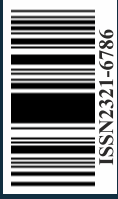




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PROUT

A Journal of Proutistic Views and Neo-Humanistic Analysis



IT IS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT DEMOCRACY IS
GOVERNMENT OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE
PEOPLE AND FOR THE PEOPLE.



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ELECTION SPECIAL PBI — POLITICS OF EXCLUSIVITY

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neglect this
world, you
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cheat yourself
by saying that
everything is
illusory, it is
nothing.

– Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Fundamental Principles of PROUT

1

No individual should be allowed to accumulate any physical wealth without the clear permission or approval of the collective body

2

There should be maximum utilization and rational distribution of all mundane, supra mundane and spiritual potentialities of the universe

3

There should be maximum utilization of the physical, metaphysical and spiritual potentialities of unit and collective body of the human society.

4

There should be a proper adjustment amongst these physical, metaphysical, mundane, supra mundane and spiritual utilizations.

5

The method of utilization should vary in accordance with the changes in time, space and person and the utilization should be of progressive nature.

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Ācārya Santosānanda Avadhūta

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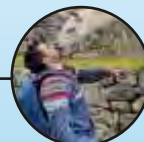
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

ELECTIONS 2024



On March 16, the Election Commission of India announced the election schedule from April 19 to June 1, in a marathon seven-phase exercise to elect the 543 members of the 18th Lok Sabha. Assembly elections will be held simultaneously in Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Sikkim, and Arunachal Pradesh along with by-polls to 26 Assembly constituencies will also be held. This parliamentary election will be the second longest polling exercise in India's electoral history. The longest was the country's first general election, which was held over a five-month period between September 1951 and February 1952.

Voting is staggered to enable security staff to guard polling stations across the country. Millions of electronic voting machines will be used, which let people choose between candidates or pick "none of the above". Across 3.3 million sq km of India, with a population of 1.4 billion — 969 million of them can vote in this year's election - roughly one in eight of the global population. Electoral rules say there must be a polling booth close to every human habitation. In the 2024 elections, officials will trek 39 km to a village in Arunachal Pradesh to collect the vote of a single female voter. The 13.4 million Indian citizens who live abroad can also vote, but must register and return to India to do so.

Polling dates are April 19 (102 constituencies in 21 states), April 26 (89 constituencies in 13 states), May 7 (94 constituencies in 12 states), May 13 (96 constituencies in 10 states), May 20 (49 constituencies in 8 states), May 25 (57 constituencies in 7 states), and June 1 (57 constituencies in 8 states). In Bihar, West Bengal, and Uttar Pradesh, voting will take place in all seven phases. The counting of votes will begin June 4. Voters in Arunachal Pradesh and Sikkim will cast their ballots for their Assembly elections on April 19, while Andhra Pradesh will elect its Assembly on May 13. Odisha's Assembly poll will be held in four phases, with voting on May 13, May 20, May 25, and June 1.

Voters must be Indian citizens of 18 years of age or older and be on the electoral register having valid ID cards. Now this begs the question — is this universal adult franchise the best criteria to select the best leaders who would have genuine love for the people and can effectively govern them on ethical and moral lines. Though this is, very pleasant to hear, but the fact remains that voters without political consciousness weaken the governmental machinery. In the interests of the general public, it is desirable that uneducated and less-educated people do not have the right to vote. Democracy is a mockery in a country of uneducated people. In such a country cunning, fraudulent persons very easily secure or purchase the votes of illiterate people. Moreover, the general public in such a country is easily misled by the propagation of casteism or communalism. Also this is a defective assertion that once people reach a certain age, it is assumed that they have the requisite capacity to weigh the pros and cons of the issues in an election and select the best candidate. But there are many people above the voting age who have little or no interest in elections and are not conversant with social or economic issues. In many cases, they vote for the party rather than the candidate, and are swayed by election propaganda or the false promises of politicians.

Another assertion could be that only literate people should be allowed to vote. In some South American countries this is prevalent. Political parties there launch literacy campaigns and people naturally cast their votes in favour of those parties which have made them literate. But is it reasonable to assume that mere literacy will awaken full wisdom about what to do and what not to do. Political parties, spread their respective party propaganda popularizing themselves among the people, who tend to become intellectually bankrupt, and their rational judgment and discrimination get affected.

The second important factor is morality. People sell their votes because they lack morality. There are some countries in the world where votes are bought and sold. It is farce and not true democracy? Democracy cannot succeed unless 51% of the population rigidly follows principles of morality. Where corrupt and immoral persons are in the majority, leaders will inevitably be elected among these immoral people.

What actually happens is that this kind of democracy induces sentiments like provincialism, communalism, casteism, etc., which are devoid of morality. This is evident from news in both print and electronic media. Most political leaders in caste ridden India indulge in it to derive maximum advantage from it. One major national party is most vocal about having a caste census. Political parties also nominate those persons who belong to majority communities as their representatives. The uneducated masses are unable to see through these games.

Finally, social, economic and political consciousness is indispensable. Even educated people may be misguided by shrewd and cunning politicians if they are not sufficiently conversant with social, economic and political issues. Democracy can be successful only when people are conscious of these three kinds. Without this the welfare of the society is not possible either in theory or in practice. People should cast their votes for deserving human beings — not for the person holding the party ticket. For this righteousness and self-purification in personal and public life is a must. Not those blinded by their obsession for power who resort to mud-slinging for the sake of party politics?

As Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar said, "A correct spiritual ideology is the only solution to the problems confronting the world. Ananda Marga ideology can, most definitely, find a just and rational solution whenever it is applied to any problem". ●



PROUT April 2024 issue, besides the Inspiring story of Head Constable Amit Lathia and his wife Manju adopting 350 youngsters and having facilitated proper education resulting in over 181 of them securing government jobs highlights the following important aspects:

1. Baba's analysis on Human beings having had to undergo tremendous struggle due to suppression, repression and oppression created by capitalism and communism.
2. Because of no justice until now, after 42 years of Bijon Sethu massacre of 17 Dadhics on April 30, 1982, in broad daylight in Kolkata, Ananda Marga should file the case to in the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has extensive powers in the form of original, appellate, and advisory jurisdictions. As the apex constitutional court, it takes up appeals primarily against verdicts of the High Courts of various states and tribunals.
3. Prout's method to address the socio-economic-political problems in countries, by setting up self-reliant Socio-economic

zones within a country, and bringing countries in a continent together into self-reliant Federations, to be brought together under a World Government constitution, providing equal representation to all the countries.

4. If we had this global political structure, we could avoid ongoing wars by Russia in Ukraine, Israel's genocide in Gaza, Refugee crisis in South Sudan, and Poverty crisis in so many Developing countries.

5. It is not possible to eradicate the sufferings of the people of India by enacting laws befitting a genuine welfare state, to bring about the economic liberation of India through the present democratic structure. This is the case with all pseudo-democratic countries controlled by political parties. So, what we need is "Democratic Governance for and by the people", involving elected representatives of public sectors (such as education sector, health care sector, legal sector, agricultural sector, industrial sector, finance and banking sector, transportation sector) to be members of local legislatures. This electoral system (devoid of political parties) can prevent support of political parties by the multinational corporations, and involve direct people's participation in how they are governed. This system can help develop people-benefitting public policies, contributing to better quality of life for the people.

6. Addressing the Plight of Farmers in India, by having thirty percent of the people to be

engaged in agriculture, and the rest of the population to be employed in industry, education in schools and colleges, healthcare in hospitals, and infrastructure development of towns and cities.

7. While Neohumanism needs to be addressed to prevent people from being narrowed by geo sentiments and socio sentiments, it is very important for the Neohumanism College to offer degree courses across academic disciplines to provide holistic education to the students—which is the requirement for all colleges.

8. India stands at a critical juncture in harnessing the potential of its mineral reserves. Control of a domestic source of lithium can improve India's ability to meet its sustainability commitments and reduce its dependency on imports of oil and components. At the same time India can pave its path to a greener and more independent future.

9. Solving India's multi-dimensional poverty crisis, by development of all sectors of towns and cities, and enabling Rural regions to sell their natural resources to Urban regions to be converted into industrial products. Thus, a well-managed rural-urban linkage is imperative for a sustainable economy.

10. How Dharma Sadhana can enable us to recognize why we are reborn in this world, and to complete our journey to self-realization by ideating on and propelling ourselves towards the Supreme Entity. ●

- *Acarya Dhanjoo Ghista,*
USA



Dornier aircraft dropping a life raft

This is the story of Assistant Commandant Priyanka Tyagi who is an inspiration to all women facing discrimination due to gender bias. As a young officer of the Indian Coast Guard she single handedly took on the establishment which refused to grant her permanency despite her outstanding career achievements. After completing 13 months of flying training to qualify as a navigator, this Science and MBA HR graduate and highly qualified professional in her 14 years service in the Coast Guard on Short Service Agreement (SSA) she saved more than 300 lives in the sea and logged 4500 flying hours — the highest among men and women in the armed forces and in 2016 was part of the all women crew on Dornier aircraft.

She rose from an assistant commandant to deputy commandant and recently, commandant (JG). She was permitted to write the mid-career professional examination for promotion as commandant, and two of her superiors recommended her permanent absorption in 2021 when she completed 12 years. Priyanka who joined the Coast Guard as assistant commandant in December 2009, said there was no discrimination between women and male SSAs till November 2009. On November 13, 2009, the government notified the Assistant Commandant Woman (General Duty) Short Service Recruitment Rules which said that “women officers shall not have the option to change over to permanent entry scheme.” Her permanent absorption was, however, blocked by the defence ministry which said permanent absorption for women SSAs did not apply to the Coast Guard.



She knocked the doors of the Supreme Court for relief, which after granting permanent commission to women short service commission officers in the Army, Navy and Air Force decided to examine her case also. A bench headed by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud issued notice on the petition filed by her whose 14-year tenure as SSA officer ended on December 30 and was released from service after she was denied any interim relief by the Delhi high court on December 21, 2023. The Supreme Court sought the Centre's response to her petition seeking parity with male officers for permanent absorption, denied to women officers under the existing rules.

Arguing that the high court should have relied on the top court's previous decisions and stayed the release of the petitioner, the only woman in her batch to seek permanent absorption. “I want to continue in service but they released me in December causing me great prejudice. So far no woman SSA officer has been granted permanent absorption as Coast Guard Rules do not permit woman SSAs to change to permanent entry scheme”. The petition relied on Supreme Court rulings that paved the way for equal opportunity for women short-service commission officers in the Indian Army, Navy and Air Force to be considered for permanent commission on par with their male counterparts and asked why the same rule did not extend to Coast Guard, an armed force since 1978.

Priyanka Tyagi made several attempts to persuade the government but received the final communication on May 26, 2023, informing her that she would be released from service on December 30. At that time she was posted in the Daman Coast Guard Air Station. She approached the Delhi high court in August last year, which took up her case and government cited the rules to turn down her request, leading to the high court denying interim relief to her. The government did not change the rules to allow women though the Coast Guard was short of officers and was recruiting retired short-service commission naval officers as permanent duty officers in the Coast Guard, clearly displaying discrimination against serving SSA officers of Coast Guard and depriving them of serving the nation.

Priyanka Tyagi is an inspiration to all women of her country and over the world for battling an unjust and unequal system. ●

Benevolent Dictatorship of **SADVIPRAS**

Proutists are to make people conscious of their rights and demands

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



In democratic countries the party in power tries to propagate their party ideals through the educational system. They prescribe only those text books which coincide with their party ideals. The universities are forced to surrender before the government because of their financial dependency. The Proutist movement will have to make the universities and educational institutions free from dirty party politics; otherwise the educational system will go on changing according to the rise or fall of different party governments. The duty of the government is to finance the universities and not to interfere in their internal affairs. The broadcasting system, too, should be free from government control.

For a good and healthy

society there should be good, healthy and well-educated citizens. Politicians are unable to rectify the defects of the present society. Their course of action is detrimental to the growth of a healthy society.

There are several forms of governmental structure, and among them the democratic structure is highly appreciated by some persons. Democracy is defined as “government of the people, by the people and for the people.” But in fact it is the rule of the majority. Hence democracy means “mobocracy” because the government in a democratic structure is guided by mob psychology. The majority of the society are fools; wise people are always in a minority. Thus, finally democracy is nothing but “foolocracy”.

In the democratic framework

of society the government may be very keen to pass laws to check corruption, but the government is not equally keen to enforce those laws, because the leaders have to depend upon the votes collected through the media of influential antisocial elements. There are three important methods to check corruption: (1) the humane approach; (2) violence; and (3) strict laws; but in a democratic society we cannot get the third item fully, and there is no scope for the second item within a democratic structure.

The best form of government is the benevolent dictatorship of the sadvipras. The sadvipras will elect a dictatorial board, and that board will elect ministers and a chairperson. The chairperson will be the constitutional head. If the chairperson cannot carry out his or her duties efficiently, the board

will replace him or her by electing another chairperson. As a principle, individual dictatorship cannot be accepted.

The sadvipras will select good persons to carry out the executive duties in the governmental and non-governmental spheres. They will also nominate top-ranking officials. The board will have power to dismiss them if they are found unfit for any responsibility. The synthetic portion of the government will be electoral and the analytic portion will be selectional. The synthetic portion will dictate policy matters and the analytic portion will execute the accepted policy. Thus our socio-economico-political structure will be selecto-electoral.

The sadvipras will capture power either by intellectual revolution or by mobilizing the mass. The duty of Proutists will be to help sadvipras to become powerful and to strengthen their hands by mobilizing the mass. Renaissance Universal will carry on intellectual and moralistic propaganda.

A socio-economic ideal can be established by either of the following two methods: (1) intellectual revolution; (2) physical revolution. Intellectual revolution stands for the propagation of ideals, but to materialize these ideals takes a pretty long time. Suffering humanity is not going to wait for this. Intellectual revolution is possible in theory only. When the hopes and aspirations of a group of people – a majority or a minority – are not fulfilled in a democratic framework, a non-democratic or sanguinary revolution is sure to take place. Such a revolution, although undesirable, is inevitable and irresistible.

Physical revolution denotes fight against all factors which go against the principle of public welfare. The Proutists will

inaugurate a new era of revolution against all sorts of fissiparous tendencies and social evils. If a country's laws are not strong enough to rectify the conduct of immoralists, the Proutists will do something concrete.

The locus standi of a nation depends on the following factors: (1) common history; (2) common tradition; (3) common territory; (4) race; (5) common faith; (6) common language; (7) common sentiments; and (8) common ideals. Among these factors items one to seven are relative factors and as such are of a transitory nature only. Within the scope of item eight there can be a blending of absolute with relativity.

The absolute factor is the ideal of Cosmic ownership. The universe is a creation of Brahma the Supreme Entity and as such the ownership of the universe is with Brahma. We may enjoy and utilize the objects created by Brahma, but we cannot declare that any item is mine. Everything is our common patrimony. We are to accept this factor within the scope of relativities. Not only will the common spiritual factor unify the inhabitants of multilingual or multi-regional countries; the entire universal society will come under the banner of this common spiritual ideal and become one.

As intellectual revolution is

of a democratic nature, Proutists are to make people conscious of their rights and demands. This can be done by:

1. Starting study circles and popularizing ideological literature. This is the first phase of intellectual propaganda. It stands for ideological education.
2. Platform propaganda and mobilizing the mass. This is for ideological consciousness because the mass can never be ideologically educated.
3. The Proutists supporting the sadvipras in democratic fights that is, helping them in occupying seats in parliament, assemblies, local self-governments, cooperative societies, etc.

In the first phase, one item; in the second phase, two items; and in the third phase, three items.

Comparatively democracy is the most favourable of all the systems of government that have so far been evolved. However there is less scope for strong leadership in a democracy than in a dictatorship. Consequently democratic countries, whether in war, socio-economic development or other spheres of activity, always remain somewhat weak, even though a democracy will usually last longer than a dictatorship.



Iconic oil painting of the French Revolution Liberty leading and Marie Antoinette being taken for execution



While there is greater scope for the rule of rationality than whimsical rule in a democratic system, the solidarity that is achieved in a dictatorship is not found in a democracy because most people do not want it. In a dictatorship common people are harassed in many ways by the whimsical rule of the dictator, and in a democracy people are equally harassed by the whimsical decisions of political parties and the expedient behaviour of party cadre. Peace loving citizens are sometimes made to suffer terribly in their hands. I would like you to objectively ponder these observations.

If the system of individual dictatorship cannot be fully supported, how can we support the system of party dictatorship? In a party dictatorship uneducated or semi-literate cadres often cause harassment to educated and talented people. Under such circumstances people want to end dictatorial rule. Sometimes they even seek the help of foreign powers to gain relief from their unbearable situation. This is the grim reality. The only solution to individual dictatorship, party dictatorship and democratic pandemonium is the Proutistic concept of Sadvipras leadership. Unless the benevolent dictatorship of the sadvipras is established,

socialization is not possible. Socialization cannot thrive in a democratic framework.

What form will the benevolent dictatorship of the Sadvipras take? PROUT supports centralization of political power and decentralization of economic power, but centralization of political power does not mean centralization in one person or one institution. Sadvipras shall elect and form several boards consisting of persons who are conversant and experienced in the various branches of administration. These boards will include the following:

1. The Supreme Board of Sadvipras: The Supreme Board of Sadvipras shall be an elected body of Sadvipras. It shall be the supreme body for framing policy and supervising the functions of different other boards in society.

2. The Legislative Board of Sadvipras: The Legislative Board of Sadvipras shall consist of those Sadvipras who are experienced in the work of legislation. It shall frame laws according to the principles of PROUT and the policies laid down by the Supreme Board of Sadvipras.

3. The Executive Board of Sadvipras: The Executive Board of Sadvipras shall consist of those Sadvipras who are experienced in the work of administration. It shall

be responsible for getting the policies and laws framed by the Legislative Board of Sadvipras materialized. It shall supervise the work of selecting and nominating the personnel who shall be employed in the bureaucracy. It shall also supervise the work of the various sub-boards established for different branches of the administration.

4. The Judicial Board of Sadvipras: The Judicial Board of Sadvipras shall be elected by Sadvipras and consist of those Sadvipras who are experienced in the work of the judiciary. It shall frame the rules and procedures for the appointment of judges and different personnel of the judiciary.

5. Sub-boards of Sadvipras for various branches of the administration: Sub-boards of Sadvipras shall be appointed by Sadvipras and shall consist of those Sadvipras who are experts in the respective branch of the administration. The lists of names for the representatives of the sub-boards shall be prepared by the Executive Board of Sadvipras and forwarded to the Legislative Board of Sadvipras. The Legislative Board of Sadvipras shall recommend the list, after amendments if necessary, to the Supreme Board of Sadvipras. The Supreme Board of Sadvipras shall finally approve this list.

However, if the Supreme Board of Sadvipras does not approve the list, it will send the list back to the Legislative Board of Sadvipras with amendments if necessary. In this case, the Legislative Board of Sadvipras shall either send the list back to the Supreme Board of Sadvipras after accepting the amendments, or send their own opinion again to the Supreme Board of Sadvipras.

The Supreme Board of Sadvipras shall be the final authority, so it will make the final decision concerning the appointment of the members of the sub-boards. ●

PBI Politics of Exclusivity

Arjun Prakash

PBI based on the ideological foundation of PROUT is not an association of opportunists but of people who are committed to ideology, morality and social justice.

Today we observe that society in India is polarised along caste and provincial lines and at the national level those who are for Modi and those who are against. This is evident from news in the print and electronic media and social media. This kind of politics of exclusion has no place in a just and stable society. It is in fact detrimental towards its growth. What is required in the politics of morality and exclusivity which Proutist

Bloc, India (PBI) a political party founded by Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar in 1968 provides just that; not politics of opportunism immorality and exclusion!

Save for few, most countries in the world follow different types of the democratic system of governance. No doubt it provides political freedom, rights and privileges to people, but not economic freedom for the mass of humanity which needs to lead dignified lives. Still today despite

scientific advancement which should have bettered the lot of the people, in the present social structure exploitation continues unabated along with evils of fundamentalism, casteism and orthodoxy. As a result, in developing countries of the world today around 28% of all children are underweight or stunted, 1.1 billion people have inadequate access to water and 2.6 billion lack basic sanitation. According to UNICEF 24000 children die each day due to poverty. Half the world lives in cities and 1 out of 3 live in slums. The world's richest 20% account for 75% of the global wealth and consume 76.6% of the world's resources. All this goes on in plain sight of the fact that the poorest 40% of the world accounts for 5% of global income and the



world's poorest consume only 1.5% of the world's resources.

Democracy that was meant to free society from all these evils and lead the society ahead, but failed miserably. Many elections have been held year after year yet people are dissatisfied. So what is the solution? Should the present day politics of divisiveness on immorality and hunger for power continue or should it be changed? What is needed is the politics of exclusivity by the moralists of the world, who should unite and carry out a major overhaul of the present social structure. "Suffering due to shortages of food, clothing, medicine, education, shelter — if we change the structure of society this misery will be ended", so said Prout's founder who founded PBI for this very purpose. It was formed not to capture power but to educate people, to serve the people and to create a sustainable society in which every human being can live with dignity. Today most of India's 2500 political parties besides trying to capture power have no real ideology, whereas PBI is based on the ideological foundation of Progressive Utilization Theory (PROUT). It is not an association of opportunists. It is an association of people who are committed to ideology, morality and social justice.

It is widely believed that democracy is government of the people, by the people and for the people. It has an old history having originated during the reign of the Licchavii Dynasty in ancient India. Hence it is hardly surprising that it has defects. In a democracy, do people have the requisite education and consciousness to judge what is right or what is wrong, what they should do or what they should not do? Does the power of understanding and judgment come as soon as one attains a prescribed age? Is age the yardstick of wisdom and education? Alas, this happens to be



the accepted fact! If those who talk big about the democratic system read the history of the Licchavii Royal Dynasty they would learn that in those days not everyone had voting rights. Only the Licchavii leaders, not the people in general, could exercise and enjoy adult franchise.

This type of political opportunism has been going on in India since independence. For the last seventy years, the political parties have maintained that democracy is the only answer to attain economic parity with the industrially developed countries of the West. The political leaders urge the electorate to vote in their favour at election time but once the elections are over, common people continue to be exploited in the name of political freedom but other areas of social life are completely neglected. Today in India millions struggle for adequate food, clothing, housing, education and medical treatment, while handful rolls in enormous wealth and luxury.

This farce of democracy is like a puppet show where a handful of power hungry politicians pull the strings from behind the scene.

In liberal democracies, capitalists manipulate the mass media such as the radio, television and newspapers, while in socialist democracies the bureaucrats lead the country to the brink of destruction. In both forms of democracy, there is little scope for honest, competent leaders to emerge in society, and virtually no possibility for the economic liberation of the people.

Democracy can work only if there is no exploitation and everyone's basic minimum requirements in life must be guaranteed and every progressive society should bear in mind that the minimum requirements will go on increasing and would no doubt change due to time, place and person. The social system viz. progressive socialism arising out of that would be in perfect harmony with changes along the way. And Prout is that very progressive socialism and PBI its torchbearer. Unless the living standards of the people are increased then and only then can democracy be termed as successful. "Otherwise, government of the people, by the people and for the people will only

mean government of fools, by fools and for fools”. PBI manned by moralists the microscopic minority once elected, would with genuine love for the people look after the welfare of the majority. It would run on ethical lines and would never allow democracy to be degenerated to be the domain of fools for the fools.

Mass education is one of the basic necessities for the successful and effective running of democracy. In some cases even educated people unjustly abuse their voting rights. People cast their votes at the insistence and inducement of misguided local leaders. To approach a polling booth like a herd of cattle to cast votes in ballot boxes is meaningless. Is this not a farce in the name of democracy? Thus, the spread of education and proper knowledge is essential. Education does not only mean literacy or alphabetical knowledge. In my opinion, real education means proper, adequate knowledge and the power of understanding. In other words, education should impart an awareness of who I am

and what I ought to do. Full knowledge about these things is what education means. Merely having some acquaintance with the alphabet is no education.

Thirdly, social, economic and political consciousness is also indispensable for the success of democracy. Even educated people may be misguided by shrewd and cunning politicians if they are not sufficiently conversant with social, economic and political issues. Democracy can be successful only when people imbibe these three kinds of consciousness. Without this awareness, the welfare of the society is not possible either in theory or in practice. Intellectuals, therefore, must never encourage unrealistic ideas of this sort. And people should cast their votes for deserving human beings – not for the person holding the party ticket.

The success of democracy depends upon educated, sensible voters. Hence, in a democratic country, the spread of education is of the highest priority. For the convenience of the general public, the educational system must be free of cost. No overbearing

government pressure should be exerted on the educational system; otherwise the party in power will continue to propagate its ideas through the medium of education. Frequent changes in the government will also result in frequent changes in the educational system; consequently the entire system of education will be jeopardized. PBI would ensure that. And in this field no ism except universalism should be allowed. The thirst for knowledge will have to be awakened among students, and reverence, devotion, orderliness and discipline will have to be taught as well. Along with this, a scientific outlook will have to be inculcated, which will rid students' minds of superstitions and high sounding isms which confuse them. As all human beings belong to one race and everyone has equal rights, exploitation of human beings and hypocrisy of vested interests would not be tolerated!”

PBI is committed to such a strong ideology of PROUT. Within the framework of Indian constitution, PBI has taken the





mandate to awaken the honest and educated people and work for the formation of a society which is worth living. PBI does not have the money raising capability like other political parties which is considered essential to win elections in today's India. But it should not be forgotten that over hundred years back, Indian freedom fighters did not have money to fight against the powerful British government. Then, the desire of all Indians to get political freedom from the British rule created a force which ultimately brought freedom. Today the determination to relieve society from the exploitation of rich and corrupt will create a collective psychic force which will change the fate of this nation. The British could be easily identified, however, today the exploiters are part of the society itself, it is not so easy to identify them. Therefore, to get economic freedom from such exploiters, the enemy within, calls for greater struggle and effort. The Indian society has done it in the past and will do so again. PBI will

lead the way. In the politics of inclusivity which PBI espouses a very important aspect is that every candidate has to declare his or her policies in writing. After an election, if it is found that a candidate is not following the declared policies and if proved, the election would be cancelled.

And as a system of government, democracy cannot be accepted as the highest and best. Among all the systems human beings have been able to devise so far, democracy can be considered to be the best of a bad lot. If human beings can devise a better system in future, it will be proper to accept it wholeheartedly. Many defects in democracy have been discovered by human beings who have already started rectifying them. It's time for the intellectual and moralists of this country to awaken unite and fight against this social malaise. Giving a clarion call to the fragmented human society "Human beings of the world unite" and follow the politics of inclusion and

exclusivity and render selfless service, not exclusion and selfishness.

These are the principles which PBI stands for and has fielded hardcore Proutists as candidates in the states of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka and Maharashtra in the forthcoming general elections and carrying its flag, the symbol of service and sacrifice, will go door to door to awaken the people of this nation and hope to make a significant impact on India's political landscape. The idea is to capture political power in the present day democratic setup by staunch moralists, only to bring about a systemic change in the social structure of society so that everyone's basic needs of life like food, clothes, housing education and medical is provided. Others as we observe want to capture power to pursue their own vested and selfish interests. PBI manned by moralists, once elected would run the government on moral and ethical lines with genuine love for the people, and look after their welfare. ●



Iran and Israeli flags

IRAN ISRAEL CONFLICT ESCALATION

Iran claims its attack was more successful than expected and that the retaliation is over unless Israel strikes back

Pushendra Goswami

The shadow conflict between Israel and Iran that has been going on over the years is now out in the open. For decades Israel and Iran have fought a shadow war across West Asia with attacks by land air and sea and in cyberspace. The barrage of drones and missiles Iran launched at Israel late April 13 marked a watershed in the conflict.

There's a history behind all this conflict. After Iran's pro Israeli leader Mohamed Reza Shan was ousted in 1979 in the revolution led by Ayatollah Khomeini and the rule of fundamentalist clergy installed, and Israel's attack on

Lebanon in 1982, Iran's Revolutionary Guards set up the Hezbollah. In 2010 Stuxnet, a computer virus was used to attack Iran's uranium enrichment facility at Natanz Nuclear site. US and Israel's hand was suspected. In 2012 Iranian nuclear scientist Mostafa Ahmadi-Roshan was killed and Israel was blamed. In January 2020 the killing of Iran's top military commander Maj Gen Qasim Suleiman by US was hailed by Israel. Iran hit back attacking two bases in Iraq, housing US troops in which 100 were injured. In July 2021 an oil tanker managed by Israeli owned shipping company was attacked allegedly

by Iranian drones off Iran which killed two. In November the same year Israel killed Iran's top nuclear scientist Mohsen Fakhrizadeh and followed it up with the assassination of a Revolutionary Guards commander Col Sayad Khodayee in May the following year. In December 2023 Iran accused Israel of killing Brig Gen Sayyed Razi Mousavi in a missile hit in Syria. Mousavi was reportedly an associate of Suleimani and helped oversee arms to Hezbollah.

And in January this year, an explosion in Beirut, Lebanon, killed Saleh al-Arouri, a Hamas commander, first assassination of

a top Hamas official outside the West Bank and Gaza in recent years. Hezbollah stepped up assaults on Israel. Israel's military killed top Hezbollah commanders. Later in March and April Israeli drone strike killed Hezbollah's rocket and missile unit commander. Air strikes near Aleppo, Syria killed 36 Syrian soldiers, 7 Hezbollah fighters and a Syrian from a top Irani militia.

Iran's missile and drone attack on Israel on April 13 was retaliation for Israeli warplanes striking the Iranian embassy complex on April 1. According to Iranian and Syrian officials at least three senior commanders and four officers overseeing Iran's covert operations in West Asia were killed in the air strike. This escalation caused due to Israel's reckless action in bombing an embassy which as per Geneva conventions is considered to be a sovereign part of the country has taken a very dangerous turn.

This was a large aerial attack from Iranian territory and Israel military chief spokesman Rear

Admiral Daniel Hagari said 30+ cruise missiles and 120 Ballistic Missiles 170 drones were fired from Iran. Most of these were intercepted but several ballistic missiles reached Israeli territory causing minor damage to an airbase. The United States helped Israel in the defensive actions and US Defence Secretary Llyod Austin said US forces intercepted missiles and attack drones launched from Iran, Iraq, Syria and Yemen. Britain also said its planes had shot down drones. Jordan, Israel's neighbouring country said its military shot down aircraft and missiles that entered its airspace. Even as Gaza is already laid to waste and the Ukraine war has entered its third year, this recent action threatens to engulf the entire region into a wider conflict something which was feared for long because of Israel's continuous air strikes' on Gaza, Syria and Lebanon. The G-7 countries have slammed Iran's attack totally ignoring the provocation which couldn't have possibly gone unanswered.

Meanwhile Iran has said its attack was more successful than expected and that the retaliation is

over unless Israel strikes back and that they were not seeking to start a wider war but warned they could launch a bigger military operation depending on Israel's response. President Joe Biden has warned Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the US will not take part in a counter offensive if Israel decides to retaliate. Russia, China, France and Germany as well as Arab states Egypt, Qatar, Turkiye and the UAE too urged restraint. There's a risk of uncontrollable regional escalation. All this has put the region on edge and commercial airplanes have been advised to avoid Iran and Israel airspace, and people advised not to travel to these countries.

While Western diplomats and US President Joe Biden have reportedly told Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu they will not support further retaliation, some analysts suggest that last night's strikes may be part of a wider ploy to draw the US, Israel's close ally, into a broader regional war.

Laying the foundation on April 1? In determining how Israel may respond to the overnight attack, analysts have focused on Israel's own attack on the Iranian consulate on April 1. That strike,



An ambulance is parked outside the Iranian embassy in Damascus after an Israeli strike on April 1, 2024

which killed two Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) generals and five officers, was carried out with scant regard to Israel's allies, who were only notified shortly ahead of the attack.

The question being debated in political and military circles is why Israel preempted such reckless action? There appear to be two causes. Firstly the Israeli strike occurred with little or no thought given to the consequences. Secondly it could have been a deliberate attempt to draw Iran into regional war and shift US and Western focus away from Israel's war on Gaza and towards Iran. Despite its status as a regional superpower, Israel – overstretched by six months of war on Gaza – would stand little chance against Iran's standing army of at least 580,000, supplemented by some 200,000 trained reserve personnel. Netanyahu's plan was clear, to distract attention from the war in Gaza and to drag the US and other Western allies back into the Middle East.

“Given the close relationship between Israel and the US and Israel's dependency on US aid, Israel should have informed the US that it was planning to attack the Iranian consulate building where the IRGC is based. By not doing so, Israel crossed a red line. Israel's motives ... need to be

questioned. An attack on a foreign consulate constitutes a strike on foreign soil under international law, and it is clear that Netanyahu knew he was crossing the line and that Iran would respond with force,” said another analyst.

For years, Iran has maintained steady pressure on Israel through its proxies, not least Hezbollah in Lebanon, which has maintained an exchange of fire with Israel dating back from before October 7.

Netanyahu's motivations for attempting to claw the US into the war likely run deeper than Israel's interests alone, analysts say, and likely speak to concerns closer to his heart. Polls in Israel show the prime minister's popularity to be at a critical low. After Netanyahu built his reputation upon claims that only he and his Likud Party stood between Israelis and oblivion, the surprise attack by Hamas-led fighters on October 7 has severely damaged his standing. Israel's options are most impacted by how Netanyahu, who is embattled domestically and internationally, will choose to take advantage of Western sympathy for Tel Aviv following Iran's highly telegraphed attack. In the months leading up to October, popular discontent with Netanyahu was growing after his extreme right-wing government attempted to force through changes that would

hobble Israel's independent judiciary.

In the months since October 7, protests have been growing against his handling of the war on Gaza as he is perceived to be less than interested in securing the release of the remaining captives taken from Israel in the attack. The protests, in addition to swelling, have developed into demonstrations against him and his rule. Even the US seemed to have lost patience with Netanyahu, with a highly publicised invitation issued to Benny Gantz, a member of Israel's war cabinet, to visit Washington, DC for talks. Netanyahu has worked to regain lost ground, using every opportunity to position himself at the forefront of a surge of nationalism that makes many people in Israel reluctant to call for an end to the war.

However, irrespective of how Israel chooses to portray itself in this latest clash, it is the US staging the play. “What we have heard so far is that the US has no interest in a war and are signaling that there will be a unified diplomatic response to Iran from the West, while at the same time calling for restraint,” Azizi said. With the US's signaling, Netanyahu's gambit looks in jeopardy.

“We are at a tipping point and the only solution is diplomatic,” Bar-Yaacov said. “A harsh military response risks dragging the region into further turmoil.”

Diplomatically, Israel's response to the attack has mirrored that of its reaction to the earlier one, with its ambassador to the United Nations calling for a UN Security Council meeting on the matter, once again trying to marshal international opinion behind Israel, despite this latest strike being a response to Israel's own. Moreover, with Iran looking less likely to suffer any cost for its strike upon Israel, he risks widening the divisions in both his own cabinet and in Israeli society if no action is taken. ●



Passions ran high in Iran after the assassination of seven IRGC members in Syria. Shown here is the funeral procession for them in Tehran on April 5, 2024

WOMEN TRAIN AND TRUCK/BUS DRIVERS

 Karunakshim Vatsalam

Women driving trains, trucks, buses, cabs, forklift operators, ambulances, or an electric three-wheeler may be a rare sight today but things are changing



Surekha Yadav: first female locomotive pilot to operate Vande Bharat Express.

These days one sees women doing things that were traditionally done by males and practically never heard of especially in India till some years ago. We find them driving trains, heavy duty trucks, buses, cabs, fly planes and helicopters, sail on the high seas in merchant and naval ships, operate cranes, forklifts and are even firefighters. Here are stories about a few of them, their trials and tribulations and success in a male dominated world.

Surekha Yadav, Asia's first woman locomotive pilot joined the Central Railway as a trainee assistant driver in 1986, undergoing rigorous training at the Kalyan Training School for six months. Sheer hard work and dedication led her to operate various types of trains. She piloted her first local goods train, numbered L-50, where she oversaw engine conditions, signals and related tasks. Her determination propelled her through the ranks, and she became a full-fledged

goods train driver in 1998. In 2010, she took on the challenging role of a train driver on the Western Ghat railway line and she drove an all-women crewed train from Mumbai to Lucknow in 2021. She continued to break barriers, becoming the first woman to operate the semi-high-speed "Vande Bharat Express" in 2023 from Solapur to Mumbai a distance of more than 450 km. On International Women's Day (8 March) the same year, the Central Railways operated the prestigious



A woman locomotive driver at Patna Junction station

Mumbai-Pune Deccan Queen Express and CSMT-Kalyan ladies' special local train with all-women crews. On that day, Yadav operated the Deccan Queen with Sayali Sawardekar as an assistant loco pilot.

Breaking the glass ceiling, more than 1250 women opted to become train drivers in 2019-20, hitherto a traditionally male domain in Indian Railways. While 50,098 male candidates qualified for Group C posts, 2170 lady candidates successfully competed in this category to become Assistant Loco Pilot (ALP), technician and Junior Engineer (JE) among others till January 2020. Very recently it's been reported that nearly five lakh women candidates are competing to become train drivers, fitters, welders and machinists in the Indian Railways. The job applications indicate that women are coming forward in areas that have until now been dominated by men. Besides this, 98 transgender persons have also applied for loco pilot and technician jobs, for which the recruitment process is in the final stage.

4.75 lakh women were

competing against 42.82 lakh men for post of 27,795 assistant loco pilots (ALP) and 36,576 technicians. The maximum number from female applicants are from Bihar (72,817) – who have applied for train driver and technician jobs – followed by Uttar Pradesh (67,831), Andhra Pradesh (47,358), Maharashtra (43,833), Tamil Nadu (39,139), Madhya Pradesh (32,595), Kerala (22,799),

West Bengal (21,625) and Rajasthan (21,340). While there are only 1,965 female candidates from Punjab, 14,416 have come forward from Haryana, 13,944 girls are from Odisha and 19,117 from Telangana. Jharkhand is also not lagging behind, as there are 17,513 women from this state who have applied. There are 2,393 women candidates from Delhi who have shown interest in becoming train drivers and technicians. Lakshadweep has a lone woman candidate, while four women from Mizoram, 22 from Manipur, 24 from Meghalaya and 11 from Nagaland are in the race.

Now here's the story of courage and fortitude of a determined mother who was a qualified lawyer but took to driving trucks to bring up her children after the death of her husband. Yogita Raghuvanshi from Bhopal became India's first woman truck driver in 2006 when she obtained a license to drive heavy vehicles. Before that, she had a license to ride a two-wheeler. "I needed to earn more for my children. I was searching for alternatives when I began my journey as a truck driver". On her



Yogita Raghuvanshi a qualified advocate turned truck driver after her husband passed away



first trip she made the 1100-mile journey from Bhopal to Hyderabad in only three days. During the first week she earned Rs 2000, so in a month she would earn 8000 whereas in her previous job driving an auto she earned 3000 a month.

She defied the odds to become the first woman to drive a truck in a male-dominated world and has driven for over 15 years travelling across more than half the country. She did all this while taking care of her two children. Yogita has degrees in law and business, while she also worked at a salon and did course in dress design. She was content being a wife and mother till her husband suggested she pursue a career in law. However, she was not able to earn much and had to take up driving after the death of her husband to look after her kids. Now Yogita owns a 10 wheeled truck presented to her by an automobile company for being India's first woman truck driver. She runs her own truck and decides her trips. In each trip she saves Rs 30000 from the revenue she receives.

Frequently encountering rude remarks, threatening looks, and

other related issues, her career started with hateful looks, but she ignored all that quickly, forged her own path and is now a confident, powerful woman working in a predominately male industry. Her life story acts as an inspiration for many people who encounter challenges on their way to achievement. Says Yogita, "I made the decision to overcome those difficulties, continue on, and build a brighter future for my family and myself".

Delisha Davis is the first Indian woman to drive a fuel tanker and also the first Indian

woman to get international licence to transport hazardous cargo. Appearances can be deceptive holds particularly true in Delisha Davis's case. Her plaited hair, gold chain and bindi give nothing away. The 23-year-old is the first Indian woman to get a licence to transport hazardous cargo — mostly tankers carrying petrol or diesel.

She had been behind the steering wheel for four years, ferrying 8,000 litres of petrol every day, on Kerala's roads. Recently, she became the first Indian woman to get an international licence to transport hazardous cargo in the



Joycy Lyngdoh at the wheel of her truck Amazon trucking partner

United Arab Emirates. “I have been crazy about driving ever since I was a child. I have been accompanying my father, a tanker truck driver, since I turned 10,” said Delisha, who did her master's in finance. When Delisha requested her father, P.V. Davis, to teach her to drive a tanker, he had only one condition—do not drive like women as most of them are bad drivers, he told her. “Delisha said that she would drive better than most men.” And, she does. Delisha came into the limelight during the first lockdown, when a vehicle inspector stopped the tanker seeing a young girl behind the wheel. When she showed her licence, the police said that this should make it to the news as it would encourage other women, too.

Initially, Delisha had to battle patriarchal mindsets. “There is a notion that women are bad drivers,” she said. “I wanted to prove that notion wrong. Driving a fuel tanker is certainly tough. But if I can do that, any woman can.” Driving a hazardous vehicle requires special training. To get the licence in the UAE, Delisha had to train for three months. “As it is an international licence, she will be

able to drive tankers anywhere in the world,” said Davis, proudly. She will be driving an 18-wheel tanker there, carrying 60,000 litres of petrol, her father added. Was he never worried about his daughter taking up this profession? “I knew she was capable, so I had no worries on that front,” said Davis.

35-year-old Joycy Lyngdoh from Meghalaya turned her passion for driving into a career as Amazon's first female trucking partner. Driving trucks is conventionally seen as a man's job, but she has the distinction of becoming the first female truck driver with an Amazon trucking partner in India. “My advice to women who want to pursue driving as a profession is that if you believe in yourself, new opportunities will open up, just go for it. You will face challenges but where there is a will, there is a way”.

A seasoned professional with over 6 years of experience, Joycy dared to turn her passion for driving into a career. Today, she cannot imagine herself doing anything else. Her journey has motivated many more female drivers in her community. “I love being out on the road traveling to

different places and meeting new people. This opportunity inspired me to pursue my passion and live a self-sufficient life,” says Joycy. She has been the sole bread earner for her family, taking care of her mother and three sisters. To make ends meet, after completing her education Joycy worked in several companies in Guwahati, including a steel company and as a store manager at a local shop. She eventually learned to drive with help from her friends. The first break she got was to drive a school bus. Her passion for the road made her take up temporary driving opportunities across the city and eventually enroll with an Amazon trucking partner where she has been working for the past one year. Joycy was quick to orient herself with Amazon's operational guidelines for reliable deliveries in and around Guwahati.

Women driving big buses, trucks, cabs, or an electric three-wheeler could be a rare thing to see in a small town but the trend is picking up in big cities, women have gained control over the steering wheel. In August 2022, the Delhi Transport Corporation introduced 11 women to the fleet. Today, there are 60 women bus



DTC's first batch of women bus drivers.



Seema, a DTC bus driver

drivers employed by the transport body — a tiny number compared to their 9,500 male counterparts. The women are hired on contractual basis, like 5,000 other drivers on the fleet.

30-year-old Anita is a DTC bus driver and currently, she drives at Badarpur-Gurugram route. "I have been driving DTC buses for the past eight months. Before this, I used to drive taxis at Delhi's IGI airport, an initiative by 'Sakha Cabs'. I learned to drive through Azad Foundation but when the Delhi government started a scheme to include women drivers in the DTC fleet, I registered myself. During the day, I used to go to Burari to learn about bus driving and at night I used to drive a taxi," Anita said. The journey for these women has been one paved with many an obstacle, including meagre pay and the uncertain nature of contractual work.

Earlier people were not very confident about women's driving skills but now schools, institutions, hospitals, hotels, state governments; everyone has started recruiting women for driver's jobs. People want women drivers for the safety of their children, for elderly people, and for women of course.



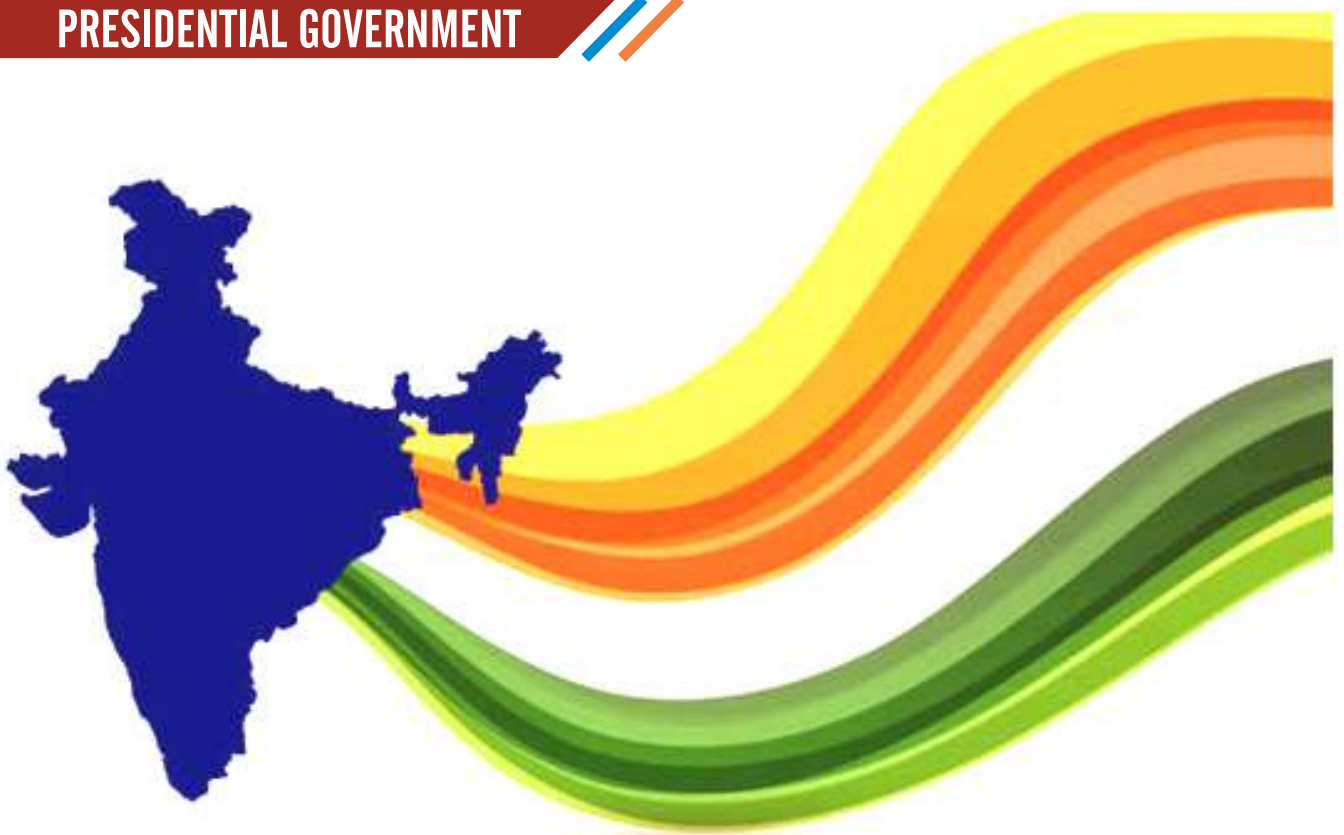
Woman driver of a buggy in Chennai

However, gender biases still exist in this profession too which needs to be resolved soon. Pink City Rickshaw Company also roped in around 200 women from low-income households for the electric rickshaw project in Jaipur. Gopesh Joshi, a spokesperson said, "Our main aim was to provide a dignified livelihood to women who belonged to the marginalised

background. These women were either working as maids or as nursing staff in the hospital. When e-rickshaws were introduced in Jaipur, we decided to rope in women". Evidently, women are gradually breaking gender stereotypes by entering into this male-dominated profession. However, the challenges persist. ●



Women 'Sakha Cab' drivers



PRESIDENTIAL FORM OF GOVERNMENT FOR INDIA

■ Nand Varma

The question of whether India should change to a presidential system keeps resurfacing. In

the 1970s Indira Gandhi considered this switch, and in the 1990s so did Atal Bihari Vajpayee. In 2013, Bharatiya Janata Party MP Rajiv Pratap Rudy asked the Rajya Sabha to adopt that system's key features. And most recently, Congress MP Shashi Tharoor reiterated his long held stance that changing to a presidential system would deliver a better functioning democracy. Some have had valid concerns. Professor Ramesh Thakur, an ex-United Nations colleague of Tharoor, outlined many of them recently in a column entitled "In Parliament's

Presidential form of government is best as the President is elected directly by the electorate

Defence". He says the fault for India's ailing democracy "lies not in the system but in politicians who have corrupted the institutions". And he claims that parliamentary systems offer better protection against a bad and incompetent head of government.

The classification of the government as Parliamentary and Presidential form is based on the relationship of the executive with the legislature. Democratic governments have always been favoured by the countries for their own political as well as economic

development. Whether it is a Presidential or Parliamentary system, each has its own advantages and disadvantages. The government of a particular nation is responsible for choosing the system that will work best for the country. This is because every country has a unique structure, population, and culture; as a result, it is critical to understand what that country actually requires. India has a Parliamentary system of governance that was modeled after the British one, chosen by our founding fathers. This article

analyses different forms of democratic government, their advantages and disadvantages and discusses what could be better, whether the present parliamentary system should continue or changed to Presidential form of government?

Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar while speaking of the Requirements of an Ideal Constitution in 1986 said: "British constitution is a collection of traditions and conventions and not a written document. The theoretical head is the crown queen or king. All power is vested with the crown but practically it is exercised by the prime minister in a parliamentary form of government. The French system is a presidential form of government where the president appoints the prime minister and all other ministers. The USA also has a presidential form of government. In France and the US there is a written constitution. In the US the president exercises power or rules the country through secretaries appointed by the president who is directly elected by the electorate. There are no ministers, only secretaries in the US system

whereas there are ministers in the French system. In India the president has no power and is only a signatory authority. The Indian prime minister can remove the president but the president cannot remove the prime minister. Although the prime minister is powerful according to the constitution, he or she is not directly elected by the electorate, that is, by the people. The prime minister is elected only as a member of parliament and then is made prime minister by the party". He felt that the US presidential form of government is a better but has a flaw, there's too much individual liberty. India is also going to suffer the same disease and this is leading to regionalism. Too much individual freedom should be curtailed in an ideal form of government. The best form of government is the presidential form where the president is elected directly by the electorate and there is less individual liberty.

The origin of Parliamentary form of government can be traced back to 17th and 18th centuries. The U.K, Austria, Germany, Denmark, India, Japan enjoy and have set up Parliamentary form of

government. Unfortunately the Parliamentary system is led by a party that aims to protect its own interests. It is often seen that the interest of the nation tends to be ignored for the interest of the party. In many occasions, the Parliamentary system of government has become a government for the party and of the party. There is a head of the state whose position is different from that of the head of the government. In such system, legislature plays a supreme role and executive derives its power from the legislature. Therefore, the executive is responsible to the house of people's representative in the legislature. Parliamentary system is not suitable for the implementation and formulation of long-term policies, because of political uncertainty and short government's tenure and changes in the ruling party which results in policy changes as was seen in 1977.

Parliamentary System often leads to dictatorship of the party and government. This happens when the ruling party wins the election with absolute majority in the Parliament. In such cases, the



party tends to become autocratic and exercises unlimited power. The Parliamentary System fails to provide a stable government especially when there are coalition governments.

One major sign of a good system of government is how well it is shielded from being corrupted or captured by popular leaders. Our parliamentary system has failed this test from the very beginning. Jawaharlal Nehru respected institutions but was able to bend them according to his personal will. Indira Gandhi made our institutions so subservient that she almost ended democracy here. And PM Narendra Modi has been accused of riding roughshod over them for the past ten years.

But there is no concern about the stability of presidential governments. Parliamentary regimes can take forever to form and may fall at any time. They are notorious for their instability around the globe. In the last 70 years, while India has had 27 administrations, Japan 35, Israel 41 and Italy a whopping 65, the US is nearing the end of her 16th. India tried to address this instability by passing anti-defection laws, but that had the unfortunate consequence of making MPs and MLAs mere bondsmen to political



party bosses.

The US model works better than ours because it is decentralised and controlled directly by the people. America invented the federal structure, which allows for local expression and real self-governance. The parliamentary system, in contrast, is inherently unitary, with the Centre controlling the entire country. Also, since parliamentary governments are controlled by the majority, a sectarian government can reduce Parliament to a rubber

stamp in a way that no presidential system can. Every lawmaker in that system is permitted to introduce legislation and build a coalition. Parliamentary coalitions share the executive power only with the controlling majority, but the presidential system shares it with the entire people, by virtue of the President's direct election.

What should be the administrative form of government? How should the powers of the federal and state governments be distributed. These questions are still under consideration in different governments of the world. Lastly, with respect to each system's ability to remove a failing chief executive, impeachment is more effective than a vote of no confidence. While the former is a constitutional provision, the latter is left to day-to-day politics. As we know, parliamentary parties never stop politicking to bring a government down. India is unfamiliar with the presidential system, and it would take a great national effort to make such a switch. But this status quoist approach is a poor reason to stick to a failing system. ●



India is gearing up for the general elections to elect its 18th Lok Sabha, the schedule for which was announced on 16th March. Indians claim that we have the largest democratic set-up in the world and that it is a mature democracy. But, the facts are contrary to this claim. Some examples are-

The party losing the election blames the winning party has misguiding the voters through emotional blackmail or that voters were given money, liquor, clothes etc. Does it not indicate that the political parties consider the voters as immature?

The Model Code of Conduct is a set of guidelines issued by the Election Commission of India for the conduct of political parties and candidates during elections mainly concerning speeches, meetings, processions, polling day, polling booths, observers, party in power, election manifestos, and general conduct. Its primary objective is to ensure that campaigns, polling, and counting proceed in an orderly,

Way for a Mature DEMOCRACY

 **Ganesh Bhat**

transparent, and peaceful manner. It also serves as a mechanism to curb the misuse of state machinery and financial resources by the ruling party.

Under the code, governments cannot do anything which may have the effect of influencing voters in favour of the party in power. Political parties and candidates are forbidden from indulging in corrupt practices. All the restrictions, and conditions imposed in the form of MCC indicate that the ECI believes that Indian voters are immature and that they can easily be influenced. Some examples are: - limits on carrying of cash by individuals, transport and storing of clothes,

gift items etc., curb on private functions like marriages, symposiums, seminars, etc. Since MCC does not possess any statutory backing political parties violate it according to their capacity and interests.

Party Affiliation:

Indian voters including the so-called educated, affiliate themselves blindly with one or the other political party. They do not bother to think about or analyse the policies or manifestos of the parties. For example, the policy of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation (which is the main cause of India's problems) was started by Congress during the early 90s and the same LPG policy was continued by BJP with more



vigour, though it opposed LPG in the beginning.

Regionalism, parochialism, casteism, groupism, religionism and other narrow sentimental or even psychic appeals play a vital role in the selection and election of candidates. In India, votes are bought and sold openly and corruption is the rule rather than the exception. Money, muscle power and cheap sentiments of caste, tribe and religion influence voter decisions. Through mock surveys, opinion polls, discussions, open support etc. media plays an important role in influencing voter's choices. Political Parties are formed based on individual interests or emotional issues rather than ideological issues.

Prout's Concept of Democracy

PROUT favours a Compartmentalized Democracy with the addition of an independent Financial or Public Exchequer department along with the existing three-branch system of Executive, Legislative, and Judicial. All of these departments should function independently, with some form of social control for coordination. Only then can these structures function freely, without interference from elected representatives. The cabinet

should confine itself to legislation, the passage and passing of the budget, the implementation of its plans and policies defence etc. The power of ministers should remain confined to the parliament and they should not poke their noses into the working of secretariat.

Voting Right

It was believed that universal suffrage would change the character of society from a state of watchfulness, doubt and suspicion to that of brotherly love, reciprocal interest and universal confidence. The idea of 'one person, one vote' sounds sweet and appealing, but it never works that way in practice. The problem of democracy today is how the franchise is exercised. How can people express 'their will' if they do not have any will or conviction of their own, whose tastes, opinions and preferences are manipulated by the big conditioning machinery? The mode in which people express their will at polls is not very different from that of their choice in buying commodities. If a highly advertised brand of soap/paste is used by the majority of the people because of some fantastic claims it makes in the propaganda, nobody with any sense would say that the

people have 'made a decision' in favour of it. All that could be claimed is that the propaganda was sufficiently effective to coax millions of people into believing the claim. The public relations counsels determine the political propaganda; and they use television, social and other media to build up political personalities as they use it to sell a product; what matters is the effect, in sales or votes, not the rationality or usefulness of what is presented.

Voting right to people having socio-politico-economic consciousness

In the name of forming a democratic government, different political and communal parties issue their election manifesto to influence the people to carry the laurels in the ensuing election battle. Besides, different parties entice the voters through election propaganda. Where there is a dearth of education and political consciousness, and where people fail to understand the reality of the manifesto and are misled by wrong propaganda, they cast their ballots in favour of parties whose ideals go contrary to the social interest. Consequently, parties are installed in power which goes against the interests of the people.

According to PROUT, the right of people to vote only upon acquiring a certain age is fundamentally defective. For the success of real democracy, PROUT suggests that the polity must be socially conscious, educated, possess basic morality, and that the minimum requirements of life of all citizens be guaranteed.

Electoral College

PROUT advocates the formation of an Electoral College whose members satisfy the following qualities: They should be educated to the extent that they understand the pros and cons of the proposals



made by those contesting elections. They should have a sense of responsibility and a socio-politico-economic consciousness and be aware of their social rights and they should, above all, be moral. PROUT emphasises that every person should be provided with the opportunities to imbibe such qualities and suggests that institutions should be established to provide moral and social education to people, thereby qualifying them as voters. Such institutions should be free from any political influence; they should be administered by an independent body like the Election Commission or the Public Service Commission, and their curriculum should be carefully designed by experts—educationalists, sociologists, philanthropists, spiritualists among others.

Those who pass the tests of such institutions should alone be the members of the Electoral College which may be divided into regions or administrative units to elect candidates for various legislative and executive bodies. The role of the Electoral College is not over even after it has elected members of various political bodies. It will continue to remain in touch with the people and apprise them of the points and counter-points of various socio-economic issues. Constant vigil required to make sure that all the arms of government function efficiently and honestly, will have to be exercised by the ever-watchful Electoral College. The qualification of a candidate for an election must be fixed much higher than that of a voter and also according to the requirements of the House to which the election is sought.

No candidate should be declared elected without a contest, even if there is only one candidate, opinions for or against him/her should be polled. Only if the candidate secures more than 50%



of votes he/she should be declared elected. If the candidate fails to get more than 50% of the votes, the candidate and all those who withdrew their nomination papers will forfeit the right to contest the subsequent by-election for that constituency. This means that they will have to wait until the next election. During elections, no candidate should be declared elected unless they secure more than 50% of votes cast.

Right to Recall People's Representatives:

Candidates would be required to state their promises and policies in black and white. Failure to implement such programs should result in termination from office to prevent politicians from making empty promises for the sake of an election. This can be affected by more than 50% of the voters of the constituency expressing their desire to recall with valid reasons or approaching the appropriate authority or court.

Party politics is one of the factors which stands, or tries to stand, in the way of human unity. Party politics is even more dangerous than disease-causing germs. In party politics, all the refined attributes of the human mind, such as simplicity and the spirit of service, slowly but surely get destroyed.

To further the interests of the party, party politics may publicly oppose something which is often secretly encouraged. Communalism, provincialism, casteism, etc. — none of these are considered bad for the sake of party interests.

Candidate qualifications, personal integrity, and the spirit of social service play secondary roles in party status and seniority. Candidates are forced to abide by party policies and cannot effectively combat elections without party endorsement. PROUT advocates that like-minded moralists people will work together to set up an ideal social structure. PROUT emphasises that the Entire cost of election should be borne by the government. Presently money, intra-party status, and media portrayal have more to do with the success or failure of a candidate at the polls than does his or her position on issues and standard of behaviour. The huge role of Big Business and the influence of money in elections undermine the spirit and content of democracy.

Unless the above changes suggested by PROUT are implemented, the present type of democracy will remain as 'mobocracy' or 'foolocracy', which creates a situation of exploitation of the majority of people by the few. ●

N

eohumanists will have a foundation in universal sentiments from which cardinal human values arise.

They will recognize that as they love their life so do all beings love theirs. They will value human dignity and will care that all have their minimum needs met, having access to basic food, shelter, medicine and clothing, as well as having opportunity for education and their inner development.

A neohumanist will acknowledge a universal base to all existence. We may call it God, we may call it Supreme Consciousness, we may call it Brahma, we may call it the Tao. We may call it the awareness that underlies manifestation; we may call it unitary consciousness. Whatever is our terminology or our belief it does not matter. What is significant is the acknowledgment of the fundamental base, the universal base that unites all living beings, and an honoring of the manifestation of that base in human, plant and animal life, and in the very expression of this created universe. This is the cardinal base. To acknowledge and give reverence to this universal base is the fundamental basis of neohumanism.

So, neohumanism is an approach grounded in spiritual insight that provides a fundamental base for human expression in the social arena. It gives a base for individual values that predispose social approaches that will benefit the human race and the planet at large. This neohumanism is a solid rock upon which we build a new society based in love and in acknowledgment of the divinity in all beings. It gives scope to the expression of cardinal values in one's approach to others, and thus in the social arena as well.

The Practice of NEO-HUMANISM

Ronald Logan

Continued from previous issue



To take neohumanism from a philosophical outlook to a practical way of life, there is need to engage in the practice of neohumanism. The practice of neohumanism entails actively engaging in one's life in ways that give tangible expression to neohumanist ideals. Two of these practices of neohumanism were

given in Part 1 of this article; the other three practices are given here.

Engage in practices to deepen your connection and understanding of the divine unifying consciousness.

Humanity has many pathways and practices with which to cultivate a relationship

with divinity. Some of these are external in form —devotional chanting, ecstatic dances, puja offerings, holy sacraments, etc. Then there are practices that are purely internal —Yogic sadhana, Theravadan vipassana, Buddhist zazen, Christian contemplative prayer, etc. These practices have awakened in spiritual seekers a connection to divine consciousness and through this connection they experience inner peace, knowledge of self, and a transcendence of the cause of suffering. These practices are then of obvious value to those who seek spiritual realization, but what are their practical value to the society? How does connecting with divine consciousness help establish neohumanism in the world?

It is because that divinity, that divine consciousness, is inherent in all life. It unites all life in a wholeness of being and possessing an awareness of this divinity creates a sense of there being a sacred essence in all beings. For those whose spiritual life has cultivated this awareness of the inherent beauty in all, neohumanism is not a philosophical belief, it becomes the essence of their nature. They look on all with respect and love.

Live in a way that your understanding of the unitary nature of the universe is your guiding principle.

This practice is about living in wholeness. It is about recognizing the underlying oneness of being — the interwoven, interdependent nature of the reality in which we exist. It is holding an awareness that nothing is separate; all is intertwined, interconnected. As the American naturalist John Muir famously said, “If you pluck the string of one strand of nature it reverberates through all other expressions.”

The surest cure for the tendency to hold divisive sentiments is to recognize the

divinity which is manifest in the form of all beings. The medieval mystic, Meister Eckhart, called on humanity to “Apprehend God in all things, for God is in all things. Every single creature is full of God.”

Human beings need to cultivate this awareness of the unity of being — to feel the divinity expressed in all things, to feel the wholeness. This fundamental awareness can be called “proto-spirituality”. Proto-spirituality is a kind of basic spirituality; it is the common essence of all forms of spirituality. Proto-spirituality serves as an antidote to the sentiments which divide people, for when we see other living beings as manifestations of one cosmic expression, our tendency is to identify with the universal human society.

Engage yourself as an active participant in bringing about social guidance by educating others about neohumanism, PROUT and spiritual life, and through the positive power of your spiritual realization.

This final practice of neohumanism, social guidance is exercised in two ways. First, there is educating others about neohumanism, spirituality and PROUT. In this practice, we are taking on the responsibility for sharing the knowledge that is most needed to transform and uplift the human society. Spirituality — in the sense of proto-spirituality — provides humanity with an expanded worldview, and one that connects us with a universal ground of being that has the capacity to fully unite the human race. And it provides a system of



practice for the transformation of consciousness. Neohumanism provides humanity with a proper value base for society, one that makes the dignity and welfare of living beings the guiding concern of our collective existence.

And PROUT offers a socio-economic theory that puts into practice neohumanist values and gives them tangible form in a dynamic society that is for all. If we were to take neohumanism as a value base for society, and then derive a social philosophy that is consistent with that value base, this would be PROUT. PROUT has as its foundations respect for all living beings and collaborating to provide for the needs of all — while maintaining respect and care for the natural world. It is a

comprehensive social theory that gives practical shape to neohumanism in all arenas of social life. As such, PROUT provides an antidote to the defective social theories of the present that have taken life out of balance. It is a pathway to a new society that can exist in harmony with nature and that is beneficial to all.

How are we to go about educating others about spirituality, neohumanism and PROUT? The word “educate” comes from the Latin word meaning “to bring forth”. In the sense we are talking about here, educating is not about proselytizing or training. It is about evoking or educating. It is about bringing forward an awareness, a way of living, and a way of collective expression that is

inherent within our innate nature. It is aligning us with that which is natural to our humanity.

The fifth practice of neohumanism also calls for affecting others with one's spiritual presence. What is it that is affected by one's spiritual presence? It is the force of love. Depending on circumstances, the expression of love may be soft and sweet, or it may be tough and forceful. But however it may need to be expressed, the effect of love is always one that is a force for good.

Neohumanists are aware that they are part of the unitary consciousness, and within that unitary consciousness they are seeking to engage the forward movement of the planet through their efforts as neohumanists. Those living in unitary consciousness, working together, can have a profound effect on society and planetary transformation.

If these elements can be brought to bear by people who are well established as neohumanists, it will have a vital importance to the process of planetary transformation that is so critical at this time in humanity's history. The mission of planetary transformation requires the assistance of those able to provide guidance and encouragement for the shift.

Johana Macy, who's long been engaged in planetary transformation, said, “Future generations, if there is a livable world for them, will look back at the epochal transition we are making to a life-sustaining society. And they may well call this the time of the Great Turning.”

As the human society struggles to shift to the next stage, it is the neohumanists who are most capable of guiding the Great Turning and of bringing forward a new era of human existence on this downtrodden planet. ●

Concluded





TAIWAN EARTHQUAKE Lessons

Taiwan the island which Prout's founder Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar visited in 1979 was hit on April 3 by the strongest

earthquake in 25 years. There were 101 aftershocks of intensity between 4 and 6. The previous one in 1999 was of 7.5, it killed 2400 and injured 100,000 and destroyed 50,000 buildings.

This time the earthquake measuring 7.4 quakes on the Richter scale struck about 18 km off Hualien, on Taiwan's east coast and was about 35 km deep. It happened during the morning rush hour killing nine people, stranding dozens of workers at quarries and sending some residents scrambling out of windows of damaged buildings. Yet the deaths and injuries were much less. Over 1000 were injured in this disaster that was centred off the coast of the

The Himalayas are prone to earthquakes; India should learn lessons from Taiwan's recent experience

 **Bhupendra Singh**

rural mountainous Hualien country, where some buildings leaned at severe angles, their ground floors totally demolished. In Taipei the capital 150 km, tiles fell from older buildings, and schools evacuated students to sports fields, giving them yellow safety helmets to wear. About 131 people were feared trapped and over 100 buildings damaged. 24 landslides damaged 35 roads, bridges and tunnels. Rescuers spread out looking for people trapped in the debris and used excavators to stabilize damaged buildings. According to the fire agency some 70 workers stranded at two rock quarries were fortunately safe but roads to reach

them were damaged by falling rocks. They would be airlifted.

Taiwan's biggest earthquake since 1999 is likely to cause some disruption across Asia's semiconductor supply chain, after chipmakers halted some operations to inspect facilities and relocate employees. The island plays an outsized role in the global chip supply chain as it is home to the world's biggest chipmaker Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Co which supplies chips to Apple and Nvidia. The country also has smaller chipmakers. While most of their facilities are not close to the earthquake's epicentre, many of the firms said they had evacuated

some of their manufacturing plants and shut down some facilities for inspections. Works would resume after inspections, while inspected facilities are expected to commence production throughout the night. The chipmaker whose facilities in Hsinchu, Tainan and Taichung have gone through varying degrees of disruptions, their shipments might get delayed. However specialists say that some highly sophisticated semiconductor labs need 24/7 seamless operations in a vacuum state for several weeks and the halts could disrupt the process, pushing up pricing. This could cause a short term hiccup to electronics manufacturers in Japan, South Korea, China and Vietnam.

Taiwan is no stranger to powerful earthquakes yet their toll on the high tech island's 23 million residents has been relatively contained due its excellent earthquake preparedness. Taiwan lies in the "Ring of Fire", the line of seismic faults encircling the Pacific Ocean where most of the world's earthquakes occur. Taiwan's earthquake preparedness is among the most advanced in the world. The island has implemented strict building codes and a world class seismological network. The government continues to revise the level of quake resistance required of new buildings and offers subsidies to residents willing to check their buildings' quake resistance. Taiwan has also pushed regular quake drills at schools and work places while public media and cell phones regularly carry notices about earthquakes and safety. These measures have significantly enhanced Taiwan's resilience to earthquakes.

Taiwan and its surrounding waters have registered about 2000 earthquakes with magnitude of 4.0 or higher since 1980 and over 100 earthquakes over 5.5. Over the last

50 years the island has experienced over 7 major quakes, the last being 7.1 in 2006 in Pingtung County in southern Taiwan. Wu Yih Min of geosciences at National Taiwan University said in the last three to five years the island's disaster has become even more sophisticated. The system scans key words and photos posted online, allowing the government to deploy resources quickly. It can also detect mobile signals in affected areas to track the flow of people while also collecting screenshots from surveillance cameras across Taiwan to assess damage. This very tech savvy trait of the island has led it to become a key player in the global market for laptops, motherboards and network devices.

The Himalayas, the world's



highest and youngest mountain range, spread across India, Nepal, Bhutan, China (Tibet) and Pakistan, has witnessed many great natural calamities, especially earthquakes that devastated the region, man-made infrastructure and claimed thousands of lives. But the worst of them all is yet to come. That is what a number of scientists of global repute have been warning for over three decades. They are convinced that an earthquake above 8 on the moment magnitude scale (denoted as Mw), considered more accurate than the Richter scale in measuring large earthquakes, is impending in the Himalayas in northern India. They, however, cannot predict when and where it is going to strike.

Earthquakes in the Himalayas

are a natural and regular occurrence. The Himalayan mountain range and the Tibetan plateau were born out of a collision between the Indian plate and the Eurasian plate about 50 million years ago. As the Indian plate continues to converge beneath the Eurasian plate, the process of mountain building continues. The stress that this process generates keeps accumulating along the plate boundaries and is released at certain intervals triggering earthquakes.

Though the National Centre for Seismology under the Ministry of Earth Sciences monitors the earthquake activity in and around the Country on 24x7 basis, with special emphasis to the Himalayan regions having high seismic potential. Wadia Institute of Himalayan Geology under the Department of Science and Technology has about 70 broadband seismograph stations operational in the Northwest and Northeast Himalayas for monitoring earthquake activities, evaluation of seismic hazards, and earthquake precursory studies. Since, an earthquake can trigger landslides, landslide susceptibility and vulnerability maps by incorporating tectonic activity based on machine learning algorithms have also been prepared. In 2005 the 7.6 magnitude Kashmir earthquake killed about 80,000 across Pakistan Occupied Kashmir (PoK), India's Jammu & Kashmir and parts of Afghanistan. In 2015 the Nepal earthquake claimed 9,000 lives and was of 7.8 magnitude. Currently two-thirds of the Himalaya is poised to rupture in one or more great earthquakes, sadly we don't know when these future earthquakes would occur.

That apart we can and should learn from Taiwan's experience to safeguard infrastructure, people's homes and their lives. ●



LABOUR AND GREEN COLONIALISM IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Continued from previous issue

Pushing Back Against Green Colonialism

In 2022, as a result of the pandemic and the war in Ukraine, the number of people without access to electricity increased for the first time in decades—by 6 million people to 760 million across the globe. Most of that increase was in sub-Saharan Africa, where four of five people lack access.

Nearly all of Uganda's energy mix comes from clean energy like hydropower. “However, despite having the highest energy mix when it comes to clean energy,” Everline Aketch reports, “only 20 percent of our households are connected to the power grid. More

Access to electricity is only one aspect of the huge disparity between the Global North and Global South

John Feffer

than 600 million people across the continent do not have access to clean energy.”

Access to electricity is only one aspect of the huge disparity between the Global North and Global South when it comes to the energy transition. The latter is increasingly the locus of a scramble for resources similar to the colonial era rush for riches. “We can add value to our natural

resources,” Ibis Fernández says, “and stop what the Global North has condemned us to be, which is raw material exporters with no added value to our products.”

Everline Aketch agrees that the Global South, which is rich in minerals, needs these resources, or the revenues from their sale, for its own transition. “And then there's the issue of intellectual property rights where most sub-Saharan Africans are not allowed to replicate some of these technologies to add value to their own material,” she adds. Another issue is the disproportionate burden of dealing with the consequences of climate change that the Global South shoulders. “Africa contributes less than 4



percent towards the current global carbon emission,” Aketch continues. “We’re the least polluters on the planet. However, we pay the highest price.”

One mechanism that enforces the divide between north and south are free trade treaties, including clauses that allow multinational companies to sue governments for regulatory practices that interfere with the corporate bottom line. “The worst thing is when these companies leave behind an environmental liability or social liability,” says Felipe Diaz, “and we have to pay them because the

companies say that we’re going against their business.”

“We have seen the effects from free trade agreements that really favor international capital more than the nation itself,” Igor Diaz agrees. “And so it becomes necessary to really review those free trade agreements with the United States and with other countries that have caused so many social problems in Colombia.”

The Case of Colombia

The presidential ticket of progressive politician Gustavo Petro and environmental justice

activist Francia Márquez won the Colombian elections in June 2022. Later that summer, the new administration stopped granting new licenses for hydrocarbon exploration and canceled fracking pilot projects, promising to wean the country from its dependency on carbon. In 2022, more than half of the country’s exports were oil and coal.

Although contracts to exploit existing reserves will last for another decade, the new government’s pledge potentially jeopardizes the livelihoods of workers in the oil, gas, and coal sectors. “In the middle of the pandemic, the government of Colombia tried to close mining for 18 months,” Igor Diaz reports. “Our union tried to stop this because more than 2,000 workers were given short notice, and they lost their jobs. This generated social chaos.”

He describes his experience representing coal miners. “In the mining company where I worked, there are 10,000 workers and more than the half of them are 35 years old,” he relates. “They’ve been working with us for 15 years. Any adjustment will be traumatic for them because in 10 years they probably won’t have any kind of retirement payment.” At the same time, he argues that “this is a historic opportunity not only for Colombia but for the whole world. We definitely have to have an energy transition. In some regions there are other labor possibilities. People could work in agriculture rather than mining. We have to stop extractivism and petroleum drilling, but for that we have to look at other productive sectors in society, at the same time improving ecosystems and stopping contamination.”

But as Felipe Diaz explains, multinationals also dominate the renewable energy sector in Colombia. “Before the Petro government took office, the task of

replacing fossil fuels was basically given to large multinational companies,” he says. “Today there are 19 different large-scale projects, and 80 percent belong to our multinational companies. Large multinational countries don’t want an underdeveloped country like Colombia to make sovereign decisions around industry and technology transfer.”

But the current Colombian government has embarked on a different path. In mid-December, the Petro administration announced the formation of Ecominerales, a new state-owned enterprise to produce and sell ore in a way to support the renewable energy industry in Colombia. “This same logic has also been proposed for the oil and gas sector,” Felipe Diaz continues. “The government wants the largest oil companies—Eco-Petrol, which is also state-owned—to have a new business unit when it comes to renewable energy.”

He continues: “That means that the public sector is going to start exercising governance and making demands of those profiting from the energy transition. The

ministries that are leading the transition are calling us to help them with information and research to find out the needs of the workers. We’ve never seen this kind of communication before. The idea here is that a Green extractivism is not going to be in the hands of mining companies.”

A major challenge that Colombia still faces is the ongoing insurgency of the National Liberation Army (ELN), a communist guerrilla group, as well as some smaller paramilitaries and narco traffickers. The stance of the ELN on the energy transition is still largely unknown. “Do they agree to transition to a clean energy matrix or do they want to keep producing oil and gas as long as it’s a sovereign nation?” Felipe Diaz asks. “There’s been a new escalation of violence with the ELN, and it’s become really difficult to negotiate with them. When they end up taking over resources, it can complicate questions of equity in an energy transition.”

Forging a Path Forward

Colombia offers an intriguing example of a state determined to

engage workers and prioritize the public sector in an energy transition. But this progressive administration also represents the culmination of many years of organizing by different sectors.

“When people come together, civil society, trade unions that is where our power actually lies,” Everline Aketch points out. “Engagement with civil society and feminist organizations is very critical in terms of amplifying the voices not only of women but also showing the implication of neoliberal policies for issues of access.” In Peru, too, such a mobilization is ongoing. “The unity has to be very wide, for example, with workers in the mining companies and indigenous people,” she explains. “We are a very diverse country where conservative forces are trying to polarize opinion in many regions. We long ago realized that we had to make an alliance against these uncivilized actors.” ●

Concluded



MEDICINES FOR THE MASSES IN INDIA SOME CRITICAL WORRIES

Making medicines of reliable quality at affordable prices to the large population has been a challenge in India since long. In Europe, generic medicines are developed to be the same as the branded medicines also called reference medicines. A generic medicine contains the same active substance(s) as the reference medicine and is used at the same dose to treat the same disease(s). However, its inactive ingredients, name, appearance, and packaging can be different. Generic medicines are manufactured according to the same quality standards as all other medicines.

A company can only submit a marketing authorization application for a generic medicine once the period of data exclusivity of the reference medicine has expired. Generics can be marketed after the marketing protection has expired, usually from 10 or 11 years after the date of first authorization of the reference product. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) assesses applications for generic medicines in the European Union (EU).

The UK is a mature market since the early 1970s in the use of generic medicines. The UK generics market is one of the world's largest in terms of both size and generic penetration. There are strict quality controls before a product licence is granted for brand or generic versions of medicines in the UK. A generic version of the same medicine will be of the same quality and have the same action as of the or branded version.

Corruption permeates the system, resulting in the unfortunate reality that generic medicines are not being prescribed to patients.

Prof. R.P. Singh



HIGHLIGHTS AS ON 15th APRIL 2022



The Indian Initiatives

In India, two initiatives have been taken in this direction: PMBJP and AMRIT Retail Pharmacy.

Pradhan Mantri Bhartiya Janaushadhi Pariyojana (PMBJP). The PMBJP stands as a symbol of hope for millions of Indians struggling to access quality medicines at affordable prices. It was launched initially by the UPA government in 2008 and later revived by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in 2015.

Under the scheme, dedicated outlets known as Janaushadhi Kendras are opened to provide

generic medicines to the masses at reduced rates.

As on 31.01.2024, 10607 Janaushadhi Kendras were functional across the country. Product basket of PMBJP comprises 1965 drugs and 293 surgical items. The Scheme is implemented by a society registered under the Societies Registration Act, viz., Pharma & Medical Bureau of India (PMBI). For low-income families burdened by medical expenses, these stores have emerged as a ray of light, promising access to affordable healthcare.

AMRIT Retail Pharmacy:

AMRIT stands for Affordable Medicines and Reliable Implants for Treatment. AMRIT retail pharmacy network offers drugs, implants, surgical disposables and other consumables at high discounts. It aims at affordable and reliable pharmacy service in public sector. The first outlet was started on 15th November 2015 at AIIMS New Delhi. Presently there are 225 AMRIT Pharmacies spread across 28 states/union territories, selling more than 5200 drugs (including cardiovascular, cancer, diabetes, stents, etc), implants, surgical disposables and other consumables at a significant discounts upto 50% on market rates, based on authentic prescriptions from doctors not only from the institutions where they are located but even to those patients availing treatment at other hospitals. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), Government of India, initiated the AMRIT program to reduce out-of-pocket expenses for medicines and medical supplies.

In summary, both initiatives aim to provide affordable medicines, but AMRIT focuses on retail pharmacies, while PMBJP emphasizes dedicated Janaushadhi Kendras. However, beneath the

surface, the schemes are grappling with deep-rooted implementation challenges, corruption, unethical practices and private pharma invasion threatening to compromise its noble objectives. These have left the marginalised population including retired individuals or those facing income-related issues still burdened with exorbitant medical expenses and compromised health. As reported by media: the following issues are crippling this whole venture of providing quality allopathic, homeopathic, ayurvedic medicines and other supports at cheap rates: Corruption permeates the system, resulting in the unfortunate reality that generic medicines are not being prescribed to patients. Doctors, preferring to write prescriptions using brand names, often deprive patients of generic alternatives. Additionally, Jan Aushadhi stores have been found selling branded medicines illegally, defeating the very purpose of providing affordable generic drugs.

Shortcomings in Medicine Supply and Availability: A critical challenge plaguing Jan Aushadhi centres is the constant shortage of generic medicines. The

unavailability of essential medications poses a serious threat to patients' health and trust in the scheme. While the government claims to offer 1,800 medicines and 285 surgical products through Jan Aushadhi stores, the reality is quite different, with the majority of outlets failing to stock even 20-25 percent of the listed medicines, he says.

The Silent Collusion: Branded Medicines in Government Stores: Adding to the existing woes, the presence of branded medicines in Jan Aushadhi outlets emerges as a major issue. Store owners justify this practice as a means to serve patients when generic medicines are unavailable. The shortage of qualified pharmacists has become a major bottleneck, hindering the smooth functioning of these outlets. Bachelor and diploma in pharmacy courses fast being expanded are expected to fill in this gap.

After an expiry date injection was administered to a patient in the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Foods and Drugs Administration Department on 26 March 2024 raided the Amrit Pharmacy inside the institute's complex and seized medicines from there. Similar issue was



reported on 22 Nov 2023 about Amrit Pharmacy inside the AIIMS Gorakhpur

Privatisation of Healthcare: A Looming Crisis

India's public healthcare system faces a worrying challenge as private pharmaceutical companies increasingly dominate the sector. As quoted by the Probe, Dr. Soumitra Ghosh, Chairperson of the Centre for Health Policy, Planning, and Management at Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS) states, "Less than 30 percent of the population has regular access to essential medicines. With a significant portion of healthcare services being provided by private players, the government's responsibility in ensuring affordable and accessible medical care remains questionable". More so, with the recent exposure in electoral bonds issue it has been reported that popular medicines of a number of well known pharma companies have failed in tests:

Between 2018 and 2023, drug tests of three drugs made by –Torrent Pharmaceutical Limited failed. These drugs were Deplate A150, Nikoran IV2 and Lopamide. Deplate A is a very popular heart medicine.

RC cough syrup, Lipavas tablets, Ondansetron and Ciperemi injection of Cipla Limited also failed seven times between 2018 and 2023. Cardivas, Latoprost eye drops, and Flexura D of Sun Pharma Laboratories Limited failed six times between 2020 and 2023.

In 2021, Bihar's drug regulator had reported a lack of quality in a batch of Remdesivir drugs manufactured by Zydus Healthcare Limited. Between 2018 and 2021, seven tests of the drugs made by Hetero Drugs Limited and Hetero Labs Limited failed. The drugs included Remdesivir injection, metformin and Covifor. In July 2020, the drug test of Anapril, made by Intas

Pharmaceuticals Limited failed. In October 2018, the drug test of Lariago tablet, made by IPCA Laboratories Limited failed.

Between 2022 and 2023, six drug tests failed on the drugs made by Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Limited. Telma AM, Telma H and Ziten tablets were included.

Quality aspect is much more critical in two ways

Use of preservatives to prolong life or renew a near expiry product particularly in manufacturing ayurvedic medicines and generic allopathic by branded manufacturers in violation of established norms is leading to poor taste and smell, poor or reverse efficacy and even risking the life & health of users.

These private companies are also involved in manufacturing of generic drugs. But their apathy and indifference is leading to frequent changes in the partners. The complaints are endless. In every sphere, there is a terrifying conspiracy. Patients are completely helpless.

The Solution

Jan Aushadhi Stores An Unmet Promise

Despite the government's announcements from time to time to establish new Jan Aushadhi

centres, the scheme's execution has fallen far short of its ambitious promises. Over 15 years since its inception, successive governments have failed to deliver on their initial commitments. While there are currently 9,303 Jan Aushadhi stores across the country, the reality on the ground does not align with grand vision of the scheme. But strong efforts are being made to expand the number of centres.

But more serious challenges are at other fronts, role of private companies in particular. On Proutistic lines, it can be stated that the right to manufacture medicines should be entrusted to directly the state government or large cooperatives which are supported by the state government. Distribution should be directly arranged by the state government or by state-controlled autonomous bodies which can distribute the medicines themselves or through consumers cooperatives. Private players should not be allowed to meddle in such matters at all because they will try to create artificial scarcity to increase the demand, prices and profits. Criminal players are habitual to quality compromises or adulterating medicines. ●



ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE ARRESTS

With Parliamentary Elections now in full swing arrests of corrupt people including politicians by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) have taken centre stage over India's political landscape. Recently released data by the ED covering the last two decades reveal.

The Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) enacted in 2002 and relevant rules were promulgated in 2005 by the Congress led UPA regime. This is from where the ED gets most of its ammunition to go after the corrupt. During the UPA years the ED started 1797 cases under PMLA, the stringent law which lays the burden of proof on the accused. 102 charge sheets were filed but got zero convictions, however by comparison during the NDA regime (2014-24) the ED initiated 5155 cases and filed 1261 charge sheets. The percentage of charge sheets filed against total cases during the UPA regime was 6% as against almost 25% under the NDA. Charge sheets are filed only after the investigations are completed by the agency only when prima facie it is established that money has been laundered. It then approaches the court and trials start.

Coming under flak by opposition political parties for pursuing cases vigorously during this juncture while elections are underway, the ED chooses to remain silent. In answer it released the above data. While on the other hand the NDA political leaders argue that due to its campaign against corruption the ED has had a busy decade. Although opposition and activists accuse ED of targeting political opponents, it has pointed out as also the government that only 3% of the cases being investigated pertain to politicians.

However, a check of ED's performance reveals that searches went up from 84 in 2005-14 to 7300 in 2014-24 and the value of assets attached went up from Rs 5086 crores to Rs 1.2 lakh crore. The number of people arrested rose from 29 to 755. While there was no confiscations of assets during UPA's term, ED confiscated assets worth 15,710 crore during the last decade. So far ED has returned more than 16000 crore to banks and other victims after disposal of assets, all in the past few years.

Still it's important to note that not a single PMLA case during the UPA regime resulted in conviction, while during the NDA regime 2014-24, 36 convictions involving 63 people were secured by the ED from courts. One of the factors contributing to this is the slow paced justice delivery system. Besides delay in trial proceedings due to repeated adjournments in courts, completing investigation in money laundering cases is a challenging task considering that economic offenders are rich and influential people who engage agencies in multiple court cases to stall probes and delay outcomes.

At one time the ED faced at least 250 petitions challenging all its powers under PMLA from registering a probe to summoning an accused and its arrest powers. These cases went through High Courts to the Supreme Court taking several years to finally arrive at a judgment when the apex court validated all the powers of the agency under the PMLA. However some high profile politicians have again moved courts stalling trials in money laundering cases again challenging the agency's powers under PMLA. ●



DHARMA SÁDHANÁ - II

- Shrii Shrii Ānandamūrti

Continued from previous issue

Today your nature is not being upheld properly. You are not following yourself; you are not following your true nature. There are two aspects of your nature: one which is not relevant and one which is relevant. The one which is not relevant is the nature of animals. We have all evolved out of that. We are all possessed of animal qualities. But that does not mean you have to follow that animal dharma; you do not have to. Even though you have come from that, you have to overcome that animal tendency. Eating, sleeping – all these qualities are there in the human being; they are not to be discarded, but to be overcome. We have got to overcome them by our true nature. Our true nature is to know ourselves thoroughly, to know who we are, where we have come from. So we need to have that energy. We need to have that momentum to know Him; that is known as sādhanā; that is known as intuitional practice – the intuitional practice or the meditation which gives you the momentum, the spiritual momentum, you need to go towards that Supreme Entity. First of all we all have got to know our dharma; our basic nature is important. You have to know your true nature. Once you know it, once you know the true nature of yourself, then you want to perform your sādhanā; then you want to perform your spiritual practices. It is because you do not know your nature that you do not do your spiritual practices. Once you start knowing your nature, once you start knowing your dharma, then you will never stop performing your sādhanā. Then you will have to fulfil your sādhanā because you know what you are, you know what you want to do, you know what you want to become. Becoming and knowing is an important part of the human being. First of all know; know what you want to do. Once you have known about what you have to become, then you will become what you want to become.

You are being propelled now by your sādhanā. Sādhanā is an important aspect of human existence. But dharma is that which protects your sādhanā. Without dharma there is no sādhanā, without sādhanā there is no dharma. The two are interdependent. They move together. So you have to be a dhārmika. You have to follow your true nature. By following your true nature you become a true spiritual aspirant. By becoming a true spiritual aspirant you know God in yourself. You know that truth in yourself. That is what your life is to be.

It is truth that is going to save you. It is not untruth that is going to save you. Truth alone will live. In Sanskrit we say Satyameva jayate – “Truth alone will be victorious.” Truth is begotten only through dharma. Where there is lack of dharma there is no truth. Where there is no truth there is no victory. So the victory of all human beings is possible only through dharma, only through spiritual practices. It is our duty to perform dharma. It is our duty to perform sādhanā. It is your duty to inspire yourself. ●

To be concluded



Mass Feeding in Spiritually Vibrant Atmosphere



A public oriented, 6 Hrs non-stop Kiirtan and Narayan Seva (Free Mass Feeding) Program was held at MCD Park at Chiraag Dilli in Delhi on 31st March. 26 posters of various spiritual quotes of Shrii Shrii Anandamurtiji was on display at various places at the MCD park kiirtan venue. All the residents of Chiraag Dilli were invited by personally informing them and providing a invitation cum information leaflet about the details of the program. The meaning of the word kiirtan, as well as the meaning of the siddha mantra "Baba Nam Kevalam", the multi dimensional effect of chanting/singing this kiirtan collectively was explained in detail in both English and Hindi for better understanding of the common people. The purpose of sadhana and speciality of Ananda Marga system of meditation called Rajadhiraj Yoga was also explained in the leaflet. 3000 of these leaflets were distributed among the general masses for an introduction of the Ananda Marga method of kiirtan and sadhana.

The program started on 31st March, Sunday at 9:30 AM with Prabhat Sangeet, and the kiirtan started at 10:00am and continued upto 4:00pm. After the kiirtan collective meditation was conducted. After the meditation Acharya



ACTIVITY

Vandananda and Acharya Santosananda spoke about the benefits of Ananda Marga sadhana system and touched briefly on the Ananda Marga philosophy, on how by following the simple straight forward practices of Ananda Marga yogic system, one can easily cultivate love for the Supreme Lord and enjoy bliss. The local councilor Beniylji also said that he enjoyed the program very much and wished to help conduct a similar program again. The atmosphere due to the vibrations of kiirtan was so blissful that it seemed that heaven had descended on earth.

Over 250 people attended the program and around 1300 people enjoyed the prasad at the Narayan Seva program conducted at the adjacent park by the kiirtan volunteers. Many books and magazines of PROUT and ANANDA MARGA were also



AMURT Holds Mass Feeding in Panchkula



In an ongoing effort to support those in need, Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT/AMURTEL) has been doing relief work in Haryana. As part of their continued efforts, the team recently distributed food to about 500 individuals outside the Government Hospital in Sector 6, Panchkula, Haryana.

The distribution, which took place on April 15, 2024, was made possible through the joint efforts of local AMURT volunteers, Taneja Family, and Ravindra Thakur, AMURT Coordinator, Chandigarh. This initiative is just one example of the team's dedication to providing vital assistance to those affected by various challenges in the region.

Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team's tireless work in Haryana and Punjab is a testament to their commitment to serving the community and making a positive impact in the lives of others.

Nominations Filed, PBI's Election Campaign Takes Off



Vinod Ghodake

Ramesh Kumar Anand, an engineer from IIT Kanpur and data scientist, has submitted his nomination as the PBI (Proutist Bloc, India) candidate for the Supaul Lok Sabha Constituency in Bihar. He has commenced his election campaign, utilizing his technical expertise and innovative approach to engage with voters and address their concerns. According to latest report is nomination papers were accepted by the returning officer.

Krishna Prasad, a seasoned proutist, has emerged as a promising PBI candidate from Bangalore Central, Karnataka, for the General Elections 2024. His nomination has been accepted, and he has been assigned the election symbol 'Plate containing food'. Despite his advanced age, Prasad is actively campaigning across his constituency, accompanied by his supporters. With a vision for inclusive progress, he is committed to addressing the



Girraj Singh Dhakre

ACTIVITY



Girraj Singh Dhakre

constituency's needs through sustainable development and community empowerment.

Vinod Ghodke, a young and dynamic PBI candidate from Dharwad, Karnataka, has filed his nomination. His candidacy has been met with enthusiasm, and he is actively engaging with electorates across all age groups, presenting the party's vision in the local language. With his humble demeanor, Ghodke has effortlessly connected with the people. His commitment to grassroots activism and community empowerment is a hallmark of his candidacy. His nomination has been also accepted.

Girraj Singh Dhakre, the PBI candidate from Fatehpur Sikri Agra, UP), filed his nomination on 18 April 2024. A dedicated social worker, Dhakre has been tirelessly advocating for social causes for many years. He is currently leading the 'Liquor-free India' movement, aiming to raise awareness about the importance of liquor ban in the country. His nomination has been also accepted.



Ramesh Kumar Anand



Krishna Prasad

Allahabad University Holds Special Symposium on Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar



On April 4th, Sanskrit Department of Allahabad University, Prayagraj, held a thought-provoking special symposium delving into Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar's perspectives on the psychological aspects of language, specifically focusing on word, meaning, and verbal understanding. The event was organized under the leadership of Prof. Narayan Chandra Mishra, Coordinator of the Department of Sanskrit, along with Dr. Minakshi Joshi and Dr. Ashish Kumar, who spearheaded the initiative.

The symposium featured esteemed scholars and intellectuals, with Prof. Anil Pratap Giri serving as the chief speaker. Prof. Giri delivered a comprehensive talk on Shrii P.R. Sarkar's significant contributions to the aforementioned topic, drawing insights from Sarkar's seminal works such as "Idea and Ideology" and "Ananda Sutram."

The event garnered substantial interest, attracting approximately 150 professors, research scholars, and students from various academic backgrounds. Attendees actively engaged in discussions, expressing admiration for Shrii P.R. Sarkar's profound perspectives and expressing a keen interest in further exploring his ideas.



BOOK REVIEW



Cooch Behar Panchanan Burma University Includes Neo-Humanism in the Syllabus



Neo-Humanism has been included in the third semester of the Undergraduate Course under the credit framework of the National Curriculum and New Education Policy by Cooch Behar Panchanan Burma University. Now Neo-Humanism will be taught in 17 colleges affiliated to the university. A total of 50 faculty members and 3000 students will be exposed to this new philosophy of Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar. This is a big step in taking the philosophy of Shri Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar to the grassroots level.

Dr. Sunandita Bhowmik, Assistant Professor in the Department of Education, has taken this initiative to incorporate neo-humanistic philosophy in the colleges of the university. She has logically justified its relevance in the present context in her Board of Studies meeting, and the Chairman has also approved the curriculum. The meeting on this subject was held on March 20 and 21, 2024. The book on Neo-Humanism will be provided to all these colleges by the Central RU Secretary.



AMURT and RAWA Received CSR Certificates



In a significant recognition of their philanthropic and cultural contributions, the Ananda Marga Universal Relief Team (AMURT) and Renaissance Artists' and Writers' Association (RAWA) have been awarded Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) certificates by the Government of India, Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

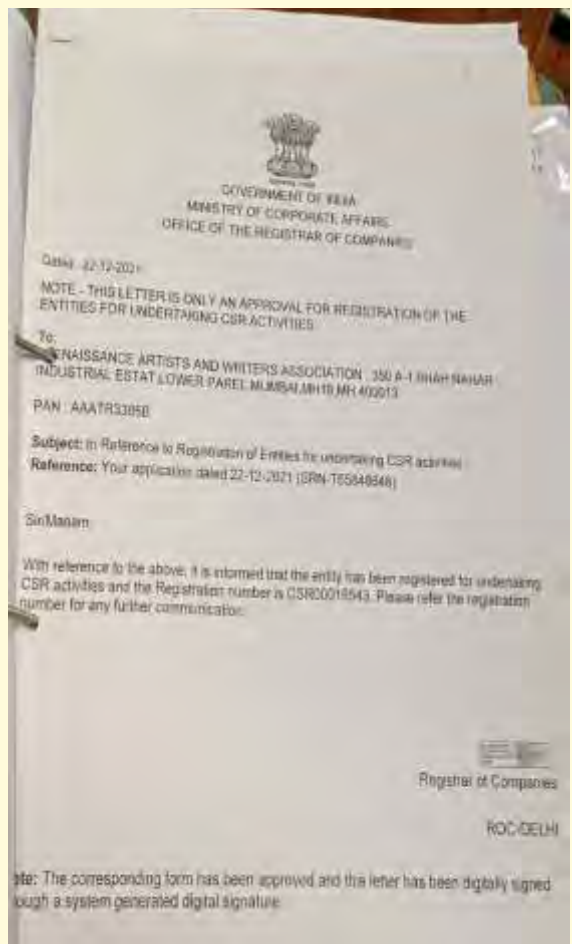
The certificates were bestowed upon the organizations recently, marking a pivotal moment in their mission to garner corporate support for humanitarian and cultural endeavors. With these certificates, AMURT and RAWA gain the ability to solicit corporate funds to further their relief efforts and promote artistic and literary endeavors.

Acharya Divyachetananda Avadhuta, the Central Secretary of AMURT and RAWA, said, "This acknowledgment will empower us to expand our reach and impact in serving communities in need and nurturing artistic expression."

AMURT, a global humanitarian organization rooted in the principles of social service and spiritual growth, has been actively involved in disaster relief, healthcare, education, and sustainable development initiatives across the globe.

Meanwhile, RAWA, dedicated to fostering creativity and cultural enrichment, has been a steadfast advocate for artists and writers, promoting their works and providing platforms for expression.

This recognition by the Government of India underscores the vital role played by AMURT and RAWA in addressing social and cultural challenges, and their commitment to making a positive difference in the lives of individuals and communities. ●



Shrii Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

I AM YOURS

DÚR ÁKÁŠHER TÁRÁ OGO
TOMÁY ÁMI JÁNINÁ
JÁNINÁ, JÁNINÁ, JÁNINÁ
DHIIRE ESE PÁSE BASO
NIJEKE GOPAN KARO NÁ
KARONÁ, KARONÁ, KARO NÁ

Star of distant skies
O I don't know You,
Don't know, don't know, don't know.
Pray do not conceal Yourself,
Do not, do not, do not.

ANEK DINER ANEK VYATHÁ
JAME ÁCHE ANEK KATHÁ
UJÁR KARE BOLBO TOMÁY
BADHIR HOYE THEKO NÁ
THEKONÁ, THEKONÁ, THEKONA

Much agony of many days piles up,
There's much to say
I shall open my heart to You
Pray do not turn a deaf ear
Do not, do not, do not.

SABÁR ÁPAN SABÁR PRIYA
SAKALERA ÁDARNÍIYA
SABÁI TOMÁY CÁICHE KÁCHE
DÚRER BÁNDHAN REKHO NÁ
REKHO NÁ, REKHO NÁ, REKHO NA

The friend of all the beloved of all
Revered by all
Everyone desires thee close
Pray do not keep barriers
Do not keep, do not keep, do not keep.

JINÁNIIRÁ SAB JÁHÁI BOLUN
SHÁSTRA VYÁKHYÁ JÁHÁI KARUN
ÁMI TOMÁR TUMI ÁMÁR
ANYA KATHÁ MÁNI NÁ
MÁNI NÁ, MÁNI NÁ, MÁNI NA

Knowledgeable men may say whatever,
Edicts and scriptures may proclaim whatever
I am Yours, You are mine
I care for nothing else
Do not care, do not care, do not care.



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