

Towards Socialism

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FOOD SECURITY MUST BE ENSURED, NOT ONLY IN ACT, BUT ALSO IN PRACTICE

DEBABRATA BISWAS, General Secretary, AIFB

Although assured and announced many times, the UPA government is yet to finalise and move the Food Security Bill in Parliament for enactment. But the crisis in food situation is not waiting for the government's patient continuing perusal of the legal and feasibility aspects of their proposed Bill. The country is facing grim prospect so far agriculture production is concerned. The growth-rate in agriculture sector has reached a precarious level as low as 1.5 percent, while, on the other hand the poverty and hunger level is steadily going up, Tendular Committee's report on the level of poverty has pegged the below poverty line families at 38 percent of the population. On the other hand, Arjun Sengupta report has highlighted that 77 percent of our population live on rupees twenty a day. It is generally estimated that about 250 million Indians go to bed without food. The level of poverty and hunger has multiplied several fold in the last five decades and has presently reached a volcanic-eruption stage. India now ranks 66th among 88 countries in the hunger index. In such a situation, food security is a burning issue which the government can not bypass any longer. After all, food security can not be assured relying on food imports. Agriculture productivity must be boosted up, but the present agriculture policy of the government of India gives us no hope in any way.

The right to food must be universal, as a right cannot be selective. If it is not universal, it is not a right. To add to it, we must think of nutrition. Along with food security, we can not rule out the demand for nutrition security for all. Unless there is political will of the government to meet the people's food and nutrition security needs, all attempts to introduce a so-called food security bill will be frustrating. It is rather apprehended that the governments' proposed Bill may cut the present entitlement of the poor to grain, and hence it may cause food insecurity instead of food security. An universal Public Distribution System can only be the answer to food and nutrition insecurity, which is now prevailing due to the UPA government's anti-people economic policy.

The renowned food scientists Prof. M.S. Swaminathan has rightly warned that the number of undernourished persons has increased from about 210 million in 1990-1992 to 252 million in 2004-2006. He further says, 'India has about half the world's under nourished children. Also, there has been a general decline in per capita calorie consumption in recent decades. Grain mountains and hungry millions continue to co-exist'.

The government must pay heed to his valuable suggestion while planning a realistic food security bill. The proposed bill should adopt a three--pronged strategy that constitutes a Universal Public Distribution System for all, including both APL, BPL, low-cost subsidized food grains to the needy poor and confirming a nutrition safety programme. We demand not only such a full-proof food security bill immediately, but also a target-oriented action programme to satisfy food security and nutrition security needs of the people.

Brutal Maoist attack at Dantewada exposes serious lapses in anti-naxal policy and operations of the Union Government

Chhatisgarh has been seized of the Maoist problem for the last several years. And what happened at Dantewada of the Chhatisgarh state on 6 April 2010 is the peak of brutalities committed by the naxalites in which 76 men of the CRPF are killed. The 75 weapons were also lost to the naxalites. This need not be taken as an isolated incident. In the name of liberation of the people, CPI(Maoists) are conducting their operation in a chain of several states, like Andhra Pradesh, Orissa, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh and others, and as a result of which about 220 districts are affected with frequent killing, arson, looting, destruction of schools, medical centres and houses, and damaging roads and communication channels. Most strikingly they are killing the security personnel along with only the poor people of the rural areas. Not a single landlord or rich man are killed by the naxalites. In such a wide spread chain violence across the states, it is absolutely wrong on the part of the Union government to say that it is a law of order problem concerning the states only. Major responsibility in containing the Maoist violence lies with the centre, and they must move in collaboration with the state governments. The Union government has, therefore, failed in their basic approach to the problem. The centre has sent para-military forces to the affected areas no doubt and engaged

in belated joint operations with the state security forces. But the Centre's condemnation of the role of the state governments has further complicated the situation and has sent wrong message to the people. This fact was particularly noticed during the Union Home Minister's last visit to West Bengal and the naxal-affected Lalgarh, where he was very much vocal in condemning the state Chief Minister and blaming him for failure in maintaining law and order in the state. There is no secret as to who was behind the Union Home Minister in creating such provocative situation. One Union Cabinet minister and opposition leader in West Bengal openly issued statement by saying that there is no Maoist in Lalgarh and all those who are engaged in violence there are CPIM cadres in disguise. Knowing fully well that such allegations are far from truth the outspoken Chidambaram refrained from contradicting such falsehood, perhaps keeping an eye on deriving prospective electoral advantage for the UPA partners in West Bengal. But perhaps Chidambaram was not aware that how this blaming-game may be so cruelly paid back in a couple of days in Dantewada tragedy.

It is high time to realize that both the centre and the states, along with the ruling and opposition parties, should move jointly to fight against naxalism, which the Prime Minister himself has said is a major menace of the recent times. Joint security operations, along with the local development programmes should be carried out simultaneously with all sincerity. And at the same time, we must see that local tribal and other poor people must not be victims of violence, deprivation and suffering. All the poor local tribals who are rallying behind the naxalites are temporarily misled. They are not our class enemies. With the development of the tribals and the poor and strong joint anti-naxal operations, we hope to get rid of the present phase of violence. We must also keep on our ideological struggle against the misled adventurists and motivated anti left power mongers.

Com. G. Devarajan met LPRP Leaders at Laos.

As a part of establishing party to party relation, Com. G. Devarajan, Secretary of All India Forward Bloc met Com. Hiem Phommachanh, Vice Chairman of the Committee for External Relations of the Central Committee of the Lao People's Revolutionary Party at the LPRP headquarters, Vientiane, Laos on 22nd March 2010. Com. G. Devarajan explained to his LPRP counterpart about the history and current programme of All India Forward Bloc and presented him a photograph of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, AIFB documents, collected works of Netaji and other current documents. Com. Hiem Phommachanh explained about the liberation struggle of Laos and the new policy initiative of the LPRP government to make sustainable developments in the country. Both the leaders were agreed to continue the exchange of documents and to proceed towards to establish official party-toparty relation between LPRP and AIFB in near future.

AIFB CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEETS AT NEW DELHI

The Central Committee of All India Forward Bloc met at New Delhi on 2,3 & 4th April 2010.

Com. N. Velappan Nair, Chairman of the party presided over the meeting. The meeting elaborately discussed about the current socio-political developments of the country and reviewed the organizational activities since the successful completion of the 16th Party Congress.

The meeting condoled on the death of Com. Jyoti Basu, Former Chief Minister of West Bengal and veteran leader of Communist Party of India (Marxist), Com. Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary of SUCI, Com. Kanu Sanyal, veteran leader of Communist and Naxalbari movement and Shri. G.P. Koirala, former Prime Minister of Nepal. The meeting observed one minute silence as a mark of respect to the departed leaders.

Following political resolutions have been adopted after threadbare discussion.

BUDGET 2010-11

The Union Budget 2010-11 placed by the finance minister was not adequate for inclusive growth and to contain the inflation. The budget has given lot of concessions and tax exemptions to the corporate sector. It is an irony that while harping upon inclusive growth the government is excluding the poor. The budget has given the concession of Rs 26,000 cr to the income tax payers and Rs 79,554 cr to the corporate sectors. But it spends only Rs.52,490 cr as food subsidy for the people below the poverty line. The government which enhanced the excise duty from 8% to 10% has reduced the corporate tax from 10% to 7.5%. The excise duty hike will cause further price rise. The finance minister has allotted no fund to augment the Public Distribution System at the same time enough indications have been given for dismantling the PDS.

The budget proposals will aggravate the crisis prevailing in the agricultural sector. The decision to hike the Urea price by 10% and to reduce Rs. 3000Cr from the fertilizer subsidy and to decontrol the fertilizer pricing system will force more farmers to leave agricultural activities.

The decision to raise the customs duty of crude oil by 5% will have cascading effect and will make worse the price rise of essential commodities. This duty hike will increase the prices of petrol and diesel

about three Rupees.

The All India Forward Bloc calls upon the people of India to come forward and to raise voice against the anti-poor and anti-farmer proposals of the Budget.

RAILWAY BUDGET 2010-11

The Railway Budget for the year 2010-11 placed by the Railway Minister is ambitious one and not based on reality.

Almost all schemes including new services, survey and lines will take years together because all these programmes requires sanctions from the Planning Commission of India.

It is contradictory that saying no privatization of railways while inviting private companies to invest and allowing them to run goods trains. The more PPP ways of investments will eventually lead to large scale privatization of Indian railways.

While welcoming the decision of no hike in the fare and freight and the announcement of new surveys and projects, the All India Forward Bloc is very skeptical about the time-bound implementation of all these ambitions projects as the finance of the Railway is worrying. It is clear from the budget that the surplus amount remaining with the Railways is a paltry of Rs.951 cr. The net revenue has marked a sharp decline from the budget estimate of Rs.8,121 cr to just about Rs. 6489 cr as was now being estimated by the end of March 2010. In 2010-11, the railways projects a surplus of just Rs. 3,173 Cr out of which Rs.2,800 cr is to be appropriated to the development fund and Rs.373 cr to the capital fund while at the same time getting subsidy from General Budget. Therefore the Railways is planning to borrow Rs. 350 Cr from the markets. These facts expose the real picture of Indian Railways. Therefore the Railway Budget 2010-11 is not based on reality.

WOMEN RESERVATION BILL.

The All India Forward Bloc welcomes the passage of Women Reservation Bill in the Rajya Sabha on 9th March 2010. The party considers it as a golden event in the history of Indian Parliamentary Democracy. The Congress (I) was always bypassing the issue on the plea of reaching a consensus. The relentless fight and continuing demand of the left parties and the progressive women organizations went a long way to pressurize the government to move the Bill in the Rajya Sabha. The demand for OBC reservation within the women reservation does not justify the complete rejection of the Bill as demanded by the parties opposing the Bill. However, we are of the opinion that only reservation of seats in the Assemblies and the Parliament will not ensure their adequate empowerment socially and economically. Empowerment is the essence of reservation therefore many other channels to be opened for the empowerment of women in true sense.

NO TO DISCRIMINATIVE NUCLEAR LIABILITY BILL.

The UPA II government is pushing a Nuclear Liability Bill under the pressure of the United States of America. This Civil Liability for Nuclear Damages Bill (CLND Bill) seeks to cap the liability of nuclear plant operators and the equipment suppliers in case there is an accident involving a nuclear plant. The US administration has made this condition to operationalise the Indo-US Nuclear Deal. The CLND Bill allows the foreign reactor suppliers to make unlimited profits with limited liability even if they supply faulty and substandard equipments. This Bill minimizes the financial liability to Rs. 2142.85 Cr. in case of a nuclear accident. The affected people will not get any compensation for either loss of life, health or property damages beyond this cap. Another astonishing factor is that the liability of the Indian operator of nuclear plant will be limited to only Rs. 500Cr. The central government can reduce it to a minimum of Rs. 100Cr ! The government of India means the people of India has to bear the rest of the liability of Rs 1642.85Cr. i.e; the difference between Rs. 2142.85 Cr and Rs. 500Cr.

This CLND Bill is an instrument to promote private nuclear power plants and to facilitate the US based nuclear companies to make maximum profit with less expenditure and risk. It is detrimental to the interest of the nation if we adopt this Bill in its current form. Therefore public opinion must be raised against the proposed Bill.

RESERVATION FOR BACKWARD MUSLIMS

The All India forward Bloc welcomes the decision of the West Bengal State Government to extend 10% reservation to the socially and educationally backward sections of the Muslims as per the principal recommendations made by the Ranganath Mishra Commission. It is calculated that the OBC Muslims comprise 16,38,000 or 8.3% of total OBC population of West Bengal and of the 66 communities marked up as OBCs, 12 are Muslims. As per the decision of the government the people having an annual income below Rs. 4,50,000 are eligible for reservation. The exclusion of creamy layer is justifiable. The All India Forward Bloc, while considering this decision to erase the shabby picture revealed by the Sachhar Commission regarding the condition of Muslims of West Bengal and urges upon the government of West Bengal to implement the decision without any administrative hindrances and ignorance.

It is a matter of serious concern that even after the Sachar revelations and many state governments' initiatives, the Union Government is keeping criminal silence on the recommendations of Ranganath Mishra Commission. The UPA is not even placing the report in the Parliament. The All India Forward Bloc urges upon the government to take immediate steps to implement the Report.

BT BRINJAL.

The All India Forward Bloc welcomes the decision of the union government to put on hold the commercial cultivation of Bt Brinjal till such time as independent scientific studies establish the safety of the product from a long-term view of human health. The All India Forward Bloc is in favour of using advanced science and technology in agriculture for enhancing the production and livelihood of the farmers. But it should be consistent with our safety of our environment and public health. The party is of the view that introduction of any advanced technology should not lead to the monopoly of any Multi National Companies on Indian agriculture and the sovereign right of the nation on its biological resources should not be compromised for private investments in agriculture. But it is matter of serious concern that on the basis of Indo-US knowledge initiative with regard to agriculture, the inclusion of the representatives of Monsanto and Wal Mart in the Board of the Initiative, which is detrimental to the interests of Indian farmers.

INDO-PAK DIALOGUE.

The All India Forward Bloc welcomes the initiative taken by both the Governments of India and Pakistan to resume the dialogue to settle the outstanding issues between both the countries. We are of the opinion that this process should continue. But it is the responsibility of the government of India to clarify the allegation of the US pressure and intervention in this dialogue. If any pockmark of true about the US interference on this bilateral dialogue will be detrimental to the interests of India.

PRESIDENT ELECTION IN SRI LANKA

Mahinda Rajapakse was re-elected as the president of Sri Lanka. He defeated Sarat Fonseka, the joint candidate of the entire opposition of Sri Lanka. There are allegations about election malpractices by the ruling coalition. But the verdict cannot be considered as the mandate for Rajapakse's policies and programmes. The people of Sri Lanka are still under tremendous exploitation by the Multi National Companies and are struggling for democratic and human rights. The pathetic condition of the Tamil people is one of the major examples in this regard.

NETAJI SUBHAS CHANDRA BOSE AND DESHPREM DIVAS

The 114th birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose was observed as 'Desh Prem Divas' by All India Forward Bloc and followers of Netaji throughout the country.

Rallies, public meetings, exhibitions, seminars, oath taking ceremonies, etc.were organised at various places. This time The All India Forward Bloc along with other three left parties i.e., CPIM, CPI and RSP urged upon the Central Government to declare 23rd January, the birthday of Netaji as 'Desh Prem Divas'. It was a suggestion of the Netaji Birth Centenary Celebration Committee headed by the Prime Minister in 1997. The All India Forward Bloc is of the opinion that the proposed declaration is very much necessary to inculcate patriotism among the younger generation.

In reference to the Special Mention raised by our Secretariat Member Dr. Barun Mukherji, on 17-12-2008 in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Planning & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India V. Narayanasamy replied in his letter no. F.3-10/2010-C&M dated 16th March 2010, "The suggestion made by you has been considered by Ministry of Culture. Many eminent personalities took part in the freedom struggle of India and the immense contribution made by them cannot be judged relatively. If at all a day is to be declared as "Desh Prem Divas", it does not appear to be appropriate to be so declared on the birth anniversary of any particular personality. Even the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi has not been declared as any special day relating to the freedom movement of India. It is, therefore, not possible to agree to the request at this stage".

It shows how the Government of India generalize Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's sacrifice, when Mahatma Gandhi called him a "patriot of patriots". Forward Bloc never disowns sacrifice of millions of freedom fighters. But Netaji's name comes only to inculcate spirit of patriotism among the people, particularly the young generation of our country.

The Central Committee has decided to expose the Government's attitude towards Subhas Chandra Bose. As a part of this movement, under the initiative of the party, a 'Citizens Convention' is being organised at the Constitutional Club, New Delhi on 4th May 2010, in which historians, academicians, research scholars, and patriotic people from all walks of people are invited.

The All India Forward Bloc will launch a nationwide movement from 22nd June to 28th June 2010 to tear the mask of the Congress (I) led UPA government on this issue. All the state units are requested to organise this nationwide programme and to organise Raj Bhavan March on 28th June 2010 as culminating

programme.

AIFB CENTRAL COMMITTEE CALLS FOR ACTION PROGRAMME :

Party Congress has given more stress on mass action programme. Without mass action the party cannot be developed. So it is resolved to intensify mass action programme from the grass root level.

The Central Committee on following Basic Tasks and Demands:

Basic Tasks :

- (I) Propagate - Rebuild India in Netaji's Way - Netaji's India a Socialist India.
- (ii) Intensify the campaign "Government must declare Netaji's birthday as "Desh Prem Divas". Reject Action Taken Report (ATR), accept Mukherjee Commission Report.
- (iii) Fight against 4Cs i.e., corruption, criminalization, communalism and casteism.
- (iv) Fight against neo-imperialism
- (v) Land to the tiller.
- (vi) Save Land, Water and Forest from the hands of MNC's

Demands :

- (1) Stop MNC's entry in agriculture, cottage industry and SSI units.
- (2) Remunerative prices for agriculture produce.
- (3) Institutional credit to the peasantry at 4% simple interest.
- (4) Scrap the future trading in agricultural produces.
- (5) Central Legislation for agriculture workers.
- (6) We need universal PDS.
- (7) Project should be taken in consultation with people/gram sabha.
- (8) We want rehabilitation act and rehabilitation for the displaced persons.
- (9) No privatization of mining sector, stop privatization and outsourcing.
- (10) Free compulsory quality education for all at the age group of 6 to 14 years.
Stop Commercialization and privatization of education.
- (11) Health and Education must be in public sector
Health - Education for all
- (12) Employment for all in MNREGA for 200 days in rural and urban both areas.
- (13) Empowerment of women, pass immediately the Women's Reservation Bill in original form.
- (14) Implement Ranganath Mishra Commission's Report on reservation for minorities.

All the party units are requested to chalk out action programme on the basis of above cited tasks and demands along with the local issues.

MAKE THE 27 APRIL 'BHARAT BANDH' A SUCCESS

To compell the Manmohan Singh government to roll back the hike in the prices of petroleum products and fertilizers, 13 political parties announced a twin-pronged plan — a nationwide strike on April 27 and amending the Finance Bill.

Leaders of the parties — that included CPI, CPI (Marxist), All-India Forward Bloc, Revolutionary Socialist Party, AIADMK, Biju Janata Dal, Janata Dal (Secular), Indian National Lok Dal, Lok Jan Shakti Party, Samajwadi Party, Rashtriya Janata Dal, Rashtriya Lok Dal, and Telugu Desam Party — decided to pool their strength in Parliament to force the Centre to accept the demand.

The leaders also discussed the possibility of the government attempting to divide the Opposition by moving the Women's Reservation Bill in the Lok Sabha.

However, it was felt that the focus should be on the price rise and on taking on the government inside Parliament.

Other leaders who attended the meeting included Prakash Karat of the CPI (M), T.J. Chandrachoodan (RSP), Debabrata Biswas (AIFB), Om Prakash Chautala (INLD), H.D. Deve Gowda (JD-S), Ajit Singh (RJD) and N. Chandrababu Naidu (TDP).

After successful 8th April 2010 Picketing and Jail Bharo and Massive Rally on 12th March 2010 at New Delhi by the the four Left parties viz. CPI(M), CPI, AIFB and RSP, this 13 parties meeting is very significant

SILVER JUBILEE VOLUME OF "JANGARJAN"

We are happy to announce the completion of 25 years of uninterrupted publication of All India Forward Bloc's Hindi monthly JANAGARJAN this year. In order to commemorate the silver jubilee of this organ, it

has been decided to publish a befitting special issue of JANAGARJAN by August 2010, with thought-provoking valuable articles from distinguished intellectuals and political writers.

The theme of this special issue will be: "Prospects of Socialism".

I would request you to kindly contribute an article on this theme, which, I am sure, will enrich the content of our proposed special issue.

It will be highly appreciated if your article, in English or Hindi, may reach us by 10 July 2010..

COUNTRYWIDE DHARNA & JAIL BHARO MOVEMENT AGAINST PRICE RISE AND FOR FOOD SECURITY.

The Left parties congratulate the lakhs of people who participated in the mass picketing and court arrest programme all over the country. They were responding to the call of the Left parties on demands pertaining to price rise, land, employment and the violence against the Left in West Bengal.

From the reports received from different states, more than 25 lakh (2.5 million) people participated in the mass picketing and court arrest programme.

New Delhi: Thousands of activists of the left parties AIFB, CPI, CPI(M) and RSP courted arrest on 8 April 2010 at Parliament Street, New Delhi against price-rise & for food security.

The protesters were demanding punishment to black marketers and hoarders of grains and other essential commodities, universalisation of Public Distribution System, end to future trading in food grains, cheap ration to all needy, land to landless and home to homeless.

The Satyagrahis were addressed by Com. Debabrata Biswas (General Secretary All India Forward Bloc), Com. A.B. Bardhan (General Secretary CPI), Com. Prakash Karat (General Secretary CPIM), Com. Abani Roy (Secretary RSP). They expressed their anguish over the continuous rise in the cost of the essential commodities making life of common people miserable. There has been rampant in distribution of APL, BPL Cards and the poor and vulnerable people are left without any Cards, they pointed out. They demanded universal coverage for cheap ration to people. Ensuring food security is a major issue, but the Government is not taking necessary steps to that effect. They demanded more spending to deal with agrarian crises, on irrigation, subsidized seeds & fertilizers to farmers, minimum support price for their produce and timely procurement from farmers to save them from private hoarders. There should be end to future trading in food grains. The speakers pointed out that serious implementation of land reforms would also help in meeting the crisis in rural India. They pointed out about the right of homeless people to have roof on their head and access to cheap health care services etc.

After the meeting, General Secretaries of the Left parties courted arrest. The other leading Satyagrahis on the day also included Com. D. Raja, MP, Com. Amarjeet Kaur, Com. Pushpinder Grewal, Com. Dinesh Varshney, Com. Vijendra Sharma, Com. Asit Ganguly and Com. Dharmendra Verma. About six thousand activists joining the meeting also courted arrest pressing their demands. The police used water cannon to disperse the protesters.

West Bengal : About 10 lakhs of people sat at day-long Dharna on 8 April 2010 in Kolkata and other districts of West Bengal. All the Left front partners jointly staged this anti price rise dharna, staying and picketing throughout the state. The main Income Tax Office ("Aaykar Bhawan") at Esplanade, Kolkata was completely paralysed due to day-long dharna of about 1 lakh people in front of it. The huge gathering there was addressed by Com. Biman Bose, Chairman, Left Front, CPI(M) leader Com. Benoy Konar and Com. Robin Deb, AIFB leader Com. (Dr.) Barnun Mukherji and Com. Hafiz Alam Sairani, RSP leader Com. Manoj Bhattacharya, CPI leader Com. Manju Majumdar and others.

At the end of the day Com. Asok Ghosh, General Secretary, AIFB Bengal Committee issued a statement congratulating the people for enthusiastically participating in the 8th April programme against the unprecedented price-rise and anti-people policy of the UPA government. Com. Ghosh further said that this day's programme was only a prelude to further greater movements in the near future, which would also aim against the anti-left conspiracy hatched by Trinamool Congress in West Bengal.

Com. Ghosh gave figures of AIFB workers and leaders participating in some of the districts as follows (figures from other districts are awaiting).

Coochbehar-20000, Jalpaiguri-3000, South Dinajpur-3000, Birbhoom-25000, Bankura-25000, West Midnapure-30,000, Hooghly-2000, Kolkata-5000, Purulia-20000.

Kerala : Hundreds of AIFB activists all over Kerala participated in the Jail Bharo movement being organised by the left parties throughout the country on 8th April 2010. The picketing and court arrest programme in Kerala was successfully organised by the Left Democratic Front. The LDF officially announced and invited the leaders of AIFB in all the district to participate and address the picketers. Com. G. Devarajan, Secretary of

AIFB inaugurated the picketing before Nedumangad Post office, Thiruvananthapuram. Com. T.J. Chandrachoodan, General Secretary of RSP inaugurated the picketing at Pathanamthitta. Com. Vaikom Vishwan, the convenor of the LDF inaugurated the picketing at Post Master General Office, TVM. Com. V. Ram Mohan, State General Secretary of AIFB addressed the gathering along with LDF Convenor at Thiruvananthapuram. Com. Thankachan Varghese (Ollur-Thrissur), Com. K.R. Brahmanandan (Chathanoor-Kollam), Com. Arun S. Sasi (Thiruvananthapuram), Com. Humayun Kabeer (Kozhikode), Com. M. Vijayan (Kanjangad), Com. Abdul Khader Vazhakkala (Kochi), Com. Kalathil Vijayan (Allappuzha), Com. Rajan Koodali (Kannur), Com. Thampi Punnathala (Kollam Head PO), Com. Rajith Rajendran (RMS-Tvpm), Com. Thottuva Surendran (Karunagappally) Adv. P.A. Roy (Chalakkudi), Com. K.V. Bhadrans (Vellarada), Com. M.Sudhakaran (Bathery- Vayanadu) etc also addressed the demonstrators at different places and court arrested. While inaugurating the picketing at Nedumangad, Com. G. Devarajan explained about the background which forced the left parties to organise such civil disobedience movement all over the country. He came down heavily on the callous attitude of the union government to check the price rise of essential commodities and to put an end to the increasing future trade of agricultural products. The local MLA belonging to CPI Com. Mangode Radhakrishnan and Com. S.K. Achary (CPM) and other LDF leaders also spoke. More than 4000 people were court arrested and then released.

Tamilnadu : "Jail Bharo" protest was conducted by three parties viz. AIFB, CPM, CPI on 8 April 2010 throughout Tamil Nadu. The district committees of 20 districts actively participated with great enthusiasm at their respective district head quarters. Com. V.S. Navamani state chairman, participated at district head quarters at Virudhunagar. At Desapandu Maithan, a large crowds of left parties cadres assembled. Com. Lakhmanan, CPM state committee member, Com. Ramasamy MLA CPI and Com. V.S. Navamani (AIFB) gave speeches on that occasion.

Rally started towards head post office of Virudhunagar. Police stopped the rally. 1,255 comrades, including leaders were arrested. 315 on behalf of AIFB courted arrest.

At Chennai, 3000 comrades including Com. P.V. Kathiravan (National Secretary AIFB and General Secretary Tamilnadu State Committee AIFB), Com. D. Pandiyan of CPI, Com. G. Ramakrishnan of CPM were arrested. 60 comrades of AIFB courted arrest.

figures of AIFB workers and leaders participating in some of the districts as follows:

Madurai City-54, Madurai East-267, Usilampatti-20, Karumathur-52, Tirunelveli-21, Tuticorin-17, Kanyakumari-11, Tiruvaru Needamangalam-12, Erode-11, Tirupur-14, Coimbatore-36, Dindigul-70, Oddanchatram-67, Palani-30, Theni-70, Andipatti-15, Chinnamanur-20, Cumbam-25, Sivagangai-24 and Sankarankovil-15.

After a long interval, Left parties conducted a joint programme and large number of comrades participated in the protest.

Tripura : Over 150,000 people, including senior Left Front leaders, courted arrest in left-ruled Tripura as part of their nation-wide "jail bharo" agitation in support of curbing rising prices of essential commodities and employment.

The four left parties - CPI-M, Communist Party of India (CPI), Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and Forward Bloc - organised the agitation to press the demand that the government must solve the unemployment problem and undertake land reforms, besides dealing with the price rise. Com. Shyamal Roy AIFB national Secretary and General Secretary Tripura AIFB State Committee courted arrest in Agartala and Com. Braja Gopal Roy leded in Dharmtala, Chairman Tripura AIFB State Committee, participated in court arrest programme.

"The UPA (United Progressive Alliance) government has rejected the left parties demand to cut customs and excise duties on crude oil to reduce retail prices of petrol and diesel. It would help in reducing prices of essential commodities", Satyagrahi and protestor raised these demands.

Uttar Pradesh: Hundreds of AIFB activists along with other left parties picketed before the central government offices in various places of Uttar Pradesh.

Shouting slogans against the government, the activists also demanded for strengthening the public distribution system, implementation of land reforms and more employment opportunities. The speakers who addressed the gathering said that the UPA government is ignoring the price rise and giving concessions to the rich people while the wholesale price index rose 7.3 percent in December from a year earlier, its highest since November 2008, and accelerated from a 4.8 percent gain in November.

The rise was driven by near 20 percent jump in food prices, which rose on weak monsoon rains and flooding in parts of the country, but inflation in manufacturing products picked up to 5.2 percent from four percent in November, a sign that inflationary pressures were spreading to other sectors of the economy.

ANDHRA PRADESH : The call for jail bharo agitation, given by the four Left parties against price rise, evoked good response in Andhra Pradesh with around 50,000 people courting arrest through out the

state. Around one lakh people participated in the agitation of picketing before the central and state government offices demanding the governments to take immediate steps to reduce the prices.

Earlier, the protesters raised loud slogans demanding reduction in prices, grant of house sites, strengthening of PDS etc. The slogan "Reduce prices or resign from chairs" attracted everyone's attention. Leaders of Forward Bloc, CPI(M) and CPI addressed the meeting, which was chaired by CPI(M) state secretariat member Y Venkateswara Rao and AIFB leader Com. Muralidhar Rao Desh Pandey. Mild tension prevailed as the protesters resisted police high handedness during the arrests. In fact, there were not enough vehicles to take the arrested people to the police stations. Later the protesters, including the leaders, were taken to Nampally and Gandhi Nagar police stations. The agitation in front of Ranga Reddy district collectorate office also saw good attendance despite the fact that Section 144 remained in force in both Hyderabad and Ranga Reddy districts in view of recent communal violence.

Jharkhand : Thousands of AIFB activists all over Jharkhand participated in the Jail Bharo movement being organised by the left parties throughout the country on 8th April 2010. The picketing and court arrest before the Raj Bhawan, in Ranchi was organised. Com. Janardan Pandey, State General Secretary of AIFB programme along with Com. Uma Shankar Pandey, Com. Noor Mohammad.

Com. Aparna Sengupta President AIFB Jharkhand State Committee, inaugurated the picketing at Sub Divisional Office, Dhanbad and courted arrest along with Com. Mofiz Sahil, Com. Shanu Choudhury, Com. Hanjala Bin Haque, Com. Salauddin, Com. Visheshwar Prasad, Com. Fatima Khatun.

Along with hundreds of cadres Com. Somnath Mukherjee, Com. Santu Goswami, Com. Shastri Kumar Vaishya, courted arrest in Giridih.

Dozens of AIFB cadres including Com. Arun Mondal, Com. Lolin Murmu, Com. Bhim Mondal courted arrest in Jamtara.

In Bokaro, hundreds of cadres along with Com. Pradip Kumar Gope courted arrest.

Com. Santosh Mahato, Com. Mrinal Kanti Mahato addressed the cadres at Neemdih Circle Office and courted arrest with hundreds of followers.

Com. Rameshwar Ram Kushwaha along with dozens of cadres and courted arrest Hazaribagh.

Bihar : Thousands of AIFB activists all over Bihar participated in the Jail Bharo movement being organised by the left parties throughout the country on 8th April 2010. Com. Naharahari Mahato, MP, Com. Azad, General Secretary, Bihar State AIFB, Com. Wakil Thakur along with hundreds of cadres blocked the Dak Bangla Chowk for three hours and given the court arrest.

In Muzaffarpur, hundreds of cadres organised the picketing and court arrest under the leadership of Satyagrahis Com. Rakesh, District General Secretary, Com. Ram Dayal Ram, Dist. President, Com. Chandradev Singh, Office Secretary Com. Habib Ansari, Secretary Com. Jai Narayan Ray, Com. J. N. Singh, Vice President.

In Sheohar, AIFB organised the picketing and court arrest programme under the leadership of Com. Rakesh, District General Secretary, Com. Ram Dayal Ram, Dist. President, Com. Chandradev Singh, Office Secretary Com. Habib Ansari, Secretary Com. Jai Narayan Ray, Com. J. N. Singh, Vice President, Com. Dharmendra Kumar Adv., AIYL General Secretary Delhi State Committee.

In the leadership of Com. Nand Kishor Singh (Dist. President AIFB), Com. Naveen Kumar Mahato (Dist. Vice President -AIFB), Com. Chandrashekhar Mishra (Dist. General Secretary-AIFB), Com. Alok Kumar (Dist. Finance Secretary-AIFB), Com. Ramanand Sah, Dist. Secretary, Com. Kameshwar, Com. Santosh Kumar Pawan, Com. Om Prakash Dukaniya in Purnea District hundreds of picketing and cadres courted arrest.

In the leadership of Com. Shyam Sundar Pandey, Com. Subhas Chandra Prasad, Com. Dilip Singh, Com. Syed Gamiuddin Haider, Sunil Singh, Com. Sunil Singh, Com. Vinod Kumar, Com. Vidyanand Prasad, Com. Rakesh Ranjan, Com. Rajendra Prasad Singh in Bhojpur (Ara) picketing and courted arrest.

In Nawada, under the leadership of Com. Naresh Chandra Vidyarthi, Com. Rajeswar Pandey, Com. Tanik Manjhi, Com. Satyendra Dubey, Com. Rajendra Prasad, Com. Kailash Singh Tandon, Com. Laxmi Devi, Com. Malti Devi, Com. Javed Ahmed 500 cadres courted arrest.

In Buxar, under the leadership of Com. Gopal Choubey, Madan Mohan Kumar, Radha Krishna Kumar, Com. Ram Pravesh Ram, Com. Baliram Manjhi 100 of cadres courted arrest.

In Katihar, under the leadership of Com. Nalini Mondal, Com. Tribhuvan Paswan hundreds of cadres courted arrest in front of District Court.

In Kaimur under the leadership of Com. A.C. Prajapati, Suryakant Bind, Com. Raj Narayan Rao, Surendra Prasad Bind 50 cadres courted arrest in front of Dist. Magistrate Office.

In Nalanda Hundreds of cadres under the leadership of Com. Gopal Prasad Singh, Com. Arun Kumar Mehta, Ramanand Sharma, Com. Sanjay Singh, Com. Ram Pravesh Rai, Com. Bujho Manjhi, Com. Sadanand Singh courted arrest.

In Lakhisarai hundreds of cadres in the leadership of Com. Raja Prasad, Com. Suresh Mahato, Com. Ram Karan Paswan, Raghuvar Ram, Shivji Saha, Com. Shakar Kumar courted arrest.

Maharashtra : Over 1 Lakh cadres of Left parties participated in protest actions across Maharashtra. Com. Arun Wankar, Com. Balwant Rai Mehta, Com. Dharm Raj Dubey from AIFB along with thousands of Cadres given the court arrest in Nagpur.

Madhya Pradesh: Over 25000 cadres of Left parties courted arrest in 35 district centres. Com. Shyam Sundar Bishnoi, President AIFB Madhya Pradesh Committee leded the cadres in Harda and Com. Ram Avtar Pachori, General Secretary AIFB Madhya Pradesh State Committee, leded in Bhopal and courted arrest.

Karnataka: 15000 people participated in protests across the State and 8000 people were arrested. Com. G.R. Shivashankar, National Secretary AIFB and President TUCC, Com. K.C. Venkatesh along with thousands of AIFB cadres given the court arrest.

Orissa: As per the law breaking movement, round 15000 people were arrested from 30 centres of the state. Jail Bharo agitatio took place in about 30 places of Orissa. Com. Santosh Mitra, General Secretary AIFB Orissa State Committee

Assam: In response to the call given by 12th March Delhi rally by Left parties, 15000 people courted arrest in Assam. Ratneswar Gogoi, General Secretary of AIFB Assam State leded the programme in Assam.

Rajasthan: 6500 people courted arrest in different district centres of the Rajasthan State. Com. Hira Chand Jain, General Secretary AIFB Rajasthan State Committee leded people and courted arrest in Jaipur.

Puducherry: Over 2200 people participated in picketing in Puducherry, where police lathi charged the protestors injuring over 30 people. K. Venkatesh Perumal, Chairman AIFB State Committee, Com. U. Muthu, General Secretary AIFB Puducherry State Committe, Com. G. Sukumar, treasurer AIFB State Committee, leded the programme and courted arrest. Under the leadership of Com. J. Muhamadu Billal, Secretary AIFB State Committee, thousands of AIFB cadres participated in law breaking movement and courted arrest.

CITIZENS CONVENTION ON 5TH MAY 2010 ON DESH PREM DIVAS

The life and struggle of the great revolutionary patriotic leader Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose have been inspiring his countrymen for decades together. He is hailed by all his countrymen as a great leader very near and dear to their hearts. His supreme sacrifice and love for his country are rare instances of noble quality that are found in the history of our freedom struggle. Gandhiji himself once paid highest tribute to Subhas by mentioning him as the "patriot of patriots." Netaji's name in modern India stands as a symbol of patriotism. Subhas Chandra sacrificed many of his worldly comforts and prospects like the ICS-posting, presidentship of the Indian National Congress or allurement of post-independence high-ranking national position. On the other hand, he preferred a life full of suffering, eleven-time imprisonment in the British jails, highly risky unprecedented 'great escape' to continue his anti-imperialist struggle for the cause of the country. But unfortunately, we have failed to honour him properly at the official level in the post-independence era.

People of India are therefore demanding since long and urging upon the government of India to officially declare Netaji Subhas Chandra's birthday, the 23rd January, as the "Deshprem Divas" - the day of patriotism, as the birthday of many of other distinguished national personalities like Dr. S. Radhakrishnan, Jawaharlal Nehu, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Indira Gandhi, Prasanta Mahalnavis, and others have been suitably honoured.

As may be appreciated by all, in the recent days, when the spirit of patriotism seems to be lacking among our countrymen due to frustration arising primarily out of the poor economic condition of the common man, it is absolutely necessary to give a call to the people on the historic birthday of Netaji to revive such a spirit once again. The example of Netaji's patriotism and secular values should help us to work unitedly for the eradication of poverty and to take our country forward in the way our patriots dreamt of, for which they sacrificed their all.

With this objective in mind, Forward Bloc, the party founded by Netaji Subhas, along with millions of followers and devotees of Netaji Subhas have been observing Netaji-Birthday since long and urging upon the Government of India to officially declare it as "Deshprem Divas". It may be recalled that a proposal was put forward before the Netaji's Birth Centenary Celebration Committee headed by the then Prime Minister of India in 1996 that January 23, the birthday of Netaji be declared as "Deshprem Diwas". Of late, the central leadership of four Left parties coordinating at the centre, have also jointly written to Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on December 31, 2009 requesting the Government of India to declare January 23 as "Deshprem Divas". But no such request or appeal have reached the deaf ears of the Congress Government.

But after the long spell of silence, the first official reaction has been given to Dr. Barun Mukherji, Central Secretariat Member of All India Forward Bloc and a Member of Parliament (Rajya Sabha), who raised a Special Mention of this issue in Rajya Sabha on 17 December 2008, requesting the government to declare 23 January as "Deshprem Diwas". But a reply to his Special Mention came only on 16 March 2010. The minister of State for Planning & Parliamentary Affairs, Government of India, Sri Narayanasamy replied in his letter no. F.3-10/2010-C&M/590, dated 16th March 2010

as such: "The suggestion made by you has been considered by Ministry of Culture. Many eminent personalities took part in the freedom struggle of India and the immense contribution made by them can not be judged relatively. If at all a day is to be declared as "Desh Prem Divas", it does not appear to be appropriate to be so declared on the birth anniversary of any particular personality. Even the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi has not been declared as any special day relating to the freedom movement of India. It is, therefore, not possible to agree to the request at this stage."

It shows how the government of India pitifully generalize Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose's patriotism and sacrifice, when Mahatma Gandhi himself hailed him as a 'Patriot of Patriots'. Forward Bloc never undermines sacrifices of millions of freedom fighters. But Netaji's name arises only as a 'symbol' to inculcate the spirit of patriotism among the people, particularly when that much needed noble spirit is lacking at the moment. The Hon'ble Minister in his aforesaid letter has stressed that even Mahatma Gandhi's birthday has not been declared as any special Day. But the learned minister has carefully avoided to mention that Mahatma Gandhi is the only national leader whose birthday is declared as a National Holiday. However, without indulging in any such "relative" assessment of our national heroes we are constrained to say that the government of India has not only failed to pay due homage to Netaji Subhas, but has also unfortunately tried to mislead the people on such a sensitive issue.

We, therefore, have thought it proper to organize such an august Citizens Convention to bring the whole issue to their notice and mobilize more public opinion in favour of the decade-long popular demand. By realizing the need for observing a Deshprem Divas and identifying it with the birthday of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose, we are not obliging the great patriot, but only enriching ourselves and strengthening our national efforts to build a New India -- a much more developed and advanced India.

This august Citizens Convention once more appeals to the government of India to declare Netaji's Birthday as "Deshprem Divas" and march ahead on way to prosperity along with our revitalized - re-inspired band of patriotic youths.

V Asia Pacific Solidarity Conference on Cuba Held in Laos.

The fifth Asia Pacific solidarity Conference on Cuba was held at Vientiane, the capital city of Lao people's democratic Republic from 19th to 21st March 2010. More than 170 delegates from 28 countries participated in the Conference. The Conference elaborately debated on the new machinations of United States of America to strangulate the Socialist Cuba and how to build up people's resistance to protect Cuba. One of the Commissions of the Conference discussed about the media network and how to use the media to propagate the valiant fight carrying forward the people of Cuba to protect their motherland from all obstacles. It was resolved that more social networking system and the local medias must be utilised for extending solidarity with Cuba and to propagate the humanitarian activities of Cuba for the mankind of all over the world. Com. G. Devarajan, Secretary of All India Forward Bloc attended the Conference on behalf of the party and addressed the delegates. Com. A. Vijaya Raghavan M.P; Com. Sreeramakrishnan and Com. Anjan Bera (CPM), Com. Nara Singh and Com. Murugan (CPI) and com. Anjan Mukherjee (RSP) etc. were the members of the Indian delegation. The text of Com. G. Devarajan's speech at Vientiane is as follows:

Dear Comrades in presidium and delegate comrades,

I, on behalf of All India Forward Bloc, the political party founded by the National revolutionary hero of India, Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose extend our warm greetings on the 5th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba. I express my sincere gratitude to the Lao-Cuba Friendship Association and the Government of Lao People's democratic Republic for the warm hospitality extended to me during the conference.

We consider that it is the bounden duty of the democracy loving people of all over the world to extend solidarity to the people of Cuba in their brave struggle against US imperialism. Cuba has suffered due to the illegal economic blockade imposed by the USA and their allied countries. The aim of the blockade is to isolate Cuba, strangulate it economically and create the condition for external intervention. But the undaunted revolutionary spirit of Cuban people is holding high the banner of socialism and anti-imperialist tradition in spite of all crises. Therefore, we salute the leaders of the Cuban people, Jose Marti, Che Guevara and Fidel Castro.

Cuba is facing trade economic embargo from the USA since the last five decades. US hostility to Cuba continues despite seventeen Cuba specific resolutions adopted by the UN general Assembly with overwhelming majority. The political parties, civil society organizations, democratic governments and number of progressive organizations all over the world have raised their voice against the criminal in 2008, the blockade still exists under President Obama.

The Toricelli Act of 1992 and the Helms-Burton Law of 1996 prevents other countries to trade with Cuba and block the companies and individuals to invest in Cuba. These laws have been condemned by

almost every country in the world as an illegal and unacceptable extension of US laws outside of its territory. But the US administration is not taking all these protests seriously rather they are intensifying their inhuman attacks against Cuba.

This situation demands more unified people's movement against the imperialistic machinations of the USA. I am aware about the people's movements all over the world in support of Cuba on their brave struggle to hold high the banner of national sovereignty and Cuban socialism. We support Cuba as it send Doctors, Professors to the needy countries not the soldiers to conquer the poor countries as US do. We stand along with Cuba because it always protect the democratic and human rights of the people and raise voice for the same for the people of all over the world.

It is a matter of great satisfaction that Cuba has become an inspiration centre for the anti-imperialist struggle of all over the world in general and in the Latin America and Caribbean in particular. The formation of ALBA (Bolivarian Alliance for the People of Our America) and the UNASUR(Union of South American Nations) are the two visible examples of such inspiration. No force in the world can deny the role being played by Cuba in the emergence of socialistic nations in the Latin American region. This 50th anniversary of Cuban revolution will definitely inspire many nations to turn towards the anti-imperialist block and will follow the path of socialism according to their circumstances and requirements. Therefore protecting Cuba means protect idea of socialism and human rights.

We are of the opinion that there must be some concerted effort to resist the media manipulation against Cuba. The solidarity organizations have to play important role in this regard. The imperialist sponsored media is trying their level best to misinform the world about the social achievements of the Cuban government despite of all odds. Therefore the civil society has to chalk out sufficient steps to propagate the success of the Cuban people in their struggle against imperialism. We hope that these types of solidarity conference are the appropriate forums to exchange such information to the civil society. The organizations participate such conferences will be able to carry forward the campaign for Cuba. The 'free the five' campaign of Cuba also needs such propaganda though it got global support.

We hope that the 5th Asia Pacific Regional Conference of Solidarity with Cuba will definitely draw such action programmes for the coming days to streamline the solidarity activities in support of Cuban people.

We recognize that supporting Cuba means opposing imperialism.

Once again we reiterate our solidarity with the Cuban people.

Long live Cuban revolution.

TUCC AND V.V.G.N.L.I. ORGANISED PEAR EDUCATIONAL CLASS

A three days leadership training camp being organised by TUCC and VV. Giri National Labour Institute jointly in Hindi Lecture Hall, NTTTR, Bhopal from 15 April to 17 April 2010. 40 leaders of TUCC working in the field of construction and biri participated in this workshop from Tamilnadu, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. Women participation in the workshop was very encouraging.

Com. Debabrata Biswas, General Secretary All India Forward Bloc, while inaugurating the session on 15 April 2010, explained how the workers are being deprived from their legitimate rights because of poor organisation. He has given more stress to recruit leadership from workers.

From the VVGnLI Dr. Poonam Chauhan, Dr. M.M. Rehman and from TUCC Com. S.P. Tiwari, Com. Hansraj Akela, Com. P.N. Dwivedi, Com. Anil Sharma participated in the workshop as a lecturer.

AIFB KANNUR DISTRICT CONFERENCE HELD

The Kannur district Conference of All India Forward Bloc was held at Chaitram Auditorium, Caltex Junction on 10-11 April 2010. The district Conference was scheduled before the 16th party Congress. But due to certain technical and organisational issues the proposed conference was postponed and an Ad-hoc committee was formed at Iritty. The postponed conference was held as per schedule. Delegates from six Assembly Constituencies participated in the Conference. The Conference was inaugurated by Com. G. Devarajan, National Secretary of the party.

While addressing the Conference, Com. G. Devarajan elaborately explained about the resolutions of the 16th Party Congress, relevance of AIFB and current political situation of the country. He opined that the central government is making the policies only to satiate the interests of the millioners and the corporates. The government is keeping criminal silence on the issue of spiralling prices of essential commodities. The future traders are minting money by exploiting the poor and middle class. The government has lost its control over the market and all the government agencies have failed to interfere in the market properly to check the price rise. Instead of providing solace to the general public, the government is spending its time energy and money for

making Nuclear Liability Bill and other legislations to satisfy the rulers of United States of America to start nuclear business with private US based companies. The government is increasing the tax components of petrol and diesel by using the term 'under recoveries' of petroleum companies. The tax hike will not provide any financial benefit to the companies. It will increase only the tax revenue of the government. Increasing tax means the people has to pay more for these products, which has cascading effect. But the government is not ready to hear the voice of the people. The 12th March Rally of the left parties at before the Parliament was the beginning of the people's movement against this reluctant attitude of the government. The 8th April 'Jail Bharo' movement also send a warning to the government. The left and secular parties will raise this issue in the next Session of the Parliament. The proposed National Hartal on 27th April will be another warning to the government. He appealed to the delegates to work for the success of the Hartal along with the LDF activists. He further said that when the young people are being misguided by the anti-national forces by using the frustration of the youngsters, the followers of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose should work hardly to bring back the misguided youngsters into the mainstream of our society with patriotic fervour. As Kannur is a citadel of left politics, the Forward Bloc has its own space in the district and all possibilities are there to develop the party in the district.

Com. Thankachan Varghese, Secretary of AIFB Kerala Committee presided over the Conference. While addressing the Delegates he reiterated the political relevance of All India Forward Bloc and how to build up the party. Com. V. Ram Mohan, General Secretary of the State Committee elaborately explained about the organisational activities of the party and the programmes of the state unit. He stated that several people are interested in Kannur to join our party. Many political party workers and lower level leaders are consistently contacting the state office and expressing their desire to join our party to propagate the political philosophy of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose. Our party has a clean image in the state and the left oriented people are choosing our party as a true patriotic revolutionary party. The members and activists of our party should utilise this situation and to take all possible steps to strengthen our party.

Com. M. Pradeep Kumar made the welcome speech. Com. M. Vijayan, (Kasargode District Secretary), Com. M. Sudhakaran (Vayanadu District Secretary), Com. Devadas Kuttambooru (Asst Secretary Kozhikode), Com. K.V. Bhadrans (Thiruvananthapuram), Com. Krishnakumar, Com. P.P. Chandran, Com. Manot Kumar, Com. Hareendran and Com. Bhaskaran also spoke. A 21 member district committee was elected as Com. (Adv.) Manoj Kumar as the secretary. The Conference ended with adopting various resolutions related to the industrial and infrastructural developments of the district. It was decided to start district wise campaign to propagate the politics of AIFB and to popularise the resolutions of the district conference. Thus a new chapter has begun in the history of AIFB in Kannur, the northern district of Kerala.

IPL CRICKET AT THE COST OF BPL PEOPLE

-G. Devarajan-

Cricket has been called as gentlemen game once upon a time. But now a group of millioners, film stars, business tycoons, liquor barons, real estate companies, politicians and retired sports personalities are using this game to minting money and to make white their back money. The recent controversies related to the Indian Premier League (IPL) Cricket match reveals the flow of black money into the whole game and how the rich people are involved in it. It was further exposed that the 'owners' of the team will make money by selling telecasting rights of the matches and through advertisement from Multi National Companies. All the state cricket Associations and the BCCI are saying that the match cannot be make profitable only through gate collections. Therefore the huge investments must be recollectd through some other means.

Let us see how the advertisements will make money and how it will affect the BPL (Below Poverty Line) people. The Multinational Companies will make advertisements of their consumer products through televisions. The prime target for the advertisement is the general public. As the cosmetic companies who elect the miss world and miss universe from India while keeping an eye to the 20% of Indian affluent class who has purchasing capacity, the IPL organisers are targeting the middle class and the BPL for their earnings through cricket. The advertisements during the matches are about edible oil, washing powder, baby foods, napkins, bathing soaps, toiletries, mobile phones, automobiles etc. The current Indian society is having an unhealthy obsession with all these consumer items. Knowing fully well the middle class's passion over these consumer items, the IPL mentors are providing opportunities to the MNCs to capture the Indian markets. There are some people repeatedly asking that what is the harm when MNCs entering into the markets? It is a fact that when MNCs come, the indigenous industries will collapse. The last two decade's experience shows that thousands of small scale and rural – cottage industries have been forced to close due to their inability to compete with the MNCs. The MNCs used to introduce their products at cheaper prices at the beginning thereby finish the rural products. Once the small scale and rural resistance are over the MNCs

will increase their prices and start to dictate the terms to control the markets. It has become a reality in almost all Indian villages and townships. More over these MNCs are artificially creating a new unhealthy consumer culture, which creates social tension and erodes moral values in the families and society.

It is an astonishing factor that the central government and many state governments are giving tax exemptions to the IPL matches! Tax exemptions for IPL mean concessions to the MNCs and the rich at the cost of poor men's money. The government of Maharashtra has announced the waiver of entertainment tax for the IPL matches, which comes around 10-12 crores of Rupees. Even purchasing the half-naked cheer leaders will get tax exemption! It is already revealed that 1500 to 2500 crores of rupees are spending for making a team. Many corporate are taking shares in the team on benami basis for their family members. Many promoters are registering their companies in Mauritius in order to avoid taxes. Many promoters are offering gifts to their beloveds in the form of shares of the company and thereby eluding taxes. The government has become mere spectators on all these developments and transactions of unaccounted money. By this way the IPL cricket is cheating the economic system of our country and the government is extending all possible supports to these anti-national activities in the name of cricket.

The mainstream print and electronic media are eulogising the IPL as panacea to sport's developments. It is nothing but to get advertisements from the teams and the MNCs. Some of them are started to say that one IPL team will bring more infrastructural and industrial developments to the concerned state! This is the way how they confuse the people and misguide the society. How a cricket team can bring sustainable developments to a particular state? It is not the money comes to the state. Only the match and the team come to the state along with MNC's advertisements. The state government has to provide security facilities to the match and the team. It has to utilise its police force and other administrative systems only for getting the entertainment tax on the basis of gate collection. The media which give more space and time for IPL are forgetting their social commitment by avoiding the increasing trend of BPL people in our country. Many media avoided to publish the planning commission's acceptance of Tendulkar Committee Report regarding the numbers of BPL people in our country. It is now finally accepted by the Empowered Group of Ministers that India at present has 37.2% BPL people. This is on the basis of survey conducted by Planning Commission. But the real number will be much more if they include the people those who are residing under the railway bridges, over bridges, flyovers and having no permanent addresses. The media didn't report about the amount of tax exemptions for the IPL and the money needed for the food subsidy to the poor. The mass media is not reporting the real picture of the farmer's suicide due debt trap and other miseries but more than 500 media people were always there to report the fashion shows and the IPL matches at different places!

The government has to constitute a joint parliamentary committee to enquire about the whole dealings about the IPL matches particularly the involvement of Union Ministers, MPs and other elected representatives. The source of the money pouring into the IPL should also be enquired thoroughly. The black money dumping into the IPL matches, the nexus between the politicians and the team owners also to be enquired immediately. The government should withdraw all the tax exemptions given to the IPL matches. The government should ensure that the IPL matches should not be at the cost of BPL people.