

NATIONAL ALLIANCE OF PEOPLE'S MOVEMENTS

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Mumbai Update

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- **Hundreds of representative citizens take it upon themselves to declare that we are in a 'State of Emergency' and announce a series of measures to counteract the crisis.**
- **To strengthen struggle against abrogation of citizen's rights, press censorship, regionalism and press for all encompassing equity & justice based development.**
- **Delegation meets Hon'ble Governor-Maharashtra & Hon'ble President Smt. Pratibha Tai Patil.**

Hundreds of people assembled at Mumbai Marathi Patrakar Sangh on 26th June to observe 33rd anniversary of Emergency. Amongst those who were present included veteran journalist Prabash Joshi ji, Adv. Y.P Singh, Dr. Adsule,

Speaker after speaker reiterated the fact that our country, today is at the crossroads, for a multitude of reasons. While on the one hand the city lines are gleaming with glossy malls, plush high rises, immaculate roads, flyovers and other 'structures of growth', a vast majority of the rest of the nation, presents a grim reality, which the State planners and policymakers would love to brush under the carpet. The inability of the State to address and bring to halt farmer suicide's points towards distorted priorities. Today while one is to witness this ever growing disparity amongst cross sections of the society with one section of the society growing at the cost of the other, conflicts are bound to rise.

Prabash Joshi, asking people to wage struggle against the ever widening disparity stressed the need of presurising our governments to behave in constitutional manner. While former IPS officer, Adv Y.P Singh drew attention towards the fact that how rights of people are being snatched away on the basis of false affidavits that are filed by governmental authorities in courts.

In the evening a delegation consisting of members of Dharavi Bet Bachao Sangharsh Samiti, Tata Dharn Ghrasth Sangarsh Samiti, Ghar Bachao Ghar Banao Andolan, Upper Vardha Bandh Ghrasth, Tushar Gandhi, Medha Patkar, Prabash Joshi and others met Hon'ble Governor-Maharashtra & Hon'ble President Smt. Pratibha Tai Patil. Hon'ble President was made aware of the opposition of people's movements & organisations to the proposed R&R Bill & Land Acquisition Act and also the suggested amendments were submitted to her. Hon'ble President's attention was drawn towards the hardships being faced by farmers, fisherfolk community, slum dwellers in the context of mis placed policies like SEZs, slum demolitions, price rise. Giving a patient hearing she assured the delegation of being considerate to the people's concerns

During the day, it was observed by various speakers that the State is disowning its most fundamental constitutional mandate and instead paving way for corporatization and privatization of all essential services. Today the State is hand in glove with corporates and builders in acquiring over fertile and habituated lands either under the farce of setting up of economic zones or for projects of 'urban renewal'. The end result being that a situation of undeclared war exists that has been unleashed on the slum dwellers, un-protected workers, farmers, dalits & women.

This has led to a state where people declare a sort of 'emergency'.

A Government declares a 'State of Emergency' when it cannot handle a situation, either due to incompetence or because it is truly beyond its control. Such a declaration entails the abrogation of citizens' rights, suspension of recourse to law, press censorship and investiture of special powers in the Executive Authority. State authorities invoke such sweeping powers, more often than not, to suppress people's democratic rights and civil liberties.

Quite unlike 1975, we are now in a real crisis-situation where the State has unleashed a kind of a war on the common people of this land, be they farmers, fisher people, factory workers, Adivasis, Dalits or women. That is borne out by untold violence and atrocities perpetrated on the people.

These atrocities are being exemplified through the case of Mulshi Maval Taluka where people were displaced 100 years back for the dams built by TATAs but are yet to receive any sort of compensation though Mumbai continues to receive un-interrupted supply from the same. Same is the status of slum dwellers of Mumbai who are to face the corrupt nexus of builders-politicians-bureaucrats who are all out to grab the last inch of land that is under them. In the name of slum rehabilitation, thousands have been displaced and land which was with them has been grabbed by the nexus to construct towers & shopping malls.

All this is, although not going unchallenged & is being questioned by the struggling populations. And these struggles are bringing people together on a common platform to raise collective voice against this unconstitutional, undemocratic and inhuman process of limited growth.

Thus, citizens today, from cross sections of the society from farmers to hawkers, slum dwellers to advocates take it upon them selves to declare that we are in a 'State of Emergency' and announce a series of measures to counteract the crisis.

Similar actions were held at various places including Delhi & Raipur not only to protest, but also to propagate our vision, our strength, and our alternatives, in the present crisis.

Santosh Thorat, Mohan Chavan, Simpreet Singh, N. Palkar, Prasad Bhagwe, Mukta Srivastava, Chandreshakar, Medha Patkar