

insurance Worker

aii
ea

Monthly Journal of All India Insurance Employees' Association

Vol. 61 • No. 12 • December 2018 • ₹ 10 • Pages 40+4



unprecedented
inequalities
mob
lunching
money
power
lawless
-ness
anti-
national
corruption

Democracy under Severe Stress



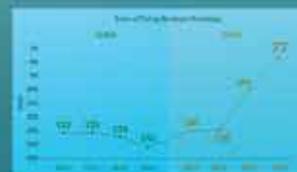
Rise up unitedly to defend
DEMOCRACY & SECULARISM
for peace and progress of India
and its working and toiling masses

**BROADEN
& INTENSIFY
PENSION
AGITATION**

TO ASSERT
THE RIGHT
TO LIVE WITH
HUMAN DIGNITY



RBI vs GOVT :
MISSING THE WOOD
FOR THE TREES



EASING BUSINESS
NORMS & ERASING
WELFARE MEASURES

भारत-एक सांझी
विरासत





Rebuilding of flood ravaged Kerala Rs.12.46 cr contribution from General Insurance

Besides the initial donation of Rs.10 lacs from AIIEA hqrs and Rs.1 lac from AIIPA to Kerala Flood Relief measures, AIIEA took up with PSGICs to issue appeal to employees for their contribution through salary deductions and also for making donations from Companies. AIIEA units in general insurance campaigned among employees for filling up authorization letters. The response was overwhelming.

GIC-Re and New India paid a donation of Rs.3 cr each to Kerala Chief Minister's Distress Relief Fund and United India, Oriental and National made Rs.1 cr each, thus making a total contribution of Rs.9 cr by PSGICs.

In addition to the above, employees' contributions collected through salary deductions totaling Rs.2.81 cr were sent to the CM's Fund by the PSGICs. (United: Rs.108.38 lacs, National: Rs.73.14 lacs, Oriental: Rs.68.00 lacs & New India: Rs.31.61 lacs).

Immediately after the first strike of floods, KSGIEU units collected donations from employees and organized relief measures in different centres. They also contributed Rs.1 lac to CM's Fund. The President (Com Viju Paul, NIC) and General Secretary (Com MU Thomas, UI) of KSGIEU and President of GIEA,SZ (Com PR Sasi, NIA) contributed their one month salary, among others.

At the call of AIIPA, general insurance retirees contributed Rs.6.32 lacs through their units or directly to the CM's Fund



Democracy under Severe Stress

The Global Democracy Index 2017 brought out by Economist Intelligence Unit has ranked India 42 down 10 places from 32 in 2016. This index measures the State of Democracy in 167 countries. The index is based on 60 indicators that measures pluralism and electoral processes, civil liberties, political culture and political participation and functioning of the government. India is bracketed along with few other nations which are described as flawed democracies. The Global Democracy Index notes that there is a rise of conservative religious ideologies and vigilantism; violence against dissenting voices and minorities and media being only partially free as reasons for the slippage of India's standing.

It is true that democracy in India today is under severe stress and strain. Democracy is often misunderstood just as elections and a form of government. It is much more than that; it is about a social organisation. The foundational principles of Indian Constitution - Liberty, Equality, Fraternity and Justice makes it clear

that it is simplistic to reduce democracy to just the rule of the majority. These foundational principles ensure that in democracy minority does not become the victim of the tyranny of majority. The definition of minority here is not confined to just religious but includes linguistic, cultural and those with opinions different from the majority.

Dr. B.R.Ambedkar had on many occasions pointed out that "democracy is not merely a form of government. It is primarily a mode of associated living, of conjoint communicated experience. It is essentially an attitude of respect and reverence towards fellowmen".

Dr. Ambedkar further added that for a successful democracy "there should not be glaring inequalities in society, that is, privilege for one class; the existence of an opposition; equality in law and administration; observance of constitutional morality; no tyranny of the majority; moral order of society: and public conscience." Looking at the political, social and economic situations in the country today, it is

PENSION-BROADEN AND INTENSIFY THE AGITATION

Amanulla Khan

5

EASING BUSINESS NORMS & ERASING WELFARE MEASURES

K Venugopal Rao

9

RBI-Govt stand-off

MISSING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES

Prof.Prabhat Patnaik

11

In This Issue

भारत – एक सांड्डी विरासत
रामजी तिवारी

13

Insurance News-A M Khan
Working Class Struggles-S.Sridhara
Economic Tid-bits-J.Suresh
For Our Field Force-Arivukkadal

Subscription

clear that Indian democracy is failing the test laid down by this great visionary.

It is true that India was never an equal society. Independence from foreign rule resulted in the power passed on to the big industrialists and landlord class resulting in huge concentration of both power and wealth in the hands of privileged few. The Constitutional task of creating one man one value appears more illusionary today. The past three decades have spanned unprecedented inequalities. This is because the State under neo-liberalism has refocused to perform the needs of the rich and the privileged. Today the top 1% of the population control over 52% of the national wealth while the monthly earnings of nearly 90% of the workforce is below Rs.10000/-. Interestingly the government has accepted the minimum need based monthly wage for its employees at Rs.18000/- per month. This reflects the terrible living conditions for the majority of our fellow citizens who are deprived of even a need based minimum wage.

Politics in India is no longer a matter of public service but has become the most profitable industry. Nearly 40 businessmen and industrialists have entered the current Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Close to 450 of Lok Sabha and 90% of Rajya Sabha Members are crorepatis. In the central cabinet of 78 members, 72 are crorepatis. Some Ministers including the Finance Minister own assets exceeding Rs 100 crore. Perhaps this is the richest parliament and richest cabinet ever in the post independent India leading to a genuine concern if India is slipping or has it already slipped into plutocracy. The money power has come to play a dominant role in election often subverting the popular mandate of the people. The corruption in electoral process is now institutionalised with electoral bonds. The demands for electoral reforms are ignored.

The strength of democracy lies in a vibrant opposition. But unfortunately political opponents in India are treated as enemies. The present ruling regime has declared to achieve opposition mukt Bharat. The entire energies are directed to win elections at any cost including through communal and casteist polarisation. When the Head of the Government itself uses indecent language and resorts to lies attacking the opposition, it is a sure indicator of the depth of degradation Indian politics and democracy

has suffered. Not just political opponents, even citizens who have genuine differences with the policies and opinions of the government are branded as anti-national. Democratic right to dissent has become treason in today's India. The full force of government machinery is let loose to intimidate those who are opposed to the ideological and economic directions of the government. The democratic institutions created under the constitutional scheme of things to act as checks and balances are under tremendous attack. The independence of judiciary, CBI, Election Commission, RBI etc today is seriously challenged.

There is a tendency to encourage lawlessness. Lynching in the name of mob justice has the official sanction. When the President of the biggest political party Amit Shah warns the Supreme Court to deliver judgments that are acceptable and meet the sentiments of the majority, he seriously challenges the concept of equality and neutrality of the administration. This also raises questions about the observance of constitutional morality that is so necessary for the survival of democracy. The true test of democracy is the fair treatment to the minorities, deprived sections and women. It is a well recognised principle in democracy that the weak, vulnerable and deprived sections have the first right on the resources of the nation. Unfortunately India fails miserably in this regard. The minorities, more specifically the religious are politically isolated. The representation of religious minorities in the State Legislatures and Parliament are at a historic low. The lack of political participation results in economic, social and cultural deprivation. This has dangerous portends for participative democracy.

The attack on democracy is not limited to India alone. The world is witnessing a rightward shift in politics due to the crisis brought about by neo-liberalism. Speaking about the dangers to democracy noble laureate Joseph Stiglitz pointed out that "America's ideals of freedom, democracy and justice for all may never have been fully realised; but now they are under open attack. Democracy has become rule of, by, and for the few; and justice for all is available to all who are white and can afford". This is very true of India too.

The survival of democracy and secularism

is the prerequisite for the peace and progress of India and its working and toiling masses. Safeguarding these two cardinal principles of our Republic cannot be left only to the political class. BJP, the ruling party and Congress, the main opposition have dubious record on democracy and secularism. It is, therefore, the responsibility of the working class to ensure

the survival of democracy and secularism. The movement of the working class cannot progress without democratic rights. It cannot also advance without unity of all the toiling people irrespective of religion, language and region. The working class must realise the dangers of the present times and rise up unitedly to defend democracy and secularism.

जनतन्त्र भारी दबाव में

आर्थिक गुप्तचर इकाई द्वारा जारी किये गये विश्विक जनतन्त्र इंडेक्स के अनुसार भारत 2016 के 32 वें स्थान की बजाये 2017 में 10 स्थान नीचे 42 वें स्थान पर है। यह इंडेक्स 167 देशों में जनतन्त्र को मापता है। इंडेक्स 60 सूचकों पर आधारित है जिनमें विविधता, निर्वाचन विधि, नागरिक स्वतन्त्रताएं, राजनीतिक संस्कृति व भागीदारी तथा सरकार का कामकाज शामिल है। भारत को उन अन्य देशों के साथ रखा गया है जहां जनतन्त्रों को नुकसान पहुंचा जा रहा है। विश्विक जनतन्त्र इंडेक्स ने यह उल्लेख किया है कि भारत में अनुदार धार्मिक विचारधाराओं व जासूसी का मजबूत होना, असहमति की आवाजों व अल्पसंख्यकों के विरुद्ध बढ़ रही हिंसा तथा मीडिया का आंशिक रूप से ही स्वतन्त्र होना उसके स्थान के नीचे आने के कुछ कारण है।

यह सही है कि आज भारत में जनतन्त्र पर भारी दबाव है। जनतन्त्र को प्रायः केवल चुनावों तथा सरकार के स्वरूप के रूप में ही समझा जाता है। यह इससे कहीं बहुत ज्यादा है: यह सामाजिक संगठन से सम्बन्धित है। भारतीय संविधान के मौलिक सिद्धान्त जैसे आजादी, बराबरी, भाईचारा तथा न्याय यह स्पष्ट करते हैं कि जनतन्त्र को बहुमत के शासन के रूप में परिभाषित करना बहुत साधारण सी व्याख्या है। यह मौलिक सिद्धान्त सुनिश्चित करते हैं कि अल्पसंख्यक बहुसंख्यकों की तानाशाही के शिकार न हो। यहां अल्पसंख्यक की परिभाषा केवल धार्मिक अर्थ तक सीमित नहीं है और इसमें भाषायी सांस्कृतिक तथा उन लोगों की राय भी शामिल है जो बहुसंख्यकों की राय से सहमति नहीं रखते हैं।

डा.बी.आर. अम्बेडकर ने कई अवसरों पर यह रेखांकित किया है कि जनतन्त्र केवल सरकार का ही स्वरूप नहीं है। यह मुख्य रूप से संयुक्त प्रतिपादित अनुभव के आधार पर साथ-साथ रहने का तरीका है। निश्चित तौर पर जनतन्त्र अपने साथियों के लिये आदर व सम्मान का भाव है। डा. अम्बेडकर ने आगे कहा कि सफल जनतन्त्र के लिये "समाज में बहुत अधिक दिखने वाली असमानताएं नहीं होनी चाहिए अर्थात् एक वर्ग के लिये सुविधायें; विपक्ष का अस्तित्व; कानून तथा शासन में बराबरी; संवैधानिक नैतिकता का पालन; बहुसंख्यकों की तानाशाही नहीं; समाज की नैतिक व्यवस्था व जनता की ईमानदारी।" आज भारत की राजनीति, आर्थिक व सामाजिक हालत को देखें तो यह स्पष्ट है कि इस महान विचारक के अनुसार हमारा जनतन्त्र असफल हो रहा है।

यह सही है कि भारत कभी भी एक समान समाज नहीं

था। विदेशी शासन से आजादी की परिणति बड़े उद्योगपतियों व जमींदारों को और अधिक शक्ति देने के रूप में हुई। कुछ सुविधा प्राप्त लोगों के पक्ष में धन व शक्ति का केन्द्रीयकरण हुआ। आज यह संवैधानिक कार्य जिसके द्वारा एक आदमी के लिये एक मूल्य की रचना की जानी थी, बहुत काल्पनिक जान पड़ता है। पिछले तीन दशकों में असमानताओं में अभूतपूर्व वृद्धि हुई है। ऐसा इस कारण है कि राज्य ने नवउदारवादी नीतियों को लागू करने के लिये कुछ खास धनी व सुविधा प्राप्त लोगों की जरूरतों पर ही ध्यान केन्द्रित किया। आज जनसंख्या के सबसे धनी एक प्रतिशत लोग लगभग 52 प्रतिशत राष्ट्रीय सम्पत्ति पर नियन्त्रण करते हैं जबकि लगभग 50 प्रतिशत लोगों की मासिक आय 10000/- रुपये से कम है। रोचक तथ्य यह है कि सरकार ने 18000/- रुपये प्रतिमाह की न्यूनतम मजदूरी जरूरत के आधार पर स्वीकार कर ली है। यह हमारे साथी नागरिकों के अधिकांश के लिये भयावह जीवन स्तर को प्रदर्शित करता है जो जरूरत के आधार पर न्यूनतम मजदूरी से भी वंचित है।

भारत में राजनीति लोगों की सेवा करने के लिये नहीं बल्कि सबसे अधिक लाभदायक उद्योग बन गया है। इस समय लोकसभा व राज्यसभा में लगभग 40 बड़े व्यापारी एवं उद्योगपति हैं। लगभग 450 लोकसभा के सदस्य एवं 90 प्रतिशत राज्यसभा के सदस्य करोड़पति हैं। 78 सदस्यों के केन्द्रीय मंत्रिमण्डल में 72 करोड़पति हैं। कुछ मंत्रियों के पास तो जिनमें वित्त मंत्री श्री अरूण जेटली भी शामिल हैं, 100 करोड़ से भी ज्यादा की सम्पत्ति है। शायद वर्तमान संसद आजादी के बाद की सारी संसदों से धनवान है जिससे यह वाजिब चिन्ता पैदा होती है कि शायद भारत या तो धनाड्यों के शासन में तब्दील हो रहा है या हो चुका है। धन की ताकत चुनाव में एक मुख्य ताकत के रूप में उभरी है जिससे लोगों का जनादेश कमजोर हुआ है। निर्वाचन बाण्डों के कारण भ्रष्टाचार ने संस्थागत रूप ले लिया है। चुनाव सुधार की मांग की उपेक्षा की जाती है।

जनतन्त्र की ताकत जीवंत विपक्ष के कारण होती है। परन्तु दुर्भाग्य से भारत में राजनीतिक विरोधियों को शत्रुओं के रूप में देखा जाता है। वर्तमान शासन ने विपक्ष मुक्त भारत की घोषणा ही कर दी है। सारी ऊर्जा किसी भी कीमत पर चुनाव जीतने की तरफ केन्द्रित कर दी गई है जिसमें जाति व सम्प्रदाय के आधार पर धुवीकरण भी शामिल है। जब सरकार का मुखिया ही खुद विपक्ष पर आक्रमण करने के लिये

अभद्र भाषा का प्रयोग करता हो तथा झूठ का सहारा लेता हो तो यह भारत में राजनीति के नीचे गिर जाने व जनतन्त्र की मुश्किलों का ही सूचक है। केवल राजनीतिक विरोधी ही नहीं बल्कि वे नागरिक भी जिनकी कि सरकार की नीतियों व राय से सचमुच मतभेद है, उनको भी राष्ट्र विरोधी घोषित कर दिया जाता है। आज के भारत में असहमति का जनतान्त्रिक अधिकार भी राष्ट्रद्रोह हो गया है। उन लोगों को परेशान करने के लिए सरकारी मशीनरी का पूरी ताकत के साथ इस्तेमाल किया जाता है जो सरकार की आर्थिक व विचाराधारात्मक दिशा से सहमत नहीं होते हैं। संवैधानिक व्यवस्था में 'चैक एण्ड बेलेन्स' का काम करने वाली जनतान्त्रिक संस्थाएं भारी हमलों की जद में हैं। न्यायपालिका की स्वतंत्रता, सीबीआई, चुनाव आयोग, आरबीआई आदि सभी गम्भीर चुनौतियों का सामना कर रहे हैं।

अव्यवस्था को प्रोत्साहित करने को रूझान देखा जा रहा है। भीड़ न्याय के रूप में 'लिंगिंग' को अधिकारिक मान्यता प्राप्त है। जब सबसे बड़ी पार्टी का अध्यक्ष अमित शाह यह चेतावनी देता है कि उच्चतम न्यायालय को ऐसे निर्णय देने चाहिए जो बहुसंख्यकों को स्वीकार्य हों तथा उनकी भावनाओं के अनुरूप हों तो वह प्रशासन की समानता व निष्पक्षता को गम्भीर चुनौती दे रहा होता है। यह संवैधानिक नैतिकता के पालन पर भी गम्भीर सवाल खड़े करता है जो जनतन्त्र की रक्षा के लिये आवश्यक है। जनतन्त्र की सच्ची परीक्षा अल्पसंख्यकों, समाज के पिछड़े वर्गों व महिलाओं के साथ अच्छा व्यवहार है। यह जनतन्त्र का जाना-माना सिद्धान्त है कि राष्ट्र के संसाधनों पर कमजोर, पीड़ित व वंचित तबकों का पहला अधिकार है। दुर्भाग्य से इस मामले में भारत बुरी तरह असफल है। अल्पसंख्यक- खासतौर पर धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यक, राजनीतिक रूप से अलग-थलग हैं। धार्मिक अल्पसंख्यकों का राज्यों की विधान सभाओं व संसद में प्रतिनिधित्व एतिहासिक

रूप से निचले स्तर पर है। राजनीतिक भागीदारी में कमी का परिणाम आर्थिक, सामाजिक व सांस्कृतिक वंचना के रूप में दिखाई देता है। भागीदारी में कमी के जनतन्त्र के लिये बहुत ही खतरनाक निहितार्थ है।

जनतन्त्र पर हमला भारत तक ही सीमित नहीं है। नव-उदारवाद द्वारा पैदा किये गये संकट ने दुनिया की राजनीति में एक दक्षिणपंथी बदलाव पैदा किया है। जनतन्त्र पर मंडरा रहे खतरों पर बोलते हुए नोबेल पुरस्कार विजेता अर्थशास्त्री जोसेफ स्टिगलिट्ज ने संकेत दिया है कि स्वतंत्रता, जनतन्त्र व सभी के लिये न्याय के अमरीकी आदर्श भले ही कभी प्राप्त नहीं हुए हों; परन्तु अब वे आक्रमण की जद में हैं। जनतन्त्र कुछ लोगों का कुछ लोगों द्वारा और कुछ लोगों के लिये शासन में बदल गया है और उन सभी के लिये न्याय उपलब्ध है जो गोरे हैं और जो इसके लिये पर्याप्त धन की व्यवस्था कर सकते हैं। यह भारत के लिये भी बिल्कुल सही है।

भारत की शांति व प्रगति के लिये, इसकी कार्यप्रणाली व मेहनतकश जनता के लिये जनतन्त्र और धर्मनिरपेक्षता की रक्षा आवश्यक है। अपने गणतन्त्र के इन दो मौलिक सिद्धान्तों की रक्षा केवल राजनीतिक वर्ग के भरोसे नहीं छोड़ी जा सकती। शासक पार्टी बीजेपी, कांग्रेस तथा मुख्य विपक्षी दलों का जनतन्त्र व धर्मनिरपेक्षता के बारे में संदेहात्मक रिकार्ड है। इसलिये यह मजदूर वर्ग की जिम्मेदारी है कि वह जनतन्त्र व धर्मनिरपेक्षता की रक्षा सुनिश्चित करे। मजदूर वर्ग का आन्दोलन जनतान्त्रिक अधिकारों के बिना प्रगति नहीं कर सकता। यह भाषा, क्षेत्र व धर्म की भिन्नता के बावजूद मेहनतकश लोगों की एकता के बिना आगे नहीं बढ़ सकता। मजदूर वर्ग को वर्तमान समय के खतरों को महसूस करना चाहिये तथा जनतन्त्र एवं धर्मनिरपेक्षता की रक्षा के लिये एक होकर उठ खड़े होना चाहिए तथा आगे बढ़ना चाहिए।

Renewal of Subscription to Insurance Worker

We had requested our subscribers/units to send separate messages regarding remittances for renewal of subscriptions by N.E.F.T, in view of the difficulty in identifying the sender at our end. We could not identify the senders of the following remittances, due to non-receipt of such messages/information. We request the concerned subscribers/unit to intimate us the renewal details, to enable us to update our records

Date	Amount
16.4.2018	Rs.49560
30.4.2018	1920
2.5.2018	1100
29.5.2018(P18052931086912/164441)	2000
6.6.2018	2440
18.7.2018	2400
19.7.2018	4320
27.8.2018 (cuttack division, IOBA0000022)	1000
20.12.2017	120
15/17-3-2018	6300
17.3.2018	3600
27.7.2018	600
Manojendra Narayanan on 9.8.2018	120
28.02.2018	3240
28.02.2018	4800
07.03.2018	2160

The Neo-liberal regime works to make the functioning of the markets easy by making conditions tough for the working people. This policy puts profits before the people. Therefore,

it has become necessary for the entire working class to unite to demand not only improvements in the pension schemes in their respective institutions but also to wage a serious struggle for universalisation of Pension.



PENSION BROADEN AND INTENSIFY THE AGITATION

Amanulla Khan

PENSION as social security has become the focal issue of many agitations of different sections of the Indian society. In the recent period there was a massive mobilisation of elderly persons in the National Capital and other parts of the country covered under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme on demand to increase the pension amount from Rs.200 per month being paid by the Central Government to a minimum of Rs.3000/-. They were also demanding universalisation of this Pension Scheme rather than restricting it only to those below the poverty levels. The Central and State Governments employees are agitating for withdrawal of National Pension Scheme and coverage of all government employees under the old defined benefit scheme. They have called for a nationwide protest action on 26th November, 2018. The RBI employees and Officers have been on struggle demanding another option and pension updation.

STRUGGLE OF INSURANCE EMPLOYEES

The insurance employees too have been on agitation for nearly a decade now demanding a final pension option and improvement in the pension scheme. The AIIEA had called a number of strikes on this issue which were very successfully observed. The Pension was introduced in LIC and PS General Insurance Industry in lieu of management's contribution to PF in the year 1995. Today nearly 87000 existing employees and 53000 pensioners and family pensioners are covered under this scheme in LIC. The exact number in the general insurance

industry is not available at present. The Pension Fund has a corpus of around Rs.53904 crore as at 31st March 2018. This fund is the pension liability relating to the existing employees and the increase in the dearness allowance to the pensioners and family pensioners. It may be noted that on retirement of an employee, the Pension Trust purchases the annuity and thereafter LIC's responsibility is only towards the increase in the dearness allowance, for which additional annuities are purchased when required. It was the farsightedness of AIIEA that had ensured that any deficit in the fund would be made good by LIC and the PSGI companies.

While majority of the employees in LIC and PSGI companies had opted to join the 1995 Pension Scheme, a small percentage chose to remain with the PF for various reasons. A second option to join the scheme was given in 1997; still some employees did not opt as there was no significant change in the interest rate regime. But a significant improvement in the form of full neutralisation of DA came in the wage revision concluded in the year 2000 effective from 1.8.1997 making 1995 Pension Scheme much more attractive. Thereafter a few more improvements like eligibility for pension to the widow/divorcee daughters and dependent parents came about. With these improvements it was natural for employees to expect another option but this did not happen despite repeated representations. In the meantime pension was made compulsory to

those who joined services after introduction of the scheme and before 1.4.2010. Effective from 1.4.2010, the 1995 Defined Benefit pension scheme was made inapplicable to the new recruits and they were covered under National Pension Scheme.

The Defined Benefit Pension Scheme was also withdrawn for the Central and State Governments employees with effect from 1.1.2004 and in the banking the withdrawal was from 1.4.2010. Today more than 50 lakh government employees are covered by NPS and they are demanding scrapping this scheme and for coverage under Defined Benefit Pension Scheme. The government justified this action saying that it was a conscious move to shift from Defined Benefit Pension Scheme to Defined Contribution Pension Scheme due to rising and unsustainable Pension Bill. The government feels that Defined Benefit Pension Schemes are unsustainable due to increasing life span and declining interest rates.

AIIEA'S DEMAND AND LIC'S RECOMMEDATIONS

The AIIEA's demand for a final pension option is totally justified in the context of changing economic environment and the fall in the interest rates. Agreeing with AIIEA, both the managements of LIC and PSGI companies have been pursuing with government to allow them to offer a final option to join the 1995 pension scheme to the eligible employees. The LIC quoting the opinion of an eminent actuary has reasoned with the government that:

1. The estimated additional pension one time net liability of the option is around Rs.2390

Cr. Further recurring expenses in terms of additional contribution to pension fund every year may increase overall ratio by maximum of 50 basis point;

2. Total liability as well as fund size will increase initially for some years and will start decreasing thereafter. As a result contribution to be made each year will become a small fraction of total premium income; and

3. The overall cost ratio has been almost steadily decreasing. Continuous reduction in cost will result in emergence of additional surplus which in turn will enable the Corporation to adopt a reduced pace of funding pension liability.

This reasoning is identical to the arguments of AIIEA that the cost of a final option is marginal and the increasing growth in the premium income would absorb this cost. The AIIEA had also pointed out to the continuous decline in the wage cost including pension as a ratio of the total premium income. With these weighty arguments, the LIC has recommended for a final pension option and continuing to pursue with the government. Similar arguments have been placed by the PSGI companies.

But the government remains unresponsive to this genuine demand. The representatives of AIIEA along with other unions in General Insurance met the Finance Minister and impressed upon the need to concede this legitimate demand. However, the unhelpful attitude of the government to accept the well reasoned recommendations and requests by the unions makes it clear that Pension is no longer an economic demand but has become a political policy of the State. Therefore, it has become necessary to broaden and intensify the agitation on this issue.



UN Declaration of Human Rights recognises social security as a basic human right. But now, pension and other social security schemes are under attack not just in India but across the world from neo-liberal regimes. Neo-liberalism as an ideology is hostile to the working class and Welfare States that were built as a response to the crisis in the aftermath of the great wars. They are being systematically dismantled, pension benefits are being reduced and retirement age increased, to increase the working life in order to reduce the post-retirement life span. The working class is heroically fighting these onslaughts.

SOCIAL SECURITY

A CONSTITUTIONAL OBLIGATION

Pension and other social security schemes are under attack not just in India but across the world from neo-liberal regimes. Neo-liberalism as an ideology is hostile to the working class and a welfare State. The Welfare States that were built as a response to the crisis in the aftermath of the great wars are systematically being dismantled. In many of the countries pension benefits are being reduced and retirement age increased. This is to increase the working life in order to reduce the post-retirement life span. The working class is heroically fighting these onslaughts.

Social security is a human rights issue. India as a Member of the United Nations has accepted the UN Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 which recognises social security as a basic human right. The Right to Life is a fundamental right under Article 21 of the Indian Constitution. The Supreme Court has interpreted this right progressively in many cases to assert that right to life is not just a bare animal existence but a right to live with human dignity.

Article 39 of the Constitution under Directive Principles of the State Policy urges the State to direct its policy towards securing right to an adequate means of livelihood for all citizens. Further Article 41 directs the State to make provisions within its economic capacity for securing right to work, to education and public assistance in old age and sickness. Therefore, it is the constitutional responsibility of the State to bring a universal social security for all citizens in the form of Pension.

UNIVERSAL PENSION SCHEME

IS POSSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE

The question is whether the State has adequate resources to universalise social security. Undoubtedly the State has the capacity and the resources so required but what it lacks is a political will. The government claims that India is the fastest growing among the large economies. If the economy is creating unprecedented wealth, certainly it is possible to allocate adequate funds for a universal pension scheme. Rather than bringing a genuine social security scheme, the government is showcasing the PM Jan Jyoti Bima Yojana, PM Suraksha Bima Yojana and Atal Pension Yojana as the great social security measures. Both the PMJJBY and PMSBY have no

financial commitment from the government. The participants have to bear the full contribution. On the issue of Atal Pension Yojana, the government commitment is only marginal. In real terms these schemes cannot be considered as genuine retirement benefits. Instead of seriously addressing the needs of the elderly, the State wants to abdicate its responsibility by making the relatives responsible for the care and upkeep of the senior citizens. Interestingly, the Ministry of social justice and empowerment has finalised the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill 2018 making even distant relatives responsible for the upkeep of the senior citizens. This Bill may be brought in the Parliament any time.

According to the 2011 census, there are 10.4 crore citizens above the age of 60 and the number of elderly are expected to grow to nearly 18 crore in the next few years. Moreover those who reach the age 60 are expected to live on average for another 20 years. In such a situation, absence of genuine social security will have disastrous social impact. This is because more than 93% of the Indian workforce is in the informal sector where there is no social security and working conditions are miserable. At present a very small number of elderly classified under BPL category between age 60-79 are paid a pension of Rs.200 p.m by central government under Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension and Rs.500 p.m for those above 80 years. Under Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme Rs.200/- p.m is paid for those between the age 40-59. This is too inadequate.

The Central Government spending on social security is abysmally low. According to Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability the total allocation for social security in the Central Budget is 0.07% of the GDP for the year 2018-19. It may be noted that the public expenditure on old age entitlements in France is 11.5% of the GDP and in Germany it is 8.5%. In fact India spends much lower than many least developed countries on social security. It is estimated that a Universal Pension Scheme with a minimum of Rs.3000 per month would cost India less than 2% of its GDP. Surely this is affordable in the context of the fact that India foregoes taxes due from the corporate to the extent of over 5% of the GDP every year. In institutions like LIC, where there is a Pension

scheme, the government can allow decisions to be taken for its improvement to the institutions depending upon their financial strengths.

NEED TO INTEGRATE OUR STRUGGLE WITH OTHER SECTIONS

But this is a very tall order to expect from a neo-liberal regime. Neo-liberalism is an ideology that works to make the functioning of the markets easy by making conditions tough for the working people. This policy puts profits before the people. Therefore, it has become necessary for the entire working class to unite to demand not only improvements in the pension schemes in their respective institutions but also to wage a serious struggle for universalisation of Pension. Fortunately, the working and toiling masses have come together to challenge neo-liberal policies through a two day nationwide strike on 8-9 January 2019 and to demand reorientation of the economic policies in favour of the people. In this struggle, minimum wage, pension and protection of public sector are the focal demands.

This is an opportunity to broaden our struggle for a final pension option; improvements in the pension scheme and for withdrawal of NPS by joining hands with the government and RBI employees who are also agitating on these demands. At the same time we must lend the force of our agitation to those sections of the working class who are campaigning for a universal pension scheme. These are the right tactics to not only achieve the goal of another pension option and other demands related to pension but also to protect this important benefit from the attacks of neo-liberalism.



Cartoon Courtesy: Surendran, The Hindu

INDIA has improved its ranking in World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index (DBI) by 23 ranks to reach 77th position among 190 economies. Last year, India saw a record jump of 30 places to reach the 100th position in the rankings. The Index measures 11 areas of business processes. They include procedures, timelines, cost related to construction, protection of minority investors, payments of tax, time and cost to export a product or import it and to resolve commercial dispute, the quality of the judicial process and time taken and the cost for resolution or insolvency.

The sharp rise in the DBI ranking will enhance the reformist credentials of the present government. The DBI is being projected as one of the finest things to happen to our economy. India has been seeking to improve its DBI ranking primarily to attract foreign direct investments (FDI). The World Bank too promotes the concept that better DBI ranking are associated with higher FDI inflows. There is also a dramatic and steady rise in FDI inflows since 2014 – from \$36 billion in 2013-14 to \$60.22 billion in 2016-17 and \$61.96 billion in 2017-18. It is also argued that higher FDI inflows will lead to higher GDP growth, higher capital formation or higher industrial output and capacity utilization.

But this did not happen though there is an increase in FDI inflows. The growth rate of GDP has been falling since 2015-16. The growth rate was 7.5 percent in 2014-15, which went up to 8 percent in 2015-16 and then declined to 7.1 percent in 2016-17 and 6.5 percent in 2017-18. Gross fixed capital formation (GFCF), which is an indicator of investment in the economy, has also been going down – from 34.31 percent of GDP in 2011-12 to 28.5 percent in 2017-18. The Index of industrial production (IIP) growth remains low and fluctuating.

The growth rate in eight core sectors (coal, crude oil, steel, cement etc.) went down from 4.9 percent in 2014-15 to 3 percent in 2015-16, went up to 4.8 percent in 2016-17 and fell to 4.2 percent in 2017-18. Capacity utilization of manufacturing companies has been fluctuating since 2014-15 and the first quarter of 2018-19 witnessed a sharp decline. Though all these indices are going down there is increase in FDI. So we can say that there is no interconnectivity to DBI ranking and inflows of FDI. Leading economists point out that presently FDI is not

From 142 in 2014 to 130, 100 and now 77- India has been put at a high pedestal in the DBI ranking but on other economic and social indicators the performance of the country is very dismal and disappointing. DBI may be a priority for the pro-corporate Govt but in the interest of the nation, the Govt should adopt a more inclusive development policy.

EASING BUSINESS NORMS & ERASING WELFARE MEASURES

K Venugopal Rao



coming from leading global producers of goods and services. FDI is coming from private equity (PE) funds and they account for 60 percent of total foreign inflows. The top recipients are retail traders of mostly imported consumer goods like Flipkart, Paytm and Snapdeal and these investments do not contribute to fresh capital formation or investment in technology. Another important thing is that FDI is coming by way of Round-tripping i.e. sending the money out of India and then bringing it back to India. This way 33% foreign inflow comes from Mauritius and another 19% from Singapore. This round-tripping investment are the foreign inflows which largely come into India to make them white and legal.

There is no relation to the DBI ranking and performance of economy also. A 2016 IIM Bangalore working paper says that DBI ranking has "limited macroeconomic usefulness and relevance". The paper explains that DBI ranking does not necessarily reflect the real conditions of the economy. CMIE came with a report in October 2017 and it says that India had registered "the lowest level of intention to invest seen in any quarter during the tenure of the Modi government" in the quarter ending September 2017. In its October 2018 report, CMIE says new investment proposals in the quarter ending September 2018 "believe" of a revival in investment sentiment. So in the interests of Indian economy, it is more useful to focus on strategies to revive investment and look into the genuineness of FDI inflows into the country.

Another fact is that DBI do not cover the macroeconomic stability, development of the financial system, market size, political and

economic stability, law and order maintenance, quality of physical infrastructure, and buoyancy in financial markets, quality of labour force, incidence of bribery and corruption. According to the latest CMIE report, unemployment rate in the country rose to 6.9% in October 2018 which the highest in the last two years. The labour participation rate – a measure of the proportion of adults willing to work – fell to 42.4% - the lowest since January 2016. There is a continuation of deterioration in labour markets and the count of unemployed persons actively looking for jobs almost doubled from 14 million in July 2017 to 29.5 million in October 2018. The Indian wage report of the ILO talks about the increased contractisation and casualisation of labour in India and also the fall of share of the workers in GDP.

In their race to improve their DBR rankings several countries have changed their regulatory frameworks. These changes are mostly related to labour, environment, land and taxation. As a result there is a drastic change in business regulation. 3500 regulations have been changed since the inception of the report. In 2018 itself, 314 regulations were changed by the Governments globally. The move to amend the labour laws and amalgamate the 44 labour laws into four codes has to be seen from this perspective only. India moved to 77th position this year because of the speedy reforms brought in by the present ruling dispensation. Several of these changes relate to dilution of environmental and labour legislation enacted as a result of long-drawn struggles. This year's report specially mentions about the changes in the Shops and Establishment Act



Cartoon courtesy: Manjul

INDEX	RANK
Increase in wealth inequality	132 out of 152
Global Hungry Index	103 out of 119
Human Development Index	130 out of 180
Per capita GDP	140 out of 188
Gender Inequality	125 out of 188
Access to Education	145 out of 191
Economic Independence	130 out of 180
Env. Performance Index	141 out of 177
Press Freedom Index	138 out of 180

resulting in elimination of work restrictions on a weekly rest day. The easy business regulations are paving the way for issuing environmental clearances easily. The draft Coastal Regulation Zone Notification 2018 recommends for a single clearance system. This could result in giving clearance to projects that will have adverse impact on ecosystem. The CRZ removes the need to have consultations with public and other shareholders and do not give a chance to the people to tell their views in a public hearing. This in many cases has resulted in public unrest which was clearly visible in Tuticorn in Tamil Nadu and Mallanna Sagar in Telangana. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana stand first and second in DBR rankings among the Indian States. The competition among the states is further eroding regulations. This unnecessary importance to the ranking without looking into other development priorities will be disastrous in future.

India has been put at a high pedestal in the DBI ranking but on other economic and social indicators the performance of the country is very dismal and disappointing. For example India is positioned at 132nd position in the increase in wealth inequality. In a new index prepared by Development Finance International and Oxfam on tracking commitment to reduce income inequality, we are placed at 132 among 152 nations. India is ranked 103 among 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index, below Bangladesh and Ethiopia. The country's position fell from 141 to 177 in the Environmental Performance Index making the country the fourth-worst on environmental health policy. In the gender inequality report we are placed at 125 among 188 countries. In economic independence

index we are at 130 in 180 countries. In Human Development Index we are ranked at 130 in 180 countries. In Press freedom Index we are at 138 among 180 countries. In per capita GDP, we are placed at a low position of 140 in 188 countries. We are at 145 in 191 countries in the index of Access to Education. Our improvement in DBI or growth in GDP did not have any positive impact on the well-being of the vast majority of the people of this country. When we celebrate our ranking on the ease of business, how can we put aside the above rankings which indicate the pathetic economic and social conditions prevailing in the country?

Even the findings of the Doing Business Report have become controversial. The 2019 report is the sixteenth report published by the World Bank Group. Paul Romer the Chief economist of the World Bank alleges that the ease of business ranking is influenced by the political motivations of the staff of the Bank. He also questioned the repeated changes in methodology for calculating the rankings. The methodology squarely raises question on the integrity of the facts it presents. It is not the first time that the veracity of the report is questioned. The Report is actually given by the IFC which is private wing of the World Bank. In 2008 itself the Internal Evaluation Group of the World Bank pointed out that the seven out of the ten indicators were biased against regulations. The report actually looks at the business regulations and not at the business climate and it is better to nomenclature it as Doing Business - Understanding Regulations".

Thus, DBI is only one of the indicators of

Continued on page 14

RBI-Govt stand-off

MISSING THE WOOD FOR THE TREES



The current discourse around government-RBI relations suggests as if the choice is only between these two conceptions, one where the “market” determines RBI policy, and the other where the government, in cahoots with crony capitalists, determines RBI policy. This discourse, in short, rules out any possibility of democratic control over the RBI.

Prof. Prabhat Patnaik

(Courtesy: Indian Express Nov. 6, 2018)

THE stand-off between the Narendra Modi government and the Reserve Bank of India has generated a false discourse on the one hand and an illusion on the other. In this discourse, the RBI's position, articulated by its deputy governor, is that central bank policy has to be guided by financial markets rather than by a government headed by politicians with electoral compulsions and “populist” agendas. This is obviously an undemocratic position, for it amounts to saying that crucial decisions affecting people's lives should be outside their sphere of intervention through the electoral process.

It is also a dangerous position since financial markets are dominated by speculators. As Keynes had pointed out, not only is market incapable of distinguishing between enterprise and speculation, but speculators, far from being “bubbles on a steady stream of enterprise”, create instead a “whirlpool” upon which enterprise itself becomes a mere bubble. The livelihood of over a trillion people cannot be made “a by-product of the activities of a casino”.

As against this RBI position we have the government's position that is equally questionable, which wishes to make the RBI into a virtual government department. To be sure, since the RBI is meant to serve society, its activities must be socially controlled. But the government's position makes government control synonymous with social control. This would not matter if the government itself was socially accountable through, for instance, being subject to parliamentary oversight; in that case,

there would be some restraint on its using control over the central bank for furthering the interests of its crony capitalists. But, as we know, the government is refusing to divulge the contents of Raghuram Rajan's note on major bank defaulters even to the Estimates Committee of Parliament, just as it is refusing to divulge the pricing formula on the Rafael deal even to the Supreme Court. Both refusals suggest attempts to hide bonanzas made available to crony capitalists. Government control over the RBI in such circumstances would amount to an undermining of the institution.

Sadly, the current discourse around government-RBI relations suggests as if the choice is only between these two conceptions, one where the “market” determines RBI policy, and the other where the government, in cahoots with crony capitalists, determines RBI policy. This discourse, in short, rules out any possibility of democratic control over the RBI: The only choice according to it is between control by global speculators and control by the government's crony capitalists.

But even if we get out of this false discourse, and institute democratic control over the RBI, its policy choice, within the present neoliberal economic regime would still be, as it were, between “plague” and “cholera”. Lowering the interest rate and expanding liquidity in the economy, apart from the moral hazard problem it would create in the context of loan non-repayment to banks, would almost certainly

be unacceptable to global finance. This would reduce financial inflow, accentuate the fall of the rupee, and thereby both accelerate inflation and increase the financial strain on companies that have borrowed from the international market. On the other hand, maintaining the current monetary stance favoured by the RBI threatens a liquidity crisis for the economy, resulting in enterprise closures and a reduced level of economic activity with consequent unemployment.

The root of the problem lies in the structure of the neoliberal regime itself, and to believe that it is only a matter of choosing the right policy within it is an illusion. Within this regime, there are simply too few policy instruments to achieve the number of objectives we have. With fiscal deficit targets fixed firmly; with taxes on capitalists, or the rich generally, for financing larger government expenditure eschewed to avoid driving away globalised finance; and with spending financed by indirect taxes, which largely impinge on the poor, incapable of generating any net expansion in aggregate demand; fiscal policy becomes virtually irrelevant for stimulating larger activity.

Likewise, tariff policy or quantitative restrictions get ruled out within the neoliberal trade regime for managing the balance of payments. Exchange rate policy, in any case, takes too long to work and can create great instability in the interim, not to mention its cost-push inflationary consequences. In effect, therefore, interest rate policy becomes the only instrument for achieving larger activity (via

influencing the cost and availability of credit), and also a manageable balance of payments (via attracting or at least not repelling financial flows). But it is impossible to use one instrument to achieve two objectives simultaneously.

The number of instruments, as the renowned Dutch economist Jan Tinbergen had shown, must be no less than the number of objectives. But the opposite is the case under a neoliberal regime. This fact does not matter when finance is flowing into the economy, as was the case in India earlier, for then one objective, namely balance of payments stability, is automatically achieved, leaving some elbow room for lowering the interest rate to stimulate activity. But when finance stops flowing in, and instead starts flowing out, then the impossibility of making one instrument achieve multiple objectives manifests itself.

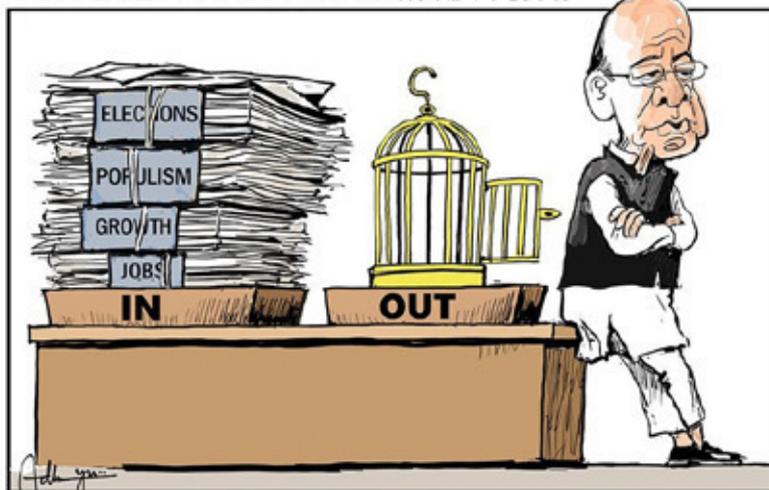
Hence, even if the government and the RBI were noble to the core, and there was no question of any cronyism on one side and subservience to international finance capital on the other, there would still be a conflict between the two because of this contradiction. What we are thus witnessing is neoliberal chickens coming home to roost: Both the objective fact of the economy coming to a sorry pass and the tussle over what to do about it, are reflections of this. Of course, the BJP government's ham-handedness in economic matters compounds the problem.

What is required is adopting direct measures, such as import controls (to restrain the payments deficit), price controls (to tackle inflation), wealth taxation (to enable larger government expenditure), and restrictions on capital outflows (to prevent any ensuing financial crisis), to cope with the economy's travails. But these would mean stepping out of the neoliberal regime.

TOI LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWARYU

GOVT UPSET WITH RBI FOR MAKING RIFT PUBLIC



Cartoon courtesy:
Sandeep Adhwaryu,
Times of India



The diversity of our multi-religious, multi-lingual, multi-cultural and multi-racial nation , is not our weakness, but, our strength. Just as nature's strength lies in its diversity, the strength of our society also is embedded in our diversity.

And, it is this diversity , which provides us with an opportunity to understand each other, which , in turn, expands our inner self. This is the path taken by our society and need of the present juncture also. Any attempt to negate this path, does no good to our nation , our society, because, homogeneity is not a practical way forward.

भारत - एक सांझी विरासत

रामजी तिवारी

The author, Ramji Tiwari is an activist of Varanasi Division Insurance Employees Association.

यह दुनिया विविधताओं से मिलकर बनी है। प्रकृति ने इसे कुछ इस तरह से बनाया है कि यहाँ अकेले किसी भी चीज का अस्तित्व नहीं हो सकता। यहाँ तक कि इसमें चेतन के साथ जड़ चीजें भी कुछ इस तरह से गुथी हुई होती हैं कि उन्हें अलगा कर हम जीवन की कल्पना नहीं कर सकते हैं। यदि हम ध्यान से देखें तो हमारा यह संसार जिन सारे जीव-जंतुओं से मिलकर बना हुआ है, उसमें हर किसी की उपस्थिति के पीछे कोई न कोई कारण है। कोई न कोई निर्भरता है जिसमें एक जीव इस दुनिया का हिस्सा बनता है। वह जीव बड़ा भी हो सकता है और छोटा भी। वह जीव बहुत सक्रिय भी हो सकता है और निष्क्रिय भी। वह जीव दिखाई भी दे सकता है और अदृश्य भी। मगर यहाँ पर उसकी उपस्थिति से ही यह संसार पूरा होता है। इसलिए वह वांछनीय भी है और अनिवार्य भी। यानि कि प्रकृति की विविधताएं हमारे जीवन की आवश्यक दशाएं भी हैं।

और जैसे कि प्रकृति के निर्माण की कहानी विविधताओं के समुच्चय की कहानी है, वैसे ही किसी भी देश या समाज के निर्माण की कहानी भी सामंजस्य और समुच्चय की कहानी है। कोई भी समाज प्रकृति के सामंजस्य के बिना निर्मित नहीं हो सकता। चूंकि उसे भी प्रकृति के ऊपर निर्भर रहना पड़ता है तो उसे प्रकृति से सीखना भी पड़ता है। प्रकृति का यह साहचर्य समाज के भीतर जज्ब होता है। कुछ इस तरह कि प्रकृति के भीतर सामंजस्य का आया कोई भी व्यक्ति उसका संतुलन बिगाड़ देता है। और फिर समाज के भीतर सामंजस्य का आया कोई व्यक्ति भी उसे नुकसान के रास्ते पर धकेल देता है।

हमारी खुशकिस्मती है कि प्रकृति ने भारत को अपनी सारी विविधताओं से नवाजा है। उसकी यह नेमत अपने सारे आयामों और सारे रूपों में साफ़-साफ़ दिखाई देती है। मसलन अपने देश के भूगोल को देखिये। कि जिस समय जैसलमेर और बाडमेर में रेत के टीलों की कटीली झाड़ियाँ अपनी नुकीली पत्तियों में पानी की आखिरी बूँद को बचाने का संघर्ष कर रही होती हैं, उस समय 'चेरापूँजी' और 'मासिनराम' की धरती पर बादलों द्वारा निसदिन प्रेम-गीत लिखा जाता है।

जिस समय मध्य-भारत की जमीन 'विषुवत-रेखीय' तापमान को छूने की तरफ बढ़ रही होती है, उस समय हिमालय की वादियों का तापमान 'साइबेरियाई' गहराईयों में डूबने के लिए बेकरार रहता है। जिस समय चेन्नई की उमस हमारी 'एड्रियो' को 'सर' के पसीने से नहला रही होती हैं, उस समय दिल्ली की होठों पर परी 'फेफरी' को सुखाने के लिए जीभ पर पानी तलाशना पड़ता है।

भूगोल की यह विविधताएं अपने देश के इतिहास और संस्कृति में भी दिखाई देती हैं। और जाहिर है कि समाज में भी। मसलन हमारा समाज कई धर्मों को एक साथ समाहित करता है। वह दुनिया के चार बड़े धर्मों की जन्मस्थली भी रहा है। सनातन हिन्दू धर्म का इस देश की मिटटी से सदा रिश्ता रहा है। शान्ति और अहिंसा के लिए विख्यात बौद्ध और जैन धर्म का उदय भी इसी भूमि से हुआ है। फिर प्रेम और संघर्ष की अद्भुत मिसाल वाला सिख धर्म भी हमारी ही मिटटी से उपजा है। इसके अलावा समानता और भाईचारा का प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाला इस्लाम धर्म भी हमारे देश में लगभग 600 वर्षों तक ड्राइविंग सीट पर रहा है। जबकि इसाईयत का प्रभाव भी अपने देश में लगभग 200 वर्षों तक रहा ही है। तो इस नाते हम दुनिया में प्रचलित लगभग सभी धर्मों के लोगों को जानते भी हैं और उनका प्रतिनिधित्व भी करते हैं। यानि कि सबको साथ लेकर चलने की यह नेमत हमें विरासत में मिली है।

भूगोल और धर्म की यह विविधता हमारे रहन-सहन, आचार-व्यवहार, तीज-त्यौहार, खान-पान, वेश-भूषा और रंग-रूप तक में विस्तार पाती है। जाहिर है कि इन सबसे मिलकर जो संस्कृति निर्मित होती है, उसमें भी यह विविधता साफ़-साफ़ परिलक्षित होती है। हमारे देश में कोई समाज इतना शाकाहारी है कि वहाँ अनजाने में भी जीव-हत्या की

मनाही है। तो किसी समाज में मांसाहार बिलकुल सामान्य सी बात है, यानि कि एकदम स्वाभाविक। और खानपान की यह विविधता दो अलग-अलग समुदायों में ही नहीं पायी जाती। वरन वह एक समाज के भीतर भी क्षेत्र के अनुरूप बदलती रहती है। मसलन बिहार के मैथिल इलाके में रहने वाले किसी एक समुदाय के लोग अपने प्रत्येक उत्सव में मछली को खानपान का हिस्सा बनाते हैं। जबकि भोजपुरी इलाके में रहने वाले उसी समुदाय के लोग मछली को त्याज्य मानते हैं, वर्जित मानते हैं।

बंगाल के मुसलमान का वह रहन-सहन वह नहीं है, जो कश्मीर या केरल में रहने वाले मुसलमान का है। वरन बंगाली मुसलमान एक बंगाली हिन्दू से अधिक साम्यता रखता है। रंग-रूप में एक जैसे दिखाई देने वाले लद्दाखी और अरुणाचली लोग जीवन व्यवहार में एक जैसी साम्यता नहीं रखते। केरल के हिन्दू का खानपान भी पंजाब के हिन्दू से नहीं मिलता। वरन उसकी साम्यता केरल के मुसलमान से अधिक होती है। एक गुजराती हिन्दू उस तरह से अपने तीज त्योहार को नहीं मनाता, जैसे कि एक बिहारी हिन्दू मनाता है। तमिल हिन्दू और उत्तर प्रदेश के हिन्दू का जीवन व्यवहार भी काफी अलग दिखाई देता है। जबकि एक तमिल मुसलमान और एक तमिल हिन्दू अधिक समान दिखाई देते हैं। जो पहनावा राजस्थान की हिन्दू औरते पहनती है, वही पहनावा असम की हिन्दू औरतों का नहीं होता। असम का एक मुसलमान यदि केरल के एक मुसलमान से धर्म के आधार पर जुड़ता है तो स्थानीय संस्कृति के आधार पर वह उससे अलग भी दिखाई देता है। एक मलयाली इसाई को हम एक मिजो इसाई से कुछ ही बिन्दुओं पर जोड़ सकते हैं। जबकि अधिकतर बिन्दुओं पर एक मलयाली इसाई का जुड़ाव एक मलयाली हिन्दू या मलयाली मुसलमान से ही अधिक नजर आता है।

लद्दाख का बौद्ध समाज वही खानपान नहीं अपनाता है, जो बिहार में रहने वाला बौद्ध समाज अपनाता है। एक पंजाबी सिख पहनावे के आधार पर एक बंगाली सिख से साम्यता तो रखता है, लेकिन उसके शेष व्यवहार में बंगाली समाज के गुण अधिक दिखाई देते हैं। यहाँ तक कि दो महानगरों में रहने वाले लोग भी स्थानीयता से अधिक प्रभावित दिखाई देते हैं। और इसमें धर्म और समुदाय की भूमिका कम, उस

क्षेत्र-विस्तार की भूमिका अधिक दिखाई देती है। समुद्र के किनारे रहने वाले लोगों का खानपान लगभग एक तरह का दिखाई देता है, चाहे उनके धर्म अलग-अलग क्यों न हों। उसी तरह पहाड़ी लोगों के रहन-सहन और जीवन-व्यवहार में एक साम्यता दिखाई देती है, चाहे उनके राज्य की सीमाएं अलग-अलग हों। एक भाषा-भाषी लोग भी समुदाय में भिन्नता रखते हुए एक जैसा ही जीवन-व्यवहार रखते हैं। यानि किसी एक धारा के आधार पर पूरे देश की संस्कृति को नहीं पकड़ा जा सकता।

इन सब विविधताओं से मिलकर ही अपना देश बनता है। वह बहु-धार्मिक है, बहु-जातीय है, बहु-भाषाई है और बहु-सांस्कृतिक भी। वह इस बात से परिचित है कि हमारे जीवन-व्यवहार में एकरसता नहीं है। न धर्म की, न जाति की, न खानपान की, न रहन-सहन की, न भाषा-बोली की और न ही प्रकृति की। हम इसी विविधता के साथ विकसित हुए हैं। इसी विविधता के साथ आगे बढ़े हैं। और इन सबके होते हुए जो एक चीज हमें एक दूसरे से जोड़ती है, वह है देश के प्रति एक सहोदर भाव। और यह सहोदर भाव कश्मीर से लेकर कन्याकुमारी, और कच्छ से लेकर कामरूप तक साथ-साथ दिखाई देता है। दुर्भाग्यवश जब कभी हमारे देश में इस विविधता को नकारने की कोशिश की जाती है, जब कभी हमें किसी खास सांचे में ढालने का प्रयास किया जाता है, तो वह पल हमारे देश और समाज के लिए अच्छा नहीं होता। क्योंकि एकरसता का रास्ता हमारे समाज के लिए एक व्यवहारिक रास्ता नहीं है।

हमें यह समझना चाहिए कि विविधता हमारे देश की कमजोरी नहीं, वरन उसकी ताकत है। जैसे कि प्रकृति की ताकत उसकी विविधता में है उसी तरह से हमारे समाज की ताकत भी हमारी विविधता में है। यह विविधता हमें एक दुसरे को समझने का अवसर देती है। एक दुसरे से ग्रहण करने और सीखने का अवसर देती है। जहाँ हम असहमत होते हैं, वहाँ एक दूसरे की भावनाओं और संस्कृतियों का आदर करते हैं। और ऐसा करने से हमारा अंतर्मन अधिक विस्तारित होता है, अधिक समेकित होता है। यही हमारे समाज का रास्ता भी है और यही हमारे दौर की जरूरत भी।



EASING BUSINESS NORMS & ERASING WELFARE MEASURES

Continued
from page 10

economic perspectives of a country and it cannot be a benchmark of measuring an economy's success. Removing systemic obstacle may improve business environment but the key to the growth of the economy is in revival of demand. Demand will increase when consumption by the ordinary people increases and this will increase if the purchasing power of the people increases. Purchasing power improves if opportunities for education, health, better living conditions,

employment and jobs are increased. The indices on malnutrition, hunger, education, workers' rights, and inequality take away the sheen from the DBI ranking. DBI may be a priority for the pro-corporate Govt but in the interest of the nation, the Govt should adopt a more inclusive development policy.

(The writer is President, SCZIEF)

AIIPA Notes – General Insurance

Discussions with United India:

A delegation of AIIPA led by Com J.Gurumurthy (VP) and comprising of Coms R.Narasimhan, D.Padmanabha Reddy, PV Nandakumar & Ascar Hussain (OBs of Chennai Region GIPA) met S/Shri KB Vijay Srinivas & S Gopakumar (both holding CMD-Joint-incharge of UIIC) at Chennai on Oct 23, 2018. The meeting was followed by detailed discussions on issues of retired employees with Shri Shahul Hameed (GM-P), Shri Petla Siva Prasad (DGM-P) and Ms Uma Swaminathan (ChMgr).

The meeting was purposeful. The management agreed to take follow up efforts with Ministry to push for early decision on *final option for Pension*. The delegation also wanted their support and efforts on larger issues, viz., improvements in pension benefits, increase in exgratia for pre-1986 Retirees/spouse, extension of increased Gratuity benefit at par with Central Govt employees & improvements in medical scheme.

AIIPA delegation pointed out the delay in payment of reimbursement claims under GMP which is centralised at HO. The GM(P) agreed to post additional staff so that payments are sent thro NEFT without delay. There are certain other issues connected with SMS confirmation of payment, ID card issues, etc. AIIPA will take up with HITPA.

The GM(P) agreed to have separate discussions on representation for reconsideration of the conditions imposed by UI Welfare Society on Holiday Home facility to retired employees

Meeting with new CMD of United India:

AIIPA team led by Com J.Gurumurthy (VP, AIIPA) and comprising of Coms R.Narasimhan, D.Padmanabha Reddy, PV Nandakumar & Ascar Hussain (OBs of Chennai Region GIPA) met Shri Girish Radhakrishnan, CMD of United India, at Chennai on Nov 5, 2018. The new CMD was very courteous and eager to interact with AIIPA on issues concerning industry and the stakeholders.

Though the meeting was introductory, the delegation brought to his attention some of the issues which were discussed with GM (Per) earlier. The CMD assured to help push the demand for *final option for pension*. He was

sympathetic to get some more relief to pre-1986 retirees / spouse by way of medical allowance as agreed in LIC. The delegation also requested him to ensure timebound action on creation of web portal for Pensioners.

AIIPA delegation meets National CMD

AIIPA delegation consisting of Coms J.Gurumurthy Vice President, P.Bagchi Jt.Secy, Nirmalya Dasgupta (President, WB), Tarun Chatterjee (Gen.Secy, WB) and Goutam Maitra met Mrs Tajinder Mukherjee, CMD of National Insurance at Kolkata on 12th Nov 2018 and discussed the pending demands of retired employees.

The CMD was appreciative of the justness of the demands and assured to take up with GIPSA / Ministry for early solutions. AIIPA's demands included – final option for Pension, improvements in Pension provisions, Medical lumpsum to pre-1986 retirees / spouses, improvements in GMP, among others.

Thereafter, the delegation held elaborate discussions with Shri A.K.Acharya (GM-P) based on a detailed agenda submitted by AIIPA. The Chief Managers and other dealing officials of Personnel & Pension/PF Depts were called in to join the discussions which lasted for over ninety minutes.

Creation of Web Portal for retired employees, filling up of Nodal Officer position, SMS intimation on Pension credit, arrangement to credit monthly pensions on last working day of the month, hassle free arrangement for restoration of Commutation (special mention was made about 2004 SVRS optees for whom restoration of commutation will fall due in March 2019), reckoning of FPA component to determine Eligible SI under GMP and issues relating to HITPA arrangement (ID cards problem, network hospitals, reimbursement claims) are some of the issues where the management agreed to take early steps.

AIIPA will be meeting Oriental & New India to pursue company-specific issues besides common demands. Meetings with GIPSA & HITPA have also been planned to follow up the issues of retirees.

National Convention on Protection of Public Sector Financial Institutions

The network of public sector financial institutions had played a highly laudable role in the financial and economic development of modern India, is an uncontested fact. The public sector banking and insurance sectors were created with clear objectives of helping the nation building exercise while protecting the interests of the depositors and policyholders. These objectives have been met to a great extent. Public sector institutions have facilitated unprecedentedly high, stable, sustainable, and remarkably inclusive growth of the financial sector. It has also been a liberal and highly elastic source of funds for the nation building activities. The excellent performance of the public financial institutions has been acknowledged even by the national committees which recommended liberalization and privatization of the sector. But at a time when we are taking forward the spirit of nationalization to new heights and making more efforts to further strengthen public sector, neo-liberal forces are in the process of diluting and dismantling banking industry, PSGI companies and LIC.

Keeping in view the sparkling contributions in nation-building made by Public Sector



Financial Institutions it is very clear that privatization of public sector financial institutions will be disastrous for the national economy and therefore it is necessary to campaign in order to protect them. With this aim and objective an umbrella organisation – CITIZEN FORUM IN DEFENCE OF PUBLIC SECTOR INDIAN FINANCIAL SECTOR was formed in Delhi under the convenorship of Com. Anil Kumar Bhatnagar, Vice President, All India Insurance Employees' Association. Following organizations constitute this forum –

- All India Bank Officers' Confederation (AIBOC),
- All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA),
- All India NABARD Employees' Association (AINEA),
- All India Regional Rural Bank Employees' Association (AIRRBEA)
- Bank Employees' Federation of India (BEFI)
- Confederation of Central Government Employees
- Society for Social & Economic Research, Delhi

Citizen Forum in Défense of Indian Financial Sector organized a National Convention in Speaker Hall Annexe, Constitution Club, V.P. House, Rafi Marg, New Delhi on 27th October 2018. In this convention Prof. Prabhat Patnaik & Prof. Jayati Ghosh





(economists); Sh. Harish Rawat (Congress) & Sh. Sanjay Singh (AAP) – political leaders and other prominent trade union leaders from financial sector – Insurance, Banking and representatives from Central Govt. Employees placed their views on the subject.

Initiating the discussion on the draft resolution eminent economist Prof. Prabhat Patnaik categorically demanded that Indian Financial Institutions particularly Public Sector Banks and Insurance Companies must be controlled by the State. Prof. Patnaik explained that capital deployed for social development must be controlled socially. He also explained that Indian Financial Institutions have been doing a marvellous job in mobilising the savings of the people for the welfare of the people. Indian public sector banks which are going to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the nationalisation next year are under tremendous pressure today from the neo-liberal forces for their total privatisation., are making more efforts to further strengthen these public sector banks. He appealed the public to understand the nefarious designs of the neo-liberal forces and launch effective campaign throughout India to foil the attempts of these forces in national interest.

Prof. Jayati Ghosh explained that the present danger is not limited to financial sector but all constitutional and democratic institutions are under attack by present political dispensation. She asked the audience and leaders of the organizations to fan out amongst general masses and make them

understand the real dangers before them in the language they understand. She appealed the present participants in the convention to continue their campaign and struggle so as to save national economic sovereignty.

Sh. Harish Rawat (Congress), former Central Minister and former Chief Minister of Uttarakhand and Sh. Sanjay Singh, MP from AamAdmi Party also spoke in the convention. Both of them appreciated the efforts of organizers in mobilizing the public opinion against the ill-effects of attack on financial institutions. Both the leaders extended their full support to the struggle launched by Citizen Forum in order to save Indian Financial Institutions.

Other distinguished speakers were – Com. V. Ramesh (General Secretary AIIEA), Com. Krishna Prasad (AIKS), Com. Thomas Franco (Ex-General Secretary AIBOC), Com. Nand Kumar (President BEFI), Com. K. Krishnan (General Secretary Confed. of Central Govt. Employees and Workers), Com. Vijay Bhonsle (General Secretary, All India NABARD Association) and Com. M L Malkotia (Treasurer CITU). All the speakers spoke on the specific challenges before their respective industries and exhorted to have a united struggle to defeat the policies of the Modi Govt. who is bent upon to weaken the democratic institutions and public sector units under the dictates of Corporate Houses (Indian





and foreign).

At the end of the convention draft resolution placed before the house by Com. A K Bhatnagar before start of the convention was passed unanimously. Following demands emanated from the convention –

1. Maintain the public sector character of financial sector institutions to uphold the freedom and sovereignty of the nation. Government should unequivocally declare that it will protect the public sector.
2. Priority should be given to protect the freedom and independence of the country from the onslaughts of finance capital.
Reasonable control be brought on speculative capital.
3. The Financial sector be reoriented so that the needs of the poor and the weaker sections are taken care of. Social banking be brought back.
4. The names of big defaulters of bank loans be published and willful defaulters are brought before law and punished.
5. The unreasonable and exorbitant service charges be withdrawn.

6. The severe conditions being imposed for advances extended to the poor, weaker sections and petty farmers and producers be dispensed with and required advances extended to them at concessional rate.
7. Security and safety of bank deposits be ensured and reasonable interest be given on deposits as majority of bank depositors are ordinary people and many of them are retirees.
8. All efforts should be made to strengthen public sector Life Insurance Corporation of India by the govt. Disinvestment process initiated by Modi Govt. in Public Sector General Insurance Companies should be stopped. Functional Autonomy should be given to public sector LIC and General Insurance Public Sector Association (GIPSA).

Com. Hira Lal, Member Planning Commission, Kerala Govt. explained in detail the significance of formation of such forums throughout India and placed following action programmes –

- A. Signature campaign through public meetings in defence of public sector financial institutions.
- B. Meeting of Citizen Forum delegation with the leaders of all political parties to make a demand to keep the financial sector protected.
- C. To organize the meeting and convention at all the major centers in defence of financial sector of India.

The effort of this movement is to apprise and bring all the political parties and all concerned to a consensus on the above demands. As against Aravind Panagariya's demand that all political parties should commit for privatization, our demand is that all political parties should undertake to strengthen the public sector institutions so that the financial freedom of the nation is defended and the interest of common man is taken care of by protecting the economic sovereignty of the country.

This National Convention of workers and officers working in Public Sector Financial Institutions and prominent economists called upon the citizens of the country to be a part of the campaign to protect and advance the interests of Public Sector Financial Institutions. This campaign is of National interest as its success will protect the economic sovereignty of the nation.



Conference of Kanpur Division Insurance Employees Association

The Annual General Body Meeting of KDIEA was held at Kanpur on 7th October 2018. The meeting began with flag hoisting by Com Dheeraj Dwivedi, president KDIEA amidst spirited sloganeering. The AGM had the presence of AIIPA President Com Ashok Tiwari, NCZIEF President Com Sanjeev Sharma and NCZIEF General Secretary Com Rajiv Nigam.

Com Shraavan Mishra placed the Annual Report before the house for discussion. Addressing the AGM Chief Guest and NCZIEF President Com. Sanjeev Sharma said that a lot of challenges have arisen due to Modi Government's anti worker, anti farmer and anti people policies. Unemployment touched a dangerous level and the recent report of the RBI on demonetization has been proved that government failed to achieve any of the objectives. He said that the Govt. is continuously attacking the autonomy of the LIC. He urged that we can stop these anti people policy of the govt. only through our unity and struggle. We have make the two day strike on 8th and 9th January 2019 a total success.

Com Ashok Tiwari, President of AIIPA, severely criticized the pro capitalist policies of BJP Govt. Quoting Shaheed-E-Azam Bhagat Singh, he said that capitalism is the root cause behind every labor problem and atrocity and capitalists succeed in exploiting the general people only when people are divided in the name of caste, creed, religion, language and states etc. Govt. effort to privatize public sector

organization is nothing else but to shift the focus point from public to profit. For raising his profit the Capitalist can exploit to any extent. These situations can be averted through our united and consolidated struggle and rational casting of our votes in the coming election.

NCZIEF General Secretary Com Rajiv Nigam, underlined that only confidence in our great organization is not sufficient but participation and connecting ourselves with the organization's ideology is more important. He said that the Modi Govt. has fulfilled none of the promises it made in 2014 to come to power. Instead it created trouble for the people by disinvesting, Demonetizing, and imposing GST on essential items like insurance etc. The suicide of about 16000 farmers during last four years is very unfortunate and complete failure of the govt. He warned the welfare of the people is dependent on our political decisions and if we cannot bring the pro-people and pro-workers Govt. in the coming election, we will have to face more challenges.

In total 26 speakers put their views in the AGM before the Report was adopted. The AGM elected a new team with Com. Amit Mishra as president, Com. Manoj Kumar as working president, Com. Arun Tiwari as General Secretary and Com Sanjay Srivastva as treasurer. The conference concluded with newly elected president Com Amit Mishra proposing the vote of thanks.

61st Conference of Chennai Division-I

The 61st Annual Conference of ICEU, Chennai Division-I, held on 27th and 28th of October, 2018 at Chennai laid down the course for the insurance employees' movement in the context of all round attacks on trade union and democratic rights during the four-year rule of the NDA Government under an undeclared emergency. The venue of the conference was named as "Comrade N.M.Sundaram Memorial Hall" and was attended by a huge audience making it difficult for the organizers to provide the needed accommodation and forced some of them stand on the steps of the staircase. The meeting was attended by senior leaders of AIIEA, present and former leaders of SZIEF and ICEU and leaders from the Chennai Region GIEA, besides pensioners. There was enchanting music rendered by three groups of comrades of 'Com.N.M.Sundaram Art Troupe' and a poem eulogizing the role of Com.NMS written by Com.K.R. chitra was read which made all those attended emotional. The songs about the multi-faceted role of AIIEA and the struggle for Indian independence were composed beautifully by Com.C.M.Kumar.

INAUGURAL SESSION

The inaugural session commenced with the flag hoisting by the president of the divisional union Com.G.Jayaraman. the flag hoisting was held with thunderous slogans hailing the achievement of AIIEA. The Conference, presided over by Com.G.Jayaraman, President, ICEU, Chennai Division-I, was inaugurated by Com. Amanullah Khan, President of AIIEA, whose exhaustive, brilliant and informative speech, was appropriate to make the beginning of the session a historic one and also led to formulate the decisions of the conference. He paid glowing tributes to the Chennai Divisional Union by recalling the days when the AIIEA headquarters was in Chennai for 15 long years and today remains the strongest unit occupying a special place in AIIEA. When the insurance employees organized under the banner of AIIEA are fighting for 40% wage increase, another option for pension, recruitment and a score of other demands, the situation all around us is disturbing



and the question has arisen as to whether India could continue to remain as a democratic and secular republic. The Indian Constitution is one of the best constitutions in the world, but it cannot protect the country and it is the will and struggles of the people that can do it. He cited the instances of recent developments in CBI, RBI, Election Commission, the Judiciary and a score of other institutions which are being compromised, the attacks on democratic institutions and on the rising prejudice on the basis of caste, religion, culture and region. Despite the enormous wealth produced in the country, the poor remain poor, because 1% of Indians corner 52% of the national wealth. He justified the demands of the organization by providing a lot of statistical information including the tremendous growth of LIC's premium income and its paying capacity. Finally, he referred to the decisions of the recent Delhi Convention of Central Trade Unions, national federations and a score of workers' unions taking a decision to go on two days' strike on 8th and 9th of January, 2019 and appealed to the comrades to participate in the strike and make it a cent percent success. The need of the hour is to organize the common masses, the working class, the peasants and the agricultural workers so as to shake foundation of the present government, he concluded.

Comrades T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF, M.Dhanaselvam, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-II and V.Ravi, Joint Secretary, Chennai Region GIEA, spoke briefly greeting the conference.

While Com.S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-I, welcomed the leaders and the gathering, Com.D.Ramesh, Joint Secretary, proposed a vote of thanks.



DELEGATES' SESSION

In the Delegates Session attended by 88 delegates out of 99 elected delegates, Com.S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, presented a comprehensive Report, the discussions on which were initiated by Com.R.K.Gopinath, Treasurer, SZIEF, followed by 12 more comrades. The Report was adopted unanimously as also the Statement of Accounts for the year ended on 31-12-2017. 20 resolutions

including the implementation of 5 day a week as agreed by LIC board, One more option for pension for left our employees' in the existing pension scheme, abolition of new pension scheme, immediate negotiations on wage revision for 40%, recruitment of class III and Class IV employees and other resolutions were passed by the house unanimously. Comrades S.Rajappa, senior leader of AIIEA, V.Suresh, Joint Secretary, SZIEF, K. Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF, L.Palaniappan, former President of ICEU, Chennai Division-I and K.David, former Manager of *Insurance Worker*, extended their greetings to the house.

The meeting elected an Executive Committee with Comrades G.Jayaraman as President, S.Rameshkumar as General Secretary and K.Sridhar as Treasurer, for the next term. The newly elected Office-Bearers were felicitated by Com.S.Sivasubramanian, Joint Secretary, SZIEF. The session came to a close with Com.K.Vijayalakshmi, Joint Secretary, proposing a vote of thanks.

COM. R.RAJENDIRAN FELICITATED

Com.R.Rajendiran retired from the LIC on 30-9-2018, after putting in service of 36 years. He served the organization in different capacities including as President and General Secretary of ICEU, Chennai I. He was also the Joint Secretary of SZIEF for one term. Com Rajendiran is connected with various social and democratic organizations. The ICEU, Chennai Division-I, organized a felicitation function in honour of Com.Rajendiran on 29-9-2018, which was presided over by Com.G.Jayaraman, President, ICEU, Chennai Division-I. Apart from Com.Rajendiran, his wife and other family members and relatives also were present in the meeting. Leaders who spoke felicitating Com.Rajendiran included Comrades S.Rajappa, senior leader of AIIEA, R.D.Dharanipathi, former General Secretary of SZIEF, K.Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF, S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-I and S.Raman, General Secretary, ICEU, Vellore Division. Speakers highlighted the multifarious activities of Com. Rajendiran and expressed the hope that he would continue his social activities after his retirement also.

Com.Rajendiran explained what made his involvement in all his activities possible and how several leaders guided him throughout. He donated Rs.10,000/ to ICEU, Chennai Division-I, Rs.5000/ to *Insurance Worker*, Rs.5000/ to Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front and Rs.5000 to Com.Selvam, who is doing full time job for the Units in Chennai. Com. Rajendiran also announced that he and his wife Mrs. Balambal had registered for donating their bodies (Cadaver Donation) to the Government Rajiv Gandhi Hospital to benefit the needy people.



23rd Conference of ICEU Karimnagar Division



The historic silver jubilee year conference (23rd general Conference) of ICEU Karimnagar Division was held on 28.10.2018 at Sircilla. The venue of the conference was named after our beloved leader of the Insurance employee's movement Com N M Sundaram. A massive rally was organized through the important streets of Sircilla town amidst thunderous slogans reverberating in the air. Around 90% of the ICEU membership across the Division participated in the rally. Com V Rajender President ICEU, Karimnagar division hoisted the AIIEA flag and floral tributes were paid at the martyrs column. Com A. Ram Mohan Rao General Secretary, ICEU, Karimnagar Division welcomed the guests on to the dais. He explained the significance of the the historic Silver jubilee year conference.

Com V Ramesh General Secretary, AIIEA inaugurated the conference. He congratulated the Karimnagar division for having completed 25 years of glorious, purposeful and eventful existence. He also congratulated the division for emerging as vibrant and one of the finest units of AIIEA during the last 25 years. He criticized the policies that are being pursued by government at the centre. He also criticized the government for adopting the regressive and pro corporate policies. He said that the while the first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru considered Public Sector as modern temples of India, the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi is destroying the Public sector. He gave a detailed picture of the prevailing situation in the country both on political and economic front. He made an appeal to all the employees to take part in the ensuing 2 days strike on 8-9 January 2019 to safeguard the interests of the Indian working class and against the anti people, anti worker policies of the government. He spoke on the pending issues such as wage revision, final option for pension recruitment and advised the employees to carry out prolonged and concerted struggles and campaigns to realize the pending demands.

Com M Sai Babu Secretary, CITU Telangana addressed in the inaugural session and lamented

24th General Conference of HRGIEA

The 24th General Conference of Hyderabad Region General Insurance Employees' Association was held at Kadapa on 13-14 October, 2018.

The Conference proceedings commenced with flag hoisting by Com.A.Narayana Rao, President, HRGIEA. Shri.G. Gopal, Regional Director, A.P Tourism Development Corporation and Chairman of the Reception Committee welcomed the gathering.

Com.M.A.Gafoor, General Secretary, C.I.T.U. Andhra Pradesh inaugurated the conference. He spoke at length about the crisis in the Indian economy and the disastrous impact of the policies pursued by NDA government. He pointed out to the developing resistance against these policies and exhorted the insurance employees to take

the lead in campaigning and mobilizing public opinion against these policies.

Com Sanjay Jha, Secretary, Standing Committee (GI), AIIEA attended the Conference as a Special invitee. In his address, he called





on the neo liberal and new economic policies perused by the government at centre and state. Sri Y Venkateshwarlu, SDM, Karimnagar Division attended and greeted on the occasion.

Com K Venugopal Rao President SCZIEF, while addressing the conference recapitulated his memories and association with ICEU, Karimnagar division for the last 25 years. He made a reference to the devaluation of the Rupee, inequities in real wages, increasing price rise in petrol and diesel prices, growing unemployment and economic inequalities in his speech. The government is dividing the society through communal polarization and attacking the working class, he added. He said united struggles are the only alternate before the working class. Representatives of the fraternal trade unions

upon the members to actively take part in the organizational activities to secure our rights and benefits. He stressed the need to strengthen AIIEA in General Insurance to fight against the ill conceived moves of the Central Government and safeguard Public Sector General Insurance Companies. Com.G.Anand, General Secretary, GIEA South Zone, Com G.Kannan, Joint Secretary, GIEA South Zone & Com.N.S.Sailaja, Women Convenor, GIEA SZ, Com A.Raghunatha Reddy, General Secretary, ICEU Kadapa DO, Com.Shankar Rao, LIC Pensioners Assn., & Com.D.Anjana Chary, General Secretary, GIPA, Hyderabad Region greeted the Conference

Com.KVVS.N.Raju, Vice President, AIIEA addressed the delegate session. In his address, he explained in detail about the developments in the Industry, achievements of AIIEA in securing

also attended the inaugural session and greeted on the occasion. The inaugural session came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Com B Prabhudas, Secretary, ICEU, Sircilla unit. A booklet giving brief account of service benefits was released by Com V Ramesh, General Secretary AIIEA in the inaugural session.

In the post lunch session Com A Ram Mohan Rao General Secretary submitted the reportage on behalf of the executive committee and Com V Vaman Rao submitted the statement of accounts. Around 15 comrades including women subcommittee co- convener participated in the debate. The house unanimously adopted the report and statement of accounts for the year 2017-18.

Com K Jayatheerth Joint Secretary SCZIEF and Com Md. Mahaboob Vice-President, SCZIEF greeted the conference and gave valuable suggestions to strengthen the organization. Com A Ram Mohan Rao summed up the debate and clarified the queries raised by the branch units.

The Conference unanimously elected Coms V Rajender as President, A Ram Mohan Rao as General Secretary and V.Vaman Rao as Treasurer for the ensuing term.

The conference ended successfully with vote of thanks proposed by Com G Ravindranath, Joint Secretary, ICEU, Karimnagar Division.

various benefits and also gave a call to carry forward the campaign and struggle to protect the Industry.

More than 20 comrades participated in the discussion on the report submitted by the General Secretary. Com.Y.Subba Rao General Secretary summed up the discussion on the report. The Report, Audited Accounts for the years 2016 & 2017, the reports of the Credential Committee and Resolutions Committee were unanimously adopted by the house. The Conference elected Com.A.Narayana Rao, Com.Y.Subba Rao and Com.A.Annapurna as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term. The Conference was a grand success and it resolved to carry forward the struggle against disinvestment move of the Government.

General Council Meeting of ICEU Bangalore Divisions I & II

The Annual General council meeting of ICEU Bangalore Divisions I and II was successfully held on 24th and 25th October 2018 at Jain College Auditorium, Bangalore. The General Council meeting started with unfurling of flag by Com.P.Nagendra, President, ICEU, DO II and the Salutation song was sung by comrades of Oriental base unit. The homage resolution was moved and Com. Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA and Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA and other leaders paid floral tributes to Com.N M Sundaram. More than 800 comrades attended the Inaugural session which was presided over by Coms D.Suresh and P.Nagendra, Presidents of Divisions I & II respectively.

Com. V. Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA inaugurating the conference explained the background in which the meeting is being held. He elaborately spoke on the crisis in the world economy and the dangerous games US imperialism is playing to retain its global domination. He also said that the growing anger against the pro-capitalist policies are being utilised by the right wing forces and they are trying to come to power and continue the same disruptive policies. While narrating the national situation he said four and half years of Narendra Modi government is a total failure and it has failed in all the promises given in its manifesto. The promise of creating two crore jobs has become a jumla and by introduction of demonetisation, GST, the jobs in the informal sectors are taken away and people are made to suffer without employment. He also said that

every democratic institution is being attacked and undermined.

Speaking on the development in the Insurance Industry he said that the government of India is continuously pursuing the policies that are not in the interest of public sector and nation at large. The effort by the government to run LIC as another department of government of India is unacceptable. While explaining the recent investment of LIC in IDBI he said that it must be in the interest of LIC and not at the instance of government. He assured that AIIEA will be ever alert to defend and protect the interests of the policyholders. Dealing with the communal and casteist polarisation, he said it is our responsibility to maintain unity and defeat those forces. He finally said that the 2019 general election is very crucial to Indian democracy and the insurance employees must play a very important role to defend the democracy and constitution.

Com. Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA, while addressing the gathering narrated in elaborate detail about the happenings in the country. He said that the media is only discussing the issues which are beneficial to the corporates and big business rather than the real issues like poverty, hunger, unemployment and destitution of the people. It is very important that the people of the country must set up a different narrative which deals with the life and living of the people. He explained about the present political situation where freedom of expression is attacked and the democratic space for dissent





is fast shrinking. He pointed out that insurance employees cannot escape these attacks as is seen in different divisions. He pointed out to the questioning of COCB and its President on the issue of comments in the Annual General Body Report on demonetisation. He said this cannot be ignored as absurd and ridiculous but has to be seen as an attempt to stifle any differing opinion. He also pointed out that there were sarkari agents within LIC who want to create a sense of fear and disrupt the unity of employees. But they must know that AIIEA is made of different mettle and it cannot be intimidated. They AIIEA will continue to speak truth to the powers and mobilise employees against all anti people and anti worker policies.

He spoke about the serious economic situation, rising inequalities, agricultural distress caused due to the aggressive implementation of neo-liberalism. He was critical of the delay in convening negotiations on wage revision and the unhelpful attitude of the government on the issue of a final option on pension. He also stressed on the need for recruitment in the very interest of the institution. He called upon the employees to make the two day strike on 8-9 January 2018 united planned by the trade union movement in the country to force the government to shift the focus from creating conditions for profits for the capitalists to the welfare of the working class and other deprived sections of the Indian society.

Com. Bhaskar Somayaji, Joint Secretary, AIIPA, Com. G.K.Gangadhar, General Secretary, I.C.P.A and Com. B.Prem Kumar, General Secretary, BRGIEA greeted the conference. Com. M L Ashok Kumar, Asst. Treasurer, ICEU DO II gave the welcome address and Com.R. Padmanabha, Joint Secretary, ICEU DO-I

proposed vote of thanks. Two meaningful Inaugural songs was rendered by the Malleswaram Base unit and Oriental base unit comrades.

In the delegates session, a comprehensive report was presented on behalf of the two Executive Committees. As many as Forty one delegates, majority of whom were women participated in the discussion on the report. The discussion focused

on developments of international, national, insurance industry, our organization and also problems of the base units. The debate marked an increased level of maturity, clarity of thought and a wonderful presentation by our comrades. The Report was unanimously approved after the discussions were summed up by Com S.K.Geetha, General Secretary, Division I. The Audited Statements of Accounts for the year 2017 presented by Coms K.B.Venkat Reddy and B.N.Yashoda Treasurers on behalf of Bangalore I & II respectively were also unanimously adopted. The conference adopted a number of resolutions relating to issues within the industry and of national importance.

Com. J. Suresh, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF while speaking in the delegate session clarified certain questions raised by the delegates and explained to the house anti-worker, anti-people policies pursued by the present BJP led NDA government. He also called upon the employees to participate in two day nationwide strike on 8th and 9th January 2019. Intervening in the debate, Com Amanulla Khan impressed upon the need to build cadres and the unity of the employees.

The General Council unanimously elected Coms. D.Suresh, S.K. Geetha and B.S.Ashok as President, General Secretary and Treasurer of Bangalore Division I. Coms. P. Nagendra, K. Gopal and B.N. Yashoda were elected unanimously and President, General Secretary and Treasurer of Bangalore Division II for the ensuing term.

The General Council meeting came to an end with the comrades committing themselves to strengthen the organisation with redoubled vigour and fight in defence of public sector insurance industry.

Silver Jubilee Conference of ICEU, Chennai-II



The 25th Silver Jubilee Conference of ICEU, Chennai Division-II, conducted on October 13-14, 2018 was a massive success in terms of participation of comrades, both men and women, high level of discussions bringing forth the problems facing the country as a whole in general and the working class in particular. Just before the Inaugural Session started, groups of women comrades rendered impressive songs connected to the trade union movement; performed a drama skit and also a dance which were applauded by the audience.

In order to enlighten the public and seek their support for safeguarding the LIC in the public sector, a number of programs were undertaken and three street-corner meetings were conducted at Gummidipoondi, Ambattur and Villivakkam, which were addressed by eminent speakers attracting the attention of the people.

Inaugural Session

The conference started with flag hoisting and opening of a photo exhibition. The conference hall was brimming with a huge audience, women exceeding the men comrades in numbers. The venue of the conference was named as "N.M.Sundaram Memorial Hall". The inaugural Session was presided over by Com.M.Dhanaselvam, President, ICEU, Chennai Division-II. The participants included some senior comrades

of AIIEA, leaders of SZIEF, Madurai, Tiruvelveli, Salem, Chennai -I and Thanjavur Divisional Units, GIC and former leaders of ICEU, Chennai-II. Com. K.Manoharan, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-II, welcomed the leaders and the gathering.

Inaugurating the conference, Com. Amanullah Khan, President of AIIEA, explained that there was all-round attack on the Constitution of India; public sector units including the LIC; freedom of expression; India's diversity and culture and a score of other impediments in the day-to-day life of the people. Due to neo-liberalism, the working people are under attack and the wealth of the country is unequally distributed. Communal polarization is taking place in every aspect of people's lives and the farmers are being made to suffer and commit suicide. The Judiciary, the Election Commission, the CAG and the Media are compromised. In such a context, we the insurance employees are demanding wage revision, recruitment, another option for pension and a score of other demands. We have to build up unity not only among ourselves but other sections of the toiling masses including the working class and unleash powerful struggles. He pointed to the unity achieved recently among a score of Central Trade Unions and other national federations including the AIIEA and the proposed all-India strike for two days on January 8 and 9, 2019 to put an end to the attacks.

In his special address to the house, Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA, referred to the demands of the AIIEA placed



before the LIC management including 40% wage rise, another option for pension and a score of other demands and stated categorically that the LIC has the paying capacity and the productivity of the employees had gone up. He regretted that in such a background, it is a pity that the number of employees is going down. The employees have contributed a lot to save the LIC in the public sector. Recruitment would bring forth prospective policyholders and the LIC's business would go up with recruitment. The need of the hour is a political campaign and struggle by unity among humanity. He quoted Dr.S.Radhakrishnan, former President of India who stressed that the minority should be protected. He also called for an end to the attack on the basis of religion, caste, etc. He expressed the confidence that if the employees unite and fight, the 40% wage rise and other demands could be achieved.

Comrades T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF, S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-I and M.Nagarajan, General Secretary, Chennai Region GIEA, greeted the participants.

Then the senior leaders of AIIEA and the former leaders of ICEU, Chennai Division-II were invited to the dais and felicitated.

Delegates' Session

Out of the 85 Delegates elected, 74 attended the Session. The discussions on the Conference Report, which had been circulated much in advance, started in the afternoon and 21 delegates participated including 8 women comrades.

The Delegates were greeted by Comrades S.Rajappa, senior leader of AIIEA, M.Girija, Joint Secretary, AIIEA, M.Kunhikrishnan, President, SZIEF, T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF, R.Punnamurthy, Vice-President, SZIEF, S.Santhanam, first General Secretary of ICEU,

Chennai Division-II and S.Muthukumarasamy, General Secretary, ICEU, Tirunelveli Division. Com.S.Kannan, President, CITU, Kancheepuram Dist., who is involved in the struggle of the 800 workers of Yamaha, a Japanese origin company, against victimization, denial of trade union rights and humiliation, greeted the delegates and on behalf of Chennai Division-II, a donation of Rs.10,000/- was made to him as a token of support to the struggle.

Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA addressed the delegates and informed them of the present challenges and the necessity to successfully meet them. Com.T.Senthilkumar, General Secretary, in his address, clarified on some of the points raised in the debate like Concurrencia, Server capacity, HFL loan, one more pension option and a score of other subjects.

Com.K.Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF dwelt on the history of Chennai, particularly North Chennai, elaborately. He referred to the establishment of the B & C Mills in which the first trade union was floated not by the workers but by two private employers. The first ever strike was also held in the Mills, he disclosed. He urged upon the comrades to read the history and keep themselves conversant with the historical developments. He also advised the comrades to expand the activities by activating the People for India forums, the need for which has been felt very badly in the last 4 years.

After Com.K.Manoharan, General Secretary, replied to the points raised in the discussions on the Report, it was adopted unanimously along with a set of resolutions proposed in the house.

The Conference elected Comrades K.Manoharan as President, M.Dhanaselvam as General Secretary and R.Sindhuja as Treasurer, for the ensuing term. Com N.Naganathan, Joint Secretary, ICEU, proposed a vote of thanks.

CONGRATULATIONS

Ms. S Sindhuja (22), daughter of Com. R Srinivasan, Treasurer, ICEU, Hyderabad Division earned the First Runners-up place in the prestigious 'Zee Sa re ga ma pa' Telugu Reality singing competition conducted by Zee Telugu channel. She is a versatile exponent of Carnatic and Hindustani music and a regular singer in Telugu, Tamil and Hindi TV Channel programmes. She is presently pursuing her Chartered Accountancy (Inter).

Insurance Worker congratulates Sindhuja and wishes her a bright future.



Golden Jubilee Conference of ICEU Machilipatnam Division



The golden jubilee Conference of ICEU, Machilipatnam Division was held at Guntur on 4th November, 2018. The Cadres of ICEU who reached the venue from different places of the Division participated in the massive procession holding placards and red flags. MLC Sri Boddu Nageswara Rao greeted the procession.

Later, the President of the Divisional Unit Com. J.Sudhakar hoisted the flag of AIIEA. The leaders and the cadres paid their homage at the martyrs' column. The Venue of the Conference was named -'Com. NMS Nagar'. Com.V.V.K.Suresh, Vice-Chairman, Reception Committee invited the guests on to the dias. The Chairman of the Reception Committee and Ex-MLC Com. K.S.Lakshmana Rao delivered a welcome speech. Women employees from Guntur and Vijayawada rendered revolutionary songs which inspired the audience.

Inaugurating the Conference, Com. K.Venu Gopal, Vice-President, AIIEA elaborately dealt with the latest developments in the insurance industry. He said,' the first private insurance company was allowed to undertake insurance business in the year 2000. Since then,many companies were permitted to compete with LIC. The governments at the Center made several attempts to weaken the public sector LIC. However,the All India Insurance Employees' Association has been always prepared and worked out its strategies to thwart the evil designs of the ruling classes from time to time and came out successful in safeguarding the industry. This was possible due

to the admiration and unflinching support extended by the people every time towards LIC. Even during the tenure of Mrs.Indira Gandhi, an attempt was made to split LIC into smaller Corporations. We resisted this dangerous move too by mobilizing people in a big way.

The present BJP government at the Center,for the last four and half years has totally failed on all counts. The Modi government shattered our economy by the twin assaults of demonetization and GST. Farmers' suicides are continuing unabated. Indian agriculture is thrown out into a deep crisis. The youth in our Country are denied jobs and the existing jobs are also being lost. The banking sector is crippled during this period. NPAs are on the rise. On the other side, the communal forces are trying to disrupt the unity of the country with deceitful slogans like 'One Nation and One Culture'. In this hour of grave situation, it is the responsibility of the entire working class, more particularly the middle class employees must remain alert and be prepared to meet the emerging challenges '.

Sri T.M.M.Jayasimhan, Sr.Divisional Manager Com.Md. Mahaboob, Vice-President, SCZIEF and Com. P.Satish,Vice-President, SCZIEF and Com.G.Madhusudana Rao, Treasurer, SCZIEF and Com.R.Siva Rami Reddy, Vice-President, Nellore Division greeted the Conference. Many other leaders from the fraternal trade unions like ICREA,CITU,UTF, Class1Officers' Association,NFIFWI, LIC OBC Employees' Association,Welfare Association of LIC SC/ST Employees (WALIC) ,LIAFI and LICAOI attended the inaugural session to greet the Conference.





27th Conference of LICEU Kottayam Division

The 27th Divisional Conference of LIC Employees' Union, Kottayam Division was held on 27th and 28th of October 2018 at Kottayam.

The Divisional President Com. Treesa P Ignatius hoisted the union flag to formally announce the start of the conference, accompanied by revolutionary slogans. AIIEA Joint Secretary Com. M Girija inaugurated the open session. She cautioned the audience about the vicious campaign being carried out by certain vested interests against LIC and underlined the need to remain vigilant against such propaganda. AIIEA Vice President and SZIEF President Com. M Kunhikrishnan, SZIEF Joint Secretaries Com. P P Krishnan and Com. R Sarvamangala, LIC Pensioners' Association Kottayam Division General Secretary Com. Baby Joseph and KSGIEU General Secretary Com. M U Thomas greeted the open session. The meeting was presided over by Divisional President Com. Treesa P Ignatius. General Secretary Com. VK Ramesh delivered the

welcome speech and Joint Secretary Com. K S Sailesh Kumar proposed a vote of thanks.

24 comrades including 6 women comrades participated in the deliberations on the Report and Statement of Accounts placed before the General Council. Intervening in the discussion, Comrades M. Kunhikrishnan, M. Girija, P P Krishnan and R Sarvamangala gave the necessary explanations and clarifications. Resolutions on Recognition to AIIEA, Wage Revision, Recruitment to Class III & IV posts, One more option for pension, withdrawal of GST on life insurance premium, protect LIC's autonomy, protect PSUs, Withdraw the anti labour laws, check the price rise, ensure security for women and keep vigil on communalism were adopted by the general council.

Comrades Treesa P Ignatius, V K Ramesh and Santhosh Ninan Zachariah were elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

Com.G.Kishore Kumar presented the annual Report in the delegate session and it was followed by the debate on the report. Later the Report and the audited Statement of Accounts were unanimously approved by the house.

Com. K Venu Gopala Rao, the President, SCZIEF, while addressing the delegate session highlighted the present scenario both on the political and economic fronts. He explained in detail how the social and economic inequalities are growing during the present regime at the Center. He appealed to the cadres to make two day nationwide strike on 8th and 9th January 2019 a grand success.

An inspiring and colorful exhibition which was arranged in the Venue depicting the various

struggles in the Division was inaugurated by Com. K Venu Gopala Rao. On the joyous occasion of golden jubilee of ICEU, Machilipatnam Division, the retired leaders of the divisional unit were felicitated by Com. K Venu Gopal and their significant contribution to the union was well recalled.

Com.J.Sudhakar Com. G.Kishore Kumar and Com.P.Nagaiah were unanimously elected President, General Secretary and the Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term. Com.K.J.S.Vijaya Kumar, Convenor, Reception Committee proposed a vote of thanks and the Conference came to an end successfully with the rendition of international song.

45th Conference of IEA Jamshedpur

The 45th Annual General Conference of Insurance Employees' Association Jamshedpur Division was held on 27th-28th October 2018 at Hindustan Building, Jamshedpur. Joint Secretary of ECZIEA Com. Trinath Dora was the chief guest and President of ECZIEA and Vice President of AIIEA Com. Pradip Mukherjee was the guest of honour at this conference. With the flag hoisting by Com. Smt. Purabi Ghosh, President, IEAJD the program started followed by paying homage to the martyrs' column. While inaugurating the conference,

Com. Trinath Dora discussed the economic and the political environment of the country. He supported the agitation of farmers all over the country and advocated for the implementation of Swaminathan committee report. He also said that today the government is trying to change the history and efforts are made to divide the society in the name of caste and religion. Representatives of other unions at LIC also addressed the open session of the conference. All of them were unanimous that we have to carry forward the progress of LIC and also we have to campaign against the anti public sector attitude of the government. This conference was also addressed by the representatives of the fraternal trade unions at Bank, railway and in health sector. All of them discussed the promises of the government and the ground reality and emphasized the need for united struggle.



In the delegate session, Annual report was placed by the General Secretary of IEAJD Com. Amit Maity and accounts for the year 2017-18 was placed by the treasurer Com. Sukanto Sharma which was passed unanimously. Addressing the house in the delegate session, Com. Pradip Mukherjee discussed the splendid performance of LIC and cautioned the house regarding government's steps to privatize the public sector units. He also called for strengthening the hands of the forces who stands for working class and raises voices on behalf of the toiling masses. Com. Trinath Dora, addressing the conference in the delegate session discussed in detail the issues like wage revision, one more option for pension and other issues related to the employees. 150 delegates and observers attended the conference. 25 delegates took part in the discussions. All the speakers discussed the present situation and emphasized on strengthening the organization to fight against the upcoming challenges. 16 resolutions on important national and industrial issues were moved and adopted unanimously.

The conference unanimously elected the new working committee for the ensuing term with Com. (smt.) Purabi Ghosh, Com. Amit Maity and Com. Sukanto Sharma as President, General Secretary and Treasurer of respectively.



PFI -Vizag Round Table Meet on 'Inter-Caste Marriages-Honour Attacks-Way Forward'

People for India, Visakhapatnam Forum conducted a Round Table Meeting on 07th October at LIC Sports Club. Prof KV Ramana presided over the meeting. All the participants in the meeting spoke covering various aspects of the caste system and unequivocally condemned the inhuman attacks and killings in the name of honour on the newly wedded inter caste couples. A Declaration was proposed by Sri BB Ganesh, Convenor, PFI demanding the govt. to hasten the legal process through Fast Track Courts and punish the guilty severely and immediately. The Declaration demanded that incentives such as Jobs, Reservations to their children be declared to the youth opting for inter caste marriages, legal assistance and police protection be provided to them and a legal enactment be made providing immediate entitlement of the estate of the parents. It has called upon the progressive forces

to undertake campaign these ideals among the people and arrest such uncivilised attacks. The house adopted the declaration unanimously.

A galaxy of eminent persons viz., Sri EAS Sarma, former Energy Secretary, two Professors from Political Sciences and Anthropology, AU, Sri A Aja Sarma, Gen Sec, Forum for Development of North Andhra, Sri BL Narayana, Vice Chairman, PFI, leaders from Ambedkar Bhavan, Kula Vivakshata Vyatireka Porata Samithi and AP Girijan Sangham, Miss Priyanka, AIDWA, Sri N Ramana Chalam, GS, ICEU, Sri G Vijay Kumar, GS, LIC SC/ST Employees' Welfare Association, Smt P Padmavathi, Co Convenor, LIC WWCC, Sri R Pandu Rangan, GS, ICREA etc. The deliberations were witnessed by many active members of ICEU, students and others. Smt P Poornima proposed vote of thanks.

PFI & LICWWCC condemn brutal killing of Pranay

People for India, Visakhapatnam Forum and LIC Working Women Co ordination Committee have organised Candle Light Protest Meeting on 03.10.2018 at Dr Baba Saheb Ambedkar statue, near LIC building condemning the brutal murder of Perumalla Pranay in Miryalaguda.

Addressing the protestors, Prof. KV Ramana, former VC, AU and Chairman, People for India Forum strongly condemned the ghastly and horrible incident wherein Mr. Pranay, S/o Balaswamy, HGA, LIC of India, a Dalit youth was cruelly murdered for marrying an upper caste girl. Prof. Ramana said the the criminals are continuing the crime unabated and fearlessly as the government is not serious in enforcement of the SC/ST Atrocities Act and other acts. He also said that such heinous crimes threatening the social harmony will increase unless the communal forces are kept away from power and demanded that a separate machinery with statutory powers should be set up to arrest such crimes. Large number of employees including women, Dos,

Agents from LIC, Medical Representatives etc, took part in the protest.

Sri BL Narayana, Vice President, PFI, Sri N RamanaChalam, Gen. Sec., ICEU, Smt. TSunanda, LIC Working Women Convenor, Sri G Vijay Kumar, Gen Sec, LIC SC ST Employees' Association, Sri Kannan, Gen Sec, LIC Dev Officers' Assn, Sri K Bhagawan Prasad, President, LIC Class I Officers' Assn and and Sri T Satyanarayana, LIC Agents Organisation led the protest.



Seminars on Social Security

At Kolkata

As decided by the seventh General Conference of AIIPA, a seminar on Universal Social Security was organised on 19.9.2018 at Subarna Banik Samaj Hall Kolkata by the four LIC Pensioners' Association(KMDO1,KMDO2,KSDO Howrah) and GIC Pensioners' Association, West Bengal.

Comrade Himadri Mohan Roy, C.C. Member, AIIPA, welcomed the audience and proposed the name of Comrade Subhash Mitra, Vice President of AIIPA, to preside over the seminar. Comrade Chandra Sekhar Bose, the veteran leader and one of the founders of AIIEA, glorified the seminar by his presence.

The president initiated with the remark that at present with the exception of few countries, there is no Social Security of the old persons. In India, practically there is no Social Security. A very small section of workers enjoys scant social security. It is the demand of all trade unions, social institutions and organisations, that there should be sufficient social security for the old and retired people. He requested Comrade Srikanta Mishra, the Joint Secretary AIIEA and General Secretary of East Central Zone Insurance Employees Association to deliver his speech.

Comrade Mishra extended his greetings to all. He congratulated the AIIPA and the Pensioners' Association of Kolkata for arranging such a seminar on Social Security for the aged persons which is a universal problem. The struggle of pensioners cannot be alienated from the struggle of other sections of people. Life expectancy of Indians is increasing and there is more demand for Social Security. 75% of the people live in rural areas. Old people, both male and female are obliged to do some work for their lively-hood as they have no Social Security provided by the government. The New Liberal Economic Policy oppressed the general people not only in India but throughout the world and the Government stopped and diminished the Social Securities available to the old people. According to Melbourne Global Rating Agency, the pension system of various countries was analysed and India remains at the bottom of the list. Struggle and only joint struggle with all sections of working people and retirees will repeal the National Pension System and compel

the ruling classes to introduce and improve Social Security for all classes of working people and retirees.

The speech of Comrade Mishra was highly applauded by the audience. Secretariat Member of EZIEA, General Secretaries of KDLIEA 1 and KDLIEA 2, HDIEA, and GIPA, few employees, Leaders of Joint Morcha of Pensioners' Associations, West Bengal, Member of other organisations and many other dignitaries attended the Seminar. The President thanked Comrade Mishra and all the pensioners and the employees, Comrades of Kanthi, Kharagpur, Diamond Harbour who came a long way to attend the conference and concluded the meeting.

At Trivandrum

A Seminar on Protection of Social Security was jointly organised by LIC Pensioners Association and LIC Employees Union Trivandrum on 23-10-2018 at Bank Employees Union Hall Trivandrum

Inaugurating the Seminar the Shri Kadakampally Surendran Hon'ble Minister for Dewaswam, Co-operation & Tourism Kerala said that the policies toeing the Neo Liberal dispensation unleashed by the Manmohan Singh Govt under UPA and followed up viciously by the current Modi government under NDA now in power at the Centre have only heaped misery and sufferings for the common man while it served the interests of the Corporate Barons in India. These policies have seriously whittled down social security arrangements in place as Pension and other welfare measures. As a result senior citizens in India are being denied pension and similar welfare arrangements. He appreciated the organisers for the Seminar which will focus the attention on these disruptive policies and pave way for a broad based unity to beat back these offensives against common man.



Comrades V G K Pillai (LIC Pensioners Association Trivandrum), P Sajukumar (LIC Employees Union Trivandrum), P V Jose from BEFI, D Mohanan from PF Pension Association presented papers on this subject at the Seminar. Comrades S S Potty (CITU), K Sadasivan Nair (KSSPU), C K Rajeev (AKBRF), MC Nair (CGPA), S Umachandra Babu (KCSFA), Vancjiyoor Gopalakrishnan (KSRTCPO) also greeted the Seminar.



Shri R Radhakrishnan (Ex President of Kerala Sasthra Sahitya Parishad) presided over

the function and Com P G N Varma (LICPA) welcomed the gathering and Com S Madhu (LICEU) proposed a Vote of thanks

RELIEF WORK AT SAKLESPUR

ICEU, Mysore Division had taken up the responsibility of providing some relief to the unfortunate victims of severe floods in Kodagu. The AIIEA had donated Rs.2 lakhs for this purpose. Apart from this all the Divisional

units in Karnataka had made collections from the employees.



Saklespur Taluk was also seriously impacted by the flood. The ICEU, Mysore with the help of the Plantation Workers Union organised a relief camp on 4th November 2018. Two very badly affected villages were chosen. 75 families of Hongadahalla and Hijjanahally were distributed foodgrains and other basic necessities of life. This gesture came for very good appreciation. The villagers were thankful to the organisation for reaching them with help.

The Mysore Divisional Unit is also in discussions with the administration for constructing a permanent structure in Kodagu District. Finality on this issue is expected to reach shortly.

BREAST CANCER AWARENESS CAMP

Women's Sub-Committee of ICEU Visakhapatnam Division organized an awareness camp for women comrades of Visakhapatnam city units on 09.10.2018 at Sports and recreation club, divisional office premises, Visakhapatnam. The camp was addressed by Dr D Jyothi, Gynec oncologist at Mahatma Gandhi cancer hospital. Addressing the gathering, she said that there are 14 million cases of cancer every year globally. Cervical, breast, ovarian, endometrial, vaginal and vulval cancers are common among women. Though causes may be genetic, a proper balanced diet, proper life style may help prevention, she said. Breast feeding is a major prevention method, she said. If detected at an early stage, cancer can be cured she said. She also dealt at length on the methods of screening, the various medical tests that can be conducted to detect

cervical as well as breast cancer and also the different vaccines to be given to young girls to prevent cervical cancer.

Women comrades attended in large numbers and benefitted immensely. Com Sunanda, Convenor, WWCC welcomed the gathering and a memento was given away to Dr D Jyothi by CO- Convenor Com Padmavathi



Trade Union Classes for Divisional Leadership of SCZIEF

SCZIEF organised a Trade Union workshop for the leadership of divisional units along with comrades from the units of AIIEA in General Sector in the State of Karnataka at Mysore on 22nd & 23rd September, 2018. The classes were held in Karnataka State Open University campus, Mysore where the ambience provided further fillip to the classes.

Com.K.Venugopala Rao, President, SCZIEF while inaugurating the classes gave a brief account of political, social, economic developments that are taking place in our country. He lamented that country is in complex situation wherein diversity, fundamental rights, sovereignty are under attack. Hate is being cultivated in our country in an organised manner with the abetment of ruling BJP with divisive forces. He expressed anguish over the fact that and society is polarised on communal lines. PSUs are being attacked with maniac frenzy. There is solace from the new horizon of unity developed between Kisans and Mazdoors, which was demonstrated in the streets of New Delhi on 5th September. He exhorted the leadership to imbibe working class consciousness as there are millions of mutinities waiting to rise up in our country.

The first class "Caste, Class & Indian Society" was dealt by Com. K Swaminathan, Vice President, SZIEF.

He traced the roots of pernicious caste system in our country by referring to the works of D.D.Kosambi, Dr.B.R.Ambedkar etc. Caste is class in its primary production stage and it has entrenched Indian Society, he quoted Kosambi. He refuted the misleading campaign that Dr. Ambedkar was anti-left, anti-Muslim and opposed to class struggles. He painstakingly explained the purport of writings of Dr.Ambedkar in proper perspective. He criticized the vested interests for trying to malign Mahatma Gandhi on his efforts to discard untouchability. Gandhi is being pitted against Dr. Ambedkar, which is unwarranted as both worked with common understanding against caste discrimination, he stated.

'Annihilation of caste' propounded by Dr.Ambedkar too find reflection in the Indian communist manifesto,

which talked of waging joint front of Dalits, depressed sections, toiling masses against British Zamindars. He underscored the fact that if the society is not safe, LIC as well as AIIEA family members will also be affected, citing the dastardly murder of Pranay, S/o Com. Balaswami, Miriyalaguda due to horrible caste killing. He informed that there are 200 instances of honour killings in Tamilnadu in the last 10 years on caste discrimination.

He explained that AIIEA is a socially conscious organisation and the cadres of AIIEA have been playing pivotal role in TNUEF, KVPS etc. AIIEA has always been trying to raise the consciousness of people so as to bring a society free of caste oppression, economic exploitation. He stated that Trade Union movement can only ignore these social malaises and evils, at its peril. AIIEA, being a class organisation, always advocate for uniting working class irrespective of religion, caste, gender, religion. He shared the experience of TNUEF in conducting various forms of agitations against caste discrimination

The Second Class on "Idea of India" was dealt by Com Amanullah Khan. He analysed the difficult times in which we are placed and the challenges posed by globalization to mankind across the world. In our country, the right wing which is in power today has been saffronizing all institutions and every institution got affected due to their coercive policies, he underscored

Com.Amanulla pointed out that Independence movement is not just confined to congress alone as different streams of thought joined the national liberal movement.

Our Constitution enshrined noble ideas like equality, liberty, fraternity and justice for all and they reflect the ethos of our Independence





movement. There is serious threat to such noble ideas now as democracy is being sought to be converted as Plutocracy with Parliament being occupied by the rich and super rich. He said we are in a post-truth period where emotions have become more important than truth itself. Nationalism is decided on the basis of religion and opinions different from the government and the rightwing are branded as anti-national. There is grave threat to the syncretic and composite culture of our country by the majority and minority fundamentalists, who are making the false bogey of religion is under threat. Unless electoral reforms are undertaken to checkmate the onset of Corporates, bigwigs into politics, democracy will be a mockery, he analysed.

He said the Idea of India is to construct a democratic, secular, fair, equal and just society. This is a long struggle but we have to put all our efforts to project this Idea of India and build broad base unity amongst all sections of Indian people, he exhorted.

The third class "Evolution of PSUs- Policies of Government -Organizational Tasks" was dealt by Com. Venu Gopal, Vice President, AIIEA. He traced the first industrial policy of 1949, wherein emphasis was given on building modern India with the establishment of PSUs in heavy industries.

He pointed out that the emerging capitalist class had no wherewithal to establish heavy and big industries in our country and consented to the State creating the infrastructure. He highlighted the objectives of 2nd industrial policy (1956) which set an objective of generating employment and enhancing the living standards of people. In accordance with the objectives, SBI, LIC, HPCL, BPCL, GIC came into being during 1950s to 1980s, who played stellar role in development of our country. He also highlighted the assistance given by then socialist countries led by USSR in establishing steel plants in our country.

However, with the advent of Thatcherism-Reagonomics policies in 1980s, the whole world witnessed different approach towards Public Sector and the focus got a firm shift to market economy to benefit the elite class. After the advent of neo-liberal economic reforms, since 1991 the ruling classes launched predatory attacks on

PSUs being hand in glove with International & domestic finance capital. In the name of LPG policies, the self-reliance of our country was given a go by and PSUs were placed on the altar to propitiate the insatiable greed of MNCs to Corporates.

He explained and how in spite of Malhotra Committee recommendations way back in 1994 to privatise LIC/GIC and despite the consistent efforts by successive governments, the insurance employees under the banner of AIIEA waged a relentless glorious struggle which has ensured that still the public sector LIC and a majority of the General insurance companies are still in public sector and in the control of government. He was critical of the policies of the government in not support the public sector insurance which is supporting for the development of self-reliant India and exhorted everyone to continue our campaign amongst the public. He urged upon the leadership to campaign vigorously amongst the general employees the need to integrate our struggles with other sections of working class in forging unity against the anti-people and anti-worker policies of the present Government.

There was a lively inter-action session after every class and the faculties lucidly clarified the doubts and questions raised after the group discussions.

Com.K.Jayateertha, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF made a brief analysis of organisation which was supplemented by Com.J.Suresh, Joint Secretary.

130 comrades from all 17 Divisions including 19 women comrades and comrades from HDRGIEA and BRGIEA participated in these classes. Com K Venugopal Rao, President, SCZIEF acted as Principal. The classes came to an end with vote of thanks by Com. J Suresh.

The classes provided impetus and ideological orientation to Divisional Leadership which augurs well for the advancement of our movement. ●

Insurance News in brief

■ A.M.KHAN, DHARWAD

* IRDA proposes following changes in linked, non-linked policies: a) Minimum death benefit to be 7 times for regular premium products and 1.25 times for single premium products for all ages; b) Non-linked policies to acquire guaranteed surrender value after 2 years. c) Revival period extended to 5 years from the current 2 years in respect of non-linked products. d) Option for commutation up to 60% to be allowed in respect of pension products. e) Settlement option period extended till 10 years or original policy term, whichever is lower. f) Minimum life cover prescribed will be 7 times the annual premium across age groups; g) Pension policyholders to be allowed to buy annuities from any insurer and commutation of up to 60% to be allowed. h) Partial withdrawals in case of linked pension plans are allowed for key goals. i) Policyholders allowed flexibility in changing tenure after buying the policy. IRDA has requested all stakeholders to offer their comments and suggestions on the proposed draft regulations latest by 15th November, 2018.

* Privatisation continues unabated. After deciding to put in abeyance the plan to merge the three public sector general insurance companies, Oriental Insurance Company, National Insurance Company and United India Insurance Company, a Ministerial Panel headed by Union Finance Minister, Arun Jaitley, has approved the offers for sale (OFS) of shares of about 10 per cent each in General Insurance Corporation (GIC Re) and New India Assurance Company (NIA). Only a year ago, October 2017, Government had sold 12.5 % shares of GIC (Re) to mop up Rs.9704 crore. In November 2017, the Centre had mopped up Rs 7,653 crore by listing NIA.

* Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY) was launched in January 2016 by Prime Minister Narendra Modi revamping the earlier National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (NAIS) and Modified National Agricultural Insurance Scheme (MNAIS). Prime Minister had said that the PMFBY "would bring about a major transformation in the lives of farmers". Government further went on to announce that PMFBY "incorporates the best features of all previous schemes and at the same time, all previous shortcomings/weaknesses have been removed". It also claimed that farmers will have to pay lower amounts as premium and that through the use of technology, the government

will ensure 'quicker settlement of claims' compared to the previous crop insurance schemes. But the reality is farmers have paid more by way of premium and received less as claims. The insurance cover has gone up by only 0.42 per cent but the companies

have collected 350 per cent more as premium. For the two seasons that the PMFBY has been implemented 2016-17 and 2017-18, insurance companies – private and public – collected a gross premium of Rs 47,408 crore. Total claims paid as on October 10, 2018 was Rs 31,613 crore.

* A Report by Willis Towers Watson and Mergermarket, first six months of 2018 has seen highest global insurance mergers and acquisitions during first-half of any year since the financial crisis. Total deal value during this period was up \$44.4 billion.

* American International Group Inc. (AIG) is exiting business activities in Iran that came with a subsidiary, Validus Holdings Ltd, a Bermuda-based reinsurer, it acquired in July this year for \$5.56 billion due to the sanctions against Iran that have been reimposed by the Trump administration,

* Globally, India has the seventh-largest insurance gap accounting for 17 per cent of the total global insurance gap. India's insurance gap is at 1 per cent of its GDP - \$ 27 billion which was \$19.7 billion in 2012" – says Llyod's Underinsurance Report 2018. The Report goes on to state that the global underinsurance gap is now \$162.5 billion, a reduction of just over 3 per cent over a period of six years from \$168 billion in 2012.

* Report of the Working Group, formed by IRDA in July 2018, for standardization of exclusions in Health Insurance Contracts, has recommended a standardised list of just 17 pre-existing that could be excluded from health insurance policies. The recommendations also specify that diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, AIDS/HIV infection, morbid obesity, if contracted after buying a health cover, cannot be excluded. The standardised list of 17 permanent exclusions include epilepsy, congenital heart disease, cerebral stroke, chronic liver and kidney diseases, hepatitis B, Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, HIV and AIDS, loss of hearing, and physical disabilities. The recommendations also suggest a four-year waiting period for inclusion of any ailment (other than permanent exclusions) in the cover of health cover as against the present average of two year. But for conditions such as hypertension, diabetes and cardiac problems, the committee has said that the waiting period should not be more than 30 days. ●

Working Class Struggles

S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE ■

BANGLADESH HEALTH WORKERS PROTEST FOR PAY RISE AND OVER DUE WAGES

- Over 28000 health workers held a sit down protest outside the city Health Central in Kawnia, Barisal District over four demands. This includes 11 months outstanding wages, workers warned that they will take more militant action if their demands are not met.

PAKISTAN: Karachi dock workers protest for outstanding benefits and permanent jobs:

Hundreds of dock workers employed at Port QASIM are on their sit-down demonstration outside Karachi Press club. Wages have been withheld for several months by Huaneng Fuyun Port and Shipping Company. These workers have been on strike for seven weeks.

HITACHI MACHINERY MAINTENANCE WORKERS STRIKE IN NEW SOUTH WALES:

Hundreds of workers at the Hitachi construction machinery depot in MUSWELL BROOK New South Wales are on rolling two hour stoppages, which they began on 1st July, in a dispute for a new enterprise agreement. The highly skilled maintenance workers are demanding upgraded pay and conditions in line with other workers in the Hunter Region mining industry.

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA STAFF STRIKE: Members of the National Territory Education Union and Australian manufacturing workers union at the University of CANBERRA stopped work for 24 hours on 1st November in a dispute over proposed Enterprise Agreement. The strike follows a half-day stoppage in October over inadequate offer.

AUSTRALIAN CRANE HIRE WORKERS STRIKE IN SINGLETON:

Workers at Boom logistics in Singleton, North of Sydney began an indefinite strike since 15th October over pay and working conditions. According to Union communication ten months of negotiations in the fair work commission had failed to establish an agreement on pay and casualisation. There were four different entities working at the Depot at four different rates of pay doing the same job.

TAIWANESE FLIGHT ATTENDANTS PROTEST AGAINST OVERWORK:

Hundreds of flight attendants protested in TAIPE on 6th November against overwork. The workers held rally outside CIVIL AERONAUTICS ADMINISTRATION (CAA) headquarters, urging the agency not to legalize excessive work hours.

MEXIAN EDUCATION SECRETARIAT WORKERS STRIKE FOR UNPAID SALARIES:

Administrative staff for the Education secretariat of TABASCO began a

strike and occupation of the department's office in VILLAMERMOSA, Mexico on 30th October. The workers primary demand is the payment of wages for September and October. Another demand by the striking workers is a guarantee that they will be paid their wages in November and December, as well as the over due Bonus.

TUBE WORKERS' STRIKE BRINGS LONDON TO A HALT:

On 6th of November London underground tube drivers ended a second round of strike. Over 8 lakhs daily commuters were affected by the strike by Central Line Drivers. The action was in defence of tube workers sacked by management since September; it also involved accumulated grievances, including the failure to employ sufficient numbers of Drivers and other staff.

STRIKES BY SWISS CONSTRUCTION WORKERS:

Over 4000 striking workers held rallies through LAUSANNE on 5th November protesting against longer working hours and eliminating the minimum wage.

NIGERIAN POWER SUPPLY WORKERS PROTEST WORKING CONDITIONS:

Electrical Power workers in Nigeria's EDO state Capital Benin held protest over pay increase. The workers are not paid salary increase ever since the company was privatised in the year 2013.

SOUTH AFRICANS GOLD FIELDS MINERS STRIKE OVER JOB LOSSES:

Workers are on strike since November 2nd over thousands of jobs losses.

KENYAN MEDICAL STAFF STRIKE OVER UNPAID WAGES AND OTHER DUES:

Public hospital workers went on strike through out Homa Bay County on 5th November. The workers are protesting over non payment of salaries over 10 months and non payment of National social security Fund. The Kenya National union Nurses, the Kenya union of clinical officers and the Kenya union of medical Laboratory officers are also protesting against lack of Medical Equipment and harassment by management.

SCHOOL SUPPORT WORKERS VOTE TO STRIKE IN RURAL DISTRICT IN WASHINGTON STATE:

School support staff in the North Thurston Public School in Washington state voted to authorise strike actions on 5th November against the Refusal of the District to provide adequate wage increase and a state law prohibiting public employees from strike.

Economic Tid Bits

■ J.SURESH, MYSORE

- According to latest global wealth report 2018 published by Credit Suisse, the richest 10% of the Indians own 77.4% of country's wealth. The richest 1% own 51.5% of country's wealth. The bottom 60%, majority of the population own 4.7% of wealth. According to the report, the Gini wealth coefficient in India has gone up from 81.3% in 2013 to 85.4% this year, which shows inequality has risen during the last four years. 91% of the adult population has wealth below \$10,000, while a small fraction of 0.6% of population has a net worth of over \$100,000. These data clearly exposes that the fruits of development are cornered by a minuscule minority in India which is not a healthy sign in a democracy.
- According to former Chief of US Fed Reserve Janet Yellen, there had been a "huge deterioration" in the standards of banklending to Corporation has a potential source of major instability with "systemic risks". She expressed her concerns to the so-called leveraged loans which are provided to companies with weaker credit ratings – a market which amounts to \$ 1.3 trillion in the US. One of the key risks associated with leveraged loans is that they are repackaged into collateralised loan obligations (CLOs) that are brought and sold by investors—a similar process to that which occurred in the sub-prime mortgage market which set off the financial meltdown in 2008, when a crisis in one, relatively small area of the market, spread throughout the system.
- According to a report by NGO United Way, 38.5% of households in New Jersey can not afford daily necessities in 2016. These necessities include food, housing, transportation, medical care, child care and a smart phone. The percentage of these households has increased by 15% since 2010. This proportion of struggling households includes 10.5% who lived in poverty in 2016, along with an additional 28% in a category that the report calls "Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed (ALICE). ALICE households, sometimes called the working poor, earn more than the federal poverty level. The proportion of ALICE households, however has increased steadily from 23.8% in 2010 to 28% in 2016. People aged 65 and older account for much of the growth in the number of ALICE households. Even with a social security benefits, 46% of New Jersey seniors have income below the ALICE threshold, according to the report.
- According to a recent study by the University of California at Berkeley economist Gabriel Zucman and British economist Thomas Wright, US multinational corporations are evading trillions of dollars of taxes on profits booked overseas. Around \$ 180 billion in a year is the tax savings on US multinationals' overseas operations. They also note that oil-producing states in the Middle East and elsewhere slashed their tax rates on US oil companies from an average of 70% between 1966 and 1990 to an average of 45% in 1990-91. The American multinationals' profits booked in offshore tax heavens increased from 20% of total US overseas profits in the first half of the 1990s to 50% today. They also note that US multinationals face effective Corporate tax rates in non-heaven countries of 27% as compared to 7% heaven countries. Since late 1990s, the effective overseas tax rate for US non-oil multinationals has fallen by nearly half, from about 35% to 20%. The estimated \$ 180 billion a year in reduced taxes on foreign earnings by US multinationals is five times the \$ 30 billion per year needed to eradicate world hunger.
- General Motors registered a 25% rise in third quarter profits to record \$ 3.2 billion. The increase in profits, despite falling sales in General Motors two largest markets, North America and China is the result of relentless cost cutting. US Corporations are averaging around a 20% increase in profits chiefly through the suppression of workers wage demands, the intensification of work and the spread of part-time and temporary employment. After announcing its profit results, GM has announced voluntary buyout packages to 18000 of its 50000 North American salaried employees or 36% of its workforce. In spite of increased profits, the wages for workers – both private and public – rose by only 2.8% in the 12 month period ending September 2018, according to labour department report of USA. For manufacturing workers, compensation costs were only 1.9%, while teachers and other state and local government workers got a miserly raise of 2.5%. The current inflation of USA is 2.3% for the 12 months ending in September 2018, according to labour department.



Brand of the year : LIC is selected as one of the winners of Indian "Brand of the year" award in the prestigious World Branding Awards, London. 270 brands from 33 countries participated in the event.

Special reports: LIC of India directed all the Third Party Agencies (TPAs) across the country to get the pathological reports of policyholders countersigned by registered medical professionals who have postgraduate (PG) qualification in pathology. Many pathological laboratories engage pathologists who are doing rampant practice of pre-signing on blank report pads of tests without physically visiting the concerned laboratories.

Shift towards protection: Insurance companies have reported moderate new business growth in the first half of the financial year with the focus shifting towards protection and away from savings. Business mix continued to shift towards higher protection which are pure term and health products. This is when 61st month persistency declined, reflecting the proportion of life insurance policies that were renewed by customers after five years falling.

Insurance gap widens: In India, the insurance gap has widened from \$19.7 billion in 2012 to \$27 billion in 2018, even though non-life insurance penetration has improved marginally from 0.7% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2012 to 0.9% as of 2018. While the insurance gap is a measure of the total value of assets divided by the value of assets that are protected by an insurance cover, insurance penetration is the ratio of the total premium underwritten in a particular year to the GDP of the country or industry. 'Penetration' states the value of total premiums in relation to GDP, while 'Gap' measures the total cost not covered by insurance policies.

Rs.40 Lakhs fine for Reliance: IRDAI has imposed a penalty of Rs.40 lakh on Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Company for violation of various regulatory norms, mainly related to 'outsourcing guidelines'. IRDAI has also asked the company to submit an action report with regards to directions issued by the authority within 90 days.

Mis-selling leads complaints: A bulk of the complaints received by the insurance ombudsman in the life sector are in respect of mis-selling of policies by intermediaries. In non-life, rejections of health claims on grounds of a pre-existing ailment is the primary cause of dispute. According to the annual report of the Executive Council of Insurers (ECOI), which facilitates the institution of Insurance Ombudsman in India, mis-

For our Field Force

■ ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

selling is done by forging the proposer's signature on forms or by selling long-term plans even though the proposer does not have the capacity to maintain the policy beyond the initial payment.

No ombudsman: At present, Ahmedabad, Delhi, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna, Pune and Noida are headless. After remaining headless for almost two years, Mumbai has former insurance executive Milind Kharat as the Ombudsman (from May 2018) overseeing complaints of Mumbai and Goa. Since this body settles most complaints in the favour of the policyholders, having an Ombudsman heading the office ensures that the complaint will be addressed quickly. In cases where there are an absence of hard evidence, benefit of doubt goes to the complainant. Due to this, customers whose claims have been delayed or denied can approach this forum to get the decision reviewed.

10 lakh in one year: Online insurance company, Digit Insurance, has announced that it has crossed 1 million customers within 1st year of their business.

Insurance through Alexa: Aviva Life Insurance on Wednesday announced its debut on Amazon's Alexa platform with Insurance Made Easy. With this new digital initiative, Aviva becomes the first life insurance company in India to offer an Alexa skill to engage with its customers.

Claim by Direct Click: Bajaj Allianz General Insurance has launched an innovative new mobile-based service called Health CDC (Claim by Direct Click) through which customers can register and track their claims in a hassle-free manner. The service is offered through their unique Insurance Wallet app. Customers who have the wallet app can use the CDC service to make claims up to Rs.20,000.

FC must: A Full Bench of the High Court of Kerala comprising five judges has held that absence of fitness certificate for a transport vehicle amounts to fundamental breach of third party insurance policy. It was held that the insurer will get 'pay and recover' option in compensation cases arising out of accidents caused by transport vehicles without fitness certificate.

No insurance: The Madras High Court has reiterated that insurance companies are not liable to compensate for deaths or injury of unauthorised passengers in goods/transport vehicles such as lorries or transport vans.

Relief for Victims of Titli Cyclone at Vizag

ICEU Visakhapatnam in association with Visakha Apartment Resident's Association and Forum for Development of North Andhra together carried out relief activity to the victims of Titli cyclone in Srikakulam District. Titli cyclone had hit the rural areas of Srikakulam District on October 12th 2018. The rural areas of the entire district have been devastated due to high speed winds and rain and the people were left without any food, clothing and shelter. The Government has done



precious little but has not gone to the interior areas of the district. ICEU gave a call to all its units to collect donations from the members. The members responded immediately to the

call and gave liberal donations. Apart from collections amongst the members, ICEU also collected donations from general public on the beach road. The public responded positively and contributed their mite. Rice, Bedsheets, sarees and men's clothing were distributed to 500 families at an SC colony at Tekkali and a girijan colony called Sudikonda near Palasa Branch Office. Leadership of ICEU, VARWA and FDNA along with Palasa and Srikakulam units participated in the programme.

ANGIKAR (Pledge)- Women's Event at Kolkata

The Women's Sub-Committee of Kolkata Sub-urban Division Insurance Employees' Association with the help of Ananda Pathshala and Nandankanan who are taking care of 69 street children organised a program on 10th October 2018 to felicitate and help these children to commemorate the holy time line of Durga Puja. The children were gifted with new clothes and other

materials needed for their studies. The Women Sub-committee also hosted a lunch. The cost of the entire program was met through generous donations of the employees at the call of the Sub-Committee. The program was participated by a large number of employees and the leadership of the divisional union.



The children showed their gratitude by performing group

songs which enthralled the audience. The program came in for all-round appreciation as the participants left with a good taste and warmth in their hearts.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
January 2018	288	6573.86
February	287	6551.03
March	287	6551.03
April	288	6573.86
May	289	6596.69
June	291	6642.34
July	301	6870.60
August	301	6870.60
September	301	6870.60

Base1960 = Base 2001 x 22.8259

DONATIONS

Com.Subir Kumar Dutt, Beliaghat Br., Kolkata Div.	Rs.3000
Com. V.Bhaskaran, CBO 1, Coimbatore	2000
Com. Subramanian, CBO 1, Coimbatore	1000

Insurance Worker heartily thanks the ablove comrades for their fine gesture.

*with best compliments
from*



**CUTTACK DIVISION
INSURANCE
EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION**



Posted at Bangalore PSO, BG-5600026
on 5th/7th/12th of Every Month
Date of Publication: 3rd December 2018

REGISTERED KA/BGW-1693/2018-20 RNI NO.5122/1957
Licensed to post Without Prepayment WPP No: 262

SOUHARDA

UNION OFFICE
OF AIIEA UNITS
IN BANGALORE



AIR-CONDITIONED
MEETING HALL
WITH A SEATING
CAPACITY OF 200
4 AIR-CONDITIONED GUEST ROOMS
WITH 15 BEDS

Contact Address:

SOUHARDA

No.1, 1st Cross, CSI Compound,
Mission Road, Bangalore-560027

Email: iceubglgh@gmail.com Ph: 080-48529910

Printed by : Vedaraja N.K. for and on behalf of All India Insurance Employees' Association
at Kriya Prakashana, No. 12, 18th Cross, Sampangirama Nagar, Bangalore - 560 027
& Published by him from No. 8, O.T.C. Road, Bangalore - 560 002. Editor : Amanulla Khan