

the situation. Enrolment under of *National Register of Citizens (NRC)*, completed in August last, threatens to exclude a large number of people who could not provide *Legacy Data* or legal proofs of their ancestral residence even before 1951 in Assam. People *sans* Legacy Data are liable to be deported. While BJP is strongly favouring this measure Congress is for softer alternative. This is a controversial issue complicated by strong presence of a Muslim-based All India United Democratic Front regularly winning a good number of Assembly votes. Politics of convenience at its extreme form is evident as not only the Congress but even the BJP has deployed one of its star campaigners to have meaningful dialogue with that party showing minority cards.

Permutation and combination game seems to enliven West Bengal which is also going in for State elections in 2016. Mamata Banerjee's Trinamul Congress (TMC) appears invincible but not unappetizing as it continues to poach political figures from other parties with promises of goodies. Even then TMC will not be cool to the grand old party if Congress becomes ready to figure in the Mamata poll platform with a subservient role as that of Bihar's Congress under Nitish-Lalu dispensation. But Mamata has alienated, if not antagonized, her supposed kindred spirits still surviving in Congress so much so that the State Congress leadership has floated the idea of a Congress-Left alliance setting at naught the art of impossible in politics. If this finds favour with the decimated State

CPI(M) leadership, the party all-India Secretary, Yechury will leave no stone unturned to dumb the policy of equidistance from Congress and BJP to take on Mamata's TMC which has destroyed the Left bastion in Bengal. Interestingly, caste bias being weak in Bengal, all three forces project themselves as the best friends of the sizable Muslim communities which constitute 27 per cent of the State population. Hence the politics of convenience has an upperhand. BJP, on the other hand, on the upswing with the Modi wave in 2014 lost ground and is bound to remain a loner political entity. It does not have either muscle power or numerical strength to venture into things like polarizing politics. Its presence will be insignificant in Bengal, in the foreseeable future.

Dr. B. D. Sharma

Dr Brahma Dutt Sharma (known to many of us as Dr Sahab), passed away on December 6th in Gwalior. He was not keeping well for some time and was being looked after by his son and daughter-in-law.

He led many battles in his life and worked tirelessly to achieve the constitutional rights of the adivasis, dalits, workers and farmers, over five decades of his working life beginning with the troublesome days in Bastar (1968) and being the last Commissioner for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (1986-1991). He also served as the Vice Chancellor of NEHU, Central University and on numerous committees of Planning Commission and National Advisory Council.

He was a bureaucrat, a contemporary of late S R Sankaran,

B N Yugandhar and others who stood for the people, just a way government servant should. As SC/ST Commissioner, he not only authored seminal reports on empowerment of SC/STs but also played a key role in authorship of the Bhuria Committee report, enactment of PESA and Forest Rights Act. As Secretary in the Minister of Tribal Affairs, he initiated the idea of Tribal Sub Plan. Until as late as 2014, he continued to collaborate and help Government in its various initiatives with the tribals and adivasis, but also challenged them on every front, for their continued betrayal and non-implementation of various plans and governance failure in the scheduled areas.

Dr. Sharma was extremely disturbed by the violence and war-like situation in the tribal

areas, and in a letter, dt May 17, 2010 to the President of India, he wrote: *I am constrained to state at this critical phase of the history of tribal people that the Union Government is guilty of abdicating its Constitutional responsibility by allowing the situation to degenerate from that of stray revolts in 1960s to 'warlike situation' at the moment. It has remained unconcerned with the simmering discontent from day one with the adoption of the Constitution. It has not issued a single direction to any State in 60 long years. You as head of the nation, at a critical time must ensure that the Union Government accepts unequivocally its Constitutional responsibility with due apologies for the decimated, shattered and disinherited tribal communities whose irretrievable loss - physical, economic and emotional - is an un-*

washable blot on the fair face of our nation that still stands by equity and justice.

He stood for the rights of the people, for implementation of the self-rule in the Gram Sabhas as mandated by the Constitution and championed the cause of the *Hamare Gaon me Hamara Raaj*. Even while serving as the SC/ST Commissioner, he filed the first case in the Supreme Court, demanding the implementation of the Narmada Water Dispute Tribunal (NWDT) award. SC ordered the implementation of the NWDT award by the governments, which paved the way for allotment of land for land to thousands of the project affected families. Unfortunately violating the SC order and order of numerous Tribunals and Commissions and in face of continued struggle of Narmada Bachao Andolan, the NDA government is pushing ahead the construction of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, leading to submergence of nearly 2 lakh plus people in the Narmada Valley.

Dr Sharma was a visionary and was troubled by the growing inequity in the society in the wake of the neo-liberal reforms pushed by the government. He worked tirelessly to implement the laws, policies, programmes and schemes of the government using all the means available with him, but he knew the real *swaraj* will come only if people themselves organized and fought for it and took control of their own life, means of livelihood, control over natural resources, had a say in the development plan and became a beneficiary in the process of development. He founded Bharat Jan Andolan and lent his voice and support to Narmada Bachao Andolan, National Alliance of People's Movements, Kisani Pratishtha Manch, Campaign for Survival and Dignity and many more people's struggles and movements.

He travelled throughout the country and propagated his views and solutions to the farmers' and workers' distress, advocated for their rights and kept stressing the

fact that we are headed towards a agrarian crisis and something which stemmed from the fact that farmers and workers were not getting their due. They were not being compensated for their efforts and hard work. He would often ask at the gatherings, *bata mere yaar, meri mehnat kaa mol hai kya ?*

He wrote extensively and also published for which he set up his publishing unit, Sahyog Kutir Prakashan. He lived frugally and minimally, travelled across the country as a simpleton, wearing his dhoti kurta and remained accessible to everyone. Even when he was not keeping well, he joined us all at the completion of 20 years of NAPM at its biennial convention in Pune, last year.

He will be missed for his courage of conviction and dedication to the cause of the marginalized. In his death we all have lost a great teacher and a comrade, who was always there for us in times of crisis and in struggle.

– NAPM

(Continued from Page 2)

vanish if it enjoys full autonomy and ceases being a parrot, caged or free.

Questions have been raised over protocol issues. Is the CBI bound to inform the CM, which ever state may be, aprior to a raid on his office. In the instant case, the CBI has denied that the Delhi CM was a target. But it is in the interest of all if a rule was laid down in this regard. Raiding the CM's office is one thing, raiding his colleagues' office quite another.

Since the name of the Union Finance Minister has been dragged

into the controversy, it will be nice to hear the CBI's response to the

charge that the raid was targeted against Mr. Jaitley also.

Janata Subscription

Annual Rs. : 260/-

Three Years : 750/-

Demand Draft / Cheque on
Mumbai Bank

in favour of
JANATA TRUST

D-15, Ganesh Prasad, Naushir
Bharucha Marg, Mumbai 400 007

janata

is available at

<http://lohiatoday.com>

thanks to

Manohar Somayya