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.....it cannot be fixed as per the needs and desires of the Capital without distributing the gains of development to the Working sections of the population.....

Economy in a tailspin: What went wrong

While investment demand was anyway weak when the NDA government came to power in 2014, private consumption has also started decelerating, impacted by the note ban

Economic report card



GROWTH SLOWDOWN A BLIP OR A DEEPER PROBLEM?

India's GDP growth slowed to a three-year low in April-June, triggering an avalanche of opinion with some seeing it as a temporary blip due to the goods and services tax (GST) rollout and demonetisation and others fretting that it may be something more than that. ET takes a look at the issue.



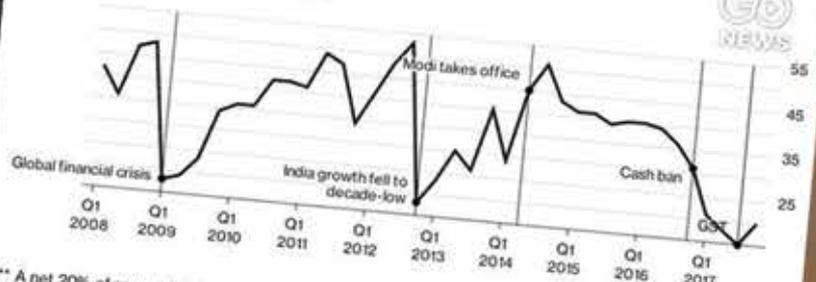
WHY GROWTH FELL: THREE REASONS FROM THE SPENDING SIDE

Category	Q1 FY17	Q1 FY18
Buying Slowed	8.4	7.3
Investments Still Sluggish	6.7	6.7

WHY SOME SEE THE SLOWDOWN AS TEMPORARY: GST and demonetisation

Pessimism Abounds

Jobs outlook lingers near 12-year low



** A net 20% of respondents see employment increasing in their location during Oct-Dec Source: Manpower Inc.

Wholesale inflation at a four-month high in August

India's wholesale price inflation accelerated to a four-month high of 3.24% in August, in line with the trend in retail inflation, on the back of rising food and fuel prices, strengthening the case for a pause on interest rates by the Reserve Bank of India in its monetary policy review next month. Data released by the department of industrial policy and promotion (DIPP) showed that food inflation quickened to 5.75% in August from 2.15% a month ago.



Against Anti Worker, Anti Farmer, Anti People Policies of the NDA Government For the Rights of Workers

delhi chalo

9,10,11 Nov 2017

3 Day Relay Dharna Before Parliament

Working Class and October Revolution

Impoverishing the Masses

Linguistic Reorganisation

Face-to-face with the Mahatma

भारतीय श्रमिक वर्ग को अक्टूबर क्रान्ति की देन





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STATE OF THE ECONOMY

India's GDP growth slumped to 5.7 percent in the first quarter of the financial year 2017-18. This is the slowest growth in the last three years. The GDP growth has been continuously declining for six quarters in a row down from 9.25% to 5.7%. This is not surprising as clear evidence was available of the economic slowdown and many leading economists had been warning that economy would slip into recession if immediate corrective steps are not taken. But the government refused to acknowledge these concerns and continued to fantasise with its understanding that Indian economy is doing very well and is recording the highest growth in the world among the large economies.

After living in denial for months, the government was forced to accept that the economy is indeed in a crisis. This acceptance came after severe criticism from within the BJP and the Sangh Parivar about the handling of the economy. Notwithstanding the spirited defence of its actions by the Prime Minister, Finance Minister and a number of senior ministers, clear signs of nervousness in the government were visible. The Cabinet was called hurriedly to discuss the economy and

the Prime Minister hurriedly constituted the Economic Advisory Council to seek immediate suggestions to fix the economy.

The Reserve Bank of India, IMF, World Bank, Asian Development Bank, OECD and a number of prominent institutions have lowered the growth of Indian economy. The consumer confidence has hit a three year low as seen from the RBI survey. There is a general consensus that demonetisation and the hasty implementation of GST have greatly impacted the economy. It is now clear that demonetisation has not achieved any of the stated objectives. On the other hand it has hugely harmed the informal sector which accounts for 40 percent of the GDP and employs close to 75 percent of the labour force. The hasty implementation of GST without much of preparations has hit the small and medium enterprises tremendously further aggravating the crisis in the economy.

There is enough evidence available to suggest that all drivers of economy are faltering. Agriculture is in an unprecedented crisis. The massive agitations of the farming community across the country and unending

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farmer suicides makes it clear that agriculture is no longer remunerative. The BJP and the Prime Minister are guilty of going back on the election promise to implement Dr. Swaminathan Commission recommendations on minimum support price for agriculture produce. The manufacturing sector continues to falter and exports have considerably declined. In the absence of demand, there is no investor enthusiasm from the private sector. The investment to GDP ratio is down from 31.8% to 27.1% now. The Banking sector is saddled with massive Non-Performing Assets in excess of Rs 8 lakh crore. There has been a 135% rise in Non-Performing Assets from December 2014 to March 2017. The ability of the banks to make fresh lending, therefore, is severely hampered.

But the biggest failure of economy is on job creation. The promise of the government to create 2 crore jobs annually has simply fallen flat. Rather than creating any new jobs, the country is seeing huge job losses. According to the Labour Bureau Survey of 2015-16, total employment has shrunk by about 0.4% per annum during the period 2013-14 to 2015-16. This translates into reduction of employment for about 37 lakhs to 53 lakhs. The Survey notes that perhaps for the first time in India, we have an absolute decline in employment growth. The Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy estimates that in the first half of the year 2017 in the aftermath of demonetisation more than 1.5 million jobs have been lost. It is well known that 1.2 crore youth enter the job market every year and failure to provide decent jobs for them would create a socially volatile situation.

Interestingly, the economic crisis has had no impact on the fortunes of the rich. According to the Forbes Magazine, the combined wealth of the 100 richest Indians rose by 26 percent. Mukesh Ambani added \$ 15.3 billion to his wealth. The 57 Indian billionaires own wealth equal to 91 crore Indians who constitute 70% of the bottom population. The Oxfam has estimated that the top 1% of the Indians own nearly 60% of the national wealth. This huge income and wealth inequality is the dubious contribution of Neo-Liberalism pursued for the past quarter century. Thomas Piketty and Lucas Chancel in their paper appropriately titled 'From British Raj to Billionaire Raj' bring

out startling facts on Indian Income Inequality during the period 1922-2014. They conclude that India has witnessed the highest increase in the share of the top 1% in national income over the past three decades from 6.2% in 1980-82 to 21.7% in 2013-14. It is not surprising that India today is the second most unequal society in the world.

The Modi government must realise that the Indian economy is in real crisis and this cannot be overcome without a reversal of the disastrous policies that favour the few rich as against the vast majority of the poor. The mere growth in the GDP will not result in better living for the entire population. The understanding that growth will benefit all based on trickle-down theory has failed across the world. There is no meaning in growth without redistribution. This is where the Indian State has abdicated its responsibility of acting as a distributor of economic justice. It is shameful that India is ranked 100 along with Djibouti and Rwanda out of 119 countries in the Global Hunger Index 2017. Even the war ravaged Iraq and economically isolated and crippled North Korea have performed better than India in tackling hunger. 191 million Indians go hungry everyday and 3000 children die every day from poor diet related illness. More than 21% of the children are wasted (low weight for height). Only three other countries Djibouti, South Sudan and Sri Lanka have recorded more than 20 percent of children wasted. The much touted economic growth under the neo-liberal era has failed to tackle the basic problems of the people including hunger.

Today opposition to the economic policies is growing. The country is witnessing unprecedented agitation by the farmers. The workers are restless. The 10 central trade unions and a number of independent federations and associations have decided to hold a massive dharna for three days at New Delhi from 9th to 11th November to demand reversal of the neo-liberal policies. It is expected that more than 5 lakh workers from across the country will assemble during these three days to present an alternative agenda for development. Though the BMS, an organisation of the Sangh Parivar has decided to stay away from this program; has decided independently to organise demonstrations in the third week

of November at Delhi to protest against the economic policies of the government. This decision of the BMS is indicative of the massive depth of resentment and anger among the working class. The Modi government must understand that the economic crisis cannot

be fixed as per the needs and desires of the capital. No economy can sustain without distributing the gains of development to the poor, vulnerable and working sections of the population. Earlier the government realises this, better it would be for the country.

अर्थव्यवस्था की स्थिति

भारत की जी.डी.पी. वृद्धि 2017-18 की पहली तिमाही में घटकर 5.7 प्रतिशत रह गई है। पिछले तीन वर्षों में यह सबसे कम वृद्धि दर है। जी.डी.पी. वृद्धि पिछली 6 तिमाहियों में लगातार गिर रही है और यह 9.25 प्रतिशत से 5.7 प्रतिशत पर आ गई है। यह आश्चर्य जनक नहीं है क्योंकि आर्थिक मंदी के स्पष्ट संकेत उपलब्ध थे और अनेक बड़े अर्थशास्त्रियों ने यह चेतावनी दी थी कि यदि अविलम्ब सही कदम नहीं उठाये जाते हैं तो अर्थव्यवस्था मंदी के दौर में चली जायेगी। लेकिन सरकार ने इन चिंताओं को नकार दिया तथा अपनी समझ के आधार पर ख्याली-पुलाव पकाने लगे कि भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था बहुत अच्छे परिणाम दे रही है तथा दुनिया की बड़ी अर्थव्यवस्थाओं में सबसे अधिक वृद्धि दर्ज कर रही है।

महीनों तक नकारते रहने के बाद सरकार को यह स्वीकार करने के लिये विवश होना पड़ा कि अर्थव्यवस्था वास्तव में संकट में है। यह स्वीकारोक्ति बी.जे.पी. व संघ परिवार द्वारा अर्थव्यवस्था को संचालित करने की अन्दर से हुई कड़ी आलोचना के आधार पर सामने आई। प्रधानमंत्री, वित्तमंत्री व अनेक वरिष्ठ मंत्रियों की कार्यवाहियों का भावनात्मक बचाव करने के बावजूद सरकार में निराशा के साफ संकेत दिखाई दिये। अर्थव्यवस्था पर विचार-विमर्श करने के लिये जल्दी में मंत्रिमण्डल की बैठक बुलाई गई और प्रधानमंत्री ने परामर्श लेने तथा अर्थव्यवस्था को सुधारने के लिये जल्दी में आर्थिक सलाहकार परिषद का गठन कर दिया।

रिजर्व बैंक, आई.एम.एफ., विश्व बैंक, एशियन विकास बैंक, ओ.ई.सी.डी. तथा अनेक विख्यात संस्थाओं ने भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था की वृद्धि दर कम कर दी है। ग्राहक विश्वास तीन वर्ष से सबसे कम हो गया है जैसा कि रिजर्व बैंक के सर्वेक्षण से देखा जा सकता है। यह आम सहमति है कि विमुद्रीकरण व जी.एस.टी. को गलत तरीके से लागू करने के कारण अर्थव्यवस्था पर बहुत प्रतिकूल असर पड़ा है। अब यह साफ हो गया है कि नोटबंदी से कोई भी घोषित उद्देश्य प्राप्त नहीं हुआ है। उल्टे, इससे अनौपचारिक क्षेत्र को बहुत नुकसान हुआ है जो जी.डी.पी. के 40 प्रतिशत के बराबर है तथा श्रम-शक्ति के लगभग 75 प्रतिशत को रोजगार प्रदान करता है। जी.एस.टी. को बिना तैयारी के जल्दी में लागू करने के कारण छोटे और मध्यम उद्योगों पर बहुत प्रतिकूल असर पड़ा है

जिससे अर्थव्यवस्था का संकट और अधिक गहरा गया है।

इस तरह के पर्याप्त साक्ष्य उपलब्ध हैं जो बता रहे थे कि अर्थव्यवस्था के सभी मानक लड़खड़ा रहे हैं। कृषि अभूतपूर्व संकट में है। कृषि कार्य में लगे कृषि समुदाय का पूरे देश में भारी आंदोलन व कभी समाप्त न होने वाली किसानों की आत्म-हत्याएँ यह स्पष्ट करती हैं कि कृषि अब लाभकारी नहीं रही है। बी.जे.पी. तथा प्रधानमंत्री अपने इस चुनावी वादे से पीछे हटने के दोषी है जिसमें उन्होंने कृषि उत्पादों के न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य के बारे में डॉ. स्वामीनाथन आयोग की सिफारिशों को लागू करने की बात कही थी। विनिर्माण क्षेत्र का लड़खड़ाना जारी है तथा निर्यात काफी हद तक कम हो गये हैं। माँग के अभाव के कारण निजी क्षेत्र में निवेश करने के लिये कोई उत्साह नहीं है। निवेश का जी.डी.पी. से अनुपात 31.8 प्रतिशत से घटकर अब 27.1 प्रतिशत रह गया है। बैंकिंग क्षेत्र भारी एन.पी.ए. की समस्या से जूझ रहा है जो अब 8 लाख करोड़ से भी ज्यादा हो गये हैं। दिसम्बर 2014 से मार्च 2017 तक एन.पी.ए. में 135 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हुई है। इसलिये, बैंकों की उधार देने की क्षमता भी काफी हद तक बाधित हुई है।

लेकिन अर्थव्यवस्था की सबसे बड़ी असफलता रोजगार सृजन की है। सरकार का वादा कि वह प्रति वर्ष दो करोड़ रोजगार सृजित करेगी, पूरी तरह विफल हो गया है। कोई नया रोजगार सृजित करने के स्थान पर देश रोजगार के नुकसान को देख रहा है। 2015-2016 के श्रम विभाग के सर्वेक्षण के अनुसार, 2013-14 से 2015-16 तक प्रति वर्ष 0.4 प्रतिशत रोजगार कम हो गये हैं जिसका अर्थ है कि 37 लाख से 53 लाख रोजगारों की कमी सर्वेक्षण रेखांकित करता है। भारत में शायद पहली बार रोजगार वृद्धि में अनियंत्रित कमी हो रही है। सी.एम.आई.ई. ने अनुमान लगाया है कि विमुद्रीकरण के पश्चात 2017 की पहली छमाही में 15 लाख से भी ज्यादा रोजगार नष्ट हुए हैं। यह जाना माना तथ्य है कि प्रति वर्ष 1.2 करोड़ युवा रोजगार के बाजार में प्रवेश करते हैं और उनके लिये अच्छा सा रोजगार सृजित करने में विफलता से सामाजिक उथल-पुथल की स्थिति पैदा हो जायेगी।

दिलचस्प तरीके से, आर्थिक संकट का अमीरों की संपत्ति पर कोई प्रभाव नहीं है। फोक्स पत्रिका के अनुसार 100 सबसे अमीर भारतीयों की संयुक्त संपत्ति में 26

प्रतिशत का इजाफा हुआ है। मुकेश अम्बानी ने अपनी सम्पत्ति में 15.3 अरब अमरीकी डालर जोड़ लिये हैं। भारत के 57 अरबपत्तियों की सम्पत्ति 91 करोड़ भारतीयों की सम्पत्ति के बराबर है जो नीचे की सबसे गरीब जनसंख्या का 70 प्रतिशत है। आक्सफैम ने यह अनुमान लगाया है कि भारत में सबसे अमीर एक प्रतिशत नागरिक साठ प्रतिशत राष्ट्रीय सम्पत्ति के मालिक हैं। आय और सम्पत्ति में यह भारी असमानता नव-उदारवाद की उन नीतियों का विवादास्पद योगदान है जोकि पिछले 25 वर्षों से लागू की जा रही हैं। टामस पिकेटी व लुकास चैन्सिल ने “फ्राम ब्रिटिश राज टू बिलियनर राज” शीर्षक अपने पेपर में उन चैंकाने वाले तथ्यों को उजागर किया है जो 1922 से 2014 के मध्य भारतीयों की आय में असमानता पर आधारित हैं। उनका निष्कर्ष है कि भारत में ऊपर के एक प्रतिशत की राष्ट्रीय आय में 1980-82 से 2013-14 के पिछले तीन दशकों में सबसे अधिक वृद्धि देखी गई है और यह 6.2 प्रतिशत से बढ़कर 21.7 प्रतिशत हो गई है। यह आश्चर्यजनक नहीं है कि भारत आज विश्व में दूसरा सबसे बड़ा असमान समाज है।

मोदी सरकार को यह महसूस करना चाहिये कि भारत की अर्थव्यवस्था वास्तव में संकट में है और उन विनाशकारी नीतियों को उल्टे बिना जोकि बहुसंख्यक गरीबों की कीमत पर कुछ धनवान व्यक्तियों को लाभ पहुंचाती है, इन पर विजय पाना संभव नहीं है। केवल जी.डी.पी. में वृद्धि से ही संपूर्ण जनसंख्या के लिये अच्छा जीवन स्तर सुनिश्चित नहीं किया जा सकता। “रिसने के सिद्धान्त” पर आधारित इस समझ से कि वृद्धि से सब लोगों को लाभ मिलेगा, दुनिया भर में असफल हो चुकी है। पुनर्वितरण के बिना वृद्धि का कोई मायने नहीं है। यहाँ पर ही भारत ने सामाजिक न्याय के पुनर्वितरक की जिम्मेदारी को लगभग त्याग ही दिया है। यह शर्मनाक है कि विश्व भूख सूचकांक, 2017 में भारत को जिबौती व रवांडा के साथ 119 में से 100वें स्थान पर रखा गया है। यहाँ तक कि युद्ध में नष्ट

हो गये ईराक व आर्थिक रूप से अलग-थलग और पिसे हुए उत्तर कोरिया का स्थान भी भूख को हल करने की चेष्टा में हमसे अच्छा है। 19.1 करोड़ भारतीय प्रतिदिन भूखे ही सो जाते हैं तथा उचित खाने से सम्बन्धित बीमारियों से प्रतिदिन 3000 बच्चे दम तोड़ देते हैं। 21 प्रतिशत से अधिक बच्चे उजड़ गये हैं (अपनी ऊंचाई के अनुसार बहुत कम वजन)। केवल तीन देशों जिबौती, दक्षिण सूडान और श्रीलंका में ही 20 प्रतिशत से अधिक बच्चों के उजड़ जाने को दर्ज किया गया है। नव-उदारवादी युग में जिस आर्थिक वृद्धि का बहुत ढोल पीटा जा रहा है वह लोगों की मौलिक समस्याओं को हल करने में असफल रही है जिसमें भूख भी शामिल है।

आज आर्थिक नीतियों का विरोध बढ़ रहा है। देश में किसानों के अभूतपूर्व आन्दोलन दिखाई दे रहे हैं। श्रमिक भी बेचैन हैं। 10 केन्द्रीय टेड्ड यूनियनों व अनेक स्वाधीन संघों एवं एसोसियेशन ने 9 से 11 नवम्बर तक नई दिल्ली में तीन दिन भारी धरना देने का निर्णय लिया है तथा नव-उदारवाद की नीतियों को उल्टे जाने की मांग की है। ऐसी अपेक्षा की जा रही है कि विकास का वैकल्पिक कार्यक्रम बनाने के इस अभियान में इन तीन दिनों में 5 लाख से भी ज्यादा लोग उपस्थित होंगे। यद्यपि बी.एम.एस. ने जो संघ परिवार का एक संगठन है, इस कार्यक्रम से अलग रहने का निर्णय लिया है, परन्तु उसने भी आत्मनिर्भर तरीके से इन नीतियों के खिलाफ नवम्बर के तीसरे सप्ताह में दिल्ली में भारी प्रदर्शन करने का निर्णय लिया है। बी.एम.एस. का फैसला श्रमिकों के भारी रोष व गुस्से का परिचायक है। मोदी सरकार को यह समझना चाहिये कि आर्थिक संकट को पूंजी की इच्छाओं के अनुरूप हल नहीं किया जा सकता। कोई भी अर्थव्यवस्था विकास के लाभों को गरीबों व जनसंख्या के कमजोर एवं श्रम करने वाले वर्गों में वितरित किये जाने के बिना जिंदा नहीं रह सकती। जितनी जल्दी सरकार यह महसूस कर लेगी, देश के लिये उतना ही अच्छा होगा।

Cartoon courtesy: Manjul, Firstpost & Keshav, The Hindu



Working Class and the Great October Revolution



'The first commandment of any trade union movement is not to rely on the State but to rely on the strength of one's own class. The transfer of power to the revolutionary, oppressed class is the only way out of the present crisis, and the only remedy for economic dislocation and the war'



These words of Lenin are as relevant now, when the working class is being attacked by the capitalist class trying to protect their profits in the wake of the systemic crisis of capitalism, as they were around a hundred years ago.

K Hemalata, President, CITU

The centenary of the Great October Revolution is being celebrated by the working class all over the world during the last one year. The 15th conference of CITU decided to observe the centenary of the Great October Revolution by focussing on the ideological development of its cadres. Many classes, conventions, meetings, seminars etc have been conducted all over the country by the state committees and affiliated unions of CITU as per this decision. In addition many other organisations of different sectors of the working class – of insurance, bank, telecom, state and central government departments, etc – have organised various programmes to commemorate the occasion. The Left parties too observed the centenary all over the country.

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) representing 92 million workers in 126 countries in all the continents has observed the centenary through various programmes across the world. The WFTU leadership will be participating in the concluding event being organised by the Communist Party of Russian Federation in Moscow.

The Great October Revolution was an event that took place in Russia a hundred years ago. It led to the establishment of socialism in an industrially backward country like Russia. What is its significance that despite the reverses and setbacks to socialism in Russia as well as in the east European countries, the working class across the world continues to be inspired by it?

The October Revolution was an event that literally 'shook the world', as the American socialist and journalist John Reed wrote in his eye witness account, 'Ten Days that Shook the World'. It sounded the death knell of imperialism. The workers, peasants and other sections of toiling people tore apart the old exploitative structure of capitalism and erected the framework for a new exploitation free society, a socialist society. It showed the future path for the development of humanity. It was a shining example of 'concrete analysis of concrete conditions' and masterly application of Marxist principles to change society, by the Bolshevik party, the party of the working class.

What the Revolution has achieved was unprecedented and unimaginable at that

time. It was a wonder. Even the so called 'welfare states' in Europe after the Second World War could not equal the rights and benefits achieved by the working class – land distribution, workers' control over factories, the right to recall elected representatives, free education and health for all, free nurseries, communal kitchens and laundries to liberate women from the back breaking domestic work. The comment of the Czech communist Fuchs 'All our tomorrows had become today' aptly describes the dramatic changes achieved by the revolutionaries.

The impact of the October Revolution on the national liberation movements across the world, the role of Soviet Union in defeating Nazi Germany in the Second World War, the immense sacrifices made the Soviet people in saving the world from the clutches of Hitler's fascism are well known. Socialist Russia extended unconditional help and support in developing the technological and industrial base in our country through the establishment of various public sector units, the establishment of premier institutions for engineering education and in the development of a self reliant economy after our independence.

What lessons can the working class of India learn from the experiences of the working class of Russia, which led a successful revolution that changed the world?

The conditions of the working class and their trade unions in Russia before the Revolution were not better than that of the working class in our country today. They were far worse. Though the labour movement in Russia began with the development of capitalism in the country and the first strike was held sometime between 1870 and 1880, it was not until 1905 that unions were organised. Trade unions soon expanded their influence. But repression on the unions and police persecution increased since 1907. The union committee members faced constant threat of arrest by the police. The police confiscated their funds and registers. The leaders including the presidents and secretaries of the unions were deported to Siberia. Czarism made it impossible for the unions to conduct their day to day activities and organise struggles on even the economic demands of the workers. Matters became worse

with the declaration of war in 1914. War was used to further suppress the trade unions. The extent of repression can be understood from the fact that while around 200,000 workers were organised in trade unions in 1905, on the eve of the Revolution in 1917 there were only three unions with a total membership of 1500.

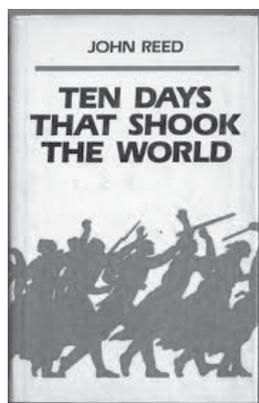
But despite this rudimentary state of the trade unions, the working class and other sections of toiling masses carried on their economic struggles with great tenacity. The working class gained its class consciousness through such struggles under conditions of severe czarist repression.

The war devastated the country. Conditions of the workers worsened. Food became scarce. Soldiers were forced to fight in the freezing cold without proper clothes or equipment. Discontent was growing among all these sections.

It was in such conditions that the women workers of Petrograd observed International Women's Day, for the first time on a working day on 23rd February 1917 (8th March as per the new calendar), by striking work. The women workers of the textile factory came out and marched on the streets calling out the workers of different factories on the way to join them. Hundreds of thousands of workers, men and women, joined the procession demanding bread and end to war. They demanded an end to monarchy. The military arrested hundreds of their leaders. Over hundred people were killed on the day. Unhappy with the terror let loose on the people large section of the army joined the revolutionaries. This February Revolution forced Czar Nicholas II to abdicate.



Women workers' march for Bread & Peace in Petrograd February 1917



"During the Revolution 'All Russia was learning to read and *reading* – politics, economics, history – because the people wanted to *know*... Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organisations and poured into the armies, the villages, factories, the streets.' People absorbed them like hot sand drinks water! These 'were not fables, falsified history, diluted religion, and the cheap fiction that corrupts but social and economic theories, philosophy, the works of Tolstoy, Gogol and Gorky...' says John Reed in his famous Ten Days that shook the World

Today we need to create such urge among the working class and the toiling people to know, to understand the truth about the link between their day to day issues and the policies being pursued by the ruling classes, whatever sweet and attractive slogans they mouth.

The overthrow of czarism unleashed the creative and organising initiatives of the working masses. The workers organised into the Soviets of Workers' Deputies. These were councils of workers. In fact the first Soviet was established in Ivanovna - Voznesensk during a strike of textile workers in 1905, as a strike committee. Later it developed into an elected body of the town's workers. This was followed by the establishment of Soviets of Workers' Deputies in around 50 towns but these were crushed soon. The leaders were arrested and imprisoned. Soviets of Workers' Deputies and Soviets of Soldiers Deputies, who were from the peasant families and represented the peasants were formed and became active after the February Revolution. 1090 delegates representing more than 400 different Soviets participated in the first congress of the Soviets held in June 1917. By the time of the October Revolution there were over 900 Soviets. Majority of these including those in Petrograd and Moscow were controlled by the Bolsheviks. The Soviets of Workers' Deputies were instruments of political struggle for the working class of Russia.

The Bolsheviks did not have majority among the Soviets from the beginning. They were in a minority till July 1917. But the tactics adopted by them under the leadership of Lenin helped them capture majority of the Soviets by October.

Lenin emphasised the need to win over majority of the Soviets by clearing the illusions that they had on the provincial government, by exposing the government through patient, systematic and persistent explanation. He stressed on the need to teach them the necessity of transferring the entire state power

to the Soviets. This was an important task set before the Bolsheviks. He also laid lot of emphasis on organisation. He said 'To achieve such a victory (victory over capitalists), to have the workers and poor peasants take power, keep that power and make proper use of it, you will need organisation, organisation and organisation...Don't put your trust in words. Don't be misled by promises. Don't overestimate your strength. Organise at every factory, in every regiment and every company, in every residential block. Work at your organising every day, every hour; do that work yourselves, for this is something you cannot entrust to anybody else. Work to steadily, soundly and indestructibly build up full confidence in the advanced workers, on the part of the masses... Such is the one guarantee of success'.

Lenin taught the working class about the importance of forging unity with the peasantry. Addressing the All Russian Trade Union conference he urged the workers to take the initiative to organise the agricultural workers and win over the majority of people to their side. 'The first commandment of any trade union movement is not to rely on the State but to rely on the strength of one's own class. The transfer of power to the revolutionary, oppressed class is the only way out of the present crisis, and the only remedy for economic dislocation and the war', he said.

These words of Lenin are as relevant now, when the working class is being attacked by the capitalist class trying to protect their profits in the wake of the systemic crisis of capitalism, as they were around a hundred years ago.

Today major sections of the working class

in our country are under the influence of the ideology of the ruling classes. The ruling classes are attacking the lives, livelihoods, working conditions and basic rights of all sections of the toiling people – the workers, agricultural workers, peasants, artisans etc – through the neoliberal regime. These policies are meant to transfer public wealth into the hands of a few big private corporations. At the same time they are able to create illusions among the people through their false promises and slogans though people are slowly getting disillusioned. They are trying to weaken and thwart united struggles of the working people by evoking communal passions, caste feelings, and regional sentiments.

Bringing the working class and the toiling people from the influence of the ruling classes requires 'patient, systematic and persistent explanation and teaching' as Lenin taught us. *Ten Days that Shook the World* says that during the Revolution 'All Russia was learning to read and reading – politics, economics, history – because the people wanted to know... Hundreds of thousands of pamphlets were distributed by thousands of organisations and poured into the armies, the villages, factories, the streets.' People absorbed them like hot sand drinks water! These 'were not fables, falsified history, diluted religion, and the cheap fiction that corrupts but social and economic theories, philosophy, the works of Tolstoy, Gogol and Gorky...'

Today we need to create such urge among the working class and the toiling people to know, to understand the truth about the link between their day to day issues and the policies being pursued by the ruling classes, whatever sweet and attractive slogans they mouth. At the same time we have to make serious efforts to satisfy that urge to know and understand the truth by exposing the politics behind the policies through their own experiences; using the language that they can easily understand. We have to develop the class consciousness of the working class to realise its historic role in ending the inhuman capitalist exploitation and replacing with an exploitation free socialist system. We have to prepare it to discharge this role.

The Great October Revolution teaches us that this is the only way to end the exploitative capitalist system. ●

अक्टूबर क्रांति श्रमिक वर्ग के संघर्षों के फलक का वह सूर्य है जिसने दुनिया भर के मेहनतकशों के खून में अधिकारों एवं सत्ता में हस्तक्षेप की गर्मी का प्रवाह किया, भारत भी इससे अछूता नहीं है।

जिस समय भारतीय समाज अंग्रेजी उपनिवेश के विरुद्ध लड़ाई के चरम की ओर था उसी समय रूसी समाज ज़ारशाही-राजतन्त्र के विरुद्ध लड़ाई के चरम पर था। दोनों संघर्षों में अन्तर यह था कि भारतीय संघर्ष विदेशी शासकों से मुक्त होने की इच्छा से ओत-प्रोत अवश्य था परन्तु मुक्ति के पश्चात् भारत के रूप-स्वरूप की बहुत स्पष्ट रूप रेखा नहीं थी। वहीं रूसी संघर्ष मार्क्सवाद-लेनिनवाद के वैज्ञानिक दर्शन के आधार पर केवल सत्ता परिवर्तन नहीं बल्कि व्यवस्था परिवर्तन की स्पष्ट नीति रखता था। रूसी क्रांति ने संसार में पहली बार समाज के सबसे गरीब मजदूरों और किसानों की सत्ता कायम करके श्रम की महत्ता स्थापित की। इस क्रांति ने श्रमिक वर्ग की सत्ता के चरित्र को भी दिखा दिया कि

- *महज 10 वर्षों में अशिक्षा का पूर्ण सफाया हो गया।
- *20 वर्षों में बेरोजगारी का पूर्ण अन्त हो गया।
- *ज़मींदारी की समूल समाप्ति करके सामूहिक फार्मों और सहकारिताओं में खेत मजदूरों और गरीब किसानों को अधिकार दिये गये।
- *सभी नागरिकों को मुफ्त स्वास्थ्य सेवायें सुनिश्चित हुईं।
- *महिलाओं को समान मजदूरी एवं मातृत्व लाभ समेत वह वातावरण निर्मित हुआ जिससे 98: से भी ज्यादा महिलायें उत्पादन प्रक्रिया से जुड़ गईं।

इस बीच अक्टूबर क्रांति को विफल करने के लिए हिटलर के फासीवाद समेत तमाम प्रति क्रांतियों के जो भी हमले हुए उन्हें रूसी श्रमिक वर्ग ने करोड़ों कुर्बानियाँ देते हुए बहादुरी से परास्त किया।

यह क्रांति ऐसी खुशबू थी जो स्वाभाविक रूप से पूरी दुनिया में फैल गई। इसने विश्व की कामगार जनता में "सत्ता में हस्तक्षेप" की हसरत और हिम्मत पैदा की। इस क्रांति के बाद भारत के स्वतंत्रता आन्दोलन में इसकी स्पष्ट छवि दिखाई देती है। इसके बाद का स्वतंत्रता आन्दोलन केवल अंग्रेजों से मुक्ति का नहीं रहा बल्कि स्वतंत्र भारत में श्रमिक वर्ग के अधिकारों की परिकल्पना भी शामिल होने लगी। श्रमिक संगठनों के निर्माण और श्रमिक हितों के लिए हड़तालों का सिलसिला शुरू हो गया।

भगत सिंह जैसे क्रांतिकारियों की यह वैचारिक स्पष्टता, "भारत की आम जनता को राहत गोरे अंग्रेजों का स्थान काले अंग्रेजों द्वारा ले लिये जाने से नहीं मिलेगी, हमारा उद्देश्य सत्ता परिवर्तन नहीं बल्कि व्यवस्था परिवर्तन है।" अक्टूबर क्रांति की ही प्रतिध्वनि थी जिसे भारत सुन रहा था।

इन क्रांतिकारी विचारों से जहाँ एक ओर ब्रिटिश सरकार इतना डर गई कि भगत सिंह और उनके साथियों के विरुद्ध कुछ भी प्रमाणित किये बगैर फांसी पर चढ़ा दिया वहीं दूसरी ओर उनकी वैचारिक स्पष्टता, दृढ़ता व साहस ने उन्हें शहीद-ए-आजम बना दिया।

स्वतंत्र भारत को गणतान्त्रिक एवं कल्याणकारी राज्य

भारतीय श्रमिक वर्ग को अक्टूबर क्रान्ति की देन

गीता शान्त

के रूप में निर्मित करने में श्रमिक आन्दोलन की निर्णायक भूमिका रही एवं यह श्रम कानून हासिल करने में कामयाब रहा। जिसके तहत रोजगार का स्थायित्व, काम के आठ घण्टे, वेतन निर्धारण, पेंशन, बोनस, पी.एफ., मातृत्व लाभ आदि समेत सबसे बड़ा अधिकार ट्रेड यूनियन बनाने के अधिकार के रूप में हासिल किया गया।

200 वर्ष की गुलामी और दो विश्व युद्धों की मार से कराहते तहस-नहस भारत ने देश के आधारभूत ढांचे के निर्माण के लिए तमाम उद्योगों के राष्ट्रीयकरण की माँग और संघर्ष भी अक्टूबर क्रान्ति की सफलता से प्रेरित था। राष्ट्रीयकृत उद्योगों ने राष्ट्र निर्माण में अद्भुत भूमिका निभाई है। स्वतंत्र भारत को तमाम क्षेत्रों में आत्मनिर्भर भारत बनाने में राष्ट्रीयकृत उद्योगों का निर्णायक योगदान है।

भारतीय जनता द्वारा जनतंत्र, राष्ट्रीयकरण एवं श्रम कानून हासिल करने में अक्टूबर की महक शामिल है।

आज जनतंत्र, राष्ट्रीयकरण और श्रम कानूनों पर मंडराता खतरा स्वतंत्र भारत के मुख्य तीनों प्रगतिशील तत्वों को नष्ट करने की साजिश है। ऐसे में अक्टूबर क्रान्ति का पुनः

The success of the October Revolution was such that its fragrance soon spread to the whole world, and we could see its clear impact on the national liberation movement in India, providing it with an ideological clarity. While it inspired Bhagat Singh and his comrades, it also had its impact on the working people's movements, including the Trade Union movement. In the great achievements of the people of India in the arena of democracy, nationalisation and labour laws, the fragrance of the October Revolution could be felt.

अवलोकन और भी प्रासंगिक हो गया है।

पूँजीपतियों के खेमे से अक्टूबर क्रान्ति के नष्ट होने का भरपूर प्रचार है। यह सत्य है कि तमाम कारणों से इसकी उस रूप में रक्षा नहीं की जा सकी मगर यह भी सत्य है कि इसने राजतन्त्र, सामन्तवाद, पूँजीवाद, साम्राज्यवाद और फासीवाद का जो विकल्प एक बार संसार को दिखा दिया है वह दुनिया के मेहनतकशों को सदैव रास्ता दिखाता रहेगा और अन्ततः हम होंगे कामयाब एक दिन।



यह सत्य है कि तमाम कारणोंसे इसकी उस रूप में रक्षा नहीं की जा सकी मगर यह भी सत्य है कि इसने राजतन्त्र, सामन्तवाद, पूँजीवाद, साम्राज्यवाद और फासीवाद का जो विकल्प एक बार संसार को दिखा दिया है वह दुनिया के मेहनतकशों को सदैव रास्ता दिखाता रहेगा और अन्ततः हम होंगे कामयाब एक दिन

The petrol, diesel, electricity, alcohol, real estate etc are kept out of the purview of GST, which constitute 40% of GDP and there are 8 rates of GST, how it can be called as "one nation one tax" as trumpeted by Modi government. Indirect tax like GST is regressive as it taxes rich and poor at same rate in a country where proportion indirect taxes out of total taxes is increasing while direct taxes is decreasing. This does not augur well for our economy. A high instance of indirect tax and a lowering of the direct tax mean enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor.

GST:



IMPOVERISHING THE MASSES

Dr Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

The much-debated Goods and Services Tax (GST), has finally come into effect from July 1, 2017. But the way it was celebrated midnight on 30th June in the Central Hall of Parliament is unwarranted. It has undermined the freedom struggle and devalued the sanctity of parliament as similar celebration has been done only thrice in the past on the historic occasion of Independence in 1947, Silver jubilee of Independence in 1972 and Golden Jubilee of Independence in 1997. The GST is just an indirect tax reform, which cannot be equated with independence. Oppositions are justified in dubbing the GST celebration as "tamasha". However, question automatically percolates in mind that if GST is India's biggest tax reform since independence as touted by BJP, then why did BJP ruled states especially Gujarat under Modi, until 2014, thwart the UPA government's plan to implement GST?

COMPLEXITY IMPOSED

GST is a tax on goods and services. VAT is a multi-point destination-based system of taxation whereas GST is a destination based tax. As many as 17 indirect taxes at the Central and State levels are being subsumed in GST. At the Central level, GST has subsumed Central Excise Duty, Additional Excise Duty, Service Tax, Additional Customs Duty commonly known as Countervailing Duty, and Special Additional Duty of Customs. At the State level, GST subsumed the State Value Added Tax/Sales Tax, Entertainment Tax (other than the tax levied by the local bodies),

Central Sales Tax (levied by the Centre and collected by the States), Octroi and Entry tax, Purchase Tax, Luxury tax, and Taxes on lottery, betting and gambling. Custom duty is not part of GST.

It is argued that GST will lead to easy compliance by ensuring similar indirect tax rates and structures across the country leading to higher revenue efficiency. Many countries in the world have a single unified GST system i.e. a single tax applicable throughout the country. European countries follow a single tax system. However Federal Countries like Brazil and Canada operate with a Dual GST- taxed by both centre and states system. India has chosen the Canadian model of dual GST. In India a Central GST (CGST) levied by centre and a State GST (SGST) levied by states on the taxable value of every transaction of supply of goods and services. Other than central and state GST, there will be an integrated GST (IGST) for transactions happening between states. It is also argued that GST would simplify tax system. First, we don't have single rate of GST tax, as poverty is rampant and essential commodities cannot be taxed as luxurious goods. But having 8 tax slabs: 0% ,1.25% for diamond, 3% for gold, 5% , 12% , 18% , 28% , 40% - doesn't not justify GST as simple tax system or one nation one tax concept. It may be noted that, goods like luxury cars, tobacco, and aerated beverages

will have 28% plus a cess, effectively taking the tax rate to around 40%

VULNERABILITY OF HIGHER GST RATE

Actually, the benefits of GST depend upon the tax rate. Present GST is not beneficial to poor and common people as tax rate is much higher. The 13th Finance Commission headed by former finance secretary Vijay Kelkar had suggested 12 % GST rate- 5% GST rate at the central level and 7% at the state level. It is noteworthy that genesis of GST lies with report of Kelkar task force on the indirect tax reforms. Our 28% slab of GST is highest GST rates in the World.

With a standard rate of 18%, the sharpest tax increases are expected in service sector, which accounts 53 % of GDP. Before GST, the service tax was charged at the rate of 15% with 14% basic service tax, 0.5% Swacch Bharat tax and the rest 0.5% Krishi Kalyan tax. When nearly 90% of services (as education and health excluded like earlier) are taxed 3% higher, it will increase the cost of living for all. Banking, Insurance, Telecommunication etc have become costlier due to increase in rate of service tax. Medicines are also expected to become costlier. This higher taxation would hurt customers and will have an inflationary impact.

GST WILL IMPERIL INSURANCE INDUSTRY

The insurance industry and its policy holders are going to be seriously hit due to GST. Insurance is neither savings nor investment. It is a risk protection, term protection or life cover or risk cover, which is manifested through term insurance policies and contains death benefit only. But to make it attractive, savings and investment element is added for which policy holders pay extra premium and get extra benefits. While endowment policies offer dual benefit of insurance and savings, Unit Linked Insurance Plans (ULIPs) offer dual benefit of insurance and investment (i.e., market linkage). Since in India there is lack of social security schemes, insurance act as a social security schemes. But unfortunately, government had imposed service tax including cess on risk component of insurance premium at 15 %. But now GST on insurance has been imposed at 18% and policyholders had to pay additional 3 % on risk component of insurance which is illogical, irrational and detrimental to

masses especially who are yet to be brought under the purview of insurance.

In case of an endowment plan as premium for risk component is not segregated, earlier 3.75% service tax was levied flat on the premium amount for the first premium while it is 1.88% for the subsequent renewal premiums. But, under this new GST regime, the tax rate on the first premium has been increased to 4.5% and the same on the renewal premiums escalated to 2.25%. In case single premium insurance policies that attracted a service tax of 1.5% earlier has increased to 1.8% under GST regime. What is worrisome is that health insurance is taxed at 18% of GST as against 15% of service tax earlier. This is ridiculous as health insurance assumes gargantuan importance in India as health care system in our country is one of the most privatized health care systems in the world. GST will make buying insurance not only expensive for policy holders but will retard ability of life insurance to mobilize savings for investment and developmental activities.

DESTROYING FEDERAL STRUCTURE

GST is an infringement on the rights of the state governments to raise resources through sales tax /VAT. In case of necessity or any natural calamities, states cannot raise resources through indirect taxes. Petroleum products, tobacco, alcohol are already overtaxed and there will little scope to raise resources by enhancing tax on those products. The Centre is already collecting 62 per cent of the total tax revenue; GST is expected to increase this amount to 83 per cent, leaving the states with meager resources. Hence, States will be at the mercy of centre always. Hence GST is anti-federalism; not an example of to co-operative federalism as claimed by Modi. Demonetisation has hit the tax collection of many states. They will be further affected by GST. Interestingly, the US, whom India emulates, does not have any such uniform rate.

CONCLUSION

Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) are affected by the GST as they are ill prepared for this measure. It is argued by government that GST will lead to rise of growth by 2 percentages. But it may not be feasible, even if feasible, it is due to rise in indirect taxes which is regressive. As per new

methodology, while calculating GDP subsidy is deducted, whereas indirect taxes are added. So rise in indirect taxes due to GST may lead to unequal growth.

The petrol, diesel, electricity, alcohol, real estate etc are kept out of the purview of GST, which constitute 40% of GDP. Had petrol, diesel been in GST purview, their prices would have been much less benefiting consumers. When 40% of GDP is out of a tax net, and there are 8 rates of GST, how it can be called as "one nation one tax" tax as trumpeted by Modi government. Indirect tax like GST is regressive as it taxes rich and poor at same rate in a country where proportion indirect taxes out of total taxes is increasing while direct taxes is decreasing. This does not augur well for our economy.

A high instance of indirect tax and a lowering of the direct tax mean enriching the rich and impoverishing the poor. It is necessary to ensure that the GST does not inflict greater burdens on the vast majority of our people. Compared to India, even European countries like Denmark and Germany, where the standard of living is much higher, have lower tax rates. Hence standard rate should be less than 15% instead of 18 % with complete elimination of GST on medicine and life insurance premium. The opposition had specifically demanded that a cap of 18% be put on GST. BJP refused to impose a cap on the GST or include it in the Constitution arguing that the Parliament's approval is needed every time the rates are revised. It means in future GST rate may be further enhanced further impoverishing the masses.

GST decision not taken by PM Modi alone, says PM Modi! Cartoon courtesy: Satish Acharya, Mail Today



A number of States in the Indian Union will be celebrating anniversary of their reorganisation on the basis of language in November. It is therefore appropriate to know the history of reorganisation at a time when there are subtle attempts to impose a single language on the entire country.

The reorganisation of the States on the basis of language, a major aspect of national consolidation and integration came to the fore almost immediately after Independence. The boundaries of the provinces in pre-1947 British India had been drawn in a haphazard manner as the British conquest of India proceeded for almost a century. No heed was paid to the linguistic or cultural cohesion so that most of the provinces were multilingual and so multicultural. The interspersed princely states had added a further element of heterogeneity.

The case of linguistic States as administrative units was very strong. Language is closely related to culture and therefore to the customs of the people. Besides, the massive spread of education and growth of mass literacy can only occur through the medium of mother tongue. Democracy can become real to the common people only when politics and administration are conducted through the language they can understand. But this language, the mother tongue, cannot be the medium of education or administration or judicial activity unless a State is formed on the basis of such predominant language.

It is for this reason, that to involve masses in national movement after 1919, Indian National Congress undertook political mobilisation in the mother tongue and in 1920 Nagpur session amended its constitution and reorganised its regional branches on linguistic basis. Since then Congress repeatedly committed itself to the redrawing of the provincial boundaries on linguistic lines.

Jawaharlal Nehru was also appreciative of the linguistic diversity of India. In an essay of 1937 he wrote "a living language is a throbbing, vitalising, ever changing, ever growing and mirroring the people who speak and write it." And "our great provincial languages are no dialects or vernaculars as some ignorant some time call them. They are ancient languages with rich inheritance, each spoken by millions of people, each tied



The Linguistic Reorganisation of India

- C.R. Shanbhag



The freedom movement had repeatedly committed itself to the redrawing of the provincial boundaries on linguistic lines. But only after decades of continuous strife and popular struggles the linguistic reorganisation of India was by and large completed, making room for greater participation by the people. Those who argued this would weaken the unity of India have been proved wrong. The recognition of the linguistic plurality and creation of linguistic states have strengthened the federal character of the Indian State. It is proved beyond any doubt that one can be a proud Tamilian, Marathi, Kannadiga, Malayalee or Teluga and equally be a proud Indian.

up inextricable with the life and culture and the ideas of the masses as well the upper classes. It is axiomatic that the masses can only grow educationally and culturally through the medium of their own language."

Just days before he was assassinated, Gandhiji, while urging the people to "discourage all fissiparous tendencies and feel and behave as Indians, also argued that the redistribution of provinces on a linguistic basis was necessary if provincial languages were to grow to their full height." It was therefore more or less universally assumed that free India would base its administrative boundaries on the linguistic principle.

But independence came with partition of the country. Government felt that priority was to consolidate national unity, and any effort undertaken immediately to redraw internal boundaries might dislocate administrative and economic development, intensify regional and linguistic rivalries.

The issue was raised in the Constituent Assembly in 1948. Linguistic Provinces Commission headed by Justice S.K. Dar advised against the step at that time.

Consequently, the Constituent Assembly decided not to incorporate the principle in the Constitution. But the public opinion was not satisfied, especially in South India; the problem remained politically active. To appease the vocal votaries, the Congress appointed a committee (nick named JVP) consisting of Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Patel, and Pattabhi Sitaramayya. This committee advised against creation of linguistic states for the time being emphasising on unity and national security as the needs of the hour. However it was laid down that where the demand for linguistic state was insistent and overwhelming and where other language groups were agreeable to it, a new state could be created. The JVP report was followed by popular movements all over the country, which persisted till 1960s with varying degrees of intensity.

The demand for a separate Andhra state for Telugu speaking people was spearheaded by Andhra Mahasabha in which the Communists were the main working force. A popular freedom fighter Potti Sriramalu who started fast-unto-death for a separate Andhra died on 15 December, 1952 after 58 days of fast. His death was followed by three days of intensive demonstrations, hartals and violence all over

Andhra region. The Government immediately gave in and conceded the demand. In October 1953, two separate states Andhra and Tamil Nadu came into existence.

The success of Andhra struggle encouraged the other linguistic groups to agitate for their own states or for rectifications of their boundaries on a linguistic basis. There was a campaign for Samyukta (united) Karnataka aiming to unite Kannada-speakers spread across the provinces of Madras, Mysore, Bombay and Hyderabad. There was Samyukta Maharashtra movement which sought to bring together Marathi speakers in a single political unit. The Malayalees wanted a state of their own based on the merger of princely states of Cochin and Travancore with Malabar. There was also Maha Gujarat movement.

In August 1953 Government appointed a State Reorganisation Commission (SRC). After two years of intensive work SRC submitted its report in October 1955. While laying down that due consideration should be given to administrative and economic factors, it recognised for the most parts the linguistic principle and recommended redrawing the state boundaries on that principle. However it opposed the splitting of Bombay and Punjab. Despite strong reactions to the report in many parts of India, the SRC's recommendations were accepted with certain modifications by the government and quickly implemented.

The States Reorganisation Act was passed by Parliament in November 1956. It provided for 14 states and six centrally administered territories. The Telangana area of Hyderabad state was transferred to Andhra. Kerala was created by merging Malabar district of old Madras Presidency with Travancore-Cochin. Certain Kannada speaking areas of Bombay, Madras, Hyderabad and Coorg were added to the Mysore state. Bombay state was enlarged by merging the states of Kutch and Saurashtra and the Marathi-speaking areas of Hyderabad with it.

The strongest opposition to SRC recommendations came from Maharashtra with widespread mass agitations. Both B.R.Ambedkar and Communists joined the movement. The Government decided to divide Bombay state into two linguistic states of Maharashtra and Gujarat with Bombay city forming a separate, centrally administrative state. This move was, however opposed by people of both Maharashtra and Gujarat. The broad-based Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti and Maha Gujarat Janata Parishat led the movement in two parts of the state. Popular agitations continued and finally in May, 1960 government agreed to bifurcate the state of Bombay into Maharashtra and Gujarat with Bombay city being included in Maharashtra and Ahmedabad being made capital of Gujarat.

The exception was Punjab. In 1956 the

THE TIMELINE

- * **1920** Nagpur session of Indian National Congress amended its constitution and reorganised its regional branches on linguistic basis.
- * **1948** Linguistic Provinces Commission headed by Justice S.K.Dar advised against the step at that time. Congress-appointed JVP Committee advised against creation of linguistic states for the time being.
- * **1952**, Dec. 15 Potti Sriramalu, a popular Andhra freedom fighter who started fast-unto-death for a separate Andhra died after 58 days of fast
- * **1953** August Government appointed a State Reorganisation Commission.
- * **1956** States Reorganisation Act passed by Andhra Pradesh, Mysore (later Karnataka) and Kerala formed on November 1, 1956.
- * **1960** May 1, Maharashtra and Gujarat formed from the erstwhile Bombay.
- * **1966** Punjab and Haryana States formed



PEPSU had been merged with it, and Punjab remained trilingual state having three language speakers – Punjabi, Hindi and Pahari. In 1966, Indira Gandhi agreed to the division of Punjab into two Punjabi and Hindi speaking states of Punjab and Haryana with Pahari-speaking district of Kangra and part of Hoshiarpur dist, with Himachal Pradesh. Chandigarh was made Union Territory to serve as the joint capital both for Punjab and Haryana.

Thus after decades of continuous strife and popular struggles the linguistic reorganisation of India was by and large completed making room for greater participation by the people. To quote the political scientist, Rajni Kothari: "the reorganisation resulted in rationalising the political map of India without seriously weakening its unity, If anything, its result has been functional, in as much as it removed what has been a major source of discord, and created homogeneous political units which could be administered through a medium that the vast majority of population understood. Indeed it could be said with the benefit of hindsight that language, rather than being a force for division has paved a cementing and integrating influence."

However everybody was not happy with the creation of the linguistic States. The RSS Chief thought that the creation of linguistic states would 'lead to bitterness and give rise to fissiparous tendencies endangering the unity of the country. In May 1954 Golwalkar spoke in Bombay at the invitation of the Anti-Provincial Conference, which saw linguistic demands as a manifestation of 'the menace of provincialism and sectionalism'. 'Multiplicity breeds strife', thundered Golwalkar: 'One nation and one culture are my principles.' To see oneself as Tamil or Maharashtrian or Bengali was to 'sap the vitality of the nation'.

However, the movements for linguistic states revealed an extraordinary depth of popular feeling. Language proved a more powerful marker of identity than caste or religion. This was manifest in their struggle and in their behaviour when struggle was won. It proved that to achieve the ideals for which people fought during freedom movement, struggle has to continue even after the political freedom is achieved.

Unfortunately today once again slogans like One nation, One Culture, One language are being raised. There are subtle efforts to impose one language across the country violating the diversity of our nation. This is going to be disastrous. The strength of India is its rich diversity, plurality of religions and languages. This diversity has to be celebrated. The faster the rulers accept this, better it would be for the unity of our great country.

Promises had been made to the people about what India would be like after Independence. The resolution on Fundamental Rights approved at the Karachi session in 1931, gave the promise of a Welfare State with rights for peasants, workers, women and the state ownership and control of basic industries. Although 70 years have passed since Independence, the promises are yet to be fulfilled, and since 1991, despite celebrations of higher rate of growth under the umbrella of 'neo-liberalism', we seem to be moving further away from the promises' fulfilment.

Those who argued that creation of linguistic States would weaken the unity of India have been proved wrong. The recognition of the linguistic plurality and creation of linguistic states have strengthened the federal character of the Indian State. It is proved beyond any doubt that one can be a proud Tamilian, Marathi, Kannadiga, Malayalee or Telgu and equally be a proud Indian. Unfortunately today once again slogans like One nation, One Culture, One language are being raised. There are subtle efforts to impose one language across the country violating the diversity of our nation. This is going to be disastrous. The strength of India is its rich diversity, plurality of religions and languages. This diversity has to be celebrated. The faster the rulers accept this, better it would be for the unity of our great country.

(Com Shanbhag is a former office-bearer of IEU, Dharwad)

Face-to-face with the Mahatma

Glib-talking TV anchor
and blazing arc lights
fail to rattle
the Father of the Nation

Harish Khare

Editor-in-Chief, The Tribune

(Courtesy: The Tribune 1/10/2017)

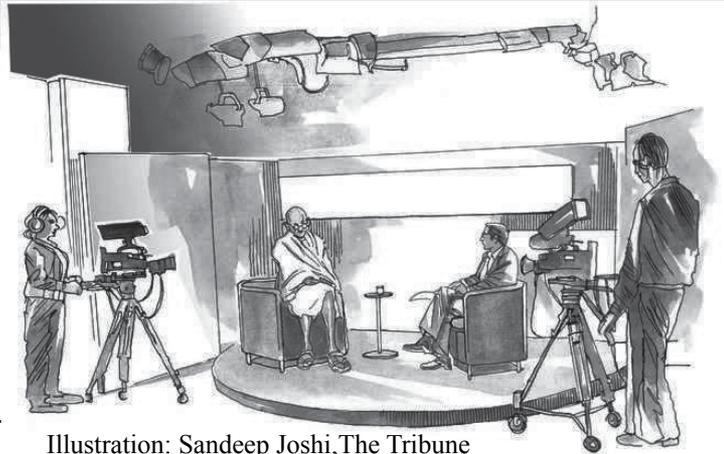


Illustration: Sandeep Joshi, The Tribune

On the eve of Gandhi Jayanti, the elusive Mahatma was persuaded to sit down in a television studio for an exclusive interview. Here are some extracts...

Anchor: *Good of you to come down for this chat. We have just about 10 minutes. So let us get down to business. Is it OK if we call you "Bapu?" Didn't they all call you "Bapu" in that film, Gandhi? Though you do not look like Ben Kingsley at all.*

Gandhi: Thank you, Bapu will be fine.

Anchor: *If you do not feel offended, please tell us why should we celebrate your birthday every year, year after year?*

Gandhi: Frankly, I do not know why it is observed. I think the politicians need, at least once a year, to pretend to be abiding by my ideas and ideals. The ritual visit to that place you people call Raj Ghat is for the leaders' need to wash off their political sins. It is simple hypocrisy, if you ask me.

Anchor: *Very well, Bapu. Can I bluntly come to the point and ask you: Why did you cheat Sardar Patel out of the premiership of free India? India would have been a different place.*

Gandhi: Oh... I hear you, young man. This is fake news and fake history. As far as I can recall, this charge was never levelled as long as Jawahar was alive. It was much later that some people invented this fiction...

Anchor (interrupting): *But there are documents....*

Gandhi: There are no documents. There cannot be any document because no one was done out of anything. Whatever you have is

manufactured history. Sardar knew it, as did every Congressman, that it was Jawahar who commanded the masses' affection... this notion of a great rivalry between the two has been invented by our friends on the extreme right, all those people who conspired to have me killed at Birla House.

Anchor: *Bapu, be careful. You are accusing great patriots and deshbhakt of something of which there has been no proof. How dare you...!*

Gandhi: Please do not be angry at this old man. I am not sure how much you read, if at all. But may I suggest a slim volume, called Gandhi is Gone. Who will Guide Us Now? This contains a transcript of a meeting of some of the national leaders — Nehru, Prasad, Azad, Vinoba, Kriplani, Jayaprakash, Kalelkar — and others held at Sevagram after my assassination. Sardar could not attend as he was very unwell. This was in March 1948. These leaders were trying to figure out what was the way forward.

And, if you will permit, I shall like to read out what Vinoba — who I believe is the flavour of the month with the new rulers — had observed: "I wish to say something. I belong to the state where the RSS came into being. Here I am, having relinquished caste; but still I cannot forget that I belong to the caste of the man who committed this act [Gandhi's assassination]. I have been living in Pauniar for many years; there, too, four or five people have been arrested on suspicion of some kind of involvement with Bapu's assassination. There

have been arrests in Wardha and Nagpur, and further arrests are being made all over the place. This organisation has been spread far and wide and with great skill, and its roots have struck very deep. It is completely fascist in character... Gandhiji's principle was that of truth; it seems to me that the principle of these people must be that of untruth. This untruth is an integral part of their technique and their philosophy.

"The methodology of the RSS has always been antithetical to ours. When we were going to jail, their policy was to join the army or the police force. They would always be quick to turn up anywhere where there was a likelihood of Hindu-Muslim riots. The government of the day saw its advantage in all this, and gave them encouragement; and now we are having to deal with the consequences."

Anchor: *That is just one man's opinion. Nothing was proven against the RSS... And, what about Bose? Why did Nehru hate Bose so much?*

Gandhi: My dear young man, can I let you in on a secret? There were very few differences between Jawahar and Subhas. It was with me that Subhas had great differences, both in techniques and ideas. Subhas' problem was that he was too deeply, perhaps too hopelessly, anchored in Bengali temperament. May I recommend that you read Nirad C. Chaudhuri's book, *Thy Hand Great Anarch!* Nirad babu's book is not very kind to me, but he makes it absolutely clear Nehru had no

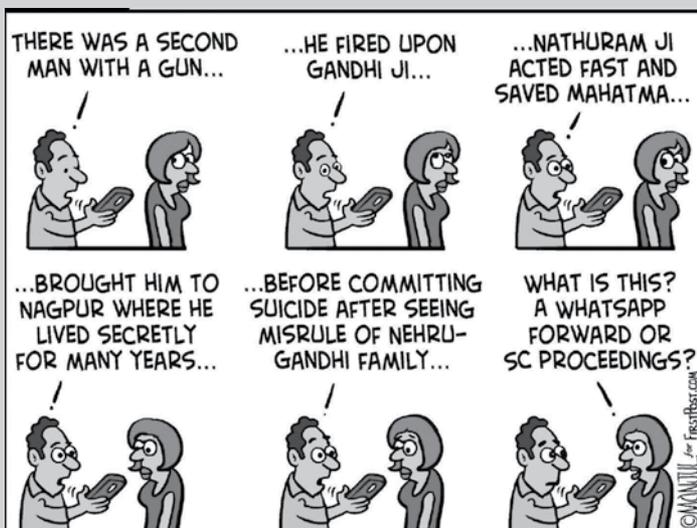
quarrel with Bose. Rather, Subhas was annoyed that Jawahar — as, also Sardar — sided with me at Tripuri [session of the Congress, 1939] May I continue? Thanks. Everyone cites Bose's angry letter of March 28, 1939, where he accuses Jawahar of "tremendous dislike for me." Read the full context in Nirad babu's book and only then can you get a flavour of that relationship. Jawahar was "most dignified." Minor differences have been magnified into a great rivalry.

Anchor: *Why are you so defensive on behalf of Nehru?*

Gandhi: You are either deaf or dumb or a simpleton. What is going on in India today is the replication of the old imperial strategy of divide and rule. We could outwit the British machinations because there were absolutely no quarrels among our senior leaders. Differences, yes; rivalry, may be; but, animosities — no way, just no way. I have a fair idea of what is going on in the country and why history is being distorted and rewritten.

The clear attempt, as I see it, is to de-legitimise Jawahar by manufacturing a great animosity between him and Sardar, between him and Subhas, and between him and Bhim Rao. Till 10 years ago, some of these very people were tearing down Bhim Rao; now they pretend to be his admirers.

And, take it from me, a chatur bania: After they are done with Jawahar, they will come after me.



The Supreme Court took up for hearing a plea seeking reinvestigation into the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi on January 30, 1948, after a petitioner sought a "new commission of inquiry to investigate the larger conspiracy behind the murder". The petitioner, Pankaj Kumudchandra Phadnis, is a Mumbai-based consultant in IT-enabled education. A bench of Justices S A Bobde and L Nageswara Rao initially asked Phadnis why the matter, affirmed by the trial court and high court verdicts, should be raked up now. However, it subsequently appointed senior counsel Amrender Sharan to assist the court in deciding whether it should proceed with the petition.

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Cartoon courtesy: Manjul, Firstpost



Trade Unions Internationals under WFTU meet at Kolkata

The Annual Consultation meeting of Trade Unions International (TUIs) under World Federation of Trade Unions was held on 9th and 10th October, 2017 at Kolkata. This meeting was a follow up of 17th WFTU Congress held, Sout in Africa and around 5 months after the meeting of the Presidential Council of WFTU in Havana, Cuba.

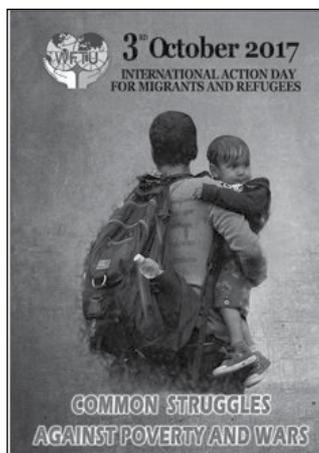
This meeting was hosted by All India Coal Workers Federation, All India Insurance Employees' Association, All India Road Transport Workers Federation, All India State Government Employees' Federation of India, BSNL Employees' Union, Confederation of Central Government Employees and Pensioners' Federations, Construction workers' Federation of India, Electricity Employees' Federation of India, Petroleum and Gas Workers' Federation of India, Steel Workers' Federation of India, Water Transport Workers' Federation of India. WFTU Secretariat and TUI (Agronomy), TUI (BIFU), TUI (Metal and Mining), TUI (Public Service), TUI (Transport), TUI (Construction), TUI (Pensioners) participated in the Meeting.

The meeting was conducted by the Presidium comprising of Com. Hemlata, President, CITU and Member, Presidential Council of WFTU, H. Mahadevan, Dy. General Secretary, WFTU and In-charge of Asia Pacific Region, C. H. Venkatachalam, General Secretary TUI(BIFU), Swadesh Dev Roye, Deputy General Secretary, WFTU and

Jolly Talukdar, leader of TUI Textiles Garments-leather, Bangladesh.

In her welcome address Com. Hemlata reminded the audience that India, at present is governed by a right reactionary government that came into power in 2014 which is also acting as a willing tool in the hands of International Finance Capital. She informed that though the labour laws are being amended by the government to take away the hard won rights of the workers, the working class in India is relentlessly fighting against the neoliberal policies since its inception. She asserted that strengthening of Global resistance of workers is the need of the hour which is being spearheaded by WFTU and the TU's throughout the Globe.

In his key note address, George Marvikos, General Secretary WFTU, appreciated the creation of a new sectoral organization, TUI Textiles-Garments-leathers. He informed that this year's foundation day of WFTU, i.e., 3rd October 2017 was observed as International Action Day for Migrants and Refugees. He narrated that this meeting is taking place in a deep crisis of the capitalist system and under worsening conditions of workers due to aggressiveness of the imperialists. The USA, NATO, European Union and their allies threaten international peace by attacks against the DPR Korea, Cuba, Venezuela and Syria. In such a misty landscape, most of the governments are implementing



This year's foundation day of WFTU, was observed as International Action Day for Migrants and Refugees

22ND CONFERENCE OF LICPA JALPAIGURI

anti-labour and Neoliberal policies that worsen the lives of workers and retirees and hit the rights of trade unionists. Naturally the neo-fascist, neo-racist and xenophobic forces also are taking courage and become dangerous for the people and workers which can be affectively countered only by the class-oriented trade union movement. He emphatically stated that it is our solemn duty to promote International solidarity with workers from other sectors and countries to usher in a new dawn of democracy, social justice and freedom.

More than 48 speakers, national and International, participated in the discussion and suggested the WFTU Secretariat to concretize the various proposals and action programmes planned by the TUIs. The participants were from the countries like Turkey, Brazil, Bangladesh, Egypt, France, Spain, Srilanka, Athens etc. Though AIIEA was to be represented by com V. Ramesh, General Secretary and Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, Joint Secretary, the former could not attend the meeting because due to inclement weather, his flight could not land at Kolkata. The stand of AIIEA was unequivocally emphasized by Com. Jayanta Mukherjee.

The meeting concluded with the formulation of 17 strategic tasks to be accomplished, some of which should be highlighted -Mechanism for regular sharing of information among all affiliated unions across the globe is to be evolved and effectively implemented. The struggles of workers across the world should be supported, Solidarity actions should be planned and implemented. Activities helping ideological development of the working class should be aptly planned.

It was also categorically decided to take precise efforts to improve the functional position of the TUs, with specific attention to strengthen the fund position of the TUIs to expand their function and activities.

After the successful conclusion of the meeting a workers' meet was also organized which was largely attended by a wide section of the working class. Com. George Marvikos, General Secretary, WFTU, Com. Tapan Sen, General Secretary, CITU and other trade union leaders addressed the meeting.

The 22nd Annual General Conference of Jalpaiguri Division LIC Pensioners' Association, Jalpaiguri was held on 20.08.2017 at Jalpaiguri. 64 delegates, including 7 women, were present in the conference. 7 delegates of five fraternal Pensioners' Association were present in the conference. Com. Debabrata Banerjee, President of the Association, conducted the proceedings of the conference. At the very outset Com. Manindra Kr. Chakraborty, who completed 80 years of age this year, was accorded warm felicitation with flower bouquet and a memento. Com. Chakraborty got emotional at the felicitation given to him, and expressed his gratitude to the Association and made a pledge to extend all possible help and co-operation from his end.

Com. Dhrubajyoti Ganguly, Vice-President, DIEA, Jalpaiguri inaugurated the conference with a brief speech on the all round attack of the neo-liberal economic policy on the common men including the pensioners all over the world. Resistance too is built up all over the world against such inhuman attack. In India too broader united movement being built up to resist the neoliberal policy aggressively pursued by the present Central Govt.

In the delegate session the annual report and the balance sheet of the year 2016 was placed by Com. Sukhendu Narayan Biswas and Com. Niranjana Chakrabarti respectively. Five delegates took part in the deliberations and supported the report and the accounts of the year 2016. The representation of fraternal Association greeted the conference and expressed the need of united movement against the anti-people policy of the Central Govt. and the undemocratic situation in Bengal. From the conference 21 resolutions on the issues of pensioners and common people were adopted unanimously. A twenty-seven member Executive Committee with Com. Debabrata Banerjee, Com. Sukhendu Narayan Biswas and Com. Gouranga Das were elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the year 2017.

61st Conference of KDLIEA(Kolkata-I)

The 61st Annual General Conference of Kolkata Division Life Insurance Employees' Association (Kolkata- I) was held successfully on 17th and 18th August, 2017 at State Youth Centre, Moulali, Kolkata. At the beginning Com. Ramkrishna Datta, President, KDLIEA paid floral tribute to martyr's column. Like yesteryears, leaders of four neighbouring Divisional Associations, Pensioners' Association (KMDO- I), Agents' Organisation of India, KMDO- I and EZIEA leadership were present to greet the Conference. The Conference became memorable by the luminous presence of the doyen of Insurance Employees' movement - Comrade Chandra Sekhar Bose. Besides 119 elected delegates and 65 observers from 16 bases of KDLIEA attended the Conference. The report of the Working Committee and the Statement of Accounts were placed before the Conference by the General Secretary and the Treasurer respectively. 40 delegates, 5 women delegates included, participated earnestly in the debate on the report.

In the post-lunch session on the first day, Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose greeted the Conference. He cautioned about the fierce struggle that would required for the materialisation of the charter of demands and also spoke about the threats of public sector units being dismantled. On the first day, Com. Pradip Gargari, Joint Secretary, EZIEA also addressed the Conference. He gave his valuable speech regarding the condition of the working class vis-à-vis the current global economy. He analysed the paradigm shift of the foreign policy of India and its effect on domestic conditions, spoke against the communal politics of the Sangha Parivar. On the second day, the General Secretary of EZIEA, Com. Jayanta Mukherjee in his important speech, depicted the massive failure of the NDA govt in the last three years, the agony of the farmers the increasing inequality



and the dangerous attacks on the public sector units. He called for the active participation of the employees to save the public sector insurance industry.

In the delegate session, delegates discussed about the anti-working class and anti-people steps taken by the central government like retrenchment, wage cut, curtailment of expenditure in social welfare schemes, amendment of labour laws ect. They also decried the onslaught of demonetisation on economy and common people, the privatisation of profit making public sector units and the attempts of communal polarisation. The delegates minced no words to condemn the utterly undemocratic conditions presently existing in West Bengal. The delegates loudly appreciated the charter of demands as placed before the LIC management by AIIEA.

The discussion on the report was summed up by Com. Amitesh Sarkar, General Secretary, KDLIEA. Following that the report of the Working Committee was adopted unanimously by the Conference. Earlier, the house, en masse, adopted the Statement of Accounts.

The Conference has taken pledge to strengthen further the struggle to save the industry. In all, 54 resolutions were adopted by the 61st Conference. The conference elected Comrades Chandra Sekhar Bose, Saibal Chaudhuri, Anup Chakraborty, Dibyendu Bhattacharjee and Tarak Banerjee the Honourary Members of KDLIEA. A 65 member Working Committee, 13 member secretariat included, for the year 2017 was also elected unanimously. Comrades Ram Krishna Datta, Amitesh Sarkar and Pradip Banerjee were elected Present, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.



ANNUAL CONFERENCE OF COIMBATORE DIVISION

The 58th Annual Conference and 31st General Council Meeting of Insurance Corporation Employees Union, Coimbatore Division was held at Udumalpet on 20th and 21st of August 2017. Com. M Gajendran, President ICEU hoisted the Union Flag and presided over the meeting. The inaugural session commenced with the thought provoking songs rendered by Udumalpet Branch Comrades. Com K Swaminathan, Vice President, SZIEF while inaugurating the conference emphasised the need for unity of people to thwart the attempt of the fundamental forces in mobilizing the people in the name of Hindutva. He further added that BJP Government which is speaking on Nationalism in other arenas is shying away from projecting Economic nationalism. He stressed the need of a united and sustained struggle to protect the Insurance Industry in the Public Sector. He also lucidly presented the background in which the charter of demands has been submitted by AIEA and informed the members to be prepared for a grim struggle to clinch it from the most un-democratic & anti labour Central Government.

Com M Girija, Joint Secretary, AIEA in her special address explained in detail the danger of disinvestment of Public Sector General Insurance Companies and called upon the cadres to be in readiness to fight against the ill-conceived move of the Government by taking the campaign to the public. Com. Rangaraj, Secretary, Tirupur CITU greeted the conference. Comrades who retired after the last conference were honoured. 2,15,000 signatures collected from the public and the policy holders against GST on Insurance Premium was handed over to Com K Swaminathan. The inaugural session of the conference came to an end with Com.K.Thulasitharan, General Secretary, ICEU rendering

the vote of thanks. More than 600 comrades including 275 women participated in the inaugural session of the conference.

The Delegates session commenced soon after the inaugural session on 20.08.2017. The General Secretary placed the annual report of the executive committee. 21 comrades including 4 women participated in the debate and enriched the report. Com M Girija and Com K Swaminathan Com V Suresh, Joint Secretary, SZIEF Com. V Janakiraman, Assistant Treasurer, SZIEF intervened in the debate. After the summing up by the general secretary, the report was accepted unanimously. The audited statement of accounts presented by the treasurer was also accepted unanimously. 28 resolutions including withdrawal of GST on Insurance Premium were passed in the conference. Com. M Gajendran, Com K Thulasitharan and Com. K. Manikandan were elected as President, General Secretary & Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term. Com. V Janakiraman, Assistant Treasurer, SZIEF greeted the newly elected delegates.

The comrades of the Udumalpet Branch conducted the conference in a befitting manner true to the tradition of the AIEA. Huge publicity were given by erecting flex boards highlighting issues like crisis in agriculture & Industrial sector, Protection of public sector and the rise of gruesome Honour killing in Tamil Nadu. The conference was unanimous in appreciating the tireless efforts of the comrades of Udumalpet Branch Unit for the excellent arrangements made for the smooth conduct of the conference. The conference concluded with Com K Thulasitharan rendering the vote of thanks.

FLOOD RELIEF BY GAUHATI DIVISION

This year too spate of flood water devastated entire Assam. More than 25 lakh people were hit by the deluge. Flood and landslides caused drowning or injuries from collapsed houses and building with lakhs of people marooned. This year major devastation was in upper Assam mainly Lakhimpur, Dhemaji and Jorhat district. However in lower Assam Barpeta district was badly affected.

Gauhati Division Insurance Employees' Association gave call to the members to contribute for relief to

the affected people. GDIEA decided to organise relief distribution along with Joint Council of Trade Unions, Assam. On 24.09.2017 the relief distribution was organised at Kalpani of Gobardhan Mauza covering three village namely Elengmari, Chunbari and Bishmari. It may be mentioned that 49 families of these villages were made homeless by the erosion of river Beki. Two bundles of GC sheet were given to each homeless families. All residents of the locality appreciated this gesture of the unions.



58th CONFERENCE OF GAUHATI DIEA

The 58th Annual General Conference of Gauhati Division Insurance Employees' Association was held on 7th-8th October, 2017 at Dhekiajuli. More than 200 delegates and observers participated in the conference. The conference started with a massive colourful procession participated by hundreds of members of fraternal Trade unions like CITU, JCTU etc besides LIC employees criss-crossing the main through fares of Dhekiajuli township the rally assembled in the Trimurti Bhaban, the venue of open session of the conference. The red flag of the organisation was hoisted by Com. Birendra Kumar Sarma, President, GDIEA and floral wreaths were placed in martyr's column.

The Conference was inaugurated by Com. Shreekanth Mishra, Joint Secretary, All India Insurance Employees' Association. The inaugural session of the Conference was massively attended by about one thousand workers and employees belonging to both organised and unorganised sector. Explaining the challenges before the insurance employees in particular and working class in general Com. Shreekanth Mishra called upon the gathering to be prepared for intensified joint movement against the policies of the Modi led central government. Com. Satanjib Das President EZIEA and Com Pradip Gargari, Joint secretary EZIEA also addressed the open session. Sjt. Ramesh Ch. Bora, President reception Committee read out the welcome address while Com Ranjit Bhuyan, Secretary, reception committee offered vote of thanks. Com. Birendra Kr. Sarma Presided over the inaugural session. From fraternal Trade Unions Royal Soren (CITU), Com. Subhrangshu Rn. Deb (NERGIEA), Com. Anjan Bhattacharjee (LIC Pensioners Association) and Com. Basudeb Sen (NFIFWI) greeted the conference. Cultural Troupe of GDIEA led by Com. Ghana Kt. Deka and members of reception committee presented a

few chorus at the outset of the inaugural session. A souvenir brought out to mark the conference was released by Com. Amitabha Ghosh, Treasurer EZIEA. In the delegates' session a forty eight page Working Committee Report was placed by Com. Bhabendra Kr. Kalita, General Secretary, GDIEA. Twenty three delegates participated in the debate on the report. The report analysed the present economic situation of the country as well as the Insurance Industry and also the state of the organisation. Delegates through their discussion on the Report enriched it further by their live experiences at the grass-root level. The Report of the Working Committee was adopted by the Conference unanimously following summing up of the discussion by the General Secretary.

Likewise the Audited Accounts of the Association placed by Com. Umesh Ch. Das, Treasurer was also adopted unanimously.

The Conference gave a clarion call for intensified struggle to defend the public sector insurance, reverse the neo-liberal economic policies and defeat the communal and divisive forces. It also called upon the delegates to prepare the employees for a grim struggle to realise the Charter of Demands concerning wage revision.

The Conference adopted nine resolutions including a demand for opening of a Zonal office of LIC at Guwahati. A fifty member working committee was elected unanimously with Com. Maitreyee Mishra as President, Com. Pitambar Rajbhandari as General Secretary and Com. Umesh Ch. Das as Treasurer. A presidium consisting of Com. Birendra Kr. Sarma, President GDIEA, Com. Geeta Pegu, Com. Mukul Kr. Das and Com. Rajendra Nath Majumder all vice presidents of GDIEA conducted the conference. The conference came to close in the evening of 8th October, 2017.

Combined Conference of Hyderabad & Secunderabad

The 16th Combined General Conference of ICEU, Hyderabad and Secunderabad Divisions held on the 8th & 9th October 2017 at Hyderabad was a magnificent success. A massive attendance of around 800 employees from both the divisions, a large number of them being women made the conference memorable. Com. K Venu Gopal, Vice-President, AIIEA; Com. V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA and Com. Com. Clement Xavier Das, General Secretary, SCZIEF graced the occasion and guided the deliberations. All other leadership of AIIEA and SCZIEF also attended the meeting. Com. G Thirupathaiiah, President, ICEU, Hyderabad Division and Com. Rajesh Singh, president, ICEU, Secunderabad Division formed Joint Presidium for the conference.

Com. K Venu Gopal congratulated the employees for the magnificent show of strength and unity displayed. In his thought provoking address, he exposed the nefarious designs of the BJP led NDA government which is trying to divide the people especially the working class on communal lines. Having failed miserably on all fronts in fulfilling their election promises and meeting the aspirations of the people, the BJP is now trying for communal polarization on a massive scale, he informed. He cautioned the employees to be vigilant of such divisive forces and appealed to safeguard the unity of the nation.

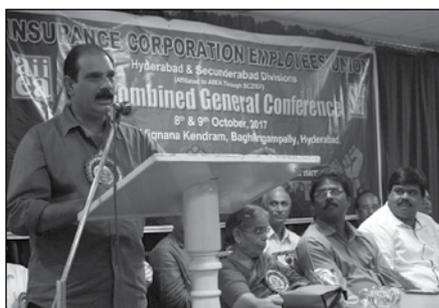
Com. V Ramesh, in his informative address, congratulated the employees for their massive participation. The Central government led by BJP is trying all means to dismantle the public sector, he accused. Having successfully implemented their agenda of privatization of Air India, BSNL the government is now focusing on privatization of GIC, through disinvestment, he said. He lambasted the anti-worker and anti-employee attitude of the central government and LIC management. The long pending demands of 5

day week, one more option for pension and Diamond Jubilee Incentive are all pending for clearance from the government, he informed. He called upon the employees to be prepared for a bitter and protracted struggle for realization of the Charter of Demands.

Com. Clement Das, in his emotion filled address recalled the teachings of great leaders like Com. R Govindarajan and Com. V Sugunakar Rao. He brought to focus, the ill-effects of the ill-conceived demonetization and GST being implemented by the NDA government. The economy is on a downward trend and the miseries of the people are being compounded, he noted. The LIC management has become very unresponsive and unhelpful to the genuine problems of the employees, he explained. He clarified the position with regard to the Educational Qualifications issues, CGIT, Ex-gratia etc. With the unstinted co-operation, support and unity of the employees all the pending demands could be realized, he exhorted.

The conference was also addressed by Com. KVVSN Raju, Vice-President, AIIEA; Com. BS Ravi, Treasurer, AIIEA and Com. Md Mahaboob, Vice-President, SCZIEF.

A total number of 48 delegates actively participated in the debate on the Report. Later the Report was adopted by the house, unanimously. The Conference elected Com. G Thirupathaiiah, Com. N Adhish Reddy and Com. R Srinivasan as the President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for ICEU, Hyderabad Division; Com. Rajesh Singh, Com. K Syam Prasad and Com. Madhuri as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for ICEU, Secunderabad Division. The conference also adopted 32 resolutions on various issues concerning the employees and people in general and against the anti-people, anti-public sector and anti-working class policies being pursued by the NDA government.





61st Conference of DIEA, Jalpaiguri

The 61st Annual General Conference of DIEA, Jalpaiguri held on 8-9, September 2017 at Com. R. Govindarajan Nagar and Com. Malay Bhattacharjee Manch was indeed a conference for advancement. The earlier scheduled date of the conference was postponed due to devastating flood in most of the districts. But the comrades from flood affected 4 districts reached the venue in time by undertaking 12-14 hours' bus journey through horrible road conditions after the flood.

All the 39 speakers, with sheer confidence to advance the organization, participated in the debate on the report placed by Com Debabrata Chowdhury, the General Secretary. The mark of distinction of the 61st conference was that for the first time 10 women comrades participated in the discussion and that too with some very high quality speeches. Com. Sumanta Paul, who has just attained 18 years of age and got her appointment on compassionate grounds spoke with clarity. The debate unequivocally condemned the attack on the voice of dissent and rationality. The conference was unanimous finance capital is making desperate attacks on workers to wriggle out of crisis and the same is meeting with stiff resistance. The conference pledged to continue to campaign on three subjects as decided by AIEA which were the key issues to protect LIC and PSGI and also to secure justly demanded wage revision.

Com. Subrata Bose and Com. Amitava Ghosh – the leaders of EZIEA addressed the delegates and created a lot of enthusiasm. While explaining the scenario in entirety, they emphasized on the justification of the demand for 40% wage hike, though it was extremely difficult to achieve from a Government which was hostile to working class. They also exposed the role of the government towards Insurance Employees when they have not only refused to release the ex-gratia or issues like 5-day week or another pension option but also undemocratically prohibited LIC from giving advertisement in the Insurance Worker!

The EZIEA leaders and the delegates expressed their concern over the growing adverse situation in

West Bengal. The state that never witnessed a single riot since 1960s is now experiencing occurrence of communal riots. The Democratic rights and the Workers' rights are being abridged continuously. The conference expressed serious concern over the situation in Darjeeling Hill areas and the role of both the central and the state Govt. who are silent despite a continuous strike in the hills since last three months.

In the open session of the conference Com. Debabrata Choudhury, General Secretary and Com. Subrata Bose, Assistant Secretary, EZIEA, appraised the present socio-political understanding of the organization amidst a huge gathering of all section of employees, teachers and workers. The Chief Guest of the open session was Com. Jiaul Alam, General Secretary, All India Plantation Workers Union and CITU, Jalpaiguri District and he gave a detailed picture of the present political and economic situation and the tasks before the working class.

The conference ended up with the firm resolve to continue educative campaign on the three issues – "Unemployment & Privatisation", "Working class unity" and "Farmers' distress and food security". The Conference decided to continue with the ongoing Agent and Customer-centric campaigns in various forms to strengthen LIC and reach out to the more policyholders. Three Committees – Trade Union Workshop Committee, Media Response Committee and a committee to update the History of DIEA, Jalpaiguri was formed for improvements in the organizational activities further.

The 61st conference elected 48 working committee members with 6 honorary members. 16-member secretariat was formed with 7 permanent invitees. Com. Dhruvajyati Ganguly, Com. Debabrata Choudhury and Com. Saugata Bhattacharjee were elected as the President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The Conference noted with gratitude the services rendered by Com. Ashim Kumar Nandi as the President and the secretariat member of the Association. While summing up the debate, he also inspired the organization with the assurance to continue his role as a proud soldier of AIEA throughout his life.

22nd General Conference of ICEU, Karimnagar

The 22nd General Conference of ICEU Karimnagar division was held in Peddapally town on 24.09.2017. Com.B.S.Ravi, Treasurer, AIIEA; Com.K.Venu Gopal Rao, President, SCZIEF and Com. K.Jayateerth, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF were the chief guests. A wonderful rally was taken out from the branch premises to the venue, which was inaugurated by com. B.S.Ravi. In the premises named after Com.R.Govindarajan, Com. V.Rajender, President hoisted the AIIEA flag amidst revolutionary slogans. Floral tributes were paid at the martyr's column.

In the inaugural session, Com.A.RamMohan Rao, General Secretary briefly explained the back ground of the conference and welcomed the guests to the dais. The women choir team from D.O rendered the welcome song. Com.V.Rajender, presided over the inaugural session.Com. K.Venugopal Rao, President, SCZIEF inaugurated the 22nd conference and addressed the gathering.He said that the conference is being held in the background of centenary year celebrations of October Revolution, 200th birth year of Karl Marx, 150th year of Das Kapital; 70 years of India's independence, 61 years of LIC existence and 66th anniversary of AIIEA. The essence underlying these land marks give direction & confidence to the conference about our tasks. The wonderful performance of LIC in the F.Y 2016-17 is more significant in the troubled year due to Demonetisation, introduction of GST and the government's effort to marginalise and dismantle public sector in India. The relentless struggles of AIIEA all these years have enabled LIC to grow in to a gigantic organisation. Com.K.Venugopal Rao said that the proposal for 40% wage hike was placed on the basis of performance, profitability and the paying capacity of the Organisation.He warned that the wage revision

will depend on the political and economical decisions of the government.He asked the cadres to be prepared for bitter struggles to protect and strengthen public sector LIC & to clinch a legitimate wage charter.

Com. B.S.Ravi, Treasurer, AIIEA in his address to the conference dealt with various statistics relating to employees in the country. He explained in a lucid manner the intricacies involved in the wage revision. The adamant nature of the management and the government is evident in the inordinate delay in clearing the pending issues like 5 day week, diamond jubilee incentive and one more pension option. Class –I Officers Association, NFIWFI and AIIEA are in consultation to form JAC to fight on the common issues. Com.Mutyam Rao, CITU, State Secretary greeted the Conference.The inaugural Session has concluded with Vote of thank by Com.R.V.Ramana, Joint Secretary.

In the post lunch Delegates session, Executive Committee report, and statement of accounts were submitted. Debating on these a total of 18 delegates spoke on various topics and concurred with the reports. Office Bearers of ICEU Com. R.Rajesham, Com. G.Ravindranath, and Com. V.Vaman Rao participated in the discussions.Com.K.Jayateerth, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF spoke at length in the session. He went nostalgic about his first appointment in Peddapally branch. The inspiring influence of Com. V.Sugunakar Rao was fondly remembered. Com.Jayateerth dealt with various organisation issues and complimented Karimnagar division for their splendid performance in the signature campaign against the GST on insurance premium. The house unanimously adopted both the reports. Com.V.Rajender, Com.A.Ram Mohan Rao and Com. V.Vaman Rao were unanimously elected as President, General Secretary, and Treasurer respectively for the

term 2017-18. The house has showered lavish praise on the Peddapally ICEU unit for successfully conducting the conference in an organised manner. Com. P. Vidyasagar thanked all the staff, field force for their whole hearted support. The delegate's session has concluded with vote of thanks by Com.Gopi Krishna, Peddapally unit.





61ST Conference of Madurai Division A CONFERENCE OF CONFIDENCE

The General Secretary summed up the debate and the same was adopted unanimously along with the audited statements of accounts. The Conference unanimously elected Comrades G. Meenakshisundaram, N.P.Ramesh Kannan and P. Mahalingam as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The 61st Conference of ICEU Madurai Division was held from 15th to 17th of September 2017 at Madurai. As a prelude to the conference, a Special Seminar was organized on 8th of Sep. 2017 against imperialism and on protecting public sector. Com. A.K. Padmanabhan, Vice-President, CITU delivered Special Lecture. Two day campaign was held on 12th and 13th of September 2017 at four centres, viz., Arappalayam, Paravai, Jeyam Theatre and Kochadai. The campaign included the thappattam and a street play named “Modi Masthan”, a satire on the present socio, political and economic situation of the country, by the “Sudar Art Troupe”. Fraternal trade union leaders greeted the campaign in all the four centers and the message of the entire campaign has reached thousands of people.

Com. K. Swaminathan, Vice-President, SZIEF inaugurated the Conference. He narrated the experience of the 25 years of globalization in the country and the challenges confronting our industry and explained in detail the task before us. Further, he reiterated that the struggle for securing wage revision is part of the struggle against globalization policies while we take serious efforts to bring about harmony in the society.

32 comrades including 6 women took part in the debate on introduction of General Secretary’s Report. Zonal leaders, comrades T. Senthilkumar, R. Dharmalingam, R. Sarvamangala and V. Janakiraman addressed the conference. Fraternal Trade union leaders, comrades Selvin Sathyaraj (BSNLEU), S. Krishnan (TNGEA), Balasubramanian (TNUEF) greeted the Conference. Com. R. Sarvamangala inaugurated the photo exhibition displayed in the venue of the Conference.

Prominent Writer and Professor Stalin Rajangam delivered Special Lecture on the “Fundamentals of Culture”. He dealt at length the multifaceted culture of our country and that several communities lived together harmoniously over thousands of years and informed that such unity is our culture, citing various examples.

The Open Session of the Conference began with flagging of the Rally by Com. E.M. Joseph, Former Vice-President, SZIEF, in which more than 600 comrades from all the twenty seven branches participated and made it a resounding success. The cultural Program consisting of a choir by the host branch unit, a dance drama and a drama by the “Kayal Art Troupe” was conducted in a grand manner. The Conference was presided over by Com. G. Meenakshisundaram, President. Sri. P.T.R.Palanivel Thiyagarajan, MLA of Madurai Central Constituency delivered welcome address. Com. Thomas Franco, President, AIBOC delivered special address. He appreciated the efforts of AIIEA for protecting the industry through their vibrant and sustained struggles. Com. T. Senthilkumar, General Secretary, SZIEF explained in detail the challenges before us in clinching 40% wage revision and the need of the hour to take up vibrant movements to protect our industry and bring about unity of working class in the days to come. Sri. P.J.Nicholson, SDM, LIC of India, Madurai Division and Comrades S. Raju (NFIFWI), C. Chandrasekaran (AIIIPA), T.Pandian (LIC CL-I Officers’ Federation), M.Pushparajan (MRGIEA) and C. Muthukumarasay (GEN. SECY. TIRUNELVELI DIVISION) greeted the conference. The children of our members who scored first mark in X STD and XII STD were felicitated. Com. C. Subbarao who has been rendering immense contribution in literature was honored in the conference. The Conference felicitated Com. P. Senthin who bagged medal in the International Athletic Competition held at Malaysia. Comrades S. Usha and K. Nagarajan who bagged medals for Badminton and Volley Ball respectively in LIC All India Competition were honoured. *Sudar* and *Kayal* Art Troupe members were then felicitated. The General Conference came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Com. N.P. Ramesh kannan, General Secretary.

Silver jubilee year conference of Satna Division IEA

The Silver jubilee year conference of Satna Division Insurance Employees' Association was held on 17-18 September, 2017. Around 120 comrades including 17 women from all the units of Satna division participated in the conference.

A massive rally was taken out by comrades of SDIEA, LIC class-1 federation, NFIFWI, LIYAFI, Bank, Postal, BSNLEU, MPMSRU, PFI, panna, State government employees union, AITUC, INTUC and income tax through main market.

SDIEA flag was unfurled by com D S Baghel, president, SDIEA; homage was paid to the immortal martyrs and floral tributes were offered.

The Conference was inaugurated by com V Ramesh, General Secretary AIEA. In his inaugural speech Com Ramesh discussed in details about the government's failure in providing jobs to youths, solution of farmers problems, price rise control. He appealed to all comrades to unite and strengthen units for very strong protest against neo liberal policies of BJP led government. Com D R Mahapatra, General Secretary CZIEA speaking on the occasion said that government is coining different terminology like start up India, make



in India, skill India and so on. President of CZIEA Com N Chakravarthy cautioned the people against divisive policy of the government and appealed to thwart it by unity.

Executive committee report was placed by Com T.P. Pandey, General Secretary. As many as 18 comrades debated on the report. Report and audited accounts were unanimously adopted.

The conference unanimously elected Com DS Baghel, Com T.P. Pandey and Com Rajesh Dwivedi as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for ensuing term. Flag for next A. G. M. was handed over to comrades of Panna unit amidst slogan shouting.

The conference concluded with the vote of thanks by President.

28th General Council of ICEU ,Mysuru Division

The 28th General Council of ICEU Mysuru Division was held on 06.08.2017 at Mysuru.

The Conference started with flag hoisting by Com. N.Vijayakumar , President of ICEU Mysuru amidst thunderous slogans followed by homage to martyr's column.

More than 200 comrades from all the base units attended the General Council.

Com. S.S.Nagesh, General Secretary placed Report on behalf of Executive Committee. Com. S.Sridhara Treasurer placed Audited Statement of accounts. The report made a comprehensive analysis of the situation prevailing across the globe including India with a proper class perspective and the challenges and the opportunities before the working class. The report also cautioned the employees about the rise of communal and fundamentalist forces and the need to preserve the unity and Idea of India. The report also discussed in details the situation prevailing in industry, the performance of public sector insurance and the

challenges and the need to intensify campaign and struggle to protect and further strengthen the public sector. The report also reviewed organization and gave clarion call to take steps to further strengthen organization.

The Conference was greeted by Com. C.R.Krishnamurthy, Gen.Secretary of ICPA, Mysuru Division and Com. Mahesh of BRGIEA, Mysore Dist.

24 comrades, including 2 women comrades participated in the debate on the report who expressed total unanimity on the formulations of the report with clear understanding of the prevailing situation. The debate was very lively and enriching.

Addressing the delegate session Com J.Suresh, Jt. Secretary, SCZIEF explained in detail various issues like, crises of capitalism, growing militarism, rising inequalities, communal polarization during past three years since NDA government assumed power, disinvestment of public sector units, attack on trade union rights, politics of intolerance in the country,

attacks on students and farmers, appropriating icons like Dr. Ambedkar and Bhagat Singh, the spectacular performance of public sector units in insurance industry, the pending issues and challenges to be confronted.

He also narrated the background of the charter of demands and urged the employees to be prepared for struggles to achieve wage demand and pending issues. He emphasised the need to be part of struggles against NPS along with Central and State government employees unions. He called upon to make signature campaign against GST in the Division success in a grand manner by reaching out to the public at large. He cautioned the serious attack on culture and tradition of the country and urged to move forward collectively and unitedly to confront all the challenges.

Com. S.S.Nagesh, General Secretary, summing up the debate congratulated all the comrades for making the conference a grand success with full representations

from all the base units. The Report along with Audited Statement of Accounts was unanimously adopted by the House.

The Conference unanimously adopted 28 resolutions proposed by Com. Channappa and seconded by Com. B.Poovapa.

The Conference decided several activities, including TU classes for branch leadership and exclusive TU classes for Women comrades and 2012 recruited comrades, Campaign on issues identified by AIEA Secretariat, Campaign against GIC disinvestment, Signature campaign against GST, Ambedkar Jayanthi celebrations, Study Circles to be formed at base units, Ambedkar Centre activities, Classes for Agents, Campaign for procuring new business, Competition for Agents, activation of PFI forum etc.

The Conference unanimously elected Com. N.Vijayakumar as President, Com. S.S.Nagesh as General Secretary and Com. S.Sridhara as Treasurer.

Silver Jubilee Year Conference of Aligarh Division Employees Association

The 13th Conference of Aligarh Division Insurance Employees' Association (ADIEA) was held on 24-25 September 2017 at Divisional Office Aligarh. This was the silver jubilee year of the Association as it was established in Sep. 1992. A Galaxy of Leader's including Com. Amanulla Khan, President AIEA, Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary AIEA, Com.Ashok Tiwari, former General Secretary of NCZIEF, the present President & General Secretary of NCZIEF, Convenor of Women's cell of NCZIEF, various delegates from fraternal Trade Unions were present in the open session held on 24th Sept. 2017.

After the welcome address by Chairman Reception Committee Shri. H.N.Singh, Com Amanulla Khan inaugurated the open session. In his address he laid great emphasis on the cultural harmony and national unity of India which is under stress under the present Governments both in the Centre and in U.P. He also touched upon the Employee's issues like one more option for pension, 5 days week and GST. He said though the LIC and GIPSA has recommended for a final pension option, the government is unwilling to concede this demand. The AIEA, however is determined to carry out necessary struggles to secure this demand pending for a long time. He also criticized the government for not approving issues agreed to between the unions and

LIC like 5 day week etc. This clearly shows the anti-employee attitude of the Government, he said.

Com.V.Ramesh, General Secretary AIEA spoke of present day challenges confronting the insurance employees. He spoke of the need to politically fight the political decisions of the government. He said the demand for 40 percent wage rise is genuine considering growth and prosperity of the institutions. But this demand will not be conceded easily and we have to keep the organization ready for a bitter struggle on this issue. The open session was addressed by Com. Ashok Tiwari, Com Geeta Shant, Com. Rajeev Nigam and Com. Shamim Akhtar on behalf of delegates of fraternal trade unions. The open session was presided over by Com. Sachin Jain, President ADIEA. The ADIEA felicitated the past office-bearers of the organization and the top ten agents of the division in premium income and number of policies.

On the evening of 24th September, General Secretary ADIEA Com. Lalit Sharma presented 40 page report and urged the delegates present in the conference to make it more relevant and rich by their debate on it. 18 delegates expressed their views on the report and the report was adopted by the house unanimously after the summing up of debate by the General Secretary. The accounts were also adopted

unanimously. Since there was no constitutional amendment, the resolutions on various subjects were also passed. Com. Amanulla Khan, Com. V.Ramesh, Com. N.K.Pachauri, Com. Sanjeev Sharma and Com. Rajeev Nigam intervened in the delegate session and gave their important suggestion of identifying our strengths and weakness. With this the silver jubilee

Conference came to an end by singing a famous Song "Sathi hath badhana".

Com. Sachin Jain, Com. Lalit Sharma, & Com Ajay Kapoor were unanimously elected the president, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

Madurai Region GIEA District Conference

The 32nd District conference of MRGIEA Trichy- Karur-Perambalur- Pudukkottai Dt committee was held at Trichy on 16th September. Com M.L.Juliet President of the Dt committee presided. More than 75 members including 5 women comrades participated. Resolutions Demanding One more option to join 1995 pension scheme, merger of Four PS GI Companies, against disinvestment of shares of PS GI Companies, and other resolutions were passed. Com R. Rajendran President MRGIEA delivered inaugural address. Com P.Sathianathan Joint Secretary MRGIEA addressed the concluding speech. Com M. L. Juliet Com K.Jayaraman and Com V. Ramesh were elected as President Secretary and Treasurer respectively. Earlier 18 page annual report was submitted in which 12 members participated in the deliberation.



Opposing the Disinvestment proposals of PSGICompanies , demanding early talks on wage

revision, demanding Option to join 1995 pension scheme and demanding merger of four PSGICompanies were the resolutions passed in the conference amongst others.

Women 's Convention at Haldwani

Fourth Women Convention of Bima Karmchari Sangh Haldwani Division held at Haldwani on 16.09.2017. At the outset, Com Madhu Soti, Convenor, read out the report of the Women Cell. She narrated how a woman is discriminated in this society and the work done by him is not counted in any manner. The report discussed the present scenario prevailing in insurance industry and also gave a brief account of activities undertaken by the women cell. Five lady comrades took part in the discussion and raised the problems of lady employees.

Com. Geeta Shant, Convenor, NCZIEF, women cell, in her own simple way, congratulated the lady comrades on conducting the convention. She told what is the need and importance of holding such conventions. She said that the comforts women are enjoying in LIC is all due to AIIEA only. She said that protecting LIC ,

in public sector, is all the more important for women employees. She dwelt at length on hardships which are faced by the women employees in private sector. She condemned the Govt's move to amend labour laws in favour of the employers. The proposed Wage code will take place of existing labour laws. Non compliance of any law is punishable whereas compliance of Code will not be punishable.

In all, 28 women attended the convention. Com. Madhu Soti, Com. Chitra Laspal, Com. Poonam Dubey, Com. Sheela Joshi and Com. Prema Pant were elected as Convenor and Co-convenors respectively. Com. D.K. Pandey, Gen. Secy, Com. Rakesh Sharma and Com. Bhanu Upadhyay also addressed the convention. The meeting was presided by Com. Manoj Gupta.

55th Conference of ICEU Thanjavur Division

The 55th General Conference of ICEU, Thanjavur Division was held on 17th and 18th September 2017 at Mayiladuthurai. The sprawling hall, the entire premises and the town wore a festive look with the display of festoons, flags and buntings. In a fitting tribute to com R Govindarajan, former joint secretary of AIIEA, who was associated with ICEU Thanjavur Division for more than 2 decades and who was instrumental for building up a very strong and vibrant Divisional Unit, the Conference Hall was named after his name as R G Arangam. The event of carrying the JOTHI was inaugurated by a senior comrade S Rajaraman a few days before the conference at Thirumeignanam and after crossing many places en route the JOTHI was handed over by SFI comrade at the venue of the conference to com S R Krishnamurthy, former president ICEU, Thanjavur Division. Com R Punniamurthy, president ICEU Thanjavur Division hoisted the flag of AIIEA amidst thunderous slogans hailing AIIEA reverberating all around. After paying homage at the Martyrs' column, the open session presided over by com R Punniamurthy, commenced. The lady comrades attired in uniform pink saris, adding extra luster to the event, presented delightful choir songs followed by skits on GST and the pitiable plight of farmers throughout India, which were enacted by the SAROJ CULTURAL TROUPE, Thanjavur.

The reception committee chairman MAKKAL MARUTHUVAR Dr V Ramamurthy welcomed the



gathering. Com M Girija, joint secretary, AIIEA in her inaugural address focussed on the challenges to be encountered to realize the Charter of Demands. She expressed her concern over the increasing incidence of honour killings, the devastating effect of the neo liberal policies pursued the Government and threat to the fundamental rights of the people. She appealed to the audience to involve with more vigour in all the democratic movements in future with all forces having identical thinking. Comrade Rayar, General Secretary, Joint Action Council, Mayiladuthurai, Com Stalin, District Secretary, Agrucultural workers' Union and Sri A S Sundarraj, Senior Divisional Manager, LIC of India, Thanjavur Division greeted the conference. The

One Day Convention on the topic 'Neo-liberalism, Privatisation & Unity of Working Class' was organized NZIEA, Srinagar Divisional Committee at Jammu on 16-09-2017. The convention was presided by Com. Dileep Koul and Com. Pawan Gupta. The convention was attended by large number of representatives of other Trade Unions of Jammu & Kashmir including Com. Om Parkash, General Secretary CITU, Com. S.P.Kesar, senior leader of CITU, Kishore Sharma of J&K Kisan Tehreek, Bank Employees Federation of India, Com. Arun Kumar Gupta, General Secretary All India Bank Employees Association (J&K).

The convention strongly opposed the policies of Neo-Liberalism and Privatisation resulting in killing of Indian manufacturing, increasing unemployment and job losses, continuing price rise and widening inequalities. According to a report by the Johannesburg

CONVENTION against NEOLIBERALISM and PRIVATISATION at JAMMU

based company, New World Health, India is the second most unequal country globally with 1% of the richest owning 54% of the wealth. The latest statistics from the Quarterly Employment Survey conducted by Labour Bureau of eight employment industries- textiles, garments, jewellery, IT, leather, handlooms, metals and automobiles- shows that employment generated in these eight sectors was only 1.35 lakh in 2015 compared to 4.9 lakh in 2014. In the successive budgets presented by NDA Govt., drastic cuts were made in expenditure for welfare schemes. Subsidies on fertilizers and fuel,

children of our comrades who secured higher marks in the 10th and 12th examinations were honoured. Com S Selvaraj, General Secretary proposed the vote of thanks. The open session was attended by a mammoth gathering of over 600 comrades including more than 100 lady comrades.

A cultural event was organized on 17th evening in which Kavignar Na Muthu Nilavan spoke and Kavignar , Vallam Tajbal presented a KAVI (POEM). Pudugai Bhoopalam troupe presented NAIYANDAI MEDAI on the current political situation which was very much enjoyed. Com K Swaminathan, vice president, SZIEF finally addressed the gathering.

The delegates' session was inaugurated by Com R K Gopinath, Treasurer, SZIEF. He dealt on the issue of servicing aspects and work culture which only will help us in a long way; he appealed to the LIC employees not to allow even a single policy holder to leave our office dissatisfied. Com V Suresh, Joint Secretary, SZIEF while greeting the delegates' session, appreciated the tremendous efforts of Thanjavur Division in obtaining more than 4 ½ lakhs signatures during the signature campaign against GST. He made a special mention about Pattukkottai Br Unit for its unique achievement of mobilizing more than 66,000 signatures from the public. He assured that suitable steps will be taken to address the issues raised by the delegate.

Com S Selvaraj, General Secretary in his erudite presentation of the report covered briefly all the issues, developments, challenges etc at the international, national and industrial level. 29 comrades including

5 women comrades deliberated on the report and enriched it with their observations. After summing up by the General secretary, the report was adopted unanimously. The audited statement of accounts for the year 2016 placed by Comrade M Ravishankar was also adopted unanimously. Com K SAMINATHAN, Vice President, SZIEF greeted the conference. In his address, he brought to light the hollowness of the tall claim by the BJP lead government on the question of demonetization which ended as a total failure. He averred that the neo liberal policies pursued more aggressively by the central government have pushed the poor citizens to the brink of disaster. The Hindutva agenda that is being shamelessly imposed on the Indian citizens by the government, which in effect will destroy the secular fabric of the country has to be taken very seriously and uncompromising struggle against it is the need of the hour. He traced the Indian history and narrated the historic struggles of our great leaders in order to achieve freedom from the British colonial rule and how this freedom is being transformed into mere mockery by the present government. He referred about the honour killings and humiliating treatment meted out to the Dalits. Comrades N Srinivasan and K Lakshmanan former office bearers

of ICEU Thanjavur Dn also greeted the delegates' session. As many as 21 resolutions were also adopted unanimously.

Comrades R. Punniamurthy, S. Selvaraj and M. Ravishankar were elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.



The public sector General Insurance cos. are too under severe attack and the process of Disinvestment has started there. The Convention appealed for the broader level unity of the working class and fight resolutely against such policies of the Govt. The convention also cautioned the workers against the communal agenda of the ruling class attempted to divide the workers on the basis of religion, region, caste and creed to weaken the strength of the working class.

The convention was also attended by Jagdish Sharma of NHPC, Jia Lal Sharma of Contractual workers union, Kailash Naik, Railway Loading and Unloading workers union, Baba Ram, Nirman Mazdoor Union, Bhomic, Industrial Estate workers union, Sunita Bhagat, ASHA Workers union. Vote of thanks was presented by Com. Dinesh Sharma of NZIEA Srinagar Division

and those for health care and education were also reduced. The budget allocation for education remains far short off 6% of GDP). Policies of privatization has led to gradual destruction of public sector as a result of which Air India is in the process of being privatized and threat is there on BSNL and other public sector.



For the last many months, some of our friends have been deeply expressing a feeling to have a reunion of all of our well-knit group of friends closely associated with Srikakulam Branch of LIC, to recall the finer moments of their past association, to recollect the sacrifices and contributions they made to the LIC fraternity and to reinforce the bonds of friendship for the present and for the future.

“LIC Retirees’ Meet of Srikakulam Memories”, an event perhaps first of its kind, was organized in Srikakulam, a district headquarters town of Andhra Pradesh. It is a branch centre (BO Code: 673) under Visakhapatnam Division in South Central Zone.

This unique event was conceived, planned and organized by LIC Retirees residing in Srikakulam, wherein they have made it to see that as many as possible of those who worked in Srikakulam Branch for some period and presently retired and settled either in Srikakulam or somewhere else. The branch was formed 60 years back in 1957 and it is a herculean task to identify the persons, who worked here and to locate their present places of residence and thus much efforts were put in contacting the neighbouring Divisions and also Hyderabad. OS departments of the Divisions have extended their help in this regard and they succeeded in tracing as many as over 70 such retirees in all cadres (Class I, III, III & IV). It took over 2 months to reach out to the persons.

The organizers’ intention was to assemble the retirees together to recall their memories of early days and yester years and enjoy a day of fun, frolic, thrill, full of remembrances and nostalgic experiences with persons in their 70s, 80s & 90s meet after 20, 30, 40 or even more years.

It was really a jubilant occasion wherein ultimately 48 persons / retirees assembled on Saturday the 9th September 2017 in a closed cool function hall. They were invited to come with spouses, obviously to see

An Event of Sweet Memories at Srikakulam

that the spouse extends a helping hand and also enjoys the event. A total gathering of 70 people attended. Every contacted person expressed happiness, for being remembered even after decades. Some, due to age, ill health etc., couldn’t undertake the travel but have sent impressive and loving messages. But all people unequivocally expressed their extreme happiness over the organizing of such an event.

Right from 1957, Srikakulam Branch functioned in rented buildings, periodically shifting for 9 times till the present own building “Jeevan Jyothi” came up in 1996 on a sprawling 9300 sq. yard area, with greeneries and gardens around the main structure, in the heart of the town. 23 Branch Managers have headed the branch’s progress over these 6 decades.

Participants were jubilant and spoke their experiences when they were in Srikakulam recalling their memories and tickling anecdotes of their times. There was no specific agenda and most of their time



One Day Convention on the topic ‘KRISHI SANKAT AUR KISAN ATAM HATYA’ (Agrarian Crisis and Farmers’ Suicide) was organized by Srinagar Division at Jammu. As a prelude to convention a was taken out through the main bazaar of the area.

The convention was presided by Com. Pawan Gupta, Divisional Secretary, Srinagar Division and Com. Kishore Kumar, State President Jammu and Kashmir Kisan Tehreek affiliated with All India Kisan Sabha. The convention was attended by large number of



was spent in greeting each another, exchange of pleasantries and emotional huggings. They dined together. Several photographs of their past events were displayed in the meeting hall to the participants' delight, triggering amusing discussion among the members and their memories.

A roaring applause was extended when Mrs. Saraswathi Devi, wife of Sri VKRatho retired BM, rendered verses from Bhagavat Gita elaborating what 'YOGAKSHEMAM VAHAMYAHAM' means and its relevance to LIC's logo. The senior most participant Mr.S.A. Narsimham (90 years) was felicitated

amidst standing ovation by the retirees. Mementos depicting the Sun God riding on his 7-horse chariot of the famous Arasavalli sun temple in Srikakulam, were presented to the participants. Mr. Venugopal, former General Secretary of the AIIEA, whose first posting was at Srikakulam, was honoured. Mr.V. Raghavendra Rao retired DM distributed copies of his literary work, a Telugu book titled "Kiranmayi Kala" to the members after it was formally released by Mr. K. Venugopal.

A minute's silence was observed by the house to pay homage to those departed personalities who also contributed to the growth of the branch.

Mr. M.A.N.Murthy convened the Meet and Mr. V.G.K.Murthy acted as Anchor and the meeting came to a close with vote of thanks by Mr.M.Prabhakara Rao amidst standing ovation by the participants offered to the hosts for the excellent idea of organizing this event and meticulously executing it.

CONVENTION on "AGRARIAN CRISIS & FARMERS' SUICIDE" at JAMMU

representatives of other Trade Unions of J&K including special guests Com. S.P.Kesar senior leader of CITU and Com. Om Parkash, General Secretary CITU (J&K).

A large number of farmers participated in the convention in the leadership of Mandev Singh, Subhedar Baba Ram, Master Brita Ram, Ajay, Ram Pal and Om Parkash. Com. Pawan Gupta, speaking on the occasion said that since 1995 to 2015, 318528 farmers have been compelled to commit suicides. It is to be noted that 12000 farmers are committing suicides per annum and from the last three years of Modi Govt., the suicide rate has increased by 25% and majority of suicides are taking place in BJP ruled states. BJP in its election manifesto and Mr. Modi in his election speeches during 2014 Lok Sabha elections had assured the peasants with a minimum support price (MSP) equivalent to the cost of production plus 50%

as recommended by Dr. M.S.Nathan report, but after coming to power, Modi Govt., in an affidavit submitted in Supreme Court, has said that it is not possible for them to implement the said report. The convention raised its serious concern over the severe distress in agriculture sector as the food grain production has showed a marked decline by more than 10 million tons in these years of Modi regime compared to 2013-14. Another election promise of Modi that the income of farmers will become double in 2022 also has fallen flat because for that agriculture sector requires to grow at the rate of 14% in next five years; and it seems quite impossible seeing to the meager 2% growth rate during the last five years. The convention assured full support to the issues of the farmers and resolved to stand firmly by them in the struggle ahead.

Vote of thanks was presented by Com. Dinesh Sharma of NZIEA Srinagar Division. Others who spoke- Com.Raj Kumar, Rajesh Kumar, Paramjeet Singh (R.S.Pura),Nanak Chand, Karan Kumar from NZIEA Srinagar Division.

49th GENERAL CONFERENCE OF MACHILIPATNAM



The 49th General Conference of ICEU, Machilipatnam Division was held at Com.R.Govinarajan Nagar, MB Vignana Kendram, Vijayawada on 24th September, 2017. A massive rally in which the cadres of ICEU and the employees and workers from the fraternal trade unions participated in large number preceded the inauguration. The Divisional Vice-President Com. K.Venkateswarlu unfurled the flag of AIIEA amidst thunderous slogans. Revolutionary songs were sung by the women and men comrades of ICEU and Praja Natya Mandali portraying the importance of unity and struggle.

The inaugural session commenced with a welcome address by Com. U.V.Krishnaiah, Vice-Chairman, Reception Committee and also the State General.

Inaugurating the conference, Com. B.V.Raghavulu, Member, CPM Polit Bureau made an educative and inspiring speech. He explained, in detail the present challenging situation which is developing in the country not only for the working class but also people as a whole. He termed the imposition of demonetisation and GST as surgical strikes on the Indian economy which is not in the pink of health. He said "our economy was in shambles as the GDP is witnessing a steady fall for the last six quarters. The decline from 9.2% to 5.7% is not an encouraging one. The policies pursued by the NDA government are totally responsible for the present economic slow-down.

One per cent fall in GDP leads to a loss of 10 lakh jobs. At the behest of the government, Niti Aayog has made many recommendations to destroy the public sector industry. The disinvestment in the government owned General Insurance Companies is aimed only to favour the big corporates and the multinationals. The rise in the unemployment problem, job losses

and the agitations by the farmers in many states for support price are indicative of failure of the central government led by Mr.Narendra Modi. The inequalities between the haves and have-nots in the country are phenomenally increasing owing to the aggressive policies of privatisation and liberalisation by the governments. The gap in income levels between the rich and the poor has gone up drastically in India compared to other developed countries. As per the recent reports, the top 1% rich people own 58% of the national wealth. On the other side, our pluralistic culture,

secularism, democratic and workers' rights are under severe attack. The brutal killing of progressive writer Ms Gauri Lankesh is the recent example in this direction". Com. Raghavulu fervently appealed to the insurance employees to come forward to work unitedly and mobilise all the employees and other progressive and democratic sections to counter the dangers emanating from the divisive, communal and authoritarian forces.

Com. Clement Xavier Das, General Secretary, SCZIEF, Com.P.Satish, General Secretary, ICEU, Rajahmundry, Sri G.Umamaheswra Rao, Divisional General Secretary, Class1 Officers' Association, Sri D.Chukka Rao from NFIFWI and other leaders from the fraternal unions like CITU, UTF, ICREA, LIAFI, LICAIOI, WALIC, LIC OBC Employees' Association spoke in the inaugural session.

Com.G.Kishore Kumar, Divisional Secretary placed an annual report for the year 2016-17 and the report was unanimously approved by the house after lively debate. The audited statement of accounts was also adopted unanimously.

Com.Clement Xavier Das, while speaking in the delegate session dealt with issues relating to the industry. He criticized the government for its deliberate attempts in many ways to weaken the public sector LIC by bringing tax reforms like GST on insurance premiums. He said that the AIIEA has placed a demand before the government to revisit the issue of unjustifiable imposition of GST on insurance premiums. He informed that lakhs of people already wrote to the government on this issue.

Com.Md.Mahaboob, Vice-President, SCZIEF and Com. B.B.Ganesh, Vice-President, SCZIEF also addressed the delegate session.

Com. J.Sudhakar, Com. G.Kishore Kumar and

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Women Art Festival of Kerala Divisions

The first State Level Arts festival for Women comrades of Kerala Divisions was held under the auspices of South Zone Working Women's Co-ordination Committee on 08th October, 2017 at Regional Theatre, Thrissur, the cultural capital of the State. The verve and enthusiasm exhibited by our comrades in participating as well as conducting the historic event was remarkable. This festival was inaugurated by Smt. Vineetha Nedungadi, renowned Mohiniyattam dancer. Com.K.R.Vini Jt. Convener, SZWWCC honoured Smt.Vineetha and Com.M.Kunhikrishnan offered our presents to her.

Com.M Kunhikrishnan, President SZIEF, Com.M Rajeev Vice President SZIEF, Com.T Senthil Kumar, General Secretary SZIEF, Com.R.Sarvamangala, Com.P.P.Krishnan Jt Secretaries, SZIEF, Com.R.K.Gopinath, Treasurer SZIEF, Com.J.Vijaya and Com.K.R.Vini, Jt Conveners SZWWCC Tamilnadu & Kerala State respectively were present on the dais during the inauguration along with Com.S.Girija, Com.R Radhika, Com V V Suma and Com.T.Bindu Womens Sub committee Conveners of Thiruvananthapuram, Kottayam, Ernakulam and Kozhikode Divisions respectively. A crowd of over 500 comrades witnessed this multifaceted skills transmitted through artistic innovations.

The underlying meme that ran through the cultural programme was the urge for a pluralistic living without the myopic influence of regressive ideologies. Syncretism with which the ideology of India survived over the millennia found its echo both in participation and the message it conveyed. Arts that were the preserve of a few both in creation and enjoyment have now got liberated and its continuum lies in the involvement of people irrespective of caste, religion, race, gender and language. This festival articulated it once again.

Regional Theatre is the headquarters of the music and drama academy of Kerala and it is one of the cultural icons of the city. The dedication and commitment exhibited by the participants in the run up to the programme was astounding as they spent lot of time and energy in preparation for it. Lot of holidays in the preceding week were dedicated for it. Once they appeared on the stage, equally wondering was the standard of each item – whether it is drama or music or any other. It was a big task undertaken by our women comrades that they were second to none in the expression of high values of the civilized society with dexterity. The remarkable feature of the event was support and encouragement given by the men-folk in preparation, arrangement and in presence.

The programme was well arranged, compered exquisitely by Com.C.M.Divya without room for unnecessary drag and conclusion was seamless and timely. Com.T.Senthil Kumar, General Secretary SZIEF felicitated famous Malayalam Cine star Com. Pradeep Kottayam who is working as Assistant at Divisional Office, Kottayam.

Jt. Conveners of SZWWCC Com.J.Vijaya and Com.K.R.Vini made valedictory speeches. To add special taste to the event, both welcome speech and vote of thanks were expressed through group songs by the comrades of host Division - Thrissur.

The curtain was brought down on the festival as the mellifluous sound of the salutation music ensemble anchored in classical mould spread it mellowing wings across the auditorium. The import of the song was that all who congregated there was equal and great amid diversity.



INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

Supreme Court directs Reliance General Insurance Company to pay to pay Rs.8.35 lakh to claimant, which, the insurer had denied on the ground that there was a delay in filing a claim. According to the appeal filed by Om Prakash, his truck was stolen in Bhiwari in Rajasthan on March 23, 2010, but he filed the insurance claim on March 31 with the firm, as during that period he was busy trying to trace it. The theft was confirmed by the investigator of the company and a claim of Rs 7.85 lakh was approved by the corporate claims manager. Yet the Reliance General Insurance Company denied claim saying he had violated a policy condition that made it mandatory to inform the firm immediately after any accidental loss or damage to the vehicle. Supreme Court passing the order says "If the reason for the delay in making a claim is satisfactorily explained, such a claim cannot be rejected on the ground of delay."

India remains an underpenetrated market, with penetration of non-life insurance at only 0.77 per cent, compared to a global average of nearly three per cent.

In a recently held World Bank conference experts warn disaster-prone countries : "Disaster-prone countries that keep rebuilding homes, roads and utilities are in danger of becoming uninsurable unless their new infrastructure is built to survive further catastrophe".

Stretching the arm, beyond the line. German insurance entity Allianz Group enters construction field. It has entered into a partnership with construction giant Shapoorji Pallonji Group to set up a \$500-million real estate fund — SPREF II — which will invest in commercial office properties in India.

Joint venture in floating a plan ! Two insurance companies come together to float a combo plan. HDFC Life Insurance and Apollo Munich Health have come together to launch 'Click2Protect Health plan', which provides both life and health cover under a single plan. This plan combines the benefits of HDFC Life's 'Click2Protect 3D Plus (term) protection plan' and Apollo Munich's 'Optima Restore health indemnity plan'.

From cross-selling of third party products (insurance and mutual fund) to mis-selling leading to force-selling has become a routine in the banking sector. What seems to promote this unethical mis-selling business is the hefty commission paid to the banker

who colludes with superiors to 'close a particular deal. Taking exception to this, AIBOC (All India Bank Officers' Confederation) has asked RBI Governor to take urgent steps to stop this menace.

The Insurance Regulatory Development Authority of India is examining the possibility of allowing private equity (PE) firms to buy stake in insurance companies. Chairman of IRDA, TS Vijayan, says a decision on this is likely to be taken in a month's time.

As if All Roads Lead only to increased technology, and there is no other go. A report by Assocham in collaboration with Ashwin Parekh Advisory Services says "recent technology trends such as artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, blockchain and robotic process automation (RPA) have significant potential to streamline insurance operations and enhance customer experience". It further says "Insurers have begun capitalising this potential of technology to acquisition and servicing for the insurance industry, technology has made it easier to manage the sourcing by way of interactive machine learning and artificial intelligence tools". With these tools in extensive use where will be "we". Unable to grapple with the situation, when there is a kind of a chaos as to why, where and how the things out in the market are going – insurance, technology and the responsibility towards the final happening, World Economic Forum (WEF) is trying to bring insurers, tech firms and government on to a single platform to assess the situation and find solutions to the various problems that the market will face. "Tech firms have moved fast to develop new products, but assigning liability – who is responsible for any accidents or losses – is not always clear", says the Report of the WEF.

In Australia, in almost 20 years, comprehensive reforms to hit the private health insurance industry will soon take place, including discounts on premiums for those aged under 30 and a drive to make a mental-health safety net part of standard coverage. To attract young people to take out health insurance, insurers will offer discounts of 2% a year for a maximum of five years for people aged between 19 and 29. The discounted rate would remain until they are 40, after which it would be phased out. Attracting more young people into private health insurance is critical to keeping the sector sustainable in an ageing population.

A.M.KHAN, DHARWAD

ECONOMIC TID BITS

- ◆ The IMF has lifted its global growth forecast from 3.5% to 3.6% this year. It has however slashed the growth of Australia to 2.2% from earlier prediction of 3%. The Global Financial report of IMF expresses concern over the growing indebtedness of G20 economies, which is at \$135 trillion, which is 235% of GDP that makes up 85% of the total world economy.
- ◆ According to a study, in UK two million of the poorest families will face 50 Pound a week cut in income by 2020. During the last five years, the government has cut nearly 17 billion Pounds from social security measures. The current government is already committed to a further 12 billion Pound welfare budget cuts by 2018, which will result in 1500 Pound cut for 8 million households up to 2018
- ◆ According to 2017 Hurun list of wealthy people, in China 2130 individuals have now fortunes estimated to exceed \$300 million, roughly double the number from five years ago. 74 people have joined the 2017 Hurun rich list, bring the list's combined assets to \$ 2.6 trillion. China now accounts for 36% of the world's billionaires. It has 647 billionaires in 2017 in US dollar terms, up from 594 in 2016. There were no billionaires in China in 2003. The wealth of the top 100 people rose by 60% this year. According to a study by French economist Thomas Piketty, "the top 10% income share rose from 27% to 41% of national income between 1978 and 2015, while the bottom 50% share dropped from 27% to 15%.
- ◆ The US government has announced its plans to revoke the federal requirement for employers to include birth control coverage in health insurance plans. The new policy would expand exemptions under the Affordable Care Act (ACA) for employers who claim moral or religious objections to contraception. Under the previous mandate, more than 55 million women employees had access to no-cost birth control. According to Kaiser Family Foundation, the percentage of women employees that pay with their own money for birth control fell from 21% to 3% after contraception became a covered preventive benefit. The new exemptions will be available to for-profit companies, non-profit organizations, colleges and universities that provide health care to students and employees. This new proposal would impact around 1,20,000 women in USA and is expected to facilitate a large number of lawsuits.
- ◆ According to Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) retail sales data recorded their largest two-month decline for seven years, in a sign that families are cutting back spending in conditions of stagnant or falling real wages. With consumer spending accounting for 60% of Australian GDP, concerns are mounting that the Australian economy is about to end its record breaking run of 26 years without recession. The household debt of Australia is at a record high of 194% of income compared to 104% of USA (this has increased five folds since 1980s). Australia's non-financial debt is over 250% of GDP, among the highest proportions in the world.
- ◆ According to a UN report, the number of people suffering from malnutrition worldwide rose to 815 million in 2016, rising by 38 million from 2015. This was the first such year-to-year increase in a century. In 2016, the world produced more than enough food to provide an adequate and nutritious diet to every human being in the planet. But these gains are increasingly offset by war and climate change according to UN report. However, the report is largely silent on increasing economic inequality, which means in both comparatively wealthy and poor countries, many people are too poor to purchase the food that exists. In 2016, an estimated 155 million children younger than five years were classified as stunted, some 52 million children were undernourished. 1/3rd of the population of Eastern Africa and 1/5th of the population of entire continent, 12% of the population of Asia is undernourished. The number of chronically undernourished people rose to 815 million in 2016 – the number greater than the population of entire European continent. India slips to 100th position from 97th position last year in the Global Hunger Index amongst the 119 countries. It was at 55th position in the year 2014.

■ J.SURESH, MYSORE

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLES

Pakistan: PIMS medical staff resume strike

Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) workers resumed strike action on 09.10.2017 in Islamabad after authorities failed to resolve their demands. Staff are stopping work for three hours each day. A three-day strike last week by administration, paramedical staff, nurses and others was called off after the government falsely claimed it would discuss and resolve their demands.

Sri Lankan rail workers strike

Sri Lanka Railways drivers and guards suddenly walked out on strike in Colombo on 11.10.2017 evening affecting trains leaving the Colombo Fort station. Police were called to several railway stations in the city when commuters protested over the cancellation of services. The rail workers allege that management had disregarded recruitment policies and procedures when recruiting trainees.

Victoria: Aged cared nurses walk out

Around 1,000 nurses at 26 Bupa aged care facilities in Victoria began limited industrial action on October 3 in a dispute over a proposed new enterprise agreement. Ongoing protest action by members of the Australian Nursing and Midwifery Federation (ANMF) includes wearing union t-shirts at work and distributing campaign materials to residents, relatives and the community. ANMF members in Melbourne walked off the job and demonstrated outside Bupa's aged care facility in Clayton on 09.10.2017 while stop-work action was held at seven other facilities across Victoria during the week.

French Polynesian public servants strike

Public servants in the small Pacific colony of French Polynesia struck on 11.10.2017 to protest the French government's plan to impose massive public sector job cuts. Hundreds of workers demonstrated in the colony's capital Papeete. The strike affected public administration, the courts and schools. The French government plans to cut 120,000 jobs from its public sector, which employs more than five million people, including 10,000 in French Polynesia.

Italian steelworkers strike against 4,000 redundancies

Steelworkers struck 09.10.2017 to protest 4,000 redundancies-out of a total workforce of 14,000. They are being proposed by the Indian steel multinational ArcelorMittal as part of its recent takeover of Ilva, once Italy's third biggest steel producer. Workers staged a sit-in in Taranto, Puglia where 3,300 jobs are due to be shed, and a protest in Genoa where 600 jobs are to go.

French public-sector workers strike against labour reforms

Thousands of French workers went on strike on 10.10.2017 and joined demonstrations nationwide, including in Paris, to protest President Emmanuel Macron's attacks on the Labour Code. Workers from

nine public sector trade unions were involved and are opposing a freeze on wages, the ending of payment of day one of sick leave, and 120,000 threatened redundancies in the public sector. Workers also fear the privatisation of services and the abolition of national pay scales. With 20 percent of the French workforce employed in the public sector, including civil servants, the strikes saw the closure of schools and hospitals, while air traffic controllers grounded 30 percent of flights.

London tube cleaners demonstrate against outsourcing

Cleaners who work for the London Underground staged a demonstration on 12.10.2017 outside City Hall to protest Victorian era working conditions. Their employers have sold the cleaning contract to the lowest bidder, the American firm ABM. ABM in turn will outsource cleaning contracts to sweatshop firms. The cleaners are members of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) union and are demanding £10 an hour in pay, free travel passes, holiday and sick pay.

Transport strike against cuts hits Belgian capital, Brussels

Public sector transport workers struck on October 10 in Belgium's capital, Brussels, to protest budget cuts. Trains stopped running for 24 hours from 10pm on 09.10.2017.

Greek journalists in 24-hour strike against austerity

Greek journalists walked off the job to protest social security underfunding due to austerity measures imposed by the Syriza government. There was no radio or TV news, newspapers published or news website updates from 10.10.2017 6am to 11.10.2017 6am.

Slovenian firefighters rally in Ljubljana

Firefighters protested 12.10.2017 in Slovenia's capital, Ljubljana, in a pay dispute that threatens to escalate into strike action.

Dutch teachers close down elementary schools in fight for pay parity

Elementary (primary) teachers throughout the Netherlands struck 10.10.2017 to protest low pay. They earn 20 percent less than their colleagues in secondary schools, or an average monthly wage that is lower by €1000. 90,000 teachers took part, with a million children having to take the day off. Two more strike days are planned for November.

Somalian University teachers strike

Teachers employed by the Somali National University in Mogadishu took strike action last 14.10.2017 because the government has failed to pay their salaries for the last six months. Workers in Somalia work long hours for little pay, as there is no labour legislation protecting workers' employment rights.

■ **S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE**

For our Field Force

16% growth in LIC's dividend to Government

A cheque amounting to Rs.2,206.70 crore was handed over to Finance Minister Arun Jaitley as the government's share of the surplus arising out of the actuarial valuation for the year ending March 2017 by LIC chairman V K Sharma. In FY16, LIC had paid Rs.1,900 crore, thus showing a growth of 15.79% in FY17.

LIC outperforms private sector

LIC has seen a growth of 23.68% year-on-year in new business premium collection in April to September 2017 period compared to 14.42% growth posted by private sector players, according to data from Life Insurance Council. Data showed that, LIC collected new premiums of Rs.68,224.29 crore while private insurers collected Rs.23,840.72 crore during the period.

IOC shares to LIC

ONGC is likely to sell some of its stake in IOC to institutional investors like LIC to part-fund its over Rs.34,000-crore acquisition of refiner Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

LIC in GIC IPO

LIC bids highest in the mega IPO of GIC Re. The Rs.11,500-crore IPO for GIC Re, which is the third-largest such offering ever in India, was subscribed close to 1.4 times. LIC has bid for shares worth around Rs.7,000-8,000 crore. LIC Chairman VK Sharma reportedly confirmed that LIC has bid for shares in the GIC Re IPO but declined to comment on the amount bid for.

General Insurance KYC

IRDAI is preparing regulations for Know-Your-Customer (KYC) in the general insurance industry. While the earlier government had proposed that there would not be any requirement of KYC once bank account number was disclosed. However, this has not yet been implemented. The regulations, which could be out in the next few weeks, may bring forth the exact information that will have to be captured by general insurance companies. Apart from renewals, this could also help in cross-selling products to the customers.

No Rejection for Delay

The Supreme Court has directed Reliance General Insurance Company to pay Rs.8.35 lakh to a customer whose insured truck was stolen but his claim was rejected on the grounds of delay in filing it. If the reason for delay in making a claim is satisfactorily explained, such a claim cannot be rejected on the ground of delay.

Death claim data

Life insurers in India will now be required to publish death claims paid ratio data annually, IRDAI

said in a circular. The move is to ensure uniformity in the method of calculation, which will be based on the 'number of policies alone'. The insurance companies can no longer club individual and group policies to advertise or publish death claims paid data, according to IRDAI.

Forced selling

The All India Bank Officers' Confederation has urged the Reserve Bank Governor to take urgent steps to stop the menace of forced cross-selling of third party products in public sector banks. According to it, many of the banks have even started making services conditional to their clientele; i.e. a savings bank account can be opened only if the customer agrees to purchase an insurance product. Insurance has been made compulsory for the sanction of every loan, just like Form 16s or IT returns. Being a corporate agent, a banker focuses on the sale of products, but with limited knowledge. Aggressive cross-selling has led to forced selling and, in turn, to mis-selling. Hardly any interest is shown in renewal premiums anymore.

HDFC Account attached

A local court in Chandigarh attached the bank account of HDFC ERGO insurance company for the non-payment of Rs.1.50 lakh to a complainant. The amount was to be paid for harassment in a case of not providing complete insurance claim of the complainant's car, which was damaged in a road accident.

Mumbai remains without Ombudsman

Mumbai region, which has three to four times of the average insurance complaints handled in an Ombudsman office, has had no full time Ombudsman for the past 18 months. Mumbai and Delhi get high volume of insurance complaints. Ombudsman from Pune office has been visiting Mumbai office for past seven to eight months to help solve the complaints. With the lack of full time Ombudsman at Mumbai, the grievance redressal machinery has been disrupted and aggrieved parties may have been considerably inconvenienced.

IRDAI Penalised

A consumer redressal forum has, in a rare instance, pulled up the IRDA and Max Life Insurance Company Ltd to pay compensation to a senior citizen for not taking appropriate action on a complaint he had filed. The forum ordered the firm and IRDA to pay the complainant Rs.44,554.51 with 9% interest from February 2012. It also ordered them to pay him Rs.25,000 for mental agony and Rs.5,000 as expenses.

ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

CONGRATULATIONS



Master A.S. Neeraj,
son of
Com.A.V.Suresh,
Cashier, Divisional
Office, Thrissur
secured 1st position
in the recently
concluded 48th
Kendriya Vidyalaya
Sangathan National
Sports Meet, 2017
(Boys Under 14
shooting) held at
Indore.
Congratulations to
Master A.S. Neeraj

DONATIONS

- Com.Saraya Devarmani,
Dharwad DO, Rs.2000
- Com.Lalit Sharma, Gen, Secy,
Aligarh Div IEA 10000
- Com.R.Arul Prakasam Thirupathur Br,
Madurai Div. 1000
- Com.P.B.Chandrashekar,
Civil Stn. Br, Bangalore Div.-II 5000
- Shadol Division Insurance Employees'
Union,23rd conference 1100
- Insurance Worker thanks these
comrades fpr their fine gesture.*

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
January 2017	274	6254.30
February	274	6254.30
March	275	6277.12
April	277	6322.77
May	278	6345.60
June	280	6391.25
July	285	6505.38
August	285	6505.38
Base1960=Base2001x22.8259		

The history of Insurance Worker written by Com Chandrasekhar Bose in the October issue is really inspiring. It is a matter of great pride that despite all difficulties, Insurance Worker has been published without any interruption for the last 60 years. Insurance Worker has enhanced the understanding of the readers. The Editorial on Gorakhpur tragedy brings into sharp focus the pathetic conditions in health sector and need to fix it early. Congratulations to Team Insurance Worker on the Diamond Jubilee of the beloved journal.

Response



- P.Muthu Kumaran

Early days of Insurance Worker' by Com Chandrasekhar Bose is a moving story of the grit and determination of organisation and its dedicated cadres.

A small but humble donation of 1000/- and another 5000/- to buy a duplicating machine is the origin of Insurance Worker. The successful story of how it has evolved into a powerful movement is described by the very person who has conceived it at the first place. It tells us of so many comrades' individual dedication and sacrifice. Most notable inter alia the singular dedication of comrade Dilip Roy. His abiding by comrade Bose's advice of not to purchase the share of Colgate Palmolive is salutary.

V.Sugumaran, Vellore Division

LIC ISSUES INSTRUCTION FOR UPGRADATION OF RPT EMPLOYEES

The AIIEA had been pursuing for the last two years the up-gradation of the residual Regular Part Time Employees. These employees had been left out of the process of up-gradation earlier due to various reasons. The efforts of the AIIEA fructified with the LIC Board deciding to upgrade these RPT employees in its meeting held in May 2017. The Board recommendation was sent to the Government for approval. The Government finally approved the recommendation. The LIC has now issued instructions to all Zonal Managers to complete the process early. It is yet another achievement of AIIEA and its determined efforts

49th CONFERENCE OF MACHILIPATNAM

Contd from Page 34

Com. P. Nagaiah were unanimously elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term. Many resolutions on various issues like Wage revision, Recruitment, Disinvestment

in GIC, Final option on Pension, GST on insurance premiums were adopted unanimously. The Conference successfully come to an end with the vote of thanks by Com. Ch.Kaladhar,Vice-President, ICEU and the Co-Convenor of the Reception Committee.

60 YEARS OF UNINTERRUPTED PUBLICATION
A GREAT ACHIEVEMENT OF

*insurance
worker*



GREETINGS TO
ALL READERS

LIC EMPLOYEES' UNION

KOTTAYAM DIVISION

With best compliments from



NZIEA HOUSING SOCIETY

**MANDOLA VIHAR
GHAZIABAD**

Convenors:

MOHAN SINGH , Delhi DO-II

RAHUL KAUSHIK, Delhi DO-I