

## For Favour of Publication

**Patna, June 21.** Most liberal democracies in the world are characterized by increasing authoritarianism and political polarization. India happens to be one of them. We falsely believe that authoritarianism is not a real threat in India. This was the assessment of distinguished political scientist, Professor Pratap Bhanu Mehta, Laurence S. Rockefeller Visiting Professor at Princeton University, USA, while he was delivering the Third Shaibal Gupta Memorial Lecture on **The Crisis of Representative Democracy: India in Comparative Perspective** organized by the Asian Development Research Institute (ADRI) today.

Speaking on the occasion, Professor Mehta opined “legitimation of the representative form of government is becoming difficult to justify in nations like France, India, Iran, etc. and things seem to be functioning only on the surface.” Echoing the thoughts of Late Dr Shaibal Gupta, he said that the foundation of democracy is to treat each other as free and equal citizens.

Professor Mehta further added that there is a collapse of the authority of the legislatures and accountability all over the world. Referring to India, he said “India now has a *de facto* Presidential form of government.” On the role of the Press, he was of the view that media is under private commercial control and they determine what information is shared, etc. However, social media has empowered ordinary citizens in a way we did not imagine by breaking the power of oligarchies, etc., he added.

He mentioned that social movements have disappeared since the 1970s. At the same time, he mentioned that the caste census data would not lead to much value addition.

The state has become more effective with an increase in state capacity over the last 10-15 years.

In his Presidential Address, acclaimed litterateur Professor Arun Kamal remarked that it is not possible to have a democracy in a fragmented society. The noted surgeon Dr. A.A. Hai, in his capacity as the Chief Guest of the event, felicitated Professor Mehta.

Earlier, Dr. Ashmita Gupta (daughter of late Dr. Shaibal Gupta) of ADRI welcomed the distinguished guests and anchored the session. In this august gathering that got together for the Memorial Lecture, academicians, bureaucrats, and representatives of civil societies from all cross-sections were present. Some of the prominent participants were Sri Nikhil Kumar (former Governor), Shivanand Tiwari, former MP; Shree Tripurari Sharan, State Information Commissioner; Shree Dipak Kumar Singh, ACS, Department of Co-operatives; Tarun Kumar, Principal, Patna College.

(Anjani K Verma)