



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## **On the May Day 2017; CITU**

### **Conveys Greetings to:**

- **Workers and Other Toiling People of India**
- **International Working Class Movement**
- **Fraternal Trade Unions & Other Mass Organisations**
- **Its Units & Federations; and**
- **Its Fighting Cadres at All Levels**

### **Demands for**

- **Social Justice for all Workers & the People**

### **Recalls**

- **Great October Revolution in its Centenary Year**

### **Reiterates**

- **Its Commitment to Socialism**

## **In Solidarity with The Persecuted Workers fighting For Their Rights & Social Justice**



**CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen Addressing  
Solidarity Meeting for Maruti Suzuki Workers at Gurgaon (Report Page 15)**

# In Solidarity with Maruti Suzuki Workers

(Report Page 15 - 17)



Delhi



Ludhiana, Punjab



Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh



Guwahati, Assam



Jaipur, Rajasthan



Kannur, Kerala



Hyderabad, Telangana



Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh



Chennai, Tamilnadu

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**WORKING CLASS****MAY 2017****EDITORIAL BOARD****Editor****K. Hemalata****Working Editor****J.S. Majumdar****Members****Tapan Sen****A.K. Padmanabhan****Amitava Guha**

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## Today's May Day Struggle in India

The essence of May Day, the international workers day, lies in the workers struggle for social justice, then and now. The demand for legal limitation of working hours in the capitalist system of production was and is for the recognition of the fact that a worker is not merely a productive unit; but is a creative unit being partner of the human society and its development.

The demand for social justice including providing food, shelter, education, health, rest, recreation and cultural activities are not gratis of the owners of the production units; but are the legal rights of all those who actually produce – the workers, peasants, agricultural workers, self employed etc - and is the responsibility of the nation-state.

The inherent conflict for super profits by the corporates and the struggle for social justice world over continue till it was resolved in a socialist state of the working class as was established by the Great October Revolution, whose centenary year we are celebrating now.

In this aggressive neoliberal stage of capitalism world over today, there are concentrated attacks on the workers' established legal rights and cuts in social security benefits of the workers and other toiling sections. The workers and toiling people's struggle is also intensified world over.

However, aggressive rightist, fascistic and racist, ideologies are taking over political space misdirecting workers and people's miseries into divisive channels; while the international finance capital led neoliberalism is trying to resolve the world economic crisis by heaping more miseries on the workers and other toiling sections.

Situation is no different in India – attacks on labour rights and social security benefits of the workers and other toiling sections - aggravated by rapid demolition of pre-neoliberal financial, industrial and industrial relation structures. Added to this is rapid advancement of rightist communal forces occupying political space misdirecting workers and other toiling sections in divisive channels.

The struggle for social justice is not sufficient today unless it is combined with the struggle of the workers and all other toiling sections fighting against the communal and divisive forces. Both are inseparable. Struggle for social justice and people's unity shall stand opposed to corporate-communal combine.



## **Ericsson – The Multinational Cherry-Pickers**

In a letter to the prime minister on 10 April, CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, MP called the multinational company Ericsson as the cherry-pickers attempting to close its 22 years functional manufacturing unit at Jaipur in Rajasthan, taking advantage of tax concession all these years, and now shifting to Pune in Maharashtra already establishing a manufacturing unit there through a vendor company showing as if it is a new manufacturing unit to take advantage of 7 years tax concession misusing the ‘Make in India’ programme which is meant for greenfield (new) manufacturing units.

Ericsson has already transferred its machines and equipments from its Jaipur factory to Pune factory and adopted dubious method of transferring the unit as sold to its frontal vendor company as a step for closure of the Jaipur factory rendering about 250 permanent and 700 contract workers out of jobs.

In his letter to the PM, Tapan Sen further wrote, *“this is what has been happening..in almost all the Export Processing Zones, subsequently renamed as Special Economic Zones where many of the industrial units formally closed down after the tax-holiday period is over and restarted in the same premise with a different signboard, with a new set of workers...I strongly feel, such anarchy should not be allowed to recur in case of ‘Make in India’ initiatives and related incentives.”*

Tapan Sen urged PM’s intervention to allow ‘Make in India’ programme and consequent incentives being abused and *“get the case of Ericsson India Private Ltd critically and comprehensively examined and restrain the company from its dubious game of cherry-picking at the cost of Govt. exchequer and also to protect the livelihood of the concerned workers.”*

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### **Notice**

#### **Working Committee Meeting**

Time & Date: 10AM, 14 July – 2 PM, 16 July, 2017  
Place: Shimla, Himachal Pradesh (Exact location will be communicated later)  
Agenda: 1. Presidential Address  
2. Report of the General Secretary  
3. Future course of campaign and struggles  
4. Amendment of CITU Constitution  
5. Any other issue with the permission of Chair

**Note:**

1. The meeting of CITU Working Committee level Working Women Coordination Committee (WWCC) with women office bearers, WC members and conveners of state WWCC will be held on 13 July 2017 in Shimla.
2. WCMs should prepare their travel plan, arrange both way journey ticket; and inform the Reception Committee of WCM for receiving them at Shimla:

C/O Himachal Pradesh State Committee of CITU  
Room no 9 Bawa Building; Shimla 171003;  
Phone: 0177-2653019, email id> [cituhp@gmail.com](mailto:cituhp@gmail.com)  
Mobile: Jagat Ram, President : 09418466202,  
Prem Gautam, General Secretary: 09418471512  
Vijender Mehra, Secretary: 09418119166

**Tapan Sen**  
**General Secretary**

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# **CITU MAY DAY MANIFESTO, 2017**

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**On this May Day 2017**

Being observed in the centenary year  
Of the Great October Revolution,

## **CITU**

EXTENDS its revolutionary greetings to the working class and toiling people across the world and in our own country, India;

EXPRESSES solidarity with the working class and people of all the continents in their fight against the exploitative international finance driven neoliberal capitalist order;

GREETs the people in the socialist countries and extends solidarity with their struggles in defence of socialism;

REAFFIRMS its full confidence that imperialist conspiracies to undermine socialism and restore capitalism in these countries would be decisively defeated; that the defensive struggles of today will get heightened into struggles aiming at the emancipation of the working class and the toiling people from the exploitative capitalist system

REASSERTS its commitment to socialism and its resolve to continue its struggle for a society free from exploitation by one human being by another

REITERATES its support and solidarity with the heroic struggle of the Palestinian on their just demands; condemns the continuing killing, torture and arrests of Palestinians by Israel; demands recognition of independent sovereign state of Palestine with 1967 borders and Jerusalem as its capital

STRONGLY DENOUNCES US imperialism led wars in different parts of the globe including in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Libya, Iraq etc killing and maiming hundreds of thousands of unarmed people, most of them women and children, to establish US hegemony over the strategic natural resources and areas in the world; millions have been rendered homeless and destitute and forced to seek refuge elsewhere

REAFFIRMS its determination to fight imperialism and its aggressive interventions with all its might; reiterates its conviction that the fight against imperialism is an integral part of the class struggle against exploitation

RECALLS the contributions of the World Federation of Trade Unions in leading the international working class struggles against imperialism; commits itself to effectively carry out the direction of the 17<sup>th</sup> Congress of WFTU and support all its efforts to defend the rights of the working class and attain its emancipation from all exploitation

**On this May Day 2017**

## **CITU**

NOTES that the global economic crisis continues unabated; growth has not picked up; whatever growth is there, its gain is wholly expropriated by the capitalists; unemployment, particularly youth unemployment continues to be at alarming levels; inequalities are growing to dangerous levels; 8 richest men in the world own the same wealth as half of the world's population; the persistent attempts of the ruling classes to tide over the crisis, to protect and increase their profits, by attacking the working and living conditions of the toiling people and their hard won rights, by promoting loot of national assets by the national and multinational corporations, have ultimately proved to be futile and counterproductive;

OBSERVES that the impact of the global crisis on the conditions of the common people and the poor is expressed in the political developments in different countries as Brexit, and the uncertainty of some other countries like Italy and Greece continuing in the European Union, the rise of right wing forces in countries like France, Austria, the Netherlands etc; attacks on emigrants' and migrant workers' livelihood and rights by various regimes in the West, the USA in particular with a racist overtone have increased;

EMPHASISES that this systemic crisis exposes the total failure and inability of the capitalist system in the full and proper use of the precious human resources to improve the well being of humanity; the unfettered exploitation of natural resources without any concern about its impact on environment and livelihood of millions

of people, large numbers of them indigenous and tribals, by the capitalist class indicates the incapability of the system for sustainable development;

POINTS OUT that the benefits of the huge advances made in science and technology have remained inaccessible for the vast sections of people, particularly the poor because of the greed for profits which is the driving force of the capitalist system; millions of people across the world suffer from poverty, illiteracy, ill health, lack of housing and other basic necessities of life even in this 21<sup>st</sup> century; new technologies like robotics, artificial intelligence etc are utilised to replace millions of workers, not to lighten their burden, despite the huge increase in productivity, thus worsening the already alarming unemployment situation;

DEMANDS that the working hours be brought down to 35 hours per week, with four shifts a day to promote employment generation and as an immediate means to address the serious unemployment across the world, particularly among the youth;

OBSERVES that the increasing discontent and anger of the people against the impact of the pro corporate and pro rich neoliberal policies, against the widening income disparities have led to their growing participation in struggles to defend their working conditions and livelihoods; increasing sections of people – workers, peasants, youth, unemployed, women - are getting gradually disillusioned with the capitalist model of development even in the advanced capitalist countries; according to a recent survey by Harvard University 51% of young people between the ages of 18 and 29 in the US do not support capitalism; 33% supported socialism; as per another survey in the UK, 39% viewed capitalism unfavourably and only 33% viewed it favourably while 36% viewed socialism favourably and 32% viewed it negatively;

NOTES with utmost concern that right wing, retrograde, reactionary and racist forces are gaining ground in several countries including our own country India in the absence of a strong progressive and left alternative; disgruntled youth are being lured into terrorist activities; attempts are being made by these right wing forces to divert peoples' anger into fratricidal fights against one another, to prevent it being channelised into united struggles against the discredited neoliberal regime and the capitalist system itself;

PLEDGES to direct all its resources and energies to spread awareness among the working class about the real face of the exploitative capitalist system and the forces that seek to sustain it; reiterates its commitment to rouse the working class to the urgent need to uproot the capitalist system and to prepare it for the ultimate struggle to end all exploitation

## **On this May Day 2017**

### **CITU**

EXPRESSES deep concern and alarm at the rising authoritarian tendencies in our country, growing intolerance in society, the increasing attacks on all rational, scientific thought and dissenting voices by the communal forces and branding all opposition as 'anti national';

EXTENDS support to the surging struggles within the country against the attacks on democratic rights; condemns the attacks on students and universities expressing differing opinions or encouraging debate; supports the students, youth, Dalits and other sections of the people asserting their fundamental rights of freedom of expression;

SALUTES the working class and other toiling people of West Bengal for continuing to heroically resist the inhuman attacks of the TMC government and its goons on the democratic rights and livelihood of the people;

WARNS the people of our country, about the dangerous combination of neoliberal and venomous communal agendas being pursued and promoted by the BJP led Modi government at the centre aimed at creating slave like conditions for the workers to benefit the domestic and foreign corporates and big business on the one hand and weaken the struggles against the neoliberal policies by dividing people on the basis of religion, region, caste, etc and disrupt their unity, on the other;

The Modi-led government is extending bonanzas to the national and multinational corporations and big business houses through tax concessions and exemptions from labour laws and other laws of the land; it is rewarding the tax and bank loan defaulters; it is handing control over the nation's wealth – our public sector, our lands, our mines, our seas, our hills and our forests, and most of all, our people to the profit greedy corporates, both domestic and foreign, for unbridled exploitation.

The vast majority of workers and the peasants, the creators of wealth are being pushed into slavery and penury; they are denuded of their lands, their jobs, their rights and their livelihoods. Mockery is being made of all labour laws, hard won rights of the working class, by converting them into Codes; claims of providing social security are being made while in reality existing statutory benefits like PF and ESI are being sought to be erased; expenditure on social welfare benefits like ICDS, MGNREGA, NHM, Midday meal programme etc are being drastically cut with the ultimate motive of dismantling them all; public sector is being dismantled; privatisation and rampant contractorisation deny the Dalits and adivasis their statutory right to reservation; agrarian crisis and peasant suicides continue unabated; despite all the hype of 'Make in India', 'Start Up India' and 'Stand Up India', employment generation has, in reality, slowed down and in many areas declining

There is a serious attack on the basic democratic rights of the people. Dissent is sought to be curtailed. Voices that question are being suppressed. The victories in the recent assembly elections have further emboldened the RSS and its various communal outfits of which have been going on rampage physically attacking people, particularly the Muslim minorities on the pretext of 'cow protection', 'anti Romeo squads' etc; those who hold views opposed to theirs, those who stand for progressive, rational and scientific thinking are being branded 'anti national'.

It is the irony of our times that RSS, an organisation which had consciously kept itself aloof from the nation's independence struggle, today seeks to appropriate to itself the right to certify patriotism and nationalism; it is ironical that BJP, the party heading a government that is selling off the public sector, which was instrumental in our country attaining the present stage of industrial development, practically putting the entire national economy and asset on sale to corporate looters, a government acting thoroughly against our national interests, questions the patriotism of those who oppose such anti national policies! It is also an irony that the present Modi led government, which is succumbing to imperialist manoeuvres, which is surrendering and compromising our independent foreign policy lays claim to be the sole proprietor of nationalist credentials! And it is the greatest mockery of our times that this BJP led government, which has become a junior partner of US imperialism in its strategy to establish its hegemony in Asia pacific region, by entering into Logistic Support Agreement with USA, in a shameless compromise of our national interests, claims to be the sole upholder of national pride.

## **On this May Day 2017**

### **CITU**

**ASSERTS** that that majority and minority communalism and fundamentalism thrive on each other; both divide people, disrupt their unity, divert their attention from their real day to day issues, weaken their struggle to improve their lives; ultimately both help the exploiting classes; the communal acts of the Hindutva forces, in turn, increase the danger of minority fundamentalism and terrorism;

**REITERATES** its conviction that the struggle for defending, widening and consolidating working class unity and unity of the people against the communal, jingoist and disruptive forces is integral to the united struggle against neoliberal economic policies and their political proponents;

**STRESSES** the need for unity of the workers, poor peasants and agricultural workers to unite to fight the neoliberal order and the capitalist system that subjects all of them to intense exploitation;

**IS CONSCIOUS** that this conviction places upon its shoulders the task of uniting all sections of toiling people in the struggle against neo liberalism, communalism and fundamentalism and the politics that promote these; the task of advancing the struggle to achieve a comprehensive change in the correlation of class forces in favour of a Left Democratic Alternative

**EXHORTS** the working class of the country to take the lead in uniting all sections of toiling people - the peasants, agricultural workers, unemployed and youth; to take the struggle against the neoliberal agenda of the ruling classes to new heights; and to resist all attempts to disrupt their unity, whether in the name of religion, caste, region or gender.

**ASSURES** the working class and the people that it will continue to be in the forefront in all the efforts to protect the unity of the workers and the people and in all the efforts to safeguard the interests of the country and the nation

## On this May Day 2017

### CITU

#### Appeals To the working class of India to:

- Widen and deepen its unity irrespective of the existence or non existence of unions and trade union affiliations; irrespective of religion, region, caste, language, gender etc; to strengthen united struggles against the anti worker, anti people and anti national neoliberal policies of the government;
- Strengthen bonds of solidarity across sectors and states and stand as one to resist and defeat the attacks on their rights, on their jobs, on their livelihoods and living conditions;
- Take the struggle against the neoliberal regime to new heights to inflict its decisive defeat by forging unity with all the other sections of toiling people, the peasants, agricultural workers, artisans and other rural workers;
- Identify the real enemy of the working class and all sections of toiling people – the capitalist system and the politics and forces that promote the system; and to prepare themselves for the struggle to change this exploitative system;
- To be aware of the attacks on the democratic rights of the people and thwart the authoritarian tendencies;
- To be vigilant against all attempts to divide and disrupt its unity and the unity of the people, in whatsoever garb or colour it is presented and to promptly intervene to thwart all such attempts.

## On this May Day 2017

### CITU

#### Raises its banner in support of –

- *International Solidarity of the Working Class;*
- *Unity Against all Exploitation and Oppression.*

- *Down with Capitalism and Imperialism;*
- *Down with Imperialist led Neoliberal Globalisation*

***Long Live Socialism;  
Workers of the World Unite***

### Notice

### CITU Secretariat Meeting

Time & Date : 11 AM, 26 May – 2.30 PM, 27 May, 2017  
Place : BTR Bhawan, New Delhi

#### Agenda:

1. Review of struggles and activities
2. Future Course of struggles
3. Preparation for the Working Committee meeting to be held in July 2017
4. Amendment of CITU Constitution
5. Any other issues with the permission of Chair

Tapan Sen  
General Secretary



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# About Minimum Wage

J. S. Majumdar

‘Fixation and enforcement of minimum wage’ and ‘same pay for same work’, at present, are the two forefront issues before the trade union movement and are the two pivots on which crores of unorganised sector workers of both formal and informal sectors of industries can be united and mobilized for united action.

## Important Provisions of Minimum Wages Act Being Ignored

In practice, today, important provisions of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 are being ignored by the Central and State governments. The Act provides that the minimum wages are to be revised at an interval within 5 years. However, minimum wages are not being revised for many years beyond 5 years. Central government’s last-notified minimum wages, for the workers in Central Sphere, was effective from 20 May, 2009. It was revised at least after 7 years and 8 months’ delay by notification on 19 January, 2017. In Delhi, last time the minimum wages were fixed on 26 July, 2011. This time it is delayed at least by more than 11 months depriving the workers from the benefits of revised minimum wages.

The Act provides that the minimum wage shall consist of basic rate of wages plus what is generally known as Dearness Allowance, (DA) *“as nearly as possible with the variation in the cost of living index”* (for the working class) (CLI). Generally, the wages are adjusted on 1 April and 1 October each year on 6 months average of index rise / fall. But in many states it is being delayed depriving the workers of their legal claim of DA rise.

Under the Act, the minimum wage is linked with fixation of ‘working hours’ and paid weekly off days. In practice those are grossly being violated.

One of the most important question before the entire trade union movement is as to how the notified minimum wages can be enforced under the provisions of the Act as the governments’ own enforcement machinery grossly ignore enforcement of the government’s own notified minimum wages.

## Deficiency in the Act

Minimum Wages Act was enacted on 15<sup>th</sup> March, 1948 before the Constitution of India came into existence. Obviously, its certain provisions are not in conformity with the subsequent developments and are deficient. One important provision of the Act is about the constitution of tripartite ‘Minimum Wage Advisory Board / Committee’ to determine the basic wages and D.A. rates. However, the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 is deficient in defining the ‘Minimum Wage’ and what should be its components and criteria of its determination.

The jobs of revision and fixation of minimum wages and the rate of DA have been left entirely to the discretion of the minimum wage advisory boards / committees. As such, till this day, the Central and State Minimum Wage Advisory Boards recommend ‘minimum wages’ without determining as to what should be defined as ‘minimum wages’ and what should be the criteria of their fixation. There is serious contradiction between the arbitrary method of fixation of minimum wages by the Central and States’ Minimum Wage Advisory Boards under Minimum Wages Act, 1948 and the direction of the Constitution of India, subsequent developments in determining the minimum wages and the Supreme Court’s judgement in this regard.

To remove this deficiency in the Minimum Wages Act; in November 1948, a ‘Tripartite Committee of Fair Wage’ was appointed to set definitions and guidelines for formulating a wage structure for the entire country. On the recommendation of the Fair Wage Committee a bill as Fair Wages Bill was introduced in the Parliament in 1950 to fix fair wages for the workers, in the first instance, in factories and mines. But the bill was allowed to be lapsed. Therefore, the contradictions and arbitrariness continue till this day on fixation of minimum wages.

## The Constitutional Direction

The Directive Principles of State Policy of the Constitution of India in Art 39 states, *“The citizens, men and women equally, have the right to an adequate means of livelihood;”* and in Art. 43 states, *“The State shall endeavour to secure, by suitable legislation or economic organisation or in any other way, to all workers, agricultural, industrial or otherwise, work, a living wage, conditions of work ensuring a decent standard of life and full enjoyment of leisure and social and cultural opportunities . . .”* (Underline added for emphasis)

## The Three levels of Wages

The Tripartite Committee of Fair Wage, made significant contribution in determining the wage structures for the workers. It defined three different levels of wages - (i) Living Wage; (ii) Fair Wage and (iii) Minimum Wage as the common flow. It defined the three levels of wages as below.

The Living Wage is the Constitutional direction. It is the highest level of the wage for a decent living to be determined considering national income and the capacity to pay of the industry; living wage had to be the ultimate goal or the target not achievable now.

The next level of wage is the Fair Wage based on the workers' contribution and the capacity to pay to be determined by wage boards, negotiations, arbitrations and through the process of raising demands and industrial disputes. It is below the Living Wage, but must be above the Minimum Wage.

At the lowest level is the Minimum Wage. The Committee of Fair Wage defined Minimum Wage as, *“The minimum wages must be provided not merely for the bare subsistence of life but also for the preservation of efficiency of the workers by providing for some measures of education, medical requirement and amenities.”*

## Determining the Minimum Rate of Wages

The task of determining the minimum rate of wage, as was defined by the committee of fair wage, was taken up by the tripartite 15<sup>th</sup> Indian Labour Conference (ILC) deciding the norms and basis of fixation of minimum wages. The 15<sup>th</sup> ILC decided 5 components of minimum wage for fixation and revision.

(i) The first component is that the minimum wage of a worker shall be calculated taking 3 consumption units of a worker's family – notionally the husband, the wife and half consumption unit of each of 2 children. The income from the women and children and adolescents, if any, in the family should be ignored.

(ii) The second is the cost of balanced food, with 2700 calories per consumption unit per day (as was determined by Dr. Aykroyd and is known as Dr. Aykroyd formula).

(iii) The third, add the cost of 18 yards of clothing per consumption unit per annum totaling 72 yards per family per annum.

(iv) The fourth, add the cost of house rent equivalent to Subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme for low income groups;

(v) The fifth, add 20% of the total as cost of fuel, electricity and miscellaneous expenses.

Thus, the 15<sup>th</sup> ILC recommended total cost of (ii) food + (iii) clothing + (iv) house rent + 20% of (ii)+(iii)+(iv) as cost of fuel, electricity and miscellaneous items = Minimum wage. This minimum wage should be linked with the CLI.

## Supreme Court Added 6<sup>th</sup> component

The Supreme Court of India approved the above criteria of the 15<sup>th</sup> ILC for fixation of minimum wage in their judgement in Standard Vacuum Refinery Company case.

However, the Supreme Court's landmark judgement on the minimum wage came in Raptakos Brett and Company case in 1991. In that judgement the Supreme Court said, *“The concept of ‘minimum wage’ is no longer the same as it was in 1936. Even 1957 is a way-behind. A worker's wage is no longer a contract between an employer and an employee. It has the force of collective bargaining under the labour laws. Each category of the wage structure has to be tested at the anvil of social justice which is the live-fibre of our society today.*

*“Keeping in view the socio-economic aspect of the wage structure, we are of the view that it is necessary to add the following additional component as a guide for fixing the minimum wage in the **industry:***

- (vi) children education, medical requirement, minimum recreation including festivals / ceremonies and provision for old age, marriage etc should further constitute 25% of the total minimum wage.”

After this judgement, Total Minimum Wage = 15<sup>th</sup> ILC recommended minimum wage plus 25% of it.

The Supreme Court judgement, further stated, “The wage structure which approximately answers the above six components is nothing more than a minimum wage at subsistence level. The employees are entitled to the minimum wage at all times and under all circumstances. An employer who cannot pay the minimum wage has no right to engage labour and no justification to run the industry.” (Underline added for emphasis)

The Constitution of India states that in absence of specific law, Supreme Court’s judgement becomes the law. As the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 lacks definition and criteria of determining the minimum wage, and as such in absence specific law to guide, the above judgement of the Supreme Court, fixing six components for fixation and revision of minimum wage has the force of law.

## **Double Standard by Governments**

The NJCA (The National Joint Council of Action of Central Government Employees) in their submission on Minimum Wages to 7<sup>th</sup> CPC (Central Pay Commission) worked out the minimum wage on the principles of Dr. Aykroyd formula, 15<sup>th</sup> ILC norms and Supreme Court’s judgement which comes to Rs.26,000 for lowest Group-C workers as on 1.1.2014. The 7<sup>th</sup> CPC also calculated Minimum Wage based on the same 15<sup>th</sup> ILC recommendations and Supreme Court’s judgement and worked out Rs.18,000 as Minimum Wage for Group ‘C’ Central Government Employees effective from 1 January, 2016. Being dissatisfied of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC report, central government employees’ federations served notice for joint strike on 11 July, 2016. The Group of Ministers on 30 June 2016 assured the NJCA to constitute a High Level Committee within 4 months to negotiate and settle the minimum wages and other issues arising out of the implementation of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC recommendations. Modi government, as usual, betrayed and 13 lakh central government employees resorted to strike in protest on 16 March, 2017.

This shows wide variations in the method of calculation of minimum wages even based on 15<sup>th</sup> ILC recommendations and Supreme Court’s judgement. Variation arises as to what should be called as balanced food with 2700 calories per consumption unit per day and what is the market cost of each item; the types and the cost of clothing; what should be house rent on the basis of Subsidised Industrial Housing Scheme for low income groups etc.

But, the fact remains that 7<sup>th</sup> CPC accepted the 15<sup>th</sup> ILC recommendation plus Supreme Court’s judgement as the basis of calculation for fixation of Minimum Wages. Through implementation, the Central government also accepted these criteria for fixation of Minimum Wages. The State governments also followed 7<sup>th</sup> CPC recommendations and started implementing it for their respective state government employees. While the Central and State governments have accepted 15<sup>th</sup> ILC formula plus Supreme court’s judgement as the basis for fixation of minimum wages for the central and state government employees through implementation of 7<sup>th</sup> CPC recommendation; the same Central and State governments use double standard while fixing / revising minimum wages by the respective minimum wage advisory board / committee for contract and private sector workers in Central sphere and State Sphere in respective states.

Central government issued notification fixing Rs.18,000 as minimum wage at the lowest level for central government employees as on 1 January, 2016. But, the same Central government issued notification on 19 January, 2017 fixing minimum wage, purportedly after recommendation of its tripartite Minimum Wage Advisory Board, for the contract and private sector workers in Central Sphere (mainly in non-coal mines, road construction, underground work, port & dock, railways and other good shed loading / unloading, watch & ward, sweepers and cleaners, etc) as Rs.9,000 (approx) at the lowest level.

## **Joint Demand of Central Trade Unions**

That is why all central trade unions jointly demanded at least Rs.18,000 as the minimum wage for all section of workers across the country as on 1 January, 2016 linked with CLI for DA, despite wide variation in calculations by the NJCA and the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC; taking into consideration that as the Central and State governments had already accepted this as the minimum wage for their employees based on 15<sup>th</sup> ILC and Supreme Court’s

judgement why the same should not be applicable to the contract employees in government departments and for public and private sectors in respective spheres through notifications under Minimum Wages Act. Fixation of minimum wages on the basis of 15<sup>th</sup> ILC plus Supreme Court's judgement has been the consistent position of the central trade unions.

This position jointly by all central trade unions on which the workers magnificently responded to the call of strike on 2 September 2016; also underlines the position that for all fixation and revision of minimum wages in Central and State Spheres, 15<sup>th</sup> ILC criteria plus Supreme Court's judgement shall be the basis, and accordingly, trade unions' representatives in the Central and State Minimum Wage Advisory Boards / Committees have to take position jointly.

In this context, it is significant that the minimum wages under Minimum Wages Act, 1948 in NCT Delhi was notified based on calculation and recommendation by the tripartite Minimum Wage Advisory Committee on the basis of 15<sup>th</sup> ILC criteria plus Supreme Court's judgement, for the first time in any state in India or at the Centre; despite the fact that there were wide variations and deficiency in the calculations between the government, employers and the employees. However, the success lies in accepting the principle of fixation of minimum wages by the tripartite body. It was not easy for the trade unions. The trade unions met separately and made calculations and made joint written submissions and pursued jointly. In between, due to conflict between the government and the Lt. Governor, earlier Advisory Committee's recommendations were rejected by the Lt. Governor; the Committee was reconstituted and discussion began afresh to the advantage of the employers.

## **How the Minimum Wages were Calculated in Delhi**

*(From: The Note on Tripartite Committee to the Government)*

Calculation of minimum rates of wages based on rates obtained from Kendriya Bhandar on 28.12.2016.

### **COST OF FOOD INTAKE FOR A FAMILY OF 3 (Units) – (4-Members) AND PROPOSED INCREASE IN MINIMUM WAGES**

Food – Rs. 2,662/- P.M. x 3 = Rs. 7,986/- P.M.

Proposed wages for unskilled category: -

Food (Family of 3 Units – 4 Members – S.C. Judgement / ILC – 1957) - Rs. 7,986/- P.M.

Clothing (72 yards per annum = 66 Mtr. P.A.)

Housing (10% of food cost/Subsidized Housing Scheme – ILC – 1957) -Rs. 798/- P.M.

Light & Fuel (20% of Food + Clothing + Housing – ILC – 1957) - Rs. 1841/- P.M.

Education (25% - Food + Clothing + Housing – ILC – 1957) -Rs. 2302/- P.M.

Total Rs.13350/- P. M.

Proposed wages for unskilled category: Rs. 13,350/- P.M.

Proposed wages for semi skilled category: Rs. 14,698/- P.M. (10.1% extra of unskilled wages)

Proposed wages for skilled category: Rs. 16,182/- P.M. (10.1% extra of semi skilled wages)

*{In the above calculation, there is a gross mistake. For Education etc it should have been 25% of total of (food + clothing + housing) + its 20% as fuel and miscellaneous as per Supreme Court judgement.}*

However, on the similar basis of calculation, trade unions fixed higher minimum wages - Rs.16,200 for unskilled; Rs.17,836 for semiskilled and Rs.19,638 for the skilled workers. Following is the gist of calculation.

Food – Rs.2430.49 x 3 = Rs.7291.46 / P.M.

Clothing – Rs.1508.73 / P.M.

House Rent – Rs.2000.00 / P.M.

20% - Miscel - Rs.2160.04 / P.M.

25% - S.C. Judgement – Rs.3240.06 / P. M.

Total - Rs16200.29 / P. M. for the unskilled worker



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## On CBT Decisions

The meeting of the CBT (Central Board of Trustees) of EPFO was held on 30 March with labour minister in chair. Other than various administrative matters, the following issues were discussed.

- Making employees contribution to EPF optional for those getting less than Rs.15,000 per month for Apparel and Made-Up sector. This was a proposal from textile ministry, approved by the cabinet and put in the agenda for amending the EPF scheme.

This was vehemently opposed by all the T.U. representative, pointing out that EPF is for future of employees and this basic aspect of the Act cannot be changed. Even some employer representatives said they are in dilemma.

Finally Minister deferred the issue.

- EPF for Anganwadi, Asha and Mid-day Meal workers, the proposal was for having 10% contribution instead of 12%. While TUs, finally accepted it, from the government side, it was informed that the concerned ministries have not yet conveyed their decision on employers' contribution. Labour ministry will continue to take up the issue with the concerned ministries. Total number of workers will be 61.50 lakhs.
- The issue of medical coverage of EPF pensioners was on the agenda. CBT was informed that the EPFO is discussing with ESI Corporation to include EPF pensioners in the medical scheme of retired workers. ESIC has not yet replied to the proposals from EPFO.
- On giving new 'Exemptions to Establishments' and allowing internal trusts to run EPF, some criteria are finalized.

Only after 5 years of contribution to EPF and only to those establishments having more than 500 workers and having Rs.100 crores as corpus will be given exemption.

- In a clarification sought from the CPFC, it was said that the recent circular on increased pension on the basis of Supreme Court judgement will be only for those who had already contributed for EPF for their full wages. Even now the present order does not cover those who had contributed for higher wages and were under exempted units. This was taken up and demanded that they should be included and there cannot be any disparity between direct EPFO subscribers and exempted unit subscribers. EPFO will consider this.
- The period of special enrollment, with concessions to employers has been extended to another 3 months, i.e. up to 30 June 2017.
- The issue of increasing the wage ceiling from Rs.15,000 to Rs.25,000 as in ESIC, could not be taken up in this meeting for want of time.

### Meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> April

The meeting was urgently called to discuss the left-over agendas of the meeting on 30. But, it was found that the agenda item on increasing the wage eligibility from Rs. 15, 000 to Rs. 25,000 was missing.

This was raised and then we were told that the issue has been kept pending as the finance ministry is discussing the issue as it involves additional contribution from the government in EPS. (It has been reported in the media on 13 April that Public Accounts Committee has suggested reducing the Govt's 'burden' and eventually doing away with Govt's contribution to EPS)

T.U. representatives protested this attitude of bringing an agenda and keeping it pending. It was an agenda proposed by Govt and they themselves are keeping it in abeyance.

- Other items in the pending agenda were all administrative matters and issues related to employees of EPF.
- One new item in the agenda, which was approved by the Pension and EDLI implementation sub-committee on 12<sup>th</sup> morning and added to the agenda list, was on increased benefits from EDLI. The proposal from EPFO, as approved by the sub-committee, was to introduce the minimum assurance amount of Rs.2.5 lakhs for those subscribers who die while in service.

Last year, the maximum amount was raised to Rs. 6 lakhs. For the first time, minimum assurance is fixed. This is a beneficial decision.

- Another new proposal is to extend a loyalty cum life benefits to members on retirement on completion of 58 60 years of age and have completed minimum 20 years of contributory service as under:

S.No.	Average wages Per Month (In Rs)	Loyalty cum life benefit (in Rs)
1	Upto Rs.5000	30,000
2	Between Rs.5000 - Rs.10000	40,000
3	Above Rs. 10,000	50,000

- Average wage will be calculated on the basis of last 12 months. On this loyalty amount, objections were raised from finance related officers in the CBT. After lot of discussion finally it was decided that these benefits will be on a pilot basis for 2 years and by that time the impact of this on the finances of the fund will be known and can be discussed further. This was the proposal of the labour minister.

EPFO officials have said that there will be no crisis and even after giving all the proposed increases, it will be only 80 percent of their income earned through interest on corpus and total contribution received in the year. Now, Govt will have to notify these and then only it will come to force.

It was decided to have a special meeting of CBT, to discuss issues raised by members of CBT.

- CITU has already proposed agenda on improvement in EPS including increase in minimum pension, bringing back commutation, return of capital and 12 months average to fix the pensionable salary from the present 60 months.
- CITU has also demanded to stop deducting the commutation amount from pension, even after the full amount has been recovered.

- A K Padmanabhan

## On Supreme Court's Judgement on EPS

EPFO, through a notification on 23<sup>rd</sup> March has decided to implement the Supreme Court Judgement, to give the members of EPS, 1995 the benefit of actual salary in the Pension Fund. This was discussed in the CBT on 16<sup>th</sup> December 2016.

When EPS 1995 was formulated the corpus of the Pension Fund was the contribution of 8.33 per cent from the Employers contribution, within the wage ceiling of Rs.5000/- and later Rs.6500. On 16<sup>th</sup> March 1996, a proviso was added that at the option of employee and employer, contribution can be paid on salary exceeding the ceiling and this was to be done on the date of the Scheme or from the date the salary exceeds the ceiling. (Proviso 11(3) of EPS)

This proviso was later withdrawn from 2014. But there were considerable subscribers for whom the contribution was made on higher salary. On the plea that the option was not recorded on the date of the commencement of the Scheme or from the date the salary exceeded the ceiling, the benefit of higher pension was denied to these subscribers.

It was on this issue High Courts of Kerala, Himachal Pradesh etc. gave judgements and this reached Supreme Court. Supreme Court, in their Judgment on 4 October 2016 said that "*A beneficial Scheme, in our considered view, ought not to be allowed to be defeated by reference to a cut-off date, particularly in a situation (as in the present case) where the employer had deposited 12% of the actual salary and not 12% of the ceiling limit of Rs.5000/- or Rs.6500/- per months as the case may be*".

The Court also said that those subscribers, who had taken back their additional contribution from their P.F. account can pay back the amount and get higher pension.

It is on the basis of the Judgment, EPFO's notification on 23 March has come.

This is applicable to only those who had contributed on the basis of higher wage earlier.

Even now, EPFO has not clarified the issue, related to those from the exempted units, who are in identical position. There is no reason for any disparity between those subscribers under EPFO and those under Exempted Units. EPS for both sections of subscribers are administered by the EPFO.

This issue was raised in CBT on 30 March and EPFO has agreed to consider the issue.

- A.K.P.

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# 5 April Solidarity Day

## With Maruti Suzuki Workers

Central trade unions (CTUs) - INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, UTUC and LPF, on 25 March, jointly gave call to all trade unions, irrespective of affiliations, and workers in general to stage demonstrations at workplaces / industrial centres on 5 April in solidarity with the Maruti Suzuki workers, who are struggling for justice and for trade union rights; for unconditional release of imprisoned Maruti workers, reinstatement of all victimised workers; and with their struggle for justice including legal battle.

The CTUs expressed distress and anguish at the sentence of life imprisonment to 13 workers and 5 years jail to another 4 Maruti Suzuki workers in connection with the violence plotted by the management in the Manesar plant of Maruti in 2012. The CTUs denounced the ugly game of the state and capital nexus.

CTUs congratulated the workers of Gurgaon and in nearby areas for their immediate and united response. The CTUs also expressed solidarity with the struggle of the Maruti workers and the industrial workers, under the banner of Trade Union Council Gurgaon, in support of the Maruti workers.

Workers of the country responded to the call to protest against the judgement and to express solidarity with the fighting Maruti Suzuki workers in different parts of the country. Following are some reports.

### Gurgaon, Haryana

At the joint call of the central trade unions, a huge protest rally against Maruti Suzuki judgement was organised at Kamala Nehru Park in Gurgaon by the Gurgaon-Rewari Trade Union Council on 5 April joined by 55 unions of the area.

To express solidarity with the Maruti Suzuki workers, national leaders of central trade unions including CITU national general secretary Tapan Sen, MP; HMS national general secretary Harbhajan Singh Siddhu; INTUC national vice president Ram Chandra Kondiya, former MP; AITUC national secretary D. L. Sachdeva with Giri; and AIUTUC national secretary Satyaban attended the rally and addressed the public meeting.

Condemning the court order, the speakers said that the court's order is absolutely prejudicial. The medical report of the deceased manager established that his death was caused by suffocation due to smoke. There was not a single piece of evidence of homicide against the concerned workers. Yet, they were punished as guilty.

#### **WFTU Solidarity for the Workers of Maruti Suzuki in India**

**The World Federation of Trade Unions, representing 92 million workers in the 5 continents, expresses its dissatisfaction and denounces the sentence of life to 13 workers and of 5 years jail to four more workers of Maruti Suzuki, regarding the incident of violence in the Manesar plant of Maruti in 2012. The violent incident in 2012, plotted by the management of the factory, through the hiring of musclemen in order to crush the trade unions and the workers who were fighting for their rights. The convicted workers are not responsible for the incident in which a general manager of the factory was killed.**

**The WFTU is greeting the demonstrations and the initiatives to take place on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2017, expressing the Trade unions' solidarity and demanding the unconditional release of the Maruti workers and reinstatement of dismissed workers.**

They condemned government-management nexus who conspired to deprive the workers from their Constitutional and legal rights and, in the process, allowed Maruti Suzuki management to dismiss en masse innocent 546 permanent and about 2500 contract workers. The workers and their families were also subjected to huge state repression.

In response to the call of central trade unions, the workers all over the country were staging protest demonstrations and were holding meetings on this day in solidarity with the struggling Maruti Suzuki workers, the central trade unions' national leaders said. They demanded immediate release of the jailed workers; reinstatement of all permanent and 2500 contract workers, including the jailed and released 117 workers, with compensation for the interim period; action against concerned management and government administrative

personnel for conspiracy and oppression against the workers; for implementation of Supreme Court's order of same pay for same work; to stop attack on trade union rights and to withdraw all anti-worker labour legislations; and strict action against labour laws violators.

The meeting was presided over by the president of Maruti Suzuki workers union Ajmer Yadav, president of Honda workers union Ramesh Mehta, Sundarlal of Hero Motor, leader of Richo Dharuhera; and local leaders of INTUC Satpal, Kuldip Singh of AITUC, Raj Sigh of CITU and Jaspal Rana of HMS.

State leaders of central trade unions who also addressed the rally include Satbir Singh and Rajendra Saroha of CITU; Surendra Lal of HMS; Amit Yadav, Anup Singh, Dharamavir Lohan and Baldev Dhanghas of AITUC; Prakash Rawat of Mazdoor Ekta Manch; Knawarlal Yadav and Sanjay Soni of Sarba Karamchari Sangh and of AIDWA Usha Saroha.

Trade Union Council of Gurgaon Rewari handed over a joint memorandum of demands on Maruti Suzuki to the SDM of Gurgaon who had come down to Kamla nehru Park to receive the memorandum.

In Haryana, demonstrations were held in all district headquarters in which thousands of workers participated.

## **Punjab**

Protesting against court verdict and in solidarity with struggling workers of Maruti Suzuki Maruti, joint rallies and demonstrations were held in Amritsar, Ropar, Nangal Dam and in Ludhiana.

## **Delhi**

Central trade unions jointly staged demonstration in front of Haryana Bhawan in New Delhi which was addressed by central TU leaders. A memorandum was submitted for the chief minister of Haryana.

## **Rajasthan**

A joint rally and demonstration were held in front of the labour commissioner's office in the state capital Jaipur which was addressed by CITU state president Ravindra Shukla and other CTUs state leaders. Joint memoranda were submitted to labour commissioner addressed to the President of India and the chief minister of Haryana.

CITU also held demonstrations and public meetings at Sikar, Bikenir, Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bhilwara, Udaipur, Kota and Chittorgarh.

## **Uttar Pradesh**

A joint trade union dharna was staged in front of Vidhan Sabha Bhawan in Lucknow on 5 April. A memorandum on demands for Maruti Suzuki workers addressed to the chief minister of Haryana was submitted to the attending magistrate. A joint dharna was also staged at Ramasray Park in Kanpur.

## **Uttarakhand**

A CITU delegation submitted memorandum to the prime minister through the state administration in Dehradun on 5 April in support of Maruti workers struggle.

## **Bihar**

A demonstration jointly by INTUC, AITUC, CITU, HMS, AICCTU, AIUTUC, TUCC and AIMU was staged in front of government secretariat at Bailey Road in the state capital Patna on 5 April. A memorandum in support of Maruti Suzuki workers demands was sent to the prime minister through the state government administration.

## **Tamilnadu**

On 5 April a convention was held in Chennai, attended by CITU, AITUC, LPF, AICCTU, AIUTUC and WPTUC. In view of high profile Assembly by-elections in the state, the statewide solidarity day was observed by staging demonstrations in most of the district headquarters and in the state capital Chennai on 13 April.

## **Telangana**

On 5 April, a Maruti Suzuki solidarity meeting was held in Hyderabad on 7 April.



## Andhra Pradesh

On 5 April, CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, TUCC, IFTU, AICCTU, YSRTUC brought out joint rallies in several district headquarters including Vijayawada and Rajahmundry. A candle light procession was brought out at Anantapur.

## Kerala

In protest against Maruti verdict and in solidarity with Maruti Suzuki workers' struggle, protest rallies were brought out and public meetings were held in all district headquarters on 5 April except Thiruvananthapuram and Trissur for other programmes; and in Malappuram district due to Parliamentary by-election.

### **'Supreme Court Counters Push for Aadhaar' 'Cannot make it mandatory for availing welfare schemes,'**

"Countering the government push to make Aadhaar compulsory for access to social welfare schemes, the Supreme Court on Tuesday said obtaining the 12-digit Unique Identification number, which requires the holder to part with his personal bio-metric data, and using it to avail himself of government subsidy was a voluntary exercise....

"The government has made Aadhaar compulsory for beneficiaries, many of them the poorest of the poor, despite a Constitution Bench of the court directing the government in October 2015 that a citizen cannot be compelled to have Aadhaar as a pre-condition to access Centrally sponsored welfare schemes. In short, the court had made it clear that the government was not free to discriminate between a person who has the Aadhaar card and one who does not.

However, a Bench led by Chief Justice of India J.S. Khehar on Tuesday found no fault with the government's choice to make Aadhaar mandatory for "non-welfare" activities like opening a bank account or filing Income Tax returns." "The Lok Sabha's recently-passed Finance Bill made Aadhaar mandatory for filing tax returns and getting a permanent account number (PAN)."

"In October 2015, the government had assured the Constitution Bench that the requirement for Aadhaar would be purely of a voluntary nature for citizens to access public subsidy. The court had said that this would remain so till it took a final decision on whether Aadhaar scheme was a privacy invasion.

"The then Chief Justice of India H.L. Dattu, who led the Constitution Bench, had even asked Attorney-General Mukul Rohatgi, for UIDAI, to make a statement in open court that "you will not insist (on Aadhaar) till the matter is finally decided here or a legislation is introduced in the Parliament". ...

"No person will be denied benefits under any government scheme for want of Aadhaar card," the A-G had responded." (Reported by: *The Hindu* on 27 March, 2017)

### **India Predominantly Non-Vegetarian Country**

There is an attempt to present India as a predominantly 'Vegetarian Country'. Vegetarianism is being imposed by ideologies of religion and caste. However, the survey report, 2014 of the Census of India, released by the Registrar General & Census Commissioner, reveals that 71% of Indians are non-vegetarian; Telangana topping the list of states having highest number of non-vegetarians with 98.8% men and 98.6% women enjoying their meal with meat, chicken and fish; followed by 98.55% in West Bengal, 98.25% in Andhra Pradesh, 97.35% in Odisha and 97% in Kerala.

Recently, Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani vowed to convert Gujarat as a *Shakahaari* (vegetarian) state. However, the Census report shows that almost 40% of Gujaratis (39.9% male and 38.2% female) are non-vegetarians mostly belonging to OBCs, Dalits, Rajputs and Muslims. (*Indian Express*, 16 April, 2017). The BJP's chief minister is preparing for incoming assembly election with '*shakahaari state*' slogan underlying with communal and caste tones.

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# INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

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## Public Sector

### **Steel Workers Strike against Strategic Sale**

On 11 April, all permanent and contract workers of the three strategic steel plants of SAIL – Alloy Steel Plant (ASP) at Durgapur in West Bengal; Salem Steel Plant (SSP) at Salem in Tamilnadu and Visvesvaraya Iron and Steel Plant (VISP) at Bhadravati in Karnataka - went on a daylong strike in protest against the 'strategic sale' of these three PSU steel plants. The strike was led jointly by all trade unions including of CITU, INTUC, HMS and AITUC.

The workers of the SAIL's other steel plants at Bokaro in Jharkhand, Rourkela in Odisha, Bhilai in Chhattisgarh and Vishakhapatnam in Andhra Pradesh and of iron ore mines in Jharkhand, Odisha and Chhattisgarh went for solidarity action staging dharna and demonstration condemning the government's decision.

The government has budgeted to raise Rs.15,000 crore from the strategic sale in 2017-18. These three plants of SAIL (Steel Authority of India Limited), the *Maharatna* public sector company, were already enlisted for strategic sale by NITI Aayog and Modi government gave its formal approval. In pursuance of this decision, SAIL has now in the process of appointing advisors including transaction advisor from professional consulting firm, investment bankers, financial institutions, to provide advisory services and manage the disinvestment process.

Strategic sale means transfer of management control in private hands even with minority block shares.

ASP at Durgapur is a strategic steel plant of SAIL with diverse product portfolio of over 400 grades catering to end-use by strategic sectors like defence, railways, automobiles, power plants, heavy engineering and manufacturing industries.

SSP in Tamil Nadu can produce stainless steel in the form of coils and sheets with an installed capacity of 70,000 tonnes a year in cold rolling mill and 3.64 lakh tonnes a year in hot rolling mill. VISP produces high quality alloy and special steels and pig iron. The unit has an installed capacity of 2.16 lakh tonnes of hot metal and 98,280 tonnes of alloy and special steels.

### **Strike against DCI Disinvestment**



In response to the call of CITU-affiliated DCI Non-executive Employees' Union (NEU), Dredging Corporation of India (DCI) employees were also on strike on 11 April in protest against Centre's decision to go for its strategic sale. Functioning of DCI corporate office at Vishakhapatnam was seriously affected due to strike. The striking workers staged demonstration outside the Dredge House, the corporate office of DCI. NEU has launched public signature campaign against the strategic sale.

Addressing the striking employees, CITU state president Narsinga Rao said that it is a conspiracy to

hand over profit-making DCI to private companies owned by Ambanis and Adanis at a throwaway price. DCI, ranking among top 10 dredging companies in the world, has been earning profits and serving all major ports in the country and also in some other countries.

### **PSU Strikes raised in the Parliament**

Raising the issue in Zero Hour in Rajya Sabha on 10 April, CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, MP, said, "Tomorrow the workers and social movements in the Alloy Steels Plant, Durgapur; the Salem Steel Plant, Tamil Nadu; and the Bhadravati (VISL) Steel Plant in Karnataka are going on strike to protest against the privatization. This is the privatization of special steel plants which have no parallel in private sector in the country. They are sought to be privatized when they are catering to the needs of defence sectors, precision engineering works etc." He pointed out the proposed strike in Dredging Corporation of India Limited on the same day. The PSU workers of Bangalore, Mysore, Kolar are planning for a strike action in May. "This move of privatization is nothing but a design of destroying the manufacturing capability of the country under the camouflage of 'Make in India' slogan. The main moto is ensuring 'Ease of Doing Business' to the foreign capital."

## **Discussion in Rajya Sabha on Employee's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2016**

Participating in the discussion on the Employee's Compensation (Amendment) Bill, 2016 in Rajya Sabha on 22 March; CITU general secretary Tapan Sen narrated some major accidents since December, 2016. On 29 December accident took place in ECL, Lalmatia in which 21 contract workers were buried alive only because of the criminal negligence of the Directorate General of Mines Safety (DGMS). That mine was declared 'un-mineable'. But, suddenly, in a very surreptitious manner DGMS had given clearance for mining saying that it is 'mineable' being obliged by a Gujarat based open-cast mining company to whom the Eastern Coalfields Limited outsourced that mining operation.

On 13 January, in BHEL, Bhopal, two contract workers died because they were compelled to move to a place where a big, heavy structure was being moved by the crane. It crushed on their head and they died on-the-spot.

These accidents occurred in the Central sector. Families of those 21 workers, who were buried alive, were yet to get their compensation because the attendance register of the contractor was not available. More than 30 dumpers were working there. As a thumb rule, 30 dumpers operating means, 60 workers were there. But only 21 bodies were recovered and two more persons were rescued with severe injuries. There were many more, but they were not recovered and it could not be verified because no attendance register was available.

On 31 January, because of poisonous gas, seven people of a local oil company died in Maharashtra. All of them were contract workers. Nobody has got any compensation.

The Bill must have provisions to identify the workmen, regular and contract; for strong enforcement mechanism and proper system of inspection. Shram Suvidha Portal has very limited reach keeping 70%-80% workforce and workplaces out of the scope of inspection.

While contract workers are not getting any compensation, the regular worker are to wait for long period as the employer immediately takes the dispute to the High Court and that lingers on. The Bill has the provision that for Rs.10,000 compensation no dispute could be raised be it minor or major injuries. Tapan Sen's amendment is to increase it to Rs.1.00,000 where dispute cannot be raised.

At conclusion he suggested that firstly the enforcement mechanism should be strengthened; identity of all regular and contract workers must be brought under its purview; employer's delaying tactics be forestalled by raising compensation amount to Rs. 1 Lakh where no dispute can be raised. Government should accept his amendments, Tapan Sen said.

With that basic policy change is necessary at workplaces which, at present, are dependent on contractorisation and obsession with ease of doing business, He said.

## Coal



**Joint Action Committee of coal workers unions staging demonstration against proposed closure of 5 mines of Sodpur Area of ECL**

Colliery Mazdoor Sabha of India (CMSI) on 3 April strongly protested against the sudden decision of closure of coal mines by the management of Eastern Coalfield Limited (ECL) on the plea of financial loss affecting large number of coal workers.

In a memorandum to the management CMSI said that despite huge coal reserves, ECL management is closing 10 coal mines in West Bengal – 5 in Sodpur; 3 in Satgram, one in Sripur and one in Bankola Areas. CMSI had been repeatedly taking up the matter of efficient running of the mines with the management. But, due to management's failure and now on the plea of financial loss these coal mines are being closed. This was never discussed with the unions before. The union demanded immediate withdrawal of closure decision of these mines.

## Odisha

### Statewide Joint Programme of CITU, WWCC & AIDWA



Odisha state committees of CITU, its Working Women Coordination Committee and AIDWA jointly staged district level demonstrations and submitted memoranda to district administration at Rourkela and Balasore and submitted joint memoranda in deputation to district administration of Nayagarh, Jagatsinghpur, Ganjam and Jharsuguda on 10 April on working women's demands.



# STATES

## Tamilnadu

### **CITU's Statewide Campaign and Massive Rally**



As per the call of the state conference, Tamilnadu state committee launched four month long extensive campaign by district committees and state level unions culminating into a massive rally in front of the government secretariat in Chennai in pursuance of 13 points demands of the workers and the people of the state including demands against price rise, unemployment; to save Salem Steel Plant; to defend labour rights; to abolish contract labour system; for equal wage for equal work, to streamline unorganised labour welfare board; to stop violence against women and to constitute complaints committee at all work places as per the Vishakha judgement; minimum wage of Rs.18000; urgent drought relief to the peasants and the agricultural workers; to withdraw increased renewal fee for auto and other transport vehicles.

Extensive campaign was organised with vans, autos, two wheelers etc; holding street corner meetings; and organising a march in Kancheepuram district covering villages and mini towns among members, workers and public with factual situation in the state and justification of each demand. It culminated into a massive

March to Government Secretariat in Chennai on 4 April. On that day Chennai city witnessed one of the biggest workers rallies in the state with 25,000 workers joining, including large number of women, coming from all over the state, industries and sectors.

A procession starting from the Rajarathinam stadium marched towards the government secretariat. The procession was led by CITU national and state leaders including its national vice president A. K. Padmanabhan, state president A. Soundararajan and general secretary G. Sukumaran, treasurer Malathi Chittibabu and others.

The rally was stopped at the police barricade on way to the Secretariat where it was converted into a massive rally and public meeting presided over by CITU state president A. Soundararajan. CITU national vice president A. K. Padmanabhan addressing the rally narrated the rising wave of strike struggles in the country by workers of different sectors and in states.

A delegation led by Soundararajan met the chief secretary Girija Vaidhyathan and submitted the memorandum with the charter of demands. The rally condemned the chief minister and other ministers who were absent and failed to meet the workers delegation despite advance intimation.

The chief secretary assured the delegation to look into the issues and take action particularly pertaining to state related issues like welfare board, unemployment, livelihood of fishermen, equal wage and abolition of contract system. Based on the chief secretary's assurance CITU suspended the agitation for the time being.

(Inputs: K.C.Gopikumar)

## Haryana

### Road Transport Workers Successful Strike & Victory

Thousands of workers of Haryana Roadways State Transport (HRST), the Haryana government's undertaking, went on lightening strike on 10 April afternoon as the talks between the unions and the government failed on the unions' demands to immediately rescind BJP state government's decision to allow private bus operators in 273 routes in the state. All 8 workers unions in HRST, including Haryana Roadways Workers Union, jointly led the successful strike.



Striking Roadways workers at Jind depot



CITU solidarity rally at Rohtak

Due to the strike, about 4,200 HRST buses, including luxury buses, remained stationed in all 24 depots and 17 sub-depots of state. Over 13 lakh passengers travel in the HRST buses daily. The state exchequer has reportedly suffered a loss of about Rs.15 crore since Monday, 10 April, evening.

The strike continued facing government's repression including suspension of 120 leading unions' functionaries on alleged ground of "instigating other employees and misleading them". Government claimed that all private bus operators were providing transport service in the state. They were escorted by deployment of additional police force.



Meanwhile, CITU and All India Road Road Transport Workers Federation called for countrywide solidarity action with the striking workers of Haryana Roadways. CITU unions and other mass organizations in Haryana had been organizing solidarity programmes throughout the state.

After 4 days, the unions called off the strike on Thursday, the 13 April evening, after successful talks between the unions and the government, led by the transport minister Krishan Lal Panwar, and reaching to an agreement in which the government agreed to the unions' demand to scrap new transport policy that gave permits to private operators. The government also agreed to withdraw suspension orders to 120 employees. *"The government had agreed to withdraw 2016-2017 transport policy and reinstate the suspended employees;" "it has also been agreed upon to form a fresh transport policy with the involvement of roadways union representatives, besides others,"* reported *Hindustan Times*.

## **CITU Congratulates Haryana Transport Workers For successful strike and Victory**

**In a statement on 14 April, CITU congratulated Haryana Roadways workers for their complete 4 days strike, jointly under the banners of 8 unions, and ending in victory when BJP state government backed out from its earlier decision of issuing permits to private bus operators with intension ultimately to close down public sector Haryana Roadways by privatising the main routes.**

## **Bihar**

### **Complete Road Transport Strike**

One day road transport strike on 27 March, jointly by all unions in road transport sector, was a massive success in the state. The strike was against the disastrous transport safety bill before the Parliament and against already manifold increase of various fees and penalties, premium for insurance etc which will cripple the entire transport sector and pave the way for transport giants like Uber and Ola to take over.

The strike affected the road transport system in the entire state. All the buses remained stranded in the major bus depots in Patna, Muzaffarpur, Darbhanga, Kishanganj and Purnea. In most of the districts, autos were also off the roads as the CITU affiliated unions at Patna, Muzaffarpur, Jahanabad, Jamui, Bhagalpur, Purnea, Katihar, Madhubani, Samastipur, Begusarai, Khagaria wholeheartedly joined the strike. Other CITU workers came out on the street from early morning in different districts in solidarity with the striking transport workers.

The state unit of All India Road Transport Federation (AIRTF) took initiative to rally different unions in road transport sector in jointly giving call for the strike. Leaflets and posters were issued; and meetings and seminars were held in different districts among transport sector workers, employees and operators as part of preparatory campaign on issues.

Raj Kumar Jha, general secretary and Vijaydhari Kumar, president of Bihar unit of AIRTF and president Uday Shankar Singh and general secretary Ajay Kumar Singh of Bihar State Motor Transport Federation led the movement and addressed the media. CITU leaders, in different district played major role in making the strike successful.

CITU general secretary Ganesh Shankar Singh congratulated the transport workers, employees, operators and CITU leaders associated with transport unions for their contribution in mobilizing the common workers in favour of strike.

- Arun Kumar Mishra

# INTERNATIONAL

30 March, 2017

## **WFTU International Day of Solidarity With the Struggle of Palestinian People**

Responding to the worldwide call of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) to observe International Solidarity Day with the Struggle of the People of Palestine on 30 March, 2017; its affiliated central trade unions in India - CITU, AITUC, AIUTUC, AICCTU, TUCC and UTUC – jointly organised solidarity programmes for the struggling people of Palestine in different parts of the country on that day.

On this occasion, all six WFTU affiliated central trade unions (WFTU-CTUs) jointly with the Embassy of the State of Palestine in India held the '*Anniversary of Land Day and International Day for Solidarity with Palestinian People*' at BTR Bhawan hall of CITU in New Delhi.

At the beginning, the Embassy of Palestine organised a short film show on the Israel's aggression on the people of Palestine. AITUC Secretary Vijayalakshmi welcomed the participants. The 5 member presidium, one each from the attending WFTU-CTUs presided. CITU general secretary Tapan Sen placed the declaration of the solidarity meeting.

The Ambassador of Palestine in India Adnan Abu Al Hija delivered his speech. The leaders of the WFTU-CTUs spoke in support of the declaration stating that the solidarity with Palestinian people is also a fight against imperialism; condemned the role of USA in backing Israel for intensifying its aggression on the people of Palestine; and expressed continued solidarity of the trade unions in India with the people of Palestine. The declaration was adopted unanimously. CITU national secretary and WFTU Deputy General Secretary Swadesh Dev Roye gave vote of thanks.

At the end, two little girls from Palestine recited poems, written by them, on the deprivation and loss of their own lands.

### **Declaration of the Meeting**

On this 30<sup>th</sup> March 2017, the Embassy of the State of Palestine in India and the Central trade Union in India affiliated to the World Federation of Trade Union (WFTU) commemorate the Land Day and declare their solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle against Israeli aggression and occupation.

It was on this day, 30<sup>th</sup> March, in 1976 that six unarmed Palestinians were killed, hundreds injured and hundreds more were arrested by the Israeli army when the people were marching in protest from Galilee to the Negev against the Israeli government's announcement of its plan to expropriate thousands of acres of their land. This was a pivotal event in the struggle of the Palestinian people for their Home Land.

The Palestinian people have been courageously carrying on the struggle for their independent Home Land braving inhuman attacks. They have been suffering for many years from the Israeli aggressiveness, from their illegal establishment of settlements, the looting of the natural resources and products of their land, and from the blockade. The conditions of the nearly 1.8 million people living in the Gaza strip have become unbearable as a result of the continuous sanctions and economic blockade by Israel. Palestinian children are murdered in the streets. Workers are imprisoned every day. Today more than 300 Palestinian children are detained in Israeli prisons.

Instead of recognizing Palestinians sovereignty over their rightful land, Israel has reinforced its occupation and truncated the remnants of the Palestinian land. In recent years, the extreme right-wing governments which have been in power in Israeli have further encroached into Palestinian territory, built Jewish settlements and snatched away the private lands of the Palestinians. They have built a security wall which has truncated the limited territory under the Palestinian authority. This Israeli aggression with the open support from the USA has even more intensified after the election of Donald Trump as the US president, especially



after the declaration called on a UN resolution stating that Israel's settlements have no legal validity, and urged the enforcement of last year's UN Security Council Resolution 2334 as is evident from its announcement of the building of 3000 houses of Jewish settlers in the West Bank and from the recent bill of the Israeli Knesset legalizing the grab of Palestinian property in the same region.

The central trade unions in India affiliated to WFTU strongly oppose the racist colonial policy of Israel and reiterate their total support and solidarity to the fight of the Palestinian people for the end of Israeli aggressiveness and settlements. We support the struggle of the Palestine people for their just cause for their just cause for their independent home land and the recognition of a free and an independent Palestinian state on the borders of 1967 with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The central trade unions in India affiliated to WFTU believe that it is the workers who can resist, who can demand and stand up, through the activities and the initiatives of their trade unions, for the end of the destruction of the Palestinian people and land. The working class of Palestine has the power to compel the US imperialism-backed Israel to concede the just demands of the Palestinian people. The WFTU affiliated central trade unions in India assure the workers and the people of Palestine continued support to their just struggle.

AITUC CITU AIUTUC AICCTU TUCC UTUC

## International Women's Day Observed

All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (AICCCWW) of CITU along with AIDWA observed International Women's Day on 8 March, 2017 jointly staging dharnas, demonstrations and organising rallies.

In Delhi-NCR, the Delhi state CCWW conducted extensive weeklong campaign and joined rally organized by the AIDWA and other women organizations.

In Telangana, hundreds of women from all walks of marched on the streets of Hyderabad under united banner of AIDWA, CITU and UTF led by veteran leader M Swarajyam and state leaders Ashalata, Hemavati, Jayalakshmi and joined by CPI(M) Polit Bureau member Brinda Karat. The procession ended in a public meeting in Sundarayya Centre addressed by Brinda Karat and others.

In Maharashtra, International Women's Day was celebrated with on 10 March, the day of death anniversary of the great social reformer and pioneer of women's education in Maharashtra Savitribai Phule; in Thane-Palghar district by AIDWA with tremendous.

In Jammu and Kashmir, International Women's Day was celebrated in the Town Hall, Kulgam by the scheme workers. About 200 workers participated in the programme. Jamila Sabri, Latifa Ganie, Misra Bakhshi and Dalshida Malik addressed the programme.

In Bihar, International women's day was observed in Patna, Samastipur, Nalanda and several other districts, in which a large number of general women, scheme workers, participated, At Patna women gathered near Bhagat Singh statue near Gandhi Maidan and raised slogans against gender discrimination, growing violence against women, particularly Dalit women in different parts of the country. They also raised slogan for 33% reservation in Parliament and State assemblies. Coordination Committee of Trade Unions and Associations, organized a meeting in the LIC campus which was addressed by women and other trade unions leaders. ADWA all India vice president Ram Pari addressed the meeting.

In Tamilnadu, state AIWCC and district committees jointly campaigned for *women empowerment & emancipation* in 29 districts and have planned in 5 districts in future date. Leaders from fraternal associations like TNGEA, AIEA, BSNL and AIDWA greeted the meetings.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS (GENERAL) FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS  
(BASE 2001=100)**

State	Centre	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2017	State	Centre	Jan. 2016	Feb. 2017
AP	GUNTUR	270	270	MHR	MUMBAI	281	282
	VIJAYWADA	267	268		NAGPUR	303	303
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	274	273		NASIK	289	286
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	252	250		PUNE	273	271
	GUWAHATI	241	240		SHOLAPUR	292	288
	LABAC SILCHAR	253	253	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	290	288
	MARIANI JORHAT	238	236		ROURKELA	281	280
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	236	234	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	293	291
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	297	295	PUN	AMRITSAR	272	275
CHD	CHANDIGARH	273	271		JALANDHAR	274	273
CHS	BHILAI	307	303		LUDHIANA	274	271
DLI	DELHI	249	249	RJN	AJMER	257	256
GOA	GOA	290	291		BHILWARA	267	268
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	256	256		JAIPUR	263	264
	BHAVNAGAR	261	258	TN	CHENNAI	255	256
	RAJKOT	269	264		COIMBATORE	250	257
	SURAT	253	251		COONOR	270	273
	VADODARA	256	254		MADURAI	262	265
HRY	FARIDABAD	247	247		SALEM	263	264
	YAMUNANAGAR	268	267		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	271	273
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	251	252	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	287	286
J&K	SRINAGAR	254	255		HYDERABAD	239	240
JRK	BOKARO	269	269		WARRANGAL	284	283
	GIRIDIH	293	292	TRP	TRIPURA	246	244
	JAMSHEDPUR	317	316	UP	AGRA	293	294
	JHARIA	299	298		GHAZIABAD	272	272
	KODARMA	315	312		KANPUR	283	281
	RANCHI HATIA	306	305		LUCKNOW	270	270
KNT	BELGAUM	279	285		VARANASI	276	274
	BENGLURU	281	282	WB	ASANSOL	300	299
	HUBLI DHARWAR	291	294		DARJEELING	260	256
	MERCARA	283	285		DURGAPUR	300	299
	MYSORE	285	291		HALDIA	307	305
KRL	ERNAKULAM	278	277		HOWRAH	259	258
	MUNDAKKAYAM	288	292		JALPAIGURI	263	263
	QUILON	309	321		KOLKATA	258	258
MP	BHOPAL	269	268		RANIGANJ	245	242
	CHHINDWARA	280	276		SILIGURI	254	252
	INDORE	250	250				
	JABALPUR	276	275				
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## Steel Workers Strike against Strategic Sale

(Report Page18)



ASP, Durgapur, West Bengal



SSP, Salem, Tamilnadu



VISP, Bhadravati, Karnataka

## Dharna in Solidarity with Striking Workers



Rourkela, Odisha



Vishakhapatnam, Andhra Pradesh



# Palestine Solidarity Day

**New Delhi, 30 March, 2017**

(Report Page 24)



**CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen placing the Declaration in the Solidarity Meeting for the people of Palestine at BTR Bhawan; Ambassador of Palestine in India Adnan Abu Al Hija sitting on the dais**  
(3<sup>rd</sup> from right)