regard has started. Satellite mapping his underway to identify places where water can be diverted to create big lakes for irrigation ...So vote the BJP to power again...”. (Deccan Herald 25-02-21) Now after 5 years what we find is that flood problem has not ebbed but increased much more causing further misery to the people of Assam. Situation is deteriorating with every passing year. In fact, from early 2024, villagers noticed that the rivers were eating away land at an unusually fast pace. Erosion is usually gradual. But what has happened here was sudden and violent, driven by flash

floods carrying enormous volumes of water from the upper reaches. So, what Amit Shah promised was nothing but a customary pre-election ‘jumla’.

Dismal scenario of rescue and relief work

The rescue and rehabilitation scenario is equally perilous. Except some token use of helicopters for rescuing marooned people and dropping of dry foods, no other appropriate rescue activities are visible. People are left to fend for themselves. Need was to deploy the military in the rescue operation on a war footing right from day one. Though there is a claim about military-led rescue operation, reality does not corroborate to that. The government officials are only issuing sermons from their safe shelter and giving bites in media while people are left in the lurch. Assam chief minister hitherto held that only “illegal infiltrators” belonging to the minority community are responsible for all woes of the people Assam. Let him say if this catastrophic flood is caused by the “illegal infiltrators” or an unholy nexus of greedy corporates-corrupt administration-political bigwigs-illegal mining and reckless attack on nature aided and abetted by the governments, both at the Centre and in the state. The construction economy has also become a bonanza to the nexus at large. Corruption has reached such a level that willing celebrities are reluctant to contribute in chief minister’s relief fund lest the money is misused or pilfered.

Not just Assam. Even Odisha and Kerala are reeling under flood in ‘Amritkal’ as is termed the post-75 years of independence by the ruling dispensation.

Silver lining

It is heartening to note that from across the country the general public, NGOs and other social activists have been doing a splendid job in reaching out reliefs to the affected people. For example, ‘Medical Service Centre’ has started medical camps at Mon (Nagaland), Shibsagar, Jorhat and Charaideo to prevent post-flood epidemics after receding of flood water.

Our demands

Our Party has firmly stood by the flood victims and taken up the relief work with all our might. But combating the worst flood situation the main responsibility lies with state and union governments. Therefore, we demand:

- (1) Government should take immediate measures of rehabilitate the flood victims, pay them adequate compensation, rebuild their houses and relay the arable lands.

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question papers for major national entrance examinations like NEET-UG and JEE-Main, was not sacked. Of late, it has come to the fore the modus operandi of this corruption at NTA. The three subject experts who allegedly leaked the question paper for this year's NEET-UG examination had noted down the questions and answer options in chits or memorising and writing them down after returning from work, marking relevant paragraphs in NCERT books. How is it that such manipulations escaped the notice of the education ministry?

For years, young generation has been told that education is the path to come out of a penurious life. But, in reality, they find that the entire education system has been turned into a commercial commodity for being sold at an exorbitant price. Rampant privatization and commercialization have paved that way. And the private operators find selling education a roaring business. The capitalist system is utterly corrupt. So, the education sector is also plunged in rampant corruption. Question papers are leaked and sold; mushrooming coaching centres mint huge profit. On the other hand, the government schools and colleges are starved of funds, adequate number of permanent teachers and collapsing infrastructure. Already over 93,000 government schools have been closed or merged across India over the past decade under the central BJP government. National Education Policy 2020 has been a blueprint for virtual annihilation of education. In such a milieu of eluding scope for receiving education, lakhs of students spend years preparing for the competitive examinations. If those examinations are cancelled overnight because of corruption on the part of the authorities, and the examinees are told their failure is personal and not the result of a flawed government policy, a flare-up is natural. Moreover, 22 students committed suicide following extreme distress over the cancellation and rescheduling of the 2026 NEET-UG medical entrance examination dates. That is why the sarcastic remark of the hon'ble Chief Justice ignited a prairie fire.

This struggle was conducted with indomitable courage and firm determination by the struggling students, youth and common people. In this age of social media, campaigns mocking the BJP as the "Cockroach Janata Party (CJP)" for playing with the lives of the 22 lakh students who appeared for NEET-UG after the paper leak, giving voice to a deep outburst of pain and anger. On 6 June, hundreds of students and youth gathered at Jantar Mantar. The number grew when the scientist, educationist and environmentalist,

Nation witnessed indomitable struggling spirit of students and youths

Sonam Wangchuk began an indefinite hunger strike on 28 June in support of the movement which, among other things, demanded resignation of the Union education minister. However, many common students did not join during the initial phase. The turning point was on 18 July, when the Delhi Police forcibly shifted Wangchuk from the protest site, in an operation for which police personnel had been assembled hours in advance under the pretext of a security drill. Students who saw him as someone who had come for upholding their cause were enraged, and those who had until then remained silent were pushed into action. This grew into organised protests across different states, culminating in the call for a peaceful Parliament March on 20 July, the opening day of the Monsoon Session. The government thought that once Wangchuk is pulled out of the site, the protesters would lose morale and the movement would subside. But then the exploitative rulers were once again shown what is meant by people's power.

The call of the Parliament March went to all corners of the country. It was an exceptional day. People from all over the country started pouring into the Jantar Mantar area. It was once again proved that the unity of the common people sends chill down the spine of the ruling dispensation. The police closed down the metro stations, 16 of them on a single day, suspended the mobile internet around Jantar Mantar and diverted the bus routes. Yet there was a stream of people congregating at the spot. They did not stop. Just as General Dyer had surrounded Jallianwala Bagh and opened fire on unarmed people, the police-administration barricaded the streets around Jantar Mantar, fired pellet guns and tear gas, and brutally lathi-charged. They misbehaved with women protesters, even went to the extent of outraging their modesty. Those who are supposed to be the protectors of the people became the predators, in order to protect the worn out, out and out corrupt and extremely coercive capitalist system and its servitors.

What happened that day was not the excess of a few men in uniform. The constable who swung the lathi had no personal grievance against a nineteen year old boy from Bihar. The lathi was charged in compliance with the directives from up. When a government answers a question raised over a leaked question paper with pellet guns, it has answered a much bigger question about itself, in whose interests the

state machinery works and against whom? The brutal face of ruling capitalism and its servitor BJP government was thoroughly exposed at Jantar Mantar.

But what was most remarkable is that despite the brutal lathi-charge, firing tear gas shells and pellet guns, putting up barricades, the students and common people in thousands gathered again at Jantar Mantar the very same night. That night, numerous students youths, despite being brutally beaten, did not back down and resumed their protest. People suffered severe injuries. Many had to be hospitalised. Yet none of them lost their spirit and valour. They came back with plasters on their hands and bandages on their heads, without any fear of further police repression. The students, youth and common people fearlessly faced the police and stood firm with their heads held high. What we witnessed was the indomitable spirit of the students, youths and guardians who did not run away like cowards. They fought back exceptionally. Although, it started with the name of CJP and Sonam Wangchuk, later, especially after 20 July, people spontaneously started participating in this movement, irrespective of religion, race, caste, creed or party affiliation. It added a unique dimension to the movement, so much so that people started protesting in various parts of the country. In Bihar, Assam, West Bengal, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and many other states, students and youth had to face similar police repression while registering protest against the Jantar Mantar brutality. The rage among the students and youths across the country now took the shape of an indefinite sit-in demonstration. It created a different kind of emotion amongst the students as well as common people. Students, youths and common people started flooding the protest site.

The very centre of this movement was a struggling solidarity. So many girls came forward to save the male protestors, presuming that the police might not beat them. But they were also not spared. A wounded 21 year old girl was on ventilator for some days. Many boys risked their own safety to protect girls from being ruthlessly beaten up. Many girls said that they did not feel unsafe at the protest site despite having seen how the police wielded of nail-fitted batons (*lathis*) on their fellow-protesters. That was the spirit of the movement.

After so many days of oppression, the government had to finally genuflect and made

Dharmendra Pradhan, the Union education minister tender his resignation to the Prime Minister. It has shown us again that a democratic movement is the only way to rise against injustice and achieve legitimate demands.

This movement once again showed how a legitimate democratic movement rising above all precipitated divides can germinate higher moral and ethical values among the people. It was the social mind that helped this movement go this far. Food, water, fans and medicines poured in from those who could give, while others volunteered their labour. A generation often dismissed as self-centred and trapped in its cell-phones organised, cared and stood together. Students fanned people in the heat, doctors and medical students served day and night, and every protester took responsibility for ensuring women felt safe at the site. Some painted posters, others raised slogans, sang progressive songs or discussed politics, but all stood united behind the same demands: Dharmendra Pradhan Must Resign, Scrap NTA, Stop Paper Leaks and Police Brutality, Save Democracy. Once again, it was the youth who stood at the forefront of the struggle for their rights.

The fight against the NTA, the body responsible for the paper leaks, is far from over. No patchwork reform can restore trust in an agency that students no longer believe in. Behind the NTA lies the larger structure of commercialised education: the withdrawal of the state from its responsibility, the privatisation of examinations, shrinking public investment, and the treatment of education as a market and students as customers. The entire Education System of our country has collapsed. Education is being handed over to private players, communal attacks are being carried out continuously on educational institutions, lakhs of government educational institutions are being closed down under National Education Policy 2020. This policy was the last nail in the coffin.

The demands must therefore move together: scrap the NTA and replace it with a transparent, publicly accountable body; ensure justice to the 22 students who committed suicide because of extreme stress, fear, and financial pressure following the cancellation and rescheduling of India's 2026 medical entrance examination and mete out stringent punishment to those linked with the entire chain behind the leaks; hold those responsible for police brutality accountable and give them exemplary punishment; and reverse the commercialisation of education through fully funded, accessible

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Development by Advertisement, Collapse by Reality

The BJP government has built much of its political narrative around infrastructure-led development. Highways are counted by the kilometer, airports by the terminals, railway stations by the redevelopment package and bridges by the number of foundation stones laid. Every new expressway is presented as evidence that India has entered a new technological age. Essential public works have been converted into political trophies: proof, citizens are repeatedly told, that a 'New India' is rising in concrete, steel and asphalt.

Public expenditure is huge

The scale of public expenditure behind this campaign is enormous. The Union Budget for 2026-27 proposed public capital expenditure of Rs 12.2 lakh crore, compared with about Rs 2 lakh crore in 2014-15. The Ministry of Road Transport and Highways alone received a total allocation of nearly Rs 3.10 lakh crore. It is financed through taxes, tolls, fuel duties paid by the people and public borrowings. Every project based on financing from public exchequer carries an obligation to be safe, durable, useful and honestly executed. Higher spending may demonstrate ambition, but it does not by itself prove value.

Yet projects funded by the people are routinely treated as stages for political spectacle. Foundation stones are laid before giant cut-outs and carefully choreographed ceremonies. Inaugurations are amplified through newspaper advertisements, television broadcasts and social-media campaigns. From Prime Minister and Chief Ministers to Union ministers, state ministers and local leaders, all scramble to feature in the media visuals and claim a share of the credit. Political credit is immediate; responsibility for failure is elusive. In some cases, only sections are opened while drainage, approach roads, safety barriers or ancillary works remain unfinished. The image of completion is available instantly, while the consequences of hurried execution become visible only after heat, traffic and rain begin to test the structure.

What happens after the ribbon is cut, the garlands are removed and the cameras leave? That is where the triumphal story begins to crack, sometimes literally. Newly laid roads develop potholes; approach embankments subside; retaining walls bulge; underpasses fill with water; station roofs leak; airport panels fall and bridges collapse during construction or remain in service despite warning signs. Each episode is explained as an exceptional natural event, an isolated contractor's lapse or a local administrative failure. But when 'isolated' failures recur across states, agencies and in every major form of transport infrastructure, they

form a pattern that cannot be concealed by press releases.

Bihar alone bears a glaring testimony

Bihar provides the most damning illustration. The under-construction Aguwani-Sultanganj bridge over the Ganga, begun in 2014, suffered major collapses in 2022, 2023 and again in 2024. Investigating experts later identified design flaws in the superstructure. In 2023, part of an under-construction bridge over the Mechi River, intended to connect Kishanganj and Katihar, collapsed. The Bakhtiyarpur-Tajpur project also suffered a structural failure during construction. Then, between 18 June and early July 2024, ten bridges or culverts collapsed or caved in across Kishanganj, Araria, Madhubani, East Champaran, Siwan and Saran. Four of the failures occurred in Siwan alone. The sequence became so relentless that each new monsoon bulletin seemed to carry news of another span disappearing into a river or canal. Engineers were suspended and companies were served notices, but the more fundamental questions remained: who approved the designs, who certified the material, who monitored construction and why was action taken only after the structures had fallen?

The warning was not confined to small rural bridges. In the early hours of 4 May 2026, a section of the Vikramshila Setu at Bhagalpur collapsed into the Ganga, forcing the closure of a vital transport link between Bhagalpur and Naugachhia. Reports indicated that concerns about deterioration had been raised before the failure. No mass casualty occurred, but the consequences were severe: traffic was halted, routes were diverted and communities dependent on the bridge faced major disruption. A bridge is not merely a slab of concrete. When it fails, farmers lose access to markets, patients travel farther to hospitals, students struggle to reach schools, and transport costs rise for everyone. Those most affected are precisely the people who financed the structure through taxes and daily consumption.

Gujarat model

Gujarat, repeatedly advertised as a model of development, offered another grim lesson on 9 July 2025 when a section of the Gambhira Bridge over the Mahi River in Vadodara district collapsed under live traffic. Vehicles plunged into the river and many lives were lost. The bridge was an older structure, but that does not absolve the state government of its responsibilities; it deepens the question as to why a critical link remained open without adequate preventive intervention. After the tragedy, authorities inspected more than 1,800 bridges across Gujarat and closed or

restricted many of them. Such a large inspection exercise after deaths had occurred was itself an admission that systematic vigilance should have preceded the disaster. Prevention would have been less expensive than rescue, compensation, closure and reconstruction. Some recently surfaced reports and localized complaints have highlighted cracks, soil settlement, and structural concerns on various sections of the 109-km Ahmedabad-Dholera Expressway (NE-8) that was opened to traffic on 31 March last. This road has also been built by the Adani group. A section of an under-construction railway overbridge near Adas village in Gujarat's Anand district gave way before the structure had even been opened to the public.

Scenario of Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand

The pattern continued in 2026. On 29 May, an under-construction bridge over the Betwa River in Hamirpur district, Uttar Pradesh, collapsed during a storm, killing six workers. The next day, the failure of an unfinished approach structure weeks before expected completion raised obvious questions about construction quality and site supervision. These are not abstract engineering errors. Workers die beneath the concrete; families lose breadwinners and inquiries begin only after human beings have paid the price. Barely a month after its April 2026 inauguration by PM Narendra Modi, viral videos surfaced showing deep surface cracks, uneven patches, and cave-ins on sections of the Rs 36,230 crore Ganga Expressway built by the Adani Group. A section of the Rs 4,200 crore Lucknow -Kanpur Highway inaugurated by Union Defence Minister and UP chief minister on 13 July last caved in within 13 days. Heavy rainwater leaked from the roof and ceiling fans at Platform No. 8 of Varanasi (Banaras) railway station on 5 July 2026, after heavy monsoon showers. Videos of the incident quickly went viral on social media, drawing criticism over the station's infrastructure.

Just 17 days after it was opened to traffic, the Rs 16-crore bridge at Nanda ki Chowki in Dehradun became the latest casualty of heavy rainfall after a large section of its approach road collapsed leaving a gaping crater that disconnected the bridge from the Dehradun-Paonta Sahib highway

Maharashtra also mirrors same spectacle

Maharashtra witnessed another tragedy on 15 June 2025 when an iron pedestrian bridge over the Indrayani River near Kundamala in Pune district collapsed, throwing visitors into the swollen river and causing deaths and injuries. Rescue operations, compensation announcements and

inquiries followed. The administrative cycle is familiar: warnings are ignored or dispersed among departments, disaster strikes, junior officials are blamed, and the political system moves on. Bailey bridges and local road bridges in Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have also failed or lost approaches during floods and landslides. Fragile terrain certainly creates difficult engineering conditions, but precisely because the terrain is fragile, conservative design, slope protection, drainage and continuous monitoring should be more rigorous, not less.

Roads and expressways tell the same story. The Mumbai-Pune Expressway's Rs 6,695-crore worth Missing Link was inaugurated on 1 May 2026 as a major engineering achievement. During its first monsoon, a rain-triggered landslide near the tunnel entrance damaged a retaining structure and forced a lengthy closure, while surface defects were also reported. Authorities stated that the main tunnel remained structurally safe, but that distinction does not erase the larger question: why did a newly opened flagship corridor suffer such serious disruption during the first season it was expected to withstand? Heavy rain is not an unforeseeable anomaly in the Western Ghats; it is a basic design condition.

Other states —no exception

The newly opened Delhi-Dehradun Expressway provided another first-monsoon embarrassment. In July 2026, sections near Shamli developed large potholes, cave-ins, soil subsidence and visible cracks in embankment structures. Delhi-Mumbai highway built at an estimated cost of Rs 29,000 crores has now become a nightmare for the motor cars and lorries particularly during night because of crumbling cement, big holes and uneven stretches. Near Chidambaram in Tamil Nadu, the approach ramp of a bridge on NH-32 caved in during April 2026; inspections reported bulging, cracking and displacement of wall blocks. On National Highway 66 in Kerala, widening works have repeatedly been associated with slope distress, embankment problems, drainage disputes and severe traffic disruption. These incidents differ technically, but the impact on common people is equally disastrous.

Saga of potholes

Then there are potholes, the everyday face of infrastructure failure. Fresh asphalt is laid before an inauguration or election, only to peel away after rain. Roads are dug repeatedly because utilities do not coordinate. Contractors patch the visible surface without correcting drainage or the weakened sub-base, ensuring that the cavity returns. This

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Use of space technology for road construction proved a hoax

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creates a permanent repair economy in which public money is spent once to construct poorly and again to repair endlessly. Government data presented in Parliament showed that pothole-related crashes killed 9,438 people between 2020 and 2024, including 2,161 deaths in 2023 and 2,385 in 2024. A pothole is, therefore, not a cosmetic blemish. It is a death trap for a motorcyclist, a cause of spinal injury, a source of vehicle damage and a trigger for collisions when drivers swerve to avoid it.

Major cities supply endless illustrations. Mumbai's roads return to a cratered surface with ritual regularity during the monsoon despite enormous recurring allocations for resurfacing and repairs. technology corridors in Bangalore, expanding suburbs of Hyderabad, corporate hub of Gurugram, arterial routes of Kolkata, flood-prone roads of Chennai, and heavily trafficked corridors of Delhi—all experience varying combinations of potholes, cave-ins, waterlogging and delayed repair. Cities marketed as global investment destinations cannot guarantee a safe road surface or a functioning storm-water outlet. The contradiction between global-city branding and daily civic breakdown could hardly be sharper.

Airports and railway stations also in shambles

The failure extends beyond roads and bridges to the country's most visible gateways. In May 2026, barely two weeks after commercial flights began, the new Halwara civil terminal near Ludhiana suffered damage during heavy rain and strong winds. Sections of false ceiling, roof panels and decorative structures reportedly came loose, while water entered the departure hall and ticketing areas. Around the same period, flight operations at Coimbatore airport were suspended after a compound wall collapsed during heavy rainfall and affected the runway area. These incidents revived memories of the canopy failures at Delhi, Jabalpur and Rajkot airports in June 2024. Just months after the Adani Group-backed Navi Mumbai International Airport began operations amid much celebration, a video showing water dripping onto a baggage conveyor belt has triggered fresh scrutiny over the durability and quality of one of India's newest aviation hubs. Water seepage was noticed in newly constructed Vashi station as well as crucial Dadar station.

Weather is routinely offered as an explanation, but rainfall and wind are engineering loads, not political alibis. Roofs must shed water, drains must remain functional, connections

must withstand design wind loads and maintenance must identify weakness before failure. But then in 'Vikshit Bharat', the rule book is written in another way.

Railway redevelopment has produced its own disturbing scenes. On 29 May 2026, a portion of a platform shed at Lucknow's Charbagh railway station collapsed during redevelopment, injuring two passengers and a travelling ticket examiner. The railway suspended officials, ordered an inquiry and penalised the contractor. In July, part of the century-old clock tower at Kozhikode railway station collapsed onto Platform 2. The structure had reportedly been marked for demolition, which makes the absence of stronger isolation and preventive controls more troubling, not less. At redeveloped stations elsewhere, the first monsoon has exposed water ingress, leaking roofs and poor drainage. Projects promoted as symbols of a modern railway system cannot be evaluated only by renovated facades and ceremonial openings; they must be judged by passenger safety, operational resilience and build quality.

Videos of water cascading through terminals or station roofs are usually treated as brief viral spectacles rather than evidence demanding published engineering audits. The government's publicity machine celebrates the inauguration nationally, but failure is localized and depoliticized. Citizens who question a bridge, road or terminal are often accused of negativity or opposition to development, if not of being anti-national. Scrutiny is not anti-development; it is the only means of protecting development from corruption, negligence and decay. Why should not the ministers who claim political credit at the inauguration accept political responsibility when systematic failure is exposed? The recently built Noida international airport claimed by PM Modi as a jewel in the crown of UP is now deluged with rain water.

Fragmented responsibility makes evasion easier

A national highway may involve the Union ministry, NHAI, a concessionaire, a design consultant, an independent engineer, subcontractors and state agencies responsible for utilities or drainage. In cities, municipal bodies, development authorities, water boards, metro corporations and power utilities repeatedly excavate and patch the same road. When defects appear, every agency points to another. What is missing is single-point asset accountability: a publicly identifiable authority answerable for the condition of the road, bridge or terminal

throughout its design life, irrespective of the contracting layers beneath it.

This is the background against which the ruling BJP government's technological claims must be judged. PM Modi has claimed use of space technology for monitoring road construction. Union Transport minister Nitin Gadkari repeatedly promised that India's road infrastructure would match that of the United States by the end of 2024. In 2025 he shifted the comparison forward by another two years. Technology can improve surveying, mapping, monitoring and asset management. But satellite imagery cannot compensate for weak concrete, inadequate compaction, blocked drainage, poor waterproofing, falsified tests, negligent maintenance and a blinded supervision. A road does not become 'space-age' because satellites watched it being built. It becomes reliable only when the pavement, subgrade, culverts, slopes and safety systems perform throughout the promised design life.

The financial architecture deserves equal scrutiny. Road projects are delivered through engineering-procurement-construction contracts, hybrid annuity arrangements, build-operate-transfer concessions and toll-operate-transfer packages. Each model distributes risk differently, but the public frequently remains the ultimate guarantor. Land acquisition, viability support, sovereign borrowing and traffic-related assumptions may be borne or enabled by the state; citizens then pay tolls after completion. When projects succeed, profit maximization elates the private players who are mostly assigned the jobs. When they fail, public agencies often finance repairs, extend deadlines, restructure contracts or absorb distressed assets. Contractor liability is time-bound; taxpayer liability is enduring.

Corporate tycoons thrive at the cost of people's money

The government's policy to assign the jobs to corporate giants without stipulating any accountability is the root cause. Gautam Adani's own infrastructure material describes a portfolio of fourteen road projects covering more than 5,000 lane kilometres and representing investment of around Rs 40,000 crore, alongside the group's commanding presence in airports, ports, power generation and logistics. Here is where the nefarious design of the corporate-political nexus emerges. Handing over jobs aplenty to 'favoured corporates' is expanding across strategic public assets. Such concentration has also been deliberately obliterating transparent tendering, conflict-of-interest safeguards, independent regulation and public disclosure. The common people finance the enabling infrastructure, bear the environmental

and displacement costs, and pay user charges. That is why allegations of reckless privatization and favouritism must be answered through disclosure and independent investigation, not dismissed through slogans.

The economic cost of bad infrastructure travels silently through society. A damaged highway slows trucks, increases fuel use and makes delivery schedules unreliable. Logistics operators incorporate those costs into freight rates; manufacturers and retailers pass them on through prices; households ultimately pay more. A collapsed rural bridge forces a detour of tens of kilometers, lowering the farm-gate price received by cultivators while raising the market price paid by consumers. Infrastructure defects thus operate as a hidden form of inflation imposed through wasted fuel, lost time, damaged vehicles and repeated public repair expenditure.

Burden is sharply inequal

A minister's convoy can be rerouted around a damaged road; a worker on a motorcycle cannot. A corporate executive can reschedule a flight; a migrant labourer losing a day's wage cannot miss a bus or train. When an underpass floods, schoolchildren, ambulances, public buses and small traders lose valuable time. When a bridge collapses, those travelling in ordinary vehicles or working at the site are the first to die or get grievously injured. The rhetoric of 'national prestige' conceals a deeply class-based reality: the common people fund the projects, use them under unsafe conditions and bear the largest consequences when they fail.

Despicable role of pliant media

Channels devote hours to ceremonial inaugurations, aerial visuals and political speeches but rarely sustain attention on the contract history, inspection record, maintenance failures and accountability trail after a collapse. The disaster is covered for a news cycle; the institutional follow-up disappears. But personality worship and manufactured electoral controversies dominate prime time. The foundation stone is televised nationally; the failed foundation is forgotten with alacrity. Such media behaviour shields the development narrative from the scrutiny of debacles that public expenditure demands.

What is the takeaway

India undeniably requires modern infrastructure. But what is lacking is infrastructure being planned and executed for public need instead of the 'developmental projects' highlighted for political mileage and a conduit for profit accumulation of the corporate giants along with a marketing campaign that treats the citizens as

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VBSA – a move towards complete centralization of education

Ours is claimed to be the largest democracy in the world. The very concept of democracy envisages governance through democratically elected bodies in all spheres of public life, including the education system. Secondly, ours is also a Union of States where powers are constitutionally distributed between the Centre and the states in accordance with the principles of federalism. Accordingly, education was included in the state list when the constitution was adopted.

Based on these two cardinal principles, the concept of academic autonomy evolved, under which the role of the government is limited to providing funding and ensuring accountability, while academic administration rests with democratically constituted autonomous bodies comprising teachers, educationists, and representatives of students and guardians. This is known as the autonomy of education and the academic freedom of teachers and students.

However, over the years, there has been a gradual encroachment upon this concept, with increasing bureaucratic control over education and snatching the hard-won rights of the teachers, students, and non-teaching staff. This process began with the transfer of education from the state list to the concurrent list through the 42nd constitutional amendment in 1976 by the then Indira Gandhi led Congress Government. Thereafter, the intervention of the central government in education has been steadily increasing.

The adoption of the National Policy on Education (1986) by the Rajiv Gandhi-led Government marked another significant step towards centralization of educational governance. Instead of resisting such developments, several state governments also curtailed academic autonomy by abolishing democratically elected bodies such as senates, syndicates, and other statutory bodies in the universities. Consequently, academic governance increasingly shifted from representative academic bodies to bureaucratic authorities functioning under the direction of the central and state governments.

Following this trajectory, the present BJP-led central government has sought to further consolidate control over the entire education system through the framework of the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020. Against this broader backdrop, the proposed 'Viksit Bharat Shiksha Abhiyan (VBSA)' Bill may be understood as a major step in the direction of complete centralization of higher education in India.

NEP-2020 & VBSA

Sections 18.1 and 18.2 of the NEP 2020 state that: *"Regulation of higher education has been too heavy-handed for decades; too much has been attempted to be regulated with too little effect. The mechanistic and disempowering nature of the regulatory system has been rife with very basic problems, such as heavy concentrations of power within a few bodies, conflicts of interest among these bodies, and a resulting lack of accountability. The regulatory system is in need of a complete overhaul in order to re-energize the higher education sector and enable it to thrive. To address the above-mentioned issues, the regulatory system of higher education will ensure that the distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding, and academic standard setting will be performed by distinct, independent, and empowered bodies. This is considered essential to create checks-and-balances in the system, minimize conflicts of interest, and eliminate concentrations of power. To ensure that the four institutional structures carrying out these four essential functions work independently yet at the same time and work in synergy towards common goals. These four structures will be set up as four independent verticals within one umbrella institution, the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI)."*

Notwithstanding the high sounding phrases of these provisions, their underlying intent appears to deviate from their stated objectives. It may be pointed out that these reforms are aimed at the creation of a single overarching regulatory framework for higher education with a view to further facilitating privatization and commercialization of education. The idea of such a single regulatory body is not new. It had earlier been recommended by the National Knowledge Commission (NKC) and the Yashpal Committee (YC). While the NKC proposed an Independent Regulatory Authority for Higher Education (IRAHE), the YC recommended a National Council for Higher Education and Research (NCHER).

It is therefore evident that proposals for a unified regulatory authority have been under consideration for quite some time. The NEP 2020 may be seen as a continuation of this trajectory, reviving the idea through the proposed Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), originally outlined in the 2018 draft Bill, with the stated aim of reducing "conflicts of interests" and eliminating "concentration of power" among the various regulatory bodies.

When the HECI Bill, 2018 was introduced, it received widespread

criticism from academicians, teachers, scholars, and organizations such as the All India Save Education Committee which is in the forefront of resisting anti-people education policies of successive governments. Despite these concerns, the central government had introduced a revised framework in Parliament in December 2025 with its typical coinage of a Sanskrit nomenclature-Viksit Bharat Shiksha Abhiyan (VBSA) teething more extensive powers under the slogan of "light but tight regulation".

The Bill has also drawn criticism from several opposition parties and sections of the academic community on the grounds of increased executive control through the Ministry of Education. Consequently, the Bill has been referred to a Joint Committee of Parliament for further examination.

What does the VBSA Bill provide?

While the HECI Bill, 2018 proposed the repeal of the University Grants Commission (UGC) Act, 1956, the VBSA Bill proposes to abolish not only the UGC but also the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and the National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE). It also seeks to alter the role of the Council of Architecture (CoA), which regulates architectural education and the profession in India.

The VBSA is proposed to be headed by a 12-member umbrella Commission, under which three councils will function for regulation, accreditation, and standards-setting. These are designated as the Viksit Bharat Shiksha Vinayaman Parishad (VBSVP), Viksit Bharat Shiksha Gunvatta Parishad (VBSGP), and Viksit Bharat Shiksha Manak Parishad (VBSMP). These bodies are envisaged as verticals under the overall direction of the VBSA Commission appointed by the Central Government.

Clause 45(1) of the Bill confers overriding powers on the central government. It provides that all bodies constituted under the Act shall be bound by policy directions issued by the central government, with the determination of what constitutes a "policy matter" also resting with the government. The Bill further empowers the central government to supersede these bodies and frame rules for implementing the provisions of the Act. While the institutional structure appears to be independent, in reality the complete authority remains with the central government.

A significant provision is that, unlike the UGC, the Commission will not handle funding of universities and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). Funds allocated to it are intended only for its internal functioning, while funding of universities across the country is to be routed through

alternative mechanisms devised by the Ministry of Education.

Further, in line with NEP 2020's Section 18.13, all HEIs—public and private—are to be treated on par within the regulatory framework and there will be common national guidelines for all legislative Acts that will form private HEIs."

Lastly, the Commission is also tasked with developing a roadmap for the promotion of Bharatiya Knowledge or Indian Knowledge Systems, languages, and arts across the higher education system.

Last Nail in the Coffin of Higher Education

On a critical examination of the VBSA Bill, one cannot but be deeply concerned about its implications for publicly funded universities and other Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The central government appears not to have undertaken due consultation with the stakeholders or states. The Bill was approved by the central cabinet shortly before its introduction, and public debate emerged even before the full text of the bill was publicly available. If enacted in its present form and implemented as envisaged under NEP 2020, it may have far-reaching consequences for educational autonomy, academic freedom and the federal structure.

Firstly, the emphasis on "system outcomes and not solely inputs" suggests that the government seeks to strengthen regulatory control while shrinking its financial responsibility. Regulation without funding may place public funded universities under externally imposed standards without adequate financial support, thereby affecting their functioning drastically. It may also impose stringent service conditions for the teachers, which are presently governed by UGC norms, and shift them towards institutional discretion.

Secondly, equal treatment of public and private HEIs may have structural implications. It may lead to a gradual reduction in public funding for State universities and government colleges, many of which have already been facing financial constraints. As a result, public institutions may increasingly depend on self-financing programmes like higher fees, MOUs, twinning arrangements, and private partnerships. At the same time, private and foreign HEIs may gain greater flexibility in establishing campuses, designing curricula, and determining fee structures. This approach aligns with NEP 2020 provisions encouraging private participation, fee fixing autonomy, and cost-recovery mechanisms, which would surely accelerate commercialization of education.

Thirdly, the wide-ranging powers

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Rampant corruption is laid bare

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mere spectators. A country does not become a 'Vishwa Guru' by self-proclamation while bridges fall, roads cave in and water flows in gushes from the top of newly constructed airports, railway stations and underpasses, indicating massive corruption during construction time. Low grade material, design defects, fake certification by government authorities about due compliance with directives—all involve massive pilferage from public exchequer to swell the purses of one and all at the top.

The real question no longer is whether infrastructure is being built. It is: for whom, at what cost, under whose control and with whose accountability? Until those questions are answered honestly, the spectacle of development will remain vulnerable to the reality of collapse. The people must see through the 'Ekangi Dhongi'—the narrow, self-proclaimed political high-ups who substitute propaganda for wisdom and reclaim development from corruption, corporate capture, political vanity and

institutional impunity.

This is just a glimpse of the grisly face of dying capitalism and its servitors where concern for people is relegated to the back while reaching out maximum profit to the ruling monopolists and multi-nationals is the sole objective. The frequent collapse of newly constructed bridges, potholes on the recently laid roads, cave-ins appearing on the highways inaugurated by the top brass in the government including the Prime Minister are all owing to design defects, use of substandard material, blending overdose of sand with cement and above all lack of monitoring as well as certification of completion without proper checking. All these bear testimony of rampant corruption in the system and presence of a bribery nexus of dishonest politicians-bureaucrats-contractor which compromises the safety of each developmental project and reaps huge monetary benefits by way of embezzling public fund. This is what is aided and abetted by the existing capitalist system the brunt of which is borne by the countrymen.

Government had to genuflect before a just struggle and accept demands

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public education from school to university, Resist NEP 2020, Save Public Education.

The victory we celebrate today must become the foundation of a stronger movement tomorrow. To carry this struggle forward, we must build People's Struggle Committees in every educational institution and locality. Through democratic discussion, these committees must evolve their own methods of work, stand firmly against every attack on education and students, oppose injustice and anti-social activities, and take the ideals of Indian Renaissance, freedom movement and revolutionary movement to the widest sections of the people.

It is through this process that the political power of the students will grow. The thousands who came together in this struggle must not disperse; they must become a permanent organised force. These People's and Students Struggle Committees must become the instruments through which students continue the fight for education, democracy and social justice. The task before us now is to organise, to educate and to continue the fight. Only then will this victory become the beginning of a larger movement.

We are at a critical juncture. Spontaneous outburst of people's wrath is fuel, not the engine. Left on its own, it either fades away or is turned into election material by those who promise change through vote while preserving the same system. We have seen this happen many times. A movement without ideology is only sporadic outburst, rudderless and often subsiding within a period.

In this regard, we must remember what Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, Founder General Secretary, SUCI(C) and an outstanding Marxist thinker of this era had said, "*Out of discontent of workers, peasants and all exploited masses, revolution will again and again try to surge ahead in waves after waves. In waves after waves it will try to burst forth. The contradiction within society will deepen and sharpen many times more, calling for radical transformation of this order. It will beseech our consciousness; it will appeal to humanity that revolution is the necessity. Still, revolution will not come, again and again it will recede, it will go astray, and reaction will again and again gain by that—revolution will not see the light until the revolutionary party emerges, capable enough to lead revolution.*" (SW Vol. III)

Victory of Adivasi movement in Mysore

The indefinite sit-in protest launched by Adivasi families in front of the District Collector's Office, demanding the immediate distribution of long-delayed food kits and opposing the reduction of old-age and widow pensions, concluded successfully on its fourth day.

As a result of the sustained four-day protest, the District Collector personally visited the protest site today and addressed the demonstrators. The Collector stated: "The tender process has been completed, and we have already discussed the matter with the state-level authorities. The tender order will be issued within the next two to three days." The District Collector further assured the protesters: "I am taking full responsibility for resolving this issue. If the problem is not addressed, you have every right to return and resume your protest. However, I request that you place your trust in me for now and withdraw the agitation."

After assurance by the District Collector, the Adivasi families decided to withdraw their indefinite sit-in protest, bringing the movement to a successful conclusion.

VBSA Bill

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of the regulatory bodies under the Bill may result in extensive intervention in university functioning. It may, therefore, be argued that instead of preserving autonomy, the Bill would intensify regulatory control all the more.

Lastly, the emphasis on Bharatiya Knowledge or Indian Knowledge Systems raises concerns regarding the orientation of education. While promotion of indigenous knowledge on scientific basis is not objectionable, inculcation of superstitious beliefs and ahistorical narratives would completely destroy scientific, secular, and evidence-based approaches whatever little of that is still remaining. The VBSA at the helm of affairs in higher education would be an effective instrument in the hands of the rulers to create a generation of young people devoid of rational bent of mind.

In view of these concerns, it is argued that the VBSA Bill, if implemented in its present form, may significantly affect the autonomy of higher education institutions and the federal character of education in India. It is therefore urged that the stakeholders critically engage with the Bill and raise a voice demanding its withdrawal lock, stock and barrel.

AIKKMS salutes success of "Quit Corporate India Movement"

AIKKMS extends revolutionary greetings and warm congratulations to farmers, workers, employees, and scheme workers across the country for making the "Quit Corporate India Movement" a success on 10 August under the banner of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, SKM shoulder to shoulder with central trade union organizations. Today, farmers and workers jointly held strong protests in district headquarters and state capitals across the country, and made the "Fill the Jails" movement a success by courting arrests.

AIKKMS wanted of Indian government to repeal the free trade agreements with foreign countries particularly the US that are against the interests of the our agriculture and peasants. AIKKMS demanded immediate declaration of guaranteed Minimum Support Price (MSP) of crops at one and a half times the cost of production, withdrawal the anti-farmer Seed Bill 2025 and Electricity Bill 2025, waive off bank loans for all farmers, reform the crop insurance scheme farmer-friendly, guarantee year-round employment for the rural poor, implement an old-age pension of Rs 10,000 per month. AIKKMS also supported demands of repealing the four anti-worker labour codes, reinstatement of the 8-hour working day, a ban on wage cuts, implementation of a minimum wage of Rs 31,000 per month, and the granting of government employee status to scheme workers. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha will continue to support the workers' and employees' movements in the future also.

Assam Flood

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- (2) Government needs to open community kitchen and feed the affected people till normalcy is restored.
- (3) Sufficient number of Medical Camps with adequate medical staff and equipment are to be set up.
- (4) Take stern action against the unholy nexus.
- (6) Form expert committee comprising river specialists, environmentalists and engineers of repute and having enough experience in regard to flood control and maintenance of ecological balance.
- (7) Deforestation in the upstream catchment areas must be stopped and illegal mining should be strictly forbidden.

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