

frontier

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The Merchant of 'Peace'

DESPITE TRUMP'S REPEATED PUBLIC POSTURES, THE NOBEL Committee, finally awarded this year's peace prize to Venezuelan opposition leader Maria Corina Machado, citing her "timeless work promoting democratic rights for the people of Venezuela and for her struggle to achieve a just and peaceful transition from dictatorship to democracy". But the West-pampered Maria is a fanatically defender of American hegemonism. And she lost no time to dedicate her prize to Trump at a time when under the pretext of fighting drug cartels Trump is all set to invade her country Venezuela by mobilising American war ships in the Caribbean. It's no accident that this year's Nobel 'Peace' Prize for imperialist war and regime change goes to Washington's puppet Maria Corina Machado. In truth Trump's Nobel Peace prize obsession is not yet over. This year's Nobel peace prize winner is asking the US to send troops to Venezuela to change the regime. She is openly inviting American oil majors to exploit Venezuelan oil resources. She vows to privatise oil industry allowing US corporations to make a lot of money at the cost of Venezuelan national interests. Trump has already authorised CIA to operate inside Venezuela to clamp down on alleged illegal flows of migrants and drugs from the South American nation, but short of saying they would have authority to remove President Nicolas Maduro. And yet all the autocratic allies of Trump are still hawking for his Nobel after the ceasefire in Gaza and return of remaining 20 Israeli alive hostages.

The much talked-about Trump peace proposal emerged in the wake of intensified pressure from Arab and European nations following Israel's targeting of Qatar; a key mediator in the ceasefire negotiations. For many Gazans, the plan represents a last chance, an opportunity that may not come again. For others, it represents a formalisation of their subjugation, a surrender not just of territory, but the very idea of self-determination. If anything Gazans are being asked to make an impossible choice: between peace that may not be just and a war that has already taken everything. Israeli apartheid and genocide are now normalised and integrated into a regional and global economy. Even if the ceasefire holds rebuilding of Gaza is out of question as it would require \$70 billion as per UN estimates to recover the devastated land from rubbles and ruins.

After the stoppage of war there were celebrations on both sides. The released hostages came at the "hostage square" in Tel Aviv, while

Palestinians rushed to embrace freed prisoners and detainees who arrived in buses in Khan Ypunis in southern Gaza. Strangely enough, the peace deal was signed by Trump and the leaders of Egypt, Qatar and Turkey who helped broker the ceasefire but no representatives of Hamas or Israel signed the document. They called it the first phase of ceasefire. All things considered this ceasefire is as fragile as anything else. The negotiations between Hamas and Israel have been characterised by stubborn refusals on both sides, each

unwilling to compromise on core demands. For the Palestinians this intransigence has been a great source of deep frustration.

What comes next is hazier. For Gaza, which lies in ruins, the damage defies description. More than 67,000 Palestinians were killed in 700-plus days of war. As major issues such as Hamas's disarmament remain unresolved, Palestinians face a dilemma: 'Every concession made by Hamas is irreversible, while every concession made by Israel can be undone'. Also the ques-

tion of the future of Gaza governance is still uncertain. In short this temporary arrangement of tranquillity may not last long.

The US-backed Israel is a murder machine that will not stop its genocidal actions until they have wiped out the Palestinian population. The people across the world at least formally possess human rights and their right to life. Except the Palestinians, against whom a war of extermination has been unfolding for a century. □□□

22-10-2025

COMMENT

No Jobs for Agriculture Graduates

DESPITE A BOOMING AGRICULTURAL sector and a surge in student enrolment, India's top agricultural colleges are grappling with dismal campus placement at the undergraduate level. NIRF data show nearly 29% of UG students at top agricultural institutes got jobs in 2023-24 soon after finishing the course, while about 64% went on to further study that year. Meanwhile, AISHE records show a rise in enrolment in agriculture courses, which has doubled from 1,13,595 (2012-13) to 2,94,379 (2021-22). The issue is not a lack of jobs, but a disconnect between academia and industry, under skilled faculty, and the low-paying nature of entry-level jobs.

The primary reason for this gap, according to experts, is the significant faculty shortage and a lack of practical, industry-relevant knowledge among educators. "Faculty shortages and skill gaps significantly undermine hands-on teaching and placement readiness in agricultural higher education in India," says RC Agrawal, former deputy director general (Agriculture Education), Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR). "Faculty members at several

universities lack specialisation in emerging areas such as precision-agriculture tools (drones, Geographic Information System, IoT), and are weak in agri-data analytics and fail to impart soft skills and entrepreneurship training to the students. This academic disconnect leads to a skills mismatch, with employers consistently reporting that graduates are unprepared for the modern workplace," he adds.

While ICAR has modernised the curriculum in 2023-24, universities still need periodic curriculum updating to keep pace with rapidly changing technologies and employer demands. "ICAR continues to spearhead curriculum modernisation as per NEP-2020 guidelines through its 6th Deans Committee (2023-24) playing a crucial role in updating UG education in agriculture. However, what is needed is periodic updating of the UG curriculum in agricultural education due to rapid technological advancements in the sector." Underlining the lack of training in modern lab techniques, data analytics, and essential soft skills among students, which restrict their employability.

Practical training components exist in colleges, but the outcomes are not defined. "Mandatory hands-on training and the Rural Agricultural Work Experience (RAWE) are part of most UG programmes; however, most internships do not convert into jobs. Besides, RAWE placements into sustained employment are not well documented.

Students opting for specialised PG programmes are often recruited by the R&D division of agri firms. "Formal campus recruitment in BSc Agriculture, BSc Food Science, BSc Horticulture, and other UG courses remains low as roughly 65-70% students pursue higher education. Around 5-10% students prepare for competitive exams such as BPS SO, NABARD, UPSC, and the remaining students look for jobs. Hence, getting a job through the university placement is not a priority for many students."

Students often face geographic challenges, as most agricultural universities are located in rural or semi-urban areas, where fewer corporate recruiters offer jobs. Moreover, the agricultural labour market is highly fragmented, with fewer large, organised companies compared to sectors like IT and finance

Experts and university leaders urged practical policy fixes that could be implemented quickly to strengthen employability. □□□ [Contributed]

NOTE

Cuttack Riot

Bhabani Shankar Nayak writes:

COMMUNAL HARMONY and brotherhood between Hindus, Muslims, and other religious communities define the synchronised secular culture of Cuttack as a city in Odisha. From Dargah Bazar and Pir Hat to Idgah Maidan, people have been witnesses to the making of the history of independent Odisha and India. People from all religious walks of life participated in shaping the secular culture during and before the anti-colonial struggles in the city. These places define secularism and communal harmony in the city and the state. Similarly, across the state, from the Rath Jatra (Car Festival) of Lord Jagannath in Puri to the Durga, Kali, Ganesh, Saraswati, Lakshmi, and Mangala Pujas in different parts of Odisha, one witnesses the participation of Muslims, Christians, Sikhs, and other religious minority groups as if these festivals were their own. Muslims often organise Hindu religious festivals, and Hindus often support Muslims in their religious celebrations and festivals.

Historically, such an organic religious bond has continued in Odisha, defining its multicultural and secular ethos—which is under threat today due to the Hindutva political patronage of religious conflicts and riots. After the rise of Hindutva politics, Odisha has been witnessing different forms of riots that tear apart the brotherhood and the social and religious harmony between different communities in the state. The Cuttack riot is not an accident, it is an well organised riot that defines the core of Hindutva politics, which is incompatible with the interactions between secular culture and multi-religious tra-

ditions in the state. As a result, cow vigilantes attack Muslims, Christians face assaults, a nun has been pulled out of a train and harassed, and such violent events are increasing—raising questions about the BJP government's ability to maintain law and order in the state, or whether it is the government's strategy to allow Hindutva violence to become normal, effectively making governance based on fear.

But the October 5 incident shattered the myth of secular Cuttack. During the annual immersion of Durga idols, slogans turned to stones and glass bottles. Within hours, Odisha's millennium city—Cuttack—lay under curfew and the internet was restricted for 48 hours. For a city that had never known communal rioting—not in 1947, not in 1993, not even in 2008—the violence in early October felt like an ontological rupture—as if the very nature of Cuttack's being was being questioned anew.

The BJP-led state government has failed miserably even to protect state police officers from the attack of Hindutva rioters. As they say, when rioters run the state and the government, riots become normal modes of governance. The BJP in Odisha continues to provide indirect or direct political patronage to religious conflicts in different parts of the state. From Graham Staines' murder to the riots in Bhadrak and Cuttack, various Hindutva groups have organised and led these riots. Violence is integral to Hindutva politics. Hindutva politics and its ideology of hate manufactures communal violence. The creation of fear and instability in society, and the normalisation of religious conflict,

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form the core of Hindutva's political strategy. Such strategies not only weaken the multicultural and secular ethos of Cuttack and Odisha but also undermine constitutional democracy in the country.

The Cuttack riot is not an aberration caused by a few individual criminals or reactionary groups; it is a well-planned political strategy to undermine secular politics, society, and culture in the city. The Cuttack riot is a wake-up call to people across the state and the country to understand the dangers of Hindutva politics and its fascist character in the long run.

Hindutva riot in Cuttack is a warning to the people of Odisha and India to end Hindutva politics or face violence in everyday life, where fear becomes a tool of governance and the domestication of citizenship rights becomes normal. □□□

For **Frontier** Contact**DHYANBINDU**

COLLEGE SQUARE

'WHAT'S WRONG WITH RIGHTS?'

Human Rights Movements and Imperialism

Manu Kant

HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS and organisations in India, in the USSR, across the globe—whatever their rhetoric of justice, dignity, or peace—have functioned as the soft arm of imperialism. They parade under the banner of morality, yet their morality is bourgeois, their vision bourgeois, and their actions ultimately serve to undermine struggles of the working class and oppressed peoples. As Lenin warned, “freedom in the capitalist world is nothing but freedom for the slave-owners.”

Human rights are not eternal or universal. They are a specific product of bourgeois revolutions, rooted in property relations. Marx showed in *On the Jewish Question* that the so-called “rights of man” boil down to the right to private property, the right of egoistic individual, the right to exploit. Stalin made clear that “rights” in a class society are always the rights of a ruling class: “In capitalist society we have the rights of the exploiters to exploit the working people, and the duty of the exploited to submit to this exploitation.” Thus, the concept of “human rights” in capitalist societies cannot be separated from the social relations of production. To demand their universal enforcement without smashing the bourgeois state is to engage in utopian liberalism. In practice, “human rights” discourse is a weapon used by imperialist states to browbeat the oppressed nations, to discipline rivals, and to delegitimise socialism.

The USSR and Human Rights Activists
The history of “human rights activism” in the USSR makes this per-

fectly clear. Figures like Andrei Sakharov and other Soviet dissidents presented themselves as defenders of conscience against a supposedly oppressive state. Yet their activities dovetailed neatly with the geopolitical aims of US imperialism. Sakharov’s campaigns were lavishly amplified by Western media, his awards funded and promoted by imperialist governments. These so-called human rights groups in the USSR consistently targeted socialism while keeping silent about the crimes of imperialism—about napalm in Vietnam, CIA coups in Latin America, and apartheid in South Africa. Their task was not to improve socialism but to delegitimise it, to paint it as irredeemable. As Stalin would have recognized, they were “agents of the bourgeoisie in the workers’ movement.”

Their rhetoric of conscience was the velvet glove hiding the iron fist of imperialism. By the late 1980s, these groups played no small role in discrediting socialism within and outside the USSR, softening the ground for Gorbachev’s capitulation and the capitalist restoration that followed. The lesson is stark: so-called human rights activists act as Trojan horses within socialist societies, undermining them from within.

Human Rights in India

Turning to India, the most famous human rights organisation is the People’s Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL). Established in 1976 by Jayaprakash Narayan, PUCL has since become the model for civil liberties activism in India. On paper, it claims to defend the rights of all

citizens, irrespective of ideology. In practice, PUCL has consistently advanced a bourgeois-liberal line that undermines revolutionary politics. PUCL has published extensive reports on state repression in Kashmir, Chhattisgarh, and the Northeast. It has taken up causes of journalists, academics, and civil society actors targeted by the state. But what is missing? PUCL rarely, if ever, situates state repression within the class structure of Indian society. It does not call for the smashing of the bourgeois state; it does not expose the comprador character of the Indian ruling classes. Instead, it seeks to “reform” the state in the name of bourgeois democracy. Worse, PUCL often lends its credibility to separatist tendencies under the guise of defending “self-determination.” In Kashmir, it has at times legitimised narratives that strengthen reactionary, religious-based separatism. In Punjab, its silences and evasions during the height of Khalistani terror gave indirect succour to separatist forces. Its method is classic bourgeois liberalism: present the state as the only villain, erase the crimes of reactionary forces, and prepare the ideological ground for Western intervention in the name of “human rights.”

Human Rights and Punjab

The Punjab experience in the 1980s reveals the bankruptcy of such activism. Here, human rights organisations—including PUCL, the Punjab Human Rights Organisation, and figures like Justice Ajit Singh Bains—emerged as loud critics of state repression. They documented police atrocities, fake encounters, and disappearances. But their indignation was one-sided. They failed to condemn, with equal force, the horrific crimes of Bhindranwale and Khalistani terrorists. They did not raise their voice when the flower of

Punjab—the communists, progressive youth, revolutionary poets like Paash and Bihari, ordinary Hindu and Sikh workers, women and children—were gunned down in cold blood. They did not mobilise outrage when trade unionists, Left cadres, and cultural activists were assassinated. Their silence was complicity. Justice Bains in particular, celebrated in liberal circles, presented himself as a defender of the Sikh community. But in practice, he and his cohort legitimised Khalistani terrorism by treating it as an issue of “state repression” alone, ignoring its reactionary and communal core. This silence demoralised progressive forces and provided fodder for Western propaganda.

Amnesty International

At the same time, Amnesty International played a crucial lobbying role. In the late 1980s and 1990s, Amnesty produced report after report denouncing police atrocities in Punjab. These reports were then weaponised by Sikh separatist organisations abroad to build sympathy in Western capitals. Amnesty consistently downplayed or ignored the fact that Khalistani militants had murdered thousands.

The effect was twofold

1. International Pressure: Western governments, citing Amnesty reports, pressed India on “human rights violations.” These constrained India’s counterinsurgency efforts.
2. Legitimisation of Separatists: Diaspora Khalistani groups leveraged Amnesty’s reports to present themselves not as terrorists but as freedom fighters. This was not “neutral human rights activism.” It was imperialist lobbying, providing cover to a separatist movement that served Western strategic aims.

The Material Roots of Khalistan

It is true that the Khalistani move-

ment had material roots. Indira Gandhi and the Congress cynically propped up Bhindranwale in the late 1970s for electoral gain. But by the 1980s, Bhindranwale had become a monster, armed and entrenched in the Golden Temple, while the Akal Takht, Sikh intellectual class, and the Sikh population at large failed to isolate and condemn him. No hukmanama was issued against the terrorists. At that stage, there was objectively no way to root out terrorism except by storming the Golden Temple. The Indian bourgeois state, as is the wont of any dependent capitalist state of the global South, made blunders. Yet the necessity of crushing Khalistani terror was undeniable. The communists had been decimated, progressive forces silenced, and ordinary people slaughtered. In such a situation, it fell to the state to act.

From the 1980s to Today

The legitimisation of Khalistan in the West during the 1980s and 1990s has now borne poisonous fruit. Today, the Khalistani diaspora in Canada, the US, and the UK has entrenched itself into political and economic structures. For India, they are what Lenin once called a “bone in the throat”—an irritant deliberately cultivated by imperialism to keep a strategic rival off balance. These networks are used by the West for several purposes: Undermining India’s Unity: By keeping Khalistan alive abroad, imperialism retains a pressure point against India’s internal cohesion. Prying Open India’s Economy: Diaspora agitation is leveraged to force India toward neoliberal concessions and subservience to Western capital. Geopolitical Control: Khalistan serves as an “insurance policy” to discipline India whenever it leans toward Russia, Iran, or China. Cultural Destabilisation: A victimhood narrative is culti-

vated among diaspora Sikhs to weaken class-based politics and amplify sectarian identity. In short, Khalistan abroad today is not about Punjab. It is about disciplining India, keeping it pliant to Western interests.

Another feature of these organisations is their constant attempt to stand “above the state.” They present themselves as supra-political arbiters of morality. But as Stalin taught, there is no such neutrality in a class society. To deny the necessity of the proletarian dictatorship, to act as judge over both the bourgeois and socialist state alike, is to serve the bourgeoisie. In India, human rights groups treat the state as the sole criminal, erasing imperialism and ignoring the crimes of reactionary forces. They pretend to float above class struggle, but in practice, they are instruments of bourgeois liberalism and imperialist meddling.

The Real Fight against Repression

Does this mean communists support state repression? No. But the fight against repression cannot be handed over to bourgeois NGOs. It must be waged by the working class, the peasantry, and revolutionary forces. Only communists can link the struggle against repression with the struggle against capitalism itself. As Lenin

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said: “Only he is a Marxist who extends the recognition of the class struggle to the recognition of the dictatorship of the proletariat.” Human rights activists recognise neither. They remain within the limits of bourgeois democracy, and thus they disarm the masses.

The real human rights activists are not the Sakharovs, not the PUCLs, not the Amnesty

Internationals. The real defenders of humanity are the communists, the workers, the peasants who fight to abolish exploitation. Those who invoke “human rights” while legitimising separatism, while silencing imperialism’s crimes, while undermining socialist states—these are not friends but enemies of the people.

For only through socialism can the true rights of humanity be

realised—not the rights of property and profit, but the right to a world without exploitation. □□□

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“A FEARLESS ADVOCATE OF CREATIVE MARXISM”

A Tribute to Badruddin Umar

[1931-2025]

Omar Tarek Chowdhury (Dhaka)

BADRUDDIN UMAR (20 DECEMBER 1931–September 2025), a well-known socialist politician, organiser, and intellectual of Bangladesh, passed away on 7 September at around 9:30 AM while having breakfast at home. After being taken to the hospital, doctors confirmed his death. Though his passing was sorrowful, it occurred at a mature age—three and a half months before his 94th birthday. Except for nearly two months of illness before his death, he lived a healthy, strong, and active life. His enviable memory remained sharp until the end. He was always lively and engaged in intellectual and organisational activities. In recent years, his hearing gradually declined; during conversations, writing things down helped him communicate effectively. He never showed fatigue or disinterest in meaningful discussions and enjoyed the company of visitors. Until his hospital admission on 22 July, he led a visibly healthy and active life, which was a joy to all. He didn’t want a longer inactive life. His last known writings were an article and an editorial published in his edited magazine *Sanskriti*, written on 6 and 8 May respectively.

In 1950, during communal riots

in both parts of Bengal, the house of his father Abul Hashim—one of the proponents of United Bengal—was burned down in Bardhaman. In grief and annoyance, the family moved to East Bengal. Umar had to arrive earlier in Dhaka to sit for his college final exams. He studied philosophy at Dhaka University during a time of intense student activism, which introduced him to East Bengal’s political climate. Though not directly involved in student movements, he observed them closely. Those incidences helped him understand the political dynamics of the time. A major shock for the Hashim family after arriving in East Bengal was the Khapra Ward shooting of communist prisoners in Rajshahi Jail on 24 April 1950—just 12 days after Umar’s arrival in Dhaka. Among the injured was Mansur Habibullah, a communist organiser from West Bengal and Umar’s cousin.

Umar closely observed the 1952 Language Movement but wasn’t affiliated with any student or youth organisations. He developed ties with Tamuddin Majlis, an Islamic cultural group that played a key role in the movement, and contributed writings to their weekly *Sainik*. Later, he distanced himself from those writings as his own intellectual orientation took

a new turn. His father’s reputation in the political circle and his own student life gave him access to many political leaders of the time, which later helped in his research on the Language Movement. Though not an active participant, 18 years later he authored a comprehensive three-volume history titled *Purba Banglar Bhasha Andolon O Totkalin Rajniti* (1970), covering the movement and other political events in East Bengal. His pioneering research involved interviews with over a hundred key figures, collecting rare documents, and using archived newspapers—making the work a milestone in Bangladesh’s political historiography.

Before completing his MA at Dhaka University in 1955, Umar briefly held temporary positions in his department and a newly established institute. During 1956-57, he began his teaching career at a college in Chittagong and later at Rajshahi University. In 1959, he went to Oxford for higher studies, completed a Philosophy, Political Science and Economics degree, and returned in 1961. His ideological shift from his father’s influence began during his time at Dhaka University and matured at Oxford, where he embraced Marxism—a stance he maintained for life.

Upon returning teaching at Rajshahi, he wrote three influential books that stirred East Pakistan: *Samproidakita* (Communalism) (1966), *Sanskritir Sangkat* (Crisis of

Culture) (1967), and *Sanskritik Samproidakita* (Cultural Communalism) (1969). His writings and activities infuriated the Pakistani government from 1965 onward. He declined a government scholarship to pursue a PhD at SOAS. After *Sanskritik Samproidakita* was published in 1969, the government issued a notice against the publisher for anti-Pakistan content. Governor Monaem Khan pressured the vice-chancellor of the university to dismiss Umar, even humiliating him for not following the suggestion of the government. Umar faced harassment but refused to compromise. To unburden the vice-chancellor, he resigned from teaching in December 1968.

His ideological transformation in Oxford was the main reason behind his resignation. For Umar joining the Communist Party full-time was a conscious and premeditated permanent decision. In London, he was connected with East Pakistani communists. Comrade Nepal Nag was in London after attending a conference in Moscow, who encouraged Umar to join the Communist Party upon returning back home. After returning, Umar engaged with both Moscow- and China-aligned factions of the party. In April 1969, four months after resigning, he joined the pro-Chinese East Pakistan Communist Party (ML) and became acting editor of its weekly *Gonoshokti* from February 1970 until the Pakistani military crackdown in March 1971.

During the Liberation War in 1971, he disagreed with the party leadership and resigned in December. The party also split in two factions, Umar remained active in the communist movement, striving to reorganise it through dialogue and joint initiatives with likeminded factions. His efforts faced many ups and downs, crises, and internal sabotage. Ultimately, he led a party and its associated mass organisations. His organisational and theoretical contributions are documented in two volumes he edited in 2023–24: *Bangladehe Gonotantrik Andolon* (Democratic Movements in Bangladesh) and *Bangladeshe Boiplobik Andolon* (Revolutionary Movements in Bangladesh).

Three defining traits of Badruddin Umar's legacy can be highlighted: First, Marxist Intellectual: From 1966 to 2025, he published 120 books in Bengali and English. His work consistently reflected Marxist perspectives and analytical methods, making him a leading figure in Marxist scholarship in Bangladesh. Second, Political Commitment: From the formation of his political views, he remained devoted to socialist movements both locally and globally. He was vocal in support and actively tried to apply theory in practice. While his success in organisational efforts may be debated, his sincerity and integrity were unquestionable. Third, Personal Integrity: He was honest, outspoken, dignified, prin-

cipled, and fearless in character and conduct.

Umar was nominated for several prestigious government awards in Bangladesh, all of which he politely declined. Six months before his death, the post-mass uprising non-partisan government in Bangladesh offered him the highest civilian honour—the *Swadinatha Dibos Puroskar* (Independence Day Award)—which he respectfully refused. He was a truly independent and fearless intellectual who never bowed to anyone or compromised his principles.

Two quotes come to mind as this tribute concludes: Late Hirendranath Mukhopadhyay, in the second volume of his *Selected Essays* dedicated to Ashok Mitra and Badruddin Umar, wrote:

“...Badruddin Umar, a multifaceted patriot and fearless advocate of creative Marxism amidst Bangladesh's harsh realities.” This statement reflects both love and respect, and accurately captures Umar's virtues.

Umar himself, in an interview for a commemorative volume on his 90th birthday, said:

“I have lived a life that I wanted to live—modest, honourable and productive.” Indeed, he chose and lived such a life, remaining true to his ideals and values without compromise.

With deep love and respect for his memory. □□□

‘TO REBEL IS JUSTIFIED’

Sonu Surrender is not the End

Kobad Ghandy

MUCH OF THE RULING classes are gloating over the surrender of Sonu as though it is the end of the revolutionary movement. No doubt the losses have been significant but the

root causes for the discontent remain as acute as before. And as long as these are not eradicated the revolutionary movement will arise again and again—even from the depths of despair—like a hydra

headed monster grabbing the ruling elites by their necks. And if pushed to the wall they could become even more desperate giving the elites sleepless nights. As long as the resistance is controlled and planned most need not fear—only the top big business houses and the big landed classes and their political and bureaucratic representatives together with their tails need tremble.

Just take a short glimpse at the state of affairs in the country—that too nearly 80 years after independence—this will give an idea as to the cause of the discontent:

Though India brags about having one of the highest growth rates in the world - Growth is expected to reach 6.3 percent in FY25/26 according to the World Bank's latest report—other real data is depressing: According to the UN's Global Multidimensional Poverty Index 2024: India still has the highest number of people living in poverty—234 million; compared to Pakistan's 93 million; Ethiopia's 86 million and Nigeria's 74 million. Though the figures may not be comparable, (India's current population is 1,466 million or about 147 crore) just the quantum of those living in sub human conditions is staggering. In the Global Hunger Index India is ranked 105 out of 127 countries. According to the UNDP Global Poverty Index, as of 2024, 1.1 billion worldwide live in extreme poverty (multi-dimensional poverty); with India in the top position.

According to the World Population Review (2025) India has about 2 million homeless people—that is those veritably living off the streets. In addition, about 78 million people in India live in slums and tenements—17% of the world's slum dwellers reside in India.

The list of impoverishments could go on and on. But that is not the main factor: India is home to some of the richest in the world and the

gap is growing with each passing day.

Over 2 lakh people earn more than Rs 1 crore annually; while the average household income is less than Rs 10,000. A total of 350 billionaires had a wealth of Rs 167 lakh crores as of Nov 2024. With Mukesh Ambani at Rs 10 lakh crores and Adani at over Rs 8 lakh crores. And this is only the declared incomes; if one considers the black income, it would be at least three times these figures. (As per estimates of some economists, the black economy of India is estimated to be at 62% of the GDP or Rs 93 lakh crores; this too would be a conservative figure). The bulk of this would go to the top billionaires; magnifying the gap considerably.

In other words, the total wealth of the billionaires would be a minimum of Rs 250 lakh crores—i.e 350 families with a wealth of about 250 lakh crores; or each family with Rs 7,000 crore. Compare this to a per capita income of India at a mere Rs 1 lakh annually or about Rs 8,000 monthly. (And the per capita income is an average which includes that of the top billionaires). The bottom half of the Indian population owns "almost nothing" of the national wealth, claimed a report authored by senior economists including France's Thomas Piketty. The top 10% earn about 20 times more than the bottom 50%. Further in the same report in Money Control (December 07, 2021) it says: "While the top 1 percent of the population hold 22 percent of total national income, the bottom half's share has gone down to 13 percent".

As long as such a situation continues to exist there will be discontent in the country. The martyrdom of his very brother, Kishanji, and hundreds of others, will not go in vain. If the rapacious government and their corporate bosses continue in this vein people are bound to revolt. But if

replaced by a people's government which seizes the ill-gotten wealth of a handful of the big businesses houses and their agents in the governments, bureaucracy and political parties, it could raise lakhs of crores which could be invested in agriculture and small-scale industries setting India on the path of true rapid development instead of wallowing in backwardness for nearly a century.

Just seizing the wealth of India's 200 billionaires would give it \$ 941 billion (Rs 80 lakh crores). And this is only the white (declared) money. If one included the black money the figure would likely be more around Rs 200 lakh crores. And if to this is added the wealth of the imperialists the amount would be mind-boggling (FII investment amounted to \$1 trillion while FDI investment in just the last decade was \$500 billion).

While these massive investments result is a huge drain of the country's wealth in the form of interest and other payments, if this vast sum was confiscated, amounting to nearly \$ 3 trillion (billionaire wealth+FDI+FII) and re-invested as outlined above i.e in agriculture and SSIs, imagine India's huge growth potential. In just a few years India would turn from a backward country into a developed one just as China has shown it can be done.

So, the killing of a few revolutionaries like Kishanji, Basavaraju, etc, or pushing some to leave activism, while protecting the ill-gotten wealth (white and Black) of the big corporates, imperialists and ultra-rich (inclusive of politicians, black-marketeers, etc) will only perpetuate India's continued backwardness. While the bulk will continue to live in poverty a handful of vultures will thrive. Such a situation is unsustainable. □□□

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“THE PEOPLE, THEY MADE ME MACHINE”

Inner Psyche of Zubeen Garg

Debanjan Borthakur

SINGER ZUBEEN GARG'S LAST interview with writer Rita Choudhury uncovered his inner core. People across Assam got to know his inner feelings. He was fascinated by Friedrich Nietzsche's "Nothingness," as he expressed in his last interview. Pink Floyd's psychedelic melodies may have captured Zubeen's imagination. Instead of collapsing into nothingness, he filled that void with creation of his own "will power". Zubeen composed rebel yet melodious music at the time when traditional norms and societal narrowness hold people in despair or imitation. His fearless music and lifestyle were Nietzsche's "will power", the power to respond to life. He did not choose the path of self-denial and despair like the "will to nothingness." Therefore, Zubeen's creations and rebellious lifestyle filled people's hearts with songs, poetry, and the songs of freedom instead of emptiness. In his last interview, Zubeen seemed to open his mind a little bit to people when he was asked, "Look, you should open up a little bit today, because you won't do it again." Maybe pain was in his innermost core. When Zubeen said, "I'm not a machine," it wasn't just fatigue, it was a rebuttal to the commodification of talent. Psychologically, that statement corresponds to what humanistic psychologists like Carl Rogers or Maslow call the need for authentic recognition. He didn't just want to see himself as a singer; he probably wanted people to love him, and that shouldn't require him to be acting like a machine. He seemed to understand that creativity could not save him from endless exhaustion.

That's why he said, "*I'm a performer; I need to perform and die.*" He was not afraid of death; he knew that if he disappeared, he would not be lost that immortality seemed to be waiting for him. With impulsivity and a risk-taking drive, he was eager to jump into the sea without gauging the depths. It is a sensation-seeking trait (Zuckerman's theory) with a kind of yearning for novelty, risk, and intensity. Creative personalities should always carry this restlessness. "*I like to play with the sea; there is nothing to do in the sea; I haven't got the ship yet*"- the sea is a metaphor for Zubeen. On the one hand it is drama, and on the other hand its futility is an endless vastness where no ship can reach. *It reflects the existential weakness of Zubeen's mind: life is a wonder and an emptiness.* Nietzsche can also reflect it as a desire to merge with the void, or this oceanic feeling is, in the words of Freud and Romain Rolland, a feeling of merging with an infinity that is metaphysical but fearful. Zubeen often blurred the line between himself and art. He didn't just create songs; he lived as if his life was a song. If one brings up the theory of psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, Zubeen may go into a mental state called *flow* when he is absorbed in the whisper of music. Singing one song after another during the day, he went into this flow mental state. With 38,000 songs in the bag, that's a lot! But when art becomes a commodity, the feeling that it threatens his being annoys him; he gets angry. There is no way to separate the Assamese identity from the philosophical aspect of Zubeen Garg. His rebellion

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was not without roots. He associated the Assamese entity with his creation. "I want to be Zubeen Garg again in rebirth, more than that"- these words reveal another aspect of his personality. It is a legend-making gesture, akin to McAdams' theory of narrative identity, in which individuals craft life stories that emphasise solidarity and legacy. Zubeen wants to be Zubeen, or bigger, in his next life. Zubeen was afraid of time, looking at his watch and saying he is afraid of time. He was afraid that he might cease to exist, and he wanted to see his life turned into a narrative; to see himself as a legend, didn't Alexander want that too?

But he turned this existential fear into creativity. He said, "I live with millions of people. So, I will stay with them. I'm a performer; I need to perform and die." He integrated his life into the performance of his

art. For an artist, life has meaning only as long as he continues to perform for life, immortality. Performance is over; life is over. "*I eat less; I feed*" - everyone knows Zubeen's altruism; it needs no explanation. But it seems to fit Carl Jung's concept of the wounded healer. Zubeen himself is wounded from inside. There was a darkness deep in his heart. He says, "*I don't know why I write some dark songs (Roi RoiBinale).*" The mathematician Ramanujan did not know how he invented number theory and infinite series; it must have come from his subconscious mind. One can say, exactly creation is a channel, not a controlled act. There is often no conscious control behind creation. He said, "*A king should never leave his kingdom. If I die in Assam, Assam will be closed for a week.*" People can understand this from social identity theory.

Zubeen is not separate from Assamese nationalism.

But he carries that burden; the burden of symbolic immortality, the idea that death would not be an end of him. He thus dared to jump into the depths of the sea, he was into an intellectual emptiness where alcohol and amusement were emphasised; yet he knew he will be alone at the time of death, he imagined an existential isolation when he said, "*When you die in battle, there are only three with you; the others are gone; they all run away.*" *The people, they made me machine. I wasn't like that...*" - Zubeen Garg. There are many people who may have mistaken Zubeen Garg's dignity for arrogance. He came and went; this is life. □□□

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MYTH AND REALITY

Viksit Bharat, 2047: Peeping into a Pledge

**Bhaskar Majumder*

THE NUMBER OF WAYS *Bharat* is perceived is unnumbered because *Bharat* is a civilisation. The way *Viksit* is pledged has its major connotations in an economy and not in a civilisation. Though the economy takes birth in the womb of the society and though the society is an integral component of India's civilisation, human tendency is to focus on the immediate past that is the economy rather than searching for the society-civilisation in which the economy took birth.

While *Bharat* refers to time immemorial, *Viksit* stands on specific time-horizon. The pledge, '*Viksit Bharat, 2047*', carries meaning for 2047 completes a century since India's independence, 1947. Of course, India's history did not start in 1947. '*Viksit*

Bharat' means developed India. In all probability, *viksit* is understood as economic development.

Success and Failure, 1947-2014

The thinkers under the political leadership of India's first Prime Minister introduced first five-year plan in India in 1951; in parallel, first general election was held in 1952-economics and politics moved parallel for probably political consensus. The major problems then were Partition of Bengal and Punjab on the east and west of British India. This showed influx of population as refugees that could not be readily absorbed in the job market. In spite of able leadership of Dr. Bidhan Chandra Roy as chief minister of West Bengal till 1962 at a stretch, the crises culminated to reach its peak in mid-1960s. The unwelcome partition of

the land also brought about a major chunk of development fund oriented to military expenses for perceived hostility on both the east and west of post-independent India.

The steadiness and stability of India's economy till mid-1960s stood on committed political leadership, first three five-year plans for industrialisation that got shocks since Indo-Pak war of 1965, drought 1966-67, and consequent food insecurity. The immediate resultant was end of uninterrupted 'planning era' and advent of 'Plan Holiday'. The shocks multiplied for the 1971 Bangladesh war that saw entry of more population from newly formed politically sovereign Bangladesh.

The Fourth Five-Year Plan (1969-1974) talked about decentralised planning but it was too late to capture either inclusive development or ensure poverty eradication. The then Prime Minister announced '*garibi hatao*' in 1972 that was incorporated in Fifth Five-Year Plan

(1974-1979). The whole of 1980s was a decade of crisis management.

The '*vikas path*' since 1991 followed New Economic Policy (NEP) that opened the gateway of India for trade and investment. It aimed at reducing state-control over industries in favour of privatisation. Already, the idea that 'there is no alternative' (TINA) was floated for acceptance of privatisation-liberalisation. Because of the adverse conditions, ultimately the 11th Five-Year Plan (2007-2012) announced 'inclusive development' as the major objective that got repeated in 12th Five-Year Plan (2012-2017) through the pledge of 'more inclusive development'. The 12th Plan was terminated in 2014 as a consequence of change of political era.

Post-2014 Decade

Some of the problems that remained concealed during pre-2014 era got revealed during post-2014 era. Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) increased by leaps and bounds, unclaimed deposits in the banking system became robust, some crooks looted bank money. The wealth of the economy of India was enormously drained out. An effort was made in the very recent past to dig out black money through declaration of 'Demonetisation'. In parallel, it was an era of de-unionisation based on scattered-fractured labour employment based on wages per day that maintained the large chunk of youth at the margin of the economy. The phenomenon of demographic disaster was concealed in 'adverse inclusion' trap. The basic structure of the economy remained mixed but it tilted in favour of the private enterprises contrary to the initial years of planning meant to form 'socialistic pattern of society' as declared in December, 1954 in the Parliament.

A Critique of Vikas

Critical analyses cropped up regarding the path of India's economic

development of which the major ones were consumer good-capital goods imbalance, comfort goods-wage goods imbalance, quantitative restrictions on trade, failure to 'catch up', failure of trickle down, non-expanding internal market and so on. The other types focused on conventional criticism like poverty-inequality-unemployment. Under the above conditions, one escape route was formation of administered market where labour could be used and food could be had-'roji-roti'. The Essential Commodities Act, 1955 aimed at food security; the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA), 2005 aimed to ensure minimum 100-day guarantee of employment per household per year.

Internal inter-firms demand for capital goods was there but exports of these goods did not succeed much because of perpetuation of colonial division of labour. India remained a country based on exports of tea, jute as commercial crops and agricultural goods in the main. The trade balance and terms of trade remained adverse on any medium-term period for India's economy. The absence of adequate internal demand for produced goods could not be compensated by external demand.

The basic structure of a mixed economy remained intact post-2014 with a tilt towards the private enterprises particularly towards monopoly and concentration of capital. Meanwhile labour market got fragmented and fractured implying declined power of labour in bargaining vis-à-vis capital with adverse impact on wage share. A perpetual condition of poverty-inequality-unemployment, and inter-generational untouchability made a large section of population excluded from development.

Bharat is *viksit* when its people are *viksit*. People are *viksit* when they are hunger-free, educated, healthy, and people of consequence

by conscious participation in decision-making processes. Self-engagement and ad hoc works surely ensure income in cash and kind for the workers so engaged. What is urgent is to promote regular wage-employment for the willing workers. This requires expansion of the organised sector of the economy.

Initial conditions of any economy cannot be altered. Processes do not repeat. Consequences are unforeseen. Hence, what people talk about are the processes.

The processes stand on a basic structure and the derivatives from it. An economy cannot move forward unless the base is strong. In order to make the base strong, there has to be collaboration between industries and public research institutions, education and work environment need to maintain symbiotic relationship, brain already drained needs 'reverse migration' to create 'brain pool'.

Under the above conditions, the state has to eliminate the trust-deficit between the public intellectuals and the government, promote education for all, ensure preventive health care system, ensure women participation in the public domain, set up more public institutions starting from the bottom, make development plans 'bottom up', ensure all state policies and practices transparent.

Bharat of 2047 is difficult to visualise in 2025 because of internal and external political economic dynamics. Of course, long-term vision is required to understand where the economy stands two decades ahead in time. That requires an understanding of unnumbered factors that either exist or factors that are yet to be discovered. The task remains to ensure 'development by willing participation of people'. The catalyst is the state. □□□

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DRASTIC CHANGES IN HEALTH CARE

Personalised Medicine in India

Ramesh Kumar

Rahul Patel

Sanjay Kumar Dwivedi

THE BIGGEST CHALLENGES today that the third world countries are facing include affordability and accessibility of quality healthcare. India is also facing similar hurdles in providing health care amenities to the masses. Technological advancements can address these challenges. One such advancement is *Personalised Medicine/Precision Medicine (PM)*. World Innovation Summit for Health (WISH) published its Forum Report in 2016 on Personalised medicine entitled, “PRECISION MEDICINE—A GLOBAL ACTION PLAN FOR IMPACT” which emphasised on customised and tailored treatments as per the needs of the individual patients. This report championed the concept of precision medicine with patient-centric approach of treatment. Healthcare is undergoing drastic transformation with the growing technology and it is imperative to leverage new technologies to generate new data and support the advent of Personalised medicine (PM). European Union Health Ministers, adopted by the Horizon 2020 Advisory Group observe Personalised medicine as a “medical model using the characterisation of individuals’ phenotypes and genotypes for treatment strategy, and to determine the predisposition to disease and to deliver timely and targeted prevention”. Personalisation encourages medicine to be more precise, safer, and more exact to control disease while efficiently curbing the risk of medication-related morbidity. A study conducted by Chakraborty et.al. published in the *Indian Journal of Rheumatology* in

the year 2022 revealed that saving on the economic burden of unnecessary medications and treatment of adverse effects, with fewer Disability Adjusted Life Years (DALYs) lost due to quicker disease control, might also offset costs. The completion of the Human Genome Project in April 2003 had scattered the questions of annotation and genetic contemplation. Researchers’ main focus for Personalised medicine (PM) in healthcare systems is mainly in the United Kingdom (UK), the United States (US), and the European Union (EU). Another study also believes that such type of medical treatment is a paradigm shift in healthcare from the current “one-size-fits-all” to a more Personalised approach. The “one-size-fits-all” approach is a traditional approach which needs to be altered because it is based on data derived from broad population averages and individual’s genetic makeup is different from the other. A scientific research published in the reputed journal *Life Sciences, Society and Policy* in the year 2020 by Qoronfleh et.al. emphasising the need of PM opines that, “Recent scientific breakthroughs and technological advancements have improved our disease knowledge and altered diagnosis and treatment approaches resulting in a more precise, preventative and providing the improved quality of life and helping to bring down healthcare costs. This policy briefing will look in detail at the issues surrounding continued development, sustained investment, risk factors, testing and approval of innovations for better strategy and

faster process”. In this way the 4 P’s of the medicine system viz. Personalised, Preventive, Predictive and Participatory offer more global vision to PM and may transform the health care delivery system and associated management worldwide.

Despite its high cost, many countries have started to adopt this novel PM technology including Southeast Asia. At the same time, these healthcare systems are striving towards universal health coverage to ensure everyone has access to needed health services, without undue financial hardship, financial constraint remains as one of the main challenges in attaining and maintaining universal health coverage. Davis et.al. in their study in 2009 said that adopting expensive PM would place increasing strain on the already constrained healthcare budget, further raises concerns on equitable, affordable and sustainable of such healthcare delivery to populations in the context of universal health coverage. Thus, the need of an efficient healthcare delivery is highly critical. The US FDA, European Medicines Agency, and regulators in Japan and South Korea have issued detailed frameworks integrating Personalised medicine into drug approvals, diagnostics, and treatment protocols. Their systems link hospitals, health records, trial registries, and pricing models, thereby creating end-to-end clarity. India has one of the highest burdens of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) including diabetes, cardiovascular conditions, and cancer. These are precisely the diseases where personalisation improves compliance, reduces hospital stays, and cuts long-term costs. With an aging population and rising lifestyle diseases, standardised treatment is economically unsustainable. It is also relevant in multi-drug resistance, a growing challenge in India. It allows

tailoring treatments based on what has failed for a patient before reducing trial and error prescriptions that increase resistance and costs.

Current Indian Medical System and scenario

India's healthcare system has undergone a dramatic transformation in past 11 years since 2014-2025. It has witnessed substantial transformation driven by robust policy interventions, political commitment, increased funding, and technology-driven solutions. The National Health Mission has emerged as the cornerstone of this revolution, establishing over 1.77 lakh Ayushman Arogya Mandirs (ARMs) and leveraging digital platforms to democratise healthcare access across the country. About 28 crore are screened for hypertension, 27 crore for diabetes, and 27 crore for oral cancer and focused on cancer screening: breast, cervical, and oral cancer screening prioritised along with Universal immunisation and public health milestones were available at these Ayushman Arogya Mandirs. According to the UN Maternal Mortality Estimation Inter-Agency Group, India's MMR declined by 86%, which is almost double the global average decline and India's Infant Mortality Rate reduced by 73%, compared to a global decline of 58%. These efforts aim to build an affordable, accessible, equitable, and quality healthcare system, aligning with UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDG-3) and national objectives under Ayushman Bharat and National Health Mission (NHM). This foundation positions India to achieve its ambitious vision of universal healthcare, marking a historic shift toward ensuring affordable, equitable, and quality healthcare reaches every corner of the nation. India has made strides in healthcare regulations with the introduction of the

Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission (ABDM), which aims to create a unified digital health ecosystem. The introduction of e-pharmacies is also being regulated by the government to ensure safe and legitimate online medical transactions. The regulation of telemedicine (eSanjeevani: Enabled remote consultations, TeleMANAS: Specialised mental health) has also gained traction, with the Telemedicine Practice Guidelines released by the Medical Council of India (MCI) in 2020.

Why Personalised System of Medicine is need for Indians

According to report of national programme for prevention and control of non-communicable diseases (2023-2030) Ministry of Health & Family Welfare Government of India 2023, 63% of deaths in NCDs are estimated to account for 63% of all deaths in country. Government of India expensed 1.84% of GDP for health, out of this about 0.5% of GDP is utilised in Non-communicable diseases. Non Communicable disease requires personalised medication which improves compliance, reduces hospital stays, and cuts long-term costs. With an aging population and rising lifestyle diseases, standardised treatment is economically unsustainable. It is also relevant in multi-drug resistance (MDR), a growing challenge in India. In countries with organised healthcare systems, it is already making a dent in healthcare outcomes and cost-efficiency. The real question for India is not whether people should adopt personalised medicine, but whether India's legal and regulatory system can support it.

The Indian government's proactive initiatives to promote healthcare innovation directly impact the India Personalised Medicine Market. National Health Mission and 'Ayushman Bharat' schemes emphasise ad-

vancements in healthcare technology and affordable treatment for all. Supported by the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (BIRAC), these initiatives aim to foster growth in the biotech and Personalised medicine sector. With more than 500 biotech startups emerging in India due to policies promoting research and development, the government is creating a conducive environment for Personalised medicine to thrive, thus significantly boosting the industry's prospects in Personalised therapeutics. The rapid advancements in genomic research and technology are propelling the India Personalised Medicine Market. With a growing number of genomic sequencing projects, such as the Indian Genome Variation database (IGVdb) project, which has mapped the genetic variation across diverse Indian populations, there is an increasing pool of data available for developing customised treatments. The Indian government has been supportive of this by funding various genomic medicine initiatives, which has led to a pronounced rise in

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precision medicine applications in healthcare. According to recent data from the Department of Biotechnology, the sector could see a surge in companies leveraging genomic data for developing medications, which reinforces the impact on Personalised medicine strategies. The rising incidence of non-communicable diseases is significantly boosting the growth of the India Personalised Medicine market. According to the National Institute of Cancer Prevention and Research, the number of cancer cases in India is expected to rise from 14 lakh in 2020 to an estimated 29 lakh by 2040 while in the case of diabetes 642 million patient expected till 2040 which is a significant public health concern, with factors like high BMI, nutritional intake, and physical inactivity contributing to the rise in T2D. This continuous increase puts pressure on the healthcare system and drives the demand for Personalised medicine strategies that target the unique genetic make-up of patients for more effective treatment. Organisations like the Tata Memorial Centre are at the forefront, utilising Personalised medicine approaches for treating cancer, thereby impacting treatment outcomes and pushing for innovations within the industry. As the number of patients requiring tailored therapies increases, the viability and attractiveness of the India Personalised Medicine Market grow, making it a focal area for investment and development. As per Market Research

Future database analysis, the India's Personalised Medicine market size was estimated at 27.83 (USD Billion) in 2023, which is expected to grow from 29.84(USD Billion) in 2024 to 80.0 (USD Billion) by 2035. The India Personalised Medicine market capital annual growth rate is expected to be around 9.381% during the forecast period (2025-2035).

Personalised medicine is in its infancy in India. The ability to offer Personalised medicine solutions to Indian patients in the traditional sense of the term requires widespread infrastructure for multi-omic testing in addition to the ability to analyse the data, all at considerable cost. However, as mentioned earlier, precision need not be limited to using multi-omics techniques and can start from simple, clinical data. The considerable diversity and large number of patients in India offer opportunities to test personalisation on such low-cost, simple data. One can envisage the following initial steps that can be taken in this regard such as improved data collection and curative capabilities, investing in standardised electronic health and records makes the gathering of phenotypic data easier, leverage databases and maintained cohorts in India. Multi-centre collation of databases across countries and bio-banking of samples to enable answering questions in the future may help to accelerate efficiency. Such data can then be used for questions related to prognostics and diagnostics by making databases

public. The Radiological Society of North America, 2017 Pediatric Bone age Challenge is an example. It provides an anonymised database for competitors to use artificial intelligence to create a bone age assessment tool. Such challenges can spur interesting questions and creative answers to personalise medicine.

Establishment of Indian Society of Personalised Medicine (Regd.) by Era University, Lucknow indicates efforts for collaboration with numerous advisors from both national and international backgrounds aiming to promote and advance the field of Personalised Medicine in India through research, education, and collaboration. Its members include leading scientists, clinicians, and healthcare professionals from across the countries, who are dedicated to tailoring medical treatments to individual patients based on their genetic profiles and other unique characteristics. What else people need today is to encourage such efforts through proper policy enactments and eradicating the limitations arising due to weak implementation of policies on health care. □□□

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AZIZUL AGAIN

A Leftist's Transition to the Right

Asis Ranjan Sengupta

THE DEMISE OF AZIZUL Haque, veteran former revolutionary, marked the end of the last cult figure of Naxalbari movement, after Nisith Bhattacharya and Mahadev Mukherjee. Bhattacharya

and Haque, upheld the red flag of Maoist line as practised by Lin Biao and Charu Mazumdar. After the martyrdom of Saroj Datta and Charu Majumdar, the ML party was in doldrums, aimless, desperate for revival,

till both Bhattacharya and Haque were rounded up by police in 1982, and the second Central Committee dismantled.

Uncompromising, fearless, dedicated, life-long revolutionary, as he was, in thought and practice, his life is a model before the youth of today and generations to come, no doubt.

But with that, it must be added that in the last one decade of his

days, he became a mouth piece of a counter revolutionary, electioneering and parliamentary party like CPI(M). In truth CPM used him for their purpose of pro-corporate agenda. Why a highly acclaimed theoretician like Azizul fell from his height is a wonder. He openly supported Governmental repression in Lalgah, Jangal Mahal, Singur and condemned the armed tribal activists. He was quite justified in pointing out the shortcomings and senseless killings by misguided activists, but in doing so, he fell in the trap of glorifying the counter-revolutionary and reactionary activism of CPM, which by that time had become a communist party merely by sign board, desperately clinging to power by any means.

CPM proved itself a counter-revolutionary party from the very days of Naxalbari in 1967. Whenever and wherever there was real mass upsurge, CPM's private army recruited from among the local toughs, would be set against revolutionaries, and the consequent casualties were cited as glorious as against the image of organisers and leaders of masses, to incite and mobilise public opinion antagonising common folk. People observed this strategy in Baranagar, Barasat, Jadavpur, Gopiballavpur and North Bengal in the seventies. Not that Haque was not aware of their real character, he himself acknowl-

edged that he suffered immense torture and betrayal by them, but still in a recorded speech sponsored by a CPM platform (video available in you tube), he tabled a new thesis of the rise of anti-CPM rightist or left forces as the rise of ultra-right politicians in Romania, who overthrew the tyrannical, autocratic, corrupt regime of Ceausescu, who led a self-proclaimed communist dispensation, backed by the then Soviet Russia, a social-imperialist country, that had colonised the East European countries with stooge governments. The bankruptcy of so-called socialist governments in Poland, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, Hungary etc. created the situation for civil wars and uprising of rightist forces, that ultimately led to the dissolution of Soviet Russia.

Same reality was happening in West Bengal; 34 years of rule or misrule, had helped build up public disapproval, rising to anger and mass uprising in Singur and Nandigram, and made the fall of pseudo-leftist rule here, and like many other places in the world, the true leftist or progressive forces failed to seize the opportunity and rightist elements, whatever toxic they might be, filled the vacuum, by corporate support.

But surprisingly, Haque sahab failed to comprehend the reality and strangely came out in support of a discredited force.

By that time, due to physical limitations inflicted by brutal torture in his Jail days (record 18 years,), he had started seeing realities through ears, not eyes. That is why he was impressed by economic development by left rule. Haque sahab was observing realities as shown to him by his new found love, that was CPM rulers.

That, like many others, is a shock, to this writer also. Finally he failed to retain his ideological height and fell from tower to ditch, without, for sure, any lure of material benefit from his opportunist mentors. Other original leaders like Asim Chatterji, Santosh Rana and Kanu Sanyal were disillusioned with the path and outcome, and failure of Naxalbari dreams. They resorted to their own paths of mass movement. A number of communist groups of the seventies were frustrated and abandoned active politics, went into oblivion, but very few, and none of the stature of Haque, openly joined the political party he once criticised as revisionist, quite justifiably in the sixties.

Physically maimed, he was spending his last years on a walking stick, and ideologically he was in need of a support of counter-revolution ideology.

So, Azizul Haque was long dead, Long Live Azizul Haque! □□□

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LETTERS

Annamalai University's Distance Education

The closure of Annamalai University's Chennai study centre at Egmore has caused significant distress among distance education students. This centrally located centre was convenient for working professionals, caregivers of aged parents, and mothers with young children in Chennai. Forcing students to travel to other cities for exams incurs high costs and logistical challenges, which contradicts the welfare objectives of distance education, aimed at supporting

economically disadvantaged and working students. The university should reconsider and reopen the Egmore centre for exams and contact classes, as promised during admissions for the 2024 batch and earlier.

T S Karthik, Chennai

Mining in Chattisgarh Forest

The Adani Group had been permitted in the first instance to mine in the Hasdeo forest villages in 2012, when the Parliament had already enacted the Scheduled Tribes And Other Traditional Forest Dwellers (Recognition Of Forest Rights)

Act as early as in 2006 ("Forest Rights Act or FRA) and, as a result, community rights were deemed to have accrued to the local tribal villages. If the Chhattisgarh government and MoTA had fully stood in support of the local tribal communities and placed the legal position before the Hon'ble High Court. ...had the Chhattisgarh government and MoTA highlighted these points properly, the outcome of the case would have been different.

Allotment of mining rights to the Adani Group in Hasdeo forest (Sarguja, Surajpur and Korba districts) prima-facie violates the local tribals' Constitutional rights

C R Bijoy

GERMINAL BOOKS

The Age of Rage and Rebellion Fifty Years After The Spring Thunder [A Frontier Anthology]

Edited by : Timir Basu & Tarun Basu
ISBN 9788197498183, Paperback, Rs 400

The Naxalbari Peasant uprising of May 1967, was a turning point of Indian History. After Naxalbari nothing remained the same as before. New theoretical orientation that began with the 'Spring Thunder' seems to have lost its course in the middle. Shaking the earth to the core was the net result of 'Spring Thunder' and the country needs another shake.

□ □ □

Without Pride And Prejudice Thinking Rationally

By Ashok Nag

ISBN 9788197498107, Paperback, Rs 300

This book of essays is a collection of articles that the author had written for his blog. The thread that binds these disparate articles written over a decade can be found in the book's title. Rationality is a big claim. But the author has tried his best to remain unbiased, subject to the boundaries defined by his own intellectual capability and knowledge.

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Subhas Chandra Ganguly

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Subhas got arrested for his political activities. After coming out from jail he, Sanjay and others organised APDR [Association for the Protection of Democratic Rights]. He translated Romila Thapar's book on Ancient Indian History into Bengali. —T Vijayendra

'I am very sorry to hear that he has passed away. I do indeed remember him and our exchanges in the course of his translating my book. Please convey my condolences and sincerest sympathies to his family'
—Romila Thapar

□ □ □

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