

insurance Worker



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MAY DAY 2016



**CAPITALISM CAN NOT BE REFORMED
IT HAS TO BE CHANGED
TO MAKE SOCIETIES FAIR, JUST & EQUAL**



The Shadowy World
of Offshore Tax Havens

The underbelly of
India's silicon valley



Travesty of Democracy



हमारी बैंकिंग प्रणाली
और सरकार की नीतियाँ



An Unequal
Agreement



WFTU Statement on May Day 2016

The World Federation of Trade Unions on the occasion of the International Workers' Day on 1st May 2016 conveys a militant salute to all men and women of the working class and to the 92 million members of WFTU in 126 countries.

Men and women, younger or older, employed or unemployed, migrants and refugees, the World Federation of Trade Unions wishes you strength, determination and courage in your small-scale or large-scale struggles.

The multinationals, the reactionary governments, neo-fascist and racist forces, the imperialist mechanisms dread this day. Because it is a symbol of internationalism, a symbol of struggle, a symbol of class unity. These are our most powerful tools with which we need to arm ourselves in our struggles for better lives, in our struggles against poverty and wars generated by the capitalist barbarity.

Building strong class-oriented base trade unions that are massive, democratic, militant we strengthen the WFTU.

And by strengthening the WFTU as a rooted class-oriented Organization of the base, internationalist and uniting, we strengthen our trade unions.

In all countries of the world, with all forms of action we demand our contemporary needs, our labor, social and trade union rights.

Our reality of misery, unemployment, poverty and wars in contrast to the technological and scientific progress and the wealth we produce, prove how unrealistic and rotten the capitalist mode of production is.

We rally our forces and build our social alliance with the popular strata against exploitation and capitalist barbarity.

On the occasion of May Day we once more want to send our internationalist solidarity to the peoples of Palestine, Libya, Syria, Lebanon, Iraq Afghanistan, Yemen and all peoples who are suffering imperialist attacks and fight for their right to decide for themselves over their present and future.



1 May 2016 INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY

STRONG trade unions
Massive | Democratic | Militant

STRONG WFTU
Stable | Class-oriented | Uniting

World Federation of Trade Unions

World Trade Union Congress
5-8 October 2016, Durban, South Africa

This year 2016, the 17th World Trade Union Congress will summon the representatives of the class-oriented trade union movement in the heroic land of South Africa. On 5-8 October 2016, thousands of delegates, real militant unionists, from all continents will gather in Durban, analyze the global and regional developments, exchange experience and proposals and resolute on the strategy and action plan of the WFTU for the next five years.

With this Congress we make a vital step forward for the international class-oriented trade union movement. "Forward! For the contemporary needs of the working class against poverty and wars generated by the capitalist barbarism"



Insurance Worker extends warmest May Day greetings to insurance employees, working and toiling people of India and the global working class.

May Day signifies the glorious traditions and struggles of the working class for a dignified life and a commitment to work for global peace, justice and equality. It is an occasion to recall the supreme sacrifices of the brave sons and daughters of the working class and to rededicate ourselves to the ideals of May Day.

May Day 2016 will be celebrated by the working class across the globe in the background of deepening economic crisis and sharpening attacks on the working class. Uncertainty and pessimism dominates the global economic outlook. Disagreeing with the IMF projections, important research

organisations expect the global economy to grow at 2.5% in 2016 which is 0.3% lower than the earlier estimates. The US and other major industrialised countries continue to slow down and recession is once again staring at the global economy. The rate of unemployment and under-employment is on the rise and youth unemployment is at an all-time high.

The global crisis has created a human tragedy of gigantic proportions. Nearly half of the world's population – more than 3 billion lives on less than USD 2.50 a day. More than 1.3 billion live on USD 1.25 in conditions of extreme poverty. According to UNICEF, 22000 children die each day due to poverty. 805 million people worldwide do not have enough to eat and 750 million lack access to clean drinking water. While this is the plight of the poor, the rich continue to amass wealth and the

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concentration of wealth has reached alarming proportions. According to Oxfam, the rich 1% of the global population today own more than 50% of the global wealth.

The imperialist drive to gain critical natural resources and their strategic political interests has destroyed nations and people. West Asia and large parts of the world today has virtually become a theatre of violent conflict. The imperialist actions and tacit support to fundamentalist forces in West Asia has given rise to dreaded terror outfits making no place in the world safe and secure. The wars in Iraq, Syria, Yemen and a host of other countries have consumed millions of lives and millions of others are rendered homeless. The world is grappling with a massive refugee crisis. The innocent men, women and children are made to pay for the crimes of imperialism.

The Indian working class is facing massive attacks and repressions. The Modi government which came to power promising ache din has further burdened the people with its policies of neo-liberalism. Labour laws are attempted to be changed to make them employer friendly. The so called reforms in labour laws in Rajasthan and Haryana are direct attack on the hard won democratic and trade union rights of the workers.

The life of the working and toiling people has become miserable. More than one-third of the population is facing severe drought and government is doing very little to offer help and take remedial actions. The agrarian crisis is further deepening with tens of thousands of farmers committing suicides unable to bear the burden of debt and to escape from the pangs of poverty and hunger. Despite slogans of Make in India, manufacturing sector continues to be crisis ridden and the economy has failed to create any additional jobs. The policies of the government have made access to the basic services like education and health unaffordable to the majority of the people. Despite claims of India being the fastest growing economy in the world, millions suffer from hunger, poverty and deprivation. The lopsided development has hugely increased income and wealth disparities. The richest 1% of Indians today own more than 53% of India's wealth while the poorest 50% of the population is condemned to a share of just 4.1% of the nation's wealth.

India today has become one of the most unequal societies in the world.

The BJP government is pursuing a retrograde social agenda. The nation's economic and political policies are being dictated by the RSS. The outfits belonging to the Sangh Parivar are given total liberty to attack individual rights and freedom of speech. The killings in the name of alleged beef eating and cattle trade are a blot on the Indian democracy. The government is making desperate attempts to take over universities by encouraging the ABVP. Dissent and freedom of expression is under serious attacks. The happenings in JNU, Hyderabad Central University and other places of higher education are too well known. The government is trying to deny space for ideas and debates.

In order to divert attention from the failures to improve the living standards of the people, the government has raised a debate on nationalism. The patriotism of citizens is judged on the basis of just one slogan. The Sangh Parivar has been authorized to decide who is a nationalist and who is an anti-national and distribute certificates of patriotism. Unrest is on rise in Jammu & Kashmir and the North East. Social tensions too are on rise with demands for reservations by various sections of the population.

The insurance employees through their struggles have been able to secure a very good wage revision but challenges remain. The demand for another pension option and improvement in pension scheme still remain unresolved. The policies of the government are destabilizing the insurance industry. The decision to list the public sector general insurance companies on the stock exchanges has to be vehemently resisted and opposed. There will be attempts to privatize LIC again. The insurance employees cannot afford to lower guard on this issue and continue with campaign for the protection of the industry.

The analysis of the present situation makes it abundantly clear that capital is on offensive and has waged a full scale war against the working class across the world. The global working class must unite to fight this offensive of capital as also the rise of forces belonging to the extreme right. This struggle must be waged with the understanding that capitalism

cannot be reformed, it has to be changed to make societies fair just and equal. In India, we see some encouraging developments in the struggle against the policies of the government. The trade union movement has united to challenge these retrograde policies and called for a nationwide strike on 2nd September 2016, which we are confident will receive unprecedented response. The movement of the students across universities against the social and economic policies and efforts to unite the Left, Progressive and Ambedkarites

to challenge the right reactionary forces raises great deal of hope.

The May Day 2016 brings to the global working class new hopes and the glorious traditions of this day inspires the workers to wage relentless struggle against the capital and work for global peace, justice and equality. With this confidence, we once again offer May Day greetings to the entire working class.

Long Live May Day.

Long Live the glorious traditions of May Day.



इन्श्योरेन्स वर्कर बीमा कर्मचारियों, भारत की मेहनतकश एवं श्रमिक जनता एवं दुनियाँ भर के मजदूर वर्ग को मई दिवस की हार्दिक बधाई प्रेषित करता है।

मई दिवस गरिमाय जीवन व विश्व-स्तर पर शांति, न्याय एवं समानता के प्रति वचनबद्धता के लिये किये गये मजदूर वर्ग के संघर्ष की गौरवपूर्ण परंपराओं का प्रतिनिधित्व करता है। इस अवसर पर हम मजदूर वर्ग के बहादुर बेटों व बेटियों के श्रेष्ठतम बलिदानों की याद करते हैं तथा खुद को मई दिवस के आदर्शों के प्रति पुनः समर्पित करते हैं।

मई दिवस 2016 मजदूर वर्ग द्वारा दुनियाँ भर में आर्थिक संकट के गहराने तथा मजदूर वर्ग पर होने वाले हमलों के तेज होने की पृष्ठभूमि में मनाया जायेगा। यह समय अनिश्चितता एवं निराशावादी विश्व आर्थिक दृष्टिकोण के प्रभुत्व का है। आई.एम.एफ. की प्रस्तुति से सहमत न होते हुए प्रमुख अनुसंधान संगठन 2016 में विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था की 2.5 प्रतिशत वृद्धि की आशा करते हैं जो पहले के अनुमानों से 0.3 प्रतिशत कम है। अमरीका तथा अन्य औद्योगिक देश धीमी गति से चलना जारी रखे हुए हैं तथा विश्व अर्थव्यवस्था एक बार फिर मंदी का शिकार हो रही है। बेरोजगारी व कम-रोजगारी बढ़ रही है तथा युवाओं की बेरोजगारी अब तक के सबसे ऊँचे स्तर पर है। विश्व संकट ने विशालकाय मानव त्रासदियों को जन्म दिया है। दुनियाँ की लगभग आधी आबादी अर्थात् 3 अरब से ज्यादा लोग 2.50 अमरीकी डालर से कम पर गुजारा करते हैं। 1.3 अरब से ज्यादा लोग 1.25 अमरीकी डालर पर अत्यन्त गरीबी की हालत में रहते हैं। यूनीसेफ के अनुसार प्रतिदिन 22,000 बच्चे गरीबी

के कारण मरते हैं, दुनियाँ में 80.5 करोड़ लोगों के पास खाने के लिये पर्याप्त साधन नहीं है तथा 75 करोड़ को पीने के साफ पानी तक पहुँच हासिल नहीं है। जहाँ गरीबों की ऐसी हालत है वहीं धनवान लोग सम्पत्ति एकत्रित करना जारी रखे हुए हैं तथा सम्पत्ति का यह केन्द्रीयकरण चौकानेवाली हदों तक पहुँच गया है। ऑक्सफेम के अनुसार आज 1 प्रतिशत धनवान लोग दुनियाँ की सम्पत्ति के 50 प्रतिशत से भी अधिक के स्वामी हैं।

निर्णायक प्राकृतिक संसाधन एवं रणनीतिक राजनीतिक हितों को प्राप्त करने की साम्राज्यवादी चाल ने लोगों व देशों को बरबाद कर रखा है। पश्चिम एशिया व दुनियाँ के बड़े हिस्से आज हिंसक झगड़ों की वास्तविक नाट्यशाला में तब्दील हो गये हैं। साम्राज्यवादी कार्यवाहियों और पश्चिम एशिया में तत्ववादी ताकतों को दिये जा रहे गुपचुप समर्थन ने भयानक आतंकवादी समूहों को जन्म दिया है जिससे दुनियाँ का कोई भी हिस्सा सुरक्षित व संरक्षित नहीं रह गया है। ईराक, सीरिया, यमन व कुछ अन्य देशों में युद्ध ने लाखों लोगों को लील लिया है तथा लाखों अन्य लोगों को गृह विहीन बनाकर छोड़ दिया है। विश्व एक भारी शरणार्थी संकट से जूझ रहा है। साम्राज्यवाद के अपराध की कीमत निर्दोष पुरूषों, महिलाओं एवं बच्चों को चुकानी पड़ रही है।

भारत का मजदूर वर्ग भारी हमलों व दमन की मार का सामना कर रहा है। मोदी सरकार जो अच्छे दिन का वादा करके शासन में आयी थी, उसने नव-उदारवादी नीतियों से लोगों पर और अधिक बोझ डाल दिया है। नियोजक-अनुकूल बनाने के लिये श्रम कानूनों को बदलने के प्रयास किये जा रहे हैं।

राजस्थान व हरियाणा में श्रम कानूनों में तथाकथित सुधार श्रमिकों द्वारा मुश्किलों से प्राप्त किये गये जनतान्त्रिक व ट्रेड-यूनियन अधिकारों पर हमले हैं।

मजदूर व मेहनतकश लोगों का जीवन दुखदायी हो गया है। एक तिहाई से भी ज्यादा जनसंख्या सूखे की चपेट में है तथा सरकार उनकी सहायता करने या सूखे से निपटने के कोई प्रयास नहीं कर रही है। ऋण के बोझ से बचने तथा गरीबी व भूख के दर्द से बचने के लिये हजारों किसानों द्वारा की जा रही आत्महत्याओं से कृषि का संकट और गहराता जा रहा है। मेक इन इंडिया के नारे के बावजूद विनिर्माण क्षेत्र संकट ग्रस्त है तथा अर्थव्यवस्था किसी अतिरिक्त रोजगार का सृजन करने में असफल हो गई है। सरकार की नीतियों के कारण अधिकांश लोगों के लिये मौलिक सेवाओं जैसे शिक्षा और स्वास्थ्य तक पहुँच अवहनीय हो गयी है।

दुनियाँ में सबसे अधिक तेजी से उभरती हुई अर्थव्यवस्था होने के दावे के बावजूद भारत में लाखों लोग भूख, गरीबी और दुःख से पीड़ित हैं। असमान विकास ने गरीबी और अमीरी की विषमताओं को बहुत बढ़ा दिया है। भारत में 1 प्रतिशत धनवान लोग इसकी 53 प्रतिशत से भी अधिक सम्पत्ति के स्वामी हैं जबकि 50 प्रतिशत गरीब लोगों के पास देश की सम्पत्ति में से 4.1 प्रतिशत हिस्सा ही है। भारत आज विश्व के सबसे अधिक असमान समाजों में से एक हो गया है।

भारतीय जनता पार्टी की सरकार एक प्रतिगामी सामाजिक कार्यक्रम अख्तियार कर रही है। देश की आर्थिक व राजनीतिक नीतियाँ आर0एस0एस0 द्वारा तय की जा रही हैं। संघ परिवार से जुड़े समूहों को व्यक्तिगत अधिकारों व अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी पर हमले करने की पूरी छूट दी जा रही है। गाय का मांस खाने तथा पशुओं का धंधा करने के नाम पर तथाकथित रूप से लोगों को मारना भारतीय जनतन्त्र पर कलंक है। ए0बी0वी0पी0 को प्रोत्साहित कर सरकार विश्वविद्यालयों पर कब्जा करने के दुःसाहसी प्रयास कर रही है। असहमति एवं अभिव्यक्ति की आजादी गंभीर हमलों की शिकार हैं। जे0एन0यू0, हैदराबाद के केन्द्रीय विश्वविद्यालय व उच्च शिक्षा के अन्य स्थानों की घटनाएँ सभी की जानकारी में हैं। सरकार विचारों व बहस की गुंजाइश को नकारने का प्रयास कर रही है।

लोगों के जीवन स्तर को सुधारने में अपनी विफलता से ध्यान हटाने के लिये सरकार ने राष्ट्रवाद पर बहस छेड़ दी है। नागरिकों की देशभक्ति केवल एक नारे पर परखी जा रही है। कौन राष्ट्रभक्त है और कौन राष्ट्र विरोधी है— यह तय करने और प्रमाणपत्र बाँटने के काम के लिये संघ परिवार को अधिकृत कर दिया गया है। जम्मू कश्मीर व उत्तर पूर्व में असंतोष

बढ़ रहा है। जनसंख्या के विभिन्न हिस्सों के लिये आरक्षण की मांग पर सामाजिक तनाव में भी वृद्धि हो रही है।

बीमा कर्मचारी अपने संघर्ष के बल पर बहुत अच्छा वेतन संशोधन प्राप्त करने में समर्थ हुए हैं परन्तु चुनौतियाँ अभी भी शेष हैं। पेंशन के एक और विकल्प तथा पेंशन योजना में सुधार की मांग का अभी भी हल नहीं निकला है। सरकार की नीतियाँ बीमा उद्योग को अस्थिर कर रही हैं। स्टॉक एक्सचेंज पर सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की आम बीमा कम्पनियों को सूचीबद्ध करने के फैसले का दृढ़ता के साथ प्रतिरोध एवं विरोध किया जाना चाहिये। एल0आई0सी0 के निजीकरण करने के प्रयास भी दुबारा से होंगे। बीमा कर्मचारी इस मुद्दे पर अपनी सतर्कता कम करना बर्दाश्त नहीं कर सकते तथा उन्हें अपने उद्योग की रक्षा के लिये अभियान चलाना जारी रखना होगा।

वर्तमान स्थिति की समीक्षा इस बात को भली भाँति स्पष्ट करती है कि पूँजी आक्रामक है तथा दुनियाँ भर में इसने मजदूर वर्ग के विरुद्ध एक पूर्ण युद्ध छेड़ दिया है। विश्व के मजदूर वर्ग को पूँजी के इस आक्रमण तथा धुर दक्षिणपंथ से सम्बन्ध रखने वाली ताकतों के विरुद्ध संघर्ष करने के लिये एकता स्थापित करनी चाहिये। यह संघर्ष इस समझ के साथ किया जाना चाहिये कि पूँजीवाद को कभी सुधारा नहीं जा सकता तथा समाजों को न्यायोचित व समान बनाने के लिये इसे बदलना ही पड़ेगा।

भारत में सरकार की इन नीतियों के विरुद्ध संघर्ष में हमें कुछ उत्साहित करने वाले घटनाक्रम देखने को मिलते हैं। ट्रेड यूनियन अभियान इन प्रतिगामी नीतियों को चुनौती देने के लिये एकजुट हुआ है और उसने दो सितम्बर 2016 को एक राष्ट्रव्यापी हड़ताल करने का आवाहन किया है जिसके बारे में हमारा विश्वास है कि इस आवाहन को अभूतपूर्व सफलता हासिल होगी। दक्षिणपंथी प्रतिक्रियावादी ताकतों को चुनौती देने के लिये सामाजिक व आर्थिक नीतियों के विरुद्ध संघर्ष तथा विभिन्न विश्वविद्यालयों में वामपंथी, प्रगतिशील व अबेडकरवादियों को एकजुट करने के विद्यार्थी आन्दोलन के प्रयासों से भी ढेर सारी आशा पैदा होती है।

मई दिवस 2016 विश्व के मजदूर वर्ग के लिये नई आशा लेकर आयेगा तथा इस दिन की गौरवपूर्ण परंपराएँ श्रमिकों को पूँजी के विरुद्ध अनवरत संघर्ष करने के लिये प्रेरित करती रहेगी और वे विश्व में शांति, न्याय व समानता के लिये काम करते रहेंगे। इसी विश्वास के साथ हम एक बार फिर समस्त मजदूर वर्ग को मई दिवस की बधाई देते हैं।

मई दिवस अमर रहे !

मई दिवस की गौरवपूर्ण परंपराएँ अमर रहे !

AIIEA Secretariat Meeting at Bengaluru

The secretariat of AIIEA met as scheduled on 28th March, 2016 at Bengaluru. The Secretariat discussed the budget 2016 presented by the Finance Minister which echoed further liberalization of Indian Economy. The BJP led NDA government continued to pursue the anti-people and anti-employee policies more aggressively. In the situation the Secretariat decided to continue the struggle against these policies along with other working people. The secretariat unanimously endorsed to join the struggles including strike action, if any, emanating from National Convention of Workers at Delhi scheduled on 30th March 2016. Accordingly, as per the decisions of the said National convention, we call upon all employees to prepare for **ONE DAY** strike action on **2nd September, 2016**.

The secretariat also decided to continue our campaign in defense of public sector insurance industry. The meeting condemned the budget proposal to disinvest the public sector general insurance companies in this financial year and decided to unleash a campaign against this move of the government. Accordingly the meeting decided to write to the management to desist from any move that weakens the public sector general insurance and if any attempts from management to list or divest the company/s – the employees in general sector will observe A ONE DAY STRIKE ACTION. Apart

from this, the secretariat decided to campaign among the employees and the people about the dangers of disinvestment and its impact on Indian economy. The secretariat also decided to approach all the unions in general sector and build a united struggle against the disinvestment of public sector General Insurance companies.

The secretariat once again endorsed the decision to oppose the unilateral Transfer and Mobility Policy of LIC management and reiterated the demand for an immediate need for recruitment in the industry.

The meeting also noted the progress on the question of online petition to the Prime Minister on 33% reservation for women in Parliament and Legislative Bodies. We call upon all the units to ensure the signing on the petition so as to reach the target of 1 lac petition at all India level at the earliest.

The South Zone Insurance Employees' Federation (SZIEF) informed the secretariat that the 24th Conference of AIIEA will be held at KOCHI (Ernakulum), Kerala from 21st to 25th January, 2017. Our comrades in Kerala have already started preparation to host this conference successfully. We call upon all our units across the country to help financially the host unit for the success of the Conference.

The AIIEA will continue to follow up the pending issues with management for early solution.

EPFO Amendments: Government should learn the lessons

In the wake of workers' protests in Bengaluru and Vishakapatnam against the anti-worker PF amendments, and the misleading statement from the Labour Ministry, CITU, a major central trade union, issued the following statement on 20th April, 2016:

Government of India has been forced to withdraw the notifications, amending the rules for withdrawal of funds from EPFO. The government, which was not prepared to listen to the demands of the central trade unions and their representatives in the Central Board of Trustees of EPFO, had to withdraw it because of struggles of workers in different

parts of the country including Bengaluru and Visakhapatnam.

It is to be recalled that last year's Union Budget proposed to appropriate the so called unclaimed money from EPFO while this year the government proposed to tax EPFO contributions, which it had to withdraw later due to huge protests in different parts of

the country. These measures are part of the government policies aimed at dismantling the EPF itself.

In the meeting of the CBT on 29th March 2016, all the trade union representatives demanded withdrawal of this notification or to give an option to the workers to withdraw their money or to continue to keep it in EPFO. The government is trying to mislead by saying that the amendment on 10th February was done as per the suggestions of some trade unions.

Denial of full withdrawal creates serious

difficulties to the workers, particularly in situations where they do not have any job security and other statutory benefits, as in the case of garment sector where huge unrest has erupted.

CITU congratulates the workers who have forced the government to withdraw this unwanted amendment. It reiterates its demand that the government should hold proper consultations with trade unions before taking any policy decision that impacts the workers in any way.

NO TO PRIVATISATION OF PUBLIC SECTOR GENERAL INSURANCE COMPANIES

The Finance Minister announced during Budget presentation that the PSGI companies will be listed in the stock markets in the current financial year. This is in violation of the commitment made by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Finance that the amendment to General Insurance Business Nationalisation Act through Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill is only an enabling provision. It is left to the managements of these companies to decide to approach the capital market if they need to infuse additional capital. The announcement of the Finance Minister indicates that it is not the need for additional capital infusion but the need of the government to raise resources through disinvestment to meet the fiscal deficit target. The AIIEA is totally opposed to this move and has asked the employees to prepare for a bitter struggle to defeat the nefarious designs of the government. Reproduced below is the letter dated 5th April 2016 addressed to the CMDs of the companies warning them of serious industrial unrest if they move forward with the disinvestment plans.

Sub: Listing of Public Sector General Insurance Companies

Ref: Government announcement in the Parliament

You are aware that during the Budget session of Parliament recently, the Hon'ble Finance Minister has announced their wish to enlist the Public Sector General Insurance Companies in the Stock Exchanges. He further stated that public shareholding in the government owned companies is a way to ensure higher transparency and accountability. It is undoubtedly a remark on the functioning of our companies.

It may be remembered that ever since 1971, when 107 private General Insurance Companies were nationalised and Government formed General Insurance Corporation of India

with its four subsidiaries. We are extending our efficient and transparent services to the people of this country with all dedication and devotion. Soon after forming the GIC of India and its four subsidiaries, Government had invested Rs.19.50 Crore as Capital. Since then, and till today, all the 4 Companies are paying huge dividends to the Government out of their profits earned in the business and never approached Government for any further capital infusion. Further, by developing the business, the 4 Companies could create a huge investment base of Rs.1,14,320 Crore as on 31.03.2015.

During the year 1999, Government allowed private companies to carry on insurance business by enacting IRDA Bill in the Parliament. This was also effectively

faced by our 4 Companies and we could retain 55% of the market share against their tough competition, even today. This was possible only because of the various activities undertaken by the organisations in the industry.

At the time of amendments proposed to General Insurance Business Nationalisation Act (GIBNA) in the Parliament, the Government had made a mention that "Companies may raise their capital for increasing their business in rural and social sectors and to meet solvency margins". But the fact remains different, we are all aware that our 4 Public Sector General Insurance Companies have expanded our business to the remotest corners of the country for so long, to serve the people, with a network of 8,120 offices as on 31.03.2015, out of which 1,455 offices were opened in tier 4, 5 and 6 cities, where no private insurance company has opened a single office. All the four public sector general insurance companies are well within the solvency norms stipulated

by IRDA. Even for the Government's pet scheme of Pradhana Mantri Suraksha Bima Yogana, 90% of the policies were done by our 4 Companies only.

Thus, the actions of the Government will definitely hamper the economy and interest of the policy holders. Their actions are seemingly aimed at helping the private companies, at the cost of the Nation's economy.

With all these points placing before you, we urge upon not to initiate any steps for valuation of Assets of the Company. We strongly believe that you will definitely support our views on transparency and accountability of our mighty organizations and the best services rendered by our staff to the people of this country for all these decades.

So, we request you to refrain from taking-up any activity towards listing of the Company, which will jeopardize the Nation's and Policyholders' interest.

SUPREME COURT DELIVERS JUDGEMENT ON PENSION CASE

The Supreme Court Bench consisting of Justice Dipak Misra and Justice R.Bhanumathi delivered their judgement on 31st March 2016 on the issue of pension to the LIC employees. The Court held that the LIC Board Resolution cannot be implemented without the framing of Rules by the Government under Section 48 of the LIC (Amandement) Act. The Court, therefore set aside the orders of the High Courts of Rajasthan, Delhi and Punjab and Haryana at Chandigarh.

Taking into account the submission of Shree Ram Panchu, Senior Counsel of Petitioners at Delhi High Court that the said Court did not advert to the challenge to the Constitutional Validity of Rule 3A of the Pension Rules, the Supreme Court referred the issue to Delhi High Court and advised all the aggrieved parties to test the constitutional validity of Rule 3A in that

Court. The Delhi High Court has been asked to hear and dispose off the case by the end of August 2016. Rule 3A refers to the different rates of DA payable to the pensioners.

The Supreme Court has also passed orders for payment of 40 percent interim relief to all those who have retired prior to 1.8.1997 within six weeks of the order. The AIIPA has written to LIC to take immediate steps to pay to the pensioners as directed by the Court and also explore the possibility of ending the discrimination in payment of pension without prolonging the litigation.

The Office-Bearers of AIIPA are meeting at Chennai on May 2, 2016 to review the situation arising out of the Court Orders and to take appropriate organization actions.

TRADE UNIONS DECIDE ON ONE DAY STRIKE ON 2ND SEPTEMBER 2016

The Joint National Convention of Central Trade Unions and Industrial Federations held in Mavalankar Hall in Delhi on 30th March 2016 called the working class of the country to observe a countrywide general strike on 2nd September 2016 against the anti-people, anti-national and anti-worker policies of the NDA government.

Hundreds of workers from all over the country employed in the organized and un-organized sectors, public and private sectors - from public sector undertakings, banks, insurance, defence, state and central government departments, railways, telecom, port and dock, road transport, electricity, construction, different schemes of the government of India, home based workers, domestic workers and from many other sectors participated in the convention.

The Convention strongly criticized the NDA government for its total apathy towards the genuine demands that were being continuously raised by the united trade union movement through their 12 point charter of demands. The government's practice of bypassing the Parliament and implementing pro management measures through executive orders was seriously condemned by the Convention. It strongly criticized the government for totally ignoring the consensus recommendations of the Indian Labour Conference related to minimum wages, contract workers and scheme workers.



The Convention unanimously adopted resolutions condemning the Haryana government which has introduced Rajasthan type amendments to the labour laws, against the brutal lathi charge on the Honda workers in Rajasthan, against the labour law violations by the MNCs and in solidarity with the Pricol workers in Tamil Nadu and Maruti workers in Haryana.

The Convention called upon the working class to observe country wide general strike on 2nd September 2016 and start massive joint preparations at once to ensure that the participation of workers in the strike surpass even that of the general strike last year on the same day. It called upon the working class to take the unity attained at the national level to the grass root and work place level and also extend the unity to all other toiling sections of the society like the peasants, agricultural workers etc.

The Convention decided to take up the following programmes in preparation for the strike:

1. Joint conventions at the state, district and industry level during June - July 2016. The campaign to involve peasants, agricultural workers and all sections of toiling people in general
2. Day long Satyagraha at the state capitals and industrial centres on 9th August, on the Quit India Day
2. In addition innovative joint actions as part of the campaign as decided at the state level

The Convention was presided by Amit Yadav (INTUC), Amarjeet Kaur (AITUC) Raja Sreedhar (HMS), A K Padmanabhan (CITU), Satyavan Singh (AIUTUC), Sanjana (SEWA), Santosh Ray (AICCTU), Shatrujeet Singh (UTUC) and Mohan Kumar (LPF). G Sanjeeva Reddy from INTUC, Gurudas Dasgupta from AITUC, Harbhajan Singh Siddu from HMS, Tapan Sen from CITU, Sankar Saha from AIUTUC, Lata Yadav from SEWA, Santosh Rai from AICCTU, Abani Roy from UTUC and Subbaraman

The Shadowy World of Offshore Tax Havens

Santosh Kumar Mohapatra



INTRODUCTION

A huge disclosure of clandestine documents from a Panamanian law firm, Mossack Fonseca, known as Panama leak- revealed shadowy world of offshore tax havens. This has thrown new light on how the law makers, rich and powerful politicians, celebrities and other famous people use -rather misuse - tax havens not just to hide their assets and evade tax, but for a wide range of reprehensible activities: from money laundering to funding wars, from trading in human beings to drug dealings. Panama leak is the biggest leak in history, dwarfing the data released by the Wikileaks organisation in 2010 or clandestine files released by Edward Snowden in 2013. For context, if the amount of data released by Wikileaks was equivalent to the population of San Francisco, the amount of data released in the Panama Papers is the equivalent to that of India.

UGLY FACE OF RICH

Panama Paper has exposed ugly face of 12 current or former heads of state and government, including dictators accused of looting their own countries. More than 60 relatives and associates of heads of state and other politicians are also implicated. The files also reveal a suspected money-laundering ring involving close associates of *Russia's* President, Vladimir

Putin and the brother-in-law of China's President Xi Jinping; Ukraine President Petro Poroshenko; Argentina President Mauricio Macri; the late father of UK Prime Minister David Cameron and three of the four children of Pakistan's Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. The documents show that Iceland's Prime Minister, Sigmundur Gunnlaugsson, had an undeclared interest linked to his wife's wealth. The scandal also touches football's world governing body, FIFA. The leak has also revealed that more than 500 banks, including their subsidiaries

Financial crimes and political conspiracies aren't discrete events but the essence of neoliberalism. When economic system of world including India is dominated by crony capitalism and laws are made or interpreted to encourage rich to amass wealth and evade taxes, it is a pipe dream to expect that illegal account holders or owner of illegal shell companies will be punished.

and branches, registered nearly 15,600 shell companies with Mossack Fonseca.

Papers have also exposed rich Indians' tax dens, which names 500 Indians for alleged offshore holdings. What is shocking that Panama papers divulged that Amitabh Bachhan, the brand ambassador of Prime Minister Narendra Modi along with Abhishek Singh, son of Chhattisgarh Chief Minister and Lokesh Sharma, the advertiser of Arun Jaitley as head of DDCA had stashed huge black money in overseas shell companies at tax heavens with the help of Mossack Fonseca law firm. In the past, the Indian Express had, through the same consortium of investigative journalists, published a list of Indians who held secret accounts in a Swiss branch of the HSBC Bank. There was also the earlier exposure of the account holders in a Liechtenstein Bank. These were all indications of how wealthy Indians and companies use tax havens for evading taxes, funneling away illegal wealth acquired and money laundering.

TAX HAVENS: CONDUIT FOR STASHING BLACK MONEY ABROAD

Tax havens and the use of anonymous companies have complex and wide-ranging effects. A 2012 report from the Tax Justice Network estimated that between USD \$21 trillion and \$32 trillion is sheltered from taxes in unreported tax havens worldwide. However, according to Gabriel Zucman, an economist at

the University of California, 8 percent of the global financial wealth estimated at \$ 7.6 trillion is hidden in offshore tax havens- half of which belongs to developing countries.

Offshore investment is among the murkiest sectors of the financial world. Offshore means made, situated, or registered outside of one's national boundaries. The term offshore is used to describe foreign banks, corporations, investments and deposits. A tax haven in offshore is known as offshore tax haven. Offshore entities are legal but it obscures its origin and conceals the genuine owners, triggers money laundering. Money laundering is the process of creating the appearance that large amounts of money obtained from serious crimes, such as drug trafficking or terrorist activity, originated from a legitimate source. A tax haven is a state, country, or territory where, on a national level, certain taxes are levied at a very low rate or not at all. It also refers to countries, which have a system of financial secrecy in place. Financial secrecy can be used by foreign individuals to indulge in money laundering, tax evasion and to circumvent certain taxes.

A shell company or an anonymous company (though not all shell companies are anonymous) has the outward appearance of being a legitimate business. But it is just an empty shell. It does nothing but manage the money in it, while hiding who owns the money. They don't make any products, and they typically don't have an office or employees. They may also be known as international business companies, personal investment companies, front companies, or mailbox. Owner of shell companies are kept secret. But one or more "nominees" will run business matters for the company or trust. These agents don't manage the money directly but act on the owner's behalf, and their names will appear on all company documents. The money going in and out needs a home. For extra anonymity, some tax dodgers will open a bank account in a different offshore location than where the company or trust is registered. A company or shell company may legitimately move offshore for the purpose of tax avoidance or to enjoy relaxed regulations, but offshore

financial institutions obscure the ownership of assets and are mostly used for illicit purposes such as money laundering and tax evasion.

There are around 82 tax havens in the World. Panama is one of the oldest tax havens in the South America. Mossack Fonseca have linkage with more than 10 tax havens from which the British Virgin Islands have 113648 companies, Panama (48,360), Bahamas (15,915), Seychelles (15,182), Nieu (9611) Samoa (5307), British Anguilla (3253), Nevada (1260), Hong Kong (452), and United Kingdom have 148 companies. Those companies are linked to 14,153 clients of 200 countries and territories. In one of buildings of Cayman Island, there are 1200 companies. Around 1500 dollar to 4000 dollar is necessary to open a new company. In tax haven of Panama, Mossack Fonseca creates offshore shell companies (either readymade or new) for its global clientele and the secrecy that is guaranteed in these tax havens ensures a conducive environment for corrupt political leaders, their relatives and associates, businesspersons and celebrities to park their funds and take them out at will. Those companies also issue bearer bond and share. No name is mentioned in the share certificate or bond paper. Only holders of the certificates are treated as owners. This enables to obscure the owners of company. It is alleged that Mossack Fonseca has helped clients launder money, dodge sanctions and evade tax.

NEO-LIBERALISM IS ROOT OF GROWING OUTFLOW OF BLACK MONEY

Financial crimes and political conspiracies aren't discrete events but the essence of neoliberalism. The neo-liberal policy, which has spurred rampant consumerism and whetted the greed and rapacity of people, is behind the escalating generation and outflow of black money. As a sequel to neo-liberal policy, in January 2004, RBI allowed companies to invest up to 100 per cent of their net worth abroad, which has been enhanced later to 400 per cent of net worth due to pressure from rich and corporate. Introducing the Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) in February 2004, government permitted resident individuals to remit up to \$25,000 a year. This

now stands at \$250,000 a year. This means, an Indian resident individual can invest \$250,000 abroad in buying shares or property or gift or donate to anyone living abroad up to this limit every year without the permission of RBI. This policy enabled rich, wealthy, politicians to park black money in offshore account of tax haven and evade tax in the guise of foreign remittance. Hence, there has been sharp increase of outward remittances from 1094 million dollar in 2013-14 to 3024 million dollar in 2015-16.

When successive governments are talking against black money and promising to retrieve it, policy formulated by them either spurs black money generation or help black money holders to convert black money in to white. The finance minister and the RBI governor harp on the fact that many of these acquisitions and accounts abroad may be legitimate. This is evading the real issue. Why does the government have to legitimise shell company acquisitions and maintenance of secret accounts in tax havens? Why does it allow round tripping? Is it not to help rich to evade tax. Earlier the government had failed to get information from Mossack Fonseca on queries about certain accounts and business dealings. It did not even take the step of blacklisting Panama as an uncooperative tax territory, a step that the French government has taken.

India has also Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) with 82 countries identified as tax havens. *A company being registered in one tax haven country can do business in India but income can be taxed only in one country.* As a result of which many investors /companies get registered in tax haven countries such as Mauritius, Singapore, pay low or nil tax and invest in India and get exempted from tax especially capital gain tax. That is why FDI in India has become a conduit for tax evasion for both Indian and foreign investors. The process involved is known as "round tripping" which allows investors to hide their identity and avoid taxes by taking the investment (i.e., their black money) out of India and bringing it back to India

under the cloak of foreign investment. After the money becomes white through round tripping, it is freely repatriated.

CONCLUSION

Finance Minister Arun Jaitley has warned that those with illegal accounts will be pursued and punished. The government has set up a multi-agency group- Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), Reserve bank of India and Financial Intelligence Unit(FIU)- to probe the offshore accounts connected to Indians and mentioned in the Panama Papers. India is seeking to restart talks with the Central American country on a Tax Information Exchange Agreement (TIEA) that can help uncover information on wealth hidden away from public scrutiny. Those are just to hoodwink the people. The NDA government has passed the Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets (Imposition of Tax) Act, 2015 and provided a one-time compliance window to declare foreign assets and income. So far, these steps have yielded little by way of repatriation of transferred assets.

On the contrary, there was also misuse of Liberalised Remittance Scheme (LRS) by opening up of two foreign accounts. While money being transferred from foreign bank account "A" is disclosed to Indian tax department but transferred to foreign bank account "B" is not declared to the tax authorities. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had repeatedly promised during his election campaign that money illegally held by Indians abroad -in the region of Rs 80 lakh crore- would be brought back and distributed among the poor. But this NDA government has tried to protect only those who have not only stashed black money abroad but plundered national assets like Vijaya Mallya. When economic system of world including India is dominated by crony capitalism and laws are made or interpreted to encourage rich to amass wealth and evade taxes, it is a pipe dream to expect that illegal account holders or owner of illegal shell companies will be punished.

(The author is Joint Secretary of CDIEA)



TRAVESTY of DEMOCRACY

S.SIVASUBRAMANIAN

Article 110(1) of the Constitution of India clearly says what shall be considered as a Money bill. 110(2) says what shall not be deemed to be a Money Bill. Article 110(3) says "if any question arises whether a Bill is a Money Bill or not, the decision of the Speaker of the House of the People (Lok Sabha) thereon shall be final". Article 110(4) says "there shall be endorsed on every Money Bill when it is transmitted to the council of States (Rajya Sabha) under Article 109, and when it is presented to the President for assent under Article 111, the Certificate of the Speaker of the House of the people signed by him that it is a Money Bill".

The way in which the Aadhaar Bill 2016 has been passed in the Budget Session of the Parliament could set a precedent which could be followed in circumstances where the government at the Centre does not want a bill to be discussed in both the houses of the Parliament. The bill was manoeuvred through both the houses of Parliament by converting it as a 'Money Bill' by the Modi government.

The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill, 2016 was introduced in the Lok Sabha as a 'Money Bill'. The feature of a 'Money Bill' is that it will not be introduced in both the houses of Parliament. It will be 'introduced' in the Lok Sabha. It will only be 'transmitted' to the Rajya Sabha. The Upper House (Rajya Sabha) cannot make amendments to the bill. It can only recommend amendments to the Lok Sabha. The Lok Sabha can accept or reject the amendments. Further there is a provision in the law that if the Bill is not returned to the Lok Sabha within 14 days from the date of receipt by the Rajya Sabha, it may be deemed as passed by both the houses.

In the case of the Aadhaar Bill 2016, the Upper House made five amendments. Not taking cognisance of those amendments, the bill was passed by the Lok Sabha in its original form. Because the Modi government lacks majority in the Rajya Sabha, it has utilised the provisions of Article 110(3). The Speaker of the Lok Sabha has to certify this as a 'Money Bill'. The current Speaker has done it. But the reasons for its certification as a 'Money Bill' were not given by her. Though the Left and the other opposition parties are demanding the reasons, it is yet to be given by her.

THE NEO LIBERAL AGENDA

During the last few months, on several occasions, the Modi government, particularly the Finance Minister has been expressing his inclinations to chose this course(of Money Bill) to get over the government's lack of majority in the Rajya Sabha. Speaking on a few functions organised by the Business and Industry bodies in August 2015, the Finance Minister Arun Jaitley had said that "the government is looking at the option of obtaining legislative approval for some of the key reform bills by framing them as Money Bills". He went on to say that the time had now come to discuss the question as "to what extent can the indirectly elected House(Rajya Sabha) hold reform proposals passed by the directly elected house(Lok Sabha) which represents the will of the people". This clearly explains the neo-liberal mindset of the ruling dispensation.

IS 'PRIVACY' NOT AN ABSOLUTE RIGHT?

The Supreme Court had delivered an order in August 2015. It ruled that Aadhaar is not mandatory. The government had told the Supreme Court that 'privacy' was not

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a fundamental right and hence Aadhaar did not violate any fundamental right. The court noted that if privacy was not considered a fundamental right, Article 21 of the constitution would stand ‘denuded of vigour and vitality’. It referred the matter to a larger constitutional bench. It is still in the Court. In such a circumstance, the government has hastily pushed through the bill when the question of ‘privacy’ is still with the judiciary.

Arun Jaitely did not hide the intent of the government when he was saying “the government pre-supposes privacy as a fundamental right, even though no such right exists in law. Privacy is not an absolute right”. What a statement from the government which has the duty to protect the basic rights of its citizens.

The Aadhaar (Targeted Delivery of Financial and other Subsidies, Benefits and Services) Bill 2016 envisages a centralised database of Indian residents. The bill, as it stands today, violates the personal liberty of an individual because all the information about an individual contained in the Aadhaar can be made available to any agency upon request. But it fails to explain on what request? From whom and for what purpose? There is a danger of these informations being utilised to polarise the society by the agencies who get this information. In the Rajya Sabha while answering a question the Finance Minister had said that for considerations of national security, this personal information of Aadhaar could be shared with national security organisations. This has to be seen in the background of people who oppose its ideology are being branded as ‘anti-national’. And we have the experience of how the idea of national security was used during the time

of ‘Emergency’.

The route adopted by this government to pass this bill is a travesty of democracy. Rajya Sabha has been denied the opportunity to debate the various implications of the bill. Arun Jaitely’s statements show that the Money Bill route is going to be a regular feature. Jaitely referred to the opposition to the legislations like this as a ‘stalemate’ in Parliament and asserted that “if the stalemate continues, then a lot of legislation would have to be framed as Money Bills”. Is this not a threat to the democratic process as far as Parliamentary procedures are concerned? It was Modi in 2013, when he was the Chief Minister of Gujarat was saying “Congress men are dancing as if Aadhaar was a herb for all cures” when the then UPA government tried to push through the bill. Suddenly after coming to power, Modi seems to have ‘realised’ the power of the herb. Now the NDA government sees the Aadhaar as an instrument to further its neo-liberal policies. In its quest to go ahead with the neo-liberal agenda without any hindrance, the government adopts unscrupulous methods in changing the stance of the parties. It was evident in the changed stance of the Trinamool Congress on this Bill. The TMC which had initially opposed the bill, walked out of the Rajya Sabha when voting took place on the amendments to the Bill.

The ‘Money Bill’ route adopted by the Modi led NDA government in passing the Aadhaar Bill 2016 clearly indicates its preparedness to go to any extent to accomplish its neo-liberal agenda. This is an ominous sign. This needs a serious debate in order to safeguard democracy.

(The author is the Vice-President of SZIEF)



हमारी बैंकिंग प्रणाली और सरकार की नीतियाँ

हमारे देश की बैंकिंग प्रणाली इस वर्ष की पहली तिमाही में उस समय चर्चा का केन्द्र बनी जब न लौटाये जाने वाले बुरे ऋण अर्थात एनपीए0 की दिसम्बर 2015 की संख्या सार्वजनिक हुई। इससे पूर्व प्रधानमंत्री जन धन योजना के अन्तर्गत लक्ष्य से अधिक खाते खोलकर इस देश की बैंकिंग प्रणाली ने सरकार सहित सब लोगों की सराहना बटोरी थी। लेकिन दिसम्बर 2015 के एनपीए0 के आकड़ों ने बैंकिंग व्यवस्था और खास तौर पर सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बैंकिंग व्यवस्था को हिला के रख दिया क्योंकि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बैंकों का एनपीए0 निजी क्षेत्र की बैंकों की अपेक्षा अधिक था। एक सूचना के अनुसार सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बैंकों का एडवान्स कुल एडवान्स का 74 प्रतिशत था जबकि इन बैंकों का सकल एनपीए0 कुल एनपीए0 का 86 प्रतिशत था। देश की बैंकिंग प्रणाली में एनपीए0 की स्थिति निम्नलिखित तालिका से स्पष्ट हो जायेगी:-

इसलिये यह आवश्यक है कि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बैंक व निजी क्षेत्र के बैंकों के इस अन्तर को अच्छी तरह समझ लिया जाये।

माह	शुद्ध एन.पी.ए. प्रतिशत में	कुल एन.पी.ए. प्रतिशत में	संकटग्रस्त संपत्तियाँ प्रतिशत में
मार्च 2013	2.3	3.4	09.2
सितम्बर 2013	2.3	4.2	10.2
मार्च 2014	2.2	4.1	10.0
सितम्बर 2014	2.5	4.5	10.7
मार्च 2015	2.5	4.6	11.1
सितम्बर 2015	2.8	5.1	11.3

राष्ट्रीयकरण:- हमारे देश में बैंकिंग का इतिहास बहुत पुराना नहीं है। आधुनिक अर्थों में बैंकिंग का इतिहास 18 वीं सदी में शुरू हुआ जब 1770 में बैंक आफ हिन्दुस्तान के नाम से जानी जाने वाली एक बैंक प्रारम्भ हुई परन्तु यह बैंक 1830 तक ही चली तथा यह 1829-32 में बंद हो गई। इसके पश्चात जनरल बैंक सन् 1786 में प्रारम्भ हुई परन्तु यह बैंक भी असफल हो गई। कहा जाता है कि 1913 व 1918 के बीच लगभग 94 बैंकें बन्द हो गईं

तथा बैंकों में काम करने वाले कर्मचारियों की यूनियन ने बैंकों के राष्ट्रीयकरण की मांग करना प्रारम्भ कर दी। स्टेट बैंक आफ इण्डिया पहली बार बैंक आफ कलकत्ता और फिर बैंक आफ बंगाल के नाम से शुरू हुई। इसके अलावा बैंक आफ मद्रास व बैंक आफ बम्बई थीं जिन्हें प्रेसीडेंसी गर्वनमेंट नियंत्रित करती थी। इन तीनों बैंकों का 1921 में विलय करके इसे इम्पीरियल बैंक का नाम दिया गया तथा स्वतन्त्रता प्राप्ति के पश्चात 1955 में इसका नाम बदलकर स्टेट बैंक आफ इण्डिया कर दिया गया। 1934 में रिजर्व बैंक आफ इण्डिया अधिनियम बनाया गया तथा 1935 में रिजर्व बैंक आफ इण्डिया की स्थापना की गई। इस बीच भारत सरकार द्वारा अपनी आर्थिक नीति व पहले औद्योगिक प्रस्ताव का एलान किया गया। मिश्रित अर्थव्यवस्था को देश का लक्ष्य घोषित किया गया परन्तु धन की कमी होने के बावजूद बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण नहीं किया गया। बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण 1969 में तब किया गया जब इंदिरा गांधी इस देश की प्रधानमंत्री थीं। उन्होंने सबसे बड़ी 14 व्यवसायिक बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण कर दिया तथा इस कार्य के लिये उन्होंने जनवरी 1969 में बैंकिंग कम्पनीज (एक्वीजीशन एण्ड ट्रान्सफर आफ अंडरटेकिंग)

नाम का एक अध्यादेश जारी किया। दो माह के अन्दर ही संसद ने एक विधेयक पारित कर इस अध्यादेश को अपनी स्वीकृति प्रदान कर दी तथा इस प्रकार 14 सबसे बड़ी व्यवसायिक बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण कर दिया गया। 1980 में पुनः 6 बैंकों का राष्ट्रीयकरण करने के पश्चात देश में राष्ट्रीयकरण बैंकों की संख्या 20 हो गई परन्तु 1993 में न्यू बैंक आफ इंडिया के पंजाब नेशनल बैंक में विलय होने के बाद इन राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंकों की संख्या 19 हो गई। इससे पूर्व 1949 में बैंकिंग रेगुलेशन अधिनियम पारित किया जा चुका था जिसके अनुसार बैंकों का नियंत्रण व नियमन रिजर्व बैंक के जिम्मे कर दिया गया था। रिजर्व बैंक को इस बात का भी अधिकार दिया गया था कि कोई भी नई बैंक अथवा मौजूदा बैंक की कोई शाखा रिजर्व बैंक से लाइसेंस लिये बिना नहीं खुल सकती तथा दो बैंकों में साझा निदेशक नहीं हो सकते। शिड्डल बैंक वे बैंकें हैं जो इस अधिनियम के सिड्डल-2 में शामिल हैं। इस वर्गीकरण का व्यवसायिक बैंकों व राष्ट्रीयकृत बैंकों से सम्बन्ध नहीं है। परन्तु 1991 में स्थितियाँ तब बदल गईं जब तत्कालीन सरकार ने ऐसी नीतियाँ अपनाईं जो राष्ट्रीयकरण के विरुद्ध थीं तथा निजी

When the quantum of NPAs of our Banks as in Decemeber 2015 became public in the first quarter of this year, it spurred an intense debate on the health of our Banking system, particularly of those in the public sector, which is being used as an alibi for transferring them into private hands again, obliterating the fact that this is actually the result of the aggressive implementation of neo-liberal policies.

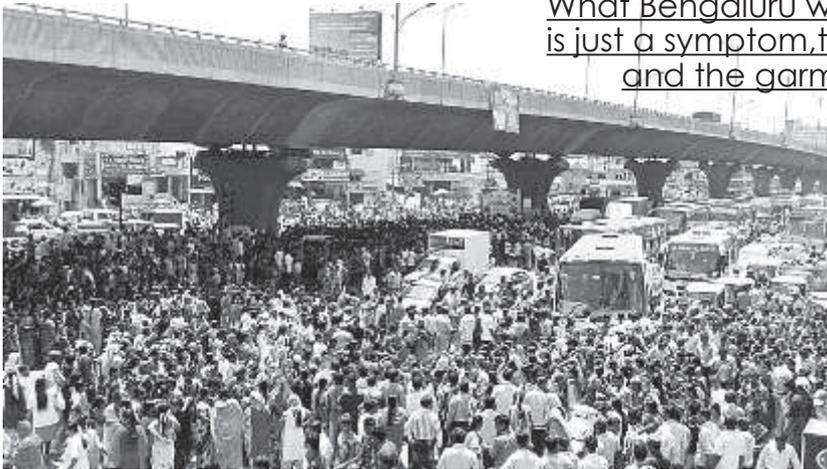
बैंकों को प्रोत्साहन देती थीं। इन नीतियों के कारण ही न केवल निजी क्षेत्र की बैंकों हमारे देश में खुली वरन 74 प्रतिशत प्रत्यक्ष विदेशी निवेश के साथ विदेशी बैंकों को भी भारत में अपनी शाखाएँ खोलने की अनुमति प्रदान की गई और बाद में उनके वोटिंग राइट पर 10 प्रतिशत का प्रतिबन्ध भी हटा लिया गया।

विनिवेश:- 1991 के संकट का कोई सम्बन्ध सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र से नहीं था। यह संकट तो भुगतान संतुलन एवं विदेशी मुद्रा का संकट था जिसके लिये उनसे पहले की विभिन्न सरकारों द्वारा विदेशों से ऋण लेना और ऋण को ब्याज सहित वापस करना ही जिम्मेदार थे परन्तु इसकी गाज सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के ऊपर गिरी और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में विनिवेश आने वाली सभी सरकारों का प्रमुख कार्यक्रम बन गया। 1991 के बाद आने वाली सरकारें पूँजीवादी विकास से बहुत अधिक प्रभावित थीं। जिन बैंको का राष्ट्रीयकरण किया गया था उन सभी में अब विनिवेश हो चुका है तथा सेण्ट्रल बैंक व इंडियन बैंक के अतिरिक्त सभी बैंकों में सरकार की हिस्सेदारी 80 प्रतिशत से कम ही बची है। स्टेट बैंक आफ इण्डिया में तो सरकार के पास केवल 58.6 प्रतिशत शेयर हैं। पूर्ववर्ती यू0पी0ए .प्प की सरकार यह कहती थी कि जब तक किसी उद्योग में सरकार के पास 51 प्रतिशत शेयर हैं तब तक उद्योग का सार्वजनिक चरित्र नहीं बदल सकता। उसी सरकार के एक मंत्री श्री जयराम रमेश ने आरोप लगाया है कि वर्तमान सरकार संसद में एक विधेयक पारित कराना चाहती है जिसके अ?नसार बैंकों के केवल 33 प्रतिशत शेयर ही सरकार के पास रहेंगे। यदि ऐसा होता है तो यह बहुत दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण होगा क्योंकि उस दशा में देश का विकास निजी क्षेत्र पर निर्भर हो जायेगा जो बैंकों का भी नियंत्रित करेगा। वर्तमान सरकार वैसे भी नव-उदारवादी व्यवस्था को तेजी से लागू कर रही है और पूरी दुनियाँ से भारत में निवेश करने के लिये भीख मांग रही है। पिछली 17 फरवरी को आर्थिक मामलों की केन्द्रीय मंत्रिमण्डल की एक समिति (सी.सी.ई.ए.) ने सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के उपक्रमों में सरकार की हिस्सेदारी को बेचने के कई प्रस्तावों को स्वीकृति प्रदान कर दी है तथा विनिवेश योजना के लिये तीन स्तरीय संरचना का गठन किया गया है जिसमें पहले स्तर पर नीति आयोग, दूसरे स्तर पर

प्रशासनिक विभाग तथा तीसरे स्तर पर सचिवों का एक समूह शामिल किया गया है। वर्ष 2015-16 के लिये इस सरकार ने विनिवेश के माध्यम से 66,500 करोड रूपये जुटाने का लक्ष्य रखा था जिसमें 28,550 करोड रूपये रणनीतिक बिक्री से प्राप्त किये जाने थे। यह अलग बात है कि विभिन्न कारणों से सरकार कोई रणनीतिक बिक्री नहीं कर पाई और उसने 32,000 करोड रूपये सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों में अपनी अल्पांश हिस्सेदारी बेचकर ही कमाये। इस वर्ष अर्थात् 2016-17 में भी सरकार ने विनिवेश से 56,500 करोड रूपये अर्जित करने का लक्ष्य रखा है जिसमें 20,500 करोड रूपये रणनीतिक बिक्री से प्राप्त करने का लक्ष्य है। रणनीतिक बिक्री वह बिक्री होती है जिसमें उस सार्वजनिक उपक्रम का प्रबन्धन व नियंत्रण दोनों ही किसी निजी क्षेत्र के व्यक्ति या कम्पनी को दे दिये जाते हैं जैसे कि अटल बिहारी वाजपेयी के प्रधानमन्त्रित्व काल में विदेश संचार निगम को टाटा व वाल्को को वेदांता समूह को बेच दिया गया था। बेसल नियम भी बैंकों के स्वामित्व के लिये घातक बनते जा रहे हैं क्योंकि हम उन बेसल नियमों को अपना रहे हैं जिनके लिये देश की बैंकिंग प्रणाली तैयार नहीं है।

निष्कर्ष:- इससे यही निष्कर्ष निकलता है कि देश में बैंकिंग प्रणाली की वर्तमान स्थिति के लिये सरकार की नीतियाँ ही जिम्मेदार हैं। यदि बैंकों को? पर्याप्त पूँजीकरण के लिये धन की जरूरत पड़ती है तो यह सरकार की जिम्मेदारी है कि वह प्रदान करे क्योंकि एक तो वह बैंकों में बहुलांश हिस्से की स्वामी है और दूसरे वह विलफुल डिफाल्टों के नाम सार्वजनिक नहीं करना चाहती। किंगफिशर एयरलाइन्स के अध्यक्ष विजय माल्या को पहले तो देश छोड़कर जाने दिया गया और अब उनके विरुद्ध कार्यवाही की जा रही है। विजय माल्या पर बैंकों का 9000 करोड रूपये का ऋण है। ऐसा लगता है कि सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंकों को जान बूझकर बदनाम किया जा रहा है ताकि उन्हें निजी हाथों में सोंपा जा सके क्योंकि एक कहावत है कि यदि कुत्ते को मारना है तो उसे पहले पागल घोषित कर दो। पूर्व आडीटर एण्ड कंट्रोलर जनरल विनोद राय ने यह राय व्यक्त की है कि ऐसा करके सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बैंकों के अधिकारियों की ऋण स्वीकृत करने अथवा स्वीकृत ऋण को वसूल करने की क्षमता को कमजोर नहीं किया जाना चाहिये। विनोद राय को पिछले ही दिनों बैंक्स बोर्ड ब्यूरो का अध्यक्ष नियुक्त किया गया है तथा उन्होंने यह राय नेशनल इंस्टीट्यूट आफ बैंक मैनेजमेंट के 12 वें दीक्षांत समारोह में व्यक्त की है। उन्होंने कहा है कि बुरे ऋण की समस्या को खतरे के रूप में नहीं देखा जाना चाहिये।

सरकार द्वारा नव-उदारवादी नीतियाँ तेजी के साथ लागू करने के कारण ही बैंकों की आज यह हालत बनी है। यह इस तथ्य से स्पष्ट है कि राष्ट्रीयकरण के समय राष्ट्रीयकृत बड़ी व्यवसायिक बैंकों का एडवान्स 85 प्रतिशत था जो अब घटकर 74 प्रतिशत रह गया है। यदि देश की बैंकिंग प्रणाली को सुधारना है तो सरकारों को अपनी नीतियों पर लगाम कसनी होगी।



What Bengaluru witnessed on April 18&19th is just a symptom, the PF law was just a trigger and the garment industry is just one small section. As we build and showcase a new economy, there is little forward movement in ensuring social security for the millions in the lower-to-middle income groups.....

The underbelly of India's silicon valley

T.M. VEERARAGHAV
(COURTESY: THE HINDU 22/4/2016)

They don't work in cubicles and are not constantly on social media sites protesting against bad roads, traffic, power cuts or water shortage. They don't grandstand on political ideologies and discuss India as a global power, for their realities are harshly local; it's about everyday survival.

They are Dalits, Other Backward Classes (OBCs), some even from forward castes and different religions, but united by a common economic plight. And they proved they can come out in their thousands to protest, suddenly, without any concrete effort at mobilisation. When they did, they paralysed a city, one portrayed to the world as India's silicon valley, its IT powerhouse.

What happened in Bengaluru this week has a lesson for every Indian city. There is a giant underbelly of disparity and discontent that exists and it can erupt, suddenly. It can challenge the myths of economic progress and images that governments have cautiously projected before the world. Images laced in terms like 'investor confidence' and 'ease of doing business'.

A spontaneous peoples' protest

There is still an air of confusion over how protests by garment factory workers erupted

and galvanised, which crippled normal life in Bengaluru for two days and turning 'extremely violent' by the city's standards. It started at one factory, where photocopies of a newspaper report stating that workers cannot withdraw employer's contribution to their provident fund (PF) till 58 years of age were circulated. A rage erupted, and workers, predominantly women, took to the roads in what was described by the police force as a "flash strike" on Monday.

Word spread like wildfire to other garment factories in the area: there are about 8-10 in the cluster. In under an hour, workers from all the factories poured out, paralysing Hosur Road. Ironically, the road is the arterial highway that leads to Electronics City, which houses campuses of several IT majors and is the showcase for a new India or 'surging economy'.

No high-tech device could have predicted the event or how it would galvanise the next day. Garment factory workers in several other parts of the city, again where factories exist in clusters, came out to the streets. Corporate offices and police stations were attacked, buses set on fire and roads blocked for hours.

Trade union leaders were clueless — they were planning a protest, but no one anticipated a sudden burst of anger, of this nature. The police were equally clueless, as one officer was reported as saying, “When we wanted to talk to their leader, they were clueless and so were we.” This protest had no one leader or negotiator for demands, it was a sudden burst of pent-up anger, triggered by the new PF ‘reform’.

These factories exist in clusters and hence workers in garment manufacturing units could mobilise themselves instantly. There are an estimated 5,00,000 people working in garment factories in the city. Predominantly women (estimated to be around 85 per cent) and for them, usually with salaries of around Rs. 6,500 a month, the few hundred rupees they save as PF is the only social security.

Symptom of a larger angst

This is where the crux of the issue lies. The PF law was just a trigger and the garment industry is just one small section. As we build and showcase a new economy, there is little forward movement in ensuring social security for the millions in the lower-to-middle income groups.

For instance, quality health care and education remain a pipe dream, and survival in a ‘booming economy’ is a daily battle. Unionisation is restricted in garment units and hence workers have little or no grievance-redressal mechanism or collective bargaining. Against this backdrop, amendments to labour laws proposed for enactment in Karnataka, like in many other States, increase work hours for workers and arguably shifts the balance in favour of factory owners.

Such policies have ensured that even a basic level of trust in the system is eroded. In this situation, when savings like PF, which for decades the working class in India has taken as the ultimate security, can become inaccessible at a time of need, it shakes the

workers’ faith completely. It’s not anger but desperation to save the little they have.

To date, Union governments have been extremely cautious in even altering PF interest rates. Did the illusion that India has changed allow the Centre to try changing PF laws?

It is important to address the difference in the way PF is looked at by those surging with a booming corporate economy and workers, like those in garment factories — PF is not the only saving mechanism for the young manager or techie, for many it’s just a mandatory contribution that one has to make.

The garment workers have proved that there is a vast, angry India outside swanky offices. And their protest is a strong message to the government and the ‘booming economy’ not to tamper with the little they have. Elections in States, including Kerala and West Bengal where the Left has a strong presence, may have ensured immediate withdrawal of the controversial PF rule by the Union government, but the real test is to see whether the intent will be to understand the concerns of the labour and lower income classes.

It’s time to focus on building systems and policies that offer them a larger stake in economic and social progress. The PF law was just a trigger to one set of a large population that works in semi-organised industries. And there are millions, like taxi drivers and construction labourers, who do not even have a shot at a provident fund. The trigger for each of these sections could be different, but their frustrations are the same and the impact they could have if they galvanise in protest could be enormous.

What Bengaluru witnessed is just a symptom, labour led by no union that had the potential to bring parts of a city to a standstill and forced the Union government to take note.



Logistics Exchange Memorandum Agreement

An unequal agreement

M. K. Bhadrakumar

Former Ambassador

(Courtesy: The Tribune – 18/4/2016)



The Narendra Modi government appears to have taken two steps forward and one step back with regard to the signing of the 'foundational agreements', which the United States has been pressing for since 2004. One of the three - Logistics Exchange Memorandum Agreement (LEMA) - has been "agreed in principle" during the visit by US Defence Secretary Ashton Carter, but for some incomprehensible reason deferred by a "few weeks" or a "few months" for the actual signatures.

Typically, the Modi government has not cared to consider public opinion - although this would be a landmark event, since the pact will give the US forces access to Indian military bases, which signifies a great leap forward in independent India's foreign and security policy doctrines.

What necessitates this breath-taking leap of faith at the present juncture remains unclear. The previous UPA government had profound reservations about signing the foundational agreements, as they'd erode India's strategic autonomy and adversely affect its independent foreign policies. The LEMA remains an unequal pact insofar as India is not a global power, it does not have an interventionist agenda abroad and has no need to access US military bases for logistics, and, of course, none of the friendly countries with which India holds military exercises ever demanded such pacts as an underpinning of cooperation.

The perception will arise in the region and beyond that India has shed its traditional aversion to military alliances and non-aligned policies and proposes to bandwagon with the US. Such a perception does not do India

The Sangh Parivar, which mentors the government, even claims monopoly to judge what is 'anti-national' on university campuses. And yet in this case the RSS in particular is betraying a comprador mentality by making India a junior partner to the US for reasons best known to it. The doublespeak is simply stunning. What explains such extreme vulnerability to US pressure? If the US expects them to bend, our hollow men are only too willing to crawl.

good. Specifically, the perception that India is drifting into an alliance with the US will generate apprehensions in the Russian mind about defence cooperation with India. Russia has been and continues to be the principal source of cutting-edge military technology for the Indian armed forces. Despite the high-sounding rhetoric of the US-Indian Defence Technology and Trade Initiative and 'Make in India', the ground reality is that so far what has happened under these rubrics is, plainly put, zilch. Mr. Carter's visit did not result in a single major project actually taking off.

On the other hand, the US has openly sought to get India on board its so-called 'rebalance' in Asia. With a view to countering China's rise, the US proposes to create an alliance system in Asia - an 'Asian NATO' - in which it envisages a pivotal role for India, alongside Japan and Australia. The US game plan is to co-opt India into an alliance system

based on the 'interoperability' of the armed forces which of course will demand the use of similar weapon systems. Within the NATO system, what the US ensures is that the 'interoperability' requires extensive use of US-made weapons, which in turn cements Washington's trans-Atlantic leadership role in decision-making on all political and military issues.

In the Indian context, a prime US motive will be to erode the Indo-Russian strategic partnership. The 'isolation' of Russia is a major global objective of the US. On the contrary, any atrophy of strategic ties with Russia is fraught with serious consequences for India's long-term interests as an emerging power in a multipolar world order. India has shared interests with Russia within the ambit of BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

Equally, any close identification with the US' rebalance strategy in Asia can create serious complications and distrust between India and China. The point is, India is not seeking confrontation with China. Its focus is on normalising the relations with China through a steady process at the bilateral level. Indeed, the UPA government achieved remarkable success in this direction. An intensive dialogue at the top levels of leadership became a regular feature of our diplomacy and the two countries were able to reach a point where they agreed that they had much more in common by way of shared interests than the differences that might keep them apart. Unfortunately, the Modi government has not kept up the UPA's momentum of high-level dialogue.

Added to this, if India gravitates toward the US-sponsored alliance system to counter China, the delicate equilibrium in the Sino-Indian normalisation process is sure to get affected. It stands to reason that India's long term advantage lies in developing a new type of relationship with China based on equality, mutual respect, and balanced interests. At the end of the day, China remains a unique - even irreplaceable - source of investment and trade for India's development in the short and medium term, and nothing should be allowed to jeopardise it.

Cartoon courtesy Manjul DNA



What explains the Modi government's reticence about signing the LEMA during Mr. Carter's visit? The only plausible explanation could be that the government is hard-pressed to explain how this paradigm shift in post-independent India's foreign and security policies is justifiable or is in the national interest. The nervousness hides a guilty conscience that without taking recourse to public discussions over the pros and cons of such a major policy shift and lacking a national consensus in the matter, the country is being hustled to go in this direction. A healthy democratic practice demands that the relevant issues in such a policy matter are debated in Parliament even if the LEMA is not a treaty that requires ratification. This was the course taken by the UPA government while concluding the India-US civil nuclear agreement in 2008.

The shocking thing in all this is that the Modi government stands on a platform of strident nationalism. The Sangh Parivar, which mentors the government, even claims monopoly to judge what is 'anti-national' on university campuses. And yet in this case the RSS in particular is betraying a comprador mentality by making India a junior partner to the US for reasons best known to it. The doublespeak is simply stunning. What explains such extreme vulnerability to US pressure? If the US expects them to bend, our hollow men are only too willing to crawl. What is their Achilles' heel? Their strident nationalism smacks of hypocrisy..

ALL INDIA TRADE UNION CLASSES FOR ZONAL LEADERSHIP AT BENGALURU

Reportage : Shreekant Mishra

AIIEA had organized a Trade Union Workshop for zonal leadership at Bengaluru from 28-30 March 2016. This was the first experiment at the All India level. The classes were held in the campus of Regional College of Co-operative Management, Bengaluru. Around 130 participants from across the country participated in the classes. The topics for the classes were quite interesting and had a direct bearing on the myriad issues constantly haunting the minds of the employees.

The topic for the first class was "Evolution of Indian Economy and Post Liberalisation Policy". Com. Vijoo Krishnan, Joint Secretary, All India Kishan Sabha was the teacher for this class and Com. K. Venugopal, Vice President AIIEA was the Principal. Com. Vijoo Krishnan dealt at length on the issue of Evolution of the Indian economy and said that British colonialism had systematically deindustrialized countries like India. Tracing the roots of India's underdevelopment, he criticized David Ricardo's Comparative Cost Advantage Theory. According to the Comparative Advantage theory of Ricardo, two trading countries can obtain gains from trade even if absolute costs/prices of production of all commodities are initially higher in one country. The only condition required is that the relative costs/prices differ in both the countries. Ricardo argued that the weaker partner in competition can also have gains from trade by availing comparative advantage. According to Com. Krishnan, the Ricardian theory essentially prescribed that the less developed countries should not go ahead with industrialization, but export food and raw materials to fulfill the industrial needs of the developed countries. The net result was that England, along with today's advanced

capitalist countries, industrialized directly at the cost of deindustrialization and underdevelopment of the non-white colonies like India.

He considered the evolution of Indian economy in the post- independence period in four phases: Period since independence in 1947 to the crisis period of 1965-66, Period of Stagnation (1966-1980), Period of Growth driven by government expenditure (1980-90) and finally the Reforms Period since 1990-91. The economic policy regime in the aftermath of independence had its roots in the freedom struggle itself. Freedom in those days meant freedom from the domination of metropolitan capital and metropolitan commodities. This gave the State a primary role in the economic activities. As a result, the public sector expanded rapidly enough to provide crucial infrastructure services, industrial raw materials and capital goods to sustain industrial growth.





Industrial growth also picked up momentum in this period and India built up a diversified industrial base. By the mid- 1960s, however, the situation changed. This was a period when growth decelerated substantially relative to that recorded during the first fifteen years after independence. Not only was the stimulus offered by import substitution exhausted, but the ability of the state to raise resources was also undermined. India's monopolists did absolutely nothing other than using state intervention as a device to consolidate and expand their own monopolistic positions. This led to the secular stagnation of the late 1960s. The third phase i.e. the 1980s were however a period of relatively high growth. Government spending provided a big stimulus to the economy. There was substantial liberalization of imports and there was heavy reliance on external commercial borrowing by the state. This led to the balance of payments crisis of the 1990s and created the material condition for the overt shift in policy towards the neo liberal economic reforms in the 1990s. India formally entered the neoliberal regime in 1991 when it borrowed from the IMF and as a part of loan conditionality had to adopt the structural adjustment programme. Com. Krishnan lucidly explained the deleterious impact of the main themes of the reforms programme i.e. Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation. Drawing upon his vast theoretical knowledge and rich practical experience from years of work in the kisan front, he gave a bird's

eye view of the disastrous consequences of the reforms on the lives and livelihoods of agricultural workers, landless labourers, the peasants, workers and people at large. He exuded confidence that it is possible to resist the neo-liberal policies in a resolute manner through coordinated action between the peasantry, agricultural workers and workers along with other democratic forces.

The topic for the second class was "Liberalisation- Changes in Rural Workers, Urban Middle Class and Working Class". Com. V. Srinivasa Rao, Central Secretariat Member of CPI (M) was the teacher for this class and Com. Ashok Tiwari, Joint Secretary AIIEA was the Principal. Describing the changes that liberalization has brought about among various sections of the people, Com. Rao said that its impact has been wide ranging. He felt that liberalization not only pertained to economic aspects; it was as much social as it was political. Liberalisation has affected our day-to-day lives in such a manner that it has brought about 'structural' changes in the lives of the people. And this probably was the reason why liberalization is also called Structural Reforms by its proponents.

Com. Rao said that liberalization had



affected the three main sectors of the economy i.e. Agriculture, Industry (manufacturing) and Service sector. Liberalisation has led to the worsening of the plight of the agricultural workers. The share of agriculture in our gross domestic product (GDP) has declined from 54.56% in 1951-52 to 17% in 2014-15. But as much as 50% of our workforce is still engaged in agriculture. Because of the huge disguised unemployment in the agriculture sector, yield per hectare has not only become low but agriculture has become unprofitable. Increase in the cost of inputs and cost of credit has contributed in large measure to the distress in the farm sector. Taking this as an opportunity, the votaries of liberalization are making attempts to convert farm centric agriculture to corporate centric agriculture. Faced with increasing uncertainty in the villages owing to agricultural distress, people are now migrating to the urban areas in large numbers. This has given rise to new problems related to urban development and planning. The situation in the manufacturing sector was no better either. India was facing the music of the export led growth strategy because of the elusive recovery in the developed world. Our exports had taken a beating. The domestic market was in the grip of recessionary trends because of inadequate demand. Employment was therefore not only not growing, but the development model had become one of job loss growth. Com. Rao maintained that addressing the problems of growing unemployment has become a big problem in view of the fact that not only was unemployment growing, but 'unemployment business' was also growing in tandem. 'Skill development' being mooted by the Modi government was nothing but a ploy to hoodwink the unemployed, averred Com. Rao.

According to Com. Rao, the only sector that has seen some appreciable growth in the reforms period is the Service sector. The growth of the service sector has led to an expansion in the ranks of the middle class and new middle classes have emerged. The growth of the service sector and the consequential increase

in the purchasing power of the new middle class has led to increased commodification. Everything, according to Com. Rao- art, literature, culture- has become a commodity. This has given rise to compulsive consumerism and a new value system. When it comes to fighting the evils of the system, the standard response seems to be: "why me". When it comes to sharing the spoils of the system, the response invariably changes to: "why not me". The sum and substance of the class was that while charting the course of liberalization, what was important was not only the rates of growth but also their ethical and moral dimensions.

Com. B. V. Raghavulu, Polit Bureau Member of the CPI (M) took the class on "Caste and Indian Society". Com. M. Kunhikrishnan, Vice President AIIEA was the Principal. Com. Raghavulu said that the practice of caste system was essentially the denial of dignity of labour and one cannot establish an egalitarian form of society without destroying the scourge of the caste system. He was emphatic that India cannot aspire to become a super power without destroying the menace of caste. He then went on to demolish the commonly held notion that working class movement need not engage its attention on the caste question since it was basically concerned with class divisions in the society. After a brief but beautiful theoretical incursion on the definitions of caste and class, he made it clear that to understand caste better one had to have a class analysis. Giving a theoretical exposition of the origin of caste in India, he outlined the main contours of the theory of divine origin, theory of conspiracy by Brahmins, racial theory of caste system,



Dumont's theory of social harmony and materialistic theory of origin of caste.

He said that caste is not a static concept, it is a dynamic one. It has a beginning, it has its development; so it will have its end too. Caste therefore is not eternal or immutable. He felt that the caste system in India is the superstructure of an economic base which is pre-capitalist. In order to put an end to the superstructure, it is necessary to hit the base which is nothing but the feudal and semi-feudal agrarian relations. Describing the developments in Hyderabad central university which led to the institutional murder of Rohit Vimula as symptomatic of the growing consciousness among the oppressed castes to rebel against their conditions of social oppression, he felt that this consciousness needs to be nurtured and strengthened with an effort to integrate this consciousness with the struggles against the present socio economic system.

The topic for the fourth class was "Communalism and Indian Society". Com. Subhashini Ali, Polit Bureau Member of the CPI (M) was the teacher while Com. Satanjib Das, Vice President AIIEA was the Principal. Com. Subhashini Ali began her presentation by stating that communalism is basically an ideology; a belief system through which polity or society is viewed. According to her, communalism started taking roots in India in the mid eighteenth century and developed very fast in the first half of the nineteenth century. Giving a historical account of the development of communal ideology in India, she said that people were not divided along

religious lines right from the ancient times. British colonialism was unnerved to see the unity of the Indian people especially during the 1857 mutiny and wanted to drive a wedge in their unity. British colonialism used the Census operations of 1891 to ask people about their religion and thus religious identities were consciously promoted. While the Census operations wanted to give the impression among the Hindus that they were the majority in India, the provision of separate electorates for people belonging to different religions led the Muslim league to claim that they were the natural leaders of Muslims in India. She recounted in detail the various phases and facets of communal mobilization in India and said that this was the biggest threat to the unity of the toilers and to the unity and integrity of India. The nation which has been a witness to gory communal violence in the days of partition cannot afford to be vivisected any further on communal lines, averred Com. Ali.

She implored that the working class movement must see through the designs of the neo-liberal communal project in the context of the BJP coming to power at the centre and unleashing its vicious propaganda. Com. Subhashini said that the Indian capitalists support communal forces to the hilt in order to divide the unity of the working class. A divided working class is in the supreme interest of capital because unequal people work for unequal wages. She however exuded confidence that the Indian people would rise to the occasion and defeat the communal forces.

The last class was on the topic "Institution and Organisation: Challenges". Com. Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA was the teacher for the class and Com. A.K. Bhatnagar, Joint Secretary AIIEA was the Principal. This class was virtually a recapitulation of the earlier four classes plus a critical examination of the present position of the insurance industry. Com. Amanulla Khan said that both the institution (LIC and Public Sector General Insurance) and Indian Society were under a tremendous ideological attack.



He said that all that we stood for during the national liberation movement were under attack today. He wanted the cadres of AIIEA to understand that the idea of India is not just political, it is also economic, and it is as much cultural. Unfortunately however, these political, economic and social structures are being shaken from their very foundations by the ruling classes. It can be said that the very idea of India was under attack today. He lamented that while free India rejected the domination of foreign capital, today all our economy and politics is being sought to be reorganized with the singular objective of appeasing foreign capital.

Com. Amanulla Khan said that the insurance industry is going through a difficult period. Given the unique role played by savings in life insurance, the government should encourage savings in this sector. Considering the fact that life insurance products have historically been viewed as tax saving products, savings in life insurance should ideally have a strong tax incentive. The government was however doing exactly the opposite by imposing service tax on life insurance premium. In the 2016-17 budget, the Finance Minister has merely lowered the service tax on single premium for annuities rather than withdrawing service tax altogether. This has affected LIC's collection of regular premium- basically single premium- to a large extent. The net result is that there has been a progressive decline in the number of policies leading to a huge increase in the cost of servicing. He cautioned the employees that the management-government combine will definitely resort to anti employee measures in the name of cutting costs and the organization must remain prepared to meet the challenges in that eventuality.

He drew the attention of the house to the announcement made by the Finance Minister that public sector general insurance companies will be listed on the stock exchanges. This announcement violated the understanding given by the government at the time of securing approval of Insurance Laws Amendment Bill. The government had said that the proposal in

the Insurance Laws Amendment Bill that public sector general insurance companies can raise funds through markets was only an enabling provision and the ultimate decision rests with the managements. This announcement in the recent budget was therefore undemocratic, said Com. Amanulla Khan. He called upon the employees to remain prepared for struggle against the moves to disinvest public sector general insurance companies.

The most serious challenge confronting the organization today was the threat to the unity of the employees, felt Com. Aman. The heinous attempts by the Sangh parivar to homogenise Indian society through the imposition of a majoritarian outlook had become a serious threat. Citing some beautiful examples to illustrate the syncretic and pluralistic culture of India, he exhorted the cadres of AIIEA to engage in constant dialogue with the rank and file of the organization so that the multi-national, multi-cultural character of our society can be protected.

Com. V. Ramesh, General Secretary AIIEA proposed a vote of thanks and expressed optimism that the theoretical inputs given in the classes during the three days would definitely augment the ideological understanding of the leadership at the zonal level and solidify the unity of the organization still further.

There was a beautiful cultural program on the evening of 29th. Smt Bindu Malini, an accomplished and renowned Hindustani Vocal singer enthralled the audience with her rendering of Kabir and Sufi songs. Her soulful voice and the magic of words weaved by Kabir and Amir Khusru was a glimpse of the wonderful syncretic culture of our country.

Comrades of ICEU Bengaluru I and II and BRGIEA once again demonstrated their exemplary commitment to the cause of the organization by helping organise the event in a befitting manner and leaving no stone unturned to make the entire event truly memorable.



TU CLASSES FOR KARNATAKA STATE DIVISIONAL LEADERSHIP

Reportage: S S Nagesh, Mysore

Inurance Employees' Union, Udupi Division successfully hosted the two day State level classes for the Divisional unit leadership of Karnataka as decided by SCZIEF on April 17-18, 2016. The classes were held at Kudremukh, which was once a big Industrial township, now a deserted town, but rich in greenery and forest which shelters variety of species of birds and wild animals. Infact, the morning wake up calls for the students was not from any electronic gadget but from chirping of birds, including whistling sound of rare Malabar Green hornbill which was setting a perfect atmosphere for serious learning.

The classes began on 17th April with welcome by Com.U.Gurudath, General Secretary, IEU, Udupi Division. Com. S K Geetha, Vice President, SCZIEF in her initial remarks explained the necessity of such classes in the background of an extreme rightwing govt. at the Centre, social and economic attacks and growing intolerance.

Com.J.Suresh, Jt.Secretary, SCZIEF took the first class on "*PRESENT POLITICAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION- CHALLENGES AND ALTERNATIVES*". Reviewing the two year rule of present BJP govt., he explained how the regime is using jargons and social media to project a rosy picture of achievements and cautioned not to allow employees to fall prey to this design. He also explained how the successive govts since Independence

have been implementing policies which suit the interests and aspirations of capitalists at that particular point of time. He narrated with examples as to how while a few are becoming richer and richer, vast majority are in abysmal condition which exposes the fallacy of "acche din" and betrayal of tall promises made by BJP during the election time. The dictatorial style of functioning and undermining of federal structure has put democracy under severe strain, he said. Dwelling on alternatives, he stressed the need for proportional representation in our election system which will allow the Left voice to be heard inside the Parliament too and need for the govt to control means of production and increase public spending. He said that if we develop political consciousness along with work knowledge and class consciousness, emergence of political alternative shall be a reality.

There was a question and answer session after the class. Com.G V Kulkarni, President, IEU, Belgaum Division was Principal for this class.

Com.Amanulla Khan, President, AIIEA took the second class on "*COMMUNALISM- CHALLENGES AND TASKS*". He very effectively explained the need for classes on communalism, casteism which divides the working class. Explaining the background of the emergence of communalism in India, with historical



records, he broke several perceptions that are being spread, like linking muslim invasion to entry of communalism etc. He quoted the first war of Independence in 1857 under Bahadur Shah Zafar against British colonialism as a landmark of Hindu-Muslim unity. He also explained different stages through which the ideology of communalism thrives. He narrated, how both the Hindu communalists and Muslim communalists mobilised the masses on communal basis to disturb the unity and in the process supported the British empire. The economic interests of upper class of both the communities added with the "Divide and Rule" policies of British sustained the growth of communalism, he said. He explained the background in which the partition took place which resulted in butchering of half a million people from both the sides and displacement of over 14 million people from their own places. He also explained how the RSS and other hindutva groups sought to project India as a nation of one religion, one language and one culture during the framing of Indian Constitution and how after an intense debate, the Idea of India which recognises pluralism and diversity emerged and which laid the foundations to work for constructing a society based on equality, fraternity and liberty. He explained how the RSS, which is clamouring for uniform civil code now, vehemently opposed the amendments to Hindu Code Bill mooted by Dr. B R Ambedkar which sought equal rights to women. Nearly 79 effigies of Ambedkar and Nehru were burnt in Delhi alone opposing this amendment. Firmly asserting that Indian Constitution is secular in character, he explained how the fire of communalism is being inflamed today and how people are caught between communalists from both the sides. He advised to study more research books on this subject and through discussion and persuasion, mobilise employees against the menace of communalism. The rich diverse culture of India should also be propagated, he advised.

A lively interaction was held after the class. Com.K.Vishwanath, President, IEU, Udupi Division was the Principal for this class.

On 18th April, Com.N.Vijayakumar, President, ICEU, Mysore Division took class on "*Indian Society and caste system-challenges and tasks*". Initiating the subject by drawing attention to the spate of so called honour killings in the name of protecting the purity of castes; he lamented that caste system is thriving very much and is reflected even in elections in several states. Basing on several historical documents and references, he explained how Aryans who invaded India attacked the Harappan Civilization and made them as slaves and created Vedic society. The relationships between these castes created several sub castes and destroyed the "purity" of aryan caste, he explained. Not only the Aryans, but Shakas, Gunas and Mongolians too invaded India, he pointed out. He explained the formation of chaturvarna system and how the caste of downtrodden was used to appropriate surplus labour and pointed out that even to this day, this has been sustained and expanded. Thus, it is a caste issue from social angle and class issue from the economic angle, he pointed out. He also narrated how the Muslims, who invaded later, did not alter the caste system to further their interests.

He spoke on the formation of Buddha Dharma as opposed to violence and animal sacrifice and how the upper castes campaigned to halt the expansion of this religion. He called upon the insurance employees to address the caste issues along with economic issues and advised to study several materials to have clarity on this issue.

An interaction session was held subsequent to the class. Com.K.Gopal, General Secretary, ICEU, Bengaluru Division 2 was the Principal for this class.

Com.S K Geetha, Vice President, SCZIEF took the 4th class on "*Industry-challenges and tasks and Organisation*". Narrating our historic struggles of over two decades to defend the public sector insurance, she said that though privatisation could be stalled, the threat continues. Passing of Insurance Laws Amendment Bill is one step in the direction of destabilising this industry. FDI limit, which

was hiked with a stipulation of approval of FIPB, is now made under automatic route. Allowing public sector general insurance companies to go to stock market for capital expansion, whenever required is a direct step towards privatisation of these four companies, she explained. A massive campaign is required to protect these four companies through all sorts of campaigns, she stressed. LIC is too going through a difficult phase with the intervention of IRDA and we must ensure the progress of LIC through innovative campaigns, motivating the field force and such other forms, she suggested. Stressing the need to strengthen our Organisation, AIIEA, she called upon to continuously educate the employees on changes, developments in the society apart

from addressing their immediate issues. The glorious struggles of AIIEA should also be told to those who have joined LIC during 1980s. She called upon to use the social media as an effective tool, and cautioned to avoid mechanical functioning. She also stressed the need to educate the employees on the dangers of communalism and casteism. She underlined the need to develop women, minorities and dalith cadres true to the understanding of AIIEA.

There was an interaction session after the class. Com.Sharanagowda, President, IEU, Raichur Division was Principal for this class.

The two day classes were attended by 60 comrades, including 10 women comrades.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY AT BELAGAVI

Commemorating the International Women's Day a function was arranged by the Women Sub-Committee of Insurance Employees' Union, Belagavi Division on the afternoon of 12th March, 2016 at Training Hall, D.O., Belagavi.

The programme commenced at 3.00 p.m. with an invocation song by Com.Veena Hegde of C.B.3, Belagavi, befitting the occasion. Com.Madhuri Baad, C.B.2, welcomed the gathering and Com. Rajalakshmi Kulkarni, Convenor, introduced the Chief Guest and main speaker of the occasion Dr.Asawari Sant, Pathologist of renown and a social activist.

The Chief Guest gave a wonderful presentation on health & stress-related issues that afflict the middle aged working women. Her talk was peppered with advices on exercise, diet, precautionary measures and changes in life style. The interactive session was very participative and illuminating. Dr.Sant was very appreciative of the social activities undertaken by the members of the union.

The occasion was also utilised to felicitate some outstanding women of Belagavi City who have made a mark in the male dominated domain. Smt.Sushma Kamble, the first women KSRTC driver stationed at Belagavi, was honoured on the occasion followed by three Women Medical Representatives of the city viz. Smt.Pallavi Zende, Smt.Sarika Kulkarni & Smt.Vaishali Kanabarkar. Smt. Sujata Belagaonkar, lone MDRT Agent of Belagavi City (Khanapur) was also felicitated. Responding to the felicitations, these outstanding performers were emotionally overwhelmed and were very appreciative of the union.

On the occasion a report of the activities of the Women Sub-Committee was presented by Com.Naveena Bhat & a brief history of women empowerment was narrated by Com. Shubha Taware, Co-Convenor of Women Sub-Committee.

While Com.P.A.Joseph, Gen. Secretary, IEU, Belagavi greeted the gathering, Com.G.V.Kulkarni, President detailed about the on-line petition campaign on the issue of passage of 33% reservation bill for women to legislative bodies and the work undertaken by union members during the Chennai Floods.

Our C.B.4, Belagavi women comrades along with D.O. Choir team rendered a revolutionary song.

While Com.Neha Joshi compered the programme, Com.Savitha Hanamsagar proposed the vote of thanks. The programme was well attended by women and men comrades to make it a GRAND SUCCESS.



Seminar at Hyderabad : Attack on Constitutional Rights & the Task before the Working Class

The 125th Birth Anniversary of Bharat Ratna Dr. BR Ambedkar was celebrated by ICEU, Hyderabad and Secunderabad Divisions in a Festive atmosphere



on 14.04.2016. A seminar on the topic "Attacks on the Constitutional Rights – Task before the Working Class" was organized on this occasion. Prof. Gali Vinod Kumar, Principal, College of Law, OU is the Main Speaker for the Seminar and Com. V Ramesh, General Secretary, AIIEA is the chief guest. Com. Clement Xavier Das, General Secretary, SCZIEF; all the other leadership of AIIEA and SCZIEF also graced the occasion. The seminar was a grand success with the enthusiastic participation of around 300 employees from both the Divisions (mofussil and city). Com. G Thirupathiah, President, ICEU, Hyderabad and Com. Rajesh Singh, President, ICEU, Secunderabad formed the presidium for the Seminar.

The proceedings started with Com. N Adhish Reddy, General Secretary, ICEU, Hyderabad giving a brief account of the significance of the occasion and inviting the dignitaries to the dais. The portrait of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar was then garlanded by Com. V Ramesh. Prof. Gali Vinod Kumar and Com. Clement Xavier Das also garlanded the portrait of the great leader.

Prof. Gali Vinod Kumar expressed happiness that the 125th Birth Anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar being celebrated today not only in India but also at United Nations. Dr. Ambedkar, always stood for the working class and is the founder of the workers party, he informed. He had to face severe caste discrimination and oppression in his early days. These experiences resolved him to work for Creation of a casteless and classless society. The Constitution of India was also developed with this perspective only. He is the first person to fight for emancipation of women and recommended for 50%

reservation to women. He strongly advocated the right to equality in all spheres of life and for implementation of the principle of one man, one vote, and one value. But, today,

under the neo-liberal regime, with the state being transformed into a capitalist state from a welfare state, the attacks on the constitutional rights viz., the right to equality, right to work, right to education of the people esp., the SC/ST and the deprived are on the increase, he informed. The ever increasing gap between the rich and poor is further marginalizing the SC/ST and deprived communities. In spite of much hue and cry, the women's reservation bill still hangs in balance. The working class of the country should stand as the vanguard of the society and work towards transforming the society by defeating these nefarious attacks on the constitutional rights, he called.

Com. V Ramesh, in his thought provoking address, noted that it is the tradition of AIIEA units all over the country, to observe the Birth Anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar, whom the organization holds in highest esteem. Dr BR Ambedkar is the first person to raise the issue of nationalization of Insurance and included the recommendation in the constitution. Thus, he is a man very dear to the insurance employees. He ridiculed the political parties





wife of Shankar, the dalit youth who was hacked to death, as part of honour killing at Chennai, recently. He appreciated the work of the Ambedkar Education Academy at MYSORE. He congratulated the employees of Headquarter Divisions for carrying forward the social activities and supporting the needy, on a regular basis. He called upon the

employees to continue the good work being done in support of the marginalized.

Com. Clement Xavier Das, Com. N Aruna Kumari, State Co-coordinator, women's sub-committees, Telangana State also placed their views. As part of the Social Activity initiatives, 20 needy students of Pragathi Education Trust were presented with two books each, on Quantitative Aptitude and a dictionary, by the dignitaries. The seminar came to an end with vote of thanks by Com. DS Raghu, Joint Secretary, Secunderabad.

which are trying to appropriate Dr BR Ambedkar for their political needs without even bothering about his ideals. Dr Ambedkar as the Chairman of the Drafting Committee played a great role in drafting the Constitution. Dr BR Ambedkar strongly advocated for State socialism. He demanded equal distribution of land and recommended for the governments appropriation of land from the landlords. The BJP government at center is trying to bring false debate on nation and nationalism, he argued. He applauded the gesture of the Coimbatore comrades, who have readily came forward to sponsor the studies of the

Seminar at Bangalore: 'Constitution for a Dignified Life'

Dr B.R. Ambedkar is remembered as a symbol of revolt against not only the oppressive features of Hindu society but that of the entire Indian society, said Com Amanulla Khan, President AIIEA. He was speaking in a Seminar at Bangalore titled

'Constitution for a Dignified Life' organized by Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Bangalore I and II on 14th April 2016. Com Aman said that it is totally unfair



to reduce Dr. Ambedkar to just a Dalit icon. He was a great visionary who through his contribution to the making of Indian Constitution laid emphasis on constructing a fair just and equal society. His sympathies to the working class and his commitment to gender justice are too well known. Com Aman wondered that the RSS and Hindu Mahasabha that launched scathing attack on the principles of Dr Ambedkar in his lifetime and burnt hundreds of his effigies on the issue of Hindu Code Bill are making all efforts to appropriate his great



legacy. The Dalit movement and working class must work together to frustrate their attempts and refuse to allow using the legacy of Dr Ambedkar to garner votes.

Com Aman said that there is some criticism though not fully unjustified that working class movement is more focused on economic issues and pay lesser attention to social discrimination and caste oppression. The AIIEA however is in full agreement with the understanding of Dr Ambedkar that political democracy is incomplete without social and economic democracy. It is with this understanding that AIIEA is intervening in social issues. He informed the audience of the role of AIIEA in breaking the Uthapuram Wall in Madurai District of Tamilnadu, the help to the victims of caste violence to secure justice and compensation and the help rendered to the Dalits in Dharmapuri where their houses were burnt over the issue of inter-caste marriage. He also informed the gathering of the splendid work being done by the cadres of AIIEA by running Ambedkar Study Centres across Tamilnadu and Mysore. He appealed for the unity of all left, progressive forces and Dalit movement to challenge the reactionary social policies of the BJP government and its attempts to deepen neo-liberalism at the cost of the welfare of the poor and the dispossessed.



Dr. Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy, eminent writer and Professor of Ambedkar Chair in Mysore University was the Chief Guest. He expressed happiness on a trade union celebrating the 125th Birth anniversary of Dr.B.R.Ambedkar. He expressed anguish that political parties are competing with each other to appropriate Dr Ambedkar without committing to his ideals and principles. Dr. Ambedkar not only spoke about political freedom but was totally committed to freedom from economic and caste discrimination. Dr.Ambedkar was very clear that land should be nationalized and redistributed. He wanted health, education and insurance to be under government control. But today the government is privatizing both the health and education sector. The opportunities available to the Dalits for attaining educational qualifications through university education are being curtailed. It is a fact that Dalits are discriminated in the universities and what happened in Hyderabad Central University is an example of this discrimination. Dr. Mudnakudu Chinnaswamy hoped that the voices of struggle and unity emerging from the universities will galvanise the mass of the people to fight for the concept of Liberty, Equality and Fraternity that were so dear to Dr Ambedkar.

Com M.Vijayakumar, President, ICEU, Mysore pointed out that Dr. Ambedkar was always concerned about the plight of the working class and was sympathetic to their struggles. He played an important role in bringing the legislation on Industrial Disputes. Pointing out to the massive student upsurge in the universities against the attack on freedom of speech and expression and saffronisation of

education, Com Vijayakumar said this offers hope for the unity of Left, Secular and Dalit movement. He drew attention to the inspiring speech of Kanhaiya Kumar after his release on bail when he said that the food served to him in jail in blue and red bowls suggests the need to the Left and Ambedkarites to come together. Com Vijayakumar said that the coming together of the Left, Progressives and Ambedkarites to challenge the forces of Hindutva and reactionary economic policies of the BJP government is the only hope for the Indian society.

On this occasion, a book containing articles from Insurance Worker on Dr. Ambedkar was released by Com Amanulla Khan. The first

copies were handed over to Com Gopal and Com Veeranna representing the SC/ST Welfare Association.

The meeting was presided over by Coms D.Suresh and P.Nagendra, Presidents of ICEU, Bangalore I and II respectively. Com K.Gopal, General Secretary, ICEU, Bangalore II welcomed the gathering and Com R.Padmanabha, Jt.Secretary, ICEU, Bangalore I proposed the vote of thanks. Earlier Com SH Vijayakumar and team and Com V.Latha and Team rendered a few revolutionary songs. The Seminar was attended by a large number of employees. It was a very successful program.

Seminar on Life & Mission of Baba Saheb at Jammu

The insurance employees under the banner of Northern Zone Insurance Employees' Association held a largely attended seminar on the topic "THE LIFE AND MISSION

OF BABA SAHEB DR. B.R.AMBEDKAR" at Jammu on 16th of April 2016 to motivate the people to follow the teachings of the great legend. Speaking on the occasion, Comrade



Pawan Gupta said that Dr. Ambedkar fought a big struggle against untouchability and caste discrimination;

but he was not only

a Dalit icon as he had definite views on minorities, women, working class and other deprived sections of the Indian society. Dr. Ambedkar was the architect of the Indian Constitution, being chairman of the Constituent assembly having 300 members from various sections of the society, which was given the task of framing the constitution. He had a dream of building a just society where there will be equality on political, social and economic level. He said that in India we have a society based on the principles of graded inequality which means elevation for someone and degradation for others due to untouchability, casteism and inequalities. On the economic plane, we have a society in which there are some with immense wealth as against many who live in abject poverty.

Comrade Pawan Gupta said that the real Shardhanjali to Baba Saheb will be to strength the struggle against the policies of the Govt. which are a road block in fulfilling the dream of Dr. Ambedkar. So we should fight against the forces of neo liberalism, globalization,



communalism, and we should integrate the class struggle with the struggle against caste exploitation by building the broadest possible unity of Dalits and all toiling masses in a struggle for economic emancipation as well as social emancipation. Others who spoke on the occasion- Comrade Romesh Chand , Com. Rajesh Gupta ,joint secretary

of NZIEA Srinagar Division, Com. Raj Kumar, Com. Dinesh Sharma-Divisional committee members, Com. Neelam Sharma –women convener, Com. Rekha, Com. Ruchi Jamwal , Com Jagdeesh, Com. Tilak,Com. Karan Kumar,Com. Kishore Lal, Com.Nanak Chand and others.

Tamilnadu: Special Convention at Coimbatore

The 125th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution and a great fighter of the oppressed section of the society was celebrated with a Special convention held on April 2, 2016 in Coimbatore by the South Zone Insurance Employees’ Federation. Justice K.Chandru, Com. G.Mamata, Dalit Shoshan Mukthi Manch, Com.K.Samuel Raj, General Secretary, Tamil Nadu Untouchability Eradication Front addressed the Convention. Sri. Ponnaiah and Sri. Sankaralingam who led the struggle against the Untouchability Wall were the Chief Guests of the Convention. Fraternal TU leaders, members and more than 600 insurance employees participated in the convention. Com.M.Girija, Joint Secretary, AIIEA, garlanded the portrait of Dr. Ambedkar.



Indian independence, democracy has been refused to the Schedule Caste people who form more than 20 % of the Indian population. Not only common mass, but also those who occupy high posts in India refuse to understand the problems faced by the oppressed people. A judge of the Gujarat High court has recently said in his judgment that Reservation is the root cause of many problems faced in India. Hence reservation should be done away with. The judgment was shocking. The judge who took oath on the Indian constitution had delivered a judgment against the Indian constitution.

After the BJP assumed power at the centre, there is a big debate going on, on freedom of expression and freedom of speech. The debates which take place in the Central Universities are curbed. Those who defy the restrictions and fight for the freedom of speech are branded as “anti-nationals”.

‘WALL’ Divided . . . ‘WILL’ United. . .

Justice K. Chandru in his special address dealt in detail the thoughts of Dr. Ambedkar and the plight of the oppressed section of the society. He said, “I take great pride in participating in this special convention as a Honorary member of Insurance Corporation Employees’ Union, Chennai division than as a retired judge. I am an honorary member for the past 25 years. I appreciate the role played by the All India Insurance Employees’ Association in the struggle for Social Justice. Dr.Ambedkar is one of the great leaders of India. Today a compulsion has been created for the Modi government to celebrate the 125th Birth anniversary of Dr.Ambedkar as an official function. Even after 69 years of



The BJP government is building memorials for Ambedkar in India and England. But what importance is given by the BJP government to the thoughts of Ambedkar.

I have 2 bricks from the demolished "Untouchability wall" of Uttapuram in my living room. WALL DIVIDED - WILL UNTIED are the words written in the two bricks. It was the 'wall' which divided the people and it was the 'will' of the people which united them. I keep it as a souvenir. Let the struggle of All India Insurance Employees' Association towards Social justice continue. Let us read the thoughts of Ambedkar and understand his ideology and carry forward the struggles".

What is Merit?

The National Council Member of DSSM, Com.G.Mamata in her speech said, "There is caste discrimination against Dalits in India. Even urban educated people often ask "where is caste? Where is discrimination?". But the fact is that untouchability could be seen in the Capital city of Delhi itself. When one goes for rental house, the first question posed before him/her is whether he/she is a vegetarian or non-vegetarian. Even today houses are not rented to dalits. Dalits are allowed to wash the clothes, vessels, sweep the floors, clean the toilets, but they are not allowed to cook. There comes untouchability. Dalits are not allowed to cook in the government run mid-day meal scheme in many places. If a dalit cooks, then the parents would not allow their children to have the mid-day meal there.

Even in Central Universities, there is discrimination against dalit students. The death of Rohith Vemula proves this discrimination. The mindset that 'dalits lack merit' is prevalent everywhere. What is merit? How do we measure merit? Can a student with an old battered cycle with punctured tyres, compete with a student having a high-end gear cycle? How can they both be considered equal? Is this the method we measure merit? Where is the level playing ground? So we demand equal opportunity to be given to the dalits before the merit is measured. The struggle against casteism should also encompass the class struggle. The class struggle should be against feudalism and capitalism."

In the land of Vallalar

Com.Samuelraj in his special address quoted Saint Vallalar who said, "I am saddened on seeing withered crops". Today in Tamilnadu where saints like Vallalar lived, an honour killings in the name of caste take place. In Udumalpet, Sankar was brutally murdered in broad daylight. Gokulraj, Illavarasan, Jakan.... now Sankar joins the list of murdered people. There are posts in social media in support of honor killings. In Tamilnadu where social reformers like Periyar, Singaravelar, Jeeva fought against this evil, is being blood stained due to caste conflicts. Let the struggles of Insurance employees' towards social justice continue.. . Let Democracy, Equality, Brotherhood flourish...."

Duty not Mercy Com.K.Swaminathan, Vice President, SZIEF, presided over the convention. Com.T.Senthil Kumar, General Secretary, delivered the introductory speech and Com.M.Kunhi Krishnan, President, greeted the convention. All the leaders dealt in length the struggles and interventions of All India Insurance Employees' Association against untouchability



and caste atrocities. From Uttapuram to the murder of Sankar in Udumalaipet, the roots of caste have penetrated deep in the soil of Tamilnadu.

The Coimbatore divisional union has promised to bear the entire educational expenses of Kousalya, the wife of Sankar. The goodwill gesture of Coimbatore divisional union was applauded by all the leaders and special guests. On April 2, 2016 a team of 40 comrades of AIIEA and TNUEF went to the remote village of Kumaralingapuram, near Udumalpet, to meet Kousalya. They consoled her and an amount of Rs. 25,000/- as first installment of educational

expenses was handed over to Kousalya by the Coimbatore divisional union. While Com. V.Suresh, Joint Secretary of SZIEF welcomed the gathering, Com. R.Dharmalingam, Vice President, SZIEF proposed vote of thanks. With a clear understanding that our help and interventions are not out of mercy but as our utmost duty, let us rededicate ourselves to the ideals of Baba Sahib Dr.B.R.Ambedkar on his 125th Birth Anniversary and continue our unrelenting struggle against casteism and untouchability.



ICREA, Machilipatnam Divl Conference at Guntur

The Divisional Conference of ICREA, Machilipatnam was held at Guntur on 10th April, 2016. The pensioners from the different centers of the division attended the Conference. It was presided by Com.R.Janardan, the Divisional President of ICREA.

Com.T.K.Chakravarthy, the General Secretary, AIIPA inaugurated the Conference. He narrated, in detail how the issues of LIC pensioners are being followed up with the Management from time to time in coordination with the All India Insurance Employees' Association. "The recent judgement of Supreme Court, delivered on 31st March has disappointed the LIC pensioners. The Court has concluded that the Board Resolution cannot be implemented without the notification from the Government. The Court while dismissing the petition has permitted the pensioners to test the validity of Rule 3A which prescribes different rates of DA before the Delhi High Court. The Office bearers of AIIPA are meeting on 2nd May at Chennai to review the situation arising out of the judgement and to take appropriate action.

Com.Chakravarthy also briefed the current political situation in the

country and came down heavily on the policies being pursued by the NDA government at the centre. He said the rich cultural diversity and the constitutional rights like freedom of expression are under serious attack posing a grave threat to the idea of India.

The annual report and the statement of audited accounts presented by Com. Bh.V.L.Radha Krishna Murthy, Divisional General Secretary were adopted unanimously. The Conference unanimously resolved to continue our campaign and struggle to protect and further strengthen the public sector LIC.

Com.G.Kishore Kumar, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF, while greeting the Conference explained how the Modi government is attacking the social benefits like PF and Pension.

Com.R.Janardan, Com.Bh.V.L.Radha



Krishna Murthy and Com.Md.Amanulla were elected unanimously the President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

The Conference successfully came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Com.M.V.Raghavaiah, Joint Secretary ICREA, Divisional unit.

New Business Campaign at Vishakapatnam

ICEU Visakhapatnam had taken up a campaign throughout the Division to secure business, during the months of February and March. ICEU members campaigned throughout the division, meeting people at their doorstep, explaining the necessity of having Life Insurance with public sector LIC of India. Comrades of all the 22 units have participated actively in the campaign. All units had set up help desk, highlighting the new products available, through flexi banners in the branch premises, to facilitate easy and speedy servicing, as well as campaign for new policies in the branch. The help desk continued for two months and our comrades managed the help desk very efficiently. In addition to the help desk, AIIEA comrades have campaigned door to door, public places and also at the village festivals, and distributed nearly **one lakh pamphlets during this period.**

Parvathipuram comrades mobilized agents and officers also and campaigned in all the mandals under the branch jurisdiction, Salur SO area, Kintali, etc, on Sundays and holidays. They distributed pamphlets on the performance of LIC and also pamphlets on new plans. They were successful in achieving 25 bimagrams in the course of the campaign. Vizianagaram comrades involved class I officers in the campaign covering Pusapatirega, Gajapathinagaram, Bondapalli etc. They received appreciation for their campaign. They also collected NEFT forms from the existing policyholders. Along with the campaign, they have distributed buttermilk to the pilgrims at the village festivals. S.kota unit also campaigned in the neighbouring village of Boddam. Garividi

comrades have mobilized class I officers and agents in large numbers and campaigned throughout the branch area.

Srikakulam comrades have campaigned in the public places like bus stand, at the temples on religious occasions, Hiranman dalammandal, Pydibhimavaram pharma industrial area, Ranasthalam, and other mandals. Palasa comrades campaigned at Kasibugga, Narsipuram, at Palasa railway station and at the village festivals. Rajam comrades also campaigned in their branch area.

Chodavaram comrades campaigned at Sabbavaram, Paderu agency areas. Narsipatnam comrades met people at Nathavarammandal and Narsipatnam. Yelamachili unit distributed pamphlets at RTC complex and Railway Station. Anakapalle comrades campaigned at Kasimkotamandal.

Comrades from the Urban centres have distributed pamphlets and explained the salient features of the products offered by LIC, to residents of various apartments and also colonies. Shipyard branch comrades have campaigned in the pedagantyada area, shop to shop in the new Gajuwaka area.

The campaign has borne fruits and there is a considerable rise in the new business of the division, which was acknowledged by the Sr DM. Agents also have gained confidence and appreciated the activity of ICEU. Policyholders have expressed confidence in LIC and also received the employees' with great regard. ICEU members also expressed satisfaction. The campaign came to a close on 25.3.2016.

INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

- ◆ With the government trying to 'hold' the directors and top officers responsible for any irregularities, Corporates are rushing to the insurance companies to buy Directors and Officers Liability Insurance policies (D&O policies). The mistakes may be genuine, in most cases they are not, or knowingly and purposefully committed. The coverage sought are as big as Rs.500 crore. D&O liability policies offer cover against personal liabilities arising out of the insured's corporate role. These include legal costs in defending allegations or suits and any damages awarded to claimants against the directors and officers, including out-of-court settlements. A key exclusion in the D&O policy is loss arising from dishonesty, fraudulent conduct and self-admission of wrongdoing.
- ◆ The FDI policy for insurance sector has been reviewed by the Government of India and accordingly it has been decided to enhance the limit of foreign investment in insurance sector from 26 to 49 percent under the automatic route subject to certain terms and conditions which have been notified on March 30. Hitherto 26 percent FDI was under automatic route and 23 percent had to get a nod by Foreign Investment Promotion Board. Now that they have set their feet and are comfortably placed, the private insurance companies plan to grow through Mergers and Acquisitions. Taking advantage of the global situation and rulers' crave for foreign investment the big want to devour the small.
- ◆ Health insurance has been one of the fastest growing segments in the insurance industry. From an annual premium of Rs. 17,000 crore in 2012-13, the aggregate premium collected by health insurance industry has grown to Rs. 27,000 crore in 2015-16. Yet, almost all insurers who are doing health insurance business have increased the premium for the year 2016-17.
- ◆ The ICICI Lombard conducted a survey which reveals that about 52 per cent of health insurance claims from the top 10 cities in the country were for caesarean (C-section) deliveries. A latest National Family Health Survey tells us that private hospitals conduct over twice as many deliveries through C-section than government hospitals. In private hospitals, 40.3 per cent of births are done through C-section, while in public hospitals, this figure is 16.9 per cent.
- ◆ In a bid to boost the start-up ecosystem, Small Industries Development Bank of India (SIDBI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Life Insurance Corporation of India, for supplementing the government's efforts under Fund-of-Fund operations for the Venture Fund industry. The MoU seeks contributions from LIC to the corpus of MSME-focused venture capital funds, along with SIDBI-managed India Aspiration Fund (IAF).
- ◆ LIC's investment in equities for the year 2015-16 goes Rs.10,000 crore beyond that of last year's investment reaching Rs.65,000 crore. LIC has booked a profit of Rs.11,000 crore on its investment in equities.
- ◆ M/s. DHFL Pramerica Life Insurance Company Limited was slapped with a fine of Rs.15,00,000/- by IRDA. Bharati AXA Life Insurance Company too was fined with Rs.5,00,000/- for violating various norms laid by it.
- ◆ India's total economic losses from natural and man-made disasters exceeded \$6.2 billion in 2015, the total insured losses were at just \$1 billion. Total economic losses from all disasters, including natural and man-made events, exceeded \$6.2 billion or 6.8 per cent of the global losses in 2015. However, this is less from \$13.4 billion or 11.9 per cent of global losses in 2014. There have been 25 catastrophic events in India last year, up from 20 in 2014, including the severe flash floods in Chennai in November that caused an estimated loss of \$2.2 billion.
- ◆ The United Kingdom's new joint industry and government sponsored reinsurance scheme for flood risk began operating on 4th April 2016. Designed to help provide access to affordable flood insurance cover for households at the highest risk, Flood Re expects up to 350,000 households to benefit from the scheme over time. Commercial properties are excluded from the scheme.
- ◆ Alas! The private sector seems to have succeeded. They were not happy right from the beginning. The Obama Health care is being brought down. UnitedHealth Group, the nation's largest health insurer says that in 2017 it will exit most of the 34 states where it offers plans on the Affordable Care Act insurance exchanges. The concept of an exchange — a marketplace with some consumer choice regulated by the government in required benefits, which is the heart of Obamacare. United Health Care says that it is doing so to stem the losses. With United going out people will be left with one or two insurers to fend.

A.M.KHAN, DHARWAD

ECONOMIC TID BITS

- ❑ Arrium, Australia's major steel company has filed bankruptcy petition, threatening 7000 jobs. The 2008 financial crisis had its deep impact in the steel industry worldwide, with steep decline in demand for steel. Since 2011, the prices of steel has fallen 60% and iron ore prices have come down for US \$ 190 a tonne to US \$ 55. More than 8 million workers are employed in steel industry globally and they are threatened with job losses, attacks on wages and Pension. In China, 5 lakhs jobs are lost in steel industry.
- ❑ According to a report published in Seattle Times, Boeing the giant commercial and military airplane manufacturer is planning to cut 4000 jobs in its Washington commercial division by June and to cut another 4000 jobs by the end of 2016. Since 2012, more than 9000 jobs are eliminated in Boeing.
- ❑ According to an agreement reached between the State and Unions, in California the minimum wages would increase from current level of \$ 10 an hour to \$ 10.50 an hour in 2017, \$ 11 in 2018 and one dollar more per year through 2022. California's cost of living is 151% of the national average, making it the most expensive State. More than 40% of the State's population lives in either poverty (earning less than about \$ 24000 per year for a family of four) or near poverty according to Census Bureau. Children are worse off, nearly 50% were poor or near poor in 2013.
- ❑ The campaign for June 23 referendum "Brexit" on Britain's continuity in European Union has officially begun. Both the groups termed "Remain group" and "leave group" are actively involved in the campaign.
- ❑ Germany's railway operator Deutsche Bahn (DB) plans to slash 2100 jobs from its freight transportation subsidy DB Cargo. DB Cargo employs 17000 people in Germany and with a market share of 62% in Germany last year is the largest rail freight company in Europe. This is the first step to implement the report given by Consultancy firm Mckinsey to eliminate one in three jobs at DB Cargo.
- ❑ According to a latest report by Brooking Institution – Financial Times tracking index, world economy is characterized by "tepid growth". According to Atlanta Federal Reserve, US economy grew at just 0.1% this quarter against the previous estimate of 0.4%. In Japan, the industrial production has turned negative and retail sales continued to decline. India's reported growth of 7%, the report says "glosses over many problems beneath the surface". While investment growth has fallen in India, the industrial production is actually contracting. The Brazil and Russian economy are facing deep recessions in their economy.
- ❑ According to a new study by University of California – Berkeley economist Danny Yagan, in USA at the current level of job growth entire regions of USA will not return to "normal" employment levels until 2020. This amounts to more than a "lost decade" of depressed employment for half of the country. The labour force participation rate fell to a 38 year low of 62.4%. According to the Economic Policy Institute, the unemployment rate of USA is 6.3% though official unemployment rate is reported at 4.9%.
- ❑ According to Amnesty report, Government's worldwide have executed at least 1634 prisoners in 2015, an increase of more than 50% above official figures for 2014. The report also said that this is the highest figure where the people are put to death by the various governments. It is also reported that more than 20000 prisoners are awaiting execution globally.
- ❑ According to a report published by the Robert Koch Institute (RKI), poor people die earlier than rich people in Germany. The report says poor men die 11 years earlier than rich and the poor women die 8.4 years earlier. Over 29% of 3 to 17 years old girls and 37% of similarly aged boys from poor families are affected by mental health problems compared to 8% of Girls and 11% of boys from rich families. In Germany, the top 1% of the population owns a third, the top 10% owns 60% of all wealth while the bottom 10% owns nothing or has debts.
- ❑ The international credit agency Moody has warned Australia of downgrading its credit rating while the Reserve Bank of Australia has expressed concerns about the deteriorating economy. Australia's government debt had trebled to 35.1% of GDP in 2015 from 11.6% of GDP in 2005, and is expected to be around 33% of GDP in 2018. The Budget deficit over the next four years would further increase by \$27 billion to \$ 96 billion.

J.SURESH, MYSORE

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLES

- ❖ Workers at South Korean-owned electronics subcontractor SeungYeun Technology Industries Corp (SYTIC) in the Philippines Cavite Export Processing Zone Authority (EPZA) went on strike on 11th April. They are demanding reinstatement of workers fired for carrying out union activities and are opposing company breaches of labour standards on working conditions and wage payments.
- ❖ Nearly 1,000 workers at the South Korean-owned BluecomVina electronics company in Vietnam's northern city of Haiphong began an indefinite strike on April 11 to demand improved wages and working hours and the right to form a union. They also want two Saturdays off each month. The workers claim that the company, which produces TV speakers and earphones, does not operate official working hours. Employees are expected to start at 8 a.m. and continue until management allows them to finish. This is usually at 9 or 10 p.m., including Saturdays. Workers are only paid \$US165 per month and a total of just \$4.50 per month for extra hours worked.
- ❖ Striking workers employed on contract by the Ceylon Electricity Board (CEB) to read household meters are continuing a fasting protest opposite the Power and Renewable Energy Ministry. The protest, which involves 800 of the workers and family members, entered its second week on April 11. About 1,400 contract meter readers service 5.5 million households across Sri Lanka. Many of them have worked at CEB for more than ten years. They are demanding that the government honour an election promise made by President Maithripala Sirisena to make them permanent.
- ❖ Pakistan Railways loco-shed workers at Karachi Cantonment Station went on strike on April 11 over several issues, including promotions and the lack of basic safety conditions and facilities, such as clean water. While most of the workers have over 25 years of service they have not been promoted to higher pay grades. According to workers, management has ignored the results of a January investigation to determine a scale-upgrade.
- ❖ Waterside workers at the Asciano-owned Patrick Stevedores container terminal at Port Botany, Sydney, went on strike for 48 hours on April 13 as part of a national dispute over a new enterprise bargaining agreement. The stoppage follows two 72-hour strikes at the company's terminal in Fremantle, Western Australia earlier this month. A 48-hour strike is planned for the Brisbane terminal on April 20.
- ❖ Teachers, students and other workers across Argentina participated in a work stoppage and protest actions on April 4 against the policies of the administration of President Mauricio Macri. The mobilizations were called by the CTERA and SADOP teachers' federations, but a number of other union members and supporters joined in. In Buenos Aires, over 6,000 education workers marched to [protest](#) Macri's first 100 days, which were marked by layoffs and firings, inflation, repressive anti-protest "protocols," attacks on pensions and subsidies and the rises in utility bills and transportation fares.
- ❖ Hundreds of child-protection workers employed by Family and Children's Services (F&CS) of Guelph and Wellington County, west of Toronto, Ontario are on strike this week after rejecting the employer's "final offer" on April 6. This is the second time this year that the workers have rejected a contract proposal brought to them by their union, the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE). Among the outstanding issues are inequality and fairness in the workplace with the union citing wage increases for management of up to nine percent while workers had their wages frozen for two years.
- ❖ The walkout by 39,000 Verizon workers in the northeastern and mid-Atlantic states is at a critical juncture. The determination of workers to resist the telecom giant's sweeping concession demands was shown in the mass picket on April 18 morning involving thousands of workers in front of a mid-town Manhattan hotel, which was reportedly housing strikebreakers. The strike has become a focal point of opposition with broad sections of workers and youth, from firefighters and fast-food workers to teachers and college students expressing their support. Verizon workers are expressing a growing mood of resistance in the working class, which has suffered a decades-long decline in living standards even as corporate profits, CEO pay and the stock markets hit record highs.
- ❖ Lakhs of garment workers in Bengaluru, majority being women went on spontaneous strike on 18th and 19th of April 2016. The workers were protesting against the new rules under Provident Fund Act notified by the Central Government on February 9 2016. The workers blocked all the highways for two days affecting the vehicular traffic. The strike forced the Central Government to defer the proposed amendment to PF Act.

S.SRIDHARA, MYSORE

For our Field Force

LIC in Bangladesh

LIC will begin operations in Bangladesh soon. The joint venture company, Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of Bangladesh Limited is incorporated in mid-December 2015 and business operations will start shortly. LIC, through its branches/joint venture companies/wholly-owned subsidiary, is present in 14 countries including places like Singapore, Kenya, Sri Lanka, Nepal and Bahrain among others. With respect to opening up operations in other countries, LIC will take a call on further expansion at an opportune time. As per LIC's Annual Report for 2014-15, the foreign branches put together issued 11,176 policies with first premium income of Rs 122.85 crore.

10 New Insurance Companies

IRDAI has received fresh applications from ten new players who want to start operations in the country. Four primary players - two non-life insurers, one life insurer, one health player, one re-insurer - and five global re-insurers have now applied for licences. However, names of these insurers and re-insurer were not revealed. As per market sources, the Aditya Birla Group is setting up a health insurance company in partnership with MMI Holdings, a South African firm. Other than this, global re-insurers who have approached the IRDAI include Munich Re, Swiss Re, Hannover Re, SCOR, and Excel ILSE.

Banks to sell insurance

According to IRDAI, over 40 banks, including the ones that have insurance products, have shown interest in selling products of multiple insurance companies. Last year, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) allowed banks to sell insurance products of multiple insurance companies, but did not make it mandatory. After resisting open architecture for a while, banks are now showing interest in selling the products of multiple insurance companies.

LIC invests 2.7 lakh cr.

LIC has earned Rs.11,000 Cr profit from stock market investments during 2015-16 even though the benchmark BSE index opened the fiscal at 28,260 points and closed at 25,341 points on March 31, 2016. LIC made investments to the tune of Rs.2.7 lakh crores in debt and equity markets during the financial year of which Rs.65,000 crs in stock market, exceeding its target of Rs.60,000 crs. Last year LIC invested Rs.55,000 crs in stock market. LIC has invested Rs.7,000 crs in railways during 2015-16.

No claim

The National Consumer Dispute Redressal Commission has held that vehicles carrying passengers in excess

of its capacity, cannot claim own damage insurance cover. However it is relevant to mention here that the Third party claim filed was allowed by the Motor Accident Claim Tribunal.

Penalty

IRDAI has fined DHFL Pramerica Life Insurance Company with Rs.15 Lakhs, Exide Life Insurance Company (Formerly ING Vysya Life Insurance Company) with Rs.11 Lakhs, Bharti AXA Life Insurance Company with Rs.5 Lakhs and Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Company with Rs.1 Lakh for irregularities.

TPAs reject more

TPAs rejected as many as 4.9 lakh health claims, amounting to 1,851 crore in hospital bills, compared with 3.7 lakh claims getting rejected by in-house insurers, amounting to 1,472 crore. India has 30 TPAs registered with IRDA. Pending claims are also more than double at TPAs. For 2015, 4.4 lakh claims remained pending at the end of period amounting to 3,757 crore in hospital bills, compared to 2.1 lakh claims amounting to 962 crore in-house. Servicing claims also comes with a cost as insurers pay 4%-5% commission to TPAs. Costs are reduced and turnaround time is shorter - when a TPA is not involved.

LIC's Bank holdings

Since the beginning of 2016, LIC has brought into preferential allotment of as many as six banks. While LIC bought the preference shares of Bank of India, Corporation Bank, Allahabad Bank, Indian Overseas Bank and Oriental Bank of Commerce in 2016 so far, it bought preference shares of IDBI Bank on Mar.28th and will be soon buying preferential shares of Dena Bank too. LIC increased its 7.21% stake in IDBI to 14.37%, buying 29 crore shares in the bank. LIC's shareholding in Banks as on 28th March 2016: Allahabad Bank 14.5%, Andhra Bank 7.7%, Bank of Baroda 11.42%, Bank of India 14.69%, Bank of Maharashtra 13.1%, Canara Bank 13.8%, Central Bank of India 12.9%, Corporation Bank 21.2%, Dena Bank 14.99% (Announced, yet to be allotted), IDBI Bank 14.37%, Indian Bank 3.1% India Overseas Bank 14.5%, Oriental Bank of Commerce 7.88%, Punjab National Bank 11.18%, Punjab and Sind Bank 10.49%, State Bank of India 14.99%, State Bank of Bikaner & Jaipur 2.02%, Syndicate Bank 9.16%, UCO Bank 14.36%, Union Bank 10.24%, United Bank 14%, Vijaya Bank 5.8%

ARIVUKKADAL, THANJAVUR

'Anti-Imperialism Day by ICEU, Machilipatnam Div.

The ICEU, Machilipatnam observed the martyrdom day of Shaheed Bhagat Singh as anti-imperialism day on 23rd March 2016 throughout the division.

In Machilipatnam Divisional office, after paying floral tributes to the portrait of revolutionary leader Bhagath Singh, amidst slogans, a meeting was conducted in which Com. M.A. Gafoor, former MLA and the State General Secretary, CITU participated as a chief guest. Com. G. Kishore Kumar, Divisional General Secretary, ICEU presided over the meeting.

Com. Gafoor said that the imperialist countries led by US continue their efforts to establish political and economic dominance to protect their own interests. "In India, the NDA govt is pursuing the same neo-liberal agenda followed by the previous UPA government. This has resulted in much deeper economic and social inequalities among the people. The promise of creation of 2 Crore jobs made by Mr Modi during the election campaign in 2014



remained as a dream even after 2 years in office. The government has removed all the barricades to permit the foreign direct investment into the big Indian market which will destabilize our self-reliant economy. On the other side, the Hindutva forces are attempting to polarize the society on the communal lines. In this situation, the working class should move unitedly in struggle towards a society free of exploitation and a society in which the workers lead a dignified

life" he said.

Com. Ch. Ravi of CPM, Com. Kodali Sarma CITU, Com. K. A. Umamaheswara Rao of UTF, Com. Dhanaraj, BSNL Employees' Union and ICEU Divisional leaders Com. T. Chandrapaul, Com. N. Subrahmanyam and others attended the programme.

In Guntur, Com. V. V. K. Suresh, Joint Secretary, ICEU garlanded the statue of Shaheed Bhagath Singh and local leaders Com. N. Bangaru Babu, Com. M. Rajeswara Rao, Com. J. Prasanth Kumar of VRGIEA, Com. R. V. Srinivas, Com. G. Satish Kumar and others took part in the programme.

In Vijayawada, a meeting was held in CAB office in this connection.

Com. S. V. Giridhar Vice-President, ICEU, Com. M. V. Anjaneyulu, Com. J. Hepsiba, Com. M. Kamalakanth and others attended the program.

Annual meet of pensioners of Patna Division

In the backdrop of high prices, unemployment, all out corruption, 49% FDI in insurance, discrimination in DA calculation, no revision of domiciliary treatment, the 28th annual general body of LIC Pensioners association Patna Division was held on the 06th March 2016 at Patna under the president ship of com. I P Singh. The conference was attended by 75 pensioners.

The annual report which dealt at length the background in which the conference was held was adopted after discussion unanimously. The meeting passed resolution against privatization, high

prices and unemployment and for revision of pensioner's 100% neutralization of DA to pre 1997 retirees, improvement in mediclaim scheme and increase in the exgratia amount to pre 1986 retirees. The salient features of the conference was that all the members who attained the age of 75 years and above numbering 42 were felicitated at a time and were given woollen shawls.

The meeting elected a 21 member working committee with Com. G P Verma, Com. M M P Verma and Com. Fateh Alam as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

DONATIONS

ICEU, Chennai Division II on the occasion of 33rd SCZIEF Conference
Rs. 10,000

Com. P. L. Ramana, AAO LIC, STC Tirupathi, Nellore Div.
Rs. 1,000

Insurance Worker thanks the above donors for their fine gesture.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2001	Base 1960
July	263	6003.21
August	264	6026.04
September	266	6071.69
October	269	6140.17
November	270	6162.99
December	269	6140.17
January	269	6140.17
February	267	6094.52
Base 1960 = Base 2001 x 22.8259		

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Policy Term	Premium Paying Term
16	10
21	15
25	16

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Plan No.: 836

UIN No.: 512N304V01

- Minimum Basic Sum Assured: ₹200,000/-
- Maximum Basic Sum Assured: No Upper limit
- Minimum Entry Age: 8 years
- Maximum Entry Age: 50/54/59 years for policy term 25/21/16 years
- Optional Benefits:
 - (i) LIC's Accidental Death and Disability Benefit Rider
 - (ii) LIC's New Term Assurance Rider

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For Further Details:

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