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Local to global tribute pours in

Gitanjali

Condolences poured in from all political parties for the late veteran CPI(M) leader Sitaram Yechury, who died on Thursday at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) at the age of 72. Umesh Melehalli, secretary of Tumkur CPM, termed him the leader of the masses.

Speaking to *The Beacon*, Umesh expressed the party's reaction to the veteran's demise. "Even though we lost him yesterday, his thoughts and ideologies continue to stay in our minds," he said. Yechury was known for giving voice to the voiceless. The party lost an important member at a crucial juncture where communal violence and injustice are increasing in the country, he opined.

Local party leaders to India's president and prime minister expressed their reverence. The president said he had a "distinct and influential voice," and the PM called him the "leading light of the left." Referring to an interaction with Yechury from last year, CPI Tumkur Secretary Girish said Yechury mentioned that all leftist parties should join together in the fight against communalism, which is deeply rooted in our country. He intended for CPI and CPM to join forces, he added.

Killer roads & pressurised staff, claim lives

Merwin Mathias

BENGALURU:

This month, the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has been involved in an alarming series of accidents, raising concerns amongst pedestrians and commuters. The absence of proper safety measures in KSRTC's Karnataka Sarige buses has only increased passenger worries. A recent ghastly accident in Manvi, Raichur district, where a school bus and a KSRTC Karnataka Sarige bus collided, led to the death of two students and injured 38 others. In another case in Athani, Belagavi district, a KSRTC bus tragically crushed a 10-year-old boy. Despite adding 240 new buses this year, safety fears among passengers and pedestrians remain pressing. "The KSRTC bus



A KSRTC bus collides with a school van in Raichur on September 5

Deccan Chronicle

drivers race through ghat sections, making travel terrifying for us. Although we are fearful, we have no alternative but to use this service," said Kiran Matti, a regular passenger. Matti also highlighted the absence of an emergency control room by KSRTC. Manoj Kumar, another traveller and a motorcyclist, voiced his safety concerns. He

noted that the buses remain poorly maintained with no significant upgrades over time and have hard, uncomfortable seats that make long trips challenging. He remarked, "Bikers and pedestrians are at high risk at night due to the speed and large size of KSRTC buses." Reflecting on recent incidents, KSRTC bus driver Ramshree Sullia

said, "We are pressured to reach the destination on time. Sometimes passengers arrive late, the roads are in poor condition, and heavy traffic enters Bengaluru city. These factors can lead to mishaps when rushing to meet the schedule." Sullia also appealed to the government to fix the potholes and complete unfinished

road construction, as these issues often result in accidents for which bus drivers are held accountable.

Amaresh Kurdi, the father of the late Samarth Kurdi, a student who was killed in the Raichur accident, expressed, "Both buses were travelling fast, and the people who witnessed it say there was a pothole, which caused the school bus to take a slight turn, leading to a collision between the KSRTC bus and the school bus." In response to these concerns, Assistant Public Relations Officer of KSRTC Nithin Kumar said, "We are helpless, and we can't control such incidents. The KSRTC buses can't drive more than 80 kmph as they are customised." He also added that the potholes often cause accidents.

Jel and contemporaries mirror historical parallels

Ouroge R F

In a move that has sparked intense debate, Bangladesh's interim government, led by Nobel laureate Mohammed Yunus, has lifted the ban on Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), an Islamic political party with a controversial history.

The ban, imposed under an anti-terrorism law, was revoked following a notification issued by the Interior Ministry of the government stating that no definite links were found between terrorism and JeI, its student wing, Islami Chhatra Shibir and other associate units of the organisation. Shafiqur Rahman, the

emir of JeI, said that its party has been misunderstood, particularly by India, asserting that it is pro-Bangladesh and solely focused on its national interests. Contrary to this statement, JeI has had a complex past. During the Liberation War, JeI aligned itself with the Pakistani Army against the Bangladeshi freedom fighters to keep the Muslim community united with the unification of East Pakistan and West Pakistan. After the nation gained independence, JeI was banned for its opposition to the creation of Bangladesh. In 2013, the Bangladesh High Court ruled JeI illegal due to

its religious and political stance. In the consequent year, there were widespread calls for a total ban on JeI after several leaders of the party were convicted by the International Crimes Tribunal (ICT) for war crimes during the 1971 Liberation War, the most notorious of which was the systematic execution of Bengali pro-liberation intellectuals.

The concept of an anti-secular party like JeI isn't foreign to India. It parallels India's Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a Hindu nationalist organisation advocating for an "Akhand Hindu Rashtra". Historian AG Noorani has

recorded how the Sangh refused to join forces with their fellow countrymen and sided with the British, posing non-Hindus as the real threat to the nation. Post-independence, they opposed the tri-colour flag and said it would never be respected and owned by the Hindus. RSS, too, has been banned on several occasions, such as after the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi by Nathuram Godse in 1948, a devout "pracharak" (full-time volunteer of RSS) and the second time, during the Emergency imposed by Indira Gandhi, and third in 1992 for the demolition of Babri Masjid.

Resolving stray-human conflict

Krishnapriya M

Trauma stemming from past human abuse and dogs' territorial nature results in aggression, said Swathy Soman, the veterinarian, citing this as the cause of rising stray dog attacks in Kochi. She opined that community dogs are highly territorial, leading to clashes with humans and other animals in their effort to protect their perceived territory.

Despite the government's schemes for animal welfare, including animal birth control and vaccination drives, animal rescuers in Kochi allege that the government veterinary institutions are not adequately equipped to care for animals. "Limitations in terms of infrastructure and manpower add to the dilemma of rescuing and rehabilitating the stray dog population in Ernakulam," said Sanand, who rescues stray dogs in collaboration with Animal Rescue Kochi. "Carrying out animal birth control, working towards proper socialisation of stray dogs and encouraging responsible feeding goes a long way in maintaining a harmonious relationship between people and stray dogs," Swathy added.

Is 'Freedom' limited to a 'Park'?

Olivia Debroy

BENGALURU: Democracy is not just about voting but about fulfilling your fundamental duties and fighting for your constitutional rights, said KS Vimala of the Janawadi Mahila Sanghatane, addressing the protesters on Monday who demanded the lifting of the ban on organising protests in certain parts of the city. Limiting protests to Freedom Park defeats the purpose of democracy, she opined.

The Horaatada Hakkigagi Janandolana (Campaign for the Right to Protest) organised a citywide signature drive to

challenge these restrictions, collecting over a thousand signatures for an open letter to the Chief Minister of Karnataka, demanding the restoration of their rights to assemble and protest freely in the city. "As a student organisation, we often have to deal with cases of academic harassment of students in colleges... Hence, it is imperative that we have the right to protest; otherwise, all our other demands will go unheard," said Aratrika, a member of the All India Students Association.

In 2022, Bengaluru Police issued an order limiting protests

to Freedom Park. In the mid of 2023, a coalition of many organisations and individuals was formed, making multiple delegations to the government and police officials to quash the FIRs against the peaceful protestors. Maitreyi K, advocate, AILAJ, stated, "This is not just about the restriction of protests to Freedom Park, but a series of incidents in which the police have abused their power and shut down any public actions such as pamphleteering, candlelight vigils or film screenings." The letter will be submitted on September 15, the International Day for Democracy.

'Society victimises the victim'

Rupa Sree

BENGALURU: Victim blaming has existed since the beginning of time, and it still haunts our society, said Vimala KS, President of the All India Women Democratic Association (AIWDA), on Wednesday, speaking about the increasing crimes against women in India. In India, almost 77 cases are registered daily, but the low conviction rate and inadequate law enforcement fail the victims.

Quoting the instance of the 2013 Nirbhaya gang rape and murder, she said justice was served due to the

country-wide uproar. Yet, rape victims are the ones held accountable. "Society does not blame the perpetrator," she opined. "It has always been about women. More than dogs; don't start here. Because of this, people tend to blame women for whatever mishaps happen in their lives," she added.

A female activist, Sita (name changed), said, "Politicians often focus on caste, religion and wealth rather than women's safety. It is rarely at the forefront of their agendas."