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Europe Rattled as Trump-led US Plans to Lord-over

The French and German economies were in shambles after the Second World War (WWII), with the USA cleverly using the crisis to help themselves. They simultaneously began to dominate them by rebuilding theirs under the infamous Marshal Plan. At the same time, they started a cold war with the Soviet Bloc and created NATO, also to bring Europe under their military influence.

After the collapse of the Soviet Bloc and the disintegration of the USSR, the US expanded NATO to incorporate countries in Eastern Europe, such as Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czechoslovakia, the Balkan countries like Latvia, Estonia, Lithuania and other smaller countries emerging from the disintegration of the former Yugoslavia. The expansion of NATO went hand in hand with the emergence of the European Economic Community (EEC).

The rising might of Putin's Russia after the collapse of the Soviet Union was always projected as a threat to the European countries. Ukraine was part of the former USSR but became independent after the latter's disintegration. Under President Volodymyr Zelenskyy, Ukraine tried to join the EEC and NATO. Russia opposed this, and hence, the war erupted with the help of the EEC and the US under NATO.

Under Trump, as the United States wants to become the only superpower, abrupt policy changes are taking place, and Europe is rattled. The US strategy is obvious. It wants to weaken strong capitalist countries like France, Germany and others by compelling them to divert their capital to defence. Hence, the European countries are asked to increase their contribution to NATO. At the same time, the US wants to help Russia to dominate Europe. In this way, the US hopes to wean Russia away from Chinese influence.

France and Germany came together to dominate the EEC. They cleverly integrated it as a political and economic unit by introducing the Euro as a common currency for all and forming a European Parliament. French President Emmanuel Macron recently announced his intention to increase defence spending in his meeting with Trump. Similar intentions were expressed by the

B K Kango

German and UK leaders. This is done to please Trump and the US.

However, Trump has indicated that Ukraine should not join NATO and even has gone to the extent of saying that it should become part of Russia. While this is a move against Europe, it is meant to please Putin. Recently, in Riyadh, Saudia Arabia, a peace plan to end the Russia-Ukraine war was discussed between Russia and the US, to which Europe and Ukraine were not invited. This has disturbed Europe, and Ukrainian President Zelenskyy has called for the formation of the European Army; discussions about this took place in France. UK and France have proposed a European force in Ukraine to counter the US strategy.

So far, the US has been implementing its strategy of dominating all over the world through the Washington Consensus, i.e. the policy of SAP (Structural Adjustment Programme), ending the GATT regime and imposing WTO. But the results were not exactly as expected by it. The US

now finds that other countries, particularly China, are challenging US hegemony. Hence, under Trump, the US is using its military and economic might to restore the old order by withdrawing from many international commitments and the WTO and talking of increasing tariffs on many countries.

In this process, Trump is being helped by the rise of the conservative, right-wing and even fascist forces all over the world. We find that the liberal values of tolerance and democracy are under threat everywhere. The crisis may lead to fresh wars, even a world war, and therefore, all peace-loving people and forces who are against the rise of fascism must come together.

It will be interesting to note that under Republican leaders like Ronald Reagan, the concept of LPG was imposed, which led to the formation of WTO. Now, under Trump, another Republican leader, this policy is being reversed. Similarly, it was Republican leader Nixon who brought China into world economic integration to weaken the Soviet Bloc, and now it is another Republican, Mr

Trump, who wants to weaken China by helping Russia!

These sudden changes destabilised the world order and rattled the EEC project under French and German domination. This is the impact of the return of the 'nation-state' powers like those of the big imperialist countries.

Many other contradictions, like the role of multinationals and their relations with nation-states, are also emerging, which need to be studied in detail to combat the present process of destabilisation. The world economy is now more integrated than it was in 1940. Hence, the question is: can we go back to the old concept of the 'nation-state' of the West without international cooperation to solve emerging contradictions?

It is interesting to note that many regional trade blocs are emerging without the participation of the US, posing a challenge to the US hegemony. The world is changing fast along with technology, and the progressive forces need to analyse them properly to advance human rights and better living conditions.

There's a difference between lip service and good policy. And if the Union Budget's approach to millions of gig workers is examined, one can draw only one conclusion – it is nothing but mere lip service. The government has claimed that it would provide identity cards to all gig workers and register them on a national database for the unorganized sector so they can avail the benefits available for unorganized sector workers. In real terms, these promises mean nothing. An identity card would not bring any benefit to workers unless it comes with some specifically declared provisions for the gig worker. Similarly, the benefits for unorganised sector workers exist only on paper and would hardly have any meaning for gig workers. Even the promise of medical insurance for gig workers seems to be a blank-shot as they would benefit from it only in case of serious illness and that too only up to five lakh rupees.

There is no move by the government to make it mandatory for platform companies to register these workers and contribute towards social security for them. The government has failed to listen to gig workers' struggle for enforcement of a dedicated law and effective implementation of welfare schemes at the national level. Not half hearted steps but a national framework for gig workers is what is required.

The working conditions of increasing number of gig workers is very disturbing. Their incomes are very low, uncertain, do not operate under employer employee arrangement, and no mechanism exists to address their demands. They are a kind of bonded labor but the employer is invisible and inaccessible to them. It is the emergence of a new and effective exploitative system that has evolved under the gig economy. General secretary, All India Gig, Platform and App based Workers Union once portrayed the prevailing perilous working conditions of gig and platform based workers in the transport and food sectors. For the last 10 years, he said, their union has been fighting for legal rights of gig workers including cab drivers of Uber, Ola and Autos, for the improved labour terms and conditions while negotiating with both state and central governments, legitimate rights. He called upon all trade unions cutting across political parties to come on to a single united platform to fight with the governments demanding comprehensive and fair laws to guarantee gig workers their legitimate rights in the society.

Gig workers are today the harbinger of the society in transition. With fast digital transformation of the economy, on-demand platforms based on digital

technology have become the source of employment differentiated from existing offline transactions by the level of accessibility, convenience and price competitiveness. These workers are kind of new slaves and masters are always inaccessible to them. It is the emergence of a novel economy with effective exploitative system that has evolved under the gig economy.

In the 2000s, the digital transformation of the economy and industry started evolving fast due to the development of information and communication technologies like the Internet and the popularization of smartphones. These platforms that are on demand based on digital technology have created jobs and employment forms that are differentiated from existing offline transactions by the level of accessibility, convenience and price competitiveness.¹

Normally "work" describes a full time jobs that have fixed working schedule, and

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also benefits. The work itself started changing theme wise and also action wise. As the economic situation kept changing, the definition of work began to change with changing economic conditions and continued technological advances. The labour is already different, characterized by independent and contractual labor and has occupied the entire scenario.

The use of computers became the way. Commercialisation has started to take place in the service industry. Those who were participating in the process started use of computing platform in order to aggregate transactions between clients and providers of a service, often bypassing the role of existing intermediaries as part of platform economy. The model of business has different operating costs compared to a traditional business.

A 2016 study concluded that, across America and England, there were a total of 162 million people that were involved in some type of independent work. Moreover, their payment is linked to the gigs they perform, which could be deliveries, rentals or other services.

The long time workers have long term employer-employee relationship in which the worker is paid by the hour or year, earning a wage or salary. Outside of that arrangement, work tends to be temporary or project-based workers are hired to complete a particular task or for certain period of time. Coordination of jobs through

an on-demand company reduces entry and operating costs for providers and allows workers' participation to be more transitory in gig markets. Full-time gig workers leverage digital service-on-demand platforms and job matching apps to level up their skills. Another example of temporary workers may be digital nomads. Digital nomads have a mobile lifestyle combining work and leisure, requiring a particular set of skills and equipment. Gig work enables digital nomads by offering flexible, location-independent job opportunities that can be performed remotely, typically through digital platforms, allowing for a lifestyle of travel and work anywhere with internet connectivity.

It is important to distinguish employment in the sharing economy from employment through zero hour contracts, a term primarily used in the United Kingdom to refer a contract in which an employer is not obliged to provide any minimum number of working hours to an employee. Employment in the gig economy entails receiving compensation for one key performance indicator, which, for example, is defined as parcels delivered or taxi lifts conducted. Another feature is that employees can opt to refuse taking an order. Although employers do not have to guarantee employment or employees can also refuse to take an order under a zero-hour contract.

There is a specific type of labor typically task-based and invisible to the end user. It is called Ghost work. Work on discrete tasks for a company, but they do not have a relationship with the company beyond assignment of the task and the minimal training necessary. A key characteristic of ghost work is the completion of small tasks to assist in machine learning or automation.

According to a 2021 report by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the expansion of the gig economy can be seen as one significant factor for the increase in worker deaths for those who work over 55 hours a week (relative to those who work 35-40), rising from 600,000 deaths in 2000 to 750,000 in 2016. The report found that in 2016, 9 percent of the world's population worked more than 55 hours weekly, and this was more prevalent among men, as well as workers in the Western Pacific and South-East Asia regions. Work has also suggested poor mental health outcomes amongst gig workers.

Union Budget 2025-26: Attack on Cooperative Federalism

Speaking on the Union Budget 2025-26, P. Sandosh Kumar, CPI MP. Sandosh Kumar, said, "This budget fails to address the genuine concerns of ordinary people of our country and how the proposals are detrimental to the interest of the economy."

Six MPs from my State, cutting across political lines, were raising specific concerns related to the State of Kerala and, thereby, related to the federal structure of our country. The fact is that the economy is in deep crisis; there is no doubt at all. Our country's internal and external debts in 2019-2020 were Rs.100 lakh crores. After four years, in 2023-24, it has increased to Rs.171.7 lakh crores. That means there has been an increase of Rs.67 lakh crore in internal and external debt during the last five years of the Modi Government's regime. This is one of the harsh realities which we have to understand.

The Household Consumption Survey clearly states that 34 per cent of our population is spending just below Rs.100 per day. While we talk about this Budget, 93 per cent of the total workforce is in the unorganised sector, and this number is increasing daily because contractual labour has become the order of the day. What does this Budget offer for the unorganised sector? There is a consistent demand from all the progressive sections and trade unions to include them in the ESI scheme. What is the Government's response to including these workers in the ESI scheme? The legally-

enforceable MSP is one of the demands of the farming community. There have been a lot of agitations. What is the fate of those promises? How can they justify themselves by constantly discussing Jawaharlal Nehru and the UPA period? They have to prove to themselves that they are doing something meaningful. With just

Budget Management Act. Kerala was denied its genuine rights, citing the provisions of this Act. The Central Government's fiscal deficit has increased to 5.4 per cent during these years. It should remain, at least, below 3 per cent or up to 3 per cent only. The Central Government itself has increased it to 5.4 per cent. This is the data made available to this august House. The GDP-debt ratio has risen to 58.1 per cent. It should be below 40 per cent. So, these are the realities. Don't boast much about

for its unwavering commitment to secularism, social justice, and the welfare of its people. Since the people of Kerala have repeatedly rejected the BJP's divisive and corporate-driven politics, this Government has chosen to retaliate by choking Kerala financially, undermining our developmental progress and depriving our people of what is rightfully theirs.

Kerala has an unparalleled development model

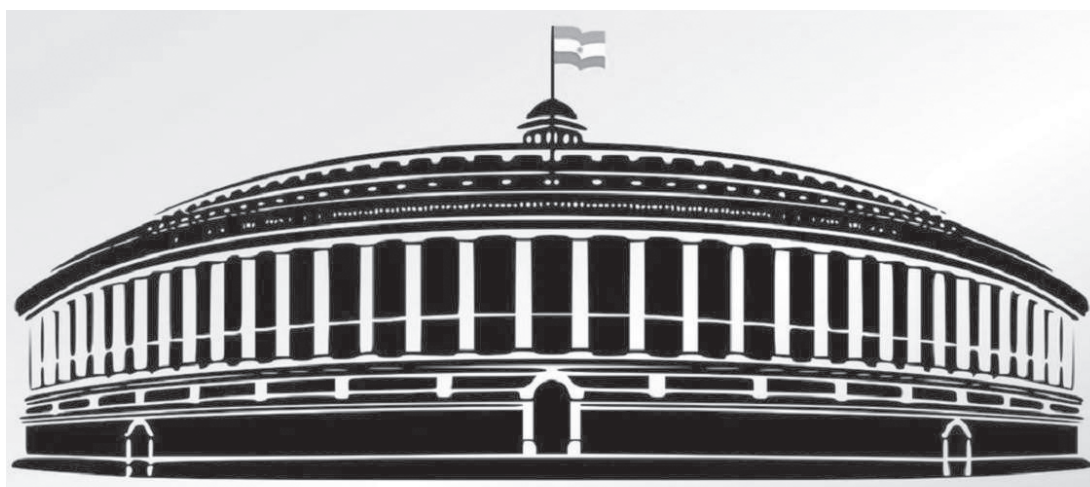
our fiscal discipline and responsible governance, the Centre has systematically reduced our share of funds. Our share in the divisible pool of taxes has been cut from 3.875 per cent under the 10th Finance Commission to 1.925 per cent under the 15th Finance Commission. The BJP Government has choked our finances by ending GST compensation and the Revenue Deficit Grant, leaving Kerala struggling to meet its basic obligations. When we requested a special package to mitigate this crisis, the Modi Government turned its back on us. Is this cooperative federalism? Is this economic retribution?

The discrimination does not stop there. When a devastating landslide hit Wayanad on July 30, 2024, claiming more than 250 lives and displacing thousands, Kerala did not receive the assistance it deserved. Even after weeks of gruelling rescue and relief efforts, after DNA sequencing to identify the dead, and after struggling to rehabilitate entire communities, the BJP Government continues to deny us Rs. 2,000 crores we need to rebuild. Are we second-class citizens in our country simply because we refuse to bow before the BJP?

The Vizhinjam Seaport — a game-changer for India's logistics sector — is up and running, promising to transform Kerala into a trans-shipment hub.

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CPI IN PARLIAMENT- RAJYA SABHA

rhetoric, can they cover up all their failures? How many missions have been announced by this Government? 'N' number of missions have been announced. I think even the Ministers don't know the exact numbers. They keep on announcing one mission or scheme after another.

The Government should come out with a White Paper on these schemes, scams related to these schemes, the benefits, if there are any, and the failures. Moreover, the Government always advises States like Kerala about the importance of the Fiscal Responsibility and

your success. From the day you are ruling the country, nothing progressive has happened. The more you chant 'Modi, Modi', the more the country goes down.

Speaking on the Union Budget 2025-26, P.P. Suneer CPI MP, said, "The budget exposed the BJP-led Union Government's blatant financial discrimination and political vendetta against the State of Kerala."

The BJP has made it clear — through its policies, its actions and its systematic economic strangulation — that it seeks to punish Kerala

prioritises human well-being over corporate profit, values education and healthcare over communal discord and ensures social security over crony capitalism. And because we have refused to fall in line with the BJP's agenda of corporate appeasement, religious polarization and reckless economic policies, they have made Kerala a target of economic blockade. Is this how a federal democracy functions? Is this how a government should treat its people?

Kerala generates over 63.58 per cent of its revenue, far higher than the national average of 53.9 per cent. Yet, despite

UGC Draft Regulation 2025: Disastrous for Higher Education

Recent UGC Draft Regulations stand against the principle of cooperative federalism. The architecture of power distribution in the Indian Constitution indicates, more in spirit than in letter, that power must travel from Rajpath (govt.) to Janpath (people), which is the actual repository of people's power. UGC Draft Regulations would have a detrimental impact on academic autonomy and federal principles. It reflects the UGC's growing tendency towards centralisation at the expense of the rights of the states and universities.

The frequent amendments to the UGC's norms for teachers' appointments and promotions highlight the ongoing confusion within the apex body. These frequent changes have left the academic community unclear about career advancement pathways, leading to widespread dissatisfaction and resentment among teachers and educational staff.

One of the core concerns raised by the teachers' bodies (including the AIFUCTO) is the failure of UGC to address the existing grievances in higher education regulation. Despite inadequate infrastructure and facilities to support such activities, the Draft Regulations impose unreasonable conditions for teachers' promotions, such as mandatory

publications and participation in academic seminars and symposia.

This regulation has led to the proliferation of low-quality academic publications and unproductive academic exercises, undermining the quality of research and teaching. UGC is demotivating educators by denying promotions based on seniority and performance. This move is counterproductive for the whole academic community.

The recent draft regulation on the appointment of vice-chancellors revising the selection process does not comply with the essence of such power distribution. Indian federalism, multilevel in its functioning, is based on the principle of subsidiarity, which essentially means that the authority needs to be invested at the lowest possible level of institutional hierarchy.

The subsidiarity principle seeks decentralisation and asserts that to deepen democracy, the local levels must be ensured with some degree of functional independence and agency. Teachers' bodies across the country have already criticised the Draft Regulations' provisions that grant governors, who often serve as the university chancellors, the authority to appoint vice-chancellors of state universities.

This undermines the

Arun Kumar

autonomy of state universities, many of which are funded almost entirely by state governments. Many southern states (non-BJP), including Tamil Nadu and Kerala, opposed the UGC regulation on the appointment of vice-chancellors in state universities, and they not only refused to accept it but also passed resolutions against it in their state assemblies.

They supposed it was a direct attack on the federal principle and a heinous attempt to snatch the rights of the state. The main objection against this regulation is that it violates the federal principle enshrined in the Constitution of India. The state governments concerned have strongly demanded its immediate withdrawal.

Under the existing regulations, a vice-chancellor can be selected only from among the academics with a minimum experience of ten years as a professor. Through an amendment, the UGC declares that professionals with more than ten years of experience in industry, public administration, or public policy shall also be considered.

Thus, the Draft Regulations raise serious constitutional issues that must be examined by separating the political context of protest and possible political reactions from the UGC

or the party in power.

Why the UGC Act?

The Parliament enacted the University Grants Commission Act of 1956 to establish the UGC for coordinating and determining standards in universities. The UGC promotes university education, maintains teaching and research standards, allocates funds for university development, recommends improvements, and advises government on grant allocations.

The UGC Act, Section 26, grants the UGC the authority to create regulations to implement the Act, ensuring they align with its provisions. A key consideration is whether the UGC's regulations on the selection and appointment of the Vice Chancellor adhere to the Act, which does not explicitly address these aspects.

However, the problems arise when the statutory body begins to regulate an area that is not the party of the Parent Act. Rules and regulations are technically called subordinate legislation. The subordinate legislation can be made only in consonance with the provisions of the Act. If this regulation goes outside the scope of the Act, it will be ultra vires the Act and hence invalid.

All universities under the Union or the States are established under a statute by the respective

legislature. Therefore, a legislature prescribes the qualifications, mode of selection and condition of service of a Vice-Chancellor. It is not the job of UGC.

The UGC's authority to grant funds has diminished with the establishment of RUSA, which now functions as the Higher Education Ministry's Notification Centre, bypassing traditional rules and regulations. The government is insisting on implementing NEP-2020 without consulting stakeholders and undermining democratic processes. This approach promotes centralisation, corporatisation, commercialisation, and communalisation of education, contravening our constitutional values and federalism. The essence of constitutional federalism is not strong centralisation but accommodating diverse needs through statutory decentralisation and principles like subsidiarity and asymmetrical federalism.

Anti-federal in Spirit

The UGC Draft Regulation 2025 emerges as the blueprint for transforming Indian Universities into corporate training grounds. Under the guise of reform and aligned with NEP-2020, these regulations promise to revolutionise academia.

Still, they seem intent on dismantling the foundation of academic rigour, social justice, and inclusivity. It is proper to say that UGC regulation,

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AIPF National Seminar Debates Impact of Artificial Intelligence

PATNA: Intellectuals and activists from all over India gathered here on February 7-9 in an all-India seminar-cum-workshop to discuss in detail the growing impact of artificial intelligence on science, technology, and the theory and practice of society. The seminar took place in the calm and quiet atmosphere of Navjyoti Niketan, Holy Family Campus, attended by participants from about a dozen states: Bihar, Punjab, Rajasthan, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra, Haryana, UP and others places.

This was a continuation of a series of national seminars held annually by the All India Progressive Forum, a platform of open debate and discussion. The previous workshops were held in Nagpur and Trivandrum, to mention a few.

The theme of this year's seminar-cum-workshop was 'Technology, Development and Problems of Employment' attracted about 30 papers from all over Bihar and India, discussed in six sessions. The participants listened and debated with intense attention throughout the three days. It was one of the most intense seminars, in which the participants kept returning to the latest developments in science, technology and artificial intelligence.

Theme Paper and Base Paper were circulated in advance.

Preparations

Organising and Reception Committees were formed in preparation for the seminar. The OC was headed as Convener by Prof Arun Kumar, general

secretary of AIFUCTO. The Committee, in its meetings attended by AIPF general secretary Anil Rajimwale, constituted various committees to collect funds and make arrangements for stay, food, souvenirs, etc. Ravindranath Rai, Sunil, Sumant, Priya Kumari, Jitendra Singh and others constituted the core team. Many intellectuals, teachers, doctors, lawyers, students etc were involved. Dr Satyajit headed the reception committee as its chairman.

Anil Rajimwale

introduced the organisation.

Technology-oriented papers

The papers covered a wide range of subjects, though mainly concentrated upon the latest developments in the AI, robotics, quantum computers and DeepSeek. The tone of discussions was set by the *Base Paper* by Anil Rajimwale, covering a wide range of 82 paras. It

Globalisation and development; Jobs in IT sector; and others.

Those who presented/sent papers included: Dr Pranav Shekhar, Dr Anil Sawant, Amit K Singh, Dr Rinki, Nico Putz, Dr AR Shanti, Dr GR Ravindranath, Dr G Ramesh, Dr Biju PN, Dr Soma Marla, Dr Gopal Krishna, Sardul Singh, Kanchan Kumar, Prof KS Chalam (President AIPF), Ramesh Rattan, Dr Yugal Rayalu, Dr BS Aulakh, Salimoddin M, Prabhat Kumar, Dr Gopal Krishna,

brought about by developments in quantum computers, Willow chips, AI, DeepSeek, etc and their growing role in re-fashioning the social structures along with contradictions. It stated: "We are passing through one of the greatest phases of technological revolution... whose chief characteristic is passing algorithmic powers to the automatic machine systems, leading to machine intelligence."

Debates centre on AI

The study of emerging technological innovations and their impacts on



Inaugural session

The inaugural session was attended by Prof Arun Kumar, Dr Satyajit K Singh, Working President of AIPF M Vijaya Kumar, general secretary Anil Rajimwale, vice-president Dr Yugal Rayalu, secretary Amit K Singh, and others.

In his inaugural address, the famous surgeon-doctor of world fame, Dr Satyajit K Singh, warmly welcomed the participants and underlined the importance of the seminar. Earlier, Prof Arun invited the dignitaries and introduced the seminar-cum-workshop. Anil provided a brief history, and Rayalu briefly

was discussed extensively.

The papers presented covered topics such as Technology and development, Governance and employment, Technology and employment issues, AI and the future of society, AI and health, AI and employment, IT and Marxism, DeepSeek and US monopolies, Technology, employment and future of society; Neocolonialism, technology and working class; Science, technology and human beings; Knowledge 'blackout'; Technology and social dimensions; Job opportunities and decent work conditions;

Laxmipathi, H Rajnaika, Gaurav Verma, Dr Rameshwar Das, Priya Kumari, Prof Arun Kumar, M Vijaya Kumar, Anil Rajimwale and others.

Those who chaired and coordinated the sessions included: Anil Kumar Roy, Ghanshyam Rai, Gaurav Verma, M Vijaya Kumar, Ravindranath Rai, Prof Lalbabu Yadav, Dr Anil Sawant, Dr Shanti, Priya Kumari, Sunil K Singh, Khushboo Kumari, and others.

Base Paper sets the tone

The *Base Paper* set the tone of the seminar-cum-workshop by pointing out the significant changes

society has been the hallmark of the AIPF. Absorbing discussions took place in the previous seminars, and some were not yet ready to accept the growing role of IT and other technologies.

But this time, the papers and the discussions spontaneously veered around to AI, quantum computers and their contradictory social impacts. This reflected a significant change, with intellectuals and activists coming around to focus on the implications of new tech on theory and practice.

The papers and discussion emphasised the assimilation of new

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Trump and Crisis of Neoliberal Capitalism

The world is facing the brunt of attacks by Donald Trump after his installation as the 47th president of the US. This person combines the qualities of an early capitalist adventurer and an American cowboy-robber baron of a bully and a businessman. Thrown up by the collapsing world imperialist economic order, he appeared on the world stage to rescue crisis-ridden capitalism with raw, savage corporate capitalism. In his latest avatar, he is surrounded by a new breed of unruly technocapitalists who plan to plough huge profits out of powerful new technologies to crush other competitors and pauperise poor developing nations and workers domestically and worldwide.

Trump's break with neoliberalism

Trump's strategy of economic 'nationalism' is to restore American dominance in the world. He wants to combine neoliberalism at home with protectionism against foreign competition. It is a position that breaks with the neoliberal strategy of free-trade globalisation hatched by the Reagan-Thatcher duo in the 1980s. However, inside the United States, Trump continues to pursue some aspects of neoliberalism. He plans to cut taxes on the rich, dismantle bureaucracy and organisations and sack thousands of employees. He threatened to impose tariffs on American corporations that plan to move their production to other countries. He has already scrapped the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) and the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP) with Europe. He pledges to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) with Mexico and Canada to secure more favourable terms. In response to the protectionist measures

from China and the European Union, he threatened to impose a 45 per cent border tax on Chinese goods and retaliatory tariffs on Indian exports to the United States. These measures could trigger a world trade war and shake the world markets. Trump is doing all this not to benefit American people but to gain a competitive advantage for America's super-rich.

The United States has pioneered the neoliberal world order of free trade globalisation since the collapse of the USSR and the socialist camp in the early 90s. Despite the emergence of a unipolar world heralded by wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, world capitalism had to face a severe global crisis triggered by the 2007 Great Recession. It has intensified competition between corporations and states. Subsequently, trade wars have paralysed the World Trade Organization (WTO) and disrupted regional free-trade deals and blocs, such as TPP, NAFTA and Brexit. With the rise of the economic might of China and Russia, trade wars between America and China became a daily routine in the world arena.

Dr. Soma Marla

Neoliberalism was implemented ruthlessly in America following privatisation and deregulation. The ruling class got rid of regulations on capital and launched a war against workers. The attacks were mainly aimed to sabotage the worker rights and paralyse trade unions. American neo-liberalism had forcefully coerced others, especially developing nations like India, to privatise state-run enterprises and discard worker rights by imposing hire and fire, threatening employment security to millions of workers.

Indeed, the world has entered a new period of imperialism, the unipolar world order under the hegemony of the United States, which has been eroding with the emergence of a multipolar world. These developments have seriously alarmed the world capitalist system. Eventually, Trump tore down the veil and resorted to pure American dominance and primitive accumulation of capital. He scrapped USAID, withdrew from WHO, and cut down on American funding for different developmental activities in the third world. He threatened to reduce American funding for NATO. He proposes a return to unvarnished rules of naked capitalist competition and exploitation in desperate mutual competition with

Russia, China, the European Union and, to a lesser extent, India and Brazil. Trump defies all previous norms only to restore America to a position, wresting the lion's share from the spoils of a new trade war.

Trump is attempting to rearm the American military to push back against all rivals: China, in particular, waging an ugly racist war against Palestinians. He even imposed sanctions against South Africa for implementing land reforms. It should be noted that even after three decades of independence, the racist white minority (of 7 per cent) holds 70 per cent of the land while the landless poor suffer in that country.

Planning a Rift between China and Russia

China has become a formidable world economic power during the last three decades. It transformed itself from a backwater producer to the new workshop of the world. It vaulted from producing about 1.9 per cent of global GDP to about 19.5 per cent in 2024. It is now the second-largest economy in the world and is predicted to overtake the United States as the largest economy shortly. China is not the sole beneficiary of the neoliberal expansion. Brazil, India, Russia, and other regional economies have also developed. By forming a parallel economic bloc, BRICS nations, primarily representing the global South, have side-lined G7 and G20. Alarmed by the

BRICS' proposal to de-dollarize and resort to a parallel currency system, Trump recently threatened to impose high trade tariffs. The recent American offer to buy Greenland from Denmark is one example of curtailing China's potential future military operations in the region.

Curry favouring Russia and mediating in the ongoing Russia-Ukraine war is an attempt to separate Russia from China. This reminds one of President Nixon's historic visit to China in the early '70s. However, China and Russia have developed strong economic, military and social alliances. China heavily depends on Russia to import vast quantities of oil and gas. Similarly, in the wake of economic sanctions imposed by Western nations, Russia badly needs technological and economic assistance from China to sustain its economy. Hence, it is not easy for Trump to separate two friends.

Can Trump succeed?

Already, Trump is facing several obstacles in implementing his new strategy. He is already becoming an unpopular president, with an approval rating hovering below 40 per cent in his first month in office. Dismantling administrative units, the sacking of thousands of workers and employees, and unpopular discriminatory gender and equal rights policies largely contributed to this development. He and his crony capitalist

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Government Withdraws Amendments to Advocate Act

Across India, the slogan “Take Back the Black Law” is resonating in the streets as advocates protest against the Advocate Amendment Bill, 2025. This is reminiscent of the farmers’ protests against the three agricultural laws, during which over 700 farmers lost their lives in a year-long struggle. The BJP-led Union government, after relentless opposition, was forced to repeal those laws. Now, a new wave of unrest has emerged – this time, led by the legal community. Now the advocates have forced the Union government to take back the Amendments in the Advocate Act.

Advocates across India, dressed in black and white, have taken to the streets in protest. In major cities, demonstrations have escalated, with reports of clashes between lawyers and the police. The legal fraternity, which has historically played a crucial role in India’s independence and governance, is now fighting for its own rights. This upheaval reminds us of the words of poet Rahat Indori, who warned that when a fire breaks out, it does not spare anyone. Today, it seems that this fire has reached the legal profession.

The proposed bill has sparked outrage because it is seen as an attack on the autonomy and independence of legal practitioners. The key issues raised by the Bar Council of India (BCI) and protesting lawyers include:

- The bill allows the Union government to appoint up to three members in Bar Councils, reducing the autonomy of these institutions. Critics argue that this is an attempt by the ruling government to influence the legal profession.

- The bill proposes transferring regulatory authority from the Bar Council to the Union government, contradicting Supreme Court directives that advocate for independent self-regulation of the legal profession.



- The bill grants the Union government the power to issue mandatory directives to the Bar Council, undermining its independence.

- The legal community fears that new fee

structures and arbitrary changes will create confusion and financial burdens for young lawyers.

- One of the most controversial provisions seeks to classify strikes and boycotts by lawyers as misconduct, effectively taking away their right to protest.

- The bill provides no provisions for healthcare, insurance, or social security for advocates, raising concerns about the welfare of legal professionals.

- The bill proposes a three-year punishment for removing advocates

scheme, this bill has been introduced without consultation with the affected community.

- Advocates have historically played a pivotal role in India’s freedom movement. From Mahatma Gandhi, Jawaharlal Nehru, and Sardar Patel to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the legal profession has shaped the nation. Today, however, many believe that the advocacy system has shifted from being a beacon of justice to a profit-driven profession. A Supreme Court lawyer recently remarked that corruption in the judiciary often begins

with advocates themselves.

- The public perception of the judiciary has also been affected, with increasing concerns over judicial accountability. Several past instances raise questions about the



STUDY & STRUGGLE

C Adhikesavan



role of legal professionals standing up for justice:

- Farmers’ Protest (2020-21): Over 750 farmers lost their lives fighting against unjust laws. How many advocates stood up for them?

- Agniveer Scheme: This scheme, which limits job opportunities for young people in the armed forces, was met with opposition. Did the legal community protest?

- Wrestlers’ Protest: When India’s top female wrestlers were dragged and humiliated on Delhi’s streets, how many advocates supported them?

- Journalist Suppression: Journalists like Pawan Jaiswal, who exposed the mid-day meal scam, were harassed and jailed. Did the legal community take a stand?

- Supreme Court Decisions: In cases like the Babri Masjid verdict and the EWS quota decision, legal experts themselves raised concerns about judicial integrity. Yet, the advocacy community remained largely silent.

National Policy Framework on Agri Marketing (NPFAM) - Part II

The draft NPFAM is intended to create a Unified National Market for agricultural produce. This is bulldozing the diversity of Indian Agricultural produce and practices. Kerala has made a vital framework to safeguard the interests of farmers, such as rubber and coconut boards. Many states conduct state-level procurement processes with additional incentives over MSP. This Unified National Market will bulldoze all these rights of farmers and take away states' control over agricultural produce.

The basic intention of the Modi government is to snatch the rights of the state governments and farmers. To create a B-Ready atmosphere for corporate houses, the government wants to dismantle the very concept of MSP and legal restrictions on Agricultural marketing. The non-existence or non-functioning of a government procurement system at MSP rates is essential for any private wholesale market to survive.

This clearly shows that the interest of farmers has been surrendered to corporate business. The following states conduct the state-level procurement of agricultural produce: Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh (Wheat Procurement); Chhattisgarh, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh (Paddy Procurement); Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh (procurement of coarse grains like bajra).

Many state governments conduct procurement of agricultural produce under the Tribal sub-plan as a support system. The union government intends to completely dismantle the Food Corporation of India, the most significant public

sector purchaser in India and the largest supply chain, which is called the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The government usually procures the following crops: paddy, wheat, barley, jowar, bajra, maize, and ragi, among others. Pulses: Gram, arhar/tur dal, moong, urad, and



lentil. For oilseeds, groundnut, rapeseed/mustard, toria, soyabean, sunflower seed, sesame, sunflower seed, and niger seed raw cotton, procured by the Cotton Corporation of India (CCI). Raw jute, procured by the Jute Corporation of India (JCI), Copra: Procured by NAFED. Unhusked coconut, procured by NAFED. Sugarcane:

Rajan Kshirsagar

Procured at a fair and remunerative price. Virginia flu-cured (VFC), the government procured tobacco.

Thus, a complete dismantling of the procurement process will ruin the prospects of farmers and workers in India. The livelihood of Indian farmers will be at the mercy of giant corporate and blind market forces. This will create a neo-colonial model of rule. The draft NPFAM has proposed a new body parallel to the GST council. Empowered

farming! For this purpose, Digital Issuance of licence/registration, linking of issuing of licence or undertaking registration with PSDA, rationalisation of license/registration fees and security, rationalisation of market fees and commission charges, indexing table considering parameters above to promote "ease of doing agri-trade". There is no concern for farmers at all! The Union Government wants to encroach and bulldoze them along with the rights of the state government on the policy dictates of the World Bank!

implement NPFAM will be indexed based on implementation ratings. Agriculture Ministers of the top three states will be honoured through the appreciation letter for / excellence certificate about the implementation of NPFAM! What a great idea for a celebration! Those ready to surrender the soul of farmers will be honoured with a certificate & corporations will take away all the profits!!

The draft NPFAM proposed Market / Price-Risk Mitigating Measures with Policy Intervention. This answers farmers' doubts about getting prices of

Agricultural Marketing Reform Committee of State Agricultural Marketing Ministers. This supra body will keep all issues outside the democratic processes, particularly the Assembly of the States and even restrictions on the parliamentary process.

The draft NPFAM proposes ease of doing business and not

This may rupture the federal character of the Constitution. Already, there are Union Government's proposals for One Nation, One Election! One Nation One Tax! & one Nation One Market is the agenda leading to an authoritarian regime.

It is also proposed in the draft NPFAM that state governments that

agricultural commodities! The whole system is created in the interest of Corporate Greed, and farmers' rights are crushed. The profit hunger of the volatile & unstable finance capital drives the system. And conflict of interest is bound to happen. Farmers will never get the correct prices for agricultural produce.

But in this situation, the Union Government also wants to protect corporate interests, for this Government is advocating a compulsory retirement of farmers from farming & snatching of land from the farmers. Market linkage through FPOs means FPOs will cater to contract farming and serve as agents of corporate. The Union Government has already adopted operational guidelines for establishing FPO on a large scale in 2020.

The draft NPFAM has proposed implementing the Model Contract Farming and Services (Promotion & Facilitation) Act, 2018 by the state governments. Once the act is passed in State Assemblies, the State Government will form a Board to regulate contract farming. FPO could cater to contract farming. There is no mention of a minimum support price in the contract regulation. The dispute settlement mechanism is at the level of the divisional Magistrate & appeals up to the District Magistrate. None of the disputes could be raised in the civil court. This whole process creates complete corporate control of land and agricultural produce. This will be an assault on farmers.

The role of FPO is as a junker path. The ruling corporate class can find agents operating through FPO. Many FPOs will only cover corporate wrongdoings. Such biased law cannot be justified. Ruling BJP governments in states may pass this model contract farming act without considering farmers' objections.

Corporate bodies may create monopolies & control in different agriculture produce trading. The proposals for contract farming are already of old kinds and made in black farm laws. The draft NPFAM has proposed a Price Insurance Scheme on the lines of PM-Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). Farmers in the country have experienced the fate of PM-Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY), a ploy by corporate insurance companies to loot public money and ultimately failed to relieve farmers affected by natural disasters. Many states, including BJP/NDA-ruled Gujarat Bihar, are not implementing it. It is an outsourcing of disaster management with anti-farmer rules. The Price Insurance scheme again guarantees that the System Based on NPFAM will not be able to deliver justice to the farmer.

It will create shocks and turmoil for the farmers who produce agricultural products. The price insurance scheme will be another model of cheating for farmers. The government wants to give subsidies to the finance sector & GST tax burden to the farmers. Why is this Price Insurance Scheme suggested? Why does the Government want to provide a simple legal guarantee of Minimum Support price @C2+50 per cent based on MS Swaminathan Committee Recommendations?

Whatever laudatory objectives the government claimed, taken together, actually the Acts aimed at:

- Facilitating free and unlimited inroads to the

corporate world to exploit the agriculture sector and agri-produce trade

- Tinkering with the existing assured purchase (in whatever limited way it exists today) of food grains and other agricultural at MSP, with the ultimate aim of putting an end to government procurement at MSP

- Tinkering with the state APMCs (Agriculture Produce Marketing Committees) with the ultimate intention of disbanding the Food Corporation of India and other government/semi-government agencies presently engaged in purchase at MSP rates

- Reintroducing and facilitating "hoarding" of food grains and other essential commodities and promoting and facilitating unrestricted "profiteering" by big traders.

- Encouraging and facilitating contract farming, in the process of which the small and marginal farmers were likely to be lured into a trap, ultimately leading to permanent dispossession of their meagre land holdings;

- Handing over the agriculture produce market to the private big traders and companies. This process was sure to lead to the formation of cartels and big monopolies handling the complete agriculture-produce trade.

The government has now brought this Draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing, which is nothing but an exercise to fulfil those very aims further. It is a backdoor attempt to re-

introduce the repealed farm laws.

1. The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance, 2020.

2. The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, 2020.

3. The Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Service Ordinance, 2020. Farmers nationwide protested against those three black laws despite the coronavirus pandemic.

When the government refused to take note of the protests, the farmers' organisations formed a united front of farmers - the Samyukt Kisan Morcha. Which continued the historic agitation of 383 days at the borders of Delhi, sacrificing 740 lives and facing immense repression, succeeded in victory by the repeal of three Black farm laws.

The Modi Government, in his NDA-3 Government, again betrayed the promises given to the agitating farmers. The Modi Government neither enacted a legal guarantee nor implemented any support system for farming. The NPFAM & BRAP 2024 Together constitute an all-round assault on farmers & workers of the country.

These policies are a bonanza for corporate & global finance capitalism. These policies will ruin Indian agriculture & destroy the livelihood of the farmers and workers. The World Bank-dictated policies of the Narendra Modi Government are not only devastating farmers and

workers of the country but also destabilising constitutional federalism, which may further lead to complex socioeconomic issues. This time, the government has taken a route bypassing the states. The BJP-ruled states may take an aggressive stance to implement NPFAM. Some of the states are more eager to implement it.

The All India Kisan Sabha strongly protests against the NPFAM & BRAP 2024 and demands to repeal it. AIKS shall continue its battle against these devastating policies. Sanyukt Kisan Morcha, of which AIKS is a crucial constituent, has joined the battlefield and declared agitation. Participation in the Kisan Mahapanchayat in Tohana (Haryana) & Moga (Punjab) has shown enthusiasm. The SKM general body has decided to launch a nationwide agitation starting with State level Pakka Morcha in every state.

SKM has also appealed to all farmer's organisations to fight unitedly against NPFAM & BRAP 2024. All sections of farmers and farming communities, small and medium farmers, sharecroppers and tenant farmers, cattle feeders, milk producers, tribals, and rural labourers should join hands to fight back the assault on the Agriculture and Federal Character of the Country. The farmers and workers who have fought for the freedom struggle against British Colonialism will not Neo colonialism imposed by World Bank -WTO dictated Policies.

AIPF National ...

From Page 05

developments in all the fields and raised the level of theory. The discussions were very optimistic and forward-looking.

Valedictory and conclusion

The session was chaired by M Vijaya Kumar, the chief guest was Prof Karyanand Paswan, and the concluding remarks were delivered by Anil Rajimwale. The participants agreed that we are going through historic times, and without studying the latest developments, we cannot develop scientific thought. We must focus on the latest technologies like AI, quantum computers, robots, DeepSeek, etc and discuss their contradictory positive and negative aspects. We must consider how new technologies could be used for people and how to prevent the concentration of wealth and capital in a few hands. Today, finding ways, methods and structures to distribute social wealth equitably is possible when productivity is rising fast. Steps can be traced towards a new order of society.

The papers agreed that scientific theory needed constant renewal. The seminar concluded on an optimistic note for the future. It ended with the singing of the *National Anthem*.

Trump and Crisis...

From Page 06

cabinet will no doubt face many obstacles to push through their agenda.

There are also real economic challenges to his ability to follow through on his economic program. He s i m u l t a n e o u s l y

promises to cut taxes for the wealthy, spend hundreds of millions on domestic infrastructure (billions to build a wall along the US-Mexico border), and expel thousands of illegal immigrants, which will undoubtedly impose a substantial economic burden. On top of all

this, multinational capital opposes American protectionism. Dozens of American multinational corporations with tens of billions of investments overseas are fighting against Trump's high tariffs and economic nationalism. The reality is that the United States economy continues to decline in the neoliberal world order. Despite many contradictions, China continues to benefit from the current trade faceoff. Trump's contradictions could stymie his ability to impose his economic nationalist program in future.

Anti-imperialist solidarity

In the face of the big successes of right-wing forces in many European states, and to resist Trump's imperialistic policies, workers around the world should come together to show solidarity. In this fight, the global working class should make alliances with third-world nations fighting against Trump's tariffs and economic protectionism. In today's world, science and economy have emerged cosmopolitan, and without mutual help and respect, no nation, however mighty, can survive in the long run.

UGC Draft Regulation 2025...

From Page 04

in its pursuit of flexibility and innovation, ignores the realities of marginalised communities and threatens to turn education into a marketplace.

It redefined the academic achievements and the concept of "notable contributions" as a new gold standard for faculty recruitment and promotions. Gone are the days when teaching, research and academic service were the pillars of an academic career.

In another stroke of genius, the UGC has decided to do away with the 10 per cent cap on contractual appointments, effectively opening the floodgates to the casualisation of teaching positions. UGC's clear-cut move is to create a class of teachers who are

too insecure to challenge exploitative practices. The question is, who can speak truth to power when they are afraid of losing their jobs? UGC regulation is not only a direct attack on academic freedom but also a way to weaken any resistance to neoliberal policies prioritising profit over pedagogy.

The introduction of the Professor of Practice (PoP) position allows universities to hire professionals from non-academic fields to teach. This provision threatens the integrity of academia by increasing private business intervention and creating a divisive layer of faculty. These appointments, often based on favouritism rather than academic merit, hinder organization within trade unions and broader faculty concerns.

Also, there is a plan to allow non-medical graduates to teach medical students. The move will directly impact the quality of healthcare delivery in India. In its recent draft, the National Medical Commission (NMC) allows non-medical graduates with M.Sc. and Ph D degrees to teach medical students anatomy, biochemistry and physiology during a t r a n s i t i o n a l period. Doctors have expressed displeasure about the move. UGC draft regulation in section 4.0 deals with the biennial admission, admitting students twice a year. This provision aims only to increase GER without bothering about the quality of higher education, infrastructure, and workload of the faculties. This is a clear-cut move to give licence to loot for

private institutions on the pretext of enhancing GER.

UGC Draft regulation in one stroke bulldozing the subject classifications unscientifically. It creates barriers to marginalised groups, putting unwanted entrance examinations for admission. This regulation equates science specialisation with arts specialisation and unwarranted structural changes promoting dropouts and sowing the seeds for discrimination. It provisions punitive measures against universities that wish to retain their unique identities while broadly adhering to UGC guidelines.

AIFUCTO views the UGC Draft regulation as against the student's welfare, ignoring social justice and compromising merit and

transparency. It is against academic integrity, federalism and centralisation.

Along with the above facts, UGC's draft regulation for 2025 is disastrous for higher education in India. There must be a direct dialogue with stakeholders and states to reach a consensus. A consensus-driven approach between the UGC and state governments, including the stakeholders, is needed to ensure regular respect for federal and democratic principles while upholding academic standards. This can involve creating joint committees to resolve conflicts and align policies. If this is not done, the union government and UGC will soon face protests from states, teachers, students and other stakeholders.

Ghalib: An Unforgettable Poet!

Mirza Asadullah Beg Khan Ghalib's Urdu ghazals attract a highly diverse set of people – rich and poor, literary and scientific, uneducated and erudite, layperson and polymath, lover and beloved, men and women, young and old, even the oppressor and the oppressed, those sunk into the past and reactionary, as well as those who are forward-looking and progressive. The plausible reasons appear to be that his couplets, which are expressed in the most exquisite language using devices such as wordplay, hyperbole, irony and paradox, reflect diverse situations, depict a range of human emotions and provide deep insights into human life and relationship with Nature. To quote Ghalib:

How great delight her eloquence contains! For what she said

It made me feel each time as if that, too, was there in my heart

(dekh nataqreer ki lazzat, keh jo us ney kaha)

Main ney yeh jaanakeh goya yeh bhimerey dil men hai)

Expectedly, even in the year 2025, that is one hundred fifty-six years after Ghalib's departure, many papers carried pieces on him on February 15, his death anniversary. Not only articles but even books on Ghalib have been written to this day. Often, the authors of these books are not professionals specialising in poetry or Urdu language but educated people drawn from different walks of life! That makes me wonder about the aspects that make Ghalib's poetry an irresistible attraction for these people despite his long absence. Perhaps the outstanding feature that prods diverse people to interpret his poetry is that one must

exercise one's mind considerably to understand him, especially when he makes the couplet dense or chooses to speak in conundrums.

Ghalib brooded intensely and found poetry, especially ghazal, the most suitable genre to express his views because, through ghazals, he could best express his abstract ideas. Furthermore, the ghazal not only provided him with the leeway to express subtleties and nuances of his thoughts but also allowed him to entertain and surprise the listener/reader through his play on words, deliberately misleading in the first line, using words varied and even different and contrary meanings to the common usage, and allowing for a multiplicity of interpretations of the couplet.

In addition to the abstract nature and use of symbolism in ghazals, my hunch is that the open spaces in Ghalib's poetry provide latitude to read/interpret as per one's outlook, which

Hasan Abdullah

may not necessarily conform with the contextual reading of his poetry. To interpret a ghazal couplet is challenging because the poet communicates his intent, including the reference to context, in just two lines. Due cognisance of two crucial aspects – the backdrop of his life and times and chronological order – is necessary to decipher the real intent of Ghalib's ghazal couplets.

Ghalib was born and

interacted with several of the most famous Indian litterateurs and British scholars of nineteenth-century India.

In October 1826, to petition British authorities to enhance his pension, he left for Kanpur on his way to Calcutta. He stayed in Lucknow for several months, where he was given an excellent reception. He remained in Banaras for a month to recover from illness and reached Kolkata on February 21, 1828. It was a painfully slow journey, and Ghalib covered most

as Delhi did not have a printing press yet. Thus, because of the nascent industrialisation, Calcutta provided a sort of contrast – a qualitative leap forward – from feudal Delhi. (Anyone guesses that Ghalib could have written the poetry that he wrote if he had not been at the cusp of feudalism and industrialisation and had not visited Calcutta).

The chronological reading of Ghalib's Urdu ghazals reveals him to be a Dialectical Thinker in the post-1826 period, as the following two couplets illustrate.

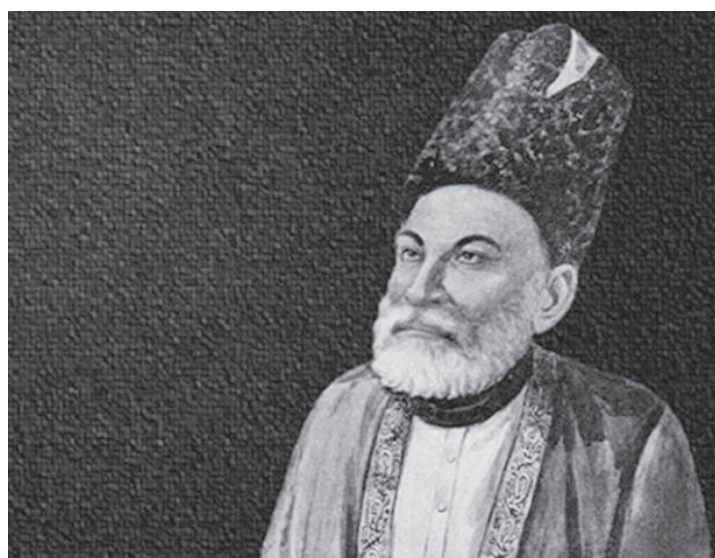
Affirmation emerges out of negation, as if

One was not endowed with a place for a mouth when created

(nafeesey karte hai, isbaat, taraawish, goyaa dee haijaa-eydahan, us ko dam-e eijaad, naheen)

The first line states that concrete existence originates from nothing. Going backwards, in the end, there would have been nothing from which the all-encompassing Nature would have emerged. Even otherwise, the human mind cannot decipher all secrets of Nature because contradiction is the root cause of motion, and the existence of humanity without contradictions, where the unknown is also a kind of contradiction, cannot be visualised.

The second line illustrates that there is no provision for the mouth



(December 27, 1797 - February 15, 1869)

raised in the northern region of nineteenth-century feudal India. The British, who had completed the conquest of India by 1803, had allowed the old Mughal court in Delhi to continue as the centre of cultural life. Ghalib appeared in this milieu as a man with an aristocratic background, a fatherless child, and an early youth of carefree gaiety. However, his adult life was beset with severe financial difficulties, and he suffered other indignities. He

of it on horseback. (In November 1829, Ghalib returned to Delhi from Calcutta.).

In Calcutta, due to the presence of the printing press, he was introduced to daily newspapers. He had access to the translations of English classics into Urdu and Persian at the recently established Fort William College. These industrialisation products – such as the printing press, the steam engine, newspapers, and the wireless – greatly impacted Ghalib's mind,

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New Age Weekly

Union Budget 2025-26...

From Page 03

Instead of supporting this strategic project, the Union Government imposed unreasonable financial burdens! Kerala seeks Rs. 5,000 crores for infrastructure like rail connectivity, a maritime cluster and a green hydrogen hub. Yet, instead of supporting growth, the Centre demands that our Viability Gap Funding be treated as a loan, costing the State Rs. 10,000 crore in repayments. When seaports receive unending Central support, especially in Gujarat, why does Kerala's port get step-motherly treatment?

This Government has also introduced a new methodology for determining open market borrowing by manipulating figures to strangle Kerala's borrowing space. We demand an increase in our normal borrowing ceiling from 3 per cent to 3.5 per cent of GSDP and an additional 0.5 per cent for power sector reforms. But, the Central

Government refuses because it wants Kerala's development to stall. Why? It is because we have built a model where education is free, healthcare is accessible, and women and the marginalised have security and dignity — values that stand in stark contrast to the BJP's economic policies of inequality and corporate handouts.

Centrally Sponsored Schemes are another tool of BJP's economic arm-twisting. States are forced to co-fund projects, eating into our resources, while the Centre takes credit. Kerala must contribute Rs. 17,500 crore to the Jal Jeevan Mission over two years. But our borrowing limits are used as a noose around our neck, threatening Rs. 12,000 crores of ongoing investments. We demand that CSS funding be exempted from these arbitrary restrictions.

Then, what about social security? The Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB) and Kerala Social Security Pension

Company Limited (KSSPL) have been targeted. Their borrowings are suddenly being counted as state debt. Through deliberate policy tweaks, the Centre has cost Kerala Rs. 3,140.7 crore over four years. This is nothing but economic sabotage, a calculated effort to weaken our welfare State model and push Kerala towards disaster. Even under the so-called Scheme for Special Assistance to States for Capital Investment, the BJP Government imposes branding requirements that essentially make a political PR exercise rather than a genuine financial aid programme. Why should Kerala be forced to toe the BJP's propaganda line to receive what is rightfully ours?

The discrimination extends even further. Our National Highway widening projects, in which Kerala has invested 25 per cent of the land acquisition cost, are being wrongly classified in a manner that forces us

to include these investments in our borrowing limits. We demand that Rs. 6,000 crore be allowed outside regular limits. But, as always, the BJP remains deaf to our legitimate requests. And what about GST? The BJP claimed that GST would ensure fair revenue distribution, but Kerala has been systematically shortchanged, suffering due to systematic tax evasion and incorrect settlements. We demand that the GST compensation scheme continue until these flaws are rectified. But, once again, this Government turns away because it knows that Kerala's robust economic model stands as proof of alternative models of development work.

Non-resident Keralites (NRKs) have sent back millions in remittances, contributing immensely to India's Foreign Exchange reserves. Yet, their welfare board is struggling due to rising return migration, and the Centre refuses to allocate even 300 crore annually to sustain it. At the same time, Kerala's proposals for migrant reintegration worth 2,000 crore have been ignored. Why? It is because the BJP sees migrants only as ATM machines, not as human beings.

This Government has given Rs. 60,000 crores to upgrade ITIs nationwide. Yet, Kerala's ITIs are denied their rightful share of Rs. 2,100 crore. Our higher education sector has been ignored under PM-USHA despite submitting proposals worth Rs. 2,117 crores.

Our cancer patients at the Regional Cancer Centre in Thiruvananthapuram are denied Rs. 1,293 crores needed for expansion. Why? It is because Kerala refused to surrender before BJP's communal politics.

Kerala fisheries sector is struggling, but harbour modernisation funds remain elusive. Our coastal communities are fighting for survival against rising sea levels, but the 2329 crore we need is nowhere in sight. We ask for increased subsidies for essential commodities, cashew, coir, handloom sector support, fair wages for MGNREGA workers and a much-needed AIIMS in Kerala. And what is the BJP's response? Silence! Neglect! Contempt! This is not governance. This is economic strangulation. This is a political conspiracy to break Kerala's resilience. But, let me and my party, the CPI, be clear — Kerala will not be bullied. Kerala will not bow down. Kerala will fight! The people of Kerala can see the BJP's game. We see this Government's contempt for our social model, our commitments to secularism and our welfare-driven economy. But let me warn you, Kerala is not alone. The BJP's attacks on federalism are an attack on every non-BJP-ruled State. If Kerala is strangled today, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, West Bengal, Punjab, and every progressive State will be next. Kerala will resist. Kerala will fight, and Kerala will prevail. The people of India will resist. The people of India will fight. And the people of India will prevail against all injustice.

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Russia-Ukraine War

Putin's Strategic Gains Leave the West in Crisis



*Diary of
International
Events*

C. Adhikesavan

On February 24, 2025, a bomb dropped — quite literally — just before dawn. Russian missiles lit up Ukrainian skies, hitting military sites in Odessa, Mariupol, Kharkiv, and Dnipro. The world was in shock. A war in 2022? Surely no one was that delusional. But for Vladimir Putin, the decision seemed inevitable. He believed Russia was being boxed in and had no choice but to defend itself.

Putin justified his “special military operation” with three key objectives: denazification, demilitarization, and ensuring Ukraine’s neutral status. Russia would not tolerate a NATO neighbour. In the war’s early days, Russian forces advanced rapidly, nearly reaching Kyiv. Many speculated about the fate of Ukraine’s leadership until Volodymyr Zelensky appeared in a video from the capital’s streets, signalling his intent to fight rather than flee. Zelensky abandoned his suits for military fatigues, sending a clear message — Ukraine would resist.

The West rallied behind Ukraine. Joe Biden saw the conflict as a moment to prove himself different from Donald Trump. The U.S. and NATO poured military and financial aid into Ukraine, declaring that Putin would never claim victory. Sanctions were supposed to cripple Russia’s economy. Western arms would stop Russian advances. Moscow would be politically isolated. Yet, none of these expectations materialized. Instead, it is Ukraine that now stands on the verge of collapse.

The Western strategy hinged on three assumptions: Russia’s economy would collapse, NATO support could halt Russian forces, and Putin would be globally isolated. All three

have failed. Russia’s economy has outperformed the G7 in 2024-25, with a projected 4 per cent GDP growth compared to the G7’s 1.7 per cent. The Ruble, which Biden promised to turn to “rubble,” remains stable — trading at nearly the same value as when the war began.

Militarily, the war has turned into a slow-moving war of attrition. Russia now controls nearly 20 per cent of Ukraine, advancing gradually but steadily. Meanwhile, Putin has strengthened his alliances. He has deepened ties with China and India, hosted African leaders in Moscow, and found an unexpected ally in North Korea’s Kim Jong-un. Instead of



isolation, Russia has solidified its place in an alternative global order, driven by BRICS expansion and non-Western trade networks.

So how did Putin manage to pull this off? Three key factors played in his favour. First, he ensured that Ukraine and the West had no viable military path to victory. He used nuclear threats strategically, keeping Western support limited. Fearing escalation, NATO initially restricted Ukraine’s access to long-range weapons, preventing direct strikes inside Russia. Only in late 2024 did the U.S. ease these restrictions, but

by then, Russia had already gained the upper hand.

Second, Putin effectively managed Russia’s economy. Despite facing over 24,000 sanctions, Russia adapted. When the West cut off trade, Moscow turned to China and India, selling oil and natural gas at discounted rates. Russian arm exports to the Global South kept military production running. Investments in BRICS expanded Russia’s economic reach, creating alternatives to Western-dominated financial systems. The idea of a Western-led global economy is now facing a challenge as BRICS expands to ten members.

Third, Putin did not frame this war as a fight between good and evil. Unlike Western leaders, who positioned Ukraine as a battle for democracy, Putin stuck to a pragmatic narrative: Russia had strategic concerns and was willing to negotiate if they were addressed. The West refused to engage diplomatically, but Putin left the door open, betting that someone — eventually — would come knocking. That someone is Donald Trump.

Trump has repeatedly stated that he would end the war quickly, urging Putin and Zelensky to negotiate. This

presents Putin with multiple options. He can push Trump for favourable terms, stretch out negotiations while gaining more ground on the battlefield, or even gamble on a full military victory if U.S. aid to Ukraine is cut.

Beyond Ukraine, a larger geopolitical shift is unfolding. Until now, Europe relied on U.S. security guarantees. But Trump’s “America First” stance threatens to weaken NATO. He insists Europe must take charge of its own defense — a position that resonates with a growing segment of American voters. If the U.S. pulls back from European security, NATO weakens, and a weaker NATO benefits Putin. With the transatlantic alliance strained, Russia can assert greater influence over its neighbours and beyond.

That said, Putin’s position is not without setbacks. His prolonged focus on Ukraine has cost him elsewhere. In Syria, his ally Bashar al-Assad was ousted largely because Russian air support was missing. Additionally, NATO has expanded. Finland and Sweden, once neutral, have now joined the alliance, bringing NATO’s borders even closer to Russia — a direct consequence of Putin’s invasion.

Strategic patience has been Putin’s greatest asset. Unlike Western leaders, he does not face elections or public backlash that could threaten his rule. He can afford to wait. Democratic leaders, on the other hand, must answer to their voters, making long-term war commitments difficult to sustain.

Ghalib: An Unforgettable Poet! ...

From Page 11

at the time of the baby’s conception. However, at the time of conception, provision for the development of different body parts of the baby does exist. Negation means undoing, reversing, or negating the pre-existing state. At the most primary level, human life, the world, or even nature originated *as if* from nothing – a la, the mouth appears from nowhere.

The principle of negation can be applied in virtually every domain. For instance, in

physical motion, its negation, rest, is required as a backdrop. Evolution through mutation also represents that affirmation emerges out of negation. Applied to the evolution of the universe, it can be surmised that at the instant of the creation of Nature, there would have been scope for future developments. However, it would have been in such an incipient state that it would have appeared as if there was no such scope. (The following verse also pertains to the same post-1826 period.).

Lust is engaged in many different delightful tasks

If there had been no death, life would have held no joy

(hawas ko hainishaat-e kaarkyaakyaa?
nah ho marnaa, to jeeneykaamazaakyaa?)

The first line gives no hint of the theme the second reveals, as the normal human desire to live longer. But, and rightly so, Ghalib terms that as rapacity. Life would lose all charm if it were eternal; death, which ordinary people dread, makes life

enjoyable for those who strive for positive change and understand that ‘affirmation emerges out of negation’.

Life and death are complements, and life is to be savoured because of its impermanence. Life is infused with meaningfulness only through its negation, death. So, life is to be lived to its fullest and savoured in all its varied hues, as death imparts impermanence and charm. For Ghalib, the permanence, whether that of verifiable earthly life or imagined heavenly bliss, is highly

boring and unacceptable.

Post-death, one lives in the form of the work one does during one’s life. One becomes a part of historical evolution. That is how society continually evolves, as the continuity of life is maintained through concrete work. In the end, death is inevitable for anything that is born. Every beginning must have an end, which is not to be dreaded or bemoaned, nor is it to be longed for. The present, the period of existence, needs to be optimally utilised and savoured.

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Krupskaya Nadezhda: Founding Member of Bolshevik Party



(February 26, 1869 - February 27, 1939)

We commemorate the birth anniversary of Nadezhda Krupskaya, writer, educator, and tall leader of the Soviet Union and wife of Vladimir Lenin. She worked on various areas, especially literacy, education, and issues pertaining to women.

She was one of the Bolshevik Party's founders. She served as the central committee's secretary during the 1905 revolution. She served as the deputy commissioner of education following the October Revolution. She also played a significant

role in founding the Communist youth movement in Soviet Russia.

While remaining steadfast in her commitment to a society founded on true equality, Krupskaya delivered her harsh condemnation of the 1930s' setbacks placed on women, including the dissolution of the Party's women's department and the limitations placed on abortion.

Using the pseudonym "Sablina," one of several she used before the Bolshevik revolution, Krupskaya penned *The*

Woman Worker in 1899. The book's significance arises from the fact that it served as the first Marxist study of Russian women's conditions.

The rationale behind women's lack of rights under tsarism are examined in great detail by the author. She urges women to stand with men as co-workers and as equals in their fight for a better life. She states, "The woman worker is a member of the working class, and all of her interests are closely tied to that class's interests."

On Record ...

Constitutionalism refers to a set of formal legal and political concepts that have shaped the modern world some of the features of modern constitutionalism include a set of Rights doctrine of separation of power, rule of law, judicial review, public accountability, and a set of rules that govern the conduct of established institutions, asserts the Chief justice of Delhi High court. – On Constitutionalism in India at a seminar.

India ranks 109th among 167 countries in terms of its performance in 2024 towards achieving the United Nation-mandated sustainable development goals (SDGs), a report released on Wednesday said, adding that it was a cause for "concern" not only for India but globally as well. India has improved its ranking by three positions over the last year. The State of India's Environment 2025 report, published by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE), is based on the UN-backed Sustainable Development Report and the NitiAayog report for 2024. The report has been published jointly by former deputy chairman of the Planning Commission Montek Singh Ahluwalia, former CEO of NitiAayog and India's G-20 Sherpa Amitabh Kant and CSE director-general

Sunita Narain. – The Telegraph, February 27.

Compensation disbursement for the victims of the 2020 Delhi riots, which claimed 53 lives, has been the "worst in the history of the Indian republic" and points to the



"profound and wanton failure" of the government, a report by an NGO working for the victims has said.

The report, titled "The Absent State: Comprehensive State Denial of Reparation & Recompense to the Survivors of the 2020 Delhi Pogrom" and published by the NGO Karwan-e-Mohabbat, was released by former Congress minister Salman Khurshid. "This is arguably the worst performance of

compensation payments after communal violence in the history of the Indian republic," the report stated. "What emerges from this report is the profound and wanton failure of both the central and state governments in all tasks of reparation during and after the 2020 Delhi communal pogrom – of rescue, relief, rehabilitation, compensation and bridging social divides," it added. – The Telegraph, February 27.

DMK Deputy General Secretary and Lok Sabha MP A Raja said Union Home Minister Amit Shah was the one not telling the truth about delimitation, not Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin. According to Raja, the provisions in the Constitution and the Delimitation Act of 2002 clearly stated that delimitation will be conducted solely based on population. "This was repealed in 1971 by the same Parliament stating that family planning was successfully implemented in Tamil Nadu and southern states," he said, adding that, because of that, to prevent a reduction in representation for Tamil Nadu and the southern states, Parliament decided to postpone delimitation for 25 years, Raja explained. Raja further stated that Chief Minister Stalin insisted on maintaining the 1971 status quo for delimitation and accused the Home Minister of failing to address this concern.

– Compiled by C. Adhikesavan

Reunification of Communists a Necessity



A huge, impressive, colourful procession through the streets of Warangal and a public meeting was held at Abby's function hall. The procession started from the Islamic Junior College grounds to LB Nagar via Pochamma Maidan. The procession and public meeting were held as part of the centenary celebrations of the CPI foundation day. The meeting was presided over by Mekala Ravi, District Secretary, CPI.

Dr. K. Narayana, CPI National Secretary, was the chief guest. He has conveyed greetings to party members on the occasion of centenary celebrations. He has clarified that CPI has a history of struggles and sacrifices. CPI will fight for the welfare of the poor while carrying a red flag.

Hence, communists must be strengthened, and reunifying all communists is an urgent need of the hour. Narendra Modi and

Amit Shah cannot stop people's movements.

Narayana, further stated that corporate forces are dictating terms on political parties. Modi is weakening all constitutional bodies. In a similar trend, KCR and Jagan Mohan Reddy, both are not attending the Assembly in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. This is nothing but insulting people's verdict. Corporate forces are strengthening and

dictating terms on the country's politics.

Elon Musk in the USA and Adani in India have similar nature and tactics. Corporate forces never help people, but they aim to earn profits. Narendra Modi is trying to bring many small parties under his control by using constitutional bodies. Several judges were given various positions as they gave verdicts favouring the BJP. CBI, ED, and the Election Commission have come under Modi's clutches. Modi frequently states that if the State and Centre are controlled by one party, they must develop. But as we saw in Manipur, BJP rules the state and Centre.

Why is Manipur still

facing the issues? At present, a new slogan of "One country, one election" has been used by Modi. This is nothing but insulting, snatching the rights of the states. If Modi's rule is good, why have BJP seats fallen from 303 to 242? Modi has become prime minister with the support of Chandrababu and Nitish Kumar, the coalition partners. BJP has blackmailed the Aam Aadmi Party and could see that an alliance would not exist between Congress and AAP in Delhi.

In Telangana, TRS has taken loans worth 7 lakh crores rupees. At present, Revanth Reddy cannot implement promises due to a shortage of funds. The caste census will bring

a lot of changes in the country. Congress has assured their partners two MLC seats as part of the alliance. Congress should implement the promise they made.

T a k k a l a p a l l y Sreenivasa Rao State Asst. While addressing this issue, Secretary CPI has made it clear that CPI(ML) has also changed its line and work democratically. H e n c e , t h e reunification of communist parties is the need of the hour. T Venkataramulu, Mekala Ravi, Karre Bixapathi, Manda Sadalaxmi, Bhashu Miya, Panjala Ramesh, Panasa Prasad Maddela yelled, Kottepaka Ravi, and Mothe Linga Reddy have also addressed the gathering.