



COMMUNIST PARTY OF INDIA (MARXIST)

Central Committee

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Report on Political Developments

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International Situation

The international situation has been dominated by events and developments in West Asia in the past four months. The first concerns the Syrian conflict and the US back down from a military strike. The second is the diplomatic breakthrough achieved on the Iran nuclear issue. Both these events have the potential of heralding major changes in the region.

Syria: Backdown by US

President Obama had announced that the US would launch military strikes against Syria on the pretext of using chemical weapons. This military plan was joined in by Britain and France. But within two weeks the situation changed. The British Prime Minister Cameron failed to get the approval of parliament for the military action. This was followed by Obama announcing that he would seek Congressional approval before attacking Syria. Public opinion in both countries was against another military intervention. With mounting opposition to the US-NATO plan, the G20 Summit in St. Petersburg was held. The US was isolated there with the opposition led by Russian President Putin. Subsequently, the Russian proposal to get Syria to give up its chemical weapons was accepted by the Syrian government. This left the US with no option but to accept this proposal particularly since its Secretary of State Kerry had made a passing remark suggesting such a course of action. President Obama announced that military action is being withdrawn and diplomatic efforts would be made. An agreement was reached in Geneva for the Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to take over the chemical stocks and destroy them in a year's time.

For the first time in recent history, an American President had to backdown after announcing military action. This is a setback for US imperialism and a small step in curbing America's proclivity to take unilateral action.

During this period, the Syrian opposition forces were being divided by the aggressive Islamist fundamentalist forces taking control and subduing the western backed Syrian National Army. The Syrian forces also made steady advances in the rebel held areas. All this constitute a setback for the axis of powers which wanted a regime change in Syria. Increasingly, talks between the concerned parties and international diplomacy seems the only way out.

Thaw in Iran Stalemate

It is in this background that the second major event assumed significance. There is a thaw in the US-Iran confrontation on the nuclear issue. The P5+1 talks with Iran held in Geneva in November has yielded an interim agreement. Iran will not enrich Uranium beyond 5 per cent strength and will dilute its enriched Uranium stocks of 20 per cent strength. The US and the EU will dilute some of the sanctions and unfreeze the funds of Iran in its banks. This agreement was possible after quiet diplomacy between the US and Iran. The assumption of Hassan Rouhani as the President of Iran has facilitated the thaw. This agreement has angered Israel with President Netanyahu calling it a historic mistake. It has also upset Saudi Arabia which was keen to isolate Iran and advance the Sunni interests in the region. Obama has to overcome strong opposition in the US Congress to Iran before a comprehensive agreement can be reached. If all the hurdles are overcome, this agreement will have far-reaching effects in the region. The US will be looking for Iranian cooperation to deal with the situation in Afghanistan, where US troops are to be withdrawn next year. US-Iran rapprochement will also act as a check on the aggressive intentions of the US and its allies in the region. Bringing Iran into the talks on Syria will also contribute to the efforts for a diplomatic and political settlement. However, it remains to be seen if the imperialist circles will allow this agreement to go ahead.

Continuing Slowdown

The growth rates of the developed capitalist economies continue to remain low, and in several cases, negative. The crisis which began nearly six years ago with the US economy entering a recession in the last quarter of 2007 shows little sign of tapering off. The IMF which had predicted a global growth rate of 3.2% in 2013 and 3.8% in 2014 in July of this year has now revised these numbers downward to 2.9% and 3.6% respectively. This is the sixth successive reduction in IMF growth rate estimates. The IMF warns that global growth is weak and that downside risks remain. It notes also that so-called emerging markets face financial risks if US interest rates rise. Growth in the US is forecast to be only 1.6 percent in 2013, a downward revision of 0.1 percent on the earlier IMF estimate. The OECD

has lowered the growth estimates for 2013 and 2014 from 3.1% and 4.0% in May to 2.7% and 3.6% in September. The OECD notes that global recovery is ‘modest and uneven’ and that the outlook for growth had weakened.

The IMF, in a recent report, has forecast that growth in “emerging markets” and developing economies will be 4.5 percent in 2013 and 5.1 percent in 2014, a downward revision of 0.5 percent and 0.4 percent respectively from forecasts it made three months earlier. Growth in the advanced economies is expected to be just 1.2 percent this year and 2 percent in 2014. The euro zone is predicted to grow by just 1 percent in 2014, after contracting by 0.4 percent this year.

While growth estimates are being repeatedly scaled back by agencies such as the IMF and the OECD, the unemployment situation is getting worse across all of Europe and in the developing world. This is even more the case with youth unemployment. Austerity policies meant to satisfy finance capital are devastating both the developed and the developing countries and laying waste a whole generation of youth.

WTO Agreement on Agriculture

The Bali round of negotiations in the WTO has been concluded. The Indian government claims that it has won a victory on maintenance of food subsidies. But that is misleading. The only concession they got was that instead of “temporary” an “interim” peace clause has been put in place for four years until a permanent solution is found. The Commerce Minister’s public posturing and the text agreed to are at variance. The Ministerial Decision clearly shows how it will seriously compromise India’s food security and farmers’ livelihoods. The agreement will threaten expansion of present programmes of food security and price support to farmers as well as universalisation of PDS. According to this agreement, countries are also to provide information on their administered prices and the volume of stocks purchased. This could unnecessarily expose domestic policies and priorities to being questioned in the WTO’s Committee on Agriculture. Such detailed notification and transparency requirements have not been demanded of the developed countries who would enjoy Special and Differential Treatment regarding transparency and notification. The rich countries led by the USA and the EU have retained their unrestricted right to channelise billions of dollars to their farmers and food aid programmes and the WTO has failed to deal with issues like the export subsidies of rich nations. The Bali Ministerial also came up with an imbalanced package which will mean expensive customs agreement for developing countries in the name of Trade Facilitation. This is tailor-made to promote the interests of predatory agribusinesses who monopolise trade.

Communist Gains in Elections

In some of the elections held in the recent period, communist parties have made some gains.

In the elections to the local bodies in Portugal, there was an increase in the number of votes for the PCP and its coalition CDU, in absolute terms (CDU scored 600,000 votes and increased its share of the vote from 10.6% to 12.0% in the municipal assemblies). This represents an increase in the number of municipalities from 28 to 34. It secured victories in 169 of the current parishes, an increase of 23.

In the Czech parliament elections, the Communist Party of Bohemia and Moravia came third, with a 3.6 percent swing in its favour. The Communist party of Bohemia and Moravia (KSCM) has been successful in winning almost 15 percent of votes, with 33 MP seats. By this, it has become a powerful Communist Party within the EU.

In Japan, the JCP raised its representation in the House of Councillors from six seats to 11, in the elections held in July 2013. Overall, the Communists came in second to the ruling party in terms of votes collected in Japan's two giant metropolises. In the Tokyo Metropolitan Assembly election in June the JCP more than doubled the number of its seats to 17 from 8 previously.

South Asia

Bangladesh

The situation in Bangladesh has deteriorated with the growing confrontation between the Awami League government and the BNP-led alliance. The BNP alliance refuses to accept elections to be held in January next year under an all Party government. It has demanded that there should be a non-party interim government to supervise the elections. Ershad, the Jatiya Party leader has also decided to boycott the election. There have been continuous strikes and hartals which have disrupted normal life and the economy. Clashes between the police and the demonstrators have led to the loss of scores of lives. The Islamic fundamentalist forces are on the offensive. The ruling alliance led by the Awami League has been on the defensive after having lost a series of municipal elections. If the political stalemate is not resolved, the prospect of holding a smooth election will be in jeopardy.

Nepal

Elections to the Constituent Assembly (CA) were held in November. The Nepali Congress has come first winning 196 seats and the CPN(UML) second with 175 seats and the UCPN(Maoist) coming a poor third with 80 seats. A faction which had split away from the Maoist party had opposed the elections and boycotted it. The Maoist leadership had initially announced that the elections were rigged and they do not accept the result. Subsequently, they have decided to join the CA. The major parties should come to an understanding about the government and the major posts. The Constituent Assembly has to set about the task of drafting the new Constitution which will be the basis for the future democratic system in the country.

National Situation

The four month period since the last Central Committee meeting has been notable for the relentless price rise of food items, the controversy over the formation of Telangana state; communal riots in Muzaffarnagar; projection of Narendra Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP and the success of the BJP in the four assembly elections.

Economic Decline And Rising Prices

The rate of growth of GDP in India continues to be sluggish, though after declining for 5 successive quarters, the growth rate of GDP improved marginally from 4.4 % in the first quarter of 2013-14 to 4.8 % in the second. The growth rate of the index of industrial production for the period April to September 2013 remains muted at 0.4 % while that for manufacturing is even more so at 0.1 %. The overall rate of growth of infrastructure-supportive industries has declined sharply from 6.6 % in April-September 2012-13 to 3.2 % in April-September 2013-14.

Meanwhile, inflation remains unabated. Inflation, as measured by the rise in the wholesale price index (WPI) increased to 7.0 per cent in October 2013 as against 6.46 per cent in September. The rate of inflation for primary food articles remained very high at 18.19% and that for food group as a whole at 12.43%. Prices of food grain as well as of fuel and electricity continue to rise rapidly. At one stage prices of onions shot up to Rs. 80 to Rs. 100 per kilo.

The food grain output has risen. The khariff production for 2013-14 is expected to be 131.27 million tonnes, which is higher than last year's figure. It is also a fact that with a good monsoon, the total agricultural

output for 2013-14 may rise by more than four per cent over the figure for 2012-13 i.e. it can reach 260 million tonnes. But the point to note is that despite the significant increase in food grain and agricultural output, food inflation has remained in double digits throughout this period. This is unprecedented in India and reflects the serious consequences of neo-liberal policies in particular, deregulation and encouragement to speculation and futures trading.

The slow growth of the economy and the dismal performance of industry have even got the chambers of commerce and industry worried about cuts in government spending. A report from ASSOCHAM states: "What is even more worrying are the signals that the government may cut its expenditure to rein in fiscal deficit. While controlling fiscal deficit is a must, drastic cut in government expenditure would lead to further squeezing of business opportunities since the government is among the largest purchaser of goods and services"

The claim of spokespersons of government that the rupee has stabilised and found its true value is meant to talk up the financial markets, but does not reflect the emerging trends in the economy. The economic advisory council to the Prime Minister (PMEAC) which predicted a 6.4% growth rate in April has since lowered its growth estimate to 5.3%, but it is unlikely that even this will be achieved.

The Finance Ministry is instituting drastic cuts in the budgetary allocations for the social sector in order to curb the fiscal deficit. This will affect various social welfare schemes.

The UPA government has continued with its acceleration of neoliberal policies in the period since the August CC meeting, desperately seeking to attract foreign capital of any kind and offering all sorts of "incentives" and concessions to both foreign capital and domestic big business.

Communal Violence

During the last CC meeting we had noted the rising number of communal incidents – in Kishtwar in Jammu and Nawadah in Bihar. There was a major outbreak of communal violence in Muzaffarnagar in West Uttar Pradesh on September 7-8. The riots saw Jats attacking Muslims and most of the violence was in the villages in Muzaffarnagar district and parts of Shamli. More than 60 people were killed and hundreds injured. There were a dozen cases of women being raped. Around 40,000 Muslims had to flee their homes and take shelter in refugee camps. The initial incident emanated from a quarrel concerning the teasing of a girl which led to a Muslim youth and two Jat youth being killed on August 27. In UP there

have been a number of communal incidents in the last one year. Such incidents were deliberately created and efforts made to spread them to the rural areas. The RSS outfits and the BJP have been systematically working to raise communal tensions by taking up issues such as cow slaughter in western UP.

The SP government and the local administration totally failed to gauge the seriousness of the situation and take prompt action. The mahapanchayat on September 7 that sparked off the violence was allowed to take place. Earlier a Muslim gathering was also allowed. In the run up to the 2014 elections the RSS-BJP combine is using its time-tested method of creating communal tensions and sparking of riots. Both in UP and Bihar there seems to be a planned effort by the Sangh combine as the BJP wants to make headway in these two big states.

There have been other activities of the communal forces that must be noted. The Vishwa Hindu Parishad announced a panchkosi yatra from five districts to Ayodhya in August. The state government prohibited the yatra and arrested over 600 people who tried to join the yatra. The firm action of the Samajwadi Party government foiled the plan of the VHP.

In the end of August, Narendra Dabholkar, a leading figure in the fight against superstition and obscurantist practices was shot dead in Pune. It is suspected that Hindu extremist forces are responsible. This murder is part of the growing attacks by the communal-fundamentalist forces.

Telangana

The Cabinet has cleared the Bill for Telangana after the group of ministers submitted their recommendations on the issue. Prior to this an effort was made to include two districts of Rayalaseema to the new state and call it Rayalatelangana. This cynical and partisan move evoked widespread opposition and had to be abandoned.

For over two months there was a continuous agitation in the Seemandhra region for a united Andhra Pradesh. Government employees, teachers, road transport workers were on strike throughout this period. The YSR Congress has been in the forefront of the agitation. Jaganmohan Reddy, after being released on bail has been rallying support against the division of the state.

The Congress party is faced with an imminent split with the Chief Minister, Kirankumar Reddy openly opposing the division. If the division goes through the Congress faces decimation in Seemandhra.

The TDP having supported Telangana is also opposing the division. This has landed the party in an unenviable position. Fearing loss of support in both areas, Chandrababu Naidu is considering allying with the BJP. When the Bill comes in parliament in the current session, we should express our stand for a united Andhra Pradesh.

Legislations

In the monsoon session of parliament, the UPA government succeeded in pushing through the Food Security Bill and the Land Acquisition & Rehabilitation Bill. Parliament adopted the Bill to nullify the Supreme Court judgment which would have meant that a person in jail or police custody cannot contest elections.

However, the Bill to amend the RTI Act to keep the political parties outside the purview of the RTI could not be adopted and it has been referred to the Standing Committee after some parties and NGOs objected to it being passed without scrutiny.

The Supreme Court had declared that any legislator or MP convicted in a criminal case which invites disqualification would stand disqualified. The clause whereby a sitting member could continue in the house till an appeal made to a higher court was struck down.

Our Party had taken a stand that the Supreme Court judgment had made a valid point regarding disqualification of convicted legislators. However, a safeguard should be provided that when an appeal is made to the higher court, the sitting member would stand suspended till the appeal is disposed off. The government decided to bring a Bill to amend the Representation of People's Act whereby legislators or members of parliament who are convicted can continue if they appeal and their conviction is stayed but they cannot draw their salary nor have the right to vote. This was referred to the Standing Committee for scrutiny.

Ordinance Withdrawn

However, the government decided to bring an ordinance to get the bill promulgated. This was done in a manner which raised suspicions that it was meant to protect certain individual members who were facing conviction. The Party opposed the promulgation of such an ordinance.

After widespread criticism of this ordinance Rahul Gandhi condemned the ordinance in harsh words while the Prime Minister was in Washington. As a result, after the Prime Minister returned, the Cabinet met and the

ordinance was withdrawn. Rather than enhancing Rahul's political stature, the episode highlighted his lack of political maturity.

Report on Backwardness of States

The Raghuram Rajan Committee's report on indexing backwardness of the states has been submitted to the government. This committee was set up in response to Bihar's demand for special category status. Odisha had also made this demand. The report has considered index of backwardness whereby 10 states have been classified as "least developed", 11 as "less developed" and 7 states as "relatively developed".

The least developed ranked in order are Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, Chattisgarh, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, UP and Rajasthan. As per the criteria and categorization of the states in this report, the least developed states would get more funds while the less developed will be in the next category as far funds are concerned and the relatively developed will get lesser funds.

This report has already been opposed by some state governments. One of the objections to this report's recommendations is that it intrudes into the work of the Finance Commission which is a constitutionally set up body for allocation of resources to the states. Our stand should be that states cannot be discriminated in this manner as far as allocations of resources are concerned. While a common set of criteria should be there for devolution of resources to all states, additional funds should be provided for states which are considered to be backward.

Obama-Manmohan Talks

The Prime Minister had a summit meeting with President Obama in Washington on September 27. This was his last meeting with the US President. The outcome of the talks has been given in the joint statement. Apart from that a joint declaration on defence cooperation was also issued. The main outcome of the meeting is the decision to step up defence cooperation. India will buy more weapons and defence equipment from the US; there will also be joint production of defence equipment and transfer of technology to India. India is trying to get American companies to invest in defence production and for joint production units. Under the Defence Framework Agreement signed in June 2005, the US is keen to make India an ally. This must be seen in the context of the strategic pivot to the Asia-Pacific region announced by the United States last year.

The other aspect of the visit was the efforts to promote American investment in the Indian economy and bilateral investment agreement being negotiated. India has already diluted some of the norms such as for FDI in retail and is trying to get the Civil Nuclear Liability law diluted to ensure that US reactors can be bought.

This is the last effort of Manmohan Singh to strengthen the India-US strategic ties before his term as Prime Minister gets over.

Political Situation

As anticipated, Narendra Modi was finally announced as the Prime Ministerial candidate of the BJP in September. This was done after the RSS directed the BJP to do so disregarding the opinion of L.K. Advani.

The unprecedented level of support that Narendra Modi is getting from the corporates indicates that a substantial section of the big bourgeoisie has shifted their support to the BJP. This is reminiscent of the period when the 1991 Lok Sabha elections were held when there was a similar shift within the big bourgeoisie towards the BJP. But the level of support is much more at present. The entire network of the RSS has been geared up to support the media led campaign. The RSS held a two-day meeting of its front organisations in September where the strategy for the BJP election campaign was discussed. It was soon after this that the announcement of Narendra Modi as the Prime Ministerial candidate took place. Narendra Modi has been addressing rallies across the country. Modi has a growing appeal among the urban middle class and youth especially in the Northern and Western regions. Backed by the corporate media there is a major effort to project Modi all over the country.

The big business support is indicated by the way the stock markets shot up to a new high at the news of the BJP victories in the assembly elections.

Assembly Election Results

The BJP has won a big victory in the recent assembly elections. It has routed the Congress in Rajasthan and won an unprecedented more than three-fourths majority. It has been able to retain Madhya Pradesh for the third time with an increased majority. It was able to win a third time in government in Chattisgarh. Only in Delhi it was deprived of a majority and emerged as the largest single party. The Congress could only retain its government in Mizoram, a northeastern state which has no national impact.

The Congress has suffered one of its worst defeats ever. In Rajasthan, it could win only 21 seats out of 200; the lowest ever. In Delhi it was

relegated to the third position getting only 8 seats out of 70. The Congress could not dislodge the BJP in Madhya Pradesh and Chattisgarh despite the ten years of BJP rule which was marked by misrule and corruption. The dismal record of the Congress led government at the Centre and its record of corruption and price rise made the people reject the Congress as an alternative.

The emergence of the Aam Admi Party as a credible alternative in Delhi is a significant phenomenon. Within a year of its formation it has been able to garner nearly 30 per cent of the vote and win 28 seats. The AAP has been able to win support of not only the middle class but also substantial sections of the urban poor and the scheduled castes. The AAP has been able to build on its popularity derived from the anti-corruption movement, struggle against electricity rates and other people's issues. The AAP has successfully positioned itself as an alternative to both the Congress and the BJP in Delhi. It remains to be seen how far it can go in consolidating its political base and formulating a political programme.

The Party suffered a setback in the Rajasthan elections. The Party had contested 37 seats including the three sitting seats. The results were disappointing as the Party lost in its sitting seats and could not win a single seat. While a proper review of the results have to be made, at present only one political reason can be given. The BJP has got a landslide winning 81 per cent of the seats. The people voted in a big way to defeat the Congress government. This has affected our electoral prospects with a section of the anti-Congress votes which we were getting going to the BJP.

The success of the BJP in these elections will provide a boost to the Modi led national campaign for the Lok Sabha elections. On the other hand, these elections have revealed the depth of the anti-Congress mood among the people. At the same time, it should be kept in mind that these four states have been traditionally bi-polar between the Congress and the BJP. This is not the situation in most other states.

Situation in States

In Uttar Pradesh, the Samajwadi Party government's image has been dented by its failure to tackle the Muzaffarnagar riots. There is anger among the Muslim minorities, particularly in Western UP in the way the state government has handled the situation. The BJP has been making gains in UP even prior to the Muzaffarnagar incident. After these riots the BJP has made gains by polarizing communities in the region.

In Bihar after the JD(U) broke the alliance with the BJP, the BJP has been taking an aggressive stance. The Nitish Kumar government and the JD(U)

has lost the support of the upper castes who had earlier rallied to the JD(U)-BJP alliance. In the coalition government, the BJP-RSS had utilised being in government to expand its influence. The RJD which was hoping to utilise this situation after the break up to expand its influence has been handicapped with the conviction and imprisonment of Laloo Prasad Yadav. The RJD and the Lok Janshakti Party of Ramvilas Paswan are seeking an alliance with the Congress.

In Odisha, the Biju Janata Dal has consolidated its position. It has won the municipal elections held in two rounds and made gains at the expense of the Congress and the BJP.

In Tamilnadu the AIADMK has consolidated its position. It has won all the by elections since the 2011 assembly polls. In the recent by elections to the Yercaud assembly seat, the AIADMK has won it with a big majority. The BJP has approached Vaiko's MDMK and the PMK to ally with it.

In Andhra Pradesh the Telugu Desam is facing a crisis, with its ambivalent stance on the Telangana issue and the division of the state. Its base is being eroded both in the Telangana and Seemandhra region. This has led Chandrababu Naidu to consider joining hands with the BJP-led NDA. This became evident when he declined to respond to attend the anti-communal convention in Delhi.

In Karnataka, the Congress party after winning the assembly elections in 2012 continues to retain popular support. In the by-elections for two Lok Sabha seats which were held by the JD(S), the Congress was able to win both the seats with big margins. The Karnataka JD(S) President Kumaraswamy entered into an understanding with the BJP whereby the BJP withdrew its candidates from these seats. Deve Gowda, the all India President stated that it was wrong on the part of his son to have entered into an understanding with the BJP. The JD(S) at the all India level has affirmed that it will have no truck with the BJP. The BJP is making efforts to bring back Yeddyurappa into its fold. Yeddyurappa had formed the KJP last year before the assembly elections. Yeddyurappa has declared his support for Narendra Modi.

Ten regional parties of the North East have formed the North East Regional Political Front (NEPRF). It includes the Nagaland People's Front, the AGP and the United Democratic Party of Meghalaya. The initiative was taken by the AGP. Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio has been appointed the Chairman of the forum and Prafulla Mohanta of the AGP is the convener. Earlier, the AGP in Assam was internally divided over the question of aligning with the BJP. However, when the question of their participation in the anti-communal convention was broached, the

AGP leadership informed that they would be with the non-Congress secular forces.

However, the history of the northeastern political parties must be kept in mind. When the ruling party at the centre changes, many of these parties are known to join the ruling alliance at the Centre.

In Kerala, the struggle for the resignation of the Chief Minister and the holding of a judicial enquiry on the solar panel scam is going on. The second phase of this struggle has begun. The differences within the Congress party and the problems within the UDF partners is also continuing unabated. Both the Kerala Congress (M) and the IUML have been making public criticisms about the Congress and the UDF government's functioning.

The LDF has been taking up various issues affecting the people. At its call a state wide hartal was observed against the implementation of the recommendations of the Kasturirangan report on the Western Ghats without due consultation with the people.

The Special CBI Court has exonerated Pinarayi Vijayan in the SNC-Lavalin case and discharged him from the case. This is a vindication of the Party's stand that it was a politically motivated case foisted by the UDF government. This verdict has foiled the conspiracy to tarnish the image of the CPI(M) leader and has been widely welcomed by the people in Kerala.

In West Bengal, the Trinamul rule has led to increasing burdens on different sections of the people. 89 farmers have committed suicide in the state under Trinamul rule. The problems of price rise have been intensified by the failure of the state government with potato and salt prices shooting up exorbitantly. The state is witnessing growing attacks on women with a large number of incidents of rape. The TMC government is covering up the nexus which led to the Saradha chit funds scam. 17 lakh people were affected by this scam. For unraveling this huge scam, there should be a CBI enquiry supervised by the Supreme Court.

On all these issues the Party and the Left have been conducting campaigns and movements. However, the attacks on the Party and the Left Front is continuing without respite. 142 comrades have been killed since the assembly elections in May 2011. After the rigging and violence in the panchayat elections, the elections to the Howrah and other municipalities saw the same pattern of attacks and rigging. The Party has to concentrate on organizing struggles on local issues by mobilizing the people, braving the repression unleashed and revamping the organisation.

Anti-Communal Convention

During the last CC meeting we had decided to step up our anti-communal campaign and to expose the BJP-RSS designs. In this connection we decided that we should strive for a broad platform to fight the communal forces and in defence of secularism.

For this we took the initiative to consult with all the Left and secular opposition parties to hold a national convention. A national convention against communalism and for people's unity was held in Delhi on October 30 at the Talkatora Indoor Stadium. Leaders of fourteen political parties participated in this convention. The convention sent out a message that the non-Congress secular forces are committed to fight communalism and the BJP-RSS combine.

Before and after this anti-communal convention, conventions and rallies were being held in various parts of the country. This campaign has assumed importance in the light of Narendra Modi's leadership being projected for the Lok Sabha elections.

Conclusion

The BJP's campaign has got momentum with the projection of Modi as its prime ministerial candidate. The results of the four assembly elections have given a boost to the BJP. But from this no national pattern can be discerned. In these states there is a bipolar situation between the BJP and the Congress. In most of the other states the political situation is different with the presence of strong regional parties and the Left parties in three states.

As noted in the Central Committee reports in the past one year the Congress is going steadily downhill. The acute discontent among the people is mainly due to the record of the UPA government with price rise, corruption and unemployment adversely affecting the people.

In such a situation we should step up our political campaign against the anti-people neo-liberal policies of the Congress-led government and against the communal forces and the disruptive politics of the BJP. We should campaign for the alternative policies which forms the basis for a secular democratic alternative to the Congress and the BJP. We should be able to step up our political work among the working class in the light of the united working class movement fostered by the central trade unions.

All the state committees should organise a campaign on the following issues: against price rise, corruption and unemployment; taking up the

issue of the farmers and rural poor; food security and against the growing attacks and violence against women. The state committees should organise the campaign by including the relevant state issues. This campaign should be conducted in the months of January and February 2014 in a time frame decided by the state concerned.

At the same time the Party should take up the range of issues affecting the people and conduct local struggles.

In the wake of the October 30 national convention against communalism, the Party should organise broad-based anti-communal conventions and rallies involving wider sections of the secular and democratic forces.

In all the states we should make the necessary organizational preparations for the Lok Sabha elections and for the assembly elections where they are being held alongside.