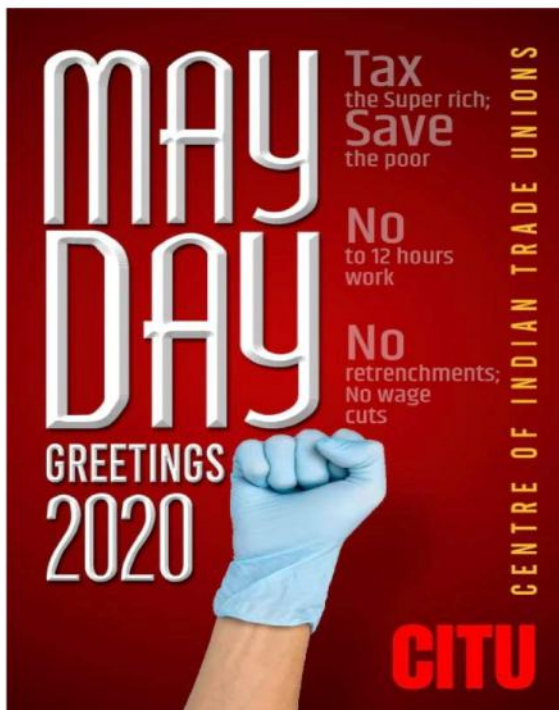




THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

During Covid-19 Lockdown



CITU Greetings & Raising its Flag at BTR Bhavan on May Day 2020



Paying Tribute to Karl Marx at BTR Bhavan on his 202th Birth Anniversary

21 April Protest

By
National Leaders of CITU, AIKS, AIDWA & SFI in New Delhi



At 15 Talkatora Road



At AIKS Central Office

For People it is COVID Pandemic; For BJP Governments it is Labour Endemic

WORKING CLASS

MAY 2020
(First Supplementary)
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During COVID-19 Pandemic; it seems, BJP's Central and State Governments are in a state of labour endemic.

Emboldened employers' organisations are prescribing medicines to 'save the industries and country's economy' from labour virus having three manifestation – jobs protection, wage and rights.

BJP governments are injecting heavy doses of anti-labour medicines to 'cure the industries and the economy' from the labour virus which include increasing daily working hours to 12 hours a day as against universal norms of 8 hours a day; suspending all labour laws in one go, for several years, in this 101th year of ILO, established after prolong world labour movement, and 100th year of first central trade union in India; the existence of both of which are reflected in the enactment of these laws after glorious struggles and sacrifices which include Lala Lajpat Roy and other leaders of national freedom struggle; Bhagat Singh and his associates; several labour, communist and democratic leaders.

The present BJP dispensations at the Centre and States want to erase this historical chapter by suspending all labour laws and rights with impunity, for the first time in independent India.

It is said that war and epidemic always help the rulers. Just so. There is design not to fight against COVID-19, but to fight against the labour. COVID-19 pandemic has become helpful to the present rulers. They want to prolong it for years as reflected in action by UP and MP governments, at least till the next general election to be

held in the situation of pandemic. Situation will be normalised and total freedom for the owners, not for the labour and other toiling sections.

New situation is unfolding and new agenda for struggle will emerge out. For, the struggle is inherent. Be ready for that.

50 Years of CITU

Rich Experience & Great Lessons; Fighting Covid-19

K. Hemalata

Golden Jubilee year of CITU was to conclude on 30 May; a grand concluding ceremony was planned in Kolkata, the city where CITU was founded fifty years ago. The concluding ceremony was to be followed by meetings of the CITU general council on 31 May - 2 June.

Covid 19 pandemic has upset this programme. CITU cadres, from top to bottom had to be confined to their respective places for the last more than 40 days, due to the countrywide lockdown. Taking care to protect their own health and that of others around them became an important task. For many, this in itself was a new experience.

However, being confined to their places did not mean being inactive or taking a break from work for most of CITU cadres. In fact, it involved the same, if not more, hectic activity, from top to bottom of the organisation. The sudden announcement of the lockdown made by the Prime Minister, with just 4 hours notice, came as a bolt from the blue for most of the workers, particularly the unorganised workers and the migrant workers. Suddenly they found themselves without job and income. Many house owners forced them to vacate their houses; they became homeless overnight.

Addressing these problems of the workers and provide relief to them in conditions of lockdown, required initiative, ingenuity and creativity among the grass root level cadres, particularly in organisations like CITU with very limited resources. CITU cadres have established that there was no dearth of them in the organisation. Through their interventions on various issues and in various ways - from representing the issues of workers to the government and its administration, to the employers, to distributing food and other essential items, facilitating their travel and helping them get shelter – CITU cadres proved their mettle and made the organisation proud. CITU's activities during this period – addressing issues, providing relief and organising protest actions – following lockdown restrictions – show the potential of the organisation. This needs to be fully utilised to unleash local initiatives, develop cadres and strengthen the organisation in the coming days.

The corona pandemic and our activities during this entire period enabled us to learn many lessons. It has also provided the working class of our country an opportunity to understand many things from their own experience.

Failure of Capitalism and Vainglory of US Imperialism

The manner in which countries and their governments responded to the pandemic has clearly demonstrated their priorities – protection of the health and lives of the vast majority of common people and workers or safeguarding the profits of their corporates and big business interests.

The USA, the richest, most scientifically advanced, and boasting of being the most powerful country, goes around ordering and threatening all countries, has proved itself of being the most incapable of safeguarding its own citizens from the disease. Similarly, the advanced capitalist

countries which have been neglecting public health in favour of privatisation following neoliberal policies and austerity measures followed the US in terms of casualties.

On the other hand, countries with robust public health system including China, which was the first country to be affected by the new virus; Cuba; Vietnam; Laos; Cambodia were able to successfully contain the disease. China was acclaimed for its efforts by the WHO.

In many countries, including India, the private hospitals kept themselves isolated from attending to, not only Covid impacted people but others as well, afraid of the disease. It was only the much vilified public doctors, nurses and other staff who worked overtime, without proper protection for themselves, risking their own lives and the lives of their dear ones, to save the life of others.

At a time when socialist Cuba, which has been suffering from over six decades of inhuman sanctions imposed by the USA; was not only able to contain the disease due to its strong public health system, but also sent medical teams to different countries including Iran, Italy, South Africa etc. It even offered to help the US in dealing with the pandemic. On the other hand, the USA blocked masks and diagnostic kits donated to Cuba by China. It prevented Cuban help to Iran. Cuban mission in the USA was attacked during this period. USA continues to encourage military coups in Venezuela. The pandemic laid bare the barbarism and brutality of imperialism in contrast to the humaneness and solidarity of the socialist system.

The Corona pandemic also exposed the inherent exploitative nature of the capitalist system and its tendency to authoritarianism to suppress workers' united resistance to the increasing attacks on their livelihood and working conditions. Government decisions are based on the demands of the capitalist class. This is clearly seen in the decisions of the BJP government led by Modi during this period. The government announced relief in various forms of tax concessions and exemptions to the big capitalist class to the tune of Rs 15.62 lakh crore in the name of incentives to invest. It has even written off Rs.68,607 crores bad loans of the wilful defaulters including those who absconded, like Mehul Choksi and Vijay Mallya.

But such benevolence is not extended to the workers and poor. The financial package to deal with the corona lockdown situation was a meagre Rs.1.7 lakh crore, of which around half the amount was already accounted for in the last budget. Food grains are rotting in the FCI godowns, but the government is not ready to distribute free food grains to all the needy. It has no money for masks, gloves and protective gear to the frontline workers. It is not willing to transfer cash to the accounts of people for three months, so they can meet their immediate requirements. The trains that were started to transport migrant workers after a lot of pressure were immediately stopped by the BJP government in Karnataka as per the demand of the employers' association.

While the entire country was under lockdown, the BJP government decided to stop increase in the DA due to the central government employees up to July 2021. While it was reported that the government of India was considering increase in working hours to 12 a day, already several state governments including Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan have increased working hours to 12 through notifications. It is reported that Maharashtra and Tripura are going to do the same.

The chief minister of BJP ruled Madhya Pradesh announced exemption to the employers from most of the labour laws through ordinance or executive order, for a period of 1000 days. They will also be freed from labour inspections. The BJP ruled Uttar Pradesh government has also decided to bring an ordinance exempting all establishments in the state from almost all labour laws for a period of three years. The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded the union government to prohibit trade unions for one year; they want flexible labour laws; they think minimum wages are fixed high and want freedom to bring them down, to make it easy for the

employer to throw away workers. It has been reported that the government is considering implementation of the pending labour codes, which would enable the employers to do most of these, through an ordinance or executive order.

Already workers' hard won rights including 8 hours work and other working conditions, social security benefits, etc were under attack under the neoliberal regime; these were accentuated with the global crisis that preceded the corona virus pandemic. Now the pandemic has further intensified these attacks. Crisis or no crisis, the capitalists get their profits only by exploiting the workers. They utilise whatever the crisis to push the burden on to the workers and the poor to protect or even increase their own profits. During this pandemic the wealth of the Super rich like Amazon's Jeff Bezos, Reliance's Mukesh Ambani have in fact soared, when the workers and common people have lost their jobs and earnings.

The pandemic has also brought out the hypocrisy behind the profession of democracy, parliamentary norms, freedom etc by the ruling classes. It has been reported that many countries in the world are turning to authoritarianism in this period, suppressing people's rights. We see this in our country also. Prime Minister Modi announced the lockdown in the media without any discussion in Parliament, which was in session at that time. Social activists who oppose the government's policies and actions are being arrested. Already some BJP ruled governments are talking about suppressing all the workers' basic rights through ordinances and executive orders, with reports of similar measures by the Government of India.

Such authoritarian measures and repression on the working class are more likely than not increase in the coming days when workers will start resisting the attacks on their livelihood and income. Even before the pandemic, unemployment rate was reported to be at a 45 years high. ILO has estimated that around 40 crore people in India will be pushed down into poverty as a result of the corona pandemic and lockdown.

CITU cadres have to learn and understand this glaringly visible unjust and exploitative character of the present system and create this awareness among the working class as a whole.

Another very important thing this pandemic brought into focus was the stellar and exemplary solidarity displayed by the working class and other toiling people, the peasants and agricultural workers. Crores of rupees worth relief in terms of cooked food, food materials and kits of other essential items were provided to the migrant workers and also other sections of the poor. The farmers and agricultural workers in several states expressed their solidarity by collecting food grains, pulses, vegetables, fruits etc and distributing to the workers. Many workers and their family members who have never participated in union activities also involved themselves in relief actions and also in the protest actions called by CITU. The 21 April All India Protest Day and the May Day this year probably saw the largest grass root participation of working class including in remote villages and tribal areas. This was possible because of the initiatives taken by our committees and members at the village / ward levels.

The relief work and the protest actions have unveiled the potential of our cadres and the immense possibilities to strengthen our organisation. The entire experience and activities of this period will facilitate in making the working class understand the 'link between their immediate issues and the policies and that between the policies and politics'. CITU has to utilise this to raise their awareness in the coming days.

This will be the correct way to carry forward our decision to raise the political ideological consciousness of the working class on the occasion of the Golden Jubilee observance of CITU.

Conclusion of Golden Jubilee of CITU

The Way Ahead

Tapan Sen

The Golden Jubilee Year of CITU will mark its completion on 30 May this year. The Concluding Celebration was to be held on 30 May 2020 in Kolkata, the place of the foundation conference of CITU in 1970, as a convergence mobilization of statewide jatha of workers immediately preceding the General Council meeting of CITU.

But, unfortunately, the programme had to be postponed owing to the uncertainty created by continued of lockdown situation due to Corona pandemic. Moreover, during the entire lockdown period, the CITU committees and grass root activists throughout the country are totally involved, within extremely limited resources and wherewithals, providing relief and support to crores of migrant, daily wage, contract, casual and unorganized sector workers who have lost everything - jobs, earnings, shelter etc owing to the lockdown.

CITU was born with the call of unity and struggle, with a clear objective, enshrined in its constitution, to intensify and advance the united struggle of the working class towards ending the exploitative system itself with goal of attaining emancipation of the people in entirety from all exploitation.

The Call of the Foundation Conference — The Implications and Aftermath

The call of the foundation conference of CITU thus, underlined certain basic tasks - the foremost task of unification of the working class as a class and carrying on united struggles, with continuity, against every aspect of exploitation and onslaught on their rights and those of the people. In last 50 years, country's trade union movement witnessed numerous struggles and gradual unification of various trade union centres into joint platform of struggles on common issues. Since 2009, almost all the trade union centres and independent federations (except of course the BMS, since 2015 after the BJP came to power) are engaged in numerous united struggles including series of countrywide general strikes with regular continuity.

Simultaneously, we have to make conscious effort to arm and heighten their understanding and consciousness, through their own experiences, about the exploitative capitalist system and the character of the political regimes holding on to it. This requires sensitizing and equipping our grass root level activists and committee members at all tiers ideologically and organizationally. Precisely premised on this understanding and a thorough political organizational review of the unfolding situation and our activities, the 14th Conference of CITU had given the call of "reaching the unreached", "linking the day to day issues facing the working class and working people at large with the neoliberal policy regime" and "exposing the politics that promotes and upholds such anti-people policies". Simultaneously, the 14th Conference underlined the organizational focus to discharge that call, with a continuity, "to equip and sensitise continuously the grass-root level activists and committee members as leaders of the working people in respective areas of work with the conscious effort to continuously expand the same."

The 15th and 16th Conference of CITU have thoroughly and self-critically reviewed our efforts and activities in this direction at all levels of organization and reiterated the call.

The 16th Conference of CITU – the Deliberations, Understandings and the Call

The 16th Conference has noted the desperate aggressiveness of the capitalist order and its political operator in the governance in the midst of deepening crisis and continuing economic slowdown to sustain itself and maximize their gains and profits increasingly imposing huge burdens on the already impoverished people and abrogation of their rights to facilitate that process. That is what is happening throughout the capitalist world resulting in faster accumulation of wealth in the hands of handful of billionaires along with speedier impoverishment of the toiling people.

This aggressive capitalist order has been taking multi-pronged routes. This is seen in the last Union Budget of the Modi Govt. in the drastic cut in all welfare and social sector expenditures; cut in food subsidy in the country ranking as low as 105th in Global Hunger Index; drastic cut in health sector expenditure as proportion of GDP; cut in MNREGA; subsidy on fertilizer; in fact, on every account relating to the overwhelming majority of population.

On the other hand in the same budget and subsequent pronouncements, huge concessions and bonanzas are announced for this handful of ultra rich class, in big-business / big corporate community, supplemented by the arrangement of legalised pilferage from the national exchequer, and the financial system through patronized tax default, debt default, debt waiver to major defaulters and through various other means of expropriation, in-built in the system of governance itself. And in this process, the rate of increase in wealth of the moneyed class surpasses much ahead of the rate of increase in investment and employment generation and despite their continuing decline. This gives rise to a kind of perversion in the system – profit and wealth gains continue to take place even when value creation in the economy through production and services dips.

And this means direct loot on the mass of the populace, national resources and public assets directly facilitated by the bourgeois landlord regime under the leadership of the big bourgeoisie and that happens to be the character as well as modality of operation of the political governance under neoliberal order.

And to facilitate the more aggressive cultivation of this perversion in the economic regime, the ruling class and polity has been carrying on simultaneously multi-pronged assault on the rights of the people and the democratic structures and institutions in an authoritarian manner with a fascistic intent. Simultaneous machination on the society at large on communal divisive line is also an integral part of the strategy of the ruling polity.

The right to dissent is being aggressively curbed in all fields and vindictive arrests, framing of right-activists etc are continuing even in the present situation of lockdown following the Corona pandemic.

And, in much more articulated manner, the rights of the working class are being targeted for total elimination. In the name of Labour Law Reforms, all the Labour Code Bills have been so designed as to ensure virtual abrogation of trade union rights, a virtual ban on right to strike and even collective agitation, total empowerment of the governments to increase daily working hours and unilaterally changing the working conditions at will at the dictate of their corporate bosses and virtual dismantling of even the functional social security system and the gross dilution of the rights of tripartite institutions to administer the social security funds.

Another obnoxious design is to permanently cripple and enslave the working class on the one hand and reduce the entire legislative exercise through Parliament. For example, OSHWC Code empowers the appropriate governments to decide the working hour and also change it subsequently through executive order without amending the principal law itself. The IR Code empowers the governments to increase the threshold limit of employment in a particular establishment through executive order to permit hire and fire. The OSHWC Code proposes to

repeal the Inter State Migrant Workmen Act, and has still been persisting with that proposal even after the horrible experiences, miseries of crores of migrant workers, having been reduced to a virtual non-entity during the lockdown period.

This pattern is being experimented through labour-law reforms with a clear authoritarian intent and is going to be practiced in all other areas of legislations; the separation of power between the executive, legislative and the judiciary as espoused by our Constitution as one of the basic tenets of our democratic structure is being targeted for total abrogation in reality through Parliamentary process itself by sheer strength of numbers by the present authoritarian regime, practically and most unfortunately without any opposition within Parliament except the Left and few others. The positions taken by different political parties in the debate on Wages Code Bill and some other labour related legislations, positions taken by various political parties in the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour on OSHWC Code and IR Code Bill clearly vindicates this.

Such a situation speaks about the real challenge before the working class movement in the days to come. And the working class movement in the country shows some silver lining. Despite absolutely lukewarm and compromising attitude of the entire political community, except the Left, on most of the class-issues like privatization, labour-law reforms, amendment of UAPA Act, curbing of right to dissent and strike and other labour rights; country's trade union movement in entirety, irrespective of different political allegiance and understandings of different central trade unions, are unitedly opposing all these through numerous struggles with a continuity.

The Charter of Demands formulated by the joint platform of the central trade unions and federations clearly points to the alternative economic policy trajectory to the ongoing corporate-servile policy regime of loot and plunder of the people. The need of the hour is to heighten that united struggles both at national and micro level towards resolute resistance to the present policy regime. And that struggle must make serious effort to embrace within its fold the other section of toiling people like peasants, agricultural workers, self-employeds and other section of populace championing their demands as well.

16TH Conference Call — the Phase of Struggle — Defiance and Resistance

16th Conference of CITU concluded that the working class movement of the country has entered a new phase - the phase of defiance and resistance. Working class cannot accept lying down the ban on their right to strike and collectively agitate even if they are enforced by law. We have to advance along our path of struggle defying such ban, and that must have to take place both at micro level and national level. In this new phase, developing capacity to resist at micro level is of crucial importance, which must continue to be our priority task.

This central task emanated from the 16th Conference call of "reaching the unreached", linking the issues with the policy regime" and "exposing the politics behind such policy regime".

COVID 19 Pandemic — The Lockdown - The Experiences

While approaching the concluding stage of golden jubilee year of CITU, we came across Corona pandemic and the experience 45 plus days lockdown. The experience had been horrible, agonizing and painful for the entire working people; but is also a source of great learning for the entire movement.

The period exposed the ruling class desperation and its polity conducting in a more arrogant and authoritarian manner bringing into surface most barbarous and fascistic face of the capitalist class as a whole which does not hesitate to barter human lives with profit and expropriation; and in

that pursuit seeks to completely redesign and overhaul the rules of governance in totality towards rabid authoritarianism and unalloyed fascism. The entire modality of the governance is being centralized toward more aggressive authoritarianism and centralization of power. Under National Disaster Management Act, the Modi Govt. and its appointed special team has empowered itself to usurp the power to override obligations under centre-state relations, suppress civil liberties and even impose censorship; and using this emergency power, the ruling class wants to consolidate the position in respect of profit and political power.

Imposition of lockdown with four hours notice without any preparation has not been a governance failure but a deliberate ploy to centralize and authoritarianise the exercise of executive power, overriding all other aspects and institutions of governance; simultaneously throwing the entire society and people in a situation of perplexity and compulsion of helplessness. Taking advantage of the pandemic situation in the background of increasing spread of virus, these authoritarian measures have been taken more for pursuing their political design of suppressing dissent, curbing labour rights, and empowering the exploiting class to mint more gains at the cost of suffering millions of people.

The ongoing exercise to dismantle all the rights and protection of the workers through executive orders reflects that strategy of the ruling class to speed up multiple times further the process of expropriation in favour of the capitalist class without even waiting for Parliament to change the labour legislation. The enhancement of the daily working hours to 12 hours through executive order in six states and exemption of all establishments from the obligations under almost all substantive labour laws in Uttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh by the respective BJP ruled governments through Ordinance exposed such hell bent bid of the ruling class to maximize the advantage of lockdown period in a dubious manner. More atrocious moves on the similar lines are expected to be taken in most of the other states as well. And in this respect, the Modi Govt's strategy is to first let lose its pliant state governments to bark and bite thereby mounting pressure on most of others to follow suit. Trickery to ensure gains of the capitalist class and their agents in political community can stoop down to nastiest level. The deeper the crisis, the more becomes the ferocity of onslaught on the rights of the working people; the nastier becomes mode of governance to the end of maximizing gains of the capitalist class at any cost and by any means. And the fact remains that the entire capitalist class is unitedly behind this inhuman as well as barbarous expropriation process so also almost all the bourgeoisie political parties.

Positive Experiences - Unleashing Tremendous Initiative at the Grass Root

The lockdown period has also revealed many positive experiences in the response of the working people in general to the call of protests and in the response of the trade union activists in the solidarity action with the suffering millions. This has been no doubt an enthusing as well as confidence-creating experience.

Tremendous initiative got triggered at the grass-root level of our organization, including at individual level. Our activities could reach in wider areas, much beyond the workplace-level as well as beyond the work-place level issues. The activities at the grass-root level could involve the family members too. And a sense of tremendous solidarity with the fellow workers and people could be roused up at the lowest level of our organization indicating the tremendous potential for widening and consolidating the class movement.

Without such widespread individual and grass-root level initiative, such massive relief work could have not been organized among the suffering workers, in particular the migrant workers, in response to CITU's call. The response has been tremendous and commendable throughout the

country, although we could reach only a section of the sufferings workers, not all, owing to our own organisational limitations. Even then, to the extent we could reach, despite tremendous restrictions and prohibition on mobility, our activists could reach is beyond our expectation and capacity. It became possible owing to big support we got from the mass of the people both in terms of physical as well as financial cooperation from them. We are yet to complete compilation of the reports of relief work to exactly quantify as to how many persons we could reach with relief of food-grains and eatables, cash-support, community kitchen to give food to the workers in distress etc. The relief work has been continuing. In a conservative estimate, we could reach to more than 20 lakh workers and their families covering almost all the states.

We must note the role of the LDF Government in Kerala which became a model of extending relief and support to the migrant workers and also workers of the unorganized sector who suffered most owing to lockdown. This is in stark contrast to most of other State Governments and the Central Government whose role displayed a brutal insensitivity towards the sufferings of the millions of working people. The numerous relief camps were set up by the Kerala Government throughout the State to accommodate the shelter-less migrant workers (they call them guest workers) and take care of food and other necessities. In this exercise also CITU played a major role to ensure that the relief and shelter reach to all beneficiaries in the State through its organizational network at the grass-root level.

Moreover, the countrywide response to the call of observance of All India Protest Day on 21st April 2020 with the theme slogan, “no more speeches and sermons, we want ration, wages and safety” (*Bhashan nahi, Ration Chahiye, Betan chahiye, Suraksha chahiye*) also reflects the massive involvements of mass of the workers, at many places along with their family members. This speaks about unleashing of tremendous initiative among our grass-root level activists, our members and even common workers. Even in the midst of lockdown and accompanying restrictions in mobility, CITU could innovate the way of communicating the programme along with the understanding behind the same up to lowest level of our organisation through social media and other means and that would have not been possible without the pro-active initiative taken by our activists at the grass-root level as a leading organiser at the respective level of the organization. In other words, this has been the expression of democratic functioning of the organization up to the lowest tier of organization signaling tremendous potential for the organization and also the working class movement as a whole. Our movement could go much beyond the workplaces and workplace level demands embracing social and peoples’ issues, demands of the farmers and agricultural workers and we could enlist the support of all the fraternal trade unions, mass organizations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women etc.

As per report received from all the states and federations, the protest by way of coming together in small numbers, displaying placards on demands, shouting slogans in residential areas, workplaces and offices, wherever open, doorsteps markets etc, the programme was observed in 407 districts, in 60,351 locations by 4,16,575 people. This has been probably biggest grass-root level mobilization on a single day-programme. In the same way, the May Day 2020 has been observed throughout the country, probably in a bigger number of locations with a much bigger participation, and the compilation of the report is under process.

The lockdown period has also witnessed numerous other initiatives at the state and district levels to demonstrate and protest in innovative ways against the policies of the governments and highlighting the demands of the workers. The latest is the initiative against the blanket exemption from all labour laws given to the employers in UP and MP and against enhancement of working hours to 12 hours in six states—revealing programmes of joint agitation along with other trade unions. All these demonstrate our potential to ‘reach the unreached’. This potential needs to be

fully utilised consciously in the coming days and the along with the task of 'linking issues with policies; policies with politics' put into practice.

The Task Ahead

The tasks ahead us is to prepare for bigger struggles against the onslaughts on the people unleashed by the systemic crisis of the neoliberal capitalist order and their agents in the ruling polity. As the crisis is deepening, the onslaughts are going to be more cruel heinous displaying barbarism. Therefore, the struggles need to be heightened with widest possible unity of the toiling people in entirety and the working class movement has to take the lead in forging such all out unity of the toiling people.

And for that, we must prepare ourselves organizationally while sharpening our political ideological understandings. Foremost task is to consolidate our work witnessing widening of our reach and contacts among the mass of the workers during the period of lockdown through relief work and also through innovative ways of collective protest agitation, in our organisation - particularly among the migrant workers and new section of workers and people where we could expand our reach.

Second one is to develop the capacity of the struggles for both resistance and defiance at workplace level to meet the forthcoming challenges before the movement. The new situation demands that the working class movement must raise united struggles to the level of defiance and resistance. This is the right path for the working class to follow.

The rich experience of our activities during the lockdown period gives us the confidence that together we can do this.

Our strategies for future actions-related agitation, propaganda and organisation must be based on the above situation and experiences. We should not miss projecting the Alternative to Neoliberal Path along with all our activities-agitation as well as propaganda, both on independent initiative and joint platforms. Our approach to formulate Alternative should not be limited to only workers' issues; it should include farmers and agri-workers issues in the context of continuing agrarian crisis; issues of rural and urban poor, issues relating to privatisation and outsourcing of public utility and welfare services etc and also issues of social repression, violence on women and minorities etc with a clear focus of building the widest possible front of toiling people for heightening the united struggle.

CITU Opposes Modi Govt.'s Action against IRS Association

In a letter to the Prime Minister on 28 April, CITU protested Modi government's move against Indian Revenue Service (IRS) Association for suggesting tax-hike on the rich through income tax and wealth tax routes as the fiscal management strategy for tackling the issues and problems arising out of COVID-19 outbreak.

Three senior IRS officials including its general secretary have been charge-sheeted and enquiry has been instituted against 50 revenue officials of the Association.

CITU's PROTEST ON 21 APRIL, 2020

The Expectation & the Response

[21 April protest was organised at a very short time notice through 'Electronic and IT' technology. Circular was issued only on 15 April. The expectation was limited due to lockdown situation. But, the Response was massive. Both are reflected in CITU's circular and statement as below]

From CITU's Circular

Observation of All India Protest Day on 21st April 2020

"The BJP government has been totally apathetic and insensitive to the miseries of the workers, particularly the unorganised sector workers, migrant workers, contract workers etc. Even while announcing extension of lockdown up to 3rd May, the Prime Minister failed to even refer to the plight of the workers. There was nothing about the measures to ensure implementation of his government's own guidelines through statutory enforceable measures. Instead of providing adequate financial resources the Prime Minister is limiting himself to only words and PRABACHANS. Meanwhile the government is reported to be going ahead with anti worker measures like increasing working hours from 8 to 12 per day, enacting the labour codes that would push workers into servility.

"The working class cannot allow this treachery by the BJP government. While taking care to protect their own health through physical distancing and implementing other WHO guidelines, working class has to raise its voice of protest, within the constraints of the lockdown.

- "We must raise our voice against • Increase in working hours from 8 to 12 a day;
- Retrenchment of workers and wage cuts and non-payment of wages for large sections of workers and employees including journalists, IT/ITES employees, contract/casual workers and workers of unorganised sector etc;
- Government apathy rather cruel insensitivity towards the serious difficulties faced by the migrant workers who are stranded in different places, lost their jobs and suffering hunger, lack of shelter etc;
- Lack of adequate protective gear to the frontline health and other workers;
- Immediate cash transfer of not less than Rs.7,500 for all non income tax paying families for 3 months and distribution of food and other basic necessities for daily survival to all the needy, particularly migrant workers, affected by the lockdown;
- Anyother issues relating to state-specific or industry-specific situation.

Keeping in view the constraints due to lockdown, our protests should comprise:

- Displaying in front of the house/ on the balcony/terrace etc along with family members and others and giving slogans like 'bhashan nahin; ration chahiye / vetan chahiye' and other demands for 5-10 minutes at 10.30 a.m. on 21st April 2020;
- Areas where large numbers of workers/employees stay at one place like, industrial townships, workers' colonies, tea plantations, employees' cooperative housing apartments, residential areas of unorganised workers etc should be targeted;
- Send email to the Prime Minister' portal for grievances on the basis of the enclosed draft.
- Where workers are on duty, hand written placards/banners etc with the demands may be displayed at the work place.

State committees should make efforts to implement all or at least some of the above, but keeping in mind that the purpose is to involve as large a number of workers in the action as possible.”

From CITU's Congratulatory Statement on 21 April

CITU congratulates people - For Observing Protest Day Countrywide on 21st April; For Raising Their Voice for the Prime Minister to Hear

“CITU congratulates people all over the country for observing All India Protest Day on 21st April 2020 by strictly following the physical distancing and other guidelines issued by the Government to contain the corona virus. People across the country had one important message for the Prime Minister – **‘We Have Heard Enough; Now, Please Hear Us’**.

“Tens of thousands of workers and other toiling people stood up at thousands of locations covering all the districts of the country and in many subdivisions and villages - in front of their homes, on their balconies or roof tops, work places, placards and flags in hands, maintaining physical distance and shouting slogans for 5-10 minutes on 21st April 2020 at 10.30 in the morning. In several places it was a single person standing in front of her/his home holding a hand written placard, in many along with their family members including children and in still many more people stood in scores displaying placards and shouting slogans. Migrant workers, stranded away from home, without proper shelter and regular food, stood up with their demands written on pieces of paper. The fact that it was observed in all states from Jammu & Kashmir to Tamil Nadu and Kerala, from Gujarat to Assam indicates that the slogans resonated with the feelings of the people. In Tripura, even though preparations were made, the state government prevented it from being observed even from within the compounds. The CITU state committee strongly condemned the government notification and wrote a letter to the Prime Minister.

“The one common slogan that resounded across the country was **‘Bhashan nahin; ration chahiye; vetan chahiye; arthik sahayata chahiye’** (Enough of hollow speeches; Give us food; wages and financial assistance). The slogan spread like wild fire across the country in less than a day.

“The call given by CITU was supported by All India Kisan Sabha, All India Agricultural Workers' Union, All India Democratic Women's Association, Democratic Youth Federation of India, Students Federation of India, Dalit Soshan Mukti Manch, Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch and National Platform for the Rights of Disabled. Several unions of middle class employees and in some states, state committees of some central trade unions also supported and joined the call.

“The programme was observed in collieries, tea gardens, construction sites, in the townships of public sector units like steel, workers' colonies, in places where large numbers of unorganised sector workers stay, as well as at the factories and work places where they are open, Safai karmacharis, ASHAs, Anganwadi employees, and others joined in thousands of places. The peasants and agricultural workers as well as the scheme workers participated in the villages. In some places, memoranda were submitted to the local authorities.

“In Maharashtra, MH Sheikh, general secretary of CITU state committee and in Gautam Budha Nagar, Gangeshwar, vice president of Delhi NCR state committee, and eight activists in Behala, Kolkata were arrested.

“While condemning these arrests and the high handed attitude of the administration in Tripura, CITU called upon the people to be united and prepared for stronger actions in the coming

days as the situation improves, if the government continues with its apathy to the poor while showering bonanzas over the big corporates and business houses.”

From the statement of AIKS on 18 April

The All India Kisan Sabha appealed to all its members and the peasantry and rural working class across the country to organize protest action on 21st April by standing at the door step, balconies, terrace of house on the demands of the peasantry and with the slogan ‘Bhashan Nahin Ration Chahiye, Arthik Sahayatha Chahiye’.

“The lock down in the context of the Corona Virus pandemic has destroyed the livelihood of the working class, peasantry, agricultural workers and all the toiling people across the world. In India, the impact of the lockdown is increasingly visible in the intensifying miseries of the people at large. However the ruling classes are not sensitive enough to understand the gravity of and handle the extraordinary situation. The package of Rs.1,70,000 crore announced by the Prime Minister is pittance and accounts to only 0.85% of the GDP when many countries have allocated 4% to 5 % of their GDP. Even within this, the actual funding is only Rs.79,000 crores.

“The government did not heed the demand of providing Rs.7,500 / month to all the non taxpaying families though it has given out around 15.62 lakhs to the corporate. The Prime Minister has not mentioned about the plight of workers and daily wagers and poor peasants. He is silent on how his government will ensure food, shelter and income support to them to sustain life.

“The peasantry, agricultural workers and even MSMEs are being neglected. The poultry sector faced complete collapse since the price has been crashed from Rs 85 to Rs 27 per kilo live weight. The dairy farmers are unable to sell the milk even at half of the price. The impact on vegetable, fish and all other perishable products is extremely severe. In all other crops also farmers have lost their income heavily due to lack of workers to harvest the crop and total disruption of transportation and close down of shops and restaurants.

“However, the Government has taken no steps to assess the loss faced by the peasantry due to the lockdown; no concrete step for harvesting and procurement of the standing crops and to ensure compensation. Government is not ready to clear the pending arrears in MNREG Scheme and ensure employment in rural areas. The danger of hunger and impoverishment is looming large in front of crores of people especially the daily wagers including the vast majority of the migrant workers, rural and urban poor and the poor peasantry.”

From the letter of All India Agricultural Workers Union

“Solidarity Actions Jointly with CITU on April 21”

“Congratulations for your initiative to organise innovative protest action on the pressing demands of working class. The living conditions of working class are becoming more difficult and Government is not even ready to accept the reality. In this scenario it is the responsibility of leading organisations of working class to take a lead. April 21 call given by CITU is very important in this regard.

“We have discussed your letter within organisation and it has been decided that AIAWU will support the All India Protest Day on April 21, 2020. We will call upon our unions; our activists will participate in this action jointly with the CITU wherever possible. Our union will also organise independent protest programmes on the demands and issues of rural masses in the areas where joint programmes are not possible.”

21 April 2020

Countrywide Protest

It was unique experience of countrywide protest on 21 April 2020 with urgent demands of the workers and of other toiling sections affected by countrywide Covid-19 lockdown. Maintaining lockdown protocol, more than 4.16 lakh workers, many with their family members, and other toiling sections joined the protest at 60,000 plus places in the 407 districts of the country raising slogans - 'Bhasan Nahi, Ration Chahie', 'Prabachan Nahi, Betan Chahie', '7500 Rupiya Sabko Chahie' etc.

The protest was much beyond all expectations. It was characterised by individual initiative and spontaneous participation by workers at grass root; large scale involvement of their family members including children; protest mainly at homes and residential places, and at some work places which remained opened; joined by other toiling sections including peasants, agricultural workers, women, youths, students; widespread in more than half lakh places in overwhelming majority of the districts in all states in the country.

A national overview of participation was published in the e-edition of *The Working Class*, May 2020 on the basis of the reports received till that day. Following is the state-wise participation at a glance. Inputs and experience of the states the protest on 21 April enrich the collective experience to draw correct conclusion.

State-wise Participation at a Glance

SI	State	Districts	Places	Workers
1	Andhra Pradesh	23	863	16617
2	Assam	13	27	1000
3	Bihar	29	2000	43000
4	Chattisgarh	12	50	1000
5	Delhi	7	55	1123
6	Gujarat	11	20	500
7	Haryana	20	2200	50000
8	Himachal Pradesh	11	391	2441
9	Jammu & Kashmir	12	250	800
10	Jharkhand	23	1300	6500
11	Karnataka	29	10626	37791
12	Kerala	14	30246	100230
13	Madhya Pradesh	17	67	450
14	Maharashtra	15	*	25000
15	Odisha	14	27	1200
16	Punjab	22	7854	54978
17	Rajasthan	13	780	2332
18	Tamil Nadu	36	*	47000
19	Telangana	34	2281	13687
20	Uttar Pradesh	24	360	500
21	Uttarakhand	6	6	483
22	West Bengal	22	948	9943
	Total	407	60351	416575

State-wise Overview

Andhra Pradesh



21 April protest was held at 863 places in 61 towns, 347 mandals, 16 industrial areas, 19 residential areas with 16,617 persons participation in all 23 districts of the state. Police arrested in 4 districts and in Kakinada and Aluru cases have been registered against 12 and 13 workers respectively.

For the preparation in lockdown situation, propaganda materials including demands and slogans and 15 types of posters were sent to large number of CITU's Whatsapp groups. In Vizag some posters were printed. All district committees and unions also communicated through face book and their respective Whatsapp groups.

Other central trade unions in the state also joined in CITU protest including AITUC at 20 places in 7 districts; and INTUC and IFTU at Kakinada in East Godavari district.

Agricultural workers union and AIKS have also conducted protest.

Assam



CITU state general secretary Tapan Sarma reported that *CITU members responded well* to the call of protest in 13 districts. At some places AIKS, AIDWA and SFI members also joined.

In Tea Gardens the response was good as workers stood in garden lane-sides with placards and raising slogans. At Kokrajhar and Rangapara, FMRAI members also stood on roadside with placards in hand. Factory workers joined the protest at Guwahati and Amingaon in North Guwahati.

CITU Bongaigaon unit organised the programme at the heart of the city in an open field. Anganwadi functionaries held individual protest throughout the state.

Large number of construction workers also staged protest with placards in front of their respective houses.

Bihar



Bihar report states, “*The programme was implemented in Bihar very enthusiastically.*” It was implemented in balconies, rooftops, entry gates, at the main centres of the urban and rural areas by more than 43,000 persons at 2000 places in most of the state’s 29 districts. The protest was participated by all unions in the state. The protest programme evoked huge support of different toiling sections, women in particular.

Transport Workers: Transport unions took additional programme of staging demonstration before the government establishments with 21 April common demands and their specific demands. Transport workers responded in a big way at the call of CITU and state All India Transport Workers' Federation (AITWF) demanding ration, financial help of Rs.7,500, testing facilities and other healthcare facilities during entire lockdown period; to keep on hold repayment of bank loan installments and other fees till the situation is normalised. Transport workers came out in big numbers in Patna, Muzaffarpur, Siwan, Sitamarhi, Jahanabad, Katihar, Kishanganj, Begusarai, East Champaran, Gopalganj, Samastipur and in other districts. CITU state general secretary Ganesh Shankar Singh, its vice president Arun Mishra and treasurer Sanjay Chatterjee joined transport workers protest at Patna.

Immediately after this protest action, state transport commissioner invited AIRTWF state leaders for discussion. In the discussion, state AIRTWF was represented by its general secretary Raj Kumar Jha and other office-bearers. Transport commissioner assured them of providing government’s help.

Chhattisgarh



Chhattisgarh state report states, “All India protest programme in Chhattisgarh was a big success. The response of the workers and people were magnificent.” Almost at all places, where CITU workers reside, the protest programme was organised. “Even the villagers, tribals, dalits MNREGA workers and agricultural workers participated in the programmes.” A good numbers of women workers both from towns and villages especially of contractors, Anganwadi, Mid-Day Meal, Beedi, Mandi etc joined the protest. LIC and BSNL workers participated in CITU programme at several places.

In Coal industry, the protest was held in 22 mines out of total 30 mines in the state. In Iron & Steel industry, a well-attended protest programme was organised at Rajhara mines; at Bhilai, contractors’ workers union organised the protest in some workers colonies; protest was held by the workers at their residences also. Beedi, Mid Day Meal, Forest Workers staged protest in Dhamtari district; MRs union protested in 5 districts. In Bharat Aluminium Company Ltd (BALCO), CITU members participated in the protest. Anganwadi workers participated in Balod & Dhamtari districts.

At some places Kishan Sabha, Adivasi Ekta Mahasabha, AIDWA members separately organised the programmes.

Delhi-NCR



West Bengal migrant garment workers, under lockdown, protesting at Ajit Nagar, Gandhi Nagar and East Delhi



In **NCT Delhi**: In the protest action 60 persons participated at 4 places in **North West Delhi**; in **South West Delhi**, Airport union organised protest at Mahipalpur with 15 participation and in balconies in Siatapuri, Panchasheel and Mahavie Enclave with total 46 participation at 11 places; 101 participation in 14 places in **South Delhi**; in **North Delhi**, 35 workers participated in Badli Industrial Area, 7 workers and

Statewise overview of 21st April Protest

leaders at Jahangirpuri office, at 2 other places AIDWA and CITU jointly organized the program with 50 participation at 4 spots; in **East & North East Delhi**, at Ajeet Nagar, Gandhi Nagar 6 garments workers participated, total participation was 34 at 3 spots.

In **NCR**: In **Gautam Budh Nagar**, total participation was 787 at 23 places. In **Ghaziabad** at Jhandapur site-4 CITU office 13 workers and at Nandgram 22 workers participated including all district secretariat members; and at Brijvihar 10 workers participated; total 45 workers at 3 spots participated. In 2 other places other mass organisations organised protest.

Gujarat



Haryana



Despite several limitations and restrictions, the state committee seriously organised the programme. State committee informed the district committees about the programme and the state level unions also sent communication to their respective lower level committees. Social media was used for sending campaign materials and slogans.

On 21 April in the protest programme, union-wise workers participation was: Brick Kiln – 8,000, Construction – 8,000, Grameen Safai Karmacharis – 3,000; Asha – 3,000, Mid Day Meal – 1,500; Anganwadi – 500; Forest Workers – 50. Total participation was about 50,000 at 2,200 places.

AIKS, AIAWU, AIDWA and DYFI also joined the programme at several places.

Himachal Pradesh



21 April programme, which was held in 11 out of the 12 districts in the state, was successful beyond expectations. In many areas the workers participated with their families. In the protest, workers in Hydel projects, STP, Anganwadi, MDM and Hotel mainly and enthusiastically participated throughout the state. AIKS, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI expressed their solidarity with CITU and the workers. CPI(M) MLA Rakesh Singha staged 2 days dharna before the SDM in Shimla demanding full ration to all workers which became the main demand of this agitation.

Jammu & Kashmir



4500 workers in 13 districts participated in the nationwide protest on 21 April. Keeping physical distancing and WHO guidelines, the workers working in Construction, BRO, Hydro Power projects, Loading & Unloading, Asha, Industrial Sector, Employees staged protest with placards in hands.

Peasants, agricultural workers, youth and students also joined in solidarity with the workers.

Jharkhand



The response of the workers was beyond expectations. The innovativeness of the programme and the scope to express the feelings attracted the members. The programme was communicated by district committees, federations, unions and CITU state committee members. Special initiatives were taken by CITU affiliated / associated unions in Coal and Sales Promotion Employees and Banks.

The programme was implemented by more than 6,500 persons at about 1300 places in 23 districts, out of total 24 districts in the state; at balconies, rooftops, gates, in front of residential places, unions' offices, road-crossings and at market places. At many places commuters stopped, read the demands, interacted and supported the initiatives. After the programme, posters were pasted on nearby walls.

Some independent union of domestic workers also participated. At Ranchi, AITUC and AICCTU joined CITU in the protest. AIKS, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI members also, either independently or jointly, implemented the programme.

There was media coverage at Ranchi, Ramgarh, Hazaribagh, Dhanbad, Godda, Pakur, Sahebganj and Jamshedpur.

Karnataka



37,791 persons at 10,626 places in 29 districts (out of total 30 districts) joined in the CITU's protest on 21 April.

Kerala



In Kerala April 21 protest programme was organized at various places. Many families displayed placards and stood in front of their houses. Programme was organized at some public places also.

Madhya Pradesh



21 April protest was held in 18 districts (of 52 total districts in the state). Protest was held in front of state CITU office in Bhopal joined by CITU, AIKS, AIDWA and SFI leaders and activists and at the residences in different places in the city. Protest was held in front of CITU office and in slum area in Gwalior city; and at 4 places in Indore city.

Protest was joined by Coal workers at 4 mines of NCL, 4 mines of SECL, 3 mines of WCL; Fertilizer workers at union office in National Fertilizer in Guna; by workers of 2 Manganese mines in Balaghat; by Textile workers of Raymond in Chhindwara and at Nagda in Ujjain; by MRs at 22 units of their union across the state; by Cement workers of J. P. Cement in Rewa; by Industrial workers in Neemach city and 5 other places; by Daily Wagers in Ashok Nagar; by Anganwadi employees in Rewa and Jabalpur and ASHA

Statewise overview of 21st April Protest

workers at 2 places in Neemach, 3 places in Dindauri, one place in Guna, one place at Rajgar and 3 blocks of Indore.

Maharashtra



More than 25,000 workers participated in the All India Protest Day on 21 April 2020 in 17 districts holding placards in their hand in front of their houses and workplaces. They demanded ration for all, Rs.7,500 as a financial assistance etc.

Police filed cases against the CITU state General Secretary M H Shaikh and six others including AIDWA state President and CITU GC Member Nasima Shaikh in Solapur; Vijay Pawar at Jalgaon and Narayan in Mumbai on alleged violation of prohibitory orders.

More than 6,000 ASHA workers participated in protest and demanded additional allowance for survey work, increase in agreed wages and protection from the culprits who are abusing and assaulting ASHA workers during Covid lockdown.

In transport sector 4,000 Auto Rickshaw owners and drivers participated with the demand of Rs.10,000 as a survival allowance for lockdown period.

Industrial workers in Nashik, Aurangabad, Mumbai, Nagpur, Nanded participated in protest in their residential areas as well as while working in factories producing essential items.

Construction, Anganwadi, Mid Day Meal, Beedi, Power Loom, Municipal workers and Medical Representatives participated in the protest.

Odisha



All India Protest Day on 21st April was organized in different districts of Odisha, responding to the call of CITU Centre.

In the back drop of Corona lock-down CITU leaders and activists shown placards with slogan “Bhasan Nuha – Rasan Chau – Betan Chau”.

Protest programme was organized in city / industrial centre / districts like Rourkela, Cuttack, Paradeep, Jagatsinghpur, Bhubaneswar, Ganjam, Sambalpur, Sundargarh, Angul, Khurda, Balasore, Bhadrak, Keonjhar and in other places of the state.

Punjab



All the Unions took active part in this action. Social and print media was intensively used planning for propaganda campaign at every level.

Total participation was about 55,000 workers with their families at about 8,000 places across the state. Never before a trade union had action which got such unprecedented and tremendous response beyond expectation. 50% of the participation was of working women especially of Scheme, Construction and MNREGA workers.

Tamil Nadu

In response to CITU's call of All India Protest Day, its Tamil Nadu's social media team geared up and created numerous posts and forwarded CITU centre's posts to all the groups in districts, federations, state level unions and fraternal unions. A video campaign by CITU state leaders was aired.

There was overwhelming response to protest in front of their houses and CITU and its unions offices in all 36 districts. Around 7,024 families enthusiastically took part in the house protest.

In Tirupur, entire villagers including children protested on the roads maintaining Covid protocol.

Throughout Tamilnadu, Anganwadi employees and Cotte members at their work places and also at residences; IT employees working at homes; members of Ambattur Engg Union members in Chennai North; BHEL workers in Trichy; Salem Steel Plant workers in their housing colony; members of 210 Auto drivers with their autos in Madurai Rural district; CITU members in Tondiarpet port colony; Power-loom workers at Namakkal Tirupur joined in the protest.

Telangana



For preparation, 270 cadres joined a session addressed online by CITU President Hemalata. Communication was sent to the cadres at all levels. CITU Telangana Youtube chanal was used in the campaign. All state level unions carried this campaign to their lowest committees.

13,687 workers of 12 different sectors joined the protest with placards, banners and badges/black ribbons at 2,281 places including 616 workplaces in 28 clusters of 18 industries; 611 households; 614 villages in 249 mandals; and 221 wards of 63 municipal towns in all 34 districts of Telangana.

Police file cases against 29 workers in 2 mandals in Medak district and against 4 leaders in Bonagiri district.

Uttar Pradesh



For preparation of 21 April protest programme at short time notice during the lockdown, email and whatsapp were extensively used to reach to the lower committees of CITU and the unions. Yet, the communication could not be sent to all places down below. The innovative programme had positive impact at most of the places in which family members joined in large number. All leading cadres joined the protest. AIKS, AIAWU, AIDWA also participated in the programme.

Programme was implemented at more than 500 places in 37 districts. Protest was held in villages where CITU has influence among MNREGA and construction workers. Emails were sent to the Prime Minister.

West Bengal



Despite heavy rain and stormy weather; constrains and Corona virus red-zone and other restriction; 21 April protest was held in all districts in the state; in several industrial belts, market places, tea gardens, main places of the towns, in front the offices, factory gates, in rural areas with hand written posters and flags maintaining lockdown protocol. The protest also reflected growing anger of the people against Modi government.

Road transport workers protested in front bus depots of South Bengal State Transport and in front of office gates of CESC in Kolkata. Protest was joined by security workers' union in Kolkata; by WBMSRU individually or jointly with others across the state; railway hawkers union at 27 railway stations; ICDS workers staged demonstration in front of ICDS centre's gate at Baranagar.

Tea garden worker protested in 21 tea gardens in Alipurduar district, in the tea gardens in Darjeeling and Naxalbari; and also in all the bought-leaf factories of the district; and the tea gardens of Uttar Denajpur district.

Protest was held in Durgapur-Raniganj-Asansol-Chittaranjan industrial belt; and at 11 commercial centres and market places of the in West Bardhaman district; in industrial belt of Hooghly at Bandel, Hind Motor, Dankuni, Singur etc and before gates of HMTC and Rayon and also of jute mills.

Protest was held at 54 points in Purba Bardhaman district especially before the factories/mills gates and also at prominent places. During the protest police detained 6 participants including 2 women at Katwa. In Howrah district, protest day was held at 141 points including the jute mill and other industrial areas. At 24

places AIKS and DYFI joined the programme. Murshidabad district organised protest with fraternal organizations at 51 places.

Purba Medinipur district committee protested in front of Kolaghat Thermal Power station involving the workers of the plant; and at 115 places including residential areas; in Dakshin Dinajpur, CITU organised the programme 9 places; in Birbhum district at 71 points in 20 blocks including Bakreswar Thermal Power Station by state electricity workmen; at 16 places in 15 blocks and in 2 municipalities and also in rural areas of Malda; 20 places in Bankura including DVC's Mejia Thermal Power Station; in 13 blocks and 2 municipal areas of Purulia district including at Santhaldih Thermal Power Station and Bhojudih Coal Washery; at 29 points in Nadia district including Kalyani industrial area. In some areas, there was police intervention.

Protest Day was observed throughout the district of North 24 Parganas including the industrial belt of Barackpore, Dum Dum, jute mills area and also in rural areas.

A big portion of Kolkata city is under the red zone. Due to strict restriction of movement, the programme was carried out in selective residential areas and market areas of the city. In Kolkata port, the programme took place at several points.

Coal



Coal workers of Coal India Ltd, SCCL at Singareni and Chasnala of SAIL joined the CITU-called protest in a big way.