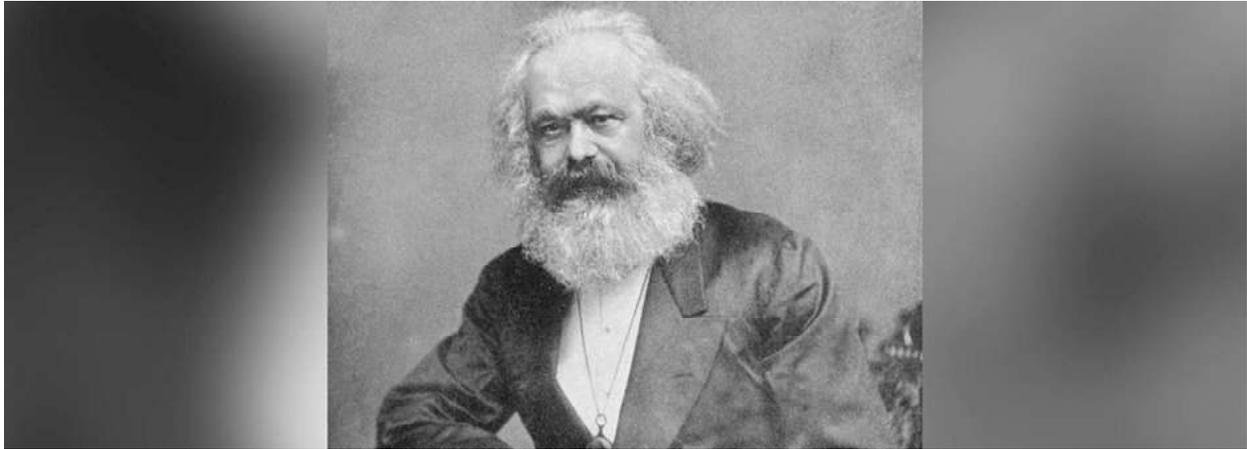




THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

200th YEARS OF KARL MARX



Salute on May Day and to its Maker



CITU national President Hemalata at the March Past of 1000 sport persons in the CITU's state level annual sports event of Kerala on May Day 2018 at Quilon

(Report page 8)

May Day 2018

Pampady Rally *(Report page 7)*



Workers Mass in Colombo *(Report page 8)*



WORKING CLASS

JUNE 2018
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Editorial

200th Year of the Birth of Karl Marx

No person in modern human history has influenced the world events so much as a man did who took birth 200 years ago on 5 May 1818; led a simple life in poverty; but was rich in thought and action. He was Karl Marx. His creative thoughts on three existing currents of philosophy, economy and social science gave rise to the three components of Marxism - dialectical materialism, political economy and scientific socialism – the interdependent tripod on which Marxism rests.

Marxism remains valid and will remain so because it is based on scientific analysis of the past, is creative based on concrete analysis of concrete conditions and is guide for action for the working class.

Based on Marxism, Karl Marx with his friend Engels made a declaration for the working class in 'Communist Manifesto' with the clarion call 'workers of the world unite'. They gave call to advance class struggle to end exploitation of man by man; march forward for the stateless and classless human society with universal brotherhood, equality and peace.

Karl Marx was one of the founders and architect of International Workingmen's Association. It is this organisation which, in its later stage, gave call to observe 1 May every year as International Workers Day and 8 March as International Women's Day. Both the Days signify in demanding social justice for the workers and the women as partners of human society' and not to be treated just as the units of capitalist mode of production; and realizing from the experience that social justice cannot be realised in a capitalist system. It is only in the socialist system that workers, women and other toiling sections get social justice.

WFTU and CITU issued respective declarations and statements on 200th year since the birth of Karl Marx paying tributes to the great man whose 200th birth day is being celebrated across the continents. Even in advanced capitalist countries there are attempts to reinvent Marx's economic analysis of capitalism and forecast of crisis inbuilt in the system itself.

For CITU, it is not sufficient to recall the contribution of Karl Marx. It is more important for all of us, who are committed to class struggle propounded by him as the driving force of human social development, to apply it in our day to day work in concrete conditions building resistance to neoliberal attacks, providing limited day to day relief to the workers and other toiling sections; and work for the alternative in the present stage. Let us not forget our responsibility in the unity of the international working class movement and struggle against imperialism.

Workers of the World Unite !



WORLD FEDERATION OF TRADE UNIONS

Class oriented - uniting - democratic - modern – independent – internationalist!

Athens, 7th May 2018

WFTU: Announcement

On the 200 years since the birth of Karl Marx

On 5th May 1818 the great founder of the scientific world view of the working class Karl Marx was born in Trier of Prussia. His theoretical work and his action paved the way to the world working class to realize its historical role and to struggle for the end of the exploitation.

By analyzing the laws of the capitalist mode of production in his works like the Critique of Political Economy (1859) and the Capital (1867), he proved that capitalism is incompatible with the workers prosperity and an obstacle to social development. He also highlighted the necessity of the class oriented struggle of the masses for the establishment of the socialist society.

Karl Marx, along with Friedrich Engels, played a key role in the foundation of the International Workingmen's Association (the first International) in 1864 in London, by writing its first "Declaration" and a series of its documents. The International Workingmen's Association, which was the predecessor of the World Federation of Trade Unions, united the labor movements of various countries under a joint proletarian fight and Karl Marx vigorously fought for the continuation of its militant trajectory.

Nowadays that the contradictions and rivalries among the monopolies are exacerbating, provoking wars and misery to the peoples, the work of Karl Marx will always be a polyvalent weapon in the hands of workers and ordinary people all over the world in their everyday struggle for their working and social rights and for the abolition of exploitation of man by man.



The Secretariat

CITU Statement

On the 200th Year of the Birth of Karl Marx

Karl Marx was born 200 years ago, on 5 May 1818. He died 135 years back, on 14 March 1883.

The bicentenary of the birth of Karl Marx is being observed across the world. International and national conferences, seminars and symposiums are being organised to discuss his writings, methods of analysis and his thoughts. These are being held not only in Germany and Europe, the country where he was born and the continent where he lived and worked, but in more than hundred countries all over the world.

It is natural that the working class and their organisations committed to Marx's thoughts have been observing the bicentenary of his birth by organising discussions, study circles and classes to enrich their understanding of his teachings, to learn how to apply his methods of analysis to the contemporary phase of capitalist society with a view to change it. But those who are avowedly opposed to his ideology, the representatives of the capitalist class, are also active in writing articles and participating in debates to malign his works and confuse the working class and the people through falsification and misrepresentation.

It is indeed remarkable that such worldwide attention is being paid today from all over the world and from different angles and sections to a person and his ideas which have been declared dead and irrelevant so many times, particularly after the set back to socialism.

But the fact is that Marx's ideas on evolution of society, political economy etc based on scientific analysis can never become outdated. International finance led neoliberal globalisation has proved yet again, the prediction of Marx to be correct. The 'Communist Manifesto' that Marx wrote 170 years back, when he was just 30, in collaboration with his close friend and comrade in arms, Frederick Engels, talks about "The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe". Capital, they wrote, "must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere" in its relentless search for markets, cheap labour and natural resources. This is what we see today.

The recurring crises of the capitalist system, each resulting in increased attacks on the living conditions and rights of the working class is leading to growing discontent. This discontent is increasingly being manifested not only against neoliberalism but against the capitalist system itself. More and more workers, particularly the young are searching for alternatives. They are seeking this alternative in the works of Marx. Because they know that it is by further developing his analysis and applying it to the concrete conditions in Russia that the working class, through the Great October Revolution, under the leadership of Lenin was able to overthrow the capitalist system and establish socialism one hundred years ago, in 1917. The centenary of the Great October Revolution, an event that changed the course of the world, was observed across the globe last year.

That is the reason for the ire of the capitalist class and their pen pushers. They are no more in a position to ignore Marx, as they did 150 years ago, when his magnum opus 'Das Kapital' which analysed the working of the capitalist system and explained its inherent exploitative character, was first published.

For Marx, theory was not just for the sake of theory. Analysing a society and interpreting it was not merely an intellectual exercise. He famously proclaimed "The philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways; the point is to change it". True to this belief, he actively participated in organising the workers, learning from them and teaching them, trying to put theory into practice. Along with Engels, he founded and actively took part in the activities of the International Workingmen's Association, the predecessor of the World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

With his family background, his education and qualifications, Marx could have become a lawyer or a public servant or be employed in any such profession with decent income that ensures a comfortable life. But he chose otherwise. As a seventeen year old student, Marx wrote an essay on choosing a profession. In this

essay, he wrote ‘the chief guide which must direct us in the choice of a profession is the welfare of mankind and our own perfection’. ‘If we have chosen the position in life in which we can most of all work for mankind, no burden can bow us down, because they are sacrifices for the benefit of all; then we shall experience no petty, limited, selfish joy, but our happiness will belong to millions, our deeds will live on quietly but perpetually at work...’.

It is this commitment that guided his entire life. He spent almost all his life studying whatever subjects he considered necessary to evolve scientific way to help people to come out of poverty and miserable conditions under the capitalist system that was not yet fully developed at that time. In addition to various branches of law he deeply studied politics, economics, history, mathematics and several other subjects. Whenever he came to know that a book on any relevant subject was available in a foreign language he embarked upon learning that language to be able to study that book. Never for a moment did he waver from his aim despite facing innumerable difficulties. He spent most of his life in poverty. Four of his children died in infancy or at a very young age because he could not afford good food and effective treatment for them. Jenny, his wife as well as his intellectual companion had to mortgage whatever little they had including clothes and furniture to meet the day to day expenses.

It is through such commitment to serve society, through such sacrifices that Marx provided the working class with the ideological and theoretical weapon to fight exploitation, to change society, to establish an exploitation free society where human beings can enjoy the fruits of their labour, the scientific and technical advances achieved through their labour; a society where all humans can fully develop their creative and cultural talents. His sacrifices were for the benefit of the toiling people; his deeds are perpetually at work, as he visualised as a young boy.

On the bicentenary year of the birth of that great human being Karl Marx, let us pledge ourselves to understand, further develop and utilise the ideological weapon handed over by him, to emancipate society from all exploitation.

Minimum Wages (Amendment) Act Enforced in NCT Delhi

3 years imprisonment and/or Rs.50,000 fine for non-payment or less payment

The Minimum Wages (Delhi) Amendment Act, 2017 has been notified on 4 May, 2018, after Presidential assent, and enforced on 5 May, 2018 in the NCT Delhi with major amendments as below;

1. In Section 22 of the Minimum Wages Act, 1948 increasing penalty of imprisonment from ‘maximum 6 months’ to ‘total 3 years’ and/or from ‘maximum Rs.500’ to ‘total Rs.50,000’ to the employer who “pays to any employee less than the minimum rates of wages fixed for that employee’s class of work, or less than the amount due to him” under the provisions of the Act and the Rules thereunder;
2. In Section 22A for other offences the penalty has been increased from fine ‘up to Rs.500’ to ‘total one year imprisonment’ and /or ‘Rs.20,000’; and
3. A new subsection has been added as 22(B)(3) saying that “*The court before whom the prosecution complaint is made under section 22 shall dispose of the same within a period of three months from the date of making of the complaint.*”

These amendments were adopted by Delhi Assembly on 3 December, 2015, but was returned and was reintroduced and passed in 2017 incorporating amendments including inserting a new clause as 2(ga) clarifying that “*State Government means the Lieutenant Governor of National Capital Territory of Delhi, appointed by the President under Article 239 and designated as such under Article 239 AA of the Constitution.*”

Minimum Wages in NCT Delhi

In March 2017, last notified minimum wages in NCT Delhi was Rs.13,350 for unskilled; Rs.14,698 for semi-skilled; and Rs.16,182 skilled workers per month. (*The Working Class: May, 2017*)

MAY DAY 2018

May Day Celebration in Pampady

In Kottayam district of Kerala Pampady is a small village in the Puthupally Assembly constituency from where former Congress chief minister Oommen Chandy has been winning since 1970. But, May Day in Pampady is unique; it is being observed as 'Gramotsavam', village festival. It began 37 years back. Congress and other forces representing the ruling classes are traditionally strong in the region. The workers, fighting for their rights under the CITU leadership, were being attacked and killed. When they resisted, a virulent campaign was unleashed against them accusing them of being rowdies and goondas and CITU leading them as an organisation of such anti-social elements. The mainstream print media prominently carried such false allegations.

It was in this situation that Vasavan, a local CITU leader at that time and the district secretary of CPI (M) now, along with a group of local CITU cadres decided to counter these allegations by uniting all sections of toiling people fighting for their rights. They decided to take this message to the people on the occasion of May Day by involving the entire village in observing it as the festival of the people of the entire village as 'Gramotsavam'. In addition to raising the issues of the people, various aspects of the cultural life of the state are show cased in the May Day rally. Tableaus depicting the impact of the government's neoliberal policies on the lives of people, the culture of the people, their traditions, religious beliefs etc, dances, drums beats, etc form important part of the procession. Competitions are held and prizes are distributed. It has emerged as a cultural pageantry. Entire village, young and old, men and women become part of the festivities, either as active participants in the rally or as spectators lining up the streets to have a glimpse of the rally. People participate in the May Day festivities setting aside their political differences. Many people, who have settled in other parts of the country, or some from other countries even, make it a point to visit Pampady to participate in the May Day festivities.

This year, over 10,000 people participated in the rally, which traversed the streets for four hours showcasing the folk arts and other cultural forms of Kerala. The workers marched under the banners of their respective unions. The village turned into a sea of red with thousands of workers along with their families marching with red flags in their hands. Small children displayed their skating skills in the front of the rally. There were a number of floats depicting the current developments of the country – the danger of communalism, attacks on dalits in various parts of the country, violence against women, the situation in Kashmir, privatisation, fixed term employment, attacks on the workers' statutory rights etc. There were many floats expressing the anger, anguish and protest against the murder of Asifa. Folk art forms of Kerala like Karakam, Pookkavadi, Mayilttom, Bommayattam, Arjuna Dance, Parrunthattam, Pookkavady, SivaParvathy Dance, band music, Panchavadyam, Pamapa vadyam, drums and huge floats made the rally colourful and vibrant. Thousands of people lined up the streets since morning braving the hot weather to witness the rally. Thousands were standing on the balconies and terraces or perched on trees. The rally culminated in a public meeting at the local bus stand.

Hemalata, president of CITU who participated in the procession also, inaugurated the public meeting. She congratulated the Pampady committee for organising such a unique rally on May Day which reminded her of the May Day in Havana which she had the opportunity to observe last year. She also said that the slogan 'class unity' for this year was very apt. She emphasised the need for strengthening unity of the people and intensifying the struggle against the neoliberal policies of the BJP led government at the centre. The people should be made aware of the divisive and disruptive machinations of the RSS and BJP and defeat them. Alternative pro-worker pro-people policies, which the left parties alone were supporting, should be taken to the people. She explained about the campaign programme culminating in a massive rally near Parliament on 5 September, which was taken up by the CITU general council in Kozhikode and appealed to the working class of Kerala to make it an unprecedented success. The rally was also addressed by K. M. Gopinath, Vasavan and other state leaders of CITU.

May Day 2018: Sports Championship in Quilon

CITU President Hemalata, president of CITU, inaugurated the sports championship, organised by CITU state committee, as an annual event on May Day, at Quilon this year. Last year the state level championship was held in Ernakulam. Around 1000 sports persons from different fields of sports, both indoor and outdoor, who won the district level competitions held in all the districts, participated in the state level championship. Vice president of Kerala state committee of CITU hoisted the flag and K.N. Gopinath, secretary of Kerala state committee of CITU, conducted the proceedings.

Workers May Day Mass in Colombo

The Christian Workers Fellowship held its annual workers' mass at St. Michael's, an old Anglican church in Colombo, Sri Lanka on May Day. A tradition that they began in 1960, the workers' mass has since become an annual May Day feature in Colombo, with priests sporting red shawls with bold prints of the hammer and sickle. In a special ceremony, workers brought in tools of labour and laid them at the altar. (*From: The Hindu*)

Defiant Workers Hold May Day Rallies in Sri Lanka

Thousands of workers defied order of Sri Lanka government to postpone May Day events to 7 May; and held rally in Colombo's Fort area on 1 May to mark the International Workers' Day.

Earlier, the Cabinet decided to defer May Day events to May 7 citing an overlap with the Buddhist festival of Buddha Poonmima April 29 and 30. The move followed a request from the influential Buddhist clergy.

Workers from free trade zones, private sector enterprises and the banking sector, many of whom took the day off to participate in the rally, marched with banners reiterating their right to eight-hour work days and fair wages. Police barricaded the road leading to the Presidential Secretariat, but workers peacefully culminated ahead as their leaders criticised the government for undermining workers' rights. The rally drew also farmers from as far as Anuradhapura, about 200 km north of Colombo. Terrance Gamini, from the Collective of Farmers and Environmental Cooperative Societies, said the government is no different from its predecessor. "They buy farmers' produce at cheap prices and then sell it to workers at high prices," he said. (*From: The Hindu*)

CITU Leader on May Day Rally in Jaffna

The Left party Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (People's Liberation Front), a party which mainly works among the Sinhalese working class in the south, held its May Day rally in Jaffna, the biggest city in the island's Tamil-speaking north. Party leader Anura Kumara Dissanayaka accused the government of ignoring working people's concerns, both in the south and the north, and pushing them into a dangerous debt trap. He called for a unified force of people from the north and south to take on the government.

Participating as a special guest CITU national vice president A. Soundararajan said on the assault on labour rights and asked as to why the Sri Lankan government was reluctant to reopen many of the old industries in the north even nine years after the war ended. (*From: The Hindu*)

May Day Celebration in Turkey

We would like to inform you about the 2018 May Day celebrations in Turkey. Taksim Square is the real May Day celebration area since the massacre in 1977 in which 34 workers were killed by Counterinsurgency forces at Taksim Square.

As Nakliyat-Ýb Union, we have always underlined the importance of May Day celebrations in Taksim Square. May Day celebrations have been banned by the Turkish Government for several years despite the fact that there are many verdicts of European Court of Human Rights and domestic courts which stated clearly that there must be no obstacle about the May Day celebrations in Taksim.

According to us, May Day is also a struggle day for Taksim Square in Turkey. Because of this reason, we have always declared to celebrate May Day in Taksim Square days before May Day. This year, two militant unions, Nakliyat-Ýp and Birleþik Metal Ýp, decided to celebrate May Day in Taksim Square. 2,000 workers of these unions started their march to Taksim from the Union Building despite all terrorizing efforts of police. The large mass of workers was blocked by a big posse of riot police after they started their march. The workers decided to celebrate May Day at the police barricade.

We would also like to inform you that our comrade from the international department of our union, Ýlhami Danacı, was detained and wasn't released until May 7. He was attacked brutally and detained by the riot police while he was marching to Taksim Square together with his 46 comrades during the action organized by his political party People's Liberation Party (Halkýn Kurtuluþ Partisi – HKP). We strongly condemn Turkish Government for its brutal attitude and violent attacks against the people who want to celebrate the May Day in the historical May Day Area of Turkey, Taksim Square.

The union members celebrated May Day very enthusiastically by making a lot of statements, carrying the flag of WFTU. May Day statement prepared by WFTU was declared by Real Market Workers who have been resisting against the extortion of their rights, fraudulent bankruptcy and yellow unionism for months. Some unions which have surrendered against the threats of the government celebrated May Day in Maltepe, Istanbul. Although they declared that they would bring hundreds of thousands of workers in the area, only a small crowd participated in the celebration in Maltepe which was organized by tens of different organizations including confederations, unions, political parties and other groups.

It's very clear that Taksim struggle of Nakliyat-Ýp and Birleþik Metal Ýp in 2018 May Day is very important for the working class movement in Turkey. We will certainly maximize our efforts to celebrate May Day in Taksim freely together with the class oriented forces in Turkey.

[From: the communication of Nakliyat-Ýp (Trade Union of Revolutionary Land, Airway and Railway Transportation Workers of Turkey), a WFTU affiliate]

May Day Protest Morcha in Mumbai

Under the banner of Trade Union Joint Action Committee (TUJAC), over 20,000 workers, coming from different districts and industries in Maharashtra, held a state level Morcha, named as 'Ishara Morcha', at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on the occasion of May Day on 1 May 2018 opposing the proposed anti-workers state amendments of labour laws. It was a sea of red with workers wearing red caps.

It also being the Maharashtra Day, the Morcha began after paying homage to the 105 martyrs of Maharashtra movement by police firing, when Morarji Desai was the chief minister, protesting against the proposed exclusion of Bombay from the state of Maharashtra under State Reorganisation Act, 1956.

With introductory comments by TUJAC joint convenor Vishwas Utgi and presided by CITU state secretary Vivek Monteiro, Babali Rawat of AITUC, Shankar Salvi of HMS and Anil Ganacharya of INTUC in the presidium; CITU national vice president D. L. Karad, Sukumar Damle of AITUC, Sanjay Vadhavkar of HMS, Suryakant Mahadik of Bhartiya Kamgar Sena, Milind Ranade of NTUI, Jaiprakash Chhajed of INTUC, Shubha Shamim of Anganwadi federation, leaders of other federations and unions including Air India Corporation Employees Union, of banks, state government employees and others addressed the convention. The speakers explained the plans of the central and state governments to abolish all the 44 labour laws and replaced by 4 labour codes to favour the corporates and Maharashtra governments attempts for this. The Morcha also raised demand of Rs. 18,000 as minimum wage, equal pay for equal work and 23 other demands.

The Morcha decided to submit memoranda to the chief minister and the governor containing the demands and in opposition of labour laws amendments with signatures of lakhs of workers and employees.

Attack on May Day Programmes in Tripura

RSS-BJP goons launched physical attacks on the workers and other toiling sections of the people who assembled in different parts of the Tripura on 1 May to observe International Workers Day; and prevented flag hoisting and holding May Day rally and public meetings.

Flag hoisting was physically prevented and red flags were thrown away, martyrs columns were uprooted and the workers and people were beaten up by the armed BJP goons on 1 May morning in all subdivisions of the State including Dukli, Teliamura, Amarpur, Kumarghat, Jirania. In Gandacherra, the assembled workers and the people were physically prevented from bringing out a procession. Traditionally, huge number of workers and employees assemble near SBI office in the state capital Agartala to hoist red flag to herald May Day celebration. BJP goons physically prevented hoisting of red flag near SBI office this May Day. In the afternoon of 1 May in the Dharmanagar district headquarter, workers and other toiling sections assembled in huge number to join the May Day procession to march to Statue of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose to hold a rally and public meeting. BJP goons with deadly weapons ransacked the meeting place and dispersed the assembled people by force. Even some people, who took shelter at Dharmanagar police station, were not spared.

In the face of such attacks, CITU Tripura state committee organised a huge mass meeting at Paradise Chowmohani in Agartala addressed by former chief minister Manik Sarkar, CITU state president Manik Dey and its general secretary Shankar Prasad Dutta and CITU leader Jaya Burman. The meeting declared to strengthen the people's unity and resolve to carry forward workers and people's issues.

CITU condemned attacks by BJP-RSS goons on trade union activists on May Day in Tripura

CITU strongly condemned the dastardly attack by the BJP–RSS goons on the trade union activists who were trying to observe the International Labour Day 'May Day' in different parts of Tripura. This is part of their continuing attack on the people of Tripura since last Assembly election. These attacks show the intolerance of BJP-RSS forces against any dissent to their communal and authoritarian ideology and politics. CITU reminded BJP government of Tripura that the people of Tripura have the history of overthrowing those who use violence to capture and remain in power.

CITU congratulated the working class of Tripura who celebrated May Day throughout the state including the capital city of Agartala despite these attacks.

CITU demanded that BJP state government take urgent measures to curb the violence being unleashed on the trade union activists and other democratic organisations. CITU called upon the democratic and progressive people of the country to protest against such attacks on the democratic rights of the people of Tripura.

May Day Greetings of National Alliance of Journalists

The National Alliance of Journalist (NAJ) on this May Day greeted all working people of media, factories, offices, services and in other fields expressing solidarity with their struggles to defend their rights and livelihood and against neoliberal attacks. NAJ committed itself to defend democracy, media freedom and journalists' rights against increasing attacks on them including killing by rightwing forces. NAJ denounced attack on labour rights for "ease of doing business" and silence of corporate media on anti-people economic reforms. NAJ condemned at the growing attacks on the Dalits and minorities and ideological attack depicting supremacy of Hindutwa forces. NAJ expressed its readiness to join hands with the central trade unions and their unions.

May Day in States

Jharkhand: May Day was observed in the state capital Ranchi and at district headquarters of Sahebganj, Pakur, Dumka, Deoghar, Godda, Jamtara, Bokaro, Dhanbad, East Singhbhum, Latehar, Koderma, Hazaribagh, Ramgarh, Palamau and Giridih bringing out May Day processions and holding public meetings. At some places cultural programmes were organised. At Ranchi, workers-employees coordination committee of coal, steel, transport construction, cinema, state government, bank, insurance, BSNL, railways and pharmaceutical workers unions hoisted flags at unions' premises, jointly brought out procession and held a May Day rally and public meeting at Albert Ekka circle addressed by unions and CITU leaders. At HEC, Hatia a meeting was held at union office premises at Dhurua followed by cultural programmes.

Jaipur, Rajasthan: May Day 2018 was observed with enthusiasm in capital city Jaipur raising demands Rs. 18,000 as minimum wage; equal pay for equal work as per Supreme Court judgement; ending contract system in jobs; withdrawal of proposed four labour codes replacing 44 labour laws; recognition as workers, minimum wage and social security for scheme workers by organising day long programmes beginning with hoisting of CITU flags at its state centre by its president; hoisting of flags at factory gates in industrial areas, private hospitals and respective unions' offices by CITU and unions leaders; and holding industrial area-wise workers mass meetings. CITU flag was hoisted by Lal Jhanda Auto Chalak Union at all auto stands; Roadways Workers Union in all bus depots and electricity workers union at electricity power houses at Nala and Vidyadharnagar. Workers and peasants jointly staged demonstration before the collectorate.

Noida, NCR: International Workers Day was observed by organising daylong programme by CITU and other trade unions in Noida in NCR by hoisting flag and holding workers mass meetings addressed by CITU and unions leaders. Yakubpur circle mass meeting was addressed by CITU leader Gangeshwar Dutt Sharma, Kisan leader Bejram Gurjar and others. Workers assembled at Udyog Bihar in Greater Noida and marched to district magistrate and staged demonstration demanding increase in minimum wages, to stop anti-workers labour laws amendments; demand of scheme workers and on specific issues of some companies. The meeting was addressed by the leaders of workers' joint struggle committee and of Kisan Sabha and AIDWA. Meeting was held at CITU district committee office.

Rapid Changes in Employment Profile

By a circular on 11 May, CITU called upon its units, unions and federations to urgently send establishment-wise employees profile as there has been substantial changes.

“The number of contract workers, trainees, apprentices, fixed term employees and other such types of workers at the workplace has hugely increased during the last several years. The government has been facilitating such employment by diluting inspection and implementation of labour laws as well as amending them to favour the employers by allowing them to drastically bring down labour costs. This aspect must be sharply brought out highlighting specific instances and providing concrete data on these practices.

“Specific information about the workers composition at the workplaces, particularly in the organised sector – preferably establishment-wise: - number of contract workers, trainees, apprentices, temporary workers, fixed term employees vis-a-vis permanent workers etc, and the wage differentials between them and all such relevant details with the name of the factory / establishment, place etc,” the circular urged.

INDUSTRY & SECTOR

Cement

CITU National Coordination Committee of Cement Workers Unions Formed

A meeting of CITU affiliated cement workers unions with CITU centre's and states' leaders was held at BTR Bhavan in New Delhi on 15 May. The meeting was attended by CITU president K. Hemalata, general secretary Tapan Sen and vice president J S Majumdar; CITU state leaders from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Himachal Pradesh; and 26 office bearers of several cement unions from the states of Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala and West Bengal. Unions' representatives from Tamilnadu, Karnataka and Punjab could attend due to pressing reasons including Assembly election in Karnataka. Hemalata presided.

The following are the conclusions and decisions of the meeting.

1. A National Co-ordination Committee of Cement Workers Unions (NCC-CWU) of CITU was constituted with Nishith Chowdhury as convener; Kashmir Singh Thakur and Pramode Pradhan as joint conveners; one representative from each affiliated union and one CITU office bearer of the concerned state who is in-charge of cement industry unions; NCC-CWU will hold its regular meetings once in every 3 / 4 month.
2. To form state coordination committees / federations within reasonable time; (a state federation in West Bengal and a state coordination committee in Rajasthan exist);
3. NCC-CWU to launch nationwide campaign for signature on memorandum containing specific demands of cement workers addressed to the Cement Manufacturers Association (CMA) and copy to Union Labour Ministry. The demands include:
 - (i) To start negotiation for overdue national wages settlement in cement industry for which a charter of demands has already been submitted by CITU;
 - (ii) To guarantee payment of minimum wage of the industry to workers in all categories;
 - (iii) To pay equal wage for equal work under section 25 (2) (v) (a) & (b) of Contract Labour (R & A) Central Rules 1971 and as per judgment of the Supreme Court; and
 - (iv) Regularisation of jobs of contract workers engaged in permanent and perennial work;
4. Campaign among cement workers on their issues and workers' 12 point general demands and for cement workers massive participation in the ensuing 5 September 2018 CITU rally in New Delhi.

Modi government for PPP Mode in EPF and ESI

In a statement on 8 May, CITU expressed its serious concern at Modi government's plan, as revealed in the media, to introduce PPP (public private partnership) mode in administering EPF and ESI schemes. While proposal for PPP in EPF was never discussed with the central trade unions (CTUs), such proposal for ESI had to be kept in abeyance facing strong opposition by the CTUs.

CITU and other CTUs have also strongly opposed the proposals in the government's Draft Code on Social Security to merge 15 existing Acts related to social security including the funds under EPFO, ESIC, Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Fund etc and giving the responsibility of administering social security benefits through the state social security boards.

May Day 2018



Mumbai, Maharashtra



Agartala, Tripura



Assam

May Day 2018



Rourkela, Odisha

Uttar Pradesh



Uttarakhand

Haryana



May Day 2018

Jammu , J & K



Patiala, Punjab

New Delhi



Koderma, Jharkhand

May Day 2018



Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

Tamil Nadu



Kerala

Karnataka



Postal Service

Indefinite Strike by Postal Employees

Notified by NFPE affiliated All India Postal Employees Union and all four unions of Gramin Dak Sevaks (GDS), nearly 3 lakh postal employees, 60 per cent of them GDS, resorted successful indefinite strike from 22 May Strike and more than 1.29 lakh postal branches remained closed.

The strike was in pursuance of their main demands for implementation of the recommendations of Kamalesh Chandra Committee report on the service conditions of the GDS. The Kamalesh Chandra committee was appointed by the government to look into the service conditions of the GDS. The Committee submitted its report in November 2016 and union minister assured to implement the pro-employee recommendations of the report. Even after 18 months, the government's implementation orders are still being awaited. This situation compelled the GDS and their unions to go on an indefinite strike after the government failed to meet even the latest deadline of April 2018, it had promised.

CITU congratulated the postal employees for their massive countrywide successful united strike; expressed solidarity with the striking employees and demanded of the government to settle the just demands of these grass root level workers who deliver valuable service to the common people.

Bank

Employees & Officers Countrywide Protest & Strike

Against attempt to penalise them for Banks' Losses

For Banks Loss: Relief to Corporates, Penalising the Employees

Wage revision of bank employees and officers is due since 1 November, 2017 despite United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU), the joint platform of 9 national federations of bank employees and officers, already submitting charters of demands on 5 June, 2017 in term of last settlement. After long delay and persuasion, IBA (Indian Bank Association) held wage negotiation only on 5 May, 2018, six months after the due date of implementation of a revised wage settlement.

On the plea that public sector banks (PSBs) in totality incurred loss in last two years consecutively, IBA seems to penalise the employees and officers for that and offered only 2 per cent increase in revised wages over wage bill as on 31 March, 2017.

UFBU rejected the offer and categorically stated that banks have incurred this loss due to huge provisioning against outstanding loans taken by the big corporates while PSBs have been earning operating profits which is also in the rise. UFBU also said that profitability cannot be linked with the wages; wages are linked with value of labour inputs and that the employees and officers cannot be penalised in wage revision linking it with the net loss incurred by banks for which they are no way responsible.

In protest against IBA's attempt to shift the burden of corporates loot on the employees and officers, at the call of UFBU protest demonstrations were staged in front of the banks across the country on 9 and 10 May. They are also preparing for 2 days All India Bank Strike on 30 and 31 May for which notice has already been served.

Construction

UP Construction Workers Union's District Conference

Balia district conference of Uttar Pradesh Bhavan Nirman Mazdoor Sabha was held in the overflowing Town Hall of Balia on 20 May with construction workers, large number of them women, coming from Srinagar, Basantpur, Shivpur Diara, and Balia Town and joining in procession from CITU office at Rampur raising demands for social security, minimum wage, against anti-workers amendments in labour laws; and against corruption

and communalism.

Inaugurating the conference, CITU state general secretary Premnarth Rai explained about construction workers earned rights and about anti-labour policies of BJP-led central and UP state governments; worker countrywide united struggle including strikes; growing workers-peasants unity and broader unity with other sections of the people; and divisive policies of communal and casteist forces. Others who addressed the meeting include CITU state committee member R M Rai, Rakesh Singh, Youth leader Ravi Yadav, Raghubans Upadhaya. The conference unanimously elected Nathuni Varma as president, Ajit Singh as general secretary and Pankaj Mehta as treasurer of the district committee of the union.

All India Protest Day at Jaipur

Responding to the call of Construction Workers Federation of India (CWFI), Rajasthan Nirman Mazdoor Union observed All India Demands Day of Construction Workers by bringing out a rally from union's office marching to labour department and staging demonstration and holding gate meeting addressed by CWFI national leader Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat, CITU state president Ravindra Shukla, union's state general secretary Harendra Singh, treasurer Babulal, its Jaipur district treasurer Vijay Singh Tambar, CITU district president Kishan Singh Rathor and others.

An 11-member delegation of the union met the additional labour commissioner and submitted a memoranda containing the demands on which discussion was held in presence of construction workers welfare board members. They assured to take urgent action on the demands. .

Road Transport

Countrywide Growing Strike & Struggles

All sections of state road transport corporation (SRTC) workers are on countrywide strikes and struggles. They were on strike in Sholapur; will be on strike in Rajasthan on 25 and 26 July and in Gujarat on 31 May; in Bombay strike notice was served, but was postponed due to court's intervention; in Telangana strike notice has been served. They are in other forms of struggle in Andhra Pradesh, Uttarakhand and J&K.

All SRTCs are facing serious financial crisis due to wrong policies of the central and state governments. Under RTC Act 1950, the central and state governments are to share capital contribution, but are not being implemented since 1989; travel concessions to students and others, decided by the state governments, are not being reimbursed in full; private operators are allowed illegally in violation of permit rules siphoning out RTC revenue; increasing diesel prices causing extra burden. In addition, the state governments are collecting huge amount as different taxes. All these together have put the SRTCs in debt trap.

But, the SRTC workers are made the scape goats. Wages are not being paid in time; in Sholapur wages are due over 10 months; in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana wage revision is due since 1 April, 2017; in Maharashtra wage revision is due for many years; pension and terminal benefits are due for long; vacancies are not filled for years causing increase in workload; several workers and retired employees have committed suicide.

Auto drivers were on strike in some districts of Bihar for a week in April and in Dhanbad district of Jharkhand for 4 days in protest against illegal collection of parking fees and harassment by police. Oil tanker workers in Odisha were on strike on 16 April demanding wage increase. In Guwahati Uber and Ola drivers were on 72 hours strike in May demanding reduction of commission.

5,200 truck operators in Bilaspur district of Himachal Pradesh were on strike for 11 days in May demanding from ACC cement company to enhance transportation charges resulting in enhancement transportation charges by Rs.400 over the existing rate. All India Motor Transport Congress decided to observe indefinite nationwide chakka-jam from 20 July and All India Confederation of Goods vehicle Owners Association has called for indefinite strike from 18 June demanding to reduce diesel rates and on other issues.

In this background, All India Co-ordination Committee of Road Transport Workers Organisations in its meeting on 16 May decided countrywide strike in August against the M.V. Act Amendment Bill, social security for the unorganised transport workers, protection of SRTCs and survival of transport industry.

R. Lakshmaiah

STATES

Maharashtra

Strike for Payment of Due Wages

BJP-ruled Maharashtra state has the dubious distinction of non-payment of workers earned due wages for months together despite courts orders. SMT (Sholapur Municipal Transport) is under Sholapur Municipal Corporation (SMC). Due to mismanagement, the transport department is running at a loss; number of busses came down substantially and workers were not paid wages during July 2017 – April, 2018. Despite non-payment of wages for 10 long months, workers continued to work in this public transportation service.

Lal Bawta Mahanagar Palika Kamgar Union of CITU submitted memorandum to the SMC administration demanding payment of all due wages since July 2017. But, SMC refused to accept the demands saying that SMT is not part of SMC. This forced the union to approach industrial court on the issue. The industrial court in its order of 28 December 2017 asked SMC to pay immediately 4 months due wages, ensure payment of current wages in time and payment of rest of due wages in installments with each month's current wages. Against this order of industrial court, SMC obtained a interim stay from Mumbai high court on 5 March, 2018 which, however, was vacated by Mumbai high court in its order on 2 May and SMC's petition was rejected reinstating the industrial court's order. Even then SMC refused to pay due wages to its SMT workers.

The union then had no option, but to serve strike notice. All SMT workers of Sholapur Municipal Corporation including 400 permanent, 200 temporary and 200 daily wagers went on indefinite strike from 9 April, 2018 and resorted to other demonstrative programmes including holding street corner meetings and public meetings, staging dharnas and demonstrations and bringing out torchlight processions etc.

On 27 April the chief minister was to come to Sholapur on tour. When striking workers declared to block the CM's convoy's entry, the administration hurriedly arranged a meeting of the striking workers with the chief minister. Led by CITU state vice president Adam Master, a delegation of the union met the chief minister, placed the problems to him and urged for his intervention. The chief minister assured to take necessary action. Yet, nothing has happened for payment of workers due wages.

Different sections of the people, affected by lack of local transport, also came forward urging SMC to end the strike by payment of workers due wages. On this Bidi workers, led by the corporator Kaminitai Adam, submitted a memorandum and thousands Bidi workers, mostly women, joined in demonstration. The striking SMT workers are led by CITU leaders Narsaya Adam Master, union's president Venkatesh Kongri, secretary Sidhyappa Kalshetty and others.

Ultimately, on 15 May night, SMC entered into an understanding with the union that 2 months due wages would be paid immediately and rest of the dues would be paid in installments with current wages. On that basis the SMT workers called off the strike and normal transportation was restored from 16 May morning.

Haryana

Indefinite Total Statewide Strike of Municipal Workers

Over 30,000 municipal workers, majority of them women, in all 87 three tier municipal bodies – corporations, councils and nagar panchayats - of Haryana began their 3 days strike from 9 May, later extended till 14 May and subsequently went on indefinite strike as the BJP-led government failed to address their

legitimate demands which include regularisation of jobs, equal pay for equal work, immediate hike of safai karamcharis' minimum wages from Rs. 10,000 to Rs. 15,000, implementation of medical facilities for contract employees, increase in allowances of both permanent and contract employees, risk allowance and better safety equipment for those engaged in cleaning sewers, etc. All these were the election promises of the ruling BJP's state manifesto.

On the contrary, the Haryana government started statewide repression against the striking employees including police attack on the assembly of striking workers and arresting the striking employees at Sonapat and some other districts. CITU state committee condemned these attacks and demanded immediate release of arrested workers and settlement of the legitimate demands. Despite these attacks the strike is total till going to the press. On 22 May CITU and Sarb Karamchari Sandh jointly staged demonstrations in all cities and towns in solidarity with the striking municipal employees. CITU all India centre congratulated the municipal workers of Haryana and the leadership of Sarva Kartmachari Sangh, the umbrella organisation of state government and municipal bodies employees unions, for their successful near total strike.

Addressing the striking workers, CITU state president Satbir Singh and general secretary Jai Bhagawan said that there are 35,000 workers in municipalities. But, as the state government stopped permanency of job of class IV employees, about 25,000 of municipal workers are now contract or outsourced workers. At many places minimum wages are not paid. There are no ESI and EPF facilities for them. Previous state government ended the contract system. But, as soon as BJP government came to power, contract system and outsourcing work have been reintroduced in a big way.

Tamilnadu

Chemplast Workers Historic Struggle for Union Rights

Chemplast Sanmar Limited is a major manufacturer of PVC, chlorochemicals etc located at Mettur, Cuddalore, Panruti and Vedaranyam in Tamil Nadu and in Puducherry. Taking advantage of Modi government's All India Council for Technical Education [National Employability Enhancement Mission (NEEM)] Regulations of 2013 and 2017; the management of Chemplast has started sending out permanent workers in its plants through VRS replacing them by ITI and diploma holders as apprentices under NEEM regulations. These workers are kept as apprentices for 3 years with a consolidated salary of Rs.5500 - Rs.8000; then employing them as temporary workers for 2 more years and, thus, after completing over 5 years they are kept as probationers for 6 months before confirming them in service with paltry salary upto Rs. 12,000 to ITI holders and upto Rs. 15000 to diploma holders.

Further, the management designated these workmen as 'executives' with intension to bypass labour laws. Workers are compelled to work 'overtime' at a stretch even upto 20 hours every alternate day. Any refusal to do overtime work even for genuine reasons or taking leave is treated as insubordination and punitive actions were being taken including dismissals.

Under these circumstances, with guidance from CITU, 270 workers working in its plant-II at Mettur formed a union in a general body meeting on 25 March and the list of elected office bearers was submitted to the management on 27 March. From that day's night shift the management started throwing out the unions' office bearers from jobs daily. All 22 office bearers of the union were summarily dismissed. This became the bone of contention between the workers and the managements and the workers resorted to lightening continuous stay-in strike inside the plant from 30 March night shift demanding reinstatement of all dismissed office bearers of the union. 250 workers staying inside the plant bravely faced attempt of intimidation by the management and police. The management closed canteen services inside the plant. The workers who remained outside and the family members kept day-night vigil and sent food and water to the workers staying inside.

In the meanwhile, an industrial dispute was raised, but the management refused to participate in the discussion. Ultimately, ALC issued an advisory on 31 March asking the management to take back all 22 dismissed workers, the union to resume duty simultaneously and return to status quo ante position. But, management turned down the advisory.

As the strike entered the 7 day, CITU district committee started indefinite sit-in outside the plant's gate. The management was also under pressure. The production in its Puducherry plant stopped as the raw materials from it going to striking Mettur plant stopped; and work in Mettur plant-III also slowed down as the output materials from the striking plant-II stopped.

Finally, on 6 April night, the management finally agreed to take back all 22 dismissed worker, union's leaders, back in service and normalcy in the plant was restored on 7 April morning. Over 250 workers, who had been indefinitely staying inside for 7 days, came out of the gate victorious and met the workers, family members and CITU workers and leaders with jubilation. The workers and the district committee of CITU unitedly fought a determined struggle and achieved a historical victory.

Police killed Protesters

Opposing Sterlite's Copper Smelting Plant in Tuticorin

Last reported, 12 persons were killed and several others were injured, some of them critically, in police firing on the protesters of Vedanta group's Sterlite's copper smelting plant in Tuticorin on 22 May.

AIADMK government's police fired on the unarmed protesters during their 100th day of agitation. If protest was peaceful for all previous 99 days and there was no need of using force by police, the government must answer as to what differently happened on 100th day of protest that police had to use such brutal force killing, maiming and injuring hundreds of protesters? Chief minister Palaniswami's statement that "*It was with a view to bringing under control the violence of the crowd that the police, under unavoidable circumstances, had to resort to the firing*" is blatantly false and the police firing was pre-designed. The facts cannot come to light by a 'one man commission' which the chief minister announced. Only a judicial enquiry by a sitting High Court judge, as demanded by the CPI(M), can find out the facts. It is not out of context that on the very next day that is on 23 May Madras High Court's Madurai bench stayed the construction of Sterlite's new copper smelter plant. This shows there is a valid legal ground of protest.

London based Vedanta Resources Plc's Indian subsidiary Sterlite Industries (India) Ltd has decided 'Brownfield expansion' of its existing copper smelting plant in Tuticorin doubling its production capacity and doubling its pollutants.

Copper smelter plant releases poisonous sulphur dioxide gas and dust in the air, copper wastes and other effluents in land and water; and draws huge surface water causing drinking and agricultural water shortage. The contaminated air and water cause irritation of eye, nose, throat and skin; leads to bronchial congestion and cancer.

The Sterlite's copper smelting plant has long history of environmental pollution in Tuticorin. In 2010, Madras High Court ordered shutting down the plant. The company, however, obtained a stay on the order of the High Court. But, the then chief minister Jayalalitha ordered closure of the plant in 2013 after gas leaked. However, on company's petition, national green tribunal overturned the state government's order. The state government moved to Supreme Court against the green tribunal's order which in its order of April, 2013 directed the company to deposit Rs. 100 crore within 3 months to the collector by an interim stay and the case is still pending in the Supreme Court.

Sterlite's Tuticorin copper smelter plant has been shut down again from 27 March as the company has license to operate the plant up to 31 March, 2018. During the closure period Tamil Nadu Pollution Control Board rejected Vedanta's license for violation of environmental laws. Sterlite has gone to appellate authority which is to hear the case on 6 June next. The company applied for extension of validity of environmental clearance up to 31 December 2018. However, the company had the valid clearance only up to 23 July, 2015.

When the company's existing plant is shut down pending environmental clearance, what was the need of Tamilnadu police to resort to strong arm method to prevent the people protesting against 'Brownfield expansion' of the existing plant?

Spontaneous protest erupted next day again against police for killing the protesters. Again police resorted to firing and killing one more person.

In a strongly worded statement on 23 May CITU condemned murderous police firing a day before on the peaceful protesters against seriously polluting Sterlite's copper smelting plant at Tuticorin killing 12 persons and injuring hundreds.

CITU said that the people are agitating demanding strong regulatory intervention against the extreme unsafe production process in the copper smelter plant as well as disposal of wastes. But, Tamilnadu administration adopted trigger-happy measures to contain such contentious issue. The manner in which police resorted to indiscriminate and murderous firing on the protesters makes it amply clear that it was aimed at giving the protesters a lesson at the behest of their corporate masters. Many of those killed had bullet injuries on their head and face. AIADMK government, a close ally of BJP, must explain as to what prompted them to give firing order on the protesting people on such a sensitive and vulnerable issue.

CITU demanded strong action against those responsible for such murderous and brutal act of firing on the protesters; high level judicial enquiry; concrete action for preventing atmospheric pollution by the Copper Smelter plant of Sterlite at Tuticorin and not to allow further expansion of the project unless all the contentious issues on pollution are sorted out to the satisfaction of the affected people of that region.

CITU called upon the workers and their unions to protest against such brutal murderous act of the Tamilnadu government at the behest of Sterlite/Vedanta group.

Welfare Activities for Migrant Workers by Kerala LDF Govt

P. Ramakrishnan

Labour Migration to Kerala State has significantly increased over the years. The demographic transition in Kerala and the subsequent changes in the structure, rapid urbanization, higher wages rates compared to the rest of other states and sustained availability are some of the main reasons for the increase in labour migration. Earlier, such migration was confined only to workers coming from the neighbouring States of Kerala. But today, workers from northern and eastern Indian states such as West Bengal, Odisha, Assam, Jharkhand, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh in large numbers come to work in Kerala. These migrant workers face several challenges in the new destination. The Department of Labour and Skills, Government of Kerala, have initiated several programmes for the welfare of the migrant workers.

The Volume of Migration

According to a study report of Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation for Kerala State Government in 2013, there are 25 Lakhs Interstate Migrant Workers (IMW) who have migrated due to the low rate of wages and lack of employment opportunity in their states. They are mainly from West Bengal, Odisha, Bihar, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Jharkhand. Interstate migrant workforce predominantly consists of single male between the age group of 18 to 35 years.

About 60% of them work in the construction sector and the balance are working in hospitality, manufacturing, trading and agricultural sectors. They are mostly engaged both in unskilled and semiskilled works such as agriculture, brickfields mason, electrician, plumbing and the like. A large number of migrant workers work in plywood and steel factories in Ernakulam, Kozhikode and Kannur districts and are concentrated particularly in plywood factories in Perumbavoor area of Ernakulam district. The said report has recommended that the State Government need to take steps to improve the housing and living conditions for their socio-economic well being.

Government Level Interventions

The Government of Kerala introduced a scheme named as 'Kerala Migrant Workers Welfare Scheme' to provide welfare benefits to Interstate Migrant Workers (ISM) working in Kerala. The administration and implementation of the said Scheme is entrusted with the Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board. A migrant worker who comes to Kerala from any other State for obtaining job who has completed the age of 18 years and not exceeded 60 years of age are entitled to be registered as migrant worker under the scheme with annual subscription fee of Rs.30. **Accident Death (Rs.50,000), Fatal Disease Treatment (Rs.25,000), Terminal Benefit (Rs.10,000 - Rs.25,000), Education Grant for Children (Rs.1,000 – Rs.3,000), Transportation of Dead body to native place (Rs.5,000 – Rs.15,000), Maternity Benefit (Rs.15,000)** are envisaged by the above Scheme.

As per records, 56,136 migrant workers have registered under this scheme. The Labour Department has been conducting medical camps and information dissemination programmes with the support of Health Department and NGOs in their work site and places where the ISM workers congregate. An average amount of Rs.50 lakh has been allotted for conducting medical camps and awareness programmes for Interstate Migrant Workers in every financial year.

With majority of migrant workers engaged in the unorganized sector, either directly or through contractors, they are mostly invisible to the government systems making Government interventions complex and challenging. These migrant workers largely remain excluded from the reach of programmes although the Department of Labour and Skills has been striving to improve their social security. Language barriers, inadequate demand creation, shortage of staff, lack of inter-departmental coordination etc. have been some of the key constraints of the Government in addressing the issues of migrant workers. Having learned lessons from implementing some of the past programmes for the migrants, Government is now planning to roll out certain innovative intervention programmes for the welfare of the migrant labourers in Kerala.

The new innovative programmes

a) Facilitation Centres

Lack of awareness about government systems and schemes coupled with language barriers limit migrant worker's access to government departments / offices for availing basic services or for grievance redressal. Inadequate demand creation and outreach activities hinder the reach of the department to migrants. The newly introduced insurance scheme AAWAS for migrant workers also calls for creating an interface between the department and the migrant workers. Facilitation Centres for ISMs under the supervision of the Department and managed by Civil Society Organisation can to a great extent overcome challenges faced by the department by providing language enabled migrant friendly services at a time convenient to the workers.

Accordingly, Government have decided to constitute Facilitation Centres with Administrative Committees comprising of District Panchayat President as Chairman and District Labour Office (E) from Labour Department as convener, nominated officials from the Department to Health, Local Self Government, Home and representatives from trade unions, employers and NGOs as members.

Objectives are -

- To provide effective and high quality advice / information to migrant workers in an inclusive manner about basic services and enhance the utilisation of service by migrant workers and their families; and
- To offer legal aid as well as other grievance redressal services in addition to providing assistance in availing several governmental schemes and programmes.

The Facilitation Centre for ISMs will be customized in such a way that it caters to the most important needs of migrant workers in an inclusive manner and will be placed at locations which are easily accessible for migrants. Service of Facilitation Centre for ISMs in Kerala can be utilized by workers irrespective of their status of migration. The Facilitation Centres will provide a wide range of advice / information services in addition to legal aid as well as other services to avail governmental schemes and services. Software will be deployed for documentation and data management. Before scaling up the mode, the Department would like to pilot the facilitation Centre for ISMs in Kerala at three locations where migrant workers are concentrated geographically locating them in south, central and north Kerala (Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode).

b) AAWAS

As per the Orders issued in GO-1325/2016/LBR dated 27.10.2017, the State Government have introduced a comprehensive Health Insurance Scheme “AAWAS” under which insurance - 'coverage upto Rs.15,000 and Rs.2 lakhs respectively for accident and death for each insured person. It will also enable the creation of a systematic registered data base of the migrant workers thereby enabling the Government to provide them with a Unique ID card.

AAWAS project was inaugurated on 1st November 2017, the 61st anniversary of the formation of Kerala State. The registration process under the scheme has already started and about 1 lakh workers have already been registered. Services related to AAWAS Scheme will be made available at all Facilitation Centres. Government has constituted district and state level monitoring committees to oversee the project.

The insurance model contemplated is similar to that of the RSBY scheme. For meeting the expenditure for running the scheme in the ensuing financial years, the Government of Kerala have requested the Government of India to share at least 60% of the total expenditure.

c) “Apna Ghar” Project

Bhavanam Foundation Kerala (A Government of Kerala Undertaking) is implementing the “Apna Ghar Project” which aims at providing good quality hostels with all basic facilities at affordable rent to interstate migrant workers working across Kerala. The Project was conceived considering the poor living conditions of the interstate migrant workers. The multi storied hostels will have kitchen, dining rooms, toilets, bathing area, washing and drying area, common areas etc within the building. The cost of construction and the running cost is envisaged to be recouped over a thirty year period through rent collection.

The first scheme under the Project called the ‘Apna Ghar Project- Palakkad Scheme” with 640 bed capacity within KINFRA integrated industrial and Textile Park, Kanjikode, Palakkad. The Scheme is scheduled to be commissioned by March 2018. It will be able to provide 640 interstate migrant workers decent accommodation at affordable rates. To implement more schemes under the Apna Ghar Project, Bhavanam Foundation Kerala has identified three plots of land of about 1 acre each in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam and Kozhikode districts. Implementation of the Apna Ghar, Project - Ramanattukara Scheme at KINFRA Advanced Technology Park, Ramanattukara, Kozhikode district will be undertaken shortly and other schemes under the Apna Ghar Project at Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam districts will be carried out in a time frame manner.

d) Mobile Health Clinic

Poor health condition of migrant workers is a major concern for the Govt. of Kerala. In order to explore a potential health clinic model to reach out to migrant population providing language enabled services at the convenience of the workers, Government proposes to pilot the feasibility of

a Mobile Health Clinic Model managed by a Civil Society Organisation. The clinic which will have a doctor, social worker, nurse and a driver cum assistant and will be deployed to reach areas which are the concentration pockets of migrant workers in a chosen district providing primary healthcare services at their convenience. In addition to treatment for minor ailments, tests for TB, Malaria, HIV etc. will be undertaken. Those who require further treatment will be linked to appropriate referral facilities for further diagnosis and treatment.

e) Stakeholders' Consultation on Labour Migration to Kerala

To improve the working and living conditions of migrants by formulating suitable solutions to address them, Government of Kerala, in partnership with the Work in Freedom Programme of the International Labour Organisation (ILO), Aajeevika Bureau and Centre for Migration and Inclusive Development (CMID), organized a Policy Round Table on Labour Migration of Kerala in Thiruvananthapuram on 5 December, 2016. This round table was followed by larger State Level Stakeholders' Consultation on 7 June 2017 at Hotel Mascot, Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala, which was also one of the key recommendations of the December 2016 round table.

The Stakeholders' Consultation was inaugurated by the Minister for Labour and Excise, Government of Kerala. Senior officials from the Department of Labour and Skills and several other government departments, representatives from the ILO, trade unions, non-governmental organizations, national and international experts on migration, the industries and employers' association academic institutes along with social activists participated in the consultation. Subsequent to presentation on labour migration scenario of the state, the Labour Commissioner presented the recommendations from the Policy Round Table. The initiatives of the Department of Labour were appreciated by the participants and suggestions were provided to further strengthen them.

f) A Study on the Status of Migrant Labour in Kerala

Migrant Labourers have now become an important and integral part of the Kerala economy. As pointed out earlier, about 25 lakhs migrant workers are estimated to be present in Kerala. Information on the status of migrations is a priority of the present government. The Stakeholders' Consultation on Labour Migration to Kerala proposed to undertake a study on the status of migrant workers in the state at least biannually. District level action plans will be developed to respond to the challenges of migrant workers on the basis of statistics of this study.

Conclusion

The social security development measures implemented in Kerala have widely been appreciated by all. It is important to point out that, migrant Labourers have also become an integral part of the development activities of the State. The services of these workers have definitely given a valuable contribution in strengthening the economy of the State. In Kerala, the labourers are being provided with better wages, worker friendly labour laws and better living conditions including specific social security measures. The LDF Government intends to extend all the benefits, being enjoyed by the workers of Kerala, to the migrant workers also in a phased manner. Moreover, definite schemes for improvement of their living conditions are being prepared and implemented with a vision.

The trade unions in the State have given all support to the Government in this process. Government look forward to have more better coordination from all parts of the society for implementation of all the schemes formulated for the upliftment of migrant workers in the State.

[T.P. Ramakrishnan is the Minister for Labour, Skills & Excise, Government of Kerala]

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

State	Centre	Feb 2018	Mar 2018	State	Centre	Feb 2018	Mar 2018
AP	GUNTUR	277	278	MHR	MUMBAI	288	287
	VIJAYWADA	278	277		NAGPUR	324	323
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	283	280		NASIK	309	304
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	258	260		PUNE	289	292
	GUWAHATI	249	249		SHOLAPUR	295	295
	LABAC SILCHAR	259	257	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	301	301
	MARIANI JORHAT	241	241		ROURKELA	305	305
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	241	240	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	308	307
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	305	307	PUN	AMRITSAR	297	297
CHD	CHANDIGARH	287	287		JALANDHAR	291	292
CHS	BHILAI	312	311		LUDHIANA	277	276
DLI	DELHI	266	264	RJN	AJMER	265	265
GOA	GOA	306	311		BHILWARA	274	276
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	268	268		JAIPUR	274	275
	BHAVNAGAR	268	268	TN	CHENNAI	269	265
	RAJKOT	276	277		COIMBATORE	271	270
	SURAT	258	258		COONOR	289	289
	VADODARA	265	264		MADURAI	276	275
HRY	FARIDABAD	259	259		SALEM	273	273
	YAMUNANAGAR	275	275		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	284	280
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	256	256	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	292	292
J&K	SRINAGAR	270	269		HYDERABAD	251	249
JRK	BOKARO	280	283		WARRANGAL	291	293
	GIRIDIH	308	309	TRP	TRIPURA	262	261
	JAMSHEDPUR	336	335	UP	AGRA	315	316
	JHARIA	317	316		GHAZIABAD	292	293
	KODARMA	336	328		KANPUR	299	299
	RANCHI HATIA	328	330		LUCKNOW	288	290
KNT	BELGAUM	297	294		VARANASI	287	288
	BENGLURU	287	286	WB	ASANSOL	309	310
	HUBLI DHARWAR	310	311		DARJEELING	272	271
	MERCARA	297	297		DURGAPUR	309	312
	MYSORE	299	296		HALDIA	316	317
KRL	ERNAKULAM	295	297		HOWRAH	273	277
	MUNDAKKAYAM	300	301		JALPAIGURI	277	281
	QUILON	326	329		KOLKATA	268	269
MP	BHOPAL	288	288		RANIGANJ	260	261
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At Pune, Maharashtra



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CITU state president Satbir Singh addressing the striking workers

