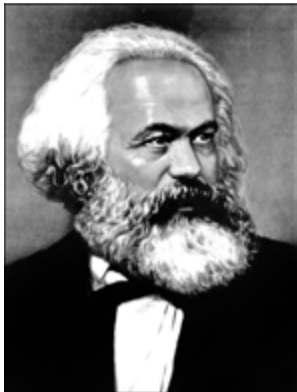


Proletarian Era

Volume 59 No. 14 Fortnightly Organ of the SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (COMMUNIST) 8 Pages
March 1, 2026 Founder Editor-in-Chief : COMRADE SHIBDAS GHOSH Page : 1 ■ Price : Rs. 3.00

Long Live Great Marx



05-05-1818 – 14-03-1883

"They all want the impossible, namely, the conditions of bourgeois existence without the necessary consequences of these conditions. None of them understands that the bourgeois form of production is historic and transitory, just as the feudal form was. This mistake arises from the fact that bourgeois man is to them the only possible basis of every society, they can't imagine a society in which men have ceased to be bourgeois."

(Letter to Annenkov,
28 December 1846)

Long live Great Stalin



18-12-1878 – 05-03-1953

"Many Party organizations underrate the importance of ideological work, with the result that it falls short of the Party's requirements, and in many organizations it is in a state of neglect. Ideological work is a prime duty of the Party, and underestimation of its importance may do irreparable damage to the interests of Party and state. We must always remember that if the influence of socialist ideology is weakened the effect is to strengthen the influence of the bourgeois ideology."

(Report to the
19th Congress of CPSU)

SUCI(C) strongly condemns unprovoked military attack by US-Israel duo on Iran

Comrade Provas Ghosh, General Secretary, SUCI (Communist), has issued the following statement on 28.02.26:

"We vehemently condemn the most atrocious launch of military assault by Zionist Israel on Iran in the name of "Preventive attack"—a baseless alibi, which is nothing but a blatant military intervention with the total backing and all supports of the US imperialists.

Infact it is a blatant aggression on Iran by the US imperialists. We demand immediate halt of the naked aggression against Iran. What is despicable is that it happened just after



Comrade Saumen Basu, Polit Bureau member, SUCI(C), set flame to Trump-Netanyahu's effigy, Kolkata

the visit of the Indian Prime Minister to Israel where he certified his counter part of Israel as crusader

against terrorism.

We call upon the people of the world to come out and develop a powerful peoples' movement to force the US imperialists and Zionist Israel to stop their naked aggression against sovereign Iran.

We also demand that the Government of India must at once sever all diplomatic ties with the Zionist Israel."

Five Indian states are going to the polls. Prior to that, an exercise under the name of Special Intensive Revision of electoral rolls has been undertaken to exclude names of many genuine Indian citizens and *bona fide* voters who are identified to possibly cast vote against the ruling BJP. But this is over and above the prevailing practice of manipulating election results by using money-muscle-media-administrative power. So, despite tall claims of India being the 'biggest democracy', the farce of election is so vividly exposed.

Bourgeois election politics and money spilling

The ruling monopolists decide, in the words of Great Lenin, "*once every few years which member of the ruling class is to repress and crush the people through parliament — such is the real essence of bourgeois parliamentarism, not only in*

Corporate control over election through political funding

parliamentary-constitutional monarchies, but also in the most democratic republics." (State and Revolution) and to materialize that, what they depend on most is money. A tiny portion of amassed fabulous money is apportioned to fund the party or parties of their choice to ensure that the government formed after the poll is to their choice and subservience. Hence the monopoly houses and multi-nationals "stimulate" the party or combination of their choice so that they, after ascending the throne, offer undue facilities to them in return. Similarly, hoarders, black marketers, black money holders and big realty promoters flourishing under the blessings of ruling bourgeoisie also provide money to the parties who,

they know, are managers of oppression and loots by the oligarchs and tycoons. Hence governments of such parties would not come in the way of their illegal activities and wrongdoings. Earlier, corporate donations to political parties were kept secret. But the BJP has made such transactions virtually official by introducing the 'electoral bond' system where both donors and donees are veiled in secrecy.

Anyone with minimum intelligence could understand that this Bond scheme, absolutely opaque in nature, was nothing but a conduit for pumping in corporate money, mostly black, to the coffers obviously of

Contd. on page 2

Epstein files reveal hideous underbelly of decaying capitalism

Capitalism is now in its death throes. The more its condition is worsening, the more reactionary, utterly corrupt and putrid it is becoming. And that rot is spreading all over, sparing none who is either abetting or serving decadent moribund capitalism— be it openly, camouflaged or veiled in secrecy, from bourgeois politicians to academia, some or other well-known personalities; —people moving in the upper or topmost echelons of society

The latest revelations of the Epstein files are a glaring testimony how low the moral-cultural base of such persons has sunk. The unsealing of millions of pages of Epstein files is not merely a criminal archive, it is a socio-political-economic-cultural x-ray of the decrepit capitalist society. Whether what has come out so far in the report represents the entirety of the archive remains uncertain. What is clear, however, is that the files illuminate something far larger than one individual's crimes. Epstein was not an

isolated monster who slipped through ever widening cracks, the yawning gaps in this rotting capitalist order. His rise was made possible by this putrid socio-political-economic system which is granting immunity to injustice, crime, debauchery, autocracy and embodiments of dehumanization. This is not rhetoric. It is a diagnosis of a systemic disease that is eating into the very vitals of life in capitalism.

Who was Epstein

Epstein taught Mathematics and Physics in the city at the private

Contd. on page 4

Contd. from page 1

those parties who are trusted by the industrial houses as subservient to their sinister class interest. And now that has been proved beyond doubt. Exposure shows BJP as the major beneficiary of Rs 16,518.11 crore bonds sold. The details which have been in the public domain indicate that this Electoral Bond Scheme might prove to be the largest scam in independent India. As per available figures, of the total bonds sold amounting to Rs 16,518.11 crore, the ruling BJP is reported to have garnered Rs 8,250 crores which is nearly 57% of the funds disbursed between 2017-2018 and 2022-2023.

And how is that money used to either lure or terrorize the electorates? First of all, following inexorable law of capitalism, inequality is soaring sky high. 95% Indians are facing rising pauperization, while 248 billionaires (as of the 2025 report), have a combined wealth of approximately Rs 98 lakh crore, i.e., 1/3rd of GDP. On the other hand, extreme poverty (a condition where individuals or households are unable to meet the minimum basic necessities required for survival, such as adequate food, clothing, shelter, and healthcare) has remained persistently high, during the years of BJP rule. In the 2025 Global Hunger Index (GHI), India is ranked 102nd out of 123 countries. With a score of 25.8, the country's hunger situation is classified as "serious". So, acute crisis and misery in the life of the toiling masses is rising unabated. People have seen that all governments irrespective of hue and colour of the flag, deceive and deprive them more and more. Before election, the bourgeois leaders and parties, craving for power, feign to be so eager to serve the people and give many hollow promises to deceive people. After election, all those promises vanish in the blue. When

Corporate funding

asked, the power-monger bourgeois leaders say nonchalantly that such gimmicks are necessary to win election. The people feel cheated and say in a frustrated voice that 'he who goes to Lanka, becomes Ravana'. Such has been going on for long.

Bereft of political consciousness and education, these unorganized people are helpless, hapless. They do not know that they are not supposed to be objects of pity of the governments nor are they to capitulate before the red eyes of the vote-based political parties. So, they presume their distress and hardship are *fait accompli*.

They also know that come election, the bourgeois parliamentary parties would come out with bagful of money and distribute cash and food in the areas inhabited by the poor people, in the slums and shanties. They also view casting vote as a simple ritual, nothing more than that. So, these oppressed millions think that since they are anyhow not going to get anything later, let them grab whatever crumbs are thrown by these power-mongers before election. And whomever they vote is immaterial as all are same, not bothered about common people's predicament. So, they line up for getting cash and kind distributed before election. Taking advantage of such haplessness of the have-nots, vote is purchased by money. One or ten votes are bought by thousands of rupees. And then there are doles and freebies on offer. In fact, the vote-based bourgeois petty-bourgeois parties are now competing each other as to who could lure the downtrodden more with offers of better perks from the public exchequer and corner their votes. It bears recall that our hon'ble BJP PM once called this practice of giving

doles as 'rewdi politics'. But no he and his party is on the forefront in doling out pre and post-election freebies.

A huge amount of money streams into election

Now about how the administration remains an indulgent onlooker. According to the rule, the maximum limit on expenses of each contesting candidate is Rs 95 lakh for a Lok Sabha constituency and Rs 40 lakh for an Assembly constituency. But there is no ceiling of expenditure that a political party can defray in the elections. Rulebook says every political party has to submit its income and expenditure report after every election. But such mandates are in effect applicable only for smaller parties while the mainstream vote-based parties enjoy an unwritten exemption. 'Association of democratic Rights' (ADR) has found in its survey that total funds collected by 5 national and 27 regional political parties during last parliamentary amounted to a total of Rs 7,445.566 cr. Of this, as high as Rs 6,268.006 cr or 84.18% of the total funds went to the BJP. 32 National and Regional parties together spent Rs 3,352.81 cr during the Lok Sabha and assembly elections 2024, of which Rs 2204.318 cr (65.75%) was spent by the 5 National Parties. These are all available figures. Unavailable figure would be several times more. Election expenses include campaigning expenditure in various forms. Besides these, as stated above, a lump sum of money is used for, to state in appropriate language, bribing the voters.

The BJP rule has virtually turned the country into a land where unbridled loot of monopoly capital is on the rise. Almost all state-owned enterprises-railways, oil, gas, banks,

insurance, airports, mountains, forests, mines - the wealth of the country, the wealth of the people, are handed over to the corporates in a silver platter.

Even business tycoons receive money from the state fund as well in different forms—sometimes as a grant, sometimes as a package, sometimes loan waivers,

Recently, the Tata group got the clearance to set up two semiconductor plants in BJP-ruled Gujarat and Assam. The central government has announced to bear 50% of the capital expenditure of these factories, i.e. Rs 44,203 crore. Within a few days, 15 companies of the Tata group gave Rs 915 crore to the Progressive Electoral Trust of which, Rs 758 crore went to the kitty of the BJP. Therefore, Tata group filled its bag with Rs 44,000 crore from the government fund against contributing Rs 758 crore to the BJP's fund. Examples are galore.

Let not people fall prey to this dirty politics

The capitalists run their business with the help of their managers. The ministers have become their political managers, and the bourgeois as well as petty-bourgeois parties their obedient subjects. So, even if the government changes, but the pro-capitalist policies do not change. Political funding by corporates is a feature of capitalist system now ailing in its decadent moribund stage. Our appeal to the suffering millions is not to fall a prey to this dirty bourgeois politics but try to acquire necessary political consciousness to understand how they are treated as purchasable community, how they are humiliated as bribe-prone greedy populace and how they are made pawns in the power game of the exploiters and plunderers.

So, we thought it necessary to revisit this aspect on the eve of ensuing assembly elections.

My name is Mohammad Deepak Kumar

— What is your name?

— Deepak Kumar.

— How can Mohammed Deepak Kumar be anybody's name?

— Why do you need to know my name? This time, the answer is stark.

On January 26, India's Republic Day, a group of Hindutva (members of the Bajrang Dal) attacked the shop of 70-year-old Wakil Ahmed in the town of Kotdwar, Uttarakhand. Because the name of the shop is 'Baba School Dress Centre'. According to the saffron party, 'Baba' means an elderly person, or a 'saint' or 'sage'. Therefore, so many people mistakenly think he is a Hindu and go to a Muslim's shop. It's 'illegal.' As a result, the name of the shop will have to be changed; otherwise, the shopkeeper will have to change his religion. When the old shopkeeper

could not understand what to do after hearing this hateful fatwa, a local youth, Deepak Kumar, came forward. He directly challenged the saffron forces. Her question: Why change the name of a thirty-year-old store? Will Hindus change their father's name? The word 'Baba' is not a Hindu word; Muslims also use the word 'Baba'. Then why can't the word 'father' be kept in the name of the shop? Deepak not only asked questions but also chased them away from Wakeel Ahmed's shop. His friends and colleagues were also present. They are also Hindus. Among them, Vijay Rawat also strongly opposed the threat of radical Hindutva.

Although they turned back before Deepak's resistance that day, they returned exactly five days later with a hundred and a half men from

different parts of Uttarakhand. A large contingent of police was present. They went in front of Deepak's gym and started threatening him. BJP's Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami has ranked first in India in 2025 for delivering 'hate speech' across India. As a result, the police of his government did not remove the rioters and instead took Deepak to the police station on the pretext of 'security'. The police had registered an FIR in Deepak's name. However, no one was named in the FIR lodged by Deepak. The entry of journalists and human rights activists into Kotdwar was banned. But this did not scare Deepak. He said, "I am neither Hindu, nor Muslim, nor Sikh, nor Christian. First of all, I am a man. Because after death, I am answerable to God and humanity, not to any

religion." "I want to tell all of you-my brothers, sisters and friends-that our country needs love and affection, not hatred," he said in a video message. "You can spread hatred as much as you want, it cannot be stopped. But love is a big thing."

In Uttarakhand, shops of Muslim shopkeepers were forcibly closed during the 'Chardham Yatra'. During the 'Maha Kumbh Mela' in Allahabad, shopkeepers were forced to write religious identity in their shops. The BJP has been cultivating such hatred since it came to power in the country in 2014. In many places, the delivery boys were sent back by the customers after knowing the identity of Muslims. There have been allegations of harassment after knowing the religious identity of the driver or passengers. Today, India needs brave young men and women like Mohammad Deepak Kumar, who will refute the fascists firmly.

Galgotias University's plagiarism in India AI summit has ridiculed the country before the world

The India AI Impact Summit 2026 was organized by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology under its 'India AI Mission', at Bharat Mandapam, New Delhi, from 16-21 February last. It was inaugurated by PM Modi who espouses arch communal utterly revivalist Hindutva doctrine, banishment of scientific thought and rational bent of mind and seek solution in spiritual devotion and divine endowment. Speaking during his monthly radio address *Mann Ki Baat*, Modi described the summit as a showcase for "India's remarkable capabilities" in AI. "At the AI summit exhibition, I showed myriad things to world leaders. I want to mention two things in particular. These two products at the summit greatly impressed leaders from around the world," the Prime Minister said. The first demonstration, he explained, illustrated how AI is transforming animal healthcare and helping farmers manage dairy operations and livestock through round-the-clock digital assistance. Even as the country was gearing up for this event over the past couple of months, a constitutional authority was releasing reports on what digital governance has achieved since 2015. Hon'ble PM also said world leaders at the AI Impact Summit 2026, meant to project India as a serious contender in the global AI ((artificial intelligence) race were "amazed" by India's use of artificial intelligence mainly to preserve ancient texts and traditional knowledge systems. But what was not disclosed whether the quality of digitalization that the country has achieved today warrants the great leap forward into an Artificial Intelligence-driven future.

A symposium of irony

What hon'ble PM did not mention was that the India AI Impact Summit 2026 was virtually a symposium on irony. Neha Singh, a communications professor at Greater Noida-based Galgotias University, gestured towards a four-legged robot at the varsity's stall and proudly introduced it as having been "developed by the Centre of Excellence at that University" naming it 'Orion'. This, she claimed, as the university's own breakthrough in artificial intelligence. But within hours, X (formerly Twitter) identified it as the Unitree Go2, a product of Chinese manufacturer Nitree Robotics, available off the shelf for roughly Rs 2-3 lakh. The robodog was not the only exhibit that day attracting scepticism. A football-playing drone on display from the Galgotias

University campus—presented as an indigenous project — was alleged to closely resemble the Striker V3 ARF, a commercially available model designed by Hesel Group, South Korean company, retailing in India for around Rs 40,000. As a face saving, the university was subsequently asked to vacate its stall. The wound was healed but the scar remained.

Enviably record of Galgotias University

But for those who have followed Galgotias University over the years, the episode felt less like a shocking revelation and more like a familiar pattern — a pattern of inflated claims, manufactured credibility, plagiarism and public unravellings. Many users trolled various departments of the university with a funny collection of memes (an image, video, piece of text, etc., typically humorous in nature, that is copied and spread rapidly by internet users, often with slight variations). During the pandemic, Galgotias University faculty published a research paper claiming that the vibrations produced by striking a thali (metal plate used to serve food) — and ringing bells — could kill the coronavirus. Perhaps based on that, PM Modi during onset of the pandemic gave call to beat metal utensils to keep the virus at bay. The paper was widely ridiculed. It drew serious scrutiny toward the university's academic standards and its peer-review process, or, to be exact, apparent lack of that. Pertinent to recall that in 2024, a group of Galgotias University students went viral for entirely different reasons. Participating in a political protest in New Delhi against "urban Naxalism", several students were filmed unable to pronounce — or explain — the very slogan on their placards. Some read it as "urban maxwell". When reporters asked them about the meaning of "urban-Naxalism", the students fumbled visibly. The clip circulated as a meme and raised uncomfortable questions about the quality of civic awareness being cultivated on campus of that University.

Foundation of the University was shadowed by controversy

Long before the robots and the drones, the very foundation of the institution were shadowed by controversy. The university's founder, Suneel Galgotia, was accused of using forged documents to obtain a loan of Rs 120 crore. The allegations, relating to the period between 2010 and 2012, cast a long shadow over the institution's governance from its earliest years.

But that did not come in the way of the University in securing blessings of PM Modi. Reports indicate that PM Modi previously recognized Galgotias University, with mentions of him handing them the DQ ICT award and calling it a "top" private university in terms of academics and global linkages. The university has also been known to host exhibitions related to the PM Modi. Galgotias University had also publicly declared that its teaching and research engagements are based on PM Modi's vision of "Aatmanirbhar Bharat" (Self-reliant India). The directive is clear: India must occupy space in global rankings so that the state can claim "Vishwa Guru" status every year, regardless of the hollowed-out reality beneath.

Ludicrous defence

Galgotias, when cornered, fell back on the same script. The university spoke of a "slip of the tongue" and "misunderstandings." On 17 February, the university posted on X that "Galgotias has not built this robodog, neither have we claimed so". It said it had "recently acquired" the robodog from Unitree. What a *volte face!* And then, around 1.40 am on 18 February 18, Galgotias doubled down, alleging a "propaganda campaign" against it and stating that the university community was "deeply pained" at the way they were criticized which amounted to dampening the national spirit. "Spreading negativity can harm the morale of students, who are working hard to innovate, learn, and build their skills using global technologies," the statement said. At 5.04 pm same day, the university issued a third statement where it "apologized profusely" for the "confusion" and sought to pin the blame on Neha Singh. Without naming her, the statement said: "one of our representatives manning the pavilion was ill-informed". But in a statement to ANI, Neha Singh said she might not have expressed herself clearly. "Your 6 can be my 9," she remarked — a weird philosophical defence at what is meant to be a technological summit. Yet the derision directed at Galgotias spills over onto India itself. How could such a brazen deception find space in an arena of such purported prestige—an event where the Prime Minister's image was the primary currency, people asked. People also wondered who vetted the credentials of Galgotias University. Who opened the doors of this fair to them? Even before the claim of originality was exposed, a Union BJP Minister had already bestowed public endorsement upon it.

Do our ministers now affix a sovereign seal to every claim without scrutiny? He deleted his post after the uproar but did not apologize.

Events framed as act of grace by PM Modi

Pertinent to mention that every national programme, project or summit, in our contemporary public discourse, is framed as an act of grace by PM Modi, performed for his glory. The Galgotias episode recalls a man stepping into the sunlight in a spotless, starched kurta, only to have a sudden clod of mud ruining the image. There is a suspicion that suspects Galgotias is being castigated not for its fraud, but for the tactical error of damaging the "brand."

But perhaps such expectations are naive. When the PM Modi himself suggests that ancient Indian "wisdom" included stem cell technology—proven, he said, by the birth of the Kauravas—or that the first organ transplant was performed by a divine surgeon who placed an elephant's head on Ganesha, the boundary between myth and empirical fact dissolves. When the hon'ble PM tells the youth that tea can be brewed using gas harvested from a gutter, why should a university feel tethered to the constraints of truth? When imagination replaces inquiry at the highest levels, Galgotias is merely a diligent student of the prevailing climate.

Galgotias University—a product of 'Amritkal'

Fact is that, as observed by a noted educationist, Galgotias is not an outlier but a symptom of systemic rot. The state rewards institutions on the basis of "rankings"—autonomy, new campuses, and the lucrative right to grant online degrees are all tethered to these metrics. Institutions are driven into a race of numbers. They inflate research publications and patent filings to satisfy the authorities of accreditation. We are witnessing the rise of degree factories designed to satisfy the government's craving for high Gross Enrolment Ratio (GER) statistics. If quality is never interrogated, the numbers look magnificent. It bears recall that the BJP government has an unenviable record of promoting this logic. It awarded the tag of "Institution of Eminence" to Ambani group-owned Jio Institute when the institution did not yet exist—it was merely an idea. All these are in consonance with the proclamation of a novel education system that has been described in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP

Contd. on page 4

Contd. from page 3

20) as a mark of India's entry into 'Amritkal' (Period of elixir).

Foundation history of Galgotias

Now a few words about the foundation history of the Galgotias University. The university was set up by Suneel Galgotia, who has publicly aligned the institution with the political leadership's vision in recent years, stating, "*We remain committed to realizing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of making India a developed nation and a global leader and Vishwa Guru, and to Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's dream of establishing UP as a global knowledge superpower.*" So, there ought not to be any confusion about the vision and mission of this Tech-university. Over the years, Suneel Galgotia, the university's founder and chancellor, has aligned the institute's mission with the political vision of the BJP-led government. In public statements, he has praised PM Modi, declaring that Galgotias is "*fully committed to fulfil PM Modi's vision of making India a Vishwaguru,*" framing the university's role within the national push towards a "*developed nation and global leader*". He has also spoken appreciatively of UP BJP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, crediting his leadership with turning the state into an emerging hub for investment and higher education. Since then, he and his son Dhruv Galgotia, CEO of the university, has continuously echoed similar hues. Pertinent to mention that both Suneel and Dhruv Galgotia were invited as select dignitaries to PM Modi's swearing-in ceremony at Rashtrapati Bhavan. So, the University's

Contd. from page 1

Dalton School in New York, in the mid-1970s although he never graduated. A father of one of his students is stated to have been so impressed that he put Epstein in touch with a senior partner at the Wall Street investment bank Bear Stearns. In no time Epstein became a partner of the firm. According to *The New York Times*, on multiple occasions Bear Stearns questioned Epstein's actions, including lying about his education in his résumé and charging expensive jewelry purchased for a girlfriend to the company. Still, in 1980, Epstein's profile was riding high. An internal investigation held Epstein's actions as violative of the Securities and Exchange Commission regulations. He was suspended and fined but denied wrongdoing, saying he was "deeply offended" by the investigation, and ultimately quit the firm. Clearly, his "connection" at the top came to his rescue.

Epstein's fortunes swelled so

Plagiarism of Galgotias University

proximity to the ruling dispensation and its avowal to uphold philosophy of the RSS-BJP are above question. Hence, the blessings of the ruling BJP have been poring on it as a mark of *quid pro quo*.

Quid pro quo

In 2014, Galgotias University received a reward presented by PM Modi, who was then the Chief Minister of Gujarat, at the DQ Cybermedia awards in Delhi, recognizing the institution for academic excellence and global linkages. Galgotias also hosted BJP leaders at conferences and academic programmes. UP minister Yogendra Upadhyaya has served as chief guest at an international academic event, while BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra has appeared at a convocation ceremony. On February 17-18, 2021, at a ceremony attended by the then education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal, the university took an oath to implement a 12-step roadmap for the policy, which, among other things, includes the integration of 'Indian knowledge systems', a prescript of ruinous NEP 20, into its curriculum. During a 2022 UP Digi Shakti Yojna event, Dhruv Galgotia praised the "positive success" of digitization under the current leadership, stating: "*Under the leadership of our Prime Minister Modi and our Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, there has been a positive success towards digitising UP. Uttar Pradesh has become one of the digitally active states.*" Galgotias University also distributed 72 tablets to students under the UP government's Digi Shakti scheme. In

November 2024 Galgotias participated in VIVIBHA 2024 (Vision of Viksit Bharat), an event organized by the Bharatiya Shikshan Mandal, an RSS affiliate working in the education sector. During the event, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat visited the university's pavilion, which Galgotias noted had been named "Best Exhibitor". Union HRD Minister Dharmendra Pradhan also delivered a keynote address at a National Innovation Workshop co-hosted by Galgotias University in August 2025 in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, AICTE and the Innovation Cell. Earlier this month, Dhruv Galgotia was featured as a speaker at the India Today Education Conclave in Delhi, and as far back as 2012, the university has served as a conclave partner for the 'India Today Conclave's branding and promotion.

Endeavour to firm up fascist cultural base

To conclude, it can only be said that education in India is in its lifetime peril. The motto of the BJP government is to annihilate education in every respect, distort its objective and transform it into a saleable



AIUTUC workers demonstrating in Surat along with other central trade unions on All India Strike Day on 12 February.



Protest in Gwalior, MP, on 17 February to press for resolution of burning problems of life

Epstein Files

much that by 1982, he had created his own firm - J Epstein and Co. Epstein became a multimillionaire very soon. He developed a social circle that included extremely wealthy individuals, prominent politicians, and even royalty. Even as he was climbing the ladder at Bear Stearns, he already mingled with some of the wealthiest movers and shakers of not just New York or US, but of the world. Throughout the 1980s, Epstein's charisma continued to charm the elite, wealthy as well as powerful circles of not only US but of the entire world. In the 1990s Epstein began running his business from the island of St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands of US—a tax haven. He later purchased another island in the same vicinity, Great St. James. He also owned several private jets.

He was not! only making fortunes from stock speculation and leveraging close ties with the two

most powerful US presidents, Bill Clinton and Donald Trump. It is alleged that apart from helping his connections with tips of financial gains, with or without compliance with regulatory mechanism, he was also instrumental in satiating perverse proclivities. The 2005 police report in Palm Beach marked the beginning of formal scrutiny into the allegations against him about trafficking and promoting sex trade. Investigators uncovered a pattern: underage girls were recruited to provide "massages" to Epstein's clients against cash payment (to keep the names of the clients secret) and incentivized to recruit others. It was exploitation structured like a pyramid scheme.

Probe into Epstein's activities

By 2007, US federal prosecutors possessed substantial evidence. Yet instead of a sweeping indictment, Epstein secured a non-prosecution agreement (NPA) under then-US Attorney Alexander Acosta. He pleaded guilty to state charges of solicitation and served 13 months in

a county facility with extensive work-release privileges. Following that, federal charges were abandoned and no one was informed of the terms of granting such an amnesty. Legally, this was a scandal. Courts later ruled that the rights of the surviving trafficked girls had been violated. Politically, it was revealing. The NPA demonstrated how prosecutorial discretion, combined with twisted legal representation, can transform criminal law into a negotiable instrument. In 2018 an investigative reporter identified some 80 alleged survivors (mostly minor teen-aged girls) of sexual abuse by Epstein or his associates. The report led to renewed examinations of sex-crime allegations against Epstein, and in 2019 a new federal criminal case was brought against him. He was arrested in July on charges of sex trafficking.

But before his trial could commence, he was found dead in a Manhattan jail cell on the morning of 10 August 2019 under mysterious

Contd. on page 6

Indian Railways – A Core Sector Coveted for Corporate Plundering

When a poor migrant worker from the far North-East wants to travel to the South, where he envisages scope for relatively more income generation, he does not have any option but to opt for a train journey. Likewise, an elderly devotee, with his hard-earned savings, plans a pilgrimage and surely prefers to travel by train. Similarly, an unemployed youth or a student appearing for competitive examinations dares to board a crowded compartment, facing many hardships. Middle-class family members of many patients recommended for treatment at a better-equipped hospital in another state, prefer a travel by train. Hence, for an affordable, accessible, and safe journey, the only option left for millions of common people in our country is to undertake train journey.

But this very mode of travel is increasingly becoming not only prohibitive but also out of reach. This is a reality—a hard reality—in a country where two-thirds of the population are living below the poverty line. The single reason for such a development can be traced to the anti-people policies adopted by successive bourgeois governments at the Centre—more aptly, the policy of privatization or corporatization of a large-scale public sector undertaking like Indian Railways.

Before dealing with the disastrous steps taken by various governments in this sector, particularly under the present BJP regime, let us have a glimpse of the length and magnitude of the operations of Indian Railways, built with the sweat and blood of the Indian people. Life-Line of the Nation built with Public Exchequer

It is no exaggeration to say that India cannot be imagined or visualized without taking into consideration the wide network of Indian Railways. Even before Independence, the railways not only helped link the people of various disconnected feudal provinces but also served the cause of national unity and the struggle for freedom. Certainly, in independent India, the role the railways played in the country's economic and industrial growth cannot be ignored. Railways, as it is said, is the artery of the country.

During the last seven or eight decades, rail connectivity has increased enormously, and it has become one of the largest railway systems in the world. At present, Indian Railways operates 13,000 to 13,500 passenger trains and over 11,000 to 11,500 freight trains, connecting more than 7,000 stations across the country. Approximately 23-25 million passengers travel by train

every day. In addition, through a vast over 68,000 kilometer route length, Indian Railways transports over 1.6 billion tonnes of freight annually. Across the railway system, nearly 1,300 goods sheds are operational. Around 3,00,000 loading workers are employed on a contract basis.

It is known to all that such a huge operational network could become a reality only with the investment of an enormous amount of public money and the hard labour rendered by lakhs of railway workers over the years. The Indian people's money has been used to create assets valued at around Rs. 60 lakh crores over the years.

In fact, just after Independence, when the country's industrialization drive was initiated along a capitalist path, no individual capitalist was interested in establishing core and key sectors like coal, power, roads, railways, and telecommunications, where immediate profit maximization were not assured due to long gestation periods. Moreover, a large amount of capital was required to be invested. But without establishing such key sectors, no capitalist would have been in a position to produce and market consumer goods for reaping immediate profits.

Under such circumstances, the Indian government, subserving the class interest of the ruling monopolists, came forward to open key and core sectors with funding from public exchequer collected through taxes. Thus, the idea of the public sector was conceived, and the building of the railways, as one of the essential key sectors, was undertaken. Although it was termed a so-called mixed economy, the development of Indian capitalism was the core content of Nehruvian economic policy, and the same continued for quite some time, building various public sector units, including the railways. The public sector in a capitalist set up, it bears mentioning, is also aimed at serving bourgeois class interest. In fact, in course of developing Indian capitalism, state monopoly capital also plays an important part. We avoid elaboration for brevity's sake.

Globalization marked the policy shift

At the turn of significant international events in the 1990s, when the erstwhile Soviet Union and other socialist countries faced counter-revolutions and the restoration of capitalist systems, an imperialist-dominated unipolar world order had emerged. The slogan of capitalist globalization, along with neo-colonial prescriptions, was imposed

worldwide. The Indian ruling class, as a relatively junior partner of the imperialist alliances, adopted the policy of privatization in all fields, including key and core sectors, to the delight of Indian monopolists who had by then amassed huge wealth by exploiting millions of Indian people. The surplus capital in their hands was in search of lucrative fields of investment. Naturally, Indian Railways became an attractive avenue for corporates to mint maximum profits at the cost of providing safe, affordable, and accessible travel to the general public.

The programme of privatizing Indian Railways was initiated by the Congress-led coalition government headed by P. V. Narasimha Rao in 1994, as part of the overall globalization scheme. Subsequently, a slew of measures was adopted by the Ministry of Railways. During the last 25 to 30 years, all Central governments—irrespective of hue—have carried forward the agenda of privatization of Indian Railways in the name of “restructuring,” “rationalization,” and “improvement of efficiency,” and so on.

Since Indian Railways is the biggest public entity, it is difficult to hand it over entirely to the private players at a single stroke. So, the various segments of Railway operation—maintenance, catering, cleaning, safety devices, and upkeep of station were first segregated. Then each segment was brought under separate corporations. And then those corporations are now being corporatized part by part. Significant steps toward breaking up and privatizing Indian Railways were first taken by the BJP-led coalition government under the Prime Ministership of late Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Many committees were set up from time to time to justify each phase of privatization. Among these, the Rakesh Mohan Committee (2001), set up by the BJP-led NDA government, Sam Pitroda Committee (2011) constituted by Congress-led UPA government and the Bibek Debroy Committee (2014), set up by the present Modi-led BJP government, are the most prominent ones in pushing forward privatization spree.

Privatization in a planned manner

As stated earlier, under the guise of terms like rationalization, restructuring, and efficiency improvement, different segments traditionally supervised under one roof by Indian Railways are being opened to private capital, while less profit-generating segments are still left to be run by the government. The Rakesh

Mohan Committee (2001) recommended that Indian Railways should engage only in activities directly related to its “core activity” of goods and passenger transport, while all “non-core activities” should be outsourced or corporatized. The Sam Pitroda Committee (2011) further pushed privatization under the name of Public-Private Partnership (PPP). Although termed a partnership, PPP is, in reality, an unequal arrangement where the private company is assured of profits while the government bears the risks. The State guarantees a rate of return on private capital. If losses are incurred, they are ultimately borne by the people, while profits go into private hands. The Bibek Debroy Committee (2014) recommended major steps toward near-complete privatization. As part of these recommendations, the separate Railway Budget was abolished, thereby removing the special status of such an important transport sector like Indian Railways.

It also recommended separating Indian Railways into a track-holding company and train-operating companies competing with private operators. This effectively opened even the “core activities” of running passenger and goods trains to privatization, leaving only track maintenance with the government. And, even this track maintenance is majorly outsourced to private operators.

About two dozen public sector corporations have been formed to separate activities that were previously performed by Indian Railways, and these include: 1. IRCON International Ltd., 2. Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC), 3. Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC), 4. Container Corporation of India Ltd. (CONCOR), 5. Mumbai Railway Vikas Corporation (MRVC), 6. Rail Vikas Nigam Ltd. (RVNL), 7. Konkan Railway Corporation (KRCL), 8. Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation Ltd. (DFCCIL), 9. High Speed Rail Corporation Ltd. (HSRCL), 10. RAILTEL Corporation of India Ltd., 11. RITES Ltd., 12. Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA), 13. Indian Railway Stations Development Corporation Ltd. (IRSDC), etc. These are being privatized in a phased manner, as planned.

When the privatization of the core activity of running passenger and freight trains began in 2021, the process of introducing 150 private passenger trains on 109 selected profitable routes was initiated. Revenue-earning routes are being handed over to private operators, while loss-making sections remain with the Railways. The Railway Ministry had also announced plans to hand over 30% of goods traffic and 30% of railway stations to private

Contd. on page 6

Contd. from page 4

circumstances. Whether it was a suicide or murder still remains opaque.

Release of Epstein files

Reportedly, attempts were made from quarters of vested interest to stall the release and tamper with the documents with a view to removing the “prominent” names. Finally, after a lot of dillydallying, particularly when throughout 2025, calls from survivors of Epstein’s abuse, estimated to number more than 1,000 girls and young women, were pouring in, the files were released.

The “Epstein Files” consist of investigative records accumulated over years: testimony, communications, photographs, financial documents. Their partial release followed intense public pressure and legislative action. But disclosure itself has become political terrain. Redactions protect certain names. Survivors have raised concerns about privacy breaches. Questions persist about whether all materials have been released. Transparency, in other words, remains mediated by institutional calculation. It was argued that mere association with Epstein does not equal guilt, and not every individual mentioned in the documents is accused of criminal conduct. Yet the density of ‘top level’ interconnection is sociologically significant. Former bourgeois political leaders, royalty, business magnates, academics—all appear within a social orbit that normalized association with a convicted sex offender. And circumstantial evidence does imply a raw fact that the trafficked girls were used to “entertain” high ups associated with Epstein. The list includes big names like President Trump, Elon Musk and others from USA, as well as many prominent politicians and public figures from different countries across the globe. The latest release of documents of Jeffrey Epstein also contain evidence that may set off political infernos around the globe for featuring the names of world leaders. Ghislaine Noelle Marion Maxwell, a British former socialite and accomplice

Epstein Files

of Jeffrey Epstein, was convicted of child sex trafficking and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Thus, with this latest disclosure of documents and emails linked to the cases against Epstein, yet more has been revealed about the financier’s criminal sexual abuse of young girls and his interactions with wealthy and powerful figures not only from USA but from the United Kingdom, Australia, Norway, Slovakia and India.

Sexual exploitation long predates capitalism

Sexual exploitation long predates capitalism. It has certainly not abated in capitalism – a system that is based on exploitation and profit motive, but there were certain strictures in public life earlier. In the late 1963, John Profumo (a British politician and philanthropist was alleged to be the central character in one of the UK’s most spectacular sex scandals of the 20th century. Stories circulated that he had had an affair with a prostitute, Christine Keeler, a teenaged showgirl, who had also shared her favours with Yevgeny Ivanov, then the Khrushchev-led Soviet military attaché in London. His lie to Parliament, together with the obvious security dangers of the Ivanov association, forced his resignation in June from both the cabinet and Parliament and contributed to the fall of the then British government in that October. Later, much commotion was created when Monica Lewinsky, a former White House intern, had claimed that Bill Clinton, during his tenure as US President, had abused his power to establish a sexual relationship with her several times.

The accusation led to impeachment proceedings against Bill Clinton who initially denied it. But later he was forced to admit that he did have an “inappropriate relationship” with her. Allegations of extra-marital affair of John Kennedy, former US President with Hollywood Actress Marilyn Monroe also created some commotion in the 1960s.

But now with unfolding of Epstein file, what comes most glaringly to the fore is how moribund capitalism’s fusion of wealth concentration, global mobility, offshore finance and political capture magnify the scale and shields perpetrators of sex crimes. Thus, sex abuse and sex crime has been globalized, in a way, and institutionalized with fine-tuning of a powerful nexus having its tentacles spread round the globe. Private jets and islands are not incidental details; they are infrastructures of impunity to both crimes and the criminals.

Indian connection

Documents released reveal conversations between Anil Ambani, the billionaire chairman of Reliance Group, known to be close to PM Modi and Epstein. All the conversations took place in the years following Epstein’s first conviction for sex offences in 2008. The two emailed each other about a range of issues, from sizing up incoming US ambassadors to India to setting up meetings for PM Modi with top US officials. One would recall that in September 2016 when the Indian and French governments signed an inter-governmental agreement, known as the “Rafale deal” involving Rs. 59,000 crore or 7.8 billion Euros, highly indebted Anil Ambani’s Reliance Aerostructure which has no past experience and expertise of manufacturing aerospace and defence equipment nor even any factory in place to do so, Dassault, the Rafale jet manufacturing French company, selected such a heavily debt-burdened non-experienced Indian firm bypassing public sector giant like Hindustan Aeronautics for such a maiden joint venture in defence.

Another major Indian name featured in the Epstein files is Hardeep Singh Puri, who retired from the Indian Foreign Service to join BJP in 2014 and then a minister before winning any Lok Sabha or Rajya Sabha seat. Emails were exchanged between Puri and Epstein from June 2014. In December 2014, Puri wrote to Epstein again by email: “Please let

me know when you are back from your exotic island,” he wrote, asking to set up a meeting in which Puri could give Epstein some books to “excite an interest in India”. Documents released also show Puri met Epstein at his Manhattan townhouse on at least three occasions: 4 February 2015, 6 January 2016 and 19 May 2017. In self-defence, Puri told Indian media that his visits and interactions with Epstein were strictly business-related.

Concluding words

The Epstein files are not about scandal alone. It is about the permeability between wealth, political authority and degraded bourgeois culture epitomized in political figureheads of different countries, India included. Epstein’s social circle was transnational. Financial globalization has produced what might be called an informal global club of oligarchs—individuals who share conference stages, philanthropic boards, and investment vehicles. These networks transcend national boundaries and often outpace regulatory frameworks. It is has also exposed that sex-rackets and underage girl trafficking have become a roaring trade. The ruling capitalist class and their political managers promise efficiency and prosperity. Yet when wealth concentration reaches oligarchic proportions, it corrodes even minimum legal accountability, safeguards crime and moral degradation. Commodification expands until even human vulnerability becomes exploitable capital. Epstein is dead. Maxwell is imprisoned. But the structures that enabled them—gross financial opacity, elite solidarity, and prosecutorial discretion shaped by class power—remain intact. If the files are to mean anything beyond spectacle, they must catalyze structural change i.e. revolutionary overthrow of obsolete, putrid capitalism after fulfilling necessary conditions enumerated by Great Marx and Lenin. Without it, the archive of crimes will stand not as a reckoning but as documentation of a system that knew, negotiated, and continued.

Contd. from page 5

operators, including the iconic World Heritage like Mumbai CSMT station.

Another recommendation was that investments should not be made in projects that do not have traffic and do not generate revenue. This implies that investments would be made only in profit-guaranteeing projects, abandoning the social objective of providing rail connectivity to remote areas. Also, the cost of tickets are being periodically raised, passenger trains renamed as express trains for being charged higher, price of platform tickets hiked substantially—all based on recommendation for profit maximization.

Railways

Modi-led BJP government vouches for total privatization

The policies of the present BJP-led central government have fundamentally altered the very purpose of railway transport. Instead of prioritizing the needs of the common people, public funds are being diverted towards luxury, high-speed trains such as Vande Bharat, Amrit Bharat, Duronto, Tejas, and Shatabdi, catering largely to a handful of privileged minority. The cost of a Vande Bharat coach is nearly three times higher than that of the Linke-Hofmann-Busch (LHB) coaches used in regular

express trains. Passenger trains, which are affordable and widely used by ordinary citizens, are being systematically reduced. Second-class sleeper coaches are being removed and replaced with AC sleeper coaches to fetch more money through escalation of fares. Nearly 90% of sleeper coaches have now been converted into AC coaches. Ordinary compartments have become things of distant past. As a result, rail travel is becoming unaffordable for a large section of people. Our hon’ble PM often proclaims the bullet train project between Mumbai and Ahmedabad at a cost of Rs 1.98 lakh crore (\$17-24 billion) as of early 2026, rising from

an initial Rs 1.1 lakh crore estimate due to delays and cost escalations. Whom is this project for? Common toiling masses or the elites like Ambani-Adani and their ilk?

The model for privatized train operation is being tested on the two private Tejas trains started in 2019 through the IRCTC. The fare varies from day to day based on demand, as is the case with airfares now. Railway workers have been advised to give priority to private trains at the cost of other trains to ensure punctuality. The operating staff, such as station managers, train controllers, loco pilots, guards, signalling staff, etc., are

Contd. on page 8

Why is Gold Price rising?

Gold prices have been soaring to historic highs in global and domestic markets, 53 new all-time highs in 2025, reaching over \$5,000 per ounce. The prices of silver or platinum show a similar trend. The question is now why the price of such precious metals, such as gold, has been soaring rapidly.

Gold reserves, as understood, are quantities of gold held by national central banks and governments worldwide. These reserves act as a financial safety net, supporting the value of the national currency and providing a buffer against economic and financial instability. Thus, gold reserves play a crucial role in national economies, often offering stability, confidence and a reliable hedge during times of market or economic uncertainty. In fact, gold has historically been viewed as a reliable store of value over time, especially during economic upheaval. Central banks and governments worldwide hold significant quantities of precious metals, with gold as the metal of choice. These gold reserves are used to bolster and underpin their financial systems and economies, and even to this day, they continue to play a vital role in shaping the global financial landscape.

Although gold reserves play a key role in supporting economies and currencies, it may surprise one to learn that currency is no longer linked to or subject to the gold holdings of a nation. Many people might think that if you take a Rs 500 note to the Reserve Bank of India, they are obliged to convert it into gold, as the currency is backed by or linked to gold in some way. But that is not the case.

Countries maintain gold reserves as a vital part of economic planning and strategy. Firstly, as previously mentioned, gold reserves provide financial stability, as in times of economic uncertainty, gold often acts as a hedge against inflation and even currency devaluation. In addition, gold plays a crucial role in supporting the national currency and instilling confidence in its value. This is particularly important as, generally speaking, a country issues and relies on 'fiat' currency, which is money not backed by a physical commodity. By having significant gold holdings, a country is stated to be reassuring everyone, both domestically and internationally that its currency is stable and credible on the international markets. Countries can use their gold reserves as collateral to secure loans from global financial institutions, or even to enhance their geopolitical influence. Countries with large gold reserves, such as the US, China, and Germany, are often seen as among the most economically powerful, giving

them greater leverage and bargaining power in negotiating economic policies. Countries with large gold holdings often exhibit stronger economies and more resilient currencies, and when these countries increase their reserves, it can drive up gold prices as a result.

This is the general principle governing a capitalist economy where the 'law of value' operates. 'Law of value', as explained by great Marx, is that the value of a commodity is determined by the average socially necessary labour time required for its production, not by its price or utility. It serves as a fundamental, regulative principle in capitalism, dictating that exchange values are proportional to the labour embodied in them. According to Marx, money is a commodity that serves as the universal equivalent, representing the exchange value of all other commodities. Money, to elaborate further, is thus a special commodity (historically gold or silver) or a single commodity that acts as a yardstick of measurement, against which all others could be compared. Marx also clarified in "The Capital": *"What appears to happen is not that a particular commodity becomes money because all other commodities express their values in it, but, on the contrary, that all other commodities universally express their values in a particular commodity because it is money."* Great Engels showed that rise of money and coinage was associated also with the increasing division of labour within class society, and the emergence of *"a class which no longer concerns itself with production, but only with the exchange of the products—the merchants."* (The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State) For brevity's sake, we leave out further expansion of the concept. Money then, as Engels explained, is the product of private ownership, the result of an emergent system of commodity production and exchange. Once called into existence, however, money develops its own logic, spreading through social interaction and asserting its cold, callous laws in one sphere of life after another.

So, that is how gold, as an equivalent of money, has been assuming more and more importance as capitalism plunges more and more into crisis, and the value of currencies with reference to international trade is in periodic fluctuation. And that in turn has a reflection in politics with powerful imperialist countries like the US trying to acquire, besides oil (popularly termed as liquid gold), more and more gold by invading, occupying or planting a puppet government in the countries having gold deposits.

The 21st century is marked by a

series of political and economic disruptions—from pandemic to ongoing conflicts in Eastern Europe and the Middle East, to rising tensions between the United States and China over trade, technology, and territorial issues. Each of these events has created an environment of uncertainty in which Investors seek safety in assets that are immune to political situations or credit risk. This major global factor is one of the top reasons driving the recent rise in gold prices. When global uncertainty is high, investors (meaning both the central banks and the Treasuries of countries, as well as individuals with resources) pour into gold to protect their capital, driving prices higher. Traditionally, central banks maintain foreign exchange reserves dominated by fiat currencies—mainly the US dollar, the euro, and the Japanese yen. However, rising geopolitical tensions, concerns about the weaponisation of currencies, and the desire for greater financial independence have led to a strategic reallocation toward gold. Central banks across the world have also started accumulating gold at unprecedented levels. Central banks have markedly expanded their gold holdings in recent years, purchasing over 1,000 tonnes annually between 2022 and 2024—a sharp increase from the earlier average of 400–500 tonnes per year over the past decade. According to the World Gold Council's 2025 survey, which gathered responses from 73 central banks worldwide, 95% of central bank respondents indicated that they expect global central bank gold reserves to increase over the next 12 months, highlighting a strong consensus on continued accumulation. Countries such as China, Russia, Turkey, India, and Poland have been among the most aggressive buyers.

This global movement toward gold accumulation has a powerful psychological and practical impact on market dynamics. When monetary authorities—the largest and most stable investors in the world—demonstrate confidence in gold, it reassures private investors and institutional funds about the asset's long-term resilience. Moreover, central bank buying reduces available global supply in the open market, exerting direct upward pressure on prices. Ever since President Trump took over the US administration, his unpredictable policies have added to the dollar's uncertainty, making it difficult for anyone to hold it as an asset.

As far as India is concerned, the imports typically fulfil nearly 90% to 95% of the total annual gold demand. Because India has very limited domestic mining, it relies almost entirely on foreign supply and the

recycling of old gold to meet its massive appetite for the yellow metal. While the exchange rate of currency as depreciated sharply, the cost of imports, especially gold, is on the rise. On top of this, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has shifted its gold strategy from passive holding to active accumulation and repatriation. Over the last two years, the RBI has emerged as one of the most aggressive buyers of gold among global central banks. The value of these reserves hit a record \$123 billion in January 2026. For context, this is a massive jump from \$77 billion in March 2025—a nearly 60% increase in value in less than a year. Gold now accounts for nearly 15% of India's total Foreign Exchange (Forex) reserves, up from just 7% a few years ago. Second, the most significant recent trend is the repatriation of gold from overseas vaults (like the Bank of England) back to India. As of late 2025, over 65% (approx. 575 tonnes) of India's gold is now stored domestically. In the first half of the 2025-26 fiscal year alone, the RBI brought back 64 tonnes. This is a strategic move to ensure financial sovereignty. Following the freezing of Russia's assets by G7 nations, the RBI (and many other central banks) decided that "if the gold is not in your custody, it is not your gold." Finally, the RBI's buying spree is part of a broader "de-dollarisation" trend. By reducing its exposure to US Treasury bills and increasing its gold holdings, the RBI is protecting India's economy against US dollar volatility and global inflation. While the RBI bought 54 tonnes in the 2024-25 fiscal year, it has transitioned to more frequent, incremental purchases (approx. 0.2 to 0.4 tonnes monthly) to average out costs amid record-high prices. Therefore, the pressure is on the precious metal prices, mainly gold. However, there must be a limit on accumulation at the Reserve Bank. Because it reduces the liquidity desired to pump money into the hands of citizens.

Moreover, unlike securities, gold does not generate interest income, which may reduce the overall returns on the bank reserves if the price crashes. Finally, physical gold cannot be secured without costs and insurance, which must incur additional expenses and risk to the bank holding it. Let us be clear about one thing. The currency fluctuations, gold price surge, geo-political war tensions, overdose of speculation, stranglehold of monopoly, rising uncertainty, plummeting income of common people, skewed wealth in the hands of a miniscule wealthy—all these are features of crisis-ridden capitalism now in its decadent moribund stage. Alienated from the laws of the capitalist economy, understanding any particular economic feature or phenomenon would leave us nowhere other than whirling in a labyrinth.

Railways at stake

Contd. from page 6

being asked to ensure success of private trains.

Earlier, parcel services at railway stations were easily accessible and highly convenient for the common public. Today, these services have been leased out, leading to irregularities, exploitation by private brokers, and fraudulent practices. Facilities such as waiting halls, public toilets, drinking water supply, and parking places, developed with public funds, are being modernized by way of handing over to private contractors.

These contractors extract profits by charging the public heavily—without investing a single rupee of their own. Thus, infrastructure built with people's money is being systematically transferred into the hands of large corporate contractors. Prior to privatization, the railway catering department operated base kitchens across the country, providing relatively better quality food at affordable prices and generating employment for over one lakh workers. But after the introduction of Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation Ltd. (IRCTC), this system has been dismantled. Catering profits are now being appropriated by private contractors. The IRCTC alone sells around 1.5 million meals every day, earning enormous profits, while workers' rights are ignored. Also, meal quality has deteriorated considerably. Even insects and dead lizards are found in the meal items. Contract workers in pantry cars are forced to work continuously for days in blatant violation of labour laws.

Staff reduced, safety compromised

The number of regular employees has steadily declined after the introduction of privatization measures. Indian Railways had 13,61,519 sanctioned posts. By 2024, this number had been reduced to 12,52,180. Since 2010, 1,67,633 workshop artisan posts—amounting to 57.7% of sanctioned positions—have been abolished. These jobs are now outsourced or assigned to contract workers.

Similarly, the strength of the Railway Protection Force (RPF) has been reduced significantly. Vacancies persist in the signalling, operations, engineering, and electrical departments. Critical posts such as loco pilots, track maintainers, and train managers remain unfilled.

Staff shortage and rise in accidents

Due to staff shortages, employees are forced to work 12 to

20 hours continuously. Lack of adequate rest, mental stress, and exhaustion are contributing factors to accidents. Permanent jobs are being replaced with contract labour, while the government claims that employee salaries are responsible for financial strain. Reports indicate that fatigue and work pressure contribute significantly to accidents.

Recently, 72 Mail train loco pilots have written to the Divisional Railway Managers, seeking voluntary retirement as they are unable to continue in service due to excessive physical and mental stress and strain, irregular working conditions, and pressure from the administrative high ups. Contract workers deployed in safety-related tasks are often not provided with proper training or protective equipment, putting passengers' lives at risk. Moreover, railway accidents have now become a periodic affair. The Coromandel Express accident in June 2023 at Balasore, Odisha, which claimed 288 lives and injured over 1,000 passengers, exposed serious loopholes in maintenance and safety mechanisms despite all tall claims of installation of 'Kavach' technology.

Unity of railway workers and passengers is imperative

In essence, the privatization of Indian Railways has been going on systematically for over 25 years and the government washing off its hands though a railway minister with fabulous salary and perks exists for namesake. International experience shows that privatization often harms both workers and passengers. Private operators focus on profitable routes and neglect less busy ones. Fares tend to increase, restricting access for common people.

The future of Indian Railways cannot be allowed to be determined solely by profit considerations. Needs and interest of the common people, back-broken by rising priceline and depleting income ought to be not only priority but sole objective. It calls for a broad public debate and collective sustained movement against the policy of privatization.

To defend affordable and safe rail transport, unity between railway workers and passengers is essential. The massive railway strike of 1974 demonstrated the power of organized unity. When workers and the general public get united by forming people's committees as instruments of struggle and develop a sustained movement throughout the country, it would surely pressure the government to refrain from implementing unabated privatization of Indian Railways.



ASHA workers' protest on 12 February in Delhi for settling their long pending demands.



Workers of Loktak Hydro Electric Power Station (NHPC) Contract workers Union, Manipur affiliated to AIUTUC & AIPF demonstrating in support of All India General Strike on 12 February.



Demonstration in Durg, Chhattisgarh, on 10 February in demand for resolving basic problems people of the city are reeling under.



AIDSO opposed blanket ban on all forms of public meetings in DU campus. On 19 February, when the AIDS0 and other left organisations were holding press conference, they were assaulted.

WB State SUCI(C) opposes assigning SIR job to judges

In a statement issued on 25-02-26 on assigning SIR job to judges appointed by the Supreme Court, Comrade Chandidas Bhattacharjee, Polit Bureau member and West Bengal State Secretary, SUCI(C), said:

The way the Supreme Court has invoked a constitutional clause to exert its special power to assign the job of determining eligibility-ineligibility of Indians as voters under ongoing SIR, to its appointed judicial officers further strengthens the apprehension that what is going on in the name of SIR is actually preparation of National Register of Citizens (NRC). Right from the beginning our Party has been alleging that the Election Commission is

actually undertaking citizenship verification under the garb of SIR. Our allegation has been confirmed by the working procedure of the hon'ble judges nominated by the Supreme Court to ascertain *bona fide* citizenship of voters. But neither in the Indian Constitution nor in The Representation of People's Act 1950 or The Registration of Electors Rule 1960, such power is vested with the Election Commission. It will be impossible for a large number of Indians particularly downtrodden, migrant workers and women who have received notice for hearing under SIR, to submit the documents sought by the Commission. So, their names will not feature in the final list of voters making their stay in this country totally uncertain.

We once again strongly protest this very exercise of SIR and demand that name of not a single genuine Indian citizen should be dropped from the voters' list.

Statement about ownership and other particulars about newspaper PROLETARIAN ERA to be printed in the first issue after last day of February FORM IV (See rule 8)

Place of publication	: 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata - 700 013
Periodicity of its Publication	: Fortnightly
Printer's Name	: Asit Bhattacharyya
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata - 700 013
Publisher's Name	: Asit Bhattacharyya
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata - 700 013
Editor's Name	: Asit Bhattacharyya
Nationality	: Indian
Address	: 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata - 700 013

Name and address of individuals who own the Newspaper and partners or shareholders holding more than one per cent of the total capital: CENTRAL COMMITTEE, SOCIALIST UNITY CENTRE OF INDIA (COMMUNIST). I, Asit Bhattacharyya, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Sd/- Asit Bhattacharyya
Signature of Publisher

1.3. 2026

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF : PROVASH GHOSH

Edited & Published by Asit Bhattacharyya from 48 Lenin Sarani, Kolkata 700 013 and printed by him at Ganadabi Printers and Publishers Private Limited, 52B, Indian Mirror Street, Kolkata 700013. Phone : 2249-1828, 2265-3234 E-mail : cc.sucicommunist@gmail.com, proletarianera@gmail.com, Website : https://sucic.org