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ATTI DUDE

Stop the world, I want to get off
GARY CHERONE

ALTI TUDE

Six Maha MLAs suspended for ruckus in House

Mumbai: Six legislators were suspended for a year after they created mayhem in the Maharashtra assembly on Tuesday and injured the presiding officer in the House.

The legislators are: Arjun Khotkar (Shiv Sena), Raj Purohit and Sanjay Kute (BJP), Wamanrao Chatap (Swatantra Bharat Paksha) and two independents supporting the Democratic Front government, Bachchu Kadu and Sanjay Chavan.

The legislators were angry when the presiding officer in the evening, Chandrakant Chhajed, did not permit them to speak on certain issues.

They rushed to the well of the House and then to the speaker's podium and started throwing the books and stationery placed there. Leader of opposition Ramdas Kadam described the action as partisan, saying that the ruling Congress party members who disturbed the House proceedings were spared while opposition members, who were not involved, were punished. IANS

JUST LIKE THAT

AJIT NINAN



Railways helped us fit this frame to protect nose wheels from stray cattle and dogs.

CPM rules out tieup with Congress

Calls For Left Unity, Says Forging Third Alternative Ultimate Target

Akshaya Mukul | TNN

Anil Biswas Nagar (Coimbatore): CPM on Tuesday unanimously adopted the political resolution making it clear that it will not enter into any alliance or united front with the Congress.

Already a document — 'Review of the Implementation of the Political-Tactical Line of the 18th Party Congress' — admits that Left-UPA coordination committee became a trap for the party while the Congress-led government took advantage of it. It says the Left could not gain much.

"The practice of holding discussions and then announcing that the Left had agreed to go ahead with their (government) policies was objectionable. From that meeting (June 2006) onwards, we discontinued the practice of giving statements and briefings to the press (after the UPA-Left co-ordination committee meetings)," the document says.

It admits that CPM found it difficult to get out of the coordination format and in November 2006 it finally decided to call it quits after the politburo said no effort should be made to revive the coordination committee format.

Calling Congress a secular bourgeois party that vacillates when the communal forces are on offensive, CPM said its ultimate target is to build up a third alternative of non-Congress secular parties. It also



ONCE BITTEN, TWICE SHY: The CPM document says that Left-UPA coordination committee became a trap for the party

talks of Left unity. But strangely another party document is sharply critical of RSP and Forward Bloc and seeks to counter their criticism of CPM on Singur and Nandigram "ideologically and politically".

Stressing the need for expansion of its political base, the political resolution also talks of intensifying class and mass struggles. Hope comes from the fact that 46.08% of its membership is below 40 years of age. Though 46 of the 304 amendments were accepted in the political resolution, sources point out

that when delegates from Maharashtra raised the issue of SEZs in the state the matter had to be put to vote. Only eight delegates, all from Maharashtra, raised their hand against SEZs. Otherwise, the entire house was in favour of SEZs but with modifications demanded by the party.

The next on agenda is a discussion on the experience of three Left-ruled states and future principles of governance. But there is no stopping West Bengal chief minister Buddhadeb Bhattacharya who met rep-

resentatives of the Coimbatore textile industry on Tuesday and invited them to set up units in the state.

The crucial political organization report is being deliberated upon by the party congress and contradictions are already coming out. Politburo member SR Pillai said factionalism had not entirely ended in Kerala but the party had made significant progress in curbing it.

Pillai's assertion was at odds with Kerala state secretary Pinarayi Vijayan's claim that factionalism in the state had completely ended. Even the party document on organization says, "The current situation demands stern action to curb factional tendencies. Factionalism promotes all sorts of unhealthy trends and practices within the party."

The party document regrets the loss of its revolutionary character and says that the new "central committee must initiate a full-fledged rectification campaign at all levels of the party". Corruption is another area of concern as the document admits some leaders having assets disproportionate to their income. What comes out as a worrying factor from the document is that some party members believe in caste and religion and even resort to obscurantist practices like dowry and indulge in holding ostentatious parties for birthdays, marriages and such occasions.

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Maniratnam's son, 16, a star at CPM meet

Coimbatore: The 16-year-old son of filmmaker Maniratnam has created a buzz by joining as a red volunteer at CPM's on-going all India congress here.

Nandan Maniratnam, son of Maniratnam and actress Suhāsini, is also the author of a 27-page pamphlet on Leninism

He said he was drawn to Marxism as it was the "most cogent, comprehensive and highly developed complex of theory and practice". "India does not exist only in the cities, and even in the cities it does not exist only for the elite. India exists predominantly for the working classes and the peasants and in that section I am sure that Marxism, if conveyed correctly, will have enormous influence," the Class XI student said.

Nandan said he came on his own to serve as a volunteer and assist the foreign delegates at the CPM meeting. Nandan said he came on his own to serve as a volunteer and assist the foreign delegates at the CPM meeting. PTI

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'Fake driving licence no ground to deny claim'

TIMES NEWS NETWORK

New Delhi: Insurance companies cannot hide behind the fake licence of a driver of an insured vehicle, which is involved in an accident, to deny compensation to the victim or his kin, the Supreme Court has ruled.

"Only because the driver possesses a fake licence, that would not absolve the insurer to reimburse the owner of the vehicle the amount awarded in favour of a third party by the Motor Accident Claims Tribunal," a Bench comprising Justices S B Sinha and V S Sirpurkar said.

Alternatively, if the insurance company pays the third party claim to the victim or his kin, it would be at liberty to recover the same from the owner of the vehicle, the Bench said.

One Ishwar Dutt Bhat, while travelling in a three-wheeler, met with an accident being hit by a truck from the rear. The truck was insured with National Insurance Company. NIC resisted the claim petition filed by Dutt's kin on the ground that the driver of the truck had a fake licence.

On appeal before the Supreme Court, the Bench said that there was a distinction between a claim made by the owner on account of damages to the vehicle and the compensation payable to the third party.

In case of fake licence, the insurance company may not be liable to pay on account of the damages to the vehicle, but it would not be absolved of its responsibility to meet the third party compensation in an accident, the Bench clarified.

Thanks to Asians, even US has got a skewed sex ratio

Neelam Raaj | TNN

New Delhi: UK, Canada and now the US — India's obsession with sons seems to be going much beyond its borders. So is its skewed sex ratio. An analysis of the 2000 United States Census has found a son-biased sex ratio among US-born children of Indian parents, with the odds of a boy increasing if the previous offspring is a girl.

If the first is a girl, the sex ratio is 114 boys for 100 girls.

The male bias is particularly evident among Indian parents when it comes to the third child: If the first two children are girls, the ratio becomes 198 boys for 100 girls. By contrast, the sex ratios of eldest and younger children with an older brother were both within the normal range, as were white offspring sex ratios (irrespective of the elder siblings' sex). This male bias is also seen among Chinese and Korean parents, note the study's authors Douglas Almond and Lena Edlund of Columbia University.

This finding is particularly significant since no such son bias was seen in the 1990 US census. The deviation in favour of sons has also led researchers to conclude that sex selection is being practiced in the US, most likely at the pre-natal stage.

The US has no law against pre-natal sex determination

and since 2005, sexing through a blood test as early as five weeks after conception has been marketed directly to consumers in the US. Some home-testing kits like GenSelect and Gender Mentor have even found their way from the US to India. In fact, so sought after was Gender Mentor in rural Punjab that it came to be popularly known as jantar mantar. Techniques like pre-implan-

tation genetic diagnosis (PGD) are also popular with Indians here as well as those settled in the US. But gender testing isn't just about painting the nursery or picking the right colour for baby clothes, it's about aborting the unwanted foetuses. And the demographic consequences of this are evident. The all-India sex ratio is 927 girls for 1,000 boys, which puts the country right at the bottom of the global charts, worse off than coun-

tries like Nigeria (965) and neighbouring Pakistan (958). With the trend spreading to the US, activists like Sabu George of the Centre for Women's Development Studies say there is reason to worry. "Technology is simply making it easier to eliminate the girl child. And in a society where the girl itself is seen as a genetic product to be eliminated, this has frightening implications," he says.

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