

The Voice of the Working Woman

**Workers of the World
UNITE !**



Long Live May Day!

CITU General Council calls for Intensifying Nationwide Struggles 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' on 5th September 2018 in New Delhi

The General Council meeting of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) held on 23-26 March 2018 at Mohammed Amin Nagar (Town Hall, Kozhikode) decided to intensify the struggles, both independent and joint, to achieve the just demands of the working people.

The General Council decided on the following action programmes

- **Countrywide Protest action on 2nd April 2018 against the Government of India decision on Fixed Term Employment**
- **“Pol Khol Halla Bol” (Expose and Protest) action programme at the call of Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan (National Platform of class, mass and social organisations) on the occasion of completion of four years of the NDA Government on 23rd May 2018. Massive mobilizations at state/district headquarters**
- **9th August 2018 – on Quit India Day – Jail Bharo along with peasant and agricultural workers organisations on demands of workers, peasants and agricultural workers.**
- **Joint mobilization of Five lakh workers, peasants and agricultural workers on 5th September 2018 in “ Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally’ in New Delhi**
- **Prepare for the joint trade union action including indefinite strike**

The General Council meeting also decided to increase the CITU membership to one crore by 2020.

<p><i>The Voice of the Working Woman</i> <i>Monthly Journal of the AICCWW(CITU)</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Editorial Board</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Editor K Hemalata</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Working Editor Ranjana Nirula</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Members A R Sindhu Sunanda Bhattacharya</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Inside</u></p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="width: 50%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"><i>Page</i></th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%;"></th> <th style="width: 10%; text-align: center;"><i>Page</i></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>May Day</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black;">India Today</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">14</td> </tr> <tr> <td>General Council Report</td> <td style="text-align: center;">7</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black;">International</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">20</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AICCWW Meeting Report</td> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black;">Special Report</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Resolutions</td> <td style="text-align: center;">10</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black;">Breaking Barriers</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">26</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Women on the Move</td> <td style="text-align: center;">12</td> <td style="border-left: 1px solid black;">CITU Pledge</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;">27</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="5" style="text-align: center; padding-top: 10px;"> Total pages - 28 (including cover pages) </td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		<i>Page</i>			<i>Page</i>	May Day	4	India Today		14	General Council Report	7	International		20	AICCWW Meeting Report	9	Special Report		24	Resolutions	10	Breaking Barriers		26	Women on the Move	12	CITU Pledge		27	Total pages - 28 (including cover pages)				
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Attacks on Democracy

Our Constitution proclaims that we are a 'sovereign socialist secular democratic republic'. We boast of being the largest democracy in the world. However today, democracy, one of the basic pillars of our republic is under threat from forces in power at the Centre and in some states, those very forces who swore by the Constitution.

The ruling Trinamul Congress in West Bengal has been trying to subvert democracy in the state since it came to power, particularly targeting the left. Its attacks on democracy have plunged to even more shameful low during the present process of Panchayat elections in the state. It has devised a new method of capturing the government offices, block development offices, sub divisional offices and even offices of the divisional magistrates, where nomination papers for the elections are to be submitted. It wants to make the entire democratic process a sham by preventing nominations by the opposition parties, mainly the Left parties, through brutal and murderous physical attacks.

It is in such attacks that Basudev Acharia, senior leader of the country's trade union movement, vice president of CITU and a former MP sustained serious injuries and had to be kept in ICU for several days. Ram Chandra Dom, general secretary of Dalit Soshan Mukti Manch, also a former MP, was also seriously injured in these attacks. In addition hundreds of cadres of left parties have been injured. These desperate attacks to prevent even nomination of opposition candidates are a reflection of the Trinamul Congress losing its grip over the rural masses in West Bengal.

Winning and losing elections is an integral part of democracy. But, as the Trinamul Congress in West Bengal, so the BJP in Tripura has started attacks on the Left on the day results were announced, as soon as its victory became clear. The burning, vandalising and capture of offices, extortions and threats continue even after more than a month. The scheme workers are being forced to resign their jobs; CITU members are being threatened to leave the organisation and join BMS. Police machinery is being used to target the CPI (M), the major left party in the state.

The intention is clear – to weaken the left by creating an atmosphere of terror and fear among the workers and the people; to suppress through terror when they could not conquer through conviction.

Not only in West Bengal and Tripura. Several other state governments led by the BJP, Congress or other bourgeois regional parties too are resorting to measures to suppress the democratic rights of the people, particularly the democratic rights of the workers to organise and struggle for their just demands. CITU and union leaders are being arrested, retained in police stations to prevent peaceful mobilisations on their demands.

It is clear that these attacks on democracy are meant to suppress any opposition to the anti people, anti worker policies of the ruling parties, in the fight against which the left has been consistently playing an active role. It is meant to suppress the struggles of the working class and the toiling people.

The working class has to understand the true character of these attacks as attacks on democracy and raise its united voice against all such attacks.

On this May Day, when we extend solidarity and support to all the toiling people across the globe, let us pledge to mobilise the working class in the struggle to save democracy in our country from being undermined by the ruling classes.

Observe May Day 2018 with Internationalism and Solidarity!

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) in the name of its more than 92 million affiliates all over the world salutes, on the occasion of this great day, all the workers who live, work and struggle in every corner of the world. May Day was, is and will be a beacon for the struggles of yesterday and tomorrow despite our enemies' efforts. May Day has to be a message of resistance against bourgeoisie, imperialists and their international alliances' policies.

At the same time, the workers' blood which was shed in Chicago on 1886 reminds us of our duty today; it reminds us that nothing is given for free; every right or freedom that was conquered by our class has been won through sacrifices, conflicts and organized struggles.

Today, while technology and scientific progress have contributed to the increase of the produced social wealth, our class' living conditions have been deteriorating. In every capitalist country, the bosses attack our class achievements: they are sweeping through salaries, pensions and social security; they are privatizing everything, they do not hesitate to attack even the sacred right to strike! Strike is the most powerful weapon we have in our hands and we are not going to allow anyone to limit, confine or convert it to a dead letter!

At the same time, they are intensively preparing and conducting regional wars. They pave the way for new massacres that will maximize their profits, for new imperialist interventions that will destroy nations, spill peoples' blood and deprive them of their natural resources. The ongoing imperialist intervention in Libya and Syria, the growing aggression against Venezuela, the US decision to recognize Jerusalem as the capital of Israel, the massacre of Saudi Arabia against Yemen, the tension on the Korean peninsula, they are all indications that multinationals have smelled new profitability areas; and every time this goes through the dead bodies of workers.

Under the current conditions of the deep economic crisis of capitalism and intense competition among various imperialist centers to control new markets, our most powerful weapons are INTERNATIONALISM and SOLIDARITY. No worker must feel alone. All together, we must move on with Solidarity and Internationalism, building the Unity of the working class to give practical effect to Karl Marx's motto "proletarians of all countries unite".

In this context, and on this anniversary, the WFTU expresses its solidarity with our persecuted brothers, the immigrants and refugees, who either because of imperialists' bullets or because of poverty and misery generated by this system, are forced to leave their homeland. The WFTU will continue to be on their side, fighting for a world without exploitation and refugees. Immigrants must become an integral part of unions, unite with local workers and fight together for wages, rights, against wars and interventions.

We join our voice with the heroic Palestinian people in order to gain their own independent and democratic homeland.

At the same time, we stand by the side of the struggling female worker, the one who suffers from double exploitation. The WFTU female members, at the recent World Women's Congress in Panama, declared loud and clear that they want equal rights to work, society and life. The WFTU also fights and will continue to fight for this equality. It's the same orientation that we follow for the the youngsters, as the new generation of workers have the task to honor the best May Day struggle traditions.

This year, the WFTU, by giving its hand to anyone who has stood up, has announced the year of trade union education and training. Our purpose is that the new shifts of workers be insubordinate, militant, enemies of class compromise and collaboration. We honor the year of trade union training and we call on every union to contribute to the militant truth, revealing the true meaning

of May Day and the sacrifices the working class made for it. By rescuing the past, the very memory of our movement, we leave a legacy for tomorrow's struggles and we also have a tool for the future. It is a duty to know the history of our movement.

The WFTU takes steps forward, strengthens and grows: and that's what frightens our opponents. There is no other way than to make it present everywhere, in every corner of the world, so that there is no longer a hungry, dismissed, hunted or persecuted worker. The WFTU must be a "trench" of struggle for a future without exploitation of man by man. This is how the vision of the first Secretary General of the WFTU, Luis Saillant, envisioned in 1945 will be brought to life: **"The WFTU for the workers of the whole world!"**

LONG LIVE MAY DAY!

On this May Day, CITU

Reiterates its conviction that the challenges confronting the working class and the toiling people in the country today necessitate three pronged struggle – the struggle against neoliberalism, against divisive communal and casteist forces and against authoritarianism

Proclaims its determination to mobilise the entire working class in the country to effectively face these challenges

Reiterates its strong **determination to strengthen and** widen the unity of all sections of toiling people in the platform of united struggle; this is the prerequisite for heightening the struggle for resistance to the anti-people socio-economic-political regime

Affirms its belief that that majority and minority communalism and fundamentalism thrive on each other; communalisms of whatever colours and flags divide people, disrupt their unity, divert their attention from real day to day issues, weaken their struggle against the real culprit – the neoliberal policies and the exploitative system; ultimately communalism serves the exploiting classes

Stresses the need for unity of the workers, poor peasants and agricultural workers to fight the neoliberal order and the capitalist system that subjects all of them to intense exploitation **and resolve to work in that direction**

Is determined to take up independent campaigns, initiatives to strengthen the joint trade union movement as well as united struggles of all toiling masses by placing concrete alternative policies to **neoliberalism in order to** achieve widest possible mobilisation of the toiling masses

Reiterates its belief that development of such massive struggles alone can lead to a comprehensive change in the correlation of class forces in favour of the working class

On this May Day 2017, CITU appeals to the working class of India to:

Strengthen unity and intensify the struggle to defeat neoliberal policies and for alternative pro worker pro people policies

Be vigilant and defeat the machinations of communal and casteist forces to disrupt unity

Deepen bonds of solidarity among all sections of toiling people – workers, agricultural workers, poor peasants etc

Identify the real enemy of the working class and all sections of toiling people – the capitalist system and the politics and forces that promote the system; prepare for the struggle to change this exploitative system

On this May Day CITU Raises its banner in support of International Working Class Solidarity and Unity Against all Exploitation and Oppression

Down With Capitalism and Imperialism! Long Live Socialism!

Workers of the World Unite!

Massive Mazdoor Kisan Rally in Delhi on 5th September

Hemalata

The general council of CITU which met in Kozhikode on 23-26 March 2018 gave a clarion call to the working class of the country to participate in huge numbers in the rally in the national capital Delhi on 5th September 2018 to highlight its demands. The general council expressed its great happiness that the two major countrywide organisations of the peasants and agricultural workers, the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and the All India Agricultural Workers' Union (AIAWU) have agreed to join the rally. Thus for the first time largest section of the toiling people - industrial workers from the organised and unorganised sectors from urban and rural areas, the scheme workers and the peasants and agricultural workers will jointly march in the national capital for the first time, voicing their demands.

349 members of the general council including 53 women from 22 states in the country attended the general council in addition to 14 invitees from the fraternal trade union organisations and 12 special invitees from different states.

The CITU general council meeting started with hoisting of the CITU flag on 23rd March by Hemalata, president of CITU. Floral tributes were paid to the martyrs' column by Hemalata and Tapan Sen, general secretary of CITU, followed by all the office bearers and general council members. The photo of Bhagat Singh, who was martyred, along with his comrades in arms Sukh Dev and Rajguru, on the same day in 1931, was garlanded by Tapan Sen, Hemalata and others.

Elamaram Kareem, national secretary of CITU and chairman of the reception committee welcomed the general council members to the historical city of Kozhikode, which has a great legacy of anti colonial and working class struggles. The city was a hub of activity of legendary leaders like P Krishna Pillai, EMS Namboodiripad and AK Gopalan. The reception committee organised a series of programmes including seminars on various subjects, family get togethers, general body meetings etc on the occasion of the CITU general council meeting in the city. The expenditure for the meeting was met exclusively by contributions from the members of CITU in the district.

Hemalata presided over the meeting. In the inaugural session the general council unanimously passed two important resolutions – one condemning the barbaric attacks including burning and vandalising of offices, physical attacks, extortion, forceful occupying of offices of CITU and other left oriented organisations by the BJP on the cadres and supporters of the left parties and CITU in Tripura. It extended solidarity to the left and CITU cadres and expressed the confidence that they will be able to create confidence among the people to resist these attacks soon.

The general council also congratulated the working class of Kerala and all the 16 trade unions who have jointly decided to go on a state wide strike against the decision of the BJP led government at the centre to introduce Fixed Term Employment in all sectors through a notification, despite the strong opposition by all the central trade unions to an earlier attempt towards this. It called upon all its state committees to hold demonstrations and rallies all over the country, in support of the joint strike in Kerala

The report of the general secretary, Tapan Sen, highlighted the conditions of the working class and other sections of the toiling people under the BJP led Modi government. The three significant features of the government's domestic policy are - aggressive pursuit of neoliberal policies, open support to the communal and disruptive 'Hindutva' agenda of the RSS and increasing authoritarian tendencies.

The BJP government is trying to hoodwink the people through deceptive slogans even when in practice the various measures taken by it have led to the deterioration in the conditions of the vast sections of the workers, particularly in the unorganised sector, the micro, small and medium enterprises, the small traders, peasants etc. The same trend was witnessed in the recent Union Budget 2018-19. Demonetisation, GST, the Union Budget 2018-19 and the various notifications it has been issuing time to time were all

utilised to transfer wealth, created by the blood and toil of the people, to the few big corporates, domestic and foreign. The last Budget of the BJP led government also continued the trend of giving enormous concessions to the big capitalist and landlord classes while imposing huge burdens on the workers and other common people, who saw worsening of their working conditions and erosion of their incomes. The public sector is being dismantled. Coal mines have been opened up for private commercial mining. The BJP government, which never fails to evoke sentiments of nationalism, is privatising strategic sectors like defence and railways, jeopardising national interests. The Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill 2017 puts the financial institutions in the dock for non payment of loans but not the corporations which defaulted. On the one hand this will pave the way for privatisation of these institutions and on the other the common people are put at risk of losing their deposits fully or partially, when the banks become bankrupt.

In addition to the amendments to the labour laws, which have been discussed several times, the government has recently amended the Contract Labour Act, removing whatever protection the contract workers had till now. The whole concept of permanent and perennial nature of jobs is being changed to 'core and peripheral jobs'. Thus a worker performing permanent nature of work cannot claim regularisation. Similarly, workers working for an agency to which a particular job has been outsourced cannot be considered as contract workers and the principal employer has no obligation to ensure implementation of labour laws in that case. Penalties for violation of the amended Act have been reduced to a minimum. The government has also introduced Fixed Term Employment through a notification despite serious opposition to the move first introduced by the former NDA government led by Vajpayee in 2002, which the UPA I government was compelled to rescind under pressure from the trade union movement and the Left parties in 2007. The entire process is aimed at improving its '*Ease of Doing Business Index*' at the cost of the workers.

The attacks on dalits and minorities, particularly the Muslim minorities, have increased. Their livelihood is being attacked by the so called 'gau rakshaks', to benefit the big corporate cattle traders. The communal outfits are seeking to control all the aspects of the day to day lives of common people, dictating what they can eat, what they can wear, whom they can befriend or marry etc. They are trying to throttle all voices of dissent or opposition through physical attacks, blackmailing, intimidation etc.

The government is also resorting to authoritarian measures by bypassing the Rajya Sabha, by claiming many bills as 'Money Bills', issuing notifications etc. While the government claims to be super nationalist, it is resorting to anti national measures like privatisation, including of railways, defence, handing over our natural resources to foreign and domestic private players etc.

It is in this context that there is an upsurge in struggles by the workers, peasants, students, dalits and other sections of society. The various sectoral struggles and the huge unprecedented joint trade union 'mahapaav' are evidence of this. The joint trade union movement is preparing for a multiple day countrywide general strike. In this background an intensive and extensive independent campaign highlighting the issues related to the working and living conditions of all sections of toiling people, while at the same time projecting the alternative pro people policies, will help in strengthening united struggles to defeat the neoliberal agenda of the ruling classes.

The CITU general council also discussed, in a separate session, the draft of the updated document on organisation placed by Tapan Sen and adopted it unanimously. Hemalata presented the proposal for future organisational and movemental tasks along with a detailed plan for their effective implementation. These too were adopted unanimously.

The plan chalked out by the CITU general council combined both organisational and movemental tasks. The updated document on organisation will be translated into local languages and discussed in the state level workshops. The state committees will prepare their own document on organisation suitable to their states but in line with the document adopted in the general council. The updated document on organisation will be taken to all members of the CITU committees right to the lowest level to facilitate its effective implementation. The state level workshops will also concretely plan implementation of the CITU slogan of

'Reach the unreached' and 'link issues with policies and expose politics behind the policies', utilising the campaign. The number of workers to be approached, methods of campaign etc will also be finalised in the workshops. It was decided to undertake this type of exercise in all state level unions and also at the district level.

The 12 point charter of demands of the joint trade union movement, the 10 points adopted by the CITU secretariat, will be highlighted during the campaign. In addition, the issues of all sections of the toiling people – employment, housing, education, health, social justice, women's empowerment, agrarian distress etc will be highlighted. The campaign will also highlight concrete alternatives on all these issues, explaining to the people how it is possible to achieve their demands with the existing resources, if there is political will.

It was decided that all state committees of CITU should meet at the earliest to concretise the organisational and movemental tasks adopted by the CITU general council. The CITU state committees were also called upon to:

- Play an active role in the effective implementation of the call of the **Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan (JEJAA)** to hold demonstrations all over the country on **23rd May 2018**, on the eve of the BJP led Modi government completing its four years in office. It urged them to expose the failures of the Modi government with the slogan **'Modi Sarkar Ka Char Sal - Phol Khol: Halla Bol'** through a week long wide campaign before that day
- Observe **30th May 2018**, the **Foundation Day of CITU** as a 'Pledge Day'
- Participate in the district level court arrest programme called by the AIKS on **9th August 2018** on the occasion of the **'Quit India Day'**. All the state committees and affiliated unions of CITU were called upon to mobilise workers in large numbers in the court arrest programme highlighting their own specific demands.
- On **14th August 2018** workers across the country will participate in the night long **'Samoochik Jagaran'** programme to focus on their demands and expose the failure of the ruling classes till today in implementing the vision of our freedom fighters of a self reliant, progressive and advanced country free of poverty, hunger, illiteracy etc
- In **August 2018** CITU will conduct **5 regional jathas** to cover the entire country; in addition, **state level jathas** will be organised in all states to cover all the district headquarters and blocks.
- This will culminate in **a massive mobilisation** of not less than 2 lakh workers **in Delhi on 5th September**. These workers will be joined by thousands of peasants and agricultural workers

The general council of CITU passed unanimous resolutions supporting the 3 days' strike by the Regional Rural Bank employees, demanding that the government of India appeal against the recent Supreme Court judgement on SC/ST Act, on the IT/ITES employees, on Palestine and on the Rohingya issue.

Hemalata concluded the meeting of the general council expressing the confidence that by implementing the decisions the general council meeting will turn into a historic one in the annals of not only the CITU but of the trade union movement of the country. She thanked the Kerala state committee of CITU and the working class of Kerala for hosting the general council meeting and making excellent arrangements for its success.

AK Ramesh presented the vote of thanks on behalf of the reception committee.

A massive public meeting was held on the sea beach in the evening on 26th March. A large number of women workers participated in the meeting which was presided over by TK Ramakrishnan, the minister for Labour in the LDF government of Kerala. Pinarayi Vijayan, chief minister of Kerala, Tapan Sen, Hemalata, AK Padmanabhan and Anathalavottam Anandan, president of the Kerala state committee of CITU, addressed the gathering.

The general council meeting as well as the huge participation of the working class and the speech of the chief minister of Kerala created great enthusiasm and confidence among the participants.

CITU Decisions on Working Women

A meeting of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women AICCWW (CITU) General Council Tier was held on 22 March 2018 at Kozhikode, Kerala, one day prior to the CITU General Council meeting. The meeting was attended by 40 members from Assam, AP, Delhi, Haryana, HP, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telengana, West Bengal and the Centre. The meeting was attended by Hemalata, President CITU. Usharani presided over the meeting. A R Sindhu, Convenor, placed the report and future tasks. 15 members participated in the discussion.

The meeting reviewed the activities since the 11th Convention of AICCWW (CITU). It was reported that state conventions were held and coordination committees were formed in Assam and HP. 8 March was observed in many states and memoranda were submitted to the authorities on issues of women workers. It was reported that only very few unions have formed women's sub committees. The meeting proposed a set of tasks which was later adopted by the CITU General Council meeting held on 23-26 March 2018 at Kozhikode, Kerala.

Tasks taken up by the CITU General Council on Working Women

1. As per the conference decision, **the meetings of CCWWs and State CITU must discuss the Commission paper "Working Women - A Class Perspective"** to develop a clear understanding of the role of the Coordination Committees and our work among the working women.
2. Formation of State CCWWs in all states **within three months**. CITU committees must ensure the effective meetings of the respective CCWWs.
3. As per the conference decision, all unions affiliated to CITU and its federations having men and women members have to constitute women's sub committees to discuss the specific problems of working women in that sector and ensure that they are taken up by the respective union/ federation committees; they should also take appropriate programmes for development of women activists and promote them to decision making bodies
4. All state CCWWs shall discuss the tasks taken in the 11th convention of working women and make proposals for discussion and adoption by the CITU state committees
5. Implement the recommendations of the workshop on sexual harassment at workplace.
6. Similar workshops must be conducted at state and district level in all states in coordination with the Centre, to sensitise the CITU cadres.
7. Joint campaign along with the sub committees of fraternal trade unions – AISGEF, CCGEW, BEFI, AIIEA, FMRAI, BSNLEU etc
 - Conduct a survey on the existence of complaints committee in a. government and public sector, b. Private sector, c. Unorganised sector
 - Awareness campaign targeting our affiliated unions/ fraternal trade union organisations in the offices, factories, establishments and different sectors in the organised/ unorganised sectors
 - Demand for effective mechanisms to prevent and deal with the issue to be included in the charter of demands of the CITU unions
 - A hand book to be prepared for the activists on 'sexual harassment at workplace'
8. Popularise the charter of demands of working women adopted in the eleventh convention of AICCWW among widest possible sections of working women.
9. Trade Union Class for women cadres at state level. TU class for state level women cadres(non scheme workers) from Hindi states at central level
10. Joint Campaign on Violence against women to be planned at the national level
11. Complete the quota for Circulation of the Voice of the Working Woman and Kamkaji Mahila. Depute one person from each state for sending reports

Stand in Solidarity with the People of Tripura: Defend Democracy and Unity

The General Council of CITU, meeting in Kozhikode, Kerala, on 23-26 March 2018 expresses grave concern at the barbaric attacks by BJP/RSS hoodlums on the people of Tripura, particularly targeting the supporters of the left parties and the left oriented mass organisations, immediately after coming to power in the state.

Attacks by the BJP and its ally, the IPFT started on the same day of counting, as soon as the BJP front's victory became clear. Physical attacks on members, cadres and supporters of the left parties and burning of their houses, looting and ransacking of properties, vandalising, capturing and burning of the offices of left parties and several mass organisations including the offices of CITU have been continuing throughout the state since then. The state administration has remained a silent spectator. Hundreds of left cadres and activists have been injured in these attacks and several of them had to be hospitalised. The offices of CITU, particularly those of the Tripura Motor Shramik Union, have been targeted for attacks by the BJP goons. Many of these offices have been locked; the CITU flags bought down and the BJP flags have been hoisted forcibly. Many offices of the cooperative societies have also been similarly captured driving out the organisers and beneficiaries. While the ideologues of RSS, the parent organisation of BJP admire fascists like Hitler and Mussolini of Germany and Italy, who have cold bloodedly murdered hundreds of thousands of common people, their followers have brought down the statue of Lenin, who led the struggle for emancipation of the toiling people in Russia. Such is the hypocrisy of these fascistic forces in the country.

Owing to this violence, in many areas the male members of the families had to flee their homes. The BJP hoodlums are attacking even the women left in the house and extorting huge amounts of money, threatening to set the house on fire and kill their kids. Thousands of working people have become homeless and are unable to go to their workplaces due to the terror. An atmosphere of terror is sought to be created throughout the state in order to mute all opposition to BJP rule. This violence, meticulously planned in advance, is aimed at annihilating the Left, particularly the trade unions, the other mass organisations and welfare societies so long run democratically for the benefit of the people.

CITU General Council notes with pride that despite such terror and violence patronised by the state government, the activists of the Left, trade unions and democratic movement are bravely facing the situation. Leaders of left parties, CITU and other mass organisation are visiting the affected people across the state and providing them all the necessary help and support. They are trying to mobilise the people to raise their voice against such organised attacks being promoted by the BJP led state government.

The General Council of CITU affirms that such barbarism and fascistic violence is inbuilt in the ideology and modus operandi of RSS and BJP. This has to be combated both politically and organisationally. The General Council recalls the glorious tradition and record of the working class movement in Tripura which has heroically fought and successfully defeated such violence and attacks by the earlier Congress regime, when it allied with the separatist and terrorist outfits. It is to the credit of the Left Front government in the state that it established peace and harmony in the state after coming to the power again in 1993. CITU General Council expresses its total confidence that this time too, the working class movement in Tripura will politically, ideologically and organisationally defeat the onslaught of the divisive, disruptive and communal forces.

The General Council takes proud note of the protest demonstrations organised at the initiative of CITU state committees, against the attacks by the BJP and in solidarity with the people of Tripura. The General Council calls upon the working class all over the country irrespective of

affiliations, to come forward in support of the Left and working class movement of Tripura, to defend democracy and unity of the people in the state.

On Issues of IT and ITES employees

India's IT and ITES Industry was projected as the symbol of India's socio economic development and hub of high profile jobs. There was a big campaign on the employment generated and the possibilities. A considerable number of qualified youth were employed in the industry with huge pay packages in the earlier days, particularly in the software industry. Even at that time the scenario was totally different in ITES area. Young workers have been engaged on these jobs with monthly wages as low as Rs. 5000/- in precarious conditions. These workers are forced to work more than 12 hours.

The majority of the workers are engaged on very stringent conditions of working on contract for a specific time. The certificates of qualifications are confiscated by the management in order to stop attrition. The employees' work contract agreements are such that they cannot work in other companies for a period of one year where the same technology is used.

The working conditions of women workers are deplorable with increasing occupational hazards. Terminologies like 'employees utilization, reorienting, upgrading the skills' etc are used as an effective instruments to exploit the workers inhumanly. Even in renowned MNCs like IBM, the Over Time wages are Rs. 25 per hour. New methods of exploitation like "work from home" to extract more work without any additional benefits are being introduced. No labour laws are being implemented in this sector.

New technological inventions of the employees are forcibly appropriated by the companies and even the employees are not allowed to get their inventions patented.

Now, with the world economic crisis which started in 2008 aggravating, the 160 billion dollar Indian IT sector has also been seriously affected. Recent restrictions on HB visa by the Trump Regime in US is also adversely affected this sector.

While NASSCOM claims that addition of employees are on the rise, large scale retrenchments/ efforts for retrenchments are going on in various Indian IT majors including TCS, Infosys etc. It is reported that in 2017, more than 57,000 were retrenched.

The General Council Meeting of CITU being held at Kozhikode, Kerala on 23-26 March 2018, takes note with serious concern that the Government of India and many state government IT/ BPO policies are totally anti worker with no implementation of even the existing labour laws in the IT/ITES sector.

This General Council demands that Central and state governments should ensure that basic labour laws ensuring job security and fair working conditions are strictly implemented in this sector. We demand that the partial and full exemptions from the various labour legislations as incentive to these sectors should be withdrawn immediately. Further the General Council meeting demands the formation of tripartite committees at the national and state levels in this sector and also proper legislation to address the special problems of this sector.

This General Council notes with appreciation that the resistance movements by the IT employees started with the movement against large scale retrenchment in TCS and Verizon is developing with the formation of unions in different states. Many of the unions and organisations could effectively intervene in retrenchments and other issues, putting forth labour disputes and forcing the governments to declare that the labour laws are applicable to this sector. We proudly note that the first IT Union which is formed in Kerala is CITU's affiliate. Recently more unions are formed in some states.

This meeting calls upon the CITU state committees to take up the issues of the Information Technology and IT enabled services and take the initiative to organize them in trade unions to build a strong trade union movement in this sector.

AIFAWH to Struggle against Direct Benefit Transfer in ICDS and for Regularisation

A meeting of the Working Committee of AIFAWH was held on 27 March 2018 at Kozhikode, Kerala. The meeting was attended by members from AP, Delhi, Haryana, Karnataka, Kerala, Pondicherry, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Telengana, UP, West Bengal and Centre. The meeting discussed the Government of India's efforts to dismantle the ICDS through further reduction of central share of ICDS budget to 25%, introduction of cash transfers and directly sending ready to eat food packets to beneficiaries etc. The meeting decided to take up widest possible campaign among the employees as well as the beneficiaries.

The meeting took the following decisions

1. Massive mobilization on 23 May 2018 at state/district level at the call of Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan (JEJAA) – '*Modi Sarkar ki char saal, Pol Khol Halla Bol*' exposing the policies of NDA government
2. Against all 4 central budgets and the breaking of promise in ICDS by the Modi Government "*pol khol, halla bol*" campaign among anganwadi employees. Protest letters on budget to MPs to be submitted through mass deputation prior to the 23 May programme.
3. Campaign and signature collection from 5 crore workers and beneficiaries against cash transfer and packet food in ICDS demanding minimum wages and pension. Quota of 200 signatures per centre to be completed by August 2018 to be submitted on 6 September.
4. Observe 14 April 2018, the Birth anniversary of B R Ambedkar by organizing some programmes against caste oppression and discrimination
5. 10 July 2018 AIFAWH demands day to be observed as 'Save ICDS' Day , mobilizing at district headquarters/Parliamentary constituency/ in front of Central Minister's Offices in states
6. Massive mobilization on 5th September 2018 – Worker- Peasant Rally.
7. Membership 2018 to be enrolled as per quota (sent earlier) reflecting our influence
8. All dues must be cleared and the Struggle fund to be completed before March 2018
9. State level workshops to be completed by May 2018
10. State level TU Classes before 10 July. TU School for Hindi Speaking states in June 2018

Anganwadi Employees Victory in MP

Since February the anganwadi workers and helpers in Madhya Pradesh, were agitating for their demands, under the CITU banner. This was a part of their long drawn struggle for implementation of the recommendations of the minimum wage advisory board. On 27 and 28 February around 10 thousand anganwadi workers and helpers held a massive Mahapadav in Bhopal. On 10 March the Chief Minister called the leaders for talks and asked them for time for one month to consider their demands. However, the workers continued their struggle, with other unions joining in.

Under pressure of the struggle the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, in a panchayat called to discuss nutritious food on 8 April 2018, declared that the honorarium for the workers would be raised to Rs. 10,000 for anganwadi workers and Rs. 5,000 for anganwadi helpers.

The retirement age will be raised to 62 years and on superannuation the worker will be paid Rs one lakh and helpers will be paid Rs75,000. In case of natural death they will be paid Rs 2 lakhs and in case of accidental death they will be paid Rs 5 lakhs.

While the mahapanchayat was on, the police put up barricades were put up and participants were not allowed to enter the house of the Chief Minister. The women protested and finally the police was forced to allow them in after a bitter struggle.

The AIFAWH all India President Usha Rani congratulated all the Anganwadi workers and helpers of Madhya Pradesh and declared that the struggle for Minimum wages and for recognition as government employees will continue. This is an achievement for the entire workforce of Anganwadi employees, led by the union of Anganwadi workers and helpers affiliated to CITU.

Schools for ASHA Activists in Haryana

After a successful struggle in January and February, the Haryana ASHA Workers Union decided to conduct an education programme for the activists of the union.

The schooling programme was conducted at 3 levels. At the first level one day District level schools were organized in which the subjects were: Aims and Objectives of CITU and Democratic Functioning of the Union.

After this two day 3 Zonal level schools were held on the Development of Society, CITU Perspective on Women and the Aims and Objectives of CITU and Democratic Functioning of Unions.

Around 800 activists attended the district level classes and 160 participated in the zonal level schools. As this schooling was successful it was decided to follow it up with a 3 day state level school.

In the two day zonal schools Shubha, leader of the Gyan Vigyan movement; Ranjana Nirula, CITU working committee member, and Savita, Janwadi Mahila Samiti leader, conducted the sessions on the Development of Society. Jai Bhagwan, CITU Haryana state secretary took the classes on Aims and Objectives of CITU and Surekha, CITU state secretary, conducted the sessions on Gender Perspective and Democratic Functioning of the Union.

These classes and workshops have not only led to a qualitative improvement in the understanding of the activists who participated in them, but also created within them a desire to perform a role as agents of social change. This schooling has also helped to arouse a desire in them to further strengthen the union.

District level schools were held in 17 out of the 21 districts in the states and 17 districts participated in the zonal schools, as well. The union has decided to organize schools in the remaining 4 districts in the coming days.

In some districts two day schools will be organized to further develop the political awareness of the activists.

The union has also planned a one day training programme for ASHA workers, to be conducted by a gynaecologist from the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (PGIMS), Rohtak. In this programme the doctor will train and equip the ASHA workers with further knowledge and skills to assist them in their work.

The union has decided to conduct classes, workshops and schools on a regular basis, to ensure the continuing development and education of its activists and cadre.

(Report from Surekha, General Secretary, Haryana ASHA Workers Union)

ASHA Coordination Committee Meets

Thirteen comrades from 7 states – Kerala, Haryana, Maharashtra, AP, MP, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu - and the Centre, attended the meeting of the All India Coordination Committee of ASHA Workers, held in Kozhikode, Kerala on 23, 24 March 2018.

The unprecedented participation of ASHA workers in the Scheme workers strike and TU Mahapadav was reviewed and commended. There have been struggles in many states, from J&K and Uttarakhand in the North to Andhra Pradesh and Kerala in the South, Maharashtra in the West and Odisha in the East of the country. A notable long and militant struggle and achievement was the one in Haryana, which resulted in an assurance of substantial benefits and fixed payment. The Odisha struggle led to an announcement of Rs. 2000 as fixed monthly payment plus other benefits. In Kerala payment of an additional Rs 2000 per month has been announced. There have been several struggles in AP but the government is not yet ready for any increase.

Discussion took place on organizational issues and it was decided to strengthen the unions through timely enrolment of membership and holding of conferences.

A proposal to form an all India Federation of ASHA workers and facilitators was discussed and accepted.

Dalit Protest

The bandh call given by various dalit organisations on April 2 evoked a militant response from dalits all across North India and places like Gujarat and Odisha. The protest was meant to be against the Supreme Court judgment which had diluted certain provisions of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

But the rage on the streets and the widespread response points to a pent-up anger that has been building with the growing attacks on dalits and the naked expression of upper-caste domination which has increased, particularly in the BJP-ruled states in Northern India.

The anger is directed not only against the Supreme Court judgment but also against the BJP governments at the centre and the states. The Rohith Vemula death and the way the centre handled the issue; the Una incident of flogging dalit youth; the attacks on dalits participating in the Bhima Koregaon rally and the various moves by government agencies like the UGC to dilute reservation for dalits have amply indicated the anti-dalit outlook of the BJP-RSS combine, despite their overt moves to co-opt dalits into the Hindutva fold.

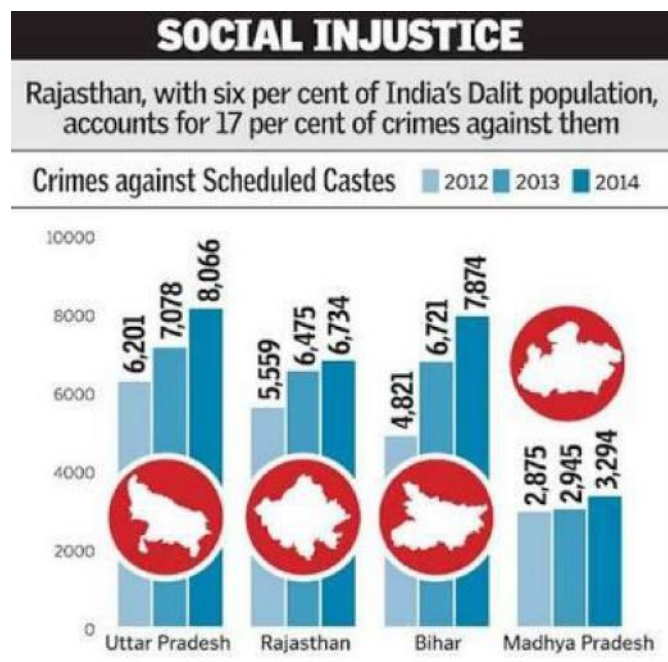
The fact that nine dalits were killed in police firing also reveals the bias in the police force. They tend to be more trigger happy when confronting dalit protests.

The other disturbing feature of the violence on April 2 was the planned attacks on dalit protesters by RSS men and upper caste chauvinists in the Gwalior region of Madhya Pradesh and in some places in UP.

In the wake of the bandh protests, there has also been retribution by upper caste elements and *Hindutvavadis*. The arson committed on the houses of a dalit BJP MLA and a former Congress MLA in Karauli district, Rajasthan and attacks on dalits in some other places are an expression of casteist intolerance at any assertion in the public space by dalits.

The dilution of the provisions of the PoA Act have been justified as steps to protect innocent people from being harassed by false cases and being arrested on that basis. The judgment is divorced from the social realities under which dalits face constant oppression and discrimination. The need to have stringent provisions in a law that protects the rights of scheduled castes and

tribes emanated from the fact that there is social and institutional bias against those lowest in the social order.



In fact the PoA Act in practice has not been able to act as a deterrent effective check against atrocities and oppression of dalits. That is why there was a prolonged movement for introducing more effective provisions and to plug loopholes. It was this demand which resulted in amendments to the PoA Act by parliament in 2015.

Even as the protests raged against the dilution of the PoA Act, statistics with regard to cases under the SC/ST PoA Act show the actual picture. According to the National Crime Records Bureau 2017 data, there has been a sharp decline in

conviction in cases under the Act. The conviction rate fell from 38 per cent in 2010 to just 16 per cent in 2016.

As against this sharp fall in conviction rates, there has been an increase in the number of cases registered under the Act from 40,481 cases in 2010 to 45,286 in 2016.

So the main issue is not the filing of false cases (which does happen), but the failure to render justice to those who suffer oppression and atrocities.

It is unfortunate that the Supreme Court bench did not view the whole issue in the context of the serious imbalance and bias in the police and institutional procedures of justice prevalent in the country. It is also indicative of the insensitivity to caste oppression and prejudice which is often displayed by the higher judiciary.

It is to be hoped that the review petition filed by the central government will lead to the court revising its earlier judgment. Otherwise, the struggle against the dilution of the Act will continue.

“Am I not a Hindu? Don’t I have same Constitution?” asks UP Dalit groom

A*m I not a Hindu?”* asks Sanjay Kumar. Over the past few months, the 27-year-old Dalit youth, from Basai Babas village in Hathras district of western Uttar Pradesh, has shot off letters to every government office-bearer, from the local police inspector to the state DGP, the chief minister to the SC/ST Commission, approached local dailies to media outlets, and released videos on social media, seeking help to take out his baraat through his bride’s Thakur-dominated village. On March 15, he moved the Allahabad High Court.

“When the Constitution says we are all equal, and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath says we are all Hindus, and he heads a Hinduvadi party, why am I facing such a situation?” asks Kumar, a Block Development Council member. *“Am I not a Hindu then?... There cannot be separate rules for people governed by one Constitution.”*

Kasganj District Magistrate R P Singh, along with Superintendent of Police Piyush Srivastava, visited bride Sheetal’s village Nizamabad, in the neighbouring Kasganj district, and combed its roads to check the routes sought by Kumar for the baraat. Singh ruled out the use of paths flanked by Thakur houses, citing the drains, garbage along one of the roads and the narrow width of the others. He also checked for any precedents of a grand Jatav (the caste to which Sheetal and Kumar belong) wedding in the village over the past 20 years and “found none”. So he advised Sheetal’s family that the baraat take the usual road taken by Dalit wedding processions in the village, and asked the Thakurs to ensure that this road was kept clean.

In the second week of March, the Thakurs cut off the water supply to the Jatav fields, supplied at Rs 100 an hour, in retaliation. Pradhan Kanti Devi, a Thakur, admits they resumed the water supply to the Jatavs only when the DM came.

Sanjay Singh, a Thakur, says the Thakurs and district authorities have been trying to make the Dalits see “reason”. *“We told them not to start this new thing because it will cause a fight. Their boundaries are marked and they should keep to those.”* The Jatavs simply want to pick up a fight where there isn’t one. *We cannot change parampara (tradition).”*

*As we go to press, it has been reported that the administration and police have managed to broker a deal between the two groups and that Sanjay Kumar’s baraat procession will be allowed to traverse all the village streets. *(Courtesy – The Indian Express)*

Crimes Against Dalits

A crime is committed against Dalits every 15 minutes in India. And six Dalit women are raped every day, according to official statistics that register a 66% hike in atrocities in the past ten years 2007-2017. The situation has worsened, with a further spike in anti-Dalit violence, over the past four years.

A data from National Crime Record Bureau (NCRB) shows that the rape dalit women has doubled in the last ten years.

The timeline for 2017 till date is a matter of shame for democratic India that has still not come to terms with its repressive caste system:

May 5, - Mass attack on Dalits in Shabbipur village, Saharanpur. 1 person killed and 15 people injured in clashes between Dalits and upper caste Thakurs.

May 7- Dalit groom allegedly beaten up for “daring” to take a decorated car to his wedding venue, in Chhatarpur District, Madhya Pradesh. The groom and 6 others of the wedding party were thrashed.

May 2017- People belonging to Scheduled Castes in Uttar Pradesh’s Kushinagar District given soap and shampoo by the local administration to clean themselves ahead of a visit by CM Yogi Adityanath.

July 3 - 31 Dalit activists who had called a press conference in Lucknow to talk about past atrocities against Dalits arrested- as they had planned to march later towards Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath’s house - which then did not have permission for.

July- Maharashtra’s Marathwada district- Dalits denied dignity even in death - no place given for cremation and burial grounds- on account of failure of the state government.

July 2 – A report by National Commission for Scheduled Castes reported that atrocities against Dalits have been on the rise in Kerala. 883 cases of atrocities between June 2016 and April 2017

September 25 - Piyush Parmar, 25 years old, allegedly thrashed by the members of the Rajput community - Gujarat

September 29- Krunal Magheria, 30 years old, thrashed for sporting a moustache in a Gujarat village.

September 30- 5 Dalits assaulted in a Vijaya Dashami procession in Belur Taluk, Karnataka

October 1- 21 year old Dalit man allegedly beaten to death by a group of men belonging to the upper caste Patel community for attending a garba event

October 3- 17 year old Dighant Magheria attacked by two bike borne men in a Gujarat village who slashed his back with a blade.

(Source: India Exclusion Report 2013-14)

Dalit Man Killed in Gujarat for Riding Horse

A Dalit man was killed in Gujarat’s Bhavnagar district by some higher-caste persons for keeping and riding a horse. Pradeep Rathod, 21, had bought a horse about two months ago and had been threatened ever since by some of his co-villagers. He was killed late Thursday night.

His father Kalubhai Rathod said Pradeep intended to sell the horse following the threats but he had convinced him not to do so.

Kalubhai Rathod told the police that Pradeep rode out to the family farm on Thursday and said they will have dinner together after he returns. *“When he did not return till late, we got worried and started looking for him. We found him lying dead on the road leading to our farm. The horse was also lying dead at a little distance,”* he said.

Pradeep was helping his father at the farm after passing his matric exams.

(Courtesy – NDTV)

No Place for Young Girls

Brinda Karat

In Kathua and Unnao, the common feature is the blatant support given by BJP leaders to those accused of rape

The child was just eight years old. The beautiful image showing her wide-eyed innocence, a semblance of a smile caught by the camera, is widely shared on the Internet. She looks even younger in the photograph. She belonged to the Bakherwal nomadic community, and went missing on January 10 from the camp site in Rasana village in Kathua, Jammu where she stayed with her family.

Grim chronicle

Her father registered the missing child case with the police on January 12. Her battered body was found on January 17. Six men were arrested, among them a special police officer, a retired revenue official and his family members; later two policemen were arrested for connivance and destruction of evidence. Three months later, on April 9, the Crime Branch of the [Jammu and Kashmir](#) Police, which took over the investigation, filed a chargesheet in court. Its contents have been widely reported.

Can any human being remain untouched, unmoved by the horrors the child had to face, depicted so graphically in the chargesheet? Is there anyone who will not be shaken with rage and anger against the extreme brutalities committed by the accused? They are accused of abducting her, sedating her, raping her in turn, inviting an associate from Meerut to “satisfy his lust,” postponing the moment of her death because one of them “wanted to rape her” again.

But there are such people who are not only unmoved but who are straining every nerve and it would seem muscle to sabotage and prevent the processes of justice. These are not ordinary men. They are men who are Ministers in the State government, they are men who lead organisations, they are men who wear the black robes of lawyers, those who are supposed to serve the ends of justice.

For two months, ever since the arrests were made the area has been witness to mobilisations and agitations. These have been organised by the Hindu Ekta Manch, a platform set up by affiliates of the Sangh Parivar. What is their agitation about? One may have thought they were agitated because the horrific crime took place in the prayer room of the local temple. Were these men on the streets because they wanted more stringent punishment against those who defiled a temple prayer room with their dastardly acts?

Far from it. The Hindu Ekta Manch has been pursuing just one aim, to prove that the investigation is wrong, the arrests are wrong because all those arrested happen to be Hindus whereas the child victim belonged to a Muslim family.

It is not just the fringe elements involved. Two Ministers of the coalition government belonging to the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Forests Minister Lal Singh and Industries Minister Chander Parkash Ganga, had joined an agitation against the arrests. Lawyers, or a section of them, went on strike to prevent the police officials from filing the chargesheet. Yet none of them have been arrested. They have the patronage of their leaders in the BJP.

This blatant communalisation of cases of sexual assault has very serious implications for India. Imagine if ‘Nirbhaya’ had happened to be Muslim, would the streets of Delhi have been filled not

with young people demanding justice, but with Hindu Ekta Manch supporters protesting against the arrest of Hindus?

In Kathua, it is not only the processes of justice post the rape and **murder** which are being communalised and sought to be subverted. But shamefully, according to the chargesheet, communal considerations determined the selection of the victim too.

A deliberate plan?

The rape was a deliberate plan to terrorise the Bakherwal community to leave the area. The Bakherwals and the Gujjars, recognised as Scheduled Tribes, are Muslim by belief. The child was raped, going by the chargesheet, because she was a Muslim.

While the Gujjar communities do own land and a substantial section are involved in the dairy industry, the Bakherwals are a nomadic tribe who migrate along with their herds of animals to the Valley and Ladakh in summer and return to the forests of Jammu in winter. They have been camping in these forests for decades.

The resurgence of Hindutva ideologies and politics in Jammu led to a campaign against the presence of the Bakherwals and Gujjars and any permanent settlement for them, it was said, would alter the demography of the region to benefit Muslims. This utterly warped understanding of citizenship rights also led to another hypocrisy. Whereas in every other case the Sangh Parivar has been campaigning for the abolition of Article 370, in the case of the Bakherwal and Gujjar communities the Sangh Parivar has taken shelter under Article 370 to deprive these communities of their rights on forest land under the Forest Rights Act (FRA) of 2006. Thus whereas under the FRA the rights of the Bakherwals on forest land would have to be recognised, Article 370 prevents its automatic applicability in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Mehbooba Mufti government has rightly been criticised for not acting swiftly enough. Nor did she take any action against the Ministers of her coalition cabinet in spite of their objectionable role in supporting the wholly unjust communally triggered demonstration against justice for the child. Ms. Mufti has now publicly stated that her government will ensure that the case is followed up and that the guilty brought to book. One can only hope that considerations of power do not interfere with this public commitment. She should also ensure that the Bakherwal communities are given the land, implementing the spirit of the FRA.

As for her Sangh Parivar partners, she should know that they have double standards as far as women's security is concerned. A communal reading of women's "izzat" is a potent weapon in the armoury of the Sangh Parivar. A typical method of the RSS mobilisations to further communal divisions is to use cases where the perpetrator of the crime happens to be a Muslim and the victim a Hindu, and to mobilise against the entire Muslim community. Where there are no such cases, rumours are spread. The dreadful communal violence in Muzaffarnagar started on a rumour deliberately spread of Hindu girls being harassed by boys who were Muslim. In Jamshedpur the same thing happened although there was no such case, as the police later confirmed. But in the large majority of cases, where the perpetrator and the victim belong to the same religion, what then is the role of the Sangh Parivar?

Over in Unnao

What is happening right now in Unnao in Uttar Pradesh? A 17-year-old had tried to file a case of rape against an MLA who belongs to the ruling BJP government. The alleged rape took place last June, but in spite of all her efforts, the police refused to file an FIR against the MLA. She was forced to stage a protest before the Chief Minister's house, but even that made no difference. On the contrary, the girl and her family were harassed. Her father died in police custody.

What would that young woman have faced — traumatised, humiliated and then to see her own father being arrested and killed because she had dared to make a complaint against a powerful man, backed by the Chief Minister. This is enough to discourage any complaints of sexual harassment against men with powerful connections. It was only after mounting public outrage that the MLA's brother has been arrested for her father's death and an FIR filed against the MLA. However, he was not arrested and had the freedom to make outrageous and defamatory statements against the girl and her family. (*The MLA was later arrested only after the Allahabad High Court strongly criticised the police and government.*)

In the Kathua and Unnao cases, the common feature is the blatant support given by BJP leaders and their Sangh Parivar partners to those accused of rape. India has seen the results of the marauding violence of "gau rakshaks". Now a new brand of politics has appeared of "rapist rakshaks". When Union Minister V.K. Singh tweets on the Kathua rape victim that "we failed her as humans", he should clarify that the "we" in his tweet means all his colleagues in Jammu and U.P., who are even today standing not with the victim but with the accused — whether they can be considered human is an open question.

The 'Beti Bachao Beti Padhao' campaign and the Prime Minister's words on "women's empowerment" get exposed as mere rhetoric when perpetrators of such horrific crimes are protected by those in power and he remains silent.

(Courtesy: *The Hindu*)

Nationwide Protest

There has been an upsurge of anger and widespread condemnation, reminiscent of the Nirbhaya case, as details of the Kathua and Unnao cases have come to light. There are protests all over the country, by organizations and people from different sections of society. The Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan was a significant part of these. All have condemned the incident in Kathua as a communal, hate crime.

The deafening silence of the women ministers of the BJP, the National Women's Commission and UP Women's Commission and the perverse, convoluted explanations by BJP spokesmen and leaders, which amount to support for the rapists, have exposed their totally anti woman, communal attitudes. The Prime Minister is himself being held responsible for lack of action and his tardy response to the incidents.

The common demands raised by women's organizations and other sections include:

1. Immediate security arrangements for the families of the victims/survivors and state support for arranging a competent prosecution team.
2. Immediate arrest and action against the BJP MLAs and leaders, Hindu Ekta Manch office bearers and leaders, members of the Jammu Bar Council, police and other officials who were complicit in the crimes or tried to protect and defend the culprits.
3. Dismissal of the Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh for protecting a rapist, for abetting the death in police custody of the rape survivor's father in Unnao, and for withdrawal of the rape case against Chinmayananda.
4. Fast track courts must be made functional at district level to ensure speedy process of cases of sexual violence.

Workers across the World

The presidential address to the CITU General Council meeting linked the conditions of the workers in our country with that of the workers across the world. The workers and other sections of toiling people are increasingly coming out on struggles including strikes in various parts of the world including in the advanced capitalist countries. These struggles, with growing participation of workers, are expressions of discontent and anger against the attacks on their livelihood and working conditions by the neoliberal policies being pursued by their respective governments. Despite the claims of upswing in the global economy, there has been no improvement in the conditions of the workers. Youth unemployment in many countries continues to be alarming. Even the World Bank, which said that the world economy was in 'full swing' for the first time since the global crisis was compelled to warn that this upswing would be short term without much prospect of improving the living standards of the people or reducing poverty. Many economists were of the view that another crisis may be round the corner.

Inequalities have reached vulgar levels. According to the Oxfam Report released in January 2018, 82% of global wealth produced in 2017 was cornered by the top 1% people who now owned more than half of the total global wealth. In India, the top 1% cornered 73% of the wealth produced by the toiling people in the country in 2017. Only 42 richest persons in the world owned the same wealth as the poorest half in 2017.

This amassing of wealth in a few hands is not because of their extraordinary talent, hard work or innovations, as many people are made to believe. The Oxfam report makes it clear that this is due to inheritance, monopoly, cronyism, tax evasions and of course, increased exploitation of the workers. Unemployment continues at alarming levels, particularly among the educated youth, due to these policies. In India, unemployment among the graduates and above has reached 23.8%.

New technology, including robotics, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things etc, is not used to reduce working hours of, or ease the burden on the workers. In the capitalist system, science and technology, developed not in isolation by some individuals, but through the involvement, directly or indirectly of the common people, is not used to benefit the people. It is used to increase the profits of the big corporates and business houses that own and control it.

Today, the world has enough resources, financial, scientific, technological, human etc to ensure education to all, health for all, food for all, housing for all, decent life for all. But under the capitalist system, this wealth, generated by the toil of the working people is not utilised for their benefit of the people who produce it. It is cornered by a few. The Oxfam report says that the \$762 billion cornered by the world's billionaires in 2017 alone, was enough to end extreme poverty seven times over. But the profit driven capitalist system will not allow it.

This discontent against the impact of the neoliberal policies is not being channelised in proper direction in many countries. It is being utilised by the right wing forces. This is particularly so in countries where the left forces and social democratic parties have betrayed the working people whom they were earlier supporting, and switched to the side of neoliberalism. The traditional left and social democratic parties which have been implementing neoliberal policies while in power are being rejected by the people. The right wing forces utilise the discontent among the people and divert it against other sections of the toiling people, their brothers and sisters working alongside them, on the basis of race, religion, region, gender etc. They disrupt the unity of the people and weaken the struggle against the neoliberal policies. When they come to power, they

have been implementing the same policies. This is seen in several European countries like Italy, France, Germany, Greece, and the Scandinavian countries.

At the same time where the left gained was where it firmly supported and led the struggles of the workers against the neoliberal policies, as seen in Greece, Portugal, Spain, the increased influence of the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn, the growing popularity of the Democratic Socialists in the USA etc, particularly among the youth.



Today, the working class and the toiling people are searching for alternatives. There is growing interest, particularly among the youth, in 'Capital', the magnum opus of Karl Marx, which was first published more than 150 years ago. The influence of World Federation of Trade Unions, the only militant and class oriented global trade union is also increasing across the world.

Neoliberalism, the latest phase of capitalism, is totally discredited and has become unsustainable. But what needs to be understood clearly is that capitalist system itself cannot be free of crisis. The decade long global crisis is only the latest in the series. In each crisis, the capitalists try to protect and even increase their profits by thrusting more burdens on the working people, which in turn bring down their purchasing power and lay the ground for another crisis. Even before the world came out of the 2008 crisis, apprehensions are being expressed that another crisis might be looming around.

In such a situation, international finance finds it imperative to support and promote right wing forces which seek to divide the working class and disrupt the unity of the working people to weaken the struggles against neoliberal policies. This has become the worldwide phenomenon now. In India, the big corporations, both domestic and foreign, have been supporting the BJP and Modi by placing their resources - money, material and media, at its service. The BJP government was also displaying authoritarian tendencies to suppress all opposition. The working class has to simultaneously fight all these three – neoliberalism, communalism and authoritarianism.

US imperialism is also trying to use its military and political might to intervene and suppress the progressive and left leaning governments in Latin America and other countries to undermine left forces and suppress resistance to the neoliberal policies there as well as gain control of the rich natural resources in these countries. On the one hand US imperialism has been talking of 'fighting terror'; on the other it has been promoting terrorist outfits by providing them with financial and other types of support. India under the BJP regime has become a junior strategic partner to US imperialism abandoning the country's long standing independent foreign policy.

It is significant in this situation to note that since the onset of the global crisis in 2008, China has taken several measures to increase domestic demand in the form of increasing minimum wages, providing housing to the rural and urban poor etc. These measures have resulted in increasing personal per capita disposable income, reduced unemployment to its lowest level in decades, and in lifting 6 crore people out of poverty. It is transforming itself into an advanced manufacturing country focussing on information technology, robotics, aerospace, railways, electric vehicles etc. In the recently held National Peoples' Congress, Xi Jinping, President of China has declared '*History has already proven and will continue to prove that only socialism can save China*'. Not only China, only socialism can save the world.

CONDEMN THE ARREST AND CONVICTION OF AHED TAMIMI

SOLIDARITY WITH THE PEOPLE OF PALESTINE

This General Council of CITU, being held at Kozhikode, Kerala on 23-26 March 2018 strongly denounces the conviction of the 17-year-old Palestinian girl Ahed Tamimi by the Israeli Ofer military court.

Ahed Tamimi and her mother were sentenced on 21st March 2018 to 8 months in prison and a fine of \$1500 each, for defending the lives of their family from the Israeli soldiers. Ahed Tamimi who fought fearlessly against Israeli atrocities has become the icon of resistance the world over. We condemn this conviction as unacceptable, anti-democratic and authoritarian, which reveals once more that Israel does not hesitate to murder and imprison young children, while continuing its occupation and aggressiveness against the people of Palestine.

We express our solidarity with the people of Palestine and the Palestinian trade unions fighting for their democratic rights.

We also condemn the recent move by the US under Trump of relocating its embassy to Jerusalem violating the international understanding and against the UN resolutions. This is bound to create new tension in the region.

While joining the protests the world over by the WFTU against this action by the Israeli state, violating all international norms, we reiterate our demand for the immediate release of all Palestinian political prisoners and for the recognition of the free state of Palestine within the 1967 borders with east Jerusalem as its capital.



The World Federation of Trade Unions firmly condemns the murder of 16 Palestinian people and the injuring of hundreds of others by the army of Israel in Gaza, during the great popular protests of the Palestinian people on the occasion of their Land Day.

The Israeli occupation forces did not hesitate to open fire and murder our Palestinian brothers who are resisting the cruel occupation of Palestinian land by the state of Israel.

The WFTU, representing more than 92 million workers in 126 countries all over the world, backs the heroic struggle and protests of our brothers and sisters from Palestine.

As the world militant trade union movement, we will continue our support and solidarity, calling for the end of the bloodshed and the occupation against the people of Palestine and for the recognition of the free State of Palestine within the 1967 borders and East Jerusalem as its capital.

Long live the heroic struggle of the people of Palestine!

Statement of the General Federation of Trade Unions in Syria Regarding US and European Threats to Strike Syria

The United States and its followers from European countries, such as France, Britain and their proxies in the region such as Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Qatar and others, have been provoking against Syria since their terrorist war against Syria since 8 years to carry out their agendas in Syrian territory. We are witnessing these days the fabrication of the alleged evidence, the latest of which is the fabricated play of the Eastern Ghouta being hit by chemical weapons by the Syrian Arab Army. These colonial Powers have always used the UN Security Council and its instruments to strike sovereign states by using illusory and fabricated pretexts to achieve their goals, such as the famous play of Colin Powell of the UN Security Council to strike Iraq. The chemical play was staged in Douma when the terrorists felt the victories of the Syrian Arab Army that liberated the eastern Ghouta, which contributed to the safety and tranquility of the people of Damascus after they suffered a lot by the terrorists who were raining on the capital Damascus dozens of missiles and rockets. The more the Syrian Arab Army achieves victories on the ground, the terrorists urge their employers to save them, as happened when they fabricated the chemical incident in Khan Sheikhaun.

This time, US President Trump, French President Macron and British Prime Minister May accuse the Syrian government of using chemical weapons in Douma on the basis of false evidence and fabricated videos of the so-called White Helmets, who are the medical wing of the fascist terrorists Al-Nusra in Syria. They have held meetings of the UN Security Council in order to issue resolutions to strike the only legitimate Syrian government that fights terrorism in the world, despite the assertion of a member state in the Security Council, Russia, that the region was free of any chemical traces after the Russian experts entered Damascus, thereby refuting their claims. The Syrian government has asked the experts of the International Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to enter and verify the incident, but Trump and his assistants from European and Gulf Arab countries blocked their ears and decided to proceed with their lies and threats.

We at the General Union of Trade Unions in Syria declare our stand with our Syrian government and army of under the leadership of President Bashar al-Assad, with whom we have faced terrorism and its sponsors for eight years. We affirm that we are confident of victory and that these American and European threats constitute a flagrant violation of the UN Charter.

We call upon all honorable people from the World Federation of Trade Unions, the International Confederation of Arab Trade Unions and all Arab and international organizations to expedite the campaign of defending Syria by sending messages of solidarity and support to Syria and organizing marches and sit-ins in front of the American embassies in the world condemning this blatant American aggression, to save the world from Trump's ruthlessness. We ask you to send letters to officials of the United Nations and the United States of America, stressing that the American president will lead to a new world war that will drag the whole world into further chaos, destruction and poverty and increase the number of refugees from the wars waged by the United States against sovereign states in the world.

Long Live Syrian people in their war against terrorism

Long Live International Solidarity with Syria

(Executive Bureau of General Union of Trade Unions, Syrian Arab Republic)

Fixed Term Employment

Another Attack on Workers to Promote Ease of Doing Business

The World Bank's ease of doing business index in 2018 ranked India at 100, up from 130 a year ago. Buoyed with this report, the BJP government has reportedly targeted 90 reforms to further climb up the ladder to reach the top 50.

Extending Fixed Term Employment to all sectors is undoubtedly one such measure.

On 16th March 2018, the government issued a Gazette notification amending the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Central Rules, 1946, allowing Fixed Term Employment in all sectors. This was done to bring into effect the announcement made by the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley in his Budget speech this year.

In fact, the BJP's enthusiasm for curtailing permanent employment, replacing it with fixed term employment, was displayed during the Vajpayee regime itself. In 2003 the then BJP led NDA government issued a Gazette notification introducing fixed term employment, despite the opposition from all the central trade unions. This notification was withdrawn through another Gazette notification by the then UPA I government, in the wake of widespread protests by the trade union movement.

Soon after coming to power, the BJP government made introduction of fixed term employment one of its priorities in labour reforms. In April 2015, it issued a draft notification to that effect but did not proceed further when all central trade unions opposed the move. But in October 2016 the BJP government introduced Fixed Term Employment in the apparel manufacturing sector, ignoring opposition of the trade unions; in 2017, this was extended to 'made up' sector, which includes, in addition to garments, bed sheets, towels etc. At every stage, CITU conveyed its strong opposition to the government which was followed by other trade unions also. In 2018, Fixed Term Employment is extended to all sectors without even consulting the trade unions.

While all central trade unions, including the BMS, part of the BJP's *parivar*, have vehemently opposed the notification and the way government let go of tripartism, the employers have welcomed it. Pradeep Bhargava, chairman, CII National IR Committee reportedly said '*It is going to boost business sentiment... Today companies hire and fire due to seasonality. This is just formalising, legitimising what is already going on*'. This in one way, sums up what the BJP government is doing in the name of the so called 'labour law reforms' – it is legitimising the violation of the existing laws by the employers, to promote 'ease of doing business' for them.

Fixed Term Employment means that a worker is employed for a fixed period. The contract is duly signed by both parties and is for a specified period of time. His or her service will automatically end after that specified period if the contract is not renewed. It is not necessary to give any notice of termination of service or make any payment in lieu of notice as in the case of temporary and *badli* workers. An employer can directly hire a worker for a fixed term without any contractor.

The employer can terminate the contract even before the due date on certain grounds like non performance, fraud etc. It is obvious that an employee with an individual contract for only a few months or a year cannot effectively counter allegations of non performance by the employer. This virtually means granting 'hire and fire' regime for the employers even without amending the Industrial Disputes Act at the central level. After the notification of 2016 which allowed Fixed Term employment in the apparel manufacturing sector, the Ministry of Labour and Employment issued a press release. It justified the measure arguing that 'the seasonal nature of the textile sector results in fluctuation of demand and hence requires flexibility in employing workers'. This argument itself is totally false. However, how can the government now justify

extending Fixed Term Employment to all sectors? Have all sectors become 'seasonal' now? The real reason is spelt out by the government while outlining the objectives of the notification as *'To provide flexibility to the employers in order to meet the challenges of globalisation, new practices and methods of doing businesses'*.

According to the notification, the *'hours of work, wages, allowances and other benefits'* of a worker under Fixed Term Contract shall not be less than that of a permanent workman'. He or she *'shall be eligible for all statutory benefits available to a permanent workman proportionately according to the period of service rendered by him even if his period of employment does not extend to the qualifying period of employment required in the statute'*

While this sounds reasonably just and welcome, keeping in view the ground realities, it is nothing but ridiculous as well as deceptive. Today, the reality, for the vast majority of workers, even in the organised sector, is that the statutory benefits including minimum wages, PF, ESI, maternity benefit etc are not implemented, particularly where the workers are not organised into trade unions. Even permanent workers in most private establishments including big multinational companies are threatened and victimised when they try to form unions. In such a situation, the workers with individual Fixed Term Employment contracts of a few months or even years cannot be expected to come together and fight to get these benefits implemented. There have been instances of such contracts in some companies and it is seen that such workers generally do not get provident fund and other benefits as the permanent workers of the same company. For example, all the workers in Alliance Air, a subsidiary of Air India, are employed on fixed term basis for years together, with the fixed term being renewed periodically. They are paid much lower wages and given fewer benefits than regular employees of Air India. Though this issue was repeatedly raised by the general secretary of CITU, Air India did not even reply.

The government also makes the ludicrous claim that Fixed Term Employment will lead to employment generation, particularly of women to the extent that it would lead to social transformation! The press release of the Ministry of Labour and Employment in 2016 claimed that the measure is significant *'due also to its potential for social transformation through women empowerment; since 70% of the workforce in the garment industry are women, majority of the new jobs created are likely to go to women'*.

What is the global experience?

According to the report of a study, fixed term contracts have increased in many countries in Europe, particularly in Spain where the share of fixed term contracts are over 50% for young workers. 94% of all the newly signed contracts are fixed term. The study showed that over long term fixed term contracts for young workers led to a reduction in the days of employment and also in their wages. The availability of fixed term contracts encourages employers to create low productivity and low pay jobs. The study says concludes *'when taking the long view, fixed term contracts are not a stepping stone but rather a stumbling block for the careers of low skilled youths'*.

An ILO paper on fixed term employment states that there has been an increase in fixed term contracts in many countries, mainly in Europe, between 2003 and 2011. It says that workers with fixed term contracts have a higher rate of becoming unemployed. For example in the last quarter of 2008, in Spain 15% of fixed term employees lost their jobs compared to 2.5% permanent workers. During economic downturns employers first target the fixed term employees to bring down costs. During the latest global crisis in many countries there was increased hiring of workers on very short term contracts, substituting permanent hiring, to keep labour costs flexible.

In fact, this is yet another attack on the job security of the workers; a measure to make them more vulnerable at the hands of the employers; an arrangement to deny the workers all statutory benefits; to gift the employers with flexibility to hire and fire as they please

Daughter of Auto Driver Aces Exam, Set to Become Judge

Shivani Azad



Poonam Todi, daughter of an autorickshaw driver in Dehradun, has finally realised her dream of becoming a judge. In the results of the entrance exam of the Uttarakhand Provincial Civil Services (Judicial) 2016, which were declared on Wednesday, Todi emerged as the state topper. Speaking with TOI, she credited her family's "rock solid support" behind her success.

"My parents never pressured me to join a job to supplement the family's income. Instead they always encouraged me to study further, which is why I was able to complete my MCom as well as law degrees," she said.

Incidentally, she had appeared for the exam twice earlier as well but could not make it beyond the interview round. However, by not letting the failure stall her, she says she tried again *"with renewed vigour and a sturdy determination to achieve my goal."*

Her proud father Ashok Todi, who earns an average of Rs 400-500 per day plying an autorickshaw, said that he *"never differentiated between my daughters and sons."* He added: *"In order to ensure that the children have a good future, we often compromised on our own needs and I am extremely happy that my daughter has now made not only me but the entire state proud."*

Poonam has three siblings — while her elder sister is married, her elder brother works in a private firm and her younger brother is studying.

Recounting the hardships the family had to endure in order to give the children a good education, Ashok Todi recalled, *"I used to run a small shop in Tehri but the business didn't do well. I then decided to shift to Dehradun. I started a shop here as well but it wasn't successful either. I took to driving an autorickshaw thereafter."*

Poonam says that her family shared her dreams when she told them she wanted to pursue a legal career *"Though I pursued commerce after class XII, I was always drawn to law. Having seen struggle and hardships from close quarters, I wanted to help those who are economically backward so that they are not deprived of justice,"* said the youngster who after completing her masters in commerce obtained an LLB degree and is currently enrolled in the LLM programme.

For her family, the news could not have come at a better time since the results were declared just before the festival of colours. *"This year, Holi will be much more colourful for us. Poonam's achievement is a message for all parents that daughters can be a family's pride,"* said her mother Lata.

PLEDGE

On the 48th Foundation Day of CITU

We rededicate ourselves to continue the fight on the demands of the workers, to defend their hard won rights from the neoliberal onslaught and improve their working and living conditions, with enhanced vigour.

We pledge to strengthen CITU to achieve its constitutional objective of an exploitation free society, for a decent and dignified life for all toiling people.

We pledge to unite the entire working class irrespective of religion, caste, region or gender in the struggle to realise this goal.

We pledge to strengthen and broaden the struggle for resisting the ongoing onslaughts on the rights of the working people and trade union rights

We affirm our determination to resist and defeat any attempts to divide the toiling people on any pretext, disrupt their unity and weaken the struggle of workers to improve their conditions

UNITE

AND

FIGHT

FOR

A

BETTER

FUTURE



CITU General Council Meeting, Kozhikod

