

MARXIST LENINIST PARTY OF INDIA (RED FLAG)

CENTRAL COMMITTEE

Cochin, 2nd June 2021

IN SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF LAKSHADWEEP

The life and amity of the people in the union territory of Lakshadweep face jeopardy as the acting Administrator Mr Praful Khoda Patel has unleashed a scathing attack upon the rights of islanders slapping draconian rules upon them in order to push the communal fascist agenda of saffronisation and the imperialist globalisation policies of promoting the business interests of the International Finance Capital-Monopoly Capital forces.

By way of a rule, the Lakshadweep Administration has banned the slaughter of cow, calf, bull and buffalo and has prohibited the sale, transport and storage of beef and beef products with penalties including a jail term up to one year and a fine of Rs 10,000. This rule is a direct infringement on the culture and eating habits of the people of Lakshadweep. The rule was decided without consultation with local bodies. The administration has curtailed the diet of the school students by omitting non vegetarian food from the menu of their noon meal. This is an outrageous attack upon the food habits of the islanders who eat non vegetarian food including beef, with a view to impose saffronisation of social life and culture.

The Administration has brought in Draft Panchayat Regulation 2021 with the aim to bar people with more than two children from contesting elections to the gram panchayat. For those who already have more than two children, the regulation will disqualify them if they have further children after the date on which the rule comes into effect. This amounts to the breach of the right to peoples representation.

The Administration has allowed liquor to be served at resorts on inhabited islands, in effect nullifying the prohibition of liquor that was on all inhabited islands. Liquor was served only at resorts on the uninhabited Bangaram island. The move will lead to a proliferation of liquor sales on the inhabited islands, which had been observing near-prohibition until now. This again is to rupture provoke the religious and social sentiments of a 99% Muslim population of the islands.

The Administration has brought in a draft Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation (LDAR). It is purported to declare 'planning areas' and to constitute 'planning and development authorities' for preparing a land use map and register, ostensibly for large projects. The notification gives powers to the Administration to remove small landholdings of Scheduled Tribe residents. The draft notification strictures that impose compulsory renewal of the registration of lease of land failing which will attract exorbitant fines and surcharges. These provisions of the notification totally nullify the right to ownership of land for the people of Lakshadweep islands and provide opportunity for international and domestic monopoly capitalist forces to grab the islanders' land.

The administration has put up the draft Lakshadweep Prevention of Anti-Social Activities Regulation. This provides for powers to detain a person without legal representation for up to one year to prevent him from “acting in any manner prejudicial to the maintenance of public order”. The administration argues that the regulation is required to keep the “youth from getting misguided by illegal businesses”. It is evident that such law in a UT with one of the lowest crime rates in the country has been brought in to arrest those who oppose the draconian measures being adopted by the Administration, those who do democratic protests against the CAA-like fascist legislations and other anti-people policies of the government.

For a year, Lakshadweep did not record any case of Covid-19 , because of following strict quarantine protocols and testing of all people who enter the islands. Last December, this was diluted by doing away with mandatory quarantine, for those who enter the islands, at Kochi and Kavaratti. Instead, anyone with a negative RT-PCR certificate issued in the previous 48 hours has been permitted to travel to Lakshadweep. The Administration said the SOPs were changed in accordance with Home Ministry rules and to allow for reopening of the economy. The change caused a spurt in infections in subsequent months. As of May 28, the Union Territory has reported over 7,300 cases and 28 deaths. This is a clear picture regarding the disregard to the peoples health and the character of the Administration that cater the profit fetish tourism business even jeopardising the scientific handling of the Covid 19 pandemic.

Adding to all the above said, it is to be vigilant of the fact that, the geo strategic interests of US imperialism, express in the actions and deployments of their naval and associated military forces by their own and as part of the QUAD (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue), the new US led military formation comprising of Japan, Australia and India, have set an eye upon the islands. The dispossession of land ownership rights of people of the island has to be seriously weighed in such a background too.

Now, the people living in the Union Territory of Lakshadweep are on a struggle-path against the said acts of the Administrator Mr Praful Khoda Patel and are demanding that he be relieved of administration of Lakshadweep. They also demand the nullifying of all the orders issued by the said administrator and also the repealing of all the draft rules and notifications put forth by the said administrator.

We call upon all the progressive, secular, democratic and truly patriotic forces to rally in solidarity with the people of the Union Territory of Lakshadweep coming forth to defend their rights and for accomplishing their demands.

(Signed)
MS JAYAKUMAR
General Secretary