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THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEET

CALLS FOR ACTION!



Rally after CITU Working Committee Meeting

Against interest rate cut on EPF

COUNTRYWIDE DEMONSTRATION ON 20TH JANUARY

In a joint meeting of central trade unions held on 11th January 2006 at New Delhi, the trade unions denounced the unilateral notification made by the Govt of India in announcing a cut in interest rate on PF from 9.5 to 8.5 per cent. In a joint statement issued on 11th January by the Central Trade Unions viz., AITUC, BMS, CITU, HMS, UTUC-LS, AICCTU, UTUC and TUCC, it was pointed out that "The notification came despite categorical assurance made by Prime Minister in the 40th Indian Labour Conference to consider the demand of the trade unions for restoration of of the interest rate on PF to 9.5% and in that light review the earlier announcement made by the Labour Minister. Such unilateral approach of the Govt is violative of the commitment made in their NCMP on dealing with labour matter based on consensus."

The Joint statement demanded restoration of 9.5% interest rate on PF and also increase in the interest rate on Special Deposit Scheme in which major part of the PF accumulation is parked..

It was decided to hold countrywide demonstration in all the workplaces against the outrageous decision of the Govt and seeking reversal of the policy on 20th January 2006.

As per report received from various units throughout the country, the call for joint demonstration on 20th January received widespread response.

In West Bengal, demonstrations were staged in almost all the industrial centers and district towns. At Calcutta, a massive demonstration was held before the office of the Regional PF Commissioner.

In Jharkhand, reports of joint demonstrations were received from all the collieries of CCL, BCCL and ECL, Bokaro Steel Plant, TISCO, Adityapur Industrial area at Jamshedpur, Heavy Engineering Corporation, Ranchi etc. Mass rallies were held at the iron ore mines of Kiriburu and Megantuburu, Sahebganj and Pakur (by the beedi and stone-quarry workers). Mass Rally was also held by the industrial workers at Randhir Verma Chawk at Dhanbad.

In Rajasthan, demonstrations and rallies were held at Sriganganagar, Hanumangarh, Bekaneer, Sikar, Jodhpur, Kota, Alwar, Bharatpur, Kankroli and other places. At the state capital, Jaipur, a huge procession of workers started from the Ambedkar circle to march through the city and converge into a demonstration before the Regional PF Office. Ravindra Shukla, General Secretary of Rajasthan State CITU, and other state CITU leaders Waqer-Ul-Ahad, Prahlad Sharma, Ramchandra Sharma (Insurance), Kishan Singh Rathod (Roadways) etc addressed the rally.

In Uttar Pradesh, reports of demonstration were received from the Sugar Mills at Bijnour, BHEL units at Jhansi and Jagadishpur and other places. In Punjab, demonstrations were held in all the district headquarters and the state capital at Chandigarh and memorandums were submitted to Regional PF Commissioner and District Collectors. State CITU leaders addressed the rallies.

Besides above, reports of joint demonstrations were received from the BHEL units at Haridwar, Bhopal, Jhansi, Ranipet, Trichy, Chennai, the steel plants at Durgapur, Burnpur, Bhilai and Bokaro.

Reports of demonstrations were also received from the industrial areas of Delhi, Ghaziabad and Faridabad. All the trade unions in Delhi have already met to plan for another joint demonstration on the PF interest rate issue shortly.

THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

FEBRUARY 2006

YOU SAID IT by Laxman



Just stand from this constituency. You are bound to win. It has no water, roads, schools etc. Promise all these during election, that's how your predecessors won.

Courtesy: The Times of India

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EDITORIAL

BUDGET NEEDS A DIRECTIONAL CHANGE...

As the UPA government prepares to present its third Budget, its direction was clearly made evident in the just concluded AICC session in Hyderabad. Notwithstanding the lip service paid to the 'aam admi', the economic resolution recorded the party's determination to push ahead with reforms. Only the naïve can believe its claims of a shift 'from elitist economic policies' and 'excessive preoccupation with FDI and privatisation' to focus on employment, education, agriculture and health under the UPA.

The last nineteen month long rule of UPA belies any hope of a shift from the pro rich bias in the economic policies. The only pro poor piece of legislation on rural employment guarantee would not have seen the light had it not been for the pressure from the Left and the people's movements.

Contrast the sharp decline in employment opportunities, the aggravation of poverty, and the continuing spate of suicides by the farmers in the countryside with the rising profit curves of the big corporates. Can the professed concern of the Prime Minister for the 'aam admi' be anything but a cruel joke? Disinvestment and privatisation, be it the profit making PSUs or the strategic infrastructure like the airports, or the crucial public utilities like power, water, public health, education continue to dominate the priority lists of the government.

While resource crunch is often cited as an excuse to dump any pro people commitment, big tax evaders enjoy impunity. The data on unpaid tax arrears by the big business and the recoveries of tax arrears during the last three years reveal that every year 95% of the tax arrears are allowed to remain unrecovered.

What is needed today is a shift in the direction of the economic policies and concrete action. As the entire trade union movement across the spectrum has demanded, this shift should be reflected in the ensuing Budget – in the plan for resource mobilisation and in the expenditure pattern.

As the Central Trade Unions have demanded in their joint memorandum, it is necessary to increase the Tax – GDP ratio by taxing the rich and affluent sections and arresting tax evasion instead of heaping burdens on the poor by cutting down subsidies on food, kerosene, petroleum and LPG. Direct employment generation should be the guiding factor for providing any concessions or incentives. Allocations for agriculture, small and medium sector industry and provision of social security cover for the mass of the people should receive priority. The focus should not be on FDI and privatisation but on promoting and protecting domestic industries and services. These were the concerns that were strongly expressed by the people on 29th September 2005 through countrywide general strike. The UPA government can ignore this only at its peril.

CITU Working Committee Meeting at Bhopal

Against imperialist machinations and neoliberal economic policies

CARRY THE UNITED STRUGGLE TO FURTHER HEIGHT

Tapan Sen

The just concluded Working Committee meeting of CITU held on 28-30 December 2005 at Bhopal called upon the working class movement to heighten the united resistance against the offensive of the neoliberal economic policy regime in continuity with the massive 29th September countrywide strike and ensure broadest mobilization of people in that direction against imperialist machinations both in political and economic fronts.

The meeting began with hoisting of flag by CITU President M K Pandhe and offering floral tributes to martyr's column by the office bearers and working committee members. Promod Pradhan, President of MP State CITU delivered the welcome-address in the meeting.

The presidential address delivered by M K Pandhe dealt in details on the developments in the international scenario. The US imperialism has been pursuing aggressively its hegemonistic design despite its increasing isolation from the world opinion. Its continued unauthorized occupation of Iraq and inhuman atrocities on the Iraqi people, its aggressive postures against Syria, Lebanon, North Korea, its continued blockade against Cuba, its encouragement to Israel to continue occupation on Palestinian territory in West Bank are all testimony to the same. It is also notable that voice of opposition to such US aggressive design undermining the UN and also the national sovereignty of the countries under target of the US imperialism, even within the USA itself is getting louder. The resistance to US occupation within Iraq is mounting, leading to every day casualities in US army personnel. The November 8 resolution adopted by UN general Assembly calling upon US Govt to end the economic blockade on Cuba with overwhelming support of the member nations (182 out of 191) depicts the increasing isolation of US imperialism from the world polity, Pandhe asserted.

The developments in the economic front as well depicts the aggressive pursuit of the hegemonistic design of the imperialist powers to economically recolonise the developing countries, concurrent to their political and military strategy. It side by side also demonstrated the utter failure of the much touted model of the neoliberal economic liberalization to bring about promised prosperity to people of the world. Poverty has aggravated and number of people under the poverty line has increased, unemployment and underemployment have become a general phenomenon and the policies being adopted by the developed countries and those imposed on the developing countries by the World Bank, IMF and WTO exercises have been aggravating the situation of joblessness and poverty every day, and the latest outcome of the Hon Kong ministerial of WTO is the testimony of such unjust terms thrust upon the developing countries, Pandhe pointed out.

But the most notable feature of the present day international scenario is the surging struggles of working class against the grievous impact on the neoliberal economic policies on the workers and people. The countrywide general strike in India oh September 2005 has taken place in the midst of such surge of anti-liberalisation struggle worldwide. Waves of strikes are literally sweeping the world –all against the impact of neoliberal policies and the onslaught on the rights and livelihood of the mass of the populace. In the global war between super profit and people, people has started asserting themselves challenging the inevitability theory of neoliberal imperialist globalisation, Pandhe reiterated.

The General Secretary's Report was presented by Chittabrata Majumdar. The Report made a

sharp pointer to the pro-US shift in the foreign policy of UPA Govt as reflected in its support to USA on Iran's nuclear policy much to the detriment of our national interests and also in the pursuit of joint Indo-US military exercise despite countrywide protest against the same. Such staunch pro-US approach in most of the issues pertaining to international reflects desperate violation of the commitment made in the National Common Minimum Programme on the pursuit of an independent foreign policy. Such pro-imperialist drift in the foreign policy by the UPA combine is nothing unnatural in the background of their proclaimed commitment towards imperialist driven neoliberal economic policy regime and the servile stance taken by the Indian negotiators in the last Hong Kong meeting of WTO exposed such servility. Hence it becomes the foremost task of the working class movement to build up resistance through widest mobilization against such pro-imperialist drift in foreign policy of the UPA Govt, its every pro-imperialist and pro-US stance in the political and international arena, without which the anti-globalisation movement cannot make an effective advance, Majumdar pointed out.

The Report also explained in detail as to how the vigorous pursuit of the same neoliberal economic policy regime by the UPA Govt has brought about severe distortion in the national economy, reflecting surging super profit of handful of capitalists along with deepening poverty and aggravating unemployment and acute distress in the rural economy with several hundreds committing suicides. Owing to consistent pressure of the trade union movement and the Left parties, the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act has been passed and that is the only positive legislative action in the economic policy front under the UPA regime. Despite protests by the entire trade union movement, the Govt has been pursuing the same policy of privatization and liberalization, in clear violation of NCMP, privatizing airports, and raising FDI cap in strategic and sensitive sector of the economy, liberalizing financial sector etc— all against the interest of the people and the economy, the Report explained.

At the same time, hectic exercises are being made to bring about pro-employer changes in labour laws aimed at introducing hire and fire regime and taking away overwhelming majority of the workers outside the purview of labour laws. Non-enforcement of labour laws are being promoted as part of the policy drives for bringing about so called labour-market flexibility, and both the central and most of the state governments have been indulging in such illegality. All the basic labour laws pertaining to minimum wages, working hours, social security benefits, contract work, safety etc are being trampled underfoot by the enforcement machinery itself. And now, the Govt of the day has been working overtime to change all the labour laws to legitimize such illegality. Precisely, this reflects complete domestication of the Govt to the interests of capital under neoliberal policy regime, Majumdar explained.

Thus the working class movement have to build stronger resistance against the neoliberal economic policy drives and at the same time fight back resolutely the onslaught on their rights and livelihood, Majumdar pointed out. The massive success of the 29th September general strike is the beginning of such struggle in the new phase and that struggle needs to be taken to further height and much broader mobilization of masses have to be ensured to force a reversal of the policy regime. And through that process of broadest mass mobilisation, the working class movement will also be able to isolate and marginalize the communal and divisive forces, the enemy of the nation and peoples' unity, Majumadar explained.

30 comrades participated in the deliberation on the General Secretary's report. Speakers, while explaining their experiences stressed upon the need for maintaining the continuity of the struggle that has been unleashed through the 29th September General strike through phased programmes of united campaign, agitation and action in the days to come, particularly in view of the offensive being planned by the ruling polity on the trade union rights and labour laws and aggressive pursuit of the same

FUTURE COURSE OF ACTION

The Working Committee took the following decisions on future course of action.

Follow-up of 29th September Strike

Grass-root level campaign on 16 point demands. Such campaign should culminate in broadest central mobilization at the time of budget session of Parliament. CITU will take initiative to discuss with other constituent Central Trade Unions of the Sponsoring Committee to finalise the programme of central mobilization to be preceded by state/district level joint campaign. CITU's independent campaign will continue side by side.

Against Attack on labour rights, non-implementation of labour laws and the Govt's move for pro-employer changes in labour laws

25th January to 31st January 2006: Observance of protest week through week-long-campaign to culminate in massive countrywide demonstration/dharna/rallies/picketing etc at state/district level throughout the country on 31st January 2006.

All the CITU committees and units must keep themselves prepared for countrywide protest actions at short notice if any anti-worker Bill is introduced in Parliament or Govt announces its decision on any such Bill.

Anti-imperialist demonstrations

CITU should join the anti-imperialist demonstration and mobilisation on 24th January 2006 called by the Left parties and democratic organizations.

The US President George Bush is scheduled to visit India sometimes in February 2006. On the day of his visit, massive protest demonstration should be organized throughout the country. CITU units and committees should prepare in advance for the same and make effort to involve NPMO in the anti-Bush demonstration.

CITU should also take initiative to organize massive demonstration on the day of commencement of Annual General Meeting of Asian Development Bank scheduled in May 2006 at Hyderabad. We have to make effort to involve other trade unions also in the Hyderabad demonstration.

CITU should associate and extend solidarity to following sectoral programmes/actions

Countrywide strike by the employees and officers of BSNL on 5th January 2006, against raising FDI cap in telecom sector, allowing BSNL's cable network to be used by private telecom players and other policy-issues. All the employees unions and officers' associations in BSNL have given the call for strike on 5th January.

Parliament March by the Road Transport workers on 7th March 2006 at the call of All India Road Transport Workers' Federation demanding appropriate National Road Transport Policy, and against move of privatization of various state transport corporations and other demands.

On 30th December 2005 afternoon, a mass rally was organized at Bhopal which was addressed by Md Amin, Labour Minister, Govt of West Bengal, M K Pandhe and Chittabrata Majumdar, President and General Secretary of CITU respectively, Dipankar Mukherjee MP and K Hemalata, both Secretaries of CITU and Badal Saroj, General Secretary of MP State CITU. Promod Pradhan, President MP State CITU presided over the meeting.

policy of liberalization.

The Working Committee had also undertaken a special discussion on "Cadre Development in Trade Union Movement". The discussion paper redrafted on the basis of deliberations in the last General Council meeting of CITU held in July 2005 was presented by Kanai Banerjee, Secretary CITU. 14 members took part in the deliberation on the subject and made valuable suggestions to enrich the understanding on the subject underlined by the discussion paper. It was decided that the CITU secretariat will finalise the document based on inputs given by the comrades in the working committee and circulate to all the units.

Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary CITU replied to the

points raised in the deliberations and the Report was unanimously adopted by the working committee.

The Working Committee also decided to set up an Institute of Trade Union and Research after the name of P Ramamoorty, the founder General Secretary of CITU and a stalwart in Indian trade union movement, to conduct education programmes for the trade union cadres and activists and also to conduct research work on issues of relevance for the working class movement. It was decided that CITU will associate the fraternal trade union organizations in setting and running of the school and structuring the classes and research work. Working Committee also adopted ten resolutions. They are 1) Against barbaric repression on glass bangles and ceramic industry workers at Ferozabad, Uttar Pradesh, 2) Opposing UPA Govt's move to disinvest shares of profit-making PSUs, 3) On Workplace Accidents and Negligence of Safety Provisions, 4) Opposing reduction of EPF interest rate and demanding enhancement of administered rate of interest to maintain EPF interest rate at 9.5%, 5) Demanding UPA Govt to scrap the PFRDA Bill, 6) Extending support to central govt employees and railway employees proposed strike action to press for setting up of 6th Pay Commission, 7) Extending support to BSNL employees countrywide strike on 5th January against raising of FDI cap in telecom sector and other issues, 8) Extending support to cycle workers of Ludhiana against closure, victimization and repression, 9) Demanding halt of large-scale export of iron-ores and valuable minerals, 10) Congratulating people of Madhya Pradesh, particularly Bhopal and also MP State CITU for successful holding of the working committee meeting of CITU.

MARKET BOOMS BUT LABOUR LOSES

The salaries of Indian managers may be moving up rapidly, with salary surveys reporting the highest pay-hikes for Indian executives in the Asia-Pacific region. But India Inc's labour cost, as a percentage of total production cost, has been going down steadily, reaching 8.13 per cent in 2004-05, compared with 9.54 per cent in 2000-01. This saving of 1.41 per cent of total cost gave the corporate sector a gain of Rs 17,284 crore in 2004-05 and accounted for 53.9 per cent of the increase in profit in that year.

Interestingly, operating profit margins did not show any improvement during this period, moving from 24.48 per cent of sales in 2000-01 to 24.26 per cent in 2004-05. In other words, there were no cost savings other than on labour during this period.

The study covers 3338 companies (3197 private and 141 PSUs) for which financial information for the last five years is available from a data base Capitaline Plus. Labour cost includes salaries, wages and bonus, staff welfare expenses, gratuity and other employee cost but excludes voluntary retirement compensation.....

The most striking reason for this was the lack of fresh employment in the manufacturing sector – in other words, manufacturing companies have grown their businesses without adding to employee numbers. For manufacturing firms in the private sector, the share of labour in the total cost of production declined from 7.52 per cent in 2000-01 to 6.04 per cent in 2004-05. The labour cost for public sector companies declined from 5.26 per cent to 3.95 per cent.....
(Business Standard, 04-01-2006)

INTENSIFY STRUGGLE AGAINST IMPENDING OFFENSIVES

Chittabrata Majumdar

The nineteen month long rule by the UPA coalition has, by and large, failed to fulfil the aspirations of the people who decisively rejected the earlier BJP led NDA combination both on account of their aggressive communalism as well as the anti-people economic policy measures. No doubt, under intense pressure from the Left parties and the mass organisations, the government has since legislated the National Rural Employment Guarantee (NREG) Act. This is, perhaps, the only pro-people legislation passed by the parliament in the post-globalisation years. The government is yet to notify the Act. The trade union movement must step up pressures on the government to ensure that the NREG Act is taken up for swift implementation.

The BJP, the main opposition party in Parliament, had been making vain bids to rake up non-issues and in the process stall the functioning of the Parliament. The BJP itself faced a crisis of sorts within. The RSS leadership openly called for L.K. Advani to step down from the post of president of the party, after his infamous remarks on 'Jinnah the secular'! The mercurial Uma Bharati is proving to be an irresistible embarrassment for the BJP leadership. Its staunch ally Shiv Sena also is going through successive internal strife.

In this situation, the BJP had some grist to its mill in the form of Volcker Committee report on involvement of politicians in Iraqi 'food for oil' programme during the Saddam Hussein regime. The UPA government as usual vacillated. It failed to nail the Volcker report itself as something of a bid by the US administration to show the 'food for oil' programme itself in poor light and claim 'evidence' of illegal activities of Saddam regime. The Iraqi government had the right to its oil revenues and use them to break the US leveraged sanctions. For fear of displeasing the USA, the government refrained from questioning the purpose and authenticity of the Volcker Report. The government also failed to defend the good relations India had with Iraq under Saddam Hussein. When the BJP seized the issue to demand the resignation of Natwar Singh from the Union Cabinet and Sonia Gandhi from the National Advisory Council, it wilted. This led to ouster of Natwar Singh from the Cabinet. This is yet another instance of pro-US shift in the country's foreign policy. Moreover despite the Left parties repeatedly pointing out to a major private sector oil company viz., Reliance Petroleum Ltd., having been one of the beneficiaries, the government is refusing to investigate the same. The terms of reference and the scope of the enquiry ordered in this regard also seem to be extremely selective and narrow.

The ruling coalition suffered yet another setback in Bihar. As the leading party of the UPA coalition, the Congress party is expected to play its role to isolate the communal forces on the political front. Unfortunately, it failed to display foresight and commitment to rally secular forces during first round of the Bihar assembly elections, which ultimately ended up as a fiasco. The damage caused has proved to be so intractable that the much-discredited NDA has been handed the reigns of power in that State. This clearly is the result of the division in secular votes. Yet another disquieting facet of this episode is the breach in the unity of left forces as well. This has ominous portents for the secular forces and the democratic movement in general.

In this backdrop, the role of the working class movement both in championing the cause of toiling people as well as isolating the communal forces assumes immense significance.

The 29th September strike has already issued a warning to the UPA government to mend its ways on the economic policy front.

Despite the massive success of the countrywide general strike on 29th September 2005, the Government of India appears not to have taken any lesson and have been pursuing the same disastrous economic policies. In line with its pro-rich and anti-people economic policy measures, the Government has embarked on an aggressive initiative to virtually erase the labour rights.

The capitalist lobby is assiduously cultivating this trend of trade union bashing through their hired intellectuals and print and electronic media. The growing intolerance towards trade unions manifested by the print and electronic media reached a crescendo in the venomous editorials following the 29th September general strike. This is an integral part of the ideological offensive of neoliberal globalisation. A myth is floated in the society that trade unions and legitimate assertion of workers' rights are inimical to investment, development and progress. The intention is to legitimise the atrocities and onslaughts against the workers' life and livelihood and their rights to protest. Unfortunately, a section of the democratic movement is falling prey to such conspiracy. We must fight back such conspiracy resolutely by involving mass of the people in anti-globalisation struggle and also debunking the unscrupulous campaign against the trade union movement.

In this context, we should also take note of alarming drift of the Judiciary from semblance of justice to the lap of the capital. The Apex Court judgment, banning right to strike particularly for government employees, is well known. Thereafter, many more judgments are pronounced against the workers, which are biased in favour of the employers. The Apex Court judgments upholding dismissal for much lighter offence like 'abusing' (read verbal altercation with) the manager or for being found sleeping on duty (Bharat Forge Co Ltd and Mahindra &Mahindra Co Ltd) are examples in hand. And the latest one crossed all limits of naked bias. In a recent judgment The Supreme Court turned down the ruling of Punjab & Haryana High Court, which upheld the principle of 'equal wage for equal work' for the contract workers. In another recent judgment, the Supreme Court observed that casual worker is not covered by the definition of workmen under Workmen's Compensation Act.

The above situation of all round attack on labour rights have to be boldly confronted by the trade union movement unitedly asserting their right to strike and struggle more vigorously. At the same time, we have to put forth alternative proposals for pro-worker changes in the labour laws and build up broadest mobilisation.

The tasks before us are both immense and urgent.

■ Campaign and mobilise the working people in the anti-imperialist struggles and fight for an independent foreign policy. ■ Build a broad platform to resist the anti-people compromises on the WTO related issues and to defend national sovereignty and self-reliant economy. ■ Continue the fight against the twin dangers of communalism and neo-liberal economic policies. ■ Pay immediate attention to some of the priority issues confronting the trade union movement. ■Launch independent campaign against communalism and other divisive trends and equip the cadres and activists at all levels to undertake this in a systematic manner. ■ Counter the increasing threats to the working class and the people from the UPA Government, particularly the high-voltage campaign to attack labour rights. ■ Carry forward this struggle on the 16-point demands espoused by the September 29th strike, which broadly reflect the aspirations of the entire masses in our country. ■ Make serious efforts to revitalise the Sponsoring Committee of Trade Unions and the NPMO to organise massive mobilisations throughout the country. ■ Pay more attention on the unorganised sector workers and pursue our campaign and struggle on the 15-point charter of demands of adopted at the Firozabad convention of unorganised sector workers. ■ Mainstream the emerging struggles of the workers and employees in various sectors and industries. ■ Organise campaign and struggle against attacks on existing social security benefits and fight for comprehensive social security for all. ■ Take up the issues of the working women and build struggle at TU level. ■ Initiate further actions as per decisions of the all India convention on "Right to Work". ■Strive to achieve the target of 40-lakh membership at the earliest, through consistent and vigorous membership drive. ■ Establish the P. Ramamoorti Institute of Trade Union Education and Research in the near future. Organise trade union school for the Hindi Speaking States as a first step.

CLASS ACTIONS RESIST GLOBAL CAPITALIST ONSLAUGHT

M K Pandhe

The UN publication "World Economic Situation and Prospects 2005" has admitted, "One of the universal weaknesses of the world economy continues to be slow growth of employment and the persistence of high rate of unemployment and underemployment in most developing countries. Unless improved economic growth is reflected in increased employment, it will prove difficult to reduce poverty." The situation is further likely to deteriorate in the forthcoming period.

MNC CONTROL OVER TECHNOLOGY

The total number of MNCs in the world is estimated to be about 70,000. Out of them 700 largest R&D spending firms account for half the world's total R&D expenditure and two thirds of the world's R&D business. The leading MNCs like Ford Motor, Pfizer, Daimler Chrysler, and Siemens are spending $6 billion every year. 80 per cent of the 700 largest spending companies come from USA, Japan, Germany, United Kingdom and France. More than half of the R&D spending is in IT hardware, automotive and pharmaceuticals/ biotechnology sectors. Thus the new technology is being controlled by the MNCs who instead of using this technology for elimination of poverty are doing so to augment their profitability. This in turn results in growing pauperization of the people all over the world. More, they transfer only their outdated technology to the developing countries which prevents them from competing with them despite cheap labour available in these countries. The MNCs have been exploiting the cheap labour available in developing countries to earn more profits.

Despite rapid advance in production technology the production in advanced capitalist countries does not show any sizable growth. The forecast of production growth during 2005 was estimated to be 3 per cent in North America, 2.25 per cent in Western Europe and 2 percent in Asia and Oceana. The average growth of production in all the advanced capitalist countries in the world is estimated at 2.5 per cent, which clearly shows that the new technology is not being utilized for the benefit of the poor in the world. So long the control of technology is in the hands of MNCs the talks of elimination of poverty in the world is going to be a mere pipedream.

WORLDWIDE STRUGGLES

In this backdrop, attacks 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 organised all over the globe.

Waves of strikes are literally 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.

Barely a week after the general strike in India, France came to a standstill. At the call of 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. 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 in the Corsican Port during the strike and carried it to the mid-sea.

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. Metalworkers' nationwide strike on 30th September 2005 in Italy which paralysed the steel plants in Milan, Naples, Reggio Emilia, L' Aquila, Torino and Taranto. And in November 2005, Italy witnessed another countrywide general strike and millions of workers flooded and paralysed all the major cities through militant processions.

Semiconductor workers in Germany also went on strike on 30th September2005 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, peasants, and government (public service) employees went for a simultaneous strike in November 2004. Peasantry supported the strike actively. 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 against job loss, high rate of unemployment and poverty.

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, if necessary one day in every week.

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.

More recently, on December 20, 2005, the transport workers in New York went on strike on wages and pension demands, resulting in an unprecedented disruption of the road, rail and metro transportation in the city, affecting seven million commuters.

And the latest one, the massive strike actions by the port and dock workers in almost all the European ports during early January 2006 compelled the European Parliament to vote down the move of so called port-operation reforms.

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, almost everywhere, are on the dock and are standing face to face with their own people. In the global war between super profit and people, people have started asserting themselves challenging the inevitability theory of neoliberal imperialist globalisation.

Under these circumstances let us prepare ourselves for bigger and bigger class actions to resist the onslaught of the capitalist class, in our country. Let us march forward with confidence to lead the workers in their struggle against the policies of neoliberal globalisation and to defend their rights and livelihood, working and living conditions.

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AIRPORT PRIVATISATION MOVE OPPOSED BY TRADE UNIONS

Despite opposition by the entire trade union movement and the airport employees and officers in particular, the Govt is moving ahead with the privatization process of Mumbai and Delhi airport. In response to invitation for bids, some private players have submitted bids all of which again do not qualify fully as per the criteria fixed boiling down the process to a single-bid scenario for each of the two airport. Now, the Govt in a hurry for airport sell-off on the plea of meeting the modernization needs are resorting to manipulative process to include even the parties not satisfying the eligibility criteria for consideration of bids for both the airports.

The reality is that privatization is the motive of the Govt and the "modernization" is a just a cover to facilitate handing over the highest revenue earning airports of the country to private players. Modernisation needs funds and expertise. The Airport Authority of India possesses the capability to manage both. On the other hand the Govt chooses to bank upon such agencies for the so called modernization of Delhi and Mumbai Airport which, both in terms of experience and expertise and financial health, are figments in comparison to AAI. And hence, the Govt preferred to manipulate the bidding process by diluting the eligibility criteria to allow all who submitted the bids to be considered for the deal, despite the fact that many of the bids are not qualified for being taken into consideration as per the eligibility criteria originally framed by the Govt itself. When 'privatisation at any cost' is the ultimate goal, integrity, propriety and transparency are always the first casualties.

The AAI Employees Joint Forum comprising with the employees and officers' unions and associations protested against such manipulative process being adopted by the Govt for achieving "privatization at any cost" of the two most profitable airports under Airport Authority of India. The Joint Forum, in the statement issued by them on 13th January 2006 strongly denounced the manipulative exercise by the Govt of India in offering "backdoor entries to non-eligible and incompetent parties" for taking part in 'privatization in the name of modernisation' project involving the two airport. AAI Employees Joint Forum asserted that "the fastest and the only logical way to approach the problem (of modernization) is to permit AAI to carry forward the alternate plan (presented by the Joint Forum and supported by the review committee constituted by the Govt of India)" and not the privatization through manipulative process.

While the Govt has been working overtime to ensure backdoor entries of non-eligible bids to facilitate privatization of these two airports at any cost, it is ignoring the alternate plan submitted by AAI Joint Employees Forum in June.... Without showing any tangible reason. The Ministry of Civil Aviation constituted a Review Committee headed by Member (Finance), AAI to examine the alternate plan for modernization of Mumbai and Delhi airports submitted by the Joint Forum. The Review Committee accepted the Alternate Plan in principle which envisaged modernization of the airports by the Airport Authority itself and strongly opined about the competence and capability of AAI to make adequate funding arrangement for modernization. The Review Committee Report mentioned in particular that, "Concepts and details of works proposed in Alternate Plan for modernization of Delhi and Mumbai airports submitted by Joint Forum are similar to what were decided earlier by AAI and hence, are acceptable. However, the proposals are to be further updated by working out current cost estimates..... It will be possible to fund the development expenditure of Rs 12,300 crores for Delhi and Mumbai projects and Rs 5500 crores for non-metro projects in addition to year to year normal Capital Expenditure. A borrowing of Rs 9500 crores will require to be made..... The feasibility of raising a sum of Rs 9500/- crores through borrowings was also informally discussed with our Financial advisor cum Lead arranger retained for non-metro projects. They are of the view that given the financial strengths of AAI with almost zero debt status, raising of funds of this magnitude will not

be a problem....."

The above report makes it amply clear that the 'modernization of airports' is not the real intention of the Govt, it is only a cover to facilitate privatization of airports. There is absolutely no reason to run after private players when Airport Authority itself very much possesses the competence both technically and financially to modernize these two airports on a priority basis. It sounds lunatic that the Govt cannot rely on AAI's financial capability, which is having Rs 3000 crore surplus reserve and profit of Rs 360 crore, in modernizing the airports and can experiment with private bidder having a reserve of only Rs 67 crore and a profit of Rs 17 crore.

Shri Dipankar Mukherjee MP, secretary CITU also expressed shock and concern in his letter dated 13th January 2006 addressed to Prime Minister of India that the "Empowered Group of Ministers is trying to pressurize even the Sreedharan Committee to re-examine all bids and to tap top three bids for each airport with an ostensible aim to dilute the eligibility criteria. This clearly shows that reasons other than urgency of modernization of airport is dictating the so called transparent bidding process." While referring to a news item about the directive issued by the Prime Minister that "the current bidding process should not be scrapped at any cost", Mukherjee urged upon the Prime Minister to intervene "so that there is no change in the bidding process at the last stage for facilitating privatization at any cost which would pose a big question mark on the credibility of the Govt." and he suggested that "the best option is that modernization task, 'in view of the urgency' is undertaken by Airport Authority of India with its own corporate mission of making world class airports" instead of "resorting to blind search for private enterprises".

Almost all the Central Trade Unions in the country opposed such "privatization at any cost" approach of the Govt in respect of the airports in a joint statement issued on 17th January 2006 and extended support to the struggle of AAI Joint Forum against privatization of airports.

AIRPORT EMPLOYEES STAGE PROTEST

The employees and officers of Airport Authority of India Ltd have been in the thick of struggle against the unscrupulous move of the Govt to privatize Mumbai and Delhi Airports on the plea of modernization. Earlier, the employees of all the 124 airports in the country have staged demonstrations rallies, dharna etc against the privatization move. In that process Airport Authority of India Employees Joint Forum was formed comprising the employees union and officers associations.

On 3rd January 2006, a massive demonstration was held at Santacruz Airport at Mumbai. The demonstration was addressed by M K Pandhe, President CITU, Dipankar Mukherjee MP and Jibon Roy, both Secretaries CITU, M K Ghosal, Convenor, AAI Employees Joint Forum and Nitin Jadav, Regional Secretary, AAI Employees Union.

When the Govt has decided to desperately push through the privatization by diluting the eligibility criteria of the private players to include even the disqualified bidders in the process of considering the bids for privatization, the Joint Forum again staged a massive demonstration at the Delhi Airport on 24th January 2006. Chittabrata Majumdar MP, M K Pandhe, General Secretary and President of CITU respectively addressed the rally and called upon the working class to unitedly oppose the disastrous bid to privatize the airports. The demonstration was also addressed by Dipankar Mukherjee mp, Secretary CITU, Abani Roy MP, secretary UTUC, M K Ghosal, General Secretary, AAI Employees Union and Y P Gautam of Airport Authority Officers Association. The speakers called upon the employees and officers to prepare for further struggle to resist the privatization move.

PREBUDGET CONSULTATION WITH FINANCE MINISTER

January 12, 2006—the Finance Minister held pre-budget consultation with the central trade unions. How much, the finance minister is going to respond to the suggestions made by the trade unions while formulating the 2006-07 budget can only be ascertained after the budget is placed. We have little optimism on that matter. But more important is that, it is probably for the first time, all the central trade unions in the country including INTUC and BMS have submitted a jointly signed memorandum to the Finance Minister detailing the suggestions of the working class movement on the 2006-07 budget.

And much more important is that the unanimous suggestions of the Central Trade Unions on the forthcoming budget urged upon the Govt for clear cut directional change in the economic policy regime when it stressed at the outset that "Tax-GDP ratio should be increased by taxing the rich and affluent section, domestic and foreign corporates and arresting tax evasion with strong hand and Instead of targeting the poor man's subsidy on food, Kerosene & petroleum and public utilities for reduction, the liberal concessions showered on the big corporates, both domestic and foreign, in the name of incentive, tax holidays, tariff concessions on utilities, should be thoroughly re-examined and reduced." Along with the memorandum also demanded "halting of privatisation and disinvestment of shares of profit making and strategically important and potentially viable PSUs and departmental undertakings."

The joint memorandum also mentioned:

- Generation of employment and people oriented development should be the central point of the budget. It is essential to embark on the programme massive govt investment targeted to augmenting agricultural production, building and expanding social infrastructure, improving irrigation facilities, promoting small and medium scale industries etc.
- Restoration of interest rate on PROVIDENT FUND to 9.5%. Interest rate on special deposit scheme (SDS) in which major part of PF accumulation is parked should be increased.
- Withdraw the Pension Fund Regulatory & Development Authority Bill and restore old pension scheme for the post 2004 entrants in Govt services.
- Income ceiling for exemption from Income Tax should be raised to Rs 2 lakh.
- Extend the benefit of standard deduction to pensioners and retirees; retiral benefits and terminal benefits accrued from the social security scheme and savings at the time of retirement should be exempted from income tax and the present EEE system should be changed accordingly.
- Evolve national social security policy to provide comprehensive scheme covering all workers; speedy enactment of Unorganised Sector Workers' Bill and Agricultural Workers' Bill with adequate Central Govt funding.
- Halt privatisation and disinvestment of shares of profit making and strategically important and potentially viable PSUs and departmental undertakings.
- Roll back corporatisation of Security Press and Mint; stop corporatisation of Defence Production Units.
- Removal of ceilings under the Payment of Bonus Act on eligibility, coverage and calculation.
- Constitute 6th Pay Commission.
- Withdraw ban on recruitment in Govt departments, undertakings and PSUs.
- Strengthen Public Distribution System and augment supply of Kerosene through PDS.
- Budget should ensure adequate funds for social sector like education, health, drinking water, housing etc.
- Implement land reforms and investment in agriculture should be substantially increased.
- Reasonable price for agricultural produce should be ensured through effective procurement system.
- Budget should provide necessary funds and provisions for rapid growth of labour intensive cottage and small scale industries with liberalised

tax concessions, subsidies, incentive, concessional credit facilities, sales promotion and restoration of items dereserved in the past in the reserved list. Appropriate mechanism for protecting small scale industries from competition from large scale units and MNCs.

■ Interest Rate policy should be so designed to ensure special differential treatment for the small scale sector and agriculture.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

■ Tax-GDP ratio should be increased by taxing the rich and affluent section, domestic and foreign corporates and arresting tax evasion with strong hand.

■ Instead of targeting the poor man's subsidy on food, Kerosene & petroleum and public utilities for reduction, the liberal concessions showered on the big corporates, both domestic and foreign, in the name of incentive, tax holidays, tariff concessions on utilities, should be thoroughly re-examined and reduced.

■ Long term capital gains tax should be introduced, short term capital gains tax should be increased, there should be higher taxes on the security transactions.

■ Taxation on luxury goods, foreign liquor and cigarettes, foreign cars including the domestically assembled ones, foreign tours and travels should be increased. The rate of wealth tax, corporate tax and gift tax should be enhanced.

■ Fast recovery of the Non Performing Assets (NPA) of the banks should be undertaken and appropriate mechanism should be put in place to arrest the growth of NPA.

■ Stringent measures to arrest tax evasion and for fast recovery of huge tax arrears to be introduced/ensured.

■ Stringent actions to be taken for unearthing huge black-money accumulation estimated to be around 40% of the country's economy and also for arresting the black money generation.

■ Import duty on luxury items and consumer goods where domestic production is available should be enhanced.

■ Steps should be taken to widen the service tax net upwards to subject the services catered to richer section of people to higher rate of taxation. Tax on big IT sector, call centres etc should be introduced and enhanced. High cost private education institutions, high cost nursing homes and similar high-cost service agencies should be brought under tax net without any exemptions.

The Joint memorandum was signed by M K Pandhe (CITU), G Sanjeeva Reddy (INTUC), H Mahadevan (AITUC), R A Mittal (HMS), Girish Awasthi (BMS), Krishna Chakraborty (UTUC-LS), Rajiv Dimri (AICCTU), Ashok Ghosh (UTUC), Devarajan (TUCC) and Naren Sen (NFITU). M K Pandhe presented the joint memorandum to Finance Minister on behalf of the trade unions and explained the essence of the proposals made warranting a directional change in the economic policy regime to ensure sustained development of the economy with distributive equity. Other trade unions also made their presentation before the Finance Minister on the same line.

CITU was represented in the meeting by the President and General Secretary, M K Pandhe and Chittabrata Majumdar respectively. Before the joint memorandum was finalized, CITU also sent in advance its suggestions on the . budget. Besides the issues mentioned in the joint memorandum, CITU has also pointed to the following specific issues and measures to be taken:

1. There must be stringent measure to stop evasion of tax payment and leakage of revenue earnings and recover tax-arrears of around Rs I lakh crore. As in the case of common man using electricity, telephone, etc and also the case of income tax deducted at source from the salaried persons, the corporates, industrialists and other disputants in such cases, should also be compelled to prepay the tax as per claim/ assessment made by the concerned authorities, before raising dispute on assessment/claim.

2. There must be higher taxation on transactions in secondary speculative stock market and there should be effective deterrents from diversion of resources/funds from productive investment to speculative market. Security transaction tax rate should be increased and foreign-exchange transactions and gift in foreign exchange should be taxed without any exemption. Long term capital gains tax should be reintroduced and existing short term capital gains tax rate should be enhanced. There should be

higher level of tax on luxury goods and services and tours and travels in foreign countries.

3. Data shows that the revenue earnings in the area of excise duty, import duty, export duty and corporate tax are not matching with the growth and production figures in the respective areas. Income from manufacturing and trading is being shown, in many cases, fictitiously as agricultural income to evade taxes; total production and sales figures are not tallying with excise duty collections from the concerned sector. These are to be prevented through appropriate measures and stringent monitoring.

4. Export subsidy of about Rs 45,000 crore should be rationalized and slashed and this can very well be done without affecting the genuine exporters. As for examples, for exporting petroleum and petro-products, which are in short-supply in our country making us heavily dependent on import, no export-subsidy should be given at all. At the same time, tax for windfall profit of the stand-alone oil refineries drawing high refinery margins may be considered to balance the burden of oil import on the economy without affecting the common people. In this context, there is urgent need for a thorough review of tax-structure on petroleum and petro-products with a view to reduce the burden of price-fluctuation on the common people.

5. The entire indirect tax structure needs to be reviewed and reworked to ensure a level playing field to domestic industries, the small and medium scale enterprises in particular. Import of finished products under free trade agreement should not lead to closure and destruction of the domestic industries of the concerned product line, as is happening in case of finished vanaspati product; the situation warrants drastic reduction in import duty on crude vanaspati oil as well as the excise duty on the domestically produced dalda and refined vegetable oil. Similarly, any reduction in the import duty on any finished item or the raw material thereof on any consideration, warrants simultaneous reduction in the excise duty rate on the concerned domestic product. Import duty on coal should be restored to 1998 level.

6. The agricultural income of the big farm houses should be brought under tax net. Special tax/surcharge should be levied on profit/turnover of the big corporate houses, both domestic and foreign, and big farms to constitute a special corpus for social security expenditure.

7. The move to raise FDI cap in telecom, banks, insurance, civil aviation etc and privatization move in the airport and sea-ports should be rescinded and dropped.

8. Adequate budgetary provisions should be made for revival/revamping of the sick but potentially viable PSUs.

9. Review Committee should be appointed with the representation of the CTUOs to devise a transparent mechanism for compiling cost of living indices.

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the complainants and posing himself against MNCs.

Sri Ramdev's furious outpour in the media, particularly in the electronic media and unfounded personal allegations hurled against Ms Karat itself reflects loss of balance and substantiates the irregularities indulged in by him. Sri Ramdev's statement could no way refute the observations made by the Union health ministry. And the slanderous allegations hurled by him on complainant's alleged involvement with multinational companies tantamount to personal insinuation by a defaulter, failing to refute the concrete complaints of defaults and violation of the laws of the land. While reacting to complaints of violation of labour laws by Divya Yog Pharmacy management, Shri Ramdev suppressed the facts and indulged in false statements. He did not say anything as to why the tripartite agreement dated 21-5-2005 which was signed by his management was not implemented. It is quite clear that Sri Ramdev is trying to personalize the issue with baseless allegations to divert the attention from the issue of blatant violation of laws of the land. CITU strongly condemns such mis-statements and malicious allegations by Sri Ramdev. CITU demands upon both the Central and Uttaranchal Govt to make serious investigation into the prima-facie violation of Indian Drugs and Cosmetics Act 1940 by Divya Yog Pharmacy and take urgent action against blatant violation of labour laws by the Pharmacy management.

GOVT & RAILWAY EMPLOYEES TO GO FOR INDEFINITE STRIKE

The Central Govt Employees and the Railway workers have jointly decided for going in for indefinite strike from 1st March 2006 to press for the long pending demands of the employees and to resist anti-employment policy of the Govt. The major demands of the employees include constitution of 6th Pay Commission, against the policy of reckless downsizing and outsourcing in various govt departments, against privatisation of pension scheme etc. Despite long persuasion by the trade unions in the respective areas to make the Govt move on the burning issues, the Govt at the centre continued to maintain a unresponsive rather a negative stand, which compelled the Joint Council of Action comprising all the unions of central govt employees and railways to take the decision for indefinite strike.

Sri J P Chaubey, Convenor, Joint Council of Action has issued the statement, which says:

"The Joint Council of Action of the Central Government Employees in its meeting held on December 5, 2005 had decided that the industrial workers working in the railway, defence and other civil establishments and elsewhere under the government of India will take strike ballot during the period from January 3 to 10, 2006 to ascertain the opinion of the central government employees in respect of indefinite general strike.

In the railways, the affiliated unions of All India Railwaymen's Federation and National Federation of Indian Railwaymen took strike ballot, in which out of 12.17 lakh Group 'C' & 'D' employees on roll, 10.68 lakh voted in favour of strike (96.25%). In the Production Units of Defence and other establishments, 96% voted in favour of strike. The employees working in the railways and defence are governed by the Industrial Disputes Act and it was mandatory for them to organise strike ballot.

In respect of other central government employees, All India Railwaymen's Federation, Nation Federation of Indian Railwaymen, All India Defence Employees Federation, Indian National Defence Workers' Federation, Income Tax Employees Federation, National Federation of Postal Employees, Federation of National Postal Organisation, All India Audit & Accounts Association, Central secretariat non-Gazetted Employees' Association, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Workers, Bhartiya Pratiraksha Mazdoor Sangh have also decided in their respective forum in favour of indefinite general strike.

Since there has been no response from the government for a negotiated settlement in spite of repeated requests made by the secretary (staff side), National Council (JCM) and also by the Convenor of the Joint Council of Action, the Action Committee has no alternative, but to fix up the date of strike. It was decided that the strike notice should be served on February 7,2006 by all the affiliated unions of the constituent organisations of National Council (JCM) and the strike should commence from March 1, 2006 at 6.00 a.m.

The JCA is conscious that the strike in the above referred important establishments will cause great hardship to the travelling public and the people of the country, but the responsibility for forcing the central government employees for taking decision to go on indefinite general strike rests with the government of India.

The JCA also thanks to the central trade unions for raising the issue "Appointment of the VI CPC" in the pre-budget discussion held with the finance minister on January 12, 2006.

The JCA, however, decides that during the period from January 29,2006, massive mobilisation should take place and "All India Protest Day" should be observed on February 23, 2006 by holding meetings, demonstrations, procession etc. and also dharnas, rallies etc.

The JCA further decides that the leadership should keep a watch on the situation and issue necessary directives for intensifying the movement and also to discuss other contingencies which may arise hereinafter so that the constituent organisations of National Council (JCM) are kept aware and given necessary guidance and direction for a successful struggle and total indefinite strike."

Centre of Indian Trade Unions have already extended support to the decision for strike by the Central Govt employees and Railway workers.

Organised Investment In Retail Business – A Ruinous Phenomenon

Kingsuk Datta

Failed to move on the growth track, global capital is now eyeing on the Indian retail market since a couple of years. With the much-hyped proliferation of 'effluent' middle class, the greedy multinational giants are restless to get into the Indian market. At the behest of the global corporate capital, pressures have been pitching high to open the retail sector to foreign direct investment. Also the successive governments at Centre in recent time are in jolly mood to cordially felicitate the multinational retail giants.

According to a recent global survey on 'retail industry', India being among the top three countries with the highest number of people with spending capabilities in the 25 to 49 years age bracket has been ranked the world's second-most attractive retail destination. Projection speaks of trebling of present turnover from Rs.35,000 crore to Rs.10,95,000 crore by 2010 for the 'organised retail industry', with the average growth of 25-30 per cent per annum for the next five to six years. Research reports project an investment of Rs.3,100 crore every year during this time. Undoubtedly all these projections are based on overenthusiastic expectation of economic and consumption growth on the basis of projected GDP growth of 10 percent for the coming ten years. But the same is unlikely achievable by any means in absence of required investment in manufacturing sector with the reversal of the ongoing pro-liberalisation reform policies of the country.

At present, as the reports say more than 200 large shopping malls are in design or under construction. More than 25 million square feet of new retail space is planned for completion in the next three years time comprising of developments in more than 50 cities across the country. Unquestionably, amidst of worst ever recession in post Second World War era, India with population of 1.2 billion is the most lucrative market to be grabbed by the ever hungry capitalism. No matters who are being trampled or perished!

In a scenario of the ever-growing unemployment and mass informalisation of the toiling mass of the country a few crore small shop owners and small and medium traders form twenty percent of the work force, the highest after agriculture sector and contribute one-seventh of the country's GDP with a turnover of about Rs.2 lakh core. In absence of opportunity of being employed gainfully for survival, a contingent of four crore of the people have been pushed to in retail market making this sector as one of "forced employment" segment. Thus in reality these retailers come into existence out of compulsion rather than a choice.

The assurances of generating more quality jobs in growing organised retail format with access of multinational retail giants are hardly of any substance since the manufacturing industries hardly have any significant employment generation capacity (often the figures of job loss surpass the number of employment generated, making the net negative impact on the industrial employment generation), with continued alarming shrinkage of employment in agriculture sector. The Associated Chambers of Commerce and Industries of India (ASSOCHAM) estimate that the organised retail sector will create 50000 jobs a year in the coming five years. It is needless to point out that they have been deliberately silent on the issue of quantum of displacements from the livelihood due to such invasion of corporate investment in retail business. Thailand witnessed the widespread closure of small and retail outlets, with the entry of foreign capital, whose share in organised retailing reached to 40 percent within a span of a few years. The anecdotes of the South-Ease Asian countries viz. South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, Taiwan and China are no different as evidenced from the pervading decline in the traditional grocery stores as an immediate effect of arrival of multinational retail chains. Asian Development Bank even expressed its apprehension for the small private ventures in retail trade in China, who has deregulated the retail trade for foreign capital only in 2004.

We can just get some glimpses of tyranny of corporate investment in retail business from the

experiences in United States of America itself. In USA while the quality jobs continue to decline at such giants as Ford, General Motors, Chrysler and AT&T, tens of thousands of new jobs are being created by mega-retail chains. Employment by Wal-Mart alone accounted for a 2890% increase over twenty years till end of last century. While in 1978, Wal-Mart had 21000 workers and revenues reached the $100million, by 1995, it had over 628000 workers with revenues approaching $100billion mark. According to data, apparently, one out of every 200 American civilian jobs is being created at Wal-Mart. But according to American standard 30% of Wal-Mart workers are part-time employees. While the autoworkers of the country have a guaranteed annual pension, the Wal-Mart employees do not. Also the Wal-Mart part-time employees are denied of company paid health benefit, while the "full timers" must pay for part of their health insurance. Further 'the Washington Post Foreign Services' reported: "The world's largest retail chain has fiercely and successfully resisted unionism attempts at its 3600 stores in the United States".

Now look at the small business owners in America. They are being considered as the major backbone of the US economy providing necessary goods and services, while transferring sales tax benefits towards public schools, libraries, fire and police etc. But alarmingly many of these small businesses are suffering attacks by the mega-retail chain stores, with the large volume buying power, and seemingly unlimited resources of later.

Thus while the American experience itself ridicule the tall claim of generating the quality job opportunity with the amplified corporate investment under the stewardship of multinational retail chains, the global experience acquaints us with the destruction of millions of small retailers by the 'organised retail sector'.

Now consider the implication of penetration by supermarket and corporate retail business on the agrarian sector. Agriculture sector, which is already the subject of attack by neo-liberal globalisation, faces serious threat from the very presence of multinational retail chains. In fact the ability of these multinational retail chains to sell at low prices is stemming from their ability to squeeze producers around the world using their monopsony power. In the event of selling the goods by these retailers at prices lower than the prevailing today's price, sourcing from Indian producers, the later are definitely to be at receiving end in terms of declining income. We must once again note that 60 percent of our population is dependent on agriculture, while our per capita national income is less than 500 dollar. Further in case the multinational retailers import the cheaper goods from abroad, domestic producers would be displaced anyway. Experience proved that corporate investment with the international market access available to global retail chains do not at all benefit the producers of the developing countries in terms of price realisation in the face of monopsony power wielded by the corporate retailers. Rather growth of the organised retail business with the influx of enormous corporate investment in collaboration with the foreign direct investment can guarantee the enhanced profit for them at the cost of the producers of the country. From the facts it is clear that in an economy that is chronically reeling under the severe shrinkage of employment opportunity coupled with the massive job loss due to ongoing dismal performance in the manufacturing sector with massive downsizing etc, advocating for the organised retail 'industry' inviting the multinational retail chains is detrimental to the best interest of our country. Also, the jubilation on the growing number of shopping malls across the country with more to come no way reflects the concern for the countless destitute striving for mere survival, rather exposes sheer selfishness of handful of beneficiaries of neo-liberal economy rapt in by consumerism.

What morale of the contemporary global experience is that, the move of multinational capital to appropriate the retail business perhaps is a compulsion to reset the morbid capitalism on growth track, the small businesses, with the meagre buying power, potential loss of wholesalers with countless producers slipping below poverty level every day are thrown to the definite process to perish.

SRI RAMDEV'S SLANDER AGAINST CITU AND WORKERS

In the face of concrete complaint of adulteration of medicine produced by Sri Ramdev's Divya Yog Pharmacy at Kankhal, Haridwar, and the Union Health Ministry's subsequent observation on prima-facie violation of Indian Drug and Cosmetic Act in the matter, slanderous campaign has been launched by Sri Ramdev and his associates against CPI(M), CITU and in particular against Com Brinda Karat MP who took initiative to collect samples of medicine from purchased from Divya Yog Pharmacy counter and submit the same to Ayush for examination. Com Brinda also pointed out to the blatant violation of labour laws by the Divya Yog Pharmacy management run by Sri Ramdev with direct patronization of the uttaranchal State Govt. Simultaneously, the saffron brigade of BJP immediately jumped in support of Sri Ramdev and attacked the CPI(M) central office at New Delhi and organized similar hoodlumism at different parts of the country.

CITU has immediately countered such slanderous through press statement issued on 4th January 2006 and holding press conference on 7th January at New Delhi laying bare the facts before all concerned.

The Divya Yog Mandir Trust headed by Sri Ramdev runs a pharmacy called Divya Yog Pharmacy which employ around 500 workers a large section of which are women workers. The workers have been agitating since long under the leadership of CITU union against violation of almost all the laws of the land including non-payment of statutory minimum wages, longer working hours, no social security benefits and above all the inhuman and ill treatment by management. In order to crush the workers and their union, management terminated the services of around 115 workers without showing any reason including 42 women on 5th May 2005. But such unlawful termination led to intensification of the agitation. On 21st May 2005, a tripartite agreement was arrived at and signed between the union, management of Divya Yog Pharmacy and Trust and the Labour deptt official at Haridwar which envisaged restoration of stus quo ante as before 5th May and reinstatement all the terminated workers, besides implementation of labour laws on minimum wages, working hours etc. That agreement has not been implemented by the management even after passage of eight months since then which is a blatant violation of the law. The State Govt which should have initiated prosecution against the Divya Yog management has remained a silent spectator till now.

During the process of agitation, Com Brinda Karat visited Haridwar and addressed the demonstration of workers and heard their complaints. At that time many workers brought to her notice that the workers are forced to collect animal parts and human skulls and bones and process them manually in the pharmacy although the Pharmacy claims to produce and sell only vegetarian medicine and the labels of the medicines sold by the Pharmacy do not mention anything about the same.

Subsequently, some medicines were purchased through prescription issued by the OPD run by the Divya Yog Trust from their pharmacy and same was sent to Union Health Ministry on 7th July 2005 along with the receipt of purchase with a request for analyzing the same to verify the contents of animal/human parts in the same. In response to her complaint dated 7th July 2005, Joint Secretary Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, Govt of India in his letter addressed to Com Brinda Karat on 29th December 2005 inter alia, stated, "Analysis reports of the samples...have since been received and prima facie reveal a violation of Licensing and labeling provisions of the Indian Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940."

The Complaint lodged was not against Ayurvedic medicine or treatment but against the possible unlawful adulterating activity by the concerned agency/trust/pharmacy and violation of the defined law of the land. Sri Ramdev , failing to counter this specific complaint and refute the categorical observation of the "Analysis Report" sought to make a cover up raising a bogey against

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Haryana:

CITU DENOUNCES HOODA GOVT. LABOUR POLICY

The Govt of Haryana has prepared a labour policy document and has been giving it wide publicity. On October 10, 2005, the Govt has called a meeting of trade unions to discuss the document in which CITU has also taken part. But the document publicized by the state govt did not contain any input from the suggestions made by the trade unions in the said meeting. The Haryana State Committee of CITU, therefore, submitted a memorandum to the Labour Minister of Haryana on the same issue on 2nd January 2006 highlighting the real plight of labour in the state of Haryana and making concrete suggestions to be incorporated in the state's labour policy.

CITU pointed out that the document published by the State Govt under the title "Labour Policy" should better be called "allurement package for the employers" so far as its direction and basic content ids concerned. The document did not highlight the deplorable conditions in which the overwhelming majority of the working people in the state has been languishing despite hefty profits being earned by the employers.

The document did not even make even indicative mention of any intention to improve the working conditions for the millions of workers in the unorganized sector. Conditions of workers in both the organized and unorganized sector can be gauged from the startling facts that more than fifty per cent of the working population in most of the industrial towns of the state like Faridabad, Panipat, Gurgaon etc are slum-dwellers (as per the latest census data) and have been facing a sharp erosion in their real earnings. Despite tall claim of the state govt that the minimum wage rate in Haryana is the highest in the country, the same has not been implemented in majority of the industrial establishments in the state. 12 hours work a day without any compensation for the additional hours has become a general practice forced upon the workers by the employers with impunity in most of the establishments in the state. Percentage of workers covered by minimum social security measures will not even cross the single digit.

The statement made in the document regarding the priority of the labour department on giving more stress on compliance on labour law rather than focusing on penalty for non-compliance is nothing but a mockery. The ground reality is that in Haryana, hardly a single establishment, particularly in the private sector can be found where the basic labour laws are implemented in a proper way and in majority of the establishments, violation of most of the basic labour laws pertaining to minimum wages, working hours, social security, contract work etc are a common phenomenon. In most of the establishments, more than half the workforce in the regular jobs are on contract which is blatant violation of the existing statute. In that background, the above statement exposes the evil-intention of legitimizing the inaction of the enforcement machinery and indulgence to labour law violation on the part of the State Govt. Fact remains that implementation of basic labour laws is a rare exception in Haryana and the entire labour enforcement machinery are made remain crippled by the ruling polity in the state in their absolute loyalty to the capitalist lobby, both domestic and foreign.

CITU also pointed out to the most repressive policy towards trade union rights being followed by the State Govt. Entire state administration is tuned in that direction. Any initiative to form trade union or demand for labour law implementation is being tackled with ruthless victimization with active indulgence of the enforcement authority and the Law & Order authority. CITU also opposed the idea of banning strike bracketing the same with lock-out and also the proposal of making the service of professional lawyers impermissible in arbitration and judicial process in labour related

matters.

While drawing the attention of the Govt to the reign of anarchy prevailing in the labour administration in the state, CITU pressed for concrete steps to be taken by the State Govt which are, inter alia:

1.The Haryana Govt must take concrete step in implementing the labour laws in their own state-run departments, establishments, municipalities, boards etc.

2. Labour department should be made responsible for implementation of labour laws in various establishments in the state and for that, the labour department should be expanded, strengthened and their work should be streamlined along with stringent provisions for penalty for labour law violation as well as negligence in enforcement.

3. Statutory Committees under the labour department should be made truly representative and be run democratically.

4. Increase in the number of labour courts and vacancies filled up and procedures should be simplified to expedite justice and curb corruption.

5. Comprehensive social security provisions for unorganized sector workers and agricultural workers including registration of all workers in these areas.

6. Complete stoppage of contract work in regular jobs and regularization of contract workers. Workers should not be dislodged in the event of change of contractors and contract workers should be paid same wage as regular workers. Principal employers should be made responsible for all aspects pertaining to service conditions of the contract workers.

7. Registration of trade unions should be ensured without delay and procedures should be simplified.

8. Proper administrative and legislative measures should be taken for the protection of migrant labourers including their registration, provision of ration cards etc.

9. Strong measures to end bonded labour and child labour including their rehabilitation.

10. Compulsory Recognition of trade unions in each unit through secret ballot.

11. Introduction of reservation for SC/ST in the private sector.

12 Minimum Wage to be formulated as per formula devised by 15th Indian Labour Conference along with direction of Raptakos Brett Judgment.

13. Universal application of PF and ESI facilities for all workers in the state.

LABOUR LAW VIOLATION A DAILY FEATURE IN HARYANA

Recently the Haryana government, as several state governments in the country, has declared a Labour Policy, which in effect bestows largesse on the employers, allowing them to merrily flout all labour laws. A case in point is Speedomex, a company manufacturing auto components in Gurgaon. It has 6 more branches in several other parts of the country. Speedomex in Gurgaon employs around 850 workers, out of which around 200 are permanent employees and the rest are contract workers. CITU has organised the workers in Speedomex, formed a union with around 600 members, and became the only representative union of the workers in the factory. Unable to digest this reality, the management started cracking the whip with a compliant administration. Instead of holding negotiations with the union, the management, with the help of a friendly police and the labour department, formed a so-called 'works committee' with its nominees. No election was held for the constitution of the Works Committee. Thus, the so called Works Committee comprising only some persons in the roll of the company selected by the employer signed an agreement with the management on wages and other service conditions of the workers, surprisingly in the presence of the local police officials and only representative registered union of workers have been ignored. The workers are being forced to sign individual undertakings with the help of gun-trotting police force. Repeated representations of the union, the district and state committees of CITU to the labour commissioner against by-passing the only representative union of the workers in coming to an agreement were completely ignored. The CITU has organised a dharna in front of the labour commissioners' office protesting the illegal agreement. But the administration chose to turn a blind eye. The management has now started victimisation of the workers, dismissing one after another leaders of the union in a most irregular manner with the active support of the labour department and the local administration. A truly jungle raj under the state administration domesticated by the employer !

PROPOSED STRIKE ON 5TH JANUARY 2006 DEFERRED

GOVT. ASSURES NO DISINVESTMENT OF BSNL

V A N Namboodiri

The Central Government and the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) have been taking decisions one after another to cripple BSNL, the telecom PSU, and to promote the private telecom operators.

While new private telecom companies were given all kinds of concessions, these were denied to BSNL on the plea that it is an already existing organization. The license fee system for private companies which was expected to bring about Rs.55,000 crores to the Exchequer was modified to Revenue Sharing system, which brought only a meager Rs.5,000 crores. While private companies were allowed to start mobile services, the same was denied to the telecom PSUs, BSNL & MTNL for five long years. BSNL and MTNL, which were ready to start the mobile service at any tine could become only the fourth mobile operator after the market has already been captured by the private companies. Still within a short time, BSNL became the second biggest mobile operator and combined the MTNL, the first. The mobile tariff was largely reduced after the entry of the two telecom PSUs.

The required autonomy and powers to run the PSU in competition with the private companies were not given to BSNL. Decisions to expand and develop were thwarted or delayed on one count or other. The Access Deficit Charge (ADC), which the private companies were to give BSNL, for getting connected to BSNL numbers were drastically reduced and even recommended to be abolished altogether. The Universal Service Obligation Fund (USOF), which was to be paid to BSNL for providing services in the rural areas which are socially essential, but financially non-remunerative and unviable, was delayed payment for a long time. Private companies which were under obligation as per license agreement to provide connections in the rural areas, were allowed to go scot free, without any penalty even when they did not give any connections. Reliance Infocom, which cheated the Government and BSNL of thousands of crores of rupees, by manipulating international and national calls in to local calls to avoid paying ADC, was let off with a small penalty, instead of canceling its license as per contract provisions.

Despite all these obstructions on the part of the Government and the TRAI, BSNL has grown with the determined and sincere efforts of the workers including the officers. The annual out turn has crossed Rs.33,000 crores and the profit for 2004-05 year is Rs.10,183 crores.

Move to Disinvest BSNL

The Telecommunications services, which were under the control of the Government were converted in to three PSUs VIZ. Videsh Sanchar Nigam Limited (VSNL), Maha Nagar Telephone Nigam Limited (MTNL) and Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), VSNL is already sold for a song to Tatas, while 46% shares of MTNL are already in the market and disinvestments of 5% more will result in privatization. 100% of shares of BSNL are at present with the Government. It is in a hurry to disinvest BSNL and gradually privatize. It was reported in the press that the Economic Affairs Committee has already proposed disinvestments of certain profitable non-navaratna PSUs, including BSNL.

FDI hike to 74% from 49% in Telecom

Despite strong opposition from the Left parties and the workers, the Government decided to increase the FDI in telecom to 74%, which will result in taking over the Indian private telecom companies by the MNCs. It has got serious security concerns, since telecom is the second line of defence. Even the western countries, who are the apostles of liberalization and globalisation have not hiked the FDI in Telecom to more than 35 or 45% due to this. The recent allegations of tapping of phones have shown the gravity of the issue and the role of the private telecom companies. It is not far, when the secret phone conversations of people, VIP or no VIP, will be available in the market for a price. Capital never

cared for human values; profit and profit was its only motive and aim.

Navaratna Status and Autonomy to BSNL

Grant of autonomy and Navaratna status would have helped BSNL to serve the people better implement vast development and expansion. Unfortunately, the government took a negative attitude, despite earlier commitment. The biggest PSU in the country with excellent rank for years was denied the Navaratna status without any valid reason.

National Telecom Policy 2005

The Government is preparing a new Telecom Policy which includes a number of proposals detrimental to the growth of the telecom PSUs and granting unjustified bonanza to the private telecom companies. Outsourcing and contractorisation even for regular jobs, dropping of the Access Deficit Charge, opening up of the copper cables of the BSNL and MTNL to private companies, sharing of BSNL infrastructure with private companies etc. are only some of these. The three and half lakh workers who have got a big stake, are not consulted in the matter, while the private companies are taken into confidence and their opinions sought.

The workers unite to face the challenges

All unions of the non-executives and associations of executives under the initiative of BSNL Employees Union, the representative and recognized union in BSNL, joined together to resist this offensive which threatened the future of BSNL and its workers. Agitational progrmames were organized through out the country demanding immediate action to give autonomy and Navaratna status, stop disinvestments and cancel hike in FDI.

Joint Forum serves strike notice

The Joint Forum of BSNL Unions including Officers' Associations met and decided to call for a strike to defend the BSNL and its workers. Protest demonstrations were organisd on 8th December in front of all exchanges and offices. It was decided to orgnaise a one day strike on 5th January 2006. Massive dharnas participated by thousands of workers were organized on 21st December 2005 on which day the strike notice was served on the management. There was no economic demand of the employees. The demands were only in defence of the BSNL to save it and serve the people better. The demands were against the anti-worker policies of the Government.

Negotiation with Secretary, DOT

At the last moment at about 7.30 PM, just before for hours to start the one day strike from the mid night of 4th/5th January, the Secretary, Department of Telecommunications, called the Unions for a meeting. The Communications Minister was abroad and the State Minister out of Delhi. The protracted discussions with the Secretary, DOT continued. At last, the Secretary DOT gave certain assurances in writing on the demands included in the strike notice. The assurances given by were discussed in the Joint Forum of BSNL unions and the Forum unanimously decided to defer the strike on the basis of the assurances.

Unity strengthened, Powder kept dry

The assurances given are important since for the first time, it has been conveyed by the Secretary that there is no proposal for disinvestments of BSNL. The Navaratna status is ensured. It was also assured that there is no proposal to unbundle the last mile copper cables of BSNL. The Unions will be consulted on National Telecom Policy 2005. These assurances are a big victory for the BSNL workers. Congratulations to the BSNL workers whose determination and preparations compelled the Government to come to the negotiating table! Despite the assurances, the workers are under no illusion. The Government has already implemented FDI hike. They very well know that the government may again resort to such measures, since it is committed to the liberalization-globalisation policy.

For the first time, all the non-executives' and executives' unions/associations in the BSNL joined together to defend their organisation and the workers. Shedding all other differences, the workers and employees stood as one man to face the onslaught and fight. BSNL Employees Union, since it got the status of the representative union has been making all efforts for a common forum and it succeeded.

The need of the hour is to strengthen the unity and prepare for further struggles and massive campaign among the workers against the anti-worker policies of the Government.

TOYOTA KIRLOSKAR MOTORS STRUGGLE

Then it was Honda Motorcycle of Gurgaon, Haryana in July 2005 which made the mass of the workers bleed for asking for trade union right and nothing else. Now it is another Japanese MNC- M/s Toyota Kirloskar Motors of Bangalore, Karnataka which resorted to same unfair labour practice of union-busting.

The management dismissed 3 workers on 3rd January 2006. The dismissal was thoroughly unlawful as per section 33(1)(b) of the Industrial Disputes Act. From 6th January 2006, the workers went on sit-in strike in protest and demanding immediate withdrawal of dismissal order and the entire 1400 workforce sat on dharna at the factory premises. A huge police force came to rescue of the management but they could not get the workers sitting in peaceful dharna dispersed. On the third day of the continuous round-the clock sit-in demonstration and strike, on 8th January, the management declared lock out in the afternoon. After this, the workers vacated the factory premise at 4 pm on 8th January.

Meantime, the conciliation proceeding in the labour department started on 6th January itself. The conciliation officer suggested to keep the dismissal order in abeyance and urged the union to withdraw the strike to which the union readily agreed. But the management got the conciliation proceeding to start again next day on 7th January. But on 7th the management did not turn up for conciliation and sent a message that they were confined by the workers and thus could not come to conciliation owing to obstruction created by the workers which is not at all the fact. Nobody obstructed the movement of management in the factory.

The union requested the Conciliation Officer to get in touch with the police inside the plant and verify the truth that the management is free to go to the conciliation. Upon our suggestion the C.O then sent a fax to the management exposing their lie and indicating 'suggestion' and union's preparedness to call off the strike.

But, most unscrupulously, the management declared a lockout on 8th January 2006 The CITU leaders ascertained the opinion of the workers sitting in the 'isolated' factory and the workers were advised to come out after the lockout, they came out at 4.p.m on 8th January 2006.

The lockout is partial applicable only to unionized in essential workers. The management plan is to restart production using other workers i.e., supervisors and trainees etc..

On 8th the Management after the lockout went on record in TV interview that they will attend the conciliation meeting on 9th. However they did not turn up alleging falsely that violence is going on the City created by the workers.

The allegations of violence was totally false. The management engaged goondas of the locality to beat up media persons, to throw stones at passing vehicles etc., to allege violence.

Over a thousand workers assembled at the 'Karmika Bhawan' the Labour Commissioner Office from 2.00p.m on the 9th and they remained steadfast in the biting cold without any protection of warm clothing braving all privations.

In order to disrupt the conciliation proceedings, the Management sought two weeks time. The Labour Commissioner Mr.K.S.Manjunath, I.A.S and Deputy Labour Commissioner Mr. Hittangi granted three days time to the management until 11.30 a.m. on 12th January 2006.

Protesting against this the Toyota workers and workers from MICO and other plants staged a 'day and night sit in demonstration' on 9th and 10th January. Com.M.Meenakshi Sundaram CITU State Treasurer stayed with the workers.

The struggle of Toyota workers against vindictive dismissal and illegal lockout is going on.

The Japanese national trade union Centre ZENROREN has sent message to CITU expressing solidarity with the Toyota workers at Bangalore and staged a demonstration before the Toyota head office at Tokyo and submitted memorandum to Toyota management demanding withdrawal of dismissal orders and lifting of lockout in their bangalore unit.

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

State	Sr. No.	Centre	Month Oct.'05	Nov.'05
Andhra Pradesh	1	Gudur	508	525
	2	Guntur	550	554
	3	Hyderabad	542	548
	4	Visakhapatnam	533	541
	5	Warangal	569	579
Assam	6	D.D.Tinsukia	456	466
	7	Guwahati	538	541
	8	Labac-Silchar	419	431
	9	Mariani-Jorhat	458	464
	10	Rangapara-Tezpur	453	460
Bihar	11	Monghyr	530	541
Chhattisgarh	12	Bhillai	498	496
Gujarat	13	Ahmedabad	531	529
	14	Bhavnagar	548	540
	15	Rajkot	509	507
	16	Surat	532	534
	17	Vadodra	515	511
Haryana	18	Faridabad	559	560
	19	Yamunanagar	535	543
J & K	20	Srinagar	637	644
Jharkhand	21	Jamshedpur	523	525
	22	Jharia	461	465
	23	Kodarma	491	498
	24	Noamundi	490	493
	25	Ranchi-Hatia	512	517
Karnataka	26	Bangalore	546	553
	27	Belgaum	602	605
	28	Hubli-Dharwar	554	561
	29	Mercara	500	505
Kerala	30	Alwaye	542	551
	31	Mundakayam	515	522
	32	Quilon	542	549
	33	Thiruvananthapuram	621	613
Madhya Pradesh	34	Balaghat	495	497
	35	Bhopal	574	575
	36	Indore	542	552
	37	Jabalpur	552	552
Maharastra	38	Mumbai	617	619
	39	Nagpur	565	564
	40	Nasik	585	589
	41	Pune	596	602
	42	Solapur	548	555
Orissa	43	Barbil	490	498
	44	Rourkela	489	487
Punjab	45	Amritsar	507	507
	46	Ludhiana	516	520
Rajasthan	47	Ajmer	545	546
	48	Jaipur	509	511
Tamil Nadu	49	Chennai	567	584
	50	Coimbatore	514	524
	51	Coonoor	518	528
	52	Madurai	508	537
	53	Salem	475	499
	54	Tiruchirapally	588	609
Uttar Pradesh	55	Agra	526	535
	56	Ghaziabad	565	567
	57	Kanpur	538	541
	58	Saharanpur	525	521
	59	Varanasi	592	590
West Bengal	60	Asansol	522	526
	61	Darjeeling	453	459
	62	Durgapur	607	609
	63	Haldia	639	650
	64	Howrah	639	659
	65	Jalpaiguri	467	473
	66	Kolkata	605	621
	67	Raniganj	482	491
Chandigarh	68	Chandigarh	628	631
Delhi	69	Delhi	665	666
Pondicherry	70	Pondicherry	588	616
ALL INDIA			**548**	**553**

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

State		Centre	October 2005	November 2005
Andhra Pradesh	1	Kethgudem	574	
Himachal Pradesh	2	Himachal Pradesh	525	
Rajasthan	3	Bhilwara	545	
Madhya Pradesh	4	Chhindwara	484	
Tripura	5	Tripura	478	
Goa	6	Goa	637	

A.P. State Conference of CITU

The 10th state conference of CITU was held On 5- 8 January 2006 in Sarada Nagar in Kadapa. 660 delegates and invitees from all the districts representing the unions in 28 sectors participated in the conference. 117 of them were women.

The Conference was preceded by an impressive procession and rally on the 5th January. For the first time in recent history that workers in such a large scale including a large number of women marched in the streets of Kadapa under the Red Flag. Ch Narasinga Rao, President of the state committee of CITU presided over the rally, which was addressed by Manik Sarkar, Chief Minister of Tripura, Hemalata, Secretary, CITU, Veeraiah, General Secretary and MA Gaffoor, Vice President of the AP state committee of CITU. Greeting the gathering Manik Sarkar told that governments at the Centre or in the states led by bourgeois parties including Congress, BJP or others were pursuing the same economic policies, which benefited the exploiting classes. Left led governments in Tripura and West Bengal had implemented land reforms and were trying to pursue pro worker and pro people policies within the present constraints. He told that the working class has a historic role in ending exploitation in the society and urged them to work for this through united struggles.

Hemalata told that the attacks on the workers have increased and criticised the UPA government for violating its own NCMP. She emphasised the need to counter the ideological offensive of imperialism and the pro globalisation lobby and explained the decisions of the CITU working committee meeting in Bhopal.

WR Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU inaugurated the conference on the 6th January. He dealt in detail the present political situation in the country and noted that this was an opportune time to intensify struggles and mobilise people for alternate economic policies to those dictated by the World Bank, IMF and other imperialist agencies.

A presidium consisting of Narasinga Rao, Roja, Krishnayya, Punyavati and Ramulu conducted the proceedings of the conference. Placing the General Secretary's report, Veeraiah noted that the CITU has expanded to 1007 mandals out of the total 1140 mandals in the state. It has formed committee in 676 of these mandals. 360 full timers were working for the CITU. The Centre has been strengthened and was in a position to plan activities for expansion. The report emphasised the need to concentrate in the unorganised sector and on the problems of the workers in their residential areas, at the same time not neglecting the organised and key sectors. The importance of cadre development was also stressed.

The conference had commission discussions on 5 topics – Membership and Expansion, Cadre Development, Work in Residential Areas, Working Class movement and Work on Social Issues and ideological Offensives Against the Working Class. 611 delegates participated in the different Commissions and 261 participated in the discussions on these subjects.

Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary, CITU greeted the conference on the 7th January. He emphasises the need to strengthen the organisation and effectively counter the ideological offensive against the working class movement. Appreciating the fact that many young cadres in the state were coming to work for the CITU as full timers, he stressed the importance of providing proper education and training for them. 58 delegates were participated in the discussions on the General Secretary's report after which it was unanimously adopted. A 202 member State Council, 101 member State Committee and a team of 22 office bearers were unanimously elected with Sudha Bhaskar as the President. Veeraiah was reelected as the General Secretary. Women members constituted 21% in the state council, 25% in the state committee and 14% in the office bearers.

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PERPETUAL TAX-EVASION — LICENSE FOR LOOT !

The Govt at the centre always laments over resource crunch when asked for more funds for the social sector projects; and then it jumps on to sell the profitable public sector with a vengeance at throw-away price. The trade unions opposing such move are advised to change their mindset. On the other hand, the big business lobby is being allowed to enjoy permanent impunity for perpetual tax-evasion. Under neoliberal framework, the big-business, both domestic and foreign are granted permanent license to loot the public and the public exchequer. As per statements made by the successive ministers of Finance in Parliament and replies to questions raised by the MPs, the amount of "tax outstanding on account of income tax, corporation tax, customs duty and central excise duty" has been practically increasing every year almost in geometric progression since 1998 crossing Rs 1 lakh crore as on date.

As per the response to a question raised in Parliament by Dipankar Mukherjee on 23rd December 2003, finally conveyed on 25th March 2004 by the Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance, the total recoverable outstanding on account of both direct and indirect taxes in 2002-03 fiscal had been Rs 86301.64 crore and in the same fiscal year the quantum recovered was only Rs 6520.27 crore , i.e., a mere 7.5 per cent of the total outstanding. In 2001-02 and 2002-03, the recovered amount as a percentage of total tax outstanding had been mere 7.9 and 5.5 per cent respectively. The phenomenon of extremely low recovery of unpaid tax arrears is prevalent in almost every major area of taxation. The year-wise details of income tax arrears and recovery made during the period 2001-04 presented before Parliament in response to a starred question no 366(August 2004), reveals that in all the three years the income tax arrears remained at Rs 80000 crore on the average and the recovery of arrears each year as a percentage of total arrear accumulation had been mere 5.4%, 7.5% and 6.3% in 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04 respectively. If the total figure of tax-outstanding (read deliberate default by the big business) every year and the amount recovered by the Govt are seen together, the rate of recovery is ranging between 5 per cent to 7 per cent on the average during 2000-01, 2001-02, 2002-03 and 2003-04. The trend of the current fiscal is almost the same, in view of the estimated tax outstanding of around Rs 1 lakh crore and the tax recovery of around Rs 3660 crore during April-October 2006. This exposed a clear pattern. The pattern is one of indulging the big-business lobby to enjoy deliberate tax default to the extent of around 93/95 per cent of total outstanding in a situation when the total outstanding has been steadily increasing every year. And this indulgent pattern is inbuilt in tax administration.

CITU has put forth concrete suggestion to Finance Minister in the recent pre-budget consultation held on 12th January 2006 for addressing the phenomenon of tax-evasion as under:

"In order to check the unabated increase in the tax arrears which is now nearing Rs 1 lakh crore, we reiterate that as in the case of common man using electricity, telephone, etc and also the case of income tax deducted at source from the salaried persons, the corporates, industrialists and other disputants in such cases, should also be compelled to prepay the tax as per claim/ assessment made by the concerned authorities, before raising dispute on assessment/claim. The defaulters have been taking recourse to raising of disputes on assessment as an easy route for evasion of tax-payment. That must be prevented."

But when indulgence to tax evasion by big business is being pursued as a operating policy of the financial managers of the country's governance, all suggestions from the people are destined to fall in deaf ears.

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