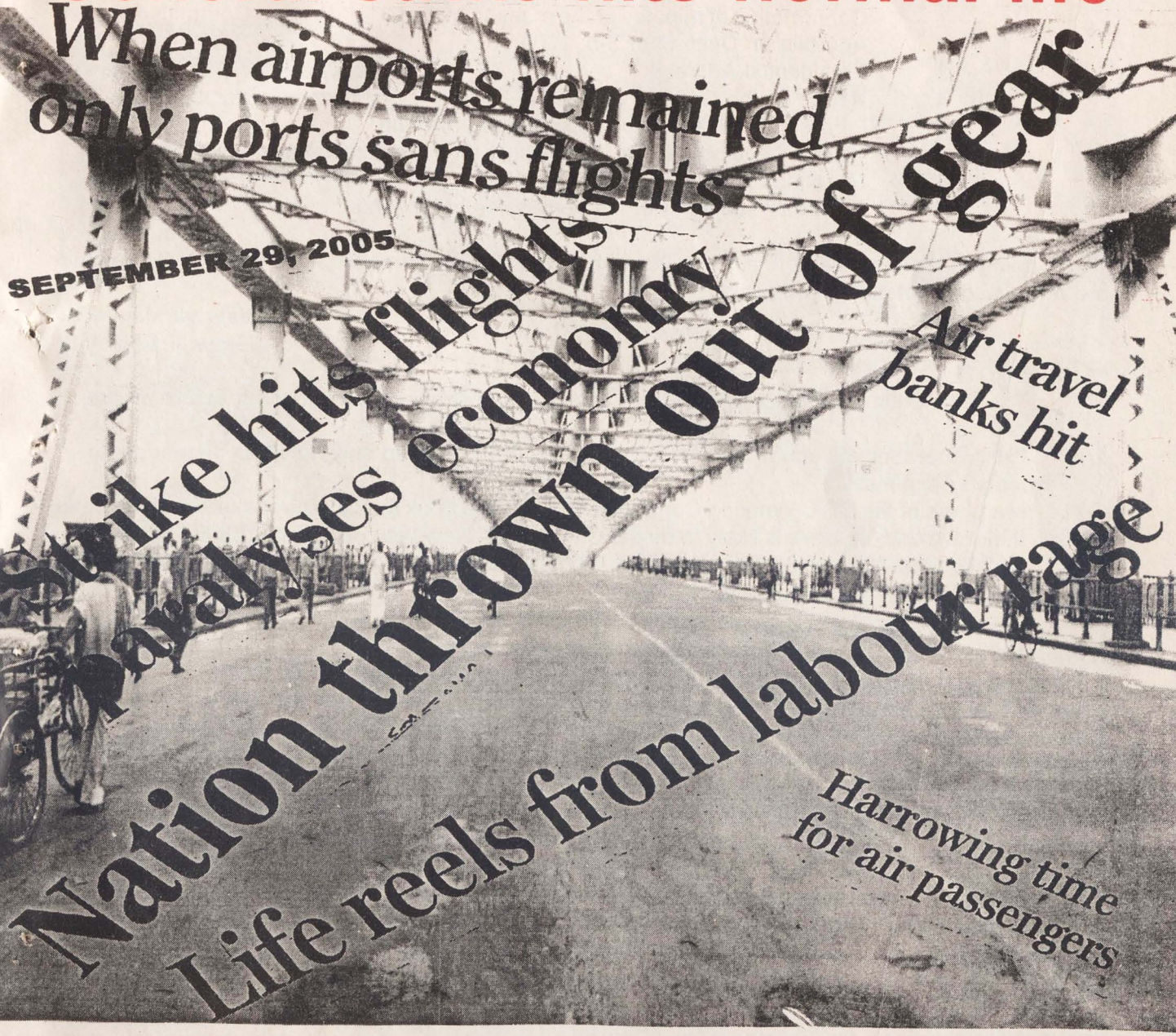
Vol. 36 No. 3 November 2005 Price: Rupees Four

THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

General strike hits normal life



STRUCK DOWN

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh), December 28 - 30, 2005

NOTICE

The meeting of the CITU Working Committee will be held at Bhopal (Madhya Pradesh) on December 28 - 30, 2005 to transact the following AGENDA:

1. Condolence Resolution
2. Confirmation of minutes of the meeting of the CITU Working Committee held at Agartala on December 3-5, 2004
3. Presidential Address
4. Report of the General Secretary
5. Finalisation of the special discussion paper on "Cadre Development in Trade Union Movement"
6. Resolutions
7. Any other subject with the permission of the Chair

The meeting will commence at 10 a.m. on December 28, 2005. All members of the Working Committee are requested to attend the meeting.

Chittabrata Majumdar
General Secretary

PLEASE NOTE:

1. The Reception Committee will intimate particulars of exact venue and other details, in due course.
2. Every member will contribute Rs. 400 (Rupees Four hundred only) towards boarding and lodging expenses.
3. Members of the CITU Working Committee may please book their journey tickets in advance at their own end, as there is likely to be the Christmas – New Year peak traffic during that period.
4. Arrival/departure details may please be intimated to:

Com. Badal Saroj,
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Centre of Indian Trade Unions,
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THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2005

YOU SAID IT by Laxman



Nothing to worry folks, sensex is soaring, stock market is booming. Our economy is growing, investments are mounting!

Courtesy: The Times of India

EDITORIAL BOARD

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(Chairman)
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EDITORIAL

SEPTEMBER 29 STRIKE: INTOLERANT OUTBURSTS
RESISTANCE IS BOUND TO GROW!

At a time when the pen pushers of the Indian print media were habituated to making gleeful claims that the trade union movement in the country has virtually been sidelined by the onward march of the economic liberalisation, the thundering success of the countrywide general strike of September 29, 2005 came as a rude shock to them. (Make no mistake; their counterparts in the high profile electronic media were no different.) It befell on all of them to report that the strike did paralyse the otherwise 'tranquil' economic scene in the country. Despite steeped antipathy to the strike, the newspapers did carry news stories with captions reading: 'Nation thrown out of gear", "General strike hits normal life", "Life reels from labour rage", "Strike hits flights, paralyses economy", "India crawls", "Struck down", *et al*.

In the success of the strike lie a fact that is hard to digest for the reforms savvy media – the economic reforms agenda, which all of them have virtually been carrying on their 'slender' shoulders, was meeting the fiercest challenge from the workers of the country! Hence, they chose to resort to all conceivable abuses from their phrase book against the strikers, its sponsors and supporters. Those at the edit-desks did not lag far behind the reporters; almost all the newspapers - a few rare exceptions apart – soiled their op-ed pages with stinking editorials denigrating the strike. Here are a few captions of these editorials:

♦ "Red Terror" *(The Pioneer)* ♦ "Red riding hoods" *(Hindustan Times)* ♦ "Striking against sense" *(The Economic Times)*

♦ "Radical Hypocrisy" *(The Indian Express)* ♦ "Struck Dumb" *(The Times of India)* ♦ "At whose expense"? *(The Statesman)*

All these can perhaps give some solace to the advocates of reforms, who feel peeved and pained at the growing resistance to the policies of globalisation and liberalisation. But, they cannot hide the reality that the reforms had failed miserably to achieve anything except further impoverishment of the masses of this country and adding to their miseries. The very fact that large sections of the people outside the trade unions came out spontaneously and in large numbers to add further dimensions to the success of the strike stands testimony to this undeniable fact.

The message of the September 29 strike is that the masses are restive and their discontent is growing. As long as the UPA regime persists with its present stance of showering mere platitudes for the poor and conferring bonanzas for the rich, it will have to confront resistance from the workers, the poor, downtrodden and the marginalised. No matter whosoever may cry hoarse about the disruptions caused because of the direct actions by the masses.

Call of the 2nd All India Convention at Firozabad

BUILD A UNITED STRUGGLE OF UNORGANISED WORKERS!

W R VARADA RAJAN

The Second All India Convention of Unorganised Sector Workers was held at Firozabad, Uttar Pradesh on October 3 - 4, 2005. The venue of the Convention was named 'Com. B.T. Ranadive Nagar'

The Convention began with the hoisting of the CITU flag by Kamalapathi Tripathi, President of the UP State CITU. Rajjo Devi, President of the Kanch Udyog Kranthikari Mazdoor Sangh, Firozabad and Chairman of the Reception Committee, welcomed the participants.

INAUGURAL ADDRESS

M.K.Pandhe, President, CITU inaugurated the Convention. Noting that the Convention was being held after thirteen years, Pandhe said that the problems of the unorganised sector workers had assumed serious proportions since the first convention held at Panihati, West Bengal in November 1992. He expressed concern over the increasing proliferation of jobs in the informal (unorganised) and home based sectors, leading to steep deterioration in the working and living conditions of around 93% of the workforce in the country.

Pandhe noted in his address: "The policies of economic liberalisation have on the one hand accentuated the crisis in the unorganised sector industries and placed unbearable burdens and miseries on the workers in the unorganised sector on the other. The WTO related policies, implemented by the government, of de-reservation of items of production earmarked for the small-scale sector and deprivation of institutional credit to this sector, have led to large-scale closures and non-employment of thousands of workers. The agrarian distress in rural India has pushed a large section of rural agricultural labourers into urban areas, leading to overcrowding of the labour market. Employers have taken full advantage of this situation to further intensify their exploitation. The policy of dispensing with the `Inspector Raj', resorted to by the central and several state governments, has made a mockery of the existing labour legislations, putting the implementing machinery under total collapse. The successive governments at the centre had miserably failed and deliberately sidelined the issue of enacting separate legislations for the agricultural and the unorganised sector workers. While the UPA government in its common minimum programme had assured to pass a comprehensive legislation for the benefit of the unorganised sector workers, it has only been circulating various versions of the draft bill without making any substantial changes in the original draft of the previous NDA regime". He called upon the CITU leaders and cadres, in various States and industries, to take effective steps to mobilise these vast sections of the workers and wage a sustained struggle to defend their interests and achieve their genuine demands.

At the very outset, the Convention unanimously adopted a resolution congratulating the glass workers of Firozabad, for their valiant fight against the attacks of the management-administration nexus and pledged full support of the CITU.

A presidium comprising Kanai Banerjee (CITU Centre), Kamalapathi Tripathi (UP), Mrinal Das (WB), Malathi Chittibabu (TN) and K. Bhaskar (AP) conducted the proceedings.

CAMPAIGNS AND TASKS

In the report placed on behalf of the All India Coordination Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers, P.K. Ganguly, Convener, narrated how the composition of the workers in the unorganised sector and the nature of the jobs being done by them had undergone a vast change due to the policies of liberalisation and globalisation. A large section of the workers in the unorganised sector consist of women workers and child labour. 98% of the total-working women are in the unorganised

UNORGANISED SECTOR WORKERS' CHARTER OF DEMANDS

1) Immediately enact the comprehensive central legislation for Unorganised Sector Workers, incorporating the unanimous suggestions and recommendations of the central trade union organisations.

2) Amend the Minimum Wages Act laying down, as the criterion for fixing need-based wages minimum wages, the 15th ILC norms, supplemented by the Supreme Court Judgement of 1991 (Raptakos Brett). Include the (amended) Minimum Wages Act in the 9th Schedule of the Constitution.

3) Revise the existing notifications by enhancing immediately the minimum wages in all employments in the Unorganised Sector to above poverty level, to be increased progressively with the objective to reach the need based level within a specified period. Guarantee payment of minimum wages, under all circumstances, in the case of piece-rated workers.

4) Ensure payment of dearness allowance with hundred per neutralisation of increases in cost of living.

5) Implement all social security measures, including security of employment and welfare measures, for all workers in the Unorganised Sector.

6) Ensure issue of appointment letters/identity cards to all workers in the Unorganised Sector, including the home based, self-employed, contract, casual, piece-rated, temporary, NMR etc workers.

7) Enforce 'equal wages for equal work' concept to all workers, male and female.

8) Address the special needs of women workers like crèche, separate toilets, maternity benefits, transport etc. No night shift for women workers. Sexual harassment at work place must be dealt with severely.

9) Abolish contract system in all sectors and regularise the contract workers; meanwhile, ensure wages and all other benefits on par with the regular workers and continued deployment of all the contract workers, even when contractors are changed.

10) Make the principal employer accountable for payment of minimum wages and settlement of any grievance or dispute in respect of all sections of workers, working under contractors or sub-contractors.

11) Enforce, through the tender documents in the case of all government contracts, incorporating the number of employees and obligatory payment of minimum wages.

12) Extend housing facilities to all workers in the Unorganised Sector.

13) To protect the establishments in the small-scale and tiny sectors, reintroduce quantitative restrictions on imports, restore the customs duties to the 1991- level, reintroduce reservation of items of production de-reserved since 1991 and ban penetration, by the MNCs and Indian monopoly houses, in these sectors and in traditional industries; provide subsidised power and extend other concessions to all units in the Unorganised Sector

14) Ensure occupational safety and health, provision of medi-care benefits to all workers and payment of compensation to the affected workers, in all cases of occupational diseases and accidents.

15) Ensure settlement of all labour disputes within three months with payment of full wages for the duration of non-employment.

sector. A large proportion of the workers in the unorganised sector belong to the down trodden and socially oppressed sections of society like the SC, ST and other backward castes, who are victims of both capitalist exploitation and social oppression. Besides the severe

CITU MARCH to PARLIAMENT

The CITU has called for a MARCH to PARLIAMENT on **December 8, 2005** to press the demands of the Unorganised Sector Workers. This MARCH to PARLIAMENT is an independent action programme of the CITU. CITU has appealed to all State Committees to take immediate steps to mobilise the unorganised sector workers in large numbers and make the march to Parliament a telling success. The State Committees from the four Southern States will, however, ensure a token participation, while planning for larger mobilisations on the same day at State/District levels.

Indian Labour Conference (ILC) is being held on December 9 – 10, 2005, in which "Social Security for unorganised sector workers including agricultural workers covering their service conditions, social security and other benefits" is included as an item of the agenda. The CITU March to Parliament will precede the ILC session.

exploitation by the employers, the unorganised sector workers live in miserable conditions in their residential areas. Majority of them have no proper dwellings and live in slums, without proper sanitation and drinking water facilities even.

The report traced the developments since the CITU constituted the All India Coordination Committee of Unorganised Workers in the Calcutta Conference in 1991 to pay focused attention to organise the workers in the unorganised sector. It recalled the holding of the first All India Convention in 1992, followed by an all India strike organised in 1993 on the demands of the unorganised sector workers. Although at present unorganised sector workers constituted around 50% of the membership of CITU, it is still insignificant when compared to the huge size of, and the vast spectrum of industries covered in, the unorganised sector. Nonetheless, the report dealt with, in some details, the work of CITU, both in the States and from the Centre, among workers in the unorganised sector in different industries and the results there from.

To strengthen our movement in the unorganised sector and overcome the persisting organisational weaknesses, the report highlighted the steps, to be taken with due seriousness and urgency, as under:

- The Sub-Committee on Unorganised Sector at the CITU Centre and the All India Coordination Committee of Unorganised Sector Workers should meet regularly and chalk out action plans for time bound implementation.
- All the State committees should discuss and decide priorities. State coordination committees should be formed, wherever they are not formed. State level sub committees, within the CITU State Committees, should be formed to monitor the functioning of the State Coordination Committee.
- Industry/ trade wise unions should be organized.
- Survey/study should be conducted on the problems of the unorganised sector workers in the prioritised industries and concrete demands should be formulated. State-wide campaigns give better results than localised actions
- Suitable cadre should be deployed for each industry/ trade wise organisation. Women cadres should preferably be deployed in industries where women work in large numbers.
- Special attention should be paid to develop cadres from among the workers, train and promote them to leading positions.
- Issues like social and the unions should address gender oppression, literacy and residential problems, besides the work place issues.
- Intermediary organisational forms like self help groups/ savings groups/ credit groups etc should be considered to create confidence in the strength of unity among the workers in the unorganised sector

A total of 345 delegates attended the convention from various States and 26 comrades

participated in the debate on the report, which was finally adopted after the summing up by the convener.

MASS RALLY

The convention unanimously resolved to take up a countrywide campaign on the pressing demands of the Unorganised Sector Workers (see box) and prepare them for a sustained struggle. It demanded the UPA government to speedily legislate both the Agricultural Workers Bill and the Unorganised Sector Workers Bill to provide for employment protection, guaranteed minimum wages and social security. Deploring that the UPA government has not taken any meaningful steps to incorporate in the draft Bill the unanimous suggestions made by the central trade unions, the convention called upon all sections of the working class to launch a countrywide campaign and struggle to pressurise the government to take immediate steps to enact this legislation, after appropriate consultations with the central trade unions. It also decided to massively mobilise the workers in the unorganised sector for a march to Parliament on December 8, 2005 (during the winter session of the Parliament) and to prepare for staging a countrywide general strike on the demands of the unorganised sector workers, during 2006.

Md. Amin, Secretary, CITU and the Labour Minister of West Bengal, greeted the participants in the Convention and later addressed a mass rally of workers, who had assembled in huge numbers, from Firozabad and its neighbourhood. He recalled with pride the labour friendly measures implemented by the Left Front government in West Bengal during the last 28 years of its rule, particularly the unique scheme of Provident Fund for the workers of the unorganised sector in the State. Others who addressed the mass rally, presided by Kamalapathi Tripathi, were: M.K. Pandhe, Kanai Banerjee, W.R. Varada Rajan. K. Hemalata, Dipankar Mukherjee, P. K. Ganguly and Daulat Ram.

TAX ON SAVINGS INSTRUMENTS OPPOSED

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions has been opposed to the move of the finance ministry to subject all kinds of savings instruments to taxation at the stage of terminal withdrawal, ever since it was announced during the budget speech in 2004.

The savings instruments comprising provident funds, small savings, insurance policies etc. have all along been exempt from taxation at all three stages viz. contribution, accumulation and withdrawal, known as EEE system. But, the proposed migration to the EET system, on which an expert committee is reportedly at work, with a mandate to complete its work by October 31, 2005, will virtually make the exemption at the earlier stages of contribution and accumulation a mockery. The imposition of tax at the withdrawal stage is nothing but cumulative taxation on the entire corpus and will naturally be at the peak rate of tax. This would cause serious financial hardship to the millions of workers and the vast community of small savings public, including the senior citizens. The Government of India during the NDA regime had, over the years, cut down the administered rate of interest, payable on all these instruments, from 12 per cent in June 2000 to 8 per cent from April 2002. The present UPA regime had turned a deaf ear to the unanimous demand of the trade unions for restoration of the interest rate to 12 per cent. The move to tax all savings instruments at the withdrawal stage is a further attack on workers and saving public. This move is aimed at widening the tax net at the base, which with the tax deduction at source (TDS) will be a captive source for resource generation by the government. The finance minister generously abolished the tax on long term capital gains and imposed a Securities Transaction Tax at 0.15 per cent but later buckled in to the blackmail of the brokers to reduce it to 0.015 per cent last year and reduced the rate of corporate income tax, bringing it on par with the personal income tax in the current year budget. But, he is out to squeeze the regular income earners at the bottom rung for his fiscal management. The high rate of household savings and its continuous growth rate have been one of the fundamental strengths of Indian economy. It is a tragedy that the government had not been able to convert these high savings into investments.

The CITU has demanded the UPA government to give up this retrograde move and continue the decades old EEE mode for all savings instruments.

- **To resist attack on labour rights**
- **To fight back anti-people economic policies**
- **In pursuit of 16-point charter of demands**

29TH SEPTEMBER COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE, A MASSIVE SUCCESS!

The working class all over the country has magnificently responded to the call for general strike on September 29, 2005. This is the tenth countrywide general strike since the onset of the Fund-Bank dictated policy of economic liberalisation in the country in 1991. Around 6 crore workers and employees, both from organised and unorganised sectors, and across all sections of economy joined the strike action to cry halt to the blind pursuit by the UPA Government of the same neo-liberal economic policy of reckless privatisation and liberalisation as by the NDA regime, much to the detriment of the national interests.

The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions congratulated the working class and toiling people of the country for their overwhelming response to the strike call. It recorded with appreciation the supportive actions by the fraternal mass organisations of peasants, agricultural workers, women, students and youth etc in the form of demonstration, rasta-roko, rail-roko and thus transforming the general strike into peoples' resistance action throughout the country. The TUs urged the UPA regime to draw appropriate lessons from this resistance and to swiftly change gear and bring about a directional change in their economic policies.

The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions drew the attention of the working people to the recent actions initiated by the UPA government

Fresh burdens have been imposed by the fifth hike affected by the UPA regime on the prices of petrol and diesel.

The Union cabinet has moved for corporatisation of Security Press and government mints, with eventual privatisation in mind.

The process to privatise the Delhi and Mumbai airports, in the name of modernisation through the private-public-partnership is vigourously being taken forward.

The chorus for labour law changes had been revived, reportedly at the instance of the Prime Minister himself.

Two Bills, both pertaining to basic labour rights have been introduced in Parliament without any consultation with the trade unions. The Bill titled "The Labour Laws (Exemption from Furnishing Returns and Maintaining Registers by Certain Establishments) Amendment and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill 2005" provides for exemptions to employers in furnishing various returns, registers, statements, mostly pertaining to employees and employment conditions, under various labour laws. The Bill titled, "Small and Medium Enterprises Development Bill 2005" contains dangerous provisions for taking away a large section of workers engaged in the Small and Medium Enterprises out of the purview of labour laws.

The Ministry of Labour has contemptuously violated the assurance, given on the floor of the Parliament, to rescind the NDA government notification permitting a new classification of "Fixed Term Employment Workmen".

Attempts are on to release a new series of Consumer Price Index with 2001 as the base year, while the unanimous concerns voiced by the central Trade Unions Organisations remain to be addressed.

Scores of draft Bills have been put in circulation from different quarters on the legislation for the unorganised sector workers, with no cognisance taken of the core suggestions mooted by the trade unions.

The central government has flatly ruled out any consideration of the demand for the setting up of the Sixth Pay Commission for government employees.

The Finance Ministry is getting ready with its plan to migrate to the EEE model of subjecting to taxation all kind of savings instruments, provident funds, various small savings schemes, insurance

claims etc., thereby imposing further financial burdens on all workers and the vast community of small savings public.

While the Finance Ministry is gearing up to push through the PFRDA Bill in the winter session of Parliament, the Interim PFRDA is going about finalising all logistical arrangements to flag off the New Pension System.

All these point to the urgent need for further heightened vigilance and preparedness for a sustained struggle on the part of the working class. The Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions called upon the working class to keep up the tempo and prepare for future struggles, if the government does not mend its ways and persist with its anti-people and anti labour policies.

Many of the BMS and INTUC affiliates and followers joined the strike action in a big way. In Bangalore, both in the public sector and several private sector units the strike was joined by both the INTUC and BMS The BMS union at Bharat Electronics Ltd, Ghaziabad joined the strike along with the other unions. In coalmines, most of the workers from the INTUC and BMS unions have joined the strike action throughout the country. The banking and insurance sectors noted participation of the followers of INTUC and BMS affiliated unions as well in the strike action. Thus, the tenth countrywide General strike by the working class against the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation and attack on labour rights has reflected much broader unity at the grass root level.

US Coercion On Insurance Opposed

The All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) has strongly objected to the statement of US ambassador to India, David C Mulford that India must allow more than 50 per cent FDI in insurance sector and termed it as "unwarranted". It stated that what was more objectionable was the threatening tone of the ambassador and felt it was a clear pressure tactic adopted by the United States to force further liberalisation of Indian insurance sector.

In a statement released from Hyderabad on October 8, 2005, AIIEA General Secretary, K Venugopal said the US demand had more to do with the needs of US insurance industry than the national requirements of India. "It is a fact that US insurance industry is stagnating. Its life premium registered a meagre growth of 0.1 per cent in 2004. Its non-life industry is in a serious crisis due to the recent natural calamities. Therefore, it wants to penetrate and gain control over the Indian insurance sector, which is growing at a phenomenal rate of around 40 per cent.

"Insurance sector is very vital to the mobilisation of funds for infrastructure and social development. According to the prime minister, India needs Rs 7,00,000 crore in the next 10 years for infrastructure development. It is absurd to expect that the foreign companies will bring their global premium into Indian infrastructure. The experience of the last five years since opening of insurance sector proves that foreign companies have not invested in infrastructure even the premium locally mobilised. On the other hand the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) alone is capable of mobilising the required funds in just seven years.

"Mulford said that the current minimum capital requirement of Rs 100 crore capital should be reduced to encourage more health insurance companies to enter the Indian market. But it is a known fact that the private companies, which entered the general insurance sector, are concentrating on the profit making portfolios of Fire and Marine insurance leaving the social insurance needs like health insurance to be taken care by the public sector general insurance companies.

AIIEA demanded from the UPA government to strengthen the nationalised insurance industry and warned it not to succumb to the pressures of the United States. It reiterated its firm opposition to any hike in the FDI in insurance from the present 26 per cent. The insurance employees will observe a nationwide one-day strike if the government attempts to bring any legislation hiking the FDI limits in insurance, stated Venugopal. He also asserted that the AIIEA will mobilise the people to oppose the US pressures and government's actions if any, taken under this pressure. Saying that the hike in FDI in insurance will be a disaster to the national economy and will retard the infrastructure development, the AIIEA solicited the support of the Indian people in this struggle.

THE RELEVANCE OF NOVEMBER REVOLUTION

M K Pandhe

The socialist revolution on 7th November in 1917 was a historic occasion since it overthrew the autocratic rule of the Kerensky Government and established for the first time a government under the leadership of the working class. It further heralded a new epoch of socialist revolutions and opened floodgates of rising struggles of the working class all over the world.

The International Labour Organisation would not have seen the light of the day had the November revolution not taken place and USSR was not formed. The November revolution created a scare in the minds of all capitalist countries which realised that they could not rule in the old ways.

WORLDWIDE IMPACT

In India, the nationalist leaders like Tilak, Gandhi, Nehru and Lajpat Rai, welcomed the socialist revolution since they felt it would lead to strengthening of the anti-imperialist struggles. The November revolution had torn asunder the myth that capitalism can give justice to the working masses.

The November revolution blazed the trail of national liberation movements all over the world hitting at the very basis of imperialism. The heroic role played by the Soviet Union in defeating fascism gave a powerful jolt to the forces of colonialism with socialist countries emerging as genuine friends of newly liberated countries.

The message of November revolution is still kicking today. The spectacular advances made by the existing socialist economies has upheld the supremacy of the socialist system. The fast growth in the Chinese economy is making it extremely difficult for the capitalist countries to explain why their economies are in deep crisis. The hard boiled critiques of socialism had to characterise the Chinese economy as engine of economic growth. They have even admitted that by 2025 China would surpass USA to become the largest economy in the world.

ADVANCES IN SOCIALIST COUNTRIES

The heroic people of Cuba, under the leadership of Fidel Castro, have challenged US imperialism despite most inhuman blockade. The remarkable steps taken by the socialist government of Cuba in economic construction and scientific advance has been acknowledged all over the world and have convincingly proved the invincibility of the socialist system. Fidel Castro himself has announced on several occasions the inspiration Cuban revolution received from the great November revolution.

The socialist Vietnam has made radical advances in building a socialist economy and improving the standard of living of the people which is playing a crucial role in economic and political development in South East Asia.

The determined struggle launched by the socialist Government of the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea against nuclear blackmail by the US imperialism has forced the self-appointed world police to withdraw the threat to attack Korea. The support received by DPRK from China has been an important factor in checking the aggressive designs of US imperialism. The progress achieved by North and South Korea for improvement of bilateral ties has great significance for peace process in Korean peninsula.

The developments in Brazil, Venezuela, Uruguay and other Latin American countries have given a big jolt to the US supremacy in that vast continent. The growing strength of the left forces in various countries in the world is also indicative of the advancement of socialist ideology in the world. The sizeable improvement in the performance of the left forces in India is a part of the global process that is highlighting in a clear cut manner that despite initial set back after dismantling of socialism in Soviet Union, the socialist and progressive forces are emerging powerful all over the globe to challenge the US imperialist supremacy in a period of globalisation.

RISING TIDE OF STRUGGLES

The rising tide of working class struggles all over the world against the policies of globalisation is a sign of growing consciousness against the exploitative policies of international capitalism. The successful general strike on 29th September 2005 in India was a part of this struggle. With

intensification of class struggles in all the continents, even the working class of USA is getting affected. A split in the AFL-CIO with nearly 40 per cent of the membership walking out to form a militant trade union organisation recently shows the anti-establishment resentment among the mass of US workers. Increasing opposition among the rank and file cadres of the British TUC to the imperialist aggressive policies of Tony Blair government is also a sign of changing world scenario. The defeat of European constitution in referendum conducted in France and Netherland further points out to the growing resistance to the imperialist policies.

The working class and the people of Russia and other former socialist countries have experienced extreme deterioration in their working and living conditions and their emerging class struggles also are indicative of opposition to growing capitalist oppression.

In contemporary world situation the development of strategic alliance between China, Russia and India is of extremely important step in the direction of development of a multi-polar world. The arbitrary concept of unipolar world trotted by US imperialism to establish its hegemony will receive a big set back if this strategic alliance will become more effective and meaningful. The Government of India's move towards defence tie-up with US imperialism may create some difficulties in this regard, yet its importance cannot be underestimated. On the occasion of 89th anniversary of November revolution, it is the duty of the Indian working class and the people to ensure that India does not become a victim of US nuclear blackmail so that the strategic alliance between China, Russia and India becomes stronger to meet challenges of world imperialism led by USA.

As well known US commentator, Robert Weissman has noted, "Internationally, the newly de-colonised Third World asserted itself politically, pressing calls at the United Nations for a new international economic order. Revolutionary movements around the world posed serious threats to established order, in many cases gaining political power and in some instances rejecting multinational corporate dominance of developing country economies."

FALLACY OF ANTI-SOVIET PROPAGANDA

The pontiffs of imperialism today are even now indulging in anti-Soviet propaganda by resorting various dubious methods since they know very well that the November revolution is still griping the minds of millions of people in all countries.

The so-called Mitrokhin achieves which has provided handle to champions of imperialist designs like Arun Shourie and company to launch most vicious campaign based on utter falsehood to malign the Soviet regime. Even respected leaders like Promod Dasgupta are being falsely characterized as agents of foreign power. These so-called documents have no historic validity but they are being widely published by the capitalist press to malign socialism and the ideology of November revolution.

It can be easily seen from the fact that they keep mum about the vicious machinations indulged in by CIA overtly and covertly to bolster the global designs of US imperialism.

Recently, I was shocked to read a piece of so-called conversation with Lenin by a Russian renegade who totally distorted Lenin's thinking which went contradictory to what Lenin was advocating throughout his life and reflected in his numerous writtings. Such fallacious publicities are made by hirelings of capitalism.

The real face of US democracy stood thoroughly exposed by Bush administration's aggression on Iraq to control its rich oil resources though it was claimed as an attempt to wipe out weapons of mass destruction which was nowhere found. Now US imperialists are conspiring to attack Iran to destroy its nuclear capability being used for producing energy. Again the real game is to control Iran's oil resources. Syria is also being made a target by US imperialism. Had the Soviet Union been existing in the world today, the US imperialists would not have dared to indulge in its machinations in West Asia.

While observing the historic anniversary of the great November revolution the working class and the people of India must understand its significance even today. The class struggle must be strengthened and struggle against imperialist machinations must acquire worldwide character. After all the working class has nothing to lose but its chains but it has a world to win.

THE SOCIAL CONTRIBUTION OF STIKES & AGITATIONS A GLOBAL EXPERIENCE

Chittabrata Majumdar

The deceitful weeping of the media on wage loss of the daily wage earners and the outburst of fury of industrial captains over the unprecedent success of general strike by the working class on 29th September 2005 is nothing new or unexpected. This time, a section of media went one step further expressing its concern for the country beyond West Bengal warning that such countrywide strike and protests by the working class would jeopardise the foreign investment prospect. But, they obviously were not courteous to refer the issues for which strike was called even for justifying their high-sounding claims of being unbiased.

The reactions were nonetheless the acknowledgement of the success of the general strike that expressed the resentment and anger of the people against the fund-bank dictated economic policies of the country on liberalisation track and their determination to resist the same. The indigenous bourgeoisie in collaboration with the multinational is determined to suppress the mass agitations and movements against the neo-liberal economic policies by all means, including by maligning the trade union movements, advising to unlearn the lessons of history. We too need to relearn from the history, not only to reply befittingly, but also to move forward the determined working class struggle more accurately and effectively.

Capitalism never concedes the demand whatever legitimate that might be on its own, till the workers exercise their strength effectively. The workers of the USA long back in 1934 had to come to the streets in thousands including strike to compel the Government to concede the demand for the social security for all sections of the toiling masses. Apart from the success in realising the social security benefits, this struggle saved USA from the danger of fascism too. In other developed capitalist countries also the workers had to wage fierce struggle from time to time to compel their employers and respective governments to accept the demands and to enact statutes introducing the social security schemes.

But, to counter the misnomer that workers movements and agitations are only confined to the mere economism of the working class alone, we must stand ideologically firm with sound arguments citing instances of the centuries-long working class movement. The two-months long strike of the workers in metal industry in Italy in 1919, followed by the agricultural workers movement for wage hike and eight hours work touched its height on 20th August 1920, when the general strike called by workers joined by the mass to bring the life at Milan at halt. The workers of the country had forced the government to withdraw army from Soviet Union as a culmination of the prolonged working class movement of that time.

France, during 1918-20, witnessed numerous workers movements, agitation and strikes. Who can deny that in April 1919, the French workers achieved the right for eight hours working day as a result of those fierce struggles and successful movements? But those movements were not confined into mere workers' economic demands. Rather, those movements acted in consolidating the revolutionary force against the then greatest threat of Fascism. The united movements under the leadership of the working class and Communist Party ultimately resulted in the Anti-fascist rally of over fifty thousands determined people in Paris on 9th February 1934 followed by the general strike on 12th February to compel the vacillating socialist block to join in the fight against Fascism on 27th June 1935.

The accelerated working class movements during the interim period of two world wars served the broader interest of the people of countries of their own, to save the world they live in, despite of the initiation of the movements with their own economic demand, in a period when the world capitalism was in the severe crises that lead to Great Depression and resulted in the World War II.

In our country also the working class contributed

in the freedom struggle mobilising the common people to make the country independent of the British Empire. The strikes in the textile industry, strike in naval ship during 1940s were jolt on the British imperialism that in turn acted immensely to organise the anti imperialist force of the country. In a contemporary era of globalisation, which is beyond argument imperialist in character that resulted on its own course with the aggravated crises of global capitalist system, the governments and big capitalists of even developed countries are about to trample the rights of the working class together with the withdrawal of the social security measures that the toiling mass have been enjoying so far. Not only the threat of imperialism is looming all over, the fascist forces in different countries are active for their revival.

Amidst of these, the third world nations are the worst affected. Not only the workers are denied of their legitimate demands, the existing benefits are slashed drastically. The unemployment and pauperisation of mass have been manifesting the galloping growth. The imperialist onslaughts on the developing countries are now overtly visible. With this backdrop, the toiling mass of the country has no other choice than to resist the attacks, to organise the people of all sections affected and to consolidate the revolutionary force.

The general strike of 29th September 2005 was of distinct character and not merely for the economic demand of the workers alone. It was rather broader ever before in nature, since the strike was for the interest of the common people, as well as to defend the self-reliance and economic sovereignty of the country, to save the public sector, that the government led by the bourgeoisie is incapable to protect before the imperialist pressures. The bourgeoisie of the country frenzied in furthering its own interest has joined the multinational capital to abuse the working class and its unions for organising the movements, agitations and strikes. They become furious on not being allowed to operate on the strike day. Expressing their anger, they even termed the workers' demonstration on the day as act of uncivilised.

But, how the section abusing the working class and trade unions for organising strikes and demonstration, would hide the recent events in the so-called civilized countries? The thousands and millions workers in Italy, France, South Korea and Russia free from socialism have been repeatedly on the streets to demonstrate against neo-liberal and globalisation policies of the respective countries in the recent time even in October 2005 itself. The workers of the other so-called civilised countries also are agitating, organising the movements and strikes; they are on streets to halt the life, to stall the train and air services to dissuade their governments from continuing the neo-liberal policies apart from the anti war demonstration in USA and UK!

The working class movements, agitation and strikes in our country in the recent time is not confined only in the economic demand of the workers alone, rather is the prime mover to organise the all sections of the society against the neo-liberal anti-people policies of the government and imperialist globalisation process. The people's movement of the country needs further to be viewed as a part of the international people's movements against the increasing threats of imperialism and danger of fascism. On the 60th anniversary of defeat of fascism, we must recapitulate the history to relearn how the international working class owing the socialist spirit from Soviet Union played its historical role for the humanity with the conviction to uphold the working class unity for the victory of socialism over capitalist-born imperialism and fascism.

CHANDIGARH: DEMONSTRATION BY UT EMPLOYEES

On 20th October 2005 a massive procession of employees of various departments of Chandigarh Administration converged into a militant demonstration before the Governor's house. The Coordination Committee of various unions of Chandigarh Administration called for the demonstration to press for their eight point demands pertaining to their service conditions and other rights.

Raghunath Singh, General Secretary of Punjab State CITU, Rakesh Kumar, Convenor of the Coordination Committee, Balkrishan, President of Federation of UT Employees and Workers addressed the rally besides others.

(The West Bengal State Committee of CITU met Md Amin, Labour Minister, Govt of West Bengal ON 7TH October 2005 at Kolkata and submitted a memorandum on violations of important labour laws in the State and urged for urgent intervention. Reproduced below the excerpts of the memorandum submitted by CITU. – Editor)

WB: CITU CITES VIOLATION OF LABOUR LAWS

.... The agenda note of the meeting of State Labour Advisory Board (SLAB) held on 31.08.2005 very rightly pointed out violation of important labour laws and benefits extended to the working people under those Acts and Rules framed there under. The Acts namely 1) ID Act, 1947, ii) The payment of Gratuity Act, 1972, iii) EPF and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, iv) ESI Act, 1948, v) Payment of Wages Act, 1936, vi)Minimum Wages Act, 1948, vii) The Contract Labour (R&A) Act, 1970, viii) Beedi and Cigar Workers (Conditions of Employment) Act, 1966. Employers in various industries are violating the provisions of those Acts and Rules.... deliberately only to deprive the working people from their legitimate claims.

Let us cite some instances of violation of different laws.

1. Industrial Disputes Act, 1947

The agenda note of SLAB mentioned violation of the tripartite agreements arrived at under the ID Act. The employers are violating the ID Act by way of refusing to pay the enhanced DA; they have kept suspended the payment of DA in many industries, (particularly in Jute Mills), which is part of wages and thereby violating the Payment of Wages Act also. There are some Jute Mills, which are giving wages at the rate of Rs.100/- to some categories of workers although the industry wise tripartite agreement dt. 05.01.2002, categorically fixed that rate of wages for the "new entrants" only who have joined the Mill on or after 05.01.2005. Unfortunately workers who are working as `Badli' for last 10/15 years, getting this rate, which is a sheer violation of the tripartite agreement.

Lock-Out Large scale lock-outs are there in our state and more than 40 thousand workers are paid an paltry amount of Rs.500/- per month by the State Govt. out of the public exchequer, who are under lock-out for more than one year. This is a good gesture from the State Govt. and it can happen only as it is a Left Front Government, who cares for workers interest. But the employer kept their factories and establishments closed in the guise of 'lock-out' years after years only to avoid payment of retrenchment and closure benefits, payment of Gratuity and other legal dues to the workers. They force the worker to resign on payment of a paltry amount.

2. Minimum Wages Act, 1948

The Govt. is required to revise the minimum wages in every five years. But that practice is not followed in a regular manner in respect of all categories of employment. There are so many schedule employments in our state where minimum wages are not given to the workmen. For example, workers engaged in Beedi making, Bakery, Roads and Building Construction, Saw Mill, Oil Mills, Shops and Commercial Establishments etc are not provided minimum wages in various places, either due to negligence on the part of the employers or due to Court Cases. Many new industries have been set up in our state, but no minimum wages have been fixed for them yet, for example, Sponge Iron and Ferro-Alloy Industries. A huge number of workmen have been engaged in those industries but no minimum wages have been fixed for them. The enforcement machinery of our State should be made more effective and regular checkup on the part of the Govt. is required for the proper implementation of the Minimum wages Act. The Minimum Wages Inspectors posted at different blocks should be brought under the direct control of the Asst. Labour Commissioner for the proper functioning in respect of this Act. We want to draw your kind attention also to the fact that there are so many court cases in respect of minimum wages of various category of employment.... and due to non-persuasion of the cases pending before the court of law, the stay-orders are continuing for long period and ultimately the working class is

deprived of their legitimate wages.

3. Payment of Gratuity Act

Non payment of Gratuity to the retired employees has become a regular feature particularly in Jute Industry. ....There are thousands of employees in Jute Mills who are not getting their gratuity dues even 15 years after their superannuating. In Agarpara Jute Mill, there are 1300 workmen who have not received their gratuity dues since 1990. The Govt. of India has not enforced Sec.4A(1) of the Payment of Gratuity Act (Insurance Coverage) and most of the Companies do not make provision for gratuity in their Balance Sheet. To avoid gratuity payment, the employers of Jute Industries have adopted an unfair practice i.e. they re-employ the retired employee on a lower rate. After sometimes the employee becomes invalid and unable to work and dies eventually, but it is sad to say that even the legal heir, nominee of the deceased employee do not get the gratuity amount....

ESI and PF Act

These are the most important Social Security Acts. Two separate Authorities have been setup by the Central Govt. to look after the implementation of these Acts. Default in payment of contribution by the employers is on the increase year by year. Although the State Govt. has no control over these two Authorities, some people with political motives blame the State Govt. for non-realization of the defaulted amount. The position of default in payment of contribution of PF& ESI in West Bengal is: PF Default as on 31.12.2004 : Rs 469.01 crore, ESI Default as on 31.03.2004: Rs 195.19 crore.

Implementation of any Act depends not on the good wishes of the employer, vigilance from the worker side is also necessary, at the same time the implementing Authorities have an important role to play.

Inspection is one of the most vital task to detect evasions and violations. But for the last few years, the Govt. of India have adopted a policy of 'NO INSPECTION" and end of INSPECTOR RAJ. As if, only inspectors are the corrupt persons in the Administration! There may be some corrupt inspectors but for this reason only, all cannot be blamed. If the Authority sincerely desires, it can take disciplinary actions against the corrupt. Instead of doing all these things, they have issued a FATWAH that there will be no inspection without the permission of the higher officials. Govt. of India is also contemplating to introduce self-certification scheme. This has encouraged the employers to violate the law. And in the event of an increased volume of violation, evasion and default in the payment, the shortage of staff in those Authorities is increasing simultaneously.

Presently, the employers have become too clever. To avoid action under IPC they are depositing only the employees' share, which is being deducted from their wages, but not depositing employers' own share. These employers get their establishments registered with PF/ESI, get code nos., enroll few workers as subscribers but most of the workers are kept out of coverage.

Special emphasis should be given for this field and the matter should be taken up with both the Authorities immediately otherwise the State Govt. shall have to earn much more condemnation without having any actual fault with them.

4. Contract Labour (R&A) Act

Violation of Contract Labour Act has become an order of the day. The Principal employers pay very little care to their obligations in abiding by this Act and Rules. There are so many instances where the principal employers have not got their establishment registered under this Act, although engagement of contract labour in those establishments in a regular feature. The Govt. establishments and Companies are no exception in the matter. Similarly many contractors have not obtained any license from the competent Authority only to escape from the statutory obligations. This trend is increasing day by day and it is found that although the number of units increasing, the number of registration and license under this Act decreasing, which is absurd. The newly setup industries are violating the provisions of Contract Labour Act frequently, despite regularly engaging contract labour . Contract labourers are now a days being engaged in the job specified for the permanent worker or job in perennial nature. The State Govt. should take up the matter with priority and force the employer to stop all these mal-practices. The workers engaged through contractors are also entitled to have benefits of ESI and PF but most of them are denied of the

said benefits.

5. Newly Set Up Industries

Your are aware of the fact that many small and medium range industries have been set up in the last few years in our state. Many employers of these industries do not maintain any record of their workmen employed, directly or indirectly. Working hours for 12 hours is a common feature although no overtime payment is given to the workmen. Leaving aside the low rate of wages, which is below the subsistence level, these employers do not care even to take permission from the Factory Directorate to run the overtime work. In some of thee factories, workers from the outside states were brought and are kept confined within the factory premises and are treated as slaves or bonded labour. These workers are deprived of their trade union rights also. Whoever dates to form union there, are dealt with seriously and dismissed summarily. Practically ad "Jungle Raj" is prevailing in most of these factories. There are so many units that blatantly violating the Pollution Control Act, Factories Act, Shops and Establishments Act, Workmen's Compensation Act, Maternity Benefit Act and also WB House Rent Allowance Act and thereby depriving the workers form their legitimate rights.

Because of huge unemployment and poverty workers are compelled to accept low wages and longer working hours only to save themselves from hunger and death. 10/12 hours working, lack of proper safety arrangements creates problems of health hazard and sometimes death. Goaded by sheer profit motive employers pay little care to the human life.

Tea Industry

We are glad that with your intervention very recently a tripartite settlement on wage revision has been signed. But some of the employers of tea gardens have failed to comply with their statutory obligations in respect of providing required housing accommodations, arrangement for supply of adequate wholesome drinking water, adequate arrangement for medical treatment. Workers are compelled to live in most unhygienic conditions. Irregular supply of subsidised rations by a section of employer is also creating problems. Most of the Bought Leaf Factories are violating various provisions of Factories Act and WB Payment of House Rent Allowance Act.

IT Industry

IT, another new industry, is coming up in our state. We welcome it. This industry is a sophisticated industry. The employers of this industry are expected to be sophisticated. Unfortunately they behave as if they are above the law of the land. This Industry comes under the provisions of the West Bengal Shops and Establishment Act as a 'Commercial Establishment'. The provision of 8 hours working as also provisions of leave, holidays and weekly rest are rampantly violated by most of these Companies. As this sector is growing rapidly immediate intervention by the Government is required for protecting the rights of the persons engaged there.

Last but not the least to say that mere appeal to the employers shall not yield any result. In a civilised society neither the State, nor the Government can not close its eyes or remains a silent spectator. The need of the hour is that Government is to come out to protect the workers and to stop violations of various Labour Laws and unfair labour practices by a section of Employer. We strongly feel Factories, Labour, Shops and Establishment Directorates are required to be geared up to face the challenges of ongoing onslaught upon the working class in the era of Liberalization, Globalization and Privatisation. Protective measures are required to be updated and revised also.

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STRIKES HERE, THERE AND EVERYWHERE...

Ardhendu Dakshi

King Kanute thought that he was most powerful. His army, his band of satraps, his wealth - everything gave him the power to discipline anybody, anything and keep the society in a perfect order of his choice. So he went to the sea and told the sea to stop the waves because he was the ruler, who ought to have been honoured, obeyed. Alas! That did not happen.

Today's Kanutes are more powerful, they do not rule only one country but the whole world. They believe that the society can be silenced, and working class, the most obstinate section of the society also can be forced to subservience with the help of all the power in their command. And one of the most powerful weapons in their hand is the media.

A wonderful orchestra is being played all over the world by the media.

The theme song is remarkably the same everywhere. That trade union is an anachronism, that the socialist philosophy is dead, that Soviet Union was only an aberration in the book of history, that labour laws are atrocious and drag in the path of growth and development, that profit is supreme and capital has to be protected by all means - not the labour, that globalisation is a must and everybody should accept that capitalism, dominated by giant corporations, is to charter the ultimate course of human civilization. In other words the message is clear that nobody should challenge the onward march of neo-liberal globalisation. The working class or for that matter the trade unions must acquiesce themselves to this "ground reality" and keep quiet. Today's Kanutes are ordering that there should be no waves.

The sea of humanity, severely oppressed under the wheels of neo-liberal globalisation are refusing to oblige the neo-Kanutes. All the shores of the world are facing waves of strikes and struggles, one after another. This proves that even the most powerful has his power limited only to a point.

In the wake of globalisation, attack on working class has been pervading and almost globalised, the issues involved are remarkably identical and the resistance movement, coming in waves, is also being organized all over the globe.

The 29th September, 2005 all India strike is the biggest strike in last one and half decades of the ten countrywide general strikes against neliberal globalisation besides numerous setoral actions. 50 to 60 million people, workers and employees, joined this massive action with a charter that reflected people's anger against the pernicious effects of globalisation.

The media controlled by big business came out as expected against the trade unions. Their vituperations having no limit. Some of the worthies suggested that the government must be firm and such waves of protest must be stopped.

But, toilers of the world are stubbornly refusing to oblige the neo-Kanutes. Strikes are not only here but everywhere in the world.

WAVES OF STRIKE ALL OVER

Barely a week after the great Indian strike, FRANCE came to a standstill. At the call of 5 French trade unions the entire country was immobilized by a strike action on 4th October 2005 as hundreds of flights were cancelled, Railway service went haywire with hardly 30 per cent service on run, buses were stranded because the staff did not turn up. The impact was similar even in schools, hospitals, universities, and other public services.

There also the dominant media came out against this strike, the government threatened of action against the strikers but nothing worked. Government employees, public sector employees braved all these threats and came out to join the strike. The strikers marched through the streets of all the cities in more than 150 locations in the country in huge numbers. The issues were same. They protested against economic policies, against fall in wages and purchasing power, against labour law dilutions, against hire and fire and most importantly against curtailment of expenditures on public services and welfare.

According to opinion poll, 75% of respondents supported the strike. No threat could stop the wave. Kanutes failed here also.

And in mid September 2005, the port & dock workers of France struck work against privatization and the striking workers snatched away ship sought to be operated by the management during the strike and carried it to the mid-sea.

Waves of strikes are sweeping the world in the last few years. The strikes in Austria, Germany, France and in many other countries are part of history now. In countries like Austria strike has taken place after decades.

GREECE has witnessed two major strikes in 3 months. Workers' anger was ventilated when the government refused to grant a compensatory holiday on 11th May 2005 as 1st May coincided with a Christian Holy day. The trade unions called a general strike on 11th May that collapsed the entire road, air, and water (maritime) transport. All schools, offices, insurance companies, municipalities banks remained closed. Workers from industries walked off their work place, even the journalists stopped their work. On 26th July 2005 again more than a million workers struck work against the government's policy of increasing working hours and reducing overtime payment.

BELGIUM workers have organized their first general strike on October 7, 2005 after 12 years against the economic and labour policies. The country was completely paralysed. The General Strike in Belgium was preceded by the Hospital workers' strike on 3rd October.

In ITALY, a general strike paralysed the country on November 30, 2004. The strike was called by the three trade union confederations to protest against the Berlusconi government's economic and financial policies. Sectoral strikes followed thereafter throughout the year. The crucial among them had been the Metalworkers' nationwide strike on 30th September 2005 in ITALY which paralysed the steel plants in Milan, Naples, Reggio Emilia, L' Aquila, Torino and Taranto.

Semiconductor workers in GERMANY also went on strike on 30th September 2005 against retrenchment move by the management.

Copper mining workers of Arizona and Texas in USA went for multiple days strike action in July 2005 braving prohibitory orders.

COLOMBIA witnessed biggest ever countrywide general strike on 12th October 2005 against the trade agreement with USA and also against repression on trade unions.

In SOUTH KOREA workers and government employees went for a simultaneous strike in November 2004. Peasantry supported the strike actively. The government wanted to change labour laws, deny the right to strike to the government employees and liberalise foodgrain import. All these steps had hit hard all sections of the working population.

Again on 1st April 2005 there was 4 hour strike by industrial workers against employment of temporary workers with reduced wage.

On 27th June 2005 millions of workers struck work in SOUTH AFRICA at the call of COSATU. Job loss, high rate of unemployment and poverty forced the workers to go for strike in the industry.

Again on 3rd October at the call of COSATU workers went on strike in Eastern and Western Cape provinces. They have decided to organise a series of strike, one day in every week. Free market policies, loss of jobs unemployment, loss of income and flooding of market by imported goods have raised peoples anger. Unemployment figure officially is 26%. Nobody knows what is the actual situation.

Port and dockworkers staged four-day general strike from 14th September 2005 at International Port of DJIBOUTI. In protest of the vindictive action by the employer against the striking workers, the Djibouti Port workers again went on strike on 24th September with two hours notice to the management.

Some distinct features are seen during the preparation and organising the strikes. Almost everywhere be it in India or in any other country it is observed that thousands of people have come out in the streets. They led processions, blocked thoroughfares and protested angrily. Governments, everywhere, are on the dock and are standing face to face with their own people.

Finally in the global war between super profit and people, people have started asserting themselves.

There are waves of struggles today that cannot be stopped. And if Kanutes cannot stop the waves, they certainly cannot stop hurricanes and people are preparing themselves to raise hurricanes of protests everywhere.

COUNTRYWIDE STRIKE ON SEPTEMBER 29

The General strike of 29TH September transformed into a complete BANDH in West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Assam; a bandh like situation was witnessed. Haryana, Orissa and Jharkhand, owing to massive participation by workers across the affiliations and immense support from people from other walks of life. In Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Chandigarh UT, total strike by roadways workers has paralysed the normal traffic. In A.P. and Karnataka, more than 50% of buses were off the road.

In Gurgaon, which was the scene of barbaric brutalities against the workers of Honda in July last, more than 85 per cent of the workers in the entire industrial area were on strike; they came over to the streets in thousand and braved lathi charge and arrests.

In several States instances of mass arrests have been reported – as in Tamil Nadu (25000) Orissa (10000), Assam, Jharkhand and Rajasthan. Police resorted to brutalities in Jaipur and Kanpur. Schools and colleges were closed in Uthranchal.

Demonstrators at innumerable centers all over the country staged angry protests and submitted memoranda to the local administration.

The massive participation of the employees of Airports and civil aviation sector in the strike in all the 124 airports in the country has brought the air-traffic to a virtual standstill. This has put the UPA Govt on notice against its ongoing exercise to hand over the Mumbai and Delhi airports to chosen private players.

The overwhelming majority of around one crore Govt employees in the country, both in central and state governments staged the biggest ever strike action countrywide in all the state govt offices and establishments in most of the states in the country barring a few. In the central govt sector, overwhelming section of employees in the telecom, postal departments, AG office, Income tax and audit offices joined the strike in a big way throughout the country braving threats and prohibition. More than eighty per cent of the defence sector employees working in around 94 ordinance factories and depots under Army, Navy and Airforce and the MES offices all over the country have joined the strike action at the call of All India Defence Employees Federation.

In other sectors...

· The entire financial sector covering the banks and the insurance companies witnessed almost total strike throughout the country involving around 20 lakh workers and employees.

· Strike by the telecom workers and employees under BSNL and MTNL was more than 70 per cent throughout the country.

· Of the six-lakh coal-mining workers in nine companies, viz., ECL, BCCL, CCL, SECL, NCL, WCL, CMPDIL, Singareni Coallieries etc more than 70 per cent workers joined the strike action. In the non-coal mining belt as well, spreading over Jharkhand, Orissa and chhattisgarh strike was near total.

· The city of Bangalore and Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, the centres of concentration of public sector units in the country witnessed massive strike in all the PSUs there.

· In the plantation sector throughout the country strike was near total.

· Unorganised sector workers in brick-kilns, head-load, beedi, and mandi-workers took part in strike in a big way, and organised rail-roko and rasta-roko at various centres throughout the country.

· The construction workers, both from the organized and unorganised sector responded to the strike call in a big way.

· The construction workers in all the hydel-projects under construction in the state of Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal and Jammu were on complete strike.

· Anganwadi workers throughout the country also participated in the strike in a big

way.

· The Transport workers, both from the state and private sector responded to strike call magnificently

· In Port & Dock, despite opposition by some of the major unions, strike was massive at Kolkata, Haldia, Cochin, Gujarat, Paradip, Tutikorin and JNPT(Mumbai) and it was partial in other ports.

· The Oil sector workers took part in the strike in a big way. In the installations, and refineries in Tripura, Assam, West Bengal, Bihar and Haryana and in the southern states strike was total whereas strike was partial in other areas.

· In steel, strike was total in Durgapur, Burnpur, 60% workers joined strike in Salem steel and in other places it was partial.

· Electricity workers joined the strike in a big way in most of the states. In some states like UP, in certain areas they were on strikes and in other areas day-long dharnas were organized which has drawn participation of workers of other affiliation.

REPORTS FROM STATES

Haryana: Owing to complete strike by the employees of Roadways Corporation and also by a major section of private bus workers, a bandh like situation has emerged. Govt employees including electricity, PWD, municipal workers and Anganwadi workers were on complete strike. In Kurukhetra and yamunanagar, hundreds of workers were arrested while they were demonstrating on the main roads. The workers of industrial area of Gurgaon and Dharuhera including the Honda

JUDICIARY INDULGES IN YET ANOTHER TRAVESTY OF JUSTICE

The Supreme Court of India in a judgment delivered on October 21, 2005 overturned the ruling of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, on the application of the 'equal wage for equal work' for employees engaged on daily wage.

The CITU in a statement released on October 24, 2005, termed the apex court ruling as yet another travesty of justice. This perhaps, is in keeping with the penchant of the apex judiciary to be reforms-savvy, which has become synonymous with anti-labour mindset, in the era of liberalisation.

While on the one hand copious crocodile tears are shed on the horrendous conditions of the workers in the unorganised sector, there are pressures on the other hand to make labour laws more flexible to permit wholesale contracting out of perennial and permanent jobs. This ruling by the apex judiciary will only render the quality of non-permanent jobs demeaning and indecent. This ruling is clearly a case of inserting a new element of equal qualification/equal pre-recruitment process in the concept of equal pay for equal work. This is an aberration - as well as distortion - of the concept laid down as a directive principle in Article 39 (d), read with Article 14 of the Constitution guaranteeing a fundamental right of equality before law. Besides, this is also a case of judicial incursion into the existing legislation, to the detriment of labour interests. The contention that Article 14 permits 'reasonable classification based on qualities and characteristics of persons recruited' leading to introduction of elements like 'accuracy', 'dexterity', 'qualitative differential based on reliability and responsibility' etc. even if the physical activity and quantity of turnover be comparable, is thoroughly a regressive interpolation in the legislative ambit. The regressive tone of the ruling is evident when viewed in the context of the provisions in the Contract Labour Central Rules laying down that the wage rates shall be the same between workmen employed by a contractor and the principal employer in cases they perform the same and similar kind of work. The CITU denounced these contentious pronouncements in this ruling as totally unacceptable and a clear transgression on the basic democratic rights of workers employed on daily wages and a case of miscarriage of justice. The CITU demanded the Govt of India to intervene appropriately in this matter and ensure that the impact of this ruling is negated.

REPORTS & EVENTS

RUSH RELIEF TO EARTHQUAKE VICTIMS!

The immense devastation caused by the recent earthquake that ravaged the Jammu and Kashmir has left thousands of people there homeless, besides the death toll of over 1200 lives. The affected people are too traumatised by the disaster that has struck them and are undergoing untold sufferings. Though the governments at the state and the centre have undertaken relief measures, the magnitude of the problem requires all out efforts from the people of our country. This is also an occasion for those in the rest of the country to demonstrate their solidarity with our brothers and sisters in J & K, by mobilising all possible resources to help them.

The CITU appeals to the working people throughout the country to contribute liberally to this cause. It called upon the State Committees of CITU to take immediate steps to collect such contributions and remit the same to the CITU Centre.

The CITU Centre has remitted Rs. 1 lakh to the Jammu State Committee of CITU as an initial contribution.

Remittances on this score may please be made by Demand Draft payable to "Centre of Indian Trade Unions, New Delhi".

factory were on total strike and Gurgaon witnessed massive demonstration by more than 10000 striking workers. The industrial centres of Panipat, Sonepat, Karnal, Rohtak remained virtually closed due to strike.

Himachal Pradesh: All the hydel project workers were on complete strike. The road transport workers joined the strike in a big way. The industrial areas of Solan, Parawanoo, Baddi Berotiwala, Sirmour, Hamirpur reported massive response to strike call. The hotel workers at Simla were in total strike. The central govt offices, banks, insurance, telecom offices also reported total strike.

Punjab: the industrial centers of Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Mandigobindgarh, Hoshierpur, Amritsar etc reported massive response to strike action by the industrial workers and the textile workers in particular. Almost all the industrial centres including Chandigarh witnessed massive demonstration by tens of thousands of striking workers. At Chandigarh, 8000 workers held demonstration at Matka Chawk and blockaded road for three hours from 12 hrs to 3 pm. Amritsar witnessed virtual bandh. FCI Palledars were on total strike. Punjab Roadways was on total strike paralyzing the normal traffic throughout the state. Workers of the unorganised sector, particularly from brick-kiln responded to the strike call in a big way. The State Govt employees, UT employees and the municipal workers were on complete strike.

Karnataka : All the public sector units viz., BHEL, BEL, BEML, ITI etc reported complete strike. All the coastal districts viz., South Kanara, Udipi and Uttarkanara and also Gulbarga and Kolar witnessed virtual bandh. The industrial units at Raichur, Tumkur, Belgaum and also the large industrial companies like MICO, ITC, Toyota, Kirloskar reported complete strike. In the industrial areas of yashwantpur, K R Pura, Hosur Road, Kumblagod, Rajajinagar Kamakshipalay etc strike was total. The Auto-rickshaws throughout the state were off the road. In road transport sector, strike was substantial affecting the traffic movement.

Tamilnadu: Industrial workers, Central Govt. Employees, Financial sector Employees and unorganised sector workers in Tamilnadu responded magnificently to the All India General Strike. Strike was complete in major industrial establishments in and around Chennai including Ashok Leyland , Ennore Foundries, WIMCO, MRF, Enfield India, Eveready Industries, EID Parry, Tube Products of India, Sinhua chemicals, Audco India, AlLSTOM, Hindustan Motors car plant, Engine valves and Balmer Lawrie. Workers from Madras Export Promotion Zone (MEPZ) and in the Electronic Industrial

REPORTS & EVENTS

PRICE INDEX: CENTRAL TU NOMINEES ON TAC

The Ministry of Labour in its letter dated September 16, 2005 conveyed its decision to include 3 members each representing all Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs) and all Employers' Organisations in the Technical Advisory Committee on Statistics of Prices & Cost of Living (TAC on SPCL).

While welcoming the move, the CTUOs viz. AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS, INTUC, UTUC and UTUC-LS, jointly conveyed to the MoI that this should not be a one-off exercise just for the purpose of the deliberations relating to release of new series of Consumer Price Index Numbers for Industrial Workers (2201=100). They in aletter dated October 6, 2005 reiterated: "the TAC on SPCL should be reconstituted, including the representatives of the workers and employers, on a permanent basis; once the reconstituted TAC examined the technical aspects relating to New Series of CPI IW (2001=100), the release of new series of CPI should further be deliberated at a meeting of all the Central Trade Unions, on the basis of the inputs such examination might throw up". The CTUOs also urged that all the other steps emphasised earlier including the following be taken up for speedy implementation:

- Appointment of Review Committee to go into the question of compilation of the Consumer Price Index.
- Constitution of a Standing Advisory Committee at the all India level as recommended by the Rath Committee.

Constitution of Standing Committees at the Sate level again as recommended by the Rath Committee.

The CTUOs had also suggested the names of S.S. Pranjapee (BMS), Lalan Choubey (INTUC) and M.K.Pandhe (CITU) for incluiosn in the TAC, which has since been accepted by the MOL.

Estate in Tiruvanmiyur and Industrial estate in Ambathur participated in the strike. Industrial workers from Textile, Engineering and other sectors from different parts of the state participated in the strike. Strike in Public sector units like BHEL, Neyveli Lignite, Salem Steel was partial. Unorganised sector workers from Construction, Auto Rickshaw, Beedi, Handloom, Cashew etc participated in the strike in large numbers. Striking workers took part in court-arrest demonstrations along with peasants, students, youth and women activists in around 300 centres in the state and around 25000 thousands were arrested including thousands of women activists.

Pondicherry: In Hindustan Lever, Indian Oil bottling plant and also in LPG delivery Services, strike was total.

Andhra Pradesh: Besides massive strike in the central and state Govt offices and departments, municipal workers, panchayat workers and also in Banks, insurance, telecom etc in the state, in most of the industries in Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam, strike was near total. In Hyderabad the strike in the PSUs viz., ECIL, HCL, BDEL, and also in state-owned PSUs strike was total while other PSUs reported partial strike. Road Transport sector reported 60% strike. In Singareni Colliery strike was more than 75% despite the dominance of the INTUC union there. The workers in the unorganised sector viz., Beedi, loading-unloading, rice-mills, construction, private-transport etc joined the strike in a big way and organised road-blockades in more than hundred centres in the state. In Hyderabad and Goadavarikhani, hundreds of workers were arrested by police.

Orissa: Almost complete bandh in Sundargarh and Keonjhar district industrial belt. In the industrial areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Cuttack, Bhubaneswar, Jaipur Road, Berhampur, the strike was near total. In the iron-ore mines and sponge-iron belt of Orissa,

REPORTS & EVENTS

CENTRAL TRUS OPPOSE SME BILL

In a letter jointly addressed by the by the Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs) viz. AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS, UTUC and UTUC-LS had urged the Prime Minister you to intervene to keep the Small & Medium Enterprises Development Bill, 2005 in abeyance and to initiate discussions with the CTUOs instead of proceeding to legislate the Bill in Parliament. Text of the letter:

The Ministry of Small Scale Industries is processing the Bill for approval by the Cabinet before the winter session of Parliament. The envisages major changes in crucial labour laws, to the utter disadvantage of labour, has been introduced in the Lok Sabha on May 12, 2005, without any consultation with the Central Trade Union Organisations right from the drafting stage, in spite of the fact that Small & Medium Enterprises account for employing large proportion of the labour. There are also reports that even the Ministry of Labour & Employment was not involved before the finalisation of the Bill. The Department related Standing Committee, to which the Bill had been referred to, did not deem it necessary to hear the views of the trade unions, even though the major industry associations were actively associated during the deliberations in the Committee.

This goes totally against the letter and spirit of the NCMP, which committed that changes in labour laws must fully protect the interests of workers and families and must take place after full consultation with trade unions.

Sections 9(2) and (15), read with Section (30), of the Bill seek to exempt the Small & Medium Enterprises from the obligation of labour laws pertaining to working conditions and social security, even while the government poses to be committed to provide social security to all workers in the country and to improve their working conditions. These provisions, together with the altered definition of small and medium scale enterprises, as envisaged in the Bill, are such that a large section of the workforce in this country would be thrown to the mercy of the employers.

The provisions of the Bill are clearly against the interests of labour. Emphasising that labour-management relations in our country must be marked by consultations, cooperation and consensus and not confrontation, the CTUOs urged the PM to take necessary measures towards that end.

Gurudas Dasgupta (AITUC), Girish Awasti (BMS), W.R. Varada Rajan (CITU), R.A. Mital (HMS), Aboni Roy (UTUC) and R.S. Sharma (UTUC-LS) have signed the letter dated October 19,2005. (As the entire Indian National Trade Union Congress leadership is engaged in their all India conference at Bangalore, their response to the draft circulated could not be obtained. It is presumed that they will communicate their views, if any, separately).

strike was total and more than 5000 trucks were held up. In Rourkela Steel Plant, strike was partial. Transport sector workers joined the strike in a big way affecting normal traffic throughout the state. In Bhubaneswar and Rourkela, and some other places in the state, 15000 workers were arrested while staging road-blockade demonstrations including the leadership of the central trade unions.

Assam: The state witnessed almost a bandh like situation. Even schools and colleges were closed. Besides complete strike in banks, insurance, BSNL and other govt offices, the refineries, paper mills, private motor transport and small scale industries reported total strike. The coal mines at Margarita and Bardoloi reported complete strike despite attacks by police and local gangsters. Rail-roko and road-blockade were organised at several places. In tea plantation strike was around 60%. In different parts of the state, police arrested around thousand

workers and state level leaders from the rallies organized jointly by AITUC, CITU, UTUC-LS and AICCTU. Deben Bhatttacharya, General Secretary, Assam state CITU, Nagen Chutia, Secretary State CITU WERE AMONG THOSE Arrested at Guawahati and Digboi. In Bongaigaon police lathichageed on the rally of the workers and several workers including women were injured.

Uttar Pradesh: The industrial centres of Saharanpur, Kanpur, Meerut, Bulandsahar, Bareli, Baranasi, Lucknow, Ghaziabad, Noida etc reported massive strike action and militant demonstration. Govt employees joined the strike in a big way. Rail-blockade was organised by the workers along with the peasantry and agri-workers at Allahabad, Etwa, Baranasi and many other places in the state.

Delhi: The workers in the industrial areas of Okhla (I & II), Wazirpur, Mangolpuri, Jhilmil industrial estate, Mayapuri, Kirtinagar, Patparganj, etc joined the strike action in a big way. At Jahanguri, Moangolpuri and Wazirpur fly-over, huge procession by the striking workers jammed the roads braving the police intervention. Delhi University teachers and employees were on complete strike.

Jharkhand: Strike was complete in the coal belt. Industrial centres viz., Ranchi, Hazaribagh, Dhurua, Dhanbad, Jharia etc witnessed massive rallies and demonstration by striking workers paralyzing the traffic. Rajdhani Express and other major trains were blockaded for several hours near Kumardhubi. G T Road near Ranchi witnessed 6 hours blockade by the striking workers. More than thousand were arrested in Ranchi and Dhanbad alone. The road transport got severely disrupted owing to massive strike by the transport sector workers.

Madhya Pradesh: Besides substantial strike in the state govt offices and coal mines and almost complete strike in banks, insurance, postal, telecom etc, the industrial areas of Mandidip, Gobindpura around Bhopal, industrial units at Gwalior, Indore, Jabalpur, Bina, Guna, Ratlam etc reported massive strike by the industrial workers. The unorganised sector workers of Beedi, loading-unloading, rice-mills anganwadi etc joined the strike in a big way and held road-blockade demonstration in several parts of the state.

Maharashtra: The industrial centers of Navi-Mumbai/Thane, Nasik, Pune, Solapur, Ichhalkaranji, Nagpur , Aurangabad etc reported massive response to strike call both from organized and unorganised sector workers. Private transport, auto-rickshaws etc were off the road in most of the cities in the state. In Mumbai, besides the total strike by state govt employees, municipal workers, and in banks and insurance, response to strike by the central govt employees and workers in other private sector industries was quite good. In port and dock, it was partial. Reports of massive mobilization by the striking workers and other mass organizations of kisan, students and youth, women to organise road-blockade at different parts of the state was reported.

Jammu & Kashmir: The hydel project workers in Baghlihar, Sewa project and NHPC joined the strike enmasse. Workers of HMT, centaur Hotel, ITI AND project Construction held massive demonstration at Lalchawk at Srinagar.

Rajasthan: Response of strike was good among the state govt employees and road transport workers. The industrial workers in all the industrial centers of Jaipur, Kota, Ganganagar, Jhunujhunu etc joined the strike in a big way. Strike in Khetri Copper Complex and J K Tyre was good. Govt employees staged day-long dharna. Unorganised sector workers in loading-unloading in the mandis also joined the strike paralyzing the transactions in the Mandi. In Jaipur, police brutally lathicharged on the peaceful rally of workers injuring many. Around 25 were arrested.

Bihar: Strike among the govt employees was complete and picketing before the Secretariat at Patna is still going on. The workers of the unorganised sector like Beedi, street vendors, contract workers and workers from small industries joined strike in a big way.

Uttaranchal: Strike in Jal Nigam, Gadwal Vikash Nigam, and small industries was substantial. All the

major hotels in Mussouri was closed. Strike in THDC was partial. Besides complete strike in BSNL, Banks and Insurance, strike was partial in BHEL. Anganwadi workers were on total strike. In Haridwar, municipal workers were on complete strike. Road blockade were organised in Pouri, Uttarkashi Dehradun, Udhamsinghnagar and other places.

Chhattisgarh: The coal belt in the state reported above 75% strike on the whole. The privatised Balco witnessed hundred per cent strike. In the iron ore mines at Dalli Rajhara, strike was to the tune of 90%. The markets at Rajnandgaon and Dhamtari were closed owing to strike by all the workers. All the 102 ware houses in the state were closed due to strike. Beedi workers and Anganwadi workers also joined the strike in a big way. Safai Mazdoor of Raipur Municipal corporation were on complete strike. In Bhilai Steel Plant, strike was negligible.

SOLIDARITY ACTIONS BY MASS ORGANISATIONS

As the working class observed countrywide general strike on September 29 against the anti-people policies of liberalization, privatization and globalisation, the mass organizations of peasants, agricultural workers, students, youth and women also launched solidarity actions through out the country by organizing picketing, rail-roko, rasta-roko etc and courted arrest in several thousands thus converting the general strike by the working class a countrywide peoples' action.

As per reports received from All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agricultural Workers' Union, Rail-roko and rasta roko actions were organized in almost all the states.

In Jharkhand, Rajdhani Express was blockaded near Dhanbad. In Bihar, rail-roko demonstration was organized at Khagaria, Kishanganj, Bhagalpur, Begusarai, Darbhanga, Samastipur, Chhapra, Patna and Motihari. Thousands were arrested.

In Maharashtra, raod and railway blockade wee held at nearly 80 centres like Nasik, Thane, Beed, Parbhani, Wardha, Yawatmal, Haingoli, Kolhapur etc.

In Karnataka, rail-roko was organisd at Gulbarga and Bnagalore. Road-blockade was held at Kolar, South Kanara, Raichur, Bellary, Bijapur, and rural Bangalore.

In Punjab, Rail-roko was organized at Amritsar, Mansa, Phillaur, Mukherain, Batala, Dhuri and Garshantar. Road-blockade was held at 30 points including the district centers at Jullundhar, Ludhiana, Nawasahar, Rajpura, Bhatinda etc.

In Haryana, reports of road-blockade was received from Hissar, Fatehabad and Jind,

In Assam, road-blocakade was reprted from Sonitpur, Kamrup, Barpeta and Kachhar.

In Madhya Pradesh, rail-roko was held at Gwalior, Shahdol and Ratlam and road-roko was organized at Bhind and Morena.

In Rajasthan rail-roko and road-blockade waere organized at Sikar, Jhunujhunu, Nagaur, Churu, Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh.

In Tamil Nadu, 75000 people including 15000 women participated in road-blockade demonstrations in 150 places in the state.

In Andhra Pradesh, road-blockade was reprted from about 30 centres of the state including Srikakulam, Prakasham, Warangal, Karimnagar, Anantapur and Nalgonda district.

In Orissa, over 20000 participated in picketings on the road and rail tracks at 65 places. 5000 were arrested.

In UP Rajdhani Express were stopped at Meja Road (Allahabad) Trains were also blockaded in Vranasi, Chandauli and road-blockade was launched at Bulandsahar, Barelly, Deoria, Mirzapur and Sultanpur.

CONFERENCE OF PRTC MOTOR MAZDOOR UNION

The 8th Conference of the Punjab Road Transport Corporation Motor Mazdoor Union started on 2.10.2005 at Chandigarh. The open session was attended by more than 500 PRTC workers. The delegate session was attended by 150 workers from the PRTC units all over the state viz., Chandigarh, Patiala, Sangrur, Bhatinda, Ferozpur, Barnala, Budlada, Ludhiana, Kapurthala depots. The conference was addressed by Raghunath Singh, General Secretary Punjab State CITU.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS ON BASE 1982=100

State	Sr. No.	Centre	Month Jul.' 05	Aug.' 05	State	Sr. No.	Centre	Month Jul.' 05	Aug.' 05
Andhra	1	Gudur	495	504	Maharastra	38	Mumbai	603	607
Pradesh	2	Guntur	521	529		39	Nagpur	556	564
	3	Hyderabad	533	535		40	Nasik	577	575
	4	Visakhapatnam	528	530		41	Pune	587	590
	5	Warangal	562	557		42	Solapur	537	543
Assam	6	D.D.Tinsukia	453	455	Orissa	43	Barbil	485	489
	7	Guwahati	536	535		44	Rourkela	479	481
	8	Labac-Silchar	411	413	Punjab	45	Amritsar	493	493
	9	Mariani-Jorhat	445	445		46	Ludhiana	504	505
	10	Rangapara-Tezpur	441	442	Rajasthan	47	Ajmer	535	539
Bihar	11	Monghyr	516	519		48	Jaipur	491	501
Chhattisg	12	Bhillai	486	492	Tamil Nadu	49	Chennai	558	558
Gujarat	13	Ahmedabad	530	528		50	Coimbato	501	500
	14	Bhavnagar	556	549		51	Coonoor	510	510
	15	Rajkot	511	510		52	Madurai	506	500
	16	Surat	508	505		53	Salem	488	478
	17	Vadodra	517	508		54	Tiruchirap	571	582
Haryana	18	Faridabad	556	557	Uttar	55	Agra	518	518
	19	Yamunanagar	523	525	Pradesh	56	Ghaziabad	555	554
J & K	20	Srinagar	632	628		57	Kanpur	523	530
Jharkhand	21	Jamshedpur	516	516		58	Saharanpur	503	510
	22	Jharia	455	451		59	Varanasi	579	581
	23	Kodarma	470	476	West	60	Asansol	513	516
	24	Noamundi	480	488	Bengal	61	Darjeeling	439	445
	25	Ranchi-Hatia	510	509		62	Durgapur	596	595
Karnataka	26	Bangalore	535	540		63	Haldia	630	630
	27	Belgaum	590	597		64	Howrah	623	625
	28	Hubli-Dharwar	545	548		65	Jalpaiguri	455	459
	29	Mercara	489	492		66	Kolkata	592	592
Kerala	30	Alwaye	548	544		67	Raniganj	474	474
	31	Mundakayam	516	514	Chandigarh	68	Chandigarh	624	624
	32	Quilon	554	545	Delhi	69	Delhi	650	650
	33	Thiruvananthapuram	610	606	Pondicherry	70	Pondicherry	571	577
Madhya	34	Balaghat	476	489					
Pradesh	35	Bhopal	565	569					
	36	Indore	541	543					
	37	Jabalpur	553	550			**ALL-INDIA**	**538**	**540**

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

State		Centre	July 2005	August 2005
Andhra Pradesh	1	Kethgudem	544	554
Himachal Pradesh	2	Himachal Pradesh	509	512
Rajasthan	3	Bhilwara	532	535
Madhya Pradesh	4	Chhindwara	478	485
Tripura	5	Tripura	466	466
Goa	6	Goa	635	638

5th CONFERENCE OF AIFAWH

The 5th Conference of the All India Federation of Anganwadi Workers and Helpers will be held in Bangalore on 8-11 November 2005. This is the first time that the Conference of AIFAWH is being held in a southern state. Around 600 delegates and observers from all over the country – from Jammu and Kashmir in the north to Tamil Nadu in the South and Tripura in the East to Gujarat in the West – will be participating in the Conference representing around 2,30,000 members of AIFAWH.

Besides reviewing the activities after the last Conference and the state of the organisation, the Conference will focus on issue of strengthening of the ICDS, which has completed 30 years of existence. The Federation has been demanding that the ICDS should be institutionalised and converted into a regular integral part of the Women and Child Development Department, because the services being provided by the ICDS are essential for the healthy physical, mental and social development of our children.

Because of the positive assessment of ICDS by several evaluating agencies like the UNICEF, AIIMS, NCAER, etc the Supreme Court has directed the government to universalise the ICDS and ensure that an anganwadi centre is established in each settlement in the country and all the children are covered by the programme. The Planning Commission too recommended universalisation of the scheme.

The CMP of the UPA government committed to universalise the ICDS. But the progress is tardy. Besides, the government has also not taken any steps to improve the conditions of the anganwadi workers and helpers who are the key functionaries of the scheme at the grass root level. They are not recognised as government employees and are paid only a meagre 'honorarium'.

The Conference will be inaugurated by Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary of CITU. A seminar on 'ICDS and the Role of the Government' is being organised on the occasion of the Conference on 9th November 2005, which will be inaugurated by the former Prime Minister Deve Gowda. Prakash Karat, General Secretary of the CPI (M), Dharam Singh, Chief Minister of Karnataka, Subbulakshmi Jagadeesan, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment and Jayati Ghosh, eminent economist, will participate in the seminar. MK Pandhe, President of CITU will participate in the concluding session.

The Karnataka Rajya Anganwadi Noukarara Sangha and the state committee of CITU are making all efforts to make the Conference a grand success. The Conference will be held in Sir Puttanna Chetty Town Hall near the City Corporation. Arrangements for accommodation have been done in Hudson Memorial Church Community Centre, close to the venue of the Conference.

The Conference will start at 10.00 AM on 8th November 2005 with a massive rally of anganwadi employees in the afternoon. A 2006 calendar depicting the struggles of anganwadi employees in different states will be released in the rally.

ANDHRA PRADESH: SUCCESSFUL STRIKE BY TRANSPORT WORKERS

The workers of the state owned Andhra Pradesh State Road Transport Corporation (APSRTC) started indefinite strike from 18th October 2005 at the call of the Joint Action Council (JAC) of trade unions affiliated to CITU, AITUC and others functioning in APSRTC. 95% per cent workers joined the strike despite all efforts by the State Govt to disrupt the unity of the workers. The workers are on strike demanding concrete action by the State Govt to save the APSRTC from losses. The demands include reduction of motor vehicle tax, waiver of 50% of the debt burden, grant of funds for procurement of new buses, reduction of sales tax on diesel, reimbursement of costs of concessions in bus fares for travel by APSRTC buses granted by the state govt to different sections of population etc. CITU and All India Road Transport Workers' Federation have extended support to the APSRTC workers' united struggle.

As per reports received, the APSRTC strike has successfully concluded with an understanding reached between the unions and the AP Govt. on the demands of the workers.

Licensed to post without prepayment under License No. U(C-39)/2003-05
Postal Regd. No. DL-13016/2003 - 05 Delhi RNI 18560/71

Posted at Eastern Court P. O New Delhi
November 1 & 2, 2005

IMPLEMENT LABOUR LAWS IN IT SECTOR: CITU

The Information Technology Enabled Services sector is spreading in India fast, and over five lakh workers and technicians are employed in it. The development of this sector is welcome as it is providing gainful employment to educated persons in India. Several centres in India have developed a large number of call centres and consultancy offices, which are earning enormous profits. Their number is likely to swell very fast in the near future.

Though formally ITES sector is covered by the labour laws of the land, in practice we find that the labour laws are being violated in a most blatant manner. CITU has received several complaints from the employees in this sector, some of which are given below:

1. The employees are working 12 hours a day without getting any overtime payment.
2. In many call centres/BPO establishments, employees are forced to work only in night-shifts, in contravention of ILO convention on frequency of night shift and compensatory allowance for doing night duty.
3. There is no grievance redressal machinery and any employee working in the industry face summary dismissal if one tries to raise any complaint about working conditions.
4. Several undertakings do not give even the appointment letter to the employees so that they can be dismissed from service without even giving notice.
5. Any attempt to form a union or association by the employees is penalised by summary dismissal.
6. Several cases of sexual harassment and molestation of women employees have occurred but the women complainants are asked not to resume duties from the next day. This creates a situation where women employees are faced with humiliating working conditions while the culprits are rarely punished. The occurrences are more frequent when women work in the night shift.
7. There are no rules to govern the working conditions, and occupation hazards have occurred in several cases without any remedy for redressal.
8. Remunerations are arbitrarily fixed with consolidated wages and there is no social security or job security for the employees.
9. Compared to the profits earned by the undertakings, the salary level is extremely low causing discontentment among the employees but they cannot raise any dispute for fear of losing jobs.
10. Maternity benefit is denied to women employees. Creche facilities are absent causing hardships to mothers with young children.

There may be other complaints from the employees. No dispute is being raised by the employees with the industrial relations machinery in India, as any attempt to do so will result in arbitrary dismissal.

The state governments are not taking any steps to ensure implementation of labour laws since they feel that it would result in such centres shifting to other states. On the contrary, there is a tendency to compete in giving concessions to this sector to attract more investment. However, there is urgent need to protect the interest of the employees in this sector so that this industry does not become a source of sophisticated indentured labour in our country. If this situation is allowed to continue, other industries will also follow suit making a mockery of all labour legislations in the country.

In a letter to K M Sahni, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Labour and Employment, M K Pandhe, President, CITU has demanded to take suitable steps so that this sector is prevailed upon to respect labour laws in the country and create proper working and living conditions for the employees working in this industry. Since the phenomenon is occurring in centres all over India and many establishments in this sector are multi-state entities, the union labour ministry is expected to intervene to ensure full implementation of all the labour laws applicable to this sector", the letter said.

CITU has urged expeditious steps to ensure benefits of all labour laws to the employees working in this sector.

Printed and published by M K Pandhe on behalf of Centre of Indian Trade Unions and printed at Progressive Printers, A-21 Jhilmil Industrial Area, Shahdara, Delhi - 95 and published from B T Ranadive Bhawan, 13-A Rouse Avenue, New Delhi - 110 002.
Editor: M K Pandhe