



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## Workers National Mass Convention

New Delhi; 30 September, 2019



CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen addressing the convention; Central Trade Unions leaders on the Dais



Convention approves 8 January Nationwide general strike

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## 2 August Countrywide Protest

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In Front of the Parliament by Left & DMK MPs

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Hoshiarpur, Punjab



Rourkela, Odisha

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Guwahati, Assam



Belgaum, Karnataka



West Prakasam, Andhra Pradesh

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## **8 January, 2020 Workers General Strike**

### **Beginning of New Phase of Struggle; To Force Government to Retreat; Change Policies**

#### **WORKING CLASS**

**OCTOBER 2019**

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It is a recessionary economy; worst slump in production and services; huge job losses; acute agrarian crisis and 45 years high unemployment rate. In this situation, Modi government goes all out for more concession to corporates; sell central public sector enterprises (CPSEs) and their assets; and heavily rely on the foreign money through FDI.

As huge concession to the corporates, domestic and foreign, Modi government has cut corporate tax to 22%, touted as the lowest in the world, causing annual loss of Rs.1.45 lakh crore in revenue. And to compensate this loss, government targeted to raise additional Rs.52,000 crore to the present target of Rs.1 lakh crore in the current fiscal by monetising lands; selling assets; strategic sale, listing and more disinvestment of CPSEs. Already reserve funds of these CPSEs and that of RBI have been siphoned out by the government.

The prime minister of India goes to America with begging bowl pleading the US MNCs to come in India, invest in defence and mining etc and takeover India's enterprises assuring his personal intervention for such takeovers.

These are combined with all out attack on the rights and livelihood of the workers and all sections of toiling people by Modi government added with diversionary and divisive agenda to weaken people's unity to fight back.

In this background, when Modi government is selling out our country's assets and its natural resources to the imperialists; all 98,000 defence employees' weeklong total strike in August in all ordinance factories against their corporatisation; and all more than 5 lakh coal workers total strike on 24 September against 100% FDI in coal mining have established three integrated components – total unity of the workers; their total striking capacity and in defending the country's interest as supreme.

The depth, spread and intensity of these strikes have set the tone for the working class for bigger united struggle. 30 September, 2019 national mass convention of the workers in the Parliament Street carries the same message – to begin an uninterrupted working class struggles to force the government to change these policies in country's interests.

8 January, 2020 nationwide strike will be heralding the beginning this struggle.

# Workers' National Mass Convention

**30 September, 2019; New Delhi**

**Over Ten Thousand Workers Join at Parliament Street;  
8 January, 2020 - Workers Nationwide General Strike**

Over 10,000 workers converged at the Parliament Street in New Delhi on 30 September 2019 from across the country to join the Workers National Mass Convention called by 10 central trade unions - INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF, UTUC - and almost all independent national federations of the employees representing crores of country's workers from all industries, sectors and services, formal and informal;

To oppose and resist the RSS-BJP led Modi-2 government's anti-national and anti-people policies and measures on pro-corporate labour laws changes; corporatisation of government entities, including rail and defence; privatisation through listing, further disinvestment and strategic sale of CPSEs; 100% FDI through automatic route in strategic sectors including coal; and against divisive, undemocratic and repressive measures like in Jammu & Kashmir and NRC; against huge joblosses, rising unemployment and wage and social security losses including forced NPS etc.

The convention unanimously adopted a declaration on these issues and decided –

- (i) Countrywide workers general strike on 8 January, 2020; and prior to that,
- (ii) Holding sectoral, state and district joint conventions in October – November; and
- (iii) Widest campaign and demonstrative activities at factory, establishment and institution levels in December, 2020;

Demanding national minimum wage of Rs.21000, pension to all, scrapping of NPS and restoration of the old pension scheme, control on price rise in essential commodities and for universal public distribution system, demanding generation of new jobs and filling up of sanctioned posts, regularisation of scheme workers in government posts, of contract workers working against regular posts, ensuring equal pay for equal work, strengthening of welfare boards for unorganised sector workers, increased budgetary provision for MNREGA and agriculture.

National leaders of ten central trade unions, including general secretaries of CITU Tapan Sen, AITUC Amarjeet Kaur, HMS Harbhajan Singh Siddu, AIUTUC Shankar Saha, TUCC G. Devarajan, AICCTU Rajeev Dimri and of LPF M. Shanmugam; and Ashok Singh of INTUC, Sonia of SEWA and N. K. Premachandran of UTUC addressed the convention.

Tapan Sen called upon the working class of the country to defend the country's economy and natural resources from the attempt of the present dispensation allowing loot of plunder by foreign corporate invaders in collaboration with their local lackeys; and convey in no uncertain terms that '*The country is not for sale.*'

National presidents and leaders - S. S. Yadav (INTUC), Ramendra Kumar (AITUC), C. A. Rajasreedhar (HMS), K. Hemalata (CITU), R. K. Parasar (AIUTUC), G. R. Shivshankar (TUCC), Lata (SEWA), Sarabjeet Singh (AICCTU), V. Subbaraman (LPF) and Satrujit Singh (UTUC) constituted the presidium of the convention.

## Declaration

The Modi-led BJP Government has completed its 100 days of its second term in Office. And the country and her people are facing a continuing economic slowdown, continuing job-losses, sky-rocketing unemployment, widening and deepening impoverishment, faster decline in average level of earnings, reckless privatisation and foreignisation of national productive assets, destruction of indigenous manufacturing capabilities leading to deindustrialization and abnormal rise of economic inequality in the society to an obscene level- mocking at the slogan of “sab ka sath sab ka vikash”. Now, with a greater arrogance, the same destructive economic policies targeting the democratic rights and livelihood of the mass of the people are being pursued, setting in motion further worsening of the situation. And more undemocratically than ever before – be it the passing of Wage Code Bill, introduction of Code on Occupational Health, Safety and Working Conditions, amendment to the RTI Act to cripple it, amendment to Unlawful Activities Prevention Act to make it even more draconian and vindictive, abrogation of Article 370 without consulting people of J & K, in fact by gagging them, or rendering lakhs of people homeless/stateless through the NRC process. Now many BJP ruled states have been advocating for NRC process to divide people on communal lines. This ongoing destructive process must be combated for the unity of the people.

Each and every demand in the 12-point charter, of the Central Trade Unions, independent federations and associations, supported by the Joint National Forums of Peasants’ Organizations and highlighted through various agitations with a continuity such as nation-wide strikes on 2nd September 2015, 2nd September 2016, the three day Maha-padav, on 9—11<sup>th</sup> Nov, 2017 before the Parliament, the Nationwide strike by Scheme Workers on 17<sup>th</sup> January 2018, Satyagrah and protests in almost all the states on varying dates beginning from 23<sup>rd</sup> January to 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2018 and the two-days’ strike on 8-9 January, 2019, *adoption of ‘Workers’ Charter’ in a joint national convention of trade unions* on 5<sup>th</sup> March on the eve of the general elections, have simply been ignored by the BJP Government. The budget presented on 5<sup>th</sup> July was out and out pro-corporate and anti-common people. The Government has announced its intention to introduce the remaining two Codes: Code on Social Security and the Code on Industrial Relations, all together aiming at imposing conditions of extreme exploitation of the working people.

The Central Govt. not only failed to respond to the genuine demands of the working people, but continued its brazen aggression against the rights of workers, in the interest of their Corporate masters. Bipartism and tripartism is given a go-by. Labour laws are being sought to be overhauled in favour of the employers’ class. The BJP Govt. continues to vindictively deprive the biggest Central Trade Union in the country, the Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC) from all representations. No Indian Labour Conference has been held after July, 2015. Pre-budget consultations have become a sham.

Continuing phenomenon of alarmingly increasing unemployment along with joblosses across the sectors, declining GDP rates, increasing gap between the rich and the poor- all revealing a terminal slowdown in the national economy are sought to be brushed under the carpet by fudging figures. The phenomenon of closure and shut-down of automobile industries and the ancillaries and the forecast of huge job-losses including in the IT sector is adding fuel to the fire. Price-rise of essential commodities including public transport, electricity, medicines etc is mounting miseries on daily lives of the people in general, both in urban and rural areas, leading to widening as well as deepening impoverishment. Drastic cut in Government expenditure in social sector and various welfare schemes has made the conditions of workers, particularly those in unorganized sector more precarious. The anti-labour authoritarian character of the Government is all the more evident in their refusal to implement even the consensus recommendations (in which the Government was also a party) of the successive Indian Labour Conferences in respect of equal pay and benefits for equal work for the contract workers,

formulation of minimum wage and workers status for the scheme workers viz., Anganwadi, Mid-Day-Meal and ASHA etc. have not been implemented. Shockingly, the Labour Minister in the Modi Government contradicted their own Committee's recommendation on National Minimum Wage (which in itself was in contravention of the recommendations of the 15<sup>th</sup> ILC) by declaring a ridiculous figure of Rs.4628/-pm instead ! Replacing gradually the workers by apprentices through NEEM, Fixed Term Employment etc, to grossly alter the employment-relations towards slavery, amendments in Prevention of Child Labour Act to allow employment of Child Labour, reduction in ESI contributions and the move for pro-employer Amendment of EPF&MP Act, including attempts to corporatize the EPFO and the ESIC— all such anti-worker steps are justified as incentives to employers for ease of doing their business at the cost of workers. The Government stubbornly refuses to implement the recent Judgments of the Supreme Court on issue of "equal wage and benefits for same work" and on EPS, 1995 on contribution and calculation of pension on actual pay and dearness allowance. On the other hand, the Government is misusing the tax-payers money to incentivise the defaulting employers to implement laws such as the Maternity Benefit Act and the EPF Act.

Another assault has come through the move for amendment of the Trade Union Act 1926. The Government intends to change the definition of the Central Trade Unions and their recognition procedure as per discretion of the executive. The malafide intention is also to have Govt. interference into the functioning and internal matters of trade unions.

Aggressive move for Privatization of even all the strategic PSUs and government sector through different routes, including Defence Production, Public Sector Banks and Insurance and also Railways, public road transport, Ports, coal, power, steel, Petroleum etc through disinvestment, strategic sale, outsourcing in favour of private sector, promoting 100 per cent FDI in defence, railways, coal, and many vital, strategic sectors is increasing day by day. Deliberate and vindictive weakening of Air India, BSNL, MTNL, not allowing them level playing field, is being carried on with a destructive zeal in total disregard to the human sufferings (no salaries for months together). Plundering and looting the RBI reserves to contain budget deficit caused by tax concessions to the Corporates is going to destabilize our economy further. Defence Sector privatization move is actually designed to destroy the indigenous Research initiatives and manufacturing capability, -demonstrating a betrayal of national interests. The dubious game plan to outsource more than 50 per cent products including weapons and critical equipments, being produced by the Ordnance establishments is finally followed up by move to corporatizing the Ordnance Factories to facilitate complete privatization. Complete privatization of the Railways, step by step, is going on. Operating private trains on the existing tracks built by Railways and free access of railway yards/workshops/sheds for private players is being permitted. Railway Printing Presses are being closed. Railway production units are being corporatized to facilitate privatization. Besides the railway employees becoming the worst victims, mass of the common people will suffer more owing to inevitable hike of railway fares and increase in freight charges owing to elimination of subsidies in passenger fares and freight on essential commodities.

The Government has announced another round of merger of 10 Public Sector Banks into four despite negative impact of previous rounds of merger, on banking services and employment. The reasons being offered for merger are utterly false and deceptive. The lowering of interest rate on deposits of common people will make them suffer, particularly the senior citizens who depend on it in absence of any meaningful pension. The Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 (IBC) procedure legitimizes the loot of the bank money by the defaulting corporate besides neglecting the dues of the workers of the bankrupt companies. In addition to all these the Government is entering into free trade agreements with different countries and group of countries like Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) which is detrimental to our economic sovereignty.

The plight of the unorganized sector workers is even worse, as they bear the brunt of the ongoing economic slowdown despite their sizable contribution to GDP. Their number will swell as the workers lose employment in formal sectors. Construction workers, beedi workers, street vendors, domestic workers, loading/unloading workers had separate laws/welfare boards. Instead of making them functional, they are sought to be abolished through social security code exercise. The Government has made a cruel joke on them promising first pension under PMSYPY of Rs.3000/-pm in the year 2039 ! It is even forcing this so-called voluntary scheme on the scheme workers. The government employees are demanding scrapping of NPS and restoration of the old Pension Scheme. Sections such as home based workers, waste recyclers, salt workers have no legal protection whatsoever.

But the workers have not accepted these measures meekly, as shown by the surge of struggles all around. Workers of 41 ordnance factories across the country, went on total strike from 20<sup>th</sup> August for a month against the corporatisation move forcing the Govt to step back for the time being just after five days of the complete historic strike. The Government's plan to corporatize seven Railway production units was immediately responded to by protest actions by the mass of the workers and their family members. The bank merger news was denounced by nation-wide protest demonstrations of bank employees and officers. Now, strike action is being planned in the banking sector. The coal workers have staged a massive strike action on 24<sup>th</sup> September, 2019 against allowing 100% FDI in coal sector. There have been agitations in various CPSUs, including the core and strategic sectors like Energy, Petroleum, Telecom, Metal, Steel, Mining, Machine Building, Road, Air and Water Transport, Port & Dock against the government plans to privatise them. The Convention extends full support to these struggles.

The Convention notes with dismay that this Government, spinelessly surrendered to threat and pressure of their private corporate masters, indigenous and foreign, by shamelessly withdrawing the measures for making the shortfall in CSR spending by private corporates a criminal offence and also withdrawing the surcharge on speculative profits of foreign portfolio investors. Shri Modi had to placate them in his 15<sup>th</sup> August speech, saying they are the "wealth creators" and cannot be viewed with suspicion. This is over and above the budget announcement of the huge sop of reducing the income tax rate by 5% for the 99.3% of the corporates. Now in the name of addressing the economic slowdown, the Finance Minister has further announced cutting back taxes on corporate from 30% to 22% whereas the workers and employees have to pay the same 30% income tax. The stimulus package to the tune of Rs.1.4 lakh crores, a bonanza to the corporates, does not increase the purchasing power of the working people, does not create any jobs or even does not ensure job security to the workers being retrenched every day, will further aggravate the recession..

Now the BJP Government is facing a backlash from the common people as the draconian measures of the newly passed Motor Vehicle Act are put in practice. The federations of transport workers had repeatedly warned against these measures during the last five years of BJP Government, through various mass actions.

Now that the euphoria of a phenomenal win in the elections is fading, jingoist claims on abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A recede, NRC turns out to be a hoax, the people are waking up to the bitter truth of a failing economy – caused entirely by the Pro-employer, anti-worker, anti-people and utterly destructive anti-national policies of this BJP Government. Relentless crisis in jobs and bread cannot be camouflaged by any amount of rhetoric.

This National Convention of Workers appeals to all the workers, irrespective of their affiliations, to join hands and co-ordinate their sectoral struggles into a mighty countrywide movement to force the government to reverse their anti-national policies. Let us send a clear message to the powers that be, that WE ARE THE WEALTH CREATORS. The wealth that we create is being looted by the corporates in connivance with the government, that has caused suppressing of effective demand and consequent

economic slowdown. We demand equitable redistribution of the wealth that we create. We want National Minimum Wage of Rs.21000/- pm (as per the current Cost of Living Index), Rs.10000/-pm minimum pension for all by Government funding, we want effective Employment Guarantee Act to cover all rural and urban households, implementation of MGNREGA with increased number of days and budget allocation, increased public investment to mitigate rural distress, remunerative price as per the Swaminathan Commission recommendations for the agriculture produce with procurement facilities and loan waiver of the peasantry, we want permanency of employment in decent work, we want Worker status for all Scheme Workers as unanimously recommended by the ILC, abolition of contract system and regularisation of contract workers, equal pay and benefits for equal work and implementation of Sustainable Development Goals.

This National Convention of Workers records its strong denunciation of the Communal forces which are cultivating an atmosphere of conflicts within the society on non-issues, giving an opportunity to the government to deflect the attention of the masses from core issues of unemployment, run away price rise etc. They are seeking to disrupt the unity of the workers and the toiling people in general, so vital to carry forward the ongoing struggles based on our 12-point Charter of Demands. Working class must raise their strong voice of protest against these divisive forces which are threatening the very social fabric of our society and endangering the basic ethos and core values of Indian Constitution.

The task before the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and independent National Federations and Associations is to further intensify the surging struggles in various sectors through a concerted united agitation and mobilization for action. The National Mass Convention of Workers calls for a countrywide general strike action as a consolidation of all sectoral struggles. This Convention therefore adopts, inter alia, the following programmes for mobilisation of workers for the grand success of the strike:

Programme of Action over the next three months

1. Joint Conventions of Workers at Sectoral Level, at State Level, at District Level during two months of October and November, 2019
2. Widest possible circulation of Declaration down to factory, establishment, institution and base level through the above activity during December, 2019
3. **Country-wide General Strike On 8th January, 2020**

The National Convention calls upon working people across the sectors and throughout the country irrespective of affiliations to make the strike action a grand success and further appeals to prepare for bigger actions if the government fails to pay heed to our demands. We call upon the people at large to support the strike action.




**INTUC**



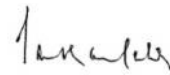
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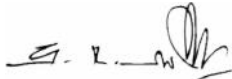
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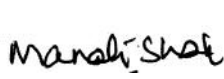
**CITU**



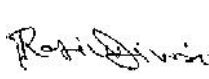
**AIUTUC**



**TUC**



**SEWA**



**AICCTU**



**LPF**



**UTUC**

And

**Independent Federations, Associations and Unions of Workers and Employees**

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# Countrywide Protests

## **CITU's Protest against Modi-2 Gov't's Anti-Worker Labour Reforms**

In response to CITU call to its units, unions and federation on 23 July, 2019 to launch immediate countrywide protest against Modi-2 government introducing Bills on Codes on Wages and Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions in Lok Sabha and its attempt to get the Bills passed by extending the current session of the Parliament bypassing the scrutiny by the Parliamentary Standing Committee; its state committees launched campaigns in end July.

In **Kerala**, CITU organised statewide protest March in district headquarters and at area centres joined by thousands of workers. In **Punjab**, as part of state-wide campaign within 31 July against anti-workers labour laws amendments, outsourcing and contract labour system, CITU held public meeting at Asron on 25 July. In **Andhra Pradesh**, CITU protest programme was organised on 29 July at 7 places - at Vizag, 25,000 handbills were distributed and dharna was staged at railway station; dharna was staged at four railway stations in East Godavari district and before the district collectorate in Kakinada; in Tirupati 12,000 handbills were distributed, a round table meeting was held and dharna was staged; In Kadapa, a rally was brought out and dharna was staged at railway station.

## **2 August All India Protest Day**

In response to the joint call of central trade unions to observe countrywide Protest Day on 2 August, 2019 against Modi-2 government's anti-workers labour laws reforms through 4 labour codes replacing all 44 existing labour laws; there were spontaneous workers outburst of protest in different parts of the country. Following are some reports received at CITU centre.

In **Delhi**, central trade unions – INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF, UTUC, MEC, ICTU – and the independent federations of workers and employees unitedly organised protest march in Parliament Street. National and state trade union leaders including Amarjeet Kaur of AITUC, Shiv Gopal Mishra of HMS, A. R. Sindhu of CITU, R. K. Sharma of AIUTUC, P. Muthu of LPF, Khuntia of INTUC, Lata of SEWA, Shatrujeet Singh of UTUC, Rajesh of AICCTU, Santosh of Mazdoor Ekta Committee, Narender of ICTU, Sabina Inderjit of Indian Journalist Union and S. K. Pande of National Alliance for Journalists addressed the rally. All the trade unions leaders appealed the MPs to vigorously oppose this anti-worker step of the government. The trade unions also opposed the all out selling of public sector companies.

In **Kerala**, trade unions jointly observed the Protest Day. Thousands of workers participated in the Protest March to central government offices in all districts. The marches were inaugurated to GPO in Thiruvananthapuram by CITU state president Anathalavattom Anadhan; in Eranakulam by CITU national secretary K. Chandran Pillai; in Palakkad by CITU national vice president K. K. Divakaran and by state leaders in other districts.

In **Chhattisgarh**, at state capital Raipur, at Burhapara area, the workers joint protest rally was addressed by state leaders - INTUC president Sanjay Singh, AITUC general secretary Harinath Singh, CITU president B. Sanyal, AICCTU general secretary Brijendra Tiwari, AIIEA zonal general secretary Dharmaraj Mahapatra,

category III state government employees president Rakesh Sahu, Central Government Coordination Committee leader Dinesh Patel and STUC secretary S. C. Bhattacharya.

In **Odisha**, despite rains, Protest Day programmes were organised in different parts of the state jointly by CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, AICCTU, AIUTUC and fraternal federations. In state capital Bhubaneswar, demonstration was staged before the state Legislative Assembly, which was on session.

In the steel city of Rourkela, Cuttack, Tangi, Berhampur, Sambalpur, Balasore, Bhadrak, Keonjhar, Puri, Paradeep, Nayagarh, Jajpur and in Baripada joint rallies, demonstrations and public meetings were held and union labour minister's effigy was burnt.

In **Jharkhand**, central trade unions and federations jointly held protests programmes in the industrial areas of Dhanbad, Bokaro, Jamshedpur, Ramgarh, Pakur, Sahebganj, Koderma, Palamau and at headquarters of other districts. In the state capital Ranchi, protest march and rally were held at Albert Ekka crossing and public meeting was addressed by state leaders—P. K. Ganguly of AITUC, Prakash Viplav of CITU, Bhubaneswar Kewat of AICCTU, Mintu Paswan of AIUTUC, M. L. Singh of BEFI, Nareshlal of BSNL, Bhavan Singh of HEC, Baijnath Nath Singh of Electricity, Om Prakash Ram of JCMU and Md. Ejaj of BSSRU.

In **Rajasthan**, thousands of workers, jointly under central trade unions and employees federations' banner, staged protest demonstrations in 15 districts and memoranda, addressed to the President of India, were submitted. Workers participation was 700 to 1000 in each of CITU's major districts of Sriganganagar, Sikar and Hanumangarh; and in rest of each district from 50 to 200 workers. Daikin Airconditioning Mazdoor Union staged protest demonstration before the SDM at Neemrana.

In Jaipur, 200 strong workers meeting in front of labour commissioner's office was addressed by CITU's Ravindra Shukla and Rampal Saini; INTUC's Sri Gurjar; HMS' Mukesh Mathur, AITUC's Kunal Yadav; and from bank federation Mahesh Mishra.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, Protest Day was observed by bringing out processions and staging dharnas in 10 districts participated by 6,445 workers. 51,000 pamphlets were distributed across the state.

At TTI centre in Vizag steel plant, all unions' members held joint protest rally led by D. Adinarayana of AITUC, J. Ayodhyaram of CITU, G. Venkat Rao of INTUC, D. Appa Rao of HMS and others. In Visakhapatnam on 3 August, rally and public meeting was held joined by 1,500 workers.

In **Tamilnadu**, central trade unions and federations, jointly staged militant demonstration and held rally at Chennai addressed by state leaders of CITU, AITUC, LPF, INTUC, HMS, AIUTUC, UTUC(LS) including K. Thiruselvan of CITU. At Trichy demonstration was staged in front of collector's office.

## **14 August 'Samuhik Jagaran'**

CITU gave call to observe Samuhik Jagaran Day and organise suitable programmes on the eve of the National Independence Day to commemorate the working class participation and sacrifice in the national freedom struggle; to defend country's Constitutional foundation of unity, integrity, secularism, federalism and democracy; and to strive for pro-people alternative economic and social policies. Following are some limited reports those were received at CITU centre.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, in 7 of CITU's organizational districts, the programme was held at 12 places with total 1,125 workers participating. Daylong dharna and fasting were organised at the railway station in Tirupati.

In **Telangana**, mass 'Jagarana' programme was held in 28 out of 32 district centres in the state. Besides these, the programme was held in 61 other places. Cultural programmes were also held. 4979 worker-members participated in these programmes.

**Tamil Nadu** state committee organised programme of the workers, artist troupes joining to reach to the people. In all districts the programmes were organised except in Chennai North, Chennai South and Cudallore district. In Kanyakumari, Coimbatore, Salem, Trichy, Thiuruvarur and Erode public meeting were held amidst police threat not to speak on Kashmir. Conventions were held In Karur, Kanchipuram and Madurai districts.

In **Odisha**, CITU's 'Aharatra Divas' was held in different parts of the state. Details are awaited. In Rourkela, the programme was organised at Bhanjan Bhavan community centre accompanied by cultural programmes.

In **Punjab**, the programme was organised in different districts. Details are awaited.

## **5 September Workers-Peasants Joint Agitation**

In continuation of the spirit of 5 September, 2018 all India Mazdoor-Kisan Sangharsh Rally in Delhi, AIKS gave call to observe the day throughout the country on 5 September, 2019 on peasants demands. CITU GCM at Hassan decided to support peasants' demands and agitation and called upon CITU units to join the AIKS programme and hold workers-peasants joint programmes. Some reports.

In **Andhra Pradesh**, despite heavy rains, out of state's total 23 districts, in 17 districts the programmes were organised jointly by CITU, AIKS and AIAWU. Total 2,203 persons, including 1464 from CITU, participated in the dharna staged in front of government offices in district headquarters. 47,000 pamphlets were distributed.

In **Karnataka**, CITU, AIKS and AIAWU jointly staged protest rallies and held public meetings in front of government offices, submitted memoranda to the DCs, Tahasildars and other government officials in 15 districts headquarters and at 12 other places in these districts with more than 4000 participation.

In **Tripura**, CITU, AIKS and AIAWU and GMP jointly organised programmes in most of the subdivisions. An impressive rally at Belonia was addressed by AIKS leader Badal Chowdhury; procession and public meetings were held in Sabroom and Teliamura; hall meetings were held at Udaipur, Khowai, Ambassa, and Panisagar; even in ruling-party terror affected Kamalpur sub-division, hall meeting was held at Santirbazar. In Agartala, an impressive rally and mass meeting, joined by participants from adjoining Mohanpur, Jirania and Dukli subdivisions; was presided by CITU state president Manik Dey and veteran GMP leader Salil Debarma and addressed by CITU state general secretary Sankar Datta, AIAWU state leader Babul Bhadra, AIKS state secretary Narayan Kar.

In **Assam**, CITU and AIKS organised workers-peasants joint programmes at Tinsukia, Dibrugarh, Jorhat, Golaghat, Hojai, Lakhimpur, Nalbari, Barpeta, Bongaigaon, Kokrajhar, Dhubri, Tejpur, Dhemaaji and Silchar. In the state capital Guwahati, thousands of workers and peasants jointly held demonstration in front labour commissioner's office and submitted memorandum addressed to the prime minister protesting against pro-employers labour laws changes. The meeting was addressed by CITU state general secretary Tapan Sarma, AIKS state secretary Tiken Das, Assam joint council of trade unions leader Bhabendra Kalita, CFWI state secretary Madan Talukdar and Anganwadi union's state secretary Indira Newar.

# Coal Workers' Total Strike

## To Defend Nation & Its Resources

### Biggest Strike Action

In one of the biggest strike action in any industry, more than 5 lakh permanent and contract coal workers, together, in all 650 coal mines of the Coal India Limited (CIL), spread over in the coal bearing states of West Bengal, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Assam and Uttar Pradesh; and in Telangana state and union governments' joint sector company, the Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL), were on total strike on 24 September.

The strike was in pursuance of three points charter to demands submitted to the Ministry of Coal on 5 September by 5 federations of INTUC, HMS, AITUC, CITU and AICCTU. The demands are - (i) For withdrawal of government's decision of 100% FDI in coal mining; (ii) For merger of all subsidiary companies – ECL, BCCL, CCL, SECL, MCL, NCL, WCL and CMPDIL – into the single entity of CIL; and (iii) To stop coal mining through contractors, outsourcing and MDOs (Mines Development Operators); and for the workers, working under them, to be regularized / treated as workmen of CIL.

This strike of the coal workers was not for any economic demand, but to protect national interest against Modi government's intention to gradually handover the control of the country's coal resources to foreign agencies through 100% FDI in commercial mining of coal and also destroying its public sector entity. With almost hundred per cent strike, the coal workers has sent a strong message that they stand united for struggle to defend the national interests and its natural resources from the marauding foreign and domestic corporates.

The strike paralysed total coal production and its transportation; and the production drop was estimated to be 2.13 M MTs and loss of Rs.4000 crore. Coal constitutes about 75% of country's energy resources.

### Wide Support

In a statement, CITU congratulated the coal workers for their historic united strike action and their determined efforts not to allow the country and its resources to be sold out and plundered by foreign corporates and their local partners. The central trade unions in a joint statement supported the coal workers strike and demands. The Trade Union International (TUI) Chemistry Energy of WFTU in a statement of 24 September fully supported the strike of Indian coal workers and their struggle to defend the public sector. National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers also supported the coal workers strike.

### Attempt to Sabotage Strike and Dilute Demands

To upstage the strike call of 5 federations and to dilute their demands; sponsored by RSS-BJP led government, its RSS-led trade union called for 5 days strike beginning a day before. Workers, however, saw through the game and completely ignored their call. Complete failure of coal workers strike on 23 September and on 25 September forced the sponsored union to call off their strike on 25 evening following a sham meeting with the minister.

### Government's Attempt of Deception

On 28 August, Modi government took decision to allow 100% FDI in coal mining. On 5 September, the

5 federations jointly served strike notice. Despite that strike notice, on 18 September the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), as per government's decision, notified 100% FDI in coal mining. According to DPIIT press note "100 per cent FDI is permitted for sale of coal, coal mining activities including associated processing infrastructure". Yet, on the very next day, on 19 September, the government calls for discussion with the striking unions which the federations rightly boycotted.

Deception is the hallmark of Modi government. In the same vein, his minister for coal Pralhad Joshi, immediately after the strike, in a statement on 25 September said, "...there is no intention to get FDI into CIL or SCCL. The government is open to having a discussion with all unions on this matter.." While in the strike notice, the federations demanded withdrawal of government's decision on "100% FDI in coal mining"; the minister in his statement said about "FDI in CIL or SCCL". (*Underline added for emphasis*) In tune with the government, the RSS union also issued statement, "The main demand of the workers was that 100 per cent FDI should not be allowed in public sector coal companies. Based on the assurance given by the Minister, we have decided to withdraw the strike,"

After nationalisation of coal mines in 1973, Coal Mines (Nationalisation) Act was amended in 1993 to allow private coal mining for captive use. However, Modi-1 government allowed private coal mining for commercial purposes by adopting Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015. It is in this area that Modi government has notified 100% FDI in coal mining. The strike was against this decision.

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## IN THE PARLIAMENT

### In Rajya Sabha

#### **Privatisation of Salem Steel Plant Opposed**

9 July, 2019: Tamilnadu MPs opposed privatisation of Salem Steel Plant in Rajya Sabha and raised slogans. The House was adjourned. (*Message: TKR*)

#### **Scheme Workers Demands Raised**

31 July, 2019: Elamaram Kareem, CPI(M) MP, CITU national secretary and its Kerala state general secretary raised the issue of scheme workers - Anganwadi ASHA and Mid Day Meal workers - in Rajya Sabha today for recognition of all scheme workers as 'workers' and to ensure minimum wages and social security to them as per 45<sup>th</sup> ILC recommendations.

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## LEGAL

### **Madras High Court Stayed GO on Autoparts Industry as 'Public Utility Service'**

The Madras High Court on 1 August, 2019 stayed the operation of a government order (GO) declaring auto component industry as a 'public utility service' under the Industrial Disputes Act.

On June 14, Tamil Nadu government issued the GO declaring the auto component industry as a 'public utility service'. Government's claim was that it would have investors' confidence. Concurring with the petitioner's submission, of a Coimbatore-based union, that by no stretch of imagination auto components manufacturing industry could be brought within the ambit of 'public utility service' under the I. D. Act and hence the declaration under the GO was arbitrary and irrational and not in conformity with the law; Justice V. Parthiban ordered an interim stay against the operation of the GO.

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# CAG Report on GST; Reveals Fraud

J. S. Majumdar

The GST Council, in its 37<sup>th</sup> session in picturesque Goa on 20 September 2019, chaired by the union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman and attended by her subordinates and the finance ministers of all states, has taken urgent step in slashing down the tariff rates in starred hotels to encourage hospitality industry and tourism, particularly foreign tourism. This was the priority for the GST Council when the country is facing its worst economic slowdown, due to slump in consumption, and 45 years low unemployment rate. This comes as a back to back decision of big bang reduction in corporate tax rates by Modi government a day before. Both have the same policy approach.

Less than two months before, the 36<sup>th</sup> GST Council meeting was called on 27 July 2019 to decide on GST rate cut on electric vehicles (EV) as the priority. That teleconferencing meeting had decided to slash down GST rates on EVs from 12% to 5%; on their chargers or charging stations from 18% to 5%; and on e-bus service at zero GST. The changes came into immediate effect from 1 August 2019.

This urgent decision on EVs has direct bearing on GST Council's refusal in its just concluded 37<sup>th</sup> meeting to cut GST rates on petrol/diesel run automobiles despite the industry facing a slump down resulting in lakhs of job losses. As of now, the auto industry has to bear the highest GST slab of 28% plus minimum 15% cess. Add to that the tax component on petrol and diesel, where GST does not apply because the highest slab of GST is 28% whereas central excise duty plus state-variable VATs together constitute 40.11% to 59.78% of the total cost of these petroleum products as of now.

There was no attempt by the GST Council to address the GST rates in the industries and the services which recorded maximum job losses during the current economic meltdown and which are having maximum job potential.

On the other side, the GST Council has been ignoring the interests of the consumers. It stubbornly been refusing to cut GST rates on medicines which is 12% including most of the 356 medicines in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM). The GST amounts on medicines further increases with spiraling increase in the prices of all decontrolled medicines and 10% annual increase of price controlled medicines in NLEM.

In the indirect tax regime, the GST Council's discussions are opaque and decisions are final outside Parliamentary scrutiny and public discourse though its decisions have direct bearing on the people due to indirect tax burden on them.

CAG, under Constitutional mandate, has submitted its first audit report on GST in the Parliament on 30 July, 2019. But, paradoxically, the Members of the Parliament, for the first time, have to discuss this CAG report on the indirect tax regime when it has been taken out of prior scrutiny by the Parliament.

This first CAG report on GST has recorded some serious matters concerning the administration of GST which have generally been ignored by the corporate media and remain outside the people's attention.

The government has already brought down the GST revenue collection target from Rs.7.61 lakh crore in Interim Budget to Rs.6.63 lakh crore the Union Budget for the financial year 2019-20. Under the hyperbole of India achieving US \$ 3 trillion economy by end of current financial year; the Union Budget 2019-20, presented on 5 July 2019, was also an admission of its failure in GST collections and, therefore, lowered the current year's target by more than 12.87% or by little less than one lakh crore.

This decline in indirect tax collection despite increase in the tax rates and spread of the tax net on all goods and services under GST regime, which came into effect on 1 July 2017, has been confirmed by the CAG report. The report states, “*The growth of indirect taxes of Government of India (GoI) slowed down to 5.80 per cent in 2017 18 over 2016 17 as compared to 21.33 per cent during 2016 17, with GoI’s revenue from goods and services taking a 10 per cent dip.*”

The CAG report shows that while the people are paying more indirect taxes under GST regime, to Government’s collection has gone down from pre-GST period. If people paid more and the government received less indirect taxes in FY2017-18, then where this huge money has gone? CAG has answered this in the part III of its report exposing the huge GST scam involved.

The CAG report attributed the reason as operational system failure. The report states, “*..on the whole, the envisaged GST tax compliance system is non functional.*” Why? Because of “*inadequate coordination among the stake holders such as Department of Revenue (DoR), Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) and GSTN as well as failure to try out the system adequately before roll out.*” (Underline added). The CAG report has confirmed the criticism by most of the opposition parties that GST was rolled out unprepared.

The CAG report has also accused that while administering the GST, Modi government had violated even the Constitutional provision and GST law in distribution of fund to the states. The report states, “*During 2017 18, GoI resorted to devolution of IGST year end balance to states as per Finance Commission formula, in contravention of the provisions of the Constitution of India and the IGST Act. This also had the impact of distribution of funds to the States on a completely different basis instead of ‘Place of Supply’ concept as envisaged in the IGST Act.*”

About GST, the CAG report further stated that “*the system prone to ITC frauds.*” It gave concrete examples to reveal the huge magnitude of GST fraud. Under GST law, a supplier gets Input Tax Credit (ITC) when goods are sold and GST paid by the consumer. During 1 July – 8 August 2018 the total ITC claims in the tax returns was Rs.8.19 lakh crore which included Rs.6.94 lakh crore from Andhra Pradesh alone. When enquired by the CAG, the GSTN replied that out of total Rs.6.94 lakh crore ITC claims from Andhra Pradesh, “*Rs.6.45 lakh crore pertaining to a particular tax payer of Andhra Pradesh was erroneously claimed.*” (Underline added). CAG was not convinced of GSTN’s statement of “erroneously claimed” by a particular tax payer. In its report CAG rebuffed GSTN’s statement by stating in bold letters, “***Unrealistic and erroneous claim of ITC of IGST claim by one taxpayer, representing 79 per cent of total ITC claims by all tax payers for a month, was allowed by the system, exposing the vulnerability of the system to fraudulent ITC claims.***”

The CAG report further states, “*After removing the above figure from Andhra Pradesh, the State of Punjab constituted the highest IGST-ITC of 32.6 per cent of all India IGST-ITC balance and risk of irregular ITC credits could not be ruled out.*”

New Nirav Modis are active in defrauding the GST of lakhs of crore rupees. How is this happening? CAG has put the entirely blame on the current system of administration of GST by GSTN, which operates as public-private partnership basis including foreign private stake holders in it.

As per GST rules, ITC can be claimed only after matching invoices of ‘suppliers’ and ‘recipients’ (the ultimate consumers) filed by returns in the formats of GSTR-1 and GSTR-2 respectively. In addition, there is GSTR-3 giving additional details by the taxpayer entirely on self-assessment basis. But, filing of GSTR-2 has been kept in abeyance and ITC claim is allowed to be settled entirely on GSTR-3 basis without verification. CAG report states, “*there was risk that the irregular ITC claims by the tax payers might go undetected.*”

Yet, there is no report as to whether, the GST Council meeting of 20 September 2019 has at all discussed the CAG report placed of 30 July 2019 or not; what was their conclusions and what remedial measures suggested except approving simplified tax returns in GSTR-9 and exempting filing this for taxpayer having less than 2 crore of annual turnover.

# INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

## Road Transport

### **Motor Vehicle (Amendment) Act; Generates People's Anger; Governments Retreat**

R. Lakshmaiah

Huge increase in the penalties including 10 times increase in the fines and in the provision of imprisonment in the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Act, 2019, even for minor offence like not wearing a helmet, not strapping seatbelt, delayed insurance renewal and license renewal etc, which came into force across the country on 1 September, 2019, has hit the headlines of print, electronic and social media. These penalties will be increasing by 10 per cent every year on April 1, as notified by the central government. Huge anger is generated among the drivers of all kinds of motor vehicles across the country.

Sensing people's huge anger, several state governments including BJP-ruled states and those in opposition-ruled states, who voted in the Parliament in favour of the amendments in the Act, are running for cover. State governments of Congress, TMC in West Bengal, TRS in Telangana, YSR Congress in Andhra Pradesh have already postponed implementation of the revised penalties. Rajasthan Congress government has reduced penalties. BJP ruled states like Karnataka and Maharashtra have postponed implementation. BJP's Gujarat and Jharkhand governments have already cut the penalty rates. Bihar's BJP-JD(U) government has kept it in abeyance.

The essence of the amendments is that fear is the key to enforce safety mandates and that drivers are exclusively responsible for the accidents.

But, what is the reality? Lack in traffic infrastructure, bad road conditions, defects in construction of the roads etc are major factors for accidents. Further, non-availability of adequate public transport and encouragement to private vehicles by giving low or interest-free loans have flooded the roads with motor vehicles. All these are contributing to the accidents. Without addressing all these issues mere enhancement of penalties will not reduce the accidents.

It is not only increased penalties alone in the amended Act. Seizure of vehicle, suspension of driving license and increase in penalty for the second offence are part of it. When these will be implemented, the unrest will further increase.

However, the real purpose of amendment is aimed at handing over the entire road transport sector, both passenger and goods, to giant corporates. There was no provision in the original Act of 1988; but, now, in this amendment in 2019 provision has been made for them in the name of 'Aggregators'. This is the main purpose of the amendment. If the entire road transport sector is taken over by the giant corporates, the workers will be the first victims. The people at large will have to bear the burden of higher fares.

In addition, the provision has been made in the amended Act for the big companies to set up vehicle testing centres. After the notification by the central government, no vehicle can obtain a fitness certificate without the certificate from the corporate testing agencies.

Many new sections have been incorporated in the amendment Act to weaken/dismantle the state-owned public transport corporations. In fact, according to the government reports, lowest accident rate is recorded in these public sector road transport corporations.

Further, the activities of the government's transport department are going to be handed over to private agencies, which is not only posing threat to the employees of the department, but in the long run, no accountability will be there and many misdeeds will occur. Even now, in some states, where the power of registration of the new vehicle is entrusted to the dealers, under invoicing is widely reported causing loss to the exchequer. If all the functions are handed over to private agencies, one can assume the larger dimension of this problem.

The M.V. (Amendment) Act, 2019 is nothing but cut and paste exercise from different countries' laws. But many intellectuals have raised the issue that in no country in the world, the penalties are higher than the daily earning of a person. Here, it was ignored. Because, the real intention is that the vehicle owners/drivers will have to leave the profession and depend on the giant corporates.

**Centre State Relations:** India is a federal country. During Modi regime all the powers of the states are being centralised. Through M. V. (Amendment) Act, 2019 the central government has taken over many powers of the states or encroached upon their powers in issuing permits formulating schemes etc.

**It is not the case of today:** Modi-1 government had brought 'Road Transport and Safety Bill, 2014' having almost similar provisions as in the M.V. (Amendment) Act, 2019. From that time onward, the transport workers and all other stake holders across the country are on continuous struggle against the Bill. For the first time since independence, transport workers went on a nationwide successful strike on 30 April, 2015 against that Bill. Again on 7 August, 2018 transport workers resorted to nationwide strike with more participation of the workers. In between, the transport workers also joined the all India strikes jointly called by the central trade unions against the retrograde and anti-people policies of the government. Facing these struggles, the government changed the title of the Bill, but not the main contents.

Due to the workers struggles and stiff opposition by the opposition parties in the Rajya Sabha, the Bill, 2014 could not be passed till the Parliament election in 2019. Along with CPI(M), CPI and DMK; Congress, TMC, AIADMK also opposed the earlier Bill and recorded their dissent during the examination of the Bill by the Select Committee of the Parliament. But, during Modi-2 regime, when the Left demanded division, except CPI(M), CPI and DMK, all other parties voted in favour of the M.V. (Amendment) Bill, 2019 or abstained from voting. Thereby, the Bill was passed with 208 in support and 13 against it.

It is pertinent to demand of Modi government to forthwith revoke the amendments in M. V. Act and hold consultation with all the stake holders in road transport sector including trade unions and the experts in the field of transport for improving road safety.

However, it is the experience that the Modi government will not listen to the people in normal ways. Its prime task is to protect and safeguard profiteering of the corporates. Hence, it is inevitable to build strong resistance movement at national level, the only way out.

*(R. Lakshmaiah is the Dy. General Secretary; All India Road Transport Workers' Federation)*

## Telecom

### **BSNL & Its Employees' Woes**

CITU national Secretary and MP Elamaram Kareem raised the issue of BSNL as a Special Mention in Rajya Sabha on 1 July, 2019. Chairman of the House observed that it is a very important issue and said that it would be discussed in current the session of the House in presence of the concerned minister.

Same day Kareem also wrote to the Union Communication Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad recalling his public statement on revival of BSNL and MTNL and giving views and suggestions.

In a written reply on 26 June, 2019 in Lok Sabha, the Minister said,

That, BSNL and MTNL are national assets; they operate in strategic areas like home and defence; and that, in the case of cyclone, floods or earthquake they are in the forefront giving free services, reported *Business Standard*.

That, stiff competition; high employee cost; and no 4G services are responsible for the poor financial state of BSNL and MTNL, reported *India Today*. "The telecom sector is facing financial stress due to stiff competition and reduction in tariffs. The gross revenue of two private operators i.e. Airtel and Vodafone/Idea has also reduced in FY 2017-18 and FY 2018-19."

BSNL's market share, despite competition, increased to 10.72% from 9.63%, during the same period, reported *Businessline*.

"Entire telecom sector is in ICU because of brutal tariff war started by Ambanis' Reliance Jio," Kareem pointed out in his letter, "Despite that BSNL is earning operational profit since 2014-15."

On 27 June CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen, Ex-MP wrote to the Minister stating, "This Public Sector Company is carved out of the Department of Telecommunications in the year 2000. An overwhelming section of the DoT employees have got absorbed in BSNL, from the government service. As such, the extant government rule on retirement, should be implemented for BSNL employees also."

## Airways

### **CITU Denounced Privatisation of Air India**

CITU, in a statement on 30 August, denounced Modi government's desperate bid to sell 100% share of Air India as announced by the minister in charge in a press meet a day before. He said that half of the Air India's debt to the tune of Rs.29000 crore had been taken over by the government and removed the same off the books of accounts of the company; and a part of the dues of Air India towards fuel account is being planned to be met by the government through equity support. This attempt is being made after failure to privatise Air India through sale of 76% government shareholding during its previous regime. The present attempt is nothing but succumbing to the blackmailing by private corporate.

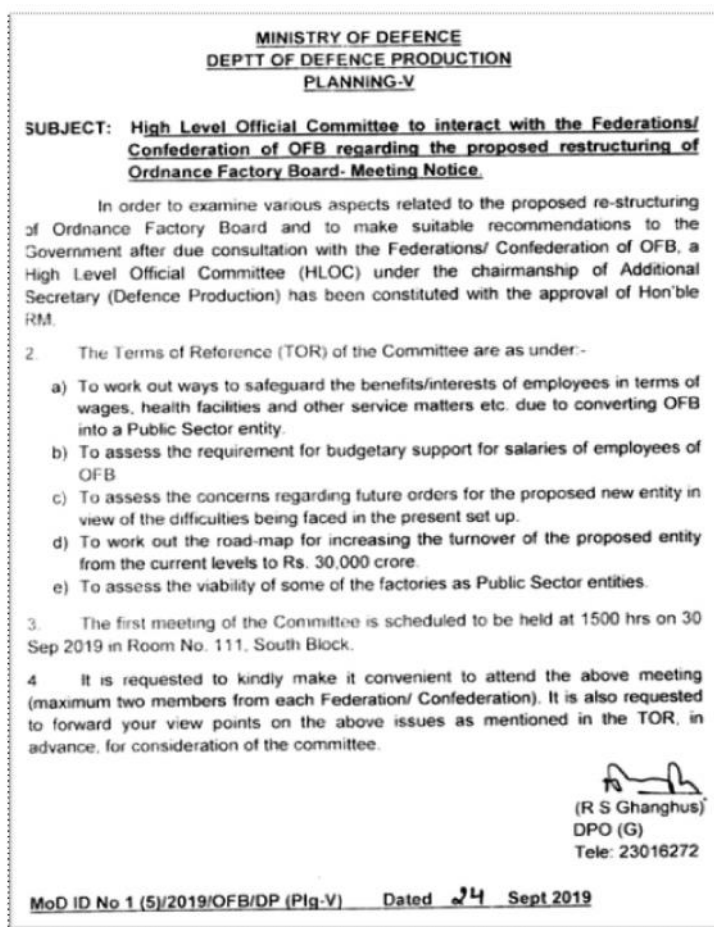
Crony capitalism in display as the government decided to sell its hundred per cent stake while making other facilitating arrangements for the private player to take over Air India with its huge asset base.

## Defence

### **Modi Govt. Betrays Defence Employees**

The month long notified strike of 98,000 defence employees in all 41 ordnance factories in the country, which began on 20 August, 2019 opposing the government's decision to corporatise the government's Ordnance Factory Board (OFB), the first step towards privatisation; was 'postponed' effective 26 August morning pursuant to the discussion between the three employees federations and the Secretary of Defence Production and other ministry officials assuring that 'No final decision' was taken and that a high powered committee would be constituted to discuss the employees' concern about this move of the government. This was confirmed in the joint statement by the three federations.

Betraying this understanding, the Department of Defence Production on 24 September issued notification on the matters of discussion between the high level committee and the employees' federations fixing 30 September as meeting date, the day of workers national convention.



From the notification it is clear that the Government has already taken final decision on corporatisation of OFB. The proposed discussion would be on post fact matters after corporatisation mainly related to workers service related issues, commitment to increase production and closure of some establishments on viability ground after corporatisation.

# STATES

## Delhi

### **Victory of Municipal Workers Struggle in Delhi**

Led by the Anti-malaria Ekta Karmachari Union of CITU, 3500 Domestic Breeding Checkers (DBC), employed as contract workers in the three Municipal Corporations of Delhi (MCDs), came out victorious on reaching agreement and signing minutes by the managements of three MCDs and the leaders of the Union and of CITU Delhi state committee on 16 September consequent to indefinite strike, 90% of them joining, and thousands of them staging dharna in front of the Corporations headquarter at Civic Centre in Delhi;

As per agreement, all 3500 contract DBC workers will be absorbed in permanent category – about 600 of them will be regularized in the existing vacant posts within December 2019 and rest of them will be absorbed in phases on the basis of seniority as and when vacancy arises and/or additional posts sanctioned. It was also agreed that in case of death of a DBC worker in service, a member of his family will be employed on compassionate ground.

To implement the agreement, North and of South MCDs have already written to Delhi government and the Union finance ministry for 1400 and 1350 additional sanctioned posts respectively. It is under process in East MCD.

DBC were originally recruited by MCDs as seasonal workers on daily wages in 1996 to control mosquito borne diseases like dengue, chikenguenia, malaria etc. Since 2010 they started to work uninterrupted round the year and were engaged for other work like serving notice for house tax collection, removal of illegal hoardings, fogging, focal spray, etc. Yet, they remained contract workers on minimum wage without any statutory benefit.

In this background, at CITU's initiative, they formed the Union in September 2016 and since then carried on struggles including strikes on 18 January and 29-30 August in 2017 as the management failed to keep their earlier oral assurances. On 30 August, 2017 first breakthrough came when an agreement was signed, and later implemented, on several statutory and other benefits including 12 days casual leave, holidays and maternity leave; bonus, PF and ESI benefits like other permanent employees. However, the assurance on regularisation in jobs remained elusive.

Following that, this agreement on 16 September, 2019 on regularisation was their second big victory.

## Rajasthan

### **Asha Workers March & Rally before Vidhan Sabha**

Thousands of Asha workers, coming from several districts, held a state level *March* to Vidhan Sabha on 23 July with their 7 point demands. On reaching Vidhan Sabha, the *March* converted into a rally, staging demonstration and holding public meeting addressed by CPI(M) MLA Balwan Punia; CITU state leaders Ravindra Shukla, V. S. Rana and others. A delegation met the state health minister Dr. Raghu Sharma and submitted memorandum with demands. He assured to take action in consultation with the Chief Minister.

**Increase in Remuneration:** Asha workers agitation and demands were followed up by CPI(M) MLAs, Balwan Punia and Giridhari Mahia, with the government. On 29 July, Gehlot government announced its cabinet decision to increase Asha workers honourarium by Rs.200 per month.

## **Workers Protest against Police Action on Students**

Led by the CITU district committee, hundreds of workers of CITU unions in Sikar marched in procession from Dhaka Bhavan to district collectorate and staged militant demonstration on 3 September in protest against police lathi charge on the students, including the girl students, and attack in local CPI(M) office on 28 August, following dispute in counting in the students unions election; and demanding action against the responsible district police and civil administration officials. A memorandum, addressed to the chief minister, was submitted to the district collector. The workers rally was addressed by CITU state leader Hazarilal Sharma, its district leaders Subhas Nehra and state and district leaders of the unions. After massive movement, first by SFI and then by CPI(M), CITU and other mass organisations, the government transferred the district magistrate, The police chief and instituted enquiry on police action.

## **Daikin Workers Protest**



After more than 200 days continuous struggle, hundreds of workers of Japanese multinational company Daikin Airconditioning at Neemrana travelled 70 kms to district headquarter Alwar and, led by the president Rukmuddin and general secretary Daulatram of Daikin Airconditioning Mazdoor Union and district leaders of CITU and AITUC, marched in procession from local bus stand to district collector's office, staged demonstration, held public meeting and submitted memorandum to district collector on 8 August demanding immediate withdrawal of false police cases against them filed by Rajasthan police for joining nationwide workers strike on 8-9 January, 2019 and staging demonstration in front of the factory gate in 'Japanese Zone' at Neemrana.

Following agitation and tripartite meeting, permanent workers, who were prevented from joining duties, have now joined duties; for contract workers and on other issues conciliation meetings are being held; and against government's actions and violation of laws writ petition by the union and CITU is pending before Rajasthan High Court.

## **West Bengal**

### **Anti-Privatisation Convention at Durgapur**

A 'Save Public Sector' mass convention was held at Srijani Auditorium at Durgapur on 27 July, 2019 jointly organised by central trade unions - CITU, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, UTUC, TUCC; Chittaranjan Locomotive

Works Sanjukta Manch, Alloy Steel Plant Officers Union, BEFI, 12 July Committee, AIKS, DYFI, SFI and AIDWA. CITU West Bengal President Subhash Mukherjee presided. Its State General Secretary Anadi Sahoo placed the convention resolution containing demands - Stop privatisation of special steel plants - ASP, SSP and VISP; dismantling of CLW; and stop privatisation, disinvestment or closures of Bridge & Roof, NTPC; Air India; BCPL and Govt. Press.

Addressing the convention, as its main speaker, CITU General Secretary Tapan Sen recalled the struggle history and success of IISCO movement where, instead of sale of IISCO, the government was forced to reinvest Rs.16.000 to modernize IISCO. INTUC state President M. Q. Qamar and UTUC General Secretary Ashok Ghosh also addressed the convention.

Concluding the convention, Subhash Mukherjee announced 280 kms Padayatra from Chittaranjan Locomotive Works (CLW) Gate to Raj Bhawan in Kolkata on the convention demands.

## Assam

### **7<sup>th</sup> State Conference of Anganwadi Employees**

The 7<sup>th</sup> state conference of CITU's Anganwadi union, Assom Rajyik Anganwadi Karmi & Sahayika Sanstha, at Mangaldoi in Darrang district on 8-10 June; began with 3000 strong Anganwadi employees rally and public meeting chaired by reception committee chairperson Dr. Rama Kanta Bora and addressed by CITU national secretary and its Anganwadi federation AIFAWH's president Usha Rani, CITU state general secretary Tapan Sarma, Union's general secretary Indira Newar and its leader Puspallata Das.

274 delegates from 230 blocks in 23 districts representing 32,400 members participated in the delegates' session inaugurated by Usha Rani. 32 delegates participated in the discussion on the general secretary's report, placed by Indira Newar. The conference unanimously elected 21 office bearers with Jaymati Das as the president, Niroda Kakati as working president, Indira Newar as the general secretary and Ratna Sur as treasurer. 46 delegates for the all India conference were also elected. (*Inputs: Tapan Sarma*)

## Tamilnadu

### **Strike in Asahi Glass**

Permanent workers of Japanese MNC, Asahi India Glass Ltd in Kanchipuram, manufacturing car glasses for Hyundai, Ford, Renault, Nissan Mahindra etc; were on strike since 11 April, 2019 in protest against dismissal of 28 office bearers and activists of CITU-led newly formed union and recognition braving attacks and threats of the management, government and the police. Ultimately, a tripartite meeting was held, called by the district collector on 18 June and attended by the DLC and CITU leaders, which continued till early hours of 20 June. An agreement was arrived with the management's assurance of holding bilateral discussion with the union and settling the dismissal issue of the union's leaders; and the union calling off the strike.

### **Anganwadi Employees Demonstration**

Demanding implementation of declared enhanced remuneration, against government's move to increase workload and privatisation and on other demands, Tamilnadu Anganwadi Workers & Helpers Union (CITU) staged demonstrations at 421 Blocks in 22 districts with total participation by about 15,000 Anganwadi employees.

## Karnataka

### **Construction Workers Protest against Repeal of Cess**



Led jointly by CITU, AITUC, INTUC, NCL and HMS construction workers state unions, more than 5000 construction workers from all over the state converged in Bengaluru on 19 September and held rally at Freedom Park protesting against the proposed repeal of Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996 in the proposed social security code of Modi government. On behalf of state government, its labour secretary, along with the welfare board officials, came at Freedom Park and received memorandum. He assured that the workers concern would be conveyed to the chief minister and try to resolve other issues which are concerning welfare board.

Earlier, on 17 July, a round table meeting was held, which was attended by retired Supreme Court judge V. Gopalagouda as a legal expert. On 9 August district level joint demonstrations were held and thousands of protest postcards were sent to the prime minister and the chief minister.

## Punjab

### **Asha Workers Rally**

Called by Asha Workers and Facilitators Union, Punjab of CITU, an impressive and militant rally and demonstration was held at Mohali on 20 September in front of the office of the director of health services. Despite police attempt to prevent the rally and threat of arrests, the Asha workers marched towards the venue and held rally. Ultimately, the district administration came to the rally and received memorandum from the leaders of the union. The government assured to hold a director level meeting on 25 September.

The rally was addressed by CITU state general secretary Raghunath Singh, leaders of the union Ranjeet Kaur, Saroj Kumari, Sukhajeet Kaur and other CITU state leaders Jatinder Pal Singh, Sucha Singh Ajnala, Kewal Hajara and Rajinder Kaur and others.

# WORKING WOMEN

## Decisions of AICCW

(Bangalore; 6 August, 2019)

A.R. Sindhu

### Issues of the Working Women

Recently released Periodic Labour Force Survey shows a continuous decrease in the women's work participation rate in India. It has sharply declined from 41.6% in 2004 to 22% in 2017-18. This shows only one aspect of the women's work participation that comes under the definition of 'principal status worker'.

With continuing agrarian crisis and galloping unemployment, increasingly more women are joining labour force seeking job. They are forced to do precarious jobs which are not even counted as 'work' and not accounted in statistics. It is essential to account these jobs to assess both the extent of exploitation of women as well as their contribution to the economy.

Women's wages are shockingly low. Wages of women are 34% less than that of men in rural areas and 19% less in urban areas in the country. India has the highest gender pay gap in the world. It increases with higher qualifications and seniority.

Majority of women workers do not get maternity benefits and crèche facilities. Night work is being imposed on them. Recently, the Mines Act is amended to allow women in underground in the name of 'equality'.

There are recent stories of women labourers in sugarcane cutting being forced to surgically remove their child bearing womb. The women garment workers are being given pills to avoid menstruation. These reveal how the profiteering of the capitalist system has completely ignoring women's health.

Under neoliberalism, violence against women and children, including sexual harassment at workplaces, has been increasing day by day to alarming proportions. The religious fundamentalism is making things worse for the women.

It is very important for us to bring these issues to the forefront and build movement and struggles.

### Review of Activities

Last AICCW (All India Coordination Committee of Working Women) meeting, held on 31 October 2018, had taken some decision - to campaign on the issues of working women; reiterated its decision to form CCWWs (Coordination Committee of Working Women); discussion on working women through class perspective; conduct survey and organise joint campaign with fraternal trade unions on Violence against Women; and quota for circulation of '*Voice of Working Women*' and of '*Kamkaji Mahila*' were fixed. There is lack of implementation report except from Kerala.

### Internal Complaints Committee

CITU's 'National Workshop on Sexual Harassment at Workplace' discussed in details the issue of sexual harassment at workplaces as well as within the organisation. The workshop recommended constituting effective mechanism to address the issues of sexual harassment within the organization. CITU working committee meeting held on 1-3 November 2018 at Visakhapatnam again discussed the issue and reiterated the decision to implement the recommendations of the workshop on sexual harassment.

Accordingly, an internal complaints committee has been constituted at the CITU central office. CITU all state committees were asked to form internal complaints committees with women constituting at least half of its members including one external member who has the experience in handling such cases. The chairperson of the committee should be a woman.

### **CCWW Conventions**

It was decided that there should be proper planning to hold State and District Working Women's Conventions and in those conventions to form respective State and District Coordination Committees of Working Women (CCWW) along with the district and state conferences of CITU. Earlier practice was to hold such working women's conventions prior to CITU district and state conferences.

The 15<sup>th</sup> Conference of CITU had also decided to change the structure of the All India, State and District Coordination Committees of Working Women for their effective functioning. As of now in 12 States CCWW (CITU)s have been formed. It is necessary to review the implementation of tasks, adopted in the 11<sup>th</sup> Convention of AICCCWW (CITU), by the respective committees.

### **CITU Conferences**

It is necessary to ensure proportionate participation of women workers at all levels of CITU conferences with minimum of 25% women delegates in proportion to the women membership. Proper representation of women in various CITU committees should also be ensured. There should be proper review of work in working women's front in CITU conferences.

### **Future Tasks**

1. National workshop on POSH Act and its implementation along with AIDWA and AILU;
2. Two days National workshop/seminar on the issues of working women in November/December 2019.
3. A nationwide campaign for two months on these issues culminating in 'jail bhara' of working women on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Call may be given from CITU conference.
4. Ensure adequate representation of women in delegation (proportional to membership to a minimum of 25%) and in committees in CITU conferences at all levels. Review of work on working women's front in the conferences.
5. National Convention in March 2020. All state conventions to be completed before it.

*(A.R. Sindhu is National Convener of AICCCWW & CITU Secretary)*

## **Protest against Attack on Unnao Rape Victim**

CITU called to protest against ghastly attack on the Unnao rape victim, her family members and lawyer masquerading as a road accident. In the attack on 28 July her aunts were killed and the girl and her lawyer fighting for life. Adityanath government had been ignoring the complaint of rape against the BJP MLA for 2 long years. Her father was beaten up in police custody. Several mass organisations including CITU and of women and others organised protest in different parts of the country. In Delhi, the protest rally was organized by CITU, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI in front of UP Bhawan, which was addressed by CITU state president Virender Gaud. In Haryana, CITU unions along with other mass organisations organized protest in various places. In Jind a demonstration was held on 31 July, effigies of the UP CM and PM were burnt. The rally was addressed by state leaders – CITU's Kashmir Singh Sonwal, AIDWA's Santosh Uchana and AIAWU's Prakash Chandra.

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

| State | Centre              | June<br>2019 | July<br>2019 | State      | Centre         | June<br>2019           | July<br>2019 |            |
|-------|---------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|----------------|------------------------|--------------|------------|
| AP    | GUNTUR              | 297          | 295          | MHR        | MUMBAI         | 309                    | 312          |            |
|       | VIJAYWADA           | 301          | 303          |            | NAGPUR         | 393                    | 403          |            |
|       | VISHAKHAPATHNAM     | 297          | 299          |            | NASIK          | 360                    | 362          |            |
| ASM   | DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA | 278          | 286          | PUN        | PUNE           | 344                    | 351          |            |
|       | GUWAHATI            | 278          | 286          |            | SHOLAPUR       | 331                    | 335          |            |
|       | LABAC SILCHAR       | 278          | 279          |            | ORI            | ANGUL TALCHER          | 332          | 335        |
|       | MARIANI JORHAT      | 262          | 266          |            |                | ROURKELA               | 319          | 319        |
|       | RANGAPARA TEZPUR    | 259          | 262          |            |                | PUD                    | PUDUCHERRY   | 323        |
| BIH   | MUNGER JAMALPUR     | 345          | 354          | PUN        | AMRITSAR       | 338                    | 342          |            |
| CHD   | CHANDIGARH          | 311          | 317          |            | JALANDHAR      | 323                    | 325          |            |
| CHS   | BHILAI              | 332          | 332          | RJN        | LUDHIANA       | 297                    | 298          |            |
| DLI   | DELHI               | 302          | 307          |            | AJMER          | 290                    | 294          |            |
| GOA   | GOA                 | 333          | 342          |            | BHILWARA       | 293                    | 298          |            |
| GUJ   | AHMEDABAD           | 283          | 285          | TN         | JAIPUR         | 309                    | 320          |            |
|       | BHAVNAGAR           | 299          | 301          |            | CHENNAI        | 287                    | 286          |            |
|       | RAJKOT              | 299          | 300          |            | COIMBATORE     | 293                    | 287          |            |
|       | SURAT               | 276          | 278          |            | COONOOR        | 341                    | 339          |            |
|       | VADODARA            | 279          | 282          |            | MADURAI        | 305                    | 302          |            |
| HRY   | FARIDABAD           | 278          | 280          | TEL        | SALEM          | 301                    | 300          |            |
|       | YAMUNANAGAR         | 299          | 304          |            | TIRUCHIRAPALLY | 305                    | 305          |            |
| HP    | HIMACHAL PRADESH    | 272          | 274          | TRP        | GODAVARIKHANI  | 335                    | 343          |            |
| J&K   | SRINAGAR            | 276          | 281          |            | HYDERABAD      | 270                    | 270          |            |
| JRK   | BOKARO              | 307          | 308          |            | WARRANGAL      | 327                    | 326          |            |
|       | GIRIDIH             | 345          | 349          | UP         | TRIPURA        | 265                    | 267          |            |
|       | JAMSHEDPUR          | 357          | 365          |            | AGRA           | 357                    | 365          |            |
|       | JHARIA              | 361          | 371          | GHAZIABAD  | 335            | 340                    |              |            |
|       | KODARMA             | 386          | 391          | KANPUR     | 343            | 348                    |              |            |
| KNT   | RANCHI HATIA        | 383          | 396          | WB         | LUCKNOW        | 339                    | 346          |            |
|       | BELGAUM             | 309          | 312          |            | VARANASI       | 335                    | 340          |            |
|       | BENGLURU            | 300          | 299          |            | ASANSOL        | 337                    | 344          |            |
|       | HUBLI DHARWAR       | 335          | 342          |            | DARJEELING     | 278                    | 278          |            |
|       | MERCARA             | 312          | 313          |            | DURGAPUR       | 333                    | 332          |            |
| KRL   | MYSORE              | 319          | 318          | HALDIA     | 339            | 362                    |              |            |
|       | ERNAKULAM           | 325          | 322          | HOWRAH     | 294            | 294                    |              |            |
|       | MUNDAKKAYAM         | 322          | 320          | JALPAIGURI | 280            | 288                    |              |            |
| MP    | QUILON              | 373          | 372          | KOLKATA    | 290            | 291                    |              |            |
|       | BHOPAL              | 330          | 336          | RANIGANJ   | 293            | 296                    |              |            |
|       | CHHINDWARA          | 311          | 314          | SILIGURI   | 283            | 287                    |              |            |
|       | INDORE              | 285          | 289          |            |                |                        |              |            |
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# 2 August Countrywide Protest

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Guwahati, Assam



Kuar, Odisha



Vizag, Andhra Pradesh



Parliament Street, Delhi

Patna, Bihar



# 2 August Countrywide Protest

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**Chennai & Trichy, Tamilnadu**



**Ranchi & Kathara, Jharkhand**



**Raipur, Chhattisgarh**



**Jaipur & Neemrana, Rajasthan**