

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

### CWC RESOLUTION

I.

Backbreaking Inflation has brought the lives of common citizens to a standstill.

The festive season is here but the Modi Government is bent upon robbing the people of India by all round inflation. The Government is completely oblivious to the economic worries and challenges being faced by the average Indian.

The irony is that these challenges are the direct result of the Modi Government's catastrophic mishandling of the economy. It has created an abyss of economic uncertainty that has swallowed the minimum income and savings of the average Indian. Nearly 14 crore jobs have been lost, salaries have been cut drastically, lakhs of MSMEs have been shut down and small shopkeepers are struggling to stay afloat.

All these challenges have been aggravated by unchecked and crushing inflation, itself the consequence of a government focused on spreading discord and division rather than on Governance.

II.

**Petrol and Diesel.** The Modi Government's actions in raising Petrol and Diesel prices is plain and simple extortion. To express it in numbers, the increase translates to an inconceivable 820% hike in excise duty on Diesel and 258% increase in excise duty on Petrol (since 2014). The Modi Government has collected massive windfall gains, in excess of ₹18,00,000 crores, from historically low oil prices and instead of passing on the benefits to the public, it continues to further increase prices. For the first time ever, Petrol has crossed the ₹100/litre mark across the country (touching ₹105 per litre at many places) and Diesel is almost touching ₹100/litre mark (crossing ₹100/litre at many places). These are acts of administrative incompetence and cruelty, and the Government must be named and shamed for this betrayal of the public.

**Cooking gas.** The price of LPG cylinder has gone up from ₹400 per cylinder (during the Congress led UPA's term) to ₹900 per cylinder, currently. This represents an increase of almost 125% in seven years. Since November 2020 alone, cylinder prices have been increased 11 times and the price has gone up by a staggering 51.5% (₹594 to ₹900). To make matters worse for households, the Government has virtually abolished the entire subsidy on cooking gas, which was a vital economic bridge for millions of poor and middle-class Indian families. A 'Suit-Boot ki Sarkar' could never understand what the difference means for several millions of these households.

**Cooking Oil, Pulses and Vegetables:** The unaffordable prices of basic consumer goods have burnt a hole in the budget of every Indian. Cooking oil is already selling at ₹200/litre (or more) as big hoarders make a killing at the cost of the common man. Price of most pulses is between ₹80 to ₹110 per kg. Vegetables and tomato prices are simply becoming unaffordable for the poor and middle class. Similar is the situation for most household consumer goods.

**Railway Fare.** During the Covid pandemic, the Modi Government converted most passenger trains to express trains thereby increasing railway fares multifold. Most passenger trains are now charging express fares putting a massive burden on nearly two crore Indians who use the train to commute every day. Even the platform ticket has gone up from ₹10 to ₹30. Despite the pandemic curbs having been lifted, the massive increase in fares has not been reconsidered by this apathetic Government.

III.

The Indian National Congress calls upon the Modi Government to forthwith reduce excise duty to bring down the unsustainably high fuel and cooking gas prices. At a time when the nation is recovering from a pandemic, made worse by a lack of preparedness on the part of the Government, the Modi Government must introspect.

No Government across the world imposes such great economic pain on its people, through deliberately made policy as also through economic negligence.

The CWC calls upon the Modi Government to take immediate steps to reduce prices in all crucial sectors, to acknowledge the damage caused by poorly thought-out economic policy and to take urgent steps to remedy the same.

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CWC RESOLUTION

**Acute Agrarian Distress & Diabolical Attack on India's Farmers**

The last 7 years have witnessed a diabolical design to attack the livelihood of India's "Anndatas"- our farmers and landless farm labourers.

I.

It began in the year 2015, with a sinister design to deny the land acquisition compensation guaranteed by the Congress led-UPA through an Act of Parliament. This was followed by an absolute refusal to provide any form of relief from agricultural indebtedness, a dilution of the norms for crop compensation and the framing of a convoluted crop insurance scheme which singularly benefitted select insurance companies instead of the suffering farmers.

The deplorable designs of the Modi Government didn't end there. Agriculture was subjected to unjustifiable levels of taxation by imposing GST on fertilizer (5%), pesticides (18%) and tractors & agricultural equipment (12%-18%). Meanwhile, fertilizer, seed and pesticide prices skyrocketed. This was compounded by astronomical and unpardonable increases in diesel prices that are touching an unprecedented ₹100/litre and have even surpassed the ₹100/litre mark in several cities across the country. While all of this took place, the MSP increase per year in principal crops was just between 2-4%.

All of these retrograde and outright anti-farmer measures, including excessive taxation by the Modi Government, have placed an additional burden of Rs. 20,000-25,000 per hectare on agriculture.

The plight of India's farmers can be gauged from the NSSO report, which highlights that the average income per day of the small and marginal farmer is a pittance of ₹26.67/ day. And the average debt is ₹72,000 per farmer. The average income per day is way below even the minimum daily wage for labour.

The three agriculture "black laws" are the culmination of this conspiracy; To subjugate India's farmers for the advantage of a handful of crony capitalist friends of the Modi Government. For over ten and a half months, lakhs of farmers have been protesting peacefully on Delhi's borders, blocked by spikes and boulders on the National Highway from advancing further. Nearly a thousand farmers have laid down their lives but the cruel Modi Government refuses to even engage with them. It further refuses to repeal the three black laws and end the stalemate.

## II.

The brutal mowing down of farmers in Lakhimpur Kheri is a manifestation of this continuing arrogance. This incident was preceded by the Union Minister (of State) for Home Affairs, himself an accused in a case of murder in which the High Court has reserved judgment for forty three months, publicly threatening the farmers with dire consequences, while flaunting his own dubious antecedents.

Can such illegal and high-handed actions be ignored especially when this warning of September 26<sup>th</sup>, 2021 is followed by a public mowing down of farmers on October 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2021 by at least two vehicles owned by the Minister and his family members. Now, despite his son having been accused and arrested under relentless public pressure, led by the Congress Party, the Prime Minister shamelessly refuses to remove him as a Union MoS for Home Affairs. The Congress Working Committee notes the courage and consistency with which Shri Rahul Gandhi has fought for the cause of farmers and the resilience of Smt. Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in fighting the onslaught on farmers in Uttar Pradesh.

In light of the above, the simple question is, can justice ever be served?

## III.

The Indian National Congress is committed to the repeal of the three “black laws” and ensuring a just and fair minimum support price mechanism for India’s farmers and justice for landless farm labourers. The INC stood shoulder to shoulder with the Nation’s farmers and led the protests against the vicious design to take away the rights of compensation for acquisition of land. We succeeded then and we shall succeed now against the three “black laws”.

We reiterate our continued resolve to fight this battle alongside the farmers and farm labourers to defeat the Modi Government’s deliberate attack on India’s Anndatas.

October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2021

## **RESOLUTION ON THE POLITICAL SITUATION**

The Congress Working Committee has reviewed the political situation in the country. The CWC is deeply distressed to note the multiple challenges that face the country and the all-round failure of the Modi government in dealing with these challenges. In fact, the catastrophic policies of the Modi government have exacerbated the situation and have placed enormous burdens on the people of the country.

The CWC is alarmed by the rapid deterioration in the security of the country – both external and internal. Nearly 18 months after the clashes in Ladakh in which 20 soldiers lost their lives, Chinese troops continue to be in occupation of Indian territory. Despite multiple rounds of talks, China has not vacated Indian territory; nor have we been able to recover our old positions. The aggressive posture of China and the unabated infiltrations by Pakistan have resulted in a dramatic deterioration of the security of Jammu & Kashmir. After the change in regime in Afghanistan and the takeover by the Taliban, the situation is even graver, but the Government remains oblivious or in deep slumber. Terrorist attacks have increased and both security forces and innocent citizens have lost their lives. The administration of J&K, or whatever goes in the name of administration, is incompetent, paralyzed and in a shambles. The way forward is restoration of full statehood and holding democratic elections.

In other parts of the country, notably in Assam, Nagaland and Mizoram, there are growing threats to security. Inter-state disputes have flared up suddenly driving fear in the minds of the people living in the border villages. The Naga peace talks have suffered a serious setback due to the ham-handed approach of the Modi government.

Drug trafficking has assumed monstrous proportions. The seizure of 3,000 kgs of heroin at Adani Port, Gujarat, following reports of another large consignment that was successfully ‘imported’ into India, gives an indication of the huge dimensions of the illegal trade that seems to have flourished under the watch of the Modi government.

The continued slide in the economy is a matter of great concern. After the sharp decline in 2020-21, the Modi government boasted of a V-shaped recovery. All signs point to an uneven and struggling recovery in different sectors. The jobs that were lost during the recession and the pandemic have not been recovered;

the micro and small units that were shut down have not been re-started. Millions of families face the twin hardships of unemployment and high prices.

The agitation by farmers against the three black laws on agriculture continues after 10 months. A government imbued with arrogance has refused to engage the farmers in talks and has stood as a mere bystander, while the police and rogue elements in the BJP have unleashed violence upon them. The tragic incident at Lakhimpur Kheri is a clear example of official support to the attempt to suppress the voice of the farmers. The refusal of the Prime Minister to condemn the brutal murder of the farmers and to sack the Minister of State for Home Affairs have shocked the conscience of the country.

The Congress Party has noted with grave concern the notifications issued by the Central Government empowering the officers of Central Security Forces to search any place and arrest, as also search any person in the purported exercise of powers to prevent a cognizable offence under any Central Act. This is a dangerous encroachment on the exclusive power of the states and the powers of the state police. The Congress Party will consult all stakeholders and other political parties as well as state governments and formulate a course of action to compel the Modi Government to repeal these notifications.

The Congress Working Committee also notes the unbridled and unchecked state sponsored attacks on Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, minorities and women, in order to intimidate them and deny them their rights. Congress Party will fight all such lumpen elements courageously and decisively and defend the rights of all our citizens.

The country's financial situation is in terrible shape. The Modi government has no compunction in running the government on revenues raised through crushing taxes imposed on petrol and diesel. In order to hide the precarious state of its finances, the Modi government has launched a fire sale of the assets built in this country over 70 years. It is widely believed that the most valuable among these assets in ports, airports, petroleum, power and telecommunications will be sold to select business houses that are cronies of the Modi government.

The assault on democratic institutions completes the sad and shameless narrative of the Modi government. India is no longer regarded as a democracy, it has earned the label of an electoral autocracy. Parliament has been contemptuously disregarded. The judiciary has been debilitated by not filling vacancies in the courts and tribunals. Independent watchdog bodies like the Information Commission, Election Commission and the Human Rights Commission have been debased and rendered virtual ciphers. The media has been threatened into meek submission through raids and false cases. Non-government organizations

(NGOs) have been intimidated and their welfare activities have been halted. The government's agencies have been widely misused to suppress the voice of the people. The government has surreptitiously used malicious spyware to intrude into the lives of the people. Every aspect of democracy has been diminished. The Congress Party will resist every sinister attempt to convert the country into a surveillance and police state. Under the Modi government, the Constitutional promise of Liberty and Justice for all has receded into a vain hope.

The CWC believes that it is its duty to sound the alarm bells. We do so and call upon all democratic parties and forces to join hands to resolutely oppose the Modi government in order to protect the values on which our country was founded and to advance the causes of the people.