

## The long march home

For the State, the migrant worker is at once an 'asset' a supply and a liability in terms of resource distribution

In Indian migrant workers' long, brutal march, echoes of Mexican migrants' trek through Sonoran

# The Epidemic, Migrants & the Media: A Workshop

Bhargabi

May Day in times of pandemic!  
A long march for Indian migrant workers

Organized by  
**Calcutta Research Group**

In collaboration with

Institute for Human Sciences, Vienna

**4-5 December 2020, Kolkata**

Venue: Rang Darbar, Swabhumi

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Migrants keep waiting as Indian authorities lockdown imposed in the wake of coronavirus



▲ On the outskirts of Allahabad in Uttar Pradesh, Nidhi Patel and her husband, Vikas Patel, centre right, both migrant workers, are seen walking along a path. Photo: AP

*This workshop is a part of CRG's programme on migration and forced migration studies supported by the Rosa Luxemburg Stiftung (RLS), the IWM, Vienna, and several other institutes and universities in India.*

As India announced a 21-

lockdown in the wake of coronavirus, lakhs of

migrant workers were rendered jobless and homeless in several States they were working. They weren't welcomed in their hometowns as well.

during the Covid-19 lockdown

# DAY 1: December 4, 2020

3:30-4:00 pm: Registration and tea

4:00-7:15 pm: Inaugural session

**Chair:** Arup Kumar Sen, *Serampore College & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

4:00-4:15 pm: **Welcome Address** by Byasdeb Dasgupta, *University of Kalyani & President, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

4:15-5:15 pm: **Keynote Address** by AS Panneerselvan, *The Hindu & Panos South Asia*

5:15-5:45 pm: **Discussion on CRG Media Readers:** Introduction to CRG's previous media readers by Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*, followed by introductory remarks on the media reader compiled and edited by Bharat Bhushan, *Senior Journalist, Delhi & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* and discussed by Rajat Roy, *Senior Journalist & Calcutta Research Group*

5:45-6:00 pm: **Book Release:**  
“**Situating Social Media: Gender, Caste, Protest, Solidarity**” edited by Samata Biswas, *The Sanskrit College and University, Kolkata & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata* and Atig Ghosh, *Visva-Bharati University, Shantiniketan & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

Book release by Shoaib Daniyal, *Scroll.in, Delhi*

6:00-7:15 pm: **Documentary Screening:** Calcutta: A Migrant City I & II

## DAY 2: December 5, 2020

### 9:30-10:30 am: Session One: **Covering Migrants in the Time of an Epidemic: Reports from Different States**

The opening session will focus on the experiences of journalists in covering the diverse problems faced by migrant workers returning to their home states after lockdown. How have media narratives during the pandemic drawn attention to already existing faultlines in the state's treatment of migrant workers?

**Moderator:** Snigdendu Bhattacharya, *Senior Journalist, Kolkata*

**Presenters:**

Sudipta Sengupta, *4thPillars, Kolkata*

Farhana Ahmed, *The Assam Tribune, Lakhimpur*

10:30-10:45 am: Tea Break

### 10:45 am-11:45 pm: Session Two: **Borders and Statelessness**

After lockdown, migrants have often been barred from entering their home state where they can claim their full rights. They come to occupy a no-man's land in this transition. What are the different forms the border takes during the migrant crisis and how has this been documented by media persons and researchers?

**Moderator:** Sabyasachi Basu Ray Chaudhury, *Rabindra Bharati University & Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

**Presenters:**

Vaishali Barua, *Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi*

Manjira Saha, *Independent Researcher & Journalist, Shyamnagar*

11:45-12:00 pm: Tea Break

### 12:00– 1:30 pm: Session Three: **Media, Images & the Migrant Crisis**

It was media images that first grabbed the nation's attention and became a definitive aspect of the migrant crisis. This session will look at the representation of migrants through different mediums, primarily visual media, and discuss their impact. How have images been mobilised in different ways and to what end?

**Moderator:** Gopal Krishna, *Lawyer & Independent Researcher, Patna*

**Presenters:**

Ria De, *Dalit Camera, Kolkata*

Panini Anand, *Executive Editor, AajTak Digital, Delhi*

Valay Singh, *Independent Journalist, Delhi*

1:30-2:30 pm: Lunch

**2:30-4:00 pm: Session Four: Presentation by CRG Media Fellows**

The issues discussed are the caste question among migrants in Delhi, Noida and Western UP; interviews with returning migrants from West Bengal on the impetus to migrate; an overview of the implementation of labour law compliance rules; and an in-depth study of the dwelling conditions of migrant workers in Kolkata.

**Moderator:** Suvojit Bagchi, *Senior Journalist, Kolkata*

**Presenters:**

Amit Sengupta, *Hardnews, Delhi*

Geetika Mishra, *101 Reporters, Darbhanga*

Swati Bhattacharjee, *Anandabazar Patrika, Kolkata* & Abhijnan Sarkar, *Documentary Filmmaker, Kolkata*

Debashis Aich, *GroundXero, Kolkata*

**4:00-4:15: Tea Break**

**4:15-5:45 pm: Session Five: Media, State and the Migrants**

How have migrants been depicted in the media as rights-bearing subjects during their long march? How has the media covered workers' rights and narratives of resistance during the pandemic? Through such questions, this session will aim to uncover the relation between media, state and the migrants.

**Moderator:** Shoaib Daniyal, *Scroll.in, Delhi*

**Presenters:**

Sudarshana Chakraborty, *GroundXero, Kolkata*

Shreya Ghosh, *Migrant Workers Solidarity Network, Delhi*

Ronak Chhabra, *NewsClick.in, Delhi*

**5:45-6:00 pm: Tea Break**

**6:00-7:00 pm: Concluding Session**

**Chair:** Ranabir Samaddar, *Distinguished Chair of Migration & Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

**6:00-6:45 pm: Closing Panel: Media, Migrants and the Pandemic in Europe**

**Speakers:**

Ruth Wodak, *University of Vienna, Vienna*

Mohammed Hamarsha, *Al-Shabaka: The Palestinian Policy Network, Paris*

**6:45-6:55 pm:** Closing remarks by Ranabir Samaddar, *Distinguished Chair of Migration & Forced Migration Studies, Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*

**6:55-7:00 pm:** Vote of Thanks by Piya Srinivasan, *Calcutta Research Group, Kolkata*