

Struggles in India: Nationwide Outrage Against Oil Price Hike

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There has been nationwide protest against the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government's decision to hike the prices of petrol, diesel and cooking gas. Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) [CPI (ML)] had given a call for an all-India protest on 6th June, and on that day and since, the party has organised independent protests and joined other Left parties in resisting the oil price hike.

In Delhi on 5 June, immediately after the announcement of the hike in prices, the CPI (ML) held a protest demonstration at Parliament Street and burnt the effigy of the UPA Government.

In Bihar, the CPI (ML) along with other Left parties including CPI and CPI (M) called a bandh on 10 June. The bandh was a great success, and was vigorously implemented with demonstrations at almost all district headquarters. In Patna alone, 6 separate, massive contingents comprising more than 2000 people marched on the streets to implement the bandh. Over 1000 CPI (ML) activists were arrested in Patna including the State Secretary Nand Kishore Prasad, central committee members (CCMs) Ram Jatan Sharma, K D Yadav and Meena Tiwari and All India Progressive Women Association (AIPWA) leader Shashi Yadav, while around 85 activists from CPI and CPI (M) were arrested. All the National Highways were blockaded by people, and train routes blockaded at Buxar, Muzaffarpur, Siwan, Ara, Leheriasarai, Narkatiaganj, Hilsa, Bihar Sharif, and Masaurhi. At Jehanabad, CPI (ML) activists clashed with the police during the bandh.

In Jharkhand, the CPI (ML) gave a call for bandh on 7 June, which was highly effective. As many as 1,000 party activists and leaders were arrested by the police in different parts of the state, who were later released. In Ranchi, party activists blockaded the Main Road and brought traffic to a standstill. The bandh got a very good response in Bokaro, Ramgarh and Dhanbad districts. In Giridih district, the bandh was led by CPI (ML) member of legislative assembly (MLA) Vinod Singh with over 2,000 activists. CCM and former MLA Bahadur Oraon led the workers in the bandh in Chakradharpur. The bandh had an effect in Lohardaga, Garhwa, Barwadih, Nirsa and many other places. The traffic on the Ranchi-Tata Road came to a halt for over an hour as over 100 workers blocked the road at Bundu.

In Uttar Pradesh, a demonstration was held and an effigy of the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government burnt outside the assembly building at Lucknow on 6 June. CPI (ML) State Secretary Sudhakar Yadav condemned the lathicharge against CPI (ML) demonstrators protesting at the Mirzapur district headquarters and the arrest of several activists including the party's district secretary Nandlal and Revolutionary Youth Association (RYA) National President Mohd. Salim. In spite of these arrests, protest demonstrations were held at the block headquarters at Ahiraura and Narayanpur in Mirzapur. Demonstrations were held and effigies of the central government burnt at the Sonebhadra District headquarters at Robertsganj, as well as at the block headquarters at Anpara, Duddhi, Babhani, Gherawal and at Mughalsarai and Chakia block headquarters in Chandauli district. At Varanasi, CPI (ML) activists burnt the effigy of the UPA Government near the Cantt. Railway Station. In Lakhimpuri Kheri town, as well as in Gorakhpur, Devaria, Maharajganj, Gazipur, Mau, Jalaun, Moradabad, Bijnaur, Sitapur and other districts, protest marches were held. Earlier on

4 June, immediately after the hikes in prices were announced, effigies of the UPA Government were burnt at Jamalpur in Mirzapur, as well as at Faizabad and Mau.

In Tamilnadu, demonstrations were held against petrol price hike in Chennai, Tiruvallore, Kanchipuram, Villupuram, Cuddalore, Nagappattinam, Coimbatore , Salem , Namakkal, Tirnelveli, Krishnagiri, Kanyakumari and Madurai districts. In Krishnagiri, on 5 June, 30 comrades were arrested for burning an effigy, and were released later. In Kanyakumari, comrades pulled an auto by ropes. In Chennai more than 100 workers mobilised by CPI (ML) participated in the protest. Demonstrations were also held in Pudukottai district in two points on 6 June against petrol price hike. The CPI (ML) supported the CPI - CPI (M)'s call for statewide bandh on 7 June, and our comrades were active in implementing the bandh at Vridhachalam (Cuddalore), Kotakuppam (Vilupuram), and Tirupanandal (Thanjavur). In Pondicherry too the bandh was a success and our comrades actively participated in it.

In Orissa, a road blockade was held at Rayagada on 6 June in which 100 people participated. A dharna was held at Laxmipur Block, Korapur district, in which 300 people protested against price rise, corruption and irregularities in issuing of below poverty line (BPL) cards and National Rural Employee Guarantee Act (NREG) implementation.

In Andhra Pradesh, the CPI (ML) Liberation along with CPI (ML) New Democracy, and MCPI held a rasta roko (road blockade) in Vijaywada on 6 June. In Prathipadu district of East Godavari, in Jaggampeta, in Gollaprolu, in Kakinada Rural, CPI (ML) held rasta roko programmes. In Vissampeta (Krishna District), a dharna was held at the Tehsildar's office. In Jangareddygudem (West Godavari District), and in Visakhapatnam also, CPI (ML) Liberation, CPI(ML) ND, and MCPI held a rasta roko.

In Rajasthan, demonstrations were held and memoranda submitted on 6 June at district headquarters of Pratapgarh, Udaipur , Jaipur, Ajmer , and Bhuhana (Jhunjhuna). In Ajmer , the demonstration comprised a large number of women activists.

At Rewari in Haryana, CPI (ML) activists held a demonstration and burnt the effigy of the UPA Government on 6 June. In Gwalior (Madhya Pradesh), a street corner meeting was held and an effigy of the central government burnt. In the Andamans, CPI (ML) conducted a protest demonstration at the Secretariat gate in Port Blair on 5 June. At Gangavati in Karnataka on 6 June, a demonstration was held and an effigy of the Prime Minister burnt.

P.S.

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