

# Proletarian Era

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## RED SALUTE COMRADE SITESH DASGUPTA



Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta, erstwhile member of the Central Committee of our party, SUCI (Communist) and, presently, Staff member of the party, breathed his last at 5 in the morning on 22 January at Calcutta Heart Clinic and Hospital after suffering from prolonged ailment. He was 82 years in age.

Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta, lifelong revolutionary, was born on 11 August in 1928 at Kaliya in Jessore district of the present Bangladesh. With his family, he came to Calcutta in 1946 and started living in South Calcutta. At that time he became a member of the "Culture Club" situated nearby on Lake Temple Road. It was there that he came in touch with Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, one of the eminent Marxist philosophers and

thinkers of this age and engaged himself in the activities of SUCI. Interested in fine arts, Comrade Dasgupta got himself admitted to the Government Art College, where he was acquainted with late Comrade Tapas Dutta, famous sculptor and member of the Central Committee of SUCI(C) who had also been a student there. In a short time, Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta proved himself a talented student of fine arts and earned a significant place in the minds of students and teachers. At the same time, it was Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta who introduced Comrade Tapas Dutta to Comrade Shibdas Ghosh. Imbued with revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Ghosh, both of them engaged themselves in taking important

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# RED SALUTE COMRADE SITESH DASGUPTA

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role in student movements.

At that time, the authorities of the Government Art College decided to inaugurate an art exhibition to be held in the College. by the then Governor Kailashnath Katju. Well known artist and sculptor Chintamani Kar was then the Principal of the College. Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta and Comrade Tapas Dutta led students to protest against this decision of the authority and demanded that since the Governor was not connected with art in any way, the art exhibition ought not to be inaugurated by him; it should be done by some well known personality of the art world. Students' movement gained momentum and unable to work out their decision to inaugurate the exhibition by the Governor, the College authority expelled Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta and Comrade Tapas Dutta and a few other students.

Though there was an end to his formal education in Arts, Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta continuously went on elevating and developing his artistic creativity. He engaged himself in the arduous revolutionary struggle of expanding and consolidating the organization of SUCI, the genuine communist party on the soil, right from the day of its inception. He set up the Institute of Art and Culture, an organization of artists. Under the guidance of

Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, he alongwith Comrade Tapas Dutta produced an exhibition, depicting the history of human civilization since its primitive stage, viewed from a Marxist angularity. The exhibition was put up in schools, colleges, clubs and particularly in slums of working people; everywhere it attracted and imbued the viewers, the common people.

Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta took part as a delegate in the first founding Convention of the Party held at Joynagar of West Bengal on 24 April 1948. He used to work for the Party in the Behala region of Calcutta. There he set up a Party centre along with a few other comrades. Party assigned him the responsibility of developing organization of the Engineering, Rice Mill, Press and office employees. He also founded a few trade unions in different industries. He worked with the tea-plantation workers of North Bengal and developed movements on their demands helping them wrest a few of those demands from the owners. He considered the struggle for building up revolutionary movement as the greatest artistic activity. Thus engaging himself in the struggle for identifying with party, he played significant role in developing trade unions in the country including West Bengal and building up movement of toiling people. For some time he was the President of

the West Bengal Committee of the All India UTUC. Later he became Treasurer of its all India body. He also played important role in developing party organization in Calcutta. He led a number of mass movements against the Congress government in the '50s and '60s of the last century as also against the anti-people policies of CPI(M)-led government since 1977, on which count, he was arrested several times.

Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta earned Staff membership of the Party in 1988 in the first Party Congress and was elected member of the Central Committee. The Central Committee sent him to Orissa assigning him the charge of helping Comrade Tapas Dutta the then Orissa State Secretary in developing the Party in that state. During the devastating cyclone that created havoc in the state, he, along with a few other party comrades, had to spend a few days without food and even water and light. Over and above, uncountable death and unbearable plight of the cyclone victims left a terrible effect on his mind and body; he developed grave nervous problems and became seriously ill. The Central Committee brought him back to the Salt Lake Commune for his medical treatment in Calcutta. Since then, he had to be removed to hospital once and often. He lost his ability to walk or stand on his own; his speech and thought process were

severely impaired.

Even suffering from a number of serious ailments, Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta never lost his mental balance. He maintained all through, even during his illness, his smiling face, pleasing amiable behavior and plain and simple dealings with comrades of all ranks. He continued unperturbed till his last days, the struggle for remoulding himself with the revolutionary teachings of the great leader Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, a struggle that he had started at the beginning of his youth. He owned a high standard of culture and ethics. He was a leading fighter in the struggle for achieving the standard of a developed communist character, to whom revolution was life, the Party was life. Engaged in this struggle he never projected himself. He discharged all responsibilities silently. It was a unique trait of his character that all of us must try to follow and develop.

Death relieved Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta of the indescribable and unbearable pangs of suffering from continuous ailments over the years. With him, the Party has lost a life-long revolutionary leader. Mass movement and trade union movements, too, have lost an ardent fighter and leader. But the memories of the revolutionary life of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta will remain ever alive.

**Red Salute  
Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta**

## The Last Journey

Prolonged painful suffering from a protracted illness of a communist revolutionary unto death ceased at last. Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta, Member of the former Central Committee and an extant Staff Member of our beloved Party, the SUCI (Communist), who survived several critical conditions over the past few years, breathed his last at Calcutta Heart Clinic and hospital on 22 January in the early morning (5 a.m.) at the age of 82. On hearing the news of his demise, Comrade Ranjit Dhar, member, Polit Bureau, rushed to the hospital and offered floral tribute on behalf of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, beloved General Secretary. Floral tributes were also offered by Comrades Manik Mukherjee, Member, Polit Bureau and Anil Sen, veteran leader and member of the former Central Committee,

Debaprasad Sarkar, member, Central Committee and others. It was decided to preserve his body till 25 January and keep the red flag half-mast for three days. All comrades were advised to wear black badges during that time.

His mortal remains were brought to the central office of the Party at 48, Lenin Sarani, Kolkata on 25 January. Draped in red banner engraved with hammer, sickle and star, the symbol of the working class movement, the body of Comrade Dasgupta was laid on a raised platform in the hall of the central office for the leaders, cadres and the members of the public to pay their last tribute to this lifelong revolutionary. Hundreds of comrades and people cutting across political lines, age, social standing and all other aspects of life in disciplined and organized manner

started pouring down to have a last glimpse of this great revolutionary, who imbued with the revolutionary thoughts of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh threw off his career and engaged himself in the working class movement. They queued in serpentine in thousands in pin-drop silence to post their last respect to that revolutionary who while studying in the Government Art College showed his mettle by organizing student movement against the injustice of the college authorities resulting in his ouster from the college but who undespised a least diverted his career building art study, at the call of Comrade Shibdas Ghosh, into the study of revolutionary creative art portraying the miserable plight of the downtrodden teeming millions and at the same time infusing in them the zeal for struggle against the ruling capitalist class of the country for emancipation from its

exploitation. The mourners offered the floral tribute with Red Salute with tears trickling down in pain and shock at the demise of their beloved leader or Comrade-in-arm. As in the last years of his struggling life, Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta was deputed to Orissa to build up Party organization, a delegation of the members of Orissa State Committee led by Comrade Dhurjati Das, Secretary, Orissa State Committee offered bid adieu to their beloved leader with floral tribute. Floral tributes were also paid by Comrades Arun Singh, Rabin Samajpati and Swapan Chatterjee on behalf of Bihar, Jharkhand and UP State Committees respectively.

On behalf of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, our beloved General Secretary, who was prevented from being present in person due to his serious illness lying bed-ridden, Comrade Ranjit Dhar, Polit Bureau

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## Introduction of Bt Brinjal cultivation

# A sinister bourgeois design to tamper with food production

The Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC) of the central government comprising mainly bureaucrats and scientists has of late accorded approval for cultivation of Bt Brinjal, a genetically modified (GM) variety of the vegetable. It may be added that the scientific communities and informed circles throughout the world are vehemently opposing introduction of GM crops having extremely harmful effect on health and environment. Yet, the government of India is over insistent to go ahead with GM crop cultivation. When asked how could the government act on the recommendation of an ad hoc committee like GEAC ignoring the protest from scientific communities and environment activists, a visibly testy Joyram Ramesh, Union Minister of Environment and Forest insolently declared earlier that “the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee may well be a statutory body but when crucial issues of human safety are concerned, the government has every right...to take the final decision.” He faced a massive protest in Kolkata on 13 January last, when he in course of a mass hearing tried to defend the government’s decision to introduce Bt Brinjal. Among others, AIKKMS, the peasant wing of the SUCI(C) and ‘Breakthrough Science Society’ participated in the protest demonstration because allowing Bt Brinjal cultivation would open the floodgate for other genetically modified (GM) food crops, like rice, maize, soybean, etc in the country. So it is necessary to understand the implication of the decision the bigwigs of the Indian bourgeois government are so keen to uphold defying all protests from the scientific communities and other mass organizations.

### Bt Brinjal and GM food

*Bacillus Thuringiensis* Brinjal, abbreviated as Bt Brinjal, is genetically modified strain created by India’s number one seeds company Mahyco (Maharashtra Hybrid Seeds Company) in collaboration with US multinational Monsanto. Normally, changes in characteristics of plants and animals are brought about in a natural way. In the course of evolution, thousands of diversified plants and animals have been created. So, variation is deemed as a natural process. Thus, changes in qualities or characteristics of food-crops are not a thing to be feared of. It is equally erroneous to oppose human intervention to recreate a food-plant with particular improved quality some alleging that such attempts are akin to “playing with God” and shall harm natural process. Using scientifically evolved, tested and tried methods and guided by the correct understanding of the natural laws, men are supposed to improve the conditions of life and meet growing needs ensuring at every stage that none of the human-induced acts cause any harm to either nature or bio-diversity including plant and animal lives. For thousands of years men have scientifically intervened into plant and animal kingdoms selecting food-crops, animals, crossing and breeding to suit their needs in a traditional way. Horses, cattle, a thousand variety of rice, wheat etc. have gone through this course.

But what is unique of this century marked by rapid progress in genetics and bioscience, is the wide range of application of bio-technical devices to insert genes (supposed to be hereditary unit) from one plant to another, from plant to animal organism and also from animal to plant organism. This is called genetic modification and crops prepared by this method is called genetically modified crops. ‘Gene’ or ‘genes’ are cut out using chemical ‘scissors’, inserted into DNA of another plant. Sometimes, even genes from animal body are inserted into plants by this technique. Before evaluating the effects of these very bio-tech modifications, it is imperative to recall in brief the lessons from the natural laws on this subject.

Every organism, plants and animals, are created and developed through the interaction of two factors – heredity and environment, popularly known as ‘Nature’ and ‘Nurture’. The heredity is now supposed to be contained in genes and environment encompasses a wide range of factors, from inner cell-environment and biochemical factors to outer environment like air, soil, climate, etc. So no organism is the product of the ‘gene’ only. In each and every step of development the hereditary factors and the environment are in constant interaction, a dialectical interaction that determines the characteristics of the plant or the animal organism.

If the bio-tech modification of crops is in consonance with this fundamental law of natural evolutionary process and guided by the genuine need of meeting the growing human necessity, there ought not to be any scope for opposition. But the bio-tech modification of crops now being pursued is predominantly under the supervision and governance of the bourgeois order where the objective is not to respond to the increasing need of the masses but to generate maximum profit for the oppressive bourgeois rulers. Even many scientists are not aware that their thinking process, the precincts of their experimentations as well as their interpretations of innovations are overtly or covertly are under the tutelage of bourgeois class thought in this class-divided society and hence, despite their good intentions, run counter to the genuine need of the people and ultimately become a prop in the hands of the exploitative rulers to distort the reality and deceive the people. Unfortunately, that has been happening in the case of bio-tech modification of food and other crops which are mostly been undertaken at the behest or under the aegis of profit-greedy large imperialist multinationals. So this device is ignoring the environmental factors and stressing one-sidedly to the hereditary factor called ‘gene’. The technique involves introduction of ‘foreign gene’ to the section of DNA of the host-cell without caring for environmental factor – neither of the host nor of the ‘foreign gene’. As a result, nobody knows how it will react in different environmental conditions. Sometimes, productivity is found to be fraught with peculiar manifestation of abnormality in the long run. This fundamental flaw of genetic modification of food-crops have been in the purview of knowledge of many a scientist. They are accusing that the separation between organism and environment in this way was the manifestation of “individualistic view of the biological world” and “modern mechanistic world view.” As late Dr Sushil Kumar Mukherjee, the renowned agricultural scientist opined, “The long-term effect of thousands of genetically modified organisms could be more harmful than what the entire gamut of petrochemicals could do. Whereas the effects of

petrochemicals would taper off, those of biological organisms would multiply, disseminate, mutate and spread out. It seems the biological pollution will be the greatest menace of the 21st century.”

### Devastating fallouts of GM food

Several studies on Bt crops in particular and GM crops in general show that there are many potential health hazards in foods bio-engineered in this manner. GM-fed animals in various studies have shown that there are problems with growth, organ development and damage, immune responsiveness and so on. It has also been shown from studies elsewhere that genes inserted into GM food survive digestive processes and are transferred into the human body. They are known to have transferred themselves into intestinal bacteria too. Bt toxin had caused powerful immune responses and abnormal cell growth in mice. It has also been shown that all the Cry proteins in Bt crops have amino acid sequence similar to known allergens and are hence potential allergens. Some instances of devastating fallout of cultivation and consumption of GM food are placed below :

- In Germany (Hesse) dozens of cows died from eating GM-176 Maize raised by Monsanto company. In 2002, hundreds of cows died from eating weed-resistant maize;
- In Philippines an entire village-people fell sick by eating Monsanto-maize in 2003. Some became disabled and victims of chronic diseases;
- GM. Soya evoked large scale attack of allergen in Great Britain, after which it was banned.
- In 1998, stomach of rats were found perforated after feeding in insecticide-resistant potatoes in Egypt. In 1994, flavour tomato caused similar incident in rats;
- In 2005, Monsanto had to reveal papers to the Court which admits that Mon-836 maize causes kidney-damage and abnormality in blood;
- In 2005, CSIRO research Institute of Australia revealed that L-amylase-inhibit-1 inflated lungs doubly to cause serious diseases.

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# Giant MNCs encouraging GM food to maximize their profit

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## Worldwide protest against GM food

Obviously, there is a world-wide protest from all well-meaning sections of the society not only against Bt Brinjal alone, but also against all genetically modified crops. Farmers, agricultural scientists, consumers and even many bio-technologists are also vociferous against introduction of GM food. Under people's pressure, governments of many countries have banned the cultivation and import of these foods. France, Hungary, Greece, Sweden, Austria, Luxemburg, Ecuador, Peru, Thailand, Bolivia, Mexico, Australia, Rumania, Germany, Poland, Cyprus, Netherlands governments have banned the import, experimental research on fields and cultivation of GM crops by various ways in various rules and regulations. Even in US, the abode of the ill-famed multinational company Monsanto, three federal courts, namely, the federal court of California, Massachusetts and Washington D.C. have banned cultivation of GM crops. Being pressed by consumer societies the courts of many countries have made it mandatory to label these foods as 'GM-food' as an alarming signal to consumers. All these measures were the direct fall out of practical experiences of people throughout the world.

## Debate over Bt Brinjal

The debate over the safety of Bt Brinjal has to be viewed in this backdrop. The protagonists of GM technology in India hold that in a GM product like Bt Brinjal, the genetic material is altered to benefit the consumer and producer, as it is pest-resistant and promises to offer a higher yield. They contend that rapid conversion of agricultural land for other uses, exponential population growth, less returns in agriculture which in turn discourages people towards agriculture and send them to seek other lucrative jobs, growing scarcity of water, change in climate which is unfavourable to agriculture etc. necessitates crops which yield more production. Otherwise due to low production and high demand, in near future the cost of food will double each year. So we should act immediately and accept science and technology to innovate production. So they claim that besides

improving yields, the step would help the agriculture sector including millions of brinjal farmers who have been suffering from the havoc caused by the Brinjal Fruit and Shoot Borer (BFSB).

On the other hand, environment activists says the effect of GM crops on rats have shown to be fatal for lungs and kidneys. It is dangerous to introduce these experimental foods into the market without proper research, they say. They have been questioning the bio-safety of these products and pointed out that this is a form of 'bio-terror' that should be curbed at all costs. A study by French scientist Gilles-Eric Seralini of the Committee for Independent Research and Information on Genetic Engineering (CIRIGEN) who carried out the first ever independent assessment of Monsanto-Mahyco's dossier on toxicity tests submitted to the Indian regulatory authorities, says the tests conducted by Mahyco, the company producing Bt brinjal, were simply not valid and raised serious health concerns. In an interview with *Business Standard*, Seralini had said, "You may not be aware that 99.9 per cent of edible genetically modified organisms are designed to contain toxic pesticides whose effect on the human body and the environment are not known." So, "the GM brinjal cannot be considered as safe as its non GM counterpart".

## Horrorific experience of Bt Cotton in India

Incidentally, India has experienced what harm can be caused by GM crop while experimenting with GM cotton. On March 26, 2002, in spite of inadequate tests of bio-safety and viability, Monsanto managed to get clearance for commercial planting of three varieties of genetically engineered Bt cotton from the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee under the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF). Ironically, this permission was granted in spite of an ongoing Supreme Court case, filed by Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology (RFSTE), challenging the 1998 field trials and stating that there were numerous irregularities and violations of bio-safety laws and guidelines in previous year field trials. Even then the GEAC have cleared Bt cotton for commercial release by

Monsanto-Mahyco. The Research Foundation for Science, Technology and Ecology, Navdanya, farmers unions and public interests groups in India had warned the government that this irresponsible, rushed clearance would have high cost for farmers in terms of the economic sovereignty and seed sovereignty. What they had predicted did come true.

In three major states Bt cotton has been wiped out completely leaving farmers in great economic and livelihood crisis. Not only have new pests and diseases emerged, Bt cotton has failed in preventing even bollworm attacks for which it has been designed. While Bt cotton is sold as pest resistant seed in India, it has proved to be more vulnerable to pest and diseases than the traditional and conventional varieties. In 2005-06, ten thousand sheep succumbed to death by grazing on Bt-cotton fields in the Warangal district of Andhra in India and it was confirmed by the government. Madhya Pradesh, the heart of the cotton-growing belt in India, witnessed total failure of genetically engineered Bt cotton. In 2005, many cows died by grazing in Bt. Cotton fields in the Nimach district of Madhya Pradesh in India. The farmers of Khargaon district where Bt is a 100 per cent failure are up in arms against Monsanto-Mahyco that supplied these GM seeds and are demanding compensation from the company for the failure of their crop. The failure of the Bt cotton has devastated the farmers since they have spent five to six times to buy seeds of Bt than the normal seed. Thousands of cotton farmers have already committed suicide.

After the GEAC had given approval to Monsanto to launch its Bt cotton technology between 2002 and 2005, Monsanto charged an exorbitant trait value (royalty) of Rs 1,200 per packet of 450 gm. Bt cotton seeds were being sold at an exorbitant price of Rs 1,800 to Rs 2,000 per packet. Based on the complaints of the *Andhra Pradesh Ryotu Sangham*, the Andhra Pradesh government referred the matter to the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Commission (MRTPC). The MRTPC indicted Monsanto and passed an interim order stating that the MNC is not following restrictive trade practices and this had resulted in some relief

for the farmers. The Tamil Nadu government has banned the sale of Bt cotton seeds after it received complaints of crop failure in Dharmapuri district.

If regulators such as the GEAC had been doing long term research to assess the claims of GM crop companies and taken up the analysis of the company's data itself then the two year large scale trials of Bt brinjal approved in 2007 would not have been allowed to go ahead. In fact, the results only came to light when a Supreme Court battle forced GEAC to put the Monsanto-Mahyco test dossier on Bt brinjal into the public domain.

## Why Bt Brinjal then

The pertinent question now, is why, in spite of this record of all out devastating effects, the cultivation of GM crops raised by biotechnical devices or genetic engineering is not only being endorsed but advocated by the Indian government? Answer is not far to seek. Among molecular biologists who are professors in universities, a large proportion are also principal scientists or principal stockholders in the MNC-owned biotechnological companies. Technology is a major industry and a major source of hoped-for profit for venture capital. All the Biotechnological researches are greatly financed by the governments, i.e. public money is siphoned to quench the thirst of profit of the giant MNCs who in this phase of capitalist globalization have now targeted the agricultural sector to exploit to the hilt for profit maximization. Moreover, the biotechnology industry is a field of huge investment with low risk and high gains. There are commercial machines that manufacture DNA from small amounts of sample materials. These machines require the impact of variety of chemical materials all of which are sold at an immense profit by the companies that manufacture the machines. It is a huge business! The high commercial benefits to the MNCs is a powerful impetus for directing the research in this direction. The agricultural crop-market is estimated at 3.2 trillion dollar. Five giant corporations US-based Monsanto, DuPont and Dow, UK-based Syngenta, and Germany-based Bayer rule the global GM seeds market. Monsanto have had their white-smoked engineers

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# BASAD pledges to advance socialist movement

[ BASAD held its first Central Convention in Dhaka on 30-31 December. In *Proletarian Era* last issue we published a brief report. Here we add some more details]

Just one day ahead of the end of the year 2009, on 30 December Bangladesher Samajtrantik Dal (BASAD) inaugurated its first Central Convention in Dhaka. It was destined to give shape to the dreams and aspirations of the oppressed toiling people of that country to free themselves from the yoke of capitalist exploitation and deprivation. From the night of 29 December itself, toiling people from different parts of the country poured into the city. They included poor peasants- agricultural labours, the tribals, tea plantation workers, garment- workers, weavers and others from the villages, slum-dwellers, rickshaw and van-pullers, hawkers, housewives with children in their lap, students-youth-office employees from the cities – in one word, common people from all sections and walks of life. All of them had red flag in their hand, slogans on their lips and determination in their heart. The goal was one and the same to convey the message of struggle to people of the country, the message of proletarian revolution, of socialism, of emancipation from exploitation and of communism.

The venue was *Mahanagar Natmancha* in the city of Dhaka. Since morning, the entire ambience of the venue, beautifully decorated with red flags and banners and adorned with the portraits of the great proletarian leaders Marx-Engels- Lenin- Stalin and Mao Zedong, was filled with the humming of the uncountable heads of keen participants and tunes of the mass songs being presented by *Charan Sanskritik Kendra*. There was also a quotation exhibition of teachings of the great proletarian leaders arranged.

At around twelve, the leaders of the BASAD Central Committee, fraternal guest leaders of different political parties and prominent intellectuals of the country, leaders of fraternal revolutionary and leftist parties of different countries took chairs on the dais. A squad of young communists, *Sishu Kishore Mela* offered Guard of Honour to the leaders. Then Comrades Khalequzzaman and Mubiniul Haidar Choudhury hoisted the national and party flags, with the National anthem being rendered on the background. The leaders then placed floral tributes on the Martyrs' Column. This was followed by reading out of greetings from different parties.

The inaugural speech was rendered by Comrade Khalequzzaman. It was followed by a 10000 strong procession of people that traversed across the city to end at the *Natmancha* once more. There in the evening, the Open Session rally of the Convention was held. The rally was addressed by members of the Central Committee of BASAD, Comrades Provash Ghosh, Member Central Committee and Polit Bureau, Socialist Centre

of India (Communist), Sara Flounders, Member Central Committee Workers World Party (USA), Indra Mohan Sigdel of Unified Communist Party (Marxist) of Nepal, Manik Mukherjee, General Secretary, International Anti-Imperialist People's Solidarity Coordinating Committee, E. Thambiah, Member Central Committee, New Democratic Party (Marxist) of Sri Lanka, Michael Kramer, a leader of US-based International Action Center. Comrade Sin Hong Chol, Ambassador of Democratic Peoples' Republic of Korea to Bangladesh, had read out the message from the Central Committee of Workers' Party of Korea in the inaugural meeting on the morning.

The inaugural and evening rally were attended also by progressive eminent intellectuals and leftist political leaders of Bangladesh, like Justice Golam Rabbani, Journalist Faiz Ahmed, Professor Akmal Hossain, Abu Sayeed Khan, Bimal Biswas, Agronomist Mohammad Hossain Mandal, Professor Abidur Reza and many others.

The Delegate Session, held on 31 December and presided over by Comrade Khalequzzaman was attended by 704 delegates and observers from 49 districts of the country. They deliberated upon and accepted the organizational-political report, national and international theses as also Draft Constitution with some amendments and endorsed the programme of anti-capitalist socialist revolution in Bangladesh, accepted as the political line by the party in 1980.

The delegates elected a Central Committee in place of the existing Central Convening Committee, with

Comrade Khalequzzaman as the General Secretary, and Comrades Mubiniul Haidar Choudhury, Abdullah Sarakar, Shubhrangshu Chakraborty, Bajlur Rasheed Feroz, Jahidul Haque Milu, Rajekuzzaman Ratan and Saifur Rahaman Tapan as the members. Below, we give some salient points from the speeches of BASAD leaders.

## Comrade Khalequzzaman

Nine years before our founding the party in 1980, three million people had shed their blood on this soil. Women, then about half of the population of the country had come out in resistance struggle; about two lakh of them had lost their dignity at the hands of the enemy; about 70 million people staked their life in the fight-till-death liberation struggle. To realize, what was the dream that the three million martyrs cherished, one must understand what makes a man give away his own life. Man loves his life most, and so he comes forward to give away his life only when he finds all roads of development blocked before it. With such a death man establishes life itself upholds the dignity of life, fulfills the pledge of humanity.

In that liberation struggle of 1971 people dreamt of finding democracy, that is people's rule, established in the country, of achieving socialism that is a society and a state without exploitation and discrimination, of freeing themselves from religious bigotry, of finding scope to develop themselves independently freed from the influence of imperialism. By the span of eight years, people found that the spirit of the liberation struggle was trampled upon, their dreams were being shattered one by one, and the country was being ruled in exactly the opposite way. So, they found the question assuming the greatest significance was: Should our struggle, our pains at the loss of closest to our heart, our immense sacrifice, courageous fight or dreams to live, should all these go in vain? It was at that juncture that we stood up with this proclamation that from within the fire of the liberation struggle we have founded a political force, whose each single party-cadre would move ahead till death keeping the banner of the spirit of the liberation struggle high aloft. The pledge we made, the journey we started was based upon our firm

faith on people.

Standing against the aspirations of this struggle, its dreams and desires the bourgeoisie have been ruling this country for the last 38 year. The ruling bourgeoisie of Bangladesh is now dreaming to turn the country a haven of their exploitation by 2021, the silver jubilee of independence. In this convention, we are here to convey the message that by 2021, there would develop the victorious force of the toiling people on the ruins of the bourgeois rule. Not the scenario of one bourgeois force vying for power with some other bourgeois force; it will be one in which with all the bourgeois forces on one side, the leftist forces, under the revolutionary leadership will stand face to face to wave the Red Flag of socialism. We are not alone; we have the toiling people of the entire world with us; people of India, of Nepal, of United States of America and others.

We started our journey with a revolutionary ethics. A revolutionary party is a growing force and this growth is not just in number; it is in quantity and character both. Comrades, we now face a challenge. At different stages when zeal and spirit of liberation struggles were being smashed down, we stood up to rekindle such spirit and zeal. When in the international field, socialist system was crumbling down, we stood before people to proclaim that socialism was not destroyed; we waved the Red Flag. Now when all over the world capitalism-imperialism has lost its power to befool and confuse people, we have again come before toiling people and we will carry on our mission with the hope that in the forthcoming silver jubilee of the independence of their country, people of Bangladesh will find that the spirit and zeal with which they fought their liberation struggle, are not lost, rather they are going to find expression in this very country of Bangladesh.

I sincerely thank the leaders of different political parties, leaders and activists of different organizations — social and cultural, professional and student and others, who have attended this Convention with an expectation, extending their sympathy and support to our efforts. I also thank fraternal international

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## Convention sets a milestone in the history of movement in Bangladesh

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leaders who have placed their views in the Convention, have encouraged and enriched us.

You have all listened to the speeches in this cold evening in such a disciplined manner. It is not simply for the sake of listening to a few words. It is from a sense of responsibility and duty; this is for facing the challenge. I hope you will return from this Convention with that inspiration for future...I end expressing my heartfelt greetings and thankfulness to all of you.

### Comrade Mubiniul Haidar Chowdhury

You know, our party was founded on 7 November, 1980. Thirty nine years have rolled by since our freedom struggle, but we are still far away from achieving the objective of that struggle. Nor have we acquired the level of consciousness that the struggle demanded of us. Ours is a backward capitalist country. Almost all the leaders of our party had played leading role in their respective areas at the time of the freedom struggle. After the freedom struggle, the bourgeois class which led the struggle completely disowned its responsibilities and alienated itself from the spirit of the struggle. At that time, we all in course of conducting socio-political activities came in contact with each other and engaged ourselves in the struggle for searching out the process that would lead to the emancipation of the working people.

We realized that mankind cannot achieve total freedom without organizing revolution under the leadership of the working class. And that revolution can not be brought about without a revolutionary party. So, we the believers in Marxism-Leninism began our journey by forming a 'Platform of Mass action'. We could comprehend that Marxism is not simply a political theory, it is a comprehensive philosophy of life, a guide to action. So we drew lessons from the teachings of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, Lenin, Stalin, Mao Zedong and Shibdas Ghosh.

Following the teachings of Marx further concretized afterwards by his worthy disciples, we realized that to accomplish revolution, we shall have to build up a monolithic party based on the Leninist principles. Premised on that, we decided that in order to build up a

monolithic party, we shall have to achieve through struggle unity of thought, singleness of purpose and oneness in approach. In order to achieve that, we have during the past 29 years waged a painstaking struggle in the complex political situations of promulgation of Emergency, imposition of Military rule and also periods of civil rule with various complications, twists and turns. That struggle is still on. We firmly hold that this battle has to be continued even after establishment of socialism.

### Comrade Abdullah Sarkar

Today, a milestone is being erected in the history of socialist movement in Bangladesh, rather revolutionary political movement of its working class...You know, in a capitalist society exploited oppressed masses of toiling people, time and often, may burst out in resentment with the hope of finding the way to emancipation. But their hopes and aspirations, their pains of sufferings do not find the path to emancipation till their struggle is conducted under the leadership of a correct revolutionary party of the proletariat. In Bangladesh too, one after another, there have been struggles and movements of toiling people since the days of the Pakistani rule. Though the leftist parties leading these movements and their leaders and cadres had ample records of struggle and sacrifice, on account of their incorrect political line, they could not lead these movements and struggles to their logical culmination. Instead of helping the movement for building up exploitation-free socialist society, movements of poor working people have been corrupted with opportunistic economism and have only helped in the contradiction within the bourgeois class to rise to power and continue to hold it. In contrast to that, through these 29 years our party BASAD has given birth to a new movement, which is being able, though slowly, to bring toiling working people out of the vicious cycle of movements infested with bourgeois-petty bourgeois opportunism-economism. On one hand, we have relentlessly tried to build up the trend of a left and democratic movement as against the bourgeois politics of two-party system. On the other hand, we strove for building up revolutionary trade union

movement and class struggles conducive to the socialist movement. In some cases we have been able to wrest demands, in others, in spite of severe losses, we have continued the movements.

We have been able to establish that, the leaders and cadres of this party cannot be purchased by money or privilege, do not make compromise with the owner, do not hand over the harvest of people's struggles to the bourgeoisie and do not get back from the movement for fear of batons-bullets or court cases. In result, day by day, this party is becoming a force upon which the fighting toiling people of the country can rest their confidence and hope.

### Comrade Shubhrangshu Chakraborty

I offer red salute and greetings to you, on the occasion of the first convention of our party. Since last 29 years back we have been making efforts to develop through initiative of the ideologically charged workers organizations and movements of the peasants, workers, lower middle class, students, teachers, intellectuals and women. The objective was to build up socialist front of agricultural laborers and peasants' under the auspices of our party.

After independence, Awami League, the representative of the bourgeois class of Bangladesh, was saddled in power and began strengthening the base of capitalist economy of Bangladesh. As inevitable harmful consequence of that, peasants began to lose their land and turn into landless peasants and agricultural labourer. Land started getting concentrated in the

hands of a few rich. There being no industrialization in urban and rural areas, people in large number turned jobless, destitute and fell prey to starvation on one hand and extensive decadent capitalist culture on the other. The NGOs are trying to confine these hapless rural population in the villages entangled in debt and engulfed in utter self-centeredness.

All agricultural commodities are being produced for profit, and being under the control of syndicate of agricultural capitalists, the expense of agriculture during harvesting season has largely increased. Peasants are falling into the clutches of usurers and getting remunerative price of their produces. So production has become capital-intensive and small and middle peasants are doomed to abject poverty. The control of land and agriculture is passing on to rural rich peasants and big capitalists. Alongside rural economy, these capitalists are establishing monopoly control not only on overall economy but also social and political fields. Under the initiative of socialist front of agricultural labourer and peasants' guided by the ideology of our party, we are developing powerful peasants' movements on demands of work, food, right to land, water bodies and fish as also right to education and healthcare at state sponsorship.

We hope that the political and organizational resolution adopted at this convention would, in the days to come, advance the legitimate movements of agricultural laborers and peasants conducting to the party's accepted line of socialist revolution.

### Cultural & Youth Fronts Score Victory significant over BJP Government in Karnataka

It was a victory rejoiced by all. People everywhere in Karnataka, particularly in Bangalore are extremely pleased. All India Democratic Youth Organisation (AIDYO) and Aavishkar, a progressive cultural forum, were preparing for holding the 14th annual street play festival at the Malleswaram ground in Bangalore where they have been regularly holding this programme. "Malleswaram Ground" — after holding this festival for 13 years had become synonymous with Beedhi Natakotsava. Eminent theater, film, artistic, literary figures of the state have taken part in this cultural festival and expressed their whole hearted support. Umpteen numbers of cultural troupes, including those of folk artistes, have exhibited their talents in front of the audience running to thousands. Troupes from far off states too have participated in the decennial celebration of this Beedhi Natakotsava in 2008.

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## The Last Journey

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member of the party placed floral wreath. Followed by this was Comrade Anil Sen, a senior member of the former Central Committee, a veteran leader of the Party and comrade-in-arm of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta. Then Comrades Provash Ghosh, Manik Mukherjee, Ranjit Dhar and Asit Bhattacharyya, all members of the Polit Bureau and Central Committee, and Central Committee members Comrades Yakub Pailan, Debprasad Sarkar, Soumen Bose and Shankar Saha offered floral tributes to the departed leader. Floral wreaths were offered among others by Comrade Prativa Mukherjee, veteran member of West Bengal State Committee, members of the West Bengal State Secretariat, Comrade Chhaya Mukherjee, President, AIMSS, available members of West Bengal State Committee of the party, leaders of AIDS, AIDYO, AIKKMS, AIUTUC, AIMSS and various Party units, trade unions and mass organizations from the districts. Leaders of other political parties who paid their tribute included Comrades Manjukumar Majumdar of CPI, Basudeb Chakraborty of CPI (ML) Liberation and Samir Putatunda of PDS. Floral tribute was also offered on behalf of RJD.

The funeral procession started at 3.45 pm. Having bedecked with flowers and red banners and festoons written "Red Salute to Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta" on them, the bier carrying the mortal remains of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta with Central and State leaders standing around his body began moving. A posse of 82 comrades of Komsomol, the young Communists, signifying the age of the departed revolutionary was marching slowly in disciplined rhythm with half-mast red banners at the fore. Following the bier were the Polit Bureau and Central Committee leaders. After them were the State leaders. Behind them were hundreds of people including all other leaders and cadres of the party constituting the cortege – all wearing black badges and holding red banners of SUCI (Communist). The procession was vibrant with song on Comrade Shibdas Ghosh and the *Internationale*. It made a brief sojourn near the headquarters of the AIUTUC on Lenin Sarani which was the epicenter of revolutionary activities of Comrade Sitesh

Dasgupta who as front-ranking leader of AIUTUC led and organized many working class movements in different sectors in the country over a long period before he fell terminally ill. Trade union leaders of different industries along with other leaders of the AIUTUC placed wreaths in memory of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta. Meandering through S.N. Banerjee Road, Esplanade, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, Ashutosh Mukherjee Road, S.P. Mukherjee Road and Rash Behari Avenue, the cortege finally reached Keoratala Burning Ghat at 6 pm after traversing a long 12-kilometer path. The mourners defied all this trouble and looked ahead of them with deep pain at heart for loss of their endeared leader but stolid with determination to carry out his unfinished tasks.

It was the darkness of the late evening quite pervading the firmament, with chill all around. Before the mortal remains of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta were consigned to flames at Keoratala Burning Ghat, all the leaders including those of Polit Bureau, Central Committee down to the ordinary comrades stood rock-firm at their posts to pay their final Red Salute to this great revolutionary leader taking oath to turn the loss into gain by creating many more such revolutionaries for accomplishing the anti-capitalist revolution in the country for which Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta dedicated his whole life. They remained with their leader till the last seconds. They left, some weeping, some crying and others holding their breath to stall tears from coming

down, only when the mortal remains of their beloved 'Siteshda' were no longer there, with thunderous slogans airing the still existence of Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta into the deepest corner of their hearts. Left they the place with memory and the cherished legacy of their leader bequeathed upon them from their precious comradeship as followers of Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought to fulfill his unaccomplished task. Nothing could and should hold them back or deviate from.

The air rent with slogans –

**"Long Live**

**Comrade Sitesh Dasgupta"**

**"Siteshda, We haven't and Won't Forget You"**

**"Long Live Revolution"**

**"Long Live Marxism-Leninism-Shibdas Ghosh Thought"**

**"Long Live SUCI (Communist)"**

## Introduction of Bt Brinjal cultivation

*Contd. from page 4*

tinkering merrily and dangerously with the very DNA of food, they are genetically modifying natural combination of things like potato in such ways that they contain a pesticide in everyone of their cells or altering rice in such manners that it contains diarrhoea-drug in every bite. This is no more confined in lab-experiment. Monsanto and handful of other global bio-tech giants have quietly spread their seeds of these genetically altered funken-foods in countries. (Funken is derived from the name of the German company, Funken, which adapted an innovative Shelf Life Booster packaging system solution, developed by Hefestus, Israel, to overcome the challenges of the shelf-life of its food products.)

### **Alternative safe methods are not explored**

It is not that alternative safe methods are not being suggested by the scientific communities. The ecologically sound agricultural production system like "sustainable agriculture" is stated to be one such method. Organic manure, leguminous cover crops, crop-rotation, maintenance of soil organic matter and application of selective inorganic nutrients with environmental friendly hybridization of beneficial varieties are also indicated to be the right way to the development of food production.

The Bt Brinjal field trials have not been compared to other safer, inexpensive alternatives. There is a lot of experience in mechanical control as well as non-chemical IPM strategies within the Indian research system. Further, there is much experience of non-chemical brinjal cultivation in farmers' fields by many practicing organic and NPM farmers in the country. Simple things like pheromone traps for mass trapping, sanitation of the field (timely removal and destruction of affected shoots & fruits), mechanical barriers, use of some local plant extracts for pest control etc., have all worked well for farmers. However, the evaluation of Bt Brinjal is not taking place against such options as part of the Risk Assessment. All these have taken a back seat as under capitalism-imperialism, it is the prospect of maximum profit and not safety, security and correct harnessing of natural resources that govern production. So GM crops and 'frunken' food are preferred and insisted upon in supersession of all other considerations.

### **Frustrate this capitalist-imperialist conspiracy**

So, it is not the eradication of hunger as pretended but the targeted market of the third world countries that gives impetus to bio-tech food crops at the instance of the MNCs of imperialist superpowers. 'Patented foods', 'Royalty',

'technology fee' are concomitant menace to consumer people. Bt Brinjal is a 'funken-food' that has damaging effect to health, environment, peasant-life and consumers in general and being fostered by the insane gluttony of capitalism-imperialism. As inseparable part of world capitalism-imperialism, ruling Indian bourgeoisie and its servitors in politics and other walks of life are part of this sinister conspiracy. Hand in gloves with US imperialism, the Indian bourgeoisie is committed to serve the anti-people commercial interest of the US-based MNCs and in reciprocation receive their backing and support in buttressing its own commercial agenda. Hence is the insistence of the Indian government on Bt Brinjal disdaining all valid protests.

This devilish attempt of the capitalist-imperialist rulers to tamper with food production and swell their purses by dishing out poison to the people must be resisted at any cost. This must form a part of the worldwide anti-imperialist struggle. To thwart the imminent danger of introduction of GM crop like Bt Brinjal and other 'frunken' food in our country, toiling masses alongwith socially conscious scientists and environmentalists must rise up and compel the government to reverse its decision under pressure of countrywide powerful people's movement.

## Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's condolence message at the demise of Comrade Jyoti Basu

At the demise of Comrade Jyoti Basu, a front ranking leader of the left movement of India and the CPI (M), I express my deep condolence personally and on behalf of my party.

I had long acquaintance with him. We together participated in many a mass movement. We together passed many days in the jail. Despite political differences, I had intimate relationship with Jyoti Basu.

At his passing away, I convey my heartfelt sympathy to his bereaved relatives and also to the leaders-workers-supporters of the CPI (M).

17 January, 2009

## Significant Victory over BJP Government in Karnataka

*Contd. from page 6*

This year, the programme was scheduled to be held from 29th January to 31st January, 2010. As usual this year too, AIDYO and Aavishkar sought permission for holding the Beedhi Natakotsava festival on 29, 30 and 31 January from the Bruhat Bangalore Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) and the police. The ground was booked more than a month back. Preparations were afoot for the event when suddenly the organisers received a rude shock from Jan 22nd onwards – the BBMP officials and local BJP leaders started insisting for shifting the venue of the festival, since the state BJP was desirous of holding a massive bash for 'anointment' of Sri. Eswarappa as state president of the BJP in this very ground on the same days. Even before the organisers had any time to think over the matter, the BBMP officials & BJP leaders started threatening that their bash would be held on the 30th itself at the Malleswaram Grounds at any cost and the festival should be shunted out to other venue. AIDYO & Aavishkar approached the BBMP and squarely raised the question as to how democratic it was to cancel our permission and grant the same to the BJP, when they were already authorised lawfully to hold the programme. The BBMP chief Engineer issued a notice to Aavishkar on 27th December stating that, 'in view of the programme of the BJP, a national party, whose all India president and the state CM and host of ministers, set to attend the same, the permission which was granted to Aavishkar is hereby cancelled.....' This is how the BJP government has made the

bureaucracy subservient to its party's interest contemptuously trampling under foot 'neutrality of bureaucracy'.

AIDYO & Aavishkar combine did not lose time to take up the challenge. Even before the notice was received by the organisers, massive preparations were afoot at Malleswaram Grounds to erect a grand dais and shamiana for the BJP bash. The organizers at once sent out a statement to the media with all the documents to show how BBMP – BJP combines were out to forcibly stop a cultural event violating all democratic norms and practices. A host of leading intellectuals and artistes' forums came forward spontaneously and expressed desire to join the protest.

Meanwhile, a petition was filed and admitted in the High Court on 28th All the dailies and channels covered the story prominently on this day.

Though belatedly, the BJP leaders at last had to bend under pressure of massive people's protest. When the case came up in the High Court, the government advocate pleaded that the BBMP had accepted its 'mistake'; also the BJP advocate admitted that the bash was being shifted to another venue. The High Court ordered that the Grounds should be cleared of all erections and handed over to the organizers of the drama festival.

This victory has given tremendous impetus to all fighting forces in the state against the BJP's misrule. Many eminent personalities are congratulating the organisations for their courageous fight and victory over the sinister machination and high-handedness of the ruling party.

## MEDICAL BULLETIN

### Comrade Nihar Mukherjee is critically ill

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee, General Secretary, SUCI (C), aged 91 years has been suffering from advanced Ischemic Heart Disease requiring multiple cardiac interventions, Parkinson's disease and COPD with a very poor general condition and lowered immune status. He is suffering from recurrent attacks of Community Acquired Pneumonia in recent times. He was admitted to the Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital on 3 November 2009, treated by a medical team headed by the eminent cardiologist Dr. K. B. Baksi and comprising multidisciplinary specialists.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee could not attend the Second Party Congress in Delhi as the medical team treating him unanimously opined that given his the then health condition, any movement would constitute a grave risk. He was discharged on 15 November in a relatively stable condition.

Again he was admitted to the Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital with Community Acquired Pneumonia on 11 December 2009 and after aggressive treatment with antibiotics, he was discharged on 15 December. During his stay at the Salt Lake commune, Calcutta, though under strict medical supervision, he continued to have persistent headache, anorexia, weakness and intermittent shortness of breath.

On 20 January last, Comrade Mukherjee was again admitted to Calcutta Heart Clinic & Hospital with Community Acquired Pneumonia with extreme weakness and anorexia. He was treated with antibiotics as a result of which infection was controlled to an extent, but subsequently he developed bladder neck obstruction for which he was catheterized. On 25 January, at about 11.45 p.m. he suddenly developed cardiac arrhythmia which was finally controlled through an all out effort. In spite of efforts to attain cardiological stability, he developed hypertensive surges with increased heart rate and impending heart failure on the night of 27 and 28 January respectively. The episode on the night of 28 January was striking as the hypertensive surge and increased heart rate progressed into frank heart failure. Aggressive management was given which led to symptomatic relief, but respiratory distress reappeared on the morning of 29 January for which respiratory support with Non Invasive Ventilation was started. Anti-heart failure management was continued and at this point of time possibility of a minor heart attack could not be ruled out and necessary management was instituted. Incidentally, a low grade fever has been persisting for the last 4 days for which he was being treated by broad spectrum antibiotics. Infection markers are being monitored daily and at present it appears that lower respiratory tract infection is persisting, though there is no sepsis.

Comrade Nihar Mukherjee's condition remains critical and he is under strict medical supervision in the ICCU.

A multi-specialty medical board has been convened on 30 January at 1pm to review the health condition of Comrade Nihar Mukherjee and also to plan for future management. The medical team includes

Dr. K. B. Baksi — Eminent cardiologist as Head  
Dr Debasis Ghosh, Dr Ranjan Sharma, Dr Goutam Sarkar  
— Cardiologists

Dr Susruta Bandyopadhyay — Consultant Intensivist  
Dr Sanjoy Ghosh — Consultant Physician  
Dr Saibal Ghosh

— Critical Care in-charge of CHCH and Pulmonologist,  
Dr Asok Samanta — Consultant Pulmonologist,  
Dr Goutam Guha — Consultant Neurologist  
Dr Subhas Dasgupta, Dr Anup Maiti — Consultant Surgeons,  
Dr Atin Banerjee — Consultant Urologist  
Dr Subhankar Chatterjee — Registrar, CHCH  
and others.

Calcutta, 29 January, 2010

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