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Parliament Street turns into an ocean of men and women raising powerful voices in all the languages of the land against injustices meted out to them by the neo-liberal regime



Maximum Government - Minimum Governance



One Nation - One Election

ब्रिक्स देशों का समूह



Why the Big Media Blacked Out Workers Mahapadav

Why India needs the Left



11TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SCZIEF REPORT ON PAGES 20 to 22



Singing Troupe



Flag hoisting by Com. K Venugopal Rao, President, of SCZIEF



Padmashri Ganesh Devy, inaugural address



Prof. Rajendra Udupa, Chairman, Reception Committee

Com. N M Sundaram, addressing the delegates

Com Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA

Com V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA



MAHAPADAV SIGNALS BEGINNING OF THE SEASON OF STRUGGLES

It was a massive show of strength by the working class of the country. The Parliament Street, the seat of power of the Indian State was taken over by the workers for three days from November 9-11, 2017. The Parliament Street was turned into an ocean of men and women raising powerful voices against injustices meted out to them by the neo-liberal regime. They came from every part of the country travelling thousands of miles undergoing huge difficulties at the call of ten central trade unions and hundreds of independent federations to register their powerful protest against policies that are ruining their life and harming the unity and sovereignty of the country. The organised rubbed shoulders with the unorganised; the Kashmiri workers joined hands with workers from Tamil Nadu; the Assamese workers raised slogans along with the Maharashtra workers. It was a splendid display of unity. Slogans criticising the anti-worker and anti-people policies of the government were raised in a

number of languages establishing the fact that India is a land of linguistic pluralism. Workers practicing different religions loudly proclaimed in unison; HUM EK HAIN. The huge gathering of workers brought the majesty and splendour of diversity and plurality of India in full display. The workers practicing different religions, speaking different languages, coming from different regions clearly understood through their lived experiences that all of them belong to the exploited class and have to unitedly fight their exploiters; the big Indian capitalists and the global finance capital and the State that is promoting the interest of these sections. The demand of the workers is simple; they want a decent life and working conditions for themselves.

Tens of thousands of workers both male and female gathered each day to back the 12 point charter of demands prepared by the Trade Unions. The demands raised were not only of concern to the workers but were relevant to the

Workers' Mahapadav

At the Barricades	4
Insurance Employees join 3 REASONS Why the Big Media Blacked Out	7
8	
Why India needs the Left - Prof. Prabhat Patnaik	10
One Nation-One Election The idea reeks of political expediency - TVNS Ravindranath	12

In This Issue

ब्रिक्स देशों का समूह - एन.के.पचौरी	15
Maximum Government -Minimum Governance - K.David	16
Insurance News-A M Khan Working Class Struggles-S.Sridhara Economic Tid-bits-J.Suresh For Our Field Force-Arivukkadal	

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entire society. It may not be far from truth to say that the assembly of workers presented an alternate model of development to neo-liberalism that has heaped miseries on the working class and the peasantry while further deepening the massive inequalities in the Indian society.

The Government did try to divide this unity of the workers through devious means but could not succeed. The government, which totally ignored the 12 point charter of demands of the trade unions during the last over two years, called a meeting on 3rd November 2017 sending a notice of less than 48 hours. It did not invite the INTUC, one of the major trade unions and a constituent of the joint movement. When the trade unions protested and refused to attend the meeting unless INTUC was also invited, the government called another meeting but on the same day when three other central trade unions were called to depose before the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour in Mumbai. After the trade unions again protested against the casual attitude of the Ministry of Labour, ultimately the meeting was fixed on the evening of 7th November. But the government had nothing to offer. The trade unions stuck to their program. The workers brushed aside all these machinations to confuse, divide and disrupt their unity and participated in the 'mahapadav' in large numbers.

Neo-liberalism is an ideology hostile to the working class and is a counter revolution through which the workers, peasants and the deprived sections are being robbed of the rights and gains secured by them through decades of struggles and sacrifices. Each of the workers who had assembled at Parliament Street had a story of deprivation, miseries and difficulties. Each of them said in no uncertain terms that it is no longer possible to live in such precarious conditions. They were convinced that their demand for a decent minimum wage, social security, ensuring food security through strengthening of Public distribution system and implementing the laws that give some protection to the workers were totally justified. They made it clear that the government's attempt of amendment the labour laws to favour the employers is unacceptable to them. The unprecedented three day dharna ended with the workers firmly resolving to carry forward and further intensify the struggle if the government remain indifferent to their genuine demands.

The Trade Unions have already drawn up a detailed program to intensify the struggle.

It came as no surprise that the corporate media ignored the unprecedented mobilisation and action of the working class. It was a deliberate attempt to downplay the protest. They fear that if the workers demands become the national agenda, it would hurt their interests. Today the media deliberately refuses to discuss the issues that impact the life and living of the vast majority of the population. They carry on uninterrupted discussions on issue that are irrelevant and most of the times divisive to divert the attention from the real issues and to promote communal and casteist polarisation. The independent press which is vital to defend and sustain democracy by questioning the policies of the government has by and large vanished from India. With the honourable exception of the few, most of the media houses have been acting as the agents of the government and the ruling party.

Let it be clear that the working class is not unduly worried about the indifference of the media. The power of the workers struggle, whether the media notices it or not, will influence the political and social development of the nation. It is this power of the struggle that has forced the BMS, the trade union from the Parivar call for protest against government policies on 17th November. The struggle against the neo-liberal economic policies will gather further strength with the peasants from across the country descending at Delhi on 20th November to register protest against the neglect of agriculture and their precarious living conditions and demand an equitable share in the nation's development and prosperity.

The insurance employees led by the AIIEA participated in the three day Mahapadav with great enthusiasm. They found that the entire working class is supportive of their struggle against privatisation and disinvestment in the public sector insurance industry. Participation in the Mahapadav was a great experience for the insurance employees and an opportunity to know the problems of the less privileged sections of the working class. The AIIEA is committed to the intensification of the struggle as decided jointly by the trade unions. AIIEA congratulates the Indian working class on the massive success of the three day Mahapadav and joins them in celebrating the beginning of the season of struggles. ●

महापड़ाव संघर्षों के मौसम की शुरुआत का संकेत है

यह देश के मजदूर वर्ग की ताकत का भारी प्रदर्शन था। संसद मार्ग जोकि भारतीय राज्य की शक्ति का केन्द्र है, 9 नवम्बर से 11 नवम्बर तक के तीन दिनों तक मजदूरों के द्वारा घेर लिया गया था। संसद मार्ग पुरुषों एवं महिलाओं के समुद्र में बदल गया था जो नव-उदारवादी शासन द्वारा उन पर किये गये अन्याय के विरुद्ध शक्तिशाली नारे लगा रहे थे। वे देश के हर भाग से आये थे। वे हजारों मील की बहुत मुश्किल यात्रा कर के दस केन्द्रीय ट्रेड-यूनियनों व स्वतन्त्र फेडरेशनों के आवाहन पर उन नीतियों के विरुद्ध अपना विरोध दर्ज कराने के लिये आये थे जिन्होंने उनके जीवन को तबाह कर दिया है तथा देश की एकता व संप्रभुता को नुकसान पहुंचा रही है। इसमें संगठित मजदूरों ने असंगठित मजदूरों के साथ कंधे से कंधा मिलाया, जम्मू और कश्मीर के मजदूरों ने तमिलनाडु के मजदूरों के साथ हाथ मिलाया तथा असम के मजदूरों ने महाराष्ट्र के मजदूरों के साथ नारे लगाये। यह एकता का अद्भुत नजारा था। सरकार की श्रमिक विरोधी व जन विरोधी नीतियों के विरुद्ध अनेक भाषाओं में नारे लगाये गये जो यह स्थापित करता है कि भारत भाषायी बहुलतावाद की भूमि है। विभिन्न धर्मों के लोगों ने एक होकर आवाज लगायी की कि हम सब एक हैं। मजदूरों की विशाल भीड़ ने भारत में विविधता की महिमा एवं गरिमा का पूर्ण प्रदर्शन किया। विभिन्न धर्मों को मानने वाले व विभिन्न भाषाएं बोलने वाले तथा अलग-अलग क्षेत्रों से आने वाले मजदूरों ने अपने जीवन के अनुभवों से यह स्पष्ट रूप से सीख लिया था कि वे सभी शोषित वर्ग के हैं तथा उन्हें एक होकर अपने शोषकों के खिलाफ लड़ना होगा; उन्हें लड़ना होगा बड़े भारतीय पूंजीपतियों व विश्विक वित्तीय पूंजी के खिलाफ तथा उस राज्य के खिलाफ जो इनके हितों को प्रोत्साहित कर रहा है। मजदूरों की मांग आसान है; वे एक अच्छा जीवन चाहते हैं तथा अपने लिये काम करने की अच्छी शर्त।

हजारों की संख्या में पुरुष एवं महिला दोनों ही तरह के मजदूर ट्रेड यूनियनों द्वारा तैयार किये गये 12 सूत्री मांग-पत्र के समर्थन में इकट्ठे होते रहे। जो मांगें उठाई गई थी उनसे केवल मजदूरों का ही वास्ता नहीं था, वरन वे पूरे समाज के लिये प्रासंगिक थीं। यह कहना सच होगा कि मजदूरों की इस सभा ने नव-उदारवादी विकास का एक वैकल्पिक नमूना पेश किया था जिन्होंने मजदूर वर्ग एवं किसानों पर अन्धा-धुन्ध परेशानियां थोप दी हैं तथा इससे भी आगे भारतीय समाज में गैर-बराबरी को भारी बढ़ावा दिया है।

सरकार ने कपटपूर्ण ढंग से इन मजदूरों की एकता को तोड़ने की कोशिश की परन्तु वह इस काम में असफल रही। सरकार जिसने कि पिछले दो वर्षों से 12 सूत्री

कार्यक्रम की उपेक्षा की थी, उसने अचानक 48 घंटे से भी कम समय की सूचना पर 3 नवम्बर को एक मीटिंग बुलाई। इस मीटिंग में उसने ऐनटियुसि को निमंत्रण नहीं भेजा जोकि संयुक्त कार्यक्रम की एक बड़ी यूनियन तथा एक महत्वपूर्ण घटक थी। जब ट्रेड-यूनियनों ने इसका विरोध किया तथा मीटिंग में भाग लेने से मना कर दिया तो सरकार ने एक अन्य मीटिंग उसी दिन बुलाई और तीन यूनियनों को संसद की स्थाई समिति के समक्ष गवाही देने के लिये कहा जो कि मुंबई में आयोजित हो रही थी। जब ट्रेड-यूनियनों ने श्रम मंत्रालय के इस आकस्मिक रूख का विरोध किया तब यह मीटिंग 7 नवम्बर के लिये तय की गई। लेकिन सरकार के पास देने के लिये कुछ भी नहीं था। ट्रेड-यूनियनें अपने कार्यक्रम पर अडिग रहीं। श्रमिकों ने उन्हें भ्रमित करने, बाँटने एवं उनकी एकता को नष्ट करने की सरकार की सभी चालों को नाकाम कर दिया तथा बड़ी संख्या में महापड़ाव में सम्मिलित हुए।

नव-उदारवाद एक ऐसी विचारधारा है जो मजदूर वर्ग के खिलाफ है तथा एक प्रति-क्रान्ति है जिसके द्वारा मजदूरों, किसानों और समाज के शोषित वर्गों को उन अधिकारों व लाभों से वंचित किया जाता है जो उन्होंने अपने संघर्षों व बलिदानों से पिछले दसियों वर्षों में प्राप्त किये हैं। हर मजदूर जो संसद मार्ग पर एकत्रित हुआ था उसके पास कठिनाईयों, परेशानियों व उत्पीड़न की अपनी कहानी थी। उनमें से प्रत्येक श्रमिक ने यह स्पष्ट रूप से कहा कि इस तरह की अनिश्चित परिस्थितियों में जीना अब संभव नहीं है। वे इस बात से मुतमर्दन थे कि अच्छे न्यूनतम वेतन, सामाजिक सुरक्षा, सार्वजनिक वितरण प्रणाली को मजबूत करके खाद्य सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित करने तथा श्रमिकों को सुरक्षा देने वाले कानूनों को लागू करने की मांगें पूर्ण रूप से न्यायोचित हैं। उन्होंने यह स्पष्ट कर दिया कि सरकार द्वारा श्रम कानूनों में परिवर्तन करके सेवायोजक का पक्ष लेना उन्हें स्वीकार नहीं है। तीन दिन का अभूतपूर्व धरना इस निश्चय के साथ समाप्त हुआ कि यदि सरकार उनकी उचित मांगों के प्रति उदासीन बनी रहती है तो इस संघर्ष को आगे बढ़ाया जायेगा और इसे और तेज किया जायेगा। संघर्ष को तेज करने के लिये ट्रेड-यूनियनों ने पहले ही एक विस्तृत कार्यक्रम तैयार कर लिया है।

इससे किसी को कोई आश्चर्य नहीं हुआ कि कोरपोरेट मीडिया ने इस अभूतपूर्व एकजुटता की और मजदूर वर्ग की इस कार्यवाही की उपेक्षा की। विरोध को कम करके दिखाने का यह उनका सोचा-समझा प्रयास था। उन्हें डर लगता है कि यदि मजदूरों की ये मांगें राष्ट्रीय कार्यक्रम बन जाती हैं तो इससे उनके हितों को चोट लगेगी। आजकल

मीडिया उन मुद्दों पर विचार-विमर्श करने से जानबूझकर मना करता है जो हमारी जनसंख्या के बड़े हिस्सों के जीवन और उनकी दशा को प्रभावित करते हैं; वे उन मुद्दों पर अन्तहीन बहस करते हैं जो प्रासंगिक नहीं हैं और जो ज्यादातर लोगों को विभाजित करते हैं ताकि लोगों का ध्यान असल मुद्दों से भटकाया जा सके और सांप्रदायिक व जातिवादी-ध्रुवीकरण को प्रोत्साहित किया जा सके। भारत से स्वतंत्र प्रेस गायब हो गई है जोकि सरकार की नीतियों पर सवाल उठा कर जनतन्त्र को बचाने व उसे जिंदा रखने के लिये आवश्यक है। कुछ माननीय अपवादों को छोड़कर ज्यादातर मीडिया घराने शासक दल और उसकी सरकार के एजेन्टों का काम कर रहे हैं। यह स्पष्ट हो जाना चाहिये कि मजदूर वर्ग मीडिया की इस उदासीनता से नाहक परेशान नहीं है। मजदूर वर्ग के संघर्षों की ताकत देश की राजनीतिक व सामाजिक विकास की नीतियों को प्रभावित करेगी भले ही मीडिया उनका संज्ञान ले अथवा नहीं। यह संघर्षों की यही ताकत है जिसने बी.एम.एस. जोकि परिवार की ही एक ट्रेड-यूनियन है, को सरकार की नीतियों के खिलाफ 17 नवम्बर को विरोध प्रदर्शन करने का आह्वान करने पर विवश कर दिया। नव-उदारवादी आर्थिक नीतियों के विरुद्ध संघर्षों में उस समय कुछ और ज्यादा जान पड़ेगी जब 20 नवम्बर को पूरे देश का कृषक समाज कृषि की उपेक्षा करने तथा अपने जीवन की अस्थिर दशा को सुधारने के लिये विरोध दर्ज कराने को दिल्ली की सड़कों पर उतरेगा तथा देश के विकास व समृद्धि में उचित हिस्से की मांग करेगा।

एएएइए के नेतृत्व में बीमा कर्मचारियों ने बहुत उत्साह के साथ महापड़ाव में भाग लिया है। उन्होंने यह देखा है कि संपूर्ण श्रमिक वर्ग बीमा उद्योग में सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के निजीकरण तथा विनिवेश के खिलाफ उनके संघर्ष का समर्थन करता है। महापड़ाव में सम्मिलित होना बीमा कर्मचारियों के लिये एक बहुत अच्छा अनुभव रहा है और उन्हें मजदूर वर्ग के कम सुविधा प्राप्त वर्गों की समस्याएँ समझने का भी अवसर प्राप्त हुआ है। एएएइए ट्रेड-यूनियनों द्वारा संयुक्त रूप से तय किये गए संघर्षों को तेज करने के लिये प्रतिबद्ध है। एएएइए मजदूर वर्ग को तीन दिन के महापड़ाव की भारी सफलता पर उन्हें बधाई देता है तथा संघर्षों के मौसम की शुरुआत का उत्सव मनाने में उनके साथ सम्मिलित होता है।

AT THE BARRICADES

The web news portal, *The Wire*, spoke to a few of the protestors who came to Delhi to participate in the Mahapadav, from various States. Excerpts from the interviews . The conversations have been translated from different languages into English.

(Interviews & images Courtesy: *Ajoy Ashirwad Mahaprashasta*, thewire.in,11/11/2017)

Shabana, Delhi

Both demonetisation and GST have wreaked havoc on my family. For more than ten years, my husband and I have made a living out of stitching clothes for companies. A contractor from our colony gets around 500 of us living in the Mustafabad area of Delhi work. We were paid Rs 150 every day and worked from our homes. The sewing machines were provided for by the companies.

I do not know what GST is, but ever since it has been implemented, all of us have stopped getting work. It has been almost three months that we haven't had any clothes to stitch. The contractor says that the companies have stopped work and unstitched clothes have stopped coming from the source. What can he do if the clothes do not come? It is not his fault.

My husband has been looking for daily wage work outside. But he too does not get any work for more than ten days in a month. As a result, there is hardly any ration in our houses. This is not my case alone. Everyone who was doing this kind of work in Mustafabad is going through similar trauma.





Now, some of the women in my colony have found some new work but it is really too little.

A new contractor has asked them to stitch leather bags and they get Rs 10 per bag. In one day, no one can make more than five or six bags, which means that your income is always less than Rs 100. How will we survive with such little money? But it is still better than no work at all.



Shibashankar Bandopadhyaya, LIC agent from Chinsurah, West Bengal.

While the Manmohan Singh government had initiated the process of destroying the Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), Modi has catalysed it. LIC's own shares are being sold off and the government is looking for opportunities to sell its stake to foreign companies.

We are here to tell the government that LIC has played one of the biggest roles in the country's infrastructural development – be it highway construction, provision of water and electricity, phone services and so on, LIC's profits were used in it. Right from its beginning in 1956 under the second five-year plan, it has played such a crucial role.

We are here to remind the government that LIC was formed after India's first prime minister Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru acquired 244 private companies, which had a history of cheating their consumers, and built the LIC. Will it be wise to hand it over to profit-oriented corporates once again?

LIC started off with a budget of Rs 5 crore and now its value is Rs 28 lakh crore. If Modi gives momentum to the privatisation

drive we understand that it is only because of conspiracy to benefit the rich.

While demonetisation ruined so many people's livelihoods, the government has diverted people's attention from the Rs 8.5 lakh crore NPA burden on banks through it. We are here to ask why the debt-ridden corporates, which have destroyed our economy, are not being held accountable by the government. It is ready to ruin our livelihoods but not ask one question to the corporates.

Similarly, GST has completely destroyed our lives. Insurance policyholders, across the country, are protesting after service tax of 3.75% to 4.05%. In single premium policies, the consumers will now have to pay an additional 1.8%. GST in insurance is very damaging for the sector and the change in rates was imposed without even discussing it with the stakeholders, all to benefit the big corporates.

Lakshmaniya Devi, Bihar

I and many of my friends have come from Nalanda, Bihar. All of us cook mid-day meals in government schools. We get Rs 1,250 as salary. We work for 12 months but our salaries come only for ten months. Our contractor says we are entitled to wages for only ten months.

During *notebandi* (demonetisation), we faced a lot of trouble. Our contractors did not give timely rations for us to cook and children blamed us. I do not know what GST is; we are illiterate. But I know for a fact that the contractor has reduced mid-day meals' groceries in the last two months. He says things have become expensive.

Earlier he used to get eggs and some fruits but all of it has stopped. When we tell him that children are complaining, he shouts at us; he says that if children do not eat, why should we bother.

Shatrughan Kumar, Uttar Pradesh

GST has broken our backs. I left my village in Bihar to work in a small textile factory in Ghaziabad around five years ago. The denim trousers, which are made in Gandhinagar, Gujarat, come to us and we wash them according to instructions to give them a





worn-out look. Prior to the implementation of GST, our salaries used to be between Rs 9,500-Rs 10,000. But in the last three months, our wages have been reduced to Rs 7,500.

I hardly save any money after paying Rs 1500 as the rent for my room, where my whole family stays. This rent is excluding the electricity bill. My children do not go to school anymore. Where there is no money to properly eat, how will I send my children to school? Back in my village, my relatives, who were dependent on my income, have started to think that I have become snobbish because I did not send them any money in the last three months. The fact is I do not save enough. The factory owner says that until the time GST is implemented properly – he says it may take another three months – he wouldn't be able to give me my full salary. But at least, I still retain my job. There are so many here who lost their jobs.

Like me, around 750 workers are suffering because of this. After demonetisation, too, we had to similarly suffer. The owner did not cut our salaries but asked us to give us our bank accounts to electronically transfer our salaries as he could not pay us in cash. Most of us had our accounts in our respective villages, it was of no use to us. We couldn't have withdrawn our salaries anyway. Then, we got cheques for one month but could not withdraw as the banks too did not have any money that time. For three months, we had to live off debts and mercies of some kind-hearted people. I am still repaying the debt that I incurred after demonetisation.

My situation is very bad but as far as I understand from media reports, GST is for the greater good of the country. Modi ji has brought it to boost our economy. So, I support it. If after these few months of suffering we manage to get permanent jobs because of GST, it will all work out well in the end.

Sarvan Kumar, Haryana

I am here to demand that minimum wages of daily wage workers should be increased. I am a construction worker but struggle to earn more than Rs 200 per day. The government should increase it to at least Rs 700. At least this much has become essential if you have a

family which is dependent on your earnings. Construction work has taken a huge beating because of demonetisation. We have nowhere to go. Our second option, the brick kilns have also shut shop after *notebandi*.

Most of us struggle to get more than ten days of work in a month. My wife and children ask me where is the money. I do not have an answer.



Sarvan Kumar (right).

It has led to fights in my family. The contractor says there is no work and he has also been struggling to make his ends meet in the last one year.

Previously, we could get some agricultural work in the farms. But the farmers are too broke these days. There is hardly any profit for them in farming.

Hemalata, Kerala

I am an *anganwadi* worker. Around 5,000 *anganwadi* workers have come from Kerala for the *dharna*. Currently, we receive Rs 10,000 of which the state government gives us Rs 7,000 while the central government gives us Rs 3,000 separately. We demand that our salary be increased to Rs 18,000 and that we receive the entire amount cumulatively through the department and not in chunks.

We would like to be recognised as permanent government employees, with commensurate benefits like summer vacations, bonus etc.

Since the current Modi government has come to power, our benefits have been scrapped while no new budgetary allocation has been made. We hardly receive anything from the Integrated Child Development Services Scheme (ICDS). Moreover, the new register system that it has implemented is proving to be quite detrimental to the well being of the employees. In Kerala, 11 registers have been put in place to monitor the ICDS and they are causing a lot of issues. It is our demand that the massive discrepancies in the current system be immediately addressed.





INSURANCE EMPLOYEES JOIN WORKERS' MAHAPADV

As per the call of Central Trade Unions, Independent Federations and Associations three days Mahapadav was organised before Parliament New Delhi by the working class of this country from November 9-11, 2017. The Mahapadav reiterated the declaration of National Joint Convention of the Workers held on 8.8.2017 at New Delhi calling upon the working class to prepare for the countrywide indefinite strike if the BJP government fails to take any positive measures on the 12 point charter of demands of the trade unions.

The working class showed its overwhelming and enthusiastic response to the unprecedented three days Mahapadav. The massive participation of the women workers including scheme workers, vendors, domestic workers, construction workers as well as large number of young workers was sparkling feature of the Mahapadav. It demonstrated their anger against the anti-worker, anti-people and anti-national policies of the BJP led government at the centre.

In response to the call of working class 500 insurance employees mainly from Northern Zone(NZIEA) and North Central Zone(NCZIEF) gathered near Jeevan Bharti building(LIC Northern Zonal Office) on 9.11.2017. For almost two hours insurance employees continued their demonstration against the anti-people and anti-worker policies of the BJP led central government. The anger and the enthusiasm shown by the insurance employees during this demonstration was visible in their heart-throbbing slogans. This demonstration drew the attention of the people moving in that area.

From Jeevan Bharti Building the demonstration converged into a rally which

was led by Com. V. Ramesh, General Secretary AIIEA; other leadership of AIIEA from Northern Zone(NZIEA), North Central Zone(NCZIEF); NZGIEU(General Insurance) and Pensioners' Association Delhi alongwith the President AIIPA. Before joining the Mahapadav, there was a strong demonstration by the comrades against the anti-people policies of the BJP government and to demand settlement of 12 points charter of the entire demands of the working class of the country. The next two days of the Mahapadav witnessed participation of the insurance employees from different States as part of the teams of those States.

At the conclusion of the Mahapadav on 11.11.2017 Central Trade Unions gave a call to the entire working class of the country to prepare for the prolonged agitation including strike. It also resolved that if government does not change its decisions the central trade unions will be forced to explore for the countrywide national indefinite strike. It was also decided to continue the following activities in the coming months:-

- ♦ **Complete joint district level conventions by the first week of January 2018**
- ♦ **District level 'Satyagraha' in the last week of January; the common date for all districts to be decided by the state level joint meeting of central trade unions and industrial federations**
- ♦ **Sectoral/ industry level joint strike whenever the government takes measures at privatisation**
- ♦ **Protest actions on the day of presentation of Union Budget if it contains anti worker measures**

Central Trade Unions will meet soon after presentation of the union budget to plan future course of action.



They came in the thousands. They came from all over India. They came to demand their rights. They were in Delhi for three days.

They were the workers of India, the mazdoors, the oppressed labour. Amongst them were hundreds of women, as vocal, as aware of their rights as the men. They came in protest against the anti-worker policies of the current government, to raise an united voice, to demand their rights.

They were blacked out by the big media. Not a word appeared on television channels, in the major newspapers, about this huge protest in the heart of the national capital. It was as if it did not happen where the media was concerned, redefining news in its desire to please the corporate and political bosses. Is this not news:

The workers come in the way of this corporate-political nexus. This is the first reason why the huge rally that continued for three days, with the workers drawn from all segments of life—industrial, agrarian, mining—giving an insight into the India that seems to have been factored out of the headlines of the corporate driven media. Both suspicious and fearful of the organised trade union movement, with the massive mobilisation by the Left parties in particular, adding to the rich and powerful paranoia.

Media houses and corporate houses worked to destroy the trade unions in newspapers through the 19980-1990's to ensure that the press workers and the working journalists were contained and controlled. Television ensured a crippling blow with contracts favouring the management replacing the daily wage board pay scales. And as the trade unions disappeared one by one in the newspaper industry, the management control over the workers intensified, with even editors now hired and fired at will with merit and capability hardly being the qualification.

Second, the workers are seen as anti-employers. Their demands thus increase the pressure on the business houses, and the governments that are resistant to conceding what the poor of India need and want. For instance on the last day Parliament street had turned into a sea of women asking for better wages, health and education care, all pretty low on the list of those who are in government and those who control government. Hence the media, that works under the employers, decided not to give space to over a lakh of workers and their demands. As pressure makes the 'employers' uncomfortable and thus it has become the duty of the owned and subservient media to ensure that comfort levels are not damaged.

.Wages was a major issue. No revision of wages, low wages, undue cut of wages, and various methods used to ensure that the workers do not get what is their due.

"Jo hamse takrayega, choor choor ho jayega" shouted the workers as their leaders told the handful of reporters who were there representing alternative media that the central employees felt cheated, betrayed, over the 7th Planning Commission. They spoke of how work had increased manifold, wages had not, as government jobs were not filled and vacancies



continued. There has been no wage revisions for instance of postal employees working in the rural areas, no confirmations, no revision. Trade union facilities are being withdrawn instead, and the government-corporate nexus is working in unison to marginalise the workers.

Those who own the newspapers too feel vulnerable against workers unity, and hence are at one with the nexus to black out the poor of India.

Three, workers are India's toiling masses from coal mines, to anganwadis, to landless labour. **They are not the consumer class**, and bring no direct benefit to the advertising and TRP linked revenues of the big media. Giving them even a passing mention is thus worthless, as it brings no money and instead for the reasons cited above actually cuts into the revenue with the workers demanding a fair slice of the growth pie. By giving them space the

big media does not want to justify or highlight their cause. Somehow the ostrich like approach has replaced conscientious and fair reportage, a belief that if the media ignores an event and buries its head in the sand, it will pass.

But as the workers said without hesitation, they have no respect left for the media. "Who cares whether they report or do not, your reporters are just bought by big money," a woman from ASHA said smiling through the apparent belligerence. There was not a single voice that spoke of the media with any level of regret saying instead, "why should we bother, you are not going to write about us here or in our work place, you are not interested but the people's voice cannot be stopped. A trade union leader pointed out, "we were here a few years ago, over a lakh of workers right outside Parliament but your media did not even notice us."



Concerned Citizens Group Urges Modi to Pay Attention to Workers' Demands

Over 50 well-known intellectuals, writers and artists have issued an open letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding that his government at the Centre intervenes to resolve their basic demands.

Text of Open Letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi:

We, the undersigned concerned citizens, strongly urge Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his government, to immediately pay attention to the demands raised by workers of the country represented by ten central trade unions and several all India federations of workers and employees. The workers have been agitating for several years for getting better wages and social security, for a universal PDS, for end to contract-work, for controlling price rise and for ending various policies hostile to people's interests like privatisation of public sector units, dilution of labour laws, etc. Living standards have fallen, joblessness and job insecurity has increased, and the country's self-reliance is threatened by your government's policies. Workers are the backbone of our economy and primary creators of wealth. Their continued neglect and marginalisation, even as big industrialists and foreign capital receive largesse from your government, is a betrayal of the public mandate given to you.

"Their continued neglect and marginalisation, even as big industrialists and foreign capital receive largesse from your government, is a betrayal of the public mandate given to you."



The signatories to this letter include:

Krishna Sobti, Writer, Bezwada Wilson, Safai Karmachari Andolan, S.P. Shukla, Retd. Secretary, Finance, Government of India, Githa Hariharan, Writer
K. Satchidanandan, Writer,
Achin Vanaik, Retd. Professor, DU,
Jayati Ghosh, Professor, JNU,
Rahul Roy, Filmmaker,
Satyajit Rath, Scientist
C.P. Chandrasekar, Professor, JNU,
Ayesha Kidwai, Professor, JNU and others.





Why India needs the Left

Prof. Prabhat Patnaik

Courtesy: The Wire, 14/11/2017

Since the Left in this country had its origins in the October Revolution, with the collapse of the Soviet Union doubts are often expressed about its future. Such discussions, however, invariably pose the question wrongly. The question is not whether the Left in this country has a future but whether this country has a future without the Left.

Neoliberal capitalism, which India in common with most other countries had adopted of late as its economic regime, has now reached a dead end. Not only is the economic crisis that began in 2008 persisting in metropolitan countries, but it has now even spread to countries like India and China which initially appeared immune to it. The only way that a new world boom can arise within the neoliberal regime, where state intervention in demand management through fiscal means is considered anathema, is through the formation of a new asset-price bubble. But such bubbles are not made to order; and even perchance if a bubble does get formed, its inevitable collapse would again bring world capitalism back to a crisis. A period of protracted stagnation in world capitalism, therefore, lies before us, which also entails a stagnation of the Indian economy. The Narendra Modi government's mindless interventions in the form of demonetisation or a Goods and Services Tax (whose most notable feature is heavier taxation of the informal sector) only compound this problem.

Even earlier, when the Indian economy was apparently growing at unprecedented rates, the petty production sector including

peasant agriculture was getting drastically squeezed, a consequence of which was the suicide of more than three lakh peasants over the past two decades. This was because the neoliberal regime entails not, as is commonly supposed, a withdrawal of the state from the economy as such and "leaving things to the market", but state support exclusively for the interests of globalised capital, with which the domestic corporate-financial oligarchy is closely integrated. It entails, therefore, state withdrawal from its earlier role of sustaining and defending petty production. Petty production under neoliberalism is left free to be "spontaneously" encroached upon by the capitalist sector, which unleashes upon it a process of what Karl Marx had called "primitive accumulation of capital", reminiscent of the colonial period that had been marked by a similar process.

The profitability of peasant agriculture drops sharply compared to the earlier *dirigiste* era, and the vicissitudes of world price fluctuations visit this sector freely, as its insulation from the world market, especially in the case of commercial crops, is ended. Distressed peasants start migrating in large numbers to the urban economy in search of jobs, but jobs are hard to find, owing to the limited growth of employment opportunities. Instead, they swell existing labour reserves that get manifested in a proliferation of casual employment, intermittent employment, disguised unemployment and "petty entrepreneurship" (a euphemism for disguised unemployment).

As a result, the distress of the peasants causes a more widespread distress of the

The question is not whether the Left in this country has a future but whether this country has a future without the Left. The country is trapped today in a cul-de-sac: a worsening economic crisis for which there is no answer within neoliberalism; the liberal bourgeois political formations, committed as they are to neoliberalism, cannot provide a way out of the cul-de-sac. The Left alone can, since it can provide an agenda transcending neoliberal capitalism...



working population as a whole, including even of the workers in the organised sector, since the bargaining strength of the trade unions decreases owing to the growing labour reserves.

Neoliberalism thus affects the petty production sector both on the supply side (since output gets adversely affected because of an income squeeze on producers) and on the demand side (since demand gets adversely affected owing to the income squeeze on the working population as a whole). In India, significantly, the per capita food grain *output* between 1990-91 and 2013-14 (both good crop years) has remained almost stagnant, suggesting a supply-side squeeze, while per capita food grain *availability* has declined by 4%, suggesting a squeeze on the purchasing power of the working population in general.

The extent of hunger in the country was recently highlighted by an IFPRI index that ranked India 100th in a list of 119 countries afflicted by hunger (which excludes the advanced countries). What is less known is that during these very years when hunger has stalked the country, India has been a significant net exporter of food grains to the world market, where such grains are used as feed grains for animals in rich countries.

Poverty in India is conceptually linked to a calorie norm: of 2,200 calories per person per day in rural India and 2,100 in urban India. The percentage of the rural population below 2,200 calories has increased from 58 in 1993-4 to 68 in 2011-12 (a good crop year); a similar result holds for urban India. All claims about a reduction in poverty during the period of neoliberalism, therefore, are without any foundation.

With the spread of the world crisis to India, the squeeze on the petty production sector has intensified. In the period between 2013-14 and 2016-17, which corresponds to the three years of Modi government, the per capita income of the agriculture-dependent population which is roughly half the country's total population, has not increased at all; indeed it has marginally declined. And this excludes the impact of demonetisation on agriculture, where it has pushed up the debt burden.

On the other side, as is well known, there has been a rapid increase in the share of income and wealth of the top 1% of the population. Indeed, their income share is higher today than at any time since 1922 (when the income tax was introduced).

The crisis has hurt not only the petty producers (global terms of trade between primary commodities and manufacturers are now moving against the former), but also the middle classes, many of whom had been beneficiaries of neoliberalism. The government's Labour Bureau data shows that "usual principal status" employment in the age group 15 years and above has actually declined in absolute terms by 37.4 lakhs between 2013-14 and 2015-16. Even the urban middle class now faces the grim prospect of unemployment.

It is this scenario, which is not confined to India alone, that has produced the current global upsurge of fascism. Nowhere as yet do we have the institution of a fascist state, but fascist elements are in power in many countries, including ours, wanting to usher in a fascist state. Such fascist elements exist normally as a fringe phenomenon in all bourgeois societies, but they come centre-stage in periods of crisis, when established bourgeois political formations are incapable of providing any solutions to the crisis and when working-class parties are too weakened and debilitated to fill the void; and they do so with the support of big business which uses them as a bulwark against any *potential* threat to its hegemony. Their agenda for resolving the crisis consists not of any concrete thought-out measures, but in projecting a "messianic" leader and ruthlessly subjugating the "other", usually some hapless minority group, which is made responsible for the crisis.

Of course, what we have today is not a replication of the fascism of the 1930s. It is also marked by country-specific characteristics. But it has the basic features of all fascism: the propagation of a "supremacism" ("white supremacism" in the West, "Hindu supremacism" here); an apotheosis of unreason (manifested in "supremacism" and the projection of a "messiah"); a grassroots movement (which distinguishes it from mere authoritarianism) and an alliance with big capital. (Modi's "achievement" in India consisted in effecting such an alliance between the RSS and Indian big capital).

There is, however, a major difference between the 1930s and now. The 1930s were a period of intense inter-imperialist rivalry, because of which, fascism, wherever it came to power, undertook large-scale military expenditure which actually got those economies out of the crisis. Japan in 1931 and Germany in

1933 overcame the Great Depression through militarisation, long before the liberal capitalist economies, which overcame the crisis only in the late 1930s, in the run-up to the war. But the world today is not marked by intense inter-imperialist rivalry since globalised capital does not want the world broken into rival “economic territories” that would impede its free global movement. Big capital in particular countries, while backing the fascists, therefore does not want any basic undermining of the neoliberal regime. This is clear in India from the Modi government’s total commitment, if anything, to a *super*-neoliberalism. This will not overcome any crisis.

The country is thus trapped today in a cul-de-sac: a worsening economic crisis for which there is no answer within neoliberalism; an attenuation of democracy that threatens people’s political rights; and, given Hindutva’s fundamental commitment to a communal agenda and the caste system, a social counter-revolution that would roll back whatever social achievements we have had over the last 100 years, conceptualised *inter alia* by the Karachi Congress resolution of 1931.

The liberal bourgeois political formations, committed as they are to neoliberalism, cannot provide a way out of this cul-de-sac. The Left alone can, since it can provide an agenda transcending neoliberal capitalism. It has to mobilise all the forces opposed to the fascists, for the defence of democratic rights and around a *minimal* programme of relief for the people. As contradictions arise in the process of implementing even such a minimal programme within the framework of a neoliberal regime, it can work progressively towards overcoming this framework itself through a set of changing political alliances.

I consider, apart from the restoration of democratic institutions and freedoms, the institution of a set of universal, justiciable, economic rights as the core of such a minimal programme. These would consist of the right to food, the right to employment, the right to free and quality healthcare (through a National Health Service), the right to free and quality education through government-run neighbourhood schools and the right to adequate old age pensions and disability benefits. These will not cost more than an additional 10% of our GDP but will go a long way in extricating us from our current predicament. The Left alone can take a lead in this direction. ●



The Election Commission has announced that it is ready to hold simultaneous elections to the Parliament and State Assemblies by the end of 2018. This is in response to the Prime Minister’s suggestion that such an idea will reduce the costs of holding elections and also helps better governance.

Holding simultaneous elections is not a new idea. India held its first four general elections in this way. The practice was changed in 1971 by Smt. Indira Gandhi. In 1995, then BJP President LK Advani tried to bring the idea back into prominence, saying that “delinking has not been good either for the health of democracy or that of the administration”. In 2010, he made another attempt by lauding the benefit of fixed term legislature.

Many arguments were advanced in the recent past in support of the proposal. Prime Minister Modi said “India’s voter is now very mature and able to take different decisions for Lok Sabha and Vidhan Sabha polls”. Holding these elections together, can “reduce expense, rid the country of black money and give us full five years to move the nation forward’.

A recent 36 page report from NITI Aayog bolsters the above arguments. The NITI Ayog report quotes the 79th report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee, which states that “Frequent elections lead to imposition of Model Code of Conduct over prolonged periods of time. Model Code of Conduct puts on hold the entire development programme and activities of the Union and State governments in the poll bound States. It even affects the normal governance. This often leads to Policy Paralysis and Governance deficit”. Thus, the report says, frequent elections adversely impact the development programmes and governance due to imposition of Model Code of Conduct by the Election Commission.

This analysis is not entirely true as it gives a wrong impression that the country is continuously and constantly on the election mode out of self will. And it attempts to throw the blame for sub-optimal governance and failure to carry out the developmental programmes on conduct of elections and the Model Code of Conduct. Elections are an inherent feature of a

One Nation-One Election

The idea reeks of political expediency



TVNS Ravindranath

democracy and the governments. Both Central and State, are supposed to plan the welfare and developmental programmes keeping the election schedules in view and not take alibi and shelter under the Model Code of Conduct.

Another area of major concern as stated by the report is the governmental expenditure for elections. It is illustrated through graphical data, how the election expenditure is increasing with each election. While the cost of expenditure for 2009 Lok Sabha elections is about Rs 1115/- crores, the expenditure tripled to about Rs 3870/- crores, by the 2014 Lok Sabha elections. And hence, the report feels that these expenditures could be controlled only by implementing simultaneous elections.

Elections incur expenditure and that is a small price to pay for democracy. Given the demographical situation of our country, it is simply not possible to hold elections to the Lok Sabha and State Assemblies in a single or double phase. Holding elections in so many phases some instances seven to eight phases will certainly lead to rise in the cost of expenditure. It may be noted here, interestingly, that the gradual increase in the election expenditure started from 1990's, the year of start of implementation of the neo-liberal policies in India. Election expenditure is a major issue. But, the more alarming concern should be the corporate funding of the political parties, which is pushing the expenditure to newer heights. The total expenditure of the political parties and individuals for the 2014 elections, according to some press reports, is over Rs 30000/- crores. There is no evidence or guarantee that this phenomenon will not exist even if simultaneous elections are held. So, it is this expenditure and corporate funding that should be the primary concern and not simultaneous elections.

The report made another important observation, that frequent elections perpetuate caste, religion and communal issues across the country. It quotes Dr SY Quarishi (former Chief

Election Commissioner) as saying "...elections are polarizing events which have accentuated Casteism, Communalism, Corruption and Crony Capitalism. If the country is perpetually on election mode, there is no respite from these evils. Holding simultaneous elections would certainly help in this context". But, apart from quoting this observation as a supportive to the proposal of simultaneous elections, the report fails to give any explanation with regard to how this can be achieved. Casteism, Communalism and Corruption are the major social evils the country is facing and these can only be eradicated through imparting proper education to people and a great deal of political will. Simply, changing the pattern of elections is not going to solve this issue.

Simultaneous elections may influence the voter behavior in a manner that voters would end up voting on national issues even for state elections. Effectively, this would lead to marginalization of Regional parties which often represent the interests of local social and economic groups. This may undermine the essence of Indian Democracy. A recent study published by IDFC Institute, after analyzing electoral data for four rounds of Lok Sabha elections- 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 concludes that "On average, there is a 77 % chance that the Indian voter will vote for the same party both for the State and Center when elections are held simultaneously." Meaning, in about 77 % of the total Assembly constituencies, the winners came from the same party as that of the Parliamentary Constituency. It is clear that simultaneous elections curb the voice of people living at the margins of the society by strangulating the scope for regional parties which reflect local aspirations/issues. This will reverse the process of deepening democracy and would harm the federal democratic structure of the Indian Polity.

It is simply not possible to synchronise elections, without breaking the fundamental parliamentary principle that governments can be brought down at any time. This tenet is what keeps parliamentary governments, accountable. By fixing the terms of elections, the country would end up with governments guaranteed to last their five-year term, without much in the name of accountability. Poor governance and corruption would only get worse.

It is simply not possible to synchronise elections, without breaking the fundamental parliamentary principle that governments can be brought down at any time. This tenet is what keeps parliamentary governments, accountable. Dr. BR Ambedkar's statement in Constituent Assembly, about picking between "responsible" versus "stable" governments, should be remembered here. He said having both was impossible. By fixing the terms of elections, the country would end up with governments guaranteed to last their five-year term, without much in the name of accountability. Poor governance and corruption would only get worse. Holding elections frequently should be our strength. It was weakened only due to the absence of a good system separating the Centre from States

A way around to this fundamental principle was suggested in the report. The report quotes the Election Commission recommendation, which says that "any no-confidence motion moved against the government in office should also necessarily include a further confidence motion in favour of a government to be headed by a named individual as the future Prime Minister and voting should take place for the two motions, together." The same recommendation holds good for State Assemblies also. But, given all the dirty tricks we have seen in bringing down governments, there is no guarantee that there would be any agreement. The people would end up with no government or a minority government. Another proposal is to copy a 2011 British Act, which requires a two-thirds majority to throw out a government. This is also undemocratic, and it would also worsen

the deal-making and corruption.

NITI Aayog is even trying to meet Modi's time-frame. The report quotes "Considering the importance and priority of this issue within the highest levels of the Government, it is suggested that this idea be first attempted along with the elections for

the 17th Lok Sabha which is expected to be constituted before June 2019". The report suggests simultaneous elections may be held in two-phases: Phase 1 to Synchronise with the Lok Sabha elections i.e. April-May 2019 (Lok Sabha and 14 State Assemblies) and Phase 2 mid-way in the term of Lok Sabha i.e. 30 months after Phase 1- around October-November 2021. Thereafter, it is envisaged to conduct elections every 2.5 years (30 months) in the country once the entire electoral cycles of Lok Sabha and all the State Assemblies are synchronized by December 2021. Needless to say, this entire exercise could be possible by extending or curtailing the present tenures of the State Assemblies, wherever necessary, through Constitutional Amendments.

Now, the question arises, why so much hurry? The bottom line is that there is something odd about an electioneering country trying to reduce the number of elections. Is there anything more important than the Country's Democracy? If each State elects its own government, and the Centre does not interfere, both governments would improve. In a recent public forum, the Prime Minister remarked "*If India is to meet the challenge of change, mere incremental progress is not enough. A metamorphosis is needed....My vision for India is **rapid transformation, not gradual evolution***". Metamorphosis! And Rapid transformation! Indeed. It is a well-known fact that the BJP has little value for the Constitution and is a strong advocate for two party system and Presidential Form of Democracy. Riding the current wave of success, it cannot wait to amend the constitution and drive the nation towards this direction.

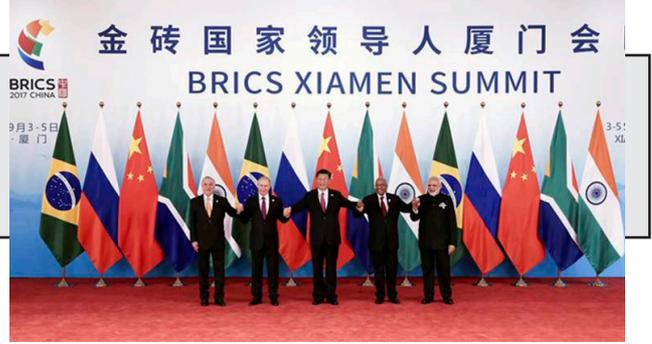
Such political expediency is not good for the country. Given India's Size and Diversity it was only natural that State issues, leaders and parties rose in prominence. This fact has become increasingly evident. In State after State, local accountability has been the people's most consistent demand. There is also the demand of the Left and Democratic forces of the country for conducting elections on "Preferential Voting Basis", by bringing about electoral reforms. This can only bring about transparency, safeguard and strengthen the Democracy in the Country. Diminishing the value of State election- which a clubbing with national parties and issues is bound to do- cannot be good for India's federalism.

(Writer is the Joint Secretary, ICEU, Hyderabad Division)



Courtesy: E.P.Unny, The Indian Express

ब्रिक्स देशों का समूह डालर के प्रभुत्व को समाप्त करने की क्षमता



The BRICS alliance comprising of 41% of world's population & 22% of global GDP has the potential to challenge the hegemony of USA & its Dollar.

एन.के.पचौरी

ब्रिक्स पांच देशों का समूह है जिसमें ब्राजील, रूस, इण्डिया, चीन व दक्षिण अफ्रीका शामिल है। यह समूह इसलिये महत्वपूर्ण है कि यह उभरती हुई अर्थव्यवस्थाओं के देशों का गठबन्धन है। इन देशों की आबादी लगभग 3.6 अरब है जो दुनिया की आबादी की 41 प्रतिशत है तथा इन देशों का कुल जी.डी.पी. 16.6 खरब अमरीकी डालर के बराबर है जो दुनिया के जी.डी.पी. का 22 प्रतिशत है। इन देशों का संयुक्त जी.डी.पी. (पी.पी.पी.) 38 खरब अमरीकी डालर के बराबर है। 2015 में इन देशों ने 3.9 प्रतिशत की आर्थिक वृद्धि दर्ज की थी जिसके कि 2016 में 4.6 प्रतिशत व 2017 में 5.3 प्रतिशत हो जाने की उम्मीद है।

इसका पहला शीर्ष सम्मेलन 2009 में हुआ था और तब दक्षिण अफ्रीका इसमें सम्मिलित नहीं था। तब उसका नाम ब्रिक्स था। सन् 2016 में दक्षिण अफ्रीका के शामिल हो जाने से इसका नाम ब्रिक्स हो गया है तथा इसमें अन्तिम 'एस' अक्षर साउथ अफ्रीका के लिये है। यह भी दिलचस्प है कि इस शब्द की रचना 2001 में गोलडमैन सॉक्स असैट मैनेजमेंट के अध्यक्ष ओ'नील ने अपनी पुस्तक 'बिल्डिंग बेटर ग्लोबल इकनोमिक ब्रिक्स' में की थी।

2006 में संयुक्त राष्ट्र संघ के एक सत्र के दौरान ब्राजील, रूस, चीन व इंडिया के विदेश मंत्रियों की बैठक हुई थी। इसका पहला सम्मेलन रूस में 2009 में आयोजित किया गया था। 2017 में इसका नौवां शीर्ष सम्मेलन चीन के शहर शियामैन में आयोजित किया गया। चीन में 2011 के बाद यह दूसरा सम्मेलन था। इससे पूर्व 2016 में भारत के गोवा में इस समूह का सम्मेलन हुआ था। 2017 में चीन के शियामैन में हुए सम्मेलन के कुछ निहितार्थ हैं जिनका उल्लेख करना हमारे पाठकों के लिये लाभदायक हो सकता है।

पहली बात तो यह है कि ये सभी देश जी-20 के सदस्य हैं और इसलिये विश्विक अर्थव्यवस्था एवं राजनीति को अच्छी तरह प्रभावित करने की स्थिति में हैं। दूसरी बात यह है कि इनमें से 4 देश जनसंख्या की दृष्टि से ऊपर के 10 देशों में आते हैं जबकि एक देश ऐसा है जो ऊपर के 25 देशों में आता है। चीन और भारत तो

दुनिया के सबसे बड़े देश हैं ही। तीसरी बात यह है कि इस समूह में भारत व चीन दोनों ही शामिल हैं जिससे उनके मध्य के विवाद पर भी प्रभाव पड़ता है। जैसा कि हमारे पाठक जानते होंगे, चीन व भारत के मध्य दोकलम में सीमा विवाद था और इस तरह की आशंका प्रकट की जा रही थी कि कहीं यह संकट युद्ध का रूप न ले ले। परन्तु ब्रिक्स देशों के समूह के शीर्ष सम्मेलन के अवसर पर 4 सितम्बर को मोदी एवं शी की बातचीत में इस मसले को शांतिपूर्वक सुलझा लिया गया तथा दोनों ही देशों की सेनाएँ आमने-सामने से हट गईं। शीर्ष सम्मेलन के पश्चात जारी संयुक्त घोषणा-पत्र में भी भारत के प्रधानमंत्री मोदी के कहने पर आतंकवाद का मुद्दा भी शामिल किया गया। इस प्रकार भारत व चीन के बीच विवादों पर एक शांतिपूर्ण समाधान निकालने की संभावनाएँ भी इस समूह में शामिल हैं। और सबसे बड़ी बात यह कि इस समूह में अमरीका के प्रभुत्व की चुनौती को स्वीकार करने तथा उसको तोड़ने की भी संभावनाएँ हैं। इस समूह के देशों के नेताओं के विचार हैं कि अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय आरक्षित मुद्रा के रूप में डालर को इस समूह द्वारा चुनौती दी जा सकती है तथा यह समूह डालर में प्रभुत्व को समाप्त कर सकता है। सभी सदस्य देशों के पास भारी मात्रा में अमरीकी डालर में विदेशी मुद्रा भंडार है और इसमें से कुछ डालरों को कम करना हर देश के लिये संभव है। यदि भारत व चीन के बीच विवाद समाप्त हो गया तो यह समूह आश्चर्यजनक काम कर सकता है क्योंकि चीन ने रूस के साथ सीमा विवाद पर हस्ताक्षर कर दिये हैं तथा उनके हित भी एक जैसे हैं। केवल भारत ही ऐसा देश है जिसका चीन के साथ अभी भी कुछ विवाद है। भारत, चीन व रूस के अतिरिक्त दो देशों ब्राजील व दक्षिण अफ्रीका की सीमाएँ मिलती नहीं हैं। इसके अलावा अफगानिस्तान, अर्जेंटीना, लेबनान, इंडोनेशिया, मैक्सिको एवं तुर्की ने ब्रिक्स देशों का पूर्णकालिक सदस्य बनने में खास दिलचस्पी दिखाई है जबकि मिस्र, ईराक, नाइजीरिया, सूडान, सीरिया तथा हाल ही में बंगलादेश तथा ग्रीस ने भी ब्रिक्स देशों के समूह में शामिल होने की इच्छा प्रकट की है। यदि यह संगठन बढ़ता है तो इसकी आवाज और भी अधिक प्रभावशाली हो

जायेगी और अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था व राजनीति को यह और भी अधिक प्रभावित करने की स्थिति में आ जायेगा।

वैसे ब्रिक्स देशों का सहयोग उदाहरण पेश करता नजर आ रहा है। हाँ, ऐसा लगता है कि सदस्य देशों की ज्यादा संख्या हो जाने पर आपस के मतभेद इस संगठन को प्रतिकूल रूप से प्रभावित कर सकते हैं। हेग में मार्च 2014 में परमाणु सुरक्षा समिति के दौरान मीटिंग में ब्रिक्स देशों के विदेश मंत्रियों ने जी-20 के पत्रकार सम्मेलन की आलोचना की थी और कहा था कि जी-20 सभी सदस्य देशों का सम्मेलन है और कोई भी देश एकतरफा तरीके से प्रेस बयान जारी नहीं कर सकता है। 2014 के क्रीमियाई संकट के समय भी यह कहा गया था कि प्रतिबन्ध व ताकत के बल पर इस समस्या का शांतिपूर्ण समाधान नहीं निकल सकता। यह उन्होंने आस्ट्रेलियन विदेश मंत्री के इस कथन के उत्तर में कहा था कि रूस के राष्ट्रपति पुतिन ब्रिक्सबेन में होने वाले जी-20 के सम्मेलन में शिरकत नहीं कर सकते हैं।

ब्रिक्स देशों के समूह की

आर्थिक संरचना: नया ब्रिक्स बैंक

ब्रिक्स विकास बैंक या नव विकास बैंक एक बहुआयामी बैंक है जिसे ब्रिक्स देशों द्वारा संचालित किया जाता है। इसका मुख्यालय चीन के शंघाई शहर में है जिसे वहाँ की व्यापारिक राजधानी का नाम दिया गया है। इसके अध्यक्ष भारत के के.वी. कामथ हैं जो इन्फोसिस के अध्यक्ष तथा भारत की सबसे बड़ी प्राइवेट बैंक आई.सी.आई.सी.आई. के गैर कार्यकारी अध्यक्ष रह चुके हैं। इसके अलावा इस बैंक का हर सदस्य देश में क्षेत्रीय कार्यालय हैं। इस बैंक का मुख्य ध्यान बुनियादी ढांचे के लिये ऋण प्रदान करने में है। इसके लिये 50 अरब अमरीकी डालर की पूंजी रखी गई है जिसमें कि प्रत्येक सदस्य देश का योगदान 10 अरब डालर का है। इस पूंजी को अन्ततः 100 अरब डालर तक पहुंचवाने का लक्ष्य रखा गया है। इसके अलावा ब्रिक्स कन्टिन्जेंट रिजर्व समझौता एक ऐसा ढांचा है जो विश्विक तरलता के दबाव से इन देशों को सुरक्षा प्रदान करता है। इसमें मुद्रा सम्बन्धी वे मुद्दे भी शामिल हैं जब किसी देश की राष्ट्रीय मुद्रा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय दबाव से प्रतिकूल रूप में प्रभावित होती है। स.आर.ए. को प्रायः अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मुद्रा कोष व विश्व बैंक के प्रतियोगी के तौर पर देखा जाता है और नये विकास बैंक के साथ यह बढ़ते हुए दक्षिण-दक्षिण सहयोग का उदाहरण है। इसे ब्रिक्स देशों द्वारा 2015 में स्थापित किया गया था। इसका कानूनी आधार ब्राजील में फर्टीलिया के सम्मेलन में तैयार किया गया था। सी.आर.ए. गर्वनिंग कोन्सिल और स्टैंडिंग कमेटी के उद्घाटन के साथ जुलाई 2015 के सम्मेलन से यह अस्तित्व में आ गया जबकि ब्रिक्स देशों द्वारा इसका अनुमोदन कर दिया गया था।

इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि ब्रिक्स देशों के गठबंधन में ही अमरीका व उसकी मुद्रा डालर के प्रभुत्व को समाप्त करने की क्षमता है। □

It is reported that the World Bank's ranking has placed India at the 100th place in respect of the 'Ease of Doing Business'. The government should be concerned about its recent decisions, which have in fact decimated businesses. Demonetization followed by an ill-conceived multi-layered GST was a double whammy for the informal sector. Jobs were lost, lives destroyed.



Image courtesy: Economic Times

Small and medium business enterprises, especially the informal sector ill-equipped to mobilize capital, did not have the capacity to pay GST upfront. The GSTN has been a nightmare for the transportation sector and small businesses. Such teething problems, as the government puts it, may be the death knell for some enterprises.

To unleash predatory taxmen and investigating agencies on ordinary businesses spreads terror and dampens the animal spirits this government wished to revive. Continuous decline in GDP growth for several consecutive quarters and the resultant prospect of the economy growing at only 6.7% for 2017-18 has derailed the India story.

The Disaster of Demonetization

Open corruption is brushed under the carpet. The biggest scam, waiting to be unearthed, is how institutional corruption led to conversion of black money into white with the banking system as a facilitator. Otherwise 99% of the cash economy relating to currency in Rs.500 and Rs.1,000 denominations could not have found itself legitimised by the banking system. No FIR yet and none will be registered. What is required to be investigated is how the money got converted. Which bankers were collaborating? Who were the high and mighty – businessmen, politicians and so on – involved? Who received commissions and to what extent? This will only surface if a criminal investigation is launched.

The Supreme Court's order directing the Centre to frame a scheme to establish special courts exclusively to try cases against politicians marks a milestone in the higher judiciary's continuing campaign to cleanse politics of the taint of crime. The court has handed down many rulings that make legislators and holders of public office accountable for corruption. In

MAXIMUM GOVERNMENT - MINIMUM GOVERNANCE

K.David

recent years, it has grappled with the disturbing phenomenon of criminals entering the electoral fray.

Corruption at all levels

The agreement for the purchase of Rafale fighter aircraft from France arrived at during the UPA tenure was to procure 126 aircraft at a cost of Rs.90,000 crore (approximately Rs.714 crore per aircraft) along with transfer of technology. NDA government's decision to scrap the earlier deal – terming it as “economically unviable” – and instead deciding to procure 36 such aircraft in fly-away condition at a much higher price of Rs.59,000 crore (approximately Rs.1,638 crore per aircraft) without technology transfer, gives this deal a rotten smell.

In BJP governed states the situation is no less murky. Vyapam is the poster boy of corruption in Madhya Pradesh with the manipulation of admissions into medical institutions allegedly involving who's who in government. That 50 people allegedly involved lost their lives is a scandal in itself.

CBI has proved to be a loyal ally of the establishment since students, parents and officials only are being prosecuted. The government in Chhattisgarh is allegedly tainted by the PDS scam, which too if properly investigated, is likely to make many heads roll.

India is important to the world for two reasons. First, as a multi-cultural and multi-ethnic democracy. Second, with 1.3 billion people it has enormous market potential. Great powers take more than they give. We have from all accounts given more and very little has come our way. The position of primacy that we enjoyed with our neighbours has waned.

Aadhaar and the Right to Privacy

The Supreme Court has cut straight to the heart of the issue in the Aadhaar petitions. On behalf of all Indian citizens, it asks the current government to address the most basic questions in a democracy governed by the law: what are the privacy rights of its citizens; and are they protected equally, with the same justice for the rich and the poor alike?

A Constitution Bench comprising nine

The Prime Minister's motto, 'minimum government, maximum governance' was to jettison the past and usher in a resurgent India of the future. But we have witnessed in the last 40 months, that is being turned on its head.

If minimum government means the government, instead of discharging its responsibilities will concentrate on polluting the polity by polarising India, then he is succeeding.

judges of the Supreme Court has recently held unanimously that privacy is a fundamental right of the citizen. This judgment is one of the most important constitutional verdict in India's post-Independence legal history. The Attorney-General on behalf of the government argued that the poor, whose welfare is at stake in the continuance of subsidy payments and other benefits, must be prepared to surrender their right of privacy, if any, in order to continue receiving benefits. This argument was sharply rejected by the bench, which recognises that the poor have the same rights as the rich, ad interim as well as permanently, in any democratic society.

Threats of suspension of bank accounts, where people save their hard-earned money, for non-compliance under Prevention of Money Laundering Rules add insult to injury, particularly considering that the Aadhaar Act 2016 has no provision making enrolment compulsory. No different is the insistence on Aadhaar to verify mobile connections.

Unique identification was originally sold to citizens as a way to efficiently deliver welfare benefits without duplication and pilferage by



Cartoon Courtesy: Gokul, Deccan Chronicle

intermediaries. In the last couple of years, however, it has grown into an all-encompassing Leviathan even as there has been little progress on welfare. On the one hand we have central and state governments conceiving uses for Aadhaar in everything from property to death registration, hailing ambulances to getting rations. The enthusiasm has rubbed off on the private sector too, with three year-olds requiring Aadhaar for nursery admissions and job opportunities tied to Aadhaar submission. The latest news is that the IRDA has instructed all insurance companies to arrange for linking Aadhaar and PAN with insurance policies and it is learnt that unless this is done, the claims will not be settled. It is to be noted that that the LIC alone has around 29 crore policy-holders. Another information is that the Railways will install Aadhaar-based biometric attendance system across its Zones and Divisions. Making biometrics a keystone to access so many essential services invades privacy, increase the potential for abuse, makes doing business difficult and ties up everyday activities in red tape.

The government's most basic obligation is to protect its citizens' rights — both their right to sustenance and their right to the privacy that enables freedom - equally. The ultimate resolution of this present controversy must recognise both the need to provide efficient and honest government services to citizens — and the need for stringent rules concerning access to and security of citizens' biometric data, in order to preserve their privacy.

Government's Failure in the area of Jobs

One of the major economic failures of the current government is in the area of jobs. It came to power promising jobs for 'inspirational India' in place of 'doles'. While 'doles' remain

largely in place, Labour Bureau data suggest even an absolute decline in formal sector jobs over the last three years instead of any significant rise. The backlog of 'surplus workers' that includes the underemployed in all sectors (as estimated in the India Employment Report 2016) exceeds 50 million workers-this does not include the women. One reason is the stringent labour laws which inhibit firing (and therefore hiring) labour. While the job crisis remains severe and potentially explosive in the socio-political sphere, surely there are possible ways of relieving it, but have not received adequate attention and the time-bomb of not enough jobs for our young people keeps ticking.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath cares less about children dying in Gorakhpur and more about Ayodhya and love jihad. A popular film actor recently suggested that people like Yogi Adityanath should be given awards just like the film stars for acting. Modi spends more time criticising the opposition than building India's future. In the last 40 months, Modi's attempts at governance have paralysed India.

The Prime Minister's motto, 'minimum government, maximum governance' was to jettison the past and usher in a resurgent India of the future. What we have witnessed in the last 40 months is that 'Minimum government, maximum governance' has been turned on its head by Modi. The Hindutva brigade spreads terror. The state is intolerant. Freedom of speech is in jeopardy. Central investigating agencies do government's bidding. If minimum government means government instead of discharging its responsibilities will concentrate on polluting the polity by polarising India, then Modi is succeeding.

Sources: Articles by Pranab Bardhan, Kapil Sibal, Eben Moglen, Mishi Choudhary and Editorials in *The Times of India* and *The Hindu*.

SAROJ BHAVAN OPENED AT CALICUT

The new office building of LIC Employees' Union, Kozhikode Division was inaugurated at Calicut on 06.08.2017 in a well attended function. In the presence of leaders of AIIEA, SZIEF and sister TUs Com. TP Ramakrishnan, Hon. Minister for Labour and Excise, Govt. of Kerala, declared Saroj Bhavan opened. Com. NM Sundaram, senior leader of our movement, garlanded the portrait of Saroj Chowdhary and Com.V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA inaugurated the Conference hall. Leaders present on the occasion included Com. M Girija (Joint Secretary, AIIEA), Com. M Kunhikrishnan, Com. T Senthil Kumar, Com. R Gopinath and Com S Sivasubramanian (President, General Secretary, Treasurer and Joint secretary





23rd Biennial Conference of Odisha State GIEA

The 23rd Biennial Conference of Odisha State General Insurance Employees' Association (OSGIEA) was held on 11th- 12th November 2017 in S.N.Memorial Hall, Cuttack. The inaugural session commenced with hoisting of AIIEA flag by com. K.C. Behera, President of the organisation. Inaugurating the conference Com. K.V.V.S.N.Raju, Vice-president, AIIEA informed the spectacular performance of Public Sector General Insurance Companies & also its contributions to the economy of the country since nationalisation. He criticised the present Govt. for its decision to disinvest profit making four PSGI companies and GIC RE. He was also critical of Govt. for not allowing the PSGI Companies to offer another option for pension to its employees. He urged upon employees of PSGI companies to be united & continue the struggle against the privatisation policy

respectively of SZIEF) and Com T Dasan (CITU Kerala State Committee). Presence of prominent Leaders of LICPA, ICEU/LICEU of various Divisonal Unions of Tamilnadu/ Kerala and Sister Trade Unions enriched the function. As a prelude to the programme Com. IK Biju, President, LICEU Kozhikode Division hoisted the red flag of the Union and Com. PP Krishnan, General secretary welcomed the gathering. Public Meeting in connection with the Office inauguration was held along with the open session of the 45th annual Conference of LICEU, Kozhikode Division which was held at Calicut on 6 and 7th August 2017.

of the Government.

Com. Surajit Das, General Secretary, EZGIEA speaking on the occasion said that the present situation for public sector insurance employees is very critical. On one hand we are fighting to defend PSGI Companies & on other we have to fight for a wage revision which has fallen due from 1st August 2017. The struggle for another option for pension is also going on. For all these we have to organise the organisation & carry forward the struggle to protect the industry as well as to achieve another good wage revision. Com. Dusmanta Das, Former President & Convenor, OSKEM, Com. Managovinda Barik, General Secretary, CDIEA & Convenor, Cuttack City Coordination Committee, Com. S.K.Dhal, General Secretary OSGIPA, Com. Bibek Sahu, leader of LIC Pensioners' Association also spoke in the inaugural session.

In the delegate session Com. M.R.Pattanayak , General Secretary presented the Biennial report & total of 21 delegates participated in the discussion. Com. Raju & Surajit also addressed the delegate session. Others who spoke included Com. Gajendranath Mohanty, Vice-president AIIPA and Com. Santosh Mohapatra, Jt. Secretary, CDIEA & an eminent columnist of Odisha State. The conference adopted 16 resolutions on industrial, national & state issues. The conference elected Com. K. C.Behera, M.R. Pattanayak & N. K.Bal as President, General Secretary & Treasurer respectively.

○

CONFRONT THE CHALLENGES WITH UNITY AND FEARLESSNESS

Consolidate Organisation through Political & Ideological Unity CLARION CALL OF 11TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF SCZIEF

The 11th General Conference of SCZIEF was successfully held at Udupi from 18-21 November 2017. The conference venue was named Com R Govindarajan Nagar in memory of the former Joint Secretary of AIIEA.

RALLY:

On 18th afternoon, an impressive rally was taken out from the LIC Divisional Office premises to the venue of the conference passing through the main streets of Udupi town. More than 1200 comrades including 450 women employees from all the 17 units of SCZIEF from the three states of Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana participated in the rally. There was a tableau depicting the need for communal harmony that attracted the attention of the general public. Enroute, the fraternal organisations CITU, BSNLEU, AIBEA and BEFI extended fraternal greetings. A cultural troupe attracted the people of Udupi by their traditional dance and drum beats through the rally.

Com. K Venugopal Rao, President of SCZIEF hoisted the flag of AIIEA amidst thunderous slogans reverberating the air. After paying homage to the martyrs, the comrades assembled in the auditorium for the inaugural session. The inaugural session commenced with brief introduction of the background of the conference by Com K.Venugopal Rao.

Com. Rajendra Udupa, Chairman of Reception Committee in his welcome address congratulated the insurance employees and AIIEA for carrying out relentless struggles to protect the public-sector insurance industry and also for protecting the economic sovereignty of the country. He cautioned that entire services sector including LIC is adopting higher technology and would resort to Artificial Intelligence making many existing jobs redundant. This situation requires proper understanding and correct struggle to defend the jobs in the industry.

Padmashri Ganesh Devy, President, Peoples'

Linguistic Survey and well-known literary critic inaugurated the conference. In his inspiring speech, he traced the history of insurance industry during the last two centuries and analysed the developments and growth of industry. He congratulated the insurance employees for making LIC one of the finest financial institutions of not only India but also the world. Analysing the situation prevailing today, he explained how the Hindutva forces with tacit support from State are attacking the freedom of expression and cultural plurality of the country. He explained how attempts are being made to silence the dissenting voices through physical violence and often by brutal killings. He pointed out that the Idea of India which is secular, inclusive and plural is under threat and asked the insurance employees to defend the democratic rights of the people by developing common struggles involving all working and progressive sections of people.

Com Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA said that though the present situation is extremely challenging and difficult, the times are also inspiring. He said that the three day Mahapadav participated by over 5 lakh workers representing every section of the working population has signalled the arrival of the season of struggles against neo-liberalism and communalism. He said that for three days from 9-11 November, the workers gloriously took over the seat of power of the Indian State, the Parliament Street. He dealt elaborately on the crisis of the Indian economy, its further aggravation due to demonetisation and unprepared implementation of GST and the growing unemployment in the country. He pointed out that the claims of the Modi government about the growth of the economy finds not reflection in the lives of the ordinary Indians. Growth without distributive justice has no meaning and it would only increase inequalities in the society. He said the struggles of the working class must include debate on alternate path of development. The Gujarat model today stands

REPORT:
J Suresh,
 Jt. Secretary, SCZIEF

in the world as well in our country and the issues pertaining to industry and the challenges before us. The report concluded with a hope that by imparting ideological understanding and by preserving the unity of the employees, it is possible for us to defeat the challenges of times.

There was a lively debate on the Report. 43 comrades including 8 women participated in the debate.

The debate was of a very high order. Difficult issues both political, economic and those relating to the industry were discussed with clarity and confidence enriching the Report. The Report was unanimously adopted after the General Secretary summed up the debate. The audited statements of accounts were also unanimously adopted.

The conference had the privilege to hear Com. N M Sundaram, the leader of our movement. He spoke in detail about the formative years of the Zonal Federation, the trials and tribulations it went through to emerge as the most vibrant and militant Zonal unit of AIIEA. He expressed concern over the growing communalism in the country and the attempts to divide the unity of the working people for partisan political gains. He made it clear that working class must understand and expose these nefarious designs. He called upon the employees to utilise every opportunity to campaign against the divisive politics and ensure that the right-wing politics does not succeed.

The leadership of the AIIEA made effective intervention in the debate. Com K Venu Gopal, Vice President of AIIEA made a brilliant analysis of the socio economic and political situation prevailing in the country and correlated the same to insurance industry and called upon the employees to stand united to defeat all the attempts to weaken the public-sector insurance industry.

Com V Ramesh, General Secretary gave the details of the issues that are clinched. He analysed the performance of LIC/GIC in a most difficult situation and called upon the employees to be ready for bitter struggles to achieve wage revision



Com. K Venugopal Rao, President of SCZIEF-INTRODUCTION

totally exposed and the achievements of Kerala in attaining high Human Development Index must be projected.

Com V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA in his address congratulated the insurance employees for their unrelenting struggles in protecting the public-sector insurance industry. He called upon the insurance employees to do their best to further strengthen the public sector LIC/GIC in the most hostile political environment and the stagnating economy. He informed the house about the efforts of AIIEA in resolving the pending issues lying with management and government. He called upon the employees to preserve the unity and be prepared for bigger struggles to achieve our objectives.

The conference was greeted by the fraternal organisations like CITU, AITUC, BEFI, LIC Class I officers Association, LIC All India Life Insurance Employees' Association, NFIFWI and LICAIOI apart from the Marketing Manager of Udupi DO. Com Clement Xavier Das, General Secretary placed the Homage in the beginning of the meeting and Com J Suresh, Joint Secretary proposed the vote of thanks. The choir of Udupi division rendered three wonderful revolutionary songs as a prelude to the inaugural session.

DELEGATE SESSION:

The report of the working committee was placed by Com Clement Das, General Secretary and the statement of accounts for the year ending 2015 and 2016 was placed by Com. Madhusudan, Treasurer. The report made a detailed and sharp analysis about the socio political and economic situation prevailing

and other issues. Com B S Ravi, Treasurer, Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, ECZIEA and Com. T Senthil Kumar, General Secretary, SZIEF addressed the conference to give valuable guidance and enthusiasm.

Com Amanullah Khan, President, AIEA in his inspiring address congratulated the delegates for a brilliant debate reflecting the unity and unanimity of the organisation in thought and action. He also explained that the Foreign Policy of India is getting a rightward shift and India is more willing to become a junior partner of USA and in the process India has shed the position as leader of Non-aligned movement. He also dealt on the conflict between India and China on border issue including Dokhlam in great detail and stressed on the need to resolve the issues peacefully by the two countries. He outlined the challenges before public sector LIC in various dimensions and called upon the cadres to understand the same in proper perspective so that the challenges can be met successfully. He laid great emphasis on strengthening the organisation and building the unity of the employees on the basis of a correct political and ideological understanding.

The conference passed 18 resolutions on various important issues confronting the Indian society, insurance industry and the working-class of this country. The conference unanimously decided to take all steps to intensify the campaign to defend and strengthen LIC. It is also decided to take all necessary steps to develop cadres and impart them ideological understanding so that the trade union loyalty can be converted into ideological commitment. It is also decided to hold protest demonstrations demanding immediate recruitment of Class III & IV in LIC and handover the resolution passed in this conference to the authorities.

SPECIAL ADDRESS:

As part of the conference, a special lecture on Idea of India was organised on 20th November. Prof. Syamal Chakraborti, West Bengal Science Forum spoke on the subject. He said that the great Indian civilisation had no Indian historian. The first written history of India was recorded by an Iranian Scholar Al-Biruni and thereafter by a British James Mill. He said that writing of James Mill is problematic as he divides the history into Hindu History, Islamic History and Modern History. He pointed out that this history is written to give credibility to the colonial conquest and exploitation by the British and

The Conference unanimously elected the following office-bearers for the ensuing term along with 65 members of working committee:

PRESIDENT:

COM. K VENUGOPAL RAO (Karimnagar)

VICE PRESIDENTS:

COM. MD. MAHBOOB (Hyderabad)

COM. S K GEETHA (Bangalore 1)

COM. P SATISH (Rajahmundry)

GENERAL SECRETARY:

COM. CLEMENT XAVIER DAS (Hyderabad)

JOINT SECRETARY:

COM. J SURESH (Mysore)

COM. K. JAYATEERTHA (Hyderabad)

COM. KISHOREKUMAR (Machilipatnam)

TREASURER:

COM. G. G.MADHUSUDAN RAO (Hyderabad)

ASST.TREASURER:

COM. RAJESH SINGH (Secunderabad)

therefore has to be discounted. But unfortunately utilising this distorted history, the Hindutva forces are spreading communal venom. He drew a distinction between patriotism and nationalism and criticised the suppression of dissent in the name of nationalism. He said India is rich because of its diversity and plurality and therefore it is the responsibility of every progressive person to defend democracy and secularism. He cautioned that the distinction between myth and history should be maintained and myths cannot be allowed to pass as history.

The Reception Committee organised cultural programmes. "Yakshagana" an art of Dakshina Kannada District of Karnataka was performed by our employees and a musical night was also organised. The Singing troupe of Udupi gave brilliant performance. The Conference was organised to perfection. The successful organisation of the conference in a place where the forces of right are making efforts to expand their footprints sent a clear message that the unity of the workers cannot be disrupted and the workers irrespective of language, religion, region and creed will stand united to fight neo-liberalism and divisive politics.

The Reception Committee gave a donation of Rs.1 lakh to Insurance Worker. The conference came to a successful end with vote of thanks by Com U.Gurudath, Secretary of the Reception Committee.

34th Conference of Chennai Region GIEA

The 34th Regional Conference of Chennai Region General Insurance Employees' Association was conducted in a most successful manner in Chennai on October 14, 2017. The significant aspects of the conference, apart from its proceedings, were the participation of a good number of newly recruited comrades, who had chosen to join the CHRGI EA recently and the naming of the venueto commemorate the most active and front-ranking leader of the organization, late Com.V. Suriyanarayanan. In all, around 100 comrades attended the conference, which was presided over by Com.N.Balakrishnan, President of the Association. Com.A.Ascar Hussain, Joint Secretary, welcomed the leaders and the gathering.

Inaugurating the conference, Com.K.Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF, referred to the all-round progress achieved by the four Public Sector General Insurance Companies with 50% market share in the midst of competition from 18 private players. He referred to the submission of the Charter of Demands and highlighted the paying capacity of the public sector companies. He stressed that apart from fighting for realisation of wage increase, the employees should launch struggles to protect the public sector institutions with high growth rate, in the context of the Government deciding to disinvest them. He spoke at length on the need to protect 'Economic Nationalism'.

Addressing the conference, Com.SanjayJha, Secretary, Standing Committee (General Insurance) of AIEEA, dealt with a score of issues starting from international situation to the urgent issues and problems facing the public sector general insurance institutions and the employees due to the anti-

worker and anti-people policies of the Government. On the national scenario, he said that whatever had been accomplished in the last 70 years since the country achieved independence had been lost in the last three years of rule by the Narendra Modi government. He highlighted the achievements of the public sector by quoting relevant statistics. He stressed that when more employment is generated the investments would go up. He also disclosed that when the disinvestment of New India is taken up by the government, the AIEEA would go on a strike action joining hands with sister trade unions to protect the public sector general insurance companies. He gave certain clarifications on promotions, another option for pension and bonus calculations and strongly pleaded for strengthening the organization so that the policies of the government could be defeated. Earlier, he launched a new Website of the CHRGI EA, (CHRGI EA.COM) which would be of enormous help in making the members and others aware of the day-to-day activities of the Association.

The Report presented by Com.M.Nagarajan, General Secretary, was comprehensive in nature and 9 comrades took part in the discussion, which was wound up with the summing up of Com M. Nagarajan. The Statement of Accounts presented before the house by Com.B.Pattabiraman, Treasurer as also a set of Resolutions moved by Com. D.Tamilmani, Vice-President, were adopted by the house. Comrades G.Anand, General Secretary, GIEA, South Zone, S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-I, Thanaselvam, President, ICEU, Chennai Division-II and R. Narasimhan, General Secretary, General Insurance Pensioners' Association, greeted the conference.

The conference unanimously elected

Comrades N.Balakrishnan, M.Nagarajan and B.Pattabiraman as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the next term.

At the end, Com.L.Kalyanasundaram, Vice-President, proposed a vote of thanks.



Diamond jubilee conference of Thiruvananthapuram Division



AIIEA leaders' comrades M Girija and M. Kunjikirishnan greeted the conference. SZIEF leaders comrades T. Senthilkumar, R. k Gopinath, M. Rajeev, P.P. Krishnan and comrades V. K. Ramesh, Sajeevan and Deepak viswanath, divisional leaders of kottayam. Ernakulum and Thrissur greeted the conference. Com S. S Potty, CITU leader and former vice president of AIIEA also greeted the conference.

The Diamond jubilee conference of Thiruvananthapuram division was held in Thiruvananthapuram on October 14 and 15, 2017. The two-day conference commenced with the flag hoisting by Com. Ganapathy krishnan, President of the union.

Com. M. Girija, Joint Secretary, AIIEA inaugurated the Council meeting. Com P. Raju, General secretary presented the report and comrade Harsha B Walsalom, the treasurer presented the accounts. In the discussion that followed 15 comrades including three women comrades participated. Com.M. Kunjikirishnan, vice president, AIIEA, T. Senthilkumar, General secretary, SZIEF, P.P. Krishnan, joint secretary, SZIEF participated and provided valuable suggestions to the General council.

The open session held on 15th morning was inaugurated by Com. V. Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA. He appreciated the efforts of women's subcommittee of Trivandrum unit in donating ambulance and chairs to the kottarakkara Taluk Hospital. The disinvestment of public sector units is increasing. Our challenge is to protect our institution in the public sector itself. We should also take up the issues of common man and align with their problems so that we must become part of the society. The

He spoke in detail about the history of Trivandrum unit of AIIEA mentioning the split, emergency period and other developments which hindered the growth of organization. Now the organization has reached new heights with the membership reaching 84%. The branch units who have achieved the targets (10000 and more) in the GST campaign particularly karunagapally unit, Attingal unit, Kollam Unit -I, Neyyattinkara unit, Kottarakkara unit and Divisional base unit were honored on the occasion.

Resolutions against GIC disinvestment, communalism and protecting the LDF Government against destabilizing by the communal and reactionary forces were passed.

The new office bearers elected were-N. Ganapathy Krishnan, President, V. S. Madhu, General secretary and K. K. Sujatha, Treasurer.





Conference of ICEU, Chennai Division II

The 24th General Conference of ICEU Chennai Division -2, was held on 28th and 29th October 2017 at parry's corner which was named after our veteran leader Com.R.Govindarajan.

The Conference commenced with Flag hoisting by Com M.Dhanaselvam, President. The Exhibition which contained the photos of various events by ICEU Chennai Division -2 was inaugurated by Com M.Dhanraj, Honorary Member, ICEU Chennai Division -2.

The 24th General Conference was presided over by Com M.Dhanaselvam. Com K.Manoharan, Gen. Secretary, ICEU Chennai Division -2 welcomed the gathering. The conference was inaugurated by Com M.Anbarasu, Gen.Secretary, TNGEA. In his inaugural speech, he pointed out as to how the Tamilnadu Govt Employees were inspired from the AIIEA struggles for social causes.

Com T.Senthil Kumar, General Secretary, SZIEF addressed the conference. Com S.Ramesh Kumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division I and Com Nagarajan, General Secretary, CRGIEA greeted the conference. More than 475 employees attended the inaugural session which came to a close with vote of thanks by Com T.V.Kumaramohan, Vice President, ICEU, Chennai II.

The Delegates Session began in the evening with the presentation of Report by the General Secretary. Com R.Sarvamangala, Jt.Secretary, SZIEF initiated the discussions. Twenty-two delegates including 7 women representing the base units participated in the debate to enrich the report. The Report was unanimously approved with the summing up of the debate by Com K.Manoharan. The audited statements of accounts were also approved unanimously.

Intervening in the debate Com. K. Swaminathan, Vice President, SZIEF gave a detailed picture of the present position. He expressed concern that the present Government at the centre is rewriting India's glorious history to suit its hindutva agenda.

22 Resolutions including a special resolution to protect the Kosasthalai river in North Chennai from encroachment were passed.

Com M.Dhanaselvam, Com K. Manoharan and Com R.Sindhuja were unanimously elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

In the cultural session Comrades from Cbo-12 & Cbo-18 sang a song about the plight of Farmers. A satire play on current political happenings written and directed by Com V.Anuja, Asst.Treasurer, ICEU Chennai Division -2 was enacted. Comrades of Cbo-12 acted brilliantly and received wide applause.



30th General Conference of Vellore Division



Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Vellore Division conducted its 30th General Conference at Arani, a branch centre on 1-2 October, 2017. The Conference was preceded by Two days "Public Sector Insurance Protection van jatha" in the Thiruvannamalai and Vellore districts on 26th and 27th September, 2017.

The conference had an emotional start with a colourful rally flagged off by Com C.Appasamy, District President, C.I.T.U. Thirty lady comrades holding high the red flags led the rally with other comrades marching with slogans which were mainly the demands of the people.

Com D.Manavalan, president, Vellore Division hoisted the flag amidst reverberating slogans. The painting exhibition containing the pictures of progressive leaders drawn beautifully by Com J.Suresh, president of the host unit Arani was inaugurated by Com R.Punniamurthy, Vice president, SZIEF.

The Conference venue was named as Comrades R.G, Lydia, C.V memorial hall in memory of the departed comrades. The inaugural session had a musical beginning with a choir rendered by the lady comrades of Vellore Centre conveying the message of unity and struggle. Com D.Manavalan, President presided over the conference. Com P.Kannan, Vice President, CITU and the chairman of the reception committee read out the welcome address.

Com G.Sugumaran, Tamilnadu State General Secretary, C.I.T.U inaugurated the conference and he explained the plight of working class in many sectors in the globalized scenario and the need to defeat the anti people policies of the central government. Com M.Girija, Joint Secretary, A.I.I.E.A in her special address, exposed the moves of the central government to weaken the public sector insurance industry and emphasised the need to synchronise with the struggle of common man.

Com T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF in

his special address narrated the issues concerning the insurance industry and called upon the members to continue the campaign and struggle to protect the nationalized insurance industry.

Com N.Krishnan, Class 1 officers association, Com C.Sivaraman, NFIFWI, Com J.K.N.Palani, LIAFI, Com T.Venkatasan, LICAOTI greeted the conference. Units who crossed the target in the signature campaign against GST, Comrades who retired after last conference, Sports persons who represented the division in all india and zonal units were felicitated. Children of our comrades who scored good marks in tenth and twelfth standard public examinations were given prizes. The inaugural session was attended by more than 375 comrades despite being held during a long holidays of four days. Inaugural session concluded with vote of thanks proposed by Com S.Raman, General Secretary.

Delegates Session commenced with Com S.Raman, General Secretary presenting the report followed by a constructive debate participated by 35 delegates including three women comrades. Com R.Punniamurthy, Vice President and Com V.Suresh, Joint Secretary of SZIEF intervened during the debate and guided the deliberations.

Com M.Girija, Joint Secretary, A.I.I.E.A and Com T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF in their special address during the delegates session clarified to some of the queries and insisted the need to focus on the development of the organization and the need to carry forward the movements. The report was unanimously adopted after the summing up by Com S.Raman, General Secretary. The accounts statement submitted by Com S.Gunaalan, Treasurer.

As a part of the conference, People Unity Cultural Festival was held at a public place on 01.10.2017. Saral Art Troupe rendered folk and progressive songs and the "Thappaattam" and "karagattam" folk dance forms of Tamilnadu attracted a large audience. Speech by Com Madurai Balan, a famous tamil writer on the unity of the country was well received by the public till the intervention of heavy downpour.

The Conference elected Com S.Palaniraj, S.Raman, L.Kumar as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Four lady comrades Com K.Meera as Vice President, Com P.Gangadevi and Com S.Jayashree as Joint Secretaries and Com M.A.Mangalagowri selvi as Assistant Treasurer were elected. Resolutions moved by the newly elected president Com S.Palaniraj, were also adopted unanimously.

The conference concluded with vote of thanks proposed by Com R.Kumaresan, Reception Committee Secretary and Secretary of the Arani Unit.

32nd Conference of Ernakulam Division

32nd Divisional Conference of LIC Employees Union, Ernakulam Division was held on 24th and 25th September 2017 at Ernakulam. Com.R.Preethy, President of LICEU unfurled the red flag amid thunderous slogans. Floral tributes were paid by leaders, guests and members to remember the sacrifices of our martyrs.

The General Conference on the opening day was inaugurated by Com.K.Chandran Pillai, All India Secretary, CITU. Com. Chandran Pillai commenced his inspiring speech, narrating the vexed political situation prevailing in our country. He criticized the Government which is aggressively implementing the anti people neo liberal policies with scant regard for the poor. The country is cruising through a phase of acute unemployment and job losses, which is affecting the economy as a whole. Implementation of Demonetisation has already ruined the economy. Faulty design and implementation of GST has resulted in an unprecedented increase of prices of all commodities. Informal sector and the small scale sector, which accounts for 40 per cent of GDP are the worst hit. He concluded his speech with an appeal to workers and general public to come forward for waging a struggle against the pro rich policies of the Government.

Com.T.Senthil Kumar, General Secretary, SZIEF, who addressed the gathering, reminded the claims of the proponents of neo liberal policies that its implementation will enhance employment and eradicate poverty. But after a long period of 25 years, the hapless poor in the country has become more poor and unemployment is increasing at an alarming rate. He also spoke on impending wage revision in LIC stating that our comrades should be prepared for

bitter struggles as the present day rulers are keeping an hostile attitude towards our demands.

Com.M.Rajeev, Vice President, SZIEF, Com.C.B.Venugopal, President, KSGIEU, Com.P.P.Krishnan, Joint Secretary, SZIEF, Com.S.S.Anil, General Secretary, BEFI, Com.Deepak Viswanath, General Secretary, LICEU, Thrissur Division, Com.P.C.Satheesh Kumar, Agents Organisation of India, and Com.P.Kunhikannan, General Secretary, LICPA also greeted the conference.

The inaugural session conference came to a close with vote of thanks by Com.E.S.Baburaj, Joint Secretary, LICEU, Ernakulam Division. Earlier, Com.P.B.Baburaj, General Secretary, LICEU Ernakulam Division, welcomed the leaders and participants. Around 300 comrades enthusiastically attended the conference, which was held after the successful conduct of the 24th AIIEA Conference at Ernakulam.

In the afternoon, Com.M.Rajeev, Vice President, SZIEF inaugurated the Delegates session. Com. Rajeev, in his address, stressed the need for unity among the employees and urged them not to be carried away by divisive and disruptive provocations. He also narrated the anti labour policies of the Modi Government and wanted the employees to continue the struggle against the privatization of Insurance Sector.

Com.P.B.Baburaj, General Secretary, placed the report before the house. On the second day of the conference, the discussion on the report was initiated by Com.T.J.Martin, Joint Secretary, LICEU. 16 delegates from various branch units took part in the discussion. The report and the audited accounts for the year 2016 were passed unanimously by the house.

Intervening in the debate, Com.M.Kunhikrishnan, President, SZIEF, dwelt at length on the charter of demand for wage revision and other present day employees issue like one more option for pension etc. Com.C.Raveendranathan, former Vice President of AIIEA also addressed the delegates and observers.

The General Council elected Com.R.Preethy, Com.P.B.Baburaj and Com.John Mathew as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

Com. K.K.Sajeewan, Joint Secretary, LICEU, Ernakulam Division, proposed vote of thanks.



43rd Conference of Visakhapatnam Division



The delegate session of the Annual General Conference of ICEU Visakhapatnam Division was held at Chodavaram on 8th October, 2017. The conference started with the **hoisting of the AIIEA flag by Com M Kameshwari, President, ICEU**, followed by the **inauguration of the photo exhibition**, highlighting the activities of the Division, by **Com BB Ganesh, Vice president, SCZIEF**. Tributes were paid at the martyr's column. The conference was **inaugurated by Com K Venugopala Rao, President, SCZIEF**. Inaugurating the conference, Com Venugopala Rao said that in the last 61 years, LIC has been contributing to the national economy. It is competing with 23 private companies in the last 17 years and has retained a market share of 71.07% in premium income and 76.09% in number of policies, settling claims over 99.92%. LIC stands as a brand name for security, and responsibility. It has contributed to the growth of the nation through the five-year plans to the extent of 14,23,055 crores. Similarly, the public sector General Insurance Companies are performing exceedingly well with a growth rate of over 28% for the year 2016-17 despite stiff competition from private companies as well as among themselves. The Government is now moving ahead with the disinvestment of the public sector General Insurance companies, though there is no requirement of capital by any of these public sector general insurance companies. The successive governments have pushed forward the privatization of public sector institutions like Air India, BHEL, Coal India, etc. and the working class has to unite and

fight against these privatization policies of the Government, he said.

Com Jayateertha, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF addressed the delegate session and spoke on the various issues resolved with the untiring efforts of AIIEA. Com BB Ganesh, Vice President, SCZIEF also addressed the delegate session.

As many as 25 delegates including 3 women comrades participated in the debate on the report placed by Com N Ramanachalam, General Secretary. Leaders from fraternal trade unions greeted the conference. The Conference unanimously elected Com M Kameshwari as President, Com N Ramanachalam as General Secretary and Com P Purnima as treasurer. Nearly 300 delegates and observers participated in the conference.

Open Session: The open session of the conference was held on 21.10.2017 at Divisional Office premises, Visakhapatnam. The open session was addressed by **Com V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA**, said that LIC tops the insurance companies with respect to the market share and paid a dividend of Rs.2260.70 crores as dividend to the Government. But today the Government is bent on dismantling the entire public sector. The BJP government had promised 2 crore jobs every year but today the country is witnessing job losses, thereby deepening the unemployment problem. Due to the anti-people policies of the government, the inequalities have risen. The top 1% own 58% wealth in the country. The demonetization move of the government has benefitted this top 1% while causing hardships to the workers and small businesses. The GST has witnessed large number of small and medium businesses close down or run into losses. The GST on essential products like food, clothing and medicine is burdening the common man. The AIIEA has given a call to campaign against GST on Insurance Premium and has submitted 44 lakh signatures to the finance minister, demanding immediate withdrawal of GST on Insurance premium, he said. AIIEA is committed to retaining LIC in the public Sector, he said and gave a call to unite with the working class of the country, as also



43th Annual Conference of IEU, Indore

The Annual General Convention of Indore Divisional Insurance Employees' Union was held on 4th & 5th November, 2017. The inaugural session commenced with welcome speech by divisional president, Shri Anil Surwade.

The conference was inaugurated by Com Mahapatra, General Secretary, CZIEA. He explained the political, economic & social situation in the country after demonetization & its impact on large section of the society belonging to deprived & unorganized sector. He listed the challenges facing our industry in the way of its growth. Disinvestment of capital of New India Insurance Company in the market by issuing public shares & imposition of GST on insurance premium have posed new challenges to protect and advance the interest of the industry.

More than 225 employees including pensioners participated in the open session.

The inaugural session ended with vote of thanks by Com.Sudha Pantane.

The delegates session commenced with the presentation of the Report of the activities of the organization by Com Ajit Kerker, General Secretary. 22 delegates took part in the discussions which lasted for over 7 hours. The lively debate was summed up by the General Secretary and the report was unanimously approved. Comrade Mahapatra addressed the delegates and spoke of the need to strengthen the organization to meet the enormous challenges confronting the insurance employees.

The Conference unanimously elected Com Anil Surwade, Com Ajit Kerker and Com Ashok Sisodiya as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

The conference came to a successful close amidst thunderous slogan after a vote of thanks by Com Anil Surwade.



to fight for the legitimate wage revision due in the Insurance industry.

The Sr DM Sri P Ramesh Babu, also hailed the efforts of AIIEA in protecting the LIC of India and also the contribution of the employees in the growth of LIC. Fraternal trade union leaders Com Chandrasekhar, NFIFWI, Com Bhagwan Prasad, LIC cl-1 association, Com V Venkata Rao, SC/ST welfare association, Com Tirumala Rao, LIAFI, Com A.Venu, LIC AOI, Com N Krishna Murty, ICREA, also greeted

the conference. Com Kameshwari, President, ICEU presided over the meeting. Com N Ramanachalam, General Secretary, introduced the new team of ICEU to the gathering.

Cultural Session. The cultural session started with a patriotic song sung by Comrades of CB-1 and CB-2. 8 Women comrades performed a folk dance Kolatam, the song for which was written by Com P Nagabhushanam, HGA, DO, Vizag and sung by 6 of our own comrades. The song hailed the efforts of AIIEA in the growth of LIC. Another folk art called Burra Katha was performed by women comrades, which was also composed by our comrade, on the schemes of the Modi Government. Shipyard unit comrades sang group song written and composed by a cl-1 officer. Rajam Base Unit performed a skit with 6 members on the present state of private jobs and the necessity of unionization. LIC employees' fine arts association comrades performed a comedy drama. The women comrades in particular have participated enthusiastically in the cultural events. The cultural events have helped motivating our comrades into organizational activities. The cultural events drew appreciation from officers, agents, Dos and all the employees. More than 550 people participated in the open session.



45TH CONFERENCE OF LICEU, KOZHIKODE

The 45th Annual conference of the LIC employees' Union kozhikode division was held at Kozhikode on 6th and 7th of August 2017. The open session of the Conference on 06.08.2017 coincided with the inauguration of the reconstructed office building of the union, 'SAROJ BHAVAN'. Com.T.P.Ramakrishnan, Minister for Labour and Excise, Government of Kerala, who earlier inaugurated Saroj Bhavan, in his inaugural address lauded the efforts of AIIEA in waging a prolonged struggle to defend the public sector insurance industry in particular and the democratic rights of the working class in general. He elaborated on the various pro people policies and schemes of the Left Democratic Front Government of Kerala and sought the support of all for achieving the goals set by the Government.

Com.V.Ramesh General Secretary, AIIEA inaugurated the open session of the Conference. He gave a detailed account of the present socio, economic and political situation of our country with an emphasis on the divisive politics of the ruling NDA Government and the Sangh Parivar affiliates. He also focussed on the background in which AIIEA has finalised the charter of demands and emphasised the need to strengthen our campaign and struggle to protect the public sector insurance industry.

Com.N.M.Sundaram addressed the gathering and all those present listened with rapt attention to his words. He was vocal on the attitude of the mainstream media and the NDA government towards the popular LDF government of Kerala which was elected to power by an overwhelming majority and strongly condemned the sinister move to topple it. Com.M.Kunhikrishnan, President, SZIEF, Com.M.Grija, Joint Secretary, AIIEA, Com.T Senthil Kumar, General Secretary, SZIEF, Com. A. Ajaya Kumar (NFIFWI), Com.M Muraleedharan (FSETO), Com.Abdul Nazar (Confederation of Central Govt. Employees), Com.KV Jayarajan (BSNLEU) Com.K Mohanan (BEFI), Com. Lekhadhan (LICAIOI), and Com.Sukumaran Punnassery (LICPA) offered felicitations. On behalf of Tamilnadu Divisions Com Thulaseedharan (Coimbatore) and Com Deepak Viswanath (Thrissur) greeted the Conference. The builders and engineering consultants of the newly

constructed Saroj Bhavan were honoured at the meeting. Leaders and members of LICPA and various sister trade unions attended in good number along with large number of employees from all Base Units. The cultural programme performed by members of LIC Employees' Union prior to the commencement of the inaugural function was well appreciated by the audience. Com.I.K.Biju, President, LIC Employees Union presided over the meeting in which Com. P.P.Krishnan General Secretary gave the welcome address and Com. M.J. Sreeram, Joint Secretary proposed the vote of thanks.

The General Council Meeting was inaugurated by Com. T Senthil Kumar on 06.08.2017, afternoon. Com.P.P.Krishnan presented the report and Com.M.Vinod treasurer presented the statements of accounts. 25 delegates participated in the discussions on the report and statement of accounts and both were adopted unanimously. Comrades V.Ramesh, M.KunhiKrishnan, M.Girija, S.Siva Subramaniam (Joint Secretary, SZIEF) and R K Gopinath (Treasurer, SZIEF) intervened in the debate and addressed the conference. Com. Mathew Syriac (General Secretary, DREU) and Com.V.R.Madhusudhanan (President, LIC Class 1 Officers Association, Kozhikode Division) greeted the Council. Fourteen resolutions were adopted by the conference.

The conference unanimously elected Coms I.K.Biju, P.P.Krishnan and M.Vinod as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

The meeting came to a close with the vote of thanks proposed by Com.K.Bahuleyan, Joint Secretary.



27TH CONFERENCE OF IEU RAICHUR

The 27th General Conference of IEU Raichur Division was held at Raichur on 15th October 2017. The conference began with the hoisting flag of AIIEA by Com. M Sharanagouda,, President, IEU Raichur amidst thunderous slogans against the ill conceived policies of the government.

Inaugurating the conference Com. K Venugopal Rao, President SCZIEF, spoke vividly on the present political situation prevailing in the country and how the policies of the government are acting against the interest of the common citizen. Recalling the promises made by the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi during 2014 Parliament elections on the issue of Price rise of essential commodities, black money, terrorism, against corruption. Now even after 3 1/2 years in power has totally forgotten all those promises and has failed to act in a direction which could have helped the people to improve their living standard. He also pointed out how GST is adversely impacting the industry and the policyholders. Questioning the motive behind the decision of the government to sell the shares of GIC Re. a profit making public sector General Insurance company having sufficient reserves fund and a healthy asset base which otherwise is in no need to sell its shares for expansion. Com. Venugopal Rao observed that having failed to recover lacs of crores of rupees that is due from big industrial houses and corporate giants in the form of taxes and loans, it is selling shares it holds in the profit making PSU's which are the proud assets of the nation only to fill its corpus. During the current financial year, the government wants to mobilise around 75,000 crores of rupees through this process, not for any developmental work but to meet the budgetary deficit.

The conference was greeted by Sri. T Raghuchandra, SDM, LIC Raichur, Com Mruthunjeshwar, Vice President, HDRGIEA, Com. Srinivas of AIRRBOA, Com P Nagarajappa of LIC class I Officers Federation, T G Vittal, of Insurance Pensioners Association, Raichur Division.

The delegate session was addressed by Com Maheboob, Vice-President SCZIEF. Congratulating the comrades of IEU Raichur Division for their active participation in the campaign unleashed by AIIEA against the attacks of the government to weaken our Industry. He cautioned the employees not to succumb to the false propaganda of the ruling classes which divide the working class in the name of caste, creed and religion.

The report of the Executive committee and the statement of accounts for the previous year were placed by Com M Ravi, General Secretary and Com Jamuna V S respectively. 13 delegates participated in the debate. With the reply given by Com M Ravi, General Secretary, the house adopted the report and well as the accounts unanimously.

Intervening in delegate session, Com J Suresh, Jt. Secretary, SCZIEF, gave a lucid picture of the latest developments in the Industry and of the pending issues. Today every section of the society across the country, excepting an elite few are on the struggle path against the government policies. We as the comrades of AIIEA cannot remain isolated and we have to play big role in the working class movement. On pending issues, Com Suresh, explained that issues related to five days week, one more option for pension and said the not conceding these issues show the hostility of government to LIC employees. He called upon the employees to campaign vigorously to protect LIC and GIC, to safe guard the interest of the policy holders, only through which the employees are protected.

The conference passed several resolutions on the issues related to Industry organisation, peasants working class etc. The conference also decided to implement all the calls of the higher tiers in all seriousness. A new team of office bearers for the ensuing term was elected unanimously with Com M Sharanagouda, Com. M Ravi, and Com. Jamuna V S, as President, General Secretary treasurer respectively. The conference came to close with vote of thanks from Com M Sharanagouda.

43rd Conference of the Vima Kamghar Sanghatana

The 43rd Biennial General Conference of the Sanghatana was held on Sunday, 8th October 2017 at Jeevan Prakash building, Nashik. In an enthusiastic atmosphere the meeting commenced with vociferous slogans, welcoming the chief guest Com Dharmraj Mahapatra General Secretary, Central Zone Insurance Employees' Association.

The conference was inaugurated by Com Mahapatra. He said that the government has decided to shut down the 20 public sector industries out of 76 & rest of the industries to be disinvested. Com Mahapatra strongly criticized the act of government to disinvest the General Insurance Corporation Re & sell out its shares in the market. He said that government is doing all these things for the benefit of private capital both Indian and foreign. He made it clear that there is serious threat to LIC OF INDIA. He stressed the need for bringing together the strength of youth, fighting working class & peasants of the nation to defeat the dirty conspiracy to privatize LIC. He urged upon all employees to remain vigilant & be ready for a bitter battle.

In presidential speech, Com Kantilal Tated spoke on "Demonetization - GST Implementation" & adverse effect thereof on economy in general & common man in particular. Criticizing the governments' decision of demonetization he said that during the period crores of man hours have gone in vain & our economy has received a major set back. He brought to the notice of the house



that government's move to merge the public sector banks & to bring down its capital to 25% is going to be a retrograde step. This will be the withdrawal of government's guarantee to the domestic saving consequently citizens' hard earned saving/deposits will be in danger.

In the delegate session the minutes of the last AGM & report of working committee for the period 2015-17 were presented by Com Mohan Deshpande G.S. & the meeting approved the same. Com. Ajay Dolas, Treasurer, Presented the Audited Accounts for the years 2015 & 2016 the same were unanimously adopted by the meeting.

The General Body Meeting elected Com Kantilal Tated as President, Com Mohan Deshpande as General Secretary and Com Ajay Dolas as Treasurer for the ensuing term. The meeting came to a close with vote of thanks by Com Priya Joshi, Jt. Secretary.

Com. Jaimin Desai felicitation

Com. Jaimin Desai, Vice President of WZIEA and President of the Surat Unit retired from the services of LIC following his attaining age of superannuation on 31st October 2017.

Com Jaimin joined LIC in 1980 and was inspired by the activities of AIIEA. He rose to become the General Secretary of SDIEU and later elected as its President. He worked for the organisation in different capacities including as the Vice-President of WZIEA. He was fortunate to get the guidance of stalwarts like Coms A.S.Deo, Kapil Purohit and K.M.Rami. He became an important leader of the trade union movement of Surat and is the Secretary of the City Trade Unions Council. He made significant

contribution to the growth and consolidation of AIIEA in Surat Division.

A Felicitation function was arranged on 5/11/2017 to honour Com Jaimin Desai. More than 400 insurance employees apart from the leaders of various fraternal organisations were present in the program. Com K.Venu Gopal, Vice-President AIIEA, The President and General Secretary of WZIEA and senior comrades like Com Kapil Purohit were present in the felicitation program. The presence of the large number of employees and galaxy of leaders showed the love and affection Com Jainmin commands. Insurance Worker wishes Com Jaimin Desai a happy, active and healthy retired life.

14th Women convention of Shimla Division

The 14th Women convention of NZIEA Shimla Division was held at Dharmashala on 29th October 2017. The Convention was inaugurated by Com Anupama Sachdev, Zonal Convenor of NZIEA Women Sub-Committee. In an inspiring speech, we dealt with the issues and problems of women, the adverse impact on women of the policies of the BJP Government at the Centre, attacks on public sector and threat to the insurance industry.

Com Ritu Aban, co-convenor of the Zonal Women Sub-Committee applauded the work being done at Shimla and the various activities being carried out by the sub-committee. She shared the experiences of the activities of the Ludhiana Division. She was also critical of the economic and social policies of the central government.

Com Deepa Sharma, Divisional Convenor presented the Report on which there was a lively

debate participated by 17 women comrades. Com Devi Dass, Divisional Secretary, NZIEA, Shimla summed up the Report. Thereafter the Report was unanimously approved.

The Convention unanimously elected Com Deepa Sharma as convenor and Coms Usha



Dutta, Arun Lata, Bhawana and Sarla Azad as co-convenors. The convention came to a close with vote of thanks by Com Surinder Singh. The convention which was jointly organised by Dharmshala, Kangra, Palampur and Nurpur units was widely participated.

10th CONFERENCE of L.I.C.P.A, SALEM

The 10th conference of LIC Pensioner's Association, Salem Division was held on 28-10-17. The conference was presided over by Com. E.D. Sugunapandian, Vice President of the Association.

The conference was inaugurated by Com. Guru Rao of the Coimbatore Division. In his speech, he traced the history of struggles waged by LIC employees to get the pension benefits and cautioned the members to be ever vigilant to protect the pension. Com. D Seshagiri, Secretary, submitted the annual report and Com. N. Manoharan presented the statement of accounts. Both were adopted unanimously by the house after discussion. The pensioners attaining age 80 were honored in the conference.

Com. A Kaliyaperumal, General Secretary, ICEU Salem Division and N Shanmugam, Secretary, Pensioners union of Postal Department greeted the conference. Resolutions on withdrawal of new pension scheme, pending issues of LIC pensioners and on protection of Salem steel plant were adopted unanimously. Around 50 pensioners attended the conference.

The conference unanimously elected Com E.D.Sugunapandian as President, Com. D. Seshagiri as Secretary and Com. B Natarajan as Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

The Conference came to an end with the vote of thanks by newly elected Joint secretary Com. R. Manohar.

Women's Convention of Bangalore I & II

The Womens' Convention of ICEU, Bangalore I & II was held on 11.11.2017. A large number of women employees both from the city and rural branches attended the program. A significant number of men comrades were also present to make the program a big success.

The convention started with two group songs sung by the teams from Bangalore I and II. Com. Josy Clara welcomed the gathering.

Smt. Hemalatha Mahishi, a leading advocate of Karnataka High Court, Writer & Social activist inaugurated the convention. She expressed happiness over the fact that a trade union is giving attention to organize the women employees and making efforts to know their issues and problems. She spoke about the progress made through enactment of laws to protect women and give them some rights. She pointed out that our constitution treats all citizens equally but the reality of life is something different. The Women in India are yet to be equal and go through various types of harassment. She said that the Parliament must enact the Women's Reservation Bill as a measure to empower women. But this would not be easy. It has to be struggled for. The women themselves have to organize and agitate for their rights.

The Report about the activities of the Women's Sub Committees was presented by Com V.Latha, Convenor, DO I. The Report also pointed out the grim economic, political and social situation in the country and of the steps required to meet the challenges of the present times. There was a lively debate in which six comrades participated. The discussion was summed up by Com Vijaya Kumari; Convenor, DO II. The Report was unanimously approved thereafter.

Intervening in the debate, Com Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA pointed out that the organization created this platform for the women members to discuss, debate and understand the problems of the women in the Indian Society. He said that through the Indian Constitution is one of the most progressive in the world, the constitutional scheme to give equality and gender justice still remains a distant dream. Quoting Engels, he said that women were slaves much before slavery came into existence with the origin of Family, Private property and State.



Even after 70 years of independence, it is a shame that India is one of the worst country for women to live in. The policies of the government in the recent period such as demonetization and introduction of GST have had great impact on the lives of the women who form majority of the workers in the informal sector. He asked the women comrades in LIC who are better placed to become the voice of the voiceless women in the struggle for a dignified life.

Com.H.R.Gayathri, Convenor, Women Coordination Committee, Karnataka and Com.S.K.Geetha, Vice-President, SCZIEF greeted the convention.

The Convention approved many resolutions including the demand for enactment of Women Reservation Bill which were proposed by Com Kathyayini and seconded by Com Yashoda.

The Convention elected new teams for the Women Sub-Committees for the two divisions with Com V.Latha and Vjayakumari as Convenors from Bangalore I and Bangalore II Divisions respectively. The convention came a successful close with resolve to carry forward the struggle to secure equality and gender justice.



Seminar on November Revolution & 31ST Birthday of Kolkata Suburban DIEA

The significance of hundred years of epoch-making November Revolution is being celebrated by the workers around the world on 7th November 2017. The day was also significant as Kolkata Suburban Division Insurance Employees' Association started its journey in the year 1987. All the Branch Units under our jurisdiction enthusiastically celebrated the 31st Birth Day of KSDIEA by hoisting flag of the Association and to commemorate the historical relevance of the day a Seminar was arranged this day. The subject of Seminar was: " AIIEA- In The light of Centenary of great November Revolution". The only speaker of the seminar was Com. Sreekant Mishra , joint secretary of AIIEA . As many as 250 employees, officers and pensioners participated in the seminar. Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, the General Secretary of EZIEA along with front line leaders of Kolkata Division also graced the occasion.

The programme started with hoisting flag of the Association by the President of the meeting Com Haridas Saha. The General secretary of KSDIEA welcomed the gathering and briefly addressed the audience on the significance of observing the day.

Com Sreekant said that Indian revolutionaries who were fighting for Indian freedom from the British yoke were inspired by the November Revolution of Russia in 1917. Before November Revolution there were many revolutions like French revolution etc. but the impact of the Russian revolution under the great leadership of Com Lenin was widespread and deep. This was first time in the history, the oppressed people achieved the power of their own which inspired the struggle against colonial rules in different part of world and helped achieve their freedom.

After formation of USSR within a span of ten years unemployment, illiteracy, exploitation was abolished forever. Women were given equal right and shared development and growth of the country. But in free India because of capitalist class in power, the economic development did not gather pace. In a newly born free country , India, required huge fund and technological assistance for its sovereign economic development and none but USSR stood

beside India. The Bhilai steel Plant, one of the finest public sectors of independent India was built by the technological and logistic support from USSR.

India was a backward country and required huge capital investment. Thus the Public Sector came into being to meet the much needed capital and year after year, the Public Sector with its unprecedented growth helped the governments to build self-reliant economy of the country. The present government of India, denying the historic role of Public Sector, decided to privatize profitable PSU's including banks and insurance, the life line of Indian sovereign economy and contemplated to earn 72,500 crore through disinvestment of shares of public Sector.

What we are observing today that this government has no faith in Indian democracy and seemed stepping towards fascism like Germany under the regime of Hitler. When Hitler was invited to form the government, he said that (God) had ordained him to become the Chancellor and his act was in history. Modiji, the apple of eye of the Indian capitalist while campaigning in Benaras for the parliament election of India in 2014 said that Mother Ganga had given him a call to fight election from Benaras. In 1933, Reichstag was burnt down by Hitler's party and the blame was given to the communists and a witch hunt began. Here in India, 'fire in Train at Godhra' witnessed a similar act.

In the centenary year of November Revolution, the workers, peasants and youth are on the road to Indian parliament demanding right to freedom of speech, minimum guaranteed wage, social security of unorganized labors etc. Thus we need to take our fight to the street as AIIEA never confined its activities within the four walls of insurance. The vision of AIIEA is so big and wide ranging. The philosophical aspect of the November revolution has always been a source of inspiration of AIIEA and we believe that 'it is a sin to lose faith in man'. He concluded with conviction that the future victory is ours.

The meeting ended with the vote of thanks given from the chair.

INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

General Insurance Corporation of India (Re) has registered over fivefold jump in net profit to Rs 1,419.11 crore for the quarter ended September 2017, as against Rs 252 crore in the year-ago quarter. The increase in profit is attributed to fewer claims, and higher premium collection from the agriculture segment. This jump in profit is despite a dip in the Gross premium to Rs 7,210 crore from Rs 10,177 crore in the same quarter last financial year. It has posted an underwriting profit of Rs 757.36 crore compared to underwriting loss of Rs 668.36 crore in the same period last financial year. For the first six months ended September 30, 2017, GIC Re has garnered gross premium of Rs 24,404 crore, compared to Rs 16,118 crore seen in six months ended September 30, 2016. The net worth of the company increased 17.5 per cent to Rs 18,549.92 crore as on September 2017 from Rs 15,786 crore as on September last year.

Taking shelter under Prevention of Money Laundering, IRDA has made linking Aadhaar with all insurance policies compulsory. IRDA says that this linking will avoid frauds.

Even as Indian equity markets are touching new highs on a weekly basis, the performance of newly-listed Indian insurance companies have not been satisfactory. As has been happening with the stocks of insurance companies which have been listed, the New India Assurance joined the earlier four other insurance companies. Shares of New India Assurance also dropped by around 10 percent below the IPO price when they made their debut in the market.

Return of "too big to fail"! Succumbing to multi-forked pressure by US Treasury department, Global Financial regulators have decided to ditch the "too big to fail" gauge for assessing the riskiness of insurers. This is a big win for companies such as American International Group and Prudential Financial Inc, the companies which had to be bailed out during the 2008 global economic crisis.

Out of a total of the 7847 cases filed in National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, 1255 (16% of the total cases) pertain to insurance sector standing at 2nd position in the list of top 10 sectors. Housing sector with 33% of the total cases stands First in the list.

Deputy Governor of Bank of England says that Brexit would devour a total of 75,000 jobs in banking and insurance sector. This estimate says that on day one itself, when Britain leaves the European Union in 2019, 10000 jobs in these sectors will vanish in thin air.

Much before completing second year of its operation, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojna (PMFBY), insurers are facing quite a many problems. Hence they are seeking more clarity. Mainly the clarifications are sought with regarding dispute resolution and implementing agency. Particularly, insurers are concerned about the dispute settlement mechanism with States. There are no clear guidelines as to what happens in case a dispute arises between an insurer and a state. This scheme is drawn by the Central Government and is responsible for the release of subsidy while the state governments are in-charge of floating tenders and crop cutting experiment (CCE). According to insurers in several states, CCEs were not properly conducted. While in some cases the experiments were not conducted on the date intimated to the insurers, in others the data presented by the states did not match the ground realities.

Insured losses from three big hurricanes in North America this year have cost the industry around \$100 billion. For Munich Re alone, the three hurricanes accounted for losses of 2.7 billion euros (\$3.13 billion) in the third quarter, leading to a quarterly net loss of 1.4 billion euros [\$1.6 billion] at the reinsurer. Swiss Re, the world's second largest reinsurer, has suffered almost half a billion dollars of losses in the first nine months of this year. For the industry overall the total insured market losses from the hurricanes and earthquakes will be around \$95 billion. Insurers and reinsurers around the globe are looking to raise rates after what looks set to be their most costly quarter on record.

The global Financial Stability Board says that replacing bank and insurance workers with machines risks creating a dependency on outside technology companies beyond the reach of regulators. Artificial Intelligence and machine learning refers to a technology that replaces traditional methods to assess the creditworthiness of customers, to crunch data, price insurance contracts and spot profitable trades across markets.

ECONOMIC TID BITS

- ◆ The members of US House of Representatives and Senate Armed Services has reached an agreement to pass \$ 700 billion National Defense Authorization Act, the annual defense spending bill, which is \$ 80 billion increase over the last year's spending on defense and roughly \$ 26 billion more than the budget requested by the President Donald Trump. This clearly indicates that US will intensify to expand its ongoing wars in the world and also to engage in far broader conflicts potentially involving North Korea, Iran, Russia and China. Amazon is expected to get \$ 53 billion order for supply of defense equipments. In 2016, Amazon accounted for 38.1% of all online retail sales, followed by eBay at 7.8%, Apple at 3.2% and Wal-Mart at 2.8%. Amazon's e-commerce sales are projected to grow by 32% this year, with market share of 43.5%. In their growth continues at the same rate, Amazon is expected to control 100% of online retail sales in 10 years.
- ◆ In spite of declining auto sales, the US automakers registered hefty profit figures during the current quarter. Ford led the way with profit of \$ 2 billion on \$ 36.5 billion net revenue. The results were 63% better than the same period last year. Fiat Chrysler earned \$ 1 billion net profit, up by 50% from last year. General Motors recorded a stronger-than-expected \$ 2.5 billion pre-tax profit in the third quarter. According to projections, US auto sales are set to decline by 4% this year.
- ◆ According to the Swiss Bank, UBS and Price Waterhouse Coopers (PwC) report, the total wealth of the world's billionaires shot up by 17% last year. The total billionaire's number increased by 10% to 1542 and their total wealth increased by \$ 1 trillion dollars hitting \$ 6 trillion, which is more, the GDP of either Germany or Japan. The growth rate of wealth of these billionaires was three times higher than the rate of growth of the global stock market during the last one year. Asia now has the more billionaires than the United States, including 318 in China, up by 67 since 2015. USA still has the largest number of billionaires with 563, including 25 new billionaires in 2016. Almost half of the wealth of the world's billionaires, \$ 2.8 trillion is concentrated in USA.
- ◆ The US Senate has passed a budget resolution slashing tax rates on Corporations and the wealthy, which would benefit them to the tune of \$ 1.5 trillion and result in reduced tax revenues for the Treasury. The resolution also calls for \$ 5 trillion worth of cuts in social spending. Medicaid would be cut by \$ 1 trillion, Medicare by \$ 473 billion. The remaining \$ 3.5 trillion in cuts would be on Food Stamps, Social Security's Supplemental Security Income and on Temporary Assistance for Needy families, known as Welfare. It is also expected that funding for the arts, medical research and science would be cut by billions of dollars.
- ◆ Haitian textile workers earn 365 gourdes a day, which is less than US \$ 6 a day. However, the government has decided to impose income tax on textile workers income too. More than 8 million Haitians have no access to electricity, the highest rate in the Caribbean. The 2017-18 budget which imposed fees, sparking protests, includes only \$ 249 million for public works and \$ 139 million for agriculture which is far less considering the devastation and damage caused by Hurricane Mathew, estimated at \$ 2.8 billion.
- ◆ The Coalition government in Netherlands has decided to introduce labour law reforms that will make it easier for firms to fire workers and also to appoint employees on contract basis, with a measly increase in minimum wages. The government is also planning to dismantle the Pension system by making individuals responsible for saving for their own savings by 2020. The government is also planning to impose higher tax bracket for workers while reducing the corporate tax from 25% to 21%. There is a proposal to reduce the health care benefit for workers as well.
- ◆ In India, the number of people who are hungry and undernourished has grown from 19.7 Crore in 2007 to 20 Crore in 2017. According to Global Hunger Index, prevalence of wasting (low weight for height) has increased from 20% in 2006-10 to 21% in 2012-16, i.e. 9.7 Crore children. According to Lancet Journal, 58% of all boys and 50% of all girls in India are underweight and 25% of world's hungry people in the world live in India.

■ J.SURESH, MYSORE

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLES

Pakistan: Punjab college professors and lecturers protest

Punjab Professors and Lecturers Association (PPLA) members at government colleges in Lahore and Bahawalpur launched a protest campaign on 6th November against restrictions on leave, teacher monitoring and in support for a pay-scale upgrade and timely promotions. Teachers wore black arm-bands during lectures. The Punjab government has banned teachers taking any casual leave except in case of a death of a close relative. Teachers are also monitored for their class attendance, punctuality, discipline and performances. The new measures impact over 19,000 teachers across 560 colleges in Punjab. The PPLA has demanded the Colleges Directorate of Public Instruction immediately withdraw its repressive actions.

Port pilot vessel workers in New South Wales strike

Crews manning pilot vessels at Port Botany in Sydney and Port Jackson, south of Sydney walked off the job for 24 hours on 8th November in a dispute over a proposed enterprise agreement (EA). The strike is the fourth in six weeks over the issue. The Australian Maritime Officers Union (AMOU) and Maritime Union of Australia (MUA) have been in negotiations with the Port Authority of New South Wales since February over the EA.

Nigeria's teachers, hospital workers and research staff protest jointly

Workers in Nigeria's educational union, the National Academic Staff Union (NASU), went on national strike on 14th November, alongside hospital staff organised in the Senior Staff Association of Teaching Hospitals and the Academic Staff Union of Research. The unions came out after a 15-day warning notice had elapsed and in the face of frustration over continued renegeing on agreements by the government over the last five years. NASU's academic workers are also demanding 12 months of unpaid wages and allowances and the implementation of retirement at age 65. The unions called off an 11-day strike in late September.

Bus workers strike in northwest England

On 13th November, bus drivers and engineers working for Arriva North West, which covers the greater Manchester area, along with staff at First Manchester based at the Rusholme depot, held a further one-day strike. They are members of the Unite and GMB unions. Staff in both disputes are seeking a pay rise to eliminate a pay differential that leaves them earning less than colleagues in neighbouring depots operated by the two companies. The 2,000 drivers and engineers working for Arriva North West

voted to hold weekly Monday strikes until the end of this month. They have now agreed to hold a further nine days of strikes in December, which will include two three-day blocks of strikes.

London school staff fight to defend pay and conditions

Staff at the Charlton Park Academy in southeast London held two one-day strikes, 14th and 16th November. The members of the GMB and the National Education Union are protesting the changes made to contracts for new staff at the school who receive a reduced sick pay rate as compared to existing staff. The school was made an academy in 2012. Staff have been taking intermittent strike action since July. A further strike had been planned for Thursday of this week but was called off by the union as they began talks with the trust Monday.

Greek metro staff continue protests

Staff working on the Athens metro system, the STASY, continued their programme of partial strikes to oppose the Syriza-led government's plans to privatise it. On 14th November, they carried out a 24-hour strike, which also impacted the Kifissia-Piraeus electric railway (ISAP). Intercity rail services were disrupted on 13th November when Hellenic Railways Organisation (OSE) workers held a three-hour strike between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. demanding improved working conditions and safety procedures.

Portuguese teachers on two-day walk-out

Teachers in Portugal, represented by the FENPROF union, began a two-week action on November 13. They undertook a partial strike by refusing to teach the first hour of the school day. This was reinforced on November 15, by an all-out 24-hour strike. They are protesting educational reforms to be outlined in an upcoming budget statement and also in favour of improved career prospects.

Protests across Brazil against labor law, pension reforms

Thousands of Brazilian workers, retirees and members of social organizations held protests November 11 in 24 of the nation's 26 state capitals and in Brasilia, the Federal District. The mobilizations, dubbed the "Day of Struggle Against Labor Reforms," were called by labor unions and social organizations to express opposition to a new labor law that went into effect that day. The labor law is extremely unpopular in Brazil, with 81 percent disapproving, according to a Vox Populi survey.

S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE

For our Field Force

LIC 24.2% Growth

The first-year premium of LIC grew by 24.2% to Rs 77,978 crore in April-October period, compared with a year-ago, data from IRDAI showed. The private sector saw income rise 13.6% to Rs 27,961 crore. Overall life insurance industry grew 21.2% to Rs 1.05 lakh crore.

No Ombudsmen

Positions of 16 of the 17 ombudsmen are vacant, according to the Office of the Executive Council of Insurers. New appointments have been delayed after the government changed rules. The number of outstanding complaints stood at 2,330 as of March. Majority of the complaints were regarding mis-selling, health and motor covers.

Banks must inform

The National Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission (NCDRC) has asked the State Bank of India (SBI) to adjust the 'personal accident policy benefits' on the loans taken by a man, who died during the policy period, after noting that the bank had failed to inform him about discontinuing the policy. Banks are bound to inform its customers through personal notice before discontinuing any insurance policy provided as a cover for loans granted, the apex consumer commission has said.

Unapproved hospitals

Getting treatment in a hospital not approved by the concerned insurance company does not become a ground for rejection of claims, according to the Madras High Court. The court ordered the Director of Pension to sanction the medical expense that were incurred by a deceased patient- a government employee for his treatment during his lifetime in an unapproved hospital.

ATH Machine

Max Bupa has introduced Any Time Health machines, which will let customers initiate their health assessment, choose the right health insurance plan for themselves, and walk away with the policy document all in three minutes. In the first phase, 20 ATH machines will be installed at partner banks' branches, across multiple cities.

BSE in Insurance

The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) and NASDAQ-listed Ebix have signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to develop an insurance distribution network in India. The two companies will be forming a joint venture (JV) through their subsidiaries, BSE Investments Limited and Ebix Fincorp Exchange, for sales and processing of insurance. The new venture called as BSE-Ebix intends to deploy an insurance distribution

exchange platform, that will allow distribution outlets, stock brokers, wealth management advisors and financial institutions etc to sell life and non-life products. The platform will cover the entire insurance cycle including customer relationship management, agency management, multi-quoting, underwriting, policy creation, claims filing and settlement, and back-end insurance policy administration.

More third party

General insurance companies collected Rs 26,523 crore under the third party motor segment in the last financial year while the premium collected under own damage was Rs 23,727 crore, according to the data published by IRDAI. Private sector insurance companies such as Cholamandalam MS General Insurance, Reliance General Insurance and Shriram General write more third party insurance than motor own damage.

Commission hiked

IRDAI has hiked the maximum commission payable to agents for two-wheeler motor insurance policies to 17.5% of the premium. So far, general insurance companies were allowed to pay a maximum of 15% as commission. The commission structure is applicable for comprehensive two-wheeler motor insurance policies.

No additional payouts

IRDAI had issued guidelines for Motor Insurance Service Provider (MISP) guidelines during August to recognize the role played by automotive dealers in distributing and servicing motor insurance policies. Now, IRDAI has emphasized again that, any fees, charges, infrastructure expenses, advertising expenses, documentation charges, legal fees, advisory fees, or any other payment by whatever name called except as specified in these guidelines should not be paid to the automotive dealers.

Aadhaar compulsory

IRDAI has recently announced that all the existing and new policies will have to be linked with Aadhaar. This procedure is a must for both life and general insurance policies such as travel, home, health and motor. The announcement was made referring to the Central Government's order dated on June 1, 2017, wherein it was notified to make Aadhaar and PAN/Form 60 mandatory for availing all financial services including insurance and also for linking the existing policies with the same.

ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

Response



I am a son of retired LIC pensioner. I regularly read the Insurance Worker. It is very educative and enlightening. The Editorial and the articles including the one on legendary Che shows remarkable team effort by the Editorial team. My best wishes to Team Insurance Worker.

Anand.G s/o Com.G. Gopalan
Pensioner LIC.

The editorial of November 2017 on Indian economy, clearly indicts the Modi government for its failure to create jobs, revive agriculture and nurse back banking system by attacking the big defaulters. A powerful movement is required to force the government to give up its pro rich policies that is the bed rock of neo-liberalism

P. Muthukumar
Vellore Division

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
January 2017	274	6254.30
February	274	6254.30
March	275	6277.12
April	277	6322.77
May	278	6345.60
June	280	6391.25
July	285	6505.38
August	285	6505.38
September	285	6505.38

Base1960=Base2001x22.8259

Felicitation to Com. Bhabendra Kumar Kalita

GDIEA organised a meeting on 11th Nov.2017 at Guwahati Divisional office premises to felicitate Com Bhabendra Kumar Kalita, vice president, GDIEA on his superannuation on 31st Oct 2017. The meeting was attended by a large number of employees representing all sections of the workforce in LIC as well as representatives of other fraternal organisations.

Com. Bhabendra Kumar Kalita led the Gauhati Division Insurance Employees' Association (GDIEA) as General Secretary for ten years. He has been playing vital role and made valuable contribution to strengthen the trade union movement in the North Eastern region.

A galaxy of leaders including Com. Satanjib Das President EZIEA, Com. Jayanta Mukherjee General Secretary, EZIEA and Leaders of JCTU, BEFI, SBISA, ASEBSMU, LICAO,NFPE, NFIFWI, LIC Class-I officer Federation, LIC Pensioner Association addressed the meeting and felicitated Com. Kalita. Employees from all base units were present in large numbers to express their gratitude for the services rendered by their



beloved leader Com. Bhabendra Kumar Kalita. Mrs Usha Kumari Kalita wife of Com. Bhabendra Kumar Kalita also graced the occasion. Com Maitreyee Misra President GDIEA presided over the meeting. Com Bhabendra Kumar Kalita shared his experiences of trade union movement and his journey with GDIEA and AIIEA.

The cultural troupe of GDIEA performed a chorus and Com Pitambar Rajbhandari General Secretary, GDIEA recorded the appreciation for the services rendered by Com Kalita. The meeting ended successfully with the audience committed to walk on the path shown by AIIEA and to defend the unity of the working class

DONATIONS

Com.Abdul Lateef, Kuzhithurai Br,Thirunelveli Div.	Rs.1000
Com. P.Satyavathi, Oriental Insurance, D.O., Tanaku	5000
Com. R.Geetha, DO, MADURAI	1000
Com.Grace Vellaiammal, D.O., Madurai	1000
Com. D.C. Dongre, Presudent,, NDLICENSEU, DO, Nagpur	1000
Com. Ashok Kumar, BR.-IV (16U), DO, Ludhiana Div.	500
Reception Committee, 11th Gen. Conference, SCZIEF	1,00,000

DONATIONS TO AIIEA

Com. G.Suryamani, City Br.-1, Vizag Division	Rs.5000
Com. D.C.Dongre, President, NDLICENSEU, Nagpur	4000

Insurance Worker thanks these comrades for their fine gesture.



**Com. Amanulla Khan, releasing the Souvenir(above)
Com.Venu Gopal inaugurating photo exhibition (above left)**



**Com. B.S.Ravi,
Treasurer, AIIEA**



**Com Shreekant Mishra,
General Secretary, ECZIEA**



**Com Clement Das,
General Secretary, SCZIEF**



**Com.S.K.Geetha,
Vice President, SCZIEF**



**Com. T Senthil Kumar,
General Secretary, SZIEF**



**Special address
Prof.Syama Chakraborti**



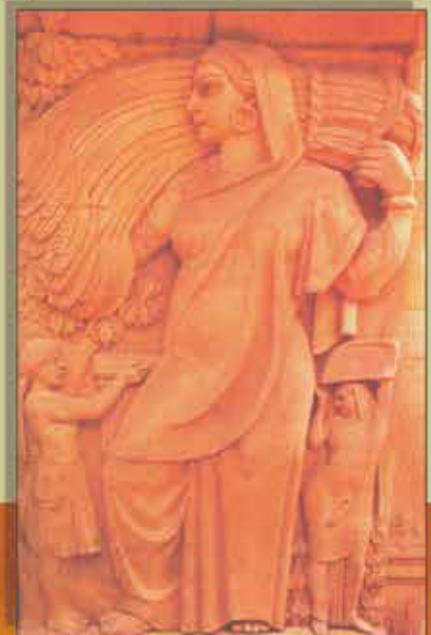


CONTRIBUTION OF LIC FOR NATION BUILDING

INVESTMENT IN GOVT. & SOCIAL SECTOR (Rs. In crore)

Type of Investment	As on		
	31.03.2015	31.03.2016	31.03.2017
01 Central Government Securities	635365	721000	822820
02 State Government & Other Govt. Guaranteed Marketable Securities	424599	521632	655603
Sub-Total (A)	1059964	1242632	1478423
03 Housing & Infrastructure Investment			
(a) Housing	56825	70302	65693
(b) Power	117759	120558	117398
(c) Irrigation/ Water Supply & Sewerage	2670	2319	2031
(d) Road, Port & Bridges. Railways	10119	13244	35210
(e) Others (Incl. Telecom.)	39433	36846	33824
Sub- Total (B)	226806	243269	254156
Total A+B	1286770	1485901	1732579

Plan	Year	Gross Investments (Rs. in crore)
II	1956-1961	184
III	1961-1966	285
IV	1969-1974	1530
V	1974-1979	2942
VI	1980-1985	7140
VII	1985-1990	12969
VIII	1992-1997	56097
IX	1997-2002	170929
X	2002-2007	394779
XI	2007-2012	704151
XII	2012-2017	1423055



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 INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION**