

Wrangling over the Capital of AP

People should not fall prey to machinations of ruling classes' groups!

The attempt to shift the capital of AP has been reflecting the deep division among the groups of ruling classes to meet their vested interests. Chandrababu Naidu used carrot and stick to take away fertile lands in the name of capital construction. After coming to the power in AP, YSR Congress Party (YCP) is playing a different game with the lives of people in the name of decentralization of governance to achieve development. The TDP government had not yielded to the advice of intellectuals and democrats that 3 to 5 thousand acres of government lands are available for the construction of capital between Vijayawada and Guntur. The then CM imposed Amaravati as the capital of AP by unanimously passing the resolution to that effect in the legislative assembly. The economic situation in AP worsened due to agricultural and industrial crisis. Instead of taking corrective measures, C Naidu had placated the construction of world class capital at Amaravati as the panacea and it will lead the state into a bright. Both the groups are competing to implement the orders from the World Bank in the name of development. They have no plan or vision to put AP on a path of self reliant and sustainable development.

Both the groups of ruling classes are using media to propagate that the selfish interests of the local contractors, real estate business and corrupt politicians, who are subservient to the world market forces and Indian big bourgeoisie, as the interests of people. All this is part of attempts to divert the attention of people from the real and basic issues that are plaguing the lives of people.

The former CM, Naidu stoked fear among the rich farmers that there would be a chaotic future if they did not allow construction of capital on their lands and at the same time fanned hopes that they can sell their land in the measures of square feet instead of acres at exorbitant prices once the capital is constructed. Thus the remaining 90 per cent of small and marginal farmers had to surrender their lands as there was no alternative, and left their villages where they lived for generations. The agricultural labourers and lease farmers had migrated to other places in search of work.

The BJP after coming to the power in 2014 had not fulfilled the very demand they made and the then UPA government promised at the time of bifurcation of AP that it will be given the special category status. Likewise, instead of fulfilling the commitments made by the earlier government, the present CM, JM Reddy raised the bogey of decentralization of governance. The decentralization of governance had begun long back in the country in the name of panchayats, zillaparishads and co-operatives. No benefit accrued to the people from that type of decentralization. It only created a leader-bureaucrat nexus at all levels of governance. Hence the decentralization of governance, the decentralization of powers and decentralization of development are not one and the same which are in the present context are being used as synonyms.

The CPI (ML) has not opposed the selection of Amaravati region as the capital of AP. But it did not agree with the groundless claims made by ex-CM Naidu that a world class city would be built and put before the people its criticism and alternative before the people.

The TDP government headed by Naidu took away 33,000 acres in the capital region and another 12 lakh acres in the districts in the name of forming land banks for SEZs, ports, airports and various projects to handover them to corporates. So there will not be any difference if the governance comes from one place or three places. The division of administrative offices is not going to benefit the people.

The leaders belonging to both the groups of ruling classes have lands in and around Visakhapatnam. They had long back in their possession 50 to 100 acres lands in the districts of Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam. The shifting of capital is not a people's issue. It is a problem between the already established capitalists and newly emerged capitalists in AP. Both of them wanted political power to consolidate their financial base as most of them amassed their riches by looting the exchequer. We appeal to the people not to be influenced by the caste and regional sentiments and hatreds being raked up by these two ruling groups.

We appeal to the people to examine the real problems being faced by the people:

1. The basic issue of land to the rural poor and rehabilitation when displaced from their lands;
2. The problems of peasants such as indebtedness, low prices for their produce, soaring input costs etc;

3. The problems of retrenchment, closure of industries and attacks on the rights of workers;
4. Growing unemployment;
5. Oppression and attacks on women, dalits and adivasis;
6. Opposing the domination, exploitation and wars instigated by US imperialism;

Both the ruling class groups are only focusing on diverting the people's attention from these basic problems. Both TDP and YCP are not coming forth with their stand on these basic problems. Also they have also not coming out on burning political issues such as growing fascist type rule at the centre, its attack on whatever federal system that existed, the problem of funds to be provided by the centre to AP after its bifurcation etc. Instead of struggling to realize these problems, both the parties are engaged in shadow boxing. The people are keenly observing these developments.

We call upon the people to launch struggles on the basic issues. We are strongly condemning the brutal repression unleashed on the agitating women and farmers in Amaravati region. We once again appeal to the people not to fall prey to caste and regional hatred being raked up by the ruling classes.

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**With revolutionary greeting,
A.P. State Committee
CPI (ML)**
