

## Let the 63 billionaires who own Rs. 29 lakh crores donate handsomely to Covid Relief Fund — demand people

[Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), urges people of India to sign the following memorandum to the Prime Minister asking for some urgent steps to combat the Covid menace.]

To  
Shri Narendra Damodardas Modi  
The Hon'ble Prime Minister  
Government of India  
New Delhi

Dear Sir,

With grave concern, pain and shock we want to draw your attention to the grim fact that before the country could overcome the disastrous impact of the first corona wave, it has again been gripped by the second wave. First wave claimed thousands of lives and made millions of workers jobless, when your government miserably failed to give due attention to adopting necessary measures as you were engaged in 'Namaste Trump festival'. Meanwhile, signal of second wave was given by the Western countries and you got some time to prepare for preventive measures. But again you did nothing as you became busy in construction of Ram Mandir, Central Vista and electoral scramble for power in some states by spending hundreds of crores of rupees. Now, the country is witnessing procession of human deaths and nobody knows where it will end.

There is acute shortage of number of hospitals, beds, ICUs, oxygen, ventilators, medicines, doctors, nurses, medical persons etc. Lakhs of people are dying and lakhs more will die. Even many are dying at the gates of the hospitals as well as on the streets. Crematoriums are filled up. There are long queues of dead bodies. Many are cremated here and there. Even the street dogs are found eating the thrown away dead bodies. This is a most unprecedented horrifying picture now being seen in the country, which claims itself to be the 'largest democracy' in the world. Was this situation inevitable and unavoidable? Who is responsible for this criminal negligence and inhuman act? Now when second wave of the pandemic is still continuing and spreading, alarming threat of a third wave is looming.

To prevent further devastation, we demand the following measures be implemented immediately on war footing even by deploying armed forces:

- 1) Construction of hospitals in all wards of the cities, towns and gram panchayats.

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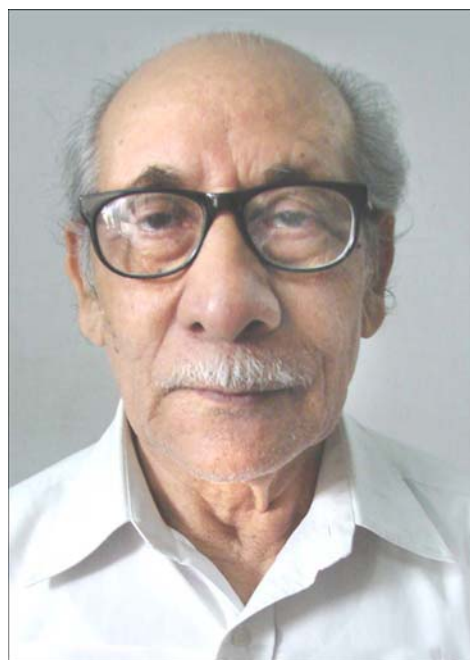
### SUCI(C) condemns Israeli attack on Jerusalem

*Comrade Provash Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), issued the following on 12 May 2021 :*

Historically Jerusalem was all along a part of Palestine. It was forcibly occupied by Israel with the support US and British imperialist rulers and then Israel has been evicting Palestinian people who have been residents for generations there. Palestinian people naturally protested against it. Now to suppress them, Israeli Zionist rulers have let loose a reign of terror there.

We condemn this unequivocally and call upon the people of India to raise their voice of protest.

## Comrade Krishna Chakraborty is no more



Comrade Krishna Chakraborty, former member of the Polit Bureau of the Central Committee of the, SUCI(C) and ex-President, AIUTUC, breathed his last on 8 May 2021, at 8.10 AM at Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital, Kolkata, after prolonged illness. He was 87.

Comrade Krishna Chakraborty came in contact with Comrade Provash Ghosh, in the early 1950s when he was a student of Kalidhan Institution in South Kolkata and was involved in socio cultural activities. Then onwards, he gradually felt attraction towards Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought and SUCI (Communist) and became close to the Party. Later, he had met Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and this meeting had left an indelible mark in his mind and he subsequently decided to join the Party and began to struggle to understand the essence of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought so as to develop himself as a true revolutionary. When All India Founding Convention of DSO was held in 1954 in which Comrade Provash Ghosh was elected as the General Secretary of the organization, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty became one of the joint assistant secretaries and as such he devoted himself in building up student movements. Later when his family shifted from South Kolkata to Dum Dum area in North Kolkata, he started developing the Party unit there. Then in the mid-1960s, he was elected West Bengal State Secretary of AIDSO. In 1968 he was deputed to Delhi to explore expansion of Party organisation there.

Afterwards, in 1969, the Party leadership sent him to Kerala to develop Party activities through a contact. From then onwards, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty was deputed to build up the Party not only in Kerala but throughout South India. Expansion of the Party throughout the South Indian belts was to a good extent attributable to his arduous efforts. In course of this, he also recruited a number of comrades who had and have been playing crucial role in Party

*Contd on page 3*

# Holding IPL amidst murderous run of Covid-19 is an unpardonable crime

The aim of education, we know, is to develop a person as a socially responsible human being with consummate knowledge about life and how to approach it from a social perspective. Sport too is a time-tested device for bringing about social integration and sense of fraternity. That is why sport has always been regarded as complementary to education. We have seen in history how imbibing the true spirit of sports spurred one in discharging his social obligation. But in dying capitalism today, sport being stripped of its essence is being packaged, advertised and sold no differently from a bunch of toiletries or a pack of junk food. Sport is now a product, to be marketed and sold in whichever way as to fetch maximum profit for the operators. Beautiful, uplifting sport is being methodically, mercilessly squeezed, its essence adulterated and sold in the market to the highest bidder. Players are being auctioned. Noticing the increased obsession of a sizeable part of sports-loving populace in the world, it was Australian media baron Kerry Packer who first toyed with the idea of converting cricket from a sporting event into a dazzling display of an item number of modern show business that seeks to define entertainment in terms of artificially stimulated excitement, incitement of perverse proclivities and a kind of riotous amusement of imposed glamour and gaiety. So Kerry Packer circus euphemized as World Series Cricket (WSC) was held in between 1977 and 1979 with Packer-owned TV channel as the sponsors as a parallel to official cricket competitions. Following the trail, the Indian Premiere League (IPL) was launched in 2008 by the Board of Cricket Control of India (BCCI), which comprised and still comprises people having least concern for the game but more concentration on personal gains. Several big monopolists as well as big film personalities either with their own resource or financed by big corporates and 'secret' investors have floated cricket clubs on ownership basis and hired cricketers round the world through open market purchase based on highest bid. Thus an event of selling rotten entertainment marked by fireworks, music, dance and scantily dressed cheer-girls with cricket as a cover was launched with much fanfare. With the spirit of sport including Cricket, hitherto called 'gentleman's game', relegated to the back, IPL created a new avenue for reaping maximum profit of the stakeholders – the franchisee-owners of the teams, the sponsor-advertisers and also of BCCI. At the same time, it served the bourgeois class interest to promote vulgarity and obscenity to break the moral backbone of the nation. As testament to modern sport's impending submersion into the quagmire of corrupt capitalism, no finer instances can be had than the mega-scale scam which broke out in 2010 of IPL that saw its chief organizer Lalit Modi fleeing the country and still remaining a fugitive.

This profit thirst of the big corporate houses and its servitors in BCCI and other controlling bodies is so severe that when the country has been in the midst of an unprecedented health

crisis caused by repeated strike of dreaded corona virus and further aggravated because of an abysmally poor health infrastructure and witnessing deaths in lakhs, the IPL was not called off. Rather, turning a blind eye to all advice of well-minded people and genuine cricket lovers to shut down the IPL in this grave hour, the BCCI, with Sourav Ganguly, former Indian captain, as the President and Joy Shah, son of Union BJP Home Minister Amit Shah, as the Secretary, went ahead with the tournament from 9 April 2021 with the final being scheduled in Narendra Modi stadium in Ahmedabad. The BCCI spun its web of lies, insisting that all are hunky-dory in so far as safety of the cricketers was concerned. Noticeably, in an environment where citizens are struggling to get tested, receive test results on time and have access to basic medical support like preventive medicines, oxygen, and hospital beds as well as are faced with dire shortage of vaccines, the IPL bio-bubbles were found to have a plethora of systems in place to protect the players. The IPL caravan also travelled with an "ICU-on-wheels ambulance" as stand-by at the Delhi stadium named after late BJP leader and minister Arun Jaitley. Complying with the profit maximization needs of the stakeholders, the first set of matches were played in Mumbai, the first epicentre of the second wave, and Chennai; the tournament was moved to Ahmedabad and New Delhi – both cities that have seen massive spikes in cases and daily deaths. The BJP government remained a silent spectator as the stake of the large corporate houses it is subservient to was involved. Naturally, the tournament has invited strong protests. Sensitive people rightly held that it is insensitive and callous to carry on with the tournament in this crucial situation of raging pandemic. In tune with the legitimate protest and resentment of the well-meaning people, the AIDS, in tune with its socially conscious role, apart from opposing the decision on social media even demonstrated before the Cricket Association offices, albeit maintaining health protocols, to stop IPL forthwith.

Under pressure of protest and when the so called bio-secure bubbles to keep the cricketers insulated had themselves burst and many participating cricketers tested positive and some expressed resentment at the arrangements, the

BCCI was compelled to postpone it, not cancelling it. The BCCI, now turned into a money-making machine of the vested interest, has lost all sensitivity. Its refusal to even acknowledge the scale of the Covid 19 crisis India is battling with, is clear evidence of irresponsibility. As a damage control exercise, the BCCI is now busy portraying itself as the responsible sporting body to ensure the safety and well-being of the players, organizers and ground staff and so they have suspended the tournament. Days after the IPL2021 was postponed, the BCCI president Sourav Ganguly defended the board's decision to stage the T20 World tournament in the country amid the coronavirus pandemic though admitting that it is difficult to contain the virus even inside a bio-secure environment and brushed away raised allegation from some quarters about breach of bio-bubble. (NDTV 06-05-21) "If we fail to complete the IPL, the loss will be close to INR 2500 crore (USD 340 million approximately). That is going by early estimates," Ganguly told *The Telegraph*. (News 18, 07-05-21)

Clearly, the focus of the BCCI, now virtually an appendage to the vested quarters lies in seeking to make fortunes by organizing marquee events like IPL. This is the inhuman face of capitalism and its lackeys. When countless people are dying helplessly in absence of minimal medical assistance and vaccines, when crematoriums are overwhelmed with dead bodies and the most irresponsible inhuman BJP government has no clue as to how to stem the rot, BCCI is estimating its financial loss. Both the bourgeois government, the BCCI and other vested interest circles will never scrap such profit-generating extravaganza *suo moto* nor will they be able to drive away the evils that gripped the tournament because all these evils starting from corruption to betting, match fixation, money operation and spilling, financial irregularities and scams, are bred by the ruling Indian capitalism, part of decadent, moribund utterly reactionary despotic world capitalism. But it is incumbent on all genuinely sports-loving people to come forward and raise their voice against such distortion and vulgarization of sports and rise up against the so called sports bodies who find money-making more important than precious human lives and plight of the common people.

## All India Bank Employees Unity Forum observed historic May Day

Under the auspicious of All India Bank Employees Unity forum, the historic May Day was observed on the 1 May. On this day martyr column was erected and garlanded in some places by the bank employees. Considering the barrier of the open meeting in this Covid pandemic situation forum organised an online meeting in the Facebook page 'Sangrami Sramik' on the day.

Purna Chandra Behera, vice president of the forum presided over this meeting. Jagannath Roymandal, Vice President All India United Trade Union Centre as well as General Secretary of the forum and Vijaypal Singh, President of the forum were the main speakers. The other speakers were Ramji Prasad vice president all India UCO Bank employees Unity forum and Gopinath the member of this forum. Speakers while explaining the significance of the May day asked the bank employees to get imbued from the struggle of May day and fight against very many attacks let loose on the bank employees by the government bank management combine.

# International Media and eminent science journals squarely hold Prime Minister Modi and his government responsible for Covid disaster

## The Guardian 23-04-21

At the beginning of March, the Hindu nationalist government of Narendra Modi claimed the country was in Covid-19's "endgame". India is now in a living hell. A new "double mutant" variant, named B.1.617, has emerged in a devastating coronavirus second wave which has sent hospitals run out of beds and oxygen. Mortuaries are so full that bodies are left to decompose at home. Charities warn that the dead risk being left on the streets... Yet little more than six weeks ago, Mr Modi, with not even 1% of the population vaccinated, declared that the country was the "world's pharmacy" and signalled that pre-pandemic life could resume. Superspreading took place when thousands filled cricket stadiums and millions of Hindus took a dip in the Ganges during the Kumbh Mela festival... Like Donald Trump, Mr Modi would not give up campaigning while the pandemic raged. India went ahead with five state elections in April, and an unmasked Mr Modi held huge rallies... The Indian prime minister suffers from overconfidence in his own instincts and pooh-poohs expert advice. The Indian prime minister suffers from overconfidence in his own instincts and pooh-poohs expert advice... In the first wave, Covid struck India's cities, but it is now moving to rural areas, where most of the country lives. As with many of the countries hit hardest, India's death toll was largely avoidable and a result of arrogant and incompetent government... To contain biological and social contagions requires credible reassurance, to quell panic, and for people to wear masks and obey rules of physical distancing... Mr Modi has put the onus on state governments to clear up his mess. The buck stops with him... Future historians will judge Mr Modi harshly if he continues with the exceptionalist views that have led to a disastrous public health outcome.

## Yahoo News-23-04-21 also tweeted by The Time

Dr. Jalil Parkar, one of India's leading pulmonologists, wears his exhaustion on his face... In between treating patients at the COVID-19 intensive care unit of Mumbai's prestigious Lilavati Hospital, Parkar appears regularly on TV to give updates on the current, devastating second wave of the pandemic that is killing thousands of Indians. He himself spent time in the ICU last year and almost died after suffering multiple COVID-complications. Now, he confesses to losing his calm over what he is seeing unfold every day... "Our healthcare system has collapsed. We have let down our own people in the country," he says. "What can doctors do when our infrastructure is unable to take the patients, when there are no hospital beds or oxygen cylinders?"... Every day, more than 2,000 people in India are dying with COVID-19, according to official numbers—and experts believe that number is a dramatic underestimate... 22 critically ill patients lost their lives at a hospital in Maharashtra after a leak from the main hospital

oxygen tank stopped the flow to their ventilators. Multiple hospitals in India are petitioning the High Courts to seek immediate oxygen supply. If the apocalypse had an image, it would be the hospitals of India.

Despite these inescapable horrors, much of India remains in a sort of parallel reality where COVID-19 is not a threat. Tens of thousands of Hindu devotees continue to show up each day for a dip in the Ganges as part of the Kumbh Mela pilgrimage in Haridwar, Uttarakhand. Millions of worshippers have participated in the weeks-long festival since the first day of bathing on March 11, despite clear evidence that thousands are testing positive for the virus after attending. In the space of just a few days in mid-April, more than 1,600 cases were confirmed among devotees. In March, when the second wave was already underway, state leaders from the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) published full-page ads in national newspapers telling worshippers it was "clean" and "safe" to attend. The Uttarakhand chief minister declared on March 20, "nobody will be stopped in the name of COVID-19 as we are sure the faith in God will overcome the fear of the virus." It wasn't until mid-April that Hindu nationalist Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that participation in the pilgrimage should be kept "symbolic" to combat the pandemic. Is it any wonder that the festival has become a super-spreader event?... The Gujarat high court has demanded the state government reveal the accurate count of COVID-19 patients and deaths.

In other states, the data for COVID-19 deaths are unreliable at best, and at worst fabricated to cover up the devastation. To give just one example, in a crematorium in the state of Madhya Pradesh, 94 bodies were cremated in a day but government data reported only three, according to Times Now... as India reported the highest number of daily cases of anywhere in the world, the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party tweeted a video of one of Modi's political rallies. (Five states are holding elections in May.) Alongside Modi was his close confidante and home minister, Amit Shah. In theory, Shah should have been in the capital, coordinating with various state governments on how to deal with the devastating spike in COVID-19 cases over the past few weeks. Instead, Shah has been holding roadshows with thousands of joyous crowds on the streets of eastern India. He broadcasts these rallies live on his Twitter and Facebook accounts at the same time as many Indians' social media feeds are inundated with people begging for medical help. As thousands are dying, our home minister and our Prime Minister have looked the other way to continue campaigning. (It was only after significant criticism this week that Modi finally announced on Thursday night that he would be cancelling his Friday rallies in West Bengal to instead hold COVID-19 management meetings with state ministers.)

Why was India caught unprepared as the second wave ravaged a cross-section of Indian

society? The responsibility lies with a strongman regime that has ignored all caution.

While epidemiologists, specialists and opposition leaders have long urged Modi to give approvals for foreign vaccines, the decision to give emergency use license to the Russian manufactured Sputnik V vaccine was only taken in the second week of April... Yet on April 20, when Modi finally addressed the nation about the growing crisis, he warned states that a lockdown should be considered a last resort, and called on young people to form committees to ensure COVID-19 protocols are being followed. On the festival of Ram Navami, he tweeted that people should follow the message of Lord Ram, the Hindu deity for protection, and follow "appropriate behaviour"... At this critical juncture in its history, Indians have been left to fend for ourselves.

## Asia Times 24-04-21

It is difficult to overstate the grip Covid-19 has on India... At the core is the total failure of the Indian government, led by Prime Minister Modi, to take this pandemic seriously. By March 10, 2020, before the WHO declared a pandemic, the Indian government had reported about 50 Covid-19 cases in the country, with infections doubling in 14 days. The first major act from India's prime minister was a 14-hour Janata curfew, which was dramatic but not in line with the WHO recommendations... This ruthless lockdown, with four hours' notice, sent hundreds of thousands of migrant workers on the road to their homes, penniless, some dying by the wayside, many carrying the virus to their towns and villages... The lockdown kept getting extended, but there was nothing systematic, no national policy that one could find anywhere on the government's websites... The consequences of turning over health care to the private sector and underfunding public health have been diabolical... Late last year, the Indian government admitted that it has 0.8 medical doctor for every 1,000 Indians, and it has 1.7 nurses for every 1,000 Indians. No country of India's size and wealth has such a small medical staff... This weakness of medical infrastructure is wholly due to privatization... No private enterprise is going to develop any surplus beds or surplus ventilators voluntarily. It is this that inevitably causes crisis in a pandemic... Shortages are a normal problem in any society. But the shortages of basic medical goods in India during the pandemic have been scandalous... No large-scale rapid procurement is in the cards. Nor is there enough medical oxygen, and promises to build capacity have been unfulfilled by the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP). India's government has been exporting oxygen, even when it became clear that domestic reserves were depleted (it has also exported precious Remdesivir injections)... On March 25, 2020, Modi said he would win this "Mahabharat" – this epic battle – against Covid-19 in 18 days. Now, more than 56 weeks after

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## International Media

# Narendra Modi's attempts to censor news and messages cannot hide truth

*Contd. from page 3*

that promise, India looks more like the blood-soaked fields of Kurukshetra, where thousands lay dead, with the war not even at halftime.

## Haaretz daily

Narendra Modi's attempts to censor the news and massage death rates can't hide his failure to prepare India for its disastrous second COVID wave. Indians are dying, and so is the prime minister's 'strongman' image.. India is reeling under the deadliest wave of COVID-19 that the world has yet seen.

## Financial Times 26-04-21

"It can be said with pride, India...defeated Covid-19 under the able, sensible, committed and visionary leadership of Prime Minister Modi... The party unequivocally hails its leadership for introducing India to the world as a proud and victorious nation in the fight against Covid." Those were the words of a resolution passed by India's ruling Bharatiya Janata party, just a few weeks ago in February. But now India is reeling from a surge in cases. Hospitals are running out of oxygen and acute-care beds. Mass cremations are taking place in makeshift facilities. Heart-rending pictures of suffering are being broadcast around the world. Surveys of mortuaries suggest that the number of Covid-19 deaths may be two to five times higher than the official figure of around 2,000 a day.... Driven by a desire to win the crucial state of West Bengal, the BJP staged mass election rallies. Modi declared himself "elated" by a large crowd that turned out to hear him speak a few days ago, even as Covid-19 cases soared. The Kumbh Mela, a religious festival that allows millions of pilgrims to converge on a single town, was allowed to go ahead and even promoted by the Hindu nationalist BJP... The lesson of India is to guard against premature celebration or hubris. Any improvement in the coronavirus situation should be used as an opportunity to prepare for future waves and to help the international fight against the pandemic. India will not be the last country to witness a tragic resurgence of Covid-19.

## CNN 26-04-21

Back in January, Narendra Modi poured scorn on experts and scientists who warned his country faced a "tsunami" of infection... Modi is only the latest populist crusader to come unstuck. Former US President Donald Trump's denialism appears to have cost tens of thousands of lives. Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro fuelled a disaster by rejecting Covid-19 countermeasures in favour of crank cures. UK PM Boris Johnson paid a heavy personal and political price for ignoring the threat of the pandemic early on, though he has since become more cautious... But the pandemic is guaranteed to expose leaders who undermine truth, create alternative realities, ostracize experts and scientists and refuse to take precautions to keep the public safe... Having their negligence exposed may not deter the truth-twisting populist leaders inspired by Trump (who is already spoiling for a comeback). Populism will find fertile soil in the economic and social detritus left in the

pandemic's wake. But when leaders prioritize their political image over public health, millions of people suffer.

## Washington Post-28-04-21

India's coronavirus crisis is stunning to behold. In northern India, bodies are being cremated in public parks because crematoriums have exceeded their capacity. Elsewhere, officials have suggested that families bury in their backyards relatives who succumbed to covid-19. Despite being the world's largest producer of vaccines, India has fully vaccinated less than 2 percent of its 1.3 billion people.... The underlying infirmities of India's health-care infrastructure were well-known. Still, through harsh lockdown measures, the nation had controlled the initial wave by January. Then, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government abandoned its caution and, in a series of stunningly reckless decisions, invited the second wave that is now crushing the country. This colossal failure of policymaking has many forebears: general callousness, crass electoral considerations and sheer ineptitude. For a government that first assumed office in 2014 with a promise of sound, technocratic governance and an end to political paralysis, the second surge represents an astonishing abdication... Instead of using the respite to build up stocks of personal protective equipment, boost vaccine production or ramp up testing, he (Modi) returned to a business-as-usual governance. He and his alter ego, Minister for Home Affairs Amit Shah, focused their energies on caricaturing opposition politicians, harassing political dissidents and claiming at a World Economic Forum meeting that India had crushed the virus.... What's more, an instinct to protect Modi's Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP) led it to permit party stalwarts to peddle all sorts of medical quackery. Some local party leaders suggested that practicing yoga and using cow urine as a disinfectant could ward off the virus. Vijay Chauthaiwale, the head of the national party's foreign affairs department, encouraged the consumption of bovine urine and turmeric as possible cures... Modi's haughty decision-making style predates the pandemic by years... Now that public parks are becoming temporary crematoria, patients are lying on the sidewalks outside hospitals, and ambulances (when available) lack oxygen, Modi's associates have resorted to more drastic, albeit familiar, tactics: They argue that the government's critics are merely seeking to sow nationwide discord. Delhi is now pressuring social media outlets like Facebook and Instagram to take down posts that are critical of its handling of the crisis....But the haphazard, abrupt approach to critical public policy questions now haunts Modi in ways he can no longer deflect.... Despite efforts to squelch the bad press, everyone knows who is to blame for the fatal disaster unfolding today.

## BBC 29-04-21

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been accused of ignoring scientific warnings to participate in election rallies and allowing a massive Hindu festival to go ahead in northern India...Dr Navjot Dahiya, the vice-president of

the Indian Medical Association, called Mr Modi a "super spreader" who had "tossed all Covid norms in the air"...The BBC's Yogita Limaye says many people are asking why the military and disaster response teams have not been put on a war footing to build field hospitals... "There is a sense of abandonment in the country, of people being left to fend for themselves," our correspondent reports.

## Nature 06-05-21

Last week, Brazil's total death toll from COVID-19 passed 400,000. In India, the pandemic is taking around 3,500 lives every day and has prompted a global response, with offers of oxygen, ventilators, intensive-care beds and more. Although these two countries are thousands of miles apart, the crises in both are the result of political failings; their leaders have either failed or been slow to act on researcher's advice. This has contributed to an unconscionable loss of life...India's leaders have not acted as decisively as was needed. They have, for example, allowed – and in some cases, encouraged – large gathers. Such a situation isn't new. As we saw during the administration of former US president Donald Trump, ignoring evidence of the need to maintain physical distancing to combat COVID-19 has catastrophic consequences. The United States has recorded more than 570,000 deaths from the disease – still the world's largest COVID-19 death toll in absolute terms...And India has other problems. One is that it's not easy for scientists to access data for COVID-19 research. That, in turn, prevents them from providing accurate predictions and evidence-based advice to the government. Even in the absence of such data, researchers warned the government last September to be cautious about relaxing COVID-19 restriction (Lancet 396,8672020) And as late as the start of April, they warned that a second wave could see 100,000 COVID-19 cases a day by the end of the month... On 29 April, more than 700 scientists wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, asking for better access to data such as COVID-19 test results and clinical outcomes of patients in hospitals (see [seego.nature.com/3vd7fak](https://www.nature.com/3vd7fak)) ... A letter of protest shouldn't have been necessary in the first place. By identifying themselves, the signatories took a risk; in the past, the Modi government has not reacted well to researchers organizing to question its policies. ...It's never good when research communities have a difficult relationship with the national governments. ... By side-lining their scientists, the governments of Brazil and India have missed out on a crucial opportunity to reduce the loss of life...During a pandemic, we all need our governments to succeed. However, it's difficult to make good decisions quickly, more so with incomplete information – which is why health data need to be both accurate and accessible to researchers and clinicians. Denying or obscuring such access risks prolonging the pandemic.

## The Lancet 08-05-21

The scenes of suffering in India are hard to comprehend. As of May 4, more than 20.2 million

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# How the ‘double engine’ UP government follows the parental Union government

During the entire election campaigning, all the front-ranking BJP ministers from the Centre, and BJP-ruled state of UP or the top-ranking ruling Party functionaries played the record of how effective for sustained development, it would be for the states to have a ‘double engine’ government, that is BJP governments in states, with a BJP government at the Centre.

Here, we provide a few instances of how such a leading double engine government in UP is faring in combating the raging pandemic second phase, following the footsteps of its parental Union government.

## Instance number 1

Uttar Pradesh, for instance, has recorded over 2,97,616 Covid-19 cases, and in the past 24 hours there has been an increase of 9,472, according to data shared by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW). According to the Government’s policy think tank NITI Aayog’s prediction, Uttar Pradesh may be the next Covid-19 hotspot after Delhi, which is reeling under a massive surge in cases.

According to news reports the NITI Aayog has projected that Uttar Pradesh is likely to add 1,19,604 coronavirus infection cases by April 30, Maharashtra is predicted to add 99,665 cases and

the surge in Delhi will continue with 67,134 cases.

These predictions of the Covid-19 of the pandemic that is expected to peak around mid-May, with a projected daily infection count of five lakhs were made by NITI Aayog member (health) VK Paul during a presentation at the meeting chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and attended by chief ministers of high caseload states. According to the news reports VK Paul said, “Heavily populated states are at particular risk and health infrastructure in these states is not adequate enough to cope with the present scenario.”

Uttar Pradesh is one of the most densely populated states in the country, and it seems that dark days may lie ahead as seen in Delhi that shares a large porous border with it. There is an acute shortage of hospital beds, ICU beds, oxygen for Covid-19 patients and many are dying waiting for help to reach. Many Delhi Hospitals have been flagging that oxygen supplies are running low, announcements are made over social media, and pasted outside hospitals.

According to reports, the NITI Aayog has projected a daily shortage in Uttar Pradesh of isolation beds with oxygen at around 16,752. There may be a 3,061 shortfall of ICU beds and at least 1,538 ventilators will be needed in the state. (sabrangIndia-27-04-21)

## International Media

### In early March, Indian Health Minister declared that India was in “endgame” of the epidemic which now surges beyond control

Contd. from page 4

cases of COVID-19 had been reported, with a rolling average of 378 000 cases a day, together with more than 222 000 deaths, which experts believe are likely to be substantial underestimates. Hospitals are overwhelmed, and health workers are exhausted and becoming infected. Social media is full of desperate people (doctors and the public) seeking medical oxygen, hospital beds, and other necessities. Yet before the second wave of cases of COVID-19 began to mount in early March, Indian Minister of Health Harsh Vardhan declared that India was in the “endgame” of the epidemic. The impression from the government was that India had beaten COVID-19 after several months of low case counts, despite repeated warnings of the dangers of a second wave and the emergence of new strains. Modelling suggested falsely that India had reached herd immunity, encouraging complacency and insufficient preparation, but a serosurvey by the Indian Council of Medical Research in January suggested that only 21% of the population had antibodies against SARS-CoV-2. At times, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s Government has seemed more intent on removing criticisms on Twitter than trying to control the pandemic....

Despite warnings about the risks of super-spreader events, the government allowed religious festivals to go ahead, drawing millions of people

from around the country, along with huge political rallies—conspicuous for their lack of COVID-19 mitigation measures. The message that COVID-19 was essentially over also slowed the start of India’s COVID-19 vaccination campaign, which has vaccinated less than 2% of the population. At the federal level, India’s vaccination plan soon fell apart. The government abruptly shifted course without discussing the change in policy with states, expanding vaccination to everyone older than 18 years, draining supplies, and creating mass confusion and a market for vaccine doses in which states and hospital systems competed....

The Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation estimates that India will see a staggering 1 million deaths from COVID-19 by Aug 1. If that outcome were to happen, Modi’s Government would be responsible for presiding over a self-inflicted national catastrophe. India squandered its early successes in controlling COVID-19. Until April, the government’s COVID-19 taskforce had not met in months. The consequences of that decision are clear before us, and India must now restructure its response while the crisis rages. The success of that effort will depend on the government owning up to its mistakes, providing responsible leadership and transparency, and implementing a public health response that has science at its heart.

## Instance number 2

“My mother will die if you take away her oxygen cylinder.” In a viral video shot on April 27 at Upadhyay Hospital in Agra, the well known tourists’ city in UP, a young man in a PPE suit is seen down on his knees on the road pleading with the Uttar Pradesh police to not confiscate an oxygen cylinder that some men under their escort are seen carting towards a van. On 28 April, this video was tweeted by *Times of India*, among others, and was soon shared multiple times.

The young man was identified by *The Wire*, a web portal, as Anmol Goyal, 22-year-old. Anmol’s mother passed away two hours after the video was taken, he told *The Wire*. She was 53 years old. “The only thing that the doctor said would help her – an oxygen cylinder – was taken away from us,” Anmol said. In his tweet with the video, the *TOI* journalist had alleged that the cylinder was reportedly taken “to supply it for a VIP.”

## Instance number 3

It may be recalled that two days earlier, the BJP Chief Minister of UP, Yogi Adityanath had reportedly asked senior administrative and police officials in an online meeting on Sunday, 25 April, to “crack down” on hospitals that discharge patients on the grounds of a shortage of oxygen or “complain” about shortages to the media.

Following this meeting the state’s additional director general of police (law and order), issued a letter to all police officials in Uttar Pradesh which said that “misleading” social media posts related to the Covid 19 situation in the state must be penalised. It entailed: “It has come to our notice that misleading information, such as copy-pasted posts, is being shared on social media to create panic”. “At present, it is very important to take strong action against unruly elements of society who put up misleading posts and to nip this misinformation in the bud. Tell your district’s social media cells to be active 24x7 and take action if any misleading posts intended to create panic are found.” (The Wire 28-04-21)

## Instance number 4

In line with this order, the Amethi police booked a man named Shashank Yadav under the Indian Penal Code and Epidemic Act, accusing him of creating fear among the people after he tweeted on Monday: “Need oxygen cylinder, ASAP”. He had apparently required it for his 88-year-old relative. The police framed a story that on enquiry the man was found sleeping peacefully, while the patient had died not of Covid-19 but of a cardiac arrest and did not require oxygen support. Notably, Yadav’s tweet never mentioned of Covid 19 infection of the patient. An FIR was lodged against Yadav and he was served a notice under Section 41 of the Cr PC (requiring appearance before police to prevent the person from committing any further offence). The Tribune 28-04-21)

## Instance number 5

In Gorakhpur, the CM’s home district, a privately-run Durgavati Hospital posted a notice

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## Double Engine

# Resentment brewing among BJP MPs and MLAs over Yogi Adityanath's handling of Covid situation in UP

*Contd. from page 5*

on 24 April stating "It is to bring to the notice of all attendants of patients in the hospital that due to a shortage of oxygen in the hospital, we will not be able to give your patient the required medical treatment. We are informing you in advance so you can shift your patient to another hospital as soon as possible." A few hours later, the notice was removed and from then on, the hospital administration merely said that oxygen was being arranged. Obviously, removal of notice was virtually coupled with the BJP chief minister ordering crackdown on hospitals reporting shortage of oxygen on 25 April only.

### Instance number 6

A Kanpur newspaper *Amar Ujala* published a report on 23 April, with the headline "476 Cremations, Pyres Burning Even After Sunset". It said that there had been 476 cremations across different cremation grounds in the district on 22 April. However, the official record of the Covid 19 deaths on April 22, which was released by the state government on 23 April, showed only nine Covid deaths.

District officials alleged the report was "misleading" and Alok Tiwari, the district magistrate (DM) of Kanpur, wrote to the newspaper: "With reference to your news story which said that corona deaths have resulted in discontinuation of the [Hindu] tradition of burning dead bodies before sunset, investigation by the municipal commissioner has revealed that this news item is misleading and can cause people to believe that all the deaths were due to Covid 19 only. Your newspaper is a reputable newspaper and it is not expected that you would publish such misleading news." The letter continued: "You are requested to get the versions of the officers concerned before publishing such news items in the future. Please issue a clarification for this story." On being asked, the DM told the Press that "It was a very polite and simple request to the newspaper, coming from a government functionary, requesting the newspaper to not publish articles that appear to be misleading."

The newspaper continued to publish reports from cremation grounds, stating that its staff were only reporting the facts as they were. It asserted that running a clarification could be considered only if the administration could point to errors in any story published by it. (The Wire 28-04-21)

### Instance number 7

In Lucknow, a press report claimed that Covid 19 related deaths in the city were being underreported. *The Wire* contacted Ram Nagina, the municipal officer in charge of the Covid19 death records in Lucknow's cremation grounds. He refused to share any information. "I am busy and I don't have the data right now," Nagina reportedly said. According to the report, the death counts recorded at crematoria across the city were two to three times higher than the official death counts. Perceptibly in an attempt to hide the actual number of Covid 19 deaths in Lucknow, the UP government installed opaque fencing outside cremation grounds after a video showing multiple burning pyres went viral on Twitter. (ibid)

### Instance no 8

Union Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar has shot off a letter to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, raising concerns about shortage of medical oxygen, alleged black-marketing of essential medical equipment such as ventilators, and the difficulties Covid patients are facing in getting a bed in hospitals in his parliamentary constituency Bareilly. "I have received complaints that in Bareilly, patients going to government hospitals are not being admitted as the hospital is asking them to get a referral letter from the district hospital. Because of this, the patient keeps running around from one place to another and in the process his oxygen level decreases," the minister said in his letter. "This is a matter of grave concern. Please ensure that this does not happen," he added.

Resentment has been brewing among BJP MPs and MLAs over the way the Yogi Adityanath government has handled the Covid situation in the state. More than half-a-dozen BJP MPs and MLAs have written to the UP CM since mid-April when Covid cases started surging in UP, about the suffering of patients owing to the shortage of hospital beds and medical oxygen in the state. Last week, BJP MP from Kanpur Satyadev Pachauri had also written to Yogi Adityanath highlighting how people in Kanpur were dying outside their homes, outside hospitals and inside ambulances because of absence of timely treatment. UP cabinet minister Brajesh Pathak, who also holds the law portfolio, was the first one to write to the state government, drawing attention to the failure of the Lucknow administration to ensure

beds and oxygen supply to critical patients, which led to mounting casualties. Meerut BJP MP Rajendra Aggarwal and Mohanlalganj BJP MP Kaushal Kishore have also written to the Yogi government about the shortage of oxygen supply in both private and government hospitals. Kishore had also demanded that the Election Commission cancel the panchayat elections, to focus on the Covid crisis and restrict the spread of infections in the state. BJP's Bhadohi MLA Dinanath Bhaskar, in his letter to CM Yogi Adityanath on 28 April, demanded an investigation against doctors posted at a Covid facility in the district, following the death of BJP leader Lal Bahadur Maurya. (The Print 10-05-21)

Arguably, many, if not all, state governments are in the habit of such underreporting of Covid 19 deaths to cover up the rickety skeleton of the healthcare infrastructure of the country. In Uttar Pradesh too, besides the above instances death counts from Covid 19 have been underreported in Varanasi, Ghaziabad, Agra, Jhansi and Bareilly districts of the state. Claiming that the state has the coronavirus situation under control, the Adityanath administration of UP is suppressing all indications of what is actually happening on the ground.

So why lay stress upon selected instances? A few issues are involved. One, this busts the myth of efficacy of 'double engine' government. Two, the UP CM as also other BJP leaders accused other state governments, for example, that of West Bengal of lying, coercing and cheating people. Be that as it may. The instances referred are few, but clear enough to prove the hypocrisy of the BJP CM. Of course, the UP government and its CM faithfully follow the Union government of the same ruling combine, RSS-BJP. It is now quite well known how heartlessly and cunningly the Union government used the first pandemic to push through its various anti-people agenda, like Labour Codes, Farm Laws, National Education Policy etc., without effectively attempting to improve public healthcare system to rise to the occasion or giving relief to hapless victims of the pandemic. It is also clear to people of the country, how the Union government wasted precious last few months' time to prepare for fighting an impending second wave, though there were clear cautions raised by medical and other concerned experts. The result is what we find now. The BJP Prime Minister, who proclaims himself to be saviour for poorer countries by providing them with vaccines etc. for fighting Covid 19 pandemic there, is now begging from door to door in the world for alms: vaccine, oxygen, equipments, medical kits. Naturally such a government would like to underreport the crisis to save its face. And following their footsteps, double-engine state governments like UP state governments will naturally try to take refuge behind the measures of coercion, catering false information, underreporting real crisis and so on. People need to get at this truth and press upon such governments to release maximum effort and resources to effectively fight the deadly second wave of Covid 19 pandemic.

## BJP government's priority financing and prescripts

Ram Mandir	—	Rs 2,500 crores
Kumbh Mela	—	Rs 4,200 crores
Statue of Liberty	—	Rs 3,000 crores
Foreign travel of ministers	—	Rs 700 crores
Purchase of Rafale jets	—	Rs 58,000 crores
Central Vista	—	Rs 20,000 crores
New aircrafts for Prime Minister	—	Rs 700 crores
Namaste Trump	—	Rs 700 crores
Covid treatment	—	Self-financing
Vaccines	—	Buy yourselves

# LDF victory in Kerala is neither a victory of left politics nor recognition for anti-people policies pursued during its rule — SUCI (Communist)

**Statement issued by the Kerala State Committee SUCI (Communist), on the assembly election results**

The victory achieved by the LDF in the just concluded assembly elections cannot be seen a victory of genuine left politics, opined the State Committee, SUCI (Communist). The LDF gov't led by Pinarayi Vijayan had failed in discharging the responsibilities which fundamentally distinguish a left government from a rightist one. The political, economic and administrative policies pursued by the CPI (M)-led LDF were for promoting the growth and profit-hunt of the big investors and wealthy sections. The very next day after the results came, the Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in a press conference said that 'Ease of doing business', was the policy of LDF and that it would be continued. The statement by the Kerala branch of the Confederation of Indian Industries expressing happiness in the continuation of the LDF rule, and recollecting the favours obtained from LDF, indicates the recognition of the industrial houses for the basic policies of the LDF gov't.

The primary responsibility of a left government is to create conducive environment for the growth and development of democratic movements with a view to raising the social consciousness of the people. So a leftist government should desist from strengthening the oppressive state machinery. The LDF government had conducted itself in just the opposite manner. If these policies alien to genuine left politics are considered as the yardstick for the victory, then this victory cannot be termed as victory of left politics.

One of the factors that helped the victory is that the welfare measures and help provided to the people was used as a propaganda material to effectively overcome the ill-feelings created by the governmental policies. In place of the political consciousness that governmental help during distress times is the right of the taxpayers, creating a mindset of dependency on the benevolence of rulers is not something that befits left politics. The real responsibility of left politics is to train people to exercise their voting rights on the basis of democratic consciousness by analysing the policies of the government freeing them from the mindset of dependency and servitude. The rightist governments also float populist schemes of financial and material assistance. Providing relief and help to people in distress times is a minimum responsibility of any government.

The electoral victory does not prove that all the criticisms against the government were baseless and the people have accepted that. In this election, conducted in the most apolitical manner, none of the important social issues at the national or state level was discussed. Hence those issues did not come up as factors influencing the electoral mandate.

People's strong opposition to the BJP's policies was reflected in this election. But neither the CPI (M)-led LDF nor the Congress-led UDF tried to convert the people's resentment against the anti-people policies and communalism of the

Central Government into a political fight. By putting forth the theory that the BJP's votes got reduced due to vote trading, the CPI(M) is trying to establish that the Central Government's policies did not play any role.

In the election campaign, the fronts competed with each other in inflaming the religious – communal sentiments. Using Sabarimala episode and 'Love Jihad' like fanaticism, anti-Muslim diatribes were raised and majority communalism was fomented. Pointing at the BJP, minority communalism was also played on. Understanding was reached with the NSS (Nair Service Society), the Yakobhaya Sabha (Christian sect), Kanthapuram (Muslim-community leader) and such others to play their roles in the election. Opportunism and unethical conduct prevailed in the political scene. Just for a few seats, the fronts (LDF, UDF, BJP) had no qualms in engaging in any kind of chicanery. The LDF that had branded the Mani Congress, a regional party, as corrupt in the last election, carried the same party on its shoulders this time. Several individuals who had no credentials to represent left politics became candidates. One of the factors for the LDF victory is that it could beat the other fronts in the competition of riding on communal and unethical politics. Kerala will have to pay a big prize for this kind of politics aimed at short term gains by inviting dangers in

the long run.

The only correct path before the people is the noble left politics aimed at bringing about revolutionary transformation of the social system. All the left minded people including those who worked for the victory of the LDF should see one reality, though a painful one. The leftist mindset that the people of Kerala had cultivated for long with pride is becoming very weak. The growing influence of religious-communal sentiments, the social environment where scientific bent of mind and logical thinking is declining, weakening of democratic tolerance, the prevalence of the worst type of opportunism, the unethical politics that justifies even the most heinous acts for selfish gains, the compromising attitude of begging and servitude to the authorities in place of boldly fighting for the rights — all these factors will provide a fertile social environment for creating a fascist mindset in the society. This is the historical lesson that we should not forget amidst the victory celebrations and expectations from the new government. Hence we should undertake the arduous struggle for the restoration of the left mentality based on conscious thinking. The correct path of left politics is the path of democratic people's movement on the burning issues affecting the people. We should uphold the politics of mass struggle dearer to our hearts.

## AIKKMS mass petition to Prime Minister

All India Kishan and Khetmajdoor Sangathan (AIKKMS) has taken initiative to send one lakh on line mass petition to the Prime Minister on the following demands:

1. Increase vaccine production. Ensure free universal vaccination within a given time frame. Ensure free and adequate supply of oxygen to meet the urgent demands of the current crisis.
2. Ensure adequate number of hospitals, hospital beds, oxygen and other medical facilities, free of cost, for patients to help them cope with the covid pandemic.
3. Withdraw the anti-people and discriminatory, pro-corporate vaccine pricing policy.
4. Public health care infrastructure should be strengthened.
5. During lockdown, retrenchment, pay cuts and evacuation of houses should be strictly prohibited.
6. Three anti-farmer Black Laws and

Electricity bill along with four anti-worker Labour Codes should be scrapped.

7. There should be a complete ban on privatization and disinvestment of public sector industries and institutions.
8. Cash subsidy of Rs. 7,500 per month should be provided to all poor farmers, farm workers and other rural poor families.
9. For the next six months, 10 kg of free cereals and pulses, edible oil should be made available per person per month.
10. There should be proper arrangement to provide effective treatment of the patients suffering from diseases other than Covid 19 in government hospitals.
11. Protective measures for all those engaged in epidemic-management work including health and front-line workers, ASHA and Anganwadi workers and ensuring comprehensive insurance coverage for all of them.

## AIMSS sends an online Charter of Demands to Prime Minister seeking immediate covid remedial measures

Comrade Chhabi Mohanty, General Secretary, All India Mahila Sanskritik Sangathan (AIMSS), sent an online Charter of Demands to Prime Minister on 12 May 2021 seeking immediate steps like free supply of adequate oxygen, free vaccination to all, free Covid testing, free treatment to the Covid 19 patients, suspension of Central Vista project and divert that fund towards Covid management and take all precautionary measures to prevent anticipated third wave.

# NEWS & VIEWS

## UP State SUCI(C) criticizes Yogi Adityanath-led BJP government for failing to stem horrendous spread of Covid infection

Comrade Pushpendra, UP State Secretary, had in a statement issued on 29 April 2021, expressed grave concern over the surging second wave of corona pandemic in the state of UP as well as in the country. With the Election Commission acting as the puppet of the Central Government, a three-layered Panchayat election held amid the pandemic ignoring ruling of the Allahabad High Court to the contrary, has catalysed the horrific transmission even upto the lowest levels in the rural areas. Moreover, the teachers and non-teaching staff who were sent on election duty were without proper protective measures and had to be without any hygiene and drinking water in the scorching summer. Consequently, a huge number of those on election duty were infected to later spread the infection to the farthest villages and every nook and corner of the state. Comrade Pushpendra demanded that cases be filled against top executives of the Election Commission the district electoral officials for such a crime and provide jobs to the nearest relatives of the deceased teachers non-teaching staff.

## Cow vigilantism even in Covid treatment

A village in north Gujarat has opened a covid isolation centre to treat patients based on ayurvedic medicines made of cow urine, dung, milk, ghee and curd called "Panchagavya" along with allopathic facilities. The centre is being run in a sprawling gaushala or cowshed that has over 5,000 cows by a trust 'Rajaram Gaushala Ashram' at Tetoda village in Deesa taluka of Banaskantha district. The centre "Vedalakshana Panchagavya Ayurvedic Covid Isolation Centre" was inaugurated on Thursday and on Saturday alone over 30 people with covid-19 symptoms came to the centre. We are providing Vedalakshana Panchagavya Ayurvedic treatment which is made of five elements of cow- urine, dung, milk, ghee and curd," said Ram Ratan Das, trustee of the ashram. District collector Anand Patel told DH: "This is an isolation centre. Fifty beds are for patients who want to opt for ayurvedic treatment. We gave permission to the trust because of its image in the locality. It is quite in the locality for its work on protecting cows. (Deccan Herald 08-05-21)

## "Holy" Ganges is now abode of dumped Covid dead bodies

Just the other day, before commencement of the Kumbh Mela in Harwar disdaining adherence to Covid protocols, the BJP—Sangh

Parivar leaders were claiming that a holy dip in the Ganges would cure everyone of ailment. Facts proved otherwise, The mela proved to be a super-spreader as blind faith succumbed to scientific reality. Now, the same holy Ganges has become abode of discarded Covid dead bodies leading to the inevitability of spread of various diseases due to contamination of the river water. Day after dozens of bodies, bloated and in various stages of decay, washed up on Monday on the banks of the Ganga in Chausa block of Bihar's Buxar district, similar sightings were reported on the banks of the river in Ghazipu district of Uttar Pradesh. The bodies are suspected to be those of Covid-19 patients who were dumped in the river, revealing the scale of Covid emergency in India. The locals have said that it is a common sight nowadays as people have started immersing the bodies of their relatives into the river as the overwhelmed crematoriums, handling a number of bodies every day, are running out of firewood. "Local residents in Hamirpur district spotted five bodies floating in the Yamuna, creating a scare that these were of Covid patients. The resident had spotted the bodies, including a half-burnt corpse, under a bridge on the Yamuna on 6 May. It is also alleged that bodies were thrown from Joyprabha bridge in Balia district from ambulances. But the apprehension is queerly dismissed by the authorities. After speaking to people and looking at the bodies, prima facie, it can be said these were not of Covid-19 patients as these were draped in a traditional manner and nobody was wrapped as done in the case of Covid-19 victims," Hamirpur District Magistrate said in a statement. The locals have complained about the stench and accused the authorities of ineptitude. (NDTV 11-05-21 and ABP 12-05-21)

## Centre funds AIIMS study whether chanting 'gayatri mantra' can treat coronavirus

The All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Rishikesh, is conducting a clinical trial to determine whether doing yoga and chanting the gayatri mantra, a religious hymn in Hinduism, can help in the recovery of coronavirus patients, The clinical trial is being funded by the Centre's Department of Science and Technology. It received the approval of the Indian Council of Medical Research's clinical trial registry, which is mandatory before conducting any kind of study on humans.

A summary provided by AIIMS to the Clinical Trial Registry of India stated, "Coronavirus caused by SARS-CoV2 [coronavirus] is one of the major viruses that primarily targets the human respiratory system. The Gayatri Mantra is the most sacred prayer of the Hindus. There is no effective treatment or vaccine for this virus as of yet."

It added that scientists "are racing against time" for a miracle cure or a vaccine to fight this pandemic. "In this scenario, role of pranayama

and Gayatri mantra chanting which has been used in other diseases and has shown promising effects becomes vital," the summary said. (scroll.in 20-05-21)

Central ministers launch of Coronil drug by Patanjali Ayurveda faces wrath from Indian Medical Association

Union BJP Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari and launched a scientific research paper on the 'first evidence-based medicine (Coronil) for Covid-19 by Patanjali' released by Yoga Guru Ramdev. "Coronil has received the Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (CoPP) from the Ayush section of Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation as per the WHO certification scheme," said Patanjali in a statement. On the basis of presented data, the Ministry of Ayush has recognised Coronil Tablet as medicine for "supporting the measure in COVID-19." (mint 21-02-21)

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## Two pro-Soviet sisters on the Victory Day in Kiev



9 May was the day of ignominious defeat of the Hitlerite fascist forces at the hands of Soviet Red Army. The Victory Day was observed in Kiev, the capital city of Ukraine, a constituent of erstwhile Soviet Union. Photo above shows two women (sisters) who came on the streets with a photo of Marshall Zhukov, chief of the Red Army's General Staff and a comrade-in-arms of great Stalin, who oversaw some of the Red Army's most decisive victory and hence asked by Stalin to take the salute at the victory march held in Moscow. The police tried to arrest the sisters but people shielded them and prevented the arrest. The sisters, now 84, were children when Kiev was liberated by the Red Army. They say that witnessed the Nazi atrocities and mass executions of Kiev Jews, communists and captured Red Army soldiers. "We have no fear. We have nothing to lose. Our mother and fathers once have smashed fascism. And we'll smash it again", commented the women.



## NEWS & VIEWS

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The Indian Medical Association on Monday took strong exception to the Centre's endorsement of "an unscientific product" like Patanjali's Coronil as a drug that can be used as a "supportive treatment" for the coronavirus. In a letter to Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan, the medical body said it was shocked to note the "blatant lie of WHO certification for a secret medicine" that was launched in his presence. "Being a Health Minister of the country, how justified is it to release such falsely fabricated unscientific product to people of the whole country and how ethical was it to promote the product in unethical, wrong and false ways,... false and fabricated projection of an unscientific medicine by the Health Minister to the entire country and being rejected by WHO is a slap and insult to the people of country... Let us not adulterate Ayurveda on the pretext of market gain to some monopoly corporate and create a disaster for humanity," mentioned the letter. IMA also added that it would write to the National Medical Commission over "the blatant disregard" of the Medical Council of India's code of conduct. As per the code, no doctor can promote a drug or prescribe it without knowing its composition. This letter issued after a day after the World Health

Organization, without naming anyone, clarified that it had not reviewed or certified the effectiveness of any traditional medicine. (scroll.in 22-02-21)

### Inconsonant

Mohit D Ram, who had been on the Election Commission's counsel panel since 2013, said in his resignation letter: "I have found that my values are not in consonance with the current functioning of the ECI; and hence I withdraw myself from the responsibilities of its panel counsel before the Supreme Court of India."

Mr Ram's resignation comes after the Election Commission fought a case in the Supreme Court requesting that the media be stopped from reporting court observations. The Election Commission's objection involved the Madras High Court recently commenting that the poll body was singularly responsible for the Covid surge and "should be booked for murder" for not stopping election rallies in the last two months. The comment was not in the final order.

The Election Commission approached the Supreme Court against what it called "blatantly disparaging remarks" that had dented its image.

The Supreme Court said constitutional authorities could do better than to complain and ask for fetters on the media.

Article 19 does not give right to freedom of

speech and expression only to people, but also confers this right to the media. It would be retrograde for the Supreme Court to gag the media," the Supreme Court said. (NDTV 07-05-21)

### Covid-19 deaths in India and US much more than reported

According to the new analysis from the University of Washington Institute For Health Metrics & Evaluation (IHME), "Estimation of total mortality due to Covid-19", the US and India together may have 7.7 lakh more deaths due to Covid-19 than they officially reported.

Analysis shows that the US may have undercounted deaths by at least 3.4 lakh, while it is 4.3 lakh in India. "In the IHME estimation of Covid-19 infections, hospitalisations, and deaths to date, we used to use officially reported Covid-19 deaths for nearly all locations. As of today, we are switching to a new approach that relies on the estimation of total mortality due to Covid-19," the researchers said. "Our approach to estimating the total Covid-19 death rate is based on measurement of the excess death rate during the pandemic week by week compared to what would have been expected based on past trends and seasonality. However, the excess death rate does not equal the total Covid-19 death rate," the researchers added.

### Billionaires donate to Covid Relief Fund — demand people

Contd. from page 1

- 2) All hospitals must be equipped with adequate number of beds, doctors, nurses, medical staff, adequate supply of oxygen, ventilators and free medicines.
- 3) Army hospitals are to be opened up for civilians' treatment.
- 4) Free vaccination for all.
- 5) Black marketeering in medicine, oxygen, etc. must be stopped.

We know to implement all these, huge amount of money is required. For that we suggest :—

- a) According to Oxfam report, there are 100 Indian billionaires who have amassed huge wealth out of the toils of millions of Indian people. Among those 63 persons own around Rs. 29 lakh crores. They are to be asked to contribute at least 50 percent of their money to meet this national disaster.
- b) President, Vice-President of the Indian state, all central and state ministers, M.P.s, M. L. A.s should contribute their one year's salary which are paid from public money.
- c) Entire amount of PM Care's fund must be disclosed and spent for this.
- d) Health budget is to be increased by curtailing other budgets except education.

This special fund collected by above measures can meet the expenditure including aiding financially retrenched workers, unemployed and poor people.

This is the crying need of the hour.  
Hope you will respond.

Sincerely Yours

### China was India's top trade partner in 2020 despite border tension and pandemic

Despite border tension and amidst pandemic and announcement of the BJP-led Indian government to cut Chinese presence in the country, including a ban of popular apps, termination of major infrastructural contracts and the approval of production-linked incentive schemes to reduce dependence on critical goods from the neighbour, China topped India's list of trading partners in 2020.

Total trade between the countries from January to December 2020 stood at \$77.67 billion (Rs 5,63, 000 crore) during the same period in 2020. Also, Indian iron and steel saw a 319.14 percent jump in exports to China, with shipments touching \$2.38 billion (Rs 17,374 crore). Total trade with the US in 2020, at \$75.95 billion, lagged behind China. (Indian Express and ABP dated 24-02-21)



Dogs feasting on Covid dead bodies floating in the river in UP

# Comrade Achintya Singha passes away Comrade Krishna Chakraborty is no more

Veteran member of SUCI(C) West Bengal State Secretariat, Comrade Achintya Singha breathed his last on 16th April at the age of 76 years at Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital. Despite persistent efforts of doctors and health workers in his treatment and care, his life could not be saved. A life-long revolutionary, Comrade Achintya Singha with his vast experiences gained through many a mass movement and inspired with the thoughts and ideals of the great leader of the proletariat- Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, had a unique character that endeared him to the leaders, cadres of the Party as also to the common people. Tribute was paid to the departed leader by garlands offered on behalf of Party General Secretary- Comrade Provash Ghosh and Polit Bureau member Comrade Asit Bhattacharya. Polit Bureau member and President- AIUTUC, Comrade Shankar Saha and AIUTUC General Secretary Comrade Shankar Dasgupta also offered garlands. Among other important leaders who paid their parting tribute were Comrades Saumen Basu, Polit Bureau member, Chandidas Bhattacharya Central Committee member and West- Bengal State Secretary, and Ashok Das, West Bengal State Secretary AIUTUC.

Comrade Achintya Singha was born at Kanakpur, in Murarai- Birbhum district, West Bengal, though he spent his student life at Raghunathgunge in Murshidabad. A very meritorious student --Achintya Singha had come over from Jangipur College to study at Krisnanath College in Berhrampur, Murshidabad. His sharpness of intellect and logical reasoning drew the attention of professors and students alike. While in Jangipur, he had come into contact with the Party through Comrade Shibpujon Sonar. Imbued with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh Thought, young Achintya Singha, still a student, decided that he would dedicate his entire life to the interest of the revolution and from that time on devoted himself to the task of expansion of Party organisation.

After graduating from Krishnanath College, he engaged himself in building up workers' and peasants' movements one following another. At that time, when a movement of construction workers engaged in building feeder canal from Farrakka barrage had developed against the oppression of the concerned employers, Comrade Singha wholeheartedly plunged into that movement and played a leading role.

Later on, his was a daring leadership provided to the developing peasants' movements in the Murshidabad district to protect the sharecroppers and small farmers from the oppression of the rural kulaks. Waves of peasant movements surged on one after another under his leadership. After two farmers embraced martyrdom in the movements at Bangsobati and Dhanpatnagar areas, the landowners ultimately were forced to bow down before the pressure of the protracted and rousing movement. Apart from that, Comrade Achintya Singha was in the forefront of innumerable mass and class struggles, both big and small, in Murshidabad as well as in the state including the blood- bathed bus- fare hike resistance movement. His role was



equally commendable in maintaining communal harmony when the Katra Masjid demolition incident occurred. Comrade Singha was also President of the JPA, a platform of struggling government employees. Comrade Achintya Singha had founded the "Jharr" cultural group, involving poets and authors in the district and brought out the publication, also named "Jharr" in 1967. Comrade Subodh Banerjee, member of first Central Committee of the SUCI(C) and then then the Labour Minister in United Front government, inaugurated the first issue of the paper priced 10 paise. Barring two issues, Comrade Singha was the editor of the paper till his last breadth. The publication had from its inception been playing an untiring role to serve the interest of the common people as against that of the vested class. Comrade Achintya Singha's unique writing skill is also worth mentioning. An avid reader of literature, he had deep interest in poetry among other literary forms. In his writings, penetrating logic mingled with heartfelt compassion for the exploited toiling people. He was also a very good orator and capable of delivering speeches fluently in Bengali, Hindi and English.

Devoted to the battle for the emancipation of the exploited masses, he was indifferent to his own happiness and comfort or his own ill- being and well-being. None has ever heard him make any complaints or show any grievance. While leading workers' movement at a young age, a company- owner wanted to lure him with lucrative job offer. Comrade Singha did overcome all such lures with ease and all through he spent a simple life and that too happily, with the workers, peasants and Party comrades. Though his family was once starving, he did not opt to take up any job to maintain his family forsaking his organisational responsibilities. Once a company management hired a professional killer to assassinate him. But the said killer after observing the conduct and character of Comrade Singha came to him, confessed everything, repented and offered to be his life-long body guard. Though seriously challenged physically having lost his sight almost fully, it never came in the way of his discharging organizational responsibilities.

On his demise, Party has lost a life-long revolutionary, an efficient organiser and a struggling leader and the toiling people of the country has lost one of the prominent guides in their movements.

**Red Salute Comrade Achintya Singha**

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organization. Under the advice of the Party leadership, he later looked after Party work in some other Western states as well. He played a key role in organizing the Second Party Congress in Delhi in 2009 as well as the historic Delhi March of the Party in March 2012.

In the first Party Congress held in Kolkata in 1988, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty was elected a member to the Central Committee. In the 19<sup>th</sup> All India conference of AIUTUC in March 2008, he was elected President of that organization. After the Second Party Congress, he was inducted in the Polit Bureau of the Party. He continued to be in the Polit Bureau and the Central Committee till February 2018.

In October 2014, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty suffered a severe bout of acute respiratory distress with Lower Respiratory Tract infection and was admitted in St. Martha's Hospital, Bangalore. As his condition deteriorated, Comrade Provash Ghosh, sent a team of doctors to Bangalore in order to assess the situation. Being briefed about his critical condition, Comrade Provash Ghosh asked the medical team to bring him to Kolkata by air-ambulance for better treatment. Accordingly, Comrade Krishna Chakraborty was brought to Kolkata and admitted in Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital where he was diagnosed as a case of gross Ischemia of multiple walls of the heart with heart failure along with acute exacerbations of COPD. An emergency angioplasty was done to remove significant blockage in one of his main coronary arteries following which he became relatively stable and overcame the crisis. But since then, he could not regain health and had to be stationed in Kolkata under regular monitoring of a team of reputed consultants. He needed frequent hospitalization as well as his condition often became critical. Of late, when he was found to be having severe respiratory distress, he was admitted in the Critical Care Unit of Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital on 1 March and later diagnosed of acute kidney injury and sepsis with multi-organ failure besides pulmonary aggravations which ultimately caused his demise.

**Red Salute Comrade Krishna Chakraborty**

We also had to bid adieu with red salute to the following leading comrades during this pandemic —

**Comrade Jagdish Chandra Barai**, member of the MP state organizing Committee and a veteran leader of AIUTUC.

**Comrade Gopal Bose**, veteran member of SUCI(C), West Bengal State Committee

**Comrade Ravi Shankar**, Bangalore AIDYO District Secretary, Karnataka

**Comrade Himanshu Shrivastva**, SUCI(C) Dewas District Secretary, MP

**Comrade Kajal Chakraborty**, Coochbehar District Secretariat member, West Bengal

**Comrade Subrata Duttgupta**, Jalpaiguri District Committee member, West Bengal

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