

## Save the Republic, Save the Constitution Before they are lost

On the 26th of January, 1950, India would be a democratic country in the sense that India from that day would have a government of the people, by the people and for the people... What would happen to her democratic constitution? Will she be able to maintain it or will she lose it again?" Dr BR Ambedkar, the prime architect of our Constitution voiced his fear in these words on November 25, 1949 during his last address to the Constituent Assembly of India. This fear of Dr Ambedkar reverberates among the people when we see our Constitution and its core values of secularism, welfare state and federalism under threat.

**On this Republic Day, as we celebrate the 75th year of our Republic while also observing the centenary of the foundation of the CPI, it is a moment for deep reflection on the legacy of our Constitution, the values it upholds and the current challenges we face as a nation and ideologically driven political party. This is also an occasion to renew our commitment to the Constitution of India, which is a beacon of hope, crafted with great foresight by our founding fathers to ensure democracy, justice, secularism, socialism and equality for all citizens.**

However, today, we stand at a crossroads, confronted with serious threats to the very principles that define the Republic and shape our collective future. The Communist Party of India has always been at the forefront of defending the core values of the Constitution. From the independence struggle to post-

independence politics, the CPI has worked tirelessly to ensure that the rights of the people, especially the marginalised, are upheld. Our vision for India has always been rooted in social justice, equality and secularism and we have consistently fought for policies that benefit the toiling masses, be they workers, peasants, women or minorities. The Constitution of India was an embodiment of this vision, and we, as a party, have made it our mission to safeguard it and its values.

The CPI's contributions to the formation of India's Constitution are crucial in understanding how our party has consistently fought for the values enshrined in the living document. During the freedom struggle, we were among the first to call for a vision of India that was not only free from colonial rule but also free from the shackles of caste, class and religious



*D. Raja*

oppression. The CPI was a firm proponent of a secular state – one that would ensure equal treatment for all religions, ensuring no particular religion to dominate the political or social landscape. This vision was shared by many of the framers of the Constitution, including Dr. BR Ambedkar, Jawaharlal Nehru, Maulana Azad and others who emphasised the importance of religious freedom and equal treatment of all citizens irrespective of their faith. Dr. Ambedkar emphatically rejected the idea of theocratic nation and theocratic state. He wrote "If Hindu raj does become a fact, it will no doubt be the greatest calamity for the country."

At the same time,

socialism was also a key aspect of our vision for an independent India. The CPI had a significant influence on the drafting of the Constitution, advocating for the inclusion of principles of social justice, equitable distribution of resources and the protection of the working class. The Directive Principles of State Policy, which call for the reduction of inequalities in income and wealth, were influenced by socialist ideals and were crafted to guide the future actions of the government. The aim was not just political independence but also economic and social justice. Considering India's rich diversity, the framers of the Constitution gave us a federal polity. The CPI was also in the lead here by forcefully raising the demand for linguistic

states and decentralisation of power. The principles of secularism, welfarism and federalism were thus woven into the very fabric of the Indian state. But as we look around us today, we find that these principles are increasingly under threat.

The Constitution of India lays down a framework for a secular state – a state where religion does not interfere in governance, where the state treats all religions equally. However, over the past few years, we have witnessed alarming shifts in this regard. The rise of religious majoritarianism, where political power is used to favor one religion over others, is one of the most serious threats to the Republic today. This

*On Page 10*  
*New Age Weekly*



The economy in our country has been sliding down even deeper for unfolding months of 2025. Data predicts further sliding to be a four year low of 6.4 per cent in 2024–25, mainly on account of a poor showing in the manufacturing and services sectors, according to government data released on January 8, 2025.

These are all symptoms of growing crisis of corporate capitalism in India. There is huge concentration of wealth and capital in a few hands led by Ambani and Adani. The small and medium enterprises that contribute maximum to national economy as well as creation of employment are in deeper crisis and are getting destroyed. This situation has emerged because India has been allowed to become a play ground for the finance capital, which is nothing but merger of banking and industrial capital. The classical procedure of the evolution of capital as defined first by Karl Marx was that a stage comes when capital takes the form of fictitious capital, that is money generated by money instead of production. It leads to poor performance of manufacturing and services sectors, while monopolization opens its wings. It leads to concentration of wealth and capital.

With the rise of finance capital, a tendency develops to go away from production into speculation. In other words capital develops a tendency to derive profits from money circulation or money from more money rather than from production and services. That is why Marx termed such capital as fictitious capital, because it is less and less available for productive investment. This leads to growing speculation.

What is even more worrisome is that many economists believe that data is manipulated and figures fudged under the Narendra Modi regime. In this situation it becomes impossible to understanding the crisis in full measure. It is, therefore, likely that the projection made in the first advance estimates of national income for 2024–25 released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) may not be the real scenario in the country. The situation may well be much

## India Faces Severe Economic Crisis

worse. The government should understand that the economy needs serious remedial measures rather than data manipulation and distraction.

The first advance estimates of national income for 2024–25 released by the National Statistics Office (NSO) is lower than the 6.6 per cent projected by the Reserve Bank in December 2024. It is also quite lower than the finance ministry's initial projection of 6.5–7 per cent. The advance estimates will be used in preparing the union budget to be presented by finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman in the Lok Sabha on February 1 and that will come with further speculation.

The economic growth slowed to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent during the



July–September 2024 period. It was 6.7 per cent in the first quarter (April–June). The manufacturing sector's output is expected to decelerate to 5.3 per cent from a high of 9.9 per cent recorded in the previous fiscal, the NSO said. The services sector, comprising trade, hotels, transport and communications, is estimated to expand at only 5.8 per cent, as against 6.4 per cent in 2023–24.

So far as the farm sector spread out in the agrarian areas are concerned, it is estimated to record a growth of 3.8 per cent in the current fiscal, up from 1.4 per cent in 2023–24. 'Real GDP has been estimated to grow by 6.4 per cent in FY 2024–25 as compared to the growth rate of 8.2 per cent in the provisional estimate (PE) of GDP for FY 2023–24,' the NSO said.

Nominal GDP is likely to grow at 9.7 per cent in 2024–25, against 9.6 per cent in 2023–24. According to the data, nominal GDP (the GDP at current prices) is estimated to attain a level of Rs 324.11 lakh crore in 2024–25, compared to Rs 295.36 lakh crore in 2023–24.

The urban economy is grappling with the dual challenge of high inflation and slowing credit growth. The Reserve Bank of India's recent data indicates consumer confidence has moderated in urban areas, while growth in retail credit, which has a larger footprint in the urban economy, has slowed.

Further, per the NSO, the nominal gross value added (GVA) is estimated to attain a level of Rs 292.64 lakh crore in 2024–25, against Rs 267.62 lakh crore in 2023–24, showing a growth rate of 9.3 per cent. Private final consumption expenditure (PFCE) at constant prices has witnessed a growth rate of 7.3 per cent during 2024–25, over the growth rate of 4 per cent in the previous financial year.

The government's final consumption expenditure (GFCE) at constant prices has rebounded to a growth rate of 4.1 per cent, compared to the growth rate of 2.5 per cent in the previous fiscal. The NSO also said the per capita income (at current prices) is estimated to have increased by 8.7 per cent to Rs 2,00,162 per annum. It was Rs 1,84,205 in the preceding fiscal.

Income support for India's poor, higher MGNREGA wages and increased minimum support prices (MSPs) were the need of the hour and demanded a drastic simplification of the "comically complex" GST regime as well as Income Tax relief for the middle class.

The advance estimates released by the Union government for GDP growth in the 2024–25 financial year projected a mere 6.4 per cent growth.

This is a four-year low, and a sharp deceleration compared to the 8.2 per cent growth recorded in FY24 (2023–24). It is even lower than the recent RBI estimate of 6.6 per cent growth, which itself marked a reduction from the earlier projection of 7.2 per cent. In a few short weeks, the bottom has fallen out of the Indian economy, with the all-important manufacturing sector simply refusing to expand as it should.

## CPI Candidates File Nominations for Delhi Elections

On January 16, 2025, Comrade Shijo Varghese, the CPI candidate and youth leader, filed his nomination papers for the West Delhi district's AC 31 Vikaspuri

Assembly elections. The event was attended by Comrade Shankar Lal, Executive Secretary of the CPI Delhi State Secretariat; Kehar Singh, a senior leader from West Delhi; Surjeet Gandhi;

and several prominent figures, including Amutha Jaydeep, a student leader from Jawaharlal Nehru University and former JNUSU Joint Secretary, along with Mohsina

Mohammed, a student leader from Delhi University's AISF. Also present were various other student leaders from AISF, Shijo Varghese's family, and notable citizens of

Vikaspuri.

The CPI candidate for the Adarsh Nagar Vidhansabha (AC 4) in the North Delhi district, Comrade Sanjeev Kumar Rana, who is also the District Secretary of CPI



# Industrial Growth at What Cost?

Corporate sector pitching for an increase in the working hours and paying less wages, disproportionate to the value of their labour, sends a terrifying message that character of the Indian economy is experiencing changes and has come full circle to acquire the silhouette of the capitalist industrial relation.

Karl Marx believed that capitalists exploit workers by making them work more hours than necessary to produce their labour power. The captains of industry are exactly arguing for it. None of the corporate honchos or capitalists has come on record whether the salaries and wages of the employees and labourers would be increased or commensurate with the increase in the working hours. Their stance ratifies the tenet that the dispute over working time was a central dynamic of capitalism.

The captains of the Indian industries are clamouring for increasing the working hours to 70 hours, some even pleading for 90 hours. Obviously the worker would be forced to sacrifice his family life and leisure time for the sake of the growth of the industrial unit. It is irony to witness that manufacturing has been steadily on decline, with gross value added (GVA) per establishment falling 6.7 per cent in 2023-24 over 2022-23, and GVA per worker decreasing 4.2 per cent over the same period. According to a fact sheet of the Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector (ASUSE), this indicates reduced productivity at both organisational and individual levels.

Arun Srivastava

than rural areas. Women have higher unemployment rates in urban areas than in rural areas.

While capitalist countries generally have shorter working hours than developing countries and in recent years even some of them have further decreased the working hours in recent years, the Indian honchos have been craving to increase the working hours. In developed or capitalist

manufacturing. Manufacturers are for tangible transformation of raw materials into finished products, managing the entire lifecycle with precision while trading companies act as vital intermediaries, facilitating connections between manufacturers and buyers. In the quest to become highly developed nation, the corporate sector has also opted for short cut. Instead of investing in manufacturing, it is for making profit through trading.

is the lower upfront investment compared to manufacturing. In today's globalized economy, the distinction between manufacturers and trading companies is pivotal for businesses engaged in sourcing and procurement.

In 2019, the National Statistical Office of the Government of India published a report "Time Use in India-2019" which revealed a startling reality - male urban workers aged 15-59 years spend an average of 521 minutes a day, or 60 hours and 47 minutes a week, on direct employment and related activities. This demolishes the myth of the legally stipulated 48-hour workweek. Similarly, rural women of the same age group spend an average of 13 hours a day on paid and unpaid work, indicating the stark reality of their daily lives.

Nevertheless Narendra Modi's pro-capitalist government, promoting their interests, suppressed the findings of the report, as a result it could not be discussed and debated in political circle. The extension of working hours has disastrous consequences with multiple grievances, reminiscent of the historic struggle and sacrifices made by workers in America 137 years ago in 1886. They stormed the streets for the right to 8 hours of work, 8 hours of leisure, and 8 hours of rest - a fight that earned the right for the entire working class of the world.

On Page 12

New Age Weekly



completely finish the Indian working class, which under the rule of saffron ecosystem is perceived as major stumbling block in their path of growth and expansion.

Indian labour market is in bad state. It faces acute challenge of high unemployment especially among younger people. The unemployment rate for people aged 15 and above is 3.2 per cent. The unemployment rate for people aged 15 to 29 is 10.2 per cent. Urban areas have higher unemployment rates

countries with the rise in incomes, the worker can afford more leisure time. This is certainly not the case with India and its labour force. The concept of the leisure time is a skewed idea.

Do these bosses believe that they can multiply their profit by increasing the working hours? There's a link between national income and average working hours. The corporate sector has changed its attitude and approach towards business. It is not willing to invest huge money in

Trading companies act as intermediaries between manufacturers and buyers. They facilitate the sourcing and distribution of products. They often maintain a diverse product catalogue sourced from multiple factories. At present, Chinese products have flooded the Indian market. Indian corporate sector is not so keen to creating unique products tailored to market needs as it costs much. But in the case of trading, the profit is quite high and one of the primary advantages



## Job Generation must have Priority in 2024-25 Budget

# Central TUs, Employers Agree on Higher Funds for Schemes

**Prioritizing employment generation and increasing funds for employment guarantee schemes have unquestionably emerged as the top priority during pre-budget consultations of Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman for the Union Budget 2025-26, both with the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) and India Inc.**

The confederation of Indian Industry (CII) urged the Union Government to prioritize employment generation and formulating an integrated National Employment Policy to unify the numerous employment focused initiatives currently under various ministries and state governments. Their suggestion has acquired a special significance since India has lost the current financial year without the Employment Linked Incentive (ELI) scheme announced in the Union Budget 2024-25 did not even take off yet.

The joint platform of the 10 Central Trade Unions (CTUs), which included AITUC, HMS, CITU, INTUC, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC, also demanded enhancement of allocation for the employment guarantee schemes while increasing the work days from 100 to 200. Ten CTUs, barring the BMS, suggested the

government look for avenues for resource mobilisation, such as from inheritance tax. They also wanted the government to take such steps that would lessen the burden on common people. One of the suggestions was easing the goods and services tax (GST). The joint platform of 10 CTUs submitted to Union Minister of Finance Nirmala Sitharaman also proposed raising of income tax rebate for salaried class. They also demanded repeal of the controversial four labour codes, which the Union Government want to implement in the financial year 2025-26. They also demanded scrapping of the new pension scheme. Nevertheless, CTUs seemed disappointed which was obvious in their statement which read, "Not only our suggestions and demands are ignored, the government has been implementing policies diametrically opposite to those suggested by the unions, bypassing all tripartite, bipartite democratic mechanisms and institutions."

CTUs once again said that the government has been sidelining not only the Central Trade Unions but also the Indian Labour Conference, which is the highest tripartite body of the country on labour issue. "It is going to be one

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decade since the highest tripartite forum, the Indian Labour Conference (ILC) has been called under the NDA governments," they said. The joint platform of the CTUs also called for the setting up of social security fund to provide universal social security schemes to include all unorganized workers. They demanded a minimum pension of Rs 9000 per month linked with Dearness Allowance along with other medical and educational benefits. Even the government supported BMS has suggested a minimum pension of Rs 5000 per month, saying that it could be followed by a 50 per cent of minimum wages notified and link it with variable Dearness Allowance. It is worth noting that India currently pays minimum of Rs 1000 only under the Employees' Pension Scheme.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) on the other hand urged the Union Government to prioritize employment generation, implementation of labour reforms, and urgent steps for increased women workforce participation in the forthcoming Union Budget 2025-26. CII has emphasized on the need to align employment

generation with higher productivity. It also suggested establishment of an expert committee to analyze productivity metrics and to recommend appropriate solution to the problem. CII also advocated for a single integrated employment portal under the National Career Service (NCS), enhanced with a Universal Labour Information Management System (ULIMS). The idea was that such a system would be able to provide detailed insights into job opportunities, skills demand, and training programmes aligned to future projections for the country.

The confederation representatives also emphasized on boosting job creation, for which they suggested a new section replacing Section 80JJA to incentivise new employment. It was a clear case of theirs not being happy with the ELI scheme announced in the Union Budget 2024-25, but is yet to take off. Neither the government is ready with ELI scheme details, nor the EPFO is ready with the digital system it required to implement the scheme. Moreover, employer companies are still hesitant to join the scheme. Their proposal includes a tax deduction for business hiring new employees, applicable for the first three years of

employment, capped at Rs1 lakh per month per employee. They also demanded targeted support for labour-intensive sectors such as construction, textiles, tourism, and low-skilled manufacturing. CII has made special emphasis on aligning tariff structures, Production Linked Incentive (PLI) schemes, and Free Trade Agreements (FTAs) to boost export from labour-intensive industries. They said that such steps would generate employment. Federation has also suggested internship programme in government offices, formalisation of care economy, economic empowerment of women, and addressing low female workforce participation in the country.

CII also recommended rolling out labour codes with a focus on providing social security for gig and platform workers, further strengthening the employment landscape. Union Budget 2025-26 therefore needs balancing act on implementation of labour codes, while focussing on generation of decent jobs, social security for workforce, and increased funding for employment guarantee scheme for the rural areas. To give relief to urban workforce, the Budget must also launch urban employment guarantee scheme.



# Centre Invites Farmers for Talks, Averts great Crisis

True to their word, after the Centre's invite for talk, 121 farmers sent their fast-unto-death hunger strike at Khanauri border of Punjab and Haryana on November 19, while their leader Jagjit Singh Dallewal who has been on fast-unto-death hunger strike since November 26, 2024, has agreed to take treatment to pave the way for fruitful talk. An immediate crisis has thus been averted, but the farmers' predicaments are far from over. February 14 is decided for talk, and the Centre and the Farmers' unions are getting ready for tough negotiations.

The Centre led by PM Narendra Modi has not been ready even for talk with agitating farmers, though they have been on sit-in protest on Khanauri and Shambhu borders since long. When the farmer leader Dallewal completed 50 days on fast-unto-death without being successful in opening the door of the Centre for a talk, 111 farmers came forward to join the fast-unto-death on January 15, 2025, turning the scene at Khanauri border very pathetic. Two days after, they were later joined on January by 10 more farmers, this time from Haryana on fast-unto-death. It worked, and the Centre finally agreed for talk.

Farmer leaders consider it only a step forward. "It is not a big

victory for us, but we were successful in getting a shut door open," said a farmer leader from Punjab Kaka Singh Kotra on Centre's invite. Joint Secretary of the Department of Agriculture and Farmer Welfare Priya Ranjan had met Dallewal on Saturday, January 18, and invited him for talks on February 14 at Mahatma Gandhi State Institute of Public Administration, Chandigarh and hoped Dallewal "ends his fast and participate in the talks."

Farmer leaders had demanded for early date for talk, but the officials told them that ministers and officers had been deputed for the Republic Day functions on January 26, and the model code of conduct for Delhi elections are in force until February 9. Farmer leaders agreed for first round of talk in Chandigarh, but has demanded next round meetings in Delhi.

Nevertheless, farmers' unions are getting themselves ready for another round of intense agitation to press on their demands, chiefly for legal guarantee for MSP for their crops. They have decided to march for Delhi for the fourth time since December 6, 2024, from Shambhu border on January 21. A group of 101 farmers are getting ready for that. They are also preparing for their

January 26 tractor march to Delhi.

This is the second leg of farmers movement since February 13, 2024 on the joint call from Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) (non-political) and Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM). Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) and umbrella organization of hundreds of farmers unions, which led the first leg of farmers' agitation in 2020-21 resulting in withdrawal of the three controversial farm laws by PM Narendra Modi, has welcomed the Union government's proposal of talks with farmers as a great victory. SKM said in a statement that the government was forced to hold discussions due to the farmers' growing unity. "The continuous efforts made by SKM leaders for farmers' unity and pan-India agitation against the anti-farmer union government has forced the Govt. to retract from its divisive strategy, it said in a statement.

SKM has also called upon all farmers to "respond and rise in protest" against the Union government and force it to "roll back its anti-farmer policies" adding that the National Policy Framework on Agriculture Marketing (NPFAM) is a new attempt to bring back the repealed controversial farm

laws. They are preparing for their tractor rallies on January 26, while their general body meeting will be held in New Delhi on January 24.

In the meantime, farmers leader Dallewal has made it clear that he would continue his fast-unto-death until the farmers' demands, including the legal guarantee for MSP were met. Four rounds of talks between Centre and agitating farmers in February 2024 had not yielded any agreement. Since then, the Centre was unwilling for any further talk.

Though the Centre has invited the farmers' leaders for talks on February 14, but no great hope has been generated among farm leaders, about the real intention of the Union Government. Both the SKM, and SKM (non-political) have already decided to jointly protest against the Centre's new draft NPFAM, alleging that Modi government has been trying to bring the repealed controversial farm laws through this policy. They said that the centre is planning to transfer control of agricultural land, farming, the food supply chain and national food security to a few corporate entities.

In the power corridor of New Delhi, officials are preparing themselves altogether skipping the issue of

"legal guarantee to MSP" but to focus on "assuring MSP benefit" to maximum number of farmers across the country on the line of the draft NPFAM. Talks may focus on strengthening procurement mechanism.

An inter-ministerial team will talk to various groups of farmers to establish a "unified national market for agricultural produce" through bringing all states on board, as envisaged by the draft NPFAM, which has already been rejected by farmers unions and the Government of Punjab.

Assurance given to the agitating farmers by the Union Government in December 2021, was only "to find a way to ensure MSP for farmers across the country" and therefore the Centre is getting itself ready for this only, but not for the "legal guaranty for MSP" which is the chief demand of farmers.

Centre is also waiting for the report of the five-member committee constituted by the Supreme Court in September 2024, which have been talking to SKM (non-political) and KMM for a solution to the problem. It should be noted that Dallewal had originally given the proposal that he would take medical help during his fast-unto-death if Centre would be ready for a talk. Later other farmers who joined the fast-unto-death had also promised to end their hunger strike on the same condition.

## CPI Reiterates its Solidarity with People of Cuba

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued January 17, 2025, the following statement:

The Communist Party of India (CPI) reiterates its unwavering solidarity with the people of Cuba and underscores the critical importance of continued support for their sovereignty and resilience. Cuba has long been a beacon of socialist principles, standing firm against decades of external

aggression, economic blockades, and imperialist interference.

President Biden's recent decision to modestly ease restrictions on Cuba is a step in the right direction but falls short of addressing the deep injustices caused by the decades-long US embargo. These measures should be further expanded to allow Cuba to develop free from external constraints. The US must respect the right of the Cuban people to

self-determination and cease all forms of intervention that undermine their independence.

The potential return of President Donald Trump to power raises significant concerns. Under his administration, the US reinstated harsh sanctions on Cuba, reversed the progress made under President Obama, and tightened the blockade to unprecedented levels. A renewed Trump administration could

bring back these draconian measures, intensifying hardship and attempting to isolate Cuba further on the global stage.

CPI strongly condemns any moves that perpetuate imperialist domination and urges all progressive forces worldwide to stand in solidarity with Cuba. The international community must hold the US accountable for its policies that harm nations striving for

sovereignty and social justice.

We call upon all democratic and progressive forces, and peace-loving individuals to join hands in opposing imperialist aggression and ensuring that Cuba continues to thrive as an example of resistance and socialism.

In unity lies our strength. Let us stand with Cuba today and always.

## CPI on Imperialist, Reactionary Doctrine of President Trump

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued January 21, 2025 the following statement:

Donald Trump's inaugural speech marks a troubling shift in global politics, reflecting overt imperialism and a vision to consolidate American dominance at the expense of international cooperation and equity.

Trump's rhetoric

promotes unilateralism, undermining principles of mutual respect, sovereignty, and international law, which threaten global stability. Protectionist economic policies, like tariffs, aim to weaponize trade against developing nations, exacerbating global inequality and systemic exploitation.

The administration's denial of climate change and rollback of environmental protections endanger

ecosystems and disproportionately harm vulnerable communities, especially in the Global South. Additionally, the dismissal of gender equality and perpetuation of patriarchal narratives pose serious threats to social justice.

Trump's rhetoric also demonizes immigrants, fostering fear and division. Such policies risk heightening xenophobia, eroding

migrant rights, and undermining diversity and inclusion. Aggressive stances toward Latin America, especially Cuba, signal continued imperialist interventionism, threatening the self-determination of nations.

CPI cautions the Indian government to engage with the US administration by prioritizing national interests, asserting strategic autonomy, and advocating for multilateralism and an

equitable global order. India must resist external pressures and ensure its domestic priorities remain uncompromised in the face of shifting US policies.

The CPI also calls upon the people of India to remain vigilant about the new US administration and to strengthen the anti-imperialist solidarity movement to ensure that the government of India does not succumb to US pressure.

## CPI Welcomes Truce between Israel and Hamas

The National Secretariat of the Communist Party of India issued on January 20, 2025 the following statement:

The Communist Party of India (CPI) welcomes the announcement of a truce between Israel and Hamas. This step, though overdue, is a necessary move

towards alleviating the immediate suffering of innocent civilians caught in the ongoing conflict.

The CPI reiterates its firm demand for the complete withdrawal of Israeli forces from all occupied Palestinian territories, including the illegally annexed lands in the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Syrian Golan Heights.

We urge the international community to hold Israel accountable for the ongoing genocide and humanitarian catastrophe in Gaza. The indiscriminate attacks on civilians, destruction of homes, and the targeting of critical infrastructure amount to crimes against humanity. Justice must be pursued for the

victims, and reparations must be provided to the affected families.

The CPI reaffirms its unwavering commitment to the two-state solution as the only viable path to a just and lasting peace in the region and is the only way to the recognition of a sovereign, independent, and contiguous Palestinian

state with East

Jerusalem as its capital, existing alongside Israel in peace and security. The Communist Party of India stands in unflinching solidarity with the people of Palestine in their rightful struggle for self-determination and the establishment of their own homeland.



## India's Toxic Work Culture: Slave Drivers?

In India, the conversation around work culture often revolves around long hours, with many corporate leaders encouraging employees to work 70 to 90 hours a week. This push for excessive work hours is justified as necessary for the country's economic growth, but it raises serious questions about labour exploitation and the overall well-being of workers.

**Communists argue that long working hours are a result of capitalist exploitation, where the capitalist class maximizes profits by extracting surplus labour from the working class. Karl Marx emphasized that workers produce more value than they are compensated for, and this surplus is appropriated by capitalists. Communist ideologies have historically advocated for shorter working hours and better working conditions to improve the quality of life for workers. In a communist system, the means of production are collectively owned, and the focus shifts from profit maximization to meeting societal needs, aiming to balance work and leisure.**

However, in today's corporate India, the focus is often on the sheer number of hours worked rather than the quality or productivity of that work. Big company CEOs and chairmen expect workers, especially younger employees, to sacrifice their time for the sake of "national progress." In this environment, long hours are viewed as a badge of honour, but this mentality often hides the fact that companies are extracting more labour from employees without compensating them fairly.

A recent example of this attitude came from S.N. Subrahmanyam, the chairman of L&T, who made a controversial

statement about working 90 hours a week. His comment sent shockwaves through the country, sparking outrage and debate. For many, this was not just about working longer hours, but about the larger issue of unhealthy work culture in India. Subrahmanyam's remark exposed a deeper truth: in India's corporate world, work is often seen as a test of endurance, rather than an opportunity for personal development or

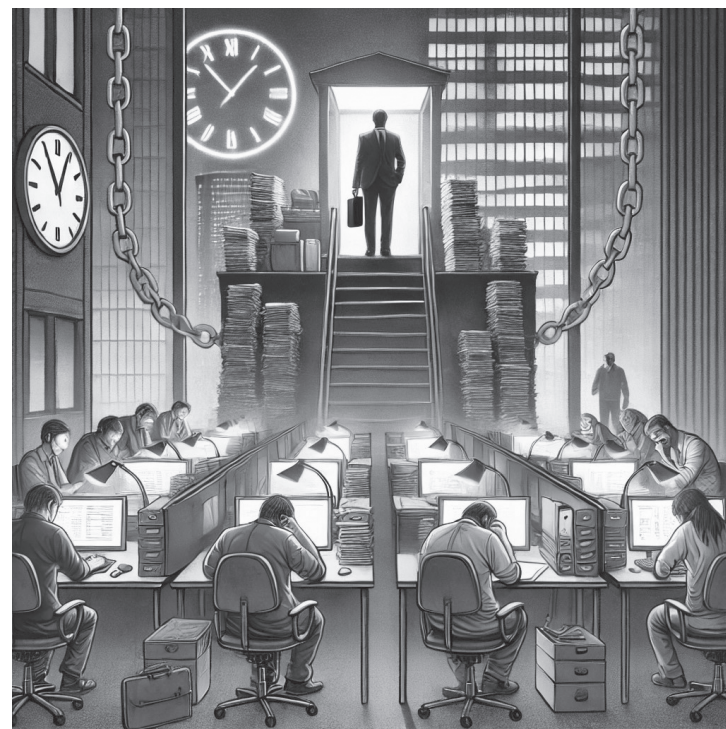
valid, his solution – demanding longer work hours – fails to address the underlying causes of inefficiency and does not offer fair compensation for the workers who are expected to meet these demands.

The problem goes beyond just long hours. It's about the fundamental imbalance between the efforts of workers and the rewards they receive. Subrahmanyam's comments about working on Sundays, for example, didn't include any mention of additional compensation for the extra time employees would be expected to put in. Moreover, there is a stark contrast between

additional labour they provide. This disparity becomes even more glaring when we consider that while CEOs continue to earn millions, the median salary for employees often remains stagnant or grows at a slower rate. In a functioning economy, productivity gains should lead to higher wages for workers, but in India's corporate culture, this is not the case.

The issue is not just about corporations; it's about broader societal norms. In India, there is an unhealthy obsession with long hours in both work and education. Many people believe that the number of hours spent on work or study determines success. Whether it's a corporate job or an academic pursuit, long hours are often seen as proof of hard work and dedication. However, this focus on hours worked rather than on productivity or creativity is deeply flawed. This culture of "endurance" often leads to burnout, poor mental and physical health, and reduced efficiency.

This obsession with hours worked can have severe consequences for both individuals and society. Overworked employees are more likely to suffer from stress, mental health problems, and physical health issues. Ironically, while many companies claim to be focusing on growth and development, they fail to realize that overworked employees are less productive and less innovative. By prioritizing quantity over quality, they undermine the very goals they claim to pursue.

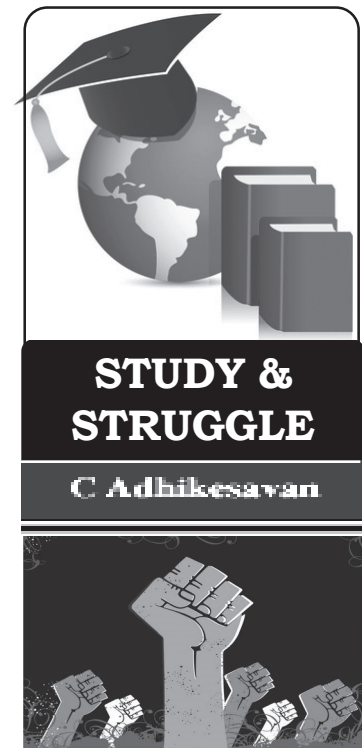


meaningful output.

This attitude towards work is not unique to L&T. Many corporate leaders, including Narayana Murthy of Infosys, have also endorsed the idea of long hours as essential for success. Murthy, for example, recently suggested that young people should work 70 hours a week, citing India's low productivity levels compared to other growing economies. While Murthy's concern about productivity is

the salaries of top executives and the average worker. Subrahmanyam earns 50 times more than the median worker at L&T, which further highlights the deep economic disparity between corporate leadership and the employees who generate their profits.

This is a classic case of labour exploitation. Workers are expected to work longer hours, produce more, but are not compensated for the



The hypocrisy of corporate leaders is hard to ignore. When figures like Murthy and Subrahmanyam call for longer working hours, they fail to acknowledge the structural problems that contribute to low productivity. They are not questioning why employees are overworked or why their own profits continue to rise while worker wages remain stagnant. Instead, they perpetuate a work culture that values hours over actual output, contributing to an unhealthy, exploitative environment.

This corporate mindset is detrimental to both workers and the economy. When employees are burnt out, they become less engaged, less efficient, and ultimately less able to contribute meaningfully to their companies or to the nation's economic growth. A more balanced approach, focusing on reducing working hours, increasing efficiency, and ensuring fair compensation, would benefit both employees and businesses. Companies should recognize that when workers have time to rest and recharge, they are more engaged, creative, and productive.



**D**ebt is a crucial source of financing for development. However, when debt becomes burdensome, it can threaten the very sovereignty of a nation. This is the situation that many African states are facing today. I have learned about Africa's rich mineral wealth from my students from various African States who come to study in India. While Africa is abundant in mineral resources, its people remain very poor.

The former Western colonial powers are primarily responsible for the current circumstances. Even after gaining independence from colonial rule, the continent continues struggling with development and appears trapped in a cycle of debt.

Africa is rich in natural resources, boasting abundant energy sources and a tropical climate ideal for food production. The continent holds approximately 30 per cent of the world's mineral reserves and is home to many critical minerals essential for the global energy transition.

According to the United States report titled "World Economic Situation and Prospects (2024)," many African states are facing significant financial challenges, with some spending up to 30 per cent of their GDP on debt repayments in 2025. In contrast to other mineral-rich states like Australia or Saudi Arabia, many African states grapple with chronic food

# African Debt Trap

*Dr. Soma Marla*

insecurity and struggle to achieve sustainable development.

Debt servicing is a significant factor that diverts financial resources from developmental goals. Over 60 per cent of African states allocate more funds towards debt servicing than to critical sectors such as healthcare, education, and infrastructure. Twenty low-income African states are at risk of debt distress, collectively owing 685.5

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Nigeria are considered the wealthiest states in Africa, primarily due to their mineral exports and high GDP. The DRC ranks among the richest states in the world in terms of mineral resources, estimated to be worth 24 trillion. However, many African states face significant poverty, and despite

revenue collected by the Nigerian government.

After two centuries of extracting mineral wealth, forests, and other resources, Britain, France, Belgium, and other Western colonial powers left Africa in deep human depravity. After gaining independence, these states were forced to rely heavily on external debt to overcome underdevelopment and fund their growth.

A significant aspect of the post-independence era is that the debt

However, in many cases, investments financed through this debt have not resulted in a sufficient increase in output or export earnings to meet debt obligations. The imbalance in prices between exported minerals and imported finished industrial goods, coupled with biased terms of trade favouring Western states and rising interest rates, has led many states to struggle with financing their external debt. This has created a never-ending debt crisis over the past few decades.

There are six petroleum export terminals in Nigeria, with 159 oil fields and 1,481 operational wells (Department of Petroleum Resources, Nigeria). Shell (UK) owns two of these terminals, while Mobil, Chevron, Texaco, and Agip each own one. Unlike other oil-producing states, however, the citizens of Nigeria do not benefit from cheap fuel. Recently, widespread protests erupted against a hike in fuel prices. In Lagos, a litre of petrol costs N998 or 0.6 US dollars.

African states borrow from various international financial institutions, including the WB, IMF and China. Over the past decade, many African states, unable to repay significant accumulated debt to Western financial institutions, have sought loans from China. China has provided substantial loans to develop infrastructure, such as ports and railways, raising concerns about "debt-trap diplomacy."



billion to external creditors as of 2023, primarily to Western financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

In 2024, African states paid 102.6 billion in external debt service. Notably, the external debt these states owe is equivalent to 24.5 per cent of their combined GDP in 2023.

Fig. African external debt as a share of GDP

Source: International Debt Statistics (IDS, World Bank) database.

their wealth in resources, they have among the poorest populations globally.

Nigeria's economy is driven by its vast oil reserves, contributing a significant part of its revenue, agricultural output, and rapidly growing technology sector. Unfortunately, Nigeria currently spends 96 per cent of its federal government revenue on debt servicing. In the first nine months of 2023, debt servicing accounted for 66.9 per cent of the total

borrowed from overseas was mostly spent not on importing food and medicines but on financing infrastructure and industrial production to support the export of minerals. Although the bulk of Africa's mineral wealth is owned by Western multinational corporations (MNCs), national governments are often obligated, according to trade agreements, to develop the road, rail, and port infrastructure necessary for facilitating mineral exports.

*On Page 12*



## Global Health Faces Setback

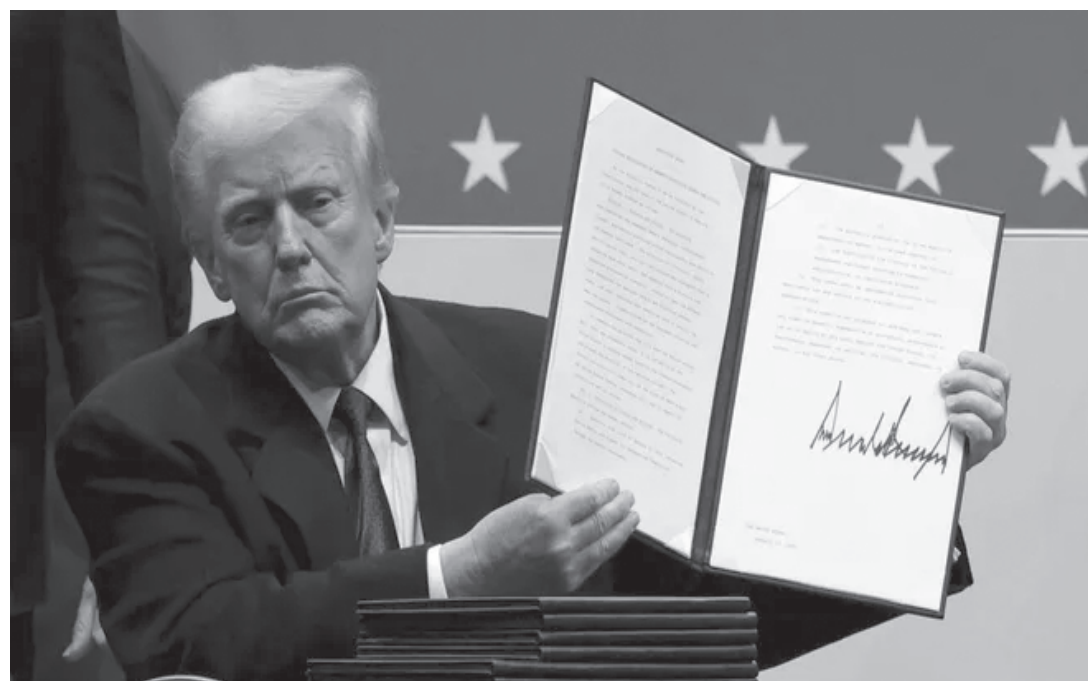
# Trump Withdraws from WHO

The inaugural ceremony of the crowning of Donald Trump as the 47th President of the USA was marked by the presence of the superrich who have influenced not only the US government but the governments of other countries. Many of them are Techie giants who plan to control the people's minds from a remote distance. Some prominent ones include Meta CEO Mark Zuckerberg, Amazon CEO Jeff Bezos, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, Elon Musk, Apple CEO Tim Cook and TikTok CEO Shou Zi Chew. The politicians who attended include far-right autocratic leaders such as Argentina's President Javier Milei, Italy's Prime Minister Giorgia Meloni, Ecuador's President Daniel Noboa, and former Polish Prime Minister Mateusz Morawieck.

Immediately after the swearing-in, Trump did not lose time to sign several orders. An order of foremost concern with long-term impact is the order to withdraw the US from the Paris Climate Agreement formally. So far, this is the most important agreement that has taken cognisance of the manmade climate crises. It highlighted the importance of global cooperation in mitigating climate change. We have already seen the effects of climate change in the form of rising temperatures, floods, changes in crop patterns, crises of food security, and the impact on the health of the poor and vulnerable people in third-world countries.

It is unlikely that any of the above-mentioned participants in Trump's swearing-in ceremony will challenge this order at any public forum. For them, the meaning of growth differs from the people's concerns about food, shelter, healthcare, education, and bare minimum needs. They believe in super industrialisation utilising fossil fuels or,

if need be, replacing them with nuclear energy in the name of the



false notion of a clean energy source without realising its inherent dangers.

Trump has also passed the order to withdraw from the World Health Organisation (WHO). This amounts to abdicating the responsibility to participate in global efforts to promote the people's health. Trump's decision does not hold ground because it has been pointed out that the WHO toes the line of multinational corporations in several matters. Most of these

Dr Arun Mitra

corporations belong to the United States of America. Whereas there have been shortcomings in handling the pandemic by the WHO, it should be noted that US-based vaccine-making corporations made huge profits and even blackmailed some of the developing countries, particularly in Africa. Needless to say, the multinational health-related corporations of

immigrants has to be viewed with scepticism. Aggressive stances toward Latin America, especially Cuba, signal continued imperialist interventionism, threatening the self-determination of nations.

He reiterated taking over the Panama Canal by putting a Naval Blockade. He has already changed the name of the Gulf of Mexico to the Gulf of America. There is an open move to purchase the Green Land.

pressurise Zelensky to stop fighting. Neither Putin nor the European countries cheering the Ukrainian President to keep fighting will readily listen to him even if he does so.

The US economy is based on the armament industry, and they would continue to make a profit by selling arms and promoting wars at the cost of people's lives. Donald Trump's inaugural speech marks a troubling shift in global politics. His policies reflect the colonial mindset of the 18th and 19th centuries. He denies worldwide cooperation and multilateralism. His threat to the BRICS shows complete contempt for the sovereignty of nations. This will threaten global stability. His orders have shown his mindset of unilateralism against mutual respect and dialogue among nations. Protectionist economic policies, like tariffs, aim to control trade against developing countries, exacerbating global inequality and systemic exploitation.

The global expenditure on the arms race, including the nuclear arms race, is increasing continuously, with a maximum share of the US in it. Donald Trump has not uttered a word about global nuclear disarmament.

With his stance and the gathering of the superrich around him, one is but to guess the future of the world in time to come. The developing countries must design their strategies and organise to save their interests.

the USA have made much more profit in the name of US governments contributing to the WHO.

Trump's order on having only two genders is highly regressive. The genders are to be defined based on whether people are born with eggs or sperm rather than on their chromosomes, according to details of the upcoming order. This will affect the rights of the transgender population.

Any policy about immigrants should be designed based on humanitarian values. His stand on the rights of

In the name of making America great again, he is unlikely to do away with aggressive policies of the US in world affairs. He has reiterated to continue arms supply to Israel. How long the ceasefire in Gaza will last is only to be seen. This is not a peace agreement but a temporary cessation of war, which can be a step forward in discussing lasting solutions for peace. The world very well knows that the US has a lot at stake in the Middle East, and Israel is their firm puppet in the region.

He will unlikely go all out to please Putin and



# Save the Republic, Save the ...

From Page 12

strain on secularism is evident in the increasing polarisation of society along religious lines. The growing influence of political forces that seek to use religion as a tool for electoral gains has led to the spread of hatred, bigotry and violence, often targeting religious minorities. The narrative of 'us' versus 'them' is gaining ground, and the foundational idea of India as a pluralistic society, where all religions coexist in harmony, is being undermined. Dr. Ambedkar had forewarned that if the electoral process becomes communalised, "Minority communities may be crushed. If not crushed they may be tyrannised and oppressed. They are sure to be discriminated against and denied equality before the law and equal opportunity in public life."

Dr. Ambedkar further warned, "if there is anybody who has in his mind the project of solving the Hindu-Muslim problem by force, which is another name of solving it by war...in order that the Muslims may be subjugated.... this country would be involved in perpetually conquering them". In the recent period the horrific incidents related to lynching of Muslims in the name of beef and food habits indicate they are subjected to war like situation.

The most recent example of this assault on secularism is the repeated violation of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act,

1991, which was enacted to maintain the status quo of religious sites and prevent the re-opening of old wounds, particularly following the Babri Masjid demolition. This law was specifically designed to prevent the recurrence of violence over religious sites, yet it is being openly flouted today by certain groups seeking to polarise the people to further their diabolical agenda. This erosion of secular values is not just a cultural or social concern; it is a political strategy aimed at dismantling the very foundations of our democratic Republic. It is essential that we stand firm against these forces, for the survival of our Republic hinges on the protection of secularism as a state principle.

Another equally pressing threat to the Republic is the increasing economic inequality that is dividing our society along class lines. The vision of a welfare state, as enshrined in the Constitution, called for a system that would not only ensure political democracy but also economic democracy. It called for an equitable distribution of wealth, an end to exploitative structures and for policies that would uplift the poor and marginalised. Yet, today, we are witnessing a growing concentration of wealth in the hands of a few, while vast sections of our population remain mired in poverty and deprivation. The rise of inequality is not just an economic issue but a social and political one as well. The marginalized are increasingly being excluded from the

benefits of economic growth, leading to heightened social unrest and a deepening of divisions within society. This inequality is also creating fertile ground for communal politics, where the poor are pitted against each other based on religious identity rather than class interests. This is precisely the kind of divide-and-rule politics that our Republic was supposed to transcend.

The Directive Principles of State Policy laid down a map for the future Republic and contained provisions for holistic development of the nation on socialist lines. The responsibility of providing means of livelihood to all and minimise the inequalities of income and status were squarely with the State. However, the economic policies of the current government – privatisation of public assets, weakening of labor rights and a pro-corporate agenda – have exacerbated these issues. The rich are becoming richer, while the poor continue to struggle. The CPI has always stood against such policies and has consistently demanded a more equitable distribution of resources. Thus, we call for a complete restoration of the welfare state, which is a core tenet of the Constitution, and social security measures for the disadvantaged sections of society.

Further, India's federal polity faces significant challenges under the BJP-RSS regime, which increasingly threatens the country's pluralistic fabric and constitutional

framework. Article 1 of the Constitution declares India as a Union of States but the centralisation of power, manifested in legislating on state subjects and misusing the colonial office of the Governor to undermine democratically elected state governments erodes the essence of federalism. This centralisation is coupled with efforts to impose cultural, linguistic, and religious uniformity disregarding India's rich diversity. The push for "One Nation, One Election" further consolidates power at the Union government diluting the autonomy of states and undermining their role in a federal democracy. Additionally, opposition-ruled states face systemic discrimination and coercion, intensifying the tension between regional aspirations and the Central government's vision of a monolithic national identity. This undermines the pluralism that India was founded on, threatening to unravel the delicate balance of power between the Union and the states.

On this Republic Day, as we stand at the crossroads of history, we must renew our commitment to the ideals of our Constitution. We must remember the prophetic words of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who, in his final speech at the Constituent Assembly, warned that "However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot." Dr. Ambedkar

emphasized that the survival of the Constitution depended not only on the quality of its provisions but also on the commitment of the people and their leaders to uphold its spirit.

Today we face a crisis where political forces of right-wing, communal fascism, crony capitalism are undermining the core values of the Constitution, secularism, welfarism and federalism. Religious majoritarianism, crony capitalism, growing inequality and homogeneity are threatening the very fabric of our Republic. It is our duty to resist these forces and rebuild India as a country that lives up to the ideals of justice, equality and secularism. The CPI calls upon every citizen, every progressive force and every true patriot to join in the struggle to regain the Republic for the betterment of the people of India. We must come together to defeat the politics of division, hate and inequality, and work towards a more just, secular and socialist India. Let us draw inspiration from the vision of our Constitution and work to ensure that it remains a living document that guarantees freedom, equality and dignity for all. Let us reclaim our Republic from the forces of division and inequality and work to build a society where the dreams of our freedom fighters are realised – where justice, liberty, equality and fraternity flourish for every citizen of this great nation. Let's regain the Republic, for the people.



# Constitution is Supreme in India

The philosophy of the Constitution is an essential idea that every Indian should incorporate into their daily life. Dr BR Ambedkar, India's foremost intellectual and one of the principal architects of the Indian Constitution, stated, "An idea needs propagation as much as a plant needs watering; otherwise, both will wither and die." The Indian Constitution, one of the largest written constitutions in the world, was drafted by Dr Ambedkar along with 388 members of the Constituent Assembly. While the Constitution does not explicitly define itself, its essence was articulated by political philosopher Thomas Paine in his book, *Rights of Man*. According to Paine, a constitution is not merely an act of government but rather an expression of the people who establish that government. A government without a constitution is simply power without rights.

Thus, the Constitution is fundamentally a document of the people, creating a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. This reflects the meaning and spirit of Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address 1863. Ruti G. Teitel, a Professor of Comparative Law at New York Law School, commented on the Indian Constitution by saying that it transformed the legal relationship between the individual and the state, changing the subjects of a colonial regime into citizens of a republic.

It replaced the colonial approach to governing and administering the population with a democratic framework based on popular sovereignty, public participation, and limited government. However, constitutional institutions have often failed to uphold constitutional supremacy and the rule of law for various reasons. Institutions such as the legislature, executive, and judiciary are essentially servants of the people, possessing powers only conferred by the Constitution. The Constitution of India is built on several fundamental principles, including democracy, secularism, socialism, a parliamentary system of

government, and federalism. In the landmark case of *Kesavananda Bharati v. State of Kerala* (1973), the honourable Supreme Court recognised these principles as the basic structure of the Constitution.

The judgement established that Parliament cannot alter these fundamental principles through constitutional amendments. Unfortunately, the Indian Constitution is in a precarious situation, and its principles are under threat. Dr BR Ambedkar, the father of the Indian Constitution, predicted our current circumstances. In 1948, he remarked, "However good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out badly because those called upon to implement it happen to be a bad lot. Conversely, however bad a Constitution may be, it can be effective if those responsible for upholding it happen to be a good lot. The functioning of a constitution does not depend solely on the quality of the Constitution itself." His observation holds that the effectiveness of a Constitution can change based on the character of the individuals tasked with enforcing it. Only those

Safi Mohan MR

loyal to the Constitution can uphold it, but some politicians in power seem more faithful to their political philosophies, neglecting the Constitution.

Many leaders and administrators in our democratic institutions do not accept the supremacy of the Constitution and the rule of law; instead, they often seek to establish dominance. This poses a potential threat to Indian democracy, which has a history of hero worship. Dr Ambedkar recognised this issue early on and quoted John Stuart Mill, who warned citizens not to place their liberties at the feet of even a great man or to trust him with the powers that could undermine their institutions. Ambedkar stated, "Bhakti in religion may be a road to the salvation of a soul, but in politics, bhakti or hero worship is a sure path to degradation and eventual dictatorship." Our Constitution places its trust in the people rather than any individual political leader. Indian democracy is founded on mutual respect, personal freedom, and the principles of justice, liberty, equality, and fraternity. It also acknowledges the dignity of individuals and the unity and integrity of the nation. This was evident in the debates of the Constituent Assembly in 1947. There were suggestions to create our Constitution in the name of God, which the Assembly rejected. Another proposal was to name the Constitution after Mahatma Gandhi, but that suggestion was dismissed. Ultimately, we crafted the Constitution of India for ourselves,

beginning with the phrase "We, the People of India" in the Preamble. This reflects the people's aspirations to build a better society. Thus, Ambedkar remarked, "The Constitution is not merely a lawyers' document; it is a vehicle of life, and its spirit is always the spirit of the age."

Many constitutions worldwide have not lasted more than 15 years, yet the Indian Constitution has survived for over 75 years of our independence. Trust in the Constitution and constitutionalism is more critical than ever, but many recent laws lack a secular spirit and often favour the wealthy over the poor. It is concerning that human rights violations, particularly against women and children, have become increasingly common. The complete failure of constitutional machinery in some states has devastating effects, leading to economic inequality. Institutions intended to uncover the truth and ensure transparency, such as investigating agencies, the press, and the judiciary, have increasingly lost their independence. When the integrity of federalism was threatened, Jammu and Kashmir lost its statehood. Furthermore, the distribution of state funds based on political bias undermines cooperative federalism, depriving communities of development opportunities and exacerbating economic inequality. The proposal for "One nation, one election" risks undermining the parliamentary form of democracy and the federal principles enshrined in the Constitution.

India's development model over the last decade

has been disappointing and inconsistent with the Constitutional vision of justice. The country lags far behind international human rights standards. An analysis of global statistics reveals that India ranks 105<sup>th</sup> on the World Hunger Index, 126<sup>th</sup> on the World Happiness Index, 112<sup>th</sup> on the World Health Index, 159<sup>th</sup> on the World Press Freedom Index, and 128<sup>th</sup> on the World Right to Information Index. These statistics highlight India's inferior human rights enforcement capabilities as the world's largest democracy. Dr. Ambedkar foresaw this situation, which might have led him to assert that political democracy cannot endure without being underpinned by social democracy. But what does social democracy mean? It refers to a way of life that recognises equality, liberty, and fraternity as foundational principles. We are living in an undemocratic society that a democratic Constitution governs. This is the right time to promote constitutional literacy and raise awareness about the importance of constitutional morality. As Ambedkar stated, "Constitutional morality is not a natural sentiment. It has to be cultivated; we must realise that our people have yet to learn it. Democracy in India is merely a superficial layer on a fundamentally undemocratic soil." Therefore, we must remember our collective responsibility to uphold constitutional supremacy and the rule of law, which can transform our country into a better democracy. We strive for a sovereign, secular, socialist, and democratic republic as envisioned in the Preamble of the Constitution.



## African Debt ...

From Page 08

Examples of these projects include the Mombasa–Nairobi Standard Gauge Railway and the Port of Mombasa in Kenya, the Abuja–Kaduna railway line in Nigeria, and the Eastern Industrial Zone in Ethiopia.

In 2018, when Kenya appeared close to defaulting on its loans, China sought to transfer ownership of the Port of Mombasa to itself. Similarly, Djibouti, a small state bordering

Somalia, defaulted on borrowed loans, prompting China to swiftly construct a military base in the Horn of Africa, where the People's Liberation Army Navy now operates. Allegations suggest that China employs debt-trap diplomacy to compel states to transfer resources and sovereignty to it. Consequently, British, American, and French mining MNCs are on one side. At the same time, China operates on the

other, both engaging in mineral extraction and plunging African states into a cycle of debt. As of December 2024, Africa's total external debt exceeds 1.152 trillion, which continues to rise.

### Way out

Good governance, characterised by a ruling elite free from corruption and a commitment to transparency in trade and debt agreements, appears to be a viable alternative for many African states. However, internal civil wars and military coups have been recurring phenomena in several African states

over the past six decades. Interestingly, local warlords controlling mineral-rich regions often receive ammunition and tacit support from Western imperialist powers.

The brutal assassination of Patrice Lumumba, the democratically elected President of Congo, in 1961 by Belgium – then a former colonial power – with the implicit support of the United States, highlights this issue. This assassination occurred shortly after Congo gained independence

and aimed to restore control over the country's mineral wealth to Belgium.

Recent efforts by some African states to form a united African Union are a positive step towards asserting sovereignty over natural resources. These states should collectively advocate for cancelling debts owed to Western financial institutions. Achieving freedom from external debt could lead Africa towards people-centric development and help attain the Human Development Goals established by the United Nations.

## Productivity is More Important than ...

From Page 03

The most insidious aspect is the implementation of work-from-home arrangements in the IT and related sectors, which has extended the workday to almost 24 hours. It allows the employees to be with their family members. But the fact is he cannot enjoy the privilege of leisure, as he has to be on alert for 24 hours. The Indian captains of industries are keen to imitate the capitalist postures but they are not willing to reform the industrial relations and mode of production. Baring a few who have incorporated new production concepts and ideas, most still prefer to follow the traditional style of production. They are averse to bring about technological innovations which make work more efficient and productive.

The industrialists are

too willing to ignore the guidelines for use of labour force. Though they claim to follow the capitalist mode of manufacturing and production, their attitude and attitude is out an out feudal. It is worth mentioning that The International Labour Organization (ILO) considers working more than 48 hours per week to be excessive. This is because it can negatively impact health, safety, productivity, and work-life balance. Even labour economists feel that hours of work is beneficial to increase the production. A tired and exhausted labour cannot be expected to boost production.

It was quite heartening to listen to Anand Mahindra, the chairman of Mahindra Group, saying that the quality of work is more important than the number of hours worked. He has spoken out

against the idea of extending working hours and said that impactful work can be done in a short amount of time. He was reacting to the remarks of L&T

reading, helps people make better decisions.

He was emphatic, "I am not really understanding why the business managers and owners would seem to

virtue of the fact that we do not, in fact, have a four day work week. But can anyone explain this to me? And don't be afraid to explain like I'm fine".

CPI(ML) MP Raja Ram Singh a week back wrote to Union labour minister Mansukh Mandaviya expressing concern over recent statements from prominent industry leaders advocating extended work hours, including proposals to violate the legally mandated eight-hour workday limit for workers. Singh, a member of the standing committee on labour, textiles and skill development, has asked for strict enforcement of the laws governing duty hours and six-day work weeks for workers. Singh argued that it is a fact that longer working hours reduced productivity instead of increasing it and were detrimental to a worker's health.



chairman S.N. Subrahmanyam that employees work 90-hour weeks. Mahindra said that he believes that spending time with friends and family, and

keep the work week long when productivity (and by extension, profits) have clearly been greater with a shorter work week. I can see that this holds true, if only by



# Gaza : Amid Ruins, Hope Emerges

As of January 22, 2025, the Gaza Strip is experiencing a fragile ceasefire between Israel and Hamas after 15 months of intense conflict. Despite the cessation of hostilities, the humanitarian

situation remains dire.

The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) reported that 915 aid trucks entered Gaza on January 20, 2025, marking the second day of the ceasefire. The ceasefire agreement mandates 600 aid trucks per day for six weeks, with half designated for northern Gaza, where famine threatens. However, aid distribution has been complicated by security concerns and logistical challenges.

The conflict has devastated Gaza's infrastructure, with drone footage revealing extensive rubble across cities and refugee camps. Critics accuse Israel of a "scorched earth" campaign, leading to widespread destruction and displacement of 90 per cent of Gaza's population. Rebuilding efforts are expected to take decades and require billions of dollars.

The World Health Organization (WHO) indicates that only half of Gaza's 36 hospitals remain partially operational after the conflict. The destruction of medical facilities and shortages of essential supplies have severely impacted healthcare services.

Hamas has reasserted control over Gaza, conducting parades and deploying forces. The ceasefire agreement allows Hamas to oversee law and order, provided they avoid Israeli troops and are monitored by international observers. Despite significant losses, Hamas maintains a substantial military presence, complicating Israeli objectives of dismantling the group.

There was no bombing in Gaza. What was it like to spend

a night without bombing? Now, there are claims of peace. Is a period of peace about to return to Gaza? This question is connected to the question of what will happen to Netanyahu. The Israeli army has shared a video and said that this is what we have been fighting for 471 days. In this video, three Israeli women freed from Hamas' captivity are seen arriving at Israel's border, with the Israeli army claiming that this is what



they were fighting for. Did the army forget that Netanyahu had said the war would not end until Hamas was eliminated?

At that time, Netanyahu boasted that even the International Court could not stop Israel's attacks. What happened to those statements? For a year, the Israeli army encircled a small area, where people's escape routes were blocked, but they still could not find Hamas or the hostages. Meanwhile, families kept saying, "Make a deal with Hamas," but Israel did not allow a deal. Is this really their achievement after a year? In this video, we will discuss how Israel will face such a major defeat: by writing its own version of history in school textbooks, or by answering the world's questions. Isn't negotiating with Hamas the exact opposite of the policy to eliminate Hamas? If Hamas had

been eliminated, if it had become so weak, wouldn't Hamas have surrendered to Israel?

Why did Israel have to accept the condition of prisoner exchange with Hamas? The media and social media have been flooded with news and photos of the hostages being released by Israel and Hamas. Among all this, I came across a report on Al Jazeera stating that, over the past 57 years, Israel has imprisoned over a million Palestinians, including children, many of whom are from the West Bank and Jerusalem. It is not that these

issues are not being talked about, but they are being given far less attention compared to Israel's hostages. The media focus is entirely on the three women who were released by Hamas. As soon as Hamas released Romy Gonen, Ren Steinbraker, and Emily Damar, their pictures filled newspapers worldwide. There's talk about their health, claiming that after 471 days as hostages, they are completely fine. Many discussions are happening about their clothes and tied hair.

How quickly have their smiling or normal pictures been used to erase the 471 days of terror from their lives? These three have not yet given their statements, nor have they said how Hamas took care of them, how they were provided food, how they were treated, or how they saw Hamas' world. When bombs were falling over Gaza, did they think survival was



*Diary of  
International  
Events*

*C. Adhikesavan*

impossible? Did they trust Netanyahu, believing his leadership would ensure Israeli soldiers reach the places where they were being held hostage?

In the first phase, a total of 33 hostages are to be freed. These pictures raise many unanswered questions, including how, after so much bombing and starvation, Hamas did not harm these hostages. How is this possible? For a year, bombs fell day and night on Gaza. There was no drinking water, no food, no medicine for treatment, children were dying, yet Hamas did not harm the hostages. Israel killed Hamas' top leader, Yehya Sinwar, and claimed it as a big success, but even then, Hamas did not harm the hostages. There were reports of some hostages' deaths, but it is yet to be confirmed whether they were killed by Hamas or due to other causes.

Hamas was able to negotiate with Israel because of these hostages. If Hamas intended to kill the hostages, why would they bring them out? Why would they keep them safe and in good health after bringing them out? Do you understand this? While Netanyahu's army was attacking from the ground and dropping bombs from the sky, Hamas was nourishing these hostages, not harming them. In Gaza, where everything was on the brink of destruction, where no place remained safe from hospitals to shelters, these hostages are now coming out safely from Hamas' control. Is what the world is being told the truth, or is there something else we may never know?



# Country Must Not Allow ...



**From Last Page**  
leader. Rahul Gandhi is a leader of publicity who can attract people. But he does not have any command on party organisation. Kamal Nath did not agree to the proposal of Rahul Gandhi to make

Jyotiraditya Scindia as President of Madhya Pradesh Congress committee. As a result Jyotiraditya has defected to other political party and Congress lost its position in Madhya Pradesh. Though revolt of Sachin Pilot was suppressed in Rajasthan,

Congress got weakened. Everybody knows that Rahul gave support to Sachin. Even in a small state like Haryana he could not manage as expected. Hindu communalists are booming in the country. Though Mohan Bhagwat is advising his

Sangh Parivar followers not to search for Mandirs under every Masjid, but communalists are working overtime on looking for searching for Mandirs. Once the communal ghost is taken out of the bottle, it cannot be pushed back into the bottle. Cine actress

Kangana Ranaut declared that India got independence after Modi came to power in 2014. But Mohan Bhagwat has pronounced it in a different way. He said that India got independence after construction of Ram Mandir in Ayodhya. Coming days may be difficult. Nothing will come out of white shirts movement of the Congress. In the struggles against unemployment, price rise and exploitation of corporate sector, if large number of masses are mobilised, Congress will get confidence of people, India alliance can be rebuilt and fight out BJP efficiently.

(The author is former general Secretary, CPI, former MP)

## P. P. H. PUBLICATIONS

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# CPI Candidates File Nominations for ...



*From Page 02*

North Delhi and a member of the State Secretariat, submitted his nomination papers. Mahesh Kumar, the outgoing Branch Secretary of the CPI Wazirpur Party Branch, and Ramji, Devendra Kumar, and CPI(M) North Delhi District leader Vipin accompanied him at the nomination event.

On the same day, Comrade Dilip Kumar, the CPI candidate for the Palam Vidhansabha (AC 37) in the South-West Delhi district, also filed his nomination papers, with district leaders present to support him.

The CPI candidate, the

Communist Party of India candidate for the Okhla Assembly constituency (AC 54) in South Delhi, filed his nomination papers for the upcoming Delhi Assembly elections. Present at the nomination were South Delhi District Secretary Comrade Ram Sharan Rajput, District Secretariat member Parvez Alam, Jawaharlal Nehru University student leader and JNUSU Joint Secretary Comrade Sajid, along with student leaders from Jamia Millia Islamia University and JNU. They honoured esteemed personalities before submitting the

nomination papers by garlanding their photographs.

The CPI candidate Irshad Khan, the candidate from the Communist Party of India, submitted his nomination papers for the Mehrauli Assembly election (AC 45) in the South Delhi district. The Communist Party of India Delhi State Council has nominated six candidates from CPI and six from other leftist parties. The people of Delhi are encouraged to vote for all twelve candidates to defeat the BJP in the remaining seats and help save Delhi.



**Two of the CPI Candidates out of Six Fielded**

## On Record ...

With voting in Delhi Assembly elections less than two weeks away, AAP national convener Arvind Kejriwal on January 23, 2025 vowed to eliminate unemployment in the national capital within the next five years. In a video message, the former Delhi Chief Minister emphasised his focus on employment. Highlighting his government's track record, Mr. Kejriwal claimed the AAP government in Punjab provided 48,000 government jobs in less than two years and facilitated over three lakh private-sector jobs for youths. "My top priority will be to provide employment to our youths. Our team is drafting a detailed plan to address the issue of unemployment," he said. - The Hindu, January 23.

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Anjana Ahirwar, a resident of Sagar district, had died in May 2024 after she allegedly fell from an ambulance that was carrying the body of her uncle who had been allegedly thrashed to death just days ago. The Supreme Court on Wednesday (January 22, 2025) issued a notice to the Madhya Pradesh government seeking its response on a

petition demanding a CBI or SIT investigation into the death of a 20-year-old Dalit woman and alleged murders of her brother and uncle in Sagar district. A Bench of Justices J.K. Maheshwari and Arvind Kumar, hearing a petition filed by Anjana Ahirwar's mother on Wednesday, sought the State government's demands of moving the investigation out of Madhya



Pradesh and police protection for the victim's family. - The Hindu, January 23.

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Vijayan assured that the funds received in the CMDRF will be utilised for the benefit of the disaster survivors and the rehabilitation process would be completed soon. The Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that while no assistance has come from the Centre till date

for rehabilitation of survivors of Wayanad landslide, Rs 712.98 received in the Chief Minister's Disaster Relief Fund will be used for helping the survivors.

Vijayan said that the state had initially demanded a sum of Rs 2,221 crore for the landslide rehabilitation from the Centre, but as per the Post Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) report, more is expected. - The Telegraph, January 23.

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A heartening story of communal harmony has emerged from the Uttar Pradesh district of Bahraich, which has been in the headlines recently for communal tensions and wolf attacks.

Mohammad Ali, a devout Muslim, has become an enduring symbol of unity through his 18-year-long service as the caretaker and president of a trust managing a Hindu temple. In Jaitapur Bazar, 27 kilometers from the Bahraich district headquarters, Ali oversees the Vriddh Mateshwari Mata Ghurdevi Temple, a site that is now revered by Muslims too.

Observing Islamic traditions like roza and namaz, 58-year-old Ali also devotes himself to the worship of Goddess Ghurdevi and Lord Hanuman, balancing his dual roles with remarkable dedication. - The Telegraph, January 23.

- Compiled by C. Adhikesavan



## ***Election Cauldron***

# **Country Must Not Allow Dictatorial Rule of BJP**

S Sudhakar Reddy

**E**lections to Delhi Assembly is going to take place in coming two more weeks. Allegations, counter allegations and attacks have started. These elections are prestige issues for Narendra Modi and BJP. This is like life and death problem politically for Aam Aadmi Party and Arvind Kejriwal. These elections are in fact issues of existence for the Congress. It may be said that perhaps main contest would be between BJP and Aam Aadmi Party.

Congress may go to third position. Success and defeat of Aam Aadmi Party would depend on the votes share divided by the Congress. Freebies are being poured on voters incredibly and absurdly by all three parties. People have to decide whether these are freebies or welfare measures. Once upon a time Modi used to express his anger on freebies but of late he is competing with other parties in announcing freebies. Income in national capital will be in fact more. Also adequate funds may be



collected for freebies. But no Party is assuring that Delhi will be protected from pollution. Delhi does not have its own atmosphere. In Punjab and Haryana, in the aftermath of harvesting season, waste crops and garbage is burnt, and consequently, pollution in Delhi will magnify. As usual pollution will increase also due to emissions of Lakhs of vehicles. Winds and dust of Uttar Pradesh and sand storms of Rajasthan are showing their effect on Delhi. Similarly cold waves from Himachal adds to the pollution in winters.

No election seat adjustments could be arrived at between the Congress and AAP because of Congress. In

Haryana Assembly elections, Congress refused to have alliance with AAP. This situation arose because of adamant attitude of the Congress. In spite of Rahul Gandhi's suggestion to have an alliance with AAP, Haryana state Congress leader mismanaged the efforts for an alliance. AAP has urged for 10 seats, while Congress agreed to allot five seats. On the pretext of AAP's urge for important seats belonging of the Congress, the alliance could not take place. Ultimately Congress got defeated in an insulting way. In Maharashtra assembly elections, the Congress has taken more seats by lot of pressure on NCP

and Shivsena. Though "INDIA" alliance bagged majority in Parliamentary seats, got defeated very badly in Assembly elections. In the aftermath of defeat in Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly elections, cleavage has erupted in the INDIA alliance, which is already facing dissatisfaction. Mamata Banerjee, who is expecting leadership, Akhilesh Yadav, leader of Samajwadi Party, who got consecutive defeats in Uttar Pradesh, Omar Abdullah of Kashmir, Sharad Pawar of NCP and Uddhav Thakre, supremo of Shivsena, have sent signals that they would be distancing with INDIA alliance. DMK, Jharkhand Mukti Morcha

and left parties are not opening their mouth at present on this issue. If at all India alliance is disintegrated, BJP regime, under the dictatorial leadership of Modi in the country, will intensify and country will have to face more dictatorial and anti-constitutional rule. It would be extremely tragic state of political developments. In present circumstances, opposition alliance without Congress cannot be possible. Congress itself will also not agree to be led by others.

BJP is alleging that Dalit leader Mallikarjun Kharge is one shadow leader, and Rahul Gandhi is real

*On Page 14*