

13th AIDWA All India Conference to empower Women's Emancipation Struggles in India

Struggle in unity for equality

The 13th All India Conference of the All India Democratic Women's Association (AIDWA) to be held in Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala from the 6 to 9 January 2023 is of special significance in the present socio-political climate of our country. The civil and labour rights of women are being scattered to the winds, and gender equality has reached a new low under the RSS-backed Modi government. The slogan of the Conference, "Struggle in Unity for Equality" gains new meaning under these circumstances. AIDWA, the largest organised women's movement of the country is holding its highest conference this week. 850 delegates from 25 states and union territories will be participating in the conference. The conference will discuss the grave and contemporary issues faced by Indian women, including many issues such as attempts to destroy the constitution, attitudes that endanger secularism and democracy, saffronization of the education sector, increasing consumption of drugs, destruction of scientific temper and spread of superstition. The conference will review the impact of the anti-women, anti-people and communal policies of the Modi government.

Six commission papers will be discussed by the conference in depth. The commission papers on relevant topics have been prepared in advance, and the primary discussions on them have been done at state levels. The papers are as follows: 1) The Freedom Struggle and Women's Movement, 2) The NEP and its Impact on Women, 3) Climate Change and Women, 4) Rights of the Girl Child, 5) Employment and Women, and 6) Women's Rights and the Question of Unity.

AIDWA will also felicitate 'Symbols of Resistance' during the Inaugural Session. The symbols of resistance who will be honoured at the conference are Phulora Mondal from West Bengal who is a survivor of TMC atrocities; Sheela Butana who is a leader of the farmers' movement from Haryana; Samyukta Shetty who was affected by and organised women against the microfinance institutions from Odisha; Shakuntala who is a leader of the anganwadi struggle from Haryana and Revathi who is a survivor of violence from Tamil Nadu.

The special invitees to the conference include Teesta Setalwad, civil rights activist, economist Madhura Swaminathan, Indu Agnihothri, women's movement pioneer, Keerti Singh, Archana Prasad and others.

There will be a Conference Declaration Procession held on January 4, at 4 PM from Overbridge to Martyrs Memorial, Palayam. On January 5, there will be the Torch Flame Procession,

Flagpole March and Flag March which will be widely attended by women comrades. The Flag March will start at S. Saradamma Memorial, Karamana and will be inaugurated by K. K. Shailaja, Central Committee Member of AIDWA. The Torch Flame Procession will start from Com. Ammu Martyr Memorial, Vazhamuttom and will be inaugurated by P. Satheedevi, All India Joint Secretary. The Flagpost March will start from Com. Devaki Warrier Memorial, Medical College and will be inaugurated by Susan Kodi, State President of AIDWA. The three marches will conclude at Mallu Swarajyam Nagar (Putharikkandam Maidan), where P.K. Sreemathi, Chairperson of the Organising Committee and All India Vice President of AIDWA will raise the flag of the conference. Torches will be brought from the twelve venues of the earlier national conferences to the 13th conference.

The conference will begin on January 6, Friday. The venue for the delegation meeting in Tagore Hall has been named as M.C. Josephine Nagar. The Conference will be inaugurated by Mallika Sarabhai, Chancellor of the Kerala Kala Mandalam Public Deemed University, a world renowned dancer and an activist who has consistently and bravely opposed communal politics in Gujarat. The flag of the organisation will be hoisted by AIDWA President Malini Bhattacharya on 6 January at the conference venue

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan will inaugurate the concluding public meeting on January 9. The conference culminates with a demonstration and public gathering attended by one lakh women.

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P.K. Sreemathi