

PEASANTS' STRUGGLE

JANUARY-FEBRUARY 2022

Historic Struggle - Great Victory





Victory Celebrations at Shahajahanpur Kheda Border



Victory Celebrations at Singhu Border



Victory Celebrations at Tikri Border

Contents

FOREWORD		2
THE HISTORIC FARMERS' CLASS STRUGGLE IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW	-Dr Ashok Dhawale	3
AN ASSESSMENT OF AIKS CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORIC NATIONWIDE KISAN MOVEMENT	-Hannan Mollah	11
TIMELINE OF THE HISTORIC FARMERS' STRUGGLE		17
THE PEASANTRY'S VICTORY OVER IMPERIALISM	-Prabhat Patnaik	21
MINDS WITHOUT FEAR AND HEADS HELD HIGH: HISTORIC VICTORY FOR UNITED KISAN STRUGGLE	-Vijoo Krishnan	24
UNITED FARMERS' STRUGGLE AND NATIONAL POLITICS	-P Krishnaprasad	28
KISAN STRUGGLE AND INDIAN SECULARISM	-Manoj Kumar	31
FARMERS MOVEMENT AND WOMEN	-Savita	34
MAHARASHTRA: SHAHEED KALASH YATRAS AND MASSIVE KISAN MAZDOOR MAHAPANCHAYAT	-Kisan Gujar / Ajit Nawale	37
HP: FARMERS PROTEST AGAINST LAND ACQUISITION	-Onkar Shad	40
ANDHRA: PADAYATRA CONCLUDES WITH MASSIVE RALLY AT ANANTAPUR	-Chandrashekhar	42
TRIPURA: 15,000 STRONG SKM RALLY CELEBRATES VICTORY OF FARMERS' STRUGGLE	-Pabitra Kar	43
TAMILNADU: 10,000 STRONG SKM RALLY AT THIRUVARUR	-B. Thulasi Narayana	45
KARNATAKA: FARMERS ASSEMBLY AT BELAGAVI DEMANDS REPEAL OF THREE STATE FARM LAWS	-T Yashavantha	46
PUNJAB: AIKS CELEBRATES VICTORY, SETS TASKS FOR ADVANCE	-Major Singh Punnawal	47
UP: VARANASI MEETING PAYS HOMAGE TO AIKS LEADER DINANATH SINGH YADAV	-Mukut Singh	48

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FOREWORD

After the repeal of the three hated Farm Laws by Parliament and the fulfilment of some other main demands of the unprecedented farmers' agitation which was on for the last one year, now the Delhi border siege sites have been vacated by the farmers. But the struggle for the rest of the demands including MSP will go on. As the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) has stated, "A battle has been won but the war will continue".

In this war of the peasants and workers of India against the pro-corporate and neo-liberal policies of the BJP government, the battle to get the three Farm Laws repealed is a historic victory, which has enthused the mass movement across the country. For the last one year, farmers and their allies have made many sacrifices in this struggle. More than 700 martyred farmers have taken this struggle to victory with their supreme sacrifice. The repeal of the Farm Laws by the adamant and insensitive BJP government shows the strength of worker-peasant unity. All progressive and democratic people in India and the world have been greatly inspired by this struggle.

Despite the repression, defamation and fake propaganda by the government, the huge support to this movement from all sections in the country forced the Modi government to step back. However, just as the BJP government had got these laws passed in Parliament by trampling on all parliamentary democratic norms, the same undemocratic process was adopted to repeal these farm laws. No time was allowed for any discussion in Parliament. Even in his speech to the nation, Prime Minister Narendra Modi still defended the Farm Laws, saying that he was repealing them because he could not convince "some farmers." He made a show of apologising to the country; actually he was apologising to the Ambanis and the Adanis and other corporates, because he could not give them what they wanted, due to the force of this valiant farmers' struggle.

The worst crime of the BJP-RSS regime is the continuation in office of the Union Minister of State for Home Affairs, Ajay Mishra Teni, who was the mastermind butcher of the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre, and the father of the main accused. In any other democracy in the world, such a Minister would not only have been dismissed immediately, he would have been in jail on charges of murder and conspiracy. Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah must be roundly condemned for protecting him.

In view of the upcoming five state assembly elections, there is a lot of turmoil in the politics of the country. Hindutva forces, who have the full support of the RSS-BJP, are engaged in poisonous activities to spread hatred towards non-Hindus. The so-called Dharam Sansads at Haridwar and Raipur are the most shocking recent incidents. They are trying to shatter the unity and integrity of our country itself.

In this issue of Peasants' Struggle, we discuss various aspects of this historic farmers' struggle. Now, we must analyse the gains of this movement and concentrate on consolidating and expanding our organisation manifold throughout the country. We must further strengthen ourselves for the war against the neo-liberal, pro-corporate and communal policies and march ahead towards a pro-people and secular alternative.



THE HISTORIC FARMERS' CLASS STRUGGLE IN INDIA: AN OVERVIEW

- Dr Ashok Dhawale

The unprecedented farmers' struggle that began at the borders of India's capital Delhi on November 26, 2020, and which won a historic victory over the reactionary forces of corporate communalism and also imperialism a full one year and fifteen days later on December 11, 2021, has been by far the largest, the longest and the most powerful nationwide farmers' struggle in the history of India, and also in the world. This amazing struggle had several distinctive features.

NINE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

First, it was led by over 500 farmers' organisations in the country, who had united under the platform of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM). Such a broad unity had never been forged before. All sections of the peasantry came together across the length and breadth of India, and particularly at the Delhi borders - from agricultural workers to poor peasants to middle peasants and even to some sections of rich peasants.

Second, it was fully supported throughout by the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions, and other industrial federations, in an extraordinary spirit of worker-peasant unity. In fact, the struggle itself began as a joint struggle, with the 'Chalo Delhi' call by farmers and an All India Working Class Strike on the same day - November 26, 2020. Lakhs of peasants and workers from all over the country came out on the streets several times in solidarity with the Delhi farmers' struggle in the course of the last one year.

Third, it combated tremendous repression

from BJP governments in the form of teargas shells, water cannons, dug up highways, massive barricades, lathi charges, indiscriminate arrests, false police cases, and even four farmers and a journalist being mowed down by cars of a BJP Union Minister! Most shamefully, that Minister, instead of being in jail on murder and conspiracy charges, still continues in the Union Cabinet! But this glorious struggle overcame it all. Over 715 farmers were martyred in the course of this battle in the last one year. They included women and men, young and old.



Fourth, it faced constant defamation from the BJP-RSS and was ridiculously accused of being instigated by Khalistanis and Naxalites and Maoists, and even by Pakistan and China! It was also accused of being anti-national and seditious! No less than the Prime Minister in his speech in Parliament ridiculed our 'annadatas' as being 'andolanjeevis' and 'parjeevis' (parasites)! Sections of the corporate-owned 'Godi' media blurted out all these charges ad nauseum and covered themselves with lasting shame. But the farmers' struggle fought against all this virulent defamation and valiantly stood its ground.

Fifth, it combated the worst health disaster to strike India in recent times, the deadly Covid pandemic. The earlier big mass struggle against the CAA-NRC-NPR in 2019-20 was suppressed by the government under the excuse of the pandemic. The farmers' struggle began in the pandemic and continued valiantly even through the disastrous second wave. The government, murdering all tenets of democracy, deliberately pushed through the Farm Laws in the midst of the pandemic, under the illusion that no resistance would be possible. But farmers blew that illusion to smithereens.

Sixth, in spite of lakhs of farmers laying siege to Delhi for 380 days and nights, the struggle was completely peaceful and democratic, not only at the Delhi borders, but all over the country. It also victoriously combated the criminal conspiracy of violence unleashed by the BJP central government, its police and its agent provocateurs on January 26, Republic Day, at the time of the huge tractor rallies.

Seventh, this struggle was entirely secular and inclusive. The farmers' struggle all over India cut across religion, caste, region, state and language. It included men and women, and

young and old. The presence of tens of thousands of women and youth in this movement was truly remarkable. It was this secular and all-encompassing nature of the farmers' struggle that made it impossible for the government to crush it.

Eighth, after the political defeat of the BJP in the state assembly elections in Kerala, Tamilnadu and West Bengal, in the local body elections in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh, and in the recent by-elections in Himachal Pradesh, Haryana and Rajasthan, it put the BJP-RSS regime squarely on the defensive in the run-up to the state assembly elections in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The SKM began Mission Uttar Pradesh-Uttarakhand with a historic 10 lakh strong rally at Muzaffarnagar.

Ninth, and most important, this struggle directly identified and attacked the corrupt nexus of corporate communalism, between the BJP-RSS-led central government, symbolised by Modi and Shah, and the Indian and foreign corporate lobby, symbolised by Ambani and Adani. Through its three major demands, this historic class struggle of the peasantry, in fact, squarely attacked the neo-liberal policies and imperialism itself.

SAVAGE ATTACK OF NEO-LIBERAL POLICIES

The farmers' struggle had three cardinal demands. One, the repeal of the three anti-farmer, anti-people and pro-corporate Farm Laws rammed through Parliament in September 2020. Two, the demand for a central law to ensure Minimum Support Price (MSP) and procurement at one and a half times the comprehensive cost of production – a seminal 2006 recommendation of the National Commission on Farmers, headed by Dr M S Swaminathan. Three, the withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill, which sought to privatise electricity and massively increase power tariffs across the board.

If we see the direction of the Modi government's policies from the Shanta Kumar Committee recommendations of 2015 onwards, it will be clear that these three Farm Laws were essentially meant to gradually dismantle the MSP regime, government procurement and storage of food grains in Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns, and thereby the entire public distribution system (PDS) itself, that caters to 81 crore of our poor rural and urban citizens.

Eventually, this trajectory would also attack and seek to usurp the land of the peasantry in distress. An attempt was already made towards this end by the Modi regime through the Land Acquisition Amendment Ordinance of 2015. But that was defeated through an intense and united peasant struggle. However, many BJP state governments forced the same amendments through their state assemblies.

Now the entire agricultural sector was sought to be handed over to the domestic and foreign corporate lobby to increase its super profits and its wealth. Similar attacks were made against the working class through the enactment of the four Labour Codes, just a week after the passage of the three Farm Laws. And the entire country is now being put up for sale by the BJP regime through its anti-national policy of reckless privatisation of the public sector, and through the National Monetisation Pipeline.

The very classes that produce the wealth of the country through their hard labour – the workers and the peasants – were and are being viciously attacked. This is the real meaning of corporate communalism, whose main symbols today are Narendra Modi, Amit Shah, Mukesh Ambani and Gautam Adani. And this is the impending disaster against which the farmers' struggle waged an uncompromising battle for over one year.

The neo-liberal policies in our country were begun by the Congress central government in 1991, were taken forward by all subsequent central governments, and have been speeded up exponentially by the current Modi-led BJP-RSS regime.

The agrarian crisis in India has reached extremely serious proportions due to the neo-liberal policies of the last 30 years. As per the figures of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) under the Union Home Ministry, over four lakh farmers in India have been forced to commit suicide due to indebtedness in the last 25 years from 1995 to 2020. Over one lakh debt-ridden farmers have been forced to commit suicide in the last seven years of the Modi government alone. Lakhs of children of poor Adivasi, Dalit and backward families in our country die every year due to starvation.

RECENT MILESTONES IN THE FARMERS' STRUGGLE

The farmers' struggle emphasised that the BJP central government led by Narendra Modi has been the worst culprit in intensifying neo-liberal policies in agriculture, industry and all other sectors. BJP-led state governments have followed suit.

But the last seven years have also seen a steady strengthening of peasant resistance against the neoliberal assault on their livelihoods by the Modi government. As agrarian distress intensified, farmers and agricultural workers raised their voices against it. See these major protests by farmers after the Modi regime came to power in 2014:

- The nationwide peasant struggle in 2015 against the Land Acquisition Amendment Ordinance led by the Bhoomi Adhikar Andolan (BAA), a joint platform initiated by the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), which forced the Modi regime to eventually

withdraw the Ordinance. This was the first defeat of the newly installed BJP government

- The four nationwide jathas undertaken independently by the AIKS, which culminated in the large rally of tens of thousands of peasants before Parliament in Delhi in November 2016, despite the savage attack of demonetization.
- The AIKS-led massive Kisan struggle of Rajasthan in 2017-18 for loan waiver and MSP, which succeeded in winning a good loan waiver package, rise in old-age pensions and other important demands from the then BJP state government
- The 11-day united and unprecedented farmers' strike in Maharashtra from June 1-11, 2017 and the AIKS-led iconic Kisan Long March from Nashik to Mumbai on March 6-12, 2018, both of which succeeded in wresting a large loan waiver package from the then BJP state government, progress in the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), and increase in old-age pensions.
- The formation of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) in June 2017, with the AIKS being one of its major constituents, after the brutal police firing by the BJP Madhya Pradesh state government at Mandsaur, that led to the martyrdom of six farmers.
- The AIKSCC Kisan Mukti Sansad and the Mahila Kisan Sansad in Delhi in November 2017, in which thousands participated from across the country.
- The two seminal AIKSCC Bills prepared after extensive countrywide consultations and placed before Parliament in August 2018 – one for freedom from indebtedness, and the other for guaranteed remunerative MSP.

The CITU-AIKS-AIAWU-led 10 lakh strong nationwide Jail Bharo on August 9, and the 2 lakh strong Mazdoor Kisan Rally in New Delhi on September 5, 2018.

- The AIKSCC 1 lakh strong Kisan Mukti March in Delhi on November 29-30, 2018.

The current nationwide farmers' struggle was therefore not sudden or spontaneous. It was, in fact, the climax of all these earlier massive peasant struggles and campaigns.

Over the last few years, the implementation of the Swaminathan Commission recommendation of remunerative MSP at one and a half times the comprehensive cost of production (C2 + 50%) and complete loan waiver to farmers, became the two main demands of the peasantry. The demand for increase in the days of work under MNREGA to 200 and wages to Rs 600, along with its expansion to urban areas, also became an important demand. The AIKSCC-led Kisan Mukti March in November 2018 adopted a 19-point comprehensive Charter of Demands of the peasantry and the agricultural workers of India, which went beyond these three basic demands. The AIKS played a vital role in the formulation of this Demand Charter.

After the Modi government promulgated the three hated farm laws first as ordinances on June 5, 2020, the AIKSCC gave a countrywide call for mass protests. Several other Kisan organisations in Punjab also began a struggle and they later formed a joint front of 32 farmers' organisations, including the AIKS. The BKU (Ekta Ugrahan), a large farmers' organisation in Punjab, chose not to be a part of these 32 organisations, but began its own independent struggle on the same issues. But it later joined the SKM.

When the Modi regime rammed through the three Farm Laws through Parliament in September 2020 by murdering parliamentary



democracy and attacking the federal principle (it also rammed through the four Labour Codes through Parliament the very next week), the AIKSCC gave a clarion call for countrywide actions on September 25 and also gave a call for a massive 'Chalo Delhi' march on November 26. In October 2020 the AIKSCC invited many other farmers' organisations from Punjab, Haryana and other states, which were outside its fold, to a joint meeting in Delhi. It was in this meeting that the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) was born and it led the farmers' struggle unitedly from November 26, 2020 for over a year. Organisations like the BKU (Tikait) in Uttar Pradesh joined the struggle soon after.

Ideologically, the organisations in the SKM belong to the left, right and centre. But it was indeed a welcome development that they came together around an issue based struggle.

For over 12 months, tens of thousands of farmers laid siege to the capital at its borders like Singhu, Tikri, Ghazipur, Shahajahanpur,

Palwal and Mewat. They braved intense cold, scorching heat and torrential rains. It was indeed an unparalleled feat of human endurance. It is this struggle that has now ended in a partial but historic victory.

AIKS ROLE IN FARMERS' STRUGGLE

The AIKS has been an important constituent of the AIKSCC and the SKM ever since their inception. In this capacity, it played a major role in the collective decision making and implementation of the just-concluded farmers' struggle. Whenever contentious issues came up, the AIKS always took a principled stand on them, for strengthening the unity of the SKM. This was generally appreciated by the other organisations.

Within the SKM, the AIKS also took the initiative to strengthen worker-peasant unity, and the unity of farmers with other sections of the people. As a result, the SKM publicly supported the demand of the Central Trade Unions (CTUs) for the repeal of the four

Labour Codes and for a halt to the privatisation drive of the public sector. Joint meetings of the SKM and the CTUs were held to coordinate nationwide actions. The SKM's national convention in August 2021 at the Singhu border invited leaders of the trade unions, agricultural workers, dalit, adivasi, women, youth and student organisations and adopted resolutions in support of their demands. This united approach greatly helped to make the Bharat Bandh of September 27 an unprecedented success.

While resolutely taking active part in all the SKM's joint nationwide calls, some independent actions were also organised. The most effective was the CITU-AIKS-AIAWU call for the nationwide struggle on the anniversary of 'Quit India Day', August 9, 2021. This 'Save India Day' mobilised tens of thousands all over the country. Another was the week-long padayatras organised by the AIKS and its fraternal organisations in Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh, which culminated at the Delhi borders on the Martyrdom Day of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev, March 23. Several such independent actions were also organised by the AIKS during the year in several states.

The AIKS was the only peasant organisation in the country with a fair presence at all the six borders around Delhi. This AIKS mobilisation came from the frontline states of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh. The AIKS in various other states also took the lead in sending contingents to the Delhi borders for several days each. They included Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Bihar, West Bengal, Gujarat, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Assam, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu & Kashmir. Besides, all SKM calls in the last one year were well implemented in all the 23 states where

the AIKS has its units, with a total mobilisation of tens of thousands, putting it in the forefront among all SKM constituents.

Large Mahapanchayats under the SKM/AIKSCC banner, with good AIKS mobilisation, or under the AIKS banner independently, were held in Kolkata, Mumbai, Agartala, Patna, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Bengaluru, Belgavi, Hyderabad, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada, Ongole, Chennai, Thanjavur, Kanyakumari, Thiruvavur, Bhubaneswar, Ranchi, Thiruvananthapuram and all other district centres of Kerala, and hundreds of other places in the frontline states like Haryana, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. The AIKS participation in the SKM Kisan Mahapanchayats, especially in Muzaffarnagar, Lucknow and several other places, was impressive.

The frontline states and all other states of the AIKS did commendable work during this struggle. AIKS cadres all over the country were, in fact, incessantly on the streets since April 23, 2020, when the first call for mass action was given, within a month of the declaration of the first lockdown on March 24, 2020. After the nationwide farmers' struggle began on November 26, 2020, the level of AIKS activity, of course, increased exponentially. Struggles on local issues were taken up and linked to the national issues.

Despite the serious difficulties in the Covid pandemic, AIKS membership increased marginally. In 2019-20 it was 1,17,32,759 and in 2020-21 it was 1,17,41,513. The AIKS Centre during this struggle published thousands of copies of pamphlets in both Hindi and English, and these were brought out in several national languages. AIKS central journals *Kisan Sangharsh* (Hindi) and *Peasants' Struggle* (English), as well as several state

journals, were published from time to time and sold very well. Lakhs of AIKS flags and badges were brought out and they made an impressive impact.

Among the AIKS leaders who camped at the Delhi borders braving heat, cold and rain, and were active in the frontline states were Major Singh Punnewal, Dharampal Singh Seal, Baljit Singh Grewal and Baldev Singh Latala from Punjab; Inderjit Singh, Surendra Singh, Phool Singh Sheokand, Sumit Dalal, Virender Singh Malik and S Solanki from Haryana; D P Singh, Chandrapal Singh, Mukut Singh, Bharat Singh and Digambar Singh from Uttar Pradesh; Amra Ram, Pema Ram, Chhagan Lal Choudhary, Sanjay Madhav and Pawan Duggal from Rajasthan; and Badal Saroj, Jaswinder Singh, Ashok Tiwari, Ramnarayan Kurariya, Akhilesh Yadav and Neena Sharma from Madhya Pradesh.

Apart from these leaders of the frontline states, thousands of leaders and activists of the AIKS, CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI from all other states in the country put in great efforts over the last one year to expand this struggle to their states in a big way.

The AIKS Centre during this year long struggle was collectively manned by general secretary Hannan Mollah, president Ashok Dhawale, finance secretary P Krishnaprasad and joint secretary Vijoo Krishnan. Joint secretaries N K Shukla, Badal Saroj and K K Ragesh were also at the Centre from time to time. The AIKS centre met regularly during this period, and also the extended centre comprising leading comrades from the frontline states. All the comrades at the AIKS Centre regularly attended meetings in several states and took part in mass actions, including many large Kisan Mahapanchayats across the country. The AIKS central office and all its multifarious tasks during this challenging

period of struggle were efficiently handled by Sumit Ray, Manoj Kumar and Niloo Srivastava.

The 9-member coordination committee of the SKM includes Hannan Mollah. Ashok Dhawale and P Krishnaprasad in the last few months attended the 9-member SKM meetings in place of Hannan Mollah due to his health concerns. SKM general body meetings were attended by the above three comrades, and also regularly by Inderjit Singh, Major Singh Punnewal, Sumit, and at times by Amra Ram, Vijoo Krishnan, and some other leaders from Punjab and Haryana mentioned above. Hannan Mollah represented the AIKS in the 40-member group that had 11 rounds of talks with the central government till January 22, when the government broke off talks. Ashok Dhawale represented the AIKS in the 5-member committee of the SKM that was formed to negotiate the final agreement on pending issues with the central government.

AIKS-CITU-AIAWU COORDINATION

A welcome feature was that the central leadership of the CITU, AIAWU and AIKS held several regular joint meetings in Delhi to plan out their joint strategy in the last one year. Two online countrywide public meetings by all three class organizations were held, the first on May 8 and the second on June 24. Another online public meeting was held by the Save Democracy Forum on June 26, addressed by Emergency detenus from almost all states in the country.

Now this process of CITU-AIKS-AIAWU coordination is being systematically taken down to the states, with joint meetings of state office bearers of all three class organizations in over 20 states attended by their central office bearers. These were in preparation for the intensive countrywide campaign from July 25 to August 8, to culminate in the massive joint mass actions that took place on 'Save

India Day', August 9, 2021. The Worker-Peasant Unity Day on January 19, 2022 and the All India General Strike and Rural Hartal on February 23-24 will also be made a grand success.

Special and commendable mention must be made of the large contributions to the AIKS Struggle Fund that were made during the struggle by the working class, several unions affiliated to the CITU, many unions in the public sector and other well wishers.

AIDWA-DYFI-SFI also coordinated among themselves, and also with the AIKS-CITU-AIAWU, both at the Centre and in several states, and mobilized in thousands for the several actions in this year long farmers' struggle all over the country.

TRUE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FARMERS' STRUGGLE

The nakedly pro-corporate policies of the Modi-led BJP-RSS government are aimed at selling off the whole country under cover of the hypocritical slogan of 'atmanirbharata'. There is no sector in India which the Modi regime has not put up for privatisation and sale at a pittance to Indian and foreign corporates – be it railways, airlines, airports, ports, mines, steel, oil, irrigation, power, telecom, banks, insurance, education, health, and even defence. Now it is agriculture and land which is on its hit list. And it was this that was bitterly opposed by the farmers' struggle. The repeal of the three Farm Laws was a significant victory for the farmers and the people, and a humiliating defeat for the forces of corporate communalism.

However, the key issues of a legal guarantee of a remunerative MSP and procurement; sharp cuts in the rising prices of agricultural inputs; massive expansion towards a universal PDS with additional items;

withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill; freedom from indebtedness; a comprehensive crop insurance scheme; great expansion of credit, irrigation and power facilities; a repeal of the four Labour Codes; halving the astronomical prices of diesel, petrol, cooking gas and other essential commodities; doubling the days of work and wages for agricultural workers under the MGNREGA and extending the scheme to the urban areas; withdrawal of the New Education Policy; and most important, radical land reforms and a halt to the selling off of the country for a pittance through the central government's privatization drive of the public sector and the so-called National Monetisation Pipeline; all these and other issues must be taken up through sustained and massive struggles.

The true significance of this historic farmers' struggle was that it struck squarely, and with a united, secular and inclusive thrust, at the disastrous, neo-liberal, pro-corporate, communal, authoritarian, fascist and anti-national policies of the BJP-RSS regime, which has always acted as the most servile agent of the corporate, feudal and imperialist lobby, right from the days of our glorious freedom struggle. It was a patriotic struggle waged by millions of farmers not only for themselves, but also in defence of the people and of the entire country, in defence of our sovereignty, democracy, secularism, federalism and our Constitution itself.

With the inspiring impetus gained by the victory of this farmers' struggle, the people's struggle for the above demands, for a change in policies, and also for a change in regime, must and will go forth with even greater strength, confidence and determination!

One historic battle has been won. But the war still remains. We shall fight it! And we shall win that too! □

AN ASSESSMENT OF ALL INDIA KISAN SABHA'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE HISTORIC NATIONWIDE KISAN MOVEMENT

- Hannan Mollah

It is the practice of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) to review its role in any struggle to understand weaknesses in its planning, campaign and mobilisation and take steps for rectification and improvement for the future. As this historic and longest-ever Kisan movement achieved a great victory and AIKS is an integral part of this movement, we analysed our contribution to it and how we can contribute more effectively in the future struggles of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM).

The present struggle started against the Modi government's conspiracy against farmers through the promulgation of three anti-farmer ordinances on June 5, 2020, when we were all locked inside our houses due to

the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. We immediately understood its implications, discussed in the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) and gave a call to farmers to burn the copies of the black ordinances. In more than 4000 places, the copies were burnt, and a massive campaign against those ordinances started among farmers, agricultural workers and the rural poor all over India.

This movement culminated on August 9, 2020, when we gave a call for 'Jail Bharo' in the country. AIKS brought the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) and All India Agricultural Workers Union (AIAWU) with us and tried to build a Kisan-Mazdoor united movement against the Modi government. This agitation



was organised in **25 states and 385 districts**. **The total number of places was 19,593, and total participation was around 12 lakh kisans, workers and agricultural workers under the AIKS-CITU-AIAWU banner.**

In spite of these protests, the Modi government did not listen to the voice of the people and bulldozed these three ordinances illegally, illegitimately and forcibly as Black Acts through Parliament, violating all norms and rules and without voting, in the month of September 2020. The AIKSCC gave a call for resisting these Black Acts and for observing 'Resistance Day' on September 25, 2020. There was a massive response from farmers all over the country. The Resistance Day turned into a general strike and bandh in large parts of the country. Support came from all sections of the people. In that struggle also, AIKS participated in a big way, and there were reports from all over the country about the AIKS role in the resistance along with that of other organisations. AIKSCC gave the next call for 'Chalo Delhi' on November 26, 2020.

In the meantime, this movement spread to different parts of the country, and many organisations joined the movement. The report of massive struggles, rail roko, bandh came from Punjab and Haryana. It became necessary to bring all struggling organisations together and build a massive movement against the Modi government's anti-farmer policies and Black Acts. Hence, the AIKSCC decided to call a national convention of all Kisan organisations on October 27, 2020, at Rakabganj Gurdwara, Delhi, in which about 500 organisations participated. After thorough discussions, it was decided that all organisations should join the movement unitedly. The proposal came in the Convention for a new name for the united platform. Along with 250 members of the AIKSCC, another 250 organisations joined together, and a new

platform was formed in the name of **Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM)**. **The SKM gave the call for a Gramin Bharat Hartal coinciding with the countrywide General Strike of the working class and 'November 26' Delhi Chalo.**

Since then, this largest, most united and most peaceful movement was going on under the leadership of SKM. These twelve and a half months experienced a new type of democratic movement spread all over the country on four demands: Repeal three Black Acts, pass an MSP Act with a legal guarantee of procurement, withdraw anti-farmer Electricity Bill, and exempt farmers from the purview of environment laws. Punjab remained in the forefront of the struggle, and Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh joined in a big way. Six states around Delhi, which included Rajasthan, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh, participated in the struggle as major partners. Farmers in all other distant states also joined the movement in a big way, and it became a pan-India Kisan movement which was unique in the history of the democratic movement in India since Independence.

From the beginning, AIKS was part of the struggle led by SKM. We observed all the SKM calls all over the country. We assessed our role in observing those calls. In North and Central India, AIKS strength is comparatively less than that of some other major organisations. Still, we tried our best to mobilise our people from Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttarakhand. As the camps at Singhu border, Tikri border, Ghazipur border, Shahajahanpur border, Palwal border and Mewat border are the main features of this movement, AIKS continued its efforts to strengthen all these six borders with its limited strength. In fact, the AIKS is one of the few organisations that has farmers' representation at all six borders. The AIKS also

mobilised a large number of farmers from Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Odisha, Bihar and Assam to these Delhi borders. Due to the distance and non-availability of ordinary trains, farmers could not come from other states in large numbers. But our presence at all the six borders was visible during the entire period. The red flag flew everywhere in those places.

At the same time, AIKS tried its best to take the calls of SKM to the all India level, and we registered some success in this effort. We collected some information about those activities for proper assessment. As AIKS was the largest All India organisation, we could implement those programmes in more than 23 states and 500 districts of India.

The first big call was the All India General Strike of the working class on November 26, 2020, along with the 'Chalo Delhi' by farmers. That was a grand success. Though trade unions played a major role in that strike, AIKS also participated in a big way. About 30 crore people joined the strike all over the country. It was the first united action of workers and peasants on such a big scale.

The next SKM call was Bharat Bandh on December 8, 2020. There was **a complete bandh in 14 states, and AIKS received information of its participation and active role in 373 districts of 22 states.**

The next SKM call was 'Protest Day' on December 14, 2020. In that action, AIKS participated with considerable strength. We received reports **from 21 states and 357 districts. More than 5 lakh volunteers participated in it.**

The next call was the 'Kisan Tractor Parade' on Republic Day, January 26, 2021. This was a massive programme around Delhi. Lakhs of peasants and tractors took part in the Parade. The Government hatched a

conspiracy to give a bad name to the SKM and created the 'Lal Qila' incident. AIKS mobilised a good number of tractors and farmers in the Central programme from Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh. The same call was also given for parades in states/districts from January 23 to 26, 2021. We received reports from **24 states about AIKS actions; in a total of 228 districts at 1352 centres, around 50,000 vehicles could be mobilised, and more than 4 lakh people joined.**

The next SKM call was for 'Rasta Roko' on February 6, 2021. For that programme, AIKS held many preparatory meetings and actively involved our comrades on National Highways. We received reports from **22 states and 386 districts. Programmes were held at more than 1000 places where vehicles were stopped for hours.**

The SKM gave a call for 'Rail Roko' on February 18, 2021. AIKS took the initiative to stop trains for hours in **22 states at 447 railway stations.** In many places, farmers faced police action, but we held the programmes successfully. About 3600 comrades were arrested. In many places, other organisations also participated.

The trade unions gave a call for 'Anti-Privatisation Day' on March 15, 2021, and SKM extended support to the programme. AIKS, along with CITU and AIAWU, observed this call in **272 districts at more than 1000 places.**

The next big call of SKM was another 'Bharat Bandh' on March 26, 2021. This was one of the very successful action programmes all over the country. About 35 crore people participated in this bandh. AIKS mobilised a large number of activists, and CITU and AIAWU played a very important role. We received reports from AIKS units **from 22**



states of India. Reports from nearly 400 districts showed that lakhs of volunteers worked to make the bandh successful in most parts of the country. Five states were having Assembly elections. Election-bound states were exempted from the bandh.

May 26, 2021 marked six months of our struggle, and also seven years of the Modi government SKM gave a call for 'Black Day' against Modi misrule. AIKS took the initiative to organise a black day **in more than 300 districts. It was observed in thousands of villages. In Kerala, in 600 villages protests were organised. Over four lakh people took part in these protests.**

The next call was on June 26, 2021. It marked seven months of our struggle, and also 46 years of the Emergency, and the call was also against the Modi government's undeclared Emergency. SKM called for protests before Raj Bhawans and gave memos to the President through Governors. Besides that, protests rallies were to be held at district centres. These were organised by AIKS **in 222 districts of India in more than 2000 places.** As too many calls were given within a short span of time, it created problems for

organising programmes. But in spite of that, AIKS tried to take the message to lakhs of people in the country. To make this movement a real all-India movement and take it outside Punjab and Haryana, AIKS made all efforts sincerely.

Another big call was again given by SKM to observe August 9 as 'Corporates Quit India Day'. All the trade unions extended full support to it. For this, AIKS, CITU and AIAWU made good preparations through several joint committee meetings and concerted campaigns. Finally, **we could implement this call in 517 districts. This covered the widest area of the country so far. This programme was held at 20,970 places and more than 10 lakh working people, including farmers, workers, and agricultural labourers, made this programme a grand success.**

On August 17, there was the Narmada Kisan Mahapanchyat at Badwani. AIKS participated in the rally.

The SKM gave a call for a Kisan Parliament at Jantar Mantar during the Parliament Session in July-August. Every day 200 Kisans participated in it. AIKS delegates regularly

joined the Kisan Parliament and Hannan Mollah, General Secretary AIKS, on the first day was the 'Speaker' in the Kisan Parliament.

On August 26, a National Convention of SKM was held at the Singhu border to evaluate the struggle and discuss the future course of action. In the Convention AIKS delegates attended from different states and contributed to future planning. Leaders of CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, SFI and DYFI also participated and spoke.

The SKM called for a huge 'Mahapanchayat' at Muzaffarnagar, UP on September 5. The main mobilisation was from North and Central India. As we are not very strong in this region, we made serious preparations for this rally. **We could mobilise around 20,000 farmers from Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and also Assam.**

For making a big success of the call for 'Bharat Bandh' on September 27, the AIKS mobilised all its units, states and districts for its preparation through posters, handbills and thousands of village/area level meetings. The AIKS also participated in the state-level conventions of the SKM and AIKSCC held in several states. The Bharat Bandh was a great success, and AIKS had a leading role in most states.

The SKM call for mass protests against the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre on October 4 was observed countrywide by AIKS in a good manner. On Dussehra day, October 15, effigies of BJP leaders were burnt at thousands of places in all states.

On October 26, an SKM call was given to protest the Lakhimpur Kheri killing of Kisans by BJP goons. This was organised in different parts of the country, and AIKS took an important part in this campaign.

The Central Trade Unions organised a national convention on November 11 to decide on future plans, and SKM joined. AIKS delegates and leaders took part in it to strengthen worker-peasant unity.

To campaign against the three black Acts, massive rallies were organised, and these were called Mahapanchayats. More than a hundred such Mahapanchayats were held all over India. AIKS participated in those Mahapanchayats in large numbers, such as at Muzaffarnagar and Lucknow. Many such Mahapanchayats were addressed by AIKS leaders along with other SKM leaders at Sikar, Jabalpur, Mumbai, Bangalore, Agartala, Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Badwani etc.

SKM demanded that the Government must discuss and solve the problem. But the Government refused to talk to SKM. But due to its intensified struggle, on November 19, 2021 morning suddenly PM Modi announced the withdrawal of the three black acts, and he apologised to the Indian people. This caused tremendous happiness among the entire farmers of India. This was the greatest victory of the Kisan movement in the country since Independence. Lakhs of peasants in the whole country observed this victory with great enthusiasm. The myth that Modi was invincible was broken, and new confidence arose in the minds of the peasantry that if a sincere, determined, united movement can be built, that can defeat any enemy, however powerful they might be. This victory was enjoyed and observed by all sections of the people - workers, women, students, youth, employees and other democratic forces in the country.

AIKS was an important and inseparable part of this struggle from the beginning. It was involved in every stage and event of conceptualising, initiating, planning and

building this movement. As a part of the nine member coordination committee of the SKM, AIKS played an important role in guiding and implementing decisions. We also tried to remove some hurdles and maintain the unity of the movement. We achieved one of our main demands but still some demands were not yet met. The movement was suspended but not ended. We have to resume the movement and continue it in the future. We have to see that Mission UP and Mission Uttarakhand are materialised. In the last one year, the kisans made unprecedented sacrifices, went through immense suffering, but showed unique determination and perseverance. We lost more than seven hundred martyrs, and we have to carry forward the dream of our great martyrs.

After an in-depth analysis, the AIKS is happy with its efforts and participation over the last ten months. But we are still not satisfied as we could not mobilise our entire strength. Due to the spread of the Covid pandemic and lockdown, we could not act freely, and we had to work under serious restrictions under pandemic rules.

We also evaluated the nature of the struggles in the states. They were doing well and trying to make this movement a pan-India one. But the nature of the programmes was still as if they were holding actions in solidarity with the Delhi movement. We asked our states to change the nature of the movement in the states. Instead of organising only solidarity movements, they should organise real state-level movements as part of the all-India movement. They must certainly raise national demands, but only with that, they cannot enthuse people. For that, they should take up the burning problems of the farmers in their districts and states and take up those demands along with national demands. Then the real state-level strong militant movement can be



built up. That will generate adequate pressure on the state as well as Central governments, and a real all-India Kisan movement will emerge. The AIKS is working with this self-criticism so that a real strong pan-India movement can be built up.

We humbly suggest that all constituent organisations of SKM should examine their role self-critically so that we can have an objective evaluation, and on the basis of actual review, we can run the future struggle in a better way. I would request the organisations, mainly the major organisations and coordination committee members, to review their work objectively so that we can assess the entire movement. All organisations can make their own assessment of their performance and identify the weaknesses so that we can collectively rectify them and build up a stronger movement if the Government fails to solve the problems of the farmers.

I hope our leaders will take these ideas in good spirit and apply their minds in this regard. We should have a self-critical evaluation of our activities which will prove our sincerity to the people and bring new energy and strength to this movement. □

TIMELINE OF THE HISTORIC FARMERS' STRUGGLE

The major milestones in the historic farmers' struggle in India of 2020-21 were as follows:

- November 25-26, 2020 - Farmers' struggle begins with lakhs of farmers from Punjab and Haryana braving intense repression by the BJP-JJP Haryana state government and also by the BJP central government. November 26 is also the day of the massive All India Strike by the working class against the four Labour Codes. The struggle thus begins on the significant note of worker-peasant unity. November 26 is also Constitution Day, when the Constitution of India was adopted by the Constituent Assembly in 1949
- December 8 - Unprecedented first Bharat Bandh in support of the farmers' struggle, call given for boycott of Ambani and Adani products and services
- December - Toll plazas freed in Punjab, Haryana and later in parts of Rajasthan
- December 31 - LDF government tables resolution for repeal of three Farm Laws in Kerala state assembly, becoming the first assembly in India to unanimously adopt it
- January 12, 2021 - Supreme Court stays implementation of the three Farm Laws for one and a half year, but appoints four-member pro-government committee, of whom one member immediately resigns; committee report never made public to date
- January 18 - Mahila Kisan Day observed at Delhi borders and all over the country
- January 22 - BJP government breaks off talks with the SKM after 11 rounds
- January 23-26 - Massive Kisan Mahapadavs and rallies in various state capitals mobilise lakhs of peasants and workers in several states across India
- January 26 - Huge peaceful one lakh strong tractor rally by lakhs of farmers on Republic Day; it is disrupted with the Red Fort incident by BJP government's chosen agent provocateurs; Godi media goes on rampage against the farmers' struggle
- January 27-29 - Farmers at Delhi borders bravely fight back intense state repression
- January 29 - MPs of opposition parties boycott President's Address in Parliament in support of the valiant farmers' struggle
- January 30 - Mahatma Gandhi's Martyrdom Anniversary observed countrywide, stressing his tenets of truth and non-violence, which guide the farmers' struggle
- February 6 - Countrywide Road Blocks against government repression at 3000 centres
- February 18 - Militant Rail Roko struggle at 600 centres across the country
- February to April - Hundreds of massive Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayats across the country, which mobilise lakhs of peasants and workers against the Modi regime
- March 6 - Farmers' struggle completes 100 days, KMP highway blocked, countrywide demonstrations of support
- March 8 - International Women's Day widely observed in solidarity
- March 17-23 - AIKS and its fraternal organisations conduct series of impressive padayatras from Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and bring them to Delhi borders
- March 23 - Martyrdom Anniversary of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev observed countrywide as Youth Kisan Day

- March 26 – Second Bharat Bandh in support of the farmers in struggle to coincide with the completion of four months of the struggle
- April 10-11 – KMP Highway blocked for 24 hours
- April 14 – Countrywide observance of Birth Anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar as ‘Save Constitution Day’
- April – Farmers foil Covid-related ‘Operation Clean’ plan of government to clear Delhi borders through ‘Operation Shakti’, despite the deadly second Covid wave
- April-May – Farmers help Covid patients in distress in Delhi during deadly second wave
- May 2 – Stinging defeat of BJP and its allies in the state assembly elections in Kerala, Tamilnadu and West Bengal widely celebrated all over the country
- May 10 – Beginning of First War of Indian Independence of 1857 observed
- May 26 – Six months of the farmers’ struggle and seven years of the Modi government observed as Black Flag Day with burning of effigies of the Modi regime countrywide
- June 5 – Protests to mark one year of the three Farm Ordinances
- June 6 – Public meetings to pay homage to the six Mandsaur martyrs of 2017, killed in police firing by the BJP state government of Madhya Pradesh
- June 9 – Martyrdom Anniversary observed of legendary tribal freedom fighter of Jharkhand, Birsa Munda, who died in a British jail in 1900
- June 18 – Martyrdom Anniversary observed of Rani Laxmibai of Jhansi, killed in 1858 during the First War of Indian Independence
- June 26 – Completion of seven months of the farmers’ struggle and 46 years after the imposition of the Emergency; call to fight undeclared Emergency of the Modi regime widely observed all over the country
- June 29 – Renowned American Left intellectual Noam Chomsky supports farmers’ struggle in India, calls it “a beacon of light in dark times for the entire world”
- June 30 – Anniversary of the tribal peasants’ Santhal Rebellion of 1855 against the British, observed as ‘Hul Kranti Divas’
- July 8 – Nationwide protests against the massive price hikes of diesel, petrol and gas
- July 17 – People’s Whips issued to MPs to fight for farmers in Parliament session
- July 22 to August 9 – Hundreds of farmers hold Kisan Parliament at Jantar Mantar daily during Parliament’s monsoon session; July 26 and August 9 see women farmers’ marches; Kisan Parliament adopts several resolutions on farmers’ issues, and concludes by adopting a No Confidence Motion against the Modi government
- July 26 – ‘Mission Uttar Pradesh’ and ‘Mission Uttarakhand’ to defeat the BJP governments in these states declared at SKM press conference in Lucknow
- August 9 – Lakhs of peasants, workers and other sections in India led by AIKS, CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, DYFI, SFI hit the streets to mark ‘Save India Day’
- August 15 – Lakhs join Tiranga Rallies on Independence Day all over the country to mark it as ‘Kisan Mazdoor Azaadi Sangram Divas’
- August 20 – 19 opposition parties in India release a joint statement on 11 burning demands, supporting key demands of the farmers’ and workers’ struggle

- August 24 – Sugarcane farmers of Punjab gain victory with a price of Rs 360 per quintal, a Rs 50 increase, after five days of Rail Roko and Rasta Roko
- August 26-27 – SKM National Convention at Singhu border mobilises over 2000 people, including national leaders of trade unions, agricultural workers, dalits, adivasis, women, youth and students; Gives call for Bharat Bandh on September 27
- August 28 – Brutal repression by police of Haryana BJP-JJP regime at Karnal claims one martyr; intense struggle by SKM begins against repression
- September 5 – Historic Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat of 10 lakhs at Muzaffarnagar, UP, cutting across religion, caste, state and language. Mission Uttar Pradesh inaugurated
- September 7-11 – Karnal siege in Haryana against repression leads to victory
- September 25 – Two Muslim peasants, one of them a 12 year old boy, in Darrang, Assam, killed in police firing ordered by the BJP state regime; condemnation all over
- September 27 – Third Bharat Bandh in the farmers' struggle gets unprecedented response from crores of farmers, workers and the people all over the country
- September 28 – Shaheed Bhagat Singh Birth Anniversary widely observed in India
- October 2 – Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary widely observed all over the country
- October 3 – Stunning massacre of mowing down of four farmers and a journalist at Lakhimpur Kheri in Uttar Pradesh by convoy of cars belonging to BJP Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra Teni, driven by his son Ashish Mishra and other BJP goons
- October 4/5 – SKM gives countrywide protest call to denounce this massacre
- October 11 – Massive Maharashtra Bandh called by the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi, and supported by all Left and anti-BJP forces, to condemn the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre
- October 11 - Birth Anniversary of Jayaprakash Narayan widely observed
- October 12 – Huge condolence meeting to mark Antim Ardaas of farmer martyrs at Lakhimpur Kheri; large protest meetings and candle light vigils across the country; Shaheed Kalash Yatras begin in several states with large farmers' gatherings
- October 15 – To mark Dussehra, effigies of BJP leaders Modi, Shah, Yogi, Mishra, Tomar and Khattar burnt by lakhs of people at thousands of places all over India to denounce the Lakhimpur Kheri massacre and to demand the dismissal and arrest of Ajay Mishra
- October 15 – Unfortunate incident of the murder of a Dalit Sikh agricultural worker by other Dalit Sikhs owing allegiance to a Nihang sect at the Singhu border, over the alleged desecration of the Guru Granth Sahib; SKM strongly condemns the incident and alleges a BJP conspiracy to defame the farmers' struggle; this conspiracy is confirmed within four days with the publication of a photograph and news in the mainstream media of Nihang chief Baba Aman Singh meeting with BJP agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar, along with other shady characters
- October 16 – India slips further in World Hunger Index, from 94th place out of 107 countries, to 101st place out of 116 countries
- October 18 – Countrywide Rail Roko to demand dismissal and arrest of Ajay Mishra
- October 26 – 11 months of farmers'

- struggle, countrywide demonstrations to demand dismissal and arrest of Ajay Mishra
- November 2 – BJP defeated in by-elections in Himachal, Haryana and Rajasthan
- November 11 – National Trade Union Convention in Delhi gives call for two day All India General Strike against Modi regime’s policies, date decided later as February 23-24
- November 15 – Birth Anniversary of Adivasi freedom fighter Birsa Munda observed
- November 16 – Martyrdom Anniversary of Ghadar Party warriors Kartar Singh Sarabha and Vishnu Ganesh Pingle, and of Dalit woman fighter of the 1857 War, Veerangana Uda Devi Pasi, observed
- November 19 – On Guru Nanak Jayanti, PM Narendra Modi finally announces in an address to the nation that the three hated Farm Laws would be repealed
- November 19-21 – Spontaneous celebrations by farmers and workers all over the country at the repeal declaration
- November 21 – SKM sends an open letter to the Prime Minister listing pending demands
- November 22 – SKM holds massive Mahapanchayat at Lucknow, capital of UP
- November 25 – SKM holds large Mahadharna at Hyderabad, capital of Telangana
- November 26 – Completion of one year of the farmers’ struggle; massive mobilisations at Delhi borders and in the states celebrate victory, vow to fight for pending demands
- November 28 – SKM holds massive Mahapanchayat at Mumbai, capital of Maharashtra
- November 29 – Both Houses of Parliament repeal the three black Farm Laws
- December 2 – Presidential assent to the repeal of the three black Farm Laws
- December 4 – SKM appoints 5-member committee to negotiate the pending demands with central government
- December 6 – Death Anniversary of Dr B R Ambedkar widely observed
- December 7 – SKM meeting rejects first draft of letter from central government, insists on important changes
- December 8 – SKM’s 5-member committee meets at AIKS office in Delhi; SKM meeting accepts revised second draft of letter from central government, which makes most of the changes insisted upon by SKM
- December 9 – Central government’s Agriculture Secretary sends official letter to SKM conceding most demands; massive SKM meeting accepts it, calls for suspension of struggle from December 11, which will be observed as Victory Day all over the country
- December 11 – Victory Day massively celebrated all across India; tens of thousands of farmers start returning home from all the Delhi borders after over one year
- Social boycott of, and hundreds of peaceful black flag demonstrations against, BJP-JJP leaders in Haryana and BJP leaders in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh etc continued unabated for the last several months
- Lastly, one important and welcome feature was the international solidarity that this farmers’ struggle received from around the world; there were solidarity rallies by the Indian diaspora and other citizens in UK, USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, other countries of Europe and elsewhere. Many of them were led by the Left.

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THE PEASANTRY'S VICTORY OVER IMPERIALISM

- Prabhat Patnaik

Particular battles often have a significance that goes beyond the immediate context, of which even the combatants may not be fully aware at the time. One such was the Battle of Plassey, which was not even a battle since one side's general had already been bribed by the other not to lead his troops against it; and yet what happened in the woods of Plassey that day ushered in a whole new epoch in world history.

The battle between the kisan movement and the Modi government falls into the same *genre*. At the most obvious level it has been seen as a climbdown by the Modi government in the face of the incredible resoluteness shown by the agitating peasants. At another level it has also been seen as a setback for neo-liberalism, since corporate ascendancy over the agricultural sector, by making peasant agriculture subservient to the corporates, is a crucial part of the neo-liberal agenda, which the farm laws were seeking to promote.

Both these perceptions are absolutely correct. But beyond them there is a third level, at which the kisan victory is of great significance, that has not received much attention. This relates to the fact that the kisan victory is a setback for *imperialism in a very fundamental sense*. One should scarcely be surprised therefore by the fact that the western media have been so critical of the Modi government for its climbdown.

Just as imperialism wants to corner all the food and raw material sources across the globe, just as it wants to control all the sources of fossil fuels in the world, it also

wants to control the entire pattern of land-use all over the world, especially in the third world, most of which falls within the tropical and subtropical zone and hence is capable of growing crops that the temperate region, within which metropolitan capitalism is located, cannot grow.

Colonialism gave the metropolis an ideal instrument for controlling land use across the world for its own benefit. This instrument was used in a country like India in a brazen manner. Since revenue demands of the colonial government had to be met by the peasants by certain fixed dates (failing which they forfeited whatever land rights they had), they took advances from merchants to meet these demands, and in turn grew crops that the merchants wanted, for sale to them at pre-contracted prices; these merchants in turn dictated the production of those crops for which there was much demand in the metropolis (as revealed by market signals). Or, alternatively as in the case of opium the agents of the East India Company directly obliged the peasants to take advances tied to growing that crop.

Land-use was thus controlled by the metropolis, with crops like indigo, opium and cotton being grown on tracts where they had never been grown before and replacing food grains production; they were obtained *gratis* by the metropolis since the peasants were paid for them from the same revenue that they themselves had handed over to the colonial ruler. And among colonising countries, such goods, extracted from their respective colonies, were traded after meeting what was required by each,



including for settling deficits through triangular trade (such as, opium forcibly grown in India, being exported to China that was forcibly made to consume it, to settle Britain's trade deficit with that country). The peasants were ruthlessly exploited: the plight of the indigo growers was so poignantly and vividly captured in the nineteenth century Bengali play *Neel Darpan* by Dinabandhu Mitra that Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, the great social reformer, who was in the audience when the play was being staged, had thrown his sandals in anger at the actor playing the role of the planter-merchant!

This mechanism, of rigidly timing revenue demands on the peasants, getting traders to give them advances and thereby influencing cropping pattern, and then buying the crops with the same revenue that the peasants had paid, is no longer available to the metropolis; and the protection offered to peasant agriculture by the post-independence *dirigiste regime*, which has taken the form of providing price support for foodgrains, has made the peasants ignore the dictates of the metropolis on the output-mix.

The metropolis at present does not need foodgrains, but it cannot get the peasants

to move away from foodgrain production into producing the crops it needs, because the government procures foodgrains at assured, pre-announced prices. Reducing the domestic demand for foodgrains through compressing incomes of the working people via fiscal austerity, which is what the neo-liberal agenda entails, also does not help imperialism in this situation, because it only leads to a piling up of foodgrain stocks with the government without reducing foodgrain output and changing the pattern of land-use. What imperialism needs therefore is a total abolition of this system of price-support, and, additionally, an alternative mechanism to influence the crop-growing decisions of the peasantry.

The three farm laws enacted by the Modi government, which promotes imperialist interests behind its "hyper-nationalist" rhetoric, were meant precisely to achieve this. They were to usher in corporatisation of agriculture that would have *ipso facto* established metropolitan control over land-use: the corporates would have got peasants to grow those crops for which they got the right market signals, which means making land-use in the third world adjust to metropolitan demands. Imperialism used

every means to achieve this end, including getting its camp followers in the academia and the media to tom-tom how good it is for the peasants *not to be supported through government price-support*. But it failed.

The stout resistance put up by the peasants against the three laws ultimately made the Modi government capitulate. But *a mere withdrawal of the laws does not automatically ensure a restoration of the status quo ante*; and the importance of maintaining the minimum support price regime which the peasants want now to be a legal enactment arises precisely for this reason. Even if, after the repeal of the three laws, foodgrain marketing can occur only in specified locations as before, namely the *mandis* where government agents can oversee the entire process, there is nothing to ensure that the peasants can get a minimum price to cover their costs and give them a certain profit, unless the MSP regime continues.

In other words, while allowing foodgrain marketing in locations other than *mandis* (so that government supervision can no longer be exercised), implies that the MSP cannot be enforced *even if an MSP continues to be formally announced*, the converse is not true: making government supervision mandatory (which the repeal of the laws would ensure) does not *ipso facto* bring back an MSP regime. An MSP regime has to be specifically kept in place. The peasants are demanding a legal enactment for this, so that the government cannot wind up such a regime whenever it likes.

This becomes particularly urgent because of the all-too-familiar chicanery of the BJP government. Even when it formally repeals the three farm laws, it can still continue its attempt to achieve the same

ends by other means.

But as long as such nefarious activities can be kept at bay, the peasants have won a crucial battle: the battle of keeping the substantial tropical and subtropical land mass of the country away from the control of imperialism. And two features of this victory deserve special attention.

The first is linked to the fact that neo-liberalism greatly restricts the scope for mass action by splitting people into atomised elements, and preventing, through the control it exercises over the media and the academia, the build-up of any significant social support for such action. It is notable that, in this entire era, the masses have generally opposed neo-liberal measures not through *direct* action, such as prolonged strikes or gheraos, but through *indirect* political means, by building up alternative political movements for capturing political power, as in Latin America. And governments opposed to neo-liberalism, when they have come to power, have faced immense hurdles, from foreign exchange crises to sanctions imposed by imperialism. Many such governments have even buckled down because of these hurdles.

It is in this context that the kisan movement in India marks a departure: while it used the political *threat*, of working against the BJP in the coming elections, it resorted to *direct* action, which is an extreme rarity under neo-liberalism.

The second is the length of the direct action by the peasants. They camped on the borders of Delhi for one whole year. Future researchers will no doubt unravel how exactly they were able to achieve this stupendous feat. But it is a feat that needs to be celebrated. □

MINDS WITHOUT FEAR AND HEADS HELD HIGH: HISTORIC VICTORY FOR UNITED KISAN STRUGGLE

- Vijoo Krishnan

THERE ARE DECADES WHERE NOTHING HAPPENS;

AND THERE ARE WEEKS WHERE DECADES HAPPEN - LENIN

In keeping with this adage Indian Kisans wrote a new chapter in history defying all prophecies of imminent defeat and canards claiming that the united Kisan movement was petering out. The united Kisan struggle with the unprecedented support of the working class and the masses has won a historic victory forcing the arrogant Narendra Modi-led BJP Government to bend down on its knees, tender an apology to farmers and announce the decision to repeal the three anti-farmer acts.

This victory has come at a huge human cost and over 700 farmers became martyrs in the course of the struggle. It has come at the cost of extreme sacrifice by millions of peasants and workers as well as their families.

The Prime Minister and the BJP Government are directly culpable for the loss of precious lives. In a telling indicator of the trust deficit the Prime Minister suffers amidst the farmers, they did not immediately erupt in jubilation; they waited not just for the Acts to be repealed in Parliament but also get concrete assurances on withdrawal of cases foisted on farmers, compensation to families of martyrs, withholding of Amendments to Electricity Act, a Committee to ensure legal guarantee of remunerative prices and decriminalisation of stubble burning by farmers. It was a near total capitulation by the ruling classes. This victory will have a cascading impact on the politics of this country; fragility of personalities



considered invincible has been exposed and the castles built on lies are also crumbling down.

The three Laws brought by the BJP Government were as per the diktats of the global imperialist trinity of WB-IMF-WTO which has been pressurising India to cut farm and food subsidies as well as for dismantling public stockholding. This was articulated in 2015 by the Shantakumar Committee set up by the present regime which openly called for liberalisation and privatisation of stockholding as well as dismantling of the price support system for crops. The three laws brought simultaneously with the labour codes that snatch away the hard-won rights of the workers including 8-hour work days and unionisation came amidst a pandemic. While the peasants, workers and toiling masses were kept under lockdown, the BJP Government literally unlocked the doors for corporate loot.

The three laws would have led to dismantling of government regulated Agricultural Produce Markets (Mandis) that had come into being to protect farmers from traders who were exploiting them. They would have opened the doors for unlimited corporate hoarding and black-marketing of essential commodities like rice, wheat, pulses, oilseeds, potatoes and onions even when there is shortage, famine or other emergencies. They would have promoted unequal corporate contract farming in which poor farmers would become workers on their own land with no scope for legal recourse even if disputes arise. Literally they would have allowed corporate profiteering at the expense of the farmers, agricultural labour and the hungry millions. It did not take long for farmers to realise that it was a “do or die” moment for them.

The farmers’ struggle against the three anti-farmer legislations which began in June

2020 immediately after the Ordinances were brought saw a qualitative change in November, 2020 when on 26th November the Central Trade Unions gave the call for a General Strike. The All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) called for ‘Chalo Delhi’ from States neighbouring Delhi on 26th and 27th November and a Grameen Bharat Hartal on 26th November on demands of the peasantry as well as in solidarity with the working class. The BJP Government dealt with the farmers marching to Delhi brutally. Trenches were dug up on the National Highways, huge shipping containers placed in addition to barricades wound with barbed wire; water-cannons, teargas and lathi-charges were used to stop the peaceful march from reaching Delhi. Farmers overcame all these hurdles and were sitting on the borders of Delhi for more than the last 12 months.

The BJP-RSS, the Government propaganda machinery, the corporate media carried out a malicious campaign against the farmers with the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah and Agriculture Minister Narendra Tomar spearheading it. All canards painting the farmers as terrorists, accusing the struggle as being supported by Khalistanis or at the behest of Pakistan or China have been given a fitting rebuff by the people of our country. Threats, intimidation and arrests have not deterred farmers; cutting of internet, electricity and water as well as physical attacks by Sanghi goons, building of concrete walls with barbed wire fencing and planting sharp iron spikes around struggle sites to convert them into open jails and deter farmers also failed. The Prime Minister mocked protesting farmers as ‘Andolanjeevis’ and parasites. They defamed the struggle as anti-national and made all efforts to malign it. This victory has triumphed over all such attacks. The farmers and people of India shall not forget the extreme repression, brutal attacks, the killing

of our comrades and the insults hurled at farmers. We shall not forget the concrete walls, the barbed wire and barricades, the trenches dug, spikes planted, insults hurled, the water cannons, teargas, the clampdown on internet, attacks on journalists. Everything shall be remembered.

The struggle against the 2020 farm laws is historic. The sheer scale of the protests is remarkable. The prolonged struggle in bitter cold, heavy rain and peak summer has had a huge human cost. The scale at which solidarity has been created among different sections of the working people is historic. The manner in which farmers have braved the repression and extreme weather conditions has won the hearts of many. Support poured in from other sections of the working people as well as various organisations. Villages from neighbouring areas of Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh ensured that there is no shortage of food supplies to protest sites. The working class came out in a big way to support financially and also ensure availability of blankets and tents. Farmers themselves have shown an incredible organisational capacity as tractor trolleys have been turned into homes, camp sites created, massive langars (community food stalls) set up and arrangements made for accessing basic amenities.

The force with which the farmers have struck the ruling classes is historic. On 26th January 2021 millions of people participated in the historic Mazdoor Kisan Parade across the country. Around the National Capital Region hundreds of thousands of tractors and other vehicles participated in the parade after hoisting the national flag, singing the national anthem and paying homage to the martyrs. It is for the first time since 15th August 1947 that such a large number of Indian citizens led by the peasantry celebrated Republic Day. The 'Resistance Day' and Bharat Bandhs called

had millions of farmers, agricultural labour, workers and other sections of society taking part in the protests. What started as a farmers' movement has become a people's movement with the working class, women, students, youth and oppressed sections taking active part.

Even as the Prime Minister and the BJP Government claimed that the movement was restricted to Punjab alone we saw it spread across the country and Delhi's borders had wide representation from across India. Farmers from Maharashtra, Kerala, Tamilnadu, Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Gujarat, Jammu and Kashmir, Bengal, Odisha and other States also joined in big numbers in addition to State-specific mobilisations. Even amidst a pandemic the peasantry and workers incessantly came out on the streets against the Acts as well as against each attack on farmers. The working class, the scheme workers like Anganwadi, ASHA, Mid-Day Meal Workers, women, students and youth also came out in big numbers.

The AIKS, CITU and AIAWU along States have carried out a 'Boycott Adani-Ambani; Boycott Corporate Cronies' campaign, Toll-Free Movement of Vehicles and it has become a Pan-Indian movement transcending into a truly people's movement. The issue-based movement led by the AIKSCC and Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) against the three anti-farmer acts, seeking legal guarantee for MSP and withdrawal of amendments to Electricity Act also immediately added repeal of anti-worker Labour Codes and other burning issues like relief for people affected by the pandemic, income support, universal vaccination as well as curb on price rise in its set of demands. The Central Trade Unions also added the demands of the farmers and coordinated, united protests including historic strike, Bharat Bandh was supported by all working class organisations, Many other

programmes like rail-roko and rasta-roko were held. The coordinated efforts of the SKM and the Central Trade Unions as well as united struggles by workers and peasants added to the sharpness of recent mobilisations.

The All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) played a significant role in creating such an atmosphere along with many organisations of the peasantry and agricultural labour. AIKS, AIAWU and the CITU had an intensive two week-long campaign against corporate loot and insensitivity of the Narendra Modi led BJP government in all the states. This was followed by a massive protest action on 9th August 2021 on the anniversary of the Quit India Movement with the slogan “Stop Corporate Loot; Save India”. Left Parties and many opposition parties also supported the farmers’ struggle.

The SKM had during the Assembly elections taken a position that the arrogant pro-corporate, anti-farmer, anti-people approach of the BJP should be exposed and it carried out a “No Vote for Anti-Farmer BJP” campaign. This was with a clear view that a political defeat is also important to resist the efforts to allow corporate take-over of agriculture and counter policies promoting corporate loot. It also gave a strong message against the deliberate efforts to foment communal tension and polarise the society. The election results were a major setback to the BJP. The mammoth Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat attended by a million people on 5th September, 2021 at Muzaffarnagar called for Mission Uttar Pradesh and Mission Uttarakhand to defeat the anti-farmer, anti-people BJP in the forthcoming elections. It also sent a resolute message of communal harmony from a place which had a few years back witnessed a communal carnage. This is the result of a meticulous and conscious intervention, weaving an issue-based unity of diverse organisations and giving it a political

direction against the pro-corporate, communal and authoritarian politics represented by the BJP. AIKS and fraternal organisations mobilised more than 20,000 people for the Mahapanchayat. The success of Mission UP, Mission Uttarakhand and Mission Punjab is very important to give a rebuff to the BJP and to force the Government to meet the demands of the peasantry. A defeat for the BJP will also determine the course of politics in India and have a bearing in protection of the Indian Constitution, democracy and secularism. It is the fear instilled by the united movement and the atmosphere it has created for a looming political defeat that has forced Narendra Modi to announce that the three Farm Acts would be repealed.

The message from the farmers is clear: the struggle shall continue; this is the resolve of the united movement of the peasants and workers. The Central Trade Unions have decided on a two-day Strike and the peasantry will be there in their fight shoulder to shoulder with the toiling masses. The struggle ahead will be for ensuring an alternative to the neoliberal economic policies, to protect the Constitution and democracy. The workers and peasants have transcended fear in the course of this historic struggle, they are asserting like Subramanya Bharati said, ‘Even if the sky would crumble and fall we have no fear, we have no fear, we have no fear at all.’ Workers and peasants have sown fear in the minds of the ruling classes. It is a victory won by sowing fear in the minds of the people’s enemies. The victory has inspired confidence in the masses that united struggles can defeat the enemies of the people. Decades will happen in the coming weeks; our struggle for a pro-people alternative will emerge victorious. Minds without fear and heads held high we will hand over many more defeats to the enemies of the people. □

UNITED FARMERS' STRUGGLE AND NATIONAL POLITICS

- P Krishnaprasad

The united farmers' struggle in India has changed the political discourse in India and the world over. The success of the struggle at the Delhi borders marks a remarkable setback to the 'reform' process under imperialist globalization in India. The main ruling party the BJP and its Prime Minister Narendra Modi have received strong criticism from the pro-imperialist media the world over since they yielded to the united farmers struggle.

The united farmers' struggle was not spontaneous. It was the result of consistent and conscious struggles undertaken by the working class and the peasant movement in

India against neo-liberal reforms. The reforms were initiated in 1991 during the period of the Narasimha Rao Government headed by the Indian National Congress. The WTO agreement was signed in 1994. The working class and the joint platform of Central Trade Unions have been consistently leading struggles in the last three decades against the neo-liberal policies. Around twenty all India general strikes were organised under their leadership and many of them including the recent strikes were also actively supported by the peasant movement.

Until recently, there was an illusion among



sections of the peasantry, especially the rich farmers who thought that these reforms would bring fortunes for them. However, now there remains no such illusion as has been proved through the experience of the last three decades. This new realization has enabled the peasantry to put up a united struggle and score a remarkable victory over the neo-liberal forces along with the active support of the united working class movement. This is a decisive achievement.

The recent struggles in India assume greater significance in the context of the intensifying contradiction at the international level between imperialism and the people of the third world countries. The world capitalist system is facing a systemic crisis and has plunged into greater recession since the subprime crisis of 2008 in USA. The recession is further intensifying and has a great impact on India too. The economy is badly affected and the ruling class alliance is facing this crisis. The State and Union governments facing serious financial resource crunch, are not able to address serious issues confronting the people like growing unemployment, unbridled price rise, lack of social security measures like Public Distribution System that endanger food security, universal health and education services etc. So much so that many State governments face severe problems to ensure timely disbursement of salaries and pension to their employees.

The most important outcome of this struggle is the emerging worker-peasant alliance in India, especially on the question of addressing the agrarian question - the most crucial political question in post-independent India. Therefore, national politics may have for the first time in the post-independence period witnessed the direct contradiction between the ruling class alliance and the united might of the working class and the

peasantry. This contradiction will decide the future character of national politics.

The agrarian crisis in India prevails mainly due to three aspects of unfulfilled agrarian reforms under the capitalist stage of development. Firstly, non-accomplishment of redistributive land reforms; secondly, not establishing agro based industries for processing and value addition; and thirdly, failure to create a domestic market by ensuring remunerative price for agro produce, sustainable employment and minimum wage to agricultural workers. Even in those states and regions where land reforms have been implemented, the remaining two tasks are yet to be undertaken comprehensively. This enables the corporate forces both Indian and foreign to dominate the agro trade and agro processing and severely exploit the peasantry by denying them the real price and minimum wage. This is the reason behind pauperization of the peasantry that results in severe indebtedness, peasant suicides and rural to urban labour migration.

The BJP-RSS led Modi Government, instead of addressing the task of agrarian reforms to curb corporate exploitation, has surrendered to the neo-liberal and imperialist forces and pushed Indian agriculture towards greater corporatization. The BJP-RSS nexus have never in their history stood for land reform and redistribution of agricultural land among the peasantry. None of the BJP-led State governments have addressed this task so far. Today the issues of remunerative price for farmers and minimum wage with stable employment for agricultural workers have become the main demands of the entire peasantry and also the working class movement, apart from withdrawal of the four anti-worker labour codes and halting the National Monetization Pipeline project that

stands for the privatisation of Public Sector Units. The three main producing classes - workers, peasants and agricultural workers are united today to undertake the struggle against the neo-liberal forces.

One of the major achievements of the struggle especially in Punjab - the epicenter of the farmers struggle - is that it has forged an anti-corporate peoples' unity. The call for boycott of Adani supermarkets, Reliance petrol pumps, Jio Simcards, freeing the Toll Plazas, were the forms of struggle which brought the protesters in direct confrontation with the corporate forces. These forms of struggle have helped the farmers to realize and recognize the real class enemies who exploit them. These forms of struggle need to spread across India as part of further intensifying the struggle against neo-liberal forces and Imperialism.

Another significant achievement of course has been the impact of the united farmers' struggle in resisting the communal and divisive politics of the BJP-RSS nexus. The united farmers and workers struggles have brought the real class and livelihood issues into mainstream national politics. The struggle has been able to forge cross caste and religion unity among the basic producing classes. This is by no means a small feat. Only class struggles based on the real livelihood issues are capable of uprooting communal and divisive politics.

At the national level in the coming days, the basic classes will be making remarkable advances against the communal and caste based electoral division of the people, which act as the mainstay of BJP politics. This is the beginning of the end of communal politics in modern India, heavily relied on by the corporate forces to divide the exploited classes. Both the extreme as well as soft communal politics for electoral gains being practiced by the right-wing political parties will be defeated

by these emerging issue-based class struggles and movements.

The unity of the peasants and workers, the unity of the people against the corporate forces and larger unity of the Left, democratic and secular forces against the corporate and communal forces is the mainstay of national politics in India today. How different political parties will respond to this new emerging situation is the most crucial aspect. The severe economic crisis in the country and political isolation will push the BJP further to suffer larger beatings in the electoral process. This trend has already been set now. How an alternative to the BJP takes shape at the national level will depend on the growing struggles of the producing classes. Hence the alternative to the BJP in national politics will depend more on the non-parliamentary struggles than on electoral battles.

In this context, the working class as well as the peasantry has to further consolidate with confidence and continue to plan and unleash larger, mightier struggles in order to protect the interests of the entire people from imperialist exploitation. Extending the coordination between the SKM and Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions to the State and District level and eventually up to the six lakh villages and towns of India is the way to further advance worker-peasant unity and achieve the objective of larger unity of the people against corporate forces and Imperialism. This will make India one of the main centres of struggle against imperialism and pave the way to replace the present rule of the exploiting classes with the rule of the producing classes. Thus, the farmers' agitation will mark the third stage of India's struggle for Independence from imperialist exploitation and the present order of corporate driven neo-liberalism.

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KISAN STRUGGLE AND INDIAN SECULARISM

- Manoj Kumar

After a year-long historic farmers' movement against the anti-farming and anti-farmer laws brought by the central government, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 19th November announced the repeal all the three laws, which was the main demand of the movement. Now Parliament has also passed the Farm Laws Repeal Act and these laws are formally repealed. The government was not ready to listen to the farmers' voice under the influence of corporates, but due to the pressure of the farmers and the public the government had to bow down. During such a long period, there was no dearth of courage and willpower of the farmers and they remained on their fronts with full enthusiasm till 11th December when Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) decided to return.

If we look at the different aspects and dimensions of this movement, we will see many features. One of its distinguishing features was that it rose above religious-caste identity and become all-inclusive. The reflection of the idea of secularism enshrined

in the Indian Constitution is clearly visible in this movement. Today, when the country is going through the worst phase of identity-based division, in such a situation, this movement showed the values of fraternity which emerged out of the freedom struggle and became the identity of our nationality. After independence secularism was adopted in the Constitution by our country; it marked the separation of religion from politics and respect for all religions. Different religious, ethnic, regional, linguistic, social identities gave a unique single identity to the country through the idea of 'Unity in Diversity' and by adopting the principle of treating all religions, creeds, communities with equal eyes and giving equal respect to all. In this era, when propaganda is being done to increase mutual distance by spreading venom in the name of religion and caste at the behest of the ruling classes, at such a time, this movement has worked not only for saving agriculture but also to save the democratic and secular principles of our Constitution.



On 5th June 2020 when these laws were brought in the form of ordinances, the farmers started opposing them. Because these laws were going to affect farmers of all the communities, so the farmers of all communities were against these laws. Therefore, they collectively stood up and became a part of this movement. On 26th November 2020, when the farmers with the slogan of 'Chalo Delhi', marched towards the nation's capital, all the farmers belonging to different organisations and ideologies, crossing the huge hurdles erected by the BJP governments, reached the borders of Delhi.

When reports of various news channels and newspapers started coming from 'Singhu Border', the first front of the farmers on the border of Delhi, there were pictures of the 'Zarda Pulao' (sweet rice) Langar set up by youth belonging to the Muslim community of Malerkotla. In this Langar sweet rice was being served throughout the day to the thousands of farmers present at the front, and this continued up to the last day of the struggle. This was one of the many Langars on the front and Muslim farmers were also present along with the farmers of all other communities. Hence this Langar became a symbol of unity among all the communities. At times when the forces in state power are continuously increasing bitterness all over the country, this sweet rice is increasing the sweetness in mutual relations, and is disrupting the plans of the rulers.

Holi, Diwali, Eid, Guruparv, Baisakhi, Teej were all the festivals celebrated together at all the protest sites around Delhi. The Navami feast of Navaratri and the feast of Iftar were held together. These days, when hatred is being served by polarizing festivals of different religions by different political interests, our tradition of celebrating all festivals and revelries together was carried forward on these Dharnas. Our tradition of

celebrating all the colours, fragrances and festivals together revived on these fronts. Certainly, these rituals are visible all over the country; it is not just the speciality of this movement; but in this era when harmony is under intense attack, the emergence of this tradition brings positive energy to the nation, society as well as this movement.

During this movement, on Mahashivratri, instead of offering Kavadi Jal to Lord Shiva in the Shiva temples of respective villages, soil and water was brought over from the villages of Haryana and offered on Shaheed Vediti at Singhu and Tikri borders. The same stage where Gurbani can be heard in the morning, Bhajanas were being played during the day and in the evening Azaan would reverberate in the ears. This movement is showing a ray of hope when the people of the country are being pushed towards conspiracies of division in the names of temples and mosques.

Seven years ago, in Muzaffarnagar, where the BJP paved the way for its political growth in western Uttar Pradesh in the heat of communal riots, today the peasant movement has written a new chapter of religious unity. During the Kisan Mahapanchayat, hundreds of villages of both Hindus and Muslims made arrangements for the lakhs of farmers who came from all over the country to participate in the Mahapanchayat. People belonging to every caste and religion from different states took part together in this Mahapanchayat. Food, water, shelters were arranged by both Hindus and Muslims for them. Along with this, the slogans of "Har Har Mahadev - Allah Hu Akbar" from the stage strongly showed the secular essence and direction of this movement.

Attempts were made by BJP-RSS to isolate this movement by linking it with one community, but in this also they failed miserably. At first, they tried to link this



movement with Sikhism and described it as their movement only; then it was claimed that the movement was limited to Punjab only. After this it was presented as a movement of Jats; it was depicted as a movement of certain areas and communities. The Samyukta Kisan Morcha, the platform under whose leadership this movement was going on is constituted by more than 500 farmers' organizations, which shows the broad nature of this platform.

Certainly, most of the people sitting on the borders of Delhi in this movement were from the nearby areas of North India, because they are from nearby areas and continuously large participation from distant states was also not possible. But there is no doubt that this was an all-India movement and solidarity actions with the central demands of movement took place in every state. Many teams of farmers came to the Delhi borders from distant states. No matter how many attempts were made by the class enemy to malign this movement and break its unity, but every time they failed. It is a tribute to the understanding and clear vision

of the leadership and the farmer agitators that this movement has been able to beat all the tricks of the ruling classes.

This movement has made it clear that the fraternity of the peasants and workers of the country is very strong and the roots of our secularism are very deep. But the communal forces are always trying to break this brotherhood, to weaken the struggles of the farmers and workers for their political gains and to protect the loot of their corporate bosses. Today, this farmers' struggle has become a struggle of saving national unity and saving the constitutional values of the country. This movement has become a challenge to the politics of communalism and hatred, and is creating new hope and energy in all the progressive sections of the country. The victory of this movement has not only encouraged the farmers but all the democratic mass movements of the country, and has also shown the strength of the unity of the farmers and workers belonging to all the communities of the country. □

FARMERS MOVEMENT AND WOMEN

- Savita



The historic farmers' movement, which lasted for 380 days on the borders of Delhi under the leadership of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) against the three anti-agriculture laws, has been recorded as a very important event in the history of people's struggles of the country and the world. This movement was the biggest, longest and most unprecedented movement in the history of democratic India. It has left a deep impact not only politically but also at the social and cultural level.

This movement was fought at a time when the BJP government was vigorously implementing neo-liberal policies to provide immense benefits to the big corporate houses. While rising inflation, unemployment, poverty and hunger had made life difficult for the common people, on the other hand, the mismanagement of the Corona pandemic had made it much worse. There was great outrage among the people. To deal with this resentment, people were being divided on the basis of caste, religion and region. Those who raised their voice against this situation were

put in jails in cases like sedition.

In such a situation, the farmers' movement not only exposed the neo-liberal, pro-corporate and patriarchal, communal agenda of the BJP-RSS to everyone, but with the help of comprehensive unity, strategic intelligence and disciplined struggle, brought the arrogant government to its knees. This movement infused new energy in the people's struggles of the country and the world and this will remain a source of inspiration for centuries.

Women in Struggle

People of all castes, religions, regions, classes, genders and all ages took part in this movement with full devotion. The role of women was very spectacular. Perhaps for the first time in the post-independence history of movements, women took part in such large numbers. In this era when the communal and regressive forces sitting in power want to push women back to the boundary wall of the house, at such a time, women scuttled their plans and facing the shivering cold, scorching



heat and torrential rains, and made their homes on the roads under the open sky. The unmatched struggle of women in Shaheen Bagh against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the spectacular participation of women in the farmers' movement are two beautiful examples of resistance, in which women broke the clutches of patriarchy to save the nation and the Constitution from fake nationalists and set a new example of struggle against power.

Identity as Women Farmers

Despite historically being the world's first farmers, women have to struggle hard to get the identity of being a farmer. The women's movement has been raising the demand for a long time that when women do 75 per cent of the agricultural work, why are they not considered farmers?

In this movement, women presented their

claim of being farmers very strongly. She joined this movement not as a mother, daughter, sister or wife, but as a farmer. She brought to the centre of discussion the work of women in agriculture, policies related to them and the impact of laws on women through Mahila Kisan Divas on 18 January, International Women's Day on 8 March and Mahila Kisan Sansad on 26 July and August 9.

Of course, women will still have to struggle a lot to get the status of farmers, to come in the centre of policy making and to get the ownership rights on the land, but women have gone a few steps ahead and their identity as farmers is to some extent has been established.

One Step Ahead Towards Gender Equality

Women have always worked shoulder to shoulder with men on farms. But now they also played the same role in the movement. From elderly women to young girls, women of all ages participated in the movement in tens of thousands. Realizing the disastrous effects of the Farm Laws on inflation and the ration distribution system, not only peasant women but also working women and middle class women gave active support to the struggle. This large participation of women made a major contribution in making the movement disciplined and peaceful.

In the movement, hundreds of women were constantly sitting on the borders along with men and thousands kept coming and going. Despite all the problems of non-availability of proper arrangements for bathing, washing, defecation etc. at the agitation sites, the women stayed firm on the Delhi borders.

These women played an important role for the inclusion of women in the committees of farmer organizations, involving women in the

stage conduction, giving women a place on the stages, and forming Mahila Kisan Samitis on the borders.

Women not only took care of agriculture and the household by staying at home, but also actively participated in the movements going on at the local level, at the toll plazas and so on. Women also did a tremendous job of collecting logistics and providing services for langars at the borders and at the local level. For those typical rural women who were always confined to the chulha-chounka of the house, dangar-dhor and farm barns, the movement became a part of their daily routine for a whole year. Every day they heard new things, speeches, songs and political discussions. This definitely helped to develop their consciousness. Women learned to speak in the movement and to speak strongly. Illiterate women from villages explained the effect of the Farm Laws like lawyers, gave interviews to journalists, wrote agitational

songs and raganis, sang on the mike, gave speeches. In fact, these women have moved ahead by breaking the conservative fabric of society.

Men were also seen peeping out of the traditional shells of their patriarchy. It was a common sight on the Delhi borders that the women who took care of the kitchen in the houses were sitting here and eating food and the men were cooking the food. The men washed their clothes themselves. Generally women and men live separately in society and households; here they together led this movement

Now the movement has ended with a sweet and historic victory. But these women and men are certainly no longer what they were a year ago. A wave of change has swept over them. These are the new types of human beings who will take this society in a new transformative direction. □



MAHARASHTRA

SHAHEED KALASH YATRAS AND MASSIVE KISAN MAZDOOR MAHAPANCHAYAT

- Kisan Gujar / Ajit Nawale

The Lakhimpur Kheri Shaheed Kalash Yatra in Maharashtra began with great enthusiasm on October 27, 2021 at Pune from Mahatma Jotirao Phule's historic house, which has long ago been declared as a national monument. Mahatma Phule (1827-1890) was a champion of the peasantry, an inveterate opponent of the caste system and of women's oppression, and the author of seminal works like 'Slavery' and 'The Whipcord of the Peasant'. His wife Savitribai Phule was the founder of the first girls' school in India in 1848.

It was a joint effort of all constituent organisations of the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC), the Trade Unions Joint Action Committee (TUJAC) and the Struggle Committee of Peoples' Movements (JASS). Activists from several districts of the state had come for this programme. Women were present in large numbers. Two busloads of activists of the TUJAC from Mumbai, and of the CPI(M) from Solapur, had come. Several state and district leaders of AIKS, CITU, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI were present in the Pune meeting.

The statue of Mahatma Phule was garlanded by AIKS President Dr Ashok Dhawale and that of Savitribai Phule was garlanded by NAPM leader Medha Patkar. A large public meeting was then held at the Hamal Bhawan in the Pune APMC Market Yard. Arvind Jakka made the welcome speech, Ajit Abhyankar gave the introductory speech and Manav Kamble presided. Vilas Kirote gave the vote of thanks. The public meeting was

addressed by leaders of the above platforms - Dr Ashok Dhawale, Medha Patkar, Pratibha Shinde, Namdev Gavade, Dr Ajit Nawale, Vidya Chavan, Subhash Ware, Vishwas Utagi, Subhash Kakuste, Ulka Mahajan and Kishor Dhamale.

All the speakers came down heavily on the Modi and Yogi led BJP governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh for shielding the butcher of Lakhimpuri Kheri, the Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra, who has neither been dismissed nor arrested even a month after the horrifying massacre of farmers. They also spoke on the cardinal issues of the farmers' struggle which would complete one year on November 26, 2021, and also on state level farmers' issues.

MONTH-LONG SHAHEED KALASH YATRA

The Shaheed Kalash Yatra of the Lakhimpur Kheri martyrs was taken by several peasant organizations independently to over 30 districts of Maharashtra in one month. The AIKS took it in an organized way to 25 districts for a month from October 27 to November 27. AIKS state council member Jitendra Chopade accompanied it all over the state. Large public meetings were held in hundreds of places to pay homage to the Lakhimpur Kheri martyrs and also to all the 700-odd martyrs of this historic farmers' struggle. They attacked the BJP-RSS government.

Meanwhile, on November 19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi was forced to announce the repeal of the three hated anti-

farmer, anti-people and pro-corporate Farm Laws. This was the result of the unprecedented one year long farmers' struggle at the Delhi borders and all over the country. There was a wave of jubilation at this historic victory throughout the country. This gave a great boost to the Shaheed Kalash Yatras that were then going on in Maharashtra.

On November 27, the various Shaheed Kalash Yatras from all over the state converged in Mumbai, paid tribute to the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji, whom Mahatma Phule had described in his ballad as the 'King of the Peasantry', the Chaitya Bhoomi of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar, a champion of the struggle against caste and gender oppression and one of the architects of the Constitution of India, the memorial to Shaheed Babu Genu, a peasant turned textile mill worker who was crushed in Mumbai on December 12, 1930 by a British truck when he was protesting against British cloth, and the statue of Mahatma Gandhi, the towering leader of the freedom struggle against British imperialism and a champion of truth, non-violence and secularism – values that have guided the one year long farmers' struggle.

On the morning of November 28, the Shaheed Kalash Yatra paid homage at the Hutatma Chowk, which commemorates the 106 martyrs of the iconic Samyukta Maharashtra Movement in the 1950s. The ashes of the martyrs were immersed in the Arabian Sea off the Gateway of India in a

special programme through boats, in the evening after the Mahapanchayat

MASSIVE KISAN MAZDOOR MAHAPANCHAYAT IN MUMBAI

A massive statewide Kisan Mazdoor Mahapanchayat was held on November 28, 2021 at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on the occasion of the death anniversary of Mahatma Jotirao Phule. Tens of thousands of peasants, workers, agricultural labourers, women, youth and students of all religions and castes from all over Maharashtra thronged this Mahapanchayat. It was organized by the Samyukta Shetkari Kamgar Morcha (SSKM), which comprises around 100 organisations. There were large contingents from the districts of Thane, Palghar, Nashik, Raigad, Ahmednagar, Dhule, Nandurbar, Jalgaon and Mumbai itself. Several organizations had mobilized well. The AIKS strength was by far the largest.

The Mahapanchayat was presided over by J P Gavit, ex-MLA (AIKS) and Milind Ranade (NTUI). It was addressed by SKM leaders Rakesh Tikait, Darshan Pal, Hannan Mollah, ex-MP, Yudhvir Singh, Tajinder Singh Virk, Atul Kumar Anjaan, Rajaram Singh, Yogendra Yadav, Jasbir Kaur Nat, Ashish Mittal, B Venkat, Ashok Dhawale, Jayant Patil, MLC, Medha Patkar, Pratibha Shinde, Narasayya Adam, ex-MLA, Vidya Chavan, ex-MLC, Dr Ajit Nawale, Namdev Gavade, Ulka Mahajan, Kishor Dhamale, Shyam Kale, Devanand Pawar, Feroze Mithiborwala, Rajendra Bawake,



Vishal Hiwale, Madhu Dhodi and Raju Korde.

At the end, AIKS President Ashok Dhawale moved a condolence resolution for all the 700-odd martyrs of the farmers' struggle, and tens of thousands of participants stood up to pay homage. The Mahapanchayat concluded with the National Anthem.

The galaxy of national and state leaders of various farmers' and workers' organization hailed the historic victory of the year long farmers' struggle over the BJP-RSS government and its corporate allies in getting the Farm Laws repealed, and also declared their determination to fight for the remaining demands. These include a central law to guarantee a just MSP and procurement, withdrawal of the Electricity Amendment Bill, repeal of the four Labour Codes, a halt to selling off the country at a pittance to the corporates through privatisation, halving the price of diesel, petrol, cooking gas and other essential commodities, doubling the days of work and wages under MNREGA and extending it to the urban areas, and removal from the Union Cabinet and arrest of the butcher of Lakhimpur Kheri, Ajay Mishra Teni.



All the leaders led a broadside attack against the anti-people, pro-corporate, communal and authoritarian BJP-RSS government and called for the defeat of the BJP in the coming state assembly elections and also in the ensuing statewide local body elections in Maharashtra.

Leaders also demanded that the MVA Maharashtra state government drop the three Farm Bills that it had tabled in the last session of the state assembly. These had been strongly opposed by the SSKM even then, because they mimic the three Central Farm Laws, with some minor amendments. With the repeal of the three Farm Laws, these three Farm Bills must also be withdrawn. They were subsequently withdrawn by the MVA state government in its cabinet meeting on December 15. Some speakers also demanded an honourable settlement of the State Transport workers strike that had been going on for their legitimate demands for a month, stringent implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), raising the price paid to farmers for milk, soyabean and cotton, and ensuring compensation to farmers whose crops had been destroyed due to unseasonal rains under the Prime Minister Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY).

All the Sikh Gurudwaras of New Mumbai came together and provided free lunch, breakfast and tea at the Azad Maidan to all the participants. They were warmly thanked and applauded.

On November 29, the very day after this Mumbai Mahapanchayat, the three hated Farm Laws were finally repealed in Parliament. And, after the BJP central government was forced to accept most of the SKM's remaining demands in writing on December 9, the historic farmers' struggle ended in a magnificent victory on December

11. □

HIMACHAL PRADESH

FARMERS PROTEST AGAINST LAND ACQUISITION

- Onkar Shad

The farmers of Himachal Pradesh particularly those whose land is being acquired for the widening of roads, laying of tower lines, hydropower projects, airport construction etc., held a public meeting at Mandi on October 27, 2021. Nearly 20 organisations of the farmers participated in this protest.

The call for the protest was given by a joint forum of affected farmers in August 2021 at a convention held in Mandi.

LAND LOST IN DEVELOPMENTAL PROJECTS

Himachal Pradesh is a hilly state and the land for cultivation is less in comparison to other states. Only 17.14 per cent of the total land is available for agriculture and allied activities. The land is a major question of the peasantry in the state. There are nearly 9,96,809 land holdings sharing 9,44,226 hectares of land according to the agricultural census of 2015-16. Nearly 88.4 per cent of farmers are small and marginal farmers and their land holdings are less than two hectares; out of these 48.43 per cent own less than 0.5 hectares and 4.9 per cent are

landless farmers. The landholdings are becoming smaller and smaller every year due to the family division.

In spite of the small land holdings, 63 per cent of the people in the state sustain their livelihoods from agriculture and allied activities. Before the Forest Conservation Act 1980, the state government used to liberally distribute land to the landless and small farmers under the *Nau Taur* (breaking the new land) Act. But then the forest department usurped even fallow land and currently, they are the biggest landlord in the state has 56 per cent of the total land.

The scope of employment for the poor is very less in the state. There are very few industries due to adverse geographical conditions, the chances in the service sector also contracted after the neoliberal reforms. In such a situation land is the only available resource left to sustain a large population of the state.

The land has been incessantly acquired for developmental activities. In Bhakra and Pong Dam more than one lakh hectares of cultivable land was acquired and submerged



in dams. The displaced farmers are still fighting for their resettlement issues. Pong Dam oustees are waiting for justice. In other projects and industrial acquisitions, the peasants were not given due compensation and land was acquired under the Land Acquisition Act 1894. The compensation was very less.

The issue of rehabilitation and resettlement was first taken up by Himachal Kisan Sabha in Nathpa Jhakri 1500 MW hydropower project, which now is called Satluj Jal Nigam Limited. After a long and bitter struggle, the peasants were awarded an increased amount in compensation and employment to the displaced was ensured.

Later demand of sharing one per cent of the total income from the project in the project affected area became one of the important demands for development in the region.

This struggle caught the imagination of other kisans of the state and similar agitations started building up for relief and rehabilitation. In the meantime, the new Land Acquisition Act 2013(LAA) was passed. It was adopted in Himachal Pradesh from April 1, 2015. This act increased the hopes of farmers for better compensation packages.

In the state, especially in the last decade, the land was being acquired at a faster pace for the construction of four-lane highways and widening of existing roads. The farmers demanded the implementation of LAA 2013 and particularly one of the provisions of getting compensation at four times the circle rate in the region.

UNFULFILLED PROMISES

In 2017, the BJP made this a big election issue and stated that in case it wins the assembly the act will be implemented with all the provisions. This demand was also included in the election manifesto of the BJP.

After BJP won the state election in December 2017, it formed a three-member committee headed by Govind Thakur a

cabinet minister to look into land acquisition issues. However, after three years nothing moved. The BJP was able to win over the president of the then Sangarsh Samiti, Sushil Thakur a retired brigadier of the Indian army and made him president of the Sainik Welfare Board. Thakur is now contesting a by-election from Mandi parliamentary seat as a BJP candidate.

The farmers refused to take two times compensation as finalised by the BJP government. The farmers attacked the BJP for hoodwinking and stabbing them at their backs.

The farmers decided to broaden the struggle and decided to fight against the BJP state government's betrayal.

On August 5, 2021, a state-level joint convention was held in Mandi in which 18 organisations participated. A state-level 'land acquisition affected manch' was formed. Himachal Kisan Sabha was also one of the constituents of this committee.

The four-lane roads are mainly from Parwanoo to Shimla, Kiratpur to Mandi, Mataur to Shimla, Pathankot to Mandi, and Hamirpur to Mandi. In addition to these 63 national highway projects are declared and are being widened. Then the railways is also acquiring land.

In the convention 10-point demand charter was formed; the main demands were that the state government should implement Land Acquisition Act 2013, providing adequate resettlement and rehabilitation and four times compensation for land acquisition. The affected farmers submitted a memorandum to the state government and demanded that its demands should be considered up to September 30, 2021.

The government did not respond. A state-level rally was held against the state government in Mandi on October 27, 2021. This rally was a big success and has also sent a political message. Since the Mandi by-election is being held the rally gave a call to defeat the BJP candidate who betrayed the farmers during the struggle. □

ANDHRA PRADESH PADAYATRA CONCLUDES WITH MASSIVE RALLY AT ANANTAPUR

- Chandrashekhar

28 Days, 800km Padayatra, 31 Mandals and 178 villages of Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh

The AIKS, AIAWU, AP Tenant Farmers' Association started the Rythu-Kooli Rakshana Padayatra on 20th November, 2021. It moved through 31 Mandals and over 178 villages in the district and culminated with a massive rally and Dharna at the Anantapur Collectorate. Members of SFI, CITU, AIDWA, AWAAZ, KVPS, FMRAI, Municipality workers and residents of the city gave a rousing welcome to the Marchers.

Anantapur usually has huge number of distress suicides by farmers. This drought-prone district this year suffered total crop loss due to unseasonal excess rainfall. Cotton, groundnut, red gram, paddy and chilly crop was totally destroyed. Two farmers committed suicide in a month. The YSRCP Jagan Mohan Reddy Government has not given any compensation.

Thousands marched today and the

Padayatra culminated at Anantapur collectorate with the following Demands:

- *Compensation of 25000/ acre for crop loss
- *Provision of MGNREGA Work
- *Subsidy for drip and sprinkler irrigation
- *Identity cards & crop loans for Tenant Farmers
- *Bonus of 4 rupees per litre for milk
- *Waiver of farm loans

Addressed the massive meeting and expressed solidarity with the united struggle. D.Subba Rao AIAWU State President, Chandrashekhar, AP Rythu Sangham District Secretary, Rambhupal, District Vice President, Obulakonda Reddy, Rayalseema Convenor, Dr Geyanand, Ex-MLC, Savitri, AIDWA leader and others participated. 11 members marched entire 800 kms with hundreds joining them daily. The meeting resolved to build a State-wide struggle if the demands are not met. □



TRIPURA

15,000 STRONG SKM RALLY CELEBRATES VICTORY OF FARMERS' STRUGGLE

- Pabitra Kar

On December 24, 2021, a massive 15,000-strong statewide SKM rally was held at the state capital Agartala in Tripura. It celebrated the victory of the nationwide farmers' struggle over the BJP central government, and also targeted the BJP state government on burning peasant demands. The three major organisations which mobilised in thousands for the rally were the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), Gana Mukti Parishad (GMP) and All India Agricultural Workers Union (AIAWU).

The huge rally with thousands of red flags and resounding slogans coursed through the streets of Agartala and culminated in a huge public meeting which began with beautifully sung songs in Hindi, Bengali and Kok Barak languages.

The enthusiastic public meeting was

addressed by former chief minister of Tripura Manik Sarkar, AIKS president Dr Ashok Dhawale, GMP president Jitendra Choudhary and AIKS state general secretary Pabitra Kar. The presidium comprised AIKS state president Aghore Deb Barma and AIAWU state president Bhanulal Saha.

The speakers warmly congratulated the SKM constituents for this massive rally and strongly attacked the anti-people, pro-corporate, authoritarian and communal policies of the BJP governments at the centre and also in the state. They called for wider sustained struggles on people's issues, and also for intensifying the resistance of the people to the repression and terror of the BJP-RSS state government and its hoodlums. They particularly attacked the BJP state government





which has destroyed agriculture and has brought all development in Tripura to a standstill.

The 10-point Charter of Demands of this SKM rally was as follows:

1. Arrange adequate fertiliser and pesticides by the Tripura Government for the farmers at cheap rates immediately.
2. Intensify the SRI (System of Rice Intensification) method producing systems in Tripura and introduce the subsidy in this system.
3. Start the irrigation sources immediately. These have totally collapsed.
4. Start the cow breeding system immediately and use doorstep workers in this connection.
5. Restore the Nagichara Agriculture Research to life. The Scientific Agriculture Centres in 8 districts in Tripura must be actively formed with the help of ICAR.
6. MNREGA must be expanded and introduced for the purpose of agricultural cultivation in various areas from planting to harvesting paddy.
7. Recruit officers and essential employees in the Agriculture and Horticultural Department immediately.
8. 125 Constitutional Amendment Bill of Tripura Autonomous District Council must be passed in Parliament immediately. The Kok Barak language must be introduced in the 8th Schedule of the Constitution.
9. To save the jhum cultivation from wild animals disturbance, the Forest Department must take positive steps immediately and adequate compensation must be provided to Jhum Cultivators.
10. Adequate compensation must be provided to the farmers who suffered losses in the last untimely rains.

□

TAMILNADU

10,000 STRONG SKM RALLY AT THIRUVARUR

- B. Thulasi Narayana

The Samyukta Kisan Morcha (SKM) held a 10,000-strong massive Victory Rally on December 29, 2021 at Thiruvavarur in Tamilnadu to mark the historic success of the farmers' struggle over the forces of corporate communalism. Several Kisan organisations including both the Kisan Sabhas and others had mobilised well. Women came in large numbers.

The huge rally with traditional dances and songs marched through the main roads of the city and culminated in a massive public meeting. It was presided over by K V Ponnaiyan and was addressed by AIKS (Shukla Lane) president Dr Ashok Dhawale, AIKS (Ajoy Bhawan) general secretary Atul Kumar Anjaan, AIKS (Shukla Lane) state general secretary P Shanmugham and AIKS (Ajoy Bhawan) state president S Gunasekaran.

S Thambusamy, V S Kaliyaperumal, P S Masilamani, V Amrithalingam, V Subramaniyan, Mary Lillybai, Chandramohan, Kalivappan, Bos, P S Kaliraj, K B Elangiran, Pasumaivalavan, Ponnuthai and other leaders also addressed the meeting.

All the speakers congratulated the farmers

and workers of Tamilnadu who led massive solidarity actions with the Delhi Kisan struggle for over one year, and hundreds of them also came and stayed at the Delhi borders for several days.

While explaining the significance of the victory of getting the three Farm Laws repealed, the speakers also declared that the struggle for legal guarantee of a remunerative MSP and other vital peasant demands, for the repeal of the four Labour Codes, and against selling off the country through the reckless privatisation drive of the Modi regime would be intensified in the coming days.

They also scathingly attacked the BJP-RSS and their henchmen for their attacks on democracy, secularism, federalism, socio-economic justice and the Constitution itself, and gave a clarion call for intense and widespread resistance to these attacks.

Farmer leaders who had faced jail in Tamilnadu under the previous AIADMK state government for having taken part in solidarity actions with the farmers' struggle were felicitated by Dr Ashok Dhawale and Atul Kumar Anjaan. □



KARNATAKA
FARMERS ASSEMBLY AT BELAGAVI DEMANDS
REPEAL OF THREE STATE FARM LAWS

- T Yashavantha



On December 12, 2021, a large farmers' assembly was held at Belagavi in Karnataka under the banner of the Samyukta Horata (United Struggle), Karnataka, to celebrate the repeal of the three central farm laws and to put pressure on the BJP's Karnataka state government to repeal the three different anti-farmer farm laws that it forced through the state assembly last year. The Karnataka state assembly is meeting in Belagavi from tomorrow, December 13.

The Samyukta Horata is an umbrella platform of several organisations of farmers, agricultural workers, trade unions, dalit, adivasi, women, youth and student organisations in Karnataka. It has unitedly led many powerful agitations in Karnataka in the last one year in support of the nationwide farmers' struggle and also on burning state level issues.

The three farm laws of the Karnataka government are: 1. A law in the direction of greatly weakening the APMCs; 2. Extremely reactionary anti-farmer and pro-corporate amendments to the Land Reform Act of 1977; 3. The Anti Cow Slaughter Act. The farmers' assembly demanded their immediate repeal.

The farmers' assembly also attacked the Karnataka government for giving no compensation or any benefit of the PM crop insurance scheme to lakhs of farmers across the state whose crops had been destroyed in

the recent unseasonal rains. It also raised the issue of denial of MSP to lakhs of farmers for paddy and also FRP for sugarcane.

The farmers' assembly was inaugurated by AIKS President and SKM leader Dr Ashok Dhawale. The speaker of the assembly was the renowned writer Sri Allama Prabhu Bettaduru. The resolution was placed by Badagalapura Nagendra, state president of the Karnataka Rajya Raitha Sangh.

Among those who addressed the assembly were KPRS (AIKS) state vice president B S Soppin, S R Hiremath from Janandolanagala Mahamaitri, Mavalli Shankar from a Dalit organisation, AIDWA state president Devi, Dr Prakash Kammareddi, ex-chairman of the State Agricultural Price Commission and several other farmer leaders.

On December 13, a delegation of the Samyukta Horata will meet the chief minister, assembly speaker and leader of the opposition and will submit to them the resolution that was unanimously adopted by the farmers' assembly today.

Today morning, on entering Karnataka from Goa, Dr Ashok Dhawale, along with Bharatiya Krishik Samaj (Samyukta) state president Sidagoud Modagi and KPRS (AIKS) state committee member Yashavantha, garlanded the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji at Ramnagar, Joida Taluka of Uttar Kannada district. □

PUNJAB PUNJAB KISAN SABHA CELEBRATES VICTORY, SETS TASKS FOR ADVANCE

- Major Singh Punnewal

On December 27, 2021, a meeting of the state and district leadership of the AIKS Punjab was held at Ludhiana. It was attended by over 100 leaders from 19 of the total 23 districts in Punjab. It celebrated the historic victory of the farmers' struggle by distribution of sweets and set out specific tasks for the advance of the AIKS.

The meeting was presided over by AIKS state president Gurchetan Singh Bassi and it was addressed by AIKS president Dr Ashok Dhawale, AIKS state vice president and CPI(M) state secretary Sukhwinder Singh Sekhon, and AIKS state general secretary Major Singh Punnewal.

Dr Ashok Dhawale warmly congratulated the AIKS and other fraternal organisations in Punjab for their valuable contribution to the historic one year long farmers' struggle under the united leadership of the SKM, outlined the significance of its victory over the forces of corporate communalism, and set out the tasks for the rapid advance of the AIKS in Punjab.

Sukhwinder Singh Sekhon outlined the current political situation in Punjab in the run-up to the state assembly elections, and stressed the danger of, and need to, defeat the anti-people, communal and fascistic RSS-BJP in these elections.

Major Singh Punnewal set out the experiences of the struggle at the Singhu border and laid out the specific tasks to be fulfilled by the AIKS in Punjab in the near future.

These tasks had been decided in a separate meeting of the AIKS Punjab state council that was held just before this wider meeting.

The main tasks decided were:

1. Along with CITU and AIAWU, make a big success of the Worker-Peasant Unity Day on January 19 and the All India Strike and Rural Hartal on February 23-24.

2. Concentrate on defeating the BJP-RSS and their allies in the coming state assembly elections.

3. Hold large AIKS general body meetings in each district beginning first week of January, to be attended by state office bearers. The dates were also decided.

4. Begin a massive statewide AIKS membership drive with the full and active participation of the state and district leadership and complete it by January 31.

5. Take up independent local struggles of peasants consistently in each district while participating fully in all future joint calls of the SKM.

6. Concentrate on women and youth peasants and consciously involve and promote them in the AIKS at all levels.

7. After the completion of the membership drive, streamline the entire organisation through the holding of AIKS village, tehsil, district and state conferences as preparation for the next AIKS All India Conference to be held in Kerala in December 2022.

On the same day, the results of the Chandigarh civic elections were announced. They led to a resounding defeat for the BJP. □



UTTAR PRADESH VARANASI MEETING PAYS HOMAGE TO AIKS LEADER DINANATH SINGH YADAV

- Mukut Singh

Last week a large public meeting was held in Varanasi district in Uttar Pradesh to pay homage to former state general secretary of the AIKS and ex-MLA Dinanath Singh Yadav. He passed away on November 19, which was the day on which the one year old historic farmers' struggle forced Narendra Modi to announce the repeal of the three hated Farm Laws.

The meeting was addressed by AIKS president Dr Ashok Dhawale, AIKS state general secretary Mukut Singh and state treasurer Baburam Yadav, CITU state president Ravi Mishra and state general secretary Premnath Rai, AIAWU state general secretary B L Bharati, former SP state minister

Surendra Patel, SJP leader Aflatun Desai and others.

While paying tribute to the departed Kisan leader, who had led several peasant struggles, Dr Ashok Dhawale also hailed the historic victory of the farmers' struggle, vowed to continue the battle for MSP and other demands of peasants and workers, and called for the resounding defeat of the BJP in the upcoming state assembly elections. It was significant that this public meeting was being held in Narendra Modi's Lok Sabha constituency.

In the evening, a press conference was held at Varanasi



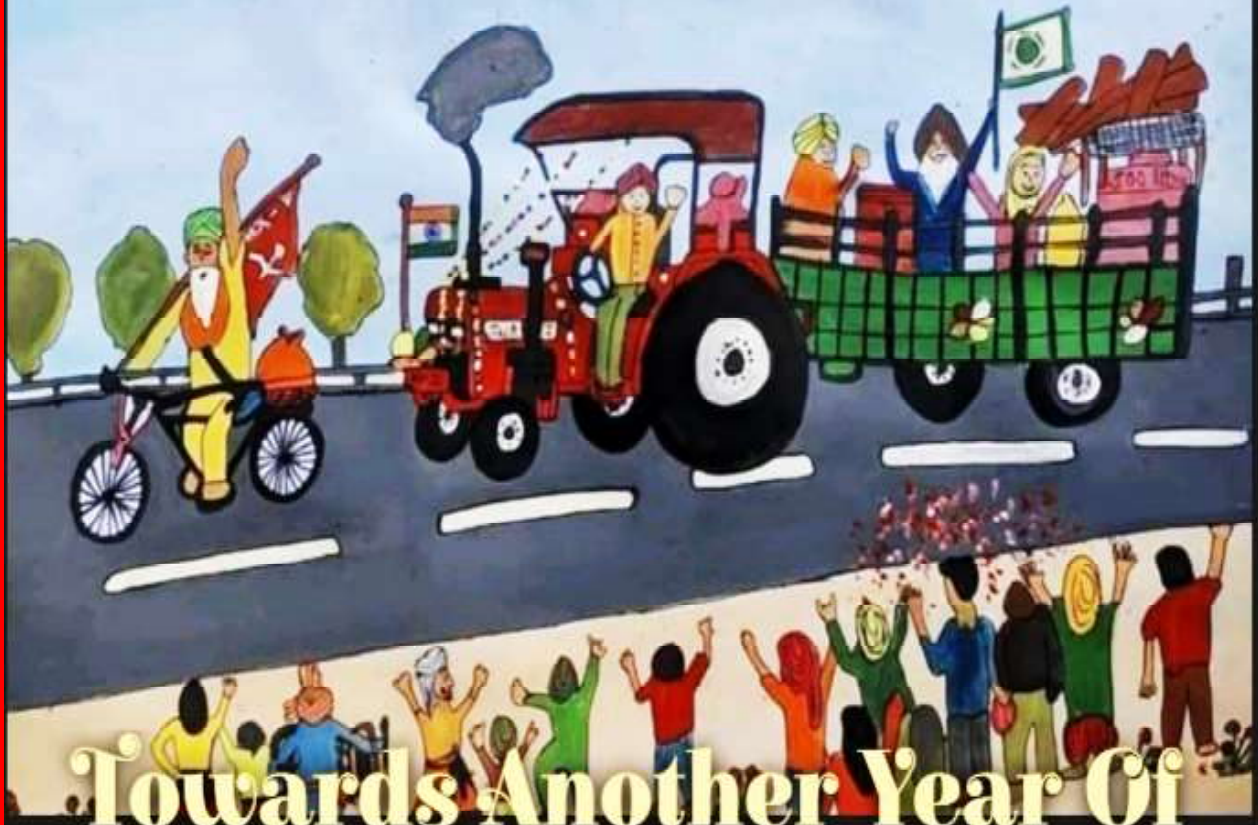


Convention of Activists involved in Delhi Borders Farmers' Struggle, at HKS Surjeet Bhawan, Delhi



MVR Memorial Charitable Trust, Kannur, Kerala decided to give annual MVR Award for 2021 to the historic Kisan Movement. The Trust invited Samyukta Kisan Morcha to come to Kannur on 9th November to receive the Award. The Trust Chairman Mr Pattiam Rajan sent the invitation letter to AIKS General secretary and SKM 9 member coordination committee member Hannan Mollah. The SKM asked Hannan Mollah to go and accept the award on behalf of SKM. Accordingly Hannan da attended the award giving ceremony on 9th November 2021 at Kannur at MVR Smrithi Mandapam in Payyambalam.

A BATTLE IS WON- THE WAR IS ON



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