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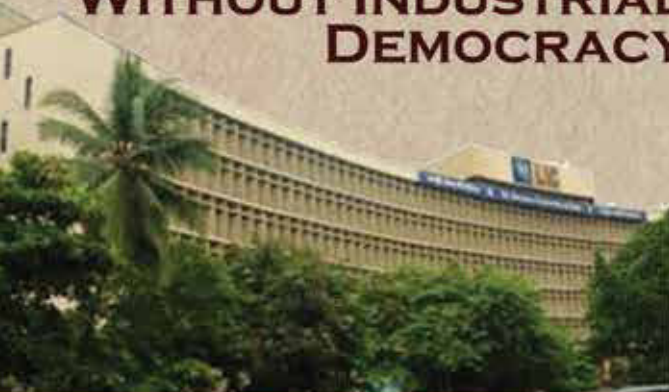
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**REJECT & DEFEAT
the POLITICS
of HATE &
POLARISATION**

**NO REAL DEMOCRACY
WITHOUT INDUSTRIAL
DEMOCRACY**



RESTORE LIC'S FUNCTIONAL AUTONOMY

MAY DAY CALL



... GAINS OF WORKING WOMEN



Killing a Child



Dilution of PoA & Dalit Resistance



शिक्षा और बजट आवंटन



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LIC Board's Functional Autonomy Undermined

It is becoming increasingly clear that actions of government are seriously undermining the functional autonomy of the LIC Board. Despite official claims that LIC is a Board managed autonomous undertaking of the government, the government is running LIC as yet another government department. The recent developments indicate that not only on the investment decisions but even on the routine functioning of the Corporation, the Department of Financial Services is imposing its decision. This is very dangerous at a time when LIC has to compete with 23 other private companies while shouldering responsibility of making the largest contribution to the nation building exercise. But then, LIC is not a case in isolation. It is common knowledge that much of the problems of the Indian Public Sector Undertakings are due to excessive bureaucratic control. The Boards of PSUs are packed with political nominees while the

government continues to deny a role for the labour in the management.

The makers of Indian Constitution were convinced that labour is not a mere factor of production but a partner in the industry and there can be no real democracy without industrial democracy. Therefore, Article 43A of the Constitution under Directive Principles of the State Policy mandates the government to take suitable steps to ensure workers participation in the management. Despite such clear directions, successive governments have denied workers their right to participate in the decision making process of the institution in which they work. In the case of LIC even recognition to the representative trade unions is also denied. But what is much more alarming is that public sector units are being used to dispense political favours and excessive bureaucratic control is denying public sector to manage its

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affairs professionally. Therefore, much of the blame for the problems of PSUs is due to lack of industrial democracy, bureaucratic control and denial of autonomy to the Boards to run the institutions and industries.

LIC is the premier financial institution of the country. Its asset base is expected to touch nearly 30 lakh crore. The LIC is the single biggest investor in the economy. It is obliged to not only make enormous contribution to the nation building activities but also offer security of policy moneys and ensure decent returns to its clientele. The policies of the government and the regulatory directions place huge burden on this great institution. Despite this LIC dumbfounded its critics by adopting itself to the challenging competitive atmosphere to emerge not just as a market leader but also as a market maker. Despite 23 private companies backed by big multi-national corporations operating in the market, the LIC has maintained a continuous dominance with a share of nearly 72% in premium income and 75% in number of policies. This is truly a creditable performance. There is no doubt that LIC is set to create new records in the financial year 2017-18.

It is disturbing to note that the functioning of such a premier institution is not free from bureaucratic interference. The last few days, reports in leading newspapers suggest that government is taking investment decisions of LIC especially in its disinvestment program rather than leaving such decisions to the LIC Board. There are reports that government is considering to sell its remaining stake in Air India to LIC and PSGI companies after it completes the strategic sale of this important public undertaking. It is unnecessary to discuss the merits or demerits of such an investment as we are opposed to the very privatisation of the Public Sector. But what is baffling is that the government is pre-deciding the issues rather than allowing the LIC Board to take investment decisions on the basis of merits. This is a clear subversion of the functional autonomy of LIC Board.

The autonomy and integrity of LIC Board also comes into question when it is not in a position to implement its own decisions on

employee related issues. Take the case of Five Day Week. The introduction of Five Day week was a part of the wage agreement concluded in the year 2015. This offer was made after the approval of LIC Board. Even after 3 years, the government is not issuing notification to honour the commitment of the LIC Board. This is not the first time that is happening. The Board Resolution of granting 100% DA neutralisation to employees who retired prior to August 1, 1997 is pending with the government for over a decade forcing the employees into litigation on this score. The recommendation of LIC on the issue of a final option to join the LIC Employees' Pension Scheme 1995 too is being stonewalled by the government. These developments make it clear that the autonomy for LIC and its Board is severely eroded.

The LIC employees went on a One Hour Walk Out strike on 28th March 2018. The LIC Class I Officers too joined the strike. The strike was to register a strong protest against the inability of LIC to implement the promises it made as also against the bureaucratic control that is undermining the functional autonomy of LIC. The strike evoked massive response across the country. The response to the strike call demonstrates the underlying anger and discontentment of the employees to the goings on in the institution. The government and LIC management must realise if the genuine grievances of the employees continue to remain unattended, there will be a serious deterioration of industrial relations.

The LIC has been built by the sweat and toil of its workforce. The commitment of the workforce has made LIC a truly world class organisation. Having contributed to the growth and prosperity of the institution, they have a legitimate claim for an upward wage revision and improved working conditions. The wage revision fell due over 8 months back and there is no indication as to when negotiations will be opened to reach a satisfactory settlement over this important issue. The LIC cannot always seek refuge under the government inaction or policies. It is the moral responsibility of LIC and its Board to meet the legitimate aspirations of the workforce.

It is becoming increasingly clear that LIC employees will have a long winter of struggles. The present struggle is not just on monetary issues. The struggle is also to safeguard the interests of the policyholders and the national economy. The LIC has to be made sensitive and responsive to the demands of the employees and the government should be

persuaded not to treat LIC as a department of the government and allow it to function as a Board managed institution by restoring to it the functional autonomy. This twin task requires massive campaign and struggle and this has to be undertaken with courage of conviction.

REJECT AND DEFEAT THE POLITICS OF HATE

रोज सुबह अखबार मेरे घर
खून में लथ-पथ आता है

Every morning newspaper comes
To my house fully soaked in blood

These two telling lines by Gulzar describe the horrible situation in the country today. There is violence everywhere against women, dalits, minorities and other weaker sections. Rape, murder and killings are not exceptions but everyday occurrence. The BJP which is the biggest political party in the country today has institutionalised hate politics. This politics of hate is tearing the country apart. The spread of communal and caste poison to polarise the Indian society may help the BJP win elections but the country would ultimately loose out. This politics of hate would seriously impact the national unity. There is increasing evidence that in the last few years the VIP hate speeches have registered a quantum jump and the guilty include even those holding constitutional positions. This is something that should alarm all the progressive sections of the Indian population.

The politics being played over the horrific gang rape and murder of an 8 year old girl in Kathua has shamed the nation. The chilling details of this premeditated rape and murder as described in the charge sheet filed by the police must create revulsion in every sane person. But what disgusts are attempts made to give a communal colour to this heinous act and polarise the J&K society. The support to the alleged rapists by two BJP Ministers in the J&K Cabinet and the attempt by Jammu Bar Association to obstruct the legal process

is highly condemnable. In yet another case in Unnao in UP, the brazen efforts of the Yogi government to protect the BJP MLA accused of rape of a girl is really shameful. The MLA is arrested only after the intervention of Allahabad High Court.

The long silence of the Prime Minister over these dastardly crimes and his party's open support to the accused are inexplicable. However, these horrific crimes united the nation and there was an outpour of anger and massive upsurge by the citizens who took to the streets demanding justice to the victims. The nationwide reaction of the citizens unnerved the government and the Prime Minister was compelled to speak. Finally he broke his silence with a generalised statement that the events of the past few days were shameful and the daughters of India will get justice. One hopes that the government will not force the investigating and prosecuting agencies to compromise and take all steps to ensure justice to the victims in true sense.

The country has recorded huge increase in the number of atrocities on women including rape in the last few years. There is massive increase in the attacks on Dalits. The Dalit protest against the dilution of SC/ST atrocities Act was brutally repressed and dalit youths are being hunted in UP and false cases hoisted upon them. There are clear attempts to fan communal problems across the country. Even the occupant of the Governor's house in Tripura continues to spread hate. This situation is unprecedented.

But in this situation of darkness, there is also a silver lining. The refusal of the

father of Mukesh Kumar killed by a Muslim family in Delhi over inter-religious marriage to communalise the situation is really heart warming. He firmly rejected attempts by Delhi BJP Chief to give communal colour to this killing. Similarly, the Imam of Asansol in West Bengal who lost his 16 year old son in the communal fire refused and prevented retribution. His appeal to the Muslim community in Asansol for peace and taking upon himself the responsibility to ensure peace in the city brings out the best in human values.

The country today is grappling with multiple problems. Despite claims of a fast growing economy, joblessness is increasing. Agriculture is in distress bringing farmers onto the streets in unprecedented struggles. Massive working class struggles are building

against the neo-liberal policies. The university campuses are restive. The slogan 'na khaonga na khaedonga' has become laughable in the face massive bank frauds. There is all-round discontent across the country. In such a situation attempts will be made to divide the country on communal and caste lines to create polarisation to retain power.

Such attempts have to be defeated. The people must speak up. They must challenge politics of hate. Let's be clear that societies built on hate cannot survive. It is love that unites the people and help progress of human race. It is worth recalling the words of 14th century great Persian poet Hafiz Shirazi that "Every other foundation we see is faulty, except that of Love, which is faultless". Therefore, India must reject and defeat this politics of hate.

एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड के कार्य करने की स्वायत्तता कमजोर हुई है

यह ज्यादा से ज्यादा स्पष्ट होता जा रहा है कि सरकार की गतिविधियां एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड के कार्य करने की स्वायत्तता को कमजोर कर रही हैं। अधिकृत दावे के बावजूद कि एल.आई.सी. एक बोर्ड द्वारा प्रबन्धित स्वायत्त उद्यम है, सरकार एल.आई.सी. के साथ एक विभाग जैसे ही व्यवहार कर रही है। हाल के घटनाक्रम यह संकेत देते हैं कि न केवल निवेश से सम्बन्धित निर्णयों में बल्कि निगम के सामान्य कार्यक्रमों से सम्बन्धित काम में भी वित्तीय सेवाओं का विभाग अपने निर्णय थोपता है। यह बहुत खतरनाक है खासतौर पर ऐसे समय में जबकि एल.आई.सी. को 23 प्राइवेट कंपनियों से प्रतिस्पर्धा दृष्टा करनी पड़ती है तथा इसे राष्ट्र निर्माण के कार्य में सबसे अधिक योगदान करने की अपनी जिम्मेदारी भी पूरी करनी पड़ती है। परन्तु एल.आई.सी. ऐसा अकेला उद्यम नहीं है। यह सामान्य से ज्ञान की बात है कि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उद्यमों की अधिकतर समस्याओं की वजह अत्यधिक नौकरशाही नियंत्रण है। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उद्यमों के बोर्डों को राजनीतिक मनोनीत व्यक्तियों से भर दिया जाता है जबकि सरकार प्रबन्धन में श्रमिकों की भागीदारी की भूमिका से इन्कार करना जारी रखती है।

संविधान के निर्माता संतुष्ट थे कि श्रमिक उत्पादन में मात्र एक कारक ही नहीं बल्कि उद्योग में भागीदार भी होता है तथा इसीलिए औद्योगिक जनतन्त्र के बिना सच्चा जनतन्त्र संभव नहीं है। इसलिये राज्य के नीति-निर्देशक सिद्धान्तों के अन्तर्गत अनुच्छेद 43ए सरकार को

यह निर्देश देता है कि वह उद्योग के प्रबन्धन में श्रमिकों की भागीदारी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए समुचित कदम उठाये। इस प्रकार के स्पष्ट निर्देशों के बावजूद एक के बाद एक सरकारों ने श्रमिकों के उस उद्योग के बारे में निर्णय लेने के अधिकार से ही इन्कार कर दिया है जिसमें कि वे काम करते हैं। एल.आई.सी. के मामले में तो प्रतिनिधित्व करने वाली यूनियन को मान्यता ही प्रदान नहीं की गयी है। लेकिन अधिक आश्चर्यजनक यह है कि सार्वजनिक उद्यमों का इस्तेमाल राजनीतिक पक्षपात के लिये किया जा रहा है तथा अत्यधिक नौकरशाही नियंत्रण इसे अपने कार्य का व्यवसायिक रूप से प्रबन्धन नहीं करने दे रहा है। इसलिये सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उद्यमों की समस्याओं का अधिकतर दोष औद्योगिक जनतन्त्र की कमी, नौकरशाही नियंत्रण तथा संस्था व उद्योग को चलाने के लिये आवश्यक स्वायत्तता से इन्कार करने को ही जाता है।

एल.आई.सी. देश का प्रमुख वित्तीय संस्थान है। इसकी सम्पत्ति के 3. लाख करोड़ को स्पर्श करने की संभावना है। एल.आई.सी. अर्थव्यवस्था में सबसे बड़ा निवेशक है। इससे राष्ट्र निर्माण में बहुत बड़ा योगदान करने की आशा ही नहीं की जाती बल्कि बीमाधन की सुरक्षा एवं अपने ग्राहकों को ज्यादा से ज्यादा लाभ प्रदान करने की उम्मीद भी की जाती है। सरकार की नीतियों व नियामक निर्देशों से इस महान संस्था पर बहुत बोझ पड़ता है। इसके बावजूद एल.आई.सी. ने

बदलते हुए प्रतिस्पर्धि वातावरण के अनुरूप अपने को ढालते हुए अपने आलोचकों को चुप करा दिया है तथा वह मार्केट लीडर ही नहीं बल्कि मार्केट मेकर बनकर उभरी है। बड़े बहुराष्ट्रीय निगमों द्वारा सहायता प्राप्त 23 प्राइवेट कम्पनियों द्वारा बाजार में काम करने के बावजूद एल.आई.सी. ने प्रीमियम आय के 72 प्रतिशत हिस्से तथा पालिसियों की संख्या के 75 प्रतिशत हिस्से के साथ अपना वर्चस्व बनाए रखा है। यह वास्तव में प्रशंसनीय उपलब्धि है। इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं कि एल.आई.सी. वर्ष 2.17-18 में नये रिकार्ड स्थापित करेगी।

यहां यह उल्लेख करना परेशान करता है कि इस प्रकार के प्रमुख संस्थान भी नौकरशाही नियंत्रण से मुक्त नहीं है। मुख्य समाचार पत्रों में पिछले कुछ दिनों की रिपोर्टें यह बताती हैं कि सरकार एल.आई.सी. के निवेश निर्णय, खासतौर पर सरकार के विनिवेश कार्यक्रम से सम्बन्धित निर्णय, एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड पर छोड़ने की बजाए खुद ले रही है। इस प्रकार की रिपोर्ट है कि सरकार एयर इंडिया में अपने बचे हुए हिस्से को इस महत्वपूर्ण सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उद्यम में रणनीतिक बित्री के बाद एल.आई.सी. व आम बीमा की सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कम्पनियों को बेचने पर विचार कर रही है। इस विनिवेश के गुण व दोषों पर विचार करना अनावश्यक है क्योंकि हम सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उद्यमों के निजीकरण के खिलाफ हैं। लेकिन जो चीज परेशान करती है वह यह है कि सरकार एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड को गुणों के आधार पर निर्णय लेने की बजाए पहले से ही मुद्दों पर निर्णय ले रही है। यह एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड के काम करने की स्वायत्तता के स्पष्ट उल्लंघन का मामला है।

एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड की स्वायत्तता व ईमानदारी पर तब और सवाल उठते हैं कि जब वह कर्मचारियों से सम्बन्धित मुद्दों पर लिये गये निर्णयों को लागू कर पाने की स्थिति में नहीं होता है। सप्ताह में पांच दिनों के कार्य का मामला ही लीजिये। पांच दिनों के इस कार्य दिवस का प्रस्ताव 2.15 के वेतन समझौते का हिस्सा है। यह प्रस्ताव बोर्ड के अनुमोदन के पश्चात दिया गया था। तीन वर्ष के बाद भी सरकार एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड के इस वादे को पूरा करने की अधिसूचना जारी नहीं कर रही है। ऐसा पहली बार नहीं हो रहा है। 1 अगस्त 1997 से पूर्व सेवा-निवृत्त हुए कर्मचारियों को 1.. प्रतिशत मंहगाई भत्ते का निष्प्रभावीकरण करने सम्बन्धी बोर्ड का प्रस्ताव एक दशक से सरकार के पास पड़ा है और इस मुद्दे पर कर्मचारियों को मुकदमेबाजी करने पर विवश होना पड़ा है। एल.आई.सी. कर्मचारियों को पेंशन योजना 1995 में सम्मिलित होने का अन्तिम विकल्प देने की एल.आई.सी. की सिफारिश पर सरकार ने इन्कार कर दिया है। यह

घटनाएं यह स्पष्ट करती हैं कि एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड की स्वायत्तता आश्चर्यजनक रूप से कमजोर हुई है।

28 मार्च 2.18 को एल.आई.सी. कर्मचारियों ने 1 घण्टे की बर्हिगमन हड़ताल की थी। एल.आई.सी. के प्रथम श्रेणी अधिकारी भी इस हड़ताल में शामिल हुए थे। हड़ताल एल.आई.सी. द्वारा अपने वादों को पूरा करने में असमर्थता तथा एल.आई.सी. बोर्ड के कार्य करने की स्वायत्तता जो अत्यधिक नौकरशाही नियंत्रण से कमजोर हो रही है, पर अपना शक्तिशाली विरोध दर्ज कराने के लिए की जा रही थी। पूरे देश में हड़ताल को जबरदस्त समर्थन प्राप्त हुआ था। हड़ताल के आव्हान के प्रति लोगों का जबरदस्त उत्साह उनके अन्दर के गुस्से व विरोध को दर्शाता है जोकि संस्था के अन्दर जो कुछ भी हो रहा है उसके खिलाफ है? सरकार व एल.आई.सी. प्रबन्धन को यह महसूस करना चाहिये कि यदि कर्मचारियों की जायज मांगों पर कार्यवाही नहीं होती है तो औद्योगिक सम्बन्ध गम्भीर रूप से प्रभावित होंगे।

एल.आई.सी. अपनी श्रमशक्ति के परिश्रम व पसीने से बनी है। श्रमशक्ति के समर्पण ने एल.आई.सी. को सचमुच दुनिया के स्तर का संस्थान बना दिया है। संस्थान की वृद्धि एवं समृद्धि में योगदान करने के पश्चात उनका बड़े हुए वेतन व सुधरी हुई कार्य की दशा पर जायज दावा बनता है। वेतन संशोधन लगभग .8 माह पूर्व ही वाजिब हो गया था परन्तु अभी तक इस बात के कोई संकेत नहीं हैं कि इस महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे पर संतोषजनक फैसले के लिये वार्ता कब शुरू होगी ? एल.आई.सी. हमेशा सरकार की नीतियों व निष्क्रियता की शरण नहीं ले सकती। अपने कर्मचारियों की जायज आकांक्षाओं को पूरा करना एल.आई.सी. व उसके बोर्ड की नैतिक जिम्मेदारी है।

यह और अधिक स्पष्ट होता जा रहा है कि एल.आई.सी. कर्मचारियों को संघर्षों के लम्बे जाड़े का सामना करना पड़ेगा। वर्तमान संघर्ष केवल पैसे सम्बन्धी मुद्दों पर नहीं है। यह संघर्ष बीमा-धारक के हितों की रक्षा करने का व राष्ट्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था का भी है। एल.आई.सी. को कर्मचारियों की मांगों के प्रति संवेदनशील व उत्तरदायी होना पड़ेगा तथा सरकार को यह बात स्वीकार करनी पड़ेगी कि वह एल.आई.सी. के साथ सरकार के एक विभाग की तरह व्यवहार करना बन्द करके कार्य करने की स्वायत्तता बहाल करे और इस संस्था के बोर्ड द्वारा प्रबन्धित रूप की अनुमति प्रदान करे। यह दोनों कार्य जबरदस्त अभियान व संघर्ष की मांग करते हैं तथा इन्हें साहस व दृढ़ विश्वास के साथ प्रारम्भ करना होगा।

नफरत की राजनीति को अस्वीकार तथा परास्त करो

रोज सुबह अखबार मेरे घर
खून में लथ-पथ आता है

गुलजार के द्वारा कही गयी ये दो पंक्तियाँ देश में आज के भयानक हालात को बयाँ करती हैं। महिलाओं, दलितों, अल्पसंख्यकों तथा अन्य कमजोर तबकों के प्रति हर जगह हिंसा हो रही है। बलात्कार, हत्या और खून-खराबा अपवाद स्वरूप नहीं रोजमर्रा की घटनाएं हो गयी हैं। बीजेपी जोकि देश की सबसे बड़ी राजनीतिक पार्टी है, ने नफरत की राजनीति को संस्थागत बना दिया है। साम्प्रदायिकता तथा जातिवाद के जहर को फैलाकर भारतीय समाज का धुवीकरण करके बीजेपी को चुनावी जीत तो मिल सकती है लेकिन अन्ततः देश की हार होती है। नफरत की यह राजनीति देश की एकता पर गंभीर प्रभाव डाल रही है। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में महत्वपूर्ण व्यक्तियों द्वारा नफरत के वक्तव्यों के देने में बड़ी मात्रा की बढ़ोतरी के सबूत मिले हैं और यहाँ तक कि ऐसे लोग संवैधानिक पदों पर भी बैठे हुए हैं। यह एक ऐसे खतरे की घंटी है जिससे भारत की जनसंख्या में प्रगतिशील तबकों को सचेत हो जाना चाहिये।

कठुआ में एक आठ वर्ष की लड़की के जघन्य बलात्कार एवं हत्या के ऊपर खेली जा रही राजनीति ने देश को शर्मसार कर दिया है। पुलिस के द्वारा जो चार्जशीट प्रस्तुत की गयी है उसमें इस बलात्कार तथा हत्या का जो खौफनाक वर्णन दिया गया है उसे पढ़कर प्रत्येक सभ्य इन्सान के मन में घृणा उत्पन्न हुई होगी। लेकिन इस नृशंसता को साम्प्रदायिक रंग देकर जम्मू-कश्मीर के समाज को धुवीकृत करने में प्रयोग करने का कार्य और भी अधिक घिनौना है। बलात्कार के आरोपियों को जम्मू-कश्मीर के बिनेट के बीजेपी के दो मंत्रियों द्वारा समर्थन दिया जाना तथा जम्मू बार एसोसियेशन के द्वारा कानूनी कार्यवाही में अड़चन पैदा करना घोर निन्दनीय है। उत्तर प्रदेश के उन्नाव के एक अन्य मामले में, योगी सरकार द्वारा जिस निर्लज्जता से एक लड़की से बलात्कार के आरोपी एक बीजेपी के विधायक को बचाने का प्रयास किया है, अत्यन्त शर्मनाक है। उस एम.एल.ए. को इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय के हस्तक्षेप के उपरान्त ही गिरफ्तार किया गया।

इन घृणित अपराधों पर प्रधानमंत्री की लम्बे समय तक चुप्पी तथा आरोपियों को उनकी पार्टी में खुले समर्थन को समझाया नहीं जा सकता। हालांकि इन डरावने अपराधों ने देश को एक कर दिया और सड़कों पर नागरिकों का भारी आवेग उबर कर आया जोकि गुस्से में थे तथा पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय की मांग कर रहे थे। नागरिकों की देशव्यापी प्रतिक्रिया से सरकार हतोत्साहित हो गयी तथा प्रधानमंत्री को बोलने के लिए मजबूर होना पड़ा। अन्त में उन्होंने अपनी चुप्पी तोड़ते हुए एक सामान्य सा वक्तव्य दिया कि पिछले कुछ दिनों की घटनाएं बहुत शर्मनाक हैं और कि भारत की बेटियों को न्याय मिलेगा। यह उम्मीद की जाती है कि सरकार

जाँच करने वाली एजेन्सी एवं अभियोजन पक्ष को समझौते के लिए बाध्य नहीं करेगी और सही मायने में पीड़ितों के लिए न्याय सुनिश्चित करेगी।

देश में महिलाओं पर होने वाले अत्याचारों जिनमें बलात्कार भी शामिल है, में बहुत वृद्धि हुई है। दलितों पर हमलों में भी भारी बढ़ोतरी हुई है। अनुसूचित जाति/जनजाति अधिनियम के कमजोर किये जाने पर दलितों द्वारा किये गये विरोध को बुरी तरह दबा दिया गया तथा उत्तर प्रदेश में दलित नौजवानों को प्रताड़ित किया जा रहा है और उन पर झूठे केस लगाये जा रहे हैं। पूरे देश में साम्प्रदायिक भावनाएं फैलाने के स्पष्ट प्रयास किये जा रहे हैं। यहाँ तक कि त्रिपुरा में राज्यपाल के निवास में रहने वाला आदमी भी घृणा फैला रहा है। यह स्थिति अभूतपूर्व है। परन्तु अंधेरे की इस स्थिति में भी उम्मीद की किरण नजर आ रही है। दिल्ली में अन्तर-धार्मिक विवाह को साम्प्रदायिक रूप न देने के लिए मुस्लिम परिवार द्वारा मारे गये मुकेश कुमार के पिता की अपील हृदयस्पर्शी है। उन्होंने दिल्ली बीजेपी के अध्यक्ष द्वारा इस हत्या को साम्प्रदायिक रंग देने के प्रयास को अस्वीकार कर दिया था। इसी प्रकार पश्चिम बंगाल में आसनसोल के इमाम जिसने कि अपने सोलह वर्षीय बच्चे को साम्प्रदायिक दंगों में खो दिया था, ने बदला लेने के प्रयास से इन्कार कर दिया। आसनसोल में शान्ति के लिए तथा शहर में व्यवस्था बनाये रखने की जिम्मेदारी सुनिश्चित करने के लिए मुस्लिम समुदाय से की गयी उनकी अपील मानव मूल्यों को दर्शाती है।

आज देश अनेक प्रकार की समस्याओं से जूझ रहा है। तेजी से बढ़ती हुई अर्थव्यवस्था के दावों के बावजूद बेरोजगारी बढ़ रही है। कृषि संकट में है तथा किसान लोग सड़कों पर अभूतपूर्व संघर्ष कर रहे हैं। नवउदारवादी नीतियों के विरोध में मजदूर वर्ग के आन्दोलन बढ़ रहे हैं। विश्वविद्यालयों के परिसरों में बेचैनी बढ़ रही है। 'न खाऊंगा न खाने दूंगा' नारे पर भारी बैंक धोखाधड़ी के परिप्रेक्ष्य में हँसी आती है। पूरे देश में असन्तोष व्याप्त है। ऐसी स्थिति में सत्ता को बनाये रखने के लिए लोगों को बाँटा जायेगा तथा जाति एवं धर्म के आधार पर धुवीकरण किया जायेगा। इस तरह के प्रयासों को पराजित करना होगा। लोगों को बोलना पड़ेगा उन्हें घृणा की राजनीति को चुनौती देनी होगी। हमें यह स्पष्ट होना चाहिये कि जो समाज घृणा पर बनते हैं वे जिन्दा नहीं रह सकते। यह प्यार ही है जो लोगों को एक करता है तथा मानवजाति की तरक्की में मदद करता है। यहाँ पर चौदहवीं शताब्दी के महान पर्सियन कवि हाफिज सिराजी के ये शब्द याद करने लायक हैं कि 'हरेक बुनियाद दोषी है सिवाय प्यार के जोकि दोष रहित है'। इसलिये भारत को घृणा की इस राजनीति को पराजित व अस्वीकार करना चाहिये।

ANOTHER WORK IS POSSIBLE

Resolve of the 11TH Congress of SIGTUR

Shreekant Mishra

The 11th Congress of SIGTUR (Southern Initiative on Globalisation and Trade Union Rights)- an alliance of the democratic trade unions from the Southern hemisphere (Latin America, Africa, Asia, Oceania)- was held at Buenos Aires, Capital City of Argentina, from 3rd to 5th April 2018. Delegates from 13 countries viz; Argentina,



Australia, India, Japan, Brazil, South Korea, South Africa, Malaysia, Philippines, Tunisia, Paraguay and Uruguay attended the Congress. These delegates represented more than 200 million workers from all over the global South. A three-member Indian delegation consisting of **Com. Pradip Biswas** (BEFI), **Com. M. Krishnan** (Confederation of Central Govt. Employees & Workers) and **Com. Shreekant Mishra** (AIIEA) represented CITU in this Congress. The Congress was organised by Confederation of Workers of the Argentina- Autonomous (CTA- Autonoma).

The Inaugural Session of the Congress was held on 3rd April 2018. The session started with the screening of a welcome video depicting the heroic battles of the Argentinian working class against the policies of neoliberal globalisation. The International General Secretary of SIGTUR **Adolfo Aguirre** welcomed the delegates and exuded confidence that the deliberations of the Congress would chart a new course of struggle and unity in the future. Leaders of the delegations of each country made a brief address in the opening session. **Victor Baez**, General Secretary of the Trade Union Confederation of the Americas (TUCA) and **Joao Felicio**, President of the International Trade Union Confederation (ITUC) addressed the session as Invited Representatives.

The Delegate Session of the Congress commenced on 4th April 2018 at 10 AM. The basic theme of the 11th Congress of SIGTUR was “**Another Work is Possible**”. At a global level, threat to jobs from advancement of technology and increase in labour flexibility due to changes in the organisation of work are two important issues. But the SIGTUR felt that

notwithstanding the importance of these two issues, ‘decent work’ should be placed at the centre of the debate. With this understanding, the signature theme was titled Another Work is Possible. The 11th Congress basically discussed and deliberated on the following six major issues:

- (i) Fighting for an Asbestos Free World;
- (ii) G 20 in Argentina- perspective and challenges: The Agenda of Argentina Presidency and the Labour 20 Role;
- (iii) Challenging Corporate Capital: Creating an Alternative to Neo Liberalism;
- (iv) Reduction of working hour without loss of rights or salary: Trade Unions Reorganisation on Global Value Chains – What is the role of the South?
- (v) Universal Basic Income: Proposals for a Minimum Income and Ideas to reverse Inequality;
- (vi) 4.0 Industry Impact and the role of workers in Technological Advance.

The Delegates Session started with the presentation of “Country Reports” by the leader of each delegation. Com. Pradip Biswas, leader of Indian delegation, presented the

country report of India.

After the presentation of country reports, a presentation on global campaign on Asbestos free world was made by the Australian Council of Trade Unions (ACTU). **Glen Thompson**, Assistant National Secretary of Australian Metal Workers Union (AMWU), an affiliate of ACTU, gave a power-point presentation explaining the ill-effects of Asbestos (chrysotile) and demanding complete ban on use of Asbestos in all countries. A resolution was also adopted in the Congress extending full support of the SIGTUR for the campaign against asbestos and for an Asbestos free world.

The CTA - Autonomia and the representative of Labour Ministry of Argentina, made a presentation on the subject - "G-20 in Argentina: Perspective and Challenges. The speakers pointed out that a Summit of the G 20 was being held for the first time in South America, that too, in Argentina at Buenos Aires on November 30 and December 1, 2018. Argentina assumed one-year presidency of G 20 in a context of regression for workers, both in the international and local situation. The G 20 gathers the advanced and emerging economies of the world. Its members represent 85 per cent of global economic output, two thirds of the world population and 75 percent of international trade. It was reported that since six members of SIGTUR are from the G 20 group of countries, G-20 is both a challenge and an opportunity. Trade unions have the chance for presenting their agenda and promote global policies with real effectiveness for workers welfare. It was however felt that G 20 proposals in favour of 'structural reforms' are nothing but a frontal attack on workers' rights. The SIGTUR Congress adopted a Resolution to organise massive rally of workers at Buenos Aires during the G-20 Summit and protest against the neo-liberal policies.

The concluding session of the 2nd day was presentation of the Futures Commission booklet titled "Challenging Corporate Capital: Creating an Alternative to Neo-liberalism". The Futures Commission report was based on the key issues identified by the 2013 SIGTUR Conference. **Prof. Robert O' Brien** of

McMaster University, Canada, presented the Report on behalf of the Editorial Board. The contents of the booklet and the presentation of Prof. Brien included a chapter on 'Democracy driven Public Sector transformation'. **Com. Shreekant Mishra**, Joint Secretary AIIEA, intervened in the debate and cautioned that Public Sector transformation under neo liberal globalisation amounted to privatisation and portends ill for workers' movement because democracy is anathema to global capitalism. Recounting the experience in India in recent times he said that the ruling classes in India want economic policy to be independent of democratic aspirations of the people. To talk of democratic transformation of public sector under a neo liberal dispensation is therefore a chimera, averred Com. Mishra.

The third day of the Congress mainly devoted to panel presentation and discussions. Three countries were included in each panel and one to chair the session. The first panel presentation was on the subject - "Reduction of working hour without income or rights reduction". The need for reorganisation of Trade Unions according to global value chains and the role of the SIGTUR was also discussed. On behalf of Indian delegation, **Com. Shreekant Mishra** participated in the discussion and said that the title of the discussion was not relevant in the Indian context. For a worker in India where hundreds of thousands are vying for the same job in the marketplace, jobs *per se* are much more important than the trade union rights. With a vast army of unemployed labour in India getting a job is far more important from the point of view of the worker. This has led to crass exploitation of workers.

The second panel discussion was on the subject - "Universal Basic Income". On behalf of Indian delegation Com. Krishnan presented the view points for discussion. The third panel discussion was on the subject - "The impact of 4th Industrial revolution and the role labour plays in it". The panel discussion was chaired by Com. Pradip Biswas, leader of Indian delegation.

The final session included building a plan of action for the next years based on a resolution



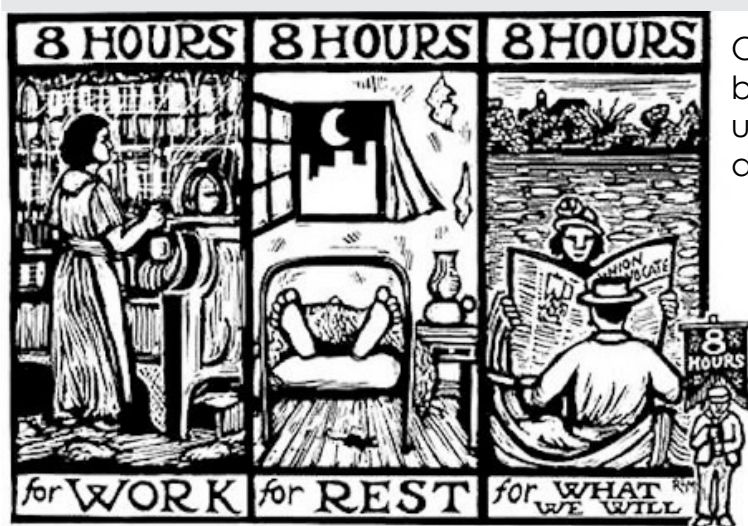
called SIGTUR XI Congress resolution and also discussion about implementation/plan of action based on XI Congress resolutions. The following resolutions were adopted in the Congress.

1. Common resolution covering all the main issues discussed in the Congress and Programme of action for the future.
2. Resolution demanding immediate release of Com. Lula, Ex-President of Brazil from jail and allowing him all democratic rights as none of the charges against him are proved.
3. Resolution demanding immediate release of Korean Trade Union leaders who are imprisoned for participation in Trade Union activities.
4. Resolution condemning the fascist, undemocratic Government of Philippines and demanding restoration of peoples' democratic rights.
5. Resolution on campaign for Universal ban on Asbestos.

The XI SIGTUR Congress was a great learning experience. People in every nook and cranny of the world, the southern hemisphere in particular, are suffering the onslaughts of

neo liberal globalisation process. Inequality is assuming monstrous proportions everywhere. The ruling classes are hand in glove with the rich and famous. Cronyism of the worst kind is visible everywhere. The poor are getting poorer with each passing day. Working people everywhere, be it in Philippines or in South Korea or Brazil or Argentina- are up in arms against the ruling classes. The rulers, in turn, have become violently regressive. President Duterte of Philippines, as reported by the Filipino delegation, is presiding over the killing of tens of thousands of innocents, most of them working class activists. Extra judicial killings, in the name of controlling drug menace, has become commonplace. Legitimate protests of workers are being criminalised in South Korea (a supposed model of western style democracy)! The KCTU (Korean

Confederation of Trade Unions) delegation gave chilling accounts of how their President **Han Sang-gyun** has been imprisoned for participating in a peaceful demonstration. Former Brazilian President Lula has been made victim of a grossly illegal judicial coup in spite of the fact that no charge against him has any legitimate proof. Stories like this abound everywhere, including in India. But the tenacity of working people rising in revolt against oppression is the silver lining. **The Mothers of Plaza De Mayo**- mothers whose children 'disappeared' during the military dictatorship in Argentina in the early eighties- are a source of inspiration! They have been protesting ever since with unfailing regularity, every Thursday, and demanding that their sons be freed if they are alive. Nobody knows whether their sons will be back...But their protests helped restore democracy in Argentina. The delegates to the 11th SIGTUR Congress were taken to participate in the weekly demonstrations of the brave mothers. That experience rekindled a new hope, a hope to fight against exploitation and make sure Another Work is Possible.



On this May Day and in the bicentenary year of Marx, let us recall the words of Lenin and declare that

"Let the celebration of May Day win thousands of new fighters to our cause and swell our forces in the great struggle for the freedom of all the people, for the liberation of all who toil from the yoke of capital!"

MAY DAY calls for Unity & Struggles of Workers

K.Venugopala Rao

"Eight hours for work; eight hours for sleep and eight hours for what we will do"

These mesmerising words signifying the spirit of May Day still inspires the working class across the world. May Day is celebrated every year with a resolve to protect the rights of the workers. We celebrate this May Day in the background of the proclamation of IMF about the end of economic crisis of 2008. They predicted a global growth of 3.9 percent for the years 2018 and 2019. But economic pundits say that in the absence of policy changes for inclusive growth, *"the next downturn will come sooner and be harder to fight."* This is because capitalism is riddled with crises and it cannot provide any solution to the problems of humanity.

Neoliberalism unleashed an ideological attack on the working class movement. Workers were told that increased reliance on markets and flexible labour markets will increase employment and salaries. These claims of neoliberals turned out to be false and untrue. According to the *Oxfam Report* released in January 2018, 82 per cent of global wealth produced in 2017 was cornered by the top 1 per cent people who now own more than half of the total global wealth. In India, the top 1 per cent cornered 73 per cent of the wealth produced by the toiling people in the

country in 2017. Again *The World Inequality Report 2018* found that the richest 1% of the global population "captured" 27% of the world's wealth growth between 1980 and 2016. Thus over the years we have seen increased concentration of wealth in the hands of few with diminishing living standards to the vast majority of the people.

A report of the ILO *'World Employment and Social Outlook – Trends 2017'* says that 140 crores people or over 42 per cent of the total workers across the world in 2017 are in 'vulnerable' or 'precarious' jobs. Major industries are showing a decline in the share of workers' wages. It is estimated that number of workers earning less than three dollars per day will be increased by around 30 lakhs per year over the next couple of years. These changes have very drastic implications for the working class. The collective bargaining rights of the workers have weakened to a large extent. It has become very difficult to organise the workers in a trade union because of their precarious nature of work, the uncertainty of their low incomes and the scattered nature of the workplaces. As a result there are no agreements on long term wage contracts and

workers are not in a position to demand wage increases also.

The Central Govt in India is trying to deceive people by catchy slogans and statements. The policies of the Govt have led to the deterioration of the conditions of the various sections of the people. The harsh demonetization and the hasty GST benefited only the corporates at the cost of small and medium enterprises and common people. The recent union budget also gave huge concessions to the big industries. Public sector is being dismantled. Coal mines are privatized. Strategic sectors like defense, railways and Air India are privatized. Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance Bill is introduced in the parliament invoking *bail in* provisions which will seriously harm the interest of the depositors. The recent scams in the banking sector are being used to destabilize the public sector banking industry. The NPAs of the banks which were just around two lakh crores in 2014 have increased to around nine lakh crores in the four year rule of NDA. In the general insurance industry, New India Company has already been listed in the stock market. The Govt wants to disinvest the other three public sector general insurance companies after completing the process of the merger of these companies.

The Govt intends to amalgamate forty four central labour laws into four codes. The Code on Wages is silent on the formula for fixation of minimum wages. The Code on Industrial Relations is highly detrimental to the interests of the workers. Employers in establishments employing up to 300 workers can retrench workers at their will. The formation of Trade Unions and going on struggles becomes very difficult under the new code. Under the new Social Security Code, all the funds with EPFO and ESI etc. will be merged and brought under the control of a national advisory board and monies from this huge fund will be invested in the speculative stock markets endangering the security of the hard earned savings of the ordinary workers. Contract Labour Act was recently amended and whatever little protection workers used to have has now been removed. The amendments to the Industrial

Employment Rules will allow for hiring of fixed term employees. This will threaten job security of the workers.

Prime Minister speaks of making India a global manufacturing hub and he says that Indian youth will be job creators rather than job seekers. Huge advertisements of 'Skill India', 'Make in India', 'Start up India' create an illusion that all is well in the Indian job market. But according to the data released by the Centre for monitoring Indian economy (CMIE) around ninety lakh jobs were lost between October 2016 and October 2017. This continues the trend of falling employment in the past three years. IT industry is in crisis and according to McKinsey, robotics and automation will make almost half of the workers in the IT sector redundant in the next five years. Agriculture which employs largest number of people in our country continues to be in crisis. Instead of the statutory 100 days work, only 50 days of work is being provided. Wages are not being paid for months at a stretch for the work done owing to cut in allocations.

BJP came to power due to the anger of the people against the neoliberal regime of the Congress. But BJP has been following the same neoliberal policies along with the Hindutva agenda. The 'Hindutva' agenda creates communal polarisation for political gains and simultaneously the international finance dictated policies of neoliberalism will be implemented with more vigour and strength. The communal agenda of the BJP and RSS results in the division of workers and is weakening the united struggles of the working class against the neoliberal policies. Babasaheb Ambedkar, on the midnight of Indian independence said, "*Will Indians place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against.*"

The NDA Govt, with total disregard to the Ambedkar's ideas, is systematically attacking every foundational pillar of our

constitution. This is accompanied by a devious communal polarisation. The private armies of 'Gau Rakshaks' and moral policing squads are reflection of such efforts. Secular democracy in India has never come under such a severe strain as we are witnessing today. Actor Kamal Hasan is attacked for speaking against Hindu terror groups. Historian Ramachandra Guha is threatened for saying that the killers of Gauri Lankesh may have had *Hindutva* links. The murders of writers – Narendra Dabholkar, Govind Pansare, M.M. Kalburgio are still under investigation. Union Information and Broadcasting Ministry in a recent notification laid down new guidelines punishing journalists for fake news. The Govt was forced to withdraw the notification due to widespread criticism. The notification was seen as an attempt of the Govt to muzzle the free press in an election year. The judiciary is divided and for the first time in the history of independent India, four senior judges have come out openly against some serious lapses in highest judiciary.

There were huge protests against the Supreme Court judgment which is widely perceived as dilution of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. Nine persons were killed during the bundh call given by the dalits. The huge protests clearly brought out the repressed

anger of the people against attacks on the rights of dalits. The death of Rohith Vemula, the Una incident, attacks on the rally of Bhima Koregaon have displayed the antipathy that Sangh parivar affiliates have for the dalits. The rape of one teenage girl in UP and another eight year old girl in Jammu and the brazen attempts of the ruling BJP to protect people accused of rapes resulted in widespread anger across the country. The tide of venom against minorities, women, dalits, Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes has been increasing. Hatred is no longer a private emotion. What we eat, who we speak to, the gods we worship – all these are conditioned by the venom of hate. Hate has been institutionalised. India is country of million cultures and traditions. Any attempt to impose uniformity upon this diversity will only lead to a social disintegration of the country. The strength of India lies in its rich diversity. Workers and toilers have to realise this and as a dynamic social force workers have to ensure the unity and diversity of this country.

Workers are coming out in bigger struggles against the attacks on their working and living conditions. Huge strikes and mobilisations have been going on in many countries across Europe and USA. Seventeen general strikes were observed in India since 1991. Lakhs

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MAY DAY Gains of Working Women & the Road Ahead

It is high time we emphasized that equality and independence of working women should not be limited to papers, but it should be brought into the practical aspects of life. The criteria of 'work need to be reconsidered and reformulated in order to understand the volume of women's contribution to the economy.

M Girija



May Day is a day when the workers across the world rise up and demand fair treatment, living wages, and equal rights. It is a traditional day for the working class solidarity and is being celebrated around the world by workers, trade unions and political parties linked to the working class. It provides workers the opportunity to come together and realize their power and strength over the socio-economic forces that seek to oppress them.

In the late 19th century, working conditions were severe and it was quite common to work for 10 to 16 hours a day in unsafe conditions. Death and injury were common at many work places. Therefore, the working class was in constant struggle to win the demand of 8 hours work, 8 hours recreation and 8 hours rest. A shorter working day and improved working conditions were part of the general protests. Women workers played a vital role in these struggles because they were the worst sufferers at the workplace. It is because of the relentless struggles launched and the sacrifices made by the men and women workers, we have today the 8-hour day and enjoy some rights and benefits.

Because of the struggles carried out by the trade union movement in various parts of the world, laws were enacted in their respective countries to protect the rights of the workers. The same way, in India too, various such laws were enacted. To protect the interests of the women workers, legislations with

special provisions viz., The Factories Act 1948, The Mines Act 1952, The Plantation Labour Act 1951, etc., were adopted. These include provisions for separate toilets, prohibition of hazardous work, crèches, etc. But still, women face discrimination at work place. Especially, in the neo-liberal era, their woes have increased multi-fold. The patriarchal Indian society is yet to accept the fact that women are also equally capable of working like men, shoulder to shoulder with them, in any field or professional sphere. It still visualizes women as none beyond the kitchen managers and managers of other domestic chores. Because of this, many of the Indian working women do not get the respect that they deserve either at the work place or in the society.

Disparity in employment opportunities and wage

Equality of employment is not possible without equal opportunities and equal treatment. Equal opportunity refers to having an equal chance of applying for a particular job – equal access to employment, equal chance to acquire training in the field, eligibility for promotions and eligibility to attain certain qualifications/enter certain cadres. Social attitude to the role of women lags much behind the law. As a result, women are considered fit for certain jobs and not for others. Equal treatment refers to being entitled to equal pay, working conditions, social security and

social protection. The principle of equal pay is based on the recognition of an objective evaluation of work in order to determine the pay. On an average, a woman's income per hour worldwide is 75% that of a man. The principle of "Equal pay for work of equal value" is enshrined in the Constitution of India under Articles 14 and 15 as well as in the Equal Remuneration Act of 1976. Despite such Constitutional recognition, the issue of equal pay for women is a proposition that is still difficult to achieve in many sectors of the Indian economy – formal and informal.

Plight of women in unorganised sector

While women constitute a substantial chunk of the available workforce in India, still they are lacking in work participation and in the quality of employment. One of the reasons for this lack of female labour participation is lack of suitable jobs on offer to them. Another problem is that the sectors such as "domestic work" that employ women fall under the 'unorganized sector, where there is no strong set of workplace rules in place. In the case of domestic workers, they are deprived of any kind of job security. They are not entitled to minimum wage and paid leave that women domestic workers get in other developed countries. Unfortunately, domestic chores and unpaid care-labour have always been thought not as work, rather looked upon as an inherent obligation of the women folk.

This nonchalant attitude towards all

activities that constitute running the household poses a barrier in getting the paid domestic work its due remuneration and recognition. On an average, women domestic workers earn a meagre amount of Rs.2000 to Rs.3000 per month. This compensation comes after toiling for around 6 to 8 hours or more per day in 4 to 5 households. They are often not even allowed to use toilets in the households they work and are forced to use the public pay and use toilets. Food and first-aid are not provided by the employers and maids are also denied rest time. Wage deductions are rampant with 66% women getting no paid leave even when they are absent due to sickness. It is disappointing to note that India has still not ratified ILO Convention of 189 on Decent Work for Domestic Workers that was adopted on 16th June 2011. Though Karnataka, Kerala and Gujarat State Legislatures have passed Minimum Wages Act for domestic workers, there is urgent need for an inclusive and holistic national legislation specifically for paid domestic workers in India. Most importantly, the criteria of 'work need to be reconsidered and reformulated in order to understand the volume of women's contribution to the economy.

Maternity Benefits

The provision of maternity protection is essential in furthering the idea of equal opportunity in employment. The idea of providing for such benefits is to prevent childbirth from working as a deterrent to



women. However, women workers with infants and young children are often forced to choose between their job and their responsibility towards their children. The problem starts with the idea that a woman's primary or natural responsibility is maintaining the home and raising the children. Though crèches have to be mandatorily provided, it is rarely done in both organized and unorganized sector where women work in more numbers. Therefore, in order to encourage more women to be active part of the workforce, it is essential that maternity benefits are provided mandatorily to women at the workplace.

Sexual harassment at the work place

Because of the second-class citizen treatment to the women at the workplace, they are often vulnerable and targets of sexual harassment. This is the harsh reality regardless of whether they are domestic workers or casual or contract labourers in the unorganized sector or highly paid executives in an urban setting. Sexual harassment at the work place is not only a discrimination related to safety and health of the women workers, but also a violation of fundamental rights and human rights. It undermines the right to equal opportunity and equal treatment of women at workplace. Though the Sexual Harassment of women at workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act came into force in December 2013, the Internal Complaints Committee/

Local Complaints Committee is yet to be constituted in very many workplaces. This Act needs to be effectively implemented.

It is in such a setting, we are going to observe the MAY DAY 2018. It is high time we emphasized that equality and independence of working women should not be limited to papers, but it should be brought into the practical aspects of life. Indian working women are truly facing a challenging life. They encounter many hurdles including social and psychological pressure of the people around them. The laws should be practiced strictly so as to provide total security, equal remuneration and a safe working atmosphere for the working women. There is a deliberate need to reshuffle the mindsets and beliefs of the family members, employers, colleagues and the public at large.

To achieve this, the struggles to change the feudal and patriarchal attitude of the society need to be strengthened. Only through the success of such struggles, we will be able to protect the hard won rights and benefits, and march forward towards an egalitarian society that is devoid of any discrimination. When we want to achieve this goal, we should also realize that this cannot be achieved without pulling down the exploitative capitalist society.

On this MAY DAY, Let us take a pledge accordingly, and be on the march towards a new society!

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MAY DAY calls for Unity & Struggles of Workers

of workers participated in the Mahapadav organised in November in New Delhi. The long march of farmers from Nasik to Mumbai traversing a distance of around 180 km caught the attention of every one. The sound of the leather chappals became the national song of protests and the march galvanised the spirit of struggles in the country. The present situation in the country calls for building a strong Left and democratic alternative. The fight against communalism must be integrated and combined with the fight against neoliberal policies.

The working class should understand that capitalism is ridden with crises and it cannot provide solution to these crises. On this May Day and in the bicentenary year of Marx, let us recall the words of Lenin and declare that *"Let the celebration of May Day win thousands of new fighters to our cause and swell our forces in the great struggle for the freedom of all the people, for the liberation of all who toil from the yoke of capital!"*

Long live May Day.

(The author is
President, SCZIEF)

Killing a child

Consolidating a communal common sense



Image courtesy:newslaundry.com

The prime minister said in his first tweet that “incidents like this, wherever they occur in the country shock our sense of humanity”. He has this exactly the wrong way round: it is when we lose our sense of humanity, when we dehumanize others, that ‘incidents’ like this ‘occur’.

Mukul Kesavan

Courtesy: The Telegraph. Apr 15, 2018

Empathy doesn’t come easily to India’s prime minister. His silence after a number of Muslims were lynched by murderous vigilantes in the name of cow protection was broken only after *gau goondas* attacked Dalits since Dalits are part of the ‘Hindu’ constituency that the Bharatiya Janatha Party wants to consolidate. His more recent conspicuous silence was ended by a statement in a speech on April 13, the gist of which was later put out as two tweets by the prime minister’s Twitter account. Narendra Modi’s sensibilities didn’t allow him to specify the nature of the “recent incidents” to which he referred and of which, he declared, we, as a society, ought to be ashamed. We were left to infer that this careful euphemism referred to the rape of a young Dalit woman in Unnao and the death of her father in custody and the gang rape and murder of an eight-year-old Muslim girl in Kathua, Jammu.

The uninformed reader would have never guessed from the prime minister’s tweets the extent of his party’s involvement in these “recent incidents”. The main accused in the Unnao case is a BJP legislator who remained at large in a state run by the BJP’s star chief minister, Yogi Adityanath, till the high court demanded that he be arrested. In Jammu, two BJP ministers addressed a demonstration organized by the Hindu Ekta Manch in defence of the men (policemen amongst

them) charged with raping and murdering the eight-year-old girl. Inside the scope of a tweet, the prime minister went to some lengths to deflect attention from the specific contexts of these atrocities. Incidents like this, he wrote, “wherever they occur in the country” challenged our humanity.

At the same time as he generalized India’s rape problem to skate over his party’s unwillingness to move against the accused in Unnao and Kathua, he also tried to minimize his own prolonged indifference to these atrocities. His first tweet referred to the incidents “... which have been in public discussion the past two days...” as if to suggest that these had just come to his notice. The rape in Unnao occurred in the summer of 2017. The girl in Jammu was raped and killed in January this year. Her brutalization and death made the headlines last week because the Hindu Ekta Manch and Jammu’s high court bar association, urged on by two BJP state ministers, came out in defence of the rape accused. The Hindu Ekta Manch had been agitating for the release of the special police officer arrested for her rape and murder since February. For a BJP prime minister to suggest that two grotesque crimes committed in two states governed singly or in coalition by his party were news to him amounts to either an abdication of responsibility or a form of deflection. The prime minister’s belated tweets were damage control dressed up as concern.

But the prime minister is right in thinking there is a larger sickness in our body politic flagged by the eight-year-old's horrifying death. The BJP is the vanguard of the vicious majoritarianism that threatens basic law and order and ordinary civility in this country today, but it represents something larger than itself. It wouldn't be in office if it didn't. The little girl's death, its premeditation, its motives and the concerted bid to defend the policemen and civilians accused of her murder, show us the growing concert between majoritarian politicians and a communalized civil society.

The *bandh* called by the Hindu Ekta Manch and the massive support shown by local lawyers for men accused of rape and murder testifies to the popularity of anti-Muslim feeling in Jammu. The chargesheet alleges that four policemen, a retired civil servant, a juvenile and a temple priest conspired to abduct the eight-year-old girl, to gang rape her in a temple, to strangle her and then to bludgeon her to death because they wanted to violently dislodge her pastoral Bakharwal community from its settlements in Kathua. The Hindu Ekta Manch and Jammu's lawyers dismissed the chargesheet as a prejudiced narrative constructed by a Muslim investigating officer, a motivated attempt to disrupt communal

harmony in Kathua where Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs and Christians had, according to them, traditionally lived in peace.

Ironically, the four demands made by the Jammu High Court's bar association when it called for a *bandh* on April 11 support the chargesheet's claim that the girl's death was born out of a communal determination to purge the area of Muslims. Each of these four demands peremptorily orders the State to help Jammu's Hindus show Muslims their place. The first asks that the Rohingya refugees settled in Jammu be thrown out simply because the lawyers suspected that they were behind the stone-pelting of Indian security forces. The second demand was for more summary legal action against tribal people (the Muslim Bakharwals are a scheduled tribe) allegedly because they encroached on land. The third asked for more vigorous action against cattle transporters in the cause of *gau raksha*. The final demand was that the little girl's case be transferred to the CBI because the local investigation was headed by a Muslim who had communalized the issue by alleging that the rape was committed in a temple which was obviously false because such a thing was inconceivable.

The only common factor in this malignant

LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWARYU



Two cartoons by Sandeep Adhwaryu, Times of India

LINE OF NO CONTROL

SANDEEP ADHWARYU



manifesto is that each demand targets Muslims for the greater good of Hindu civil society. What do refugees from Myanmar's Rakhine province have in common with a murdered eight-year-old Bakharwal girl? The fact that the Rohingya and the Bakharwals are both Muslim. The second demand — the prosecution of encroaching tribals — actually supports the chargesheet's allegation that there was a concerted attempt to expel the Bakharwals from Kathua. The allegation that the state government had been slack in its pursuit of cattle traders and the insistence that the local investigation into the girl's murder was incapable of being impartial because it was headed up by a Kashmiri Muslim are evidence of the consolidation of a communal common sense in Jammu.

The reason Rohingyas live exiled lives in Jammu and elsewhere in the world is because a thousand miles southeast of Jammu, Myanmar's Buddhist majoritarians defined northern Rakhine's Muslims out of political existence. This is what this concerted campaign by Jammu's lawyers, the Hindu Ekta Manch and their BJP cheerleaders amounts to: the delegitimization of Muslims, the active refusal to accept them as neighbours, citizens or refugees. The evil rape and murder of a child, the attempt to expel Muslim refugees, are some of the ways in which this monstrous process can play out.

The prime minister said in his first tweet that "incidents like this, wherever they occur in the country shock our sense of humanity". He has this exactly the wrong way round: it is when we lose our sense of humanity, when we dehumanize others, that 'incidents' like this 'occur'. The eight-year-old girl died because her killers, premeditatedly, in cold blood, decided that she wasn't human. The prime minister got one thing right; there are hundreds of millions of Indians who are shocked and ashamed by her death. His most urgent task is to address those of his supporters in Jammu and elsewhere, who aren't.

(The author is a historian, novelist and political and social essayist)

बजट 2018-19

वित्त मंत्री श्री अरूण जेटली ने वर्ष 2018-19 के लिये बजट प्रस्तुत करते हुए शिक्षा पर ₹ 85,010.00 व्यय करने का प्रस्ताव किया जोकि एकदम अपर्याप्त है। इस 85,010.00 रुपये के व्यय में से 50,000.00 करोड़ रुपये उन्होंने माध्यमिक शिक्षा पर व्यय करने के लिये रखे थे तथा 35,010.00 करोड़ रुपये उच्च शिक्षा पर। परन्तु यह धनराशि न केवल अपर्याप्त है वरन इससे शिक्षा में कोई बदलाव न होना भी निःसंदेह रूप से सही है। स्वामी विवेकानन्द ने कहा था कि भविष्य में उनकी आशा चरित्रवान, प्रतिभावान, धार्मिक जो दूसरों की सेवा में समय देते हैं तथा आज्ञाकारी युवाओं में बसती है। लगता है कि यह धनराशि चरित्रवान, प्रतिभावान व धार्मिक युवा तो पैदा नहीं ही करेगी। हाँ, ये नीतियाँ आज्ञाकारी युवा अवश्य पैदा कर सकती है।

वर्ष 2018-19 के लिये शिक्षा का व्यय ₹ 85,010.00 करोड़ रुपये है। पिछले वर्ष अर्थात् 2017-18 में यह व्यय ₹ 79,685.00 करोड़ रुपये था तथा इस विभाग का संशोधित व्यय 81,858.00 करोड़ रुपये था। इसका अर्थ यह हुआ कि इस वर्ष शिक्षा के व्यय पर पिछले वर्ष के संशोधित व्यय से 4 प्रतिशत से भी कम राशि अधिक रखी गयी है। वास्तविकता में तो यह व्यय वर्ष 2017-18 के व्यय से कम ही बैठता है। यदि मुद्रा स्फीति को शामिल कर लिया जाये तो यह राशि बहुत कम बैठती है।

दिल्ली से प्रकाशित होने वाले 17 मार्च 2018 के हिन्दुस्तान में एक समाचार प्रकाशित हुआ है जिसका शीर्षक है— राशि की कटौती बिगाड़ न दे सर्व शिक्षा अभियान की सूरत। इस खबर में कहा गया है कि मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय के प्रस्ताव में 10,000.00 करोड़ रुपये से अधिक की कटौती कर बजट आवंटन पर संसद की स्थाई समिति ने चिंता जताई है। समिति ने कहा है कि बजट में यह कमी कहीं इस अभियान की सूरत न बिगाड़ दे। सर्व-शिक्षा अभियान के अलावा समिति ने साक्षर भारत अभियान और लड़कियों की माध्यमिक शिक्षा के लिये प्रोत्साहन योजना में भी प्रस्तावित बजट में कटौती पर चिंता जताई है।

दरअसल मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने सर्व शिक्षा अभियान के लिये 37,048.00 करोड़ रुपये का प्रस्ताव वित्त मंत्रालय के पास भेजा था परन्तु वित्त मंत्रालय ने 10,919.00 करोड़ रुपये की कटौती कर इसे केवल 26,128.00 करोड़ कर दिया। भाजपा सांसद सत्य नारायण जटिया की अध्यक्षता वाली मानव संसाधन विकास सम्बन्धी संसद की स्थाई समिति ने अब इस कटौती पर सवाल उठाये हैं। समिति की रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय ने कुल 65,551.00 करोड़ रुपये का बजट प्रस्ताव भेजा था जिसमें से विभाग को 50,000.00 करोड़ आवंटित किये

शिक्षा पर व्यय अपर्याप्त – एन.के.पचौरी



The allocation for education in the current budget is Rs. 85,010 crores vis-a-vis last year's revised allocation of Rs. 81,858 crores, thus a reduction even without accounting for inflation. This works out to a mere 0.53% of GDP, for a nation, where 65% of the population is aged below 25 years. Will this provide education and employment to our youth?

गये हैं। इस समाचार पत्र में योजनावार कटौती की सूची भी दिखाई है जो इस प्रकार है:-

यहाँ यह बता देना उचित होगा कि सर्व शिक्षा अभियान वह योजना है जो कि 6-14 वर्ष के स्कूली बच्चों की अनिवार्य शिक्षा के लिये शिक्षा के अधिकार के अन्तर्गत चलाई जाती है। एक अनुमान के अनुसार 6-14 वर्ष की आयु में लगभग 5 करोड़ बच्चे ऐसे हैं जो अभी भी स्कूल नहीं जाते। यह कैसी विडम्बना है

हमारे प्रधानमंत्री अपने किसी भाषण में बेटी बचाओ, बेटी पढ़ाओ का जिक्र करना नहीं भूलते।

इस वर्ष प्रस्तुत आर्थिक सर्वे में सरकार ने यह कहा था कि इस वर्ष अर्थात् 2018-19 में सामाजिक क्षेत्र में व्यय के लिये अधिक गुंजाइश नहीं है परन्तु मानव संसाधन विकास मंत्रालय द्वारा प्रस्तुत बजट में इतनी कटौती की जायेगी, यह आशा से परे था। बहुत पहले 1970 में कोठारी आयोग ने शिक्षा पर जी0डी0पी0 का

योजना	प्रस्ताव (करोड़ रु में)	आवंटन (करोड़ रु में)	कमी (करोड़ रु में)
सर्व शिक्षा अभियान	37048.00	26128.00	10919.00
मिड डे मील	12147.00	10500.00	1647.00
साक्षर भारत अभियान	990.00	20.00	970.00
बालिका प्रोत्साहन योजना	510.00	255.00	255.00

6 प्रतिशत व्यय करने की बात कही थी परन्तु यह व्यय जी.डी.पी. के 1 प्रतिशत से भी कम आता है। वर्तमान एक्सचेंज रेट पर एक प्रतिशत लगभग 1,60,000 करोड़ के करीब बैठता है। इस प्रकार शिक्षा पर व्यय हमारी जी.डी.पी. का कुल 0.53 प्रतिशत के बराबर आता है।

यह देश युवाओं का देश है। इसकी लगभग 65 प्रतिशत जनसंख्या 25 वर्ष

कि इन बच्चों को स्कूल भेजे जाने में सहायता करने और अपनी जिम्मेदारी का निर्वाह करने के स्थान पर केन्द्र सरकार इस योजना की धनराशि में कटौती कर रही है। इसी प्रकार मिड-डे मील की व्यवस्था है। बालिका प्रोत्साहन योजना के मद में भी कटौती की गई है जबकि

से कम के लोगों की है।

यह देखना शेष है कि इस बजट आवंटन से कैसे इस देश के युवाओं को शिक्षा व रोजगार प्राप्त हो सकता है?

Dilution of Prevention of Atrocities Act by Supreme Court



Dalit Resistance – A Justifiable Response

April 2, 2018 saw widespread protests throughout the country owing to the Bharath bandh called by the Dalit organisations and the democratic forces. Around 10 Dalits lost their lives. The Bandh was complete in some major states of the country particularly those ruled by BJP i.e. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Gujarat. The Bandh was against the order of the Supreme Court on 20.03.2018 diluting the provisions of the Prevention of Atrocities (Amendment) Act – (PoA) in an appeal filed by one official Subash Kashi Bath Mahajan for quashing a FIR against him under POA. Though this issue was a flash point, the emotional reaction of the Dalits reflected their pent-up anger on various counts accumulated for years on end.

The order of the SC has demoralizing effect on the Dalit masses since it is not in consonance with the social realities in the country. The PoA is protective shield in their day to day life as they face discriminations in every aspect. The POA in its present form has a long history, and has evolved stage by stage over the years after securing political consensus.

Article 17 of the Indian constitution declared that Untouchability be abolished, and its practice in any form forbidden. To realize this fundamental principle, the Untouchability Offences Act 1955 was enacted. This was later renamed as Protection of Civil Rights Act in 1976 – 77. It was a significant step at that time and provided relief to the people belonging

The order of the Supreme Court has demoralizing effect on the Dalit masses since it is not in consonance with the social realities in the country. The PoA is protective shield in their day to day life as they face discriminations in every aspect. It is to be noted that “Misuse” theory is already targeting gender rights and attempts are there to dilute sections related to matrimonial cruelties against women.

K Swaminathan

to the SC and ST to some extent. But practices of untouchability continue to this day in various forms – plain and subtle. The surveys conducted by Tamilnadu Untouchability Eradication Front in which AIIEA units are also a constituent have brought to light more than 100 forms of untouchability prevalent in the state.

Yet legal protection and the struggles of democratic forces have brought improvements in the lives of the SC and ST and have been helpful for their upward mobility in Education and Employment. This development has brought new awakening among them. Naturally Dalits started asserting their rights in the social and economic spheres of life. But the vested interests have brutally dealt with such acts of assertion by unleashing violence on them.

Issues of temple entry, discriminations in tea shops, hair dressing outlets and laundries,

access to public water bodies, discrimination in schools, manual scavenging, preventing the Dalits from contesting elections through devious means, banning the wearing of footwear by the Dalits while walking through streets of caste Hindu residents, banning bicycle riding, preventing participation in auctions etc – These and some more became points of confrontation. The vested interests used caste as a weapon to quell the assertion of Dalits. The structure of Indian caste system laced with “Graded inequality” has been used to divide the people and for creating social jealousies and animosities among various social groups of working class.

The need had arisen to evolve a legal frame work to check atrocities in the evolving situations. 1970s and 80s saw many instances of atrocities. Keezha Venmani of Thanjavur in Tamilnadu where 44 Dalit agricultural labourers were burnt to death was a glaring example to this. After intense debate the need for stringent law was recognized which had given birth to Prevention of Atrocities Act (POA) on 11.09.1989. It had given a breather to the oppressed sections to some extent. Yet its enforcement lacks will - both on the part of governments and law enforcing agencies. Newer forms of untouchability are also coming to the fore. Recently one Dalit was attacked for keeping a ringtone hailing Ambedkar in his mobile phone. Atrocities continued and it touched off further debate on the issue. After scrutiny by a Parliamentary committee and debates outside the parliament, a consensus was arrived at, and new Act - Prevention of Atrocities Act (Amendment) came into force from January 26, 2016.

The special features of it are:

- 1 Stringent provisions against sexual attacks.
- 2 Ensuring rights for victims and witnesses for delivery of justice
- 3 Exclusive courts at district level to handle the cases speedily.
- 4 Provisions against social / economic boycott
- 5 Accountability on enforcing officials and penal provisions and
- 6 Enhanced compensation for the victims.

It is unfortunate that the wheels of social justice have been reversed now by the Supreme Court by diluting the important provision for

granting bail.

The field experience in Tamilnadu shows inaction and partisan attitude of the law enforcing agencies. In a village near Madurai One Dilip kumar and Vimala Devi fell in love with each other and got married. They lived in a distant place. The Police brought back this couple and separated them. Then her parents were allowed to take her to their home. There she was doused with petrol and brutally burnt to death. In a case filed by her Dalit husband Dilip kumar in the Madras HC, the judge ordered action against errant officials uniform. Recently one girl was raped and murdered in Ariyalur several days after kidnapping owing to inaction of the police.

This is the stark reality on the ground. But in the reverse, the Supreme Court order cited the necessity to “protect innocent people from harassment” for diluting the provisions for bail. It has cited low conviction rate also as a reason. It is ironical that the same reason was cited in 2015 for strengthening the provisions of the Act. The SC order acted as a catalyst for dalit reaction. But the real reason behind these massive protests is the repressed emotions that have been haunting their psyche for quite long. The feel of insecurity has been set in their minds because of continuous attacks on them in last the few years especially after assumption of power by the BJP at the centre. Rohit Vemula suicide in HCU, flogging Dalit youths in Una, attacks on Dalits by cow vigilante, recent attacks at Bima koregaon, anti reservation remarks by the leaders of Sangh Parivar are some examples which shook the confidence of the Dalits.

These social issues apart, they are the worst hit on the economic side of life thanks to the neo-liberal economic path aggressively pursued by the central government. Rural distress has chased them out in search of a living. Cities are also not spared from the casteist exclusion. Most of the unorganized workers suffering without any social security are Dalits. In the name of development, Dalits are thrown out of their dwellings; they are denied their right to live in cities. Every job has become a contractual one, where no reservation exists. Privatisation also has made

reservation questionable. Due to abolition of the Planning Commission SCSP (Scheduled caste sub-plan) and TSP (Tribal sub-plan) they have lost their mandated allocations and relegated to ordinary schemes. Due to commercialization of education Dalits are not in a position to bear the high cost of it and become Neo-Ekalvyas. Though these issues are there for the poor among non-Dalits too, divisive politics stall their unification and unified actions.

Dalits voted for BJP overwhelmingly in 2014. Some euphoria was also there when symbolic actions like setting up of Memorial for Dr Ambedkar in London and choosing Shri Ramnath kovind for presidency. But that euphoria has been completely wiped out now.

The state governments of BJP took repressive measures to suppress the dissent. 11 Dalits have lost their lives. Not only police but brigades of Sangh Parivar were also in action with pistols according to eye witnesses. The fact finding committee led by Com Somaprasad M.P (CPI M) and Leader of Dalit Shosan Mukthi Manch has brought startling facts like denial of treatment in District government hospitals to Dalits wounded during bandh, destruction of homes and properties, bullet wounds inflicted on cows (!) and livestock of dalits.

Though it has been painted as caste issue, its real import goes much beyond that. Now there is anger among the poor and middle classes irrespective of caste owing to the neo-liberal policies of government. We saw its reflection during Maha Padayatra of peasants in Maharashtra in the form of overwhelming support from the general public. Recent by-

elections in UP saw realignment of political forces which led to the defeat of BJP in prestigious Gorakhpur Lok Sabha constituency where present CM Yogi Adityanath got elected earlier. Samajwadi party in UP and RJD in Bihar have asked their cadres to celebrate Dr Ambedkar birth anniversary this month. This is a real social engineering evolving at the grass root level as a natural process. Yet we have to see whether the political class of this country will take forward such an interwoven social fabric.

Sensing the mood of anger and popular discontent central government has filed a review petition before the SC. The LDF government at Kerala has also filed a review petition, and their move has given wider perspective to this issue. Now other state governments are also under pressure to file review petitions.

The struggle is not an issue of caste alone. Neo-liberal hegemony does not want dissent in any form. "Misuse" theory is already targeting gender rights and attempts are there to dilute sections related to matrimonial cruelties against women. Democracy and rights of expression are under attack. Every institution has been subjected to arm-twisting by the rulers without exception. Labour law amendments are knocking the doors of the working class. Hence it is the need of the hour to rise against oppressions of all forms - be it economic, social or gender. Let us forge strong bonds of unity with the rest of the working class. Also let us hold the hands of the hapless millions of this nation to counter the neo-liberal offensive and divisive politics.

(The author is Vice-President - SCZIEF)

It has been reported that Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, all the three states ruled by BJP, have issued formal orders to implement the SC/ST act as per the Supreme Court's directions. However, days after implementing the "diluted" act, the Chhattisgarh government on April 17 went back on its decision. The move came after opposition Congress leaders in the state accused the BJP of "doublespeak" on the issue.

On the other side, left ruled Kerala had also filed a review petition with the Supreme Court in this matter.

States must be sensitive towards the cause of oppressed sections such as SCs, STs instead of taking a stand against them, opined P.S. Krishnan, former Secretary, Ministry of welfare and member of the National Monitoring Committee for Education of SCs, STs and Persons with Disabilities. "While there is a review petition pending with the court, why do the states need to hurry in implementing the changes in the act which caused distress among SCs and STs," Krishnan told Newsclick over the phone.

(Courtesy: newsclick.in, 17 April 2018)

Please save the judiciary from the judges as well, your lordships!

Does the principle 'judges don't lie', not apply to the four seniormost judges of the Supreme Court who have been raising some substantive points of judicial governance for months now? Is their word to be discounted as motivated and their concerns dismissed as misplaced while we take the four Maharashtra judges at their word? In India of 2018, the pre-eminent threat to the judiciary now isn't just from outside, but from within.



Shekhar Gupta (Courtesy: The Print, 21 April 2018)

Basu Bhattacharya's 1971 film *Anubhav*, the first in his trilogy on marital discord, features Sanjeev Kumar as a workaholic editor and Tanuja as his lonely wife. After all is dusted and done through an intense two-and-a-half hours, with Dinesh Thakur completing the triangle of tension, comes a dramatic final exchange between the couple.

"You write editorials each day for everybody else's problems. Will you write one for ours too?" Tanuja (ok, millennial, Kajol's mom) asks Sanjeev Kumar.

Picture your eminent Supreme Court judges in a similar situation. This week saw them deliver a judgment of rare clarity, and bombast-free passion. Throwing out the Public Interest Litigations (PILs) demanding an independent inquiry into judge B.H. Loya's death in Nagpur, Justice D.Y. Chandrachud, writing for the three-judge bench headed by Chief Justice Dipak Misra, lambasted the petitioners and their lawyers for making scurrilous allegations without a "tittle of proof", scandalising and thereby undermining the entire judiciary.

Rejection of the petitions apart, the rage in the judgment came from wanting to save the judiciary from lawyers, activists, the media and other busybodies. It looks like everybody

is beating on the judges and they are fighting back.

So can we also ask the judges a simple question echoing *Anubhav*'s Tanuja: you write judgments all the time to protect the judiciary from others. Will you write one on how to save the judiciary from the judges too?

I am being overly cautious in developing this argument, and I better be. Because, the judges said they were being large-hearted in sparing the very eminent Loya case lawyers and petitioners from criminal contempt. A mere editor may not get the same generosity going ahead. Facts, however, have to be stated, and debated.

This isn't the moment to discuss the merits of the judgment itself. It is very well argued and stated with brevity not seen in most Supreme Court orders lately. In these polarised times, what you make of it also depends where you stand politically or ideologically. Journalist Barkha Dutt described the commentariat's predicament brutally as being two rival poles, *chamchas* (sycophants) and *morchas* (activist fronts). It's perilous to talk nuance as you will then be abused by both sides. It is enormously more troublesome, however, when the higher judiciary looks and sounds similarly polarised.

That's the real threat to it, from within.

That's what the judges should be angry about. That's why the judiciary needs saving from the judges. There are no individual villains here. Just that while it tries to shoo away what it sees as outside viruses, the institution itself is caught in an awful auto-immune disease. You know, when a body starts to eat itself.

You can't but agree with the larger points made in the judgment. First, that PILs are being misused. People have made careers out of bringing political, individual and ideological fights to courts, wasting their time and contributing to delays. Second, that judges don't lie — at least not four of them together. And third, that it is preposterous to say that one man controls the entire judiciary. It is an impossibility.

Now, some fact-checking. On the day this judgment was delivered, the morning's papers reported the Bombay High Court imposing water-use restrictions for IPL matches in Maharashtra in response to an earlier PIL. Forget the worth of the water thus saved for the farmer by starving a playground. Is it really worth the honourable court's time to pronounce on a PIL on a cricket league when it has many important cases? You must never impute motives to the judges' actions even as you question their wisdom. The Loya judgment said PILs had become a "facade" for people seeking publicity. Would the judges look in the mirror and ask themselves if they haven't been calling for the same temptation?

My colleague Maneesh Chhibber, who is a most avid and insightful watcher of the higher judiciary, has helped me compile a short list of the more interesting examples besides, indeed, the BCCI, which now has left the Supreme Court governing Indian cricket for more than a year with no end in sight. Recently the CJI, who now heads the cricket bench (heard any such in a constitutional democracy?) also admitted another PIL on the side, seeking to legalise betting and gambling in sports. Misra, before he became CJI, had ordered (on 30 Nov. 2016) that playing of the national anthem be made mandatory in cinema halls, only to rescind it much later. Each of these PILs made headlines. Nobody remembers the names of the petitioners. So why blame them alone for

headline-hunting? Even the morning after the Loya judgment, 12 of the 43 cases on the CJI's list were PILs.

A few more: the PIL to bring the Koh-i-Noor back from Britain, another to ban Santa-Banta jokes, to criminalise porn-watching (eating into court's time since 2013), to make yoga compulsory in schools, and so on. Some of these were eventually dismissed. Why these were admitted, with such a huge pendency and so many citizens waiting on issues of individual liberty, is a question we ask.

The fact is, since the eminently noble idea of PIL as the citizen's last resort originated in the mid-1980s, too many judges have extended its reach and range and in the process stretched their jurisdiction and powers. This often walks them into the executive domain of messy day-to-day governance with no exit.

In the capital, the court set up an empowered committee to improve air quality 20 years ago. It continues to date, having transcended the tenure of 18 CJIs; the air has only become more noxious. The same for the court's committee on illegal constructions and encroachment in the capital. In both cases, the court can't admit failure and dismount the tiger. But people blame it instead of the politicians and it suits them fine. PILs are being overdone, but not just by publicity-seeking activists. Judges are part of the problem.

The second principled point was, judges don't lie. At least not four senior district judges together. Does the principle not apply to the four seniormost judges of the Supreme Court who have been raising some substantive points of judicial governance for months now? Is their word to be discounted as motivated and their concerns dismissed as misplaced while we take the four Maharashtra judges at their word? I am not stupid enough to insinuate the district judges are lying. I will have to be insane to believe the top SC judges are. Their questions need a response, debate and introspection.

This relentless stretching of jurisdiction, the judiciary's tendency of headline-hunting through the same PILs it decries as pestilence, and its inability to get its own house in order has weakened the institution more than any

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An untold story

Employees and Agents Relations Committee

Gradually the existence of such a Employees and Agents Relations Committee, envisaged under Section 22(3) of The LIC Act, 1956 went into oblivion. But it still remains as a non-functional statutory Committee in the pages of The LIC Act and The LIC Rules.

Chandrashekar Bose



A significant matter had completely went out of the radar of my mind for so long. This was formation of Employees and Agents Relation Committee in the LIC. To be sure I checked with several members of the present and past leadership but none is aware that the Committee exists or ever existed in LIC. To be doubly sure I checked The LIC Act, 1956 with subsequent amendments and found that Section 22 (3) that envisages this Committee still stands unchanged.

Section 22(3) of The LIC Act, 1956 states that:

“The Corporation shall constitute in the prescribed manner for each Zonal office an Employees and Agents Relations Committee consisting of such number of persons as it thinks fit and every such committee shall consist of representatives of the Corporation and of its employees and agents, so however, that the number of representatives of the employees and agent of the Committee shall not be less than the number of the representatives of the Corporation and shall be duty of the committee to advise the Zonal Managers on matters which relate to the welfare of the employees and agents of the Corporation or which are likely to promote and secure amity and good relations between them and the Corporation.”

In consonance, Clause 14 and 15 of The LIC Rules, 1956 stipulates that:

Clause 14:

“The representatives of the Corporation of the Employees and Agents Relations Committee constituted under sub section 3 of section 22 of the Act for each Zonal office of the Corporation and the representatives of

the employees and agents on such Committee shall be nominated by the Corporation.”

Clause 15:

“A member of an Employees and Agents Relations Committee shall hold office for a period of two years but shall be eligible for being re-nominated. “

So far I remember the Committee was first formed in 1958. I had been nominated as employees’ representative on Eastern Zonal Committee. Out of a total of six members, the Corporation had three representatives including the then Zonal Manager Mr S.D. Srinivasan. Unfortunately, I could not recall the names of other members on the committee. The first meeting was held in June, 1958 in a room adjacent to the Zonal Manager’s chamber. All the six members were present and at the very onset the Zonal Manager started the proceedings of the meeting. I immediately raised the point that as envisaged in the Act, the recommendations of the Committee would be sent to the Zonal Manager for consideration and implementation. So as a natural corollary he could not be a member on the Committee itself. Moreover all the six members on the Committee were having equal rights. Even if the Zonal Manager had nominated himself on the Committee he was there as an ordinary member. So he could not suo-motu initiate the proceedings of the meeting of the Committee as its chairman. It would not be proper that being the Zonal Manager he would become the ex-officio chairman of the Committee. However, since he wanted to chair the meeting, I am proposing his name to chair the current session of the meeting.

An awestruck Mr Srinivasan started

proceedings of the meeting and requested me to be the first speaker. I read out from the LIC Rules, 1956 and told that since the Rules were silent on who would be the Chairman and Convener of the Committee and how the Committee would function etc, this Committee had to form the Bye-Rules to transact its business. I told as the first step we should nominate a Convener and I had no objection if any Corporation's representative became the Convener. Also I proposed let this Committee meet once in two months. The chairman of the Committee should be selected from among the members by rotation. A time frame should be there in place by which the recommendations of the Committee would be acted upon. I suggested one month should be sufficient for the Zonal Manager to act on the recommendations. If he does not want to accept and implement any certain recommendation of the Committee, he would send a written communication to the Committee with the specific reasons for such non acceptance/ implementation.

After my submission all the members remained dumbfounded and it appeared that none had read the relevant sections and clauses of the Act and the Rules. At the end Mr Srinivasan told that the points I had raised were very serious in nature and beyond his capacity to comment and decide on them. Instead he was referring the matter to the Central Office in Bombay for decision and guidance. Once the same was received he would convene the next session of the Committee and update. Then the meeting ended with customary coffee and sweets.

I am not aware the fate of the Committee in other zones. But till my retirement from the services of the Corporation in April 1983, neither any meeting of the Committee took place nor was the Committee reconstituted. Also no response from the Central Office was received by the Eastern Zonal office. Gradually the existence of such a Committee went into oblivion. But it still remains as a non-functional statutory Committee in the pages of The LIC Act and The LIC Rules.

Please save judiciary from.....

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outsiders. When the judges seem so divided, you would expect litigants and lawyers to go forum-shopping. More importantly, you will have the executive play games with you, holding back your own appointments while you try cleaning the air they breathe and run the game of cricket.

Some tension among institutions is healthy. But if one becomes too weak, another will muscle its way into its space. That's exactly what is happening now. The top judges are squabbling, and the politicians are laughing.

Which brings us to the third key point in the judgment – that it is preposterous to say that one individual could control the entire judiciary. In principle, you can't dispute it. In reality, we have seen that come to pass. Except that it wasn't a man, but a woman,

Indira Gandhi. The courage and spine of just one great judge, H.R. Khanna, then saved us from becoming like Erdogan's Turkey today. India of 2018 needs not just one, but several such because the pre-eminent threat now isn't just from outside, but from within.

(The author is an eminent journalist & Editor-in-Chief of The Print)



Cartoon courtesy: Shekhar Gurera



26TH Conference of Bhopal Division IEU

The 26th Divisional Conference of BDIEU was held on 11th & 12th March, 2018 at COM. N M SUNDARAM NAGAR, BHOPAL. The Conference was organized by BEHL BHOPAL UNIT. The Conference was vibrant with the presence of GENERAL SECRETARY, AIIEA, Com. V RAMESH & General Secretary, CZIEA, COM DR Mahapatra. Com V Ramesh was the Chief Guest and Com DR Mapatra as Special Guest. Com, Pramod Pradhan, GENERAL SECRETARY [CITU], MP, was also invited as SPECIAL GUEST. The Conference started with the hoisting the UNION FLAG by President BDIEU amidst thunderous slogans followed by floral tributes to the martyrs column.

At the outset, Com President moved a condolence resolution. Rich tributes were paid to great departed AIIEA leader Comrade N M SUNDARAM, Former President & General Secretary of AIIEA.

Com V Ramesh, GS, AIIEA, Chief Guest, inaugurated the Conference. In his speech he said that the conference is being held in such a difficult and critical situation. Expressing concern about LIC's future, he pointed out that average age of LIC employees has reached to 50 years. He said that recruitment in CLASS-III & CLASS-IV Cadre has not taken place since long; as a result of this Union activities are also affected. Need of young blood in LIC is now being felt. AIIEA is persuading the issue of new recruitment with LIC management, he added. Referring to other issued, like one more option for pension, wage revision, 5 days week, Com Ramesh informed the house that AIIEA is determined to achieve the goal and now it is our collective responsibility to fight unitedly with organizational & ideological commitment. Com RAMESH also described in brief about the discussions taken in the AIIEA Secretariat meeting held at PATNA.

He also said that AIIEA is protecting nationalized LIC & GIC and unless we defend LIC & GIC, we cannot achieve wage revisions and other benefits. He strongly condemned MODI govt for playing divide and rule politics in the name of religion. Globalizations, Privatization, demonetizations, GST were also some of the issues on which AIIEA GS spoke in detail. He called upon insurance employees to protect LIC & GIC to achieve better wage revision, one more option for pension etc.

COM. DR MAHAPATRA, GS, CZIEA also spoke in the conference as SPECIAL GUEST. He said why AIIEA is different from other trade unions. Language, caste and religion are not barriers in AIIEA. AIIEA has been educating us on various issues related to commons man. He strongly condemned MODI GOVT's economic policies. These policies have increased economic disparities and numbers of Capitalists are increasing day by day. He stressed on the need to change policies instead of leaders.

Com PRAMOD PRADHAN, GEN. SECY CITU MP, also delivered his speech. He expressed satisfaction that insurance employees under the banner of AIIEA have been shouldering a great deal of responsibility towards the betterment of insurance industry in particular. He also strongly condemned present govt for increasing burden on common man by unleashing wrong economic policies.

Com General Secretary presented a REPORT on behalf of the working committee. More than 25 delegates participated in the deliberations. Various proposals were also moved in the conference. The house unanimously approved the report. The Conference elected Com MS BHADORIA, MS ANSARI as PRESIDENT AND GENERAL. A total number of 15 office bearers were elected to the body of BDIEU.

SOUHARDA – Realisation of a Dream of Bangalore Units

The dream project of ICEU, Bangalore Divisions I & II and BRGIEA of constructing and owning a spacious union office came to fruition on 24th March 2018. The New Union Office located very close to Bangalore Divisional Office I in the heart of the city will house the offices of the three units, Insurance Worker and Pensioners' Association. The Union office also has four guest rooms with 15 beds. It has a meeting hall with a capacity of around 200. This dream project came to realization costing over 4 crore. The funds were raised through donations of members, well wishers from all classes of employees and officers, Agents, Pensioners and savings of the Unions. It was a magnificent response from the employees and their unflinching faith in the organization that made this dream project possible. The project has to encounter many difficulties as the organization refused to compromise with the system. Overcoming all odds and raising such massive funds for completion of the project was a proud accomplishment.

It was decided to inaugurate the Union Office building on 24th March 2018. The union office is aptly named as SOUHARDA meaning harmony and solidarity. There was huge enthusiasm among the employees. All offices of LIC and General Insurance were decorated with buntings and festoons. More than 1400 employees, officers, Development Officers, Agents and leading office-bearers of other divisional unions in South Central Zone turned up to witness the inauguration of the Building by Com Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA amidst thunderous slogans. This was followed by lighting of lamp by comrades Com. B.Bhaskara Somayaji, Com. C.V.Kumar, com. Leela Uthappa, Com. Anand and Com. H.R.Gayathri.

The inauguration was preceded by flag hoisting by the presidents of three units.



Comrades of Bangalore DO 1 and 2 added melody with the group songs. The office space in the 1st floor was inaugurated by com. V.Ramesh General Secretary, AIIEA, Com. K.Venugopal, Vice president, AIIEA, inaugurated the COM. N.M.Sundaram memorial conference hall the third floor. The pavilion named after Com.R.P.manchanda was inaugurated by Com. Sanjay Jha, Secretary, Standing committee (GI).

The inaugural function was arranged at Hudson memorial community hall closer the union office. in the venue to witness the historic programme. Galaxy of leaders from AIIEA, A large number of members, agents, officers, and developments officers and pensioners congregated SCZIEF, other divisions in the zone and fraternal organization were also present in the function. Two group songs were rendered by the comrades of DO 1 and 2.

Com. Amanulla Khan took the audience on a journey down the memory lane narrating the efforts of organization in constructing the union office. He fondly remembered the senior comrades – Comrades K.V.Sreenivasan, Lakshmikantha, M.B.Shankar and Ramanujam who built the organization in Bangalore. He hoped that the union office which is going to be the centre of our activities will be a place to spread the message of love and harmony to defeat the forces that are spreading hate and working to divide the people.

Com.K.Venugopal, Vice President appreciated the comrades of Bangalore for their collective efforts. He called up on the comrades to further strengthen the unity in facing the challenges before the working class. Com.

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10th Women Sub-Committee Meeting of Jabalpur Division IEU



The 10th Biennial Meeting of Women's Sub-Committee of JDIEU was held at Jabalpur on 8th April 2018. The Conference had enthusiastic participation of a large number of comrades. It was presided over by Com Ranjana Tiwari. The conference began with revolutionary song by the women comrades. A homage resolution was presented.

The Conference was inaugurated by Com Subhashini Ali, a veteran leader of All India Democratic Women's Association and Politburo Member of CPI (M). Com Subhashini spoke at length on the present political, economic and social situation in the country. She was critical of the Government for the aggressive neo-liberalism and the divisive

politics. She spoke on the increasing atrocities on the women and the weaker sections of the population. She said that the struggles of Dr B.R.Ambedkar and Jyotiba Phule should inspire and motivate all the progressive sections of the Indian society to meet the present day challenges. She asked the women comrades of AIIEA to enter into social activities like imparting education and coaching to the children from poor and marginalized sections of the society.

Com. D.R.Mahapatra General Secretary, CZIEA also spoke on the occasion. He laid great emphasis on building and consolidation the organization on correct political and ideological understanding to fight the present day challenges and the policies that are endangering the very existence of the Public Sector Insurance Industry and public sector as a whole.

Com Gayathri Suri, Secretary, Women Sub-Committee presented the biennial report. 8 women comrades spoke on the report and the same was adopted unanimously.

Com .N.Chakravarty ,Vice President ,AIIEA and President ,CZIEA also spoke on this occasion .Com Ranjana Tiwari proposed the vote of thanks.

PENSIONERS' MEET AT VELLORE

The 7th General Body Meeting of ICPA, Vellore was held on 26th April 2018. The Meeting had to privilege of presence and guidance of Com K.Natarajan, Vice-President, AIIPA.

Addressing the meeting Com K.Natarajan informed the efforts of the organisation in bringing various benefits in the Mediclaim Scheme and some other benefits. He also gave a detailed analysis of the Legal battle on the issue of 100 percent DA neutralisation and updation of pension.

ComNatarajan gave details of the discussions with LIC officials on the demands for improvement in family pension, full pension on 20 years of service and cash medical benefit to meet the ever increasing cost on out-patient treatment.

The Report presented by the Secretary was debated upon and adopted unanimously.

The Statements of Accounts were also unanimously adopted.

The conference unanimously elected Coms K.Pandian, R.Kesavan and V.R.Radha Krishnan as President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing year.

AGENTS' COMPETITION AT JABALPUR

The Jabalpur Division Insurance Employees' Union floated a new business competition for the Agents. It laid the condition of procuring a minimum of 20 new policies during the period 22nd to 26th March 2018. It evoked very good response with 2744 Agents procuring 10324 policies with five days. The program came for wide appreciation from both the marketing and administrative staff. The JDIEU expressed its gratitude to all Agents and Staff for making the program a great success.

Dr.B.R.Ambedkar & Phule birth celebrations Seminar on SOCIAL JUSTICE- CHALLENGES

Commemorating the birth celebrations of Bharath Ratna Dr.B.R.Ambedkar & Jyothirao Phule ICEU Karimnagar division had arranged a seminar on the topic "SOCIAL JUSTICE- CHALLENGES" on 12.04.2018 at conference hall, Divisional Office, Karimnagar. Com.K.Venugopal Rao, President, SCZIEF was the main speaker. The seminar commenced with garlanding of Ambedkar & Phule portraits. Com.A.Rammohan Rao, General Secretary, ICEU Karimnagar Division welcomed the gathering. Com.V.Rajender, President, ICEU presided over.



Com.K.Venugopal Rao, President, SCZIEF in his lecture explained the significant contributions of Ambedkar & Phule in ensuring the much elusive Social Justice prevailing in the pre Independent years. Jyothirao Phule & Savitri Phule couple pioneered empowering the women and girl by imparting education to them. Dr.Ambedkar who faced the social evil of untouchability in his schooldays, realized that education would be the primary weapon to fight the social evils. With his outstanding scholastic achievements he led the struggle against the evil of untouchability. At the time of Indian independence he suggested that to sustain the political freedom of the country it is essential to have economic freedom which is still elusive in the country. Being the chairman of the constitution committee he thoroughly studied the constitutions of many countries. Thus Dr.Ambedkar contributed the best constitution for a secular democratic India. He strived hard to ensure equal rights for women and introduced the Hindu Law code as the Law minister of the government of India. His principles of Trinity "Liberty-equality- Fraternity" were firstly found in his book "Annihilation of Caste" in 1936. He strongly opined that removal of caste system can only ensure equality and liberty in society. He wanted health and education in the total control of the state.

Unfortunately even after 70 years of independence, India stands away distance

from the dreams of these visionary social leaders in upliftment of women and the marginalized sections in India. The right wing government at the centre is trying to appropriate Ambedkar while implementing the neo liberal policies which are in contrast to Ambedkar's philosophy. The BJP government is destroy all the labour laws which were legislated with the dedicated efforts of Dr.Ambedkar. The growing attacks on minorities, dalits, adivasis in the name of the faith they believe, the food they eat have become the order of the day. The increasing sexual harassment on girls and women do not augur well for the total empowerment of the country. The BJP government is trying to portrait Ambedkar as a free market economist, while he wanted the public sector to be strengthened and supported by the government. The philosophy and preaching's of Dr.Ambedkar and Phule have become more relevant in the present political and social situation prevailing in the country. Com. K.Venugopal Rao has urged the cadres of AIIEA to understand the intrinsic politics and join the struggles of masses to realize the dreams of Dr.Ambedkar's trio of principles. The seminar was attended by around 100 members comprising the officials of Divisional office, Class I officers, ICEU membership of Karimnagar Town and surrounding branches. The seminar concluded with vote of thanks by Com.G.Ravindranath, Joint Secretary, Karimnagar Division.

Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Jayanthi at Bangalore

“Dalit and the Working class movements will come together to fight Neo-liberalism and Caste oppression”

The Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Bangalore Divisions I & II jointly organised a lecture on “Convergence of Class and Caste Struggles” on 17th April 2018 to celebrate the 127th Birth Anniversary of Dr.B.R. Ambedkar. Com Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA delivered the lecture.

Com Amanulla Khan paid glowing tributes to Dr.Ambedkar. He said that Dr.Ambedkar was an outstanding personality of 20th century who shaped the course of modern Indian history. He played a very important role in framing the constitution whose founding principles were based on Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Justice. But after 68 years of adoption of the Constitution, one finds that these foundational principles are severely compromised and today there is even a talk of changing the Constitution itself.

He said India today is at a cross-road. It is the responsibility of all progressive sections to come together to defend the Idea of India as envisaged in the national liberation movement. He pointed out that it has become necessary to integrate the struggle against caste oppression and class exploitation to unify all exploited sections of the Indian people to meet the challenging situation prevailing in the country. However, there are attempts



to pit class vs caste by some vested interests. This mechanical distinction between caste and class is divorced from the present day Indian reality.

Explaining the inter-relation between caste and class, Com Amanulla Khan pointed out that the Dalits are subjected to dual exploitation both as part of the class and on the basis of the caste. Therefore he stressed that class exploitation and social oppression complement each other. He said untouchability is a reality today despite its abolition in 1950 through Article 17 of the Constitution. The atrocities on Dalits are ever increasing and the complicity of Central Government in the Supreme Court direction on SC/ST Atrocities Act is really baffling. Though due to the pressure including a spontaneous

protest by dalit groups on April 2, 2018 the Central Government was forced to seek review of the judgement, its governments in Rajasthan, Chattisgarh and M.P. have issued directions to implement the order of the court. He was also critical of detention of Chandrasekhar Azad, the founder of Bhim Army under National Security Act without



Ambedkar Jayanthi at Bangalore

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any justification.

Com Amanulla Khan said convergence of the caste and class struggle is not a new idea. The cooperation of the Independent Labour Party founded by Dr.Ambedkar and the Left on the issue of land distribution in 1930s and the two joining together to successfully call for a strike in Textile industry was an example of this convergence. He further added that in 1950 Dr.Ambedkar and the CPI together organised struggle on the issue of land again. He also traced the history of Dalit Panthers movement which arose as a revolutionary force embracing both the caste and class struggle. In the recent times the struggle led by Jignesh Mewani supported by the Left and the Trade Unions helped secure land for 112 landless dalit families in Gujarat. This joint struggle also secured regularisation of 6000 safai karamcharis in U.P. Today we hear the slogan Jai Bheem Lal Salam in university campuses and there is increased cooperation between Dalit groups and the Left in the universities today.

Com Aman pointed out that in the current political situation where fascist threat has become real it has become imperative to integrate the class and caste struggle. He said it is important to understand that class struggle cannot succeed without annihilating the caste and the caste struggle has to recognise that material aspirations matter and without destroying the economic structure on which the caste system is based, there cannot be an end to the caste oppression. He concluded with hope that the dangerous situation in the country will bring the Dalit and the working class movements to come together to fight the common enemy represented by neo-liberalism and caste oppression.

The meeting was well attended. Earlier, Com R.Padmanabha, Jt.Secretary, DO I welcomed the gathering and Com TPN Murthy, Vice President, DO II proposed the vote of thanks. Com S.K.Geetha, General Secretary, DO I introduced the subject and the objective of organising this program.



A Seminar on “International Women’s Day - our Task” was organised at VIZAG city. Com D Ramadevi, AIDWA AP state secretary addressed the seminar. Speaking on the occasion, Com Ramadevi said that in the recent times women are coming out of the confinement of their homes to work, whether it is in the formal or informal sector. But the trends to confine women to the house are on the increase in the name of tradition and customs. Even the beauty contests are being held with slogans like ‘save the girl child’. The atrocities against women are increasing everyday. Progressive women have been fighting for an equal space in the society, for which innumerable women have to contribute. She said, AIIEA women must carry out the progressive ideas through social media. Com Sunanda, Convenor, WWCC, Com M Kameshwari, AP State convenor, Com N Ramanachalam, General Secretary, ICEU also participated. Com Chaitanya welcomed the gathering and Com Tirumala delivered a vote of thanks. Women comrades attended in large numbers and the event was well covered by press. Our comrades also participated in the human chain programme organised by CITU and AIDWA.

Chodavaram Unit donated provisions to a poor widow. Port branch donated provisions and other utilities like oils, soaps etc worth Rs.60000/-, apart from organising one day lunch for 140 inmates of a home for destitute called “Ashray”. The women comrades of the unit involved all classes of employees as well as agents in the activity.

Shipyard base unit comrades distributed Pediasure health drink and notebooks to 32 children of “Dezire Society”, who are suffering from AIDS.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT VIZAG

Garividi unit women comrades donated school bags, pens pencils to students of Lalidam government primary school. Srikakulam unit comrades donated provisions worth Rs.4000/- to an orphanage.

Narasannapeta unit donated provisions to "Tapovanam", an old age home. City units women comrades donated boost packets and pickles to a blind girls school in Vizag. They also contributed Rs.4500/- towards the charges of scribes who wrote the exams for these blind girls.

Four women Com Purnima, Com Tirumala, Com Nagarani and Com RV Padmavathi performed a playlet "Go Grahanam", at the cultural fest held by Praja Natya mandali, on the eve of International Women's day. The playlet depicted the oppression of women and the evil of dowry. The play received wide appreciation across the general public of Vizag city. Rs5000/- was donated to Praja Natya Mandali, towards the expenses of the cultural events.



Seminar on Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh

A series of programs have been conducted on the issue pertaining to 'Special category Status' to Andhra Pradesh state. Preparatory program viz., Round Table Meeting was organized during 3rd week of February. Taking a call from the round table meet a Seminar was organized on 02.03.2018 with participants from various trade unions, mass organizations, NGOs and Teachers. Unions from LIC, GIC, Banks, BSNL, Medical representatives, CITU and various transport federations took part. Tax payers' association, People for India, Helping Hands are among other associations. There was a large gathering in the meeting hall opposing the central government's inaction on the issue. Com S Rajendra Prasad noted lawyer and member of AP Bar Council chaired the session. Com K Nageswar Ex-MLC spoke at length on the subject. He narrated the gimmicks and jumlaas of central government

and the ruling combine. The refusal in granting the much awaited special category status (SCS) to AP which was promised in the 2014 general elections millions of times shows the arrogance of the government at the centre.

On 06.03.2018 another meeting attended by more than 31 organizations decided to form a Joint Action Committee (JAC) for achieving SCS with Com S Rajendra Prasad as its Convener and 10 members as Steering Committee. A press meet was organized on 09.03.2018 highlighting the decisions of JAC.

On 13.03.2018 a Candle Light Demonstration was organized by the JAC demanding SCS and implementation of all the assurances made in the AP reorganization act 2014 in the busy area of MG Road access point. Our comrades from local LIC, GIC units and members of People for India participated in good numbers.

UP State Government employees win battle against privatisation

Employees of UP state government proved that neither privatisation is undefeatable nor regularization of contractual workers is impossible even in the neo-liberal regime of Yogi government which has 325 MLAs and is fully committed to privatise the government sector and contractualise the labour.

UP Government decided to privatise power distribution of 5 districts of Uttar Pradesh. Employees, officers and even contractual workers of Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation Limited decided not to accept the privatisation of their department. They immediately formed a joint forum of all unions and started struggle. There were dharnas in all offices of state for 20 days and after that they gave a call of 3 days walkout on 9, 10 and 11 April 2018. Many other unions of different sections of employees, unorganised sectors and traders also supported the struggle of employees of UP Power Corporation.

It was an unique experience that the common people of state despite lot of grievances with the department opposed the decision of privatisation of power and supported the struggle. Struggle was so united and intense that it forced the government to back off from its decision. Finally Struggle and unity won.

Another important victory was achieved by employees of UP State Road Transport

Corporation. All the employees whether regular or contractual facing a lot of problems due to contractualization decided to fight against this unjust labour practice. Since December 17 they organised many meetings, rallies, dharnas at district and state level. After a long struggle they decided to stop the road transport on 9th April for indefinite period. This was also supported by other sections of workers and common people of the state.

After the failure of 3 rounds of negotiations, situation became very serious but the employees were not ready to compromise with their demands. Finally government invited the union leaders on 8 April 2018 and accepted major demands of workers which are as follows 1) all the contractual workers who have worked up to 2001 will be regularized. 2) Substantial wage hike in different categories. 3) Medical help of 2.5 lacs in case of any accident on duty. 4) In case of death on duty compassionate appointment on contractual basis for children.

In the present economic scenario, the two victories scored by the UP Government employees are very significant. It has given confidence that a strong resistance against neo-liberalism can push back the disastrous policies. The struggle was won due to total unity achieved and this unity need to be protected and further consolidated.

(Report - Geeta Shant)

Comrade Peter Joseph Retires

Com.P.A.Joseph, General Secretary of Insurance Employees' Union Belagavi Division, retired from the services of LIC on 31.03.2018. He held the General Secretary post for about 20 years (from Nov.1998) Com.P.A.Joseph joined LIC on 15.06.1982 as an Assistant at Dharwad Branch. In the year 1993, he was promoted as HGA and was posted at Gokak Branch under the undivided Dharwad Division. He took over responsibility as General Secretary on his transfer to Divisional office from City Branch.III.He led the organisation from the front motivating the employees to fight the offensives of the Government and the Management. He is voracious reader . His vast knowledge on the various topics,his analytical skills of the society has kept him in good stead,when he intervened in the debates and discussion in the conferences of SCZIEF/AIIEA.His flowery English (both written and spoken) has won many a hearts in the organisation at the all India level.Under his leadership IEU Belagavi successfully hosted the 9th General Conference of SCZIEF at Belgaum. His simple and easy approach and friendly nature has won many friends within as well as outside LIC.

A Grand and befitting function was organised on 8th April at MAULI Mangal Karyalaya Belgaum. The same was attended by more than 300 Employees,Officers, Pensioners, Representatives of various fraternal organisations and Family members of Com.P.A. Joseph.

Com.Amanulla Khan,President AIIEA,while felicitating said that" Com.Joseph may have retired from the services of LIC the situation prevailing in the society does not permit him to retire from the Trade Union Movement and he has to continue to work for the betterment of the society."



Com.Clement Xavier Das,General Secretary SCZIEF, S.K.Geeta,Vice President SCZIEF, Com.Bhaskar Somayaji,Jt Secretary AIIPA and Com.J.Suresh,Jt Secretary SCZIEF were present for the felicitation function. The Office bearers of various Divisional Units of Karnataka were present and graced memorable occasion.

Prof.Anand Mense (AITUC), Com. E.M.Ginde (NCBE), Com.S.S.Dhaded (GIC Pensioners) and Dr.Jyoti Hiremath of B.V.Bellad Law College Belgaum,while felicitating Com.Joseph recalled their association and various qualities and contribution of Joseph to the movement.

Com.P.A.Joseph in his reply to the felicitations, profusely thanked the leadership of AIIEA and SCZIEF for all the support and guidance given to him in discharging the responsibilities of General Secretary.He also assured to continue to support IEU Belgaum and broader movement in future also.

He announced the Donations to Insurance Worker, IEU Belgaum and Vima Naukara.

Insurance News in brief

■ A.M.KHAN, DHARWAD

AI (artificial intelligence) means much more than simply automating existing processes. If anything, AI has become an important tool to developing processes that were not even conceivable just a couple of years ago. Insurance companies have been taking the lead with AI in areas such as telematics, which has opened up to new ways of doing business.

"Underwriting is not dying. It is just being automated into digital algorithms versus analog human beings", this is how the Artificial Intelligence geeks are propagating. Going a step ahead it is now being used in selling life insurance. By giving a test to the people, who are today consumers, which show the probability of dying by what age ! Then the person with the not so better of dying age would be a good prospective buyer of insurance. one life company is offering life insurance based on an algorithm that uses downloads of patient medical data. The randomness essential to insurance operating well, affordably, and as a social good, is being quietly diminished. Without randomness, insurance is not insurance.

Another top consulting firm is closing down its insurance division because insurers no longer need expert advice from them. We did a good job of convincing the insurance to adopt the latest technologies," says the chief of the firm. The insurance firms did adopt. And today the artificial intelligence has replaced firm.

Cognizant, a technology giant, has joined hands with a consortium of leading Indian life insurers to develop a blockchain solution to facilitate cross-company data-sharing. The consortium comprises of SBI Life Insurance, Max Life Insurance, Canara HSBC OBC Life Insurance, Edelweiss Tokio Life, IDBI Federal Life Insurance, Birla Sun Life Insurance, HDFC Life, Kotak Life, Tata AIA Life PNB MetLife, India First Life Insurance, ICICI Prudential Life Insurance, Bharati AXA, Aegon Life and SUD (Star Union Dai-ichi) Life Insurance. As a shared source of truth, blockchain opens numerous possibilities for insurers to collaborate more effectively and transparently, make better-informed decisions, and create greater trust and accountability, while disintermediating data aggregators. Built on Corda, a distributed ledger platform developed by R3 and hosted on

Microsoft's Azure infrastructure, the solution will help insurers reduce their reliance on data intermediaries and aggregators in obtaining customer and policy details for a wide range of critical purposes, such as know-your-

customer due diligence, financial and medical underwriting, risk assessment, fraud detection, and regulatory compliance.

In India only 6.5 to 7 crores vehicles have insurance cover as against approximately 18 crore registered vehicles. Concerned over poor compliance of third party insurance of vehicles, which puts all road users at risk, the Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety has asked the insurance regulator to offer mandatory three-year insurance policy for cars and five-year policy for motorbikes at the time of sale and registration.

The Delhi High Court on March 19, 2018 held that the exclusionary clause of 'Genetic Disorders' in health insurance policies was too broad, ambiguous and discriminatory. Therefore, such conditions were violative of Article 14 of the Constitution of India and the court directed Irdai to re-look at these exclusionary clauses and ensure that insurance companies do not reject claims on the basis of expulsions related to genetic disorders. Following this order IRDA has sent directives to all General and Health insurers to not include 'Genetic Disorders' as one of the exclusions in new health insurance policies.

The Narendra Modi government's flagship crop insurance scheme, launched with much fanfare two years ago, has witnessed negative growth this year as the coverage has reduced to 24 per cent of gross cropped area (GCA) in 2017-18 from 30 per cent in 2016-17. Likewise, the number of farmers insured during both the kharif and rabi seasons has gone down by 14 per cent. The government had allocated Rs 55 billion in the budget for 2016-17, which was increased to Rs 1324 billion. In 2017-18, the allocation was Rs 90 billion. For 2018-19, the government has provided Rs 130 billion with a target to bring 98 million hectares — close to 50 per cent of gross cropped area — under the scheme.

The insured losses from natural and non-made disasters world wide in 2017 amounts to US \$ 144 billion. The main driver of the huge losses was the hurricane season in the North Atlantic. Harvey, Irma and Maria left a trail of destruction. The other disasters were wildfires that ravaged parts of California. Total economic losses have been put at \$ 337 billion.



BANGLADESH TEA ESTATE WORKERS STRIKE FOR HIGHER WAGES:

Thousands of Tea Estate Workers in the Sylhet Valley struck work and marched to call for a pay rise and the appointment of a Qualified Physician and an ambulance at every tea plantation. Workers demanding their daily wage increase from 85 Taka i.e 1 US Dollar to 250 Taka i.e 3 US Dollars and recognition of their ownership of Land where they had lived for generation.

NEWZEALAND NURSES PROTEST LOW WAGES:

Nurses throughout Newzealand demonstrated whole week from 9th April to 13th April , following a rejected pay offer from the District Health Boards. The DHBS are critically underfunded after decades of cost cutting measures by successive Government . Protests were organized by the Newzealand Nursing Organization.

STRIKING WORKERS SHUT DOWN SRILANKA'S MAIN AIRPORT:

More than 3000 workers from Bandaranaike International Airport , walked out on strike and protested outside the Airport on 3rd April 2018, for higher wages and other demands. The strike included Management, Engineering, Security and power sector workers. They demanded pay increase by a minimum of Rs.10,000/- per month.

OKLAHOMA STRUGGLE CONTINUES AS CALL FOR TEACHERS STRIKE SPREAD ACROSS US :

Large number of teachers on 16th April show up at the State Capital , to continue their fight for improved wages and school funding. Teachers are also setting up Facebook pages in Florida, Michigan, Iowa and other states to fight for collective action.

PESHAWAR ENGINEERS DEMAND A SERVICE STRUCTURE:

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Association of Government Engineer's members from across the Pakistani Province protested on 2nd April over lengthy delay in implementing a basic service structure., The Engineers also demanded Professional allowance and higher pay. Engineers from range of Government departments including communication, irrigation and public works warned that they would take industrial action if their demands were not met.

GM TO SLASH 1500 JOBS AT LORDS TOWN, OHIO PLANT:

In spite of a continuous chorus in the media of booming Economy, creating robust JOB Numbers, General Motors is unleashing a new round of attacks on autoworkers in North America as a part of Global cost-cutting offensive against the working class. The GM Motors management announced on 30th March that it will cut one of

Working Class Struggles

■ S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE

the two operating shifts at its massive Lordstown, Ohio, assembly plant cutting as may as 1500 jobs effective from June 15. Workers are planning to create a Public opinion against these attacks.

WINDSOR, ONTARIO CASION WORKERS STRIKE:

Thousands of workers at the Caesars Hotel and Casino in Windsor Ontario struck work on 7th April demanding wage increase and improved Insurance and other social benefits.

STRIKES IN GERMANY'S PUBLIC SECTOR AS ANGER MOUNTS OVER WAGES AND WORKING CONDITION:

The Public Sector Service Workers expanded strikes in Germany on 3rd & 4th April. Over 60000 workers took strike action in the States of BERLIN, BRANDENBURG and at many other places. Workers participated in demonstrations and Rallies. The Trade Union are demanding 6% wage increase.

STUDENTS PROTEST AGAINST AUSTERITY MOUNT IN FRANCE:

All over the country students are occupying campuses and general assemblies and demonstrations. On 10th April thousands of students participated , against the growing social inequality, education policies across the Universities in France.

FRENCH RAIL WORKERS RESUME STRIKE ACTION:

Social opposition to President EMMANUEL MACRONI's Government is growing as Rail Workers begin fourth day of strike action against Privatization of the FRENCH NATION RAILWAYS. Strike action started on 6th April. The movement is bringing workers and youth into a direct political confrontation within the FRENCH Government.

TEACHERS ACROSS THE UK VOTE FOR INDUSTRIAL ACTION:

Teachers across UK voted overwhelmingly for strike action over pay and pension at Conference of the National Education Union(NEU). The meeting held on 1st April decided to hold demonstration across UK and followed by strike actions.

SOUTH KOREAN SHIPYARD WORKERS LAUNCH INDEFINITE STRIKE:

Hundreds of workers from STX OFFSHORE & SHIPBUILDING'S JINHAEE SHIPYARD, IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN CITY CHANGWON, began an indefinite walkout on 25th March against Company plans to slash labour cost by 75% and axing of 40% of its work force.

Economic Tid Bits

■ J.SURESH, MYSORE

- Sri Lanka's economic growth fell to 3.1% last year from 4.4% in 2017, lowest in the last 16 years. According to the statistics department, the service sector which contributes close to 56% of the output, grew last year only by 3.2%, a significant drop from the previous year's 4.7%. The agriculture sector which accounts for close to 8% of the economy, declined by 0.8%. The industrial sector which makes up around 27% of the economy grew by only 3.9%, a fall from previous year's 5.8%. To bail out the Sri Lankan economy, IMF has insisted that the fiscal deficit be cut to 3.5% of the GDP by 2020, half of the 2014 deficit. The Sri Lankan debt service payment for this year is US \$ 2.9 billion, rising to \$ 4.2 billion in 2019 and will continue at \$ 3.6 billion for each year from 2020 to 2022. Though the per capita income slightly increased from \$ 3842 in 2015 to \$ 4065 in 2017m when adjusted for inflation, the per capita income reduced from \$ 3032 in 2015 to \$ 2780 in 2017.
- According to IMF Chief Christine Legarde, the global debt – private and public – had now reached an all-time high of \$ 164 trillion. Private debt made up two-thirds of the total, with public debt level reaching levels seen not since World War II. She said, if the present trend continued, "many low-income countries will face unsustainable debt burdens". She also said that the high debt burdens have left governments, companies and households more vulnerable to sudden tightening of financial conditions and the entire international trading and economic order is, "in danger of being torn apart".
- According to Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises, there are 331 CPSEs or CPSUs in India. They are spread into various sectors of economy including Railways, Shipping, Telecommunications, arms manufacturing, mining, banking, petrochemicals, airlines and electricity generation and transmission. In railways, for 90000 jobs ranging from engine driver and carpenter to track inspector, 25 lakh people applied. The government is consistently taking steps to weaken the public sector enterprises. The government has already sold 20% of its ownership in Coal India and has announced its plan to reduce the workforce in Coal India by 30% by 2020. Half of the 5,00,000 miners in Coal India are contract workers who

are just paid around Rs.8500/- per month, which are half of those paid to regular workers. During the financial year 2017-18, the BJP government has mobilized US \$ 15.6 billion from disinvestment of public sector and for the current fiscal they have set a target of \$

12.3 billion from disinvestment of PSUs. During the last four years of BJP regime, they have disinvested PSUs and mobilized more than \$ 36 billion, just to contain the budget deficit and to increase the military spending. The total valuation of 331 PSUs is at \$ 195 billion.

- The unemployment rate of Spain is 16.5%. Nearly three and a half million Spanish people are unemployed. According to official statistics, 21.5 million contracts were signed in 2017, of which 90% were temporary. According to Oxfam Intercom, Spain is ranked as third highest inequality growing country in the EU since 2007. The richest 1% of the Spain population controls 25% of the national wealth. Around 7000 new millionaires were created in 2017. The total wealth of the top three richest people is equivalent to the wealth of the poorest 30% i.e. over 14 million people. The hourly productivity of Spanish worker has increased by 6% since 2012, but the wages have only increased by 0.6%. Ten and a quarter million people live below the official poverty line and 22.3 % is the poverty rate of Spain. 27% of poor Spaniards live in homes without lighting, with water leaks, rot on walls and floors and dirty surroundings. The jobless rate for those between the ages 16 and 19 is as high as 60%. It is more than 40% for those aged between 20 and 24 and 25.6% for those between 25 and 29.
- According to a World Inequality Report 2018, the current share of total wealth controlled by top 1% of the world's population is 33% up from 28% in 1980. The top 10% of the world's population now own over 70% of total wealth. The bottom half of the world's population – 3.5 billion people – owns less than 2% of the wealth. In terms of income, the top 1% captured 23% of world income from 1980 to 2016, equal to the total captured by the bottom 60%. The top 0.1% captured as much income as the bottom half of the world's population. After decreasing for most of the twentieth century, the income and wealth share of the top 10 and top 1% has increased dramatically since 1980s. If the world's billionaires continue increasing their wealth at the present rate, they will eventually "own 100% of the world's wealth".

Claim in moments

Lemonade, an insurance agency in USA has claimed to set a world record by taking an unbelievable 3-second period to settle a claim through its AI-powered bot, Jim, something that used to take days or even weeks to accomplish. Jim processed the claim in a couple of blinks – in which he registered the claim, processed the details, verified the policy, regulations and compliance guidelines, sent a wiring instruction to the bank and also informed the customer that the claim has been settled!

"Newborn" definition

With an increase in the incidence of neonatal complications, paediatricians and neonatologists have been worrying about the lack of insurance cover for newborns. In the absence of a definition of 'newborn' by IRDAI, insurance schemes that mention newborn coverage were restricting it to vaccinations in the first 90 days of the child's birth. Now, IRDAI has defined a newborn as a "baby born during the policy period and aged up to 90 days".

GST Exemption

IRDAI has exempted 24 schemes from insurance from GST, including Aam Aadmi Bima Yojana, Varishtha Pension Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Jeevan Jyoti Bima Yojana, Janashree Bima Yojana, Universal Health Insurance Scheme, Pradhan Mantri Jan Dhan Yojana, Hut Insurance Scheme, Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana, Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana, Universal Health Insurance Scheme and Niramaya Health Insurance Scheme.

Aadhaar

After the Supreme Court extended the deadline to link Aadhaar with various services, including insurance policies, IRDAI has clarified that though Aadhaar is not compulsorily required at the time of buying a new insurance policy, the consumer will have to submit it within 6 months. In the absence of Aadhaar, one of the documents listed in Prevention of Money Laundering rules viz., passport, driving licence, PAN card, voter identity card issued by the Election Commission of India, job card issued by MGNREGA would be enough.

Compulsory Insurance

The Supreme Court Committee on Road Safety has asked insurance regulator to offer a mandatory three-year policy for cars, apart from a five-year policy for motorbikes at the time of sale and registration. Quoting sources from the Insurance Information Bureau (IIB), the report highlighted that only 6.5-7 crore vehicles had insurance cover, out of a total number of 18 crore registered vehicles.

Non-life 2017-18

PSU insurers collected gross direct premium of Rs.67,921.17 crore in 2017-18, compared to Rs.65,427.16 crore collected by private sector insurers.

For our Field Force

■ ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

PSU GI Merger

Following the government's Budget 2018-19 announcement of merging three general public-sector insurance companies, a committee consisting of senior officials of the three companies — National Insurance Company (NIC), United India Insurance and Oriental Insurance Company — has been formed to assess the modalities of the merger process.

Cancer Cover Sales

Five months after the launch of its unique cancer cover, LIC has sold 88,750 policies across India. And data shows that just four states — Maharashtra, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu and Kerala (West and South Zones) — accounted for 58.5% of these cancer policies sold during this period.

Government Guarantee

In 2015, the railways ministry had entered into a MoU with LIC for a financial assistance of Rs 1.50 lakh crore for identified projects between 2015 to 2019. However due to exposure limit constraints as per IRDAI guidelines, LIC has not been able to subscribe to IRFC bonds beyond a certain limit. Now, the finance ministry has announced that LIC will have Government Guarantee for the bonds.

Rs.2900 Cr in HAL

LIC has subscribed 70% (Rs.2,900 Cr.) of Hindustan Aeronautics' Rs.4,200-crore initial public offering. The IPO would have failed to reach even the half-way subscription mark if not for a last-minute bid by LIC.

Air-India - LIC

Government has decided to completely exit Air-India by disinvesting 76% to private and 4% to permanent employees as ESOPS. Government wants LIC to buy the remaining 20%, but, an insurance company can hold only up to 15% shares in another company, as per rules of the IRDAI rules. So, it plans to sell the remaining to LIC and other PSU insurance cos.

LIC questions ICICI

ICICI Bank CEO Chanda Kochhar has sanctioned Rs.3250 Cr. loan to Videocon, to favour her husband Deepak Kochhar and it became NPA. LIC, which is having 9.4% shares in ICICI bank, wanted an explanation and also called a special meeting with the top management of the bank. LIC, the largest institutional shareholder in ICICI Bank, is concerned over losses incurred due to the decline in the bank's stock price.

Videocon exits

Videocon Industries has sold its entire stake in insurance business joint venture with US-based Liberty Mutual Insurance Group to DP Jindal Group and Enam Securities. Post the sale, the name of Liberty Videocon will change to 'Liberty General Insurance Company Limited'.

Response



This refers to your editorial 'historic long March.' The editorial has given a detailed analysis of the historical march of the farmers from Nasik to Mumbai on foot. It is a wake up call to government from the deepest slumber. The march reminded us of the Dandi march led by Gandhiji. It is an irony that the farmers who produce food go to bed hungry. Due to climate change the farming activities suffer from floods, drought, and unseasonal rain. Also the prices of seeds, fertilisers and pesticide increased and thus making the agriculture unsustainable. After realising the agitation will affect their electoral prospects the government thought it is prudent enough to accept their demands.

-K.Narayana Rao, Bangalore

SOUHARDA – Realisation of a Dream of Bangalore Units

Contd from P.28

V.Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA greeted the comrades. He expressed happiness on being the part of this very special occasion, Com.Girija, Joint secretary, AIIEA, said that it was a matter of pride to own a union office in the heart of the city and hoped that the place would cater to the needs of the people beyond LIC. Com. Sanjay Jha, Secretary, Standing committee (GI), said that the union office is built with grit and determination of the comrades of Bangalore and it is a pride of AIIEA. Com.K.Natarajan, AIIPA in his address narrated the difficulties faced by the organization in the initial years due to lack of space to work from and today our comrades in Bangalore have created a space not just for themselves but can also cater to the needs of other organizations. Com. Clement Xavier Das, General Secretary SCZIEF greeted on behalf of the zonal federation. Shri. Mallashetty, General Secretary of NFIFWI and Shri. Mahadevaiah Mathapathi, Federation of State Government employees conveyed their best wishes on behalf of their organisations. Com. Amanulla Khan felicitated Shri Manjunath Reddy, former

Mayor of Bangalore and Shri B. Mrithyunjaya Architect of our building.

Com. S.K. Geetha, General Secretary, DO-I welcomed the gathering and Com.K.Gopal, General Secretary, DO-II proposed vote of thanks to everyone who had helped in the construction of the union office. Mementos were given to all the workers who were involved in the construction as a mark of our special appreciations. Family members of our departed leaders com.Ramanujam, com.K.V. Srinivasan and com.Lakshmikantha were greeted with flower bouquets.

The inauguration of union office was a unique experience for every one who took part in it. The massive participation of members and the fraternal organizations reflected their love and affection for the organization. It gave a sense of accomplishment to everyone who was a part of this huge task. The rangoli, flower arrangement, balloons, buntings, all brought out the true joy and celebration befitting the occasion.

Soudharda is not just a piece of real estate for the organization. All efforts will be made to convert it as a centre of democratic, trade union and progressive activities.

DONATIONS

Com.Muralikrishna M, Guntir Br1, Masulipatnam Div.	Rs. 2000
Com.Purbi Ghosh, President, IEA, Jamshedpur	5000
Com. Hariprasad V, Nellore	2000
Com. B.V.Subramanya, Nellore	500
Com.Shoba, Rourkela, Sambalpur Div	3000
Com.Joseph P A , Belgaum	10000
Com.Premlatha Aind, Rourkela	2000
Com.Pana Murmu,Rourkela, Sambalpur Div	4001
Com.V.S.Samuel, Muvathupuzza,Ernakulam Div.	5000
Com.V Sugumaran, Cuddalore, Vellore Div.	1000
Com.Surinder Singh, Kasumpti, Shimla	2100
Comrades of Umaria Base Unit Shadool Division	1100

Insurance Worker heartily thanks all these comrades.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
July 2017	285	6505.38
August	285	6505.38
September	285	6505.38
October	287	6551.03
November	288	6573.86
December	286	6528.21
January 2018	288	6573.86
February	287	6551.03
Base1960=Base2001x22.8259		

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