

Horrific Hathras Rape And Murder

Even When A 'Dalit' is the President of India

In Hathras, Uttar Pradesh (UP), a 19-year poor *dalit* girl was brutally gang-raped, tortured and murdered allegedly by four men belonging to the powerful community, also high-ups in social rung in the caste-stratified society. It was followed by the over-activism on the part of the police-administration under the BJP-led state government to cremate the victim's body at dead night keeping her family members locked in their house, despite their begging to take a last look at her. The bestiality of the crime which took place on 14 September and the allegations of tardy investigations, lax forensics, hurried cremation, dubious statements by the police-administration and coercive actions against protesters and journalists covering the incident have roiled India once again. More suspicious has been the way the crime of gangrape is being shielded by the administration and the powerful BJP leaders and ministers representing the moneyed upper caste lobby who are also trying to hold the accused as innocent. In fact, rallies are being organized by the BJP satraps and other constituents of the Hindutva group in demand for release of the four men taken into custody. Of late, a theory has been floated from the ruling quarters that an "international conspiracy" has been hatched with foreign funding to foment caste conflagration in the state with a view to defaming the BJP-led government.

Growing crime against women

This gruesome incident has brought to the fore three criminal aberrations stemming from the decrepit capitalist society in India and exacerbating socio-political oppression of the common toiling masses. Growing crime on women, escalating casteist oppression and rising despotism of the government-administration. The lethal Nirbhaya gangrape in 2012 was just one of the 24,923 rape cases reported that year. Actual number would have been many times higher as most of such cases go unreported. And pitifully, the conviction rate is only 27.2 % which itself

shows how callous and dysfunctional is the administrative machinery in dealing with the rape criminals. Consequently, crimes against women have risen steadily from 3.22 lakh in 2016 to 4.05 lakh in 2019 notwithstanding the fact that power at the centre and in many states have passed on to the BJP from the Congress. National Crime Research Bureau (NCRB) statistics released just a few days ago tell us that 87 rapes are reported every day in India. 10 *dalit* women are raped every day, reports NCRB. But that constitutes only 11% of the reported cases meaning women belonging to non-dalit populace are also not spared. UP is now run by a BJP government. A saffron-clad self-styled monk is the chief minister. But even with such a monk at the helm, UP tops

the list of rape incidents with a shocking increase of 20% between 2016 and 2019. Hence, NCRB has correctly marked UP as the most unsafe state for women. The figures mentioned above are based on counting the cases where the victim women dared to speak out. And we know there are umpteen number of unreported cases where the victims do not disclose the incidents fearing social stigma, ostracization as well as retaliatory action by the offenders who mostly bask under the umbrella of the ruling dispensation. The parents and relatives of the victims, instead of fighting for justice, often try to hide the crimes because of that. Irony is that while the girls live in shame, the rapists swagger around freely and

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Central Labour Code Bills

A Brutal Attack on the Rights and Security of Workers and Trade unions

The Modi-led Central government by virtue of its brute majority in both houses of parliament recently passed three crucial bills on Labor codes which constitute a grave death blow to the trade union rights and the working class of the country. The three bills, Industrial Relations (IR) code bill, 2020, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working conditions code bill, 2020, and the Code on Social Security bill, 2020 were hurriedly passed in the midst of rising covid-19 pandemic and at a time when the opposition had boycotted the parliament to oppose anti-peasant farm bills. One more legislation that is code on wages was passed in 2019 which makes it four Labour codes.

It is said that the 44 Central Labour laws were consolidated and simplified into 4 Labour codes. But in actuality the new labour codes far from being just a simplified version actually includes several new provisions detrimental to the cause of working class. These legislations give a free hand for hiring and firing workers snatch

away existing labour protections and infringe upon their right to strike. On the other hand it rolls out red carpet for ease of doing business.

The Industrial Relations Code Bill, 2020 is a death blow to the workers interests

The Industrial Relations code, 2020, has given absolute right for industries hiring up to 300 workers to unilaterally terminate services of any worker without any need of government's approval. Earlier, following an amendment in 1982, industries hiring more than 100 workers were barred from unilaterally terminating any worker or declaring layoff. This offered some protection for the workers from the whimsical decisions of the owners. But the new enactment has done away with this safeguard and thrown the workers at the mercy of the management. This is applicable to more than 90% of the total work force who will be left without protection. According to Annual

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Countrywide protest against Hathras Crime



Karnataka

Guna, MP

Tripura

Hathras Rape and Murder

Growing crime on women, escalating casteist oppression and rising despotism of the government-administration laid bare

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taking 'pride' in what they have done. With the government-administration more often than not remaining an indulgent onlooker, these rapists who are stripped of all human values and essence, thump around with notoriety. In such a milieu, the common unorganized marginalized populace, irrespective of caste or religion or ethnicity, whose daughters, sisters, wives or mothers become easy preys to these wolves, languish in fear and bear with the assault and humiliation silently. That is why, mostly the women including minors and children belonging to the economically distressed and socially discriminated, deprived, persecuted, underprivileged sections are the victims. If the law-keepers are not held accountable to law, it gives a handle to the powerful despots to commit any crime with impunity. And so, justice cries in the wilderness!

Secondly, objectification of women is another endowment of degraded capitalism where consumerist mindset is incited every moment. Hence male chauvinism which has not vanished with overthrowing of feudalism but assumed a new dimension in decadent moribund capitalism is reflected in viewing women as an objective of satisfying consumerist lust. This is a part of the all-out cultural degradation bred by dying reactionary capitalism-imperialism. So, there is widespread proliferation of sex-perversion, raw violence, obscenity, vulgar exhibition of female body in commercial advertisements and spurt of rotten filthy contents in the media including social media as well as entertainment channels and films. This is also contributing to spike in crime on women. Ruling capitalism derives immense benefits by this reckless promotion of crude indecency because more is the social sickness and depravity, more the people in general and the youth in particular are dispossessed of all the finer senses, sensibilities, tenderness, ethics, morality and are intoxicated with the thought of satiating animal instinct. And if the people particularly young generation are thus emasculated from within, less would be the possibility of any united conscious upsurge against oppressive capitalist order. Because mentally crippled people with a broken backbone cannot stand firmly against crime and injustice.

Insight into casteist exploitation

Let us make it clear at the outset that when we have been using the terms 'higher caste' or 'lower caste', we are only speaking terms of the prevailing thoughts in the society. For Marxists who are believers in scientific analysis of history and law-governance of social development, the caste identity is an artificial distinctiveness derived from social stratification of bygone years which we have explained below. But the feature

of caste oppression in India cannot be wished away either and its cause needs to be understood in proper perspective. It is no secret that in India, patriarchal domination, misogynistic mentality and upper caste highhandedness are pronounced even after 70 years of achieving political independence. Persecution of the economically backward socially marginalized so called lower caste people has virtually been a virulent social evil in this country. Rape, lynching, physical assault, discrimination and deprivation, meting out slave-like behaviour, bullying to submission—such are the attacks, humiliations and injustice the disadvantaged lower caste people including *dalits*

social stratification to formulate the caste system. Thus historically, it turned out that the feudal landowning class in general belonged to the so called higher castes and the tillers as well as other working populace belonged to the so called lower caste. In other words, the exploiters generally were generally having an upper caste identity and the exploited the lower caste identity. Thus, in the Indian society in feudal period, caste and class were found to be interwoven. Class exploitation assumed the form of caste oppression in many cases. Misogyny also has its root in patriarchal mooring of feudal culture. Women in feudal society were virtually viewed as subordinate to

men not allowed to undertake any activity except looking after household works, bearing and rearing children and acting as per wishes of husbands. They were bound to obediently carry out orders of the male heads of the family as well as abide by the injunctions of the self-declared elders of the society. They had no right, no freedom, no autonomy. They were indeed consigned to a secluded life. Women were made to believe that they were destined to this place in the society and hence more they reconciled with it, the better. Even in the sphere of sex, men were licensed to do anything including promiscuity and polygamy while the so called 'chastity' rule applied exclusively to women. So while both men and women faced feudal oppression, women were confronted with an additional oppression—that is the oppression of an unkind patriarchal society. The same male dominance coupled with debauched mentality persisting in and nurtured by degenerated capitalism is manifest in objectification of females and the crude misogynistic conducts, now and then raising their head.

Secondly, caste-stratified social organization in dying feudalism was mired in senseless rituals, bigoted thoughts and a host of prejudices. So it impeded the process of development of advanced social thinking and striking out new paths towards progress. No doubt inroad of capitalism in Indian economy preceded by enlightenment of the soil by the higher thoughts of renaissance dealt a blow to the hoary system and ultimately Indian national bourgeoisie captured state power through compromise with the British imperialist rulers. But democratization of the Indian society, which was a task of anti-feudal bourgeois democratic revolution, remained unfulfilled due to the half-baked and truncated bourgeois reforms owing to the compromising character of Indian capitalism in the given historical epoch. So, the caste system could not be eradicated, rather was preserved by the ruling Indian monopolists to serve their class interest of keeping people disunited and sunk in prejudiced and regressive thoughts. Thirdly, the Indian working class also had a specific feature. Though they, uprooted from land, came to the cities to work in the factories, their links with the old village-based society were not completely

Hathras case : Late-night cremation of victim violation of human rights, says High Court

The Allahabad High Court has observed that the late-night cremation of the Hathras woman who died after alleged gang-raped was a violation of human rights for which the responsibility should be fixed.

The Lucknow bench of the high court also directed the state government to lay down modalities for cremation in Hathras-like situations.

Considering the sensitivity of the issue, the court directed Uttar Pradesh officials, political parties and all others to avoid making any statement in public on it. A division bench of Justice Pankaj Mithal and Justice Rajan Roy also expected the electronic and print media to observe restraint while reporting and discussing the matter.

The order was issued Tuesday, a day after it was reserved when the bench heard the victim's family and government officials.

It said the cremation in the middle of the night without following rituals violated the victim's human rights as well as those of her family and relatives.

Family members of the victim girl claimed that the cremation, which took place well past midnight, was without their consent and they were not allowed to bring home the body one last time. The hurried cremation fuelled outrage over the incident and the high court took suo motu cognizance of it. (*Indian Express* 13-10-20)

are made to live with in capitalist India. The ruling monopolists and their political agents of different hues are custodians of such brutality, injustice and inhumanity that a vast section of underprivileged marginalized impoverished Indians face. Class exploitation is inherent in capitalism. The handful of ruling monopolists exploit the millions of toiling masses irrespective of their casteist, ethnic, religious or such other affiliations. But, in India, this class exploitation often takes the form of casteist oppression. Why is it so?

The cause lies in the specific context and history of Indian society. A unique feature in the social structure of India has been the caste system which connotes hierarchical endogamic social division formulated by none other than the then ruling dispensation. In feudal India, under self-sufficient village economic system, a stratification of the society determined the occupation of its members. This stratification played an important role in both economy and social organizations then. The rulers used this

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How economy has been recovering in the BJP regime

Position before Covid 19 pandemic

The release of richest people's lists is usually a signal for much back-slapping and triumphalism in the corporate world and its hangers on in the media. It is seen as some kind of symptom that India is doing well, people are getting wealthier, *achhe din* (good days) are here, although such lists are only for a 100 people (as in the case of the Forbes India list) or perhaps more (as in IIFL Hurun list), in a country of 1.3 billion (130 crore) people.

But these lists also reveal another side of the super wealthy corporates of the country. **A comparison between the Forbes India richest people's lists of 2014 and 2019 reveals which of the corporate honchos have flourished under Narendra Modi's rule and which have not done so well.**

Before going into the individuals, it should be noted that **the total wealth of the top 100 richest Indian corporate heads increased from about Rs.25 lakh crore to over Rs.32 lakh crore between 2014 and 2019. That's a 31% increase. The wealth of just these 100 people in 2019 is about 6% of the country's GDP (gross domestic product). This is a measure of the high degree of inequality in the country that just 100 people own so much wealth while the vast bulk of India's people have only a very small fraction of it.**

Who has Flourished Under Modi?

Coming now to the rather curious case of individual growth among corporates, it turns out that the richest person in India, **Mukesh Ambani, has more than doubled his wealth. It has increased by 118%, to be precise, from Rs.1.68 lakh crore to Rs.3.65 lakh crore between**

2014 and 2019.

In Gautam Adani's case, the rise has been better. **His wealth zoomed up by 121% from Rs.50.4 thousand crore in 2014 to a breath-taking Rs.1.1 lakh crore in 2019.** He climbed up from the 11th place in the 2014 rankings to becoming the second richest man in India in 2019.

Both these illustrious men are known to be quite friendly with Prime Minister Modi and the ruling dispensation. Modi had even appeared in a full-page advertisement for the launch of Jio, the Reliance telecom service, which has, in three years, the largest subscriber base in India.

Adani's association with Modi dates back to the days when Modi was the chief minister of Gujarat. But it was Modi's elevation to New Delhi that marked a phenomenal upswing in Adani's fortunes.

A noteworthy trend that has emerged in recent years – which may have some relevance to wealth creation – is the growing bonhomie between the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (which is the mentor of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party) and corporate bigwigs. Only a few days ago, Shiv Nadar of HCL was the chief guest at the Foundation Day of RSS at Nagpur. A few days before that, Azim Premji of Wipro visited the RSS headquarters and met Sangh supremo Mohan Bhagwat. In April 2019, Ratan Tata had visited the RSS headquarters to meet Bhagwat. In fact, last year, Tata Trusts donated Rs 100 crore to Nagpur's National Cancer Institute run by an RSS-affiliated trust named after Dr Aabaji Thatte, the personal assistant of second RSS chief M S Golwalkar. In 2017, ONGC, a premier public sector undertaking too donated Rs.100 crore to the hospital. Last month, Rahul Bajaj visited Smruti Mandir to pay tributes at the

Name	Source of earning	Wealth increase this year (Rs in crores)	Net wealth (Rs in crores)
Mukesh Ambani	Reliance Industries	2, 05, 130	6,33, 640
Gautam Adani	Adani Group	69,934	1,52, 570
Aziz Premzi	WIPRO	31,098	1,64,980
Shiv Nadar	HCL	40, 588	1,52, 570

Calculation basis
 * net wealth is calculated by taking into account current sale value of all shares in hand plus salary and movable /immovable properties like car, real estate etc.
 \$ 1 USD+ Rs 73 (Source: Bloomberg Billionaires Index)

memorial of RSS founder K B Hedgewar at Nagpur.

Corporate India doesn't kowtow to anybody unless they envisage some benefit. This increasing closeness of corporate honchos to the RSS, so much so that they have been making a beeline to Nagpur to pay respects to the founder and to confabulate with the current chief, is their way of extending support to the Modi government and generally be in its good books. (Newslick 13-10-19)

On the other hand, with unemployment at a 45-year high, poor health—42 infants per 1,000 still die before turning one—and low levels of education—an average person has attended school for 6.3 years—India's demographic dividend was at risk, according to an **India Spend** analysis of data from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Indian government, and research from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). India also ranked 102 out of 117 countries in global Hunger Index. India accounted for a quarter of the world's hungry people and was home to over 190 million undernourished people. Incidence of poverty was at nearly 30 per cent. India ranked 114th out of 132 countries on under-5 stunting and 120th out of 130 countries on under-5 wasting and 170th out of 185 countries on prevalence of anaemia. Anaemia continued to affect 50 per cent of women, including pregnant women, and 60 per cent of children in the country,"

said the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) note on India.

(Reference: Business Standard 23-08-19, Frontline 22-11-19)

Situation during Covid 19 pandemic

After imposition of lockdown in last March end, the wealth of Mukesh Ambani has increased by Rs 90 crores per hour. This is as per latest IIFL Hurun list. According to Forbes's list, the net wealth of Gautam Adani has increased by Rs 71, 540 crores. The Chart below would give the latest picture (as on 8 October 2020)

This stupendous rise in wealth has taken place when **GDP was down by 23.5 %** in April-June this year and predicted by RBI to contract by 9.5% at the year end. **2.1 crore people have lost jobs in organized sector. An estimated 12.2 crore people have lost their jobs. An estimated 6 crore Indians** out of 60 crores who go to work (or one in 10) were stated to be **at the risk of losing their jobs** before break of autumn. **MSMEs were facing existential crisis,** with revenue falling by 17-21% as estimated after June end. **About 84% of Indian households saw their incomes fall and many were threatened of not surviving much longer without assistance, a study showed.**

(Reference: ABP 13-10-20, CRISIL 30-06-20, India today 23-08-20, Hindustan Times 16-05-20)

Countrywide protest against Hathras Crime



Chakulia, Jharkhand

Coochbehar, WB

Moradabad, UP

Central Labour Code Bills

A Brutal Attack on the Rights and Security of Workers and Trade unions

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Survey of Industries 2014-15, if one looked at the organized sector, the number of industries appointing 100 or more workers was just 7.2%. The number of industries appointing 300 or more workers was only 1.2%. With the promulgation of new Industrial Relations bill, the applicability of Industrial Disputes Act is drastically reduced.

Further the new code has totally freed the managements from furnishing a standing order. The earlier existing Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, 1946, made it mandatory for the employers of an industrial establishment where 100 or more workers are employed to clearly define the conditions of employment and rules of conduct for the workmen and make them known to the workmen employed. Now it has been abandoned. Standing order was enacted in 1946 in order to standardize the terms and conditions of service across various occupations so that the employer cannot arbitrarily change or determine the terms and conditions of service. It also provides for employment security against arbitrary dismissal by the employers by framing any kinds of allegations. It is to be noted that upto now the existing legal norm has been that no standing orders signed between the management and the workers' representative could violate the model standing orders put out by the labour ministry. This acted as a great protection against unbridled exploitation by the owners. Now the

standing order which mandates strict adherence to all these provisions are totally removed. So in this new situation what will be the fate of employees is anybody's guess.

The Biggest Onslaught on the Right to Strike

The right to association and the right to strike which is an inalienable right of the working class has been restricted and diluted. More serious is the condition imposed on carrying out strikes. The time period of arbitration proceedings has been included in the conditions for workers before going on a strike as against only the time for conciliation at present. This means if the conciliation is on they cannot go on strike. After 7 days of conclusion of conciliation, they cannot go on strike. Then the dispute will go to the industrial tribunal which takes still more time during which time they cannot go on strike. Only after 60 days of completion of all proceedings legal strike is allowed. Therefore by imposing such conditions the code attempts to muzzle the voice of dissent of the workers and the unions.

Fixed term employment has been introduced under which the employers are given the absolute right to hire workers for a fixed term by denying them continued service even when the job is perennial in nature. Further under this act the managements are not mandated to provide any social security benefits. This is nothing but legalization of hire and fire regime! Hitherto, the percentage of number of contract

workers in organized sector was 35%. Moreover, appointment of contract workers for performing basic activities in the organized sector was banned. But now, any industry with 300 or more workers would be able to engage workers on contract for doing basic jobs and thereby keeping them out of the purview of Industrial Disputes Act. Moreover, in 2014-15, the average wage paid to a worker on contract in organized sector was Rs 8,500 was only 70% of what was paid to a regular worker. The new code would empower the employers to appoint more and more workers on contract thereby widening the gap between wage and labour.

By redefining what constitutes an industry the new Code simply excludes all institutions owned or managed by organizations substantially engaged in any "charitable, social or philanthropic service", and such other services thereby denies protection and benefits to huge number of workers working in these establishments. Even "wage" has been redefined to deny wages to a worker as per the earlier provisions. It excludes a large proportion of the emoluments paid to a worker under the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 like house rent allowance, the value of any house-accommodation, travelling allowance, overtime allowance and remuneration among others.

The Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions

Certain existing provision offering protection to the workers have been removed and new specifications are prescribed. The code has also proposed employing women in all establishments for all types of works between 7 PM and 6 AM brushing aside the widespread concern of women's safety.

Further the protections for contract workers have been removed in establishments hiring more than 20 workers by increasing the threshold limit to 50 workers which means two-thirds of the industrial establishments which hire more than 20 workers but less than 50 will be left out of the purview of any legal benefits.

Earlier labour laws were applicable for factories using electricity which employ more than 10 workers and in factories without electricity which employ more than 20 workers. Now by increasing the

limits to 20 and 40 workers respectively the new code has in one stroke snatched away whatever protection existed for the workers of the above establishments. 70 per cent of the industrial establishments and 74 per cent of industrial workers will now be subjected to hire and fire regime.

Code on Social Security bill, 2020

Under social security code only organized workers are taken into consideration. Unorganized sector workers working in establishments having 10 or less workers are considered as a separate category. This means the new code provides two types of social security for two categories of workers, organized workers and unorganized workers. Further the new code has recommended constitution of a National Social Security Board which in turn will recommend to the central government suitable social security schemes for different sectors of organized workers. For GIG workers (workers engaged in non-traditional works consisting of income-earning activities outside of traditional, long-term employer-employee relationships), social security fund will be raised by both the aggregators and GIG workers. GIG workers will have to shell out up to 5% of their salary amount while the aggregators will contribute just 1-2 % of their turnover.

Tasks Ahead

The central government by means of these labour code bills has let loose an all-out attack on the working class of the country. These labour code bills, which are a part of anti-people globalization and liberalization policies has cast its dark shadows on all the category of the workers, whether organized, or unorganized, whether contract workers or construction workers or GIG workers. It seeks to nullify in one stroke the hard won rights and protections of the workers won over decades of struggle. Therefore to shoot down the above legislations and fight for the rights of the working class let us close our ranks and rise up to build up and intensify a united organized powerful protest movement and then gradually step that movement into a resistance movement which would compel the government to roll back the anti-worker legislations.

AIKKMS writes to Prime Minister highlighting the anti-peasant aspects of New Farm Bills

All India Kisan Khetmazdoor Sanghathan (AIKKMS) has written a letter to the prime minister on 20 September 2020, highlighting the brazenly anti-peasant aspects of the three newly passed farm Bills.

The letter mentioned, inter alia, that these new enactments would further worsen the condition of the impoverished misery-stricken peasants and allow the corporate giants to take control of the agricultural sector paving the way for yet more ruthless exploitation of the peasantry. It would also imperil food security which in turn would aggravate malnutrition and starvation to an unprecedented level. The so called claim of freedom of the peasants to sell their produce to anyone who offers them higher price is a hoax because the poor peasants who cannot bargain even with the middlemen and arhatiyas now would have no power whatsoever in dealing with the agri-giants over price aspect. This scope is further minimized, if not set at naught, in contract farming as all legal protections would be to contracting companies and not the peasants. Already four lakh farmers and agricultural workers have committed suicide due to the plunder of rural bourgeoisie and the agri-corporates and MNCs.

Hence, AIKKMS demanded immediate annulment of the three ill-conceived farm laws.

Hathras Rape and Murder

Conspicuous silence from top functionaries in governance

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severed. Hence, age-old feudal superstitions, caste feelings, obscurantist thoughts and rusticity remained ingrained in their cultural-mental makeup. The ruling monopolists from their heinous class interest went on fomenting such prejudiced mindset so that caste questions and such other divisive thoughts not only remained alive but took further grip on the society. This made the Indian soil fertile for casteist divide and oppression to continue. With India becoming politically independent by dethroning feudal autocracy and replacing foreign imperialist rule, exploitation of man by man did not end. Only the nature of exploitation changed. Now it is the Indian monopolists who are in power and as part and parcel of the obsolete reactionary world imperialism-capitalism, are bringing down inhuman oppression on the toiling people in every sphere of life. So, as against feudal oppression and colonial domination, it is now exploitation of labour by capital. Agriculture is also governed by capitalist relations of production.

And as we know, the class which controls economy also controls politics, social domain and culture. So, today the socio-cultural-political sphere is controlled by the ruling monopolists in a manner suited to their vile class interest. Since most of the industrial workers as well the poor

and marginalized peasants and agricultural labourers belong to so-called lower castes by birth while the capitalist owners and rural bourgeoisie are mainly having an upper caste identity as per contours of caste-stratified society of yester years, class exploitation in capitalist India often becomes intertwined with caste oppression. It is, however, to be borne in mind that such differences in terms of caste identity by birth exist among the ruling bourgeoisie as well. But, in so far as class interest and class motive of profit maximization by ruthless exploitation of labour power of workers (including white collar workers and intellectuals) and peasants are concerned, all capitalists, whether industrial or agricultural, belong the same genre, the same class identity. So, a so-called higher caste worker is exploited in the same manner as a so called lower caste worker, irrespective of whether the exploiter by birth has a higher or lower class identity. The division is between the exploiting class and the exploited myriads, irrespective of casteist, religious, lingual, regional or ethnic identity. Crux of capitalism is class exploitation and the only scientific course to abolish it is intensification of class struggle based on higher proletarian ideology, morality and culture. If casteist bias or hatred is sought to be retaliated by counter-casteist bias or abhorrence, that would only

strengthen the hands of ruling capitalism which wants such divides and divisive attitudes to be sustained for driving a wedge into the desired unity of the exploited and oppressed millions.

So the battleline is clearly drawn between the exploiting bourgeoisie and the exploited toiling millions—the workers, peasants and middle class. Intensification of class struggle warrants cemented fraternity and solidarity of the exploited rising above all divides. Hence, eradication of caste oppression is contingent upon abolition of class-divided capitalist society. Unless we have a clear understanding of the character of capitalist exploitation in capitalist India, we shall not be able to understand how class exploitation is hidden behind many the incidents of caste oppression. In that event, we shall not find the correct way to fight out the evil. In fact, casteist or racial bias, if not hatred, though an offshoot of feudalism are now structural cradle to capitalism-imperialism throughout the world.

Fascist autocratic conduct of government-administration

Since the very foundation of the capitalist society is now trembling, the ruling monopolists haunted by the fear-complex of anti-capitalist socialist revolution, besides promoting cultural

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Few words about rising food insecurity in India

Even before we could swallow, India's rank of 102 among 117 countries in terms of Global Hunger Index (GHI) in 2019, the State of Food security and nutrition in the world (SOFI) report 2020 released by UNO indicates that food insecurity is increasing in India and in terms of population, India has highest number of food-insecure people in the world. The report indicates that the food insecurity increased by 3.8% from 2014-16 to 2017-19.

This report is based on the global surveys conducted by FAO and other agencies around the world. Unfortunately, government of India (GoI) neither conducts such surveys nor it allows to publish such reports in India. This data is extracted from the Social Finance, Inc. (SOFI) report by comparing the data provided for South East Asia with India and without India.

Food insecurity is measured based on two indicators. 1) Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) and 2) Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI). PoU is a conventional measure and based on consumption surveys. Whereas PMSFI is a new measure and based on the incidence of food shortage, skipping meals, changing diets etc. FAO has conducted this

survey in 140 countries in collaboration with Gallup World Poll (GWP).

GoI has not released the report of NSSO (National Sample Survey Organization) of 2017-18. Therefore PoU data on consumption is not available. Under this situation PMSFI indicator is more significant.

The date reveals that in 2017-19, 22% of the global population facing food insecurity were residing in India. In India food insecurity was increased by 3.8% while in the rest of South Asia it got reduced by 0.5%. The total number increased from 42.65Cr to 48.86Cr, a jump of 6.2 crores.

Underlying causes

The life conditions of our country men are worsening day by day for the last few years. The draconian policy of Demonetization and GST have further accelerated the penury. What is to be taken into account is that all these data and report are for pre-Covid 19 period. Now we can assume the fate of the poor and migrant workers after lockdown!

Every year, it is announced that there is bumper crop production. But then where does the produce go keeping the countrymen starved? Significantly, while over 50 crores of

our people are either hungry or food-insecure, the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns were reported to have a stock of 100 million Metric Tons (mMT) of food grains before pandemic strike. The safety buffer stock needed is less than 50 mMTs. Even if 10kgs of grain per person for 85% of the population is distributed for 4 months, it needs only 47m MT. This food grain stock unless distributed to the hungry poor, will have to be sold in the open market, for which there is not much demand, or left to rot. This is the inhuman face of this so called democratic system.

The other factors contributing to rising food insecurity is destruction of multi-crop fertile lands for setting up capital-intensive industries or Special Economic Zones. Secondly, proliferation of contract farming of cash crops is bound to hamper production of staple items like rice, wheat etc. Moreover, hoarding, black marketing and manipulation of prices of food items through widespread speculation capital market speculation in the form of forward trading etc. have already been jacking up food prices depriving the pauperized millions of buying their bare necessities to eke out a bare living. Unpardonable crimes like adulteration of food articles and artificial colouring of

Year	% of Food insecurity	Population (in crores)
2014-16	27.8	42.65
2017-19	31.6	48.86

vegetables with poisonous material by unscrupulous businessmen with a view to maximizing profit also from a different perspective imperils food security. Now, with passing of the new highly sinister farm bills, hoarding and black marketing, apart from other anti-peasant steps, would soar as whatever little legal restrictions had been in force are also now removed.

What more evidences are needed to state that this profit hungry capitalism does never care about the stomach hungry, poor people. It is clearly evident that as the hunger for profit grows among the capitalists, the hunger for food grows among the workers and poor in the same proportion. The so called 'Trickle down' theory which was hitherto so ready an excuse available with the bourgeois economists to justify capitalist oppression has also gone down the drain. To put it succinctly, the monopoly giants, corporate behemoths and agri-MNCs have been merrily trading in the hunger of the millions. It is time to realize this fact and raise our voice.

Hathras Rape and Murder

Inhuman and fascistic face of capitalist India glaringly exposed

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pollution and precipitating social divides based on caste, creed, religion or ethnicity, are also bent upon regimenting the administrative machinery in such a way as to become servile executors of their dictates trampling underfoot all democratic principles, conduct and functioning. At the same time, the ruling monopolists are working overtime to ensure that manipulative as well as suppressive apparatus takes a firm root in every walk of governance. Also they are out to destroy the very fulcrum of justice delivery system as injustice is what they are thriving on. So injustice and not justice is ruling the roost in dying capitalism.

Sexual violence and discrimination faced by women belonging to underprivileged oppressed poor segment like the *dalits* and the justification given by the protagonists of upper caste highhandedness who are bootlickers of the ruling monopolists and wedded to the task of serving bourgeois class interest for pelf and power, has always revolved around the doctrine of male dominance and caste supremacy which are now readymade fodders in the canon of exploitative capitalism.

Hathras brutality exposed this inhuman and fascistic face of capitalist rule

Ghastly Hathras incident has glaringly exposed the inhuman and fascistic face of capitalist India. If one looks at the sequential occurrences in the Hathras rape case, one can find that it underlined all the above-mentioned heinous socio-political aspects of the capitalist rule i.e. casteist bias, misogynistic mindset, abetting grisly crime on women and administrative autocracy.

The teenage *dalit* girl went to the field for gathering grass to feed the cows. The four men

belonging to the rural gentry who are reported to have harassed her earlier also, dragged her inside the millet field, gang-raped and tortured her mercilessly. Her mother who found her lying in a precarious condition in the part of the fields owned by the Thakur neighbours of upper caste identity, was quoted as saying, "My daughter was lying naked with her tongue protruding from her mouth. Her eyes were bulging out and she was bleeding from her mouth, her neck and there was blood near her eyes. I also noticed bleeding from her vagina. I quickly covered her with my saree and started screaming." Post the assault, she was taken to the nearby police station and from there to the hospital. At the hospital, despite the trauma, she clearly named her neighbours and their associates as her sexual assaulters. Over two weeks after the assault, she was transferred to Safdarjung Medical Hospital in Delhi where she died. In three videos in circulation the girl was clearly heard of being gang-raped. Though the autopsy report of the victim referred to "rape and strangulation", UP police claimed that a forensic report of her viscera has ruled out any rape or gang rape but attributed the cause of death to "injury to the cervical spine by indirect blunt trauma". Notably, the forensic investigation was done on samples collected days after the incident when presence of sperms (evidence of rape) cannot be detected. This clearly smacks of a grave conspiracy to hush up the truth. A forensic examination of the viscera and that too after 11 days of the gangrape was an irrelevant exercise and given the circumstances, cannot be a substantial evidence to be used to discount the possibility of rape. It showed how the police-highest district administration behaved in a most cruel and biased manner making a mockery of the responsibilities vested with them. It obviates to

say that this could not be possible without tacit approval of the incumbent government. This apprehension is further strengthened by the fact that within no time, the government through a note circulated by a hired Public Relations (PR) agency said that "*Police action (that is burning the body without consent of the family and in fact keeping the family in confinement—P Era) was prompt to prevent untoward incident: further intensive probe into the matter.*"

Though the BJP-led UP government, under pressure of people's rage and widespread condemnation, announced forming a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to look into the matter, the fact is that this was nothing but an eyewash. Before the SIT could initiate the procedure of probing, the government stated through the same note released by the PR agency that "*The reports also revealed the conspiracy to push the state into caste turmoil... 'SIT is sure to unveil evil design behind the whole incident (and) the vested interests who wanted to create an atmosphere of disharmony in Uttar Pradesh.*" Incredible indeed! The findings were foretold before commencement of the probe. Moreover, key CCTV footage, which is a crucial piece of evidence, is reported "lost" from the hospital where the victim girl was taken for treatment. The Hathras village is now shut behind bolted doors. The trauma of the victim is being trivialized. Could anything be more farcical than this? The inanity of whataboutery—the technique or practice of responding to an accusation or difficult question by making a counter-accusation or raising a different issue—of the BJP government has been nakedly exposed. Moreover, Hathras incident has revealed that there is a surrealist tone in the unceasing crimes

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In 3 videos, Hathras girl said she was raped, strangled when she resisted

At least thrice before she died, the 19-year-old Dalit girl from Hathras had said she had been raped. "Zabardasti" is the word that recurs in all three videos TOI is in possession of, in which she repeats the same harrowing account. This is how they are, she had said, and they had attempted this before.

In the first, a 48-second video shot on September 14, she is lying on the floor outside the Chandpa police station, flies hovering and ants crawling about her. "They strangled me," she says. A man asks why. She hesitates. Asked again, she answers, "I didn't let them force themselves on me." The man asks again, "Why did they strangle you?" She repeats, "Because I resisted." When asked if she has any other injuries, she sticks out her tongue, full of gashes.

The second video, 46-second-long, was shot at the district hospital in Hathras the same day. She was first taken there. Lying on a bed, she is asked by a journalist — who hurt her? "Sandeep," she answers. "Tongue. Strangled me," she manages to say, explaining where she was injured. She is asked again, why? "Koi baat nahin (Nothing). I had gone to gather fodder. He dragged me inside, tried to force himself on me. When I resisted, he strangled me," she says. The man asks her, "Kya koi ranjish chal rahi hai (is there a feud)?" Yes, she answers.

The third, part of the statement she had given to the police on September 22, was at Aligarh's Jawaharlal Nehru Medical College. In the 5-minute 17-second video, the girl goes over what had happened again. "I was raped. Ravi and Sandeep were in together ... They had tried to rape me a month ago, but I had run away," she says through an oxygen mask. "But that day, I was

raped. The two raped me, the rest ran away when they saw my mother approach. I was partially conscious by then." When she is asked if she has been pressured into saying she has been raped, she says, "Koi dabav nahin hai (there is no pressure). Woh log aise hi hain (that is how they are) ... He should not be spared, he can do this again. He threatens me, goli se uda doonga." Before her statement, the video begins with her mother's narrative. "She was lying in the field, her salwar pulled down, her tongue cut. There were five people. I saw only three. I was in the field, a little further away. She was out of my sight," she says. When asked if she saw her daughter dragged away, she answers, "When I could not see her around, I started looking. Then, three of them I saw. There was Sandeep. He's the one who strangled her ... There was Ravi and another guy."

A senior police officer said the videos, which surfaced later, are now part of the CBI investigation. "All angles are being looked into. The first FIR was registered on the basis of a written complaint ... After the girl's detailed statement on September 22, rape charges were added and the other three accused arrested," the officer added. According to the police, on September 14, she was brought to the Chandpa police station at 10.30am, from where she was taken to the district hospital at Hathras and finally admitted to the Aligarh hospital at 2pm.

There's a fourth video. Of the crime spot, where the girl was allegedly raped and left in a near-dead state. Part of the millet crop is flattened. Just ahead, a heap of fodder lies on a sack, as if ready to be carried back home. A sickle lies next to it, and a blue slipper abandoned. (Times of India 13-10-20)

Hathras Rape and Murder

Only intensification of class struggle based on higher proletarian ideology can abolish capitalist exploitation

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against women as in their cruelty. The cruelty is exacerbated when misogyny is crossed with casteist bias and ruling class dominance.

Shameless conduct of the BJP leaders

What was more revealing was that the BJP leaders instead of condemning the crime took the side of the accused and even did not hesitate to indulge in character assassination of the victim. Ranjeet Bahadur Srivastava, BJP MP from Barabanki, was heard saying in a video which went viral on social media that *"The victim must have called the boy to the field because they were having an affair. This news is already out on social media and news channels. She must have gotten caught...Such girls are found dead in only some places. They will be found dead in sugarcane, corn and millet fields or in bushes, gutters or forests. Why are they never found dead in paddy or wheat fields?"*... *"I can say with guarantee these boys are innocent"*. Surendra Singh, BJP MP from Balia, UP, has declared that incidents of rape would end if parents instilled 'sanskar' (traditional morality) in their daughters. Such incidents (like Hathras) would not stop through 'shashan' (governance), but only when mothers and fathers teach 'sanskar' and good modest behaviour to their young daughters. *"Governance doesn't matter, women must be reformed"*, insisted Singh. That means, all aspersions are cast against the victim and her family, while the culprits are given a clean chit even before findings of formal enquiry. It reminds us that during the 'Nirbhaya' case, self-appointed moral policemen loudly questioned why she was travelling with her boyfriend at night which did not uphold 'sanskar'? It goes without saying that woman-hating patriarchs use the word 'sanskar' as a perverse, hypocritical and motivated term to terrorise women and keep them in line as they never refer to 'sanskar' to castigate male criminal behaviour. Such examples of nurturing casteist and misogynistic mindset by the RSS-BJP leaders are galore. Even philosophically, the so called "sanatan Hindu dharma" (eternal Hindu religion) they espouse for is premised on "Manusmriti" which upholds Brahminical supremacy and designates corporal punishments for the lower castes. Allegiance of the RSS-BJP towards *Manusmriti* is further evident from the fact that, when the constitution of India was being finalised, the RSS complained: *"To this day his laws as enunciated in the Manusmriti excite the admiration of the world and elicit spontaneous obedience and conformity. But to our constitutional pundits that means nothing"*. Endorsing the same view, M S Golwalkar, the RSS ideologue, held that *"the first and greatest law giver of the world - Manu, laid down in his code, directing all the peoples of the world to come to learn their duties at the holy feet of the "Eldest-born" Brahmans of this land."* He not only called *Manu* the supreme law giver but has also referred to him at various places to cite the supremacy of *the Brahmans*. The conspicuous

silence of both prime minister and home minister over such a brutal and criminal act is also worth taking cognizance of.

Casteism as a tool of reaping electoral mileage

But then why the RSS-BJP leaders who are apologists of *Manusmriti* try to outreach the *dalit* community in an apparent bid to redraw its image among them? Why did Yogi Adityanath and other BJP leaders have been showcasing in the media their orchestrated visits to *dalit* residences and sharing food with them? Because electoral exigency compels them to do so to woo *dalit* votes and create, what is known as, '*dalit* vote bank'. Same is the case with other bourgeois parties. Even the ruling class creates and nurtures various casteist outfits so that the oppressed and deprived communities including the *dalits* designated as lower caste by the establishment, in absence of due political consciousness, mistake those casteist outfits and casteist leaders as their representatives or messiahs and rally behind them. Riding on this casteist feeling, these caste-based parties derive electoral advantage and remain afloat in the corridor of power. That pelf and power only matters for such casteist parties are attested by the fact that at opportune moments, they do not hesitate to join hands with the *Manuwadi* political parties to share power and occupy ministerial chairs. Even after such a grim tragedy in Hathras, the well-known UP-centric casteist outfits have been eerily silent save and except some benign tweets and one or two token protests.

No doubt some members of the underprivileged marginalized communities are able to brave all odds and proving their worth in various fields through their own accomplishments. They are not stooges of the ruling class but successful because of their own efforts, merit, perseverance and persistence. But simultaneously there is another feature which is worth taking note of. In order to hoodwink the underprivileged segments, the ruling monopolists pick up a tiny group of affluent 'elites' from among the communities who enjoy all privileges and clout as part of the handful of dominating rich in the society. Soon they become an appendage to ruling capitalism, being totally indifferent to and unconcerned about the rapid degeneration of the life and livelihood of the populace having lower caste identity. When the yawning gap between the haves and have-nots in decadent moribund capitalism is making social stratification more pronounced and vivid, the ruling monopolists, thus, in a crafty move, carves out a privileged group from the most oppressed section of the masses to be pliable to its class interest and project them as proof of prosperity (!) of the *dalit* and other underprivileged communities occupying lower rungs in so called caste hierarchy.

Similarly, the ruling class also handpicks some aspirant persons from among such communities and then pitchforks them to coveted positions in governance or administration to prove so called empowerment of the backward disadvantaged

populace. For example, to pretend its concern for *dalit* cause and outsmart its political rivals, the ruling BJP has selected a person stated to be from a *dalit* community as the President of India. But has that lessened the plight, penury and misery of the *dalits* and other marginalized pauperized communities? Has anyone seen the President uttering a single word against the horrid Hathras rape and murder or any similar incident? If he has not, then is he discharging his constitutional responsibilities to the people or is preferring to remain in good book of the ruling BJP, trusted political representative of the ruling monopolists, to hold on to the chair? For such self-proclaimed *dalit* or backward segment leaders, power is what matters most. Nothing else not even worst kind of repression and oppression on the *dalits* and other toiling backward sections weigh on them.

What is to be done

The suffering toiling masses particularly the *dalit* brethren and members of marginalized penury-stricken communities need to realize one truth in right earnest. All the evils of socio-cultural assaults, discrimination, negligence, denial of due honour as well as incidents of casteist oppression are, in fact, variants of ruthless class exploitation in the capitalist system we are having. This worn-out system is breeding corruption, nepotism, growing inequality, mutual hatred, fanaticism, injustice and cultural degradation. Following the inexorable course of history, capitalism has long become obsolete and is fighting to the last for bare survival. The question of abolishing all oppression and exploitation including caste oppression shattering life is, therefore, inseparably linked with the question of overthrowing capitalism from power. The battle is between the few super-rich exploitative capitalist owners of the means of production and the millions of oppressed workers, peasants and all other sections of toiling people irrespective of caste, creed, religion, region, ethnicity or language. Far from being a caste feud, it is a conscious class struggle led by the vanguard detachment of the proletarians which can show the light beyond the tunnel.

So, unless the crusade against growing crime on women, is linked with the crystallizing revolutionary struggle to dethrone capitalism, the desired result can never come by. Even the cry for women's liberation from the stranglehold of patriarchy can be channelized along the right track, only if the struggle for the desired emancipation develops as conducive to anti-capitalist revolutionary movement. No bourgeois party, irrespective of hues, who only wanders around the rendezvous of power and promises permanent reprieve within the precincts of bourgeois parliamentarism, does anything but defrauding the toiling masses, distracting them from the correct path, embroiling them in mutual distrust and even fratricidal feuds and thereby using them as pawns to make lucrative political career through farce of election. Sole objective of

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Joseph Stiglitz, Nobel laureate economist, on Indian situation

Speaking at a web conference hosted by business chamber FICCI, Joseph Stiglitz, the outspoken Nobel laureate economist suggested that Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his party must get rid of the politics of division as “the source of economic prosperity of the last 250 years is one of tolerance”.

“I will start by trying to create an inclusive society. Politics of division is an antithesis of what needs to be done. Modi has tried to divide your country, Moslems against Hindus, and that is going to undermine your society and economy no matter what else happens. This fundamental division will weaken India forever.” “That (religious divide) is the fundamental division that you have to get rid of.” “So if I were to say where to begin, I would say the politics of division, get rid of that,” he said when asked what India should do to prosper in a post- pandemic world.

According to Stiglitz, these “authoritarian regimes” failed (at controlling the pandemic) as they’ve usually tried to divide societies or shift the blame on another person; slightly than accepting faults. For occasion, within the US, President Donald Trump blamed China for the unfold of the virus; withdrew funding to WHO and so on. In India, PM Narendra Modi’s regime “has done the same” by pitching one faith in opposition to one other.

Bracketing India with Brazil and the United States for its “utter failure” to deal with Covid-19, Stiglitz described “India as a poster child of what not to do”, saying the lockdown failed to have any impact and the migrant labour crisis precipitated the contagion. “It (India) picked up one

idea that is important. Lockdown. Did not think about what it means in a poor country. How are people going to live, large number of people moving across the country. One could not have imagined anything worse for spreading the disease,” he said.

When asked what his advice would be to the India government, which has been a little circumspect in spending money to kick-start the economy because of fiscal concerns,

Stiglitz, the author of several celebrated books, including “Globalisation and its Discontent”, said the first option should be to print money as there is a compelling case to spend money. “If we don’t, there will be long term damage. Companies that go bankrupt don’t go un-bankrupt in two years’ time,” he said.

“The first priority is to help the vulnerable but also contain the disease. Spending the money in a way that prevents contagion and also helps people gives double dividends. Let me say very clearly, you cannot control the economic aftermath if you cannot control the pandemic... Raise taxes on the very rich — you have a lot of billionaires in India — and spend the money well, it can stimulate the economy,” he argued.

Stiglitz additionally identified that within the present international order “no country can be fully self-reliant” with issues like uncooked supplies or expertise being imported. Such a pitch – in the direction of full self-reliance – is out of contact with the 21st century and is one thing one would count on from authoritarian regimes. (newnews dated 05-0-20 and The Telegraph 06-10-20)

Hathras Rape and Murder

How long will cries of hapless victims rent the air?

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such parties is to protect capitalism, divert people’s attention from the truth, exhaust people’s just movement into the blind alley of reformism-legalism and dissuade them from the imperative task of intensifying revolutionary movement of the oppressed myriads. These vile attempts must be thwarted. Cultural oppression and onslaughts on *dalits* and other poor marginalized communities, felonious assaults on women, lynching or any such crime needs to be foiled with the powerful instrument of people’s conscious struggle. Wherever an incident of rape, gangrape or crime on women would take place, people need to come forward, build up struggle committees and force the government-administration to take prompt effective action to ensure delivery of due justice. This alone can counter the heinous attempts by the bourgeois parties like the ruling BJP to silence any protest that goes against their grain. The milieu of such powerful organized democratic movements under correct revolutionary leadership would provide the right ambience to foster an alternative healthy cultural movement and conduct fierce ideological struggle against all shades of perverted bourgeois culture and debased thoughts like casteism and misogyny, while bringing to the fore the new, higher values of life. This alone can build up an effective bulwark against the growing rape and violence against women and casteist oppression. At the same time, this surge of conscious people’s movement alone would build up pressure on the government and government parties to pay heed to people’s voice and do the needful. This is the only way to free the society from the scourge of such savage acts.

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Low Conviction Rates Across the Country — A Sordid State of Affairs

Nothing could be more tragic and horrifying than the recent gang rape and murder of a 19 year old girl in UP. This incident cannot but remind us of the pathetic state of affairs prevailing in the justice delivery system in solving the social menace. Unfortunately, we are in the midst of a situation where a large number of such crimes go unreported. It is no hidden secret that apart from pressures and threats issued against the victim and her family by the accused using police and administration social taboo of being castigated in society acts as a deterrent against reporting cases. Be that as it may what is more shocking is the abysmally low conviction rate in the country. According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) figures, the conviction rates in rape cases in the country is 27.2 percent. Bihar is among the worst with lowest conviction rate. But even in states like Kerala that stands among the highest in conviction rates, a huge number of convicted are allowed to escape punishment. The low rate of conviction indicates that the perpetrators of rape and murder enjoy high degree of impunity. More fast tract courts, establishment of more forensic laboratories across the country is no doubt required to enhance speedy trials. But in order to ensure justice and bringing to book all culprits, political will and a pro-people approach is required. But none of the governments, far less the present dispensations at the centre and states, including the current UP regime can be depended upon. It reveals that the entire system is increasingly becoming rotten against which people must take up cudgels and raise their strong voice of sustained united powerful protest.

Protest rallies in Kolkata on 15 October against Privatization spree by Citizens’ Forum



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