

Proletarian Era

Volume 58 No. 20 Fortnightly Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (COMMUNIST) 12 Pages
June 1, 2025 Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH Page : 1 ■ Price : Rs. 4.00

People need to understand politics to distinguish between right and wrong

Comrade Provash Ghosh on 78th Party Foundation Day

[This is the English translation of the speech delivered in Bengali by Comrade Provash Ghosh, our beloved General Secretary, at a massive mass meeting on 24 April 2025, the 78th Party Foundation Day, at Shaheed Minar Maidan, Kolkata. Responsibility of translation error and inadequacy of expression, if any, lies with the Editorial Board of Proletarian Era.]

Comrade President, comrades and friends,

Braving the scorching summer sun, you all have assembled here on the occasion of the 78th Foundation Day of the Party with deep emotion and profound respect for Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the Founder of the Party and a great Marxist thinker. You also intend to be acquainted with the analysis of the Party on contemporary problems and developments. Just now, a resolution on the brutal killing of innocent tourists in Pahalgam, Kashmir, has been placed before you.

Central government cannot avoid responsibility of terrorist attack in Kashmir

The terrorist organization who has orchestrated this heinous crime has claimed that it has done so in the



interest of Kashmir. In fact, they have caused immense harm to Kashmir and the country. It is not alone that some innocent persons have been killed; it has further ramifications on the tourism industry on which greatly depends the livelihood of the Kashmiri people. Vacationers and holiday-makers from different countries come to Kashmir during this peak tourist season. They stay in the hotels, visit different places, buy woolen dresses, carpets, fruits and other handicraft products which hugely contribute to the economy of the valley. These all have been severely affected. After this ghastly incident, military operation in Kashmir would increase manifold. Just like what

happened earlier in the name of combating terrorism, repression and oppression on common Kashmiri people would also go up. Already, in the name of safety measure, there is massive mobilization of military and para-military forces in Jammu and Kashmir. Obviously the question arises as to how could such a terror attack occur despite presence of such a huge contingent of armed forces and an active intelligence wing? The central government cannot deny its responsibility for this. By this act, the terrorists have helped the rabid Hindu communal RSS-BJP. For long, the RSS-BJP have been relentlessly fomenting anti-Muslim hatred to buttress vile electoral interest. Now they will exploit this incident to exacerbate that noxious agenda by branding all Muslims as terrorists. Already the relation between India and Pakistan is bitter. This Pahalgam killing would further worsen the relation.

It has come to light that a Muslim youth lost his life while trying to snatch the rifle of a terrorist to save the victims. Those who rushed to save the tourists after the incident

Contd. on page 2

SUCI(C) strongly condemns killing of CPI (Maoist) General Secretary along with 26 poor Adivasi people

Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 22-05-25:

"We strongly condemn the extra-judicial cold-blooded killing of CPI-(Maoist) General Secretary along with 26 poor Adivasi people yesterday in Chhattisgarh in the name of 'encounter'. Although we differ with the CPI-Maoist group politics, we condemn this ghastly murder which democratic-minded people cannot accept in any way. We call upon all progressive minded people to raise their voice of protest against this horrific incident and also demand an impartial judicial inquiry to reveal the truth."

Discussion meet against communalism, politics of war and war-psychosis, and on anti-fascist struggle

Under the auspices of All India Anti-Imperialist Forum (AIAIF), West Bengal chapter, a discussion meet on 'Communalism, Politics of War and War-psychosis, and Anti-fascist Struggle' was organized on 27 May

last at University Institute Hall, Kolkata. It was presided over by Dr Dhrubajyoti Mukherjee, General Secretary, AIAIF and the discussants were the leaders of various left parties.

Seated from left to right : Comrades Kalyan Bandopadhyay, CPI, Nirbhik Majumdar, CPI (ML)-Mass Line, Shankar, CPI (ML)-Red Star, Atanu Chakraborty, CPI (ML)-Liberation, Dr Dhrubajyoti

Mukherjee, Comrades Anjan Bera, CPI(M), Chandidas Bhattacharjee, SUCI(C), and Ashok Ghosh, RSP. While placing their respective views, all the speakers thanked the AIAIF for arranging such programme of immense importance and stressed on building up a united left movement on the issues.



Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

Religious blindness will be exacerbated if correct path of emancipation remains elusive

Contd. from page 1

were all Muslim citizens of Kashmir. The entire valley is immensely grieved at the incident. The entire people of the valley observed 24 hours successful bandh in protest against the terror attack. Those who called and observed the bandh are all Muslims. They viewed the incident as an attack on humanity. I shall make an appeal to all the countrymen from this meeting: The RSS-BJP will try to incite an anti-minority frenzy and ignite a communal conflagration centring on this incident. Please be alert about that.

Vote bank politics is going on

Round the country, a vote bank politics is going on. One phase of that was till installation of Ram Mandir on the relics of Babri Masjid. Now, one after another search is being conducted to find what is lying beneath this and that mosque; whether any idol of Shiva or Krishna is buried underneath. Various cities and streets are being renamed to wipe out any sign of Muslim nomenclature. Of late, Waqf Act has been amended much to the dislike of the democratic-minded people. The sole purpose of all these series of activities is to strengthen the Hindu votebank. The RSS-BJP are doing all such things with full backing of the state power. Yet, the principle of a democratic country is to remain neutral over the question of religion. But in India, right from the days of the Congress rule, just the reverse has happened. The same thing is happening in this state also, as was seen in the recent communal attack in Murshidabad district. We have strongly condemned the incident. The police knew everything. But the police was by design kept inactive for three hours and a half. Was it a decision of the local police-administration? Can the state government fight shy of its responsibility for this? Why could this happen? Is it that the ruling TMC deliberately engineered it further to consolidate its minority vote bank? On the other hand, the TMC is also trying to protect its Hindu vote bank. In fact, a competition is going on as to who could perform how many pujas? The BJP has established a Ram Mandir in Ayodhya while the TMC has built a Jagannath temple in Digha. Alongside competition for building temples, there is a race for observing Ram Navami. Both the BJP and the TMC are vying with each other over Ram Navami

celebration. Ram is a character of the epic Ramayana. But the people of West Bengal hitherto did not see Ramchandra being worshipped as a god. Now West Bengal like other parts of the country is abuzz with Ram puja, Hanuman puja and so forth. Earlier in India, there was no practice of continuously fanning up religion and using religion for reaping political gains. During the freedom struggle, let alone those who were atheists, even the believers in religion never did such things. Have you ever heard that Deshbandhu Chittaranjan Das, Bipin Pal, Lala Lajpat Rai were seen running after pujas? There is no question of Netaji Subhash Chandra's craving for religious rituals or observance of pujas. None of them indulged in such craze for religious observances and pujas. But such a craze is now going full throttle. Notably, politicians have become preachers of religion. Earlier, it was the monks, the priests who used to do that. Now all of them have become jobless. The last among the religious preachers whom every Hindu holds in high esteem and we also respect despite our philosophical difference, was Vivekananda. After him no great character professing religion has appeared in this country.

Hypocrisy in the name of religion

The Prime Minister of the country is a preacher of religion. So are the chief ministers of various states. They have taken upon themselves the responsibility of sermonizing religion. Are they true preachers of religion? Do you think that the Prime Minister possesses a sinless pure character and strictly abides by religion? Are you of the opinion that he follows even the barest precepts of religion? Do you all believe that the chief ministers of West Bengal and other states have any genuine faith in religion? Do their rules reflect rule of religion? Is it that there is no sin, no crime, no injustice? Are they all clean in every respect? Facts speak otherwise. What they are practising is utter hypocrisy. They are deceiving the people. They all have one objective — cultivation of narrow sectarian vote-politics. Organizing one after another religious festivals and religious fairs, providing grant to the Durga Puja committees from public exchequer are all purported to that end. Earlier, the locality-based Durga pujas were held by collecting subscription from the residents of

that area. Now the state government has become the chief donor. What a misuse of public fund! The donations that the government is giving to the clubs and puja committees are actually an investment for votes. So many people have died during the recently concluded Kumbh mela. There has not even been any post-mortem of these stampede deaths. This mela (fair) has also been an investment for reaping electoral gains. According to the media, it was an event that the UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath had organized for self-publicity because there is a competition between him and Amit Shah as to who would step into the shoes of PM Modi. Will those who honestly adhere to religion see such activities with any respect whatsoever? Is it proper to view it like that? In fact, these are all acts of fraud and hypocrisy with a cloak of religion.

We are believers in Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. Though we are atheists, we acknowledge the progressive role religion played in yester years. We respect the religious preachers of the past. Great Marx had said: *"Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the heart of the heartless world and the soul of the soulless conditions... is at the same time the expression of real distress and also the protest against real distress."* (Critique of Hegel's philosophy of Right) Great Engels while commenting on Christianity had observed that: *"Christianity and the workers' socialism preach forthcoming salvation from bondage and misery; Christianity places this salvation in a life beyond, after death, in heaven; socialism places it in this world, in a transformation of society."* (On the History of Early Christianity) Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had shown: *"...religion at a particular stage of social development ... helped in furthering the concept of morals and ethics, the sense of values, the concept of right and wrong, the spirit of service to others and not despising anyone. As a result, a sense of discipline grew which helped to bring about consolidation and cohesion in society. From this angle too, religion played a role in social progress."* (Some Aspects of Marxism and Dialectical Materialism) It is therefore clear that at a particular stage of social

development, religion was a necessity for social development. However, there is no reference or prescribed solution for the burning problems of today's life in the Gita, Manu Sanhita, Veda, Bible or Quran. Because these problems did not arise at that point of time. The religious preachers of that period fought against injustice, faced repression and even were killed by the then vested interest. But today, neither any religion nor the temples-mosques-churches have any voice of protest against surfeit of injustices. Actually, they are all financed by the ruling exploitative capitalist class and hence are working in its favour. That is why Marx remarked that at present the oppressing class is using religion as opium so that the oppressed people accept their misery-stricken unbearable life as injunction of imaginary god. Thus, the oppressive class intoxicate people using religion as opium. The more unbearable is the crisis, the more are suffering people madly rushing to these religious celebrations with the expectation of getting solace to lessen irremediable suffering in the material world and nurturing illusive hope for justice in the imaginary life after death. And in its course hundreds are falling victims to stampede. With further accentuation of crisis, this religious blindness will also be exacerbated if due consciousness and correct path of emancipation remain elusive.

During bourgeois democratic revolution, rising capitalism abandoned religion

At a particular juncture of history, when capitalism was a rising force against feudal autocracy and bourgeois democratic revolution was being organized, the prevailing thought had been that the monarch or feudal lord was a representative of god. To go against them was akin to going against god. So, it was necessary for capitalism to fight religion. That was the time of blooming bourgeois democracy, not obsolete reactionary democracy as we see today. Capitalism then was progressive. It was building new civilization, giving call of establishing democratic republic by overthrowing monarchical rule, raising slogan of humanist values, democratic norms, principles and ethics. Capitalism was then upholding individual liberty, freedom of expression and a social system where people would decide everything including kind of governance. That is what they called republic. Previously, the kings and emperors during coronation used to take oath by keeping hand on the Gita, Quran or Bible. But during the advent of capitalism, that practice

Contd. on page 4

IPL's Power Play

A Blazing Brew of Betting

The Indian Premier League (IPL), launched in 2008 as a dazzling new vision of cricket's future, is now a global sporting phenomenon. It has redefined fan engagement, created an unprecedented commercial ecosystem, and turned young cricketers overnight into millionaires.

The teams formed with a combination of national and international players through auction were rechristened as franchisees as those were owned by the big corporate tycoons. From a game so pleasing to the eye and known for acquiring excellence through prolonged concentration, stamina as well as perseverance of playing through five days preserving due reflex, cricket became a commodity for money-making.

In pursuit of profit, the sponsors of IPL have radically transformed cricket into a carnival where craze, cheap entertainment, colour blitz, intermittent playing of theme music crating a vibe of amusement, over-the-top opening ceremonies, and Bollywood performances are packaged to attract audience. Not the battle between the bat and ball but this bundled offering has become the mainstay.

Importance of Sports

Sport, as we all know, is a great character building tool. It is a device to sustain physical and mental nourishment—a means to create a healthy mind in a healthy body and foster the spirit of cordiality and friendship. Sport is a source of refreshing entertainment right from the children to the aged. Sportsmanship is an attitude that strives for fair play, courtesy toward teammates and opponents, ethical behaviour and integrity, and grace in victory or defeat.

Fair play refers to all participants having an equitable chance to pursue victory and acting toward others in an honest, straightforward, and a firm and dignified manner even when others do not play fairly. It includes respect for others including team members, opponents, and officials. Character refers to disposition, values and habits that determine the way that a person normally responds to desires, fears, challenges, opportunities, failures and successes and is typically seen in polite behaviour toward others such as helping an opponent up or shaking hands after a match.

Bollywood-Political Nexus: Power Behind the Pitch

But events like IPL militate against the very ethos of sportsman spirit. It has turned a much-liked game into a carnival. Sport is now turned into a product, to be marketed and sold in whichever way as to fetch maximum profit for the investors. Beautiful, uplifting sport is being methodically, mercilessly squeezed, its essence adulterated and sold in the market to the highest bidder. In IPL, teams are rechristened. Franchise ownership in IPL is as glamorous as it is murky. Officially, each team is run by a consortium of businesses, film stars, and venture capitalists. Unofficially, shell companies, offshore accounts, and benami investors proliferate. Several team owners and sponsors are linked to political parties across the spectrum—from pro-BJP businessmen of Northern India, Tamil Nadu-based corporates to regional satraps of Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal. The result is a powerful ecosystem largely insulated from scrutiny.

The IPL's glamour quotient owes much to Bollywood—but also to political powerbrokers who operate behind the scenes. Celebrity ownership of franchisees has added sheen—but also questions. *"The IPL is a soft power playground,"* says a political analyst in Delhi. *"It's where film stars, industrialists, and politicians coalesce. Ownership structures are often deliberately opaque—routed through holding companies in tax havens like Mauritius or the British Virgin Islands."*

The IPL's inception had strong political backing—with Lalit Modi, a BJP loyalist, crafting it with full support of the then Congress-led UPA government. Today, Modi is a fugitive in London, accused of financial irregularities and money laundering. Yet, his legacy lives on—not just in the league's format but in its culture of impunity.

In 2010, when a new Kerala-based franchise was included, its shadowy ownership structure triggered a political maelstrom. The franchise was later terminated, but the episode exposed how powerful lobbies—including ministers—can influence team bids and steer the league's commercial future. According to a 2019 leaked ED report, several IPL franchisees were under probe for financial irregularities, including "round-

tripping of funds, tax evasion, and links to hawala networks." To date, no public white paper has been issued on these findings. Cricket, once a slow, reflective contest steeped in tradition, has been repackaged into a kinetic spectacle tailored for mass consumption, glittering endorsements, and media saturation. What was once a national pastime has become a transnational product-tailored to maximize returns rather than uphold the values that once made it revered.

The Media Machinery: Glitz, Gossip, and Narrative Control

Finally, there's the media—both victim and accomplice in the IPL's rise. Networks compete for broadcast rights, now worth billions. In 2022, Star Sports and Viacom18 paid a combined \$6.2 billion for a five-year deal—making it one of the most expensive media rights auctions globally. With such money at stake, editorial independence often collapses. Investigative stories are replaced with gossip segments, player romances, and trivia. The result is a sanitized spectacle where controversies are buried, not broadcasted. *"This is cricketainment, not journalism,"* quips a former sports editor at a national daily. *"Try running a story on franchise irregularities—you'll get a call within an hour."*

While genuine cricket-lovers decry the dilution of cricketing values, those polluting the arena of sports with fun-fiesta call it a natural evolution. *"The IPL is to cricket what Formula 1 is to motor racing—elite, expensive, and inaccessible,"* says a well-known sports journalist. Yet, the costs are evident: dwindling attendance at Test cricket, dwindling incentives for even one day cricket and a growing gap between commercial cricket and the grassroots.

Players under Pressure: Glory or Burnout

Behind the glitz of multimillion-dollar contracts lies a darker reality—player exploitation, mental health crises, and widening inequalities. Top stars like the top-ranking national and international players command astronomical fees and endorsement deals. But for uncapped players, especially from rural India, the league is a high-stakes gamble. A few weeks of play could change their lives—or shatter them. Many are benched for entire seasons, living in bio-bubbles under intense

surveillance, with no playing time or psychological support. In 2021, one Indian leading pace bowler spoke openly about his battle with depression during the bio-bubble season. More such stories remain untold. *"The IPL is brutal,"* says a former player-turned-coach. *"If you fail in two games, you're benched. No feedback, no second chances. Youngsters are made to feel disposable."* There's also a stark disparity in pay: while foreign players often receive full contracts and elite amenities, Indian players outside the spotlight need to fight for basic facilities and mentorship.

WTO's Legacy and the IPL

In the wake of the World Trade Organization's sweeping liberalization agenda in the late 1990s and early 21st century, the global consensus shifted toward treating every facet of human activity—sports, entertainment, education, even culture—as a commodity ripe for market exploitation. The Indian Premier League (IPL), perhaps inadvertently, became the apotheosis of this commodification.

Environmental Irony: Lights, Fireworks, and Parched Cities

In a country battling climate change and acute water scarcity, the IPL's environmental impact is seldom questioned. Each game uses lakhs of litres of treated water to maintain pitches. Stadiums remain lit with floodlights for hours, and grand opening nights feature firework shows—all in cities often struggling with pollution, drought, and power shortages.

In 2016, severe droughts in Maharashtra forced a shift of IPL matches out of Mumbai and Pune. But environmental accountability remains tokenistic. The carbon footprint of the 2023 season—with its flights, hotel stays, and high-energy usage—has never been publicly assessed.

Match Fixing has Turned Cricketing Arena into a Punter's Den

And behind its floodlights, cheerleaders, celebrities, glamourous film artistes, and billion-dollar deals, the IPL hides a murky underbelly—one where match-fixing, illegal betting, political nexus, and unbridled commercialization intermingle to form a cocktail far removed from the essence of cricket, once viewed as a gentleman's game. This inside story probes the shadows of the world's richest cricket league—exposing the interplay of illicit cash flows, association of Bollywood stars, political patronage, and the price of glory.

The murk came in open in

Contd. on page 10

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

Indian freedom struggle was not free from Hindu religious thoughts

Contd. from page 2

was discarded. Instead, it was decided that people's elected representatives would take pledge to abide by the Constitution. In accordance with the directives of the Constitution, the legislators would govern the republic. This was how bourgeois parliamentary democracy had come into being. The bourgeois thinkers at that time could not understand the role of religion. Rather they denigrated religion. Bacon, Spinoza, Locke, Hobbs, Kant, Feuerbach and others had held that religion was an aberration of history. It was nothing but a chapter of history which ought to be abandoned. But Marx correctly showed what was the role of religion in social development.

Primitive men had no concept of god

Explaining more clearly, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has shown that primitive man had no concept of god, meaning any super-natural entity. Their thinking was then materialistic. They tried to propitiate nature, natural forces. So, they tried to please water, air, fire, tree or hill through various incantations. These incantations were actually means to win over nature. Vivekananda in his Lahore speech had shown his recognition of this. Vivekananda said that initially man tried to search for truth in nature, made efforts to find solutions of problems in the material world. Even today you will find this practice of worshipping nature among the aboriginals in Andamans, Australia, Canada or Africa. A few days back, when the BJP had called the tribal people as Hindus, they protested. The tribal people said that they do not believe in worship of god, they worship nature. Then when did the thought of god arise in the society? Comrade Shibdas Ghosh provided scientific answer to this question. He pointed out that when the slave masters were ruthlessly oppressing the slaves in the slave-master society, the moaning slaves wondered if there was anyone above the masters. This question had stirred the minds of a group of thinkers of that time. They observed that the sun is rising and setting in an orderly manner. The change of seasons, cycle of day and night, birth and death—everything is happening in a law-governed way. If the universe is moving in such a disciplined manner, then just like the way the slave-master society was operating based on the rules and laws determined by the slave-

owners, there must be one owner, the master of the universe who is conducting and guiding it to run in an orderly way. "Thus", as shown by Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, *"it is through this process of drawing analogy or drawing parallel between two different phenomena—that is following the logic of resemblance, which man, guided by common sense, is so easily prone to as also generally used to—that the idea of god was born in man"*. (Marxism and Development of Human Society) This was the truth behind emergence of religion as gospels of god. Then came the thought that the divine laws are equally applicable to both the slaves and the masters. Though the prophets of various religions preached different religions based on the specific conditions of the countries or societies they respectively belonged to, the essence of their preaching was the same—the gospels of god. They assumed that their understanding about how society could be freed from aberrations was nothing but the thought of god. This is what Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had explained. Later, he provided answers to many questions on science, nature and so forth. I am not entering into that.

Communal thoughts originated in India during colonial rule

What I want to say now is that communal thoughts, which you find poisoning the entire society, had originated during the glorious days of Indian freedom movement. On the one hand, hundreds of martyrs sacrificed their lives to free the country from colonial rule, fell to the bullets of British police and raised their voice in exaltation for the victory of life with the noose of the gallows round their neck. But the revolutionaries could not give leadership to the freedom movement. Kshudiram, Benoy-Badal-Dinesh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Bhagat Singh, Surya Sen, Subhas Chandra Bose who represented the uncompromising revolutionary trend of freedom movement and hence considered as votaries of revolutionism could not come to the leadership of the freedom struggle. At that time it was the aspirant Indian national bourgeoisie who backed the Gandhite leadership within the Congress. The same national bourgeoisie is now saddled in state power, oppressing and plundering the country ruthlessly. Since it stood behind the Gandhites,

those believing in uncompromising revolutionism could not come to the forefront. So, revolution could not take place. The Gandhite leadership, in the class interest of the national bourgeoisie, even compelled Subhas Chandra to resign from Presidentship of the Congress and finally expelled him from the party. Many of today's generation are not aware of these facts.

As the compromising Congress leadership did not resort to armed struggle against the British imperialist rulers, it also stayed away from fighting the then religious thinking in our country, feudal ideas and thoughts, superstitious habits and casteism, etc. Instead it compromised with all these obsolete reactionary thoughts and allowed them to be sustained in the society.

Doyens of the Renaissance initiated fight against religious thoughts

Fight against religious bigotry and dogmatism was initiated by Raja Rammohan Roy, the pioneer of the Indian Renaissance. Though he believed in the Vedanta, he emphasized on imperativeness of English education. Opposing teaching of Sanskrit, he said that Sanskrit-based education has pushed the country into the abyss of darkness for several thousand years. He stressed that such an education gives rise to false sense of vanity. The British rulers were trying just that in collaboration with the Sanskrit pundits. Vedantic education would not create citizens of worth. Because the Vedanta disavows the objective reality. He wanted to teach scientific philosophy, anatomy, chemistry, physics and mathematics. Vidyasagar went a step forward to declare that all *shastras* (scriptures) were false. You all know that Vidyasagar fought for introducing widow remarriage. Vidyasagar used to help the poor in all possible ways, even with financial assistance through liberal donation from his own income. Rabindranath described him as follows: *"Neither compassion, nor learning, but the crowning glory of Ishwarchandra Vidyasagar's character was invincible manhood and imperishable humanness"*. Rabindranath expressed this view while praising his courage and indomitable spirit in fighting the age-old inertia of scriptural authority. Ishwarchandra who himself had thoroughly studied shastras in the Sanskrit College, received many degrees and thereby earned the

name Vidyasagar (ocean of knowledge) had written to the British government saying that *"Veda-Vedanta are false systems of philosophy"*. At the age of 21, he started learning English and through the vehicle of that language got acquainted with Western knowledge, science and philosophy. Thereafter, he discarded ancient scriptures as false. He went further to say that our students should be taught such European philosophies which would convince them about the falsity of the *shastras*. He wanted teachers who knew both the Bengali and the English language, and at the same time were free from religious prejudices. Jotibarao Phule of Maharashtra also fought against religious superstitions and injunctions. Vidyasagar, Phule and others sought to fight against religious bigotry, backwardness and superstitions. The national bourgeoisie obstructed this attempt by putting Gandhiji in front. As a result, the Congress became the National Hindu Congress notwithstanding Gandhiji's holding of the Gita in one hand and the Quran in the other hand. Gandhiji had brought to the fore the concept of *Ramrajya* (utopian regime) by singing Ramdhun song during his prayers. The song might have lines that Ishwar and Allah both are names of god. But the dominance of Hindu religion prevailed in the Congress because of the compromise with religion. So, the bulk of the Muslim masses had viewed Gandhiji as a Hindu monk. The British rulers took advantage of that to drive a wedge into the unity of the two communities. Both the British rulers as well as the power-mongers within the Muslim community had sought to convince the oppressed Muslim people that the Congress is under a Hindu leadership. Not just Hindu, but upper caste Hindu. So, the so called lower caste Hindus who are called *dalits* also did not identify themselves with the Congress. So, they remained outside the ambit of freedom struggle. Later the Congress on assuming power used this divide to its advantage.

What is secularism in the truest sense of the term

What do those who brand the Congress as secular mean by secularism? What is secularism in the truest sense of the term? Comrade Shibdas Ghosh has taught that term secular means worldly. Everything has to be understood based on recognition of the material world. A secular state would neither encourage nor obstruct religion. But in the running of the state, in the political, educational and socio-

Contd. on page 5

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

Ruling party admits to have fooled people with fake pre-election promises

Contd. from page 4

cultural sphere religion would have no role to play. Religion ought to be a matter of personal observance, personal belief. Subhash Chandra had said that politics should not be guided by religion or ideas of the supernatural, it should be guided solely by economic and political deliberations. Rabindranath held that religious infatuation enfeebles a human being. So, religion should not have any place in the arena of politics. Saratchandra went a step ahead to declare that all religions are false, prejudices of the past. Those who are using religion as a tool for deriving political mileage, they might ignore us.

But can they ignore Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Subhash Chandra Bose? It is for them that we find once prominent social reformer Gopal Krishna Gokhale's famous utterance, "*What Bengal thinks today, India thinks tomorrow*" that became a legend. The whole of India viewed them like this. To what a state have first the Congress, then CPI (M) and then TMC-BJP dragged down that West Bengal. A group of youths are rallying behind them for money and other privileges. What could be more sad than this!

A horrific situation has developed in the country. Not a single walk of life—economic, political, social, cultural, personal, familial is free from crisis. So, people are in dire distress. How could such a harrowing situation develop? Was it inevitable? No. So that people would not try to probe into the cause of such misery of theirs, they are being pushed into stirred up hullabaloo over temple, mosque, religious festivals, etc. To divert attention of the suffering people, communal riots are being orchestrated. Not that only the Muslims are being persecuted and harassed, even the so called lower caste or *dalit* people are facing onslaughts from the upper caste Hindus. *Dalits* are also being lynched. And all this is being orchestrated for the sake of heinous political interests.

All ruling parties including BJP-TMC are mired in corruption

You have just seen how the planned brutal murder of a young lady doctor at R G Kar Medical College in Kolkata has come into full view. She could detect ongoing corruption in the hospital and raised

her voice of protest against the same. She had to pay for that with her life. The entire administration is involved in this crime. Even today, justice has not been obtained. On the other hand, thousands of school teachers who had been appointed as *bona fide* candidates after passing through all portals have been removed from service. Some of them are also observing hunger strike. Why so? Because, a good number of ineligible candidates were recruited through corrupt route at the instance of the unscrupulous ruling party leaders and their lackeys who took hefty sum of money as bribe for tampering with the documents for such illegal inductions. Even the Supreme Court which ordered cancellation of the entire panel admitted that the recruitment list contained names of both eligible and non-eligible candidates. Then why should the eligible candidates who have already been teaching in the schools be removed from service? Is it not a travesty of justice? As you know, the school education in this state is tottering. There is lack of teachers, lack of infrastructure, and severe scarcity of Group III and IV non-teaching staff. Now even all these teachers are ousted. Thus, an acute crisis has gripped the school education. Corruption is ruling the roost everywhere. All ruling parties, whether at national or state level, are mired in neck-deep corruption.

Now the CBI is pressed in action to arrest the opposition. When the Congress was in power, CBI used to apprehend the BJP and other opposition leaders. At that time, the Supreme Court held that CBI is a caged parrot of the Congress. I do not know whether you all remember that. Now also, CBI continues to be a caged parrot. But the owner of the cage is the BJP. So, CBI is blindfolded to the corruption of the BJP ministers, legislators and leaders. As if the BJP satraps are all saintly beings. The opposition leaders who are being hauled up are no doubt corrupt. But is it that the BJP is free from corruption? A few years back, the dimension of the VYAPAM (Vyavsayik Pareeksha Mandal) scam of Madhya Pradesh stirred the whole nation. Many witnesses of this scam were killed. Even the reporters who brought the scam to the fore were also assassinated. The BJP's claim of corruption-free country had tumbled with a hard splash. Even today, the culprits could not be identified, let

alone being tried and punished. During the BJP rule in Karnataka, contractors working on government projects, including those who identified themselves as supporters of the BJP, had alleged that ministers, MLAs and officials had been asking for 40% of a project's cost as bribe. They said that if so much money is to be paid as cut money, they would not be able to pay back bank loans they have taken. One of the contractors committed suicide after writing a letter to a BJP minister. So, it can be seen that those who are parroting religious gospels are deeply sunk in corruption.

Root of corruption

What is the root of corruption? The root is the prevailing capitalist society. The entire society is in the grip of corruption. By social system is meant those who are in control of society. Who controls the society? Our basic aspect of life is the economic system. So, those who control the economy also control the other spheres of life. Long back, Great Marx had pointed out that the capitalism is utterly reactionary and inhuman. The ruling capitalists have only one objective—making profit. For that they need to exploit the workers. And now, in this era of imperialism and proletarian revolution, they are after maximization of profit through maximum exploitation of labour. The more they squeeze the people, the more swelled their coffers become. Capitalism-imperialism round the world does not care for any ideology, principle, scruple, humaneness or even an iota of democratic norms. Their only goal is to maximize profit. For that, there is mutual competition among the capitalists. For minting maximum profit, they do not hesitate to subvert the laws and norms they themselves had formulated. This capitalism is corrupt to the bone. So the bourgeois politics and politicians who are protecting capitalism are also immensely corrupt and are corrupting the society as well.

I want to place some data to show you what is the condition of India today. The top 10% of the Indian population holds 77% of the total national wealth while 67 crore Indians who comprise the poorest half of the population own only 1 % of the national wealth. This is the situation prevailing today! Gautam Adani, who is so endearing to the BJP, contributes most to the election fund of the BJP and has been charged with having committed large

scale financial fraud, his spiraling net worth reached Rs 11.6 lakh crores as of August 2024. The wealth of Mukesh Ambani, another pro-BJP industrial tycoon, is estimated to be around Rs 9.10 lakh crores as of March 2025. And 60% Indians earn only Rs 20 a day. And 21%, or more than 25 crores people, survive on a mere Rs 166 a day. Approximately 4,500 children under the age of five years in the country die every day due to hunger and malnutrition. On the other hand, India's external debt stands at \$663.8 billion (Rs 5,54,80, 870 crores) at end-March 2024 while India's national debt was placed at Rs 155 lakh crores as on 31.03-23. Indian banks have written off a staggering Rs 16.35 lakh crore in bad loans over the last ten financial years. Side by side, being unable to repay bank loans, lakhs of people including poor peasants are committing suicide.

Number of middle class families has shrunk to 6.6 crores from 9.9 crores meaning that 3.2 crore people were pushed into poverty. This figure was published three years back. Surely, the figure has gone up in the next three years. This is the situation in India. Crores of people are unemployed or under-employed. The number of retrenchment of workers is soaring phenomenally. Lakhs of industries are being closed down. There is no permanent worker today. Because permanent workers are to be paid fixed remuneration and the industry-owners need to follow certain regulations. So, employment on permanent basis has been abolished both by the central as well as state governments, in government departments, railways, banks, everywhere. Now employment is mainly on contract basis. The contractors pay wage as per their whims and force the labourers to work for long hours. The norm of 8-hour work a day has been dispensed with. Labourers have to work for as many hours as the owners want. Since the toiling people are starved of work, they cannot ask for better remuneration nor can they refuse to work for a paltry wage. This is the condition of the workers in our country. As migrant workers, lakhs of people from rural areas are rushing to urban localities. They are leaving the country even to eke out a bare livelihood.

Of late, some of such Indian migrant labourers who were inducted in the Russian army died in the war with Ukraine. They were taken there with the promise of being provided with a job. But they were not told beforehand that the job would mean joining Russian army. Zionist Israel is sending the

Contd. on page 6

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

RSS-BJP were opposed to Freedom Movement and Indian Nationalism

Contd. from page 5

youths of its country as soldiers in the war against Palestine. So, who would perform other important jobs in that country? So, Indian migrants are sent to Israel to do those jobs. If you go to Saudi Arabia, Dubai or such other West Asian countries, you would find many poor immigrants from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka doing most of the jobs. Theirs is a very tormenting life bereft of almost all necessary facilities.

Now has appeared a new section of workers known as gig workers. Did you ever hear the terms gig labour, migrant labour, etc., earlier? These workers have no fixed income, no job security. So, their life is full of distress, their families are virtually shattered. Some migrants take their wives along with them. Some do not and stay with other women at the place of job. Everything is topsy-turvy. Capitalism is destroying village life. Previously there used to be a rural culture, a rural environment, a unique village society where mutual harmony, sense of responsibility towards each other, respect for the elders were manifest. Now everything has vanished.

Who has destroyed the society? None other than capitalism which has given birth to monopoly and multi-nationals. Can you imagine that declared expenditure incurred for the marriage of the younger son of Mukesh Ambani was Rs 5000 crores? This excludes other undisclosed expenses. Who were the invitees? All his servitors like the leaders of the BJP, the Congress, the regional parties and others. Because all these parties are run based on financial assistance provided by monopolist behemoths like Ambani. It is these giant industrialists who anoint them on ministerial throne. The monopolist giants also bear the expenses of their advertisements in the media, their electoral campaign. So, they were all falling over themselves to attend the marriage ceremony. The BJP government had given international tag to the sensitive defence airport at Gujarat's Jamnagar town for just 10 days so that guests invited to the wedding of Mukesh Ambani's son could land close to the venue. This is capitalist rule. These capitalists are undeclared monarchs of the country. It is, so to say, a monarchical system under the garb of democracy and republic. These very monopolists decide who would come to power at

the Centre, the Congress or the BJP; whether the TMC would continue to rule in West Bengal or not or Nitish Kumar should have another term as chief minister of Bihar. The entire mainstream media is under the control of the monopoly houses. If you leaf through the pages of newspapers, you will find only publicity of such leaders and parties. The same is the case with the electronic media. The media-owners say that unless they give full-blown publicity to the bourgeois top-brass and parties, their papers or channels would not survive. They only decide whom to give publicity and in what proportion.

It bears recall that Indira Gandhi who curbed democracy and clamped emergency, was eulogized as "the sun of emancipation of Asia" by the bourgeois media only. And the same media propagated that Atal Behari Vajpayee would herald "shining India" or Narendra Modi would bring "achhe din" (good days) by providing Rs 15 lakhs to each citizen, two crore jobs each year and doubling the income of the peasants in five years. When Home Minister Amit Shah was asked by the journalists what about those promises, he smilingly replied "those were electoral *jumlas* (mere gimmicks)" meaning such deceptions are part of electoral campaign. These leaders do not feel ashamed of saying such things in such a cool manner.

Why did people want a change in West Bengal

You all are witness to what is happening in this state in the name of change. Once the CPI (M) was in power. The editorial of a leading daily then had rightly observed that whether a leaf of a tree would move, quarrel between mother-in-law and daughter-in-law would subside were all decided by the CPI(M) state headquarters. They used to control everything at that time. The CPI(M) came to power by defeating the Congress with the promise of fully restoring democracy. But then the CPI(M) started attacking other parties. One agitating peasant was gunned down in Nadia district. One worker was shot dead in the Dock area because of taking part in a protest movement. Around 159 of our leaders and cadres were killed by the CPI(M). They decided to teach us a lesson because we organized movements to bring back English at primary school level and against price rise and increase in transport fare. They wanted to

extirpate us. So, our leaders and cadres were targeted. Right from recruiting a school peon to selecting vice-chancellor of a university, everything was controlled by them. They established absolute control over the police-administration and hence all police stations were under their command. Promotion of real estate business, formation of realty syndicates to supply building material using muscle-power, setting up a network of ruling party-backed contractors—all these are endowments of the CPI (M) rule. A phrase was coined at that time-politics of providing gains. No one was familiar herein before with this brand of politics. Supporting politics means to get something in return. Panchayats, municipalities and even government would shower gains provided the gainer supported the CPI (M) and its government. If one did not support the CPI(M), one was not entitled to get anything even what was otherwise gettable. The CPI(M) had run its 34 years of uninterrupted rule in this manner only. Today they are isolated from the masses. Why are they isolated? Will the CPI(M) leaders admit their mistakes? The CPI(M) was never a Marxist party. I am not entering into the discussion on the reasons behind it. During the United Front government in this state in 1967 and 1969, Comrade Shibdas Ghosh had said that a leftist government cannot function like a bourgeois government. He declared that United Front Government would not allow police to interfere into legitimate democratic movements. Instead, this government would encourage class and mass struggles to develop and intensify. But the CPI(M) did not follow this principle during their 34 years of rule. Rather, they flouted that at every step. As a result, discontent mounted against the CPI(M) government. Thereafter, when they had not only killed innocent peasants but engaged anti-socials and police to rape women at large in Singur and Nandigram, the bourgeois media projected TMC supremo as a blazing woman and loudly propagated that she would usher in a changed regime. Now the TMC rule is in vogue. We call it a carbon copy of the CPI(M) rule. Only difference is that the CPI(M) rule was well organized while the TMC regime is loose and disconnected. The corruption of the CPI(M) was well-structured and hence was not exposed so easily. It was very difficult to unfold it. But the corruption of the TMC is easily detected and glaringly manifest.

If there is any leader-cadre or supporter of the CPI(M) present here, please note that we do not

possess any hatred towards them. We want the CPI(M) to join united left movement and conduct struggle. But that ought not to be a rehearsal for netting electoral gains. They cannot join hands with the Congress by branding it as secular. Is it that merely opposing the BJP is akin to secularism? The term secularism has a definite meaning, a distinct connotation. I have already discussed that before. Is the Congress democratic? Who had clamped emergency? Who had enacted draconian laws like TADA, ESMA, MISA ? Was it not the Congress? Who had engineered communal riots in Rourkela, Bhagalpur and Nellie and then anti-Sikh carnage in Delhi? I want to ask the CPI(M) leaders why are they branding that Congress as secular and democratic? Other regional parties are also not abiding by democratic norms or following secular principles. Are you not entering into alliance with all of them just for the sake of deriving electoral advantage?

We call upon you to join the real movement developing in people's interest. But before that, you need to admit your mistakes. What is the teaching of great Lenin? He said that the real communists not only admit their mistakes but also probe into the cause behind committing such mistakes and inform people about that. And they also intimate people how they propose to rectify themselves. This is the yardstick to understand if any party is truly revolutionary or not. Have the CPI(M) leaders ever confessed to have made mistakes? Had they ever said what was their role in the emergence of the BJP? Many of you might not be knowing that before emergency, a massive anti-Congress movement had developed in the country, particularly in Bihar and Gujarat in 1973-74. The youths and students were the organizers of that movement. It was in demand for democratic education, employment to all and against corruption and misrule. At that time, the CPI openly supported Indira Gandhi while the CPI(M) also did the same thing but in a roundabout way. Hindu Mahasabha, RSS and Jan Sangh joined that anti-Congress movement. They did not have much strength then. We called upon the CPI and CPI(M) to come forward and along with us, join the movement to give a left orientation to it. But they did not agree on the pretext of presence of RSS-Jan Sangh being in the movement. We said that since we, the leftists, were not there, these rightist forces are taking advantage. Let leftists like all

Contd. on page 7

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

In absence of socialist camp, imperialists are unbridled in generating wars

Contd. from page 6

of us unitedly join the movement, provide leadership to it and thereby isolate them. But they paid no heed to our call. Fact is that they did not want to go against Indira Gandhi or her Congress because Indira Gandhi, in their eyes, was 'progressive'. But when election was declared in 1977, the RSS, Jan Sangh, Swatantra party, Syndicate Congress, Charan Singh's Lok Dal, Jagjivan Ram's Congress for Democracy and Socialist Party combined overnight to form Janata Party under the leadership of Moraraji Desai. The CPI(M) could sense victory of the Janata Party in the ensuing election. So, they allied with the Janata Party despite knowing fully well that RSS-Jan Sangh were constituents of it. Later, when V P Singh, a Congress dissident, formed a non-Congress formed dethroning Rajiv Gandhi from Prime Ministership, both the CPI(M) and the BJP extended support to him. In this very Shaheed Minar Maidan, Jyoti Basu and Atal Behari Vajpayee had jointly addressed a public meeting and stood hand in hand. Can the CPI(M) leaders deny these facts? Were not all those actions sheer opportunism? If they are honest, they need to admit that. They need to confess that during their 34 years of rule, they had committed a lot of wrongs, adopted anti-left policies. Had they practised genuine leftism when they were in power, how could the rightist forces like the BJP and the TMC gain strength? And why is the CPI(M) in such a precarious condition? Why are people still refusing to accept the CPI(M) as an alternative to the TMC? Why are the CPI(M) leaders so desperate to anyhow win a seat? Can they hold their cadres responsible for such a miserable condition of theirs? Does not the responsibility lie with the leadership? Who had misled the cadres? If the CPI(M) leaders are honest towards ideology, have obligation towards the people, why should they confuse their cadres? Straightaway admit that you had committed mistake and would now move in the right path. Let me reiterate once again that we have no hatred, no ill-feeling against the CPI(M). The only difference is that whereas it is a reformist left party, we are cultivating revolutionary leftism.

BJP is opposed to Renaissance

The BJP, which I want to point out to you, is opposed to the

thoughts of the Renaissance. If you support the BJP, you will have to disown Raja Rammohan, Vidyasagar, Jyotiba Phule, Subramania Bharati, Jyotiprosad and such other leading lights of the Indian Renaissance. They all fought against religious tutelage. Now the BJP is bringing back that religious tutelage into the education system. The Manu Sanhita, the Gita, the Ramayana, the Mahabharata, spiritualism-are now being brought back.

BJP was against Indian freedom movement

As you are aware, the RSS was against the Indian Freedom struggle right from day one. M S Golwalkar, the ideologue of the RSS held that anti-British imperialist movement was reactionary. Those opposed to British imperialism were not patriots or freedom fighters. What he preached was Hindutva-based nationalism. That was the stand of the RSS. During the entire period of Indian freedom movement, the Hindu Mahasabha or the RSS who are the predecessors of the BJP, did not play any role in the movement. It was their leader V D Savarkar who had first raised the demand for partition of the country in the 19th Hindu Mahasabha session in Ahmedabad in 1937. This same Savarkar was freed from jail after he made several mercy petitions to the British rulers declaring his total surrender and submission to them. In his petition he assured: "*I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like...*". Three years later, Mohammad Ali Jinnah raised the proposal for division of the country along religious lines. Many do not know that the undivided CPI, which later split into CPI and CPI (M), supported this partition of the country. They agreed to the theory that the Hindus and the Muslims belong to two different nations. In 1946, when the proposal for partition was mooted, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Muslim League were running coalition governments in undivided Bengal, Sind and the North-West Frontier provinces. In Bengal, Fazlul Haque of Muslim League was the chief minister while Shyama Prasad Mukherjee of Hindu Mahasabha was his deputy. In 1942, Shyama Prasad Mukherjee assured the British Government of his help in suppressing the Quit India Movement. He explicitly stated that the Fazlul Haq-led Bengal government, in alliance with the Hindu Mahasabha, would actively

work to defeat the movement. This was the role of the RSS-Hindu Mahasabha from which the BJP has been formed. On the one hand, they were against the Renaissance while on the other hand, they opposed the freedom movement.

Lower caste Hindus embraced Islam to get rid of upper caste Hindu oppression— Vivekananda

I had raised one issue earlier. Today I want to reiterate that once more. Vivekananda was a true preacher of religion. If he was correct, then what would one say of the BJP? Vivekananda said: "*The Mohammedan conquest of India came as a salvation to the downtrodden, to the poor. That is why one-fifth of our people have become Mohammedans. It was not the sword that did it all...The poor wanted to be free from the clutches of the zamindars and the priests.*" He also said: "*If I had a son, I would not have given him any religious tutelage except practising concentration, one para of prayer and chanting mantras. Thereafter, in course of growing in age he would have accepted Christ, Buddha or Muhammad, whoever he would have wished to. ...It is very natural that simultaneously with full freedom and without having any conflict, my son could be a Buddhist, my wife a Christian and myself a Muslim.*" He said that we not only support all religions, we respect them, believe in them. "*We want to lead mankind to the place where there is neither the Vedas, nor the Bible, nor the Quran.*" He also said that no religion has taught to oppress or burn a woman alive. Then who has taught to oppress and suppress? Not religion but power-centric politics. Vivekananda asked to throw away all bells and other implements of worshipping god into the water. "*Millions of rupees are spent on opening and closing the gates of Kashi and Vrindavan temples. Once the god is changing clothes while at other time, he is eating rice or chiding at the sons of barren women. On the other hand, living gods are dying without food and clothes,*" he observed. He further said: "*So long the crores of Indians will remain plunged in the darkness of poverty and ignorance, I shall consider those who are educated at the cost of these myriads of poor and ignorant but do not even look at them, as traitors. ...So long twenty crores of Indians will lead life of a hungry animal, I shall call those rich who are enjoying a grandiose life by earning money through squeezing*

these hapless, as sinful rascals." Are the BJP leaders having any knowledge about this Vivekananda? In the context of the observations and teachings of Vivekananda, what would you say about the RSS-BJP leadership? Vivekananda was a believer in the Vedanta. But we are students of Marxism. So, we have a philosophical difference with him. Yet, we respect him profoundly. And by citing the observations of Vivekananda, we say that the BJP does not believe in Hinduism. And if the RSS-BJP are to be taken as correct, then we have to say that Vivekananda did not believe in Hinduism. Was not Ramkrishna a Hindu? Then how could he worship goddess Kali in a temple and at the same time offer *namaz* in a mosque and prayer in a church? He said, well someone says water, someone *jal* and someone *pani*. One says god, another Allah and another Bhagwan. But all are same. And what are the RSS-BJP doing in the country in the name of Hindutva?

Capitalism wants exacerbation of religious blindness

Reactionary capitalism today, I want to point out, is misusing religion. What is its objective? Objective of the capitalist rulers wants exacerbation of religious blindness among people. Because if religious fanaticism increases, people would believe in fate, believe that all their misery is preordained or a *fait accompli*, i.e. impossible to change. It would then be easy to convince them that their predicament is due to their sins in the previous life. Why has the son of a downtrodden succumbed to disease having been denied any medical treatment? Because the father had committed wrongs in his previous birth. Everything is pre-destined, will of the almighty. God may do as he pleases. Fact is that during our freedom movement, there had not been an uncompromising struggle against religious tutelage nor any socio-cultural movement conducive to such a struggle. So religious blindness is existing in the society. Most of the oppressed millions who are deprived of education, who, being denied justice and fairness, are ardently seeking the favour of imaginary god with the hope of receiving justice in next birth. The capitalist rulers are further fomenting such irrational thoughts to grip the mind of the poor so that the government is not held responsible for all their plight and poverty; so that they refrain from viewing ruling capitalism as enemy and hence do not put up a fight against it. And then religious blindness could be

Contd. on page 8

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

Capitalism is the root of all evils

Contd. from page 7

conveniently used to firm up fascism in the country.

Imperialism-capitalism are number one enemy of mankind today. You must have noticed that the multi-national giants are now making a decisive inroad into retail business. Monopolist sharks like the Tatas, Ambanis as well as US multinationals like Amazon, Flipkart are selling fish, meat, vegetables, fruits, edible oil, spices, groceries and other utility items from their outlets or through their home-delivery network. So, the small traders, grocery shops, stationary shops and vendors who sell such items in local markets will all be eliminated from the scene in short time. The monopoly houses and multi-nationals will fully take over retail business. Thus, big capital will knock out small capital.

Generation of war to stave off economic crisis

For the same reason, Palestine is under attack today. War against Palestine is required by US imperialism. Because war needs arms. And US would sell arms to Palestine. Plunged in growing insoluble economic crisis, US imperialism has no other way but to artificially stimulate its economy through militarization as no market other than that of military armaments is open to it. So war is needed. And with the help of Israel, US imperialism wants to large tracts of land, expand its territorial domination and establish its control over important trade routes. For this reason it wants to oust the entire Palestine nation, and the razing of Gaza strip into rubble. It is learnt that the US rulers would convert Gaza into a tourist centre. The Palestinian people who would be alive after large scale genocide orchestrated there will be driven out and sent to other countries as refugees. They have openly declared this. But alas! Not a single country is protesting against such horrendous crime.

Role of socialism against war

Had the Soviet Union and the socialist camp been in existence today, they would have raised their voice of protest against such overlordism and brigandage. Let me cite an example. Suez canal was under the ownership of companies owned by British and French imperialists. The Egyptian government nationalized that canal. Immediately, Britain and France along with Zionist Israel launched military attack on Egypt. At that time Soviet Union, which was still

somewhat under the impact of Great Stalin, warned that if the British-French troops were not withdrawn within 12 hours, it would bomb London and Paris. Soviet Union told the people of Britain and France that it had no animosity with them. But their governments have waged a war against Egypt. So, let the British and French people demand of their respective governments to stop the war. Within six hours, the British-French army wagged their tails and fled from the scene. That Soviet Union is now dismantled because of counter-revolution. After demolishing socialism, the Russian imperialists are now ruling that country. This very Russian imperialism has launched a war against Ukraine. Such local wars are going on in many parts of the world. And the imperialist powers are involved in all such wars. In fact, these are all proxy wars at their instance. These wars are necessitated to prevent imperialist economies from collapse.

Trade war is going on

Another war is going on, that is trade war. You have seen how the US President is threatening to build a tariff wall. US economy is tottering in absence of market. The imperialists are at loggerheads with each other over market—who would remove whom from which market, how to secure one's own market, which market is to be grabbed and so forth. The entire world imperialism-capitalism is in the grip of this market crisis. Why is this crisis? Because purchasing power of the common people is plummeting with every passing day. What is causing such dip in buying power? Because there are millions of unemployed and retrenched workers whose purchasing capacity is virtually nil. On the other hand, a huge section of the workers and employees are having a paltry income which falls far short of minimum purchasing capacity. This market crisis is endemic of the capitalist system.

So there is a desperate competition among the imperialists-capitalists to somehow stay alive in this more and more squeezed market. On the one hand is US imperialism while on the other hand is Chinese imperialism, its *bete noir*. Both are crossing swords. US imperialism is intimidating everyone by means of bargaining more and more commercial advantage and waiting to see if that works out. It is warning India to reduce import tariff pending which it would impose higher tariff on Indian exports to

US. If tariff is reduced on US exports to India, the Indian market will be flooded with US goods. So, the ruling Indian monopolists are negotiating with the US through the BJP government. At the same time, they are having dialogue with the European countries. Trump is trying to corner China. Thus, a tariff war is raging. Imperialism needs market for exploitation. So, the imperialists fight among themselves to snatch market. Centering on this tussle over market, both the First and the Second World Wars had broken out. The days to come will show what is the outcome of this tariff war. Because of this war, the whole world is now plunged into a grave crisis.

Capitalism is endangering climate as well

Another dangerous attack has come on mankind. Have you ever felt so much of summer heat? Even a few years back, such scorching sun and sweltering weather were not experienced. Temperature will go up further in the coming year. This is also an attack of capitalism. In order to keep cost of production down, the industrialists are releasing huge amount of greenhouse gases caring a fig for concomitant menacing change of climate.

In the factories, fossil fuels like petrol-diesel-coal are used excessively. If such excessive use of fossil fuel as well as emission of greenhouse gases is to be contained in a scientific way, production cost will go up, entailing reduction in profit. So, the industrialists are not doing that. This large scale emission of toxic greenhouse gases is causing global temperature to rise. The corporate tycoons are also destroying forest lands ignoring the warning of the scientists.

Often it is seen in the newspapers that ice formation in the Himalayas is slowing down causing glaciers to melt which in turn is causing floods and landslides, and then will decrease the water flow in the rivers. Surface temperatures of all oceans are warming at a fast rate. Warmer oceans provide extra energy to tropical cyclones and make them more frequent, and more destructive.

Also, the incidence of draught condition is on the rise as well. On the other hand, many coastal areas and even small islands are being submerged. All these are devastating the life of common people. This is another lethal attack of capitalism on human civilization. The monopolists are only after profit maximization. They have no concern for the future of mankind. Capitalism is extremely inhuman today.

Capitalism is annihilating morality

There is one more ongoing horrendous attack. That is of destroying humanness, character, ethics and morality, sense of values, sense of duty. People are being dispossessed of the ability to think rationally so that they cannot rise in protest against injustice. The ruling class is inducing the youth to become alcoholics, drug addicts, be drunk with addiction in blue films, vulgar discussion over woman physique and thereby get emasculated from within. The media do not care to provide any coverage on Vidyasagar-Rabindranath-Nazrul-Subhas Chandra Bose-Bhagat Singh and such other great men. Who is interested in their birth or death anniversaries? But the media reportage is abundant with the scandals of the film industry, which cricketer is dating whom, whose marriage has broken and such palatable stories. There is a definite design to keep the youths confined to all this trash. Right at this moment, so many girls are being raped or molested, even killed. From a six month old girl child to eighty year old woman—none is spared. Father is raping daughter, brother is outraging modesty of sister, the teacher is physically assaulting girl student. The wails of the victims are renting the air. Can you imagine to what a low the society has stooped? Such things did not happen even during ancient barbarism. No child is born as a rapist. This decrepit society is creating rapists. The youths are made to think that sex is the main objective of life. Capitalism has brought all such rotten thoughts. So, we need to be seriously worried about where is life being led to? If this ruinous capitalism persists, price rise will be unbridled, unemployment will soar, retrenchment will be at a higher rate, starvation death and child death will mount. Children will desert old parents on the streets, kill them for property or send them to old age homes. Marital life will be at stake. Are we not yearning for emancipation from all such evils?

Socialism alone can provide succour

To get rid of ruthless capitalist oppression in every sphere of life, what is needed is anti-capitalist socialist revolution. Socialism had brought a new civilization. Having witnessed that, Rabindranath had said that had he not come to the Soviet Union, his life's pilgrimage would have remained incomplete. He said: *"The new Russia is striving to uproot a huge deadly shell from the heart of human civilization and that is what is*

Contd. on page 9

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

Socialism brought a new civilization

Contd. from page 8

called greed." And he also said: "...nowhere else in the history of mankind did I observe such a permanent cause of joy and hope." Soviet socialism was acclaimed by Romain Rolland, Bernard Shaw, Einstein Saratchandra, Netaji Subhas, Bhagat Singh, Premchand, Nazrul, Subramania Bharati as dawn of a new civilization in the world. Bhagat Singh had declared himself as a communist. Subhas Chandra observed that *"the present world system can be divided into two main forces—the imperialist forces and as their counter-current the surging forces of communism. So, the defeat of Hitlerism means the establishment of communism."* This was how they viewed Soviet socialism. Soviet Union declared that no one would remain unemployed there. Everyone would get a job. According to the Soviet Constitution, everyone had the right to work. It was announced that unless one worked, one would not get food. There was the programme for social welfare. Russian workers used to have houses at minimal rent, received food and other essential items at the least price. The workers used to get electricity, fuel, water, transport and factory uniform free of cost. Russia had implemented universal education. Right from the primary stage to higher stage, education was totally free. Who drafted Soviet Constitution? Not some pedants. The draft of that Constitution was first distributed among the millions of workers and peasants who organized thousands of meetings to collectively read the draft, exchange views and then gave their opinions. Based on those opinions was authored the final Constitution. This was truly people's Constitution. It was constitutionally guaranteed that representatives of the workers and peasants could come even to the Supreme Soviet. In fact, the quota of workers and peasants was maximum in supreme Soviet. The state used to ensure that adolescent boys, girls and youths could take part in sports. As a result, performance of Soviet Union in the Olympics was superb. 16 Soviet scientists received Nobel Prize. Earlier, there was no alphabet of 30 languages. The linguists under Soviet leadership created those alphabets and thus boosted development of the respective mother tongues of various nationalities. Soviet Union comprised various nationalities, various Union

Republics. Each of them had different constitutions, different national flags. Soviet state had granted them the right to secede, if they so wanted. If the elected representatives were found not to be working as per people's expectation, people had right to recall them any time. They did not need to wait for 5 years. Seeing such norms, principles and codes, Rabindranath had compared Soviet Union with a hermitage. He was a humanist, not a communist. Many of you might not be aware that Soviet Union, in the face of war machination of the imperialists, gave a call for total disarmament by all. It held that there was no need of arms or war. That was socialist civilization. But it was wrecked by imperialist forces from outside in league with defeated Russian bourgeoisie taking advantage of certain shortcomings within. Romain Rolland rightly observed that *"If it (Soviet Union) is crushed it would no longer be the proletariat of the world alone who would be enslaved, but all liberty, social or individual;...the world will be thrown several stages behind."* Exactly that has happened.

Either decadent moribund capitalism, the annihilator of human civilization will stay or it has to be overthrown by accomplishing anti-capitalist socialist revolution based on Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. There is no third option. Guided by the illumining thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, the great leader of the proletariat, our Party is engaged in developing the revolutionary struggle. We are organizing struggles of the working class and the struggle of impoverished peasants and middle class.

People need to understand politics

I want to emphasize on another important point. It is true that the power-greedy leaders of the vote-oriented political parties cheat people. But how could they do it? Why are you deceived repeatedly? Because you do not want to understand politics, rather stay away from it. But politics is controlling your entire life. Politics determines everything, starting from procuring items of daily use to providing education to your children, seeking medical treatment, arranging marriage of your daughter and what not. Willingly or unwillingly, you are accepting the decisions of the government, abiding by prevailing laws and also casting your vote in favour of this or that party. All these

come under the ambit of politics. You are rallying behind prevailing mainstream politics without understanding its character and thus strengthening it. But you are presuming that you are not in politics. This is akin to self-deception. Politics is driving you. But you refuse to understand its nuances. As a result, the parties subservient to capitalist rulers are taking advantage of your ignorance. Each party wears a particular mask, chants various slogans, gets huge coverage in print as well as electronic media and swayed by those, you run after them only to find that you have been outrightly duped. So, we urge you to thoroughly understand politics. Evaluate each and every party based on each one's role and performance and find out whether any of them is upholding the cause of the have-nots or not. There are only two contending forces in politics. One is for accomplishing anti-capitalist socialist revolution while all others are in servitude of capitalism—in whatever nomenclature might they be posed. Our Party is struggling to make revolution successful. You need to also examine whether our claim is correct, whether we are treading the right path or not. But how would you appraise the parties unless you cultivate politics? Only our Party in the country is emphatic in its call on the people to cultivate politics. Our Party desires that politically conscious masses themselves go to the workers and peasants and organize them in people's committees in each locality. These committees will decide whom to vote for, whom not. These committees will decide how and on what demands people's struggles are to be developed.

On R G Kar movement

We wanted that the movement seeking justice for a female doctor who was brutally killed inside the R G Kar Medical College premises be developed in this manner. Our Party never came to the forefront. We supported the movement from behind and wanted it to surge forth as a people's movement. A section of the people are suffering from despondency and asking what has the movement yielded? But is it that the movement has achieved nothing? Had the movement not surged forth, would such a big conspiracy have come to light?

The police-administration had initially tried to pass it off as a case of suicide. But how could the people come to know that it was not a suicide but a planned murder? Only because the protest movement had burst forth in time. Under pressure of this movement, the Kolkata Police

Commissioner was removed. The north and central Deputy Police Commissioners were transferred. The Principal of R G Kar Medical College and some others had to undergo jail custody. The rampant corruption in the state healthcare system was exposed. Some of the front-ranking health officials were moved out. These all hold testimony for the success of the movement, though partial.

This movement also laid bare the nasty role of the TMC-led state government in orchestrating such an organized crime and then hushing up evidences. Everyone in this state is convinced that all evidences were tampered with or removed. The people have realized this because of the movement.

At the same time, it has also come to light that the BJP-led central government in its own interest has conducted the CBI enquiry in such a way that the truth is not unravelled. Because the central government had also been afraid of the movement which spread not only throughout the country but even abroad. This movement spurred on the women hitherto humiliated, persecuted and deprived to raise their united voice of protest with indomitable fighting spirit. Thousands of women, both in rural and urban areas, came out and occupied streets at mid-night. Such was not seen even during our freedom movement. It was indeed unprecedented. Rapes and gang-rapes have become commonplace in the BJP-run states. But the offenders are moving scot-free. The waves of the R G Kar movement had reached those states as well. So, with the help of CBI, the BJP had tried to ensure fizzling out of the movement. That is why, despite creating such a hullabaloo at the outset, the BJP slowly moved out of the scene. The CPI(M) had also tried to divert the attention towards vote. But we tried to ensure that only the people's committee and the students conducted the movement, and the real culprits were arrested. We simply lent our support from behind.

All movements are not able to achieve the demands. The massive non-cooperation movement of 1922 and the Quit India movement in August 1942 could not achieve the demands, Netaji Subhas' Indian National Army could not bring about freedom of the country. The Naval mutiny of 1946 had not met with an instant success. But each and every movement paved the way for ultimate transfer of power. In fact, the very development of a movement is an immense success. People are not tolerating injustice

Contd. on page 10

First state-level students' conference was held in Puducherry on 27-05-25 in the presence of Comrades Sourav Ghosh, President



(sitting fourth from the right), and Shibasis Praharaj, General Secretary, (seating fifth from the right) respectively. A 21 member State Executive Committee with Comrades S Sarathy as President and Ranadive as General Secretary was constituted. Also present on the occasion, among others, was Comrade Lenin Durai, Puducherry State Secretary, SUCI(C).

Speech of Comrade Provash Ghosh

R G Kar movement opened a new horizon

Contd. from page 9

but raising their voice of protest, building up struggles—is it not an achievement in itself? More are the protests and resistances, more powerful will be the ability to combat. On the contrary, if, out of frustration, we allow injustice and unfairness to continue unabated, it will give a handle to the oppressors to be more ruthless in bring down onslaught on us. According to Rabindranath, those who commit injustice as well as those who tolerate it are both liable to be abhorred just like the way a thatched grass is burnt into ashes. Tolerating injustice is itself an injustice. Netaji Subhas said: *"There is no crime more heinous than to compromise with injustice and untruth."*

He further said that he fought against injustice everywhere and whatever little ability he earned was through that process. These all are valuable lessons. Comrade Shibdas Ghosh also observed that if one cannot protest against injustice, one is not fit to be called a human being.

Take initiative to strengthen SUCI(C)

So, there is no reason to be frustrated. We have to build up movement again, and proceed by drawing necessary lesson from the R G Kar movement. I appeal to you once again to understand politics. Wherever you have come from, do ask the toiling people to understand politics, to to appraise a party or a political figure. Do not get carried away by the media propaganda. Judge on your own which party is right, who is wrong. While exchanging money, don't you examine whether the currency note you have received is genuine or fake? Likewise, a party also has to be examined. And the toiling people need be organized rising above all precipitated divides based on religion, caste, race, ethnicity,

region. There is no Hindu-Muslim question in so far as development of fighting unity among the toiling millions is concerned. There are only two opposite sides—the oppressors and the oppressed, the capitalist owner and the exploited labourers. You need to cement your struggling unity accordingly.

Do strengthen our Party. I exhort the youths among you to come forward and hold aloft the noble banner of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought. We seek advice, suggestions and encouragement from the elderly people in building class and mass struggles. If our comrades make any mistake, point it out to them so that they could rectify themselves. Take this Party as yours. I would draw your attention to another disturbing feature. Under the impact of the rotten capitalist environment, children are getting spoiled, engaged in filthy talks. Please save them. Involve them in sports, in singing, acting and other cultural activities every Sunday morning. Inspire them by narrating the life and struggle of Vidyasagar, Rabindranath, Saratchandra, Nazrul, Subhas Chandra, Bhagat Singh, Chandrasekhar Azad, Premchand, Kshudiram, Pritilata, Surya Sen and such other doyens of yester years. Otherwise, the days to come will be more horrific. Definitely you would not like your children to go astray or their future to be more awful. I have already said that on the one side is complete destruction and on the other side is emancipation from all wrongs and evils. On the one side is capitalism and on the other side socialism. There is nothing in between the two. With these words, I conclude today by conveying revolutionary greetings to all of you.

IPL

Spirit of cricket replaced by spirit of speculation and profit maximization

Contd. from page 3

2013 when Delhi Police arrested three players of one franchisee team on charges of spot-fixing. It was not just a scandal—it was a rupture. Investigations revealed that the players were paid to concede runs at pre-decided moments, with bookies acting as intermediaries. The ripple effect reached another franchisee whose top official Gurunath Meiyappan, closely linked to then BCCI president N. Srinivasan, a South-India based industrialist tycoon, was accused of betting and passing team information. Though legal action was taken, with the Justice Lodha Committee eventually suspending two franchises for two years, critics argue that the rot runs deeper.

"Fixing didn't end in 2013," claims a former anti-corruption officer of the BCCI who requested anonymity. *"It only got smarter. Bookies evolved, and so did their methods— now they exploit technology, encrypted apps, and even offshore servers."*

The Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) of the BCCI claims vigilance has improved, yet a recent ICC report on betting patterns noted "abnormal spikes" in online wagers during IPL 2023—suggesting loopholes continue to remain.

Betting, Bookies, and the Underworld Connection

Despite betting on cricket being illegal in most parts of India, estimates peg the annual betting turnover during IPL at a staggering \$150 billion - much of it illicit. In 2022, the Maharashtra anti-terrorism squad unearthed a syndicate operating from Dubai and Karachi with links to D-Company - the underworld network led by fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim. *"The IPL is a goldmine for betting rings,"* says a senior Mumbai police officer. *"What makes it lucrative is its unpredictability, short format, and massive public engagement."*

Online platforms like Telegram and WhatsApp have become hotbeds for "tipsters" offering ball-by-ball odds. While players are prohibited from engaging with betting entities, enforcement remains patchy, especially at the grassroots and domestic levels—the breeding ground for future stars and potential targets.

Betting Boom and India's Lost Youth

As the IPL broadcasts flood every screen, a parallel digital economy hums beneath the surface—one of mobile apps, fantasy leagues, and betting platforms. Wagers begin at the deceptively trivial sum of Rs 49, enough to lure even

school students, college-goers, and unemployed youth. Once drawn in, the line between fandom and financial compulsion blurs. Over the course of the three-month season, entire social ecosystem bends toward the rhythm of match days and betting odds.

These young audiences, alienated from civic discourse and social engagement, are ensnared in a high-octane, gamified world in which instant gratification trumps long-term awareness. The result is not just monetary loss but a growing detachment from ground realities, turning cricket into a narcotic for a disenchanted generation.

Collapse of sports in decadent moribund capitalism

Once celebrated as a gentleman's game marked by integrity, fair play, and collective purpose, cricket has now been engulfed by the aesthetics of excess. Under the weight of late-stage capitalism, the IPL has shed the skin of sportsmanship and donned the garb of entertainment engineered for profit. Franchises operate more like stock portfolios than sporting institutions, while player auctions echo the cold calculations of asset acquisition.

Teamwork and discipline have been replaced by individual branding and contract incentives. In this transformation, cricket has ceased to be a sport—it is now a high-stakes casino, spinning on the roulette wheel of market forces, brand endorsements, and political patronage. The spirit of the game has been replaced by the spirit of speculation and profit maximization.

Save Cricket as well as entire sports arena from being consigned to doom

This expoe lays bare how dying capitalism has corroded cricket's soul-transforming a once-gentleman's game into a gaudy theatre of gambling, gimmickry, and profit-driven spectacle. Not only cricket has been defiled and degraded, even the audience is coerced to accept the mutilated formats like IPL as modernized version of the sporting events. An unholy nexus of industrial house-speculative capital-government and corrupt sports officials is controlling the field of sports. As the classical elegance of the sport, including cricket, fades beneath the din of showmanship, it is time for genuine sports lovers to reclaim its dignity. The genuine sports lovers as well as admirers of cricket's spirit must speak out-firmly and urgently—to preserve the grace, integrity, and tradition that made the game worth watching in the first place.

Resist Privatisation of Indian Railways

The Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was passed in the Lok Sabha on 11 December 2024. It has been passed in Rajya Sabha on 10 March 2025. While tabling the Bill in the Lok Sabha, Union Railway Minister stated that the Bill is designed to simplify rules and regulations. He also emphasised the Bill's potential at modernizing and streamlining railway operations across India and empowering field offices, boost efficiency, and strengthen cooperative federalism. Though he sought to clarify that the Bill would not reduce the powers of either state governments or parliament and the nature, scope, as well as functioning of the Railway Board, zones, divisions, and production units would remain unchanged, an in depth insight into the Bill as well as the government's policies on railway operation would reveal that it is nothing but a blueprint of total privatization of the Railways, the artery of the country.

Arguments advanced in support of privatization

Indian Railways was nationalized in 1951. Then existing 42 private railway companies were merged into one unit under the Ministry of Railways, forming the largest rail network in Asia and the second-largest globally under the aegis of the government. It was then argued that bringing the different railway companies under one unified entity, i.e. central government, would ensure better coordination of the railway network, especially in the context of planned post-independence economy. This move was aimed to improve efficiency, ensure timely availability of rail infrastructure, and reduce reliance on imported rolling stock. But now, following the directives of capitalist globalization, that process is reversed. Already the mainstream media has started writing articles justifying the privatization by saying that the Railways at present is inefficient, accident prone and bringing no adequate revenue for the Government to run it. In other words, it is an admission of inefficiency of the government.

History of Privatisation

Fact is that the proposal of privatizing railways was rolled out long back. In 1991 the then Finance Minister of the Congress government introduced the policy of liberalization of the Indian economy by disinvestment of government-owned industries and public utility services. On the pretext of bettering Railway service, numerous committees and panels were formed by the government to elicit a favourable recommendation to that effect. Based on the recommendations of Prakash Tandon Committee formed in 1994, the railway's own catering system was transferred to IRCTC, a government-owned company. IRCTC was also assigned catering and tourism services.

Then a Container Corporation was formed for transport of goods. Since then, many jobs, like in the railway management offices, maintenance department, repairing and cleaning services were privatized. Abolition of permanent posts and appointment of casual workers had started. The Rakesh Mohan Committee formed in 2002 during the BJP regime recommended that the commercial role and the social role of the railways need to be segregated. Based on it the part of railways which is directly connected with passenger transport and freight services were termed as

core and the other functions were designated as non-core. Many railway schools, hospitals, printing press etc. were completely closed or outsourced to private operators. Seven production units were corporatized. The Bibek Debroy Committee formed in 2015 during the present BJP regime recommended sweeping changes: from encouraging private players to run trains to eliminating the Railway Budget (hitherto placed separately) altogether, decentralize its operations. It was stated that henceforth, the focus would be on core activities and distance would be maintained from the non-core activities (such as running hospitals and schools, catering, real estate development, including housing, construction and maintenance of infrastructure, manufacturing locomotives, coaches, wagons and their parts, running a police force etc.). It was decided that shutters would be downed on the general stores in the 17 railway zones, each having to 4 thousand employees. The 7 production units including the associated workshops were proposed to be 'hived off' to the 'Indian Railway Rolling Stock Company'. The majority of the large workshops were also either handed over to private houses or closed down.

Present situation

Going a step further, presently the BJP government has allowed private companies to operate trains on certain routes and run certain services like catering and cleaning. Some railway stations are being beautified and managed through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)—an indirect mode of privatization. Services like coach washing and cleaning as well as a very crucial service like track maintenance are increasingly being outsourced to private companies. Some parts of freight operations are also being opened to private companies. The government-owned railway production units, which manufacture railway equipment, are also being considered for corporatization.

According to NITI Aayog, the Railway Ministry had decided in 2019 to bring in private operators to run passenger trains and is also contemplating to take up as many as 150 trains in the first phase, and the government is in the process of forming a task force to draw a blueprint for handing over operations of 50 railway stations to private operators in a "time-bound" manner. It is reported that the government wants to hand over running of premier trains including the Rajdhani and Shatabdi express trains to private operators, for which tenders would be floated within four months. In fact, plans are afoot to entrust the job of running trains on routes where scope for minting profit is maximum. IRCTC has already commenced running the Tejas Express, the country's first "private" train, on the Lucknow-New Delhi route. But there is every possibility of corporatizing IRCTC in no time. There are plans to hand over the railway enquiry system to private players. Private companies will also have the liberty to procure locomotives and trains from their preferred sources. All employees operating the train will be private employees, except for the loco pilots and the guards who will continue to be Railway employees. Eventually, the latter would also be under private ownership.

Plea of non-profitability

Another plea of the government in support of privatization is of recurring loss and increasing

Massive protest meeting in Bangalore

A state-level 'Janahoraata' (People's Struggle) meeting was organized in Bangalore on 14 May last by the Karnataka State Committee, SUCI(C), demanding the control of price rise, for basic facilities in



Comrade K Radhakrishna, Polit Bureau member (left) and Comrade K Uma, Central Committee member and State Secretary (right) Addressing the meeting

government hospitals, increase in the guaranteed employment wage days to 200 days, provision of a minimum support price for farmers' crops, prevention of the closure of 6000 government schools, increase in employment opportunities, and abolition of the contract system and provision of worker status to ASHA, Anganwadi, and midday meal workers, urging the central and state governments to solve the burning problems of the people. Addressing the meeting, Comrade K Radhakrishna, Polit Bureau member said: "The lives of the people of the country are in distress, and the reason for this is the governments' pro-Adani, Ambani corporate policies. A few super rich people own 60 percent of the country's wealth, while the vast majority, 55 percent of the people own only 3 percent of the wealth. The right to life of farmers and laborers are being ruthlessly snatched away. A strong struggle must be built against this exploitative system, and ultimately, struggles must be developed towards a socialist system free from exploitation and oppression."

Presiding over the protest meeting, Comrade K Uma, Central Committee member and State Secretary said that when 20 crore people in the country are suffering from malnutrition, 7000 people are dying of hunger every day, 10,000 farmers die in a year, students are committing suicide in large number, 11 women are raped every minute, sons are killing father or mother for property, prices are skyrocketing, unity among toiling people is disrupted by precipitating divide along casteist-communal lines, the government, instead of addressing the burning issues, is trying to divert attention by raising war hysteria and fanning communal-casteist divides.

operation expenditure. Nothing could be a greater falsehood than this. Indian Railways had earned Rs 2,56,093 crore in FY24 with a net total revenue of Rs 3,260 crore. Freight operations were the top earner, growing by 29%. It shows that the Indian Railway is still a profitable entity. It is argued that the operating ratio cost of the Indian Railways in 2024 stood at a 98.43% which means that it spends over Rs 98 for every Rs100 it earns and most of the revenue goes into keeping the trains running. But fact is operation ratio is increasing because of large scale pilferage of funds due to rampant corruption and theft. Still, Railways is not a loss-making operation.

Consequence of privatization spree

Hitherto, Railways were viewed as an essential public utility service. But now railways are perceived to be a lucrative service sector for profit maximization. The fares and freight charges were being periodically raised and notably before central budget through an

Contd. on page 12

Resist Privatisation of Indian Railways

Contd. from page 11

administrative fiat. But, with gradual induction of private players, fare hike is going to be a regularity.

Already train fares have become unaffordable for the majority of passengers. Many concessions such as discount available to senior citizens have been withdrawn. Refund charges, platform tickets have become costlier. All passenger trains are just changed to express trains without any change of the dilapidated conditions of the rakes, unclean toilets, shortage of water, passenger amenities, timings, number of stoppages etc. and thus charged express train fares. Number of general compartments is reduced, and reserve compartments are increased. Premium high speed trains are exorbitantly costly. No ordinary Indian can dream of riding much-touted Bande Bharat trains. Now bullet trains are in the offing. Passengers have already started bearing extra charges for additional baggage, preferred seating, on-board services etc. With all-out privatization, large part of the population will lose access to railway services because of steep rise in fares. Private train operators would have freedom to decide passenger fare and other charges. The trains may be cancelled if there are not enough passengers, as has happened due to the pandemic.

The government is also on the path of selling the key assets and services to private houses and intending to hand over the vast land owned by the railways adjacent to train platforms, in railway-run schools, hospitals, staff quarters and officers' bungalows in all the cities and towns across India at prime locations. Monopoly houses now want to convert all land resources into thriving real estate business. It is moved to handover the public property to private parties.

The real intention was gradually to privatise the Indian Railways. According to the Railway Land Development Authority (RLDA), the nodal rail organisation that has the mandate to

commercially monetise rail land. Another area is safety which is now highly compromised making accidents frequent. No effective step is taken to improve safety measures, track maintenance etc. as private operators entrusted with the job are not supervised by the authorities. Over the last five years, 351 persons died and 970 were injured in 200 major railway accidents, data shared by the Indian Railways from 17 railway zones reveals. The private owners work with the sole motive of making maximum profit and that is why the first casualty of privatisation is safety of all assets and train journey.

As a result of privatization of the railways and outsourcing the number of employees has drastically reduced from more than 22 lakh to about 12 lakh. It has started to retrench about 3 lakh of railway employees who have served for more than 30 years or have attained the age of 55 years. An RTI query has revealed that more than 3.1 lakh posts out of 14.75 lakh Group C posts and 3,018 out of the sanctioned 18,881 gazetted cadre positions are lying vacant in various departments of Indian railways. But the government is deliberately not filling these posts, to create a ground for privatisation. When a country is facing the highest rate of unemployment since independence, the privatization of the railways will add fuel to the fire.

Reality is conveniently shielded

The government is trying to fool the people saying that the new Railway (Amendment) Bill is not a passport to whole hog privatization. It has also been hiding the harmful effects of privatisation. However, life experience in our country as well as in other countries exposes these claims to be completely false. Our experience shows that the quality of many of the rail related services have deteriorated after being taken over by private entrepreneurs. The government has been further claiming that it does not have enough funds to modernise Indian Railways and therefore both Indian and foreign private capital has to be attracted by offering them attractive terms for investment. The very same Ministry of Finance has no problems in allocating funds for

recapitalisation of public sector banks, waiving huge tax defaults to large corporates and wealthy tax evaders or providing tax concessions of Rs 16 lakh crore rupees in the last decade for the benefit of the capitalist class!

It is pertinent to mention that the experience of the privatisation of British Rail showed how private rail operators start pocketing huge government subsidies while passengers end up paying much higher fares. After over 25 years of privatization, an opinion poll in Britain showed that 75% of the people wanted re-nationalisation of British Rail. Privatisation was ultimately reversed in Argentina in 2015, with the creation of a new public sector rail company which took over the entire rail system.

Privatization of railways can never be permitted

The Indian Railways has been built with the sweat and blood of lakhs of workers over the last 165 years. Indian people's money has been used to create assets valued around Rs. 60 lakh crores over the years. Indian Railways has played a vital role in the social and economic development and progress of India. It is the prime mode of transport for passengers and freight traffic. It brings people together from the farthest corner of the country preserving unity and integrity by linking together cities, regions of the entire country and also contributes to conducting various economic activities. As mentioned above, the entire infrastructure of the railways such as the railway tracks; signalling system, buildings, platforms etc. were developed with public money. Now the profit-hungry corporates and multi-nationals will enjoy the fruits of it without making any investments. Does the government have any moral right to hand over these public assets to private parties? This is totally against the interest of the common people. In fact, railway employees have a history of glorious trade union movements, like the 1974 strike. If the future of railways and their employees is to be saved; a united powerful sustained conscious movement of the employees and the passengers is the need of the hour to stop the privatization of Indian railways.

Release of the Draft People's Education Policy 2025 An Alternative to Ruinous NEP 2020

Eminent educationists, intellectuals and renowned education-loving personalities who have long been protesting against the devastating National Education Policy 2020 under the banner of All India Save Education Committee (AISEC), a people's committee formed to raise organized voice of

Dwarbhanga, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Guwahati, Agartala, Shillong, Hyderabad, Anantapur (Andhra Pradesh), Bengaluru, Kochi and Chennai.

The present central government, which also was in power in 2020 adopted the National

The central government sought feedback from the citizens, but it took no note of the concerns of the stakeholders. Without paying any heed to the leading intellectuals, educationists, students and education loving people of the country in general the central government has been forcibly imposing the policy on the states, an action that the Supreme Court recently disapproved. The All India Save Education Committee being of the firm opinion that it will destroy the entire education system in India has been at the forefront of the struggle against the NEP 2020.

While releasing the draft policy the AISEC leaders said "we place the Draft PEP for nation-wide discussions and deliberations. Unlike the NEP 2020 which was imposed from above, AISEC believes in finalization of the Alternative Education Policy by taking due opinion of different sections of the people and then, based on the inputs so received, would improve the draft.

AISEC proposes that after incorporating the inputs, a final policy document "People's Education Policy - An Alternative to the NEP 2020" will be prepared. The central government did not place it in the parliament but the AISEC will place it before a National People's Parliament to be called for the purpose in January 2026 in Bengaluru. Once the final Alternative People's Education Policy is ready, AISEC proposes to submit the People's Education Policy to the central and state governments and demand its implementation within a stipulated time-frame.



Kolkata



Delhi

protest, have now released a Draft People's Education Policy 2025 (PEP) - An Alternative to NEP 2020 on 22 May, the birth day of Raja Rammohan Roy, the pioneer of Indian renaissance who paved the way for modern education in India. On this occasion press conferences were held simultaneously in 19 cities like New Delhi, Ludhiana, Ahmedabad, Bhopal, Pratapgarh (UP), Dalhousie (Himachal Pradesh), Patna, Muzaffarpur,

Education Policy 2020 during Covid 19 pandemic when the country was under a complete lockdown. The adoption was through a cabinet decision avoiding placement on the floor of the parliament for meaningful debate and discussion on such a crucial policy framework. Although education is under the Concurrent List, the state governments were never consulted before formulating the policy.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH