

STARVING POOR TREK TO CITIES

SRI Y. B. Chavan speaking in the Lok Sabha, said that in the months ahead as a result

Where Human Lives Are Cheap

TWO men and two women, members of landless labour family, died one after another recently due to the excessive strain they underwent working on a famine relief work.

This was disclosed to newsmen by the Vice-President of the Ahmednagar Zilla Parishad recently. They could get neither medical aid nor monetary help to ease their distress.

The family members, hailing from the Wanjoli village, in Newasa taluka, were working at a metal-breaking centre at Ghodgaon, eight kilometres from their village.

One of the women who died had given birth to a child just one month before her death. She had to resume work within fifteen days of her delivery.

The family had left behind six children all below eleven years.

—The Indian Express, November 27

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Maya Pandurang Tike, a twenty-eight-year old fisherman from Alibag, Maharashtra, has been shot and killed.

Policemen were target shooting at the firing range at Kolaba fort—with no thought that a stray bullet could hit anyone of the fishermen near by. A bullet fired missed the target and directly hit Tike who was out in the sea fishing in a country-craft along with four others.

A few more bullets had gone off the target and fell near the other fishermen.

What price human life under Congress rule?

of the drought some areas of the country would have acute scarcity of drinking water and millions of cattle might perish.

In Sri Chavan's own State, Maharashtra, it is happening today. The people have faced three consecutive years of drought and still the Congress Government had made no preparation at all to face the food, and water famine.

Twenty million people in 25 districts are estimated to be very badly hit. Desperately looking for non-existent jobs, they cannot feed themselves, leave alone their cattle. There is no drinking water. In some 25 villages of Pathar area in the Sangamner taluka, for instance, the villagers have to trek three to six miles to find drinking water.

While hundreds of thousands of cattle have already perished—in Ahmednagar district alone, the figure is put at seven lakhs—the villagers are desperately migrating to the urban areas for food and water.

It is estimated that from the famine-hit areas in Western Maharashtra alone, the number of migrants will reach the staggering figure of 12.5 lakhs. This does not include possible migration from the Marathwada area. Sri Khadilkar has said that the trek to the cities from Ratnagiri alone involved about six lakh people, trying to escape the water-famine.

The pavements of Bombay and Poona are lined

by these families of the rural poor, forced to beg for food because they can't find any employment, open to every disease and epidemic, their reality mocking the glittering slogan of *garibi hatao*.

During the two years of drought, the rural poor somehow managed to eke out an existence selling their utensils and other household goods including whatever ornaments they had. This year they are forced to sell their precious plough animals—because there is no water and fodder prices have shot up fantastically. At the present rates, 400 per cent up, at least Rs. 15 a day is required to feed a pair of bullocks.

And so the bullocks are being sold for chicken-feed. In the Aurangabad market, bulls are being sold at Rs. 30 a head, a cow and calf for Rs. 75.

And in the markets of Bombay, while all other prices are zooming upward, the price of beef has come down. With herds of cattle being driven in every day by the drought-hit peasants, a kilo of beef is available at about Rs. two and the price is expected to go further down if the distress sales of cattle continue.

The Congress rulers plead for time. When the people have no food or water and their cattle are dying in their thousands, the Congress rulers ask them to be patient and view their plight "in the national perspective".

Myself and the Communist Party of India 1920-1929

by Muzaffar Ahmad

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MARCHING TO "SOCIALISM"

The total foreign private investment in India at the end of March 1971 was tentatively estimated at Rs. 1319.7 crores, the Finance Minister, Mr. Y. B. Chavan, said in the Lok Sabha. The firm figure at the end of 1969 was Rs. 1258.8 crores while the quick estimates for the years ending March 1970 and March 1971 were Rs. 1289 and Rs. 1319 crores.

The Times of India, November 29

The Minister of State for Planning, Mr. Mohan Dhar said in the Lok Sabha that people living below the poverty line were defined as those whose per capita monthly expenditure was less than Rs. 20 in the rural areas and Rs. 30 in the urban areas at the 1964-65 price level.

The Hindustan Times, November 30

The all-India figure for people living below the poverty line are 44.57 per cent in the rural areas and 51.34 per cent in the urban areas.

Data available for 1964-65 for the various States (in percentage of population for rural and urban) are :

States	Rural area (less than Rs. 20 per capita monthly expenditure)	Urban area (less than Rs. 30 per capita monthly expenditure)
Andhra Pradesh	48.50	57.61
Assam	38.30	48.51
Bihar	42.80	55.55
Gujarat	45.59	54.48
Haryana	21.16	48.11
Jammu and Kashmir	26.63	61.38
Kerala	60.82	66.36
Madhya Pradesh	46.32	54.73
Tamil Nadu	50.94	55.16
Maharashtra	47.02	43.93
Mysore	48.99	51.81
Orissa	62.04	57.58
Punjab	22.69	43.39
Rajasthan	35.29	51.41
Uttar Pradesh	41.61	62.56
West Bengal	50.19	40.18
Union Territories	33.24	24.12

—Lok Sabha proceedings, Patriot, November 30

An agricultural labourer (aged thirty), his wife (aged twentyseven) and their three children (aged ten, eight and five respectively) were found dead in the hut of a relative in Sellampalayam village near Perambalur on November 19. It is alleged that on account of poverty the worker mixed insecticide in milk and gave it to his wife and three children and later drank it himself.

The Hindu, November 22

In relation to the big houses the Government remains committed to the prevention of monopoly and concentration of economic power. But the constraints in their growth will be eased if they agree to expand in the joint sector framework. This is implied in the speech he [Mr. D. P. Dhar] made in Bombay asking them to participate in "evolving solutions to India's social and economic problems."

The Times of India, November 29

"While the export value at Rs. 1607 crores in 1971-72 represented a growth rate of 4.6 per cent over the preceding year as against the Four Year Plan target of seven per cent, the import bill mounted by about eleven per cent at Rs. 1812 crores. The trade deficit thus widened to Rs. 205 crores as against Rs. 99 crores."

—Mr. K. T. Satarwala, Chairman of the Indian Institute of Foreign Trade, addressing the annual general meeting of the Institute, New Delhi, November 28.