



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Vision of Freedom

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times



Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar said that "He who is not a slave of circumstances and is always ready and striving to change them in his favour, I call him free. One who is not a slave

of usage, customs, of meaningless rituals and ceremonies, of superstitions and traditions; whose flame of reason has not been extinguished, I call him a free man." On the freedom of India while expressing his joy he said "Independence is no doubt a matter of joy. But let us not forget that this independence has thrown on us greater responsibilities. By independence, we have lost the excuse of blaming the British for anything going wrong. If hereafter things go wrong, we will have nobody to blame except ourselves. There is a greater danger of things going wrong. Times are fast changing." The evil of caste system continues to stay with us even after seventy five years of India's Independence! We need to free ourselves from the shackles of caste. Who are these 'ourselves'? Why we have been tolerating the insidiously institution of caste? Moreover, during all these years, caste seems to be entered into our electoral arena as well. The distribution of tickets for elections to the state assemblies and the national legislature are often done on caste lines. Even grassroots electoral bodies are not spared. Dr. Ambedkar said that "There is no nation of Indians in the real sense of the world; it is yet to be created. In believing we are a nation, we are cherishing a great delusion. How can people divided into thousands of castes be a nation? The sooner we realize that we are not yet a nation, in a social and psychological sense of the world, the better for us". It sounds perfect with the current ground realities in India.

To tackle the menace of caste and to put an end to it, Babasaheb devoted his whole life. He did whatever possible within his reach to root out the caste system from the social setup of India. One of his seminal contributions in that regard is the drafting of the constitution of Independent India. In his own words, "I feel that the constitution is workable, it is flexible and it is strong enough to hold the country together both in peacetime and in wartime. Indeed, if I may say so, if things go wrong under the new Constitution, the reason will not be that we had a bad Constitution. What we will have to say is that Man was vile." He further said "On 26th January 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics, we will have equality and in social and economic structure, continue to deny the principle of one man one value. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions? How long shall we continue to deny equality in our social and economic life? If we continue to deny it for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment else those who suffer from inequality will blow up the structure of democracy which this Constituent Assembly has so laboriously built up." Let us take a lesson from the warning of Babasaheb and join our hand to annihilate caste from India and usher in a new era of social democracy which facilitates the fulfillment of his dreams India: free from the evil of caste and vibrant with social justice and peace all around

India celebrates 73rd Republic day in 2022

India's 73rd Republic Day in 2022 is just around the corner. We, on behalf of Supreme Council, Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA congratulate the entire Indian nation as well as the Indian diaspora all over the world on this historic day falling on 26 January, 2022.

After independence from British colonial rule India became a sovereign democratic republic on January 26, 1950. This was a red lettered day in the history of India's struggle for freedom when India's

pieces of legislation in the history of the world, replacing the Government of India Act, 1935 as the governing document of India.

In his last speech to the Constituent Assembly Dr.

Ambedkar made some cautionary notes in

very categorical terms about the new constitution, some of which are reproduced below. On 26 January, 1950, we are going to enter into a life of contradictions. In politics we will have equality and in social and economic life we will have inequality. How long shall we continue to live this life of contradictions. How long we shall continue to deny equality in our social and economic life. If we continue to



deny this equality for long, we will do so

only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else, those suffering from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly so laboriously built up." These words of Babasaheb are still shining like a beacon light today. Efforts are under way all the time to interfere with the democratic structure of the constitution and we all have to be vigilant and guard against it to save the institution of democracy.

own constitution came into existence. The history behind choosing 26th of January goes back to the year 1930 when Indian National Congress passed a resolution in its Lahore Session for Poorna Swaraj from British colonialism. The new constitution of India drafted under the dynamic leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar became effective on this day in 1950. With his charismatic skills and profound knowledge of Constitutional law Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar pioneered the enactment of one of the most voluminous

deny this equality for long, we will do so only by putting our political democracy in peril. We must remove this contradiction at the earliest possible moment or else, those suffering from inequality will blow up the structure of political democracy which this Assembly so laboriously built up." These words of Babasaheb are still shining like a beacon light today. Efforts are under way all the time to interfere with the democratic structure of the constitution and we all have to be vigilant and guard against it to save the institution of democracy.



Humble Sewadar,
O.P. Bailey (General Secretary)
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Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia "A Great Social Liberator"

A recent talk organized by Mr. Harbans Singh Hira, Kanshi Radio U.K on a Zoom program was a magnificent success in an attempt to talk about the role of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia in the establishment Ad-Dharam Mandal as our distinct identity as the original inhabitants of India. Because of some technical difficulties I could not have my full participation in the conversation on the zoom, but whatever I could hear and grasp it was an adorable start to reinvigorate the ideology of Babu Mangu Ram. As already stated by me earlier I met Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia in person in 1963 at his village, Muggowal and it was a rare opportunity for me to grasp the truth of his contributions to fight for social justice. I again applaud the efforts of Kanshi Radio U.K with an hope to continue such programs in future too. That is the only source to let our future generations know about what we have been through in our past struggles for independent existence for the sake of human rights and social equality.



I also appreciate Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Chief Editor, Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times for keeping me posted about the latest progress in social and political transformations.

O.P. Bailey (925-252-6085)

General Secretary

Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA

Republic Day, January 26 – A good occasion to reflect

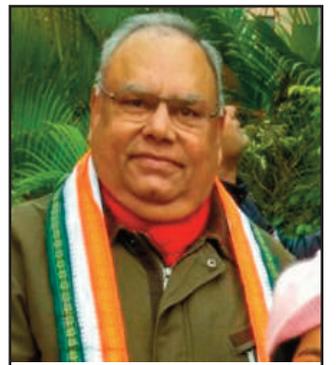
The Republic day, one of our National Days, is celebrated with great pomp and show and due solemnity every year since January 26, 1950, the day our constitution came into effect and India became a Republic. It is an important day having roots in our freedom struggle - 26 January was chosen as in 1929 on the same day the Indian National Congress denounced colonial rule and proclaimed Purna Swaraj, "complete freedom from the British" This completed the country's transition into becoming a Sovereign Republic in 1950. For the first four years, 1950-54, Republic Day was celebrated in the national capital Delhi at different venues – Red Fort, Ramlilla Grounds, Irwin Stadium and Kingsway and the venue was permanently shifted the Rajpath in 1955. Every successive year, a foreign dignitary or dignitaries are invited to the occasion as the Chief Guest/Guests, with a view to engage our global partners and interlocutors in our international outreach

perative to do so, if we want to see our country as a land of happiness and prosperity for all its citizens and the world at large.

As I said that we have come a long way. Our first priority was to have constitutional governance to bind us together in the wake of mayhem and instability created by the partition of the country at the dawn independence in 1947. It was a matter of satisfaction that our forefathers gave us one of finest constitutions to begin with. I often feel and say that India is India today only because of the constitution otherwise the 'Nay Sayers' were waiting with the question 'Who after Nehru'. We proved them wrong. PMs Indira and Rajiv were eliminated in violence by the inimical forces a leaving but nothing happened and Indian constitutional system prevailed. By now, India is the largest functional democracy of the world with vibrant and one of the fast moving economies. We could defend and reserve our territorial integrity

independence have done their best in the process to make India a land of our dreams. But more needs to be done by all of us - all political, social and spiritual dispensations. Let us maintain and preserve the cardinal values of secularism, integrated society, democracy, pluralism keeping in mind the principles of 'Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity' so beautifully enshrined in the very Preamble of the Constitution. Let us not fail ourselves by failing the constitution. There is a greater need to adhere to the values of 'constitutional morality' the very edifice of 'Raj Dharma'. Babasaheb Ambedkar, father of the constitution, asserted and rightly so, in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly on November 25, 1949, "I shall not therefore enter into the merits of the Constitution. Because I feel, however good a Constitution may be, it is sure to turn out bad because those who are called to work it, happen to be a bad lot. However bad a Constitution may be, it may turn out

fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indian place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. This eventuality we must all res-



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as a responsible and dignified member of the comity of nations. President Sukarno of Indonesia was the foreign guest in the first Republic day on January 26, 1950. In 1955 when the venue was shifted to the Rajpath, the Chief Guest was Governor General of Pakistan, Malik Ghulam Muhammad. There have been occasions, 1952, 1953, and 1966, when no guest was invited due to one reason or the other like, in 2021 and now in 2022. PM of the UK, Boris Johnson was to come in 2021 but could not make it due to Covid precautions and again in 2022, it was all set to invite the Head of States of our extended neighborhood, the Central Asia but again the Covid restrictions did not allow this to happen and there will be no Chief Guest at the celebrations this year too.

Ever since, 1950, India, a land of 135 crore people, has come a long way but still to go a long way to wipe the tears of the every citizen and usher India to the path of development and prosperity as visualized our forefathers and stipulated in our constitution. Let us observe and celebrate the solemn occasion of the Republic day this year as a day to reflect on our achievements, failures, weaknesses, strengths and the way ahead to keep ourselves on track. It is im-

and security in spite of volatile borders with hostile neighbors, Pakistan and China. From net food importer till 1960s, the US calling it a 'bottomless pit', is now a net food exporting country. India excelled in IT sector and also industrial development to integrate with the world economy. Our strides in the space and scientific excellence remained equally impressive. Infrastructure development, particularly the highways and metros have been impressive. These factors led us to the current agenda of "Atamirbhar Bharat". India could face and meet the challenges of current Covid pandemic with confidence in spite of initial problems. On the flip side, I will not shirk to admit that we are not still out of the woods. A large chunk of the society is still living the poverty line. Health and Education could not get due attention and priority. The Administration, the public services are, unfortunately, have bogged down under corruption. On the social front, the very basic malice of 'Caste' could not be addressed even after 70 years of our efforts to establish a 'casteless' society as visualized and stipulate in the constitutional framework. Our mid-night pledge "Tryst with Destiny" taken on the night of August 14, 1947 is yet to be redeemed fully. All the successive governments since



to be good if those who are called to work it, happen to be a good lot."

The way ahead for us is not to harp on our differences but on agreements and similarities. Let us arrest and kill the divisive tendencies in the polity and society. Let us work in concert to establish a casteless society. Let us address the glaring economic divide among the haves and have-nots. Let us not try to gain brownie points in twisting the history. Let us ward ourselves off from the small irritants and political slugfest on issues like shifting of Amar Jawan Jyoti from India Gate to the National War Memorial and avoidable controversy on the issue of due recognition of the role and persona of Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose. It is difficult to erase history by twisting the facts.. The truth would ultimately immerge and appear. Finally, Let us not encourage and resort to communal divide for short term political gains instead try to bring about political polarization on the basis of prograame, agenda and ideology in our polity and listen to the warnings given by Babasaheb Ambedkar while reflecting on the future of The Republic of India. While reflecting on the fact that as how India lost her independence before, Dr. Ambedkar said, "Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which

olutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood." Greetings on the Republic Day – Jai Hind – Jai Bharat

Postscript:

The Republic Day ceremonies traditionally conclude with Beating of Retreat at the Vijay Chowk by the select bands of Indian Armed Forces, an impressive ceremony. According to media reports one of Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Christian hymns "Abide With Me" has been dropped from this year's Beating Retreat ceremony. "Abide With Me", written by Scottish Anglican poet and hymnologist Henry Francis Lyte in 1847, has been part of the Beating Retreat ceremony since 1950. The Beating Retreat used to end with the "Abide With Me" hymn.

This year's ceremony will conclude with 'Sare Jahan Se Acha', the brochure stated. Undoubtedly, Sare Jahan Se Acha is the best National Song of India and, prima facie, it seems a good decision. But hunch is that in these days of increasing communal divide some 'Sirfiras' may stand up and oppose the good intentioned gesture as the Nazam Sare Jahan Se Acha was written by Allama Iqbal, one of the main protagonists of Pakistan. Let us not listen to such

Rapidly growing economic inequalities in India

In January 16, 2022, Oxfam, a non-profit organization, released a report on the rapidly growing economic inequalities in the world ahead of the 50th Annual Meeting of the World Economic Forum (WEF). The findings of the report on the rapidly growing economic inequalities in India show that the country's wealth is being rapidly grabbed by billionaires and the common man is suffering from the problems arising out of the rapidly growing economic inequalities. The Covid pandemic has sharply widened economic inequalities in the country. While the number of billionaires has increased from 102 to 142 in 2021, the income of 84 per cent households has declined in India. The expenditure on healthcare

the Covid pandemic. This figure highlights the fact that growing economic inequalities have plagued women workers during the Covid pandemic. Whenever employment declines, the first blow falls on women workers.

One of the saddest aspects of the Oxfam report is that in the last four years, the share of Central government revenue from indirect taxes has exceeded direct taxes. In this regard, it is important to know that indirect taxes are levied by the government at the time of purchase of goods or services like Goods and Services Tax (GST) and these taxes are levied on the rich and the poor at the same rate, whereas the ability to pay taxes by the poor is much lower than that of the rich. Reducing cor-

public sector, as well as monitoring and regulating the functioning of the private sector. Various research studies, and government data show that economic inequalities in the country decreased during this period. After 1980, planning was put in reverse gear and the NDA government replaced the Planning Commission with the pro-capitalist/pro-corporate NITI Aayog. The 'New Economic Policies' of liberalization, privatization, and globalization adopted in the country since 1991 have weakened the public sector enterprises and it has severely curtailed monitoring and regulation of the private sector. Due to these reasons, not only the economic inequalities in the country are increasing rapidly, but also the in-

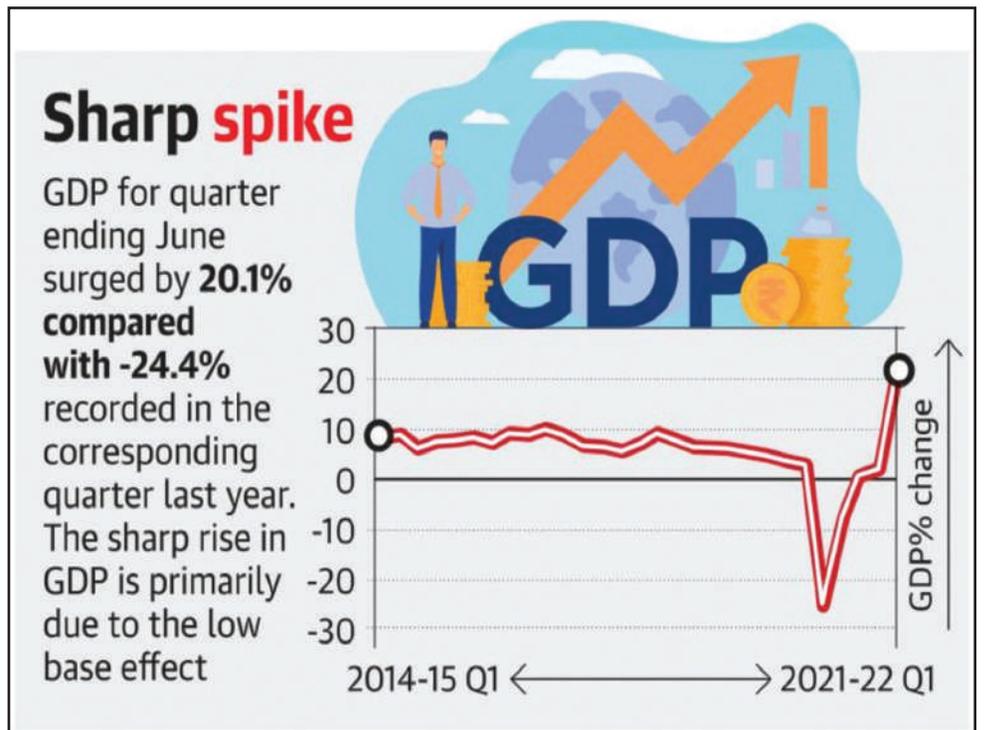
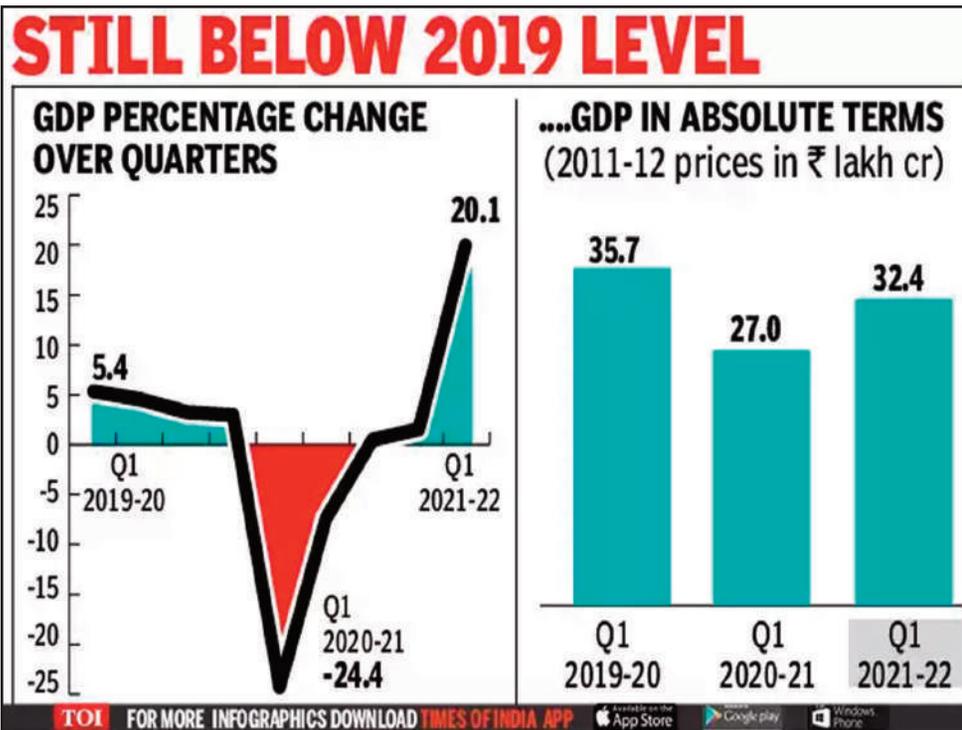
tural labourers, and rural artisans have so much debt on their heads that they are not in a position to even pay the interest on the debt as these sections have to borrow only to keep the stove burning for two times meal, which takes the form of debt due to non-repay-



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has been reduced by 10 per cent from the revised estimates(2020-21). In addition, there has been a reduction of 6 per cent for education and 1.5 per cent for social security.

Between March 2020 and November 30, 2021, the wealth of the country's billionaires increased from Rs 23.14 lakh crore to Rs 53.16 lakh crore. The 98 richest Indians in the country have the same wealth as much shared by 552 million bottom people. In 2020, 46 million Indians are projected to be pushed into abject poverty, which is close to half of the world's new poor, according to the United Nations. Economic inequalities are on the rise even when the country's urban unemployment rate rises to 15 per cent and the healthcare infrastructure is on the verge of collapse.

According to the Oxfam report, the one-fifth increase in the wealth of the country's 100 richest people is the result of an increase in the wealth of the Adani business family alone. The family ranks second in India and 24th in the world in terms of wealth. The family's wealth increased from USD 8.89 billion in 2020 to USD 50.5 billion in 2021. During the same period, Mukesh Ambani's wealth has increased from USD 36.8 billion to USD 85.5 billion.

As many as 13 million women lost their jobs in 2020 due to

porate taxes from 30 per cent to 22 per cent has cost the Central government Rs 1.5 lakh crore. In 2016, the wealth tax imposed on the extremely rich was abolished. These figures highlight the fact that while the wealth of the affluent has skyrocketed during the Covid pandemic, the tax burden on the common man has increased. The report suggests that a 4 per cent tax on the wealth of the 98 richest people would be sufficient to meet the expenditure of the Mid-Day Meal programme for school children that could be run for 17 years. With just 1 per cent wealth tax revenue, the cost of school education and literacy can be met or the Central government's Health Insurance Scheme Ayushman Bharat can be financed for more than 7 years.

The Oxfam report found that even when in the federal structure of the country, the reins of government revenue are left in the hands of the Central government, the states are left to deal with the Covid pandemic, with their insufficient financial and manpower resources.

After the independence of the country, the Planning Commission was set up in 1950 and Five Year Plans were introduced from 1951. The period from 1951-80 is considered the planning period. During the planning period, there was establishment and expansion of the

come of a large section of the workers is also declining, a fact which has been brought to the fore in this Oxfam report.

About half of the country's population depends on agriculture for their livelihood. According to official figures, this half population of the country was given about 16 per cent of the national income in 2018-19. With the exception of large farmers, the rest of the peasantry is economically very poor. According to the latest official data, 71 per cent of the farmers in the country own less than 2.5 acres of land and 17 per cent of the farmers own less than 2.5 acres to less than 5 acres of land. The economic condition of these peasant classes is very poor. The economic condition of the two pillars of the agrarian economy — agricultural labourers, and rural artisans is very miserable as they have no other means of production except to sell their labour. The use of machinery, and herbicides in the package of 'New Agricultural Technology-NAT' adopted in the agricultural sector has drastically reduced employment in the agricultural sector, with the greatest impact being on agricultural labourers, and rural artisans. Research studies conducted in different parts of the country have revealed the fact that except the large farmers, the rest of the peasantry, agricul-

ment of loan on time. Debt and extreme poverty are like twins, when one grows the other follows. Debt on the part of these peasants, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans, and extreme poverty among them, manifests itself in the form of increasing suicides.

The percentage of informal employment in the total employment is increasing rapidly after the adoption of 'New Economic Policies' in the country. About 95 per cent of employment is informal. The uncertainty of finding even such employment, very low wage rates, and lack of other facilities are making the lives of informally employed workers miserable.

In different parts of the country, mechanization, automated machines, and the use of artificial intelligence are reducing employment at a large scale. Rising unemployment reduces the income of the working class as well as increases economic inequalities.

For making the lives of people livable and the progress of the country, along with the taxes suggested by Oxfam the economic development model should be pro-people and nature-friendly. We will have to establish again a mixed economy consisting of a strong public sector and monitoring and regulating of the private sector.

Union Budget 2022-23: All key financial terms explained

While going through Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's upcoming budget speech, you may come across many financial terms that will provide a better understanding of the government's spending plan for the next financial year. Some of the key financial terms are explained in detail in this article.

Union Budget 2022-23 is all set to be presented by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on February 1. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will present the Union Budget for the financial year 2022-23 on 1 February at 11 am. The annual financial statement by the government presents an overall picture of the financial position of the Government of India, including that of Railways. It also earmarks the allocation of funds for defence.

Here's a brief look at what the Union Budget is, and everything you need to know about it:

What is it?

As per Article 112 (1) of the Constitution, the Budget or the Annual Financial Statement contains the estimated receipts and expenditure of the Government of India in respect of a financial year, which starts from 1 April and ends on 31 March.

The Budget is prepared by the finance ministry in consultation with other concerned ministries. Since 2017, the Budget is presented on 1 February at 11 am by the finance minister in the Lok Sabha.

The upcoming budget will be tabled in Parliament at a time when India's economic recovery is facing hurdles due to rising inflation and fresh Covid restrictions. During the budget speech, the finance minister is expected to make several announcements and speak about financial indicators like inflation, fiscal deficit, capital expenditure, revenue receipts, bad loans and more. Making sense of these terms is crucial for understanding the government's expenditure plans for the next financial year commencing on April 1, 2022.

Annual Financial Statement

The Union Budget is also known as the annual financial statement (AFS) for a particular fiscal year. It is presented by the government to highlight its expenditure and receipts during the financial year. Under Article 112 of the Constitution, an AFS has to be laid before Parliament in respect of every financial year which runs from April 1 to March 31.

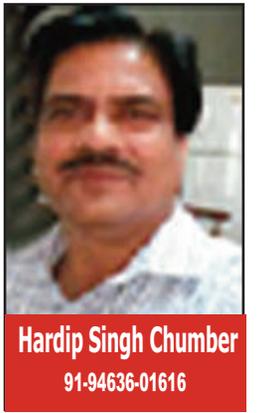
The budget or AFS also outlines the estimates of the government's accounts for the next fiscal year, known as budget estimates. It may be noted that the budget for the upcoming fiscal year has to be sanctioned by the parliament. Without its approval, the government cannot draw from the Consolidated Fund of India.

Economic Survey: The Economic Survey is a flagship document of the finance ministry. It is presented every year ahead of the Union

Budget. The Economic Survey provides detailed information about the Indian economy over the past financial year. Along with the current state of the economy, the Economic Survey provides the economic outlook. A team led by the Chief Economic Advisor prepares the document. G. The document is presented in both houses of Parliament a day before the Union Budget is presented. The first Economic Survey was presented in the year 1950-51 and till 1964, it used to be presented along with the Union Budget. For common people, the Economic Survey is a useful document to understand the state of economic affairs in India and impact of the decisions made by the Union government.

penditure exceeds total revenue, excluding any external borrowings. However, the fiscal deficit should not be read same as that of debt, which can be an accumulation of many yearly deficits. It is extremely pivotal for developing countries like India to maintain a healthy fiscal deficit ratio as the total revenue generated is not enough for the government to meet all its revenue and capital expenditure. Since the government requires a large sum of money to fund infrastructural development, developing countries often run on a fiscal deficit towards asset creation. This is why some economists argue that fiscal deficit is not really a bad indicator but a stance that indicates development. An ideal fiscal deficit should not

Tax (GST), the government has room to announce changes, if it wants, in its budget presentation. It is a key component of the budget and many sectors will be keenly awaiting an announcement regarding customs duty.



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Goods and Services Tax (GST): Unlike customs duty, changes to the Goods and Services Tax (GST) are not announced in the budget. The GST Council takes a call on any changes in the GST slabs and structure. While Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman may speak about GST in her Budget speech but no changes in this regard will be announced in the budget.

Direct Tax (Income Tax): Direct taxes include income tax and corporate tax. The government is unlikely to make any major announcements related to income tax this year. However, some tweaks can be expected.

Current Account Deficit: The Current Account Deficit (CAD) is a measurement of the country's trade, where the value of imported goods and services exceeds the value of exports. It is a component of the country's balance of payments.

Revenue Deficit: A revenue deficit occurs when the government's net income or revenue generation is less than the projected net income. This is a situation where the actual amount of revenue or expenditure is not in line with budget revenues and expenditure. It is a key indicator to determine whether the government is overspending from its regular income.

Revenue Surplus: Revenue surplus is the opposite of a revenue deficit. It is a situation where the government's net realized income or revenue generation is more than the projected net income. The actual revenue and expenditure is more than the budget estimates.

Plan and Non-plan Expenditure: Expenditure usually has two components - plan and non-plan expenditure. The plan expenditure covers budget estimates that are determined after discussion with all stakeholders or ministries. Non-plan expenditure, on the other hand, mostly involves revenue expenditure, though it also includes the capital expenditure.

These are expenses incurred by the government on interest payments, statutory transfers to state/Union Territories, pension payments and salaries of government employees. Non-plan expenses constitute a major part of the government's budgetary expenses. Debt servicing, defence expenditure, and interest payments comprise the biggest expenses under the category.



Inflation: Inflation, usually expressed in percentages, is a quantitative measure of the rate at which products and services in an economy are increased over a certain period of time. When the price of a certain basket of commodities increases due to internal or external economic factors, it can be termed as a rise in inflation. A rise in inflation indicates a decrease in the country's currency value and purchasing power. While the term has more to do with the central bank's policies, it won't be surprising if the finance minister mentions the term during the budget speech.

Fiscal Policy: Fiscal policy basically outlines the estimated taxation and government spending and serves as a key instrument to monitor the country's economic position. The Fiscal policy denotes adjustments in spending level and tax rates and also refers to the use of government spending and tax policies to influence economic conditions, especially aggregate demand for goods and services, employment, inflation, and economic growth. It goes hand in hand with monetary policy, through which the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) influences the nation's money supply. In case of an ongoing recession, the government may employ an expansionary fiscal policy by lowering taxes to increase aggregate demand.

Fiscal Deficit: Fiscal deficit means when a government's total ex-

ceed 4 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

Divestment: Divestment is process involving the sale of existing assets. It is the opposite of investment. The government has been looking to divest many of its assets which have turned sour over the years. In last year's budget, the government set target on divestments as it looked to close the fiscal deficit gap.

Capital Expenditure: Capital expenditure (capex) refers to funds used by the government in this case - to acquire, maintain or upgrade physical assets such as property, new infrastructural projects or buying new equipment. Capital expenditure is classified as a long-term expenditure and usually includes expenses incurred by the government towards asset building, including developmental and infrastructural projects. When a government spends money on big-ticket projects, the expenses incurred are usually categorized as capital expenditure. Such expenses are not recurring in nature. While capital expenditure (capex) is a broad economic term used by several companies, it holds importance in a budgetary context.

Customs Duty: Customs duty is a levy that is charged when certain goods are imported into/exported out of the country. Eventually, these expenses are passed on to the end customer. Since customs duty is outside the purview of Goods and Services

California Board of Trustees Votes Unanimously to Ratify California Faculty Association Collective Bargaining Agreement to Add Caste as a Protected Category

In a historic meeting of the California State University System's Trustees voted unanimously to ratify the California Faculty Association's collective bargaining agreement which historically demands caste as a protected category to all of its anti-discrimination clauses for all contract. This win further flanks the CSU's earlier announcement that caste was added to its university-wide non-discrimination policy. This win also impacts all the CSU system's 23+ campuses and eight off-campus centers enrolling 485,550 students with 55,909 faculties and staff. Cal State is the largest four-year public university system in the United States.

To affirm the critical importance of the CSU system's decision that was under discussion at a recent Board of Trustees meeting, Cal State faculty along with nearly 500 allied academics, numerous civil rights organizations, Ambedkarite Dalit civil rights organizations, trade and labor unions submitted letters of support for the addition of caste to the Cal State Non-Discrimination Policy and to urge the Cal State Trustees to ratify without delay the historic California Faculty Association's Collective Bargaining Agreement that includes caste protections and furthers caste equity for millions of CSU students, staff, faculty, and workers.

Below are excerpts from these uncompromising letters and the electrifying Cal State Trustee Board Hearing

****Charles Toombs, CFA President**

**CFA members are in the process of voting on the agreement between CSU management and CFA. This agreement includes the inclusion of caste as a protected category. We strongly support the inclusion of caste. It is about non-discrimination, not discrimination. As of this morning, we have received almost 100 letters and emails of support from across the state and across the nation in support of caste as a protected category.

Ruvani Fonseka, Assistant Professor, San Jose State University School of Social Work, Former Lecturer, CSU East Bay Social Work Department-Signatory to the Faculty Letter

As a caste-privileged Sri Lankan-American woman of Sinhala-Buddhist descent and a CFA member, I support the addition of caste to the anti-discrimination statement in the tentative agreement. In the 2020-2021 academic year, I had the opportunity to learn from a student in the Social Work department at CSU East Bay who bravely disclosed their experiences of caste-based discrimination in California. Throughout that year, the department, the East Bay Academic Senate, and the Cal State Student Association all voted to define caste as a protected category against discrimination. Just a few weeks ago in January 2022, the CSU added caste to their non-discrimination pol-

icy. Following these decisive actions, the inclusion of caste in the tentative agreement is another important move towards equality and non-discrimination for some of the most vulnerable members of the CSU community.

Marilyn Tseng, Chair of Academic Senate Diversity Committee at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo

The CSU is to be applauded for recognizing caste as a protected category in its revised non-discrimination policy. This important step is the result of organizers and educators who recognized the experience of an oppressed group, then worked to bring this experience to light. That cases of caste discrimination have been and continue to be documented elsewhere indicates that this is a real issue. The fact that many of the organizers are themselves of Hindu, Indian, and South Asian descent also suggests that the issue is neither false nor theoretical, but one with real emotional, social, and economic consequences. Addressing unfair treatment on the basis of caste falls squarely within the scope and the spirit of the CSU's non-discrimination policy, and explicit recognition of it within the policy is well warranted.

APALA: Asian Pacific American Labor Alliance, AFL-CIO (APALA), which is a labor constituency group and nonprofit organization of API workers affiliated with the AFL-CIO, national federation of labor unions.

APALA unconditionally supports protections for caste-oppressed students, faculty, and staff within the CSU system and beyond, whose tireless organizing made this historic civil rights win possible. Freedom from caste discrimination is inextricably tied to workers' rights. In 2021, APALA passed a resolution condemning caste discrimination and added caste to our own list of protected classes. We have also publicly supported the listing of caste in the protected classes in the public sector for unobstructed access to good jobs, quality education, social benefits, and representation at the federal, state, county and city levels including school districts. The urgency of this issue is high, given the seriousness of caste discrimination complaints arising from multiple industries including tech, university, construction, and domestic workers.

Will Jamil Wiltschko, Director of the California Trade Justice Coalition

The California Trade Justice Coalition, an alliance of labor unions, environmental, public health, immigrant rights, and human rights organizations, commends the California State University (CSU) system for adding caste as a protected category. Our coalition stands in support of the caste-oppressed students, faculty, and staff within the CSU system and beyond, whose tireless organizing made this historic civil rights win possible. We stand in solidarity with

caste oppressed communities who continue to face segregation and discrimination. This type of discrimination is wrong and stands against the values we continue to strive towards as a country

As institutions like CSU and CALFAC begin to ensure accountability for the discrimination and harassment that caste-oppressed students, staff, faculty, and other members face within their spaces, we encourage the CSU Board of Trustees to swiftly ratify the negotiating committee's hard-won agreement and continue to uphold the democratic union processes principled on the safety and equal rights of all workers, especially of those who are the most vulnerable.

Prem Pariyar, MSW Alumnus of CSU East Bay and Lead Organizer's testimony from the CSU Trustee Meeting

Respected chancellor Dr. Castro, Board of Trustees and everyone, today I am here to support caste protections. I am a Hindu Nepali Dalit and alumni of CSUEB. Adding caste to the CSU system has nothing to do with my religion. People opposing caste protections on this call are diminishing the importance of democratic negotiations that took months to get caste added as a protected category into contracts and policy documents. I hope they are able to understand that caste protections are only an additive layer of support for students like me. Changing the policy now, simply in the face of pushback, is undermining workers' rights itself. I know what I experienced, and it is hurtful for dominant caste people involved in advocating against caste protections to take that away from me. Recognizing the Caste in the anti-discrimination policy, the CSU system has proved that how they are worried of their caste oppressed marginalized faculties, staff and students. Thank you for creating welcoming environment for dalit student

When the Social Work department of CSUEB added caste as the protected category for the first time, I started to talk to other caste oppressed students at CSUEB and asked them to come forward. They were not ready for that. They were concerned about their safety issues. They didn't want to expose their real caste identity. They didn't want to lose their friends circle after exposing their caste identity. They had fear of revealing their caste identity. But they were ready to support me for this campaign. When they told me that, I was very committed to fighting for this. There is a gap and someone has to fill this gap. Being silent is not the solution. This is the 21st century and educated people (students) are not feeling safe to talk about their lived experiences. As I am fighting for caste protections, I am fighting for my human rights. I am fighting for all Dalit students and caste oppressed communities who experience discrim-

ination and violence. The wait has been very long but finally, we are seeing the very positive and encouraging results of adding caste as the protected category in the CSU system. It took months and months to get the results and there was and continues to be resistance from other dominant caste students and their families who never wanted to see caste as the protected category. However, I am hopeful that the CSU Board of Trustees will see through their fragility and stay committed to policies focused on created safe spaces for all, including caste oppressed students, staff and faculties.

Sonja Thomas- Signatory to Faculty Letter and her testimony from the CSU Trustee Meeting

My name is Sonja Thomas and I am a tenured associate professor, and Women's Studies department chair at Colby College. In October 2021, Colby became the second college in the nation to add caste to our non-discrimination policy.

I have published numerous peer reviewed articles and an academic book on caste in Christianity. To say that recognizing caste is "hinduphobic" is misguided and such a charge fails to understand how casteism functions in many different religions including Christianity. By recognizing caste as a protected category, we protect those who may experience this discrimination in any religion. It is unfortunately the case that those with the most amount of privilege voice anger and convoluted arguments when oppressed peoples ask for mere equity. I applaud this board for standing up to such fragility. And for seeing caste as a human rights issue. I am happy to talk further with the board about how casteism functions in Christianity. And I thank you for your time.

** manmitsinghchahal, lead organizer, San Francisco State University and their testimony from the CSU Trustee Meeting

** My name is Manmit and I am a student at San Francisco State University, as well as one of the co-writers of the CSSA Resolution that passed last year where the official voice of the CSU students voiced support for caste to be added as a protected category. I want to thank the CSU administration for listening to the CSU student voice and adding caste protections. I urge you to stand firm in your commitment to the students, staff, and faculty, especially the most marginalized, who collectively stand with you in this historic move, and pass CFA's collective bargaining agreement today with the caste clause. A small group of people against caste equity are feeling discomfort by this move towards equity, just like there has been such opposition protesting civil rights when each and every civil rights legislation has been passed in US history. But I urge

(Contd. on next page)

California Board of Trustees Votes Unanimously to Ratify California Faculty Association Collective Bargaining

(Continue from page 5)

you to not be swayed by them. History is our witness today as we come here to speak, history has been our witness as we have fought for this for the past year and half, and you must choose the right side of history. You must stand firm to protect us all, especially the minorities within the minorities. And I stand in solidarity with the calls by SQE for defunding and demilitarizing the police and redirecting those resources in generative ways.

This victory truly is exemplary of the power of an inter-faith, inter-caste, multiracial coalition of students, staff, faculty, and community leaders committed to equity and justice. It has taken months and months of immense labor, constant education, advocacy, and community building on the part of students, staff, and faculty across the state to reach this point where caste protections now exist for over 55,000 staff and faculty and over a half a million students. As a queer and trans Sikh, I know

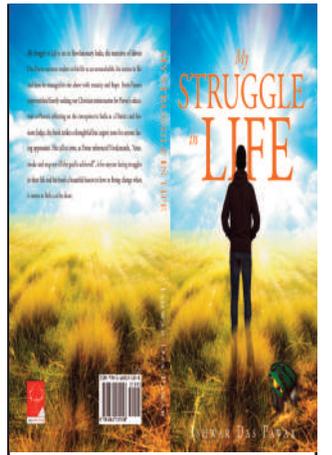
how important this fight for caste protections has been. Even though the addition of caste is merely an additive approach and a simple single step of recognition towards numerous more needed to bridge caste equity gaps, this single step has brought so much vitriol and threats.

Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Executive Director of Equality Labs, a National Dalit Civil Rights Organization

This was such a loving and joyous win. Caste oppressed students, community members, and the labor movement stood shoulder to shoulder to tell our truths and secure this win. As an alumni of the UC Systems and with family in the CSU system I know what happens to caste oppressed people without these protections. We face caste slurs, macroaggressions, discrimination in housing, and gender based violence like sexual harassment and assault. This aligns with our research which found 1 in 4 Dalits faced physical and verbal assault, 2 in 3 workplace discrimination and 1 in 3 discrimina-

tion in education. That is why this win matters.

The California State University (CSU) system has already added caste as a protected category and the undemocratic efforts of opponents who are opposed to caste equity cannot derail this movement. Dalit workers, students, and communities are being flanked by unions, scholars, and governmental bodies as Americans stand fast to address the growing problem of caste discrimination. Despite the disinformation and gas lighting, caste oppressed communities and allies are unified in continuing to build our movement and we will meet every unprincipled attack with integrity, evidence, and a commitment to our freedom and dignity. No special interest groups or hatemongers can match the determination of caste oppressed people to be free. We have already won and we will defend our win even if we have to go to the highest court in the United States. Justice will not be denied. We now look forward to implementing these policies. **(With thanks)**



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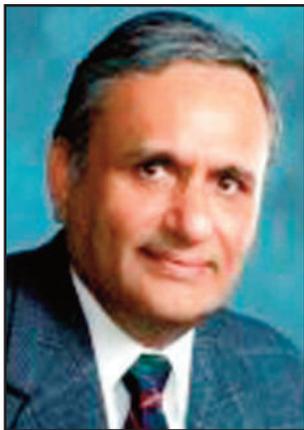
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In Historic Civil Rights Win, the Cal State University System Adds Caste to its Non-Discrimination Policy

Equality Labs congratulates the Cal State University System for adding caste to its non-discrimination policy and applauds the inter-caste and interfaith coalition of students, faculty, and staff who helped usher in this historic win. The Cal State University system encompasses over 23 campuses and eight off-campus centers enrolling 485,550 students with 55,909 faculty and staff, and is the largest four-year public university system in the United States.

Adding caste as a protected category ensures that all 23 of CSU campuses are able to be a place of access and equity for all students. We commend the CSU system for making history by supporting the rights of caste-oppressed students, staff, and faculty with a policy that ensures a caste equitable safe for all. We look forward to working with the CSU system to help implement this historic win.

Quotes from student leaders and key stakeholders:

Joseph I. Castro, CSU Chancellor "The entire California State University aspires to uphold the values of Inclusive Excellence by creating an environment where all of our talented and diverse students and employees are welcome and encouraged to succeed. I commend the incredible work and dedication of the students, employees, and other partners whose efforts ensure that our policies align with our bold aspirations."

Krystal Raynes, CSU Student Trustee "The students, allies, and especially the leadership from Dalit students and Dalit feminists of the caste protection movement are truly incredible.

For months, they used their voice to illuminate their stories and data to bring attention and movement in California higher education: beginning on a campus level with Associated Students Inc. at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, Academic Senate at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and East Bay, the California Faculty Association, the California State Student Association, and finally organizing with myself to the Chancellor's Office. I saw firsthand how those opposed to protecting the rights of caste-oppressed students used the opportunity for public comment on this critical issue to belittle and minimize the lived experiences of people who encounter caste oppression daily. I was moved by the stories from Dalit students and the bravery they exhibited in the face of oppressive action, and I knew that California State University (CSU) had to recognize these harms towards its own student body.

I thank these student leaders for educating all of us in California higher education about this important civil rights issue and allowing me to be a part of their movement at CSU, and making a lasting mark on the statewide institution's anti-discrimination policy."

Prem Pariyar, Nepali Dalit Social Work student at CSU East Bay

and Lead Organizer - "The recognition of caste and caste-based violence in the CSU system is very personal and historic to me. The CSU East Bay Social Work department added caste as the protected category first based on my sharing of personal experiences of discrimination and now the entire CSU system has added it. I take this step as strengthening the anti-caste movement at 23 CSU Universities and in the United States. Lack of legal protections allows for caste-based discrimination within the South Asian diaspora. When I faced caste discrimination within the campus and outside in the community, I felt very disappointed and low. I thought I had left caste discrimination behind in Nepal. But I was wrong. I have been experiencing caste discrimination in every sphere of my life even in the US. Many caste-oppressed students, faculty, and staff members at CSU campuses will now feel safer and report any incident of harassment or discrimination by the dominant caste students and co-workers. This policy strengthens our society. Diversity without including caste-oppressed students, faculty, and staff is incomplete. Diversity in the CSU system makes better citizens and results in a more vibrant and prosperous society that benefits everyone.

This recognition is huge but not enough. The CSU system should now have a plan to effectively implement caste protections and create trainings and curriculum for awareness among South Asians and non-South Asians on campus. They should mobilize funding to promote research and scholarship on caste and also invest in advancing the careers of caste-oppressed students. Lastly, the CSU system should bring in culturally competent leadership from caste-oppressed backgrounds to encourage the implementation of caste protections and sensitize the university environment."

Manmit Singh, San Francisco State University Student and Lead Organizer- "This victory in getting caste protections is, though long overdue, also very historic. It isn't just the end result that is historic but the process itself. For months, students, staff, faculty, and community partners have been working under Dalit feminist leadership to advocate for this policy change. This has been despite a very violent opposition that has continued to fight against caste equity, using tactics such as gas lighting, misinformation, and blunt casteism to shut down this movement. An example of this was at the California State Student Association's open forum, which lasted for over 2 hours as people not even affiliated with the CSU joined the call,

using violent and discriminatory tactics in attempts at shutting down caste protections.

However, this victory has shown the power of an interfaith, inter-caste, and multiracial coalition. Operating within these systems that seek to divide us and prevent community formation, this initiative led by Dalit students had the transformative impact of pulling together such a historic, powerful, and diverse coalition, whose impact has now set a precedent for university systems across the nation. With the largest four-year public university system in the nation now adding caste protections, it is time that public and private universities across the nation join this growing movement and renew their commitment to justice and equity, including towards their caste-oppressed students, staff, and faculty."

Prof. Dr. Sarah Taylor, Chair, Department of Social Work, CSU East Bay- "Adding caste to the mission statement for the Department of Social Work at Cal State East Bay was incredibly personal for our professors. One of our students brought our attention to caste discrimination as not being something that is happening far away, but something that is being dealt with daily by some of our students in their personal lives. We want to honor their lived experiences and advocate against caste discrimination.

The mission statement for the Department of Social Work for Cal State East Bay is our compass. It defines who we are and the direction we are going. We want students, faculty, staff, and community partners who come to our department to see themselves represented. We are constantly advocating and creating a just environment for our community to connect and thrive.

For so many of us, caste is not yet part of our regular lexicon, but it needs to be. This has to be part of the lens our students, staff, faculty, and community draw on when they think about intersectional identities, experiences, and oppressions.

I hope students who experience caste discrimination know they are not alone and have someone safe they can confide in, be it a professor or someone on staff. At Cal State East Bay and at all institutions of higher education, we need to be advocates, to raise our voices when it comes to caste discrimination and the impacts on all people who suffer under it."

M Bangar, Anti-caste Dalit Community Organizer & Educator - "California universities have a casteism problem. As a Dalit student, I did not feel safe disclosing my caste and had to hide this in shame while

caste-privileged students and faculty made disrespectful casteist remarks against my people and my ancestors. I felt unwelcome, unsafe, and excluded from important opportunities. We have experienced violent pushback from caste-privileged adversaries who do not want caste to be added as a protected category. I always struggled to believe that accountability against casteism was feasible in such a violent climate. However, the CSU system has shown that accountability is not only feasible but also vital in protecting students that attend any of the CSU campuses. This historic decision to add caste as a protected factor in the anti-discrimination policy creates a safer academic environment for myself and other Dalits pursuing education. This is a decision that is on the right side of history and liberation. The CSU is leading by example and I hope other academic institutions follow this lead to protect their Dalit students from experiencing further caste-based trauma and discrimination. *Jai Bhim, Jai Savitri.*"

Thenmozhi Soundararajan, Executive Director of Equality Labs "This win is historic. The Cal State system is one of the largest in the United States and because of the tireless efforts of the student-led interfaith and inter-caste initiative we now have 23 new campuses who are joining the civil rights movement to protect caste-oppressed Americans. We are so proud of the leadership of CSU students, faculty, and staff who worked to make this happen. We also want to thank the California Faculty Association, led by the Asian Pacific Islander Desi Americans (APIDA) Caucus, who worked to add caste as part of their contract negotiations. CFA is one of the largest faculty contracts to do so in the country, extending caste equity protections for over 29,000 faculty members. The movement for caste equity in the United States is growing exponentially as caste-oppressed Americans and allies bravely organize for our rights. We look forward to working with CSU campuses to help implement this historic win."

Equality Labs is a national Dalit civil rights organization. For more information on this win and to contact these leaders please reach out to Equality Labs at thenmozhi@equalitylabs.org.

EQUALITY LABS JANUARY 18, 2022 FACEBOOK 0 TWITTER 2 LIKES

Equality Labs Congratulates UC San Diego Ethnic Studies Department for being the first Ethnic Studies Department to add Caste as a Protected Category

Courtesy:

<https://www.equalitylabs.org/press-releases/2022/1/18/in-historic-civil-rights-win-the-cal-state-university-system-adds-caste-to-its-non-discrimination-policy>

(With thanks)



Bihari Lal Chahal – Shardhanjali

Bihari Lal Chahal of California (USA), 84, who was in India on social calls, passed away at his native place Nakodar on January 14, 2022, I learnt about this with a heavy heart from my friend Prem Chumber, Chief Editor of esteemed the Ambedkar Times and the Desh Doaba being published from California. While passing on the intimation of the Antim Ardas for the departed soul on January 25 at Ambedkar Bhawan, Prem told me that Bihari Lal ji was a much respected personality who was a staunch Ambedkarite and a dedicated supporter of Manyawar Kanshi Ram. He also introduced to me the scion of Chahal family, Amardeep Chahal

through a conference call. I conveyed my heartfelt condolences on the sad demise of his father and informed that I will join them at the Antim Ardas to pay my humble Shardhanjali to Bihari Lal Sahib. I always felt that we should honour and recognize our 'unsung heroes' who not only made a mark in their own lives but also contributed their bit to the community with a sense of gratitude.

Accordingly, I joined the family at the Antim Ardas, a solemn function arranged by the bereaved family on a cold and cloudy day. After the traditional spiritual rituals, some close relatives and friends, namely Jagdish Kler, D.D. Ahir, Ravi Mehra, Sudesh

Chahal among others, of Bihari Lal ji, a self made and successful man, spoke very high of the departed soul. Since I did not know Bihari Lal ji and his family personally, I was happy to listen to the tributes paid to him and came to know that Bihari Lal Sahib was an accomplished poet of sorts and was apt at making his audience spell bound by reciting his poetry on community and social events. A recorded recital in his own voice – Babasaheb Zindabad - was played at the function and I could clearly make out the dedication and zeal of Bihari Lal Sahib in taking forward the Caravan (Kafila) of Babasaheb Ambedkar. In my humble Shardhanjali to Bihari

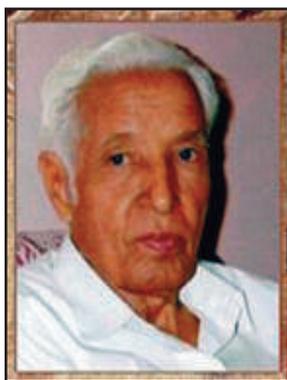
Lal Sahib, with whom I came to know a new bond between us at the function itself that he was born at his maternal parents (Nanke) home at Nawan Pind Jattan, a village near Nakodar which happens to be my Sasural, the village of my wife Vidya, I registered Naman and prayed for peace to the departed soul on my own behalf and on behalf of my friend, Prem Chumber and concluded with a poetic expression:

जसि धज से कोई मक़्तल में गया;
वह शान सलामत रहती है,
यह जान तो आनी जानी है ;
इस जान की कोई बात नहीं।
May God grant peace to the departed soul of Bihari Lal Chahal ji.



Late Sh. Bihari Lal Chahal
Birth 04 Mar 1937 To Exp. 14 Jan 2022





D. C. Ahir

The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a

Punjabi youth, who had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again".

Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he,



however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake, however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his

family as no letters could be written for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower.

The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and



sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion.

Both believed in self-help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever.

The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis.

This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Jueregensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir

Ethnocracy invading India's democracy

As India approaches its Republic day, annual rituals of guns salute and unfurling of the national flag followed by republic day parade will be held at Delhi. We all Indian citizens will be made feel proud of our democracy. US President Joe Biden, at the recent Summit for Democracy, emphasised that democracy has to be renewed with each generation. Has India been able to do breathe life into its republic or was busy merely celebrating history? On the 75th Republic day, let's not only commemorate but also contemplate.

Our constitution makers gave us a legacy of political democracy but at the same time entrusted us with the responsibility of demolishing the graded socio-economic inequality to establish the principle of one man one value. Perhaps, we failed them as well as ourselves. The resultant nation is picture of a blown-up democracy marching towards ethnocracy, a regime characterized by an ethnic core disguised by a fine democratic covering.

Coined by Sammy Smooha, an Israeli sociologist, ethnic democracy is a by-product of ethnic nationalism—the ideology of a group that considers itself bound by racial, linguistic, religious, or other cultural characteristics and derives from these bonds a strong sense of belonging. The mess is that this group has a sense of superiority associated with a feeling of rejection of the non-identical who are perceived as a threat to the survival and integrity of the ethnic nation. He describes ethnocracy as a type of political structure in which the state apparatus is con-

trolled by a dominant ethnic group to further its interests, power and resources leading to ethnicization of the territory and society.

Ethnocracy develops when a dominant group is powerful enough to determine unilaterally the nature of the state. The current Modi-Shah diarchy has ensured that this dominance percolates down via all the limbs of democracy including the

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media. Attributing to introduction of religious element to the conceptualization of Indian citizenship, India has been dubbed as a 'flawed democracy' by Economist Intelligence Unit.

An ethnic nation controls the state via majority genus and uses it to further its national interests and to grant its members a favoured status while the minorities are placed under control and treated as second-class citizens. Recent hate-speeches at religious platforms and their indirect endorsement by the state give a clear indication about the direction in which India's democracy is heading. India inherited class inequality along with oppressive forces like casteism, patriarchy, religious fanaticism, and region/language bias. This undemocratic legacy has made it easy for the present reign to execute its plan to establish majoritarian authoritarianism type of governance. Although PM Modi has asked for next 25 years to reclaim what our society has lost in hundreds of years of slavery, he is in fact demanding this period of time to push back India into a 'Hindu Rashtra'. A Rashtra where there would be

no place for the regional, racial, religious minorities. A Rashtra where in all probabilities, the lancet would not be directed where the blood is thickest but to the weakest and the meekest part of the population.

The planned breakdown of the federal structure is also a move towards ethnocracy. Under the British raj, London was constantly out to loot the various provincial governments,

centralising funds and changing monetary policies to suit its ends. Even after a century, the modus operandi is the same but this time it is being done by Delhi and for the benefit of a few.

No doubt, this has created a big dent on India's economic democracy. World inequality data 2022 suggests that the poorest 50% of the Indians now earn the same as what the poorest 50% of Americans earned way back in 1932.

A few, at the top 10% of the population own 67% of India's wealth and control all institutions, guide public policies and dominate public discourse. They own media houses and decide what people shouldn't know. They influence voting behaviour by manufacturing selective content and injecting it into the masses.

The steady dilution of transparent governance by chocking of laws like the RTI act clearly conveys to the world how facts are being obscured. India now lags behind even a totalitarian country like China in Inequality transparency Index. It is iron-

ical that breathtaking advances in science and technology are being used to conceal official facts and figures whilst snooping upon personal data in order to serve political and economic interests of a few.

Democracy is not a mere ritual act of casting one's vote once in a while. This pseudo notion has degraded our democracy in taking us towards an electoral autocracy. As we forgot to renew our democracy as per times, we have already in a stage of ethnic democracy and ethnocracy is knocking at our democratic doors.

This is in contrast to western countries that are slowly shifting towards multi-cultural democracies while ours is consolidating as an alternative form of democracy that serves as a means to end as a single ethnic nation.

Rather than celebrating Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, India demands freedom from tyranny and de facto ethnocracy so that social, political and economic democracy could be established.

The messiah will rise to the podium again at Rajpath to ensure the masses that he is working overtime and goodies would be delivered to them soon from his bag of tricks. Not unexpectedly, he has always excelled in oratory, widening the gap between word and practices thus leading to a drastic and deliberate drop in democratic quotient of the country.

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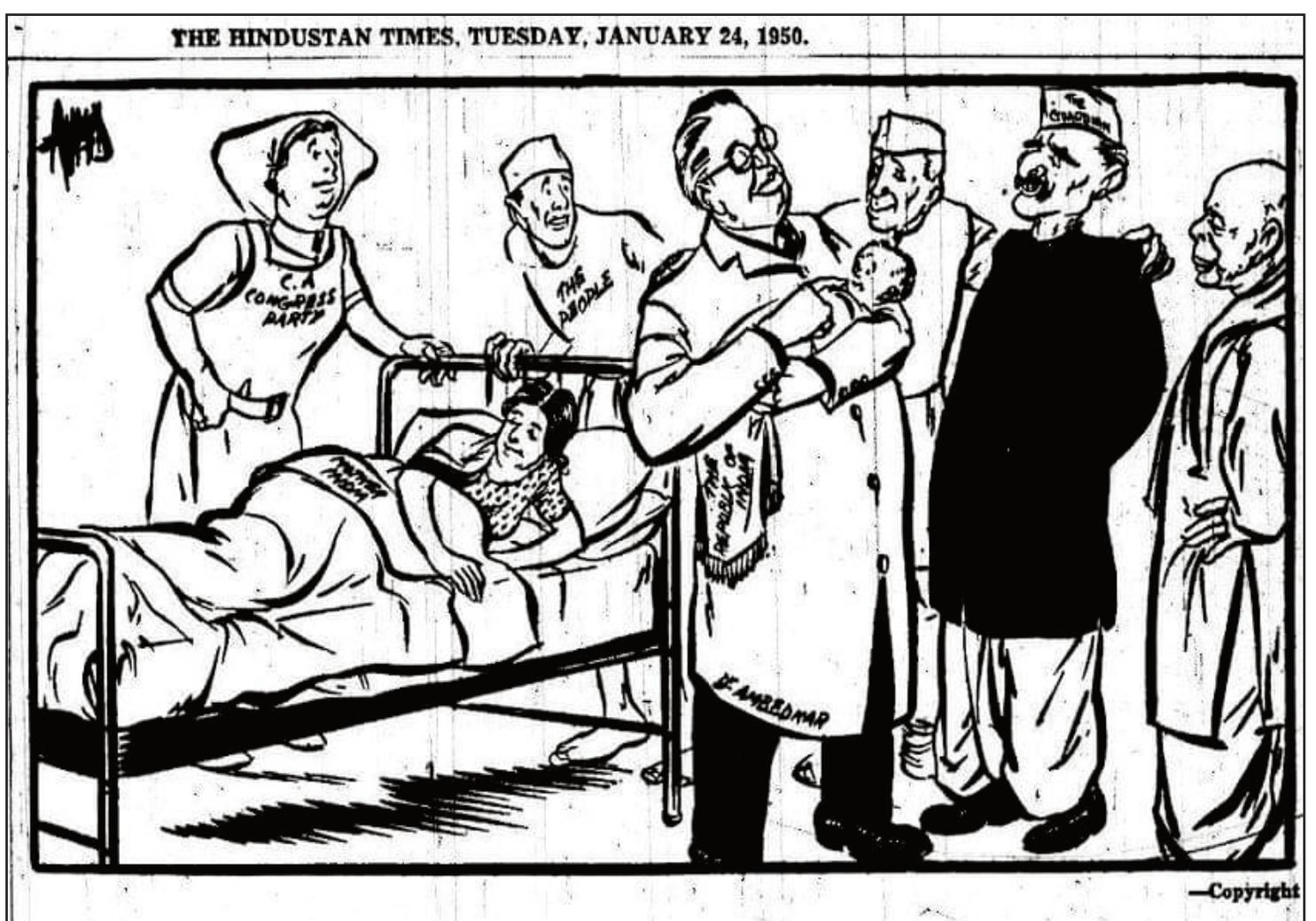
Mother India giving birth to a baby called The Republic of India and Dr. Ambedkar

Whole India was proud of historical task completed by Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar in successfully getting an excellent Constitution delivered and presented to the people of India. A befitting appreciation by The Hindustan Times to Babasaheb Ambedkar by this cartoon. This Cartoon, which was published in the year 1950, on 24th January, that is two days before the first Indian Republic day, in The Hindustan Times, drawn by the famous Cartoonist Anwar Ahmed. Cartoon showing Mother India giving birth to a baby called The Republic of India and Dr. Ambedkar holding that baby in his hands and giving a gentle touch, while the other leaders in the background (from Left to Right) Constituent Assembly & Congress Party as Nurse, Jawaharlal Nehru, Babu Rajendra Prasad and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel all of them are looking at the newly born baby with great anxiety. As we get ready to celebrate 72nd Republic day it is appropriate to remember Babasaheb Ambedkar.

Courtesy: Ambedkarite Friends

Read more:

www.ambedkartimes.com





The following passage is from the Speech delivered by Mrs. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, leader of the Indian Delegation to the United Nations General Assembly in Paris, on 25th September 1948, which makes mention of the fact that the watchwords "Liberty, Equality, Fraternity" in the Indian Constitution were taken from France:

Faith in Democracy:

India has faith in democracy; her allegiance to the principles of the Charter of the United Nations is not mere lip service. In a few weeks she will be framing her new Constitution, embodying all the ideals of her new freedom. The main provisions have already been settled. We have taken from France - as, indeed, which country has not - the inspiring ideals of liberty, equality and fraternity; we have taken from the United States of America the idea of a Bill of Rights, enforceable by the Courts; we have taken from the United Kingdom the idea of an independent judiciary, the bulwark of British freedom; we have taken from the Soviet many a provision for the

FAITH IN DEMOCRACY

benefit of the common and forgotten man. Remembering that India is to be a secular State, we have provided every possible safeguard for the protection of minorities. Copying a step taken by the United States of America in 1946, we have provided for the periodic appointment of commissions to investigate the conditions of any under-privileged classes of the population; anticipating one of the recommendations of the Civic Rights Committee, appointed in the United States, we have provided for the appointment, both for the Union of India and for each of the States, of special officers to see that the rights guaranteed by the Constitution are not violated in the day-to-day administration of the country.

Adult suffrage for men and women is to be the basis of all elections. In this and other ways, we have

tried to do all we can to reaffirm our faith "in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person, in the equal rights of men and women...and to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom."

Those are the words of the Charter, and we have shown in the shaping of our Constitution that to us they are no empty phrases, but a living inspiration. Nothing will deflect India from the resolute pursuit of these great ideals - neither adverse circumstances, nor obloquy, nor misunderstanding - because those ideals are in full accord with the noblest traditions of Indian culture.

Source Courtesy: India News, Vol. IX, No.18, September 1948, Issued By - Office of the High Commissioner for India, India House, London

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

By Martin Luther King, Jr.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU was a man of three extraordinary epochs. He was a leader in the long anticolonial struggle to free his own land and to inspire a fighting will in other lands under bondage.

He lived to see victory and to move then to another epochal confrontation - the fight for peace after World War II. In this climactic struggle he did not have Gandhi at his side, but he did have the Indian people, now free in their own great Republic.

It would be hard to overstate Nehru's and India's contributions in this period. It was a time fraught with the constant threat of a devastating finality for mankind. There was no moment in this period free from the peril of atomic war. In these years Nehru was a towering world force skillfully inserting the peace will of India between the raging antagonisms of the great powers of East and West.

The world needed a mediator and an 'honest broker' lest, in its sudden acquisition of overwhelming destructive force, one side or the other might plunge the world into mankind's last war. Nehru had the prestige, the wisdom, and the daring to play the role.

The markedly relaxed tensions of today are Nehru's legacy to us, and at the same time they are our monument to him.

It should not be forgotten that the treaty to end nuclear testing accomplished in 1963 was first proposed by Nehru. Let us also remember that the world dissolution

of colonialism now speedily unfolding had its essential origins in India's massive victory. And let it also be remembered that Nehru guided into being the 'Asian-African Bloc' as a

work is unfolding after his death. Even though his physical presence is gone, his spiritual influence retains a living force. The great powers are not yet in harmonious relationship to

the United States, have made strides toward freedom beyond all precedent in our history. Our successes directly derive from our employment of the tactics of nonviolent direct action and non-cooperation with evil which Nehru effectively employed under Gandhi's inspiration.

The peculiar genius of imperialism was found in its capacity to delude so much of the world into the belief that it was civilizing primitive cultures even though it was grossly exploiting them. Satyagraha made the myth transparent as it revealed the oppressed to be the truly civilized party. They rejected violence but maintained resistance, while the oppressor knew nothing but the use of violence.

My people found that Satyagraha, applied in the United States to our oppressors, also clarified who was right and who was wrong. On this foundation of truth as irresistible, a majority could be organized for just solutions.

Our fight is not yet won, just as the struggle against colonialism is still unfinished, and above all, the achievement of a stable peace still lies ahead of and not behind us.

In all of these struggles of mankind to rise to a true state of civilization, the towering figure of Nehru sits unseen but felt at all council tables. He is missed by the world, and because he is so wanted, he is a living force in the tremulous world of today.

Source Courtesy: Darshan, October 1987



Martin Luther King and Mrs. King with Jawaharlal Nehru at New Delhi, when they visited India at the invitation of the Gandhi Peace Foundation.

united voice for the billions who were groping toward a modern world. He was the architect of the policy of nonalignment which was calculated to give independent expression to the emerging nations while enabling them to play a constructive role in world affairs.

The third epoch of Nehru's

each other, but with the help of the nonaligned world they have learned to exercise a wise restraint. In this is the basis for a lasting detente. Beyond this, Nehru's example in daring to believe and act for peaceful co-existence gives mankind its most glowing hope.

In this period, the Negroes of



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DHAN DHAN SRI GURU RAVIDASS JI

Bole' So Nirbhay! Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ki Jai

645th GURPURB of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji

ਤੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਮੋਹੀ ਤੋਹੀ ਅੰਤਰ ਕੈਸਾ ॥ ਕਨਕ ਕਟਿਕ ਜਲ ਤਰੰਗ ਜੈਸਾ ॥੧॥
 ਜਉ ਪੈ ਹਮ ਨ ਪਾਪ ਕਰੰਤਾ ਅਹੇ ਅਨੰਤਾ ॥ ਪਤਿਤ ਪਾਵਨ ਨਾਮ ਕੈਸੇ ਹੰਤਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਤਮਹਹ ਜ ਨਾਇਕ ਆਛਹ ਅੰਤਰਜਾਮੀ ॥ ਪਰਭ ਤੇ ਜਨ ਜਾਨੀਜੈ ਜਨ ਤੇ ਸਆਮੀ ॥੨॥
 ਸਰੀਰ ਆਰਾਧੈ ਮੋ ਕਉ ਬੀਚਾਰ ਦੇਹੁ ॥ ਰਵਿਦਾਸ ਸਮ ਦਲ ਸਮਝਾਵੈ ਕੋਉ ॥੩॥



Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha CA, Pittsburg will be celebrating the 645th Parkash Utsav of SATGURU RAVIDASS JI on Sunday, February 20, 2022 at the Gurughar, The entire Sangat is humbly requested to participate in this Gurupurb . Sri Guru Ravidass ji was born in 1377, in Kanshi, in India, in a humble family of Pita Santokh Dass ji and Mata Kalsa Devi ji. Guru Ravidass Ji was a great religious and social reformer. Guru Ji dedicated his whole life for the welfare of the humanity. He preached social harmony and equality among all human beings. He stood against caste based discrimination.

ARAMBH SHRI AKHAND PATH - February 18, 2022 (Friday) 10:00 AM

BHOG SHRI AKHAND PATH - February 20, 2022 (Sunday) 10:00 AM

**Nishan Sahib Hoisting Ceremony - February 19, 2022(Saturday) at 11:00 AM.
 (Nishan Sahib sewa by Bhai Sucha Singh Bangar and Bibi Sunita Bangar)**

We need **volunteers** to help with this event to prepare and serve Langar, keep Gurughar clean and organized, directing traffic/parking, kitchen and other Sewa. For **STALLS** or any **SEWA**, please contact President Jagtar Singh Bhatia at (925)487-9624 or Secretary Abhishek Pal Narabut at (925) 695-4637.

KIRTAN DIWAN

SATURDAY: Gurughar Jatha will start Shabad Kirtan at 5:30PM

Bhai Rachpal Singh ji start Shabad Kirtan at 6:00 PM

SUNDAY: **Giani Gurnam Singh ji / Giani Ompal Singh ji** will start the Shabad Kirtan at 11:00 AM

Prominent Jatha of Bhai Onkar Singh ji, Una Sahib Waley will delight the sangat from 12:00 noon to 1:00 PM with Guru Ka Kirtan.

Kirtani Jatha of Bhai Jagjit Singh ji will begin Shabad Kirtan at 1:00 PM



**“NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA”
Sangat Sewadars**

**Chairperson
Kulwant Kaur Banga**

**President
Jagtar Bhatia**

**General Secretary
Abhishek Pal Narabut**

**Treasurer
Sunita K Singh**

Pease visit Gurughar website for information: WWW.SriGuruRavidassTemple.com