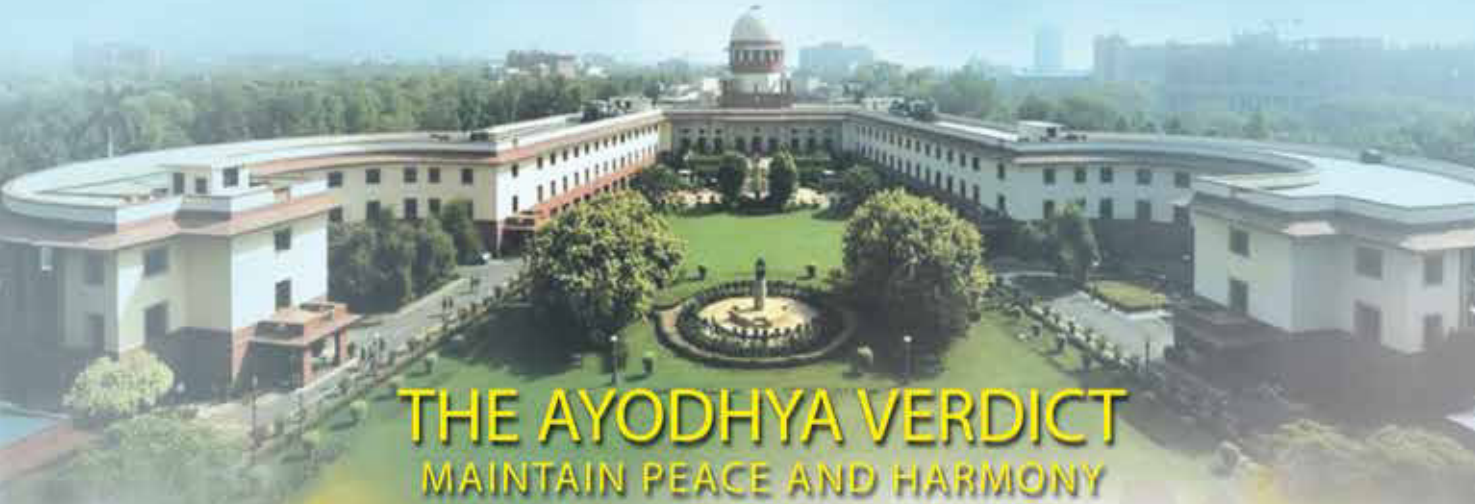


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THE AYODHYA VERDICT MAINTAIN PEACE AND HARMONY



*Let us reclaim
the Secular and
Democratic Republic & construct a Nation
where all its Citizens
live in Peace and Dignity*



Idea of India
CHALLENGES
AND TASKS

A Decision more
Political than
Economic

Demonetisation
and
Black Economy

संसदीय
संप्रभुता से
खिलवाड़





**NZIEA DIVISIONAL COMMITTEE
AMRITSAR**

**WISHES
GRAND SUCCESS
TO**

**25TH
GENERAL CONFERENCE OF
ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION**



**TO BE HELD FROM
27.01.2020 TO 30.01.2020
AT VISAKHAPATNAM**

THE AYODHYA VERDICT NEED TO MAINTAIN PEACE AND HARMONY

The five judge constitutional bench of the Supreme Court delivered a unanimous verdict in the more than hundred year old dispute relating to Babri Masjid and Ramjanambhoomi. The Court ruled that on the basis of balance of probabilities Ram Lalla has better claim to the 2.77 acre of disputed land and has directed the Government of India to constitute a Trust which can undertake the construction of a Ram Temple. Invoking its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution in order to render balance of equity, it has directed that the Centre or the State should allot 5 acre of land in Ayodhya to Sunni Wakf Board.

The Supreme Court strains hard to explain that a land dispute cannot be decided on the basis of faith. But a closer scrutiny of the 1045 page judgement makes it clear that it is ultimately faith that has triumphed over the law. It is strange that the judgement does not have the name of the Justice who wrote it. The judgement also has a 116 page addendum giving out reasons as to how Hindus are justified in believing that the disputed site is the birth place of Lord Ram. Interestingly the Judge who authored the addendum has also

chosen to remain anonymous. It looks that the decision on Ayodhya dispute is more a judicial compromise rather than a legal judgement.

The Court has reasoned that there is no evidence to suggest that a Ram Temple or for that matter any other temple was destroyed to construct the Babri Masjid. This finding clearly exposes the intent of the Ramjanambhoomi movement and demolishes the very premise on which this movement was built. The Court has held that the surreptitious installation of the Ram Lalla idols inside the Babri Masjid in the intervening night of 22-23 December 1949 is an act of vandalism and totally unlawful. The Court also held that the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992 was a clear violation of law.

The Court agrees to the existence of a mosque since 1528 for more than 450 years. It also tends to agree that the British intervened only in 1857 to separate the worshippers of the two communities by erecting a railing to prevent social discord. Namaz was offered continuously in the mosque from 1857 to 1949 when it was closed after the surreptitious installation of the idols. The Bench held that the disputed site is a composite site and it

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cannot be divided as done by the Allahabad High Court. According to the Court prayers were held uninterrupted in the outer courtyard called Ram Chabutra by the devotees of Ram and there is a dispute on possession only regarding the inner courtyard. Since the Muslim litigants were unable to prove the possession before 1857, the balance of probabilities is in favour of Ram Lalla. Hence the case is decided in favour of Ram Lalla.

The Judgement raises many questions. Asking proof of possession from the Muslim litigants when mosque was in existence since 450 years is beyond comprehension. Perhaps the Bench was aware of the existing social realities while pronouncing the judgement. Infact in a case of 2013 (Badshah vs Urmila Badshah), Supreme Court had held that "change in social reality is the law of life, the responsiveness to change in social reality is the life of the law. It can be said that the history of law is the history of adapting the law to society's changing needs." The judgement reflects the existing social reality today where politics and society is dominated by majoritarian values.

The AIIEA had always held that the Ayodhya dispute should be resolved through mutual understanding by the contesting claimants or it should be decided by a judicial verdict. Now that the judicial verdict is out, despite all its limitations, this contentious issue should be allowed to rest. But it must be remembered that in the aftermath of demolition of Babri masjid, thousands of lives were lost. There cannot be any closure for the victim families without them getting justice. The Supreme Court has held the demolition of the Mosque as an act of vandalism, violation of law and in contempt of court. Therefore those who were responsible for the demolition and those who instigated the crowd must be brought to justice at the earliest. The Trial Court examining this case must hasten the process to complete the trial.

The Supreme Court holding the demolition of Babri Masjid as violation of law vindicates the stand of the AIIEA. AIIEA had said in 1992 that this is an attack on the Constitution. The AIIEA had held a firm belief that the mandir movement was a mass political mobilisation of communalism and had less to do with religion. This principled stand of the organisation came for criticism from vested interests and misguided elements. Attacking AIIEA for this principled stand they sought to disrupt the unity of the insurance employees. They could mislead and misguide a section of the employees in Vadodra Division

and weaned them away from AIIEA. But they failed miserably in rest of the country. The employees in rest of the country stood solidly behind the organisation to defend the unity of the employees. The employees understood the damage this act of vandalism had done to the social fabric of the country. It is an indisputable fact that the events of 1992 created among minorities a sense of insecurity leading to their ghettoisation and strengthening of forces of identity politics. The country witnessed the rise of terrorism and the nation had to pay and continues to pay a heavy price.

The Supreme Court has also spoken about the responsibility of the Government for the strict implementation of The Places of Worship (Special Provision) Act 1991. This Act prohibits conversion of any place of worship. The Act provides for maintenance of religious character of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August 1947. The forces of Hindutva may see the Supreme Court verdict as the legalisation of the faith and belief of majoritarianism. They may be encouraged to raise fresh disputes and create social strife. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that this does not happen.

The AIIEA appeals every individual, organisation and community to maintain peace. The country cannot progress and prosper without peace. The promises made to the Indian people at the time of independence are still to be redeemed. The country has seen a lop-sided economic development where the fruits have been cornered by a few rich. Result, India is one of the most unequal societies today. A substantial section of its population suffers from extreme poverty, disease, hunger and illiteracy. The economy is in a crisis. The unemployment is at an all time high. Therefore, the energies of the people should be channelized to construct a nation where all its citizens live in peace and dignity.

India is a richly diverse country. Its religious, cultural and linguistic plurality must be respected to keep the nation united. Unity of the class is fundamental to the progress of the working class. Therefore the working class has to necessarily fight all divisive and communal tendencies. This is the historical task for the working class. In the recent period, the idea of India, the vision of constructing a secular and democratic republic on the foundations of equality, justice and fraternity is on retreat. Therefore, it is the responsibility of the working class to reclaim the secular and democratic republic.

अयोध्या का फैसला

शांति और सद्भाव बनाये रखने की जरूरत

बाबरी मस्जिद और रामजन्मभूमि के सौ वर्ष से भी अधिक पुराने विवाद में सर्वोच्च-न्यायालय की पांच जजों वाली संवैधानिक पीठ ने सर्वसम्मति वाला फैसला दिया। न्यायालय ने फैसला दिया कि संभावनाओं के संतुलन के आधार पर 2.77 एकड़ विवादित भूमि के ऊपर रामलला का दावा बेहतर बनता है और भारत सरकार को राम मंदिर के निर्माण हेतु एक ट्रस्ट का गठन करने का निर्देश दिया है। निष्पक्षता का संतुलन प्रदर्शित करने हेतु संविधान के अनुच्छेद 142 के तहत अपनी असाधारण शक्तियों का प्रयोग करते हुए निर्देश दिये गये हैं कि केन्द्र या राज्य अयोध्या में सुन्नी वक्फ बोर्ड को 5 एकड़ भूमि आवंटित करें।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पूरा जोर लगा कर यह समझाने का प्रयास किया है कि भूमि विवाद आस्था के आधार पर नहीं सुलझाया जा सकता। किन्तु 1045 पेज के फैसले की बारीकी से जांच करने पर यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि आखिरकार आस्था की कानून पर विजय हुई है। इस निर्णय को लिखने वाले न्यायमूर्ति के नाम का उल्लेख नहीं होना एक अनोखी बात है। इस निर्णय के साथ एक 116 पेज का परिशिष्ट भी है जो विवादित स्थल को भगवान राम का जन्म स्थान मानने की हिन्दुओं की मान्यता को उचित बताता है। दिलचस्प बात यह है कि इस परिशिष्ट को लिखने वाले ने भी अपना नाम उजागर न करना ही पसन्द किया है। ऐसा लगता है कि अयोध्या विवाद का यह फैसला एक विधिक निर्णय की बजाये एक न्यायिक समझौता है।

न्यायालय ने तर्कसंगत विवेचना करते हुए कहा है कि इस बात का कोई सबूत नहीं मिलता है जो यह स्पष्ट करता हो कि राम मंदिर या वैसे ही किसी अन्य निर्माण को नष्ट करके बाबरी मस्जिद का निर्माण किया गया था। यह निष्कर्ष रामजन्मभूमि आन्दोलन की मंशा को स्पष्ट उजागर करता है और उस आधार को ध्वस्त कर देता है जिस पर यह आन्दोलन निर्मित किया गया था। न्यायालय ने यह माना है कि 22-23 दिसम्बर 1949 की मध्यरात्रि में बाबरी मस्जिद के अंदर रामलला की मूर्तियों की स्थापना एक बर्बर कृत्य है और पूरी तरह से गैरकानूनी है। न्यायालय ने यह भी कहा कि दिसम्बर 1992 में बाबरी मस्जिद का विध्वंस कानून का स्पष्ट उल्लंघन था।

न्यायालय 1528 से 450 वर्षों से अधिक समय के लिए एक मस्जिद के अस्तित्व को स्वीकार करता है। न्यायालय यह भी मानने के लिए सहमत है कि 1857 में ब्रिटिशों ने हस्तक्षेप किया और सामाजिक कलह को रोकने के लिए रैलिंग लगाकर दोनों समुदायों के उपासकों को अलग किया। मस्जिद में 1857 से 1949 तक लगातार नमाज अदा की जाती थी, जब चोरी-छिपे मूर्तियों की स्थापना के बाद इसे बंद कर दिया गया था। खंडपीठ ने कहा कि विवादित स्थल एक मिश्रित स्थल है और इसे इस प्रकार विभाजित नहीं किया जा सकता जिस प्रकार इलाहाबाद उच्च न्यायालय ने किया था। कोर्ट के अनुसार राम चबूतरा नामक बाहरी आंगन में राम के भक्तों द्वारा की जा रही पूजा-पाठ को अबाधित किया गया था और भीतर के प्रांगण के सम्बन्ध में केवल कब्जे को लेकर विवाद है। चूंकि मुस्लिम वादी

1857 से पहले अपने कब्जे को साबित करने में असमर्थ रहे थे, इसलिये संभावनाओं का संतुलन राम लला के पक्ष में है। अतः मामला राम लला के पक्ष में तय किया जाता है।

यह फैसला कई सवाल खड़े करता है। 450 साल से मस्जिद के अस्तित्व को संदेह से परे माने जाने के बाद भी मुस्लिम वादकारियों से कब्जे के सबूत मांगना समझ से परे है। शायद फैसला सुनाते समय पीठ मौजूदा सामाजिक वास्तविकताओं का ख्याल रख रही थी। वास्तव में 2013 के एक मामले (बादशाह विरूद्ध उर्मिला बादशाह) में सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने माना था कि "सामाजिक वास्तविकता में बदलाव जीवन का नियम है और सामाजिक वास्तविकताओं में परिवर्तन के प्रति जिम्मेदार होना कानून का जीवन है। यह कहा जा सकता है कि कानून का इतिहास समाज की बदलती जरूरतों के लिये कानून को अपनाने का इतिहास है।" यह फैसला आज की मौजूदा सामाजिक वास्तविकताओं को दर्शाता है जहां राजनीति और समाज पर बहुसंख्यकवादी मूल्य हावी हैं।

एआईआईईए ने हमेशा माना था कि अयोध्या विवाद को या तो इसके दावेदारों द्वारा आपसी समझ-बूझ से हल कर लेना चाहिये या फिर न्यायिक फैसले द्वारा तय किया जाना चाहिये। अब जबकि न्यायिक निर्णय आ चुका है अपनी समस्त सीमाओं के साथ इस विवादास्पद मुद्दे को शान्त हो जाना चाहिये। लेकिन यह हमेशा याद रखना चाहिये कि बाबरी मस्जिद के विध्वंस के बाद हजारों लोगों की जान चली गई थी। पीड़ित परिवारों के लिये यह तब तक बन्द नहीं माना जा सकता जब तक कि उन्हें न्याय प्राप्त नहीं हो जाता। सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने यह माना है कि मस्जिद का विध्वंस एक बर्बर कृत्य, कानून का उल्लंघन और न्यायालय की अवमानना है। इसलिये जो लोग विध्वंस के लिए जिम्मेदार थे और जिन्होंने भीड़ को उकसाया उनके खिलाफ जल्द से जल्द न्यायिक कार्यवाही होनी चाहिये। इस मामले की जांच कर रही ट्रायल कोर्ट को मुकदमे को पूरा करने के लिए प्रक्रिया को जल्द समाप्त करना चाहिए।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने बाबरी मस्जिद के विध्वंस को कानून के उल्लंघन के रूप में मानकर एआईआईईए के रूख का समर्थन किया है। एआईआईईए ने 1992 में कहा था कि यह संविधान पर हमला है। एआईआईईए का यह दृढ़ विश्वास था कि मन्दिर आन्दोलन साम्प्रदायिकता की राजनीति को बढ़ाने वाला था और इसका धर्म से कम ही लेना-देना था। संगठन के इस सैद्धान्तिक रूख की निहित स्वार्थी तथा गुमराह करने वाले तत्वों द्वारा तीव्र आलोचना की गयी थी। एआईआईईए की इस सैद्धान्तिक समझदारी को उन्होंने कर्मचारियों की एकता को तोड़ने के लिए प्रयोग किया था। वे बड़ौदा मण्डल के कर्मचारियों के एक वर्ग को गुमराह कर सके थे और उन्हें एआईआईईए से अलग कर पाये थे किन्तु देश के बाकी हिस्सों में वे बुरी तरह विफल रहे। देश के बाकी हिस्सों में कर्मचारियों की एकता की रक्षा के लिये संगठन पूरी तरह से मजबूती के साथ खड़ा था। कर्मचारियों को समझ आ गया था कि इस विध्वंसक कार्यवाही ने देश के सामाजिक ताने-बाने को नुकसान पहुंचाया है। यह एक

निर्विवाद तथ्य है कि 1992 की घटनाओं ने अल्पसंख्यकों के बीच असुरक्षा की भावना पैदा कर दी थी जो उनको अलग-थलग करने और पहचान की राजनीति की ताकतों को मजबूत करने का कारण बनी। देश ने आतंकवाद को बढ़ते हुए देखा जिसकी राष्ट्र को भारी कीमत चुकानी पड़ी और लगातार चुका रहा है।

सुप्रीम कोर्ट ने पूजा स्थल (विशेष प्रावधान) अधिनियम 1991 के सख्त कार्यान्वयन के लिए सरकार की जिम्मेदारी के बारे में भी कहा है। यह अधिनियम पूजा के किसी भी स्थान के रूपान्तरण पर प्रतिबन्ध लगाता है। यह अधिनियम किसी भी पूजा स्थल के धार्मिक चरित्र को 15 अगस्त 1947 के दिन वाली स्थिति में बरकरार रखने के लिए कहता है। दक्षिणपंथी ताकतें सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के इस फैसले को बहुसंख्यकों की आस्था और विश्वास को वैधता प्रदान करने के रूप में देखती हैं। इससे वे नये विवाद उठाने व सामाजिक कलह पैदा करने के लिये प्रोत्साहित होंगे। यह सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है कि वह सुनिश्चित करे कि ऐसा न होने पाये।

एआईआईईए हर व्यक्ति, संगठन और समुदाय से शांति बनाए रखने की अपील करता है। देश शांति के बिना प्रगति और उन्नति नहीं कर सकता। आजादी के समय भारतीय

लोगों से किए गए वादों को अभी भी पूरा किया जाना बाकी है। देश ने एकतरफा आर्थिक विकास देखा है जहां कुछ अमीर लोगों ने फायदा उठाया है। परिणाम, भारत आज सबसे असमान समाजों में से एक है। इसकी आबादी का एक बड़ा हिस्सा अत्यधिक गरीबी, बीमारी, भूख और अशिक्षा से पीड़ित है। अर्थव्यवस्था संकट में है। बेरोजगारी अब तक की सर्वाधिक है। इसलिए लोगों की ऊर्जा को एक ऐसे राष्ट्र के निर्माण के लिए उपयोग किया जाना चाहिए जहां उसके सभी नागरिक शांति और सम्मान के साथ रह सकें।

भारत एक समृद्ध विविधता वाला देश है। राष्ट्र को एकजुट रखने के लिए इसकी धार्मिक, सांस्कृतिक और भाषाई बहुलता का सम्मान किया जाना चाहिए। वर्ग की एकता मजदूर वर्ग की प्रगति के लिए आवश्यक है। इसलिए मजदूर वर्ग को आवश्यक रूप से सभी विभाजनकारी और सांप्रदायिक प्रवृत्तियों से लड़ना चाहिए। मजदूर वर्ग के लिए यह ऐतिहासिक कार्य है। हाल की अवधि में समानता, न्याय और बंधुत्व की नींव पर एक धर्मनिरपेक्ष और लोकतान्त्रिक गणराज्य के निर्माण की दृष्टि वाले भारत का विचार पीछे छूटता जा रहा है। इसलिए धर्मनिरपेक्ष और लोकतान्त्रिक गणराज्य की पुनर्स्थापना श्रमिक वर्ग की जिम्मेदारी है।

AIEA Supports the struggle of Oil and Petroleum Workers

The National convention of Oil & Petroleum Workers was held on 26th of 2019 at Mumbai. It was guided by CITU, AITUC, INTUC & Bhartiya Kamgar Sena along with several Industrial federations of Oil and Petroleum industry. More than 350 participants came from Maharashtra, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Assam and other states. The successful struggle of Kerala and Assam units came for wide appreciation. The representatives from Kerala led by Com. Aji, informed the convention that they have apprised the Members of State legislature and Government is likely to pass a resolution opposing the decision to privatization of BPCL.

Com Sukumar Damle of AITUC initiated

the debate and appealed to unions to take the campaign against sell out of Public sector. Shri. Suryakant Mahadik asked all unions to agitate like Kerala and Assam units. He also appealed for total unity of workers forgetting political, religious, regional and linguistic differences for meeting the challenge. Mr. Jayprakash Chajed of INTUC explained the imprudent handling by government as reason for deteriorating economy. Com. Vasant Nalawade, President WZIEA along with 25 Comrades from Thane and Mumbai units participated and extended the support on behalf of AIEA. He explained the success of prolonged struggle by insurance employees under the leadership of AIEA. He shared experience of historical signature campaign and advantages of mobilising public support.

Com. Kaushik of BSNL employees Union extended support on behalf of telecom sector employees.

Com. Debshish Debaroy of CITU, while summing up the debate proposed a programme of action, which was approved in thunderous applause by the participant representative of unions. He also informed the house that Officers Unions have conveyed their readiness to join the next Convention.



AIIEA DELEGATION MEETS LIC CHAIRMAN

Com. Amanulla Khan, President, V.Ramesh, General Secretary and H.I.Bhat, Joint Secretary, AIIEA visited the Central Office of LIC on October 31, 2019 and held discussions with Shri M.R.Kumar, Chairman and Shri T.C.Susheel Kumar, Managing Director on some important issues relating to the industry and the employees. Shri Mukesh Gupta, EDP, Shri G.S.Wanwar, Chief (P), Smt Aruna Seth, Secretary (P) and other officials of Personnel Department were present.

The delegation expressed happiness on the performance of LIC in the current financial year and regaining of the market share. Despite this sterling performance certain concerns remain relating to Non-Single Premium and number of policies. The AIIEA pointed out that hard efforts are required to increase the share of Non-single premium in the business of LIC and to meet the target set for number of policies. The Chairman agreeing with the AIIEA said all efforts are being taken in this direction and hoped that these efforts would start yielding results in due course. The M.D joined to inform that the number of policies are likely to cross 1 crore by the close of the day. The AIIEA appreciated the efforts of the Chairman to counter the negative perception on LIC deliberately being created by vested interests and present the strength and successes of LIC both through Print and Electronic Media. The delegation discussed the following issues:

Wage Revision

More than 7 months have passed since the last round of negotiations on wage revision held in March 2019. This inordinate delay in settling wage revision taking into consideration the strength of the institution and aspirations of the employees is making the employees restive. The AIIEA demanded early commencement of negotiations so as to reach a successful conclusion within a time frame. The Chairman informed of the efforts LIC is making with the government for a mandate on this issue. Agreeing to the importance of an early settlement on wage issue, he assured a vigorous follow up with the government.

Improvements in Pension

It is a matter of satisfaction that overwhelming numbers of eligible in-service

employees have exercised option to join the 1995 Pension Scheme with less than 100 employees across the country deciding to remain with the Contributory PF Scheme. The response from the eligible retired employees and family pensioners too has been very good with nearly 80% of them opting to join the scheme. While thanking LIC for its proactive role on this issue, we said serious consideration should now be given for certain improvements in the Pension Scheme. The Chairman said that LIC Board has already approved the increase in the family pension and the same has been sent to the government for approval and notification. Similarly LIC has also sent recommendations for determining the Basic Pension on the basis of the last drawn pay or the average of the last ten months whichever is beneficial. These two issues are being pursued with the government and he is hopeful of early decision. The AIIEA also demanded updation of Pension as done in RBI and the government.

The AIIEA pointed out that some **Regular Part Time Employees** who could not join the scheme framed for them in 1999 should be given an opportunity to join the scheme now. The AIIEA was informed that this is under active consideration. The representation for another pension option to some **ex-servicemen and professionally qualified employees** joining LIC at a higher age has been taken up with the government and being pursued.

The AIIEA pointed out to the decision of the government to enhance the employer's contribution to 14% in case of employees covered under National Pension Scheme and to a similar action by the RBI. The AIIEA demanded LIC to increase its contribution to 14% in case of employees covered by **Defined Contribution Pension Scheme**. This demand is raised without any prejudice to our stand that all employees in LIC should be covered by the 1995 Pension Scheme. The Chairman agreed to look into this demand.

Absorption of Temporary Employees

There are some employees recruited through employment exchanges on temporary basis and are in continuous service for the last 15 to 20 years. We said that there cannot be a temporary employment on a permanent basis and LIC must regularise them. We also pointed

out that this issue is being agitated in different High Courts and in Supreme Court. A section of the employees have also obtained favourable decision from the Supreme Court and LIC has regularised their services. This favourable decision must be extended to all such similarly placed employees. The LIC informed that legal issues relating to this issue is being examined. The issue has to be further pursued. The delegation also demanded bringing to a close the **CGIT issue by accepting the findings of the Delhi CGIT** without prolonging the legal battle.

The delegation also discussed a number of other issues. It was informed that instructions for **restoration of deferred increment** due to participation in strike on 8-9 January 2018 will be issued soon. The LIC has agreed to take up the issue of reduction in interest rates on **Housing Loan with LICHFL** on the basis of the RBI and government favouring linking of Housing Loans with the Bank interest rates. We pointed out to the difficulties that

would come in **booking air tickets for LTC** purposes and demanded a relook at the instructions. It was informed that this is done on the instructions of the Central Vigilance Commission. However, it was agreed to revisit the issue. The LIC also agreed to follow up with the government on the issue of **ex-servicemen pay fixation**. The AIEEA also raised the issue of revision of **Handicap Allowance and Special Area Allowances**. The issues relating to **vigilance cases and Education loan** were also raised. The demand for allowing retired employees another **opportunity to join the Mediclaim scheme** and automatic inclusion of dependents on revision of income criterion was also raised. The AIEEA also suggested introduction of a **cash medical benefit to the pensioners**. The Chairman assured to look into this demand. The proposal for **ex-gratia in lieu of Bonus** for eligible employees has also been sent to the government for approval. The AIEEA will vigorously pursue all these issues.

AIEEA meets Parliamentary Committee on Labour

The Parliamentary Committee on Labour was on study tour to analyze the deployment of Contract, Casual, Sanitation Workers in Public sector institutions. It discussed the issues with Unions and Managements of Various public sectors institutions.

A meeting was held with unions in LIC on 2nd November 2019 at Mumbai. AIEEA was represented by its Vice president Com. V.S. Nalawade. A written note on various issues was submitted. AIEEA raised the following issues and requested the Committee to give necessary directions to LIC Management.

1. It was brought to the notice of the Committee that in spite of our strong protests Management has resorted to outsourcing of major work of Peons, sweepers, watchmen and Care takers.
2. Immediate recruitment in all Class IV cadres and absorption of temporary employees who are working for years .
3. LIC should not delay the CGIT matter and immediately absorb the eligible candidates. Similarly we requested Committee to direct LIC Management to find out amicable solutions to pending litigation in various Court's relating temporary employees.
4. The Committee was requested to direct the

Management to resolve the issue of pension option to Regularised part time workers and provide such employees the option to join 1999 scheme.

5. Pay fixation of Ex-Servicemen: The issue was explained to Committee in detail. It was also brought to their notice that implementing rules with retrospective effect amounts to breach of employment contract. These employees were recruited as per offer of Pay scales and fixation in accordance with prevailing instructions (1989), these conditions were changed arbitrarily and with retrospectively. The ex servicemen were compelled to seek justice through Courts which is costing them lot after reduction in their pay and huge recoveries.
6. Recognition to Majority unions: The Committee's attention was drawn to the fact that LIC of India is the only public sector institution which does has not accorded recognition to the unions on the basis of representative character thereby flouting all norms of industrial democracy.

The Chairman of the Committee Mr Bhartruhari Mahtab, M. P Lok Sabha and other members of the committee gave patient hearing.

AIEA meets Managements of NIA, OIC and GIPSA

A IIEA delegations met the NIA officials on November 4-5, 2019 and OIC and GIPSA Officials on November 6, 2019. The team which met the CMD and other officials of NIA at Mumbai comprised of Coms. Sanjay Jha, Secretary, Standing Committee, K V V S N Raju, Vice President, AIEA, and office bearers of our Maharashtra State unit viz. Coms. Prempal Balmiki, Jitendra Ghadge and Vinayak Rahate.

The delegation which met the OIC officials and Chief Executive, GIPSA at Delhi consisted of Coms. Reena Mishra, General Secretary, NZGIEU and G. Anand, General Secretary, GIEA- SZ apart from the Standing Committee Secretary and the Vice President.

An in-depth discussion on all the issues faced by and demands of the employees of PSGICs were held with the Management of the Companies as well as GIPSA and AIEA stressed the need for expeditious action on the part of Management in order to resolve the issues and settle the demands at the earliest. A brief on the issues raised by us and Managements' response thereto is presented below:-

Implementation of One More option for pension

In the backdrop of simultaneous purchasing of annuities resulting in payment of pension along with arrears to new pension optees (Retired) in National and United, retired employees of New India and Oriental are in a state of anxiety as no such process seems to have started in these two companies till now. We pointed out that the New India could have done away with the repetition in documentation at this stage as it was unnecessary in our view. Also, there was no need of going through the process of obtaining IAD clearance for already retired employees by Oriental. Also, a proper communication from the Companies to the concerned through ROs was lacking. To this, the respective Companies replied as such:-

New India:- There was initially some technical issues with the LIC, which was now resolved. The top management decided to follow the conventional system of documentation as is done in normal superannuation cases. However, the GM(P) had already advised the ROs in the last week of October to send the completed documents to the HO as early

as possible. Now the documents are being sent to the LIC for purchase of annuities so that pension along with the arrears from September, 2019 could be paid from the month of December, 2019. As for pension for the month of August, 2019, the HO has already started to advise the ROs to pay the same from their end. Requisite papers of more than 400 retirees were already sent to the LIC for their action till date.

Oriental: They have also started to send the documents (More than 300) and advice to the LIC for purchase of annuities and release of Pension to the newly opted retirees by December, 2019.

Extension of Pension option to the erstwhile TAC employees

We expressed our objection to forwarding this issue to the DFS for their clarification as the erstwhile TAC employees are now employees of the four PSGICs and governed by their rules and regulations. While appreciating our views, GIPSA informed that since the Gazette was silent on this point, the Governing Board of GIPSA decided to have a clarification from the DFS. However, GIPSA also agreed that the TAC employees were entitled for this option and assured us that they were pursuing with the DFS for expeditious issuance of the clarification.

AIEA will continue to follow up with the New India, Oriental and the GIPSA on the aforementioned issues.

Negotiations on Wage Revision

We stated that it was utter disappointing for the employees of the PSGI Companies that even after a lapse of more than two years since the wage revision fell due and the expressed assurance of Chairman of GIPSA during exploratory meeting held at Mumbai on 4th April, 2019 to initiate negotiations for a meaningful Wage Revision once the Parliamentary elections were over, there seemed to be no serious effort on the part of GIPSA in this direction. We referred to our earlier reminders in this regard. The Chief Executive, GIPSA informed that they were constantly pursuing the issue with the DFS and assured us that they expected a positive signal from the Ministry very soon. We reiterated our earlier Demand of industry wise settlement of wages independent of any issues extraneous to the

Insurance Industry. The response of the Chief Executive was affirmative.

Recruitment in the Cadres of Class III and IV

New India has just finished recruitment exercise in the cadre of Class III. They informed that they would go for assessment of manpower planning, expected retirements in coming years before embarking upon the next exercise. It may take some time.

OIC and GIPSA informed that despite their continuous efforts for recruitment in the Assistant cadre in other three PSGICs, the Government is not giving approval in view of ensuing Merger of three companies. Still GIPSA will continue with its efforts, the CE informed.

As far as recruitment in Class IV cadre is concerned, the Government is not in favour of any permanent employment in this cadre till date.

AIIEA will continue to make efforts in this direction.

Merger of three PSGICs

The CE, GIPSA informed that the note of the DFS prepared on the basis of the primary recommendations of the consultant E&Y is lying with the Cabinet, which will take the final call. Thereafter, the process of Merger will be kicked off. We reminded him of our demand consultations with Associations in the process of Merger. To this the CE pointed out that once the Merger process starts, several working groups will be created which will go through consultations with all stakeholders including Associations before implementation of any decision.

Assured discussion on Staff GMC

While raising the demands for improvement of facilities under GMC, we reminded The CE that it has been a long time since an exclusive discussion on Staff GMC Policy with Check off qualified Associations was held. The same should be convened immediately as a review meeting was assured by GIPSA long back. The CE informed that GIPSA is in the process of collecting various statistics relating to the Staff GMC. The review meeting may be convened once the process is completed.

LTS, Maternity leave, Pension calculation

GIPSA Management confirmed that on the issues of improvement in the LTS benefits (4500 kms per way), Maternity leave (15 months in service), increase in family pension to 30%, reckoning the last month basic or 10 months

average whichever is favourable for calculation of basic pension they were moving in tandem with LIC. Please refer our Standing Committee circular 11/2019 dated 23rd October 2019 regarding the discussions we had with United India during Structured meeting, wherein we had mentioned the above.

Promotion Exercises in OIC

We demanded for another one time special promotion exercise for all the RCs/ Sub Staff/ Drivers and FTS who were left out because of sudden change in the eligibility criteria in the last special exercise. The DGM(P), OIC informed us that the Department was in the process of conducting the same and it would be notified soon.

As for normal promotion exercise to the cadre of Senior Assistant, the DGM(P) stated that the note was ready for the approval of the competent Authority and more than 200 vacancies were supposed to be declared.

We demanded for declaration of more vacancies and also urged him not to declare the places of vacancies beforehand. The promotees could be posted by ROs as per their needs once the Ranking list was published. The DGM informed that the issue was under their consideration (In the meantime, the notification has been issued and the demands of AIIEA have been acceded to by the Management).

Cash Handling Allowances to Cashiers in Micro offices in Oriental

On our demand for issue of circular for payment of Cash Handling Allowance to Class III employees, handling Cash functions in Micro offices where more than one employee is posted, the management agreed to consider and issue the circular at the earliest.

Apart from above Core issues, various non-core issues such as reimbursement of Newspaper and Mobile expenses, Meal coupons, revisiting the PLIS, reduction in ROI (from 7.5 percent to 5 percent for amount in excess of Rs. 50000/-) on Vehicle Advance and doing away with the waiting period for availing of the same, restoration of Graduation increments etc. were raised. The CE, GIPSA assured us that the issues will be taken at appropriate time. We need to follow up further on these issues.

In addition, a number of specific issues were followed up with various departments and developments on the same have been communicated to the units.



Idea of India

CHALLENGES AND TASKS

Amanulla Khan

सर-ज़मीन-ए-हिंद पर अक्रवाम-ए-आलम के 'फ़िराक़'
क्राफ़िले बसते गए हिन्दोस्तां बनाता गया
*On the land of India
different communities of world Firaq
Caravans kept settling down
and India was made*

These two beautiful lines penned by the great Urdu poet Raghupathi Sahay Firaq describe the diversity, plurality, uniqueness and the making of India. However, the rightward shift in Indian politics has changed the political and social discourse in the country. The electoral victories of BJP have emboldened the forces of Hindutva to take aggressive steps to construct a majoritarian State. This project considers only the contributions of Hindus in politics and society as important and denies the contributions of other communities in the making of India. The construction of Hindu Rashtra is through falsification of history and by invoking a muscular nationalism. This New India which BJP wants to build glorifies the past and often passes off myths as history and reject and denigrate the contributions of all other communities and political opponents. The religious minorities are treated as 'others' and a threat to the national security. The attempt to build a New India on the theme 'one religion one culture one language' refuses to recognise the rich diversities and religious, linguistic and cultural pluralities that exist in India. This project challenges the Idea of India developed during the national liberation movement and therefore has to be resisted and fought.

The national liberation movement brought all communities and groups together to secure independence from over 200 years of colonial rule. The aim of the national liberation

movement was not just to gain independence from British rule but also to build a modern nation after wresting power from the colonial rulers. The leaders of the national movement were clear that India is a unique country. It is home to all major religions in the world. It has hundreds of languages. This is a country of diverse cultures. Therefore there was a broad consensus that India after independence should be a Secular and Democratic Republic which respects the rich diversities and pluralities existing in the country. However there were two opposing voices to this broad consensus. One was represented by Muslim League and the other Hindu Mahasabha. Both of these forces had identical views that Hindus and Muslims constitute two different nationalities and from this faulty understanding the seeds of two nation theory were sown. People were sought to be mobilised on the understanding that the political, social, economic and cultural interests of these two major communities differ from each other and are always in conflict and therefore they cannot peacefully co-exist. Interestingly both the Muslim League and Hindu Mahasabha were supportive of British and were often hostile to the leadership of the liberation movement.

India gained independence with partition consuming millions of lives. With the creation of Pakistan, the Hindu Right demanded that India should be declared a Hindu Rashtra. However the leadership of the national movement rejected this idea and declared to build a modern nation with secularism and democracy as the foundational principles of the Republic. The Moral leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and the role played by Nehru and other leaders of the Congress thwarted the attempts to make India a Hindu Rashtra. This is the

Image courtesy: indiatimes



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reason why the Hindu Right hate Gandhi and Nehru so much and unfortunately this hatred claimed the life of the Father of the Nation who fell to the bullet of an assassin.

India became a Republic with the adoption of a progressive Constitution. The Constitution was built on the foundational principles of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. The Constitution gave certain fundamental rights to the citizens, ensured the minority rights and also gave a direction as to how the economic policies need to be designed and pursued. The Indian Constitution is unique in the sense that it not only gives the political entitlement to the citizens but also shows direction for economic justice. The Constitution was framed taking into account the pluralities of religions and the linguistic, cultural and economic aspirations of the people. This succeeded in keeping such hugely diverse nation united. Not many political analysts gave a chance for the survival of India when it gained independence. They felt that India with such vast diversities and pluralities will fall apart. But India defied all odds not just to remain united but also to keep its democracy and constitutional values ticking.

However, capture of the State by the Hindu Right now is posing a serious challenge to this Idea of India. This regime is following aggressive neoliberal economic policies accompanied by a regressive social agenda. While the economic policies are creating massive inequalities, the social policies are trying to destroy the social cohesion so painfully built. The Constitution is under attack and democracy being undermined. The institutions built under the constitutional scheme to act as checks and balances in a democracy are subverted and undermined. From Election Commission to Judiciary, every single institution is under tremendous pressure raising serious concerns over their independence. The legislative actions are taken not by developing consensus but by bulldozing

all opposition. The manner in which Article 370 is abrogated and the fundamental rights of 8 million Kashmiri people are suspended is a serious issue for constitutional democracy.

The country today is witnessing unprecedented polarisation of the Indian society. The attacks on minorities and other weaker sections like Dalit have increased manifold. There is a huge jump in killings in the name of cow vigilantism. The othering of minorities have made them live in constant fear. The aggressive push of muscular nationalism has made dissent seditious. Genuine criticism of the government and its policies has now become anti-national. Prime Minister is equated with the nation and any criticism against the Prime Minister is seen as criticism against the nation itself. The universities which are places for developing ideas have come under tremendous onslaught. The nation is continuously being fed with the campaign that its national security is perennially under threat. Elections are fought not on issues of life and livelihood of people but on perceived threat to the national security and through political mobilisation of communalism. The Home Minister is seriously pursuing to amend the Citizenship Act where citizenship will be decided on the basis of religion. He had to backtrack on his suggestion to make Hindi compulsory faced with massive opposition from non-Hindi speaking population. The situation is really dangerous.

The government's economic policy is being seriously challenged. The country has witnessed massive protest actions by farmers and workers. The unprecedented agrarian crisis has seriously impacted life in rural India. The Farmers have taken to the streets in such scale that was not seen previously in independent India. The working class have been fighting the policy of privatisation as well as attack on the job security and their economic conditions. In the recent past we have seen massive strikes in every sector of the economy.

The New India that is sought to be built is on the basis of hate and falsification of history. We must develop a counter narrative to explain to the people that our Idea of India is secular, democratic, based on social justice and love. History has innumerable instances which show that hate only destroys and true civilisations can be built only on the basis of love and compassion.



Image courtesy: Newslick

The country has also witnessed united struggle of the workers in the form of the nationwide strikes. The country is poised to see another united nationwide strike on 8th January, 2020. The massive income and wealth inequalities have created huge discontent. People are clearly seeing the unholy nexus between the government and the big business houses. The big business houses today are the unabashed supporters of the authoritarian regime. This has made the national media too complicit.

But unfortunately there is no significant opposition to the social policies of the government. This has created an impression that the regime has the support of the entire society for its social policies. This is a totally incorrect understanding. Indian democracy is based on Westminster model where first past the post wins the election. The BJP has captured the State power by securing just one-third of the votes polled. This makes it clear that its policies do not have the sanction of the entire society. Understanding this, the working class has to strategise its struggle and develop the necessary tactics. The working class must understand that the social policies

are polarising and dividing the people. The impact of such division in the society cannot leave the struggles of the working class unaffected. Such divisions in the ranks of the workers would benefit the ruling classes and considerably weaken the resistance to the economic policies of the present regime.

The working class desires to construct a society that is equal, just and fair. The Hindutva's vision of India is directly in conflict with the idea of the working class. The working class being the most progressive section of the Indian society must take the lead in resisting and countering the political Right and its supporters. It must fight the policies of polarisation and communalisation of the society. It must fight pseudo nationalism and promote the ideas of true patriotism. The fight against the social evils must go hand in hand with the resistance against the economic policies. It must be understood that Hindutva wants to obliterate our shared civilisation of over 1000 years. This struggle must draw from the rich cultural heritage to fight attempts to impose a unitary culture. The composite and syncretic culture which is our proud heritage gives ample examples and opportunities to show the commonness in our lives and to bring the people together.

The Idea of India is a vision for the construction of our society. The New India that is sought to be built is on the basis of hate and falsification of history. We must develop a counter narrative to explain to the people that our Idea of India is secular, democratic, based on social justice and love. History has innumerable instances which show that hate only destroys and true civilisations can be built only on the basis of love and compassion. It is the responsibility of the working class to present this Idea and mobilise the people to build a truly great country.



Cartoon courtesy: Sandeep Adhwaryu, Times of India

A Decision more Political than Economic



S.Sivasubramanian

In early November, 2019, India announced that it has pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP). In Bangkok earlier this month where the meeting of the organization was held, India announced its impossibility to join the RCEP agreement. According to sources in the government, India has decided not to join RCEP and has stood firm on the issue that India's concerns were not addressed in the agreement. Sources said the RCEP agreement with China and Asean countries does not reflect "its original intent" and the outcome is "not fair or balanced".

It was during the period of UPA-II under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, India entered into negotiations for this pact in 2011-12. RCEP negotiations were launched at the ASEAN summit in Cambodia in November 2012. With Modi government assuming Office in the year 2014, with its penchant for neo-liberal agenda, the NDA government proceeded with the negotiations till 2019. India offered to eliminate tariffs on 42.5% of items from China and more for ASEAN in September 2015. Subsequently in 2017-18, India improved its offer of eliminating tariffs for about 90% of the items from ASEAN, and over 74% of items from China.

The 16 members of RCEP together account for 39 percent of the global GDP, 30 percent of Global Trade, 26 percent of Global Foreign Direct Investment flows and 45 percent of the total population speaks volume of the agreement.

The Guiding Principles & Objectives

The guiding principles and objectives for negotiating the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership says that the objective of launching RCEP negotiations is to achieve a modern, comprehensive, high quality and mutually beneficial economic partnership agreement among the ASEAN member States and ASEAN's FTA (Free Trade Agreement) Partners. RCEP will cover trade in goods, in services, investment, economic and technical

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In fact the decision of pulling out from RCEP is more political than economic. The government was actually willing to push ahead and join RCEP despite the obvious risks. But it began to face strong opposition from a variety of industries Farmers Organisations throughout the country held nation-wide protest movements against this agreement involving tens of lakhs of farmers. Modi government had to face stiff opposition from its own Parivar. And finally the check came in the form of the results of the Assembly elections of Haryana and Maharashtra.

cooperation, intellectual property, competition, dispute settlement and other issues.

The provisions in Trade In Goods' says that the RCEP will aim at progressively eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantially all trade in goods in order to establish a free trade area among the parties. It also says "the tariff negotiations will be conducted on a comprehensive basis. Such negotiations should aim to achieve the high level of tariff liberalization, through building upon the existing liberalization levels between RCEP participating countries and through tariff elimination on a high percentage of both tariff lines and trade value".

The provisions in 'Trade in Services' says "the RCEP will be comprehensive, of high quality and substantially eliminate restrictions and/or discriminatory measures with respect to trade in services between the RCEP participating countries". On the Rules and obligations on trade in services under the RCEP, it says "those will be in

consistent with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) and will be directed towards achieving liberalization commitments building on the RCEP participating countries' commitments under the GATS." Finally it says that all sectors and modes of supply would be subject to negotiations.

The terms 'Tariff Liberalisation', 'Tariff Elimination' clearly indicate tariff free imports of goods and services in to India which means the stake of Indian goods and services will be in question. In fact during the period of UPA-II government itself the government of Kerala had expressed its major concerns about the effect of the FTA on the producers of edible oils in the State. An Official delegation led by V.S. Achuthanandan, the then Chief Minister of Kerala had met the then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and expressed its concerns. The then PM had also given his personal assurance that Kerala would be consulted before the agreement was finally signed. But it was never done.

Farmers Organisations across the country have raised their voices against this agreement which if signed will further aggravate the living conditions of the farmers who are already in distress because of the neo-liberal policies. The Intellectual Property Rights regime under RCEP will not only make it more restrictive, but also make it impossible for peasants to use their own seeds without inviting legal action. Despite being a fairly open economy, India still uses tariff to protect the significant levels of vulnerabilities, especially in agriculture and also in the manufacturing sector. In the FTAs with the ASEAN, Korea and Japan, most of the major agricultural products were excluded from import tariff cuts. The cheap imports in the agriculture sector will have its deleterious

effect on the Indian economy by increasing the swell of the reserve army of labour adding to the increasing unemployment in the country.

The threat faced by stakeholders in the Dairy business in India is enormous if the RCEP is signed. New Zealand is the second largest exporter of milk and milk products and this group of products has contributed between a third and a fourth of the Country's total exports in recent years.

Australia has large export interests in Wheat and Sugar, two of the most politically sensitive commodities for India. It is important to note here that in the recent months, Australia has initiated a dispute against India in WTO arguing that subsidies granted to sugarcane producers violate the rules of the agreement on Agriculture. Three other countries, China, Indonesia and Thailand have joined the dispute as third parties. The strategy seems to be to ensure that India reduces sugar subsidies, which would threaten the viability of sugar producers in the country. The resultant vacuum can then be plugged by these interested parties.

The Pharma sector is another sector which is going to be affected by import of medicines without tariff restrictions.

The RCEP will affect not just the agriculture or pharma sector, but also manufacturing, where India will be flooded by imports from East Asia. Iron and Steel, marine products, chemical products, electronic products and textiles sectors are worried about the effects of tariff reductions. The RCEP threatened to alter the template of import protection that is available in India. The "Guiding Principles and Objectives for Negotiating RCEP" states that "RCEP will aim at progressively eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantially all trade" and that "the tariff negotiations should aim to achieve the high level of tariff liberalization".

Democratic Practices given a go by

The terms of the agreement have never been brought to the public domain by subsequent governments. The Seventh Schedule of the Constitution demarcates the domains of jurisdiction of the Centre and the States. Agriculture belongs to State's domain. The RCEP has adverse implications on agriculture and yet the States were never discussed and were never consulted about the terms of the agreement. It is a blatant violation of the constitutional rights of the States. Even in the US, any such international agreements have to get the US Congressional approval,



Cartoon courtesy: Satish Acharya, Sify.com

even after it has been signed by the executive, before it becomes effective. In India, in the neo-liberal era, successive Central governments have simply gone ahead and signed FTAs without submitting them for Parliamentary approval negating the rights of the people of this country to know the details and impact of the agreements their government has been entering into with other countries.

In India's case, secrecy has been accompanied by signs that the government itself is not clear on what it expects the country to gain from joining the RCEP. The evidence on the trade front is clear. The outcomes of the FTAs which India has entered into with ASEAN, Japan and Korea have been adverse. India's trade deficit with ASEAN has risen from \$5 billion to \$8 billion, and that with Korea from around \$ 7 billion to \$12 billion.

A No should be a No

Announcing India's position not to join the RCEP in Bangkok, Modi said "When I measure the RCEP agreement with respect to the interests of all Indians, I do not get a positive answer. Therefore, neither the Talisman of Gandhiji, nor my own conscience permits me to join RCEP". In fact the decision of pulling out from RCEP is more political than economic. The government was actually willing to push ahead and join RCEP despite the obvious risks. But it began to face strong opposition from a variety of industries including the very powerful dairy sector including companies like Amul. Farmers Organisations throughout the country including the All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee have held nation-wide protest movements against this agreement involving tens of lakhs of farmers. Modi government had to face stiff opposition against this agreement from the Swadeshi Jagran Manch (SJM) and Bharatiya Kisan Sangh (BKS) which belong to Parivar. And finally the check came in the form of the results of the Assembly elections of Haryana and Maharashtra.

Many RCEP countries have been eager to get India into the trade grouping. Even after India expressed its stand, they have been expressing their hope of re-negotiating with India to make it a party to the agreement. Any reopening of the decision ignoring the concerns of all stakeholders in India will ruin the lives of tens of millions and further push the economy into a ever deepening crisis.

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Three years ago, demonetisation was announced on the night of November 8, 2016. What can we now say about this surgical strike which led to chaotic conditions across the country for months?

The prime minister recently said in Thailand that red-tapism, cronyism and corruption are history in India and it has become one of the most attractive destinations for investment. This implies a belief that the policies implemented to check the black economy in the last five years have been successful and demonetisation was the big bang policy.

During the 2014 election campaign, Narendra Modi promised that he would eliminate the black economy in India and would get back all the black money held abroad. In fact, he said there was so much black money abroad that if it was brought back, each Indian family could get Rs 15 lakh. Many believed this and when Jan Dhan Yojna was announced, many opened accounts believing that money would come into these accounts. But nothing came and many of these accounts remained zero-balance accounts.

The first step the new government undertook in May 2014 was to set up the Supreme Court-monitored SIT on black money. After that, other steps like the Foreign Money Bill, Income Declaration Scheme and so on were announced to check the black economy. But none of them yielded the desired results. The opposition taunted the prime minister on his failure during the state assembly elections.

Modi likely thought something drastic had to be done, especially before the Uttar Pradesh elections. So, demonetisation was the '*brahmastra*' to slay the demon of black

Demonetisation and the Art of Tackling India's Black Economy



Image courtesy: indiatimes

Courtesy: The Wire, 11th Nov. 2019

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money and silence the critics. The prime minister implied in his speech announcing demonetisation that it was his decision and even his cabinet colleagues did not know of it. What it meant for cabinet functioning and later for parliament where Modi did not make any statement in spite of the demand from the opposition is another matter. The credibility of the Reserve Bank of India and the entire banking system was dented, since they faced enormous problems dealing with the sudden rush. So, institutions were damaged.

The flawed notion that 'black means cash' is what led to the note ban. The idea was that demonetisation, by squeezing out cash, would eliminate the black economy. The public also believed this to be so, but it was a monumental misperception since black cash is less than 1% of black wealth, and it does not hamper generation of fresh black incomes. Clearly, one invests to get a return and holding cash does not give a return so, little of black wealth is held as cash.

It also contradicted the idea that most of the black money is held abroad. If that were so, how would devaluation of the Indian rupee help? Black money held abroad would not be in rupees but in foreign currency since the Indian rupee is not convertible. It is not acceptable outside India, except in some of the South Asian countries. If most of the black money is held abroad, one would need to devalue the foreign currency in which it is held and demonetization of the rupee would not help.

Demonetisation could at best tackle black money held in India. Since it is easy to hold large sums of money in big denomination notes, the government decided to demonetise the largest denomination notes then in

existence – Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 currency notes. They ceased to be legal tender from the night of November 8, 2016. They constituted 86% of all currency with the public at that time – Rs15.44 lakh crore out of the total of about Rs 17.9 lakh crore.

According to this author (and later confirmed by the RBI) by January 10, 2017, 99% of the demonetised currency was returned to the banks. Clearly, people with black money converted their hoards of old notes into new notes. Even if the black cash hoards had not been returned to the banks, as argued above, only 1% of the black wealth would have been eliminated.

Furthermore, black income generation is a process that has not been impacted at all. A friend had to pay Rs 5,000 for getting a driving license in Gurugram and another who was caught last week in Mumbai smoking in public was asked to cough up Rs 30,000 by the cops, but the final settlement was for Rs 9,000. These are not stray instances. The big bank scams and other scams that are surfacing with great regularity are an indication of persisting corruption. This is not possible without political backing.

In India it is known that the corruption money, like *hafta*, goes right up to the top. Ruling politicians usually believe that they are safe because of their control over the investigative agencies. But now it is clear that when out of power, they can be caught.

The failure of demonetisation led the government to shift goalposts to digitisation, cashless economy and formalisation of the economy. It is another misperception about the black economy that the informal sector generates black incomes. A vast majority of

the incomes earned in this sector are way below the taxable limits, so whether or not they are declared, they are not black incomes. Actually, in India, most of the black incomes are generated in the organised sectors.

In recent times, the goal post has again shifted once again to the prosecution and arrest of high-profile opposition leaders as a symbol of the fight against black. But it has taken a political hue; many believe that these attempts are to either get the opposition leaders to join the ruling party or to go quiet. But what about the corrupt ruling party leaders? The cow vigilantes were called goons by the prime minister who extort money. How many of them have been caught? Clearly, the fight against black money is being used as a political tool to decimate the opposition and rule unopposed. This weakening of democracy is now a bigger national danger than the black economy.

The failure to check black income generation has also meant that tax collection has lagged and led to a resource crunch. So, businesses are being pressurised to pay up and they are complaining in private of tax terrorism. When the French CEO complained to the defence minister of tax terrorism, it reflected the business mood in India and abroad. Angela Merkel, the German chancellor, during her recent visit, embarrassingly flagged the difficulties faced by German businesses.

The issue is how to fight black economy without destroying business confidence, which a recent RBI study says has declined? As a response to this, in the last three months after the budget presentation, the government has offered big sops to the corporates, even though that is not the solution to the lack of demand.

Black income generation is indeed a menace which impacts the poor the most. But the recession following demonetisation has caused a bigger loss to the poor, who were the worst affected. They have lost lakhs of crores of incomes and have got further marginalised. The weakening of democracy is an even bigger danger for society and especially for the poor. There is no silver bullet to tackle the black economy quickly. The need is to raise public consciousness through socio-political movements, and that implies strengthening democracy and bringing about accountability of those in power. Demonetisation, on the other hand, did not do any of this.

जिस कश्मीर में 5 अगस्त के बाद जब वहां संविधान के अनुच्छेद 370 व धारा 35ए को एकाएक विलोपित कर दिये जाने के बाद वहां से चुने हुए सांसदों को जो दिल्ली में थे, को कश्मीर जाने नहीं दिया गया और जो कश्मीर में थे, उन्हें घर से निकलने नहीं दिया गया, उसी कश्मीर में अब 28 अक्टूबर को यूरोपियन यूनियन के 27 सांसदों को जाने की अनुमति दी गई है। इसमें 23 कश्मीर घाटी पहुंचे। वापस लौटे सांसदों में से एक क्रिस डेविस ने कहा कि यह मोदी सरकार का पी.आर. स्टंट था। मैंने स्वतंत्र तौर पर कश्मीरियों से बातचीत की शर्त रखी थी परन्तु सरकार द्वारा इसे स्वीकार न किये जाने के कारण मैं कश्मीर घाटी नहीं गया। ये सभी सांसद जिनकी राजनीतिक पृष्ठभूमि दक्षिणपंथी बताई जा रही है। वे सब हमारे प्रधानमंत्री नरेंद्र मोदी से मिलकर गये हैं और सरकार कह रही है, यह निजी दौरा है। जबकि मोदी उनका स्वागत कर 2 दिवसीय विदेशी दौरे पर सऊदी अरब निकल गये हैं। सामने आई मीडिया खबरों के मुताबिक ये दौरा एक अनाम से एन. जी.ओ. 'वूमेन्स इकॉनोमिक्स एंड सोशल थिंक टैंक' की ओर से मांडी मधु शर्मा ने किया था। जिस कश्मीर में 5 अगस्त के बाद से जनता के चुने गये प्रतिनिधियों के साथ दोगम दर्जे का व्यवहार होता है, उन्हें वहां आने-जाने की इजाजत नहीं, वहीं विदेशी सांसद कैसे जा रहे हैं वो भी जब अमेरिका और यूरोपियन यूनियन की संसद में कश्मीरियों के लोकतांत्रिक अधिकारों के हनन पर सवाल उठाये गये हो? कश्मीर को अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मुद्दा कौन बना रहा है? क्या स्वयं मोदी सरकार नहीं बना रही?

इन सांसदों को कश्मीर जाने की इजाजत किसने दी? जबकि इसी सरकार ने फारूख अब्दुल्ला जो सांसद हैं, जिस दिन संसद में अनुच्छेद 370 के विलोपन का प्रस्ताव पारित किया जा रहा था, नजरबंद कर दिया और उन्हें संसद में नहीं आने दिया। वहां 3 मुख्यमंत्री, तमाम विधायक और 1000 से ज्यादा लोग जेलों में बंद कर दिये गये थे। सरकार ने गुलाब नबी आजाद जो राज्य सभा में विपक्ष के नेता है और कश्मीर से हैं, को अपने घर नहीं जाने दिया गया। कांग्रेस के राहुल गांधी और सी.पी.आई एम के महासचिव कामरेड सीताराम येचुरी को एक बार नहीं दो बार हवाई अड्डे से ही वापस लौटा दिया गया। कॉमरेड सीताराम येचुरी को अपने बीमार विधायक साथी कामरेड युसुफ तारागामी तक से मिलने नहीं दिया गया। बाद में सर्वोच्च न्यायालय के दखल से उन्हें दिल्ली में इलाज हेतु लाया गया। कांग्रेस और सी.पी.आई(एम) ने इस कृत्य की कड़ी आलोचना करते हुए इसे हमारी संसदीय संप्रभुता से खिलवाड़ बताया है।

एक बात और भी गौर करने लायक यह है कि जिस दिन कश्मीर में इन विदेशी सांसदों को कश्मीर जाने दिया जा रहा था, उसी दिन आतंकी अबू बकर बगदादी के मरने की खबर आई और इसकी घोषणा करते हुए अमेरिकी राष्ट्रपति डोनाल्ड ट्रंप ने कहा 'वह कुत्ते की मौत मरा' अब सवाल यह उठता है कि यह कथित कुत्ता आखिर पाला हुआ किसका था? विकीलीक्स ने बहुत पहले ही अमेरिकी दस्तावेजों और तथ्यों के हवाले से पूरी दुनिया को यह बता दिया था कि आईएस.आई.एस. का गठन अमेरिका और इजरायल की खुफिया एजेंसी मोसाद ने किया था। एक बार हिलेरी क्लिंटन जो अमेरिका में राष्ट्रपति पद का चुनाव भी लड़ी चुकी है, ने इस तथ्य को दबी जुबान में स्वीकारा भी था। मजे की बात तो तब हुई जब भारत

संसदीय संप्रभुता से खिलवाड़ रामचन्द्र शर्मा

Blatantly brushing aside democratic opinions, the Central Govt did not even hesitate to play with the sovereignty of our Parliament. While, not allowing our own elected MPs to visit Kashmir, it has allowed, rather invited, a set of Members of European Parliament for a Kashmir visit. But, it seems, the resistance to such strong-arm and diversionary tactics is building up and consequences of its deeds are catching up.



के गोदी मीडिया ने बगदादी के मारे जाने का श्रेय नरेन्द्र मोदी को दे डाला। अमीष देवगन चैनल पर गलाफाड़ मोदी यशोगानी कर रहे थे। इसी बीच देश-विदेश में इजराइली स्पाइवेयर मेगासेस के जरिये वाट्सऐप से जासूसी होने की खबरों के बीच यह बात सामने आई है कि 100 से ज्यादा पत्रकार और मानवाधिकार कार्यकर्ता इसका निशाना बन चुके हैं। इजरायली कम्पनी ने स्पष्ट किया कि वह मनमर्जी से नहीं, सरकार के कहने पर ही जासूसी करती है। बैंकों के डेबिट-क्रेडिट कार्ड के डाटा भी ब्रिकी होने की खबरें तैर रही हैं। बढ़ते साइबर क्राइम के बीच न बैंकों में जमा धन सुरक्षित है और निजता।

सत्ता-संघर्ष की राजनीति

इसी बीच एक और गौर करनेवाला समाचार जो उन्हीं चैनलों पर चल रहा था वह यह था कि शिवसेना भाजपा को राम का वास्ता देकर 50-50 के चुनाव पूर्व तय फार्मूले पर सच बोलने की मांग कर रही थी और आगे महाराष्ट्र में सरकार बनाने के लिए लिखित समझौते पर अड़ी हुई थी। कथित रामभक्तों की पोल उसके सहयोगी ही खोल रहे हैं। उसने भाजपा पर तंज करते हुए कहा कि 'यहां कोई दुष्यंत नहीं है जिसका पिता जेल में हो'। गौरतलब है कि हरियाणा में नई बनी जे.जे.पी. के दुष्यंत चैटाला ने भाजपा सरकार को समर्थन दे एकतरफ उपमुख्यमंत्री का पद पाया तो दूसरी ओर जेल में बंद उसके पिता अजय चैटाला भी बाहर आ गये। जबकि दुष्यंत चैटाला ने सभाओं में जब आमजन से पूछा तो जनता ने भाजपा को समर्थन न देने की बात कही थी। परन्तु पिछले 5 सालों से जब से भाजपा केन्द्र में सत्तारूढ़ हुई है, लोगों में सामने आये अनुभवों से एक धारणा घर करती जा रही है कि वोट चाहे जिसको दे, सरकार भाजपा की ही बननी है।

बयानों की भाषा चाहे जो हो परन्तु सत्ता के मोहफांस में फसी शिवसेना के तेवर भी आखिर ढिले कब होंगे, यह तो नहीं पता परन्तु उसने अब तक जो दृढ़ता दिखाई है, उसके कारण महाराष्ट्र में राष्ट्रपति शासन लग गया है। जिस तरह से न्यूनतम साझा कार्यक्रम को सामने रखकर शिवसेना-एन.सी.पी.-कांग्रेस युति सरकार की बातें चल

पड़ी हैं, उससे लगता है कि अब भाजपा की राह वहां आसान नहीं हैं और साम, दाम, दंड, भेद के जिस मंत्र के सहारे उसने कई राज्यों में अपनी सरकारें बनाई, वो यहां नहीं चल पा रहा है। इसके साथ ही एक बात और भी गौर करनेवाली है कि जिस प्रचंड अहंकार के बल पर वह प्रतिरोध की आवाज को अनसुना कर रही थी, उसे भी अब कहीं न कहीं सुनना पड़ रहा है और यही कारण है कि जवाहरलाल नेहरू वि.वि. में हास्टल व अन्य मदों में बढ़ाई गई फीस के खिलाफ छात्रों के उभरे तीखे आंदोलन जिसका उसने क्रूरता से दमन भी किया परन्तु प्रतिरोध पर डटे रहने की जिद पर सवार छात्रों के हौसले के आगे उसे पस्त होना पड़ा और बढ़ी फीस वापस लेनी पड़ी। इसी तरह 10 आसियान व 6 अन्य देशों के साथ दुग्ध तथ कृषि उत्पादों की करमुक्त आवाजाही से दुष्प्रभावित होनेवाले किसानों के तीखे आंदोलन के आगे भी इस सरकार को घुटने टेकने पड़े हैं।

अब यह किसी से छुपा नहीं है कि भाजपा नेतृत्ववाली मोदी सरकार जो कहती है, उससे ठीक उल्टा वो करती



Cartoon courtesy: Kirithish, BBC Hindi News

है। विकास की बात करनेवालों के कर्म विनाश करनेवाले ही नजर आते हैं। राफेल ढको तो नोटबंदी के घाव दिखते हैं। नोटबंदी ढको तो जी.एस.टी. के घाव दिखते हैं। जी.एस.टी. ढको तो मोटर व्हिकल एक्ट, एन.आई.ए. एक्ट, यू.ए.पी.ए. और श्रम कानूनों में बदलाव के घाव दिखते हैं। इनको ढको तो मंदी की मार और बेरोजगारी की भयावहता दिखती है। इनको भी ढको तो राष्ट्रीय सुरक्षा और कश्मीर के घाव और आमजन के बीच पसरे अभाव दिखते हैं। भारत 117 देशों के भुखमरी सूचकांक में और पछाड़ खाता हुआ 102वें स्थान पर जा गिरने की खबर मोदी के तोतारटत 5 ट्रिलियन डॉलर की अर्थव्यवस्था होने के दावे का मुंह चिढ़ा रही है। पीड़ित आमजन केन्द्र की भाजपा सरकार की अर्थनीति को डेंगू मच्छर की संज्ञा दे रहे हैं। सुचारू अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए रक्त माने जानेवाले जरूरी वित्त की निरन्तर कमी हो रही है। भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक से 1.76 लाख करोड़ रू. के आपातकालीन कोष से ले लिये जाने के बाद भी राजकोषीय घाटा 4.32 लाख करोड़ रू. से पार जाता हुआ दिखाई दे रहा है। अब सरकार की नजर भारतीय रिजर्व बैंक के सोने पर है।

कांग्रेस की मनमोहनसिंह सरकार की तुलना में मोदी राज में बैंकों के घोटाले 38 गुणा बढ़े हैं। तब के 1850 करोड़ रू. के बैंक घोटालों की राशि अब बढ़कर 71500 करोड़ रुपये हो गई है। पूंजीपरस्त उदारीकरण के दौर में घटती ब्याज दरें और लगातार कमतर होते निवेश रिटर्न के बीच जमाओं पर ज्यादा रिटर्न के लालच में फंसे निवेशकों की जमाओं को डकारने की खबरों और सहकारी बैंकों में हो रहे बड़े बड़े घोटालों की तो बाढ़ सी आ गई है। सही इलाज के अभाव में अर्थव्यवस्था और ज्यादा रूग्ण होती जा रही है। अभी हाल ही मंदी के नाम पर कारपोरेट जगत को सरकार ने 1.45 लाख करोड़ रू. की कर रहते दे दी हैं। समर्थवान कारपोरेट जगत के 6.82 लाख करोड़ रू. की डूबत ऋणों की माफी मोदी सरकार के दबाव में बैंक कर चुकी है। जिसमें 72,000 करोड़ रू. अकेले अडानी समूह की कम्पनियों के हैं। जबकि अडानी समूह की माफ की गई ऋण राशि जितनी धनराशि में तो समूचे देश के निर्बल किसानों के बकाया ऋण चुक जाते।

जितने किसानों ने इस देश में आत्महत्या की है, उतनी यदि किसी और देश में हुई होती तो वहां के तख्तों-ताज कब के हिल गये होते। विश्व मानव विकास रिपोर्ट में 182 देशों में हम बहुत नीचे 134वें नम्बर पर हैं। कुपोषित बच्चों में भी भारत की स्थिति बहुत ही शर्मनाक बनी हुई है। पैदा होनेवाले 100 बच्चों में 48 कुपोषित हैं। भूख से मरनेवालों की झारखंड से निरन्तर आनेवाली खबरें हमारे देश के अधोगामी विकास की दास्तां को बयां कर रही हैं। जबकि हमारे प्रधानमंत्री आये दिन विदेश भ्रमण पर रहकर जब तब अपने पूंजीयारों के मंच से विकास के थोथे बोल पीटते ही दिखाई देते हैं। जिस तरह ब्रिटिश राज में आजादी की जंग में एकाएक शामिल होकर जेल पहुंच जाने के बाद वहां जेलजीवन से हताश होकर माफी मांगकर आये सावरकर को भाजपाई 'वीर' की संज्ञा ही नहीं दे रहे बल्कि महाराष्ट्र विधान सभा चुनावों में जनता के असल मुद्दों पर बात करने के बदले इसी सावरकर को 'भारत रत्न' देने को भाजपा मुद्दा बनाती है। जबकि आजादी के लिए फांसी पर झूल गये शहीद भगतसिंह के नाम पर भाजपा की हरियाणा सरकार हवाई अड्डे तक का नाम रखने को तैयार नहीं होती है।

AIIEA opposes Closure/ Merger/ downgrading of Divisional and Branch Offices

**AIIEA'S LETTER DATED 19/11/2019
ADDRESSED TO UNITED INDIA
CHAIRMAN**

In the above context, kindly recall our discussion during Structured Meeting held at Chennai on October 14, 2019. We had categorically demanded for consultation with the Associations before embarking upon any decision of closure/ Merger or downgrading of any office of the United India. However, to our utter shock and surprise, we note that the Management has commenced the process of rationalisation of offices under various ROs through fixing deadlines and issuance of notices. We strongly protest against this action of Management, which is unilateral and arbitrary. Being representatives of the very important stakeholders i.e. employees of the company, we do not find any justification in such action of the company that is devoid of any consultative process with the Associations.

Further, while not denying the fact that as a commercial organization, the United India has to take care of the profitability of its operations, we also strongly hold the opinion that as a public sector company, United India is bound by some social obligations and should take care that the offices which are located in remote and unrepresented areas are not closed on the consideration of economic feasibility alone. In such cases the company should frame strategies to make those offices sustainable and economically viable.

Moreover, we stand against any displacement arising out of the closure/ merger of offices to the employees.

In light of the above, we demand that the process should be kept in abeyance and the Associations should be immediately invited to have a detailed discussion on the issue.'

Meeting of AIIPA Units in Maharashtra & Goa

A Meeting of AIIPA Units in Maharashtra & Goa held on 20th October 2019 at Nagpur. The meeting was attended by IPA units of PUNE, Thane, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Goa & VIPA Nagpur with its all Managing Committee members & activists. Com. M.K.Chattaraj President VIPA Nagpur welcomed the participants. Com. K.S.Sapate, Gen.Secretary VIPA Nagpur & Joint Secretary AIIPA presented the Note for Discussion. The meeting was presided over by Com. R.N.Patne Ex-president WZIEA and was inaugurated by Com. T.K. Chakravorty Gen. Secretary AIIPA, Com. B.J.Kerkar was Guest speaker. The meeting had the advantage of presence of Mr. Nilesh Sathe Ex-ED LIC and IRDAI Board Member, who was in Nagpur that day. In his short address and replies to the questions raised by the participants, he made the units aware of the dangers before public sector insurance industry.

Com. T.K.Chakravorty G.S.AIIPA in his inaugural address guided the units for improvements in their functioning. He appealed the units to have coordination with the local Divisional units for bringing in newly retired employees in our fold, to participate in all calls & programmes of action given by AJIEA, to infuse the youngsters into the IPA units. He also emphasized the need & urgency for registration of units under Trade Union Act 1926. [2]

VIPA Nagpur got registered under T.U.Act and a Note for registration prepared by them was circulated to the participating units. He appealed all participants to join the nation-wide strike-call of 8th January 2020 with Divisional units of AITEA. The main

theme of this meeting was to strengthen AIIPA by increasing the membership and educating the cadres and thus AIIPA to grow qualitatively & quantitatively. He also assured that AIIPA will always endeavour to safeguard the interests of insurance pensioners.

Com. B.J.Kerkar, Gen. Secretary Pune, Guest speaker gave a very inspirational speech. He suggested the units to remain alive and connected with the general membership by organising various events like health checkup camps, Lectures on health tips by renowned doctors, family picnics, special events for women members & family pensioners. Com. A. G. Dhokpande, Gen. Secretary, NDICEU also spoke on this occasion and assured of all-out support in all activities of VIPA & AIIPA.

Com. R.N.Patne in his presidential address referred to the policies of Modi Government which are anti-people. He said in BJP manifesto of 2014, there was not a single word on labour welfare. While inaugurating the 46th Indian Labour Conference in 2016, P.M.Modi termed the conference as workers' Parliament but did not implement any of the decisions of that conference and no Indian Labour Conference took place thereafter. He pointed out to the efforts to codify the labour laws to favour the employers and stressed on the need to fight these attempts. He exhorted the pensioners to join hands with the workers and participate in the nationwide strike call of 8th January 2020.

The participating units deliberated on the strengths and eaknesses of their units and also raised some questions to which

AIIPA General Secretary Com. T.K.Chakravorty replied. The meeting passed unanimously the resolutions on issues of importance to the pensioners and the industry.

Com. K.S.Sapate proposed vote of thanks and the meeting ended thereafter.



32nd General Conference of

Northern Zone Insurance Employees' Association



Northern Zone Insurance Employees' Association held its 32nd General Conference at Ludhiana (Punjab) on 4th – 6th November 2019. More than 450 delegates and observers from the length and breadth of Northern part of the country participated in the conference to review the tasks undertaken in the last conference of NZIEA held at Jammu in the year 2016 & also to decide future tasks and strategies to fight back the neoliberal policies of the NDA Government led by Narendra Modi.

Colourful Rally and flag hoisting

Huge rally of LIC employees from Ludhiana Division, nearby divisions, delegates, observers from the other divisions in Northern Zone and also the comrades from fraternal trade unions marched from Guru Nanak Dev Bhavan, the venue of conference, with placards and banners. It was led by the leadership of NZIEA and followed by a group of 32 women comrades of Ludhiana division symbolizing 32nd Conference of NZIEA in uniform dress viz. golden saree with red boarder. The colourful procession with full-throated slogans on national and industry issues attracted the public throughout the route of the rally. After the rally the comrades assembled at the conference venue- Com. R. Govindarajan Sabhagar, Guru Nanak Dev Bhavan, Com. N.M. Sundaram Nagar where the flag of NZIEA was unfurled by **Com. Anil Kumar Bhatnagar**, President NZIEA amidst thunderous applause and full-throated slogans. Thereafter floral tributes were paid to the Martyrs column.

Inaugural Session

The inaugural session commenced with welcome address by Prof. Jagmohan Singh, Chairman Reception Committee & a prominent leader of democratic movements in Punjab. He is also the nephew of Shahid e Azam Bhagat Singh. The conference was inaugurated by Com. Rupchand Pal, our beloved leader. The session was presided over by Com. A. K. Bhatnagar, President NZIEA.

Com. Rupchand Pal in his forceful and impressive inaugural speech, going to the memories of 1967 – the battle of automation – recalled his 60-year-old association with AIIEA. He went on narrating his experiences of ILACO vigil movement at Calcutta launched by AIIEA to oppose the 'Super Computers' imported from USA. He said that as an MP from CPI(M) and being associated with various Parliamentary Committees including Committee on Public Undertakings & also on Finance, he had the privilege to have an analytical view of the administrative activities of LIC and also the ideology of AIIEA. He praised the various





revision. He expressed confidence that AIIEA will secure a good wage revision and called upon the employees to defend LIC against the ill-conceived move of privatization. It is also necessary to challenge the propagandists who are spreading lies on the strength of our great institution. He said that the decisions to be taken by this conference will be very useful for AIIEA in

deciding its future strategy.

struggles launched by AIIEA from time to time to defend public sector insurance & also to safeguard further the interest of the working class of the country. Citing CMIE data he criticized the Govt. for unprecedentedly high unemployment rate in the country. The economy is going into downward due to demonetization and hasty implementation of GST.

He lambasted present Modi Government for its anti-people and anti-working-class policies. He cited the distressed situation of the people in Jammu & Kashmir. The state has been divided into two union territories. The people of Kashmir are peace loving people but are the victims of wrong policies of the successive central governments. The remedy lies in healthy and peaceful discussion with the people of Kashmir, he emphasized.

Com. Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA addressing the inaugural session said on the one hand the country is celebrating 150th Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi & 550th Prakash Parv of Guru Nanak Dev ji who gave the message of love and peaceful coexistence. Unfortunately today the rise of political right through communal polarization is dividing the country and spreading hate. Punjab is the land of sacrifice and love. It gave the world such epic love story like Heer Ranjha. It is the land where Guru Nanak Devji spread the message of love and universal brotherhood. Drawing inspiration from the land of Punjab, our movement must address the difficult questions of our times. The communal distress is creating a divide a Even under such difficult times, AIIEA united insurance employees and successfully led struggles to secure final pension option and open negotiations on wage

Com. V. Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA while addressing the house said that LIC could maintain its position as market leader even two decades after opening up of the industry. Speaking about the spectacular performance of LIC in new business, claim settlement, servicing standards and contribution to the national economy, he asserted that LIC is the finest public sector institution in the country. He underlined that the need of the hour is to fight unitedly to defeat the neoliberal policies being aggressively pursued by the government & also to carry forward the struggle to defend public sector insurance. He clarified that privatization, neoliberalism and globalization cannot coexist with democracy, secularism and brotherhood. He cautioned the comrades to be aware of the game plan of Modi Government which is hell bent to destroy the social harmony in this country. He exhorted the house to make 8th January 2020 general strike a grand success as a step towards defeating the anti-people and anti-worker policies of the Modi Govt.

Com. Sreekant Mishra, Jt. Secretary, AIIEA addressing the house lauded the comrades of Ludhiana for hosting the conference of NZIEA in such a magnificent manner and for providing congenial atmosphere for the success of the conference. Cadres are the backbone of the organization and every conference is an important platform of learning process for everyone. 8000 new recruits will join LIC soon. It is great achievement of the organization particularly at this juncture when the policy of the government is to do away with permanent employment. He patted Ludhiana and Delhi-1 divisions of Northern Zone for holding free classes for the aspirants. He gave a clarion call

to ensure enrolment of every new appointee within the fold of AIIEA. Strengthening the organization, ideologically and numerically both, is the need of the hour.

Com. B.S. Ravi, the Treasurer of AIIEA, also addressed the house. He appreciated the functioning of NZIEA and said that the strong organisation like NZIEA helps in the success story of LIC. He discussed the achievements of LIC, the role of employees in it and the hurdles in achieving a handsome wage increase for LIC employees at length. He exhorted the gathering that we should provide best services to the policyholders as they have now other means of savings. The best services to the policyholders will be the key to further the interest & success of LIC. He condemned the move of the Modi government to list LIC in the share market.

Com. Naveen Chand, General Secretary NZIEA exposed the nefarious designs of the government to create a divide amongst the society in general and the working class in particular. He stressed upon the need to strengthen the organization down the lines ideologically and numerically.

The delegate session started on 04.11.2019 with Com. Naveen Chand, General Secretary placing the report on behalf of Working Committee before the house enlisting therein the international and national scenario and its impact on working class and people of the country, industrial situation, achievements of the organization etc. The main focus of the report was on the organization and the future tasks for the conference. In all 29 delegates participated in the discussion. General Secretary Com. Naveen Chand replied the queries raised in the conference by the delegates. During Delegate Session Coms. Amanulla Khan, V. Ramesh, Sreekant Mishra, & Com. B.S. Ravi, intervened in the deliberations and enriched & guided the house with their powerful submissions on the developments taking place at international, national, political, industrial and economical

Prof. Jagmohan Singh, Chairman Reception Committee and Com. A K Bhatnagar, who presided over the conference.



Com. Naveen Chand,
Gen. Secretary and
Com. R.C. Sharma,
newly elected
President of NZIEA.

level.

On the basis of the discussions in the conference, a program of action was decided to secure the legitimate demands of the employees, against attempts to list LIC, defending national unity and to make the 8th January 2020 strike total.

The report and the above tasks were adopted unanimously by the house. The Accounts of the Association for the year 2016, 2017 & 2018 and also of Beema Mazdoor were passed by the house unanimously.

The conference also adopted 19 resolutions to demand withdrawal of GST on insurance premium, to demand social security benefits to the workers of unorganized sector, to defend public sector, to defend and safeguard the constitution of India, to oppose communalism and terrorism, to oppose the labor reforms & attacks on trade union rights, on education and employment, on agrarian crisis, against the atrocities on Dalits & Adivasis, against the atrocities on women, against NPS & demanding defined benefit pension scheme for all, on improvement in pension scheme, on early settlement of charter of demands as per the aspirations of employees & paying capacity of the institution, recruitment in Class 3 & 4, against the illogical decision of LIC on pay fixation of Ex-servicemen re-employed in LIC w.e.f. 1.1.2006, against new sports policy, on recognition to AIIEA & to restore right to collective bargaining'

The Conference elected Com R.C.Sharma as President, Com Naveen Chand as General Secretary and Com Ravinder Sharma as Chief Treasurer for the ensuing term.

The Conference placed on record its thanks for the services and the guidance rendered by Com. Surjit Ram as Secretary of NZIEA. The Conference wished him good health and a purposeful life ahead. The conference also placed on record the highest appreciation for the wonderful arrangements made by our Ludhiana comrades in making the conference a grand success.

The conference concluded with thunderous slogans on the success of the conference.

31st General Conference of EZIEA

– A Splendid Success



The 31st General Conference of the Eastern Zone Insurance Employees' Association (EZIEA) took place at Siliguri in the northern part of West Bengal on 14th, 15th and 16th November, 2019 amidst boundless enthusiasm. The Conference was preceded by an intensive campaign for several days in defence of the LIC and public sector and against the government's anti people policies organized by the DIEA, Jalpaiguri. The van jatha campaign traversed 787 km, hundreds of townships, tea gardens and rural centers, organized 82 street meetings, distributed 10000 leaflets and displayed 1000 posters. The conference started with a thousand-strong colourful and militant rally participated not only by LIC employees but also by other section of the working class including a big contingent of struggling tea garden workers. The rally paraded a five kilometer long route through the main thoroughfares of Siliguri town with sky rending slogans from hundred of voices that articulated not only the demands of LIC employees alone but also that of other sections of the working people. The grim determination of the working class to fight back the offensives of neoliberal economic policies and the vicious forces of communal forces found vivid expression in the rally which later converged in spacious lawn of Shivam Palace (Com. N M Sunadaram Nagar, Com Anil Kumar Niyogi Mancha), the venue of the conference. The rally

was greeted on the route by several fraternal organizations including 12th July committee, DYFI, CITU, CGCC, Pensioners Co-ordination Committee, AIDWA.

Com. Satanjib Das, President EZIEA unfurled the red flag of EZIEA amidst roaring slogans followed by placing of wreaths on the martyrs column.

Inaugural Session

Inaugural session of the conference started thereafter in the jam packed hall with two inspiring chorus songs. Com. Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA, inaugurated the conference. In his hour long inaugural speech Com. Amanulla dwelt on the significance of the achievements of AIIEA in realizing the final option for 1995 pension scheme and other benefits in the context of a very difficult socio-economic-political situation. He said that the aggressive persuasion of the neoliberal economic policies coupled with reckless steps of demonetization and hasty introduction of GST by the Modi Government have landed the economy in deep crisis. He said that the situation urgently calls for an alternatively policy framework that would give priority to improving the income and purchasing power of the vast masses of working people and not to the maximization of the profits of the corporate. Com. Amanulla pointed out that the present ruling party and the government led by

Narendra Modi has been using the weapon of communal polarization to divide the working people and distract their attention from the basic issues of lives and livings vis-à-vis the government's anti people policy.

Com.V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA also addressed the inaugural session. Leaders of several fraternal organizations including comrades Sukhmayt Oraon, former MLA and Vice President, CITU Jalpaiguri District Committee, Rameswar Bakshi (12th July Committee), Com. Amitava Goswami, Federation of Class-I officers association, Tapan Kumar Das (LIAFI), Dipak Sarkar (LICAIOI), Bipul Chakraborty (BSNLEU), Com. Subhash Chandra Mitra (AIIPA), Tapas Sarkar, Sabhadhipati Siliguri Mahakuma Parishad and Com. Jiaul Alam, General Secretary, All India Plantation Workers' Federation also addressed the inaugural session and greeted the Conference. Earlier, Ashok Narayan Bhattacharya, Mayor Siliguri Municipal Corporation and Chairman, Reception committee of the Conference delivered his address of welcome. Com.Satanjib Das presided over the inaugural session.

Delegate Session

The delegate session of the Conference began thereafter. 191 delegates and 165 observers representing all the 12 divisional units of EZIEA in the state of west Bengal and the 8 states of the north east attended the session. Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, General Secretary EZIEA, placed the 70 page report of the working committee in the conference while Com. Amitava Ghosh, the Treasurer placed the audited statement of accounts of the EZIEA for the years 2016, 2017 and 2018. The report of the working committee dwelt elaborately on

the situation prevailing in the international and national spheres as well as in the state of west Bengal and the north east vis-à-vis the industrial scenario and the challenges facing LICI and the public sector insurance as a whole. It hailed the splendid achievements of AIIEA in realizing the final option for 1995 pension scheme as well as other benefits and narrated the efforts being made by AIIEA to realize the charter of demands concerning wage revision. The report also put forward the interventions made by EZIEA in resolving many problems faced by the employees of the zone. The report subjected the organization to a through scrutiny and expressed the satisfaction that EZIEA commands the allegiance of 80% of the Class-III and IV employees throughout the zone. However the report underlined the need of further increasing the membership and equipping the organization at all levels ideologically. As many as 36 delegates including six women comrades participated in the discussion on the report and enriched it with their grass-root experiences and lively debate. Later, the general secretary EZIEA summed up the discussions and replied to many queries and issues raised by the delegates. Both the working committee report and the audited statement of accounts were adopted unanimously by the conference.

Com Amanulla Khan and Com V.Ramesh also addressed the delegates. They spoke on the necessity of defending the institution and consolidating the organization. They pointed out that the present difficult challenges can be successfully met only when the organization is united on the basis of correct political and ideological understanding.

The delegate session also have the privilege





Introduction of the adopted girl

One of the highlights of the conference was the introduction of Ms. Nisha Rani Lakra, a girl child of a worker of a closed tea garden adopted by DIEA, Jalpaiguri, in the conference. This child had suffered serious burn injuries. The DIEA, Jalpaiguri took the responsibility of giving her the best medical treatment and nurse her back to health. The Jalpaiguri Unit also bears all the expenses for her education and upbringing. On behalf of the conference Com. Amanulla Khan presented some mementos to this little girl. The entire conference wished the girl a bright future.

to listen to Comrades Shreekant Mishra, Joint Secretary AIIEA and B S Ravi, Treasurer AIIEA who made brilliant interventions that helped the delegates and observers to understand the complexities and dynamics of the present scenario both inside and outside the industry.

Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose, the 97 Year living legend of AIIEA and one of its founder leaders arrived at the conference on 15th November to a standing ovation and prolonged applause from the delegates and observers. He was warmly felicitated by the reception committee. Com. Bose also addressed the delegate session which was greatly inspiring.

A souvenir brought out to mark the conference was released by Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose.

The Tasks laid down by the Conference

The tasks that emerged out of the deliberations and aptly summarized by the general secretary. It was decided to make the

8th January 2020 a resounding success. The Conference decided to continue the campaign and struggle for protection of LIC and fight against privatization of public sector units. The Conference decided to consolidate the organization by imparting education in the form of trade union classes and induction of younger comrades into the leadership positions

Resolutions: The Conference adopted a number of resolutions relating to the insurance industry, employee benefits and of national importance.

Election of Working Committee and Office Bearers

The conference unanimously elected a 45 member working committee of EZIEA with comrades Dhrubajyoti Ganguly as President, Jayanta Mukherjee as General Secretary and Amitava Ghosh as Treasurer of EZIEA. The conference elected comrades Satanjib Das and Anup Chakraborty as permanent invitees to



Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, General Secretary & Com. Dhrubajyoti Ganguly, President,

Com. Satanjib Das

the EZIEA Secretariat. The delegate session was presided by a presidium consisting of comrades Satanjib Das, Ramkrishna Datta, Amitendra Chatterjee and Bhabendra Kr. Kalita.

The Seminar

On 15th October in the evening a seminar was held on the subject; 'The challenges before the working class in the present scenario'. Dr. Surajit Majumder, Professor Jawaharlal Nehru University and distinguished economist addressed the seminar. In his one and half hour long illuminating discourse he traced the genesis of the present economic crisis to the development of capitalism in India without smashing the feudal and semi feudal land relations which resulted in shrinkage of the internal market. Neo-liberalism pursued aggressively by the present regime exacerbated the economic disparity in an unprecedented manner and further contributed to this shrinkage, he said. Demonetization and GST are two steps that gave a deadly blow to agriculture and MSME sector and accelerated the slowdown in the economy. He said that only an alternative pro people policy framework can take the country out of the present morass. But the modi government with his corporate friendly policies is moving in the opposite direction. He therefore, stressed the urgent need of united intervention of the working people to rollback these policies and stem the tide of social counter revolution that this government has engineered.

Cultural Function

On the occasion of the conference an exquisite cultural function was organized in the evening of the 14th November. The function depicted the diverse and rich culture of the region.

Conclusion

The 31st General Conference of EZIEA came to a grand finale at 4.30 PM on 16th October. Hundreds of volunteers worked round the clock to make this conference a grand success. Kudos to them. Kudos to the host unit, DIEA, Jalpaiguri. Our revolutionary greetings to all the delegates, observers, members and office bearers of the reception committee, fraternal organizations but for whose contributions the conference couldn't have been such a magnificent one.

The 63rd Annual General Conference of Kolkata Division Life Insurance Employees' Association was held on 13th and 14th September, 2019 at Subarno Banik Samaj Hall, Kolkata. At the outset, Com. Ramkrishna Datta, President, KDLIEA paid floral tribute to the martyrs' column. The leaders of three neighbouring Divisional Associations, Pensioners' Association (KMDO-I) and LIC Agents' Organisation of India, KMDO-I were present to greet the Conference. Age could not prevent Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose, the towering leader of insurance employees' movement, from attending the Conference. Besides, 108 out of 112 elected delegates and 85 observers from 16 bases 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. Altogether 32 delegates, 7 women delegates included, participated sincerely in the debate on the report.

In the post-lunch session on the first day, Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose addressed the delegates, observers and guests who were attending the 63rd Conference of KDLIEA. Being apprehensive about the government's attitude to list LIC in the stock market he tried to inspire the Conference to fight against the policies of Modi-II government. In order to do that it is necessary to convert the insurance employees' movement into a people's movement by mobilising public opinion, he reminded the audience. On the 1st day, the General Secretary of EZIEA, Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, also addressed the Conference. In his valuable speech he dealt on the issue of climate change, the menace that threatens the very existence of this beautiful planet. Besides, he also discussed at length the economic condition of the country as well as the worsening political situation of West Bengal.

On the 2nd day, Com. Satanjib Das, President of EZIEA, addressed the Conference. In his eloquent speech, he presented a holistic analysis of current political situation vis-à-vis the challenges before LIC. He reminded the Conference of the glorious saga of struggle for the achievement of final pension option. He also informed the house about upcoming recruitment of around 8000 Assistants in LIC. The speeches of Com. Chandra Sekhar Bose, Com. Satanjib Das and Com. Jayanta Mukherjee were very appreciated by all those

63rd Conference of KDLIEA(Kolkata- I)



present in the Conference.

In the Conference, delegates discussed may topical issues. They tried to analyse the victory of BJP in the 17th Lok Sabha election, the debacle of Left, ominous conspiracy of disinvestment of LIC, the unholy nexus between BJP and the ruling TMC in West Bengal, slow down of the Indian economy as well as the global economy and obviously the issue of wage revision in our industry.

The discussions on the report of the Working Committee was nicely summed up by Com. Amitesh Sarkar, General Secretary , KDLIEA, following which the report of

the Working Committee was adopted unanimously by the Conference. Earlier, the house, en masse, adopted the Statement of Accounts for the year 2018. In all, 68 resolutions were adopted by the 63rd Conference. The Conference elected Comrades Chandra Sekhar Bose, Saibal Chaudhuri, Anup Chakraborty, Tarak Banerjee and Ramkrishna Datta the Honorary members of KDLIEA.

A 65-member Working Committee, 13-member Secretariat included, for the year 2019 was also elected unanimously. Comrades Ramkrishna Datta, Amitesh Sarkar and Pradip Banerjee were reelected President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. The curtain dropped on the 63rd Conference after Com. Ramkrishna Datta, on behalf of the Presidium, asked the delegates and observers to take the message of the Conference properly to the employees at large and prepare them for the bitter struggle ahead.



Combined Annual Conference of Bangalore I & II

The Annual General council meeting of ICEU, Bangalore division I and II was scheduled to be held on 9th and 10th November 2019 at Bharath Scouts & Guides Auditorium, Palace Road, Bengaluru. However the Bangalore Police imposed Section 144 in the city in view of the Ayodhya Verdict, permission was denied to hold the meeting on 10th. Therefore, the Conference was restricted to a single day on 10th. The venue of the Meeting was decorated with banners, and buntings. Despite the difficulties and restricting comrades enthusiastically came from all the Branch units to attend the Conference.

The Conference began with unfurling of the flag of AIIEA by Com. D Suresh, President, ICEU DO I. The salutation song sung by our comrades inspired the gathering. The comrades of Malleswaram base unit rendered a song befitting the occasion. Com. R Padmanabha, Joint Secretary

ICEU DO I welcomed the gathering. Com. S K Geetha, General Secretary ICEU DO I placed the report to the house and presented the important features impacting the international working class, Indian society and our industry.

Com. M.R. Sameera, Joint Secretary ICEU DO I initiated the discussion on the report. As many as 26 delegates participated in the discussion. The discussion was of a very high order and helped enriching the Report. Comrades who spoke analysed the developments in international, national, insurance industry, our organization and the problems they face in their respective base units while servicing



the policyholders. The important features of the discussion were the concerns expressed on the problems of the farmers specially in the context of the developments on Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership treaty and the increasing polarization of our society and the spread of communal poison. Com. K Gopal, General Secretary, ICEU DO II while summing up the debate called upon the comrades to further strengthen unity under the banner of AIIEA and remain prepared to defend public sector insurance industry. He also called for preparedness to struggle to achieve a meaningful wage revision and also to strengthen the organization. The call was also given to make the one day strike on 8th January 2020 a thumping success. The report was unanimously adopted after clarifying the points raised by the comrades.

Intervening the debate Com. Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA spoke on the difficult questions confronting the working class and the Indian society. He said that it is now an acknowledged fact that neo-liberalism has failed. The ruthless exploitation of nature's resources and playing with environment and ecology is threatening the existence of life itself on earth. Therefore, a sustainable model of development in place of the vulgar capitalism has to be placed before and people. He asserted that Indian economy is in deep crisis and in order to divert the attention of the people from issues of life and livelihood, the Indian society is being polarized and communalized. He said that all democratic institutions are compromised and even Supreme Court has failed to act as a Sentinel of fundamental rights of the citizens as seen from the developments in Jammu & Kashmir.

He gave details of the glorious struggle to secure a final pension option and the opening of wage talks. He said that the gains achieved need to be defended by remaining vigilant. He also said that it is possible to achieve a good wage revision and necessary struggle in that direction has to be developed. He lauded the progress registered by LIC especially in the current financial year and was critical of the propaganda of the vested interests on the strength of LIC. He said that today LIC is the finest and the strongest financial institution in the country. It is seen as a jewel in the crown. He also warned that efforts are on to list LIC on the stock markets. The political belief of the present government is to totally dismantle the public sector. It is this belief and ideology that is at work and efforts are being made to

privatise LIC. He asserted that any tinkering with the public character of LIC would be disastrous to the national economy. He called upon the audience to carry on a sustained campaign to defend LIC against all attacks.

Com Amanulla Khan stressed on the consolidation of the organization. Today unity of the working class is necessary to fight all out offensive launched by the ruling classes. This unity has to be build on the basis of a correct political and ideological understanding. He pointed out that vested interests are working to disrupt the massive unity achieved by AIIEA despite the fact that all such efforts have failed in the past. He expressed confidence that insurance employees will defeat all these vested interests and further strengthen the organisation which their only weapon to fight the sickening exploitative system.

Com. J Suresh, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF greeted the general council and explained the political and economic situation of the country and the developments within the industry. Com. Bhaskar Somayaji, Joint Secretary, AIIPA, Com. B Prem Kumar, General Secretary, BRGIEA, Com. Sridhar, Treasurer ICEU, Mysuru greeted the general council.

Com. B S Ashok and Com. B N Yashoda, Treasurers of ICEU Bangalore I and II respectively placed the annual accounts and the same were unanimously approved.

The Conference unanimously elected Coms D. Suresh, S.K. Geetha and B.S. Ashok as President, General Secretary and Treasurer of ICEU Bangalore I for the ensuing term. Similarly Coms P. Nagendra, K. Gopal and B.N. Yashoda were unanimously elected as President, General Secretary and Treasurer of ICEU, Bangalore II. Com. S.K. Geetha, and Com. K Gopal were elected as the Working Committee Members of AIIEA, from ICEU Bangalore DO1 & DO2 respectively.

The General Council meeting was a tremendous success. The enthusiastic participation of our comrades, political and ideological understanding and presentation of the issues, the unflinching commitment to LIC and AIIEA and the determination of the comrades in defending the public sector character of LIC were reflected in this general council. It was both a celebration and thanks giving to the beloved organisation AIIEA for achieving long pending demands of pension option and recruitment of Assistants in LIC. It was also a conference that made their determination stronger to take our struggles forward for a better future for all.

Triennial Combined Conference of Jaipur1&2

The triennial divisional conference of Jaipur-1 & 2 was held on 28-29, sept.2019 in the premises of Jaipur Division-1. The Conference was a huge success with the enthusiastic participation of 150 delegates and observers (including a large number of women comrades) from both the divisions. Fraternal Trade Unions and Jaipur insurance pensioner association graced the conference.

On 28th September, Com. Naveen Chand General Secretary NZIEA inaugurated the conference. His thought provoking address gave an analytical review of the socio-economic and political situation prevailing in the country. He informed the house that the final option on pension was possible only due to the relentless efforts of AIIEA and the credit should go to the AIIEA Alone. The struggle demanding the scrapping of NPS and restoration of old pension scheme should be strengthened.

Com. V.P.Arora Vice President- NZIEA, Com. R.C.Sharma Vice President NZIEA, Com. Devi Das Organizing Secretary NZIEA, Com.V.N.Poddar Founder President of Jaipur Division and Com. Komal Chand Jain Founder Secretary of Jaipur Division and Com. Satish Khandelwal General Secretary of Jaipur Insurance Pensioner Association graced the conference. The session was presided over by Com. Laxman Rawat.

The conference ended with the decision to further strengthen the united forum formed within industry through divisional level programmes, continue to strengthen the relationships with the agents, serious endeavor to mobilize the policy holder through programmes and improved servicing and increase the participation in the larger joint movements against neoliberal policies and communal and ultra nationalist policies.

The conference unanimously elected com. Mahesh Gurbani, Com. P.K.Sethi and Com. Shailender

Kaushik as the President, Divisional Secretary and Treasurer respectively for NZIEA Jaipur-1 and Com. K.K.Soni, Com. G.P.Raipuria and Com. J.K.Sharma as the President, Divisional Secretary and Treasurer respectively for NZIEA Jaipur-2 for the ensuring term.

A open session was held on 29th Sept., 2019. Com.B.S.Sharma was the main speaker and he pointed out that AIIEA firmly believes in ideology of the working class whereas the BJP follows the ideology of RSS, which is communal, pro-corporate and anti-working class. AIIEA firmly believes that the workers are the real wealth creators whereas the PM proclaims that the corporates are the wealth creators. There is a systematic attack on the people's right. Today, democracy is itself is under threat and we must work assiduously for the protection of the plurality of the country, he said. The government is trying to divide the people in general, the working class in particular, on caste and communal lines. The AIIEA is totally opposed to any attempt to dismantle LIC of India. He ridiculed the Splinter Groups which are supporting the dis-investment proposal, shamelessly. He urged upon the employees to take-up policy servicing and business campaign activities in order to win the public support to our cause and strengthen the industry.

The Presidents of Jaipur- 1 Com.Sunil Batla and Com.Laxman Rawat Jaipur- 2 proposed the vote of thanks. With this the conference came to a successful close.



37th General Conference of Silchar Div IEA



Attended by 170 delegates and observers from all the fifteen Base committees scattered in the states of Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram and southern part of Assam, the 37th General Conference of Silchar Division Insurance Employees' Association was got off to a brilliant start at HaashiKhushi Bhawan Silchar on September 22, 2019 with the hoisting of flag by Comrade Abhijit Roy Choudhury, President SDIEA. The conference hall was beautifully decorated with posters and banners. A grand exhibition was organised remembering 150th Birth anniversary of Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar, communal harmony and picturesque the various activities of the SDIEA during the period under review and events reminisced the past activities which was opened jointly by Comrade Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA and Comrade Amitendra Chatterjee, Vice President EZIEA.

Dr. Tara NandyMazumder, Chairperson Reception Committee welcomed the participants through her written speech where she appreciated the role of the organisation in participating in various struggles against neoliberal policies, against privatisation of Public sectors including LIC etc.

Comrade Amanullah Khan, President AIIEA while inaugurating the conference, congratulated the employees and said that our country is passing through a difficult times. Under the dispensation of the present government our democracy, democratic rights and democratic institutions are under severe attack, be it the Supreme Court, Election Commission or the institution which are supposed to be independent. He criticised

reduction in corporate taxes when the need is to create demand by increasing incomes of workers. He explained in detail how the economy is derailed due to demonetisation and hasty implementation of GST. Jobs are lost and unemployment rate is highest in the last 45 years. He mentioned that Trade unions like ours are demanding with the Government to increase the purchasing power of the people by investing more in the agriculture sector, building of roads etc. Today, in India ninety percent of villages

do not have motorable roads. He demanded withdrawal of GST on life and medical insurance premium.

He lucidly explained the tactics and struggles behind achieving another option for pension for the LIC employees despite the Government's refusal to accept the similar demands of the employees of RBI and forty lakhs Government employees. On the question of wage revision, he said 10% offer on wage bill is not acceptable and demanded further improvements. The joint front of AIIEA, LIC Class I officers and NFIFWI are moving together for a very good settlement. On the malicious campaign against the LIC, he said after 19 years of liberalisation, no Insurance company in the world could retain 74% of the market share as of now and LIC's market share has increased further after the closing of the FY 2018/19. He reminded that LIC's investment decision is prudent and out of the total investible fund, 82% is invested in Govt securities and rest are in share market.

He cautioned that the forces inimical to the growth, development and prosperity of the country are trying to destroy the peace, harmony and syncretic culture of our country. To fight against the retrograde policies of the government, all central Trade unions will meet and decide future course of action. **(By now, All Central trade unions and other Federations have decided to go for one day strike on January 8, 2020 on various issues).** He also addressed the delegate session on 23rd September, 2019 and informed other issues including recruitment in LIC etc

Comrade Atin deb Choudhury, General

Secretary, SDIEA placed the Report of the working Committee where as many as seventeen delegates participated in the discussion. The report and audited statements of Accounts were accepted unanimously.

Comrade Amitendra Chatterjee, while guiding the conference, replied and explained to the various issues raised during the debate. In regard to the servicing aspects of the industry he stressed the need to provide better services to the clientele and called upon to raise the problems with the authority that hinder the customer services on a regular

basis.

Two days conference came to an end with a clarion call to implement the decision taken in the conference. The Cultural Committee organised two hour long programmes that will be a memorable one.

The conference adopted twelve resolutions on various issues. A thirty members Working Committee with Comrades Abhijit Roy Choudhur, atin Deb Choudhury and Pratap Chandra Malakar as President, General secretary and Treasurer for the year 2019.

Annual General Meeting of Surat Unit

Anual General Meeting of ASDIEU was held on 20th oct 2019 in LIC sports room, Jeevan Prakash Building, Surat. Com. Jaimin Desai, President of SDIEU, presided over the meeting.

Com. H.I.Bhat, General Secretary, WZIEA, inaugurated the conference. In his inaugural speech, he brought to light the economic, political and social aspects affecting the country. He informed that in recent assembly elections of five states working class has played a definite and decisive role and defeated the corporate friendly governments. He explained that because of these defeats Government was compelled to mitigate achievement of Pension Option and recruitment of 8000 assistants in the light of above facts and our long struggles. He stressed the importance of strengthening the organisation on the basis of political and ideological understanding. He dwelt in details regarding a convention of Central Trade Unions held in New Delhi on 30.09.2019 in which AIIEA was a partner. He also explained how AIIEA is pursuing its demands and also achieving the same through tactical expertise. He gave details of the issues of 8th January 2020 strike and appealed all to make it a grand success. He also implored all the members to be prepared for struggle to achieve Charter of Demands and the protection of LIC. He appealed to all to be vigilant against divisive forces that are on rampant in the country.



The report was placed in the house by General Secretary Com. Devang Naik. The report was accepted unanimously by the house. The conference also passed 30 resolutions pertaining to LIC, PSUs, SC/STs, Women's issue, recruitment and also local issues.

A felicitation to meritorious students and retired members were also done by Com. Kapil Purohit, Com. H.I.Bhat and Com. Jaimin Desai.

The meeting elected Com.Jaimin Desai, Com Devang Naik and Com Hemant Haveliwala as President, General Secretary and treasurer respectively.

AGM also decided to hold various programmes to commemorate SDIEU's 60 years of journey. Com.Kapil Purohit graced the AGM by narrating the brief history of SDIEU. He appealed to all to celebrate the 60 years of SDIEU in a befitting manner. The meeting came to end by vote of thanks by com H.N.Patel, Vice president SDIEU.

13th Conference of NZIEA Srinagar Division



13TH Tri-ennial conference of Northern Zone Insurance Employees' Association, Srinagar Division was held at Jammu on 13-14 October 2019. The conference was greeted by Com.A.K.Bhatnagar, President NZIEA, Com. Naveen Chand, General Secretary NZIEA and Com. Devi Dass, Organising Secretary NZIEA (CHIEF GUESTS). In the inaugural session, Sh. Sat Pal, Sr. Divisional Manager LIC of India Srinagar Division was guest of Honour and Sh. Raj Kumar Verma, Marketing Manager LIC Srinagar Division was the special guest on the occasion. The conference held discussion on the issues relating to National, International and Industry (LIC) level. The conference after thread bare discussion decided that Insurance Employees throughout Jammu and Kashmir will have extensive campaign and mobilisation against Government's move to list Life Insurance Corporation of India in stock market.

The conference also decided to struggle for the realisation of wage revision in LIC and GIC which is due since 01-08-2017. To fight back anti people and pro-capitalist policies of the Modi government, the conference decided to stand in the fore front with the trade unions based in Jammu and Kashmir. The conference also felt concerned about the economic sovereignty of the country. It was also decided that the government's move to attack on the hard earned trade union rights will be strongly resisted through strike and other actions by the workers. The conference was of the firm opinion that these steps by Modi government are being undertaken to help big corporate houses- Indian and

foreign. It is unfortunate that the Modi government is pushing the working class in a slavery regime.

The conference said that the abrogation of Article 370 and clause 35A in Jammu and Kashmir as also making the state as two Union territories is an attack on unity of the nation and constitution. The conference is of the opinion that this step of the government is a

step to snatch the democratic rights of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. The conference felt concerned that the unity and integrity of the country is being compromised by Modi Government through various decisions. The conference also decided to uphold the dignity and essence of the constitution of India. The conference also decided to make strike action on 08-01-2020 decided by Central Trade Union and Independent Federations against anti-people policies of Modi Government, attack on democratic right of work as constitution, a grand success. The conference unanimously passed the resolutions for 33% reservation of women in parliament and state assemblies, against increasing unemployment, against atrocities on SC/ST, against exploitation and increasing violence against women, against privatisation, against destruction of public sector and against amendment of labour laws in favour of corporate.

The Conference unanimously elected Com A.M.Tantry (Srinagar) as President, Com Pawan Gupta (Jammu) as Secretary and Com Raj Kumar Sharma (Jammu) as Treasurer for the ensuing term.



19th Conference of Gandhinagar Division

The 19th General Conference of Gandhinagar Division unit and felicitation function of Comrade Amrut Prajapati, President of LIC Employees' Union, Gandhinagar was held at Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Hall, Gandhinagar on 13th Oct., 2019 in presence of Com. H.I. Bhatt, WZIEA General Secretary, office bearers of Gandhinagar Division and local units.

The conference was declared open after the ceremonial flag hosting by Com. Amrut Prajapati, President. The guests were greeted with flowers. More than 130 Delegates and observers from different branches of Gandhinagar Division attended the conference.

In the conference, report was presented by Divisional Secretary Com. Subodh Trivedi on all issues of Global, National and Industrial importance. There was lively debate on the report which was finally adopted unanimously.

Com. H.I. Bhatt, General Secretary, WZIEA criticized the current economic policies of the central government. He said that nation is still struggling to come out of the crisis that began with the 2007 financial meltdown. He pointed out that the decision of the government to privatize PSUs will inevitably lead to attacks on the LIC. He, therefore, exhorted the participants to understand the dangers and remain vigilant to defend the institution. Com. H.I. Bhatt gave a detailed picture of the issues within the

industry and stressed upon the need to defend the industry and strengthening of the organization.

The conference unanimously adopted a number of resolutions on nation and issues relating to Insurance Industry. The conference took a decision to conduct District Level Sibir.

The conference unanimously elected Com. Subodh Trivedi as President, Com. G.I. Anand as Working President, Com. Dishant Patel as General Secretary and Com. Jayesh Patel as Treasurer of the Divisional Committee for the ensuing term.

The conference concluded after vote of thanks given by Com. Amrut Prajapati, President, Gandhinagar Division.



Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary in Madurai Division

ICEU, Madurai Division, in its 63rd Conference held in July 2019 gave a call to celebrate the 150th Birth Anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. It was successfully conducted under the banner of PFI in five centres namely, Madurai, Virudhunagar, Sivakasi, Dindigul and Aruppukottai. The programmes have instilled confidence among us to take our message among the students.

On 2nd of October 2019, Com. G. Meenakshisundaram, President garlanded the portrait of Mahatma Gandhi in Gandhi Museum, Madurai. Around 50 of our comrades were present on the occasion.

A seminar was organized at Sri Vidhya college of Education, Virudhunagar on 3rd of

October 2019. Com. N. Sureshkumar, Vice-President delivered lecture on "THE DREAM OF GANDHI". The programme was well attended by around 500 students.

Dindigul Branch Unit I and II organized a Special Seminar on 3rd of October 2019 at Dindigul Branch II. Com. Sivakumar, District Secretary, Tamilnadu Progressive Writers and Artistes Association, addressed the gathering. A number of agents and Development Officers apart from our members attended the seminar.

In Sivakasi, a seminar was organized on 11th October 2019 at Sivakasi Government Arts College. Com. N. Sureshkumar, Vice-President,

Womens' Convention of LICEU, Kottayam

The 16th womens' convention of LICEU, Kottayam Division was held at Kottayam on 23rd October 2019. 124 out of the total 144 women comrades attended the convention. SZIEF Vice President Com. R Sarvamangala inaugurated the convention. Kerala State Gender Advisor Dr. T K Anandi delivered key-note address and she said that the current BJP regime at the centre was carrying out its anti-people and anti-worker reforms at a fast pace without leaving time for reacting or protesting. Womens' Sub-committee Convener Com R Radhika presented the report. Resolutions on withdrawal of GST on insurance premium, privatization of public sector, 33% reservation for women, atrocities against women, anti-worker labour laws, wage revision in LIC, arresting price rise and fighting communalism were approved. Com. Anu Mariam Jose who won two gold medals and one silver medal at the All India LIC Games – 2019 at Gauhati was felicitated at the function. LIC Pensioners' Association General



Secretary Com. Baby Joseph and LICEU, Kottayam Division General Secretary Com. V K Remesh greeted the gathering. LICEU, Kottayam Division President Com. Treesa P Ignatius presided over the convention which was welcomed by Com. R Radhika and thanked by Joint Convener Com. M S Latha. Comrades R Radhika (Convener), M S Latha, Suma P S, Suja K and Anjali R (Joint Conveners) were elected as office bearers for the ensuing term.

WOMEN'S CONVENTION OF CHENNAI DIVISION I



The 24th Working Women's Convention of ICEU, Chennai Division-1, was conducted successfully on October 12, 2019. Despite the restrictions on movement of traffic in Chennai on account of the visit of the Chinese President to the city on that date, a fair number of women attended

the convention.

Inaugurating the convention, Com. Asha Velinger, General Secretary, IEA, Goa Division, in her inspiring speech, pointed to the pride of place for women in the AIIEA despite the fact that 54 per cent of women in the country suffer from the effects of the neo-liberal policies pursued by the government. Most of the women are only home makers, which is a gender discrimination, she said. She urged the audience to fight for 33% reservation for women in legislative bodies and for equal rights and equal opportunities. She concluded

her speech with an appeal to launch struggles to change the world.

The Report of the convention of the convention was placed before the house by Com.A.Sivapriya, Convener of the Women's Sub-Committee assisted by some members

of the committee. Com.S. Manjula of CBO.16 and Com.Manjula of CBO-8 discussed the report, which was adopted unanimously, after Com.S.Rameshkumar, General Secretary, ICEU, Chennai Division-1, summed up the discussions. A total of 11 resolutions were also adopted unanimously by the convention. While one resolution demanded 33% reservation for women in Parliament and other legislative bodies, another urged the government to desist from tampering with the labour laws in the country and important resolution moved to make the Jan, 8 2020 one day General Strike

a grand success. Com.Sarvamangala, Vice-President, SZIEF, greeted the participants assembled in the meeting.

The convention elected Com.A.Sivapriya as the Convener of the Women's Sub-Committee along with six of Joint Conveners. A Divisional Media Committee was also formed in the meeting with 21 women comrades in which the Divisional Women's sub Committee convener will be convener of the media committee.

At the outset, Com.A.Sivapriya welcomed the gathering. Com.K.Vijayalakshmi, Joint Secretary, ICEU, proposed a vote of thanks.

WOMEN TU CLASS AT MADURAI

The Working Women Sub-Committee of ICEU, Madurai Division decided to organize three exclusive Trade Union Classes for women on Nov 9th, 17 and 23rd of November 2019 at Sunil Maitra Illam. The first class was successfully held on 9th Nov. 2019 with participation of over 50 comrades. This class was presided over by Com. M. Mallika, Jt. Convener. Com. D. Chitra, Convener delivered inaugural address and explained the objective of the class. The resource person for the class was Com. N. Sureh kumar, Vice-President. He handled the class on the topic "Women: Self-Recognition-Freedom. It was then followed by a question-answer session. As many as 17 comrades took active part in the discussion. They very openly discussed various issues concerning women. Com. Suresh kumar summed up

the queries raised. Com. S. Maheswari, Jt. Convener proposed vote of thanks. The whole program was thought provoking. We were able to successfully conduct the program even though the judgement for Ayodhya issue was to come on that date. It shows the commitment of our cadres to attend our program with more enthusiasm.

Ranjani, Jt. Convener. Com. J. Vijaya, Jt. Convener, LICSZWWCC delivered inaugural address. Com. G. Meenakshisundaram, President, was the resource person. He handled the class with power point presentation. The class was very effective. As many as 14 comrades took part in the discussion. After the summing up by the resource person, the class came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Com. G. Kala, Jt. Convener.



Insurance News in brief

■ A.M.KHAN, DHARWAD

In its exposure Draft IRDA has proposed to increase the limit for self-assessment of damages. The proposal will allow the policyholders report claims up to Rs.75000 as against the current ceiling of Rs.50000 in the motor insurance claims. For claims other than motor insurance the ceiling is proposed to be increased to Rs.1,50,000/- from the present ceiling of Rs.1,00,000/-.

The draft guidelines on wellness and preventive care services, issued by IRDA, propose to permit the health insurance companies to come out with wellness and preventive features in their health cover policies. The guidelines say the wellness and preventive features shall be designed only with the objective of maintaining good health and improving it, and that insurers should factor in the pricing impact of the wellness and preventive features offered and disclose the same in the 'File and Use' or 'Use and File' application

Standard Life, the foreign partner in Housing Development and Finance Corporation (HDFC) Life insurance Company, sell 4.96 per cent to a clutch of institutional investors through multiple block deals to mop up Rs.5,752 crore. As at September 2019, Standard Life had held 19.69 per cent equity stake in HDFC Life. With this transaction its stake comes to 14.73 per cent. Prior to this, in this year alone, Standard Life has sold 9.91 per cent of its stake in HDFC.

In a bid to find out whether the insurance companies have had over exposure against their asset base, IRDA has sought data from insurance companies on their exposure to Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS), Indiabulls, Anil Ambani group companies and DHFL.

Private non life insurance companies, ICICI Lombard, Tata AIG, Cholamandalam MS and Shriram General Insurance, decide to opt out of the PM Fasal BimaYojana {PMFBY} for the year 2019-2020. Reason being put forth is their claims ratios in the previous years were quite high! What when during the earlier years there were windfall of profits in this segment? On the other hand more than 50 per cent of the crop insurance in the country is covered by public sector general/ agri insurance companies.

Health of the Reliance Health Insurance company is not at all good with the continuous dropping of

its solvency ratio. As such the IRDA has barred this Anil Ambani owned company from selling new health insurance policies. It has also directed the company to transfer entire policyholders' liabilities along with all assets to Reliance General Insurance company which in turn will settle all claims of existing policyholders. Reliance Health has underwritten premiums to the tune of Rs 6.14 crore in H1 of financial year 2019-20 and has a market share of 0.01 per cent after underwriting 9000 policies.

As at the end of October 2019 life insurance industry in India grew by 31.84 per cent whereas LIC grew at the rate of 37.70 per cent in the new premium segment. LIC's market share is 70.90 per cent. In number of policies LIC's market share is 73.81 per cent.

Insurtech funding levels, across the world, during the first three quarters of this year has surpassed the 2018 full-year total. The figure reaches \$4.4 billion marking a 5 percent increase.

A telematics solution that provides insurers with more personalised risk assessment has been developed by Swiss Re and Tokyo-based car electronics company, Pioneer Corp to support safer driving behaviour. The solution will be integrated in Swiss Re's 'Coloride' app. This is set to be launched next year. Coloride assigns a risk score to each driver that an insurer can use to calculate the usage-based insurance premium. Thus the insurers can encourage responsible driving.

AIR Worldwide (AIR), catastrophe risk modelling firm it has released a Multiple Peril Crop Insurance (MPCI) Model for India to help in assessing potential losses being caused by yield shortfalls for 11 major crops. This model can give the reinsurers in India the exposure data analysed at district levels or any cluster level.

Swiss Re forecast that global non-life and life premium will grow by around 3 per cent in real terms in each year 2020 and 2021. It further states that emerging Asia will power global industry growth. It relies on the fact that pricing in non-life has strengthened this fiscal and expects this to be the same next year too. Profitability as measured by return on equity has strengthened in both non-life and life, in part due to realised gains from investment management.

Working Class Struggles

S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE ■

NATIONAL STRIKE BY FINNISH POSTAL WORKERS:

Around 9000 Postal workers at the State owned Postal Services walked out on 11.11.2019. Initially planned for a two weeks strike, now it has extended for four weeks. Workers demanding improved working condition and opposing increase in working hours.

STRIKE BY POSTAL WORKERS IN SLOVENIA:

Thousands of Slovenian Postal workers came out on strike on 11th November. They are demanding 10% pay raise and an end to staff shortages. According to press agency, the strike was joined by trade union of transport and communications workers who are not officially part of the dispute.

STAFF AT UK FOREIGN AND COMMON WEALTH OFFICE STRIKE:

Security staff, cleaners and maintenance workers employed at the UK Government, foreign and common wealth Office began a four day strike on November 7th. The striking employees are seeking pay increase and Union recognition.

STRIKE AT McDONALD'S FAST FOOD OUTLETS IN LONDON:

UK workers at several McDONALD's Restaurants in London walked out on 12th November. The outlets affected were in BALAHAM, CATFORD, CRAYFORD, DEITFORD, DOWNHAM and WANDSWORTH. The Baker's food and allied workers union members are demanding 15 Pounds an hour wage and guaranteed working hours.

ALGERIAN GENERAL STRIKE HITS ALL SECTORS:

The three day general strike took place on 5th, 6th & 7th November in Algeria. It is estimated around 50% of the population took part in 3 days General strike. The sector included Industry, transport, servicing and energy as well as the Public Sector. The strike was part of ongoing protests against the Algerian Government, which began earlier in this year. The workers are demanding an end to repression and the right to strike.

ON GOING PROTEST IN LEBANON:

Schools and Banks were closed on 12th November as a part of ongoing demonstration in Lebanon. The demonstrations were against the austerity measures taken by Lebanon Government. The students held protest in front of palace of Justice in Central Beirut to prevent judicial staff to enter. Students also held protest in front of Education Ministry.

IRANIAN SUGAR WORKERS BEGIN FURTHER STRIKE:

Iranian workers at the Haft Tappeh Sugar Facility began their latest round of strike on 4th November. They are demanding payment of wage arrears, reinstatement of sacked workers and re-

nationalisation of the Company. The Company workers have undertaken series of walkouts and mass protests over the last 3 years over job losses, pay and service condition and for nationalization.

STRIKE BY KUWAITI AIRPORT STAFF:

Thousands of staff at Kuwait city airport went on strike on 11th November. They were protesting against working conditions at the airport including pollution and noise levels as well as demanding the implementation of an agreement on the payment of an allowance provision to all civil aviation workers. This was followed by another one day strike on 17th November.

ZIMBABWE DOCTORS STRIKE SPREADS TO OTHER SECTORS:

Zimbabwe's Junior Hospital Doctors are continuing their National strike for a living wage which began 10 weeks ago. Over 2,30,000 Doctors, nurses and Public Sector workers are staying away from work as they cannot afford travel costs with stagnant wages and runaway inflation at 500%.

SOUTH AFRICAN AIRLINE WORKERS THREATEN STRIKE OVER WAGES AND JOB LOSSES:

Workers at State owned airlines are planning for indefinite strike action over pay and job losses. Pilots association members are also planning for strike action. Over the last 8 months the aviation sector effected 18% reduction in the strength of pilots.

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC:

One day health workers strike over pay and other demands. Nurses, service staff and other health sector workers was held on 7th November to press for better wages and other demands. The workers other demands include the investment of 5% of gross national product in the health sector and a program for construction of housing for health sector workers.

GUYANESE SUGAR WORKERS PROTEST FOR WAGE HIKE:

Hundreds of sugar workers, cane cultivators, harvesters, factory workers, tillage workers and others held protest on November 8th to demand pay rise. The workers did not have a rise not since 2014 despite huge increase in inflation.

TRINIDADIAN TEACHERS PROTEST AGAIN TO RESTART SALARY TALKS:

Teachers in Trinidad and Tobago held protest on 5th November, once again to voice their demand for the reopening of salary talks with the Education Ministry. Despite rising cost of living over the last five years, pay has not increased.

Economic Tid Bits

■ J.SURESH, MYSORE

* India's industrial output has contracted in the quarter ending September by 0.4% from a 3% expansion in the previous quarter. According to a report released by SBI, India's GDP is likely to register only 4.2% growth in the second quarter down from an earlier prediction of 6.1%. The growth forecast for FY 2019-20 has come down to 5% from 6%. This is mainly attributed to low automobile sales, deceleration in air traffic movements, flattening of core sector growth and declining investment in construction and infrastructure. According to the report, out of 33 high frequency reading indicators

reveal an acceleration rate which was 65% in Q1 of FY 2019-20 but declined sharply to 27% in Q2 of FY 20. Besides, the international rating agency Moody has downgraded India's economic situation from stable to negative, clearly reflecting the serious economic crisis in India.

* The US Federal Reserve has cut its base interest by 0.25% percentage points, the third such cut since July. This cut comes after the release of data on GDP of USA. According to the report, the US GDP rose by annual rate of just 1.9% in the third quarter, compared to a 2% increase in the second quarter, the lowest rate since the end of 2018.

* All the major steel producers in the US have reduced production this year pointing to a further slowdown in manufacturing sector and the impact of Trump's trade war measures. This slowdown is also translating into series of job cuts. United States Steel (USS), the second largest steel producer in the US and once the symbol of US domination of industrial production, is facing a major crisis. While the most analysts points to tariff as the cause of the crisis for steel producers, the general slowdown in production in the US and world economy is a major factor. US manufacturing has declined for the past three months while world demand is also down. China's growth rate has fallen to 6% and the country is not importing as much steel as it did. Manufacturing in Europe is also falling, which means they both import less steel and have more steel for export.

* According to a data from Lebanon's Central Bank, consumer debt has risen to \$ 21 billion, in addition to mortgage debt of \$ 13 billion, meaning that households are paying a massive \$ 1.5 billion in interest. But these loans have in turn fueled an escalation in housing prices with the result that housing costs eat up a vast proportion of wages. Now, many of the borrowers are unable to keep up with their payments or repay their loans. According to one World Bank report, any further devaluation would lead up to half Lebanon's 6 million population falling below the official poverty line. It says that the crisis may have already pushed Lebanon into recession.

* According to Mervin King, former Governor of Bank of England, during 2008 crisis, the global financial system is heading for a devastating financial crisis. In a lecture delivered during the semi-annual meeting of IMF, he said there had been no fundamental questioning of the ideas that had led to the crisis a decade ago. He also warned that the US would suffer a "financial Armageddon" if the Federal Reserve were not able to combat another crisis. According to a IMF report, the world is experiencing a synchronised growth slow down, concentrated in the major economies. It noted that the Chinese economy had grown by 6% in the third quarter of this year, its slowest pace in 30 years. The main factors were the trade war with the US, slowing manufacturing and shrinking investment opportunities. The impact of US trade war was reflected in a 3.2% fall in Chinese exports for the year. Investment is also weakening, with growth in construction activity- a key driver in the economy – down to 4.7% year-on-year in the third quarter from a rate of 5.5% in the second quarter. In another expression of global slowdown, the German government has revised its forecast for growth in the world's fourth largest economy for next year from 1.5% to 1%, and projected only 0.5% growth for 2019. The German economy shrank by 0.1% in the second quarter and there could be a similar contraction in the third, placing it in a "technical recession" defined as two consecutive quarters of contraction. The world economy is expected to grow by 3% this year.

For our Field Force

■ ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

All time high: LIC is likely to end FY20 with an all-time high equity investment (gross) of around up to Rs.72,000 crore, an all-time high, sources said. In FY19, LIC invested around Rs.68,620 crore into the equity market. In 2019, LIC is looking to invest Rs 3.49 lakh crore into debt and equities.

LIC invests: LIC has invested Rs.2,500 crore in PNB Housing Finance through the issue of secured redeemable non-convertible debentures (NCDs). *JSW Steel has raised Rs.2,000 crore via issuance of NCDs from LIC to meet long term working capital requirements. *LIC has invested Rs.1,000 crore in Tata Capital Housing Finance (TCHF).

LIC warns: In its latest alert, LIC warns policyholders to beware of calls from people posing as Officials or Agents of LIC or as any other officials. Earlier, LIC had also warned policyholders to stay away from fake or spurious SMSs. Fraudsters are misleading people posing as LIC officials, agents, IRDAI officials and others offering alluring benefits.

New company: The Centre is looking at forming a separate company for postal life insurance hiving it off from India Post, according to Gautam Bhattacharya, chief post master general, West Bengal Circle.

Tencent enters: Chinese technology giant Tencent Holdings Ltd. has acquired a minority stake in Policybazaar.com valuing the Indian online insurance aggregator at \$1.5 billion, according to a person familiar with the deal, as it tries to get a foothold in the country's burgeoning insurance sector. Tencent, known for its dominant WeChat messenger app, has been an aggressive investor in Indian startups. It's thrown its might behind prominent technology companies including ride-hailing service Ola, education platform Byju's and food delivery platform Swiggy. The Shenzhen-headquartered company has been a recent entrant to the booming fintech sector, investing in digital banking services startup NiYo Solutions earlier this year. Tencent, known for its dominant WeChat messenger app, has been an aggressive investor in Indian startups. It's thrown its might behind prominent technology companies including ride-hailing service Ola, education platform Byju's and food delivery platform Swiggy. The Shenzhen-headquartered company has been a recent entrant to the booming fintech sector, investing in digital banking services startup NiYo Solutions earlier this year.

Reliance Health barred: IRDAI has directed Reliance Health Insurance to stop selling new products and transfer its liabilities to Reliance General Insurance,

with effect from November 15. The move from the insurance regulator comes after the standalone health insurer recorded a continuous fall in its solvency margin.

Aviva insolvency: The National Company Law Tribunal has admitted a petition to initiate a bankruptcy process against private life insurer Aviva Life Insurance Co India Ltd. The New Delhi bench of the tribunal passed the order of corporate insolvency resolution process (CIRP) following a petition by Apeejay Trust, who is recognised as an operational creditor to Aviva Life.

Wellness discount: IRDAI has issued draft guidelines on the wellness and preventive features in health insurance products to enhance the scope of services offered. The insurer should take into account the cost towards wellness services while pricing the underlying health insurance product, and the price factored in should be disclosed in all insurance advertisements where wellness features are promoted.

Self assessment: IRDAI has proposed to increase the limits for self-assessment of damage. The current limit for self-declaration by customers for motor accident claims is Rs.50,000, and for fire, home, marine, engineering and other insurance claims it is Rs.1 lakh. Anything above that limit would have to be assessed by an insurance surveyor. With the new proposal, customers can self-declare in case of motor accidents up to Rs.75,000, and for non motor claims up to Rs.1.5 lakh.

Motor Losses: The loss ratio in motor insurance segment is likely to rise for the general insurance sector in H2 FY20. A dip in automobile sales and inadequate premiums in the non-life industry has led to loss ratios going up to almost 200% in the business.

Cheap health insurance: IFFCO Tokio General Insurance has announced the launch of its new health insurance policy – Swasthya Raksha Bima – for people living in smaller towns and non-metro cities.

Complementary insurance: Bharti Airtel has partnered with the group's insurance arm, Bharti AXA Life Insurance to offer Rs.4 lakh cover with every pre-paid recharge of Rs.599 to its customers in Delhi-NCR.

Penalty: IRDAI has imposed a fine of Rs.4 lakh on SBI Life Insurance Company Ltd for violating norms on advertisement and protection of policyholders' interest and Rs.1 crore on Cholamandalam MS GIC for violating health insurance regulations related to payment of commission.



CONGRATULATIONS

Kum Sunkara Sai Swathi daughter of Com S.Santhosh Kumar, HGA, Srikalahasti Branch, Nellore Division has secured the first rank in the AP Medical Entrance Examination conducted in 2019. She has been a consistent top performer in various competitive examinations, earning 4th rank Telangana EAMCET, 158th rank in NEET(Open) and 288th rank in AIIMS(Open). Insurance Worker congratulates her and wish her a bright academic career.

Mahatma Gandhi Birth Anniversary in Madurai Division

Continued from Page 33

delivered lecture on "THE DREAM OF GANDHI". More than 200 students attended the program with enthusiasm.

In Madurai, a seminar was organized in Palayampatti Nadar Uravinar Higher Secondary School" on 14th of Oct. 2019. Com. S.Thanikairaj, Joint Secretary, gave lecture on "MAHATMA GANDHIJI - 150TH YEAR". More than 500 students of the school actively participated in the program. Another seminar was organized in Aruppukottai Nadar Girls Higher Secondary School, Madurai on 22 Oct. 2019. This programme was well attended by about 1000 students. Com. S. Thanikairaj, Joint Secretary delivered lecture on the topic, 'GANDHIAN THOUGHTS'. Com.N.P.Rameshkannan, General Secretary interacted with the students. Both these programmes were organized by our comrades of City Branch III.

A seminar was organized on 18th of Oct.2019 at Ramana Arts and Science College, Aruppukottai. Com. S.Thanikairaj, Joint Secretary, gave lecture on "The Dream of Gandhi". The program was attended by more than 250 students. Thiru Muthumanickam, Branch Manager, LIC of India, Aruppukottai greeted on the occasion.



The November 2019 issue of Insurance Worker is very informative and educative. An effort is made to cover all pressing issues of the times. The articles highlight the failure of the BJP government to run the economy. The doles to the Corporate and regulatory failure in case of PMC Bank is correctly highlighted. The need to fight the neo-liberal policies through a nationwide strike on January 8, 2020 is stressed. Thank you Insurance Worker.

D.Manavalan Cuddalore

DONATIONS

Com. P.V.Milindkumar , Nagpur DO	Rs.5000
Com. Sandeep Nigam Lucknow DO	1000
Com. Rajendra Vellore DO	2000
Com. Vijayalakshmi Thrissur DO	3000

Insurance Worker thanks these comrades for their fine gesture. In the November 2019 issue donation list, Rs. 25000 received from SZIEF was wrongly printed as from SCZIEF. We sincerely regret the error.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
January	307	7007.55
February	307	7007.55
March	309	7053.20
April	312	7121.68
May	314	7167.33
June	316	7212.98
July	319	7281.46
August	320	7304.29
September	322	7349.94

Base 1960=Base 2001 x 22.8259

*With warm Greetings
from*

**Eastern Zone
General Insurance
Employees' Association
KOLKATA**



*With Best Compliments
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Branch Unit-Jeevan Prakash, Ajmer
Divisional Committee
Ajmer



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