

ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
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To

All the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units

MAY DAY 2020

All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) extends warm and revolutionary greetings to all the insurance employees and the entire working class on the occasion of May Day. This May Day is being celebrated in the midst of the COVID-19 crisis. This May Day is also being celebrated in the 150th birth Anniversary year of Com. Lenin, who helped form the first ever socialist state of the world and gave new dimension and meaning to the struggles and life of the workers across the world.

The COVID-19 pandemic is both an economic and health crisis. Each day is witnessing soaring rate of infections and deaths across the globe. The economic crisis which is being compared to the crisis of great depression is playing havoc with life and livelihood of the working class. The ILO has warned that nearly half of the entire global workforce is in immediate danger of losing their livelihoods. Billions of dollars are being given to the rich and super rich in the name of Corona bailouts, but the poor are left in the lurch. The huge death toll in the advanced economies of the world due to COVID-19 has revealed the crumbling public health system and ugly face of capitalism where profits are placed above people.

The situation is no different in India. Around 32867 cases and 1069 deaths of corona are reported in India so far. The corona virus outbreak has worsened the already precarious position of the Indian economy. A recent ILO report cautions that around 40 crores people in India will be pushed to poverty. CMIE report says that unemployment rate which was 6.7% in March has surged to 23% in April. It is the workers and poor who suffer the most in these adverse conditions. The unplanned lockdown has created a crisis of gigantic proportions for the less fortunate migrant workers. Despite all claims of taking care of these workers, hunger is stalking the country. A large number of cases are reported of deaths due to hunger, exhaustion and deprivation as a consequence of unplanned lockdown.

The Governments should come to the rescue of these defenseless people. The States are in the frontline of the fight against this pandemic. The States which are starved of resources should be supported by the Central Government. Kerala has emerged as an example with the success achieved due to strong public health system, responsive government, decentralisation and participation of civil society. The Central Government must give up its obsession with fiscal fundamentalism and come out with a stimulus package that not only takes care of dignity of workers but also provide some relief to the medium and small enterprises. The public distribution system has to be widened to provide food to the poor. Cash incentives should be given to all vulnerable people. Rural Employment guarantee

scheme should be implemented earnestly and the number of work days should be doubled.

Unfortunately, the Modi government has utilised this crisis to attack the rights and benefits of the workers. The DA for government employees is frozen, additional NPS contribution is stopped, coercion is used for contribution to PM Care Fund and there are many attempts to change laws to the detriment of the working class. The soul of May Day, the heroic struggle to limit the working day to 8 hours is attacked with unimaginable ferocity. The Modi Government has increased the working day to 12 hours now in a most undemocratic and autocratic manner. Apart from these overt attempts at weakening the working-class movement, covert attempts are being made to disrupt the unity of the toiling people by using communalism as a political mobilisation strategy. Attempts are being made to give religious colour to the social and economic crisis created by the covid-19. Fake news is being propagated targeting certain communities and countries. The working class of India must take note of this and prepare to preserve the class unity.

The COVID19 induced crisis has brought the relevance of public sector back to the centre stage again. It is public health infrastructure that is saving the lives of millions today. Public health workers are in the frontline fighting the menace of the coronavirus. But we know that a government wedded to the ideology of neoliberalism will never realise this and will continue to weaken and dismantle public sector institutions. This has been more than manifest in the attacks directed against public sector insurance industry. It is heartening to note that when the entire economy is in dire straits, LIC and PSGI companies have performed admirably well. The LIC has clocked a growth rate of 25.17% in first year new business premium income and increased its market share by 1.19% in number of policies and by 2.5% in first year premium income. The four PSGI companies have reclaimed the top four positions in terms of market share. Let us resolve on this May Day to fight the attempts to weaken public sector insurance industry and work to strengthen these institutions in the interest of the country and her people.

Let's hope on this May Day that humanity will soon come out of the crisis of COVID-19. We shall make common cause with the toiling people, broaden our movement and strive to protect and strengthen public sector in general and public sector insurance industry in particular, safeguard the economic and political sovereignty of the country, strengthen our civilisational values of justice, equality, liberty and fraternity; and march ahead with conviction and courage.

With Revolutionary Greetings,

Comradely Yours

Shreekanth Mishra

General Secretary