

COMMENT

## Political Mainstream

TO WHOM THE MAINSTREAM politics belongs? The declared assets of the members of the Indian Parliament are more than 30 million rupees on the average. Everybody understands that the undeclared assets are much more than that. Yet these members are elected representatives of the people. If the assets of those who lost elections are taken into account, they will not probably be much behind those who won. Again, the money in the Swiss Bank may be a topic for discussion. There are those who hypocritically tried to dismiss the reports suggesting that investors have little interest in depositing their money in Swiss banks. These fools do not want to understand that the depositors are not mainly industrialists, but politicians who are looting public money. Again, the revelations about the Bhopal tragedy have shown that not only the mainstream politician, but a large section of the judiciary also prefers to remain in league with multinationals in the work of looting the country and people. And Prime Minister prefers to keep silent, and some others are trying to defend Rajiv Gandhi. Mr Arjun Singh on his part is trying to wash off his hands by shifting the blame on Narashima Rao who is long dead.

Thus one facet of mainstream politics is revealed. The IPL episode and the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee have brought out startling facts about massive tax concessions to the corporate lobby as well as non-corporate groups and private individuals connected with the IPL. There is not much of an outcry in the Indian Parliament for ostensible reasons. A large number of members are connected with these interests in various ways.

The outlay of Rs 35000 crores on the development of infrastructure on the occasion of the Commonwealth Games, and reports of mind-boggling corruption have become national news, but the hullabaloo is not likely to last long. By any reasonable estimate about 70 to 80 percent of the population are living below the poverty line, while basic health facilities are not available to many. Local level hospitals and health centres are unable to provide medicine for even small diseases to patients. But the cities have world class costly hospitals, luxurious hotels and resorts and so on and so forth. The number of billionaires has multiplied over the years. And so has the incidence of the plunder of national wealth by greedy politicians and corporate sector.

One may not approve of the mode of action of the CPI (Maoist), and much of it is deplorable. But the reasons for revolt continue to remain. The revolt too continues, despite the repressive policy of the state. Jharkhand is one example. When Arjun Munda of the BJP was the Chief Minister, he signed MoUs for handing over about two lakh hectares of land to big companies. But the surge of popular resistance has everywhere prevented the acquisition of land. This is only one instance. The government, unable to crush popular resistance, is now trying to intensify operations by suggesting that the Maoists are the greatest danger to the nation's internal security. Under the garb of such talks, the government will try to crush popular resistance, because Mr Singh and his followers, the champions of 'mainstream politics' can ill-afford to throw off the yoke of the multinationals, the IMF and the World Bank. □□□