



MIL Update

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CPI(ML)-ASDC to Launch Nationwide Relief Campaign for the Quake Victims of Gujarat

The tremors of the January 26 earthquake have left a trail of unprecedented physical devastation and psychological trauma. The tragedy of such mind-boggling dimension calls for an overwhelming national response in terms of mobilisation of material resources and organisation of relief operation.

The CPI(ML) has called upon all its members and supporters to rise to the occasion. All Party units have been directed to collect and dispatch relief materials, especially money and medicine, on a war-footing for the next one week suspending all other normal activities.

Elected representatives of the CPI(ML) and its Assam-based ally, ASDC, will play a key role in the relief campaign. The Party MP Dr. Jayanta Rongpi and his ASDC colleague in Rajya Sabha Prakant Warisa have decided to donate Rs. 10 lakh each from their local area development scheme funds to the Red Cross relief fund for Gujarat. The MPs apart, all party legislators in Bihar and Jharkhand and their ASDC counterparts in Assam as well as members of the ASDC-run autonomous councils in Karbi Anglong and NC Hills districts of Assam will donate a month's salary each. The two councils will also contribute Rs. one lakh each in the relief effort.

The Party is also sending a central relief team along with activists of the All India Students' Association to undertake relief operations in cooperation with the Party's Ahmedabad unit.

**The devastating
quake in
Gujarat has
rocked the
entire country.**

**Let us spare no
effort to
overcome this
colossal national
tragedy.**

Solidarity Messages to Our Relief Campaign from Abroad

Please accept the heartfelt solidarity wishes from the Democratic Socialist Party and progressive forces in Australia to the struggling Indian people as they confront this terrible disaster of the Gujarat earthquake. Best wishes to the CPI ML and the ASDC and AISA as you carry out your emergency campaign, and our special solidarity to your comrades in Ahmedabad.

DSP, Australia

We are with you and the people effected by this disaster. It was the most right action by CPI(ML) to call all its members to be involved in relief activities.

We will do bit of our part here in Pakistan for the affected people of Hyderabad and Mir Pur Khas in Sind.

With deep sorrow and agony,

Labour Party of Pakistan

Sad But True

The Bhuj District Administration remained busy with the Prime Minister's visit (on 29 January) to the area rather than coordinating relief operations. Food sent by Unicef remained unattended at the district magistrate's office as his staff was busy. Most of the relief operations were being conducted by the foreign teams and the Army. (*The Hindustan Times*, 30 January 2001)

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On 27 January, a team of 25 doctors flew in from Delhi ... they included surgeons and senior faculty from AIIMS. But having arrived they found no one to direct them.

A group of doctors from Mumbai flew into Bhuj on Sunday (28 January). They brought a portable generator, tables that could be used for operations, sterilisers and machines. After a day of trying to find out where they should go, they gave up and returned to Mumbai with their equipment. (*The Hindu*, 30 January 2001)

Left Parties Condemn Manpur Firing

A high-level CPI(ML) delegation comprising Party PB member and Bihar Legislature Party leader Com. Ram Naresh Ram, State Convenor of Bihar Khet Mazdoor Sabha Com. Rameshwar Prasad, BPKS leader Com. Ramadhar Singh and Gaya Party DC Secy. Com. Arvind Kumar, demanded after visiting Manpur in Gaya on 25 January that the DSP of Gaya Ranjit Kumar and the BDO of Manpur must be suspended immediately, and arrested and tried under Sec.302 for murder. Without this no impartial inquiry is possible.

According to them the police firing on 23 January was totally an unprovoked one, and the allegation that a bomb was thrown at them is patently false. Police in connivance of the goons entered the agrarian labourer tola of the village and opened fire, killing two villagers and injuring 4 others. The whole tola was ransacked and cash, jewelery, utensils etc. were looted from the houses. Manpur bandh was called in protest against police-criminal attacks on the people during Bihar bandh on 17 Jan.

Party took out a protest march against Manpur firing on 24 January in Patna. Black Day against Manpur massacre was observed on 25 January, during which street corner meetings and protest demonstrations were organised. On 25 January AIPWA brought out a march in Patna.

7 Left Parties Meet

Seven Left parties including CPI(ML)-Liberation passed a resolution demanding panchayat elections to be held latest by April in any case. With the notification in February, there will be a long gap between notification and the polling that increases the risk of violence. A delegation of Left leaders will soon meet the State Election Commission in this regard. The left leaders also criticised the absence of provision for reservation to women and dalits for Mukhiya and other posts. They demanded that the govt. must issue ordinance to introduce reservation to these classes. Left parties also criticised non-implementation of the agreement with university and college teachers and demanded its immediate implementation.

Peasant-Toiler-Youth Convention at Bareilly

At the call of UP Chhatra Yuva Sangharsh Morcha, Ruhelkhand level Peasant-toilers-youth convention was held at Bareilly on 22 January. It was held to oppose plunder of peasants and workers and demand the right to cheaper education, cheaper health services and right to employment. Apart from people from Pilibhit, Lakhimpur Kheri and Nainital, students, youth and democratic sections of Bareilly also participated in good numbers in the convention. The convention was inaugurated by Com. Akhilendra Pratap Singh, State Party Secretary and conducted by Dr. Javed Abdul Wajed. It was also attended by Party CC member Com. Krishna Adhikari, left intellectual of Bareilly Dr. CP Sharma, noted poet Viren Dangwal, AISA Gen. Secy. Sunil Yadav, State AISA Secy. Ajit Yadav, Uttarakhand peasant leader Bahadur Singh Jangi, DYFI dist. secy. Tarakeshwar Chaturvedi and other RYA and AISA leaders. RYA General Secretary Com. Lal Bahadur Singh read out the political resolutions. The initiative received an encouraging response from the democratic intelligentsia and moreover, the success of this convention has provided the party with a new opportunity to flourish in this area.

Conference of Lucknow University Unit of AISA

The Lucknow University branch of AISA held its conference on 25 January. It was inaugurated by Com. Lal Bahadur Singh, Gen. Secy. of RYA and ex-president of Allahabad University Students Union and conducted by AISA state president Rakesh Singh. The concluding speech was made by Com. Sunil Yadav, Gen. Secy. of AISA. The delegates were addressed by AV Shukla, leader of Bank and Insurance employees union, AISA State Secy. Ajit Singh Yadav and others. Prior to the conference, the students took out a march with slogans "No Mandir, we want employment, we want the right to live". A 25-member University Committee was elected with Dinesh Gautam as president and Girisant Yadav as secretary.

AICCTU Workshop Against Globalisation

AICCTU held a workshop on 26 January in Chennai, attended by 130 workers from various factories including HVF and Ashok Leyland.

In the first session, TU tactics to be adopted in the face of growing attack of globalisation were discussed. Concrete experiences of AICCTU in Sanmar Leather Factory, Dunlop India Ltd, TIDC, hotel workers; workers' issues and issues like organising women workers and how to develop TU as a weapon of class struggle were discussed in 4 groups, in which 60 comrades actively participated. Com. S. Kumarasamy, State AICCTU President summed up the discussion.

The second session was on the effects of globalisation. Topics like the process of globalisation in India, class-forces supporting it, resentment against globalisation, and how this process can be pushed back etc. were discussed in this session. The response of the workers was summed up by Com. Murugan, Chennai City Committee Member of the Party. The participants felt that the workshop was very useful for them to understand the process of globalisation.

The workshop decided to carry on workers' movement on demands such as minimum wages to be fixed as Rs. 4500; Tamilnadu Govt. to allocate Rs 2500 crores to open the closed industries; state and central govts to provide Rs 1000 monthly each for the workers of the closed industries, workers' residential quarters be built by the govt., etc. It was also decided to take up a campaign on the issues of women workers from Feb. 1 to March 8 which will culminate in a convention.

Funeral Procession of Governments in Delhi

The funeral procession of BJP-led government at the centre and the Congress government of Delhi was brought out by CPI(ML) Shahdara zone committee on 23 January, the last day of "Save Delhi, Save the Poor" campaign launched by Delhi Party against the anti-people steps of evicting numerous industries, footpath vendors and shops and driving rickshaw pullers away in the name of pollution. It started from Ambedkar Park, Vishwas Nagar and after covering 6 km. route ended at Nathu Colony Chowk. The meeting held there was addressed by Delhi Party Secy. Com. Rajendra Pratholi, State AIPWA Secy. Jeeta Kaur, State RYA Secy. Shashi Bhushan, Party Secy. of Shahdara area Com. Ram Abhilash and an entrepreneur Sampat Nahta. Party has distributed an appeal to the entrepreneurs to forge a broadbased unity to fight against the anti-people policies of BJP and Congress, so as to mobilise a determined resistance of the people in the second phase of sealing the industries.

Meet to Launch Solidarity Campaign in Delhi

A meeting of the leading cadres working on the trade union front in the organised sector, particularly health, postal and telecommunication sectors, was held on 23 January in Delhi. After a fruitful discussion on the need to initiate solidarity campaign and movement against the offensive of privatisation and globalisation, it was decided to launch a solidarity forum in the second week of March. An adhoc committee of 9 comrades was formed and Com. Ramkishan and Com. RAP Singh were appointed coordinators to ensure the participation of representatives from the organised sectors.

Andaman AICCTU to Hold Convention, Dharna

AICCTU State Council of Andaman in its 7 January meeting decided to organise street corner meetings from 16 January and a massive dharna was organised on 25 January in front of Van Sadan (forest house). It has also decided to convene a trade union convention to oppose globalisation drive on 4 February, inviting Left unions.

AICCTU Flags Hoisted in Haryana Factories

On 26 January, a campaign to hoist AICCTU flags was organised in the industrial zone of Sonapat in Haryana. In three factories the flag was hoisted and mass meetings were held. Com. Swapan Mukherjee, General Secretary of AICCTU, Com. Satbeer Singh, leader of an MTNL employees' union, Com. Surinder, KK Neogi and Srikrishna Yadav addressed the mass meetings.

First Chennai District Conference of AISA

First Chennai District Conference of AISA was held on 9 January at Andhra Mahasabha Hall, in which more than 250 students representing 12 major colleges participated. The conference was against saffronisation, privatisation and commercialisation of education. It came down heavily on the DMK government at the state and the BJP led NDA government at the centre and passed a resolution to organise a students' rally in March to give an ultimatum to the government to fulfil the demands like free bus pass, student union elections and reversal of the fee hike. It also resolved to follow the rally with a Jail Bharao movement.

The conference was addressed by Com. Kavita, AISA President, Com. S. Kumarasamy, CCM, CPI(ML) and Com. Selvi, member of AISA National Executive. A 27-member District Committee was elected, which elected Senthil as Honorary President, Barathi as President and Immanuel as General Secretary along with 8 secretaries. The conference has generated positive enthusiasm among the students.

AISA Dharna at Lucknow

AISA staged a dharna at the statue of Dr. Ambedkar at Hazratganj crossing on 11 January to protest BJP govt. decision to stop stipend to 60 lakh dalit students.

Govt. Overcharges Rs.435 Cr. Under PDS, Says CAG

Taking serious exception to "overcharging" of consumers under public distribution system (PDS), the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has said in its latest report on food and consumer affairs: "Consumers were charged Rs.435.71 crores in excess due to passing on extra expenditure to them instead of absorbing from state budgets ... Thus, the main objective of providing wheat and rice at uniform and affordable rate was not fulfilled".

In Tamil Nadu, consumers were overcharged by Rs.251.44 crore due to passing on the retail margins to them for foodgrains and kerosene oil, though the charges were to be borne by the state government.

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**ML Update
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President Warns against Attempts to Tamper with the Constitution

President K.R. Narayanan's address to the nation on this year's Republic Day eve was quite hard-hitting. Exercising his prerogative to the hilt, the President took the opportunity to sound a timely alarm against the saffron design to revise the Constitution. He came down heavily on the idea that the Constitution has to be revised to guarantee stable governments at the Centre. He was categorical that the founding fathers of the Constitution had preferred responsibility to stability and any attempt to ensure stability by restricting the opposition's right to defeat a government through no-confidence motion or other means would therefore amount to a brazen violation of the essential spirit of the Constitution and Parliamentary democracy.

He even went to the extent of comparing the campaign for revising the Constitution with Pakistan's former military dictator Ayub Khan's notion of 'guided democracy' based on indirect election. The President probably thought that comparison with Pakistan would cause the most devastating embarrassment to the Sangh Parivar. But the use of Pakistan as the anti-democratic stereotype seems a little prejudiced and hence rather ill-advised in a Presidential address.

The saffron brigade has been predictably piqued by the President's address. The BJP spokesperson Jana Krishnamurthy has taken exception to the Presidential alarm calling it unnecessary and unfortunate. He would have us believe that nobody is advocating indirect election and all that. Incidentally, the Constitution Review Commission has just released its first set of consultation papers and questionnaires concerning various aspects of the constitutional framework of India's parliamentary democracy. The Commission seems to be particularly haunted by the spectre of instability and it would like to subject India's multi-party system to drastic regimentation. In fact, the first question of the questionnaire on political parties asks whether political parties are necessary in a democracy! Another paper talks of a certain 'Gandhian model' of elections whereby direct franchise will be limited to the panchayat level and the upper tiers from Zilla Parishad onward will be formed through indirect election! Who are you trying to fool, Mr. Krishnamurthy?

An Attempt to 'Talibanise' Hindu Religion

(From Rajinder Sachar's article "*Are we not a soft state?*")

"The tensions created by the VHP using the occasion of Mahakumbh are a dangerous portent. This is an attempt at 'Talibanisation' of Hindu religion ... This spread of hatred and discord being sought to be projected at the Mahakumbh endangers the real essence of Hinduism and its philosophy of stoicism."

"Who has given the authority to the VHP and a band of cellular phone-holding 'sadhus' to speak on behalf of Hindus. The cowardly act of demolishing the Babri Masjid is condemned by a large majority of Hindus.

"The proceedings of the VHP-managed 'dharma sansad' purporting to fix the outer date for temple construction to coincide with the Assembly election in Uttar Pradesh are a cheap gimmick, betraying the political motivation of the temple movement.

"In this context the visit by the Congress President Ms. Sonia Gandhi to the Kumbh Mela with a view of making a dent in the same obscurantist, fundamentalist religious section of the Hindu electorate is unfortunate. That may help her in getting some votes. but secular fabric of the nation has been further weakened by this open and shameless effort at mixing religion with politics by both the major parties for their electoral gains."

Culture of Resistance Against Culture of Fascist Hindutwa

Jan Sanskriti Manch organised a seminar on "Culture of resistance and creativity" on 15 January in Lucknow. It was presided over by Shaqil Siddiqi of PWA and conducted by Ashok Chandra, poet and convenor of Lucknow unit of JSM.

Introducing the topic of the seminar Ajay Singh, poet and General Secretary of JSM, asserted in his paper that the culture of resistance is inseparably linked with the battle for revolutionary transformation of Indian society. Making it the starting point, a broadbased front of all progressive and left literateurs, artists and cultural activists must be forged against cultural fascism and imperialism. At the dawn of 21st century, the most important cultural task should be elimination of fascist Hindutwa culture and creation of progressive and modern culture based on culture of resistance. Among those who spoke at the occasion include, apart from Shaqil Siddiqi, veteran writer Akhilesh Mishra, Mohan Thapaliyal, Shyam Ankuram, Kishor Kaushal, Anil Sinha, Dr. GP Mishra, Ajanta Lohit, Ramesh Dixit and stage artist RK Sinha.