



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

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***MAY DAY 2020 GREETINGS TO ALL***

**150<sup>TH</sup> BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF LENIN**

22 April, 2020



**CITU'S TRIBUTE**

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# **Worker's Tribute to Comrade Lenin**

## **On His 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary**

J. S. Majumdar

22 April 2020 marks the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of the greatest world working class revolutionary leader, Vladimir Ilyich Lenin (World calls him simply as *Lenin*).

Under his leadership, through October Revolution in 1917, a working class led State was established as 'Soviet Union' ushering in a Socialist State for the first time in the world history of human social development.

Taking forward the foundational work of Marx and Engels, Lenin analyzed the phase of capitalist development in early twentieth century; and characterized the same in his work as '*Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*'; found the weakest link in the world capitalism in the imperialist stage; struck at it breaking the chain through October Revolution and established the first working class led state.

Under his leadership, the working class formed their own party with firm alliance with other exploited class, the peasantry, producing food for the humanity. This firm alliance is symbolised in the hammer and sickle permanently embossed in the red flag with revolutionary message. CITU inherited this symbol in its flag to uphold class-orientation of the trade unions and class struggle for the emancipation of the working class, the peasantry and other toiling sections in India and to carry on work for proletarian internationalism.

Under Lenin's leadership, while fighting the imperialist countries' encircled armed attacks to nip the nascent Socialist State in its bud; the working class, under Socialist State, embarked upon Socialist Construction, for the first time in human social history, as practical work in the existing and changing realities and as part of continuing class struggle; to provide minimum basis necessities for the citizens – food, health, shelter, education and social recreation – and also to remove the hitherto followed social disparities between human beings and classes in the distribution of national wealth, created by human labour, for its redistribution for social common good and in the development of the quality of human life for higher human social development for creating a society that ends exploitation of man by man.

In bourgeois democracy in the capitalist system, people are involved only in parliamentary elections to elect candidates of political parties for playing the role of ruling and opposition in the parliament. People have no role to play. Marx and Lenin has shown us that in essence it ensures continuation of capitalist class rule for profits while society functions under its framed rules in production, distribution, administration, marking guilty for violating these rules and giving painful punishment.

Under Lenin, the Socialist State ushered in a new form of democracy, The 'Socialist Democracy', the participative democracy involving all sections of the people in the process of decision making and in their implementation with the understanding that issue-based 'criticism and self-criticism' in existing material conditions are the essence of scientific debate to arrive at the correct decision and learning further from their implementation.

In Trade Union Democracy also there is nothing as ruling and opposition. The principles of socialist democracy are practiced in the working class organisations, in trade unions. That is why it is said that trade union democracy is the learning stage of Socialist Democracy.

Led by Lenin, the October Revolution has ushered in a new historical epoch in human social development characterized by four main fundamental social contradictions and struggle in the world today. Despite dismantling of Soviet Union and setbacks in several erstwhile east European socialist countries, the present epoch with contradiction between Capitalism and Socialism remains as the Central Contradiction with contradictions and struggle between the

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labour and capital, between the imperialists and third world countries and inter-imperialists as the main remaining valid in this epoch as proved during last 40 years in the world human social developments after dismantling of USSR.

Lenin characterised revolutionary stages; formulated 'strategy' for the entire specific stage and tactics according to the changing realities and developments during that specific stage.

Lenin firmly stood against all forms of reformism and collaborationism including opportunism, anarchism and Left extremism.

Lenin distinguished work of the working class party among the masses and of the mass organisations among the classes with different approach, understanding and agenda yet keeping linkages between the two.

Lenin always emphasised as priority task of establishing centres at every level of a revolutionary party and separately of its mass organisations.

Lenin always emphasised on propaganda – communist propaganda and on political agenda by the Party; and agitational propaganda by the mass organisations.

Three world events – devastation caused by inter-imperialist 1<sup>st</sup> World War, the working class led revolution in Russia unnerving the capitalist world, and wave of rejuvenated working class struggle along with heightening of national liberation movement in colonial countries; paved the way for creation of International Labour Organisation (ILO), the world's only tripartite forum of labour, employers and governments, as part of the 'Treaty of Versailles' ending the WWI.

The preamble of ILO constitution states,

1. "Whereas universal and lasting peace can be established only if it is based upon social justice;"
2. "And whereas conditions of labour exist involving such injustice, hardship and privation to large numbers of people as to produce unrest so great that the peace and harmony of the world are imperiled;" and an improvement of those conditions is urgently required;
3. Whereas also the failure of any nation to adopt humane conditions of labour is an obstacle in the way of other nations which desire to improve the conditions in their own countries.

Even before October Revolution, Lenin studied Indian freedom movement and working class participation in it despite they not having any modern trade union or a working class party. When Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak was convicted and sentenced to six years' imprisonment on charges of 'sedition'; Lenin wrote, *"The infamous sentence pronounced by the British jackals on the Indian democrat Tilak...this revenge against a democrat by the lackeys of the money-bag evoked street demonstrations and a strike in Bombay. In India, too, the proletariat has already developed to conscious political mass struggle – and, that being the case, the Russian-style British regime in India is doomed!"*

October revolution also galvanized Indian working class quickly forming modern trade unions and establishing their first centre of Indian trade unions as 'All India Trade Union Congress' led by Lala Lajpat Rai giving orientation and momentum in India trade union movement and freedom movement.

The united struggle of the working class inspired by the formation of its trade union centre also gave rise to the formation of their own party – the Communist Party in India and also several currents of revolutionary movement paving way for formation and struggle of the peasants and other mass organisations side by side of the national freedom struggle.

On this occasion of 150<sup>th</sup> year of birth anniversary of the working class leader and revolutionary Comrade Lenin, we pay our respectful homage to Comrade Lenin and rededicate ourselves to follow his teachings for implementation to go forward in the working class revolutionary movement in India.

**Red Salute Comrade Lenin!**

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**WORKING CLASS****MAY 2020****EDITORIAL BOARD****Editor****K. Hemalata****Working Editor****J.S. Majumdar****Members****Tapan Sen****R. Karumalaiyan****Amitava Guha****H. S. Rajput**

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**Rich Lesson in Covid Lockdown**

We are compelled to publish only e-edition for the month of May 2020 also due to ongoing lockdown to combat Covid-19. Please make maximum use for its onward circulation.

However, we shall bring out a supplementary May 2020 e-edition by end of first week of May to cover large number of accumulated news worth for wide dissemination.

During End March and throughout April, CITU, its units and the workers were fully engaged in helping the workers and the people to fight Covid-19 by strictly following all guidelines during lockdown; providing masks to lakhs of people, at some places PPEs to health workers; helping the stranded migrant workers in different parts of the country in coordination with respective state committees and administration; providing readymade food and food materials to lakhs of unorganised sector workers and other marginalized sections of the people all over India.

The units and workers are engaged in collecting information about loss of job and wage in many industries in violation of lockdown guidelines; pursuing with concerned government authorities in protecting jobs and wage; CITU general secretary writing to government and the government responding to it.

The CITU activists and workers across the country have organised protest on 21 April in unprecedented scale involving more than 2.5 lakh workers at 25,000 places across the country yet strictly following lockdown restrictions. CITU directed to follow up same pattern on May Day 2020 hoisting flag and taking pledge in more number of places. It is new experience from which we have to learn and contribute in future.

One thing came out sharply in the process i.e. the use of social media to reach to quickly to the members grass root and beyond.

# MAY DAY 2020

## CITU - MAY DAY MANIFESTO 2020

### On this Day of International Working Class Solidarity, May Day 2020

- In the midst of the Corona virus pandemic - One of the worst tragedies that struck humanity in a century;
- Leading to an impending economic crisis predicted to be the worst since the World War II;

### CITU

### Expresses its heartfelt gratitude and class pride at the invaluable services being rendered by

- All the front line health workers, the doctors, nurses, paramedical staff, the sanitation workers and all other workers across the globe, risking their lives to safeguard the lives of others;

### Extends solidarity to

- The working class, who kept the wheels of society running during the lockdown imposed in countries across the world by maintaining the essential services - water, electricity, transport, communication, financial services, milk, groceries, vegetables, medicines, etc to sustain life for the hundreds of millions of people under the lockdown in many countries, braving huge personal difficulties and sufferings;
- All the peasants and agricultural workers who continue to feed the world, and
- All the workers and other toiling people, the unsung heroes and heroines who are the real 'wealth creators', the unseen powers that propel the world;

### CITU

### Deeply condoles the families of the millions of people across the world who lost their dear ones to the Covid -19 pandemic;

### Stands in solidarity with

- The hundreds of millions who suffer from the disease and many of whom are also stigmatised by sections of society, for no fault of theirs; and
- The many other hundreds of millions who live in anxiety and fear –
- Anxiety and fear not only of the virus; but
- Anxiety of the future of those who have already lost their jobs and sources of livelihood;
- Anxiety of many more who fear losing their jobs and source of livelihood, tomorrow if not today;

## **On this May Day**

### **CITU**

#### **Asserts that**

- The only way to overcome the present crisis due to the Covid -19 pandemic as well as the already existing global economic crisis, is for the workers and all sections of toiling people to Unite;
- Unite by demolishing the walls being built between them in the name of religion, race, region, caste, ethnicity, language, gender etc;
- Unite as human beings to protect our lives, livelihoods and the earth and environment that sustain our lives and livelihoods;

The Covid -19 pandemic has stripped naked the inhuman and barbaric nature of the society that we live in today - the capitalist system and its neoliberal avatar;

The challenge that the novel Corona virus, an invisible micro organism, has thrown before humanity in this twenty first century, requires a united fight to protect lives, to mobilise the entire world's scientific and technological knowledge, financial resources, pool all our human strength to fight and defeat it;

Instead, what we see today is the most hideous and repulsive face of the capitalist system.

Today over 22 lakhs of people are infected with the corona virus, crores of people at risk and already more than 1.5 lakh people dead across the world. Tens of millions have lost their jobs and incomes because of the lockdown imposed in many countries. They have become homeless; they and their families are going hungry. In this situation, the big corporates and businesses are making use of the pandemic, retrenching workers, cutting their wages, bonuses, increasing work hours, denying them their rights. The corporate friendly, rather corporate-led governments that rule in many countries are taking advantage of the situation to help their corporate masters by changing the labour laws to curtail the rights of workers, legalising the illegal violation of labour laws by the employers and suppressing democratic rights. Pandemic or no pandemic, what matters to the capitalists and the governments, representing their interests, is not the lives and livelihood of the toiling people who create wealth, who keep the wheels of society moving; it is only the profits of the capitalist class. Profit is their god; not Ram or Allah or Jesus. They use people's religious beliefs to divide people, to make them fight each other, but when it comes to exploiting people, attacking their rights, the capitalists are united and they exploit and attack all the workers; no discrimination or favouritism here.

US imperialism, the most powerful country in the world stands exposed today. In a most cruel and barbarous display of its hegemonic aggression, it continues its economic and political war against Cuba, Venezuela and Iran. Despite being almost isolated in the world community of nations, it supports Israel to deny Palestinians their right to Mother Land. It is blocking many countries from accepting the unilateral offers of medical help from Cuba, which has a unique record of extending international medical solidarity. It is also blocking any international assistance from reaching Cuba.

Socialist Cuba, despite facing the US imposed sanctions has developed universally acknowledged public health services with health indices which surpass many of the advanced capitalist countries. USA has stopped any help reaching Iran invoking its sanctions resulting in many preventable deaths. Trump has also invoked Korean War era Defence Production Act having extra territorial jurisdiction to force US companies to supply to the US market. What is more heinous

is the diversion and stealing of consignments meant for various countries, including India and even its European allies. The arrival of rapid test kits to India from China was delayed because the consignment meant for India was diverted to the US. Trump has warned India of 'retaliatory measures' if it does not lift ban of export of Hydroxychloroquine, which he believes can cure the corona virus disease. Germany, France, Canada and Brazil and some other countries have accused the US for its attempts to block face-masks, PPE and testing kits designated to their countries. This is nothing but modern day piracy.

And recently, the USA has stopped funding to the World Health Organisation, which has been helping the world to deal with the critical situation arising due to the corona pandemic, accusing it of siding with China.

The claims of USA as the world leader also stand totally discredited today. It has totally failed to protect its own people, despite its unprecedented advance in science and technology, because of its policies.

Health care in the USA is run by the private corporates with profit motive. This has proved to be totally inadequate and incapable of dealing with a public emergency like the corona virus pandemic. The private corporate health sector is unwilling to give up its profits even in situations like this. Even in normal times, private healthcare in the USA is unaffordable for the majority of workers who do not have health insurance. The public hospitals do not have beds, ICUs, ventilators and personal protective equipment for its health care personnel. So while the rich can buy better medical facilities, the poor die in thousands. President Trump also failed to take early measures to contain the disease. The next Presidential elections and his chances of winning in the face of restrictions on the economy weighted more on him than the lives of the people. Thus today, USA has reported the largest number of cases crossing 7 lakhs and the largest number of deaths, crossing 36,000.

A country having innumerable missiles, fighter jets, submarines and mercenaries all over the world, ready to attack any country to impose its economic and political terms, does not care to allot adequate resources for the health of its own people. It is not able to provide its own people with hospital beds, ventilators; it is not able to provide its own health staff with personal protective equipment and masks. It is resorting to stealing consignments of these items meant for other countries. At the same time Trump announced \$500 billion worth package for the monopolies, \$29 billion for airlines and \$17 billion for security companies.

This is imperialism, as Lenin termed it '*The highest stage of capitalism*'. As the crisis aggravates, so does the gangsterism of imperialism rise, exposing its most degraded and heinous side.

Under neoliberal capitalism, even some advanced capitalist countries, which had better public health systems like the UK, Italy etc have cut down social welfare expenditure including on public health, education etc and promoted privatisation. This has further worsened with the austerity measures taken up after the global crisis of 2008. The result of this is now evident in their inability to meet the requirements of the present crisis as in Italy, Spain, UK, France etc. Spain had to nationalise private hospitals to meet the crisis now.

The world has not yet recovered from economic crisis that has engulfed it in 2007- 2008 when the corona virus pandemic struck. Now it is widely predicted that the world economy would slip into the worst economic crisis the world has ever seen. This has also brought to the fore the antagonisms between the imperialist countries. Trump has been reported to have offered funds to lure CureVac, a German company developing a potential vaccine against corona virus, into coming to the US and exclusively working for it. It was also reported that the German government was making counter offers to tempt the company to stay in Germany. Germany refused medical

equipment to Italy. Italy and Spain prohibited exports to Greece. Germany and Netherlands denied help to Spain, Italy and France having large number of deaths due to the corona virus.

But when it comes to protecting the profits of the capitalists by attacking the hard won rights of the workers, their wages, welfare etc, all the capitalist countries are united in implementing the same policies.

The slogan 'All united to get out of the crisis' is meaningless as far as the capitalists and the countries they rule in proxy or directly, are concerned. It is only the workers and the working class governments, the socialist countries that have always extended solidarity to the toiling people everywhere. Unity is the urgent need also in the midst of this worst Corona Pandemic, and that is unity of the entire toiling class *united to fight the* atrocious exploitative system, which does not hesitate to barter human lives and livelihood with insatiable greed for profit. Entire global scenario today vindicates that position.

The tiny country, socialist Cuba has heroically sent 60 doctors to Italy, the second most affected country after the US, to help fight the corona virus there. When many countries including the USA refused permission to a British ocean liner carrying passengers and crew diagnosed with corona virus, to dock in their ports, it was Cuba that allowed the ship to dock in its port. Strictly following WHO guidelines it has helped the more than 1000 passengers and crew members to leave the boat, carried them in buses with special police escort to the airport and safely transported them in chartered flights back to the United Kingdom.

That is the stark contrast between socialism and capitalism, between highest form of humanism and predatory barbarism.

Despite all the difficulties it had faced due to the decades long criminal US blockade, Cuba has developed a model public health care system for the people that provides free health care, with only a nominal registration fees. It has also developed advanced drug industry. Medical teams including specialist doctors are sent to many needy countries in Latin America, Africa etc regularly by Cuba. In addition to Italy, Cuba has sent medical teams to Venezuela and four Caribbean countries during this pandemic. Socialist system in Cuba provides free public education, public provision of food, housing etc.

China, where the first case of corona virus was detected, mobilised all its resources to stop its spread. WHO said this was '*the most ambitious, agile and aggressive disease containment effort in history*'. This was possible because of the strong public health system in China. Because of its political commitment to establish an 'accessible, equitable, affordable and efficient health system to cover all people by 2020', the health expenditure rose from 5% of GDP in 2009 to 6.4% of GDP in 2017. Out of pocket expenditure dropped to 29%; 82% in patient care was provided in public hospitals in 2017. This was the result of planning and the socialist system where the driving force is not profit, but people.

It is also noteworthy that during every crisis and emergency, it is only the much vilified public sector that rises to the occasion and comes to the rescue of the nation and the people. This was seen in the 2008 global financial crisis. It was the public sector banks and financial institutions that came to the rescue; and it is the public sector companies and institutions that kept the national economy floating through continuous capital spending. It was the public sector pharmaceutical sector that contained the dominance of the pharmaceutical MNCs and provided affordable medicines to our people for a long time after Independence. But the neoliberal policy regime got this self-reliance in medicines severely eroded and did everything virtually destroy and/or severely weaken the pharmaceutical PSUs like IDPL, Hindustan Antibiotics, Bengal Chemical & Pharmaceuticals Ltd etc, much to the detriment of national and peoples' interest. It is also seen now.



It is the public hospitals, the government doctors, nurses, para medical staff, the sanitation workers, who are working 24 hours a day to save lives and contain the virus. In almost all the capitalist countries including India, they are waging an unequal war; they are fighting like soldiers without weapons, without protective equipment, without even masks, gloves etc, risking their own lives and their family members. Many doctors and nurses have lost their lives in the process. In several places big hospitals had to be closed when the doctors and nurses get infected, further depriving medical help to tens of thousands of common people.

On the other hand, the private corporate hospitals utilise the situation to charge exorbitant rates for tests, treatment, beds and everything but at the same time exploit their staff by paying a pittance as wages and deny them even the right to organise.

This is what the capitalist system is. Not only in the health sector; it is the same everywhere - in education, housing, social security, work place, labour rights... profits for the capitalists, miseries and deprivation for the workers and toiling people; governments are mostly working for the corporates and big businesses.

It is the same in India. The public health expenditure in India is only around 1% of GDP. The health system is one of the most privatised. And it has happened in phases throughout the period of neoliberalism. Out of pocket expenditure on health comprises nearly 70% of total expenditure on health. Only 44% of inpatient care is provided in the government hospitals. India promotes health tourism. People who can afford come from other countries for medical treatment in the big corporate hospitals. At the same time, the poor in our country are dying in thousands of preventable and curable diseases like diarrhoea and tuberculosis because they cannot access proper health care. Under neoliberal policies, public hospitals are being neglected and in some states, even primary health centres are being privatised. Naturally our public health system is unable to meet the requirements of the present corona pandemic. Our doctors, our nurses, the para medical staff, ASHAs, the sanitation workers and others are compelled to work without the minimum protection, risking their lives. In the process several doctors and nurses have died due to the corona virus.

Of course, Kerala is an exception. The LDF government has planned the necessary measures even when the corona virus disease was limited to China because many students from the state are studying in China. It has taken all the necessary precautions including testing, tracking, isolation, quarantine etc. The public health care system has been developed over the years in the state with the LDF governments, motivated by socialist goals, taking measures to strengthen it, whenever they are in power.

It is a shame that in this situation when the working class, particularly the unorganised workers are suffering from job losses, loss of wages and incomes, the BJP government reportedly wants to hasten labour law changes to push them into slave like conditions. The workers today are reeling under the triple whammy - the pre-existing global economic crisis, the corona virus disease and the totally unplanned preparation-less lockdown. The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry demands suspension of the provision of formation of trade unions for at least one year, extension of the period of 90 days to clear dues related to PF and ESI and reduction of wages of the contract workers to Rs 202 per day on par with the MGNREGS workers. Employers Federation of Southern India demands 12 hours working day and suspension of revision of dearness allowance and exemption from even bare minimum punitive measures for labour law violations.

The government of India is reportedly moving towards amending the Factories Act to increase working hours to 12 a day and 72 a week. Already the BJP governments of Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have issued notifications in the matter. The BJP government led by Modi is also reported to be pushing through the labour code bills now with the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour, through an ordinance or executive order. This is nothing but a brazen and shameless

attempt by the government to gratify their big corporate masters and donors by pushing the workers into slave like conditions, depriving them of the basic rights of organisation and collective actions. These measures also tantamount to make the corona pandemic situation an instrument for promoting further the interest of their corporate masters.

The ugly communal face of the RSS and its tentacles spread over the country was exposed when even a human tragedy like corona virus disease, which does not discriminate between religions, castes etc, was utilised to spray communal venom and attack on the Muslims. Through aggressive abuse of the media including social media, communal poisoning of society is being continuously sought to be engineered by the RSS and their various wings with tacit support of the administration. This was despite the fact that not only were such congregations held by several other religions including by ISKON in London, but also many political leaders including BJP leaders celebrated birthdays, marriages and *shradh* ceremonies involving hundreds of people, violating the lockdown guidelines, endangering their own health and that of others.

The corona virus has exposed the barbaric nature of the capitalist system. The economic crisis that existed before it, has exposed its inability to address the basic needs of the common people, of providing employment, decent and dignified living conditions, education, and health for all. It has also exposed its inability to even make the economy grow sustainably. The inherent exploitative, divisive, disruptive and poisonous character of the system has also been laid bare for everyone to see.

At the same time, working class solidarity in its best was also displayed in these times of distress. The workers and toiling people, the poor peasants, agricultural workers and many progressive sections have been working untiringly during the most critical period of lockdown to stand by and extend all support to the extremely suffering workers and migrant workers who lost their jobs and incomes and were stranded in different places, far from their homes. They could reach to the large sections of such hapless, jobless and shelter-less workers and their family members running into several lakhs to give them food, relief and all kinds of support including moral support in all the states throughout the country. CITU is proud of its committees, cadres and activists, even those in organisationally weaker areas, who did an enormous work going out of their capacity in demonstrating the class solidarity in supporting their distress stricken brethren and sisters during the lockdown period.

The difference between capitalist greed and exploitation and working class solidarity and sacrifice is now crystal clear for everybody to see. It is time the working class compare words with deeds. It is time for all toiling people to match speeches of leaders with their own experiences; to understand that their issues are linked with the policies, that these policies are in turn governed by the politics of the exploiting class.

In the midst of deepening crisis of the neoliberal capitalist order, further aggravated by the Corona Pandemic, the ruling class is going to be more aggressive and cruel in their onslaught on the toiling peoples' rights to life and livelihood. Human lives have little value before the lust for profit by the capitalist rulers. The continuing crisis is making the exploiting class and their political agents in governance pounce on all rights of people, to turn more arrogantly authoritarian with a clear fascist intent and also more aggressively divisive and disruptive. In the name of so called crisis management and bringing out the economy from slow down and crisis, the capitalist class will try to extract more pounds of flesh from the mass of the people through the Govt machinery by various anti-people measures and the corporate media will try to sell and justify those measures in order to fool the people. The employment and employment-relations are going to be targeted for more exploitative reorganisation and restructuring in favour of the profiteer class. The working class movement cannot accept such an exercise lying down.

- And, such a situation vindicates the correctness of the understanding pronounced by the 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of CITU—*“the working class movement is entering a new phase—one of defiance and resistance”*. Let the May Day 2020 be observed with the pledge of preparing ourselves, both organisationally and ideologically, for the said struggle uniting the entire class.
- This is the time for the working people to expose this nefarious destructive game plan of the capitalist order through their agents in governance.
- This is the time for us to identify who stands for whom; for what, with whose support and against whom to fight. This is all the more urgent and necessary today. As George Mavrikos, the general secretary of World Federation of Trade Unions said ‘Our struggle against daily problems is just. Our struggle for social liberation of the working class is necessary. All the workers together, we can do it’.
- The vanguard section of the working class and the class-oriented working class movement has to make consistent and continuous effort to ensure that the nakedness of the cruel system, its inhuman machination and the dubious politics promoting the same reach the consciousness of the toiling people in entirety.
- May Day this year, which coincides with the 150<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary of comrade Lenin, enjoins upon the class oriented working class movement to take up this task right earnest.

**Thus, on this May Day**

**CITU**

**Appeals to all workers and toiling people across the world and in India to**

- Unite to fight the Virus, to stay safe and protect their health;
- Unite to fight the manoeuvres and machinations of the capitalists and the governments that represent them to shift the burden of the economic crisis aggravated by the virus entirely on to the working class;
- Unite to fight the dirty attempts to pauperise the workers and denude them of their hard-won rights while protecting profits and wealth of the big corporates, generated by the working class and the toiling people;
- Unite and fight to thwart all attempts to disrupt working class unity and unity of all toiling people and divide them on the basis of religion, region, race, caste, ethnicity and gender.

**Long Live May Day**

**Long Live Working Class Solidarity**

**Long Live Worker Peasant Alliance**

**Long Live Socialism**

**Down With Capitalism**

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# To Observe May Day 2020

Congratulating the workers and other toiling sections for the hugely successful countrywide unique protest action, at the call of CITU, on 21 April 2020, maintaining all lockdown protocol for fighting Covid 19; CITU has asked its units, unions and workers to observe May Day 2020 by hoisting its red flag at as many places as possible, adhering to all lockdown guidelines.

In its circular of 21 April CITU says -

*"As today, so on 1<sup>st</sup> May, in the morning at 8.00 am onwards CITU flags should be raised – wherever possible, in the houses, colonies, offices, workplaces wherever being opened etc.*

*"As on today, but even in more number of places, we should gather, again observing all precautions and guidelines and physical distance, to take the pledge. We should pledge to fight the attacks on the rights of the workers and the people, including eight hour working day, the fight for which May Day symbolizes."*

## **May Day 2020 Pledge**

**: On this May Day 2020 :**

**We, the Workers and Toiling People Pledge to -**

- Unite to fight the corona virus, to stay safe and protect their health;
- Unite to fight to defend the right of eight hour working day, which is already under attack;
- Unite, to fight the manoeuvres and machinations of the capitalists and the governments that represent them, to shift the burden of the economic crisis aggravated by the virus entirely on to the working class;
- Unite, to fight the dirty attempts of the capitalists and the governments that represent them, to pauperise the workers and denude them of their hard won rights while protecting profits and wealth of the big corporates, generated by the working class and the toiling people;
- Unite and fight to thwart all attempts to disrupt working class unity and unity of all toiling people and divide them on the basis of religion, region, race, caste, ethnicity and gender;
- Unite to fight and defeat the attacks of imperialism on the workers and people of the world to establish its hegemony and push the diktats of international finance;
- Unite to fight heighten the struggle for the end of the exploitative capitalist system and usher in a new exploitation free society, a socialist society

**Long Live May Day**

**Long Live Working Class Solidarity**

**Long Live Worker Peasant Alliance**

**Long Live Socialism**

**Down With Capitalism**

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# May Day 2020:

## The current situation and our duties



The World Federation of Trade Unions, on the occasion of May Day 2020, **salutes the workers in all continents**; all those whose work continues to move the gears of life even in difficult conditions such as the Coronavirus Pandemic and keeps producing all the necessary goods so that life may continue and the needs of workers and popular strata can be met.

**We honor the millions of employees in public healthcare systems around the world:** doctors, nurses, all healthcare workers, who amidst the Coronavirus pandemic struggle every day to save the patients from the pandemic without even having the necessary protective and medical equipment, risking their own health and lives. They are at the frontline of struggle, with courage and self-denial, lifting the burden of care and treatment in a middle of a pandemic that already counts millions of cases and hundreds of thousands of deaths, in a public healthcare system deteriorated by underfunding and discredited by the policies of all capitalist governments, which consciously undermine the public healthcare system and privatize its neuralgic activities to enhance the speculative profitability of multinationals.

The workers and the popular strata, we unite our voices with those of the militant healthcare workers, we stand in solidarity with their struggle and we demand immediate coverage of the vacancies, adequacy of public health infrastructure and materials to serve the permanent and temporary needs of the people; Requisition of the private sector and abolition of the commercialization and privatization of Health and Welfare. Free public universal and high-quality health services. **Workers' health over profit!**

We salute the workers in production and distribution of food and basic necessities, in supermarkets, in pharmaceutical sector, in cleaning services, in energy sector and other services, who through their work ensure the access of workers and peoples to everything necessary for their survival.

At the same time, on the occasion of the consequences of the coronavirus pandemic, **we denounce the huge attack on workers' labor rights through layoffs, lack of payment, undeclared work and the restriction of trade union freedoms.**

The long-term unemployed, the uninsured workers, immigrants, refugees, those who suffer from other diseases, are literally left at their fate, without being able to earn a living or ensure the necessary monitoring of their health, which can cause its deterioration.

Complaints are expressed from all over the world from employees in companies that do not produce basic necessities, but continue to work with their employees squeezed into production lines and offices, without any compliance with the necessary protection measures, so that multinationals can increase their profitability; As a result, the pandemic spreads rapidly, as was the case in northern Italy, in the US, Turkey, and elsewhere.

Facing all these issues, we stay strong and active, we put forward our militant demands, the workers' demands for public and free healthcare for all, for jobs with decent wages, the right to full employment for all the unemployed, the substantial support of those who are unable to work or suffer from the coronavirus or other diseases. Take back all the layoffs and adverse changes that took place during the Pandemic!

At the same time, the antagonisms of capitalist countries and imperialist powers that are stealing the natural and produced wealth of peoples and leading to bloody conflicts and wars

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continue unabated even in these conditions, in a frantic effort to safeguard their economic interests against the workers' needs. The US economic sanctions against the peoples of Cuba, Venezuela and Iran, the imperialist interventions against Syria, Palestine, Yemen, the weapon production and trade, the conflicts and antagonisms continue.

The speculation in hygiene and essential materials against coronavirus, the competition to find a vaccine that will bring huge profits to the respective companies in the country that will find it are intensified.

**Against capitalist antagonisms and speculation, the workers and peoples raise our solidarity** and proletarian internationalism, following the example of Cuba, which has sent specialized doctors to fourteen countries affected by the Pandemic, the example of the workers of Italy who organized a general strike in support of doctors and workers, following the example of workers in all countries who do not remain silent, who counter fight also this crisis with militant slogans in solidarity to all peoples.

The migrant workers in Chicago, who struggled and sacrificed their lives in May 1886 for the establishment of the 8-hour working day, paved the way of the world working class for the continuous claim of its rights.

The international class-oriented labor movement through the lines of WFTU honors the legacy of their struggle and continues under any circumstance, despite the difficulties, to struggle for the coverage of the workers' modern needs and the abolition of exploitation; **For the emancipation of the working class and its liberation from capitalist barbarism.**

### **OUR URGENT DUTIES**

Brother and sisters; workers, employees and unemployed, retirees, immigrants and refugees, young scientists, indigenous people, women and men, in front of the complex difficulties we are faced with, we must once again stand at the forefront of the struggle, combining our ability to fight for the abolition of social exploitation with immediate and urgent requests:

1. The states and governments should allocate the necessary funds for the support of the Public Healthcare Sector, so that all peoples have access to free, full and decent health coverage.
2. Prohibition of privatizations in the strategic health sector.
3. The International Organizations should stop good wishes and descriptions and live up to their founding principles.
4. Safe and free vaccine for all.
5. Prohibition of dismissals.
6. Respect of all salary, insurance and employment rights of the employees.
7. Defending democratic and trade union freedoms.
8. Defending the right to strike.
9. Strengthening of the internationalism and solidarity between workers and peoples.
10. Stop speculation and high prices.
11. Repel racist and neo-fascist phenomena.

Dear Colleagues,

**Honoring the 75 years of WFTU, let us strengthen our class struggles, putting into practice our slogan: "NO ONE SHOULD BE ALONE!"** All workers, together, we can struggle for the satisfaction of our modern needs.

The WFTU has been and is at the forefront for 75 years. It is our duty to continue and we will do so.

**Long live proletarian internationalism  
Long live May Day  
The struggle goes on!**

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## Central Trade Unions

# **Joint Call on Observing May Day 2020**

[9 Central trade unions – INTUC, AITUC, HMS , CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, AICCTU, LPF and UTUC – gave joint call to observe May Day 2020 in the lockdown situation due to corona virus pandemic. The call is communicated down to the workers through handbills]

**Comrades, friends, brothers and sisters**  
**May Day greetings!**

TODAY, the working people face very serious attacks.

Using Covid-19 as an excuse, the employers and governments want to push us back to those days, 134 years ago, when the Chicago martyrs sacrificed their lives fighting for 8 hour work day. The BJP government at the centre is reportedly taking measures to legalise 12 hour working day. The BJP governments in Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh have already issued notifications to that effect.

The BJP government at the centre also wants to complete the labour law codification process by executive order or through the ordinance route to attack the basic rights of the working class to organise and to strike. The Gujarat Chamber of Commerce and Industry has demanded that trade unions should be prohibited for at least one year and to reduce the wages of the contract workers to the level of the MGNREGA workers, to Rs.202 a day. The government and its masters, the big industrialists obviously want the workers to be pushed into slave like conditions. The order of the MHA, dated 19.04.2020, which prohibits movement of the migrant labour across state borders, but permits it across all the districts within the state they are locked-down in, is a gross violation of human rights. Many more attacks on the rights of the working people are on the anvil on the plea of reviving the slowing-down economy, further aggravated by Corona and lockdown.

Instead of mobilising financial resources from the super rich, the government is putting the entire burden on the workers and the common people. It has announced that the DA/DR rise for the central government employees and pensioners, approved by the Cabinet, will not be paid up to July 2021. Several state governments are unilaterally deducting wages without any consultation with the employees. Despite all the directives and guidelines from the government, thousands of enterprises, both private and public, and appallingly even the public sector undertakings are retrenching contract/casual workers and cutting down their wages.

The working class cannot accept such attacks on its livelihood and working conditions.

THE government claims to be facing a financial crisis due to Covid-19. The fact is the government had emptied its coffers much earlier by tax concessions to the corporates, sale of profit-making PSUs, non-recovery of NPAs in PSU banks etc. The government is arm-twisting its employees into contributing to 'PM CARES Fund' one day salary every month for one year! But the workers are already bearing the triple whammy – of the already existing global crisis and economic slowdown, then the Covid-19 and then the unplanned and preparation-less countrywide lockdown. Large sections of the workers and employees, including the front line health workers, are working almost

24 hours a day risking their lives to save the lives of others. Large number of workers including the migrant workers and unorganised sector workers are bearing the brunt of corona and the lockdown in the form of job-loss, loss of earnings, even loss of shelters along with their family members going hungry under the sky.

Instead of providing any relief to the workers, who create the wealth of our country, who are today forced to starve and have become homeless, the government is extending concessions and incentives to the big corporates and businesses.

IT is possible to mobilise the necessary resources by imposing a nominal, very small wealth tax on the super rich.

Every year, top 1% usurps 73% of our GDP. Today the wealth of the top 1% of the rich in our country is more than 4 times of total wealth of the lowest 70% of our people. The combined total wealth of 63 Indian dollar billionaires is higher than the total Union Budget of India for the fiscal year 2018-19 which was at Rs.24,42,200 crore. 953 billionaires' families in our country have an average wealth of Rs.5278 crores. The BJP government abolished wealth tax in the Union Budget of 2016-17. A small wealth tax on these super rich will easily enable the government to meet the expenditure necessary to provide relief to the around 50 crore of the workers and other sections of the toiling people.

But the government is not ready to do this. Instead, it wants to take Covid-19 as an opportunity to push its already existing anti-people 'reforms' agenda so that its corporate masters can further increase their wealth by sucking the blood of the poor workers and toiling people.

It is shocking to see the foot soldiers of the party in power, use the corona pandemic to demonise the Muslim community as a whole, sowing seeds of communal hatred. At the same time voice of dissent and democracy and constitutional rights as a whole are facing an added assault in the wake of Corona Virus and in the name of enforcement of lockdown.

THE working class cannot allow this.

- On this May Day, the International Day of Solidarity of the Working Class, let us pledge to defeat these machinations of the BJP government and its corporate masters.

- ***On this May Day, in the midst of lockdown situation, let us observe May Day by raising the flag of our respective organisations in every house of our members and workers, every workplace which is in operation in lockdown period, maintaining physical distancing and at the same time asserting social solidarity and unity.***

LET us pledge to -

- Unite to fight the corona virus, to stay safe and protect our health;
- Unite to fight to defend the right of eight hour working day, which is under attack;
- Unite to fight against the merger of 44 labour laws into four codes only to favour employers curtailing the rights of workers;
- Unite to fight to defend the existing social security, occupational safety health measures and to make them inclusive for universal coverage;
- Unite to fight against privatisation of Government departments and PSUs to the multinationals, like 100% FDI in Indian Railways, Defence Factories, Coal, Port & Dock, Air India, Banks, LIC, 76 PSUs etc;
- Unite to fight the manoeuvres and machinations of the capitalists and the governments that represent them, to shift the burden of the economic crisis aggravated by the virus entirely on to the working class;



- Unite, to fight the dirty attempts of the capitalists and the governments that represent them, to pauperise the workers and denude them of their hard won rights while protecting profits and wealth of the big corporates, generated by the working class and the toiling people;
- Unite and fight to thwart all attempts to disrupt working class unity and unity of all toiling people and divide them on the basis of religion, region, race, caste, ethnicity and gender;
- Unite to fight and defeat the attacks of imperialism on the workers and people of the world to establish its hegemony and push the diktats of international finance;
- Unite to fight heighten the struggle for the end of the exploitative capitalist system and usher in a new exploitation free society, a socialist society.

**Long Live May Day!**  
**Long Live Working Class Solidarity!**  
**Long Live Worker Peasant Alliance!**  
**Long Live Socialism!**  
**Down With Capitalism!**



INTUC




AITUC



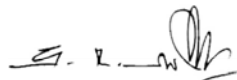
HMS



CITU



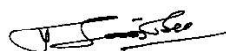
AIUTUC



TUCC



AICCTU



LPF



UTUC

## **Immediately Form Social Media Network/Groups** **To Reach Members at All Levels: CITU**

Gaining experience from the success of the 21 April 2020 protest programme at 25,000 places across the country; and scheduled May Day 2020 programme of flag hoisting and taking pledge at more number of places and as wide as possible; and

Underlining the importance of social media in these campaigns;

CITU, by a communication to its all committees on 26 April, has asked all units, federations and unions to form social media network / groups, WhatsApp groups etc. at different levels – CITU national office bearers, GC members; of federations; and of office bearers, committees and councils in states and unions to reach to the members at grass roots and beyond as quickly as possible.

21 April 2020

## **All India Protest Day**

During countrywide lockdown fighting Covid-19; at the call of CITU, as per preliminary report, more than 2.5 lakh workers at around 25,000 places in more than 300 districts in all states across the country participated in the all India protest on 21 April 2020.

CITU's call was immediately supported and joined in action by other mass organisations including AIKS, AIAWU, AIDWA, DYFI, SFI, DSMM, Adivasi Adhikar Rashtriya Manch and National Platform for the Rights of Disabled. Several middle class employees unions and in some states local units of some of other central trade unions also supported and joined.

On this day exactly at 10.30 am, lakhs of workers and other toiling sections stood in front of their homes, on their balconies or roof tops, work places, on the main roads and by-lanes; with placards and flags in hands for 10 minutes, maintaining physical distance as per lockdown protocol, and shouted slogans voicing their demands.

At several places it was a single person standing in front of her/his home holding a hand written placard; at many places they stood along with their family members including children; and still at many more places people gathered in small and big groups in front of offices, on the sides of roads and in small town / village centres. Migrant workers, away from home, stranded without proper shelter and regular food, also stood up with their demands inscribed on pieces of paper.

The protest Day was observed in collieries, tea gardens, construction sites, in the townships of steel PSUs; workers' colonies, in places where large numbers of unorganised sector workers stay,

as well as at the factories and work places where they were open. Safai Karmacharis, ASHAs, Anganwadi employees, and others joined at thousands of places. The peasants and agricultural workers as well as the scheme workers participated in the villages. At some places, memoranda were submitted to the local authorities.

The common slogan that resonated across the country was '*Bhashan nahin; ration chahiye; vetan chahiye; arthik sahayata chahiye*' (No speeches; give us food, wages and financial assistance). The slogan spread like wild fire across the country.

The slogans that reverberated from Kashmir to Kerala, Gujarat to Assam indicated the feelings of the people and their urge for action. In Tripura, the state government prevented CITU and the workers from observing the day even from within the compounds and invoked ESMA. CITU Tripura state committee strongly condemned the government notification and wrote letter to the Prime Minister.

CITU's Maharashtra state general secretary M.H. Sheikh; its Delhi-NCR state committee vice president Gangeshwar at Gautam Budha Nagar and 8 activists at in Kolkata were arrested.

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## **Why This Protest Action on 21 April, 2020**

The government has extended countrywide lockdown to 3 May 2020. Announcing the extension, the Prime Minister has given seven advices to the people. But there was not one sentence about the measures that his government proposes to take to provide relief to the tens of millions of workers who have lost their only source of income and are starving with their families. They are not in a position to put into practice the Prime Minister's generous advices to take care of their old family members without any food or money, to observe 'social distancing' in their crowded houses, or to wash their hands repeatedly without any water. The employers are not ready to heed his advice about not to retrench workers and not to cut their wages. What is the use of such benevolent words for the workers?

It is the workers, particularly the unorganised workers, the contract and casual workers, the NEEM workers, apprentices, trainees etc in the organised sector, the migrant workers including the construction, brick kiln etc workers, the workers in micro and small enterprises, the domestic workers, the small peasants and agricultural workers etc who are bearing the brunt of the lockdown

due to the corona virus pandemic. The journalists, IT/ITES employees and permanent workers in the organised sector are also not spared. Every day cases of closure, retrenchments and wage cuts of workers, not only in the private sector, organised and unorganised but also from public sector companies to corporate media houses are pouring in. It was already the workers who were the worst affected by the economic slowdown that existed even before the corona virus struck. Even during the second phase of the countrywide lockdown, most of the migrant workers stranded at different places, far from their homes, are facing hunger; they don't know where their food for the day will come from, if at all.

Nearly 200 people died of starvation, exhaustion and other causes while trying to reach their homes on foot.

The capitalist class, the big corporates and business people, are keeping to their houses, trying new recipes and enjoying with their families whereas crores of workers who create wealth, who run the wheels of society, have lost their work; have no place to stay; and are starving. Those whose services to the society are indispensable are made to work without any protective gear, risking their lives. Doctors, nurses and other health workers are getting infected by Covid19 and even hospitals have to be closed. The frontline workers and cleaning workers are not even provided masks.

It is also a matter of great concern that in many parts of India the standing crops like wheat, paddy, chillies, pulses etc., are ready for harvest but the lockdown and restrictions have created a situation where harvesting, transport and marketing is curtailed. No measures are taken to ensure harvesting, remunerative price, procurement or arrangements for new cultivation. Even the pending wages in MGNREGA are not yet paid.

With all family members confined to the home, women's space in the house has become restricted. Their workload has increased. Violence against women has increased alarmingly.

But the government has neither the time nor the inclination to address any of these serious problems faced by the crores of common people due to the lockdown.

Eminent economists and intellectuals have suggested and the central trade unions and national organisations of peasants and agricultural workers have been demanding that at least a relief package of 5-6 percent of GDP should be announced to provide relief to the distressed millions of toiling people and revive the economy.

CITU has been demanding statutory measures for the implementation of the directives and guidelines that workers should not be retrenched and their wages should not be cut during the lockdown period. There is demand that the unemployment wage clause under MGNREGA to be used for helping agricultural workers; that harvesting and transportation work should be included under MGNREGA to ensure work and income for the agricultural workers; to extend the Employment Guarantee Act to the urban areas also; to save the farmer and the agricultural workers and to ensure food security to the country by protecting the standing crops.

The Prime Minister had no ear for any of these.

Instead, the government wants to take advantage of the lockdown, to surreptitiously go ahead with its anti-workers agenda, as is reported in the media. It is reportedly going to amend the Factories Act to increase working hours to 12 hours a day. It is also reportedly moving ahead to enact the three Labour Codes now as the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour submitted its report. These are nothing but measures to push workers into slave like conditions and serve their corporate masters who are explicitly demanding the same to protect their profits. The CII has

estimated that their profits will come down by around 10% due to the corona virus pandemic. (Note that profits are not going to be wiped out.) They are not ready to bear even a 10% decrease in their profits. But they want to push the entire burden on the workers who are already reeling under the impact – losing their livelihood, lives, shelter-less and starving. This is the naked picture of capitalism.

The working class, already suffering the double whammy of economic slowdown and corona virus, is not ready to take on this burden. It is not ready to tolerate the deceitful machinations of the government and the Prime Minister who has only words for the workers and the common people but money bags for the capitalists, the big corporates and business people.

The financial package announced by the Finance Minister in effect comes to only 0.85% of India's GDP. Ever since the lock down was enforced, the CITU has been demanding the Prime Minister to ensure direct Bank Transfer of Rs.7500 per month through Jan Dhan account to all the non-taxpaying households, to provide free ration to all the unorganised and migrant workers and all needy people irrespective of their having ration cards or Aadhaar cards or not, to strengthen the health infrastructure, provide personal protective equipment to all front line health workers including ASHAs, Anganwadi employees, sanitation workers, and to financially help the MSMEs to enable them pay the wages of their workers. CITU has demanded that the financial package comprising at least 5%-6% of GDP should be announced by the government.

People have banged pots and plates. They have switched lights off and lighted candles and *Diyas* because the Prime Minister asked them to do so. It was time the Prime Minister hears the voices of the people. It was time for the people to unitedly raise their voices within the constraints of the lockdown. The response of the people proves that that was what they were waiting for.

- K. Hemalata

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## **Condolence**

### **Comrade Pijush Nag**



CITU is deeply grieved at the passing away of Comrade Pijush Nag, the Working President of Tripura state committee of CITU, on 17 April 2020 in the early morning hours after prolonged illness. He was 84.

After finishing his studies in Kolkata, he started as a worker in Indian Airlines and subsequently he took up the profession of a medical representative at his young age.

Comrade Pijush Nag had been associated with trade union movement for last five decades since 1970. In 1974, he shifted to Tripura from West Bengal. As a CITU organizer, he played frontline role in organizing workers in trade unions in Tripura, both in organized and unorganized sector, braving terror and repression. He had been General Secretary of Tripura state committee of CITU for more than a decade. He had also been the member of the national Working Committee of CITU for decades till its 16<sup>th</sup> Conference, held in January 2020.

In the demise of Comrade Pijush Nag, a veteran of the working class movement of Tripura, is a great loss to the working class movement and CITU in particular.

CITU pays homage to the departed leader and conveys its heartfelt condolence to his comrades and bereaved family members.

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# During Lockdown against Covid-19

## **CITU's Relief Work across the Country**

K. Hemalata

THE first one week of the lockdown India, out of the declared three weeks, has once again displayed the callous and lackadaisical attitude of the BJP led Modi government towards the poor workers of the country. The sudden announcement of the lockdown giving hardly a few hours' time for the people to prepare themselves for the lockdown and without the needed preparation by the government to minimise people's, particularly the poor unorganised and migrant workers' sufferings, led to utter chaos in many states.

Daily wage workers, migrant workers, workers in small eateries, hotels, shops and other such establishments, street vendors and many such others were left in the lurch. Suddenly they found they had no work, so no income and so no food.

IMMEDIATELY after the lockdown was announced, CITU independently and also jointly along with other central trade unions wrote to the Prime Minister demanding immediate announcement of 'strong statutorily enforceable measures to arrest and put a ban on the ongoing spree of retrenchments, wage cut, forced unpaid leave etc', particularly of 'the contract/casual/ temporary/ fixed term workers in various establishments, particularly in the private sector. The central trade unions have also pointed out that 'mere appeal by the government or advisory by the labour ministry is not at all working to prevent loss of employment and earnings in the process of lockdown'.

On the second day of the lockdown itself the central trade unions warned the government that unless a concrete package '*income/livelihood support for the most vulnerable 40 crore informal sector workers to deal with these issues*' are announced, '*anxiety of no work and no food amongst the toiling masses will create problems in dealing with COVID -19 pandemic*'.

The demand for concessions and debt moratorium for the MSMEs, small retail traders, street vendors/ self-employeds was also raised by the central trade unions. The central trade unions estimated that the package to address the immediate concerns related to the Corona pandemic would cost not less than Rs 5-7 lakh crore, which is less than the tax and other concessions given by the government to the big corporates as 'incentives' for investment, which has not been forthcoming. They expressed their shock that the government's economic taskforce headed by the Finance Minister announced extension in deadlines for filing IT returns, GST, about TDS or the cases under the Bankruptcy Act etc that benefit mainly the defaulters among the big business but was totally silent on providing any relief to the working people of the country. The Finance Minister announced a Rs.1.7 lakh crore package, which is highly inadequate. A few days back, the government announced drastic reduction in the interest rate on small savings and social security instruments like EPF, PPF, Senior Citizens Savings Schemes, Sukanya Samridhi Yojana, NSC etc hitting hard the senior citizens and the common people.

IMMEDIATELY after countrywide the lockdown against Covid-19; CITU issued circular to all its committees to extend all possible help to the unorganised sector workers, particularly the migrant workers. It also called upon its committees and members to ensure that the wages of the domestic workers who cannot attend to their work due to the lockdown are not deducted.

The working class all over the country, including in states where the CITU and the trade union movement itself were not strong, responded magnificently to support their brethren in distress, particularly the migrant workers. Almost in all states, the CITU committees, from the state, district to lower level cadres responded with due seriousness. The major problems that were common all over the country were the loss of jobs, loss of income, and loss of shelter due to eviction by the house owners, and lack of food and other essentials. CITU committees have been trying their best to help the workers in all these aspects.

In Delhi NCR area where thousands are stranded, food packets/ration is being supplied to many migrant workers. CITU Delhi-NCR state committee has given a fund call for meeting the requests for help that were pouring in. It is providing a basket of food and essentials for a family of five for a week that costs Rs.1200. The call is being well responded. Food and essential items have already been distributed to thousands of migrant workers from West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir etc. In three places, community kitchens for a few are also being run.

In Maharashtra, CITU committees in West Mumbai, Nashik, Solapur, Nagpur etc provided food kits and food packets to thousands of migrant construction workers in different places. The vendor's union contributed vegetables to prepare food. The Mumbai municipal corporation helped the effort by providing transport. This is being expanded in other districts also.

In Karnataka, the state committee of CITU has taken initiative to organise 10,000 food kits for around a week for migrant workers of unorganised sector in Bangalore and adjoining areas, each kit containing some essential food and other items that cost Rs.800 each. The committee got very good response to its call for funds and within a couple of days was ready to distribute 2,000 food kits. Relief efforts are going on in other districts as well.

In Gujarat, the Bhavanagar district committee distributed one week's ration to a section of migrant workers covering 1053 persons. CITU committees in some places took the help of gurdwaras and NGOs in providing food. The CITU in the state also helped around 60 migrant workers from Bihar who lost their work in Surat and had no food. In Lucknow in Uttar Pradesh, the CITU committee provided 10 kg rice, 3 kg dal and 1 kg salt to ten families of construction workers. The Kanpur, Saharanpur, Allahabad and other district committees, with their limited resources, are also making efforts to provide essential food items to the needy unorganised sector workers.

The Jammu and Kashmir state committee of CITU is also continuously in contact with the migrant as well as local contract workers working in Railway loading and unloading, BSF Organisation and in different factories. They have informed the workers about the government directions related to payment of wages, job protection during the lockdown period etc and representing to the authorities wherever they were not being implemented. They have also pressurised the contractors to supply food materials to the contract workers.

In Assam, CITU along with SFI formed a group helpline of workers belonging to Assam and West Bengal working in Kerala and Tamil Nadu to help them in coordination with the Kerala and Tamil Nadu CITU committees. In Bihar, bank employees distributed food to thousands of workers.

In Haryana, CITU district committees are conducting surveys of migrant workers, registering them and providing assistance with the help of local people, administration and NGOs. A group of migrant workers from UP were supplied one week's ration at Kaithal district. Hundreds of workers from West Bengal and other states stranded in Gurgaon were provided food. Similar initiatives are taken in Faridabad and other districts also.

In Kerala, elaborate arrangements have been made throughout the state by CITU along with other mass organisations to organise food and relief for the migrant workers who are called 'guest workers' in the state. They are also coordinating with the comprehensive measures that are

being implemented by the LDF government to provide relief to all the needy workers in the state including unorganised sector workers and the migrant workers.

Migrant granite workers from Uttar Pradesh working in Khammam in Telangana were given food materials by the district committee of CITU. Migrant workers from West Bengal were given help in different places in Hyderabad. The district committees are visiting the areas where migrant workers are staying to find out their problems and addressing them including by making representations to the labour department to ensure that the government's directions to payment of wages, etc are implemented.

In Tamil Nadu, CITU district committees particularly those in and around Chennai have been helping the migrant workers from different states including Jharkhand, Odisha, West Bengal, and also students travelling through Chennai to West Bengal in various ways including providing food, facilitating and providing accommodation, talking to the employers and labour department about continuing their employment, payment of wages etc.

West Bengal state committee of CITU, along with SFI, DYFI and other mass organisations, is providing food and assistance to the unorganised sector workers including migrant workers, in almost all the districts. Old people and women are particularly being taken care of by rendering all help including physical support and in procuring their daily needs like medicines etc.

CITU, All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agriculture Workers' Union, have together decided to open community kitchens and make arrangements for distributing food to the needy workers in as many places as possible all over the country.

The state committees of CITU are also coordinating among themselves to identify the needy migrant workers and extend help to them. In addition the CITU cadres in many states are also putting pressure on the governments to register the workers, provide ration, open community kitchens, shelters etc for the migrant workers. They are also engaged in helping the workers and others in accessing essential services like transport, cleaning etc.

Scheme workers including ASHAs, second ANMs and other scheme workers in the health services, Anganwadi employees have been engaged in providing health services, conducting surveys etc; the workers engaged in other essential services like cleaning, transport, supply of food etc are also discharging their responsibilities. But till now most of these workers have not even been provided minimum protective equipments.

CITU committees are making best efforts to extend support in all possible ways to the migrant workers, despite the many difficulties due to the lockdown, curfew etc including the hurdles created by the governments, particularly in the BJP ruled states in issuing curfew passes to CITU activists, the limitation of resources in terms of funds and cadres etc. They are able to carry out this important work because of the huge sense of solidarity shown by the workers and common people and their help and support in various ways.

Along with these activities, CITU is putting pressure on the governments to register the workers, provide ration and open community kitchens etc. CITU committees are also making all efforts to implement the announcements made by various governments for ration, financial assistance etc.

They are also fighting the retrenchments, non payment of wages etc. In many states, the workers engaged in health and essential services like transport, cleaning, food supplies etc. are not even given basic safety equipments.

BUT the attitude of the government, both the government of India and some of the state governments is appalling. The migrant workers are treated as criminals. They are being lathi charged and cases being booked against those who were forced to walk hundreds of kilometres to



reach their native places for lack of income and food and shelter, on the pretext that they are violating the lockdown order. In Uttar Pradesh migrant workers in a group are sprayed disinfectant on the highway to sanitise them. In Haryana, the government wants to put them in prisons. Most cruel is the attitude of the BJP government led by Modi who did not take the conditions of the poor workers into consideration at all and made no arrangements to ensure food and shelter before announcing the lockdown, forcing them into starvation and making lakhs of workers suddenly homeless. The Telangana state government has issued an order to deduct 50% of salaries of all employees and pensioners as well; even the poorly paid outsourced and contract employees are not spared, they too have to undergo 10% reduction in their salaries. The deductions will continue 'until further orders'.

The drastic cut down in public health infrastructure, in public distribution system, in welfare expenditure for the people under neoliberalism further aggravated by the crisis that has been continuing for over a decade has made the Corona virus pandemic even more serious, in India as well as in many countries in the world. Superstitions and unscientific thinking, widely promoted in India during the last several years have also contributed to ignorance about scientific precautions and in spreading unscientific ideas like use of cow urine and cow dung in prevention and treatment of Corona virus.

The government needs to abandon its neoliberal agenda and focus on developing scientific thinking.

## **CITU General Council Meeting Postponed**

### **50<sup>th</sup> Year Concluding Ceremony &**

### **Working Women Committee Meeting Deferred**

By an urgent communication on 25 April 2020 to all its units; CITU Centre has informed that CITU General Council Meeting (GCM), slated to be held on 31 May - 2 June 2020 in Kolkata, was postponed owing to the prevailing uncertainty on continuity of lockdown due to Corona Pandemic.

Accordingly, the conclusion of CITU's Golden Jubilee Year celebration which was also slated to be held at Kolkata on 30 May 2020; and

The meeting of the General Council tier of Working Women Committee on the morning hours on the same day is also stands postponed.

The dates of the GCM along with the concluding celebration of the 50<sup>th</sup> year of CITU and the Working Women Committee meeting will be decided after the easing out of the lockdown situation.

## **CITU Condemned Imposition of ESMA in Tripura**

In a statement on 12 April 2020, CITU condemned imposition of draconian ESMA by the BJP government in Tripura during Covid 19 lockdown aiming to cover up the government's failure in providing safety measures like PPEs to nursing staff and other health workers and adequate testing facilities; extreme inadequacy in the government hospitals to treat the Covid victims; and in providing relief to the unorganised sector workers, Adivasis, Dalits and others.

At the same time ESMA has been imposed to suppress any protest by the suffering people led by CITU and other mass organisations. CITU demanded its immediate withdrawal.

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

State	Centre	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020	State	Centre	Jan. 2020	Feb. 2020
AP	GUNTUR	302	299	MHR	MUMBAI	322	319
	VIJAYWADA	306	304		NAGPUR	406	405
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	314	312		NASIK	380	377
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	301	298		PUNE	362	360
	GUWAHATI	293	292		SHOLAPUR	350	349
	LABAC SILCHAR	282	279	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	349	346
	MARIANI JORHAT	277	274		ROURKELA	335	333
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	264	261	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	332	329
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	366	358	PUN	AMRITSAR	357	357
CHD	CHANDIGARH	325	323		JALANDHAR	337	335
CHS	BHILAI	342	337		LUDHIANA	316	312
DLI	DELHI	314	311	RJN	AJMER	299	299
GOA	GOA	345	340		BHILWARA	308	303
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	295	292		JAIPUR	326	324
	BHAVNAGAR	307	311	TN	CHENNAI	292	289
	RAJKOT	312	310		COIMBATORE	303	301
	SURAT	285	279		COONOR	350	347
	VADODARA	290	289		MADURAI	321	319
HRV	FARIDABAD	292	289		SALEM	310	306
	YAMUNANAGAR	315	314		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	331	325
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	282	280	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	348	345
J&K	SRINAGAR	301	299		HYDERABAD	275	275
JRK	BOKARO	318	313		WARRANGAL	332	330
	GIRIDIH	366	359	TRP	TRIPURA	278	272
	JAMSHEDPUR	381	378	UP	AGRA	382	377
	JHARIA	377	375		GHAZIABAD	350	346
	KODARMA	404	402		KANPUR	364	360
	RANCHI HATIA	413	408		LUCKNOW	362	357
KNT	BELGAUM	322	320		VARANASI	358	353
	BENGLURU	308	306	WB	ASANSOL	354	350
	HUBLI DHARWAR	353	348		DARJEELING	287	284
	MERCARA	320	319		DURGAPUR	336	335
	MYSORE	327	326		HALDIA	403	398
KRL	ERNAKULAM	336	334		HOWRAH	303	302
	MUNDACKAYAM	334	332		JALPAIGURI	291	289
	QUILON	376	374		KOLKATA	296	296
MP	BHOPAL	342	341		RANIGANJ	313	312
	CHHINDWARA	325	320		SILIGURI	299	296
	INDORE	298	297				
	JABALPUR	337	337				
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# 21 April Countrywide Protest

(Report page 18)

## ASSAM



In Tea Garden and Factory

## CHHATTISGARH



Banging empty thali and raising slogan '*Bhasan Nahi, Ration chahie*'

## JHARKHAND



At Bokaro, Ranchi and Ramgarh



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# 21 April Countrywide Protest

## KERALA



## PUNJAB



