

# frontier

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## *Unipolar, Bipolar or Multipolar?*

**T**HE UKRAINE WAR IS ACCELERATING INTERNATIONAL BIPOLARITY, if not Multipolarity despite initial Atlantic unity. America—or more precisely, a cartel composed largely of G-7 states—no longer exercises global hegemony that it did just two or three decades ago. Other states are now more willing and able to shape new order in line with their preferences. A shift away from unipolarity toward multipolarity or bipolarity is clearly visible. The end of cold war gave rise to US unipolarity. But things are changing very fast. There are now more poles of power—US, China, European Union and Russia are vying to establish their own mutually exclusive orders. No doubt China's abnormal rise is real, making the world less Unipolar today. But many think the decline of America is 'oversold'. Notwithstanding their humiliating defeat in Afghanistan it is not yet a 'paper tiger'. America continues to surpass all other nations, including China and Russia, in military and economic metrics, in part because of its centuries-long exploitation of people of colour domestically and abroad.

Bipolarity describes a condition with first-tier great powers as it was during the cold war. International politics is multipolar when there are three or more great powers. For a great power both economic and military might matter.

Whether western big powers like it or not China is much closer to economic parity with the United States than military parity. And in today's neo-colonial set-up economic power is more important in exercising authority globally. In the ultimate analysis money talks subtly or loudly, depending on the situation. Dollar mattered in two world wars and it matters in the on-going war in Ukraine. If Kyiv is still in a position of offensive it is because of American dollars.

For one thing China is emerging as a contender in multi-polar world but it will be quite some time before it could overtake the US economy. US advantages in technology and strong world-wide network of alliances reinforce its military advantages, for now. The world is transforming from unipolarity to a loose bipolarity at the moment but the situation is not yet comparable to cold war stage. In truth the future is more likely to be multipolar than bipolar.

America is rapidly losing both the will and the capacity to play the unchallenged hegemonic role. Even in its traditional backyard—Latin America—it is being challenged frequently by left-wing parliamentary

political tendencies. With the Ukraine war escalating further Russia is getting weak with every passing day while China stands to gain enormously despite its limited covert support to Moscow's war exercise. Russia is exhausting its economic and military resources very quickly. Ukraine is a proxy; in reality Russia is now essentially at war with America and NATO. China remains unaffected. Beijing is unlikely to jeopardise its trade relations with the West and America by supporting Russia beyond tokenism; their 'unlimited friendship' has its limits. If anything the Chinese 'communists'

are nationalist to the core, they understand only their national interests even when proletarian internationalism was a buzz word in international communist movement. In the yester years they betrayed a number of communist parties in Asia and elsewhere saying goodbye to communist internationalism. And today capitalist China has no obligation to show even semblance of internationalism. China is still a very long way from being a unipole. It can at best be a member of multipolar world equally dominated by Russia and some other emerging regional economies. In today's

globalised economy it is becoming increasingly difficult for any state to accumulate the relative advantage needed for superpower status. Maybe, the world order will soon have no superpower; it will be a mixed scenario of some great powers and a host of regional powers. This reality is being further strengthened by the possession of nuclear weapons by some poor countries.

The era of global unipolarity where the United States is unrivalled and unchallenged across different policy domains is virtually over. Afghanistan and Iraq wars were the beginning of the end. China is clearly filling the void.

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## COMMENT

### Summer Ordeal

LAST YEAR INDIA WITNESSED 280 heat-waves across 16 states—the highest number the country has seen in 12 years. As things are this year the situation won't be any better. Indications are that it may be worse this year. According to a May 2022 report by an international group of scientists the likelihood of similar heat waves occurring in India has increased by 30 times since the pre-industrial era. Heat-waves are likely to become more frequent and hotter. A recent study by the Indian Meteorological Department noted that among natural hazards, after floods and tropical cyclones, heat-waves had killed the most number of people in India. Last year cold-wave too was severe and it was fatal in north India, killing many people.

How workers in unorganised sector are exposed to extreme weather conditions, having no legal protection; is being ignored by the persons in power even in the 21st century. Brick kiln workers are most vulnerable to heat conditions because they virtually toil in hell-fires. Incidentally brick kilns across the country con-

sume one third of total coal produced by the government-owned coal companies. It doesn't require much elaboration to gauge how much green house gas emissions they are causing. "Occupational Heat Exposure"—a technical term that includes factors such as outside temperature and metabolic heat from exertion—in the brick kilns in summer months sometimes exceeded the international standard limits for safe work. But who bothers about work-place safety in India and that too in informal sector? Nobody. Some labour laws are there but they are not for implementation. For one thing India is the second largest brick producer in the world. Roughly 144,000 brick kilns are said to be operating officially in the country, employing mostly migrant workers who are actually bonded labourers without being called so. Then nobody knows how many illegal kilns are working defying statutory rules. A conservative estimate says there are about 23 million migrant workers in India's brick kilns. They are in debt bondage and the whole family members

including women and children are to toil for the whole season. Workers take an advance that they have to pay off. As per provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act of 1976, any arrangement in which a worker renders labour in consideration of an advance is a form of bonded labour. So brick kilns workers are basically bonded labourers. They mainly come from the marginalised sections of the society—Dalits, Adivasis and OBC category people. This summer they are facing tremendous hardships because of steady rise of mercury.

Meanwhile, alarming reports are emanating from different sources. The next five years are almost sweltering, the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO) warned recently. "The planet is already running a fever". The average temperature for the entire five-year period will be hotter than previous five years. The last eight years have been the hottest on the books, the WMO reported in January. In the last few years, people almost in every corner of the globe witnessed jaw-dropping damage that extreme temperatures can bring. Climate Change has already raised baseline temperatures for the planet earth. Now, a weather

pattern known as El Nino is going to make things even hotter when it develops later this year. And this will have far-reaching repercussions for health, food security, water management and the environment. Ecological disaster can hardly be avoided.

1.5 degrees Celsius of warming is a big issue widely debated throughout the world for quite some time. The Paris Climate Agreement strives to keep the world from warming beyond

that threshold. WMO is sounding alarm but nobody is listening. For the industrially advanced countries it is business as usual. China—in truth China is an industrially advanced country now—suffered its most severe heat-wave last year. Another record smashing heat-wave in July last year sent temperatures in notoriously cool and cloudy UK soaring above 40 degrees Celsius for the first time—a direct effect of climate change. □□□

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#### NOTE

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## Peaceful Revolution

*Bharat Dogra writes:*

**A** REVOLUTION INVOLVES extensive and systemic changes, a significant break with the past. It is needed when the present system, its dominant thinking and ways of functioning, become incompatible with the welfare of people. It is most urgently needed when the present system is not just incompatible with the welfare of people, but rather it is seen to be becoming more and more incompatible with the basic safety and indeed the very survival of human beings as well as other forms of life.

In history most of the earlier situations requiring revolution have been of the first kind—these arose out of conditions in which the existing system had become incompatible with human welfare. The second type of conditions requiring revolution have been created for the first time in human history (speaking only about human-made changes and aspects within the realm of humanity's actions) now in the 21st century. Hence the need for revolution now is more than ever before in human history because, as stated earlier, the existing systems have become incompatible with the safety and survival of humanity, particularly the coming generations, as well as those other

forms of life. While this is the predominant need for revolution today, there are other reasons as well which relate to the continuing deprivation, poverty and forced indignity of a very large section of humanity, in turn rooted in inequality and injustice at various levels. Yet another reason is the increasing failure of governance systems to respond to real needs, and the rollback or decline of democracy in many, perhaps most parts of world.

What will the world revolution involve?

Firstly, as the survival crisis has been created partially by about a dozen serious environmental problems led by climate change and these are threatening to spiral out of control if not checked in the near future, a revolution should be able to secure adequate steps for resolving these environmental problems including climate change.

Secondly, as the survival crisis is also caused to a significant extent by the accumulation of weapons of mass destruction, the revolution should be able to quickly move towards the conditions for achieving the elimination of weapons of mass destruction.

Thirdly, these two action plans needed for resolving the survival crisis should be achieved within a frame-

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work of peace, justice and democracy in such a way that the overall objectives of peace, equality, justice and democracy are also advanced, providing much relief to people, and bringing future pathways of the journey of humanity much closer to justice, peace, democracy and environment protection.

Fourthly, important changes in governance systems, including at world level, should be achieved so that these can be brought closer to real needs. Last but not the least, important changes in prevailing value systems need to be achieved so that people's thinking in general is most often in tune with peace, justice, environment protection and justice.

If world revolution achieves these changes to a significant extent, then the world can shift from a path of many-sided threats, stresses and distress to a new path of safety, significantly reduced distress, more happiness based on highly creative social pursuits for now and for future generations, as well as better well-being of other forms of life.

How can such a world revolution

be brought? One important step forward is to spread more and more awareness of the need for such systemic change which necessarily has to bring together several different concerns and integrate them. In the process people also need to get rid of several old concepts which are too narrow for present needs. In particular there should be wide realisation that revolutionary work should be peaceful, non-violent and transparent, should be very open in terms of

the involvement of a very large number of concerned people, giving them the space to be able to contribute within their limits, although at the same time those who want to be involved full-time should be encouraged and facilitated in various ways.

The existing movements of peace, justice, environment protection, democracy and other related concerns, movements of youth and women should come closer to each other and should come together for vari-

ous tasks, they should integrate their concerns in such a way that the objectives of revolutionary change are best achieved, overcoming narrow differences. In this way a comprehensive programme of changes needed at local, national and international levels can emerge.

Revolution will not come with a bang heard on any single day. It will be achieved over a period of time with sustained, coordinated, large-scale efforts. □□□

#### DISHONOURING MARTYRS

## New Parliament Complex and Savarkar

*Shamsul Islam*

INDIAN PRIME MINISTER MODI is set to inaugurate new complex of Indian Parliament on May 28 (2023) which is also the 140th birth anniversary of Vinayak Damodar Savarkar who is described as 'great son of India' and 'Veer' [gallant/fearless] by the RSS-BJP lot. Thus the new Parliament built under the direct supervision of PM Modi and his chosen few will be dedicated to Savarkar. It is a horrendous and shameful decision in many respects. Dedication to Savarkar will mean rejection of the whole idea of an egalitarian, democratic and secular India which came into being on August 15, 1947. Honouring of Savarkar would also mean dishonouring of the martyrs and participants of the Indian freedom struggle.

Savarkar, like the RSS, abhorred every symbol of the Indian people's united struggle against the British rule. In a circular issued on September 22, 1941 to be followed by the Hindu Mahasabha cadres, he declared,

"So far as the flag question is concerned, the Hindus know no flag representing Hindudom as a whole than the 'Kundalini Kripianankit' Mahasabha flag

with the 'Om and the Swastik' the most ancient symbols of the Hindu race and policy coming down from age to age and honoured throughout Hindusthan... Therefore, any place or function where this Pan-Hindu flag is not honoured should be boycotted by the Hindu sanghatanists at any rate...The Charkha-Flag [before the present national flag spinning-wheel used to be at the centre of the Tricolour] in particular may very well represent a Khadi-Bhandar, but the Charkha can never symbolize and represent the spirit of the proud and ancient nation like the Hindus."

[Bhide, A. S. (ed.), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda: Extracts from the President's Diary of his Propagandist Tours Interviews from December 1937 to October 1941, na, Bombay, 1940, p. 470-73.]

Muslim league under MA Jinnah demanded Pakistan in March 1940. Long before it Savarkar had laid down his two-nation theory. Savarkar took over the leadership of Hindu Mahasabha [HM] in 1937. While addressing the 19th Session of Hindu

Mahasabha at Ahmedabad in the same year stated:

"As it is, there are two antagonistic nations living side by side in India, several infantile politicians commit the serious mistake in supposing that India is already welded into a harmonious nation, or that it could be welded thus for the mere wish to do so...India cannot be assumed today to be a Unitarian and homogenous nation, but on the contrary there are two nations in the main: the Hindus and the Moslems, in India."

[Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan (Collected works of Savarkar in English), Hindu Mahasabha, Pune, 1963, p. 296.]

This shameless collusion between Savarkar and Jinnah was described by Dr B R Ambedkar in the following words:

"Strange as it may appear, Mr Savarkar and Mr Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the one nation versus two nations issue are in complete agreement about it. Both not only agree, but insist that there are two nations in India-one the Muslim nation and the other Hindu nation."

[Ambedkar, BR, Pakistan or the Partition of India, Government of Maharashtra, Bombay, (reprint of 1940 edition), p. 142.]



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The Quit India Movement began on August 9, 1942 as per Gandhi's call to 'Do or Die' in order to expel the British from India. The British rulers swiftly responded with mass detentions on August 8th itself. Over 100,000 arrests were made which included the total top leadership of Congress including Gandhi, mass fines were levied and demonstrators were subjected to public flogging. Hundreds of civilians were killed in state sponsored violence, many shot by the police and army. Congress was banned. During these times of repression Savarkar announced full support to the British rulers in line with the Muslim League.

Addressing the 24th session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Kanpur in 1942, Savarkar outlined the strategy of the Hindu Mahasabha of co-operating with the rulers in the following words:

"The Hindu Mahasabha holds that the leading principle of all practical politics is the policy of Responsive Co-operation [with the British]." He called upon HM councillors, ministers, legislators and conducting any municipal or any public bodies to offer "Responsive Co-operation which covers the whole gamut of patriotic activities from unconditional co-operation right up to active and even armed resistance..."

[V D Savarkar, Hindu Rashtra Darshan, vol. 6, Maharashtra Prantik Hindusabha, Poona, 1963, p. 112.]

Hindu Mahasabha and Jinnah led Muslim League joined hands in running coalition governments in Bengal and Sind (and later in NWFP) in 1942. Defending this collusion between HM and ML against Congress Savarkar stated,

"In practical politics also the Mahasabha knows that we must advance through reasonable compromises. Witness the fact that only recently in Sind, the Sind-

Hindu-Sabha on invitation had taken the responsibility of joining hands with the League itself in running coalition Government. The case of Bengal is well known. Wild Leaguers whom even the Congress with all its submissiveness could not placate grew quite reasonably compromising and socialable [sic] as soon as they came in contact with the Hindu Mahasabha and the Coalition Government, under the premiership of Mr Fazlul Huq and the able lead of our esteemed Mahasabha leader Dr Syama Prasad Mookerji, functioned successfully for a year or so to the benefit of both the communities."

[Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan (Collected works of Savarkar in English), vol. 6, Hindu Mahasabha, Pune, 1963, pp. 479-80.]

It is to be noted that Mookerji was deputy premier and held the portfolio of suppressing Quit India Movement in Bengal.

When Netaji Subhash Chander Bose was planning to liberate India militarily, Savarkar offered full military co-operation to the British masters. Addressing 23rd session of Hindu Mahasabha at Bhagalpur in 1941, he declared:

"Our best national interests demands that so far as India's defence is concerned, Hindudom must ally unhesitatingly, in a spirit of responsive co-operation with the war effort of the Indian government in so far as it is consistent with the Hindu interests, by joining the Army, Navy and the Aerial forces in as large a number as possible and by securing an entry into all ordnance, ammunition and war craft factories... Again it must be noted that Japan's entry into the war has exposed us directly and im-

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mediately to the attack by Britain's enemies... Hindu Mahasabhait must, therefore, rouse Hindus especially in the provinces of Bengal and Assam as effectively as possible to enter the military forces of all arms without losing a single minute."

[Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan (Collected works of Savarkar in English), vol. 6, Hindu Mahasabha, Pune, 1963, p. 460.]

According to HM documents Savarkar was able to inspire one lakh Hindus to join the ranks of the British armed forces.

Savarkar submitted minimum 5 mercy petitions [MP] in 1911, 1913, 1914, 1918 and 1920. Savarkarites claim that these were submitted not as an act of cowardice but "as an ardent follower of Shivaji, Savarkar wanted to die in action. Finding this the only way, he wrote six letters to the British pleading for his release". A perusal of the two available mercy petitions will prove that there cannot be a lie worse than the claim that Savarkar's MP petitions were in league with the tricks which Shivaji used to hoodwink the Mughal rulers successfully. The mercy petition dated 14th November, 1913 ended with the following words:

"[Therefore] if the government in their manifold beneficence and mercy release me, I for one cannot but be the staunchest advocate of constitutional progress and loyalty to the English government which is the foremost condition of that progress. ...Moreover my conversion to the constitutional line would bring back all those misled young men in India and abroad who were once looking up to me as their guide. I am ready to serve the Government in any capacity they like, for as my conversion is conscientious so I hope my future

conduct would be. By keeping me in jail nothing can be got in comparison to what would be otherwise. The Mighty alone can afford to be merciful and therefore where else can the prodigal son return but to the parental doors of the Government?"

The petition dated 30th March 1920 from this prodigal son of the British masters ended with the following words:

"The brilliant prospects of my early life all but too soon blighted, have constituted so painful a source of regret to me that a release would be a new birth and would touch my heart, sensitive and submissive, to kindness so deeply as to render me personally attached and politically useful in future. For often magnanimity wins even where might fails against."

[Available with the National Archives, Delhi.]

There was nothing wrong on the part of the CJ detainees in writing mercy petitions to the British. It was an important legal right available to the prisoners. Apart from Savarkar, Barin, HK Kanjilal, and Nand Gopal too submitted petitions. However, these were only Savarkar and Barin who sought forgiveness for their revolutionary past. Kanjilal and Nand Gopal did not demand any personal favour but status of political prisoners.

Savarkar was incarcerated at Andamans on July 4, 1911 for two life terms [50 years]. On May 2, 1921 [after NINE years TEN months] he was transferred along with his elder brother, Babarao, to the mainland. He was finally released conditionally on January 6, 1924 [total imprisonment TWELVE years SIX months] from Yeravda Jail.

Savarkar is glorified as a rationalist and crusader against Untouchability. The reality is otherwise. While delivering presidential address to the

22nd session of Hindu Mahasabha at Madura he declared Manu to be the lawgiver for Hindus and emphasised that once we "re-learn the manly lessons" which Manu taught "our Hindu nation shall prove again as unconquerable and conquering a race as we proved once". [Samagra Savarkar Wangmaya: Hindu Rashtra Darshan (Collected works of Savarkar in English), vol. 6, Hindu Mahasabha, Pune, 1963, p. 426.]

He declared Manusmriti to be "that scripture which is most worship-able after Vedas for our Hindu Nation ... Today Manusmriti is Hindu law. That is fundamental". [Savarkar V D, 'Women in Manusmriti' in Savarkar Samagr (collection of writings of Savarkar in Hindi), vil. 4, Prabhat, Delhi, p. 415.]

So far his crusade for Untouchables entry into Hindu temples was concerned he gave undertaking to Brahmins that "the Hindu Maha Sabha shall never force any legislations regarding the entry of untouchables in the ancient temples or compel by law any sacred ancient and moral usage or custom prevailing in those temples. In general the Mahasabha will not back up any Legislation to thrust the reforming views on our Sanatani brothers so far as personal law is concerned".

[Bhide, A. S. (ed.), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda: Extracts from the President's Diary of his Propagandist Tours Interviews from December 1937 to October 1941, na, Bombay, 1940, p. 425.]

Savarkar even preached that it was legitimate to have the King of Nepal as 'Free Hindusthan's Future Emperor' if the British plan to leave India. His advice to the British rulers was very clear:

"If an academical [sic] probability is at all to be indulged in of all factors that count today, His

Majesty the King of Nepal, the scion of the Shisodias [sic], alone has the best chance of winning the Imperial crown of India. Strange as it may seem, the English know it better than we Hindus do... It is not impossible that Nepal may even be called upon to control the destiny of India itself. Even Britain will feel it more graceful that the Sceptre [sic] of Indian Empire, if it ever slips out of her grip, should be handed over to an equal and independent ally of Britain like His Majesty the King of Nepal than to one who is but a vassal and a vanquished potentate of Britain like the Nizam." [Italics as in the original]

[Bhide, AS, (ed.), Vinayak Damodar Savarkar's Whirlwind Propaganda:

Extracts from the President's Diary of his Propagandist Tours Interviews from December 1937 to October 1941, na, Bombay, 1940, pp. 256-57.]

Savarkar was a great defender of molestation and rape as a political tool against the women of adversaries. In his important work of Hindu history, *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*, originally written in Marathi and translated in English in 1971 he included a chapter titled 'Perverted Conception of Virtues' (chapter VIII). He criticised Shivaji and Chimaji Appa for restoring back to the families the women of defeated Muslim and Portuguese governors. Since Shivaji did not allow molestation of captured women Savarkar complained:

"Did not the plaintive screams and pitiful lamentations of the millions

of molested Hindu women, which reverberated throughout the length and breadth of the country, reach the ears of Shivaji Maharaj and Chimaji Appa?"

He went on to lament that "It was the suicidal Hindu idea of chivalry to women which saved the Muslim women (simply because they were women) from the heavy punishments of committing indescribable sins and crimes against the Hindu women. Their womanhood became their shield quite sufficient to protect them".

['Perverted conception of virtues' in V D Savarkar (tr. By S T Godbole), *Six Glorious Epochs of Indian History*, Bal Savarkar India, Delhi, 1971, pp. 147-159.]

With these irrefutable facts about Savarkar, PM Modi honoured Savarkar on May 28. □□□

#### PROTECTING THE CULPRIT

## Why are top Wrestlers on the Streets?

*Suparna Sharma*

IT HAS BEEN NEARLY FOUR weeks since some of India's top wrestlers—Olympians and world champions—resumed living on a footpath in central Delhi to demand the removal and arrest of the president of the Wrestling Federation of India (WFI), Brij Bhushan Sharan Singh, for allegedly sexually harassing female athletes for more than a decade.

Seven female wrestlers, including a minor, have filed police complaints against him; accusing him of stalking, touching them with sexual intent, making sexual remarks and "outraging their modesty".

The wrestlers want a thorough probe by the police that, they have said, is only possible if Singh—who is serving his sixth term as a member of parliament from the governing Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and has been the WFI president since 2012—is arrested.

Singh has denied all the allegations and has refused to quit.

"If they can prove even one charge, if they have a video, if I have called anyone, if they have proof, I am ready to be hanged", he has said.

He has claimed that the protest is politically motivated and, without citing names, said that the wrestlers were being backed by an opposition politician and an industrialist.

The protests initially began on January 18, when about 30 top wrestlers—male and female—began a sit-in in Delhi against Singh after complaints by wrestlers of sexual harassment. They doggedly kept their protest apolitical, not allowing any politician to even sit with them.

Three days later, they called off their protest after being given assurances given by the sports minister, Anurag Thakur, that an Oversight Commission had been set up to

probe the allegations against the WFI chief. Thakur also said all WFI activities had been suspended and Singh had been asked to "step aside" until the probe was complete.

However, while the committee's findings were submitted to the sport ministry, they have not been released and the wrestlers returned to the streets on April 23.

On April 25, the sport ministry said the "major findings" of the committee were that the WFI lacked an internal complaints committee, which is mandatory by law. The ministry did not address allegations against Singh and he has since resumed presiding over national wrestling tournaments.

The same day, the wrestlers petitioned the Supreme Court to force the authorities to register a First Information Report, which forms the basis of investigation. The police registered two FIRs three days later.

Purna Singh, a lawyer who handles cases of sexual assault of minors, said the process laid down by law is clear and stringent.

“Immediate registration of FIR, arrest of the accused in cases of minors, followed by interrogation and filing of charge sheet. What the wrestlers are demanding is their right.”

Phogat, who won her third consecutive Commonwealth Games gold medal in 2022, has been leading the sit-in of about 20 to 25 people along with Tokyo Olympic bronze medallist Bajrang Punia and Rio Olympic bronze medallist Sakshi Malik—at great risk to their careers.

All the protesting wrestlers have opted out of ranking series and tournaments and some have threatened to return their medals awarded by the state.

Phogat said protesters have been manhandled by the police—including on May 4, when police tried to physically stop them from bringing in folding cots to sleep on because the footpath and their mattresses were wet from heavy rain.

However, despite their dedication, they have taken on a powerful figure in Singh, who has longstanding and deep ties to the ruling party.

Wrestling is arguably India’s most successful Olympic sport. In the 75 years since India’s independence, India has won 21 Olympic medals in individual sports, six of which were won by wrestlers.

Most wrestlers come from villages, many of them from poor families. And the bulk of them have been from Haryana, an agrarian and highly patriarchal region with high rates of female foeticide and honour killings.

**For Frontier Contact**

**ALAIGAL VELIYEETAGAMI**

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Female athletes have long complained of sexual harassment in their sports, although they have been reluctant to speak out publicly.

Phogat said several sexual harassment cases were reported in the past, but that Singh succeeded in either making the charges disappear or made sure the complainant did not compete again.

Recently, Phogat said, she received a phone call from young female wrestlers from a state in east India.

“They had complained to the WFI in writing about sexual harassment by a coach. The coach was banned for 10 days, but returned in seven days as head coach. This is the culture [of the WFI]. When the head himself is like that, what action will he take against others?” she said.

The protesting wrestlers have refused to share the names of the women who have complained as details of incidents of sexual harassment that may be embarrassing for the survivors, nor will they let the girls come forward.

“The background, the villages we come from, people are not that educated there. And [the girls] have to live there. They can’t move to London or [Mumbai]. If their names are out, stepping out of the house can become very difficult,” Phogat said.

But the star wrestlers are shielding the victims and risking their own careers by taking on not just a powerful man but also by extension the government.

The BJP, usually quick to claim the success of Indian athletes as being a result of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s sport schemes, has ignored the protests.

Singh is a longtime BJP heavy-weight from Uttar Pradesh with considerable sway in India’s most populous state, which elects 80 of the

543 legislators.

Often referred to as “Bahubali” (strongman), Singh, many have said, draws immunity from his financial power, political clout and reputation.

Accused of being involved in the destruction of the Babri mosque in 1992, he has a criminal record dating back to the 1990s when he was jailed for aiding associates of gangster Dawood Ibrahim. He still has four criminal cases pending against him, including for robbery, attempted murder and illegal payments in connection with an election.

In interviews to select channels since the sit-in protest began in April, Singh has reacted with defiance and counter-accusations.

Meanwhile, support for the protests among Indian athletes and the wider public appears to be growing.

Many of India’s top athletes, including six-time Grand Slam champion Sania Mirza, Tokyo Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra, and cricketer Virendra Sehwag have spoken out in support, and several politicians, rights activists and farmer unions have now joined their protest.

At the protest site, amid checkpoints and a heavy police presence, the protesting wrestlers have tried to maintain a basic, daily routine that begins in the early morning with jogging and exercises. But as the impasse drags on, their worries are mounting.

“It’s an important year. There are Asian Games [in September], then Olympic qualifications. We had not thought that our fight would go on for so long. We thought that we had a simple demand and the government would agree [to remove Singh], but the government is not ready to take any action.”

Phogat said the protesters just want basic rights to be respected.

□□□



## COOPERATION AND NON-COOPERATION

## Fragile State of Cooperative Movement

*Sukanta Sarkar*

**I**N ALL COUNTRIES, THE POOR are more, the rich are less. If so, I will call which country particularly poor. The answer to this is that in a country where the means of earning for the poor are few, the roads are closed. In a country where the poor hope to become rich, that hope is a great treasure. There is a shortage of money in our country. The truth is, there is a lack of trust in our country. So, when we feel frustrated we blame the forehead; we lie half-dead on the dust, saying that we will be saved only if God or man has mercy from outside. We cannot even think of any way we have in our own hands.' That was Rabindranath Tagore. He wrote these words in 1325 Bngabda (1918) about his cooperative thought.

Rabindranath repeatedly expressed his confidence in cooperatives. In one place of the article written in this context in 1329 Bangabda (1922), he wrote, 'The main way to make a sufficient amount of freedom the property of the common people is to combine the power of the common people in the acquisition of wealth. Then wealth will not accumulate in the hands of one person or one community. But everyone can enjoy the fruits of wealth that millionaires and crorepatas are entitled to today. When many people learn to turn their energy into wealth in the cooperative system, the foundation of freedom for all will be laid. If we are not saved from poverty, we will continue to be beaten by all kinds of devils. There is wealth within each and every one of us, only if we understand and apply this simple word then we will defeat poverty.'

Today, 1430 Bangabda (2023).

In fact, Rabindranath Tagore realised the necessity and importance of co-operatives in the country a hundred years ago. Although the co-operative movement started during Rabindranath's lifetime, it was mainly carried out by the Swadeshi agitation with the encouragement and inspiration of Gandhiji. Initially started by weaving khadi cloth on spinning wheels, the cooperatives gradually started producing other cottage and rural goods as well. After the partition of the country many cooperatives were formed in different parts of the country and especially in West Bengal. Through which the ration system was also run in rural areas. But, there should be no hesitation in saying that they were not carried out with much care or tenderness either. As a result, most of these cooperatives have either collapsed or remain in a very poor condition. The fact that cooperatives can be a real poverty alleviation tool, neither socialists i.e. intellectuals and politicians themselves thought seriously, nor did they convince or encourage the common people. The interesting thing is that even today, in various discussion circles related to cooperatives, starting from politicians and intellectuals, they talk for hours and hours about the necessity and importance of co-operative movement. There ends the matter. No follow-up action.

Currently cooperative means a grey area before the eyes. Except for a handful of cooperatives, cooperatives have become an extremely neglected sector in the entire country, including the state of West Bengal. However, the Centre and many states have cooperative ministries. It goes without saying that these Ministries

at the Centre and the States have failed. Because, the government is generally indifferent to the cooperative movement. But, even when Rabindranath and Gandhi thought of the cooperative movement a century ago, the country's poverty has not decreased, but rather increased, due to the increase in population and iniquity in income distribution.

Before and after the partition of the country, most of the cooperatives, especially in the states, were run by Gandhians. After the change of government in West Bengal in 1977, the Left was expected to use the cooperative movement extensively. Because, the cooperative movement has a close relationship with the socialist system and philosophy. After Operation Barga, the Left Government did not take any initiative to form farmers' cooperatives by pooling the pieces of land owned by the sharecroppers. As a result, the condition of sharecropping became more pathetic. But, through Operation Barga in consultation with the original owners of the land, it was possible to combine the lands of the cultivators with ease and to form many agricultural cooperatives across the state. The agricultural production would also increase manifold and the rural economy would definitely flourish. On the contrary, in the left

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era, it was observed that the existing cooperative banks or cooperative lending societies were looked upon. Not only that, many such organisations also formed new ones. It was not understood at all how the local economy improved. However, few party workers-supporters in the area got employment. There is no objection to that. But, the problem is, common people are not that way towards cooperative banks. Two reasons. One, people have a lot of trust in the central government sponsored banks. Two, no concerted effort was made by the state government or the then ruling party to create interest and attraction of the common people towards cooperative banks. As a result, co-operative banks never became self-sustaining. Loans disbursed by co-operative banks mostly remained unrepaid. From recruitment to lending, corruption and nepotism made the underwater journey of most co-operative banks almost certain. In this situation, the moribund co-operative banks have started trying to turn around with the intervention of the Reserve Bank. Even though the Reserve Bank has come forward, there is still apprehension about co-operative banks among the common people.

Apart from agricultural co-operatives societies and co-operative banks, there are several areas where

co-operatives could have benefited. Unfortunately, no one looked at it that way. There is prospect of industrial cooperatives. In the case of industrial co-operatives, this state has not been bothered in that way. After the success of Amul in Gujarat, several co-operatives were formed in the dairy sector in the state as well. The Mayurakshi Dairy Cooperative in Murshidabad was once in a good shape. Later, mainly due to political reasons, the cooperative could not progress as expected. Himul, another dairy cooperative in North Bengal, is practically in a shambles. Apart from this, in the early 70's cooperatives were formed mainly under government initiative in several places including Dhanekhali, Daihat, Monteshwar, Fuliya, Shantipur with tantubais--handloom weavers. Organisations like Tantuj, Manjusha were set up to sell sarees, dresses etc. made in these cooperatives. But unfortunately, the management and control of these cooperatives passed into the hands of financiers instead of tantubais. As a result, common fibre traders remained deprived of the benefits of cooperatives. Today, most of the textile mills workers in the state have left their generational occupation and started looking for alternatives.

Cooperatives still have a wide scope to exploit without being dis-

heartened by this sad picture. In particular, there is a huge opportunity to develop industrial cooperatives in this state. Thousands of bicycles are given annually to school students through Sabuj Sathi, a state government scheme. Apart from that, the bicycle is still the main mode of transportation in rural areas. Creating thousands of bi-cycles a year by forming cooperatives in different parts of the state is not a difficult task. Different parts of the bicycle will form different cooperatives. Then it will be assembled by one or two other cooperatives. Not only this, the responsibility of selling these bicycles should also be given to the cooperative. Its market is in the state. It also has employment opportunities for thousands of unemployed people.

Small industrial cooperatives can be formed in every block of the state basing on low cost materials which are easily available. In some parts of South India, plates, bowls and even sarees have been made from the trunk of the banana tree by twisting it into machines and extracting the fibre. It is possible to produce many such things by forming numerous small industrial cooperatives in this state as well. But people in this part of the globe are more familiar with non-cooperation movement, not co-operative movement.

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## INDIA'S FIRST LABOUR MINISTER

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### Ambedkar as Labour Leader

*Sanjoy Ghose*

**B**R AMBEDKAR WAS NOT only the most important Dalit icon and a hero for aspirational classes to adore and emulate in post-independence India but also contributed immensely to the labour movement in the country.

After bagging his master's and PhDs from Columbia University and

the London School of Economics, he joined as a professor at the Government Law College, Bombay. Yet he failed to secure decent accommodation as education and distinction weren't enough to wash off the 'stain' of untouchability.

For 10 years, Babasaheb resided in a chawl of the Bombay Develop-

ment Department, in Parel, meant for the lowest working class, mainly employed with textile mills. The humiliation was perhaps the greatest gift to India's labour movement. These foundational years and his brush with the daily existential struggle of the toiling poor were bound to impact the thinking and orientation of a man destined to be the first labour minister.

Ambedkar's tryst with labour began when he was associated with the Bombay Textile Labour Union,

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formed in 1925 by moderates N M Joshi and R R Bakale. Ambedkar noticed that 'high' caste workers discriminated against their colleagues from 'low' castes when the latter had to wet the thread with saliva to tie the knot to replace weft bobbins— which were thus 'polluted'.

During the Great Bombay textile strike in 1928, Ambedkar found the opportunity to address this age-old inhumanity. He threatened communist leaders with dissuading his followers from participating in the agitation if his demand for access of 'low' caste workers to all jobs in mills wasn't mentioned in the charter of demands. He succeeded, though the demand was reluctantly accepted.

In 1936, Ambedkar formed the Independent Labour Party (ILP), which had a comprehensive manifesto on worker rights. In 1937, the party described itself as a "labour organisation" which mainly "advanced the welfare of labour classes" and was "committed to supporting state ownership and management wherever necessary".

In the 1937 Indian provincial elections, the first under the Government of India Act, 1935, the ILP made a stunning debut by winning 15 of the 17 seats contested in the Bombay Legislative Assembly.

Disillusioned by the caste divide in the working class, Ambedkar realised that the labour class could not be meaningfully uplifted unless the oppressed classes were emancipated. It was the reason the ILP's commitment to labour reforms in the 1940s made way for the All India Scheduled Caste Federation in 1942 with a predominant caste activism mandate.

Ambedkar summarised his divergence from Marxists by stating: "Had Karl Marx been born in India and had written his famous treatise *Das Kapital* sitting in India, he would

have to write it in an entirely different fashion."

In his 1936 book *Annihilation of Caste*, Ambedkar writes that what was implicit in the caste system was not merely the division of labour but also the division of labourers. "Now the caste system will not allow Hindus to take to occupations where they are wanted if they do not belong to them by heredity. If a Hindu is seen to starve rather than take to new occupations not assigned to his caste, the reason is to be found in the caste system," he writes.

Ambedkar opposed the Industries Disputes Bill, introduced by the Congress government of Bombay in 1937, terming it the "Workers Civil Liberties Suspension Act" as it prescribed a six-month imprisonment for participating in an illegal strike. Opposing the Bill in the Assembly in 1938, he argued that punishing workers for participating in a strike was "nothing short of making the worker a slave". Slavery was nothing but involuntary servitude, he added.

Despite being under British rule, India was a founding member of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), established by the League of Nations in 1919. The ILO also established its branch office in Delhi in 1928. The ILO's mantra was tripartism, i.e. the bringing together of capital and labour by the State to resolve industrial disputes, conflicts and challenges.

Given his deep sectoral expertise, Ambedkar was appointed as the labour member of the viceroy's Executive Council from 1942 to 1946—a de facto labour minister of sorts by the Royal Warrant of July 20, 1942.

Ambedkar's captaincy of the labour ministry came at a crucial time when the war economy demanded the expansion of industry and, at the same time, required the effective management of industrial disputes. His even-handedness earned

him the appreciation of both capitalists and labourers. He reduced the number of working hours from 14 to 8 and announced the same at the 7th session of the Indian Labour Conference in New Delhi on November 27, 1942.

Days before the beginning of the Quit India movement, Ambedkar addressed the fourth Tripartite National Labour Conference in New Delhi on August 7, 1942. As a historic first at this conference, representatives of employers and employees were brought face to face. Ambedkar spoke about both the universality of labour legislation and internationalism, "Employers and employees, who were earlier not represented, would now find a seat at the High Table." The era of tripartism had indeed dawned.

India was dragged into World War II without the British consulting Indian leaders. Congress governments in the provinces tendered their resignation in protest. The Muslim League supported the British war efforts. Ambedkar also chose to stick on.

While Ambedkar would gain wide recognition for his ability to pilot the draft of the Constitution through the arduous debates in the Constituent Assembly, many may not be aware that he had picked up the expertise and skill while defending the imperial government's labour policies and legislation as labour minister in the Central Assembly.

Ambedkar's legal training was an asset as he forensically broke down legislative proposals to explain the same to Central Assembly members. Crucial legislation on trade unions, maternity benefits and factories that form the backbone of industrial law were crafted under him.

Ambedkar was also a hands-on labour minister. On December 9, 1943, he visited several collieries in Dhanbad wearing a safety hat and even went down to a 400-foot-deep

mine to see the working conditions of miners. He also closely watched the condition of female labourers and the amenities provided by the government and the colliery owner.

Ambedkar also visited the hospital for workers and chatted with its patients. He made it a point to interact with workers and their families and encouraged them to share their experiences. For instance, he spent an hour studying the various types of houses built by the mine owner for the workers of Digwadih Colliery.

Ambedkar was genuinely interested in the living and working conditions of the workers, many of whom belonged to oppressed classes and would hail him as their messiah one day. Whether it was the leper colony in Raniganj or the school for miners' children at Sitapur Colony, Babasaheb was one with all.

While returning to Dhanbad, he inspected the Dhowras, or tenements, at Begunia Colliery and enquired about the workers' food, clothing and health.

When Ambedkar returned to the capital, he lifted the ban on women working in underground coal mines.

The All India Schedule Castes Federation was formed to test the electoral waters as home rule, or self-government, was becoming an inevitable reality. Sadly, Ambedkar could not win a seat in the Constituent Assembly.

Though the Congress cold-shouldered Ambedkar during the 1946 election to the Constituent Assembly, when seats had to be reduced following the Partition in 1947, the party brought him back from the Bombay Province. Mahatma Gandhi was keen that Ambedkar should not only participate in framing the Constitution but also serve in Jawaharlal Nehru's cabinet.

As the assembly wanted to secure 'economic justice', it took up the discussion on workers' rights. The most crucial provision debated was the right to life—which ultimately would be enshrined in Article 21 of the Constitution. The assembly had to decide

on whether to use the "due process clause", as was the law in the United States, i.e. the right to life can only be impacted by the due process of law, or should a more conservative phraseology be adopted such as "procedure established by law".

Ambedkar passionately defended the Drafting Committee's rejection of the due process clause in favour of the "procedure established by law" to protect the rights of labourers.

Even when the contours of the fundamental rights were being shaped—particularly, granting the freedom of trade, professional and occupation—Ambedkar advised caution. In his note on fundamental rights, he pointed out that this would be nothing other than the freedom "to increase hours of work and reduce rates of wages".

Ambedkar agreed with communists that capitalism was the enemy of the working class. His point of divergence was that he believed Brahmanism was no lesser evil. □□□

[Source: *The Leaflet*]

## SACKED PRIMARY TEACHERS

### Will They Get Back Their Jobs?

*Nityananda Ghosh*

**W**ILL THE SACKED PRIMARY school teachers be reappointed? The hapless will have to wait till September 2023. The fate of 32,000- odd teachers is swinging in balance after a division bench of Calcutta High Court ordered an interim stay on Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay's order sacking them finding irregularities in their process of appointment. Division Bench comprising Justice Subrata Talukdar and Justice Supratim Bhattacharya, however, ordered an interim stay on 29th May 2023. Earlier Justice Abhijit Gangopadhyay ordered sacking of 36,000- odd teachers in the govern-

ment aided primary schools on the ground that they did not fulfill the criteria to have a diploma in elementary education. In his landmark order Justice Gangopadhyay issued sacking of 36,000- odd teachers which was later rectified by him and the numbers came down to 32,000. Justice Gangopadhyay's order of sacking 32,000 odd- teachers will henceforth be treated as para-teachers and they will be deprived of their earlier status i.e. permanent full time teachers. Justice Gangopadhyay issued the order on 12th of May 2023. In truth it was in response to a TET (Teachers Eligibility Test) passed aspirants- filed case.

For one thing the recruitment of teachers in primary schools has been stopped since 2016 when 40,000 odd- teachers were last recruited.

The Prathamik Shiksha Parshad (The West Bengal State Primary Education Board) along with the sacked teachers filed a case in the division bench headed by Justice Talukdar and Justice Bhattacharya challenging the order issued by Justice Gangopadhyay's single Bench. Considering the merit of the case the division bench comprising Justice Subrata Talukdar and Justice Supratim Bhattacharya accepted it and hearing took place on 17th May but the decision was pending till 19th May. On that particular date the division bench of Justice Talukdar and Justice Bhattacharya stayed the order of single bench till September 2023. During the intervening period,



the sacked teachers will not be treated as para-teachers (who are not regular teachers) as was ordered by Justice Gangopadhyay. The 32,000-odd teachers will be eligible to draw their salaries like regular teachers till further order.

The division bench actually upheld a part of Justice Gangopadhyay's order in which it said 'a fresh panel of candidates has to be drawn up within three months to fill the posts that will fall vacant once the 32,000-odd teachers lose their jobs'. The single bench of Justice Gangopadhyay also said the 32,000-odd teachers would have to appear in the aptitude test and an interview to be conducted by the Prathamik Shiksha Parshad as a part of teacher recruitment exercise where they won't have to sit for written test i.e. TET which they had already qualified in 2015. They have to appear in an aptitude test and an interview to make it to merit list. Five marks each are allotted to aptitude test and the interview. Justice Gangopadhyay's order to treat the 32,000-odd teachers as para-teachers is simply ridiculous.

On 12th of May Justice Gangopadhyay had said in his order

"The board shall immediately arrange for recruitment process for candidates who were untrained at the time of recruitment (including candidates who have obtained training qualification in the meantime) within a period of 3(three) months from date only for the candidates who participated in 2016 recruitment process". It is still unknown how efficiently the Prathamik Shiksha Parshad and the Bengal's education ministry will take the case to help resolve the crisis. Given the present state of chaotic situation prevailing in the entire education system it is unlikely they will act promptly.

Justice Gangopadhyay in his order said all examinees would have to appear in an interview and an aptitude test—"the whole interview process has to be videographed carefully and preserved." So, the fate of 32,000-odd teachers is under High Court's jurisdiction and the Prathamik Shiksha Parshad has to obey either the division bench's order or to opt for challenging it in Supreme Court. The Prathamik Shiksha Parshad is said to have opted for the second one.

Amidst rampant corruption perpetrated by small fry to big boss of this government as well as the ruling

party leaders the unemployed youth's future in this state is bleak. The opposition parties (extreme right, right and the left) as a whole are trying to capitalise on the overall turmoil in education sector but their efforts are to make respective parties' electoral gains rather than to direct the government in right direction to settle the matter in favour of the aspirants. The opposition parties' main aim is to issue press release against the misrule of the present government and to show their faces before the TV cameras but they are unable to address the fate of thousands of young aspirants who are protesting on the streets. Sensible persons expect that the Prathamik Shiksha Parishad as well as the Education Ministry will take the issue seriously to sort out the complications arising out of the court order and they will abide by the order of the division bench by absorbing the qualified TET passed candidates in their jobs as early as possible. Then it is not clear yet whether the Prathamik Shiksha Parshad despite its preliminary legal action will act according to the aspirations of unemployed youth who are swelling the list to get appointed in primary schools. □□□

## NEW LABOUR CODES

# Unchallenged Attack on Workers

*Notan Kar*

**T**HE BHARATIYA JANATA Party (BJP)-led NDA government at the centre passed the new labour codes during the lockdown period on 23rd September, 2020, when the opposition parties were boycotting the session on the issue of the farm bill. The Industrial Relations (IR) Code, the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH) Code and the Social Security (SS) Code along with the Code on Wages, 2019 were

promulgated, incorporating earlier 44 labour laws. By this way, the government violated all the previous parliamentary procedures to get these acts passed in the most undemocratic way.

Through the Wage Code Bill, the Modi government has fixed the national Floor wage at rupees 178/- per day, which is less than the amount of rupees 375/- per day initially suggested by the Union Labour Ministry. Then this wage is

much less than the wage fixed by government as minimum wage. It is also worth noting that in July 2018, the Expert Committee of the Government (Dr Anup Satpathy committee) itself had suggested the minimum daily wage to be at least Rs. 375/-, based on the price index. The Modi government is undermining its own committee recommendations, which is nothing but a big fraud with the working class of the country. In the name of establishing a national floor level minimum wage, the Bill has been formulated to destroy the struggle for minimum wage altogether. The Wage Code proposes 9 (nine) hours of working time. This

is contrary to the standard practice of 8 (eight) hours of work. The minimum wage is also conventionally set for the 8 (eight) hour-work period. Making it 9 (nine) would effectively reduce minimum wage.

The Industrial Relations Code is an instrument for taking away the rights of the workers to unionise and struggle while giving full freedom to the management to hire and fire. According to the Code, government permission is now no longer required for lay-offs, closures or retrenchment of workers in a factory having less than 300 workers. The government can increase this number if required. Earlier the government's permission was mandatory for lay-offs, closures or retrenchment in a factory with 100 or more workers. In India, 70% of enterprises have less than 300 workers. The Code states that if there are less than 50 contractual workers in a factory, labour law will not be enforced there. Now the provision for contractual workers is applicable if the number of workers in the factory is at least 20. Currently, unions need to give 14 days' notice before a strike. Under the new rule, a 60-day notice is required. The bill states that if 51% of the workers of a factory are members of a union, then that union will be recognised as a 'negotiation or

bargaining union'. If no union has the stipulated numbers, then all the trade unions in the establishment can be part of the negotiating council. The Industrial Relations (IR) Code allows managements to hire contract workers directly through 'fixed-term contract'. Then fixed-term contractual workers are not entitled to 'retrenchment compensation' like permanent workers.

The Social Security Code speaks for establishing a 'National Social Security Board' which shall recommend to the central government for formulating suitable beneficial schemes for different sections of unorganised workers like gig workers (who deliver door-to-door service) and platform workers (those online staff and workers). The Code simplifies labour laws to a large extent but there remains a lack of clarity in the definitions. Also, the Bill has not clearly specified the norms pertaining to social security schemes, health and safety standards, and working conditions and delegated these largely to the state governments. The Code has not universalised social security benefits for workers in the informal sector. Instead, it restricts the ability of labour officers to determine the quantum of provident fund and state insurance due to employees from

employers. The Social Security Code will exclude virtually all welfare schemes assigned to permanent or temporary workers.

The OSH Code applies to those workers, i.e., persons not engaged in managerial or administrative role or supervisory role with a monthly wage exceeding INR 18,000. The Code suggests a national database for inter-state migrant workers to collect, compile and analyse their occupational safety and health statistics. The code allows management to engage women staff at night shift. The Code is restricted to establishments with 10 or more workers. This raises the question of whether workers under 10 in smaller establishments should not be covered by health and safety laws.

India is currently facing horrible job loss due to COVID-19. The Centre for Monitoring of the Indian Economy (CMIE) estimated 2.1 crore salaried jobs were lost following the lockdown. Under the new Codes, the employer will have the full opportunity to arbitrarily fix the terms and conditions of service of the workers and fire them at their will. The time has come for the toilers to unite and combat new labour codes and evolve strategies to counter the government's out and out anti-labour policies. □□□

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## LETTERS

### **Dadabhai Naoroji**

Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, played a significant role in shaping British public opinion in favour of India. Dadabhai and WC Bonnerjee founded the London Indian Society to facilitate the exchange of views on India between Indians and Englishmen. He also established the East India Association in London to hold wide-ranging discussions on Indian issues.

From 1892 to 1895, Dadabhai was a member of the British House

of Commons. His interventions in the House ensured an inquiry into Indian expenditure. In this, he was helped by British men like Samuel Smith. In 1895, the British government set up the Royal Commission on the Administration of Expenditure of India. Dadabhai not only served as a member of the commission but also testified before it as a witness. His main submissions to the Commission were as follows: The British rule in India is central to the prosperity of the British nation. Hence, Britain must pay a

fair share of the cost of administration in India. In the case of war, India should not be burdened with the cost of wars fought for British imperial interests. But in frontier wars where British and Indian interests are involved, the cost of war should be divided between Britain and India in a just manner.

Dadabhai, through his writings and speeches, familiarised the British public with the Indian National Congress. To attract the attention of the British Parliament and British public to Indian interests, a British Committee of the Congress was formed in

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London in 1889. Dadabhai cooperated with this committee. The British cotton trade, centred in Lancashire, had severely undermined Indian trade interests. To counteract it, Dadabhai started a propaganda campaign in Britain to inform the British public about India's financial condition and trade needs. W.A. Chambers, Romesh Dutt, and Bipin Chandra Pal participated in this propaganda.

Dadabhai Naoroji's lifelong effort to bring to the attention of the British public the needs of India earned him the sobriquet "Unofficial Ambassador of India".

**Visakh S M, Kaithamukku,  
Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala  
Condemn Police Action**

While the Prime Minister, who would say Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao, was busy inaugurating the new parliament building, his party colleague and prime accused, Brij Bhushan Singh, was seen moving around with other members of parliament during the inauguration programme. On May 28, Olympic medalist and Padmashree awardee Sikhs Malik said it was a 'sad day' in the history of Indian Sports. "A sexual abuser, Brij Bhushan, is sitting in Parliament today while national wrestlers are being dragged on the road. Sad day for Indian sports", Malik said.

The vindictive Delhi police have also removed the makeshift tents, tarpaulin camps, mattresses, etc., from Jantar Mantar, where the wrestlers have been protesting. Not just that, Dendendra Pathak, Special CP, Law and Order, Delhi Police, who was also at the spot to monitor the situation, said that the wrestlers had been detained for violating law and order. "We will take legal action after an inquiry in due course of time", the senior police officer said.

Not just that the protesting wrestlers were detained, but the supporters, who came in large numbers from different walks of life and in individual capacities or as parts of demo-

cratic organisations and farmers' groups, were heckled and arrested. Some of these supporters were arrested on May 27 in a bid to prevent them from joining the mahapanchayat.

CDRO calls upon all democratic-minded people to support the wrestlers' protest and expose the patriarchal tendencies of the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP). CDRO urges people to come out openly against the highhandedness of the Delhi police as a mark of solidarity with the wrestlers.

**Coordination of Democratic  
Rights Organisation (CDRO)  
(Asish Gupta), (Tapas Chakraborty)  
(Kranthi Chaitanya)  
Coordinators, CDRO  
Police Brutality**

Behind the façade of the inauguration of the new parliament building people witnessed the most brutal form of crack-down on the peacefully protesting wrestlers in broad day-light at the heart of the national capital. Behind the curtain of the "dance of democracy" Indians saw, the "Champions of India" are being dragged through the tarred road of Delhi and thrown into the police vans. Masum strongly condemns this act.

Since last few months the top-tier wrestlers of India have been staging a sit-in demonstration demanding justice in the case of alleged sexual abuse by the president of Wrestling Federation of India, Mr Brij Bhushan Singh, also a leader of ruling Bharatiya Janata Party. During their planned march to the new parliament building, they were intercepted by Delhi police and manhandled to detention.

In the last few years, India has seen these same faces of the wrestlers on the victory ramps singing the national anthem proudly. The persons like Ms Shakshi Mallik, Ms Vineesh Phogat and Mr Bajrang Punia et al have raised the Indian flag multiple times in the international arena. But, now the government is paying them

back with the brutality in order to hide a crime of someone who is part of the ruling establishment.

When this police brutality was taking place, only a few kms away, the prime minister of India Mr Narendra Modi was engaged in a façade of celebration on the occasion of the inauguration of the new parliament building with saffron clad religious leaders. The parliament is a symbol of pluralist democracy in India. By engaging in the showcase of majoritarian communal power when the protesters were being manhandled on the roads, the PM is actively engaging in saboteur acts against democracy itself.

If the government really wants to secure the well being of the citizens of India, they should empathetically look into the accusation of sexual harassment against Mr Brij Bhushan Singh and book him under relevant charges to let the justice prevail. Instead of that, the government is steamrolling the voices of the survivors to protect the perpetrator, which is severely detrimental to the democratic environment of the country.

**Kirity Roy, Secretary  
Banglar Manabdhikar  
Suraksha Mancha (MASUM)  
Not a Tactical Victory**

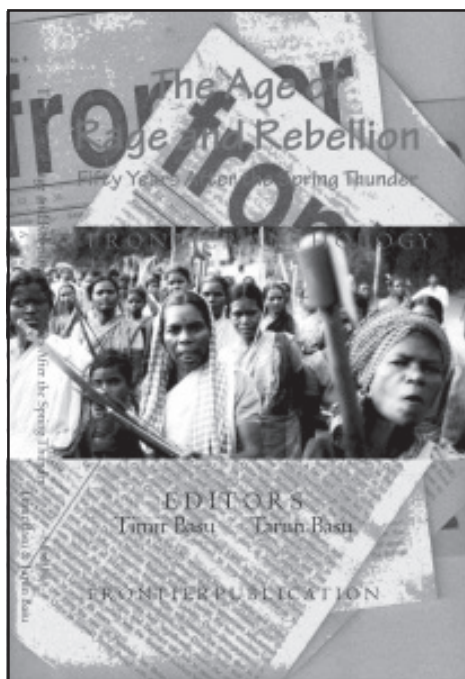
Despite Moscow's claims of victory, Igor Girkin, nom de guerre Strelkov, a former Russian soldier and intelligence officer who led the original 2014-15 uprising of east Ukrainian separatists, painted a bleaker picture to his nearly 800,000 Telegram subscribers.

He describes the capture of Bakhmut as not a victory in any tactical sense, but part of the Kremlin's policy of "freezing the conflict through a compromise agreement", and as such, only intending to wear the enemy down until Kyiv and its Western allies agree to let Russia keep Crimea and the Donbas. Strelkov is a hardline Russian nationalist who believes Moscow is not taking the conquest of Ukraine seriously enough.

**Al Jazeera**

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