

SUCI (Communist) Brands the Union Budget 2021 as a roadmap of total Privatization instead of addressing a single people's issue

In a quick reaction to the Union Budget 2021, Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI(C), issued the following statement on 1 February 2021:

“When the common people of the country assailed by continued economic destitution and strike of pandemic, are in desperate need of fiscal subsidy and other necessary financial support to eke out a bare living, the BJP Finance Minister (FM) did not touch a single pressing problem of their life like mounting unemployment, growing job loss, rampant closure of industries, harrowing price rise, exorbitant spurt in fuel cost, non-receipt of remunerative prices by the peasants etc. Instead, the entire budget speech was full of sickening chest-thumping, providence of questionable statistics and spurious claim of economic revival and growth. In the name of creating ‘Amanirbhar Bharat’, a full-fledged roadmap of further and speedy privatization of almost all sectors including social welfare and service sectors like health, education, insurance and banks has been rolled out.

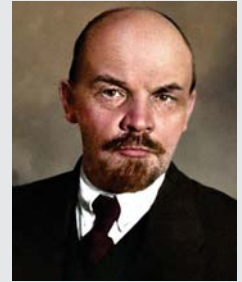
Incidentally, the whole country is witnessing and wholeheartedly supporting the historic movement of the peasants, the bread-givers of the country and constituting over 70% of the population, against three black Farm Laws and other pro-corporate reforms in agriculture in. Already 153 precious lives have been sacrificed in that movement. But the FM, in keeping with the autocratic stand of the government against the just demands of the movement, had simply avoided any reference to that. Instead she gave some questionable figures of payment of Minimum Support Price (MSP) to the farmers in last one year to pretend how much her government has done for the peasants while it known to all that the government is refusing to accept the peasants' demand for legalizing MSP. No change has been made in direct taxation rates despite the fact that middle class taxpayers are reeling under spiralling prices, lowering income and dipping bank interest. Thus it has been made it clear that this government is completely wedded to the task of serving the class interest of the monopoly houses, both domestic and foreign, who, as per latest revelations increased their wealth manifold even during the pandemic. So, ‘Atmanirbhar Bharat’ (Self-reliant India) is actually proved to be a euphemism for ‘Corporate-reliant India’.

We vehemently condemn such an anti-people budget visibly formulated at the dictate of the ruling capitalist class in such a grave hour of crisis in people's life and call up on the suffering countrymen to rise up in organized struggles against this treachery and despotic outlook of the BJP government.”

LONG LIVE COMRADE LENIN

“Only struggle educates the exploited class. Only struggle discloses to it the magnitude of its own power, widens its horizon, enhances its abilities, clarifies its mind, forges its will.” (Lectures on 1905 Revolution-CW Vol 23)

“Everyone knows that bourgeois politicians always come forward with all sorts of slogans, programmes, and platforms to deceive the people. Bourgeois politicians always, especially before elections, call themselves liberals, progressives, democrats and even ‘radical socialists’ solely for the purpose of catching votes and deceiving the people. This is a universal phenomenon in all capitalist countries. That is why Marx and Engels even referred to bourgeois deputies as people ...who represent and repress the people through their parliamentary powers.” (The new Senate Interpretation CW Vol.11 p.335)



22 April 1870 - 21 January 1924

Paying Revolutionary Tribute To Great Lenin on 21 January 2021 on his 97th Death Anniversary



Comrade Provash Ghosh,
General Secretary, SUCI(C),
at Shibpur Party Centre, West Bengal

Comrade Manik Mukherjee,
Polit Bureau member, at
Salt Lake Party Centre, Kolkata

Comrade Asit Bhattacharyya, Polit
Bureau member, at
Salt Lake Party Centre, Kolkata

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Historic Peasants' Movement Fountain of Endless Inspiration

Tremors are felt by the ruling quarters—tremors of the historic peasants' movements that have been going on for 67 days in demand for repeal of the three black Farm Laws, withdrawal of the proposed Electricity (Amendment) Bill and legalizing Minimum Support Price for procurement of agricultural produce. The government initially thought that this was a sporadic movement and would soon fizzle out as the peasants would not be able to squat for long abandoning cultivation work back home and bearing the severe wintry cold. Moreover, it was nurturing another illusion that with the help of the pliant media, it would be able to convince the illiterate peasants that the new laws are meant for their benefit. But soon the government found, it was not that easy. With an undaunted spirit

and courage, the peasants were determined to carry on their movement braving all odds till their legitimate demands of annulment of all pro-corporate laws and measures are achieved. The government tried to resist the peasants from entering Delhi and took all necessary prohibitive measures including digging the roads and blocking the entry points to the national capital with boulders, concrete slabs etc.. But thousands of peasants began sit-in demonstration at the four border points of Tikri, Singhu, Shahjahanpur and Gazipur. Everyday peasants from various states were joining the movement. Sensing problem, the government offered to sit with the agitating peasants and discuss the issues. But ten rounds of bilateral

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Peasants' Movement

Black Farm Laws would only pave way for eventual corporate invasion in the sphere of agriculture

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talks proved abortive as the government was not inclined to repeal the black laws and agree to other demands. Instead they spoke of bringing amendments to the laws. Repeatedly, the agriculture and food ministers who represented the government side tried to argue that the bills are in the interest of the peasants.

Ruinous consequences of the black Farm Laws

But the peasants told them to their face that



Mahapanchayat in Muzaffarnagar, UP, in support of the peasants' movement

however the government might try to eulogize the laws, the fact is that these laws would only pave the way for eventual corporate invasion in the sphere of agriculture. First of all, the total overhauling of the Essential Commodities Act 1955 would enable the agri-corporates and MNCs to purchase rice, wheat, pulses, vegetables, milk, fish and all other food articles as much as they want and then hoard without limit. No punitive measure would be taken for unlimited stocking of such essential items. Then once an artificial scarcity is created by way of this hoarding, they would release the articles selectively and raise the prices. But the existing APMC (agricultural Produce and Marketing Committee) Act poses an obstacle before such unhindered privatization of procurement process. There are at present nearly 7,500 APMC Act-regulated mandis (markets) in the country where 30-32 % of the agricultural crops are sold to the government by the peasants at government approved MSP (Minimum Support price). If these markets continue to exist, it would hinder the intended privatization. So, in the second law, permission has been granted to the corporates to open private mandis side by side government mandis. Once these mandis are operative, the government would phase out the government mandis in a planned manner just like the way, mushrooming growth of private schools has virtually crippled the government schools. Once private houses take full control of the procurement system, they would purchase crops from the peasants at throwaway price and then sell those crops at exorbitant rate in the retail outlets. So, both the peasants and the common people would be severely hit while the coffers of the private operators would swell. Already, within days of enactment of the new laws, as many as 247 APMC mandis have been closed down in Madhya Pradesh (MP) proving that the

apprehension of the peasants are not unfounded. Moreover, if the APMC mandis are abolished, the government would have no crops at its disposal. So whatever little of the Public Distribution System (PDS) or ration system is still in existence, would cease to be there. Food Corporation of India (FCI) would also close down. In fact, already the Adani-group, known for their close proximity to the BJP Prime Minister and government is assigned the responsibility of storing the surplus crops that FCI godowns cannot accommodate. Moreover, there would be spurt in contract farming. Third, the law empowers the big corporates and agri-MNCs with enormous money power and having backing of the government as well as the ruling dispensation to enter

into contract with the peasants most of whom are small or marginal peasants owning 2 to 4 acres of cultivable lands. All clauses of contract as per the new law are skewed in favour of the corporate giants. So it will be a contract between unequals. It is clearly stated in the new law that when the contracted crop would be ready for harvesting, the quality check would be undertaken by the buying corporates. What is the guarantee that the corporates would not manipulate to downgrade the 'A' category crops as 'C' grade and force the peasants to sell their contracted produce at a much lower price with tears. Even if the crops are bought, the peasants would have to run from pillar to post to get the sale proceeds. The peasants would be left in the lurch if the corporates refuse to buy the crops as per contract. These are no baseless apprehensions. In Uttar Pradesh (UP), the peasants sell sugarcane to the big sugar mills based on contract farming. But it takes at times 3 to 5 years to realize the price. Same is the experience of the flower-peasants of Karnataka to corporates. Moreover, the big corporates and MNCs whose objective is to go for large scale business in agriculture would give contract only for crops which have demand in both domestic and overseas markets. So, they cannot depend on the kind of crops the peasants would like to produce. So, they need to dictate terms in this regard. That is why, they prefer contract farming. There is no precedence in the

world that the peasants have benefitted because of contract farming. Rather the opposite is true. Moreover, peasants as well as workers and other sections of the toiling people have already experienced what devastation the privatization spree can bring to their life. More and more peasants are losing land and turning into agricultural workers, and then migrant workers. Land is more and more concentrated in the hands of the big monopoly houses and rural bourgeoisie. Cultivable multi-crop land was sought to be forcibly grabbed and handed over to corporate tycoons in the name of industrialization. Against such forcible acquisition, historic peasants' movements surged forth in Singur-Nandigram in West Bengal against the then CPI (M) government and the conspiracy was foiled. Likewise peasants of Odisha had to organize struggle to prevent land-grab by the Mittal group. Peasants of Maharashtra rose against establishment of Special Economic Zone (SEZ) by Ambanis there.

Can the words of the Prime Minister be relied upon?

So, it is difficult to believe that the corporates would change colour overnight at the request of the Prime Minister or the government and do justice to the peasants. But the BJP Prime Minister continues to assure the peasants that the new laws would help doubling their income by 2022. We are only in 2021. Has the income of the peasants increased or has it been plummeting with every passing day. The government says widescale privatization is good for the peasants. Is it so? Ten years back, agricultural input sale (seed, fertilizer, pesticides etc.) was totally handed over to large MNCs by dismantling all government producers like the Fertilizer Corporation of India. What has been the outcome? Prices of those inputs have doubled, if not tripled making production cost extremely high. So, the peasants, most of whom have no access to bank or financial institutions borrow heavily at very high interest from private lenders. But they



Sikh peasants guarding their Muslim sisters during Namaz at a movement spot in Delhi border

are denied remunerative price even in the existing condition and often forced into distress sale. Unable to pay back loans, many peasants commit suicides. In India, one peasant commits suicide in every twelve minute. It is on record that being denied prices as per contract, many cotton-growing peasants of Maharashtra and Karnataka have committed suicide. The BJP government spokespersons often claim that these

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Peasants' Movement

People have already experienced what devastation privatization spree can bring to their life

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new laws have been promulgated as per the agricultural reforms which are dream projects of the Prime Minister. So, the peasants should repose confidence in his words. Again an incredible paradox! The Prime Minister promised to provide two crore jobs every year, unearth black money and credit every citizen's bank account with 15 lakh rupees, recover black money, contain terror-funding and intercept counterfeit notes by demonetization. The Prime Minister is even on record to have said that he should be "hanged in public" if proved wrong. Have these promises been kept or proved, as per the admission of the Union Home Minister, as hoaxes?

Peasants are undaunted in realizing their just demands

Such being the experience, the peasants have raised the just demand of repealing the black laws and measures, lock, stock and barrel. They are firm on their demands. It also became clear to the peasants that government by prolonging the fruitless discussions was actually buying time and adopting a dilatory tactics to tire them so that they were forced to agree to government's proposal of some cosmetic changes and withdraw the movement. But seeing the peasants unwavering, the government moved the Supreme Court and in the seventh round of discussion asked the peasants to accept the verdict of the Court. The government also said that the implementation of the black laws would be postponed by one year and a half. Responding to the government's petition, the Supreme Court said that it was constituting a committee to go through the entire issue and submit its report. But the peasants said that they were not fighting any legal battle. They are fighting for their cause. They also pointed out that the judiciary is supposed to examine the constitutional validity of any law which is made by the legislators in the parliament. But they had never asked for examining the constitutional validity of the laws. They have demanded repeal of the laws. So where does the question of accepting the verdict of Supreme Court or appearing before any committee come from? At this point, the talks failed and the peasants closed their ranks further to intensify the movement which has all through been peaceful despite all

provocations from the ruling camp. They could make out that the government was weaving ploys to make them agree to suspending the movement on this or that pretext because if the peasants could be sent back home based on some spurious promises, such a gigantic movement would not get crystallized again. So, for stepping up the movement, they decided that a tractor rally would be organized on 26 January, the Republic Day, in Delhi, following the roadmap in

needed to resort to plan B- a plan that all despotic rulers adopt to break a legitimate movement. On 26 January, 99% of the peasants began the peaceful tractor rally on the designated route at 11.30 am and returned to the protest site at 4 pm without creating any trouble.

However, a peasant organization having no connection with the SKM, in connivance with RSS goons started a separate tractor rally in defiance of the SKM decision and rushed to the Red Fort

AIKKMS appeals to the countrymen

Dear friends,

Ongoing peasant movement in Delhi has created a ray of hope among the toiling millions of our country. They witnessed in it an undaunted heroism which, defying all sorts of obstructions, can continue a movement till the goal is reached. They witnessed in it an unheard-of act of self-immolation of hundred fifty three souls. And all these are to force the BJP government to repeal three anti-peasant, pro-corporate Farm Acts and Electricity (Amendment) Bill-2020.

In this struggle, the peasants have got tremendous support from the people - old, young, men, women, students, youths, labouring masses and intelligentsia. Their heart-felt support has been helping the movement to go forward.

The BJP government in the centre in a bid to foil the movement took various measures. They used oppressive and suppressive measures, tried to create division among the peasants, unnecessarily linger the talks to frustrate the peasants. Even they planned to use the supreme Court against the farmers. But most dangerous has been their act on 26 January 2021. On that very important day of our national life, the BJP government got some agent provocateurs infiltrated in the movement. These BJP-RSS men also misguided a small portion of peasants those who are outside the ambit of Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) and have done so many unwanted things to malign the peaceful movement.

Now they are organising hooligans and RSS-BJP men in big numbers and utilising them along with the para-military forces to crush the movement. Any time, this armed fascist force can attack the peasants in borders like Singhu, Tikri, Gazipur etc. We urge upon the people at large to come forward to resist the fascistic design of the BJP government and make the movement a victorious one.

Satyawan, President
Sankar Ghosh, General Secretary
All India Committee, AIKKMS

28 January 2021

consultation with the police. After initial dilly-dally, the police permitted to take out the tractor rally as per the approved route.

Earlier the BJP government and the ruling party leaders had tried to mislead the countrymen by saying that there were anti-national terrorist groups like the Khalistanis behind the movement. But that propaganda did not hold water. Rather, waves of public sympathy in favour of the farmers' movement increased manifold. So, the ruling circle

for hoisting Sikh Religious flags there. Clearly, the intention was to defame the peasants' movement and help the BJP government in spreading canard against the struggling peasants. Significantly, the mainstream media instead of depicting the peaceful tractor rally, zoomed in on the Red Fort incident and most television news anchors began painting the protesting farmers as "terrorists" and "Khalistanis". It was soon revealed that the stray violent incident and

induced clash with the police was instigated by a known RSS man. Within no time, the peasant organizations leading the movement condemned the incident and dissociated themselves from the trouble-making group and said that the godi media (i.e. the monopoly-controlled media) was trying to defame them and seeking to inflict a blow to the overflowing public support to and the solidarity with their just movement. That it was a planned move to show the movement in a bad light, and then capitalizing on that to take punitive measures to disrupt the movement became evidently clear when summons were issued in the names of several peasant leaders accusing them of attacking police and vandalizing government property. The BJP-led UP and MP governments also filed FIRs against some senior editors and journalists for honest reporting of the 26 January violence. The Editors' Guild condemned this action and held that this was an attempt to "harass, browbeat and stifle" the media.

While the government was holding the farmers responsible for violating the agreed rules of the tractor rally, which they say led to clashes in parts of the city, the farmers had correctly refuted the accusation as false with the police themselves creating barricades on some stipulated routes. The farmers also said that it smacked of a conspiracy to sabotage and malign their peaceful protest. In fact, after this incident, the peasants' unity has become more consolidated and their resolve to see it through to the end has been further steeled.

The BJP government bares its fascist autocratic face

Having failed in all attempts to sabotage the movement, the government opted to bare its tooth and claw and fielded armed storm-troopers to terrorize the peasants. On 30 January, around 400 to 500 armed persons masquerading as locals pounced upon the peasants at Singhu border, ransacked the tents the peasants were staying in and raised provocative anti-peasant slogans. The police at the outset remained mute spectators. While all vehicles and persons except the media-men and police personnel were prevented from entering the movement site from 2 km away, it was a mystery how the "locals" could so easily sneak through the police cordon and that too with vehicles, reach the movement spot and attack the peasants. Even water tanks to the movement spot were held back. But the peasants did not run into the trap and exercised

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Peasants' Movement

All heinous attempts to break the movement prove abortive

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exemplary restraint. So, this attempt to create fissure in the movement also failed. On the other hand, at Ghazipur bordering Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, the BJP run state government mobilized huge contingent of armed police and paramilitary forces on the evening of 28 January. The local administration asked the farmers to end their protest and vacate the road by that night. But the farmers have refused to budge declaring that they were "ready to face bullets" if needed. "There has been no violence on the Ghazipur border. Despite this, the government is adopting a repressive policy. It is the face of the Uttar Pradesh government," the peasants observed. Seeing the grit of the peasants, the police-administration beat a retreat at around midnight. Electricity supply at the protest site, which had been cut, was also restored. Earlier also, the UP government issued direct threat of dire consequences to the peasants on their way to the movement site if they proceeded further. But that was also of no avail. Rather, as it is reported, hundreds of peasants from various districts are marching towards the protest sites at Singhu, Ghazipur and Tikri borders with renewed enthusiasm. Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM), of which AIKKMS, the Peasant front of our Party is an important constituent, has vehemently condemned the Uttar Pradesh Police for trying to forcibly evict farmers protesting at the Ghazipur border between Delhi and UP and said that the police were not taking action against the "real culprits" of the Republic Day violence, but were instead arresting farmers who were protesting peacefully. The SKM has also demanded that all peaceful protesters should be released, immediately and unconditionally. But this is not the end. The government in future might take more coercive measures and weave more ploys to kill the movement.

But the peasants are on guard. They have instinctively realized that the black laws would lead them to the precipice of virtual ruin. So they have united and launched this historic movement. As usual, the government has been trying drive a wedge into their fighting unity by precipitating divisiveness. But the cultural milieu of a united legitimate democratic movement creates an atmosphere where fighting people rise above all divisiveness to uphold their cause. Exactly, that is being witnessed in this

peasants' movement. People of different states, different languages, different religious beliefs are staying together, eating together, observing religious rituals together and helping each other in overcoming the difficulties. Anyone who has come in contact with these struggling peasants would feel the fervour of the movement. This movement has proved to what high level of fighting consciousness the oppressed people can attain when they unitedly struggle against a common enemy for a right cause. It has also provided impetus to the suffering workers who are also pressed under the grinding wheel of ruthless capitalist exploitation and now facing further peril consequent on brazen pro-corporate labour reforms like wage code etc. brought in by the BJP government. This movement has also proved that such a united movement of people does not require MPs or MLAs to back it. It is the people's zeal, determination and courage that act as the motive force.

Historic significance of the movement

There is another very important aspect of this movement. Hitherto the movements were directed against the anti-people policies of any government. But from this movement, slogans have been raised against the monopoly houses trying to seize the agricultural sector and the government has been branded as a 'mask' of these monopolists. In other words, the movement has been to some extent able to detect that the monopolists are at the helm of power and Prime Minister Modi is just their political manager. This particular realization is of enormous significance. The toiling masses would gradually understand that it is a rule of capital. Ambani-Adani-Tata-Birla are in power. By casting vote in an election, the power of these ruling monopolists cannot be curbed. So, when one would try to seek answer in regard to abolishing this oppressive rule, it would be clear to one that by reforming capitalism, the desired emancipation would not come by. Capitalism has to be overthrown. When this consciousness would dawn upon the oppressed millions, they would search for the correct ideology, correct base political line and correct revolutionary leadership to build up a new struggle and set up a new society free from exploitation of man by man. The historic significance of this movement lies here.

Workers and Farmers Unite to Safeguard National Interests

Joint statement by Samyukta Sangharsh Morcha of farmers and the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions including AIUTUC issued on 25 January 2021

The meeting between the representatives of the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and the Samyukta Sangharsh Morcha of farmers held on 22 January 2-21 congratulated the farmers and their organisations for their determined struggles on their just demands. The meeting paid homage to the farmers who lost their lives during the course of the protests.

It is more than 58 days since lakhs of farmers have been protesting at the borders of Delhi braving cold, rains and inclement weather demanding repeal of the three 'black' farm acts and withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 and legal guarantee for MSP for all crops along with assured government procurement. The meeting appreciated the firm unity and resolve displayed by the farmers' organizations in the midst of the government's vilification campaign branding the farmers as Khalistanis, terrorists, etc, using the 'gadi' corporate controlled media and its troll army.

The meeting deplored the use of NIA, ED, Income tax department and imposing criminal cases to threaten and intimidate the leadership of the agitation and innocent farmers. It demanded that the Central Government take cognizance of widening support to Kisan agitation, stop delaying tactics and accept the just demands of the Farmers graciously at once.

The meeting also appreciated the active support and solidarity expressed by all sections of people, particularly the workers and the trade unions, who have been in the front line in solidarity actions across the country. Thousands of workers are participating in all the protest actions called by the Samyukta Kisan Morcha all over the country and actively campaigning in support of the farmers' demands. Thousands of workers are getting ready to participate in the Kisan Parade on 26th January at the national capital and in different parts of the country.

The meeting emphasized that the growing unity of working class and the farmers in the fight against the three farm acts, four labour codes, privatization and sale of national assets and loot by the corporate, and in defence of democratic rights is historic and in the interest of the entire nation. It was decided to further strengthen the unity of the workers and farmers and intensify their struggles. It was also decided to explore the possibilities of joint struggles against the anti-people policies of the NDA government in the future.

Observance of Kisan Andolan Sanghati Divas by AIJASC



9 January 2021 was declared as 'KISHAN ANDOLON SANGHATI DIVAS' by 'All India Jan Adhikar Suraksha Committee (AIJASC)'. 9th January is a historic day known as 'ULGULAN DAY'. On 9th January 1900, Birsa Munda, the celebrated leader of an armed peasants' uprising against British imperialism and feudalism in Chhotanagpur area (now in Jharkhand). All India Jan Adhikar Suraksha Committee (AIJASC) observe the day as a symbol of struggle of toiling oppressed people almost all over the country. This year AIJASC had declared this day as 'KISHAN ANDOLON SANGHATI DIVAS' and announced programmes like dharna, demonstration, jatha, group sittings etc. in support of the present peasants' movement. AIJASC wholeheartedly congratulated the leaders of the peasants' movement and fighting spirit of the lakhs of peasants including mothers and sisters.

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE STRUGGLING PEASANTS



Comrade V Venugopal, Central Committee member and Kerala State Secretary, SUCI(C) addressing solidarity programme in Thiruvananthapuram



AIKKMS, AIUTUC and AIDYO activists at solidarity programme at Azad Hind maidan, Mumbai, on 26 January



In Solidarity with the struggling peasants, AIDSO At Singhu Border 19 January

In support of the nationwide farmers movement, AIDSO, Karnataka, organised a bike rally on 21 January 2021, from Hussainiwala of Punjab, where the bodies of legendary freedom fighters Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhadev were burnt by the British rulers, to Singhu and Tikri borders of Delhi.



Solidarity rally in Kolkata on 26 January

PERILS OF ASHA WORKERS

ASHA (Acredited Social Health Activists) workers are considered volunteers. What a pompous name for them and what a prestigious identity! Beyond the name and identity is hidden the ever increasing burden the ASHA workers bear, the lowest remuneration that they get, and the basic rights that they are deprived of. Like all downtrodden women their sufferings are also beyond description

Their main task as directed was very important and enormous, that is to take care of all pregnant mothers and children. But other tasks that are being continuously shifted on them are preventing them from carrying out their main task. One after another they are piled up with tasks like handling drought-flood-storm and cyclone situation, duty at

events of sports and games and at different fairgrounds, during elections, at examination centres. Even ASHA workers are given the weird task of executing to locate and alert people who are clearing bowels behind bushes, surveying door to door people who drink wine. They are even given the job of identifying co-morbid corona patients without providing them proper safety measures. They are even burdened with a lot of state government projects. They cannot refuse any task. They have no right to suffer from any ailment. They will not be spared for any family ceremony or problem. If anybody gets stuck in a crisis she is curtly said, like what the corporate capitalists do, either work or get lost.

ASHA workers are to work in format system. If by any chance a

worker gets more than Rs 3000 in a month -only Rs 3000 after a month's back bending work -her earning is curtailed by whatever means possible. Besides it, their pays are reduced by many a pretext. Abrupt field visits, what mistake was committed six months back, why children are not gaining weight, why ASHA workers are not referring, even overlooking a single dose of vaccination invites punishment. If medicines, thermometer are not supplied by the hospital, ASHA workers' poor salary is cut. When a patient due to lack of infrastructure in hospital goes to a nursing home out of insecurity, ASHA workers are to bear the responsibility. ASHA workers are held responsible for a lot of such irregularities. Without infrastructure and proper salary all of a sudden day and night hospital duties for ASHA workers have been started. First, they have not given any training, neither any arrangement for their staying at night nor their dinner has been made. For an entire month the ASHA workers remain isolated from their village. Many unseemly events are being reported from different districts. In many hospitals outsiders annoy the ASHA workers. Despite these have been reported the government remains indifferent. Everybody knows, health is on the concurrent list. But, neither the central government nor the state

government does fulfil the responsibility of building up proper infrastructure necessary to provide service to the people.

It's 15 years that the central government has launched ASHA project. Last year the Prime Minister himself at a TV talk promised salary enhancement for the ASHA workers. The promise has not been fulfilled while the central government, true to their nature of serving the capitalist class, declared bank loan waiver for industrialists at the tune of millions upon millions. The government rather is reducing the allowance meant for the ASHA workers. encouragement grant, announced by the government, has been cut on various pleas during the lock down period. ASHA workers are compelled to work 12-13 hours. Despite this hard work they are not given respect and security. The family life of the workers has been shattered. They are isolated from family life due to burden of work. Clearly, this is a glaring example of grossly unfair labour practice and that too with hapless female workers. The ASHA workers, therefore, are compelled to take to the path of mass movement to realize their just demands, informed Ismat Arah Khatun, General Secretary, Scheme Workers' Federation of India.

Brutal Assassination of Iran's Nuclear Scientist by War Monger US-Zionist duo

Mohsen Fakhrizadeh, a top Iranian nuclear scientist and a brigadier general of the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC), was assassinated on the outskirts of Tehran on 27 November 2020. It is one of the most high profile killings of an Iranian regime figure just within a year since the assassination of General Qassem Soleimani, commander of the Quds Force of the IRGC, in Baghdad on 3 January 2020 through a targeted US drone strike ordered by former US President Trump. While the Zionist Israeli regime, the springboard of US imperialism in the region, is widely agreed to be the perpetrator of the latest brutal killing, it was clearly encouraged by the Pentagon rulers. It has once again exposed how the US imperialists and Zionist Israel are bent upon targeting the countries like Iran which refuse to bend before their dictates and brigandage. The then US President Donald Trump's immediate approval of the incident, on the one hand, once again confirms the US-Israel game plan to sabotage the development of science and technology in Iran in general, and, on the other, points to every possible effort to disrupt peace or normalization of relations with Iran by former Trump administration, in particular.

Fakhrizadeh was targeted long back

Fakhrizadeh had a track record of scientific innovations and led a team that developed one of the country's first kits for coronavirus diagnosis. Fakhrizadeh, a professor of physics at Imam Hussein University in Tehran, was the former head of Iran's Physics Research Center. It is not the first time that Fakhrizadeh faced an attempt on his life. He escaped an attempted assassination a few years ago. According to the US and Israel, Fakhrizadeh monitored Iran's nuclear weapons programme in the 1990s and early 2000s and had been a key figure in the country's nuclear research programme and the Defence Ministry. In April 2018, Mossad, Israeli spy agency, reportedly stole documents of nuclear research from Iran and Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu immediately linked Fakhrizadeh's name with it.

Early last month, when Trump was stated to have raised the possibility of attacking Iran to disable its nuclear programme, US military and other senior officials warned of potential retaliation against US troops in the region where anti-US mentality is growing day by day. Still, Israel Defence Forces were allegedly instructed to prepare for a possible US strike on Iran before Trump leaves office.

US-Israel plotting against Iran

Israel also is intent on keeping US-Iran confrontation alive as Iran is considered a better militarily equipped country than others and has been resolutely opposing US domination in the Middle East. So, the Zionist Israeli rulers backed by the US imperialism have been seeking to increase pressure on Iran for waging a full-blown war. But, in the situation obtaining at present the US imperialists are exercising a bit caution and trying to go step by step with a full-drawn plan of

decimating Iran's military capabilities before the final assault just like the way the US rulers virtually enfeebled Saddam Hussein militarily through arm-twisting efforts and then occupied Iraq.

As mentioned, Mohsen Fakhrizadeh is not the first Iranian scientist assassinated by US-Israel joint ferocity. At least four others were killed during the past decade and the pattern of killing has in all cases been typical - either the victims were on their way to or from work. All these killings are clearly aimed at sabotaging Iran's nuclear energy ambitions. Pertinent to mention here is that in September 2005, in the crucial meeting of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) the US and its European Union allies moved a resolution alleging that Iran, a party to the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty (NPT), had failed on a number of instances to meet its obligations under the NPT safeguards agreement." The resolution which was incidentally supported by India, also mentioned that there is "absence of confidence" about Iran's nuclear programme being "exclusively for peaceful purposes." Whereas the resolution accused Iran of non-compliance with the IAEA norms and concealing facts about its nuclear activities, the IAEA Director General himself actually informed on 2 September 2005, that "good progress has been made in Iran's ability to confirm certain aspects of Iran's declarations." He also confirmed that nine issues out of ten had been resolved. Yet the US imperialists and their associates went ahead in framing charges of 'non-compliance' against Iran and that too of such a magnitude as to threaten international peace and security.

US aim to disarm Iran

The fact is, Iran had repeatedly said that it is only keen to have nuclear capability for peaceful means. Even after adoption of IAEA resolution, Iran offered to scale down its nuclear activities. While agreeing to sit and talk on any issue with anybody including the US imperialist regime or its protégé Israel, if there is respect and fairness, Iran has also made it clear that if someone wants to talk rudely and in a domineering manner with daggers drawn, no independent sovereign country having minimum self-respect can accept the same. Following that, in 2013 the Obama-led US administration asked Israel to discontinue the line of assassinations as it started talks with Tehran that led two years later to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA) 2015 with six world powers - the US, Germany, France, Britain, Russia and China. But the next US President Donald Trump unilaterally had withdrawn the US from the Iran Nuclear Deal in 2018, violating the agreement. The European allies of US tried to keep the agreement intact. But Trump threatened them with trade war tactics, dissociated with them on this issue and imposed stringent economic sanctions on Iran in an effort to force it back to the bargaining table, which Iran refused to do. Iran started a fresh effort on nuclear activities and increased stockpiling of low enriched uranium beyond the

limit set in JCPOA. The Donald Trump administration has been relentlessly and extremely aggressive against Iran. Besides imposing sanctions, it waged various attacks on Iran including ordering a drone strike on 3 January 2020 that killed its most powerful general, Qassem Soleimani, as mentioned. Trump is reported to have asked for military options in Iran, in the aftermath of his election defeat. The assassination of Fakhrizadeh has been purported to exacerbate the veiled threat to Iran and pressurize it give up its nuclear build up programme. In fact, a section of the US administration has already aired a view that the death of Mr. Fakhrizadeh, the latest in a string of such mysterious killings of Iran's top nuclear scientists, would send a chilling message to the country's other top scientists working on that programme.

Next comes a basic question. Backed by US imperialism, its mentor, Zionist Israel has long cited its pledge to destroy Iran, demanding that it has the right to defend itself by blocking Iran from becoming a military nuclear power. If US imperialism and its allies pose constant war threat to countries that decline to capitulate to them, do not those countries have inalienable right to defend themselves by building up necessary military power? While the US imperialists are asking other countries to give up nuclear programme, have they themselves abandoned or even restricted their own production of sophisticated lethal weapons including nuclear arms? Are not they continuously upgrading their nuclear armoury and regularly coming out with innovations in the category of mass destructive weapons. US so far has conducted as many as 1,054 tests by official count, which far exceed the number of similar tests by others taken together. Now, US, which had earlier threatened its opponents of star war, plans to set up the first nuclear reactor on the moon by the end of 2026. An apprehension is expressed by many that perhaps helium-3, which is present in large quantity on moon's surface, would be used by the US to produce energy by nuclear fusion and thus would possibly turn the moon into a production site of nuclear weapons. This intended lunar nuclear centre might become military projects to give US imperialists the position of a space superpower.

Who is known for military aggression against other countries?

The point relevant here is that Has Iran or any of the countries which the US imperialists have long branded as 'axis of evil' or 'enemy states', used any nuclear weapon or weapons of mass destruction against any other country, militarily aggressed and occupied others' territories, set up numerous military bases on foreign lands to launch attack on foreign territories, sent naval force equipped with deadly nuclear weapons to patrol along the shores of other countries, violated the airspace of any sovereign country, strafed and raided others'

Contd. on page 7

Iran

US imperialists are bent upon targeting countries like Iran which refuse to bend before their dictates

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territories with unmanned drones, engineered coups to bring about regime changes and install puppet governments in other countries, orchestrated secret assassination or abduction of key persons of foreign lands, set up military bases round the world, permanently posted military in various countries, threatened other sovereign countries with armed interventions, star wars and nuclear warfare if they dared to disobey their dictates? It is relevant to mention that after the nuclear holocaust of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the socialist camp under Stalin's leadership, to free the earth from the horror of war, gave call for complete and all-out disarmament including full nuclear disarmament immediately after USSR had quickly produced atom bomb itself against looming US imperialist threat. The peace loving people of the world stood up and lent total support to the proposal. But the imperialist bloc led by US imperialism did not pay any heed to people's opinion across the globe and instead stuck to developing yet more sophisticated nuclear weapons and pursued all sorts of nefarious activities.

Then what is the propriety of the US-Israel combine to ask Iran to dissuade from rebuilding the stockpile of nuclear fuel that it gave up in 2015? It is true that Mohsen Fakhri-zadeh was a key figure in running Iran's entire nuclear programme. So, his killing might be a temporary setback, but it is not likely to jeopardise Iran's nuclear programme. Previous cyberattacks by the US and Israel, as also assassinations of scientists, had not been able to do so.

US imperialists unbridled in absence of socialist camp

To those closely observing world events and possessing a broad democratic outlook, it is not very difficult to understand the motive of the US imperialists. In absence of the powerful socialist camp which, notwithstanding many limitations and shortcomings it suffered from under revisionist leadership first assuming power in USSR after Stalin and then in China in absence of Mao Zedong, the socialist camp had continued to be a bulwark of peace as against war and war-mongering, the US imperialists have arrogated to themselves the role of a super-authority authorized to rule the entire world like an emperor. Any

country declining to obey their mandates or carry out their behest have been immediately bracketed as 'inimical to peace and democracy' and targeted for military intervention and blitzkrieg. Everyone is aware that, among other things, the gigantic oil conglomerates and their bid to control production and distribution of oil, bankrolled the post-Second World War military and economic rise of US imperialism. In the unipolar world, the US imperialists and their associates are unbridled in their bid to consolidate their absolute hold on the rich oilfields of West Asian countries by flexing their economic and military muscles. By militarily overrunning sovereign independent Iraq, flouting all international laws and trampling underfoot the barest precepts of democracy, the US and its allies have managed to regain control over the oil business in that country, which threatened to slip out of their control in first in 1991, and then finally in 2002, with Saddam Hussein taking a firm anti-US imperialist stand. After illegal occupation of sovereign Iraq, the US imperialists were keen to capture the other oil fields of the West Asian countries one by one. But much to their chagrin, Iran has refused to bow down before the US decree.

Since then, the US imperialists have upped their ante much more aggressively against Iran and pulled the strings from behind to precipitate unrest inside Iran, pit one section of the toiling people against another and instigate internecine conflicts so that they, on the plea of preventing human rights violation, curbing terrorism and scuttling subversion of democracy could meddle in the internal affairs of the country leading gradually to launch a full-fledged military offensive to 'gift democracy' to the Iranian people. This is the blueprint of international gangsterism the US leaders have designed to buttress their heinous class interest.

War a must for US imperialists to keep its economy rolling and political domination

Apart from grabbing the vast oil resources, there are other reasons also for the US imperialists to unleash a combination of war games, conspiratorial games and spy games against Iran and other West Asian countries. In order to somehow stave off the acute insoluble market crisis endemic of capitalist economy, the

US imperialists, and for that matter all imperialist powers, big or small, are compelled to resort to frantic rearmament and militarization of industry so that increased military consumption to some extent artificially stimulates the sagging economy. More militarized is the economy, more rabidly world imperialism led by US imperialists is precipitating war in one country after another, directly and indirectly. Another vital economic aspect is that the US dollar, as we know, is required by every oil-importing country. This is the reason why the central banks of most of these countries keep their foreign exchange reserves in US dollars. Thus more dollars are circulated outside the US or invested by foreign owners in US assets. Consequently, the rest of the world has to provide the US with more goods and services in exchange for these dollars. The US can pay its debt to other countries just by printing its own money. This very special status of the dollar is threatened with some of the key oil producing

countries switching over from dollar to Euro for trade in oil and gas. Iraq wanted to do the same just before it was invaded. But Iran dared to move out of its dependency on the US dollar for its energy revenue when it faced sanctions in 2006 and thus considerably undermined the demand for US dollar in the world market. The US imperialists fear that if other oil exporting countries follow suit, the consequences will be disastrous for them.

But the democratic-minded peace-loving people of the world, both in imperialist countries and elsewhere, need to draw a lesson from these ghastly killings. They need to stand united against the war, sanction, sabotage, assassination, military aggression and forcible occupation of other lands by US imperialism and its allies in avid pursuit of their imperialist machination and force them to take their hands off from Iran and any other sovereign country.

(Information Sources: International Journal of Peace Studies, Volume 10, Number 2, Autumn/Winter 2005, The Guardian dated 27 November 2020, 01-12-20 The Hindu; Fars News Agency via AP November 27, 2020; Workers World dated 30 November 2020)

AIMSS slams Bombay High Court judgement on Sexual Assault

Comrade Chhabi Mohanty, General Secretary, AIMSS in a statement issued on 26 January slammed the recent judgement of the Bombay High Court delivered by justice Pushpa Ganediwala which held that "there is no sexual assault if there is no 'skin to skin' contact." The judgement is unacceptable, atrocious and obnoxious.

Groping women and girls on clothes is a very usual and unfortunately normal sexual assault in this country. It is a hard fact of today that all types of crimes against women and children are on a steep rise with a very low conviction rate. Such judgements in today's condition will only motivate the criminals and

surely will not act as a deterrent to such a heinous crime.

If this judgement is accepted, groping in broad daylight in full view of all and in broad daylight will become order of the day, whether inside homes or in public places. Also other kinds of sexual attacks and harassments both without any restraint. When the Supreme Court has been expressing concern at growing incidents of sexual assault on women in the workplaces, this Bombay High Court ruling is indeed beyond one's comprehension.

AIMSS demands reversal of the judgement by higher court and protection of dignity and honour of mothers and sisters of this land.

AIKKMS UNIT FORMED IN RAJASTHAN



AIKKMS unit formed in Rajasthan on 19 January in presence of Comrade Shankar Ghosh, General Secretary, AIKKMS (4th from left)

Paying Revolutionary Tribute to great Lenin on 21 January 2021 on his 97th Death Anniversary



Comrade K Radhakrishna, Polit Bureau Member, SUCI (C) in Bangalore



Comrade B S Amarnath, Andhra Pradesh State Secretary, SUCI(C), offering floral tribute at the statue of great Lenin at Vijayawada



◀ Comrades Swapan Ghosh, Chandidas Bhattacharjee, Swapan Chatterjee and Manab Bera, all Central Committee members, SUCI(C), at Party Central Office in Kolkata

WIDENED INEQUALITY DURING PANDEMIC

Covid 19 pandemic has played a role in highlighting growing inequality in India and across the world. The global billionaires wealth surged by 19 percent during pandemic. The world's 500 richest people have gained 809 billion US dollars this year, a 14 percent increase since January 2020 while 100 million people were pushed into poverty. "Worldwide, billionaires' wealth increased by a staggering \$3.9 trillion between March 18 and December 31, 2020... at the same time it is estimated that the total number of people living in poverty could have increased by between 200 million and 500 million," the Oxfam global report said. According to Oxfam, the increase in the wealth - just since the crisis began - of the world's 10 richest billionaires is "more than enough to prevent anyone on Earth from falling into poverty because of the virus, and to pay for a COVID-19 vaccine for everyone".

Indian billionaires increased their wealth by 35% during the lockdown to ? 3 trillion, ranking India after U.S., China, Germany, Russia and France. Out of these, the rise in fortunes for the top 100

billionaires since the lockdown in March is enough to give every one of the 138 million poorest Indian people a cheque for ?94,045 each, according to Oxfam's 'Inequality Virus Report' released on the opening day of the World Economic Forum in Davos.

The wealth of just the top 11 billionaires during the pandemic could easily sustain the MGNREGS or the Health Ministry for the next 10 years, stated the report, which underscored the deepening inequalities due to Covid-19 where the wealthiest escaped the worst impact of the pandemic while the poor faced joblessness, starvation and death.

Mukesh Ambani, who emerged as the richest man in India and Asia, earned Rs 90 crore an hour during the pandemic when around 24% of the people in the country were earning under Rs 3,000 a month during the lockdown. The increase in his wealth alone could keep 40 crore informal workers out of poverty for at least five months, said the report. "The rising inequality in the country is poignant... it would take an unskilled worker 10,000 years to

make what (Reliance Industries' Chairman Mukesh) Ambani made in an hour during the pandemic... and three years to make what Ambani made in a second," the report added.

The report also delved deeper into different forms of inequities, including educational, gender and health, which meant that facilities to wash hands and maintain distance, essential to prevent the spread of Coronavirus, was impossible for a majority of the population.

According to the report, only 6% of the poorest 20% have access to non-shared sources of improved sanitation, compared to 93.4 % of the top 20 %. 59.6 % of India's population lived in a room or less, which meant that protocols necessary to prevent the spread of Covid-19 cannot be followed.

Till October, 32 crores students were hit by closure of schools, of whom 84 % resided in rural areas and 70 % attended government schools. Oxfam India's survey across five States said that close to 40 % of teachers in government schools feared that the prolonged school closure might lead to a third of the students not returning once

schools reopened. It was estimated that out of school rates would double in a year. Dalits, Adivasis and Muslims were likely to see a higher rate of dropout. Girls were also most vulnerable as they were at risk of early and forced marriage, violence and early pregnancies, it noted.

Unemployment of women rose by 15% from a pre-lockdown level of 18 %, which could result in a loss of India's GDP of about 8 % or Rs 15 lakh crores. Women who were employed before the lockdown were also 23.5 percentage points less likely to be re-employed compared to men in the post lockdown phase.

An estimated 73 percent of country's revenue comes through taxes while the share of indirect taxes (Customs Duty and GST) which hits the common man most has seen an increase. It was 44 percent in 2014-15, and as of now, is projected to be 46 percent. Any attempt to increase the tax-GDP ratio to augment the depleting revenue would lead to higher inequality because GST is an indirect tax levied at the same rate on the poor and the rich. (Oxfam Report, NDTV 25-01-21 and The Hindu 26-01-21)

OBSERVE 125th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY YEAR OF NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE IN A BEFITTING MANNER

Quotes from his works and speeches



"Those who say that the interests of the Hindus and Muslims are not the same actually do not speak the truth. Hunger, unemployment, decay of national industries, increase of death rates, illiteracy...these are basic questions and on these questions, the interests of the Hindus and Muslims are one and the same. We can win independence only by joint efforts of both the Hindus and Muslims." (SW Vol II)

"Communalism has raised its ugly head in all and nakedness...Even the oppressed, the poor and ignorant long for independence.

We hear the voices of Hindu Raj in India owing to a majority of Hindu population. These are all useless thoughts. Do the communal organizations solve any of the problems confronted by the working class? Do any such organizations have any answer to unemployment and poverty?...The idea of Savarkar and Hindu Mahasabha of anti-Muslim propoganda in practice means full collaboration with British." (Speech at Coomilla, 14 June 1938, SW Vol III)

"The Hindu Mahasabha has deployed sannyasis and sannyasins with tridents in their hands to beg for votes. At the very sight of tridents and saffron robes, Hindus bow their head in reverence. By taking advantage of religion and desecrating it, the Hindu Mahasabha has entered the arena of politics. It is the duty of all Hindus to condemn it....Banish these traitors from national life. Do not listen to them." (Speech at a public meeting in Jhargram, West Bengal, published in the Ananda Bazar Patrika on 12 May 1840)

"Religion should be totally kept out of politics. Religion should be one's personal matter. There should be full liberty for an individual to profess any religion he wants as a human being. But politics should not be guided by religion or any supernatural concepts. Politics should be guided by economic, political and scientific reasoning." (Crossroads)

"You, the peasants, be united. Otherwise, your demands for rights would not find recognition. It is an irony that those who produce food for us, die because of dearth of food. In order to remedy the situation, the peasants need to develop a united front among themselves." (Speech at the meeting organized by Kisan Sabha in 1937)



Haripura, Gujarat, where Netaji was elected President of the Congress



Tezpur, Assam



Dharwad, Karnataka



Agartala, Tripura



Pilani, Rajasthan



Cuttack, Odisha, where Netaji was born



Singhu border, Delhi

Corrigendum : In Proletarian Era dated 15 January 2021, in the news item captioned "Is CPI (M) leader a corporate mouthpiece" on p7, please read 'Advani' as 'Adani' and 'no wander' as 'no wonder'. Error regretted.

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH