



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

MID DAY MEAL WORKERS JOINT RALLY

New Delhi; 19 November 2018

(Report Page 20)



**(Top) CITU National Secretary A. R. Sindhu and
(Below) MDMWFI General Secretary Jaibhagawan addressing**

For 8-9 January, 2019 Strike

Trade Unions Joint State Conventions

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Punjab



Uttar Pradesh



WORKING CLASS

**DECEMBER 2018
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Editorial

Kisans Long March & the Working Class

After historic Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally on 5 September, it is now Kisans Long March to Delhi on 29-30 November entering through four points and joining in a massive rally before the Modi government on peasants' demands. More than 200 Kisan organisations from across the country are participating in this rally.

They will definitely ask the question as to why lakhs of debt-burdened peasants committed suicide in different parts of the country during last two decades. Most of the institutional agricultural loans at low interest are being taken away by the big corporates in agri business like seeds, export of agri products including the future trading companies and others. The poor agrarian masses are pushed to money lenders to take loan with high interests.

The Pradhan Mantri Fasal Beema Yojna (PMFBY) has become scandalous. According to Insurance Regulatory Authority of India records about 11 insurance companies have been benefitted by more than Rs.10,000 Crores in Khariff season in 2016 alone from the premium that central and state governments shared with 49% each and the Kisan paying 2%. In the name of Kisans the corporates are being provided with huge public fund through insurance route. This is the neoliberal economy i.e. the corporates are taking away major loans in agri business depriving the Kisans and on the other side in the name of crop failure of the farmers, the insurance companies are fattening with public funding.

The other side of the farmers issue is that they are not getting surplus amount from their land and labour by selling the agricultural produce. Swaminathan formula of comprehensive cost (C2) inclusive of land cost and interest on fixed capital investment with that adding 50% as remunerative price is not being accepted by the government. They are misleading the people with false calculations and claims.

If workers are denied of minimum wages based on 15th ILC recommendations and Supreme Court's judgement on it; the Kisans are denied the remunerative prices of their investments, inputs and labour costs.

It has become important for both, the workers and Kisans to join hands and fight for their subsistence income to achieve the cherished goal that is enshrined in the Constitution of India.

Future of democratic India relies on this workers-peasants alliance. CITU gave call for workers and trade union movement's all out support, participation and countrywide solidarity action with Kisan's 'Long March' to Delhi on 29-30 November, 2018.

Long live workers-peasants unity!

CTUs Boycotted Tripartite Meeting on Labour Code

[All 10 Central Trade Unions boycotted the Tripartite meeting on Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions 2018 and wrote to the Union Labour Minister jointly giving reasons thereof. The letter is reproduced below.]

20th November 2018

Shri Santosh Gangwar,
Minister of Labour & Employment
Govt of India
Shram Shakti Bhawan
Rafi Marg
New Delhi

Sub: Tripartite meeting on Labour Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions 2018 proposed to be held on 22nd November 2018

Dear Santosh Gangwar ji,

Just about 16.02 hours on 20th November 2018, we have received a e-mail from the Labour Ministry sending a letter signed by Shri J K Singh, Under Secretary dated 9th November 2018 conveying on the Tripartite Consultation Meeting on the above subject on 22nd November 2018 at your office.

Please note, the letter dated 9th November 2018 has reached us on 20th November 2018 proposing the tripartite meeting to be held on 22nd November 2018 that too on a subject which proposed to amend 13 different laws covering wide range of industries and services.

We are constrained to convey to you that the tripartite consultation exercise with the stakeholders has been practically reduced to a ritualism, which the Central Trade Unions cannot put up with.


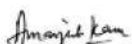
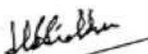
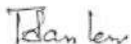
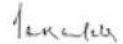
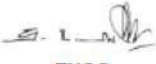
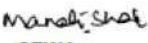



Secondly, we express our strong opposition to the very concept of amendment of 13 different laws together covering divergent areas and occupation both in industries and services on a serious issue of occupational health and safety which is different in different industries within the industrial sector itself and also in service sector.

However, it will not be possible for us to respond to your call for tripartite consultation on a seventy page voluminous draft with such a short notice of less than one and half day.

Moreover, despite repeated communications and protest, it appears the biggest trade union centre of the country, INTUC has not been invited in this proposed meeting also, and the Central Trade Unions cannot accept such discriminatory and vindictive approach of the Govt.

For the reasons cited above, we reiterate that we will not be attending the proposed meeting on 22.11.2018.

Thanking you
Yours sincerely,

 INTUC	 AITUC	 HMS	 CITU	 AIUTUC
 TUCC	 SEWA	 AICCTU	 LPF	 UTUC

Copy to Shri J K Singh, Under Secretary to Govt of India, MoLE, Shram Shakti Bhawan, New Delhi

Employment Generation

Major Issue of 8-9 January General Strike

Hemalata

‘Where is my job?’ This is the question troubling the minds of hundreds of lakhs of young people across the country. They want concrete answer from the government on just one of the many pre-poll promises made by Modi and his BJP in 2014 to attract the young and get their votes. But, the Modi government acted deaf.

The Promise and Propaganda

What is the employment situation in the country today when the BJP led government is at the fag end of its tenure? During the Parliament elections in 2014, BJP promised that if voted to power it would provide 2 crore jobs every year. After coming to power the Modi government has embarked upon an illusion creating spree of announcing various programmes – ‘Make in India’, ‘Skill India’, ‘Start Up India’, ‘Digital India’, ‘Pradhan Mantri Rojgar Protsahan Yojana (PMRPY)’ etc and etc, which it claimed would generate employment.

Scramble for Job; Absence of Quality Job

How many jobs did these schemes and programmes really generated? Let us just look at a few newspaper reports that show a highly disturbing situation.

- 1.9 crore appeared for the Railway Recruitment Board exam to fill just 62,907 posts, mostly of gangmen, gatemen, helpers in electrical and mechanical departments. A large number of them were postgraduates;
- 23 lakhs applied for 400 class IV jobs in UP. 50,000 of them were graduates;
- 25 lakhs appeared for the exam for 6,000 class IV jobs in West Bengal; many of them were graduates and post graduates;
- More than 2 lakhs appeared for 1,137 posts of police constables in Mumbai. While the basic qualification was 12th standard, 543 were postgraduates and 425 were engineering graduates.

Many more similar instances can be cited: engineers driving auto rickshaws, MBAs working as shop attendants, post graduates as servers in restaurants etc. They are not doing these jobs for fun. They are compelled to take up such low paying jobs, despite their high educational qualifications, because they could not find suitable and better jobs.

Most probably, many of the lakhs of educated youth are also selling ‘pakodas’ as suggested by the Prime Minister or running ‘pan shops’ or ‘rearing cows’ as per the advice of the BJP chief minister of Tripura. But obviously they do not share the view of the Prime Minister Modi and the president of his party Amit Shah that such a ‘job’ in which one earns ‘Rs 200 a day’ with no guarantee of work the next day can be called ‘employment’. That is why they wanted a secure job with guaranteed income, even if it does not obviously meet their original aspirations.

Rising Joblosses, Underemployment & Temporary Nature of Jobs

Apart from the ground level experience, data from several prestigious institutions show the worsening unemployment situation.

The 'State of Working India 2018' report of Azim Premji University states that between 2013 and 2015 total employment actually shrank by 70 lakhs. More recent data from other such eminent agencies show that the absolute decline has continued past 2015. It is reported that 15,000 – 20,000 people lost their jobs in the telecom sector during the six months period ending 30 September 2018. The staffing firm TeamLease Services estimates that 65,000 telecom workers will lose their jobs by 31 March 2019.

Employment in the information technology sector has also dropped drastically in 2017-18 though these companies' revenue has shown a decent growth. They are increasingly resorting to use of automation and higher technologies. According to some experts, the slowdown in hiring and the reduction in the number of employees, is taking place much faster than anticipated.

According to a report by **IndiaSpend**, fewest organised sector jobs in seven years were created in large companies and factories across eight important industries in the country in 2015. 60% of those with jobs do not find employment for the entire year which indicates widespread underemployment and temporary jobs. The report pointed out that though India had seen high growth after 1991, less than half the population was fully employed.

According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) unemployment rate in the country increased to 6.9%, the highest in two years. The number of persons employed in October 2018 was 39.7 crore. This was 40.7 crore in October 2017. 90 lakh jobs were lost in 11 months, up to September 2018 (Financial Express 26-9-2018). CMIE data also show that 'joblessness is rising steadily from 3% of the potential workforce on 30th July 2017 to 8% on 23rd September 2018. This is a 167% increase in joblessness in just 14 months'. A new feature according to the report is the high rate of open unemployment, which is 16% for youth and the higher educated.

The trend of negative employment generation reported by these two non-government agencies matches with the reports of the employment-unemployment surveys of Labour Ministry that 2014 onwards net employment generation (including job losses owing to closure shut downs etc) has turned negative. There is an absolute decline in employment in the economy despite increase in GDP. The Labour Bureau reports of 2014 – 15 and 2015-16 reveal that hardly 3.7 lakh new jobs were created in the eight most labour intensive sectors including construction and IT, during this period. Of course, most of these jobs were temporary and contractual in nature. How did the BJP government react to these reports? It has stopped publishing of such reports by the Labour Bureau since 2016-17 on the pretext of revising the survey procedure.

But during the same period, at least 15 lakh jobs were lost due to shut downs, closures, lay off etc in industries and services. As majority of workers in industrial establishments are contract, casual/temporary etc, any decision to cut down production due to recession etc immediately results in retrenchment/ termination of services of these workers. Under the present BJP regime led by Modi, such cut down in production has become a regular feature.

Covering Up & False Campaign

The fact is that employment is on a downward trend. As this became clear, the BJP government started an aggressive campaign of false claims to cover its failure. It even involved various government run institutions like the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) in this lie campaign. Led by the Prime Minister himself, ministers in the BJP government are competing with each other in spreading misinformation on employment generation to deceive people.

The Prime Minister claimed that 46 lakh jobs were created in 2017-18. The finance minister in his budget speech claimed that 70 lakh jobs have been created in the same period. Not to be outdone, the EPFO, obviously at the behest of the Labour Ministry, claimed that only in July 2018,

10 lakh new jobs have been generated. The latest is the claim that 85 lakh people have got jobs under the PMRPY.

And Its Reality

What is the reality? The PMRPY is in fact a fraudulent project, which was announced by the Prime Minister in August 2016. Under this programme the employers' contribution to Provident Fund for the new employees in the concerned establishment, will be paid by the government for a period of three years, as an incentive to employment generation. Through this programme, the BJP government under Modi has started a new kind of subsidy to the employers. It is shouldering employers' statutory obligation on PF contribution, funding it from the national exchequer. The resultant increase in the number of EPF subscribers is shown as 'employment generation'. The fact is that large numbers of workers who have been working are not covered by EPF despite being eligible for that owing to the failure of the enforcement machinery. Many employers deliberately flout the law. Under the PMRPY of the present BJP government, this failure of the enforcement machinery and deliberate violation of law is being covered up by huge transfer of people's money to subsidise the employers. On the other this inclusion of already existing workers under EPF is dubiously shown as employment generation. This is how the BJP government under Modi is trying to serve its corporate masters and at the same time cheat the people. It might have disappointed the employment seeking youth. But it has satisfied the profit hungry corporates and big business. India's ranking on 'Ease of Doing Business Index' has gone up from 130 to 100 and now further to 77. It wants to take it to under 50 by pursuing the same neoliberal policies, which have proved to be disastrous for the common people and the future of our youth.

Some of the ministers in the BJP government like Nitin Gadkari, though inadvertently, and a few bureaucrats were compelled to admit the truth. Reacting to the demands for reservation in jobs for the Marathas, Nitin Gadkari, the Surface Transport Minister in the Modi government, shot back asking 'Where are the jobs?' The Prime Minister's claims in Parliament, citing EPFO payroll data, that 10 million jobs were created in the past year alone, were recently punctured by the chief statistician who said 'EPFO enrolment data never talked about job creation'.

The Stark Reality

More than 50% of population in the country is below the age of 25 and more than 65% below the age of 35. It is estimated that India will have the largest number of working people in the world, around 87 crore, within four years. Our country can achieve great strides in development in all spheres by utilising this huge potential by employing their energies and creativity in the production process, services etc. But under the capitalist system, particularly in its latest and most predatory phase of neoliberalism, which the BJP government under Modi is aggressively pursuing, this cannot happen.

The perception, that economic growth by itself would create jobs, has been proved to be wrong by several reports at the national as well as international levels. The Azim Premji University 'State of Working India 2018' report also states that under neoliberalism growth was creating fewer jobs in the country. 'In the 1970 and 1980s, when GDP growth was around 3-4%, employment growth was around 2% per year. In the 1990s and particularly in the 2000s, GDP growth has accelerated to 7% but employment has slowed to 1% per year or even less'.

Employment situation has worsened under the neoliberal regime with steep fall in permanent jobs and increase in precarious jobs like contract, casual, temporary, fixed term, part time,

apprentices, trainees etc. The situation has further worsened after the systemic crisis which started in 2008 and is still continuing. Such crises are integral to the capitalist system and the employers seek to protect their profits by shifting the burden on to the workers. Increasing unemployment is one of the outcomes of this.

Trade Unions Movement against Unemployment

The joint trade union movement has been raising the demand for employment generation since long. It has been demanding that the concessions and exemptions being given to the big corporates should be linked to job creation. But the government totally ignored the demand. While every year tax exemptions of around Rs 5 lakh crore are given away to the big corporates, employment generation is becoming negative. Money due to the government is money due to the people. That is being waived off on the pretext that this will create jobs. But this has become a chimera. Net employment generation is turning negative. Whatever employment that is created, is of very poor quality, indecent, with no job security, income security or social security.

Employment generation is one of the 12 points demands raised by the country wide general strike on 8-9 January 2019 called by the joint trade union movement. The two days' strike is part of the continuous struggle against the anti worker anti people and anti national neoliberal regime, which the BJP led government of Modi is pursuing with increased vigour and brutality.

Divide, Divert & Disrupt to Rule

Not only that. The BJP leading the government and its ideological mentor, the RSS are trying to divert the attention of the people and particularly the energies of the youth into unproductive and destructive channels. The RSS and its many outfits are utilising the frustration among the youth against lack of jobs, against lack of opportunities to develop their talents and creativity etc to create animosities on the basis of religion, caste, region etc, to polarise society for the electoral gains of the BJP. The issues of construction of Ram mandir at Ayodhya, the instigations against Supreme Court judgment allowing entry of women of all ages to the Sabarimala temple, the increasing attacks on minorities and dalits etc being engineered by the RSS and its various outfits are meant to achieve such polarisation of society. They are meant to divide - the working class, youth and society in general, disrupt people's unity and weaken the fight against the neoliberal policies. The working class must be vigilant against any such attempts, protect its unity and defeat such divisive machinations.

The Call

Employment, along with many other issues on which the two days' strike focuses, is an issue as much of all sections of the people as it is of the workers.

- CITU appeals to the entire working class irrespective of their trade union or political affiliations to join the two days' strike.
- CITU also appeals to all toiling people and all sections of society to extend their solidarity and all forms of support to the strike.

Conspiracy to Impose **Slavery on Working Class;** ***‘Hire and Fire’* without Changing Laws**

Tapan Sen

The BJP government at the Centre, right from the day it assumed office, has been working overtime to empower the employers' class with the unbridled right to ***“hire and fire”*** workers at their will through various routes. Its sole motive is to impose the conditions of slavery on the working people of the country who actually produce the GDP, generate resources for the national exchequer and also generate profit for the employers.

“Ease of doing business” is the central focus of the Modi government. In the process, weakening and finally eliminating trade unions at workplaces is the main objective. Continuing loot on the workers and their rights is its modus operandi.

Attempts of Hire & Fire & Resistance

Had there been no workers, there would have been no production of goods and services and, therefore, no profit. But, under capitalist regime, these workers are being squeezed and exploited most. As the crisis of the capitalist system deepens and aggravates, such exploitation becomes more atrocious, more heinous and more blood-sucking.

The attempts to introduce the system of ***“hire and fire”*** have been going on since the onset of the neoliberal policies. Successive governments at the Centre and in many states made hell-bent efforts to change the labour laws. The proposal to change the Industrial Disputes Act to allow employers in all establishments, employing up to 300 workers, to retrench workers or declare closure without government's prior permission had been initiated in the mid nineties itself. These comprise more than 70% of the industrial establishments in the country employing more than 78% of the industrial workforce. But that could not be achieved by the government owing to consistent united resistance by the trade union movement of the country. In fact, latest proposal of the Modi government on Code on Industrial Relations Bill also pressed for the same proposals on ***“hire and fire”*** i.e. complete freedom to employers' class to retrench workers at their will, which even the Modi sponsored trade union centre could not endorse publicly.

The united movement of the working class in the country which is getting consistently and continuously widened in the process of countrywide struggles could successfully stall such retrograde move changing the labour laws for introducing ***“hire and fire”*** till now.

Contractorisation and Casualisation Route

In this background, the governments, led by BJP, have resorted to most dubious means of circumstantially empowering the employers' class to retrench workers at their will even without changing legal framework through innovative as well as satanic administrative measures. The ground for such aggressive onslaught of ***“hire and fire”*** has been set through widespread contractorisation and casualisation of labour which got additional momentum since the inception of neoliberal policy regime in early 1990s itself. It is not that prior to 1990s contract system was not there. But such contract work had been prevalent mainly in peripheral and supportive jobs in most

of the establishments and not that much in core operational jobs. And even in those peripheral jobs, particularly those of permanent and perennial nature, deployment of contract workers was continuing illegally in violation of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act 1970, with the direct indulgence of the concerned governments. Even in that situation, wherever the contract workers could be organised in trade unions and struggles could be conducted, they could be regularised in many industries till mid 1980s.

But since 1991 onward, such unlawful deployment of contract workers even in core operational jobs of the establishment proliferated in a big way through active indulgence of the government machineries reaching almost an explosive proportion of the total workforce by now. Even the Supreme Court Judgment put hurdles on regularisation of contract workers deployed in permanent and perennial nature of jobs as per the law of the land. As per official estimates (Employment -Unemployment Survey conducted by Labour Bureau under the Labour Ministry-2015-16) 46.6% of the workforce were found to be self employed, as per Usual Principal Status Approach followed by 32.8% as casual labour. Only 20.7% are wage/salaried workers including contract workers. As per the same survey report, 64.9% of the wage/salaried workers and 67.8% of the contract workers and 95.3% of the casual workers do not have any written job contracts (and/or appointment letters). This itself reveals the extremely temporary character of employment of majority of the wage/salaried workers in the country. The same report also revealed that 67.5% of the self-employed (46.6% of the total workforce) have an average monthly income up to Rs 7500, 57.2% of wage/salaried workers have a monthly income up to Rs.10,000 and 38.5% of the contract workers and 59.3% of the casual workers have a monthly income of up to Rs 5000. The entire findings of the Survey Report clearly reveal that overwhelming majority of the country's workforce in industries and services are on contract, only a small proportion are on regular permanent employment. Even among the majority of self-employed, contract system is in operation in hidden form.

Annual Survey of Industries and also the reports published by Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy brought forth industry specific details of contract work. According to these reports, petroleum sector accounts for 56.21% contract workers out of its total workforce, basic metal (steel, aluminium etc) 46.5%, automobile including trucks and trailers 45.95%, tobacco products 72.83%, pharmaceuticals and chemicals 47.19%, non-metallic minerals 60.37% etc. Of these the public sector itself accounts for around 50% contract workers out of the total workforce and the private sector entities are employing around 70% of its total workforce as contract workers of different hues.

The alarming extent to which workers are being severely exploited through contract system is thus clear. In public sector industries, contract workers are generally being paid less than one tenth of the wage of the regular workers despite doing the same and similar work, not to speak of other benefits. In private sector, contract workers' wage is well below 50% of the wages being paid to regular workers. Majority of the contract workers are deprived of any social security benefits despite being legally entitled for the same. But the very temporary nature of service as contract workers, keeping them under constant threat of retrenchment, does not allow the contract workers to demand such benefits to which they are legally entitled.

Not only that. The clear stipulation of the section 25 of the Rules framed under Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act 1970 providing for payment of same wages as regular workers to the contract workers for doing the same and similar jobs is not being implemented by the concerned governments subjecting the contract workers to severe exploitation.

New Routes for “*Ease of Doing Business*”

It is in this background of extreme vulnerability of employment relations of majority of country's workforce even in the organised sector itself, that the present BJP government has been introducing measures one after another to virtually empower the employers' class with the complete right to “**hire and fire**” at will. This is being done in their anxiety to ensure so called “***ease of doing business***”.

First, Outsourcing

The first is to allow employers to deploy of contract workers in regular jobs through different nomenclatures viz., outsourcing, job contracts, commercial contracts etc. It is argued that no contractor has been engaged for doing the jobs but the entire work has been outsourced to another agency for a price; so the principal employer has no responsibility over the workers working in the outsourced agencies, although they are actually working for the principal employer. Thus these workers are sought to be thrown out of the purview of the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act 1970 and principal employers, mostly the large corporates are completely freed from their statutory obligations. There are numerous cases where the labour departments, both in the centre and the states refused to entertain or attend complaints or industrial disputes raised by the workers of the outsourced agencies on violation of the Contract Labour (R&A) Act.

Second, Fixed Term Employment

Second, introduction of the system of “***fixed term employment***” through amendment of the Rules under Industrial Employment Standing Order Act through executive order has opened the floodgate of employment of temporary workers in all organised sector establishments, both in public and private sectors. The fixed term employment was first introduced during the earlier BJP regime in 2002 despite vehement opposition by all the trade unions in the country. Subsequently, owing to consistent pressure and persuasion by the trade union movement, the UPA government had to rescind the notification on “***fixed term employment***” in 2007. But again, after the new incarnation of the BJP government under Narendra Modi this atrocious provision has again been introduced in 2017 ignoring the opposition of the entire trade union movement. As per this provision the employers will be allowed to employ workers for a fixed term say 6 months or one year and after the completion of the tenure those workers can be retrenched without any notice and compensation, unless their tenure is renewed for another fixed term. This has introduced further fragility in the employment relations keeping the concerned workers under constant threat of retrenchment or non-renewal of their tenure.

Although as per rules, workers on ***fixed term employment*** are eligible for the same wage as the regular workers in the concerned establishment, the temporary nature of their employment and consequent fear of jobloss do not allow them to demand the same enabling the employers to take advantage of the situation. This phenomenon is prevalent even in public sector companies. Employees of Alliance Air, a subsidiary of Air India, who are all on ***fixed term employment*** since last 15 years or so through periodic renewal of their terms, have been getting much less wages and benefits than the Air India employees. Similar examples are there in other PSUs and private companies as well. Even in a PSU like ONGC, highly skilled workers in on-shore and off-shore exploration jobs are being deployed on “***fixed term employment***”. And, after notification of “***fixed term employment***” last year, reports are being received from many states on private sector units aggressively resorting to this route of ***fixed term employment*** while simultaneously retrenching regular workers on one plea or the other.

Third, NEEM & NETAP

The latest move of 'temporarising' the employment pattern for greater exploitation of labour is through engagement of apprentices in a big way. The amendment to the Apprentices Act along with introduction of the National Skill Development Programme titled National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM) and National Employment Through Apprenticeship Programme (NETAP) is another gift by the BJP government led by Modi to its corporate bosses. These schemes are being introduced under the camouflage of loud slogans of improving and advancing the skill-level of country's youth to ensure greater employability. But in practice, they are sinister designs to get the workers' jobs done by apprentices, without any obligation to retain or pay them right wages and social security benefits and, thereby, make a savings of the employers on labour cost. As is already being witnessed in various industries, apprentices are being utilised as workers on the production lines year after year denying them all benefits of regular workers. Most of the MNCs are now availing this route of brazen exploitation. Other private majors have also started making use of this instrument to accentuate exploitation of workers.

The Project "Ease of Doing Business"

The picture is becoming abundantly clear. The entire project of so called **"ease of doing business"** is practically aimed at more severe exploitation and loot on labour who actually keeps the wheel of production and services running. There is no programme for making power, transport and other industrial raw-materials and inputs cheaper for the business and industries since all those areas are separate profit centres for the same private corporate. Hence exploitation of labour is main life-line of their project of **"ease of doing business"**.

The BJP government has been working overtime to facilitate such inhuman exploitation and extraction of sweat and blood of labour without any hurdles. Their aim is not to allow the workers to organise in unions and also weaken the trade union movement through introducing extreme heterogeneity in the composition of workforce within every workplace viz

Handful of regular workers, larger number of contract workers, fixed term employees and apprentices – all doing the same jobs with widely divergent and different wage and service conditions.

It is a criminal conspiracy that through this process they want to impose conditions of slavery on the entire workforce.

Part of Neoliberal Drive

This criminal conspiracy of imposing slavery on the working people flows from the working of the crisis ridden neoliberal capitalist order. Hence our fight must be directed against the very exploitative neoliberal policies and their political operators at the helm of governance, whosoever it may be. At this juncture it is the RSS led BJP government at the centre and in most of the states. This criminal conspiracy must be thoroughly exposed and squarely defeated by the working class movement.

Go for 2 Days Strike to Defeat Design of Imposing Slavery

The two days' countrywide strike on 8-9 January 2019 called by the united platform of trade unions is aimed at cementing the unity and determination of the working class to mount stout resistance to this conspiracy and oust the conspirator class in the governance decisively.

Designs of imposing slavery on the workers and the people will not pass!

NPS and Government Employees

R. Elangovan

(The article has been abridged and edited from campaign document of DREU)

Presently, there are 34,80,697 central government employees, including railways and defence, of which 17,58,144 employees are covered under NPS i.e. 50%. In Indian Railways there are about 13,84,720 employees, out of which 6,84,565 employees i.e. 52% are in NPS. In Southern Railway there are 87,643 employees out of which 53,005 employees i.e. 60% are in NPS.

Old Pension Scheme (Employees Pension Scheme - EPS)

EPS is defined benefit scheme. Employee who has put-in a minimum of 10 years qualifying service is eligible for 50% of last drawn pay as monthly pension. The minimum guaranteed pension is Rs.9000.

Out of monthly pension an amount equal to 40% of the pension can be commuted i.e. can be withdrawn in advance, which will be recovered in 15 years; and can get a lump-sum payment in advance. After commutation, residual pension and DA on full pension will be paid for 15 years. If the pensioner dies before 15 years they need not repay the balance.

The pension increases by 20% after 80 years, 30% after 85 years, 40% after 90 years; 50% after 95 years and 100% after 100 years of age.

Whenever Pay Commissions submits recommendations for wage revision, it necessarily contains recommendations for revision of pension also.

Apart from Pension and Family Pension a lump-sum payment of "Death cum Retirement Gratuity" is also given. Maximum is 20 lakhs.

Family Pension, since 1964, is granted for spouses (wife / husband), unmarried / widowed / divorced daughters and crippled son/daughter who is not able to earn his/her livelihood. An employee who becomes medically unfit in all classes during service is entitled for invalid pension and gratuity and employees who are crippled due to accident are eligible for Extra-ordinary Pension. Payment of gratuity or commutation amount does not attract any tax.

New Pension System (NPS)

Defined contribution but non-Defined benefits: NPS is not the defined benefit scheme. Its contribution is defined but the benefit is not defined. It is uncertain. Whereas, under EPS there is no contribution from employees and the benefits like pension, gratuity, commutation etc. are well defined. BJP government introduced NPS by an executive order on 20-12-2003 w.e.f.01.01.2004. The UPA-II government passed Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 with the support of BJP and all other national and regional parties, except the Left parties, and enforced it on 1 February, 2014.

Under NPS 10% of basic pay plus DA is recovered. Government gives equal amount as matching grant. Both the amounts earned interest until August, 2008. Thereafter it was sent to Bank of India, a nationalized bank. Now it is sent to Axis bank, a private bank. The total amount is distributed to three pension fund managers of LIC, SBI and UTI. They invest 15% in share market and 85% in bonds, both government and private corporates. There is no guarantee for returns on this investment. As per one of the 8 risks listed by SEBI there is a **Risk of Loss of Principal**. The amount invested and the return together is called the pension wealth.

At the time of retirement on attaining 60 years, if the principal and savings are still available, a sum equal to 60% of total is given to the retiree. It attracts taxation unlike EPS. Remaining 40% has to be invested in annuities and the retiree is given option to choose the company in which he may invest in annuity. Investment of 40% of Pension Wealth in annuities is mandatory. In case an employee voluntarily retires or resigns before 60 years he will be paid only 20% of pension wealth and balance 80% of pension wealth has to be invested in annuities. If the total amount of pension wealth is Rs.2 lakhs or less the entire amount can be withdrawn.

Though it is stated that this 40% or 80% does not attract any tax, to the actual amount of investment, but, 18% GST is imposed. The PFRDA has listed certain annuity providers like LIC and ICICI. This 40% or 80% amount is called purchase price. That is you purchase a scheme for pension.

Different Types of NPS Annuities and Benefits

(i) Default Scheme: According to this scheme the pension will be paid for life. After the death the spouse will get the same amount until death. If the spouse dies before the NPS subscriber nobody else will get the pension. Neither crippled son nor unmarried or widowed or divorced daughter will get the pension as it is available in EPS. The nominee will get back the invested amount i.e. purchase price will be returned.

(ii) Scheme only for lifetime: Under this scheme, pension is given during contributor's lifetime and, after his death it is stopped. Spouse will not get the pension. The purchase price is also lost. The spouse or the nominee will not get back the invested amount. In some other variant schemes also purchase price is lost.

(iii) Investment in Annuities: What the annuity company does with the purchase price? They invest it 100% in the share market. If there is share market crisis the investment will get wiped out and the company does not guarantee a minimum pension. Basudev Acharia, CPI(M) MP moved an amendment to the Act for guaranteed minimum pension at the rate of 50% of last drawn pay. Government did not accept. It was pressed for vote, but was defeated as, except Left parties, all parties voted against it.

Atal Pension Yojana

Atal Pension Yojana for unorganized sector workers, introduced by BJP government, is also based on the investment. If one opts for minimum pension of Rs.5000 his accumulated contribution has to be Rs.8.5 lakhs. If the investment in share market earns higher amount then the investor will get more pension. Government guarantees payment of minimum pension of Rs.5000 in the eventuality of earning lesser amount or if wiped out in the market crisis. After the death of the pensioner the spouse will get the guaranteed same amount of pension. After the death of both husband and wife the purchase price is returned to the nominee.

But, the same government refuses to pay minimum guaranteed pension to its own employees under NPS.

NPS and Left-led Governments

All the state governments implemented NPS, except three Left parties' led governments in Kerala, West Bengal and Tripura. When Congress came to power in Kerala they implemented NPS in Kerala w.e.f. 1-4-2013. West Bengal is still continuing with old pension scheme (EPS). Recently, Tripura has elected BJP led government and, therefore, the fate of old pension is under threat.

KERALA FLOOD

The Role of LDF Government & Working Class

N. Padmalochanan

[Kerala had the worst flood in a century. The people of Kerala have demonstrated their unity efforts with calm and resilience. The working class and their unions made significant contribution in the relief and rehabilitation work for the flood victims without any remuneration of award. Special mention has to be made about the fishermen's union for saving lives, electricity workers and employees who, despite immense hardship, restored power in record time and headloaders union for rehabilitation of the flood victims. There is all round appreciation of the commendable work of LDF government for relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction work.]

It was only BJP, other RSS outfits and their government who tried to create obstruction in these efforts of the people of Kerala. These are the forces who are now trying to create disruption and disaffection among the people of Kerala for their narrow political purposes.

In this background this article is being published to recall the efforts of the great people of Kerala who faced the natural calamities; as they will face this man made challenge of disruption.
– Editor]

The Devastating Flood

Kerala had heavy rainfall. It was the biggest ever rainfall in the state in last hundred years. 13 out of the 14 districts in the state were affected. 439 persons lost their lives and 44 persons are still missing. 14,50,707 persons of 3,91,494 families were sheltered in relief camps. It was for the first time in the history of Kerala that such huge number of people was compelled to stay in the relief camps.

The rain was extremely high on 4 August 2018. Indian meteorological department was unable to forecast it. Their forecast was that the rainfall would be 98.9mm during 9 to 15 August; but the actually rainfall was 352.2mm, more than three times of the forecast.

Due to the heavy rainfall the water level became unmanageable. Well known rivers like Bharatha puzha, Periyar, Chalakudi puzha, Pamba and all other rivers swelled and started overflowing the banks; the riverside areas were heavily flooded. All 82 dams were full to maximum reserve level.

Heavy rainfall also led to largescale landslides. 54,000 hectares of standing crops were destroyed; 50,000 cattle and hundreds of poultry farms with their 2 lakhs products perished. Hundreds of houses collapsed. Heavy flood water did not even spared multi-storied buildings. The geographical features of the land itself were altered in many parts of the state. Major parts of the residential and commercial areas were completely flooded. Government offices were also submerged. In government offices many documents were damaged substantial portion of which is not retrievable. Centuries old monuments and institutions built with immense human effort has also been seriously affected.

In the history of Kerala there was a bigger flood only in 1924. But the density of population was much lesser at that time, only one third of the present population.

The damage caused by the flood in Kerala cannot easily be estimated without taking into account the ecological diversity of the affected areas. Kerala has 44 rivers of which 41 originate from the Western Ghats which flow westward to Arabian Sea. The statewide network of rivers aggravated the calamity.

State Government's Efforts

From the very beginning, under the leadership of the chief minister, Kerala government has made concerted, coordinated and continuous efforts to overcome the calamity and in the rescue and relief operations. On the very next day of the incident, the chief minister convened a meeting of the state level disaster management authority and connected all the district collectors through video conferencing. In every morning and evening meetings were held and reviews were made of rescue operations. These meetings finalised the method of distribution of the resources including the human resources. A 24 hours observatory cell started. Each district was monitored by the ministers of the state. The first priority was to save human lives.

The relief to next of kin of flood victims actually began on 29 May. Government released Rs.4 Lakh to each to the kin of the 334 bereaved families and also Rs.10,000 each to 5,58,335 families till 3 October, 2018. Government has also taken steps to release an interest free loan of Rs.1 Lakh each to 1,39,785 families through Kudumbasree by availing a loan of Rs.925 crores from banks. The interest of the loan will be paid by the government.

Government has taken steps to issue the lost certificates to the students, driving licenses and other documents. Notebooks and text books were given to 40,575 students.

People's Efforts

The secular fabric and composite culture of the Kerala society were exhibited at the time of the rescue and relief activities. The people participated in rescue efforts with unity and none of the differences in colour, caste or religion could break the collectivity.

CPI(M) Volunteers

CPI(M) volunteers joined rescue and relief work from the very moment the calamity started. They shifted affected people from danger zone to the relief camps or to safety zones. They conducted relief camps and collected resources for facing the problems which are notable in the history of Kerala.

After the flood water receded, cleaning activities were conducted. Volunteers from other districts went to the heavily flooded districts like Alapuzha, Ernakulam, Pathanamthitta etc. In Ernakulam district, 53,112 CPI(M) volunteers had participated. A vast majority came from other districts.

Class and Mass Organisations

The class and mass organisation also did impressive job. CITU members in the fisheries sector have received admiration and applause from all walks of life for their life saving mission. More than 600 fishermen went to the flood affected hilly areas with their boats transported in lorries and with these boats they rescued the stranded families who could not be rescued by others like the military helicopter / police since it was beyond their reach.

The chief minister called the rescuer fishermen as the army of Kerala in the rescue work. The government offered Rs.3000 as rent per boat. But, the fishermen refused to accept it and, instead, they contributed it to the chief minister's relief fund. Electricity workers with speed restored electricity connection to houses of more than 1 Lakh families within 5 days. Construction workers, head loading workers, plumbers, scheme workers and other sections of workers in large number were engaged in rebuilding the structure of the flood affected areas, including repairing and new constructions.

Effect of Flood & Relief Work: An Overview

- 439 persons lost their lives and 44 persons are still missing;
- 26,000 houses were completely or partially destroyed;
- In 5645 camps: 7,24,645 persons took shelter;
- People still in relief camps: about 6000 of about 1000 families;
- Flood affected wells: 3,20,000 out of which 3,00,956 wells have been cleaned and repaired;
- Crop loss in 40,000 hectares is estimated to be Rs.20,000 crores;
- 33 dams opened as part of relief work out of 83 dams;
- Forces deployment: police, fire brigade, army, navy, air force, coast guards;
- Total central forces participation – 7,443;
- Relief fund received from Keralites living abroad: Rs.1467.15 Crore, received till the end of September 2018;
- Central government's fund: Rs.600 crores;
- Central government refused permission to receive Rs.700 Crore donation offer of UAE;
- Central government refused giving permission to the ministers of Kerala to go to foreign countries to collect funds from Keralites living there;
- As per the assessment of UN India chief Yuri Afonassire, the State needs Rs.31000 Crore for the flood recovery and reconstruction.

Huge Response of Workers and Employees for Donation to Relief Fund

At the first stage of flood, the chief minister gave a call to government, semi-government and state public sector employees to donate 2 days salary to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. The response was 100%.

The chief minister later made an appeal to the government employees, teachers and workers in public sector and in other institutions to contribute one month's salary to pay in 10 installments to the CM's relief fund. 80% of the employees, teachers and workers expressed their willingness to contribute as requested by the chief minister.

Chenamangalam handicraft units were completely destroyed which affected the livelihood of hundreds of families. CITU Kerala state committee has already contributed Rs.5 lakhs from its own fund for the reconstruction of the units.

(N. Padmalochanan is a secretary of CITU Kerala State Committee)

'Gaja' Cyclone's Havoc in Tamilnadu

CITU's Urgent Call

On 22 November, CITU gave call to the working class in general and of Tamilnadu in particular to stand in solidarity with the people affected by Gaja cyclone and asked its unions and members to involve in rescue, relief and rehabilitation works and to extend all possible help to the affected people. Cyclone Gaja caused huge losses; 50 persons lost their lives; caused huge loss of property and infrastructural damage. About 1 lakh people are in the relief camps in Nagapatinam, Cuddalore, Tiruvarur, Thanjavur, Pudukottai, Trichy, Dindigul, Theni Ramanathapuram, districts.

CITU also demanded of the state and central governments to take all possible steps for rescue, relief and rehabilitation of the affected people uniting all other sections of people in this effort as was done in Kerala.

8-9 January Nationwide Workers General Strike

State Conventions

[Workers National Convention, held in New Delhi on 28 September, gave call for 2 days nationwide general strike on 8-9 January, 2019. The declaration of the convention set preparatory programmes of holding state, district and sectorwise conventions, submission of joint strike notice and massive campaign among the workers and people on the strike issues.

In this series of actions, several states are holding state level joint conventions. Following are some reports received at the CITU centre till going to the press.]

Odisha

Odisha state level well-attended joint convention of central trade unions (CTUs) and independent employees' federations was held at Bhanjakala Mandap, Bhubaneswar on 4 November. Presidium consisting of Lambodar Nayak of CITU, Ashok Das of AITUC, K.C. Patra of HMS, Madan Dhal of INTUC, Sambhunath Nayak of AIUTUC, N. K. Mohanty of AICCTU presided.

Convention unanimously adopted a declaration to make 8-9 January 2019 all India workers general strike in Odisha successful and decided to hold time bound district level conventions and effective joint campaign in all districts and industrial centres to prepare the workers for the strike.

Sauribandhu Kar state general secretary of AITUC; Bishnu Mohanty, national vice-president and state general secretary of CITU; Ramachandra Khuntia, state president of INTUC; Jogendra Nath Tripathy, state general secretary of HMS; Radhakanta Sethy, state general secretary of AICCTU; Jaysen Mehera of AIUTUC; Dusmanta Das of CITU, Kishore Jena of INTUC, Mahendra Parida, Sushil Giri of BEFI, Prafula Tripathy of AIBEA, Bamadev Mishra of general insurance, Bruhaspati Samal of central government employees, C.C. Pratap Mishra from state government employees and others addressed the convention. The speakers emphasized on holding joint campaign against anti-workers anti-national policy of the central government and on 12 point chapter of demand. **(Input: Ramesh Jena)**

Punjab

An impressive joint trade union convention was held in Desh Bhagat Yadgar Hall in Jalandhar on 5 November. Over one thousands representatives of various unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC, INTUC, AICCTU, CTU Punjab and several federations attended. The convention was addressed by the general secretary of AITUC Amarjeet Kaur.

The resolution of the convention was moved by CITU state general secretary Raghunath Singh calling upon the workers and employees to launch joint intensive campaign to make the 8-9 January strike a grand success to defeat anti-worker, anti-people and anti-nation policies and communal fascistic forces.

In support of the resolution those who addressed the convention include Bant Brar, state president of AITUC, state president of INTUC Subhas Sharma, state general secretary of AICCTU Guljar Singh and Inderjeet Singh, state president of CTU Punjab.

The convention was chaired by Harjeet Kaur Panjola of CITU, Sukhdev Sharma of AITUC, Sukhdev Saini, state president INTUC, Ravinder Rana, state president of AICCTU and Natha Singh, state president of CTU Punjab.

Leaders employees federations also addressed the convention in support. The resolution with its action plan was unanimously accepted with raising of slogans. The convention also gave call to organize a state level rally at Mohali on 27 November to gear up the strike campaign. **(Inputs: Raghunath Singh)**

Uttar Pradesh

A state level joint convention of workers and employees was held at the Gandhi Auditorium in Lucknow on 20 November organised jointly by INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AICCTU, SEWA, TUCC. AIUTUC could not attend, but expressed total support.

Those CTU leaders who addressed the convention include CITU national vice president J. S. Majumdar, state president of INTUC Ashok Singh, state general secretary of HMS Uma Shankar Misra, state general secretary of AITUC Sadruhin Rana, state general secretary of AICCTU Dr. Kamal, state secretary of Sewa Suraiya and Uday Singh from TUCC.

The leaders of employees' federations, who addressed the convention, include UP state government employees general secretary and AISGEF national vice president S.P. Singh and also Kmalesh Misra, state dy. general secretary of AIBEA Sangtani, BSNLEU state general secretary R. K. Misra, Anaganwadi federation leader Veena Gupta and others.

R. S. Bajpai of CITU conducted the proceedings on behalf of the presidium and CITU state general secretary Premnath Rai coordinated. The convention unanimously resolved to make workers national strike on 8-9 January 2019 total success in the state; hold district level and sectorwise joint conventions and submit joint strike notice in time frame. **(Inputs: Premnath Rai)**

Tamilnadu

An all trade union meeting was held which decided to make the strike a grand success in Tamilnadu. The meeting was participated by the leaders from CITU, AITUC, LPF, HMS, and AICCTU and AIUTUC. The meeting decided to hold 2 zonal conventions – one at Madurai and the other at Chennai in the month of December. Districtwise programme was discussed. Industry wise campaign and gate meetings planned. Printing of leaflets and posters were planned. **(Inputs: Gopi Kumar)**

INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

Scheme Workers

Jaitley forgot MDM workers on Wage Increase **Thousands Held Rally to Remind Him**

At the joint call of Mid Day Meal (MDM) workers federations of all central trade unions (CTUs), except BMS; 15,000 plus Mid Day Meal (MDM) workers, coming from 15 states of India, held an impressive rally and public meeting at Parliament Street in New Delhi on 19 November demanding of the Central government to immediately increase their remuneration.

It may be recalled that while the prime minister announced increase in remuneration, though inadequate, of Anganwadi and Asha workers on 11 September, 2018; MDM workers were left out. This created wave of anger among MDM workers across the country.

Led by D Raja, MP of CPI; a delegation from the rally, consisting of B. V. Vijayalakshmi, Shyam Kale, Jaibhagawan, Kanta Mahant, Saroj Choube and Geeta Mandal, met the union finance minister Arun Jaitley and submitted memorandum demanding immediate increase in MDM workers remuneration. In response, Arun Jaitley admitted that MDM workers belong to socially most backward sections of the workers; yet his ministry “missed” them while increasing remuneration of other scheme workers; and that the government would consider increasing the remuneration of MDM workers soon.

The rally and public meeting was presided by the presidium with B. V. Vijayalakshmi (AITUC), Kanta Mahant (CITU) and Sohila Gupta (AICCTU) and addressed by central trade unions leaders - Amarjeet Kaur, general secretary of AITUC; A. R. Sindhu, national secretary of CITU, Geeta Mandal of AICCTU, M. Chaurasia of AIUTUC, Ujjaini of INTUC and Ashok Ghosh of UTUC. Sindhu called upon the MDM workers all over the country to make the workers national general strike on 8-9 January 2019 a grand success. D. Raja and JNU students’ union president Sai Balaji also addressed.

MDM federations’ leaders also addressed the meeting. Of CITU federation MDMWFI, its general secretary Jaibhagawan, Vyas Prasad from Bihar, Ashok Thorat from Maharashtra, Jagatram from Himachal Pradesh, Shanta from Andhra Pradesh also addressed the meeting. In his address Jaibhagawan condemned Modi government’s attempt to privatise this welfare scheme and called the MDM workers across the country to continue and intensify their resistance against it. He further said that the government failed to implement its promise that the HRD ministry made in the 45th ILC on increasing remuneration of MDM workers.

The meeting resolved for nationwide campaign on the issues of MDM workers and submit memorandum to all the MPs on their demands; and to make MDM workers strike total in the workers national general strike on 8-9 January, 2019.

(Input: Jaibhagawan)

STATES

Delhi

Supreme Court's Significant Order on Minimum Wages

Anurag Saxena

The Supreme Court of India issued a significant interim order on 31 October, 2018 which will benefit lakhs of unorganised sector workers in Delhi. The interim order was issued by the Supreme Court on a special leave petition filed by Delhi government through its labour commissioner against the judgement of Delhi High Court on minimum wages. In its judgement on 4 August, 2018, the Delhi High Court had completely rejected Delhi government's notification on minimum wages dated 3 March, 2017. Employers had refused to implement the notified minimum wages and filed several petitions before Delhi Court for rejection of the notification mainly on the alleged ground of several categories of employers not being represented in the Minimum Wages Advisory Board etc.

After delay, Delhi government had constituted the Advisory Board in April, 2016. At the behest of the employers and BJPs' central government, the then LG of Delhi rejected the Advisory Board on the ground that no prior permission was obtained from him. With LG's prior permission, the Advisory Board was constituted again in September, 2016. CITU state general secretary Anurag Saxena was a member in the Advisory Board on behalf of the employees.

On the basis of the Advisory Board's recommendation the Delhi government finally issued notification on minimum wages on 3 March, 2017. It was for the first time that the Advisory Board decided minimum wages on the basis of 15th Indian Labour Conference (ILC) recommendations and Supreme Court's judgement on it in Raptakos Brett case of 1992. It is important to note that the 7th CPC for the central government employees also calculated minimum wages on the basis of 15th ILC recommendation and Supreme Court's historic judgement on it. It is also important to note that the 8-9 January, 2019 workers national general strike's one of the major demands is Rs.18,000 as minimum wage as on 1 January, 2016 as was recommended by the 7th CPC based on 15th ILC recommendations and Supreme Court's judgement. Therefore, the struggle to defend this notification on minimum wages became very important for the working class movement.

Employers refused to accept and implement the notified minimum wages and conspired to sabotage it. CITU Delhi state committee remained in the forefront of movement in NCT Delhi for implementation of the notified minimum wages. It organized various protests and finally galvanized all trade unions to go for one day's joint strike on 20 July 2018 for implementation of the notification on minimum wages of 3 March, 2017 as the strike's major demand.

Refusing to implement the minimum wage notification, the employers, at the behest of BJP dispensation at the Centre, filed several petitions before the High Court and the High Court after 1 year and 5 months rejected the notification completely.

It severely affected the economic interest of millions of workers in NCT of Delhi. High Court's order demoralized the workers in general and the trade union activists in particular as they achieved the basis of fixation of minimum wages on 15th ILC recommendations and Supreme Court's 1992 judgement and, accordingly, average 37% rise in the wages after consistent and arduous struggle for more than 2 years.

Supreme Court's interim order of 31 October, 2018 has brought some relief and smiles among millions of workers in Delhi. The Chief Justice of India Rajan Gogoi called this case file before the main bench of the Supreme Court of which he himself was part and played crucial role.

The interim order of the Supreme Court clearly turned down the judgement of Delhi High Court and restored the minimum wages notification of 3 March, 2017 temporarily; ordered implementation of the notified minimum wages effective 1 November, 2018 till disposal of the case; ordered Delhi government to constitute a Minimum Wage Advisory Board strictly under the provision of the Act and on its advice prepare a fresh draft of minimum wages notification and place the same before the Supreme Court within 3 months for scrutiny and approval.

As per this order, effective from 1 November, 2018, the minimum wage for an unskilled worker in Delhi is Rs.14,000 per month, a jump of 40%, subject to final judgement. The implementation of the notified minimum wages now has the force of Supreme Court's order and contempt of court in case of non-implementation,

The Supreme Court also allowed CITU state committee, through its president Virendra Gaur to become an intervener party in this case.

(Anurag Saxena is the General Secretary of CITU, Delhi state committee)

Tamilnadu

56 days Strike in Yamaha Ends with Agreement

56 days indefinite strike, beginning on 21 September, by the workers of Japanese major two wheeler maker, Yamaha, in Chennai ended on 16 November through an agreement, arrived at a day before, in the tripartite meeting called by the district administration. The workers representatives in the tripartite meeting was led by CITU state President A. Sounderarajan.

As per the agreement, the main dispute about arbitrary dismissals of two workers, who are leaders of the union (**The Working Class, November 2018**), it was agreed that the management would revoke the dismissal orders first, put them under suspension with full pay pending domestic enquiry on specific charges and not awarding termination of service as punishment if at all the enquiry report proves them guilty of alleged misconduct.

It was agreed that no action would be initiated against the workers for participation in the strike. No wages would be paid to the workers for the strike period. However, an amount would be paid to each worker under the head 'bonus' on receipt of letter seeking inclusion of his name in the punching machine for reporting on duty.

It was also agreed by the management to withdraw criminal cases filed against 12 workers. The cases pending in the labour court would also be withdrawn. It was also agreed to bilaterally discuss other demands of the workers between the management and the committee representing the majority of the permanent workers.

Fraternal Support to Automobile Workers' Strikes

Around 2,300 workers gheraoed the collector's office and courted arrests in Chennai on 9 November in support of the striking workers of Yamaha, MSI and Royal Enfield. The collector assured the trade unions delegation of holding tripartite meetings soon to resolve the workers strikes demands; and on that assurance, a proposed workers March on 12 November was postponed.

The leaders and members of several CITU unions, including in Hyundai and Apollo Tyres; of state level unions and federations, of CITU district and state committees expressed their solidarity by meeting the striking workers in pandals and made financial contributions. AIIEA and AIKS also extended support.

Massive Rally of Anganwadi Employees

Demanding immediate implementation of enhanced remuneration as per central government's announcement and for other demands; led by CITU's Anganwadi workers and helpers union in the state, about 35,000 Anganwadi employees held rallies and staged demonstrations in all district headquarters on 29 October, except in 3 districts - Sivaganga, Theni and Nilgiris – due to enforcement of Sec144 of Cr.PC. CITU leaders addressed the rallies.

Protest against Attempt of Privatisation of Municipal Work

CITU affiliated **Sengodi Sangam** staged militant demonstration and sit-in in front the commissioner's office of Chennai Municipal Corporation against attempt of privatization of scavenging work in the Corporation's 8 divisions. The corporation management assured the agitating workers that the privatization process would be shelved. Based on that assurance, the programme was suspended.

Conferences

Road Transport Workers Federation Conference and Convention

The conference of the Tamilnadu Road Transport Workers Federation was held at Erode on 13-14 October. The conference unanimously elected K. Arumuga Nainar as president and S. Murthy as general secretary. On this occasion, All India Road Transport Workers Federation (AIRTWF)'s state committee organised a successful "Save Road Transport" convention attended by more than 750 delegates from CITU unions, two wheeler mechanic association, lorry transport owners association, sand lorry drivers association, road transport teachers & trainers association and others. CITU national secretary and AIRTWF general leader K. K. Divakaran and CITU state president A. Soundararajan were the main speakers.

Loading and Unloading Workers Federation Conference

CITU affiliated Tamilnadu Loading and Unloading Workers Federation held its conference at Villupuram on 14-15 October participated by 210 delegates from 32 districts. The conference elected S. Gunasekaran as president and R. Venkatapathy as general secretary. The conference resolved to campaign vigorously and make 8-9 January national workers general strike successful in the state.

Cooperative Society Employees Federation Conference

The conference of the Tamilnadu State Cooperative Society Employees Federation was held at Salem on 29-30 September attended by 165 delegates. The conference resolved raise demand to state government to increase pension to Rs.4500; regularize their jobs, revise wages of primary agricultural cooperative society and the other cooperative and credit society employees. The conference elected A. Krishnamurthy as president and R. Jeevanandam as general secretary.

(Inputs: K.C. Gopikumar)

Rajasthan

Strike & Struggle of Road Transport Workers

Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC) workers ended their 20 days long strike on 6 October, 2018 when the Election Commission announced state Assembly election.

The strike was led by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of CITU, AITUC, INTUC and some other local unions of RSRTC workers for a single demand of implementation of the earlier agreement

entered in between the JAC, government, including the road transport minister, and the RSRTC management on 27 July, 2018 (**The Working Class, September 2018**).

The earlier agreement inter alia includes release of Rs.150 Crore by the government to meet retired employees dues and allowances of existing employees; replacement of inoperative buses by new buses; constitution of a high powered committee, inclusive of unions representatives, on implementation of 7th CPC at par with state government employees and filling up of vacant posts to submit its report within 31 August, 2018. The government did not implement a single agreement.

For more than 3 years now, RSRTC workers are on struggle. In the past, facing agitation, the government had to withdraw its notification allowing private buses to operate from RSRTC bus stations; to ensure timely payment of wages to serving workers and pension to retirees.

Haryana

Statewide Protest against Police Repression



At the call of Sarb Karamchari Sangh and CITU, Haryana; thousands of government, semi-government and other sectors workers and employees, joined by other mass organisations, brought out processions moving in all district headquarter cities and towns culminating in rallies and staging demonstrations in front of the deputy commissioners' offices in protest against the atrocities committed by Haryana police and jail authorities against the arrested leaders and workers, including women, during transport workers strike against privatisation of Haryana Roadways and solidarity strike and agitation by government employees and all others sections which was called off on 2 November, 2018 after intervention and interim order of Punjab - Haryana high court putting a blanket stay on all punitive and disciplinary actions and arrests and cases filed by the government against

all sections of workers and employees and others in this struggle and directing the government and agitating workers to resolve the issue through bilateral discussion (***The Working Class, November, 2018***).

The rallies adopted resolution demanding strong action against the concerned culprit officials committing atrocities. The resolution and memoranda, addressed to the chief minister, chief secretary, high officials in the home ministry and the DIG of police, were submitted to the deputy commissioners of the districts before concluding the rally.

Responding immediately, the Haryana minister for jail called a press conference and announced holding departmental enquiry by the DGP (Jail) on the complaints of atrocities committed against the arrested leaders and workers and others who were in judicial custody in the jail. However, no step has yet been taken by the government against the culprit police and administrative officials who committed atrocities in police stations in Bhiwani and Rohtak.

The Bhiwani district administration and the police started a reign of terror against the agitating employees in democratic movement. Their leaders were arrested breaking open their residences at late night; from the hospitals undergoing medical treatment, who include the district president of AIDWA; from the bus depots and other public places. The arrested persons were severely beaten in police custody while taking them in bus. DC and SP were personally present in civil line police station continuously for four hours supervising the tortures inflicted on the arrested persons, abusing and threatening them. The arrested persons were de-robed and sent to jail after filing false cases under several sections of IPC. Arrested workers during 16 October demonstration at Rohtak bus depot were de-robed and tortured in the police station. The roadways union president Indra Singh Badhwana was tortured in the police station in jail.

In the meantime, the bipartite meeting on 12 November as per direction of the court failed. In the hearing on 14 November, the high court asked the union to submit its say on roadways privatisation. Posting next date of hearing on 29 November.

INTERNATIONAL

Greece

Spectacular Strikes in Public Sector; Construction & Healthcare

Workers of public services, construction and healthcare were on nationwide strike on 14 November. Strike by PAME's (WFTU affiliate in Greece) National Federation of Workers in Construction was particularly impressive with 100 per cent in all big and 90 per cent in smaller construction sites. PAME unions brought out militant rallies in all major cities in the country.

Exhibiting authoritarian trend, Syriza government has been attacking the militant trade union movement. During strike its secret police in Athens threatened the striking construction workers with gun at picketing line. Its riot police attempted to physically break the strike and assembly of the construction workers led by the Federation of Workers in Construction. This incident is in continuation of earlier attacks of the Syriza government against the militant Greek trade union movement.

These militant strikes were converging to nationwide workers general strike to be held on 28 November, 2018.

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

State	Centre	Aug 2018	Sept 2018	State	Centre	Aug 2018	Sept 2018
AP	GUNTUR	284	282	MHR	MUMBAI	297	295
	VIJAYWADA	285	285		NAGPUR	361	366
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	289	291		NASIK	334	336
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	271	271		PUNE	314	317
	GUWAHATI	260	261		SHOLAPUR	309	313
	LABAC SILCHAR	263	264	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	318	319
	MARIANI JORHAT	253	253		ROURKELA	310	311
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	252	251	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	311	302
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	323	320	PUN	AMRITSAR	321	321
CHD	CHANDIGARH	303	304		JALANDHAR	303	303
CHS	BHILAI	322	324		LUDHIANA	286	287
DLI	DELHI	286	287	RJN	AJMER	279	280
GOA	GOA	332	325		BHILWARA	281	280
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	274	276		JAIPUR	287	291
	BHAVNAGAR	292	292	TN	CHENNAI	272	271
	RAJKOT	290	289		COIMBATORE	276	275
	SURAT	263	265		COONOR	314	314
	VADODARA	270	272		MADURAI	282	281
HRY	FARIDABAD	273	273		SALEM	283	282
	YAMUNANAGAR	287	287		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	293	293
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	267	266	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	311	311
J&K	SRINAGAR	270	271		HYDERABAD	253	253
JRK	BOKARO	293	293		WARRANGAL	309	309
	GIRIDIH	330	329	TRP	TRIPURA	264	265
	JAMSHEDPUR	348	345	UP	AGRA	347	347
	JHARIA	340	346		GHAZIABAD	320	319
	KODARMA	365	365		KANPUR	328	325
	RANCHI HATIA	365	366		LUCKNOW	323	321
KNT	BELGAUM	298	298		VARANASI	314	317
	BENGLURU	290	290	WB	ASANSOL	324	326
	HUBLI DHARWAR	317	318		DARJEELING	274	276
	MERCARA	305	305		DURGAPUR	320	320
	MYSORE	303	305		HALDIA	330	332
KRL	ERNAKULAM	310	305		HOWRAH	284	285
	MUNDAKKAYAM	307	304		JALPAIGURI	286	281
	QUILON	347	342		KOLKATA	283	283
MP	BHOPAL	313	313		RANIGANJ	280	280
	CHHINDWARA	296	296		SILIGURI	271	273
	INDORE	275	274				
	JABALPUR	308	309				
ALL INDIA INDEX						301	301

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For 8-9 January, 2019 Strike

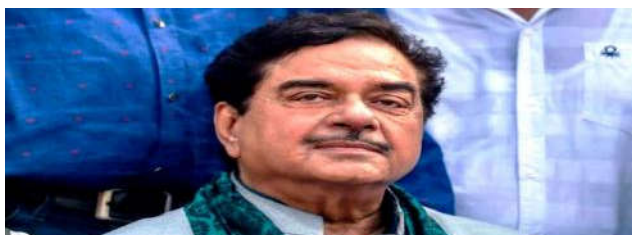
Trade Unions Joint State Conventions

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Odisha



On Rafale Deal (Without Comment)



अगर एक टेलीकॉम कंपनी को लड़ाकू जहाज़
बनाने की डील दी जा सकती है
तो फिर "हल्दीराम" को भी "तोप के गोले"
बनाने का ऑर्डर मिलना चाहिये और उनके
पास तो "लड्डू" बनाने का अनुभव भी है।
शत्रुघ्न सिंह

(If a telephone company can be given deal to make
fighter jets, then 'Haldiram' also should have orders
to make cannon balls; after all they have the
experience of making 'Laddos')

- Satrugan Sinha on Rafale Deal

For 8-9 January, 2019 Strike

Trade Unions Joint State Conventions

Bihar



CITU National Secretary A. R. Sindhu addressed the Rally

Strike & Rally in Greece

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