

Insurance Worker

Volume 64
Number 03
March 2021
₹ 10 • Pages 40+4

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Monthly Journal of ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION



Kisans & Media



Sliding into Fiscal Abyss



Why Not Listen to Them



PEOPLE'S MONEY ~~FOR PEOPLE'S WELFARE~~
henceforth FOR CRONIES' SUPER PROFITS.....

FOREIGN DIRECT INVESTMENT
for ATMANIRBHAR BHARAT !?

तुम परचम लहराना साथी
मैं बरबत पर गाऊंगा



You waive the flag comrade,
I shall sing for you

SAHIR -100

'NO' to
LIC IPO-FDI HIKE
GI PRIVATISATION
and **DISMANTLING**
PUBLIC SECTOR





**CUTTACK DIVISION
INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
(CDIEA)**

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ITS MEMBERS**

FOR

ACCOMPLISHING THE SPECIAL ENDEAVOUR OF
MAKING ALL MEMBERS AS SUBSCRIBERS OF

***insurance
worker*** FOR 2021.

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Cover Design & Lay-out :
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Subscription
Annual : Rs. 120
Single Copy : Rs. 10

BLUEPRINT FOR DISMANTLING OF PUBLIC SECTOR

The Finance Minister presenting the Budget for 2021-22 informed Parliament that government would take steps to list LIC through an Initial Public Offering in the coming financial year and necessary amendments to LIC Act 1956 will be presented in the budget session itself. Later it came to light that these amendments are proposed through the Finance Bill itself in an attempt to bypass their closer scrutiny by Parliament. She also said that FDI limit in insurance would be raised to 74% and management control will be allowed to foreign capital. In a decision that will have far reaching consequences for the national economy, Finance Minister announced that government will sell outright one public sector general insurance company and two public sector banks in the year 2021-22. The Finance Minister also informed the policy decision of the government to privatise nearly the entire public sector.

The budget is not just a statement of revenue and expenditure of the central government. It is rather a political and ideological statement. This budget has turned the Indian economic direction to the extreme right. It is a strong assertion of crony capitalism, signalling the smooth and mutually beneficial relationship between the crony capitalists and the ruling party in power. The roadmap drawn by the government to totally dismantle the public sector is to pave way for acquiring of public assets by crony capitalists to make huge gains.

The Public Sector was created in India to help the backward agricultural economy to industrialise fast. The public sector laid the necessary infrastructure for industrialisation through public funding and public resources. With the help of public sector, India moved towards building a self reliant economy standing up to the economic pressures of the industrialised countries. The Public sector helped in checking the concentration of income in the hands of few and the profits earned were diverted for the welfare of the people. The public sector also played an important role in narrowing the regional disparities and imbalances and helped fulfil regional aspirations of people to a great extent.

In a country where large sections of the population depend upon public provisioning of goods and services, public sector has an extremely important role to play. The government policy endangers not just the economic sovereignty but will also make basic services unaffordable to the people and make them helplessly dependent

on profit seeking private capital. The policy of dismantling public sector is also in violation of the Directive Principles of State Policy as enshrined in the Constitution. The government may say that these are just guidelines and are not justiciable. But this raises a larger question of constitutional morality.

Part IV of Constitution lays down the Directive Principles of State Policy. Though provisions contained in this Part cannot be enforced legally, these principles are fundamental in the governance of the country and it is the duty of the State to apply these principles in governance. Article 38 directs the State to 'strive to promote welfare of people by securing and protecting as effectively as it may a social order in which justice, social economic and political shall inform all the institutions of the national life'. Article 39 lays down that "the ownership and control of the material resources of the community are so distributed as best to sub-serve the common good" and goes further to add that "the operation of economic system does not result in the concentration of wealth and means of production to the common detriment." Article 46 says "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation".

The policy announced to dismantle the public sector violates each of the above three Articles of the Constitution. The government has decided to hand over the material resources of the country for the benefit of few capitalists at the cost of economic and social justice to the vast majority of people. India has experienced unprecedented concentration of wealth with the top 1% of the population owning more than 50% of the national wealth. The extreme rightward shift of the economic policy will further accentuate inequalities. The affirmative action of the State in the form of reservations in education and jobs will greatly suffer with the destruction of public sector adversely impacting the lives of the SC/ST communities and economically disadvantaged groups. Therefore, the policy of dismantling the public sector must be resolutely opposed through common, united and intensified actions of the working class.

The AIIEA is opposed to LIC IPO on sound and valid reasons. The life insurance business was nationalised to help the State control domestic savings and to protect the interests of the policyholders from

the monumental frauds committed by the private operators. The LIC was created to mobilise small savings and convert them into capital for long term investments to help industrialisation of the country. The LIC was also given the mandate to offer total protection to the policyholders' monies and ensure decent returns. The LIC has been very successful in carrying forward these objectives by operating on the unique principle of 'peoples' money for peoples' welfare'. The public listing of this eminently successful institution will undermine the very objectives of nationalisation of life insurance business and the creation of LIC. The reasons advanced for LIC IPO are too frivolous and the AIIEA has forcefully countered each of these arguments. The listing of LIC will force this institution to work to enhance the value for shareholders rather than creating value for the policyholders and the national economy. Therefore, the LIC IPO is a retrograde step that would enable a small section to exploit and corner the massive value created by the finest public financial institution in the country.

It is strange that a government which professes to work towards an atmanirbhar Bharat has decided to enhance FDI limits in insurance from 49% to 74% and allow management control to foreign capital. Domestic savings play the most important role in capital formation and its investment in productive sectors of the economy. By hiking FDI limits and allowing control over life insurance companies, the government is putting to risk the savings of the people greatly harming national interests.

The decision to sell outright a general insurance company and two banks is highly condemnable. There are no justifiable reasons for this decision. This decision is coming in the background of the recommendation to permit the corporate houses to enter the banking industry. The coming together of industrial and finance capital will not only place at risk the savings of the people but also has potential to destabilise the entire economy. The government can ignore, only at great cost to the economy, the lessons of the past where the confluence of industrial and finance capital resulted in huge frauds necessitating nationalisation of insurance and banking; institutions that mobilise the savings of the people.

It is extremely unfortunate that the budget failed to address the real concerns of the economy. The Indian economy was already sliding down before the outbreak of Covid 19 and the pandemic

further aggravated the crisis. There were wide expectations that Budget would initiate policy measures to increase incomes of people, create employment opportunities and address the issue of demand constraint. But that was not. The severe shortcomings experienced in the health sector and the digital divide in education during the pandemic find no remedial measures in the budget. It appears that poor have simply disappeared from the policy discourse and what we are witnessing is a right-wing socialism where the top 1% of the population has taken control over the government and policies are framed to allow them to redistribute and concentrate wealth of the country into their hands.

The insurance employees cannot but resist the entire economic agenda of the government with a special focus on the issues relating to insurance industry. The LIC IPO, FDI hike and privatisation of General Insurance Company cannot go without a serious challenge. The need of the times is to build a powerful campaign including industrial strike actions. The attack on entire public sector has also thrown up huge possibilities of uniting all sections of the working class to wage a determined battle against the right-wing economic agenda. The AIIEA must take the lead in this direction. The united struggles of the workers must force the government to abandon the right-wing economic direction.

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के खात्मे का खाका

वित्त मंत्री ने 2021-22 के लिए बजट पेश करते हुए संसद को सूचित किया कि सरकार आगामी वित्तीय वर्ष में एक प्रारम्भिक सार्वजनिक पेशकश के माध्यम से एलआईसी को सूचीबद्ध करने के लिए कदम उठाएगी और एलआईसी अधिनियम 1956 में आवश्यक संशोधन बजट सत्र में ही प्रस्तुत किए जाएंगे। बाद में यह जानकारी में आया है कि गहन संसदीय जांच से बचकर निकलने के प्रयास में इस संशोधन को वित्त विधेयक में ही शामिल करके प्रस्तावित किया जाएगा। उन्होंने यह भी कहा कि बीमा में एफडीआई सीमा को 74 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाया जाएगा और प्रबन्ध नियन्त्रण में भी विदेशी पूंजी को अनुमति दी जाएगी। एक फैसले में जो राष्ट्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए बहुत दूरगामी परिणाम देगा, वित्त मंत्री ने घोषणा की कि सरकार वर्ष 2021-22 में एक सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की सामान्य बीमा कम्पनी और दो सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंकों को बेचेगी। वित्त मंत्री ने लगभग पूरे सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के निजीकरण के सरकार के नीतिगत निर्णय की भी जानकारी दी।

बजट केवल केन्द्र सरकार के राजस्व और व्यय का विवरण नहीं है। बल्कि यह एक राजनीतिक और वैचारिक बयान है। इस बजट ने भारत की आर्थिक दिशा को धुर दक्षिणपंथ में बदल दिया है। यह पक्षपाती पूंजीवाद की एक मजबूत स्थापना है जो पूंजीवादी मित्रों और सत्ता में सत्तारूढ़ पार्टी के बीच सहज और पारस्परिक रूप से लाभकारी सम्बन्ध का संकेत देता है। सरकार द्वारा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को पूरी तरह से टुकड़े-टुकड़े करने के लिए तैयार किये गए दिशानिर्देश बड़े पैमाने पर पूंजीवादी मित्रों द्वारा सार्वजनिक सम्पत्ति हड़पकर असाधारण लाभ हासिल करने का मार्ग प्रशस्त करते हैं।

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र का निर्माण भारत की पिछड़ती कृषि अर्थव्यवस्था को तेजी से औद्योगिकीकरण में मदद करने के लिए किया गया था। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र ने सार्वजनिक धन और सार्वजनिक संसाधनों के माध्यम से औद्योगिकीकरण के लिए आवश्यक बुनियादी ढांचा तैयार किया। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की मदद से भारत औद्योगिक देशों के आर्थिक दबाव का सामना

करते हुए एक आत्मनिर्भर अर्थव्यवस्था का निर्माण करने की ओर अग्रसर हुआ। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र ने कुछ लोगों के हाथों में आय की एकाग्रता पर रोक लगाने में मदद की और अर्जित लाभ को लोगों के कल्याण के लिए मोड़ दिया। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र ने भी क्षेत्रीय विषमताओं और असंतुलन को कम करने में महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई और लोगों की क्षेत्रीय आकांक्षाओं को काफी हद तक पूरा करने में मदद की।

ऐसे देश में जहां जनसंख्या का बड़ा हिस्सा वस्तु और सेवाओं की सार्वजनिक व्यवस्था पर निर्भर करता है, सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका होती है। सरकार की नीति न केवल आर्थिक संप्रभुता को खतरे में डालती है बल्कि लोगों के लिए बुनियादी सेवाओं को पहुंच से बाहर कर देगी और उन्हें लाभलोलुप निजी पूंजी के सामने लाचारी से आश्रित बना देगी। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को विघटित करने की नीति संविधान में प्रतिष्ठापित राज्य के नीति निर्देशक सिद्धान्तों का भी उल्लंघन है। सरकार कह सकती है कि ये सिर्फ दिशा-निर्देश हैं और ये बाध्यकारी नहीं हैं। लेकिन इससे संवैधानिक नैतिकता का बड़ा सवाल उठता है।

संविधान के चौथे भाग द्वारा राज्य की नीति निर्देशक सिद्धान्तों का पालन किया जाता है। यद्यपि इस भाग में निहित प्रावधान कानूनी रूप से बाध्यकारी नहीं किए जा सकते, किन्तु ये सिद्धान्त देश के शासन व्यवस्था के लिये आधारभूत होते हैं और इन सिद्धान्तों को शासन व्यवस्था में शामिल करना राज्य का कर्तव्य है। अनुच्छेद 38 राज्य को निर्देश देता है कि "राज्य लोगों को सुरक्षित और संरक्षित करते हुए अधिक से अधिक कल्याण को बढ़ावा देने हेतु एक सामाजिक, आर्थिक व राजनीतिक व्यवस्था को प्राप्त करने के लिये प्रयास करेगा एवं राष्ट्रीय जीवन की सभी संस्थाओं को सजग करेगा।" अनुच्छेद 39 यह बताता है कि "समुदाय के भौतिक संसाधनों के स्वामित्व और नियन्त्रण को इस प्रकार वितरित किया जाये जिससे आम लोगों की भलाई में सहायक हो" और आगे जोड़ते हुए कहते हैं कि "आर्थिक प्रणाली का संचालन इस प्रकार किया जाए जिससे धन-

सम्पत्ति एवं उत्पादन के साधनों का एकत्रीकरण आम लोगों के लिए अहितकर न हो।” अनुच्छेद 46 में कहा गया है, “राज्य समाज के कमजोर वर्गों में खासतौर से अनुसूचित जातियों और अनुसूचित जनजातियों के शैक्षणिक और आर्थिक हितों में विशेष ध्यान रखेगा और उन्हें सामाजिक अन्याय एवं सभी प्रकार के शोषण से संरक्षित रखेगा।”

सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को समाप्त करने की प्रस्तुत नीति संविधान के उपरोक्त तीनों अनुच्छेदों में से प्रत्येक का उल्लंघन करती है। सरकार ने बहुसंख्यक लोगों के आर्थिक और सामाजिक न्याय की कीमत पर कुछ पूंजीपतियों के लाभ के लिए देश के भौतिक संसाधनों को सौंपने का फैसला किया है। भारत में 50 प्रतिशत से भी अधिक राष्ट्रीय सम्पत्ति शीर्ष 1 प्रतिशत आबादी के पास अभूतपूर्व रूप से सिमट कर एकत्रित होने का अनुभव हो रहा है। आर्थिक नीतियों का इस प्रकार घोर दक्षिणपंथ की तरफ खिसकना और भी अधिक असमानता बढ़ाने वाला होगा। शिक्षा और नौकरियों में आरक्षण के रूप में राज्य द्वारा की जा रही सकारात्मक कार्यवाही पर सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के विनाश के साथ ही एससी/एसटी समुदायों और आर्थिक रूप से वंचित समूहों के जीवन पर बहुत ही बुरी तरह से प्रतिकूल प्रभाव पड़ेगा। इसलिए, सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र को खत्म करने की नीति का मजदूर वर्ग के आम, एकजुट और तीव्र आन्दोलनों के माध्य से पूरी तरह विरोध किया जाना चाहिए।

एआईआईईए टोस और वैध तर्कों के आधार पर एलआईसी आईपीओ का विरोध करती है। जीवन बीमा व्यवसाय का राष्ट्रीयकरण घरेलू बचत को नियन्त्रित करने और निजी संचालकों द्वारा की गई बड़ी-बड़ी धोखाधड़ी से पॉलिसीधारकों के हितों की रक्षा के लिए किया गया था। एलआईसी को छोटी बचत जुटाने और देश के औद्योगिकीकरण में मदद हेतु दीर्घकालिक निवेश की पूंजी में परिवर्तित करने के लिए बनाया गया था। एलआईसी को पॉलिसीधारकों के पैसे को सम्पूर्ण सुरक्षा प्रदान करने और समुचित लाभ सुनिश्चित करने के लिए भी जनादेश दिया गया था। ‘लोगों के कल्याण के लिए लोगों के धन’ के अद्वितीय सिद्धान्त पर काम करते हुए एलआईसी इन उद्देश्यों को आगे बढ़ाने में बहुत सफल रही है। इस अत्यन्त सफल संस्थान की पब्लिक लिस्टिंग जीवन बीमा व्यवसाय के राष्ट्रीयकरण और एलआईसी के निर्माण के उद्देश्यों को ही कमजोर करेगी। एलआईसी में आईपीओ लाने के लिए जो कारण बताए जा रहे हैं, बेहद तुच्छ हैं और एआईआईईए ने इनमें से प्रत्येक तर्क के उत्तर में जोरदार जवाब गिनाए हैं। एलआईसी की लिस्टिंग इस संस्थान को पॉलिसीधारकों और राष्ट्रीय अर्थव्यवस्था के लिए निधि बनाने के बजाय श्रेयधारकों का मूल्य बढ़ाने के लिए काम करने को मजबूर करेगी। इसलिए, एलआईसी आईपीओ एक प्रतिगामी कदम है जो देश में बेहतरीन सार्वजनिक वित्तीय संस्थान द्वारा बनाए गए बड़े पैमाने पर निधि का एक बहुत ही छोटे से वर्ग को फायदा उठाने और उनका दोहन करने में सक्षम बना देगा।

यह अजीब बात है कि सरकार जो एक आत्मनिर्भर भारत बनाने की दिशा में काम करने का ढिंढोरा पीटती है, उसने बीमा में सीधे विदेशी निवेश की सीमा 49 प्रतिशत से

बढ़ाकर 74 प्रतिशत करने का फैसला किया है और प्रबन्धन में विदेशी पूंजी के नियन्त्रण की अनुमति दी है। घरेलू बचत पूंजी निर्माण और अर्थव्यवस्था के उत्पादक क्षेत्रों में इसके निवेश में सबसे महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाती है। एफडीआई की सीमाएं तय करने और जीवन बीमा कम्पनियों पर नियन्त्रण की अनुमति देकर, सरकार राष्ट्रीय हितों को नुकसान पहुंचाते हुए लोगों की बचत को जोखिम में डाल रही है।

एक सामान्य बीमा कम्पनी और दो बैंकों को एकमुश्त बेचने का निर्णय अत्यन्त निन्दनीय है। इस निर्णय के लिए कोई उचित कारण नहीं है। यह निर्णय कारपोरेट घरानों को बैंकिंग उद्योग में प्रवेश करने की अनुमति देने की सिफारिश की पृष्ठभूमि में आ रहा है। औद्योगिक और वित्त पूंजी के एक साथ आने से न केवल लोगों की बचत के ऊपर खतरा आयेगा, बल्कि इसमें पूरी अर्थव्यवस्था को अस्थिर करने की क्षमता होगी। अतीत के वे सबक जहां औद्योगिक और वित्त पूंजी के संगम से अनेक घोटाले हुए जिसके परिणामस्वरूप बीमा और बैंकिंग संस्थाएं जोकि लोगों की बचत को एकजुट करती हैं, उनके राष्ट्रीयकरण की आवश्यकता पैदा हुई, ये सरकार केवल अर्थव्यवस्था की बड़ी कीमत पर इनको नजरअन्दाज कर सकती है।

यह अत्यन्त दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि बजट अर्थव्यवस्था की वास्तविक चिन्ताओं को दूर करने में विफल रहा। कोविड 19 के प्रकोप के आने से पहले ही भारतीय अर्थव्यवस्था नीचे खिसक रही थी उस पर महामारी ने संकट को और भी बढ़ा दिया। व्यापक उम्मीदें थीं कि बजट लोगों की आय बढ़ाने, रोजगार के अवसर पैदा करने और मांग में कमी के मुद्दे को दूर करने के लिए नीतिगत उपाय शुरू करेगा। लेकिन ऐसा नहीं हुआ। महामारी के दौरान स्वास्थ्य के क्षेत्र में गम्भीर खामियों और शिक्षा में डिजिटल इन्फ्रामाल के सम्बन्ध में बजट में कोई सुधारात्मक उपाय नहीं मिला। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि गरीब तो अब नीतिगत चर्चा से भी गायब हो गया है और हम जो देख रहे हैं वह एक दक्षिणपंथी समाजवाद है जहां शीर्ष 1 प्रतिशत आबादी ने सरकार पर नियन्त्रण कर लिया है और नीतियां इस तरह की तैयार की जा रही हैं जिससे पुनर्वितरण की अनुमति इनको इस प्रकार मिलती है कि देश की संपदा एकत्रित होकर इन्हीं की मट्टी में आ जाये।

बीमा कर्मचारी कुछ नहीं सिर्फ बीमा उद्योग से सम्बन्धित मुद्दों पर विशेष ध्यान देने के साथ सरकार के सम्पूर्ण आर्थिक एजेण्डे का विरोध कर सकते हैं। एलआईसी आईपीओ, एफडीआई बढ़ोतरी और जनरल इन्श्योरेन्स कम्पनी के निजीकरण जैसे काम एक गम्भीर चुनौती के बिना ऐसे ही नहीं छोड़े जा सकते। समय की जरूरत है कि औद्योगिक हड़ताल की कार्यवाही सहित एक शक्तिशाली अभियान का निर्माण किया जाए। सम्पूर्ण सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र पर किये जा रहे हमले ने दक्षिणपंथी आर्थिक एजेण्डे के खिलाफ दृढ़ संकल्प के साथ लड़ाई छेड़ने के लिए मजदूर वर्ग के सभी वर्गों को एकजुट करने की भारी संभावनाएं पैदा कर दी हैं। एआईआईईए को इस दिशा में आगे बढ़कर कदम उठाने चाहिए। श्रमिकों के एकजुट संघर्ष को सरकार के दक्षिणपंथी आर्थिक दिशा को छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर करना चाहिए।

AIIEA SECRETARIAT MEETING

- * Decries Attempts to hasten the IPO process of LIC
- * Criticises the Move to Privatisise One General Insurance Company
- * Condemns the proposal to Increase FDI in Insurance from 49% to 74%
- * Calls upon Employees to Prepare for Struggle
- * Expresses Unhappiness over the Delay in Conclusion of Wage Negotiations
- * Resolves to Strive for Early and Satisfactory Wage Settlement

The Secretariat of AIIEA met through video conferencing on 02 February 2021. The online Secretariat meeting was called to take stock of developments related to the industry in the context of the Union Budget that was placed on 01 February and to decide the future course of action on the issue of wage revision in LIC and PSGI Companies.

The Secretariat of the AIIEA felt that the Union Budget was a big let-down. It was full of rhetoric and devoid of any substance. The Indian economy was hit by the twin blows of the pandemic and a severe recession. The Budget however did not take any remedial measures to alleviate the miseries and sufferings of the people. Rather than making any honest attempt to give some relief to the people groaning under severe joblessness, unemployment and raging inequality, the Budget instead has given huge bonanza to the Corporate Sector. The secretariat was critical that there was no serious attempt for resource mobilisation to lift the economy out of the severe contraction that it is in. The inability and unwillingness of the government to augment public spending by mobilising resources through taxation was amply evident in the mad

rush to privatise the entire gamut of public sector undertakings. The Secretariat was critical that Disinvestment and Privatisation had become the signature theme of the Budget.

The Secretariat condemned the Budget proposals relating to amendment of the Insurance Act 1938 with a view to increasing FDI in the insurance sector from 49% to 74%, privatising one general insurance company along with two public sector banks and the decision to bring the LIC IPO in Financial Year 2021-22. The Secretariat reiterated that there is absolutely no justification for FDI hike in the insurance industry. The actual share of FDI in the total investments in the private insurance industry today is much less than the current limit of 49%. Scarcity of Foreign capital, therefore, has never been an impediment to the growth of the insurance industry. FDI hike in insurance would only help foreign capital gain greater control over our precious domestic savings and would be against the national interest, noted the Secretariat.

The Secretariat was of the firm opinion that privatisation of any public sector general insurance company is not in the interest of the nation. Despite

intense competition, the public sector general insurance companies have held their ground to retain market dominance. Despite the slowdown in the economy, the public sector general insurance companies have recorded impressive growth in the recent period. If these companies are facing some difficulties now, it is not due to slack in business performance but due to higher provisioning they were forced to make to make these companies attractive for disinvestment in future. The Secretariat noted that rather than privatising any PSGI company, the government should have actually consolidated the public sector general insurance companies and enabled them to face competition successfully.

The budget proposal to go ahead with the IPO of LIC in the coming financial year came in for sharp criticism in the meeting of the Secretariat. It was the considered opinion of the meeting that the LIC IPO will undermine the very objectives of nationalisation. Rather than delivering value to the nation and its policyholders, it will be forced to work for creating value and generating profits for the shareholders. The asset owned by all Indians will be exploited for profits by small number of rich in the country, felt the Secretariat.

The government seems to be in a tearing hurry to fast forward the IPO process of LIC. It is not prepared even to wait for the amendment of the LIC Act to carry forward the necessary legislative agenda. The government now wants LIC's disinvestment any which way. Therefore, the government has stealthily sneaked in the proposed amendments to the LIC Act in the Finance Bill itself. A cursory reading of the Finance Bill 2021 makes it amply clear that the government has proposed changes in the LIC Act of 1956 pertaining to the capital structure of the LIC, composition of the LIC Board, dividend payments to policy holders and governing norms of the LIC. These amendments to the LIC Act also propose to increase the authorised share capital from the current level of Rs. 100 crore to Rs. 25000 crore divided into 2500 crore shares of Rs.10 each. It is also mentioned that the government will hold at least 75 per cent stake in the LIC for the next five years and will continue to hold at least 51 per cent after that. The proposed amendments also make changes in the pattern of surplus distribution adversely impacting the interests of the policyholders. The Secretariat is of the firm opinion that LIC IPO is the first step

towards privatisation. It may be pointed out that the Government had assured through legislations that its holding in PS Banks and PSGI companies will not come below 51 percent. Despite this commitment, the announcement to privatise two PS Banks and One GI company clearly demonstrates the trust deficit and the unabashed commitment of the government to neo-liberal agenda.

The Secretariat of the AIIEA unanimously decided to fight this offensive by mobilising the broadest possible section of the people. Underscoring the need to develop unity across the financial sector on the issue of privatisation of public sector financial institutions, the meeting decided to work for expanding unity beyond the industry also. The Secretariat authorised the headquarters of the AIIEA to chalk out programmes of action in consultation with our partners in the Joint Front, in LIC and PSGI Companies. The Secretariat of AIIEA felt that the wage revision issue had reached a decisive phase in LIC with the management's offer of 16 per cent in the last round of negotiations on 21st December 2020. Expressing unhappiness over the fact that there was not much headway thereafter, the Secretariat resolved to pursue the issue vigorously for early settlement of the issue to the satisfaction of the employees. The Secretariat took a serious note of the GIPSA management's complete silence on the issue of wage revision of PSGI employees. It was critical that not a single round of discussion had taken place as yet. The meeting complemented the Standing Committee (General Insurance) for their united struggle under the banner of the Joint Front and authorised the Standing Committee to intensify the struggle in the days to come for the realisation of a good wage revision. We understand that today's One Hour walk out strike called by the Joint Forum of Unions in PSGI companies has been a massive success throughout the country.

The Secretariat was confident that the wage issue in life sector will be resolved at the earliest. In the general sector no stone will be left unturned to initiate the wage revision discussion for a satisfactory settlement. However, at the same time, we call upon all the employees to be in readiness to unleash a powerful campaign against the cynical move of the government to weaken the public sector insurance industry.



Why AIIEA is opposed to LIC IPO, FDI hike and Privatisation of Gen.Ins. company

Finance Minister Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman made three important announcements relating to the insurance industry in her budget proposals.

1. The government would increase FDI in the insurance sector from 49% to 74% and allow foreign ownership in insurance with some safeguards.
2. Government has plans to privatise one general insurance company along with two public sector banks.
3. The government would bring the LIC IPO in this Financial Year. To facilitate this, necessary amendments to LIC Act have been incorporated in the Finance Bill.

The All India Insurance Employees' Association is opposed to all the three proposals as these are not in the interest of the insurance industry, the Indian economy and the people. We give very briefly reasons for our opposition to these proposals.

No need to Increase FDI Limit:

The insurance sector was opened for private companies through the IRDA Act 1999. Initially the IRDA Act allowed 26 per cent foreign equity in private insurance companies. Subsequently, the FDI limit was increased from 26 to 49 per cent in the year 2015. The government has now proposed to increase it from 49 to 74 per cent and has decided to allow even foreign ownership in insurance company.

The argument for FDI hike is that insurance is a capital intensive business. The development and expansion of insurance requires significant amount of capital, which the Indian partners are not capable of doing. This is not true. All the big corporate houses of India have entered the insurance business and capital has never been an issue with them. Most of these business houses have been investing heavily outside the country for expansion of their interests. Therefore, it is not possible to accept that they lack resources for expansion. Some of them are also listed and have access to raise capital through the markets in India.

The second argument is that insurance in India still remains under penetrated. Penetration is seen as premiums collected in relation to the GDP. In a country which has a low per capita income and people lack adequate resources to save, looking at

the insurance market from this angle is not entirely right. It is estimated that nearly 40 crore Indians are insured both through individual assurances and Group insurance. It is estimated that the insurable population (Persons who can be insured) in India is around 60 crore. Therefore the numbers of persons covered are significant. This number can increase depending upon the rising levels of income and savings.

The growth rate of General Insurance business in India is one of the highest in the world. This growth can further increase if the asset owning households increase. The potential for the growth of life and health insurance gets restricted due to the levying of 18 percent GST.

Insurance, especially life insurance, mobilises small savings of the people and converts them into capital for long term investments in social and infrastructure projects. It is therefore imprudent to allow foreign capital greater access to and control over domestic savings. It is important that in a developing economy like ours, the state exercises greater control over domestic savings. Allowing foreign capital greater control over domestic savings would surely harm the nation. In a country which has scarcity of capital, it is imprudent to allow the foreign capital to control the household savings. The experience worldwide has proved that foreign capital can never be a substitute for capital formation through domestic savings.

It is interesting to note that the actual share of FDI in the total investments in the private insurance industry today is much less than the current limit of 49%. According to the Annual Report of the IRDA 2018-19, as of 31st March 2019 FDI in the life insurance industry was Rs.9764.20 crore and that in the general insurance industry was Rs. 4045.63 crore. Thus the share of FDI in the total investments of the life and general insurance industries was only 35.36% and 23.66% against the present limit of 49%. There is therefore no justification for FDI increase in the insurance industry from 49 to 74 per cent.

The decision to increase FDI and allow foreign ownership in insurance would only amount to handing over precious savings of the people in India to the hands of foreign capital.

No Justification for LIC IPO:

The LIC was created through an Act of Parliament. It was given the task of raising resources for faster industrialization of the country by collecting small savings in the form of premiums while giving utmost security to the policyholders. The LIC has been very successful in meeting these objectives. The disinvestment in LIC is the first step towards privatization. Therefore LIC IPO violates the very objectives of its creation.

The government has taken up a position that “Listing of companies on stock exchanges disciplines a company and provides access to financial markets and unlocks its value. It also gives opportunity for retail investors to participate in the wealth so created”. The arguments advanced to list LIC in the stock market and float its IPO are hollow.

LIC is a transparent and efficient Board managed institution. It comes out with Public Disclosures every quarter. It submits reports of its functioning every month to the Regulator IRDAI. It places its accounts in the Parliament for scrutiny. If this is not transparent functioning, what else it is?

The argument that listing will help LIC access funds from the market is laughable. LIC is the largest investor in the Indian economy. LIC generates investible funds to the tune of Rs.3.5 to 4 lakh crores annually and therefore there is no necessity for LIC to access the market for funds. The total investments of the corporation amounted to Rs.29, 84,331.25 crore as at 31st March 2019. LIC has made an investment of Rs.21, 40,106 crore in Government and Social Sector as at 31st March 2019. It is amazing to note that LIC funds more than 25% of the government borrowings. No single institution anywhere in the world funds the government borrowings to this extent. The assets of LIC at \$440 billion are larger than GDP of 75 percent of the countries in the list of United Nations. In terms of the revenue earned it can figure among the top Fortune 500 companies. There is therefore no dearth of funds for LIC.

It is common knowledge that only around 3% of the total participants in the stock market as retail investors. To say listing will enhance the value for retail investors is far from truth. It will enhance value and profit for the rich, foreign capital and domestic institutional investors. This simply means handing over the finest financial institutions for enhancement of value for the rich.

To say that listing will protect the interests of policyholders mean that LIC is lacking in this aspect which again is not true. The LIC has fully protected the interests of its policyholders. While ensuring total safety of the funds of policyholders, it has the track record to giving the best returns in the form of bonus. It has set very high servicing standards and its claim settlement performance is the best in the global insurance industry. It has the lowest operating cost in the entire life insurance industry in India. Therefore, the arguments of better transparency, policyholders’ interests etc totally fall flat in the face of existing reality.

Therefore, the move to disinvest LIC will severely impact the economy and vulnerable sections of the Indian people. The objectives of nationalisation will recede in the background and LIC will have to concentrate on delivering increasing profits to the shareholders. The LIC like the private companies have to target the big policies which bring greater profits. In the process the small size policies which the poor, vulnerable and lower middle classes purchase will no more be attractive. The social objective of providing insurance cover to the weaker sections will receive a set-back. The aim to expand insurance in the unprofitable rural areas too will suffer. Therefore, disturbing the character of LIC will harm the interests of the national economy and the poorer sections of the Indian population.

Privatisation of Public Sector General Insurance Company is uncalled for:

Privatisation of any public sector general insurance company is not in the interest of the nation. Despite intense competition, the public sector general insurance companies have held their ground to retain market dominance. Despite the slowdown in the economy, the public sector general insurance companies have recorded impressive growth in the recent period. If these companies are facing some difficulties now, it is not due to slack in business performance but due to higher provisioning they were forced to make to make these companies attractive for disinvestment in future. Rather than privatising any PSGI company, the government should have actually consolidated the public sector general insurance companies and enabled them to face competition successfully.

The AIIEA is determined to fight back this massive attack on the public sector insurance industry.

FINANCE MINISTER MET BUDGET PROPOSAL ON INSURANCE OPPOSED DEMANDED EARLY WAGE SETTLEMENT

A delegation of Joint Front leadership of South Zone consisting of Sri.S.Raghu, S.Senthil Kumaran (LIC Class I Officers' Association), Sri S. Anand - National Federation of Insurance Field Workers of India (NFIFWI), T.Senthilkumar, K.Swaminathan, R.K.Gopinath (South Zone Insurance Employees' Federation) S.Rameshkumar, S.Ravikumar, R.Vijayanirmala (ICEU Chennai I), M.Dhanaselvam (ICEU Chennai II) met Finance minister Smt. Nirmala Sitaraman at Chennai on 19th February 2021.

The delegation communicated our opposition to LIC IPO, FDI hike and privatisation of one General Insurance Company proposed in the Budget for the year 2021-22. The delegation effectively placed the reasons of our opposition. It was made clear that our opposition is not based on any sectarian interests but is on the issues relating to economic sovereignty and national interests

and the interests of insuring public. The delegation requested that considering the importance of insurance sector to the national economy, the government should revisit these decisions. The Finance Minister explained the position of the Government on the issue.

The delegation also raised the issue of wage revision in insurance industry pending for a long time. We demanded wage revision in LIC to be expedited and for commencement of the process in general insurance with the aim to reach a finality at the earliest. We pointed out that enhancement of Family pension also requires early clearance. She assured to look into the issues of the employees.

The discussions lasted for over 40 minutes.





Sliding into Fiscal Abyss

Dr. Santosh Kumar Mohapatra

The Union Budget comes in at a time when the economy has been ravaged by the Corona pandemic-induced recession. The much-talked V-shaped recovery is a hoax and the economy is experiencing a K-shaped recovery with the rich getting richer, the financial market booming on one side, while the poor getting impoverished, and the real economy crumbling on the other side. The ruling dispensation at the Centre including many economists, intellectuals have described India's first paperless union budget 2021-22 as growth-oriented having a multiplier effect. By contrast, opposition dubbed it as pro-corporates, visionless, Sell India, anti-people and betrayal of masses.

No doubt, the Budget has a colossal impact on the economy as well as the lives and livelihoods of people. But if a just presentation of a budget is enough to ensure growth, then no country would have experienced dwindling growth or recession. Allocation, implementation, the outcome of the Budget including internal, external situation also plays a decisive role. Since the 1990s, when India embraced liberalization, the Indian economy is increasingly becoming susceptible to vicissitudes of international crisis. The said Budget is not the first budget of the present ruling dispensation.

The budget is not just a statement of income, expenditure but a policy statement. This Budget is designed to transfer national assets to crony capitalists. The problems of low tax-GDP ratio, low tax buoyancy, battered finances, the decline in demand with concomitant unsustainable public debt, lower growth, and poor governance pose a grave threat to our fragile economic recovery unless addressed properly.

The Narendra Modi government has been presenting a Budget since 2014 and similar euphoria was created to derive political mileage but all budgets have failed to make any dent on poverty, hunger, unemployment and inequality.

Before the Corona pandemic struck, the Indian economy was already slowing down and was in a tizzy and tenterhooks. The pandemic triggered a health crisis of gargantuan proportion and subsequent poorly planned lockdown exacerbated the already beleaguered economy through supply disruption and demand compression resulting in loss of livelihoods, jobs and worst contraction of growth. Further, growth is not an indicator of the well-being of people; it just reflects the size of the economy which can grow when

rich becomes richer and this is a usual feature of our economy. What is misleading is that illusion and delusion of growth, development is created in such a way that people accept present sufferings gracefully in the hope of a better life in the future.

Though the government is in denial mood, an unfettered fiscal deficit of 9.5% of GDP in a revised estimate of 2020-21 and projected 6.8% of GDP in next fiscal with concomitant other economic malaises indicates not only fiscal profligacy but the looming fiscal apocalypse. The Indian economy seems to have been dragged into the fiscal abyss. However, it is good to see that the Central government which was opposed to a higher fiscal deficit in past has shed, albeit belatedly, its so-called fiscal conservatism and fundamentalism and has embraced the countercyclical fiscal policy. It has discarded its long-term commitment to bring the deficit down to close to 3% of GDP and plans to lower the fiscal deficit to 4.5% of GDP only by 2025-26. But what is outlandish is that fiscal deficit has been relegated to a secondary role in fiscal policy by the government not willingly but to camouflage its abysmal failure to mobilize resources to bridge the gap between receipts and expenditure. This exposes the hypocrisy of a government that twists rules to suit its purpose.

What is worrisome is that the escalating fiscal deficit is not due to augmented expenditure as propounded but primarily on account of revenues collapsing due to pandemic or the inability of the government to tax the rich, corporates, and affluent people according to their capacities. However, the fiscal deficit is not bad if the resources generated through borrowing are spent on creating assets or on the welfare of people and within the repayment capacity of the government. However, utmost care should be taken that higher borrowing is converted into inclusive growth and spent productively so that debt sustainability (i.e., debt -GDP ratio does not increase), inter-generational equity is maintained and the responsibility of paying the debt is not shifted to the future generation. But the distressing news is that while the burden of escalating debt falls on masses; benefits of debt-induced growth is garnered by few only.

However, debt burden seems to be unsustainable and the fiscal cataclysm is evident from the fact that the debt -GDP ratio is expected to touch 90% in current fiscal up from 72 .2% in 2019-20, much above the 60% envisaged by the government. The debt -GDP ratio will remain at an elevated level in foreseeable future as per the projection of the 15th Finance commission. If the economy does not grow by 14.4 % in nominal term and 10% in the real term (taking inflation into account) in 2021-22 as estimated, then the debt problem may



Cartoon courtesy: Alok Nirantar

assume an alarming proportion pushing the economy into a quagmire. A higher debt stock and escalated interest liabilities will lower social sector expenditure as already seen in this budget.

The fiscal upheaval is clearly palpable from the fact that the government is expected to spend around Rs 8 .1 lakh crore on interest payments in 2021-22 against the net tax revenue of around Rs 15.5 lakh crore. What is disconcerting is that government is heavily dependent upon disinvestment /privatization of the public sector, monetization of assets, and increase of regressive indirect taxes (i.e., excise tax) on petroleum products for resource generation, which are anti-people. The disinvestment and privatization act as conduits for transferring national assets to private individuals and reduce the future stream of dividends received by the government from the public sector and decimates the voiceless. It is known that while the public sector caters to the interest of the masses, the private sector represents the interest of its owners. The crisis is further compounded by allowing dominance to foreign capital by enhancing FDI limit from 49% to 74% in insurance sector. The policy of privatisation and unbridled FDI is the antithesis to the very concept of Atmanirbhar Bharat.

The government has tried to remain unscathed by attributing unbridled fiscal deficit to the recession and improved spending. In a post -Budget interaction with media, to assert that the government has spent more, Finance Minister said blatantly “we have spent, we have spent, we have spent”. But the grim reality is that total expenditure as a percentage of GDP is estimated to shrink to 15.63% in 2021-22 from 17.69% in 2020-21. In the Budget, the government has trumpeted that the total financial impact of all AtmaNirbhar Bharat packages including measures taken by RBI was estimated to about Rs `27.1 lakh crores which amount to more than 13% of GDP. But this is illusive and



Cartoon courtesy:
Sajith Kumar, Deccan Herald

deceptive. The budgeted total expenditure of Rs 34.83 lakh crores in 2021-22 amounts to slashing expenditure in real terms (i.e taking inflation into account) when compared to the revised estimate of the previous fiscal. Total budgeted expenditure was pegged at Rs 30.42 lakh in 2020-21 crore and revised upward to Rs 34.5 lakh crore to mitigate the pandemic crisis. It may be assumed excess of around Rs 4.1 lakh crore has been spent as a pandemic package. But, in reality, it is even much less may be around Rs 2 lakh crore or 1 % of GDP if the money spent to end extra-budgetary borrowing is considered.

The reality is that Finance Minister has ended the practice of extra-budgetary borrowing from the coming fiscal year onwards. This is a welcome step but the surreptitious design of dismantling the public procurement system and the Minimum Support Price (MSP) mechanism in the future cannot be fully ruled out. However, if there is any increased expenditure to mitigate the pandemic, simultaneous there must be a cut in other social or welfare expenditures. In 2021-22, there is a cut in some social sector expenditures too compared to the previous fiscal. Some expenditures like health have been repackaged to show a higher increase. In case of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Programme (MGNREGP), the budgetary allocation for 2021-22 has been placed at just Rs 73,000 crore lower than the revised estimate of Rs 1, 11,500 crores in previous fiscal. The allocation for the Department of Agriculture Cooperation and Farmers Welfare has slashed 8.5 per cent in 2021-22.

The major crisis plaguing youth today is a crisis of unemployment. But no attempt is made to create

Cartoon courtesy: Satish Acharya

more jobs. It was expected that the Budget will provide income supports to the poor especially those who have lost jobs and source of livelihoods due to pandemic. But Finance Minister has ignored this and had catered to the interest of corporates, foreign investors more. There was no attempt to enhance private spending, thereby demand which is responsible for growth contraction.

The Budget has proposed Agriculture Infrastructure and Development Cess (AIDC) on over a dozen items which include Rs 2.5 a litre on petrol and Rs 4 a litre in diesel. This may be replaced by a reduction of a similar amount of Additional Excise Duty (AED) on these fuels. But states do not have any share in resources raised through cesses and surcharges by the Centre. In 2020-21, it was estimated that the Center will raise revenues worth Rs 3.7 lakh crore through cesses and surcharges from which states will not get single paise. This is not cooperative federalism.

The revenues could have been raised through increasing corporate tax rate, introducing a marginal rate of tax on wealth and inheritance. But this is not to be so. For the first time, corporate taxes will now bring fewer revenues than taxes on individual income.

The budget is not just a statement of income, expenditure but a policy statement. The budget fails to address issues of hunger, poverty, inequality and creation jobs. Indeed, the Budget offered no tangible solutions, the strategic idea to the challenges facing the economy except serving only "platitudes and slogans". The Budget is designed to transfer national assets to crony capitalists. The problems of low tax-GDP ratio, low tax buoyancy, battered finances, the decline in demand with concomitant unsustainable public debt, lower growth, and poor governance pose a grave threat to our fragile economic recovery unless addressed properly.





SAHIR LUDHIANVI

– A POWERFUL VOICE
OF THE MARGINALISED
Amanulla Khan

Through his work, he raised the issues of the poor and the working class. He was a powerful critic of capitalism and its exploitative nature. He firmly believed in the socialist ideals. His was the voice of dissent. Sahir was uncompromising in his criticism of the rightwing philosophy and believed that only the Left can usher in an exploitation-free society. Though Sahir died 41 years back on October 25, 1980, the magical poetry he wrote is on the lips of tens of millions of Indians even today. His work is an enormous contribution to the progressive ideas and the movement of the working class. On the Birth Centenary of this great poet, we pay our rich tributes to his memory.

तुम से कुव्वत ले कर अब मैं तुम को राह दिखाऊँगा
तुम परचम लहराना साथी मैं बरबत पर गाऊँगा

*Drawing from your strength, I shall show you the way
You waive the flag comrade, I shall sing for you*

Sahir weaving these magical words clearly demonstrate his affinity and belonging to the movement of the working class and marginalised sections. As the world celebrate the birth centenary of Sahir Ludhianvi, his great work holds relevance to the problems of our times and provides inspiration to the progressive movement across the world.

Sahir Ludhianvi was born on 8th March 1921 in Ludhiana in a zamindar family. His real name was Abdul Hai Fazal Mohammad. He adopted the pen name Sahir, which means magician. His father Fazal Mohammad was a big Zamindar but Sahir could not enjoy the privileges of his class as his parents separated soon after his birth. His mother Sardar Begum took him away after separation and took the entire responsibility of bringing him up.

Sahir though grew up away from the Zamindari culture; even as a young child he witnessed the

cruelty and vulgarity of the system. He was also resentful of the manner his father ill-treated his mother. This had a big influence on his life. As a young man, he was deeply concerned with the social, economic and political situation of the times. In 1943, he joined the famous Dayal Singh College at Lahore. Here he took active part in the student politics and became the President of the Students Union. He had to leave the college for some reasons before completing the studies.

The country was partitioned in 1947 and Sahir chose to remain at Lahore which became part of Pakistan. Soon he became disillusioned with the political atmosphere in Pakistan and raised voice against suppression of dissent and popular movements. In 1949, he wrote a poem Awaaz-e – Adam whose lines read as follows:

दबेगी कब तलक आवाज़-ए-आदम हम भी देखेंगे
रुकेँगे कब तलक जज्बात-ए-बरहम हम भी देखेंगे
How long can the voice of Adam be suppressed?

We too shall see

How long can angry emotions be controlled?

We too shall see

The work of Sahir attracted the ire of those in power in Pakistan. He was under constant threats from the government agencies. He, therefore, chose to leave Lahore and moved to India to settle down at Bombay (now Mumbai) and became a very important part of Indian cinema. The telling lines of his poem 'hum bhi dekhenge' inspired Faiz who borrowed it to write the iconic poem 'Hum Dekhenge' which has become the anthem of resistance across the globe.

Sahir was an important member of the Progressive Writers' Association along with Munshi Premchand, Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Ali Sardar Jaffery and other great writers and poets of the times who played an important role in shaping progressive ideas. Inspired by the socialist ideals, the PWA believed that art cannot be for sake of art but it must reflect the realities of times. Art has to deal with the living realities of hunger, poverty and social backwardness. This finds reflection in the lines penned by Sahir:

फन जो नादार तक नहीं पहुँचा
अभी मेयार तक नहीं पहुँचा
*The art that does not reach the poor
Has not achieved its potential*

Through his work, he raised the issues of the poor and the working class. He was a powerful critic of capitalism and its exploitative nature. He firmly believed in the socialist ideals. His was the voice of dissent. Sahir was uncompromising in his criticism of the rightwing philosophy and believed that only the Left can usher in an exploitation-free society. The path of economic development the country took after independence created national wealth but the redistribution of this wealth was uneven. The fruits of development were cornered by a small section of the population with the vast majority remaining deprived of even the basic necessities of life. Raising these questions, Sahir in his poem 26th January asks the ruling classes a pertinent question:

दौलत बढी तो मुल्क में अफ़लास क्यूं बढा
खुश-हाली-ए-अवाम के अस्बाब क्या हुए
*If national wealth has increased,
why this increasing poverty
What happened to the path towards
ordinary peoples' prosperity*

These lines suggest that Sahir was a ruthless critic of capitalism. Sahir was an advocate of communal harmony. He was totally against the games to polarise the Indian society into Hindus and Muslims and reminded the people that to embrace humane

values is the biggest virtue. In the film Dhool ka Phool, when the villagers ask the religious identity of an abandoned child, Sahir advised the boy through the following lines:

तू हिन्दू बनेगा न मुसलमान बनेगा
इंसान की औलाद है इंसान बनेगा
*You will neither become a Hindu nor Muslim
You are a child of humans, you will be a human being*

In today's surcharged atmosphere in the country with religious bigotry, hate and the dangerous polarisation for electoral gains, these lines of Sahir offer an alternative for peaceful living together and happiness.

Sahir was a strong advocate of peace. He strongly believed that war can never be a solution for anything. For him peace was essential for the progress of humanity. He was very critical of the imperialist games of war. He wondered that imperialism creates conflicts, supply weapons to the warring nations to make enormous profits and then act as adjudicators of peace. He warned people against the imperialist designs and advised nations and people to resolve the disputes peacefully. In today's context, where television newsrooms have become war rooms and news anchors have become advocates of wars and conflict, the following lines of Sahir have profound meaning:

जंग तो खुद ही एक मसला है
जंग क्या मसअलों का हल देगी
खून और आग आज बरसेगी
भूख और एहतियाज कल देगी
*War itself is the problem
Not the solution to any
All it will give is fire and blood today
Hunger and beggary tomorrow*

For Sahir, the only wars that have to be waged vigorously were wars against hunger, poverty and exploitation.

Sahir was deeply concerned about the development of nuclear weapons and their proliferation. The experimentation of atomic bombs on Japan brought the chilling impact and destruction of life and property. The events have proved that the use of atomic bombs were not necessitated by the circumstances of the war but was a statement

to establish global superiority and hegemony. He exhorted the people to speak against development of these nuclear weapons capable of destroying the globe many times over. In his long poem 'parchaiyan', he exhorts:

कहो कि आज भी हम सब अगर खामोश रहे,
तो इस दमकते हुए खाकदाँ की खैर नहीं
जुनुँ की ढाली हुई ऐटमी बलाओं से,
ज़मी की खैर नहीं आसमाँ की खैर नहीं
*Speak, for if we remain silent today
This burnished treasure of earth has no future
In the lunacy of nuclear proliferation
Not just the earth, even the sky has no future*

This strong warning against nuclear proliferation has assumed great relevance today when nations are competing with each other to acquire nuclear technology and develop weapons of mass destruction. The global struggle for peace and demand for elimination of all weapons of mass destruction has to be reinvented. This has become an urgent necessity.

Sahir was a strong advocate of women's rights and equality. The ill treatment of his mother by his father perhaps influenced his thoughts. He expresses his strong sentiments on this subject in the lyrics written for the film Sadhana.

औरत ने जनम दिया मर्दों को,
मर्दों ने उसे बाज़ार दिया
जब जी चाहा कुचला मसला,
जब जी चाहा दुत्कार दिया
*Woman gave birth to men and
men gave her the marketplace
To crush and trample at will
to reject and cast off at will*

The anguish expressed by Sahir is justified. Even today women in Indian society are not treated equally and it may not be untrue to say that she is treated as a property of man. Women are kept bound in the name of tradition and what is significant is that majority of women themselves do not feel the necessity to break free from those traditions which are exploitative. In this poem, Sahir laments that man refuses to accept the role of women in the development and continuation of human race and its progress.

Sahir placed great reliance on the struggles of the

working class. He was convinced that it is this class which is capable of bringing about a social change. He was an unabashed supporter of the working class movement. He believed that the contribution of workers to the advancement of society is not recognised. In his poem Taj Mahal, while he is critical of the vulgarity of riches and sees this monument as a symbol of Emperor's love ridiculing the love of less privileged, he recognises the contribution made by the workers through their blood and sweat to create this beautiful monument.

He believed that no genuine class struggle fails. For him every struggle is a step towards the destination that we have set up and advocates the movement to continue the journey on this path. The following lines beautifully articulate this understanding:

माना कि इस ज़मी को न गुलज़ार कर सके
कुछ खार कम तो कर गए गुज़रे जिधर से हम
*True, we could not turn this world into a garden
Atleast we lessened some thorns from path we
travelled*

Any discussion on Sahir would be incomplete without mentioning the sublime love between him and Amrita Pritam. His fondness for Amrita Pritam and her immense love for him are well known. Sahir-Amrita romance is no ordinary thing; it has become a cultural phenomena. Today when boundaries are defined and restrictions are placed on love in the name of love Jihad, the extraordinary relationship between Sahir and Amrita is a strong statement that true love is capable of transcending the artificial boundaries placed.

Today we are experiencing a threat to democracy and the foundational principles of constitution. The society is sought to be divided on every conceivable basis to preserve and advance the interests of class rule. The atmosphere is unfortunately filled with venom and hate. In such a situation, the great work of Sahir is an inspiration for the working class. Though Sahir died 41 years back on October 25, 1980, the magical poetry he wrote is on the lips of tens of millions of Indians even today. His work is an enormous contribution to the progressive ideas and the movement of the working class. On the Birth Centenary of this great poet, we pay our rich tributes to his memory.



किसान आंदोलन और मीडिया

रामचंद्र शर्मा

किसान आंदोलन के संदर्भ में मुख्य धारा के मीडिया की भूमिका जबरदस्त आलोचना की जद में आ गयी है। लोकतंत्र में आंदोलन होते हैं और उसके समाधान की जिम्मेदारी सरकार की होती है परंतु पहली बार आंदोलन करने वाले बतौर खलनायक पेश किये जा रहे हैं और समाधान करने में विफल सरकार को कोसना और उससे सवाल करना तो दूर उल्टा सरकार के प्रवक्ताओं के विपक्ष से किये सवालों को प्रधानता दी जा रही है। पहले कभी ऐसा देखने-सुनने को नहीं मिला। आंदोलन में लोग भारी संख्या में जुटते हैं तो छुटपुट घटनाएं हो सकती हैं उसके लिए ऐतिहासिक बरतना और आवश्यक प्रबंधन करना सरकार काम है। उसमें रही कमी के लिए सरकार जिम्मेदारी होती है। हमने अनेक अवसरों पर देखा है हमारी पुलिस हालात को हैंडल करने के लिए उस स्तर तक प्रशिक्षित नहीं होती है। जब सुरक्षा बलों का शीर्ष नेतृत्व ही राजनैतिक जमात को संविधान से बड़ा आका मान लेता है तो स्थिति और खराब हो जाती है। जब कोई बड़ा आंदोलन खड़ा होता है और सरकार वार्ता करके आपसी सहमति से खत्म करने में नाकाम हो जाती है तो अंतिम विकल्प के रूप में वह षडयंत्र के तहत अपने लोगों को बीच में घुसाकर आंदोलन को तोड़ने के लिए हिंसा का सहारा लेती है।

गौरतलब है कि किसान आंदोलन को शुरू से ही सत्ता ने अपने देश के नागरिकों के नजरिये से देखा ही नहीं था। पंजाब के किसानों ने महीनों आंदोलन के बाद दिल्ली कूच किया तो सत्ताधारी पार्टी के प्रवक्ता, पार्टी की आईटी सेल से लेकर मंत्रियों, मुख्यमंत्रियों व केंद्रीय मंत्रियों तक ने सार्थक समाधान के बदले खालिस्तानी, किराए के, विपक्ष के बरगलाए आदि कई अलंकारों से उन्हें नवाजा। समाधान के अभाव में प्रतिक्रिया स्वरूप आंदोलन का विस्तार और तेज होता गया और लोग जुड़ते गए। आंदोलन को गति देने में भारतीय चाटुकार मीडिया ने महत्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभाई। किसानों ने मीडिया से

The Kisans are peacefully waiting at the borders of the national capital for 90 days and there was not a single incident of violence till January 26. And after the Red Fort incident, the ruling circles and their troll armies are busy in searching for a 'conspiracy'. The media, particularly, a major section of the mainstream, instead of probing the failure of the rulers, and questioning them on their dealing with a democratic movement, the Opposition is being questioned and the supporters of the movement are demonised. Naturally, it has earned them the epithet of Godi Media and has made them unwelcome to the agitating farmers.

दूरी बनाई व सोशल मीडिया के द्वारा आपस में जुड़ते गए। किसान अब जब 90 दिन से शांतिपूर्ण तरीके से दिल्ली के बॉर्डर पर डटे हुए हैं, कहीं कोई हिंसा नहीं हुई। लेकिन इस बीच 26 जनवरी को जो लाल किले पर खाली पोल पर झंडे को लेकर बवाल सरकार में बैठे लोग व इनकी भांड मीडिया, ट्रोल सेना मचाये रही है, उसके कानूनी पोस्ट मार्टम में जाये बिना हम सरकार से यह पूछना चाहते हैं कि हिंसा हुई उसको उकसाने वाला कौन था, उसके संबंध किसके साथ रहे है। सोशल मीडिया पर वायरल फोटो केंद्र के सत्ताधारी प्रधानों से दिखाई देता रिश्ते सबके सामने है। पुलिस की जी हजुरी सर्वविदित है। ऐसी घटनाओं के बचाव के लिए राष्ट्रीय पुलिस आयोग बनाने की मांग कई बार उठी, कमेटियां बनाई गईं, रिपोर्ट्स आईं लेकिन कभी लागू नहीं की गईं क्योंकि सत्ताधारी पार्टी चाहती रही है कि पुलिस का दुरुपयोग ऐसे मौकों पर किया जा सके।

अब सरकार की तरफ से जो मुकदमें दर्ज किए जा रहे हैं वो आंदोलन खत्म करने हेतु किसान नेताओं को दबाव में लाने के लिए किए जाते रहे हैं। सबको पता है कि आंदोलन

आगे बढ़ता है तो अंतिम वार्ता में यह भी एक मांग शामिल होती है कि आंदोलन के दौरान जितने भी मुकदमें दर्ज किए गए हैं वो वापिस ले लिए जाएं।

कमजोर किसान नेताओं को निशाना बनाया जा रहा है। सोशल मीडिया पर सच को सामने लाने वाले देशद्रोही से लांचित किये जा रहे हैं। पिछले दो सालों में 5300 नागरिकों पर देशद्रोह के प्रकरण दर्ज किये गये हैं।

इस किसान आंदोलन में हर किसान नेता है, बस वार्ता के लिए नामित लोग जाते हैं। देशभर के करोड़ों किसान अपने-अपने हिसाब से इस आंदोलन में भागीदारी निभा रहे हैं। सरकार इतने बड़े जन आंदोलन को पुरानी पड़ चुकी ट्रिप से खत्म करने की भूल कर रही है। पुलिस द्वारा मुकदमें दर्ज करना मीडिया में पार्टी प्रवक्ताओं के घड़ियाली आंसुओं का सैलाब निकालना, ट्रोल सेना द्वारा वर्षों पुराने देश-विदेश के फोटो-वीडियो वायरल करना आदि हथकंडे अपना रही है।

सबसे खराब जो हथकंडा इस सरकार ने नया अपनाया है वो आंदोलनकारी जनता के खिलाफ जनता के दूसरे गुट को खड़ा करना जैसे शाहीन बाग आदि में गोलियां चलाई गईं और कपिल मिश्रा जैसे उन्मादी गुंडों को सड़कों पर उतारा गया था ठीक उसी प्रकार की सूचना आ रही है कि शाहजहांपुर खेड़ा बॉर्डर, गाजीपुर, सिधु और टिकरी बॉर्डर पर डटे किसानों को कथित आसपास के गांवों से कुछ लोगों ने आज आकर अल्टीमेटम दिया कि 24 घंटे में सड़क खाली करो अन्यथा हम खाली करवाएंगे। यह हथकंडा आग से खेलने जैसा था लेकिन किसानों ने सयम से काम लिया। विश्वास है कि किसान लड़ेगा व जीतेगा।

1987 में हुए किसान आंदोलन जिसमें 10 लाख किसान जंतर-मंतर से लेकर वोट क्लब तक खचाखच भरे हुए थे। किसी भी किसान को दिल्ली आने से नहीं रोका गया था। 2014 से पहले केन्द्र में कितनी ही बुरी सरकारें क्यों न रही हो मगर किसानों को दिल्ली में आने से नहीं रोका गया था। 2014 के बाद यह सिलसिला शुरू हुआ। किसान-विरोधी भाजपा सरकार भूमि अवाप्ति के लिए एक बार नहीं तीन बार अध्यादेश लेकर आई परन्तु किसानों के उभरे जबरदस्त विरोध और राज्यसभा में बहुमत न होने के चलते इन्हें संसद से पारित नहीं करा पाई। दुबारा ज्यादा मतों से जीतकर आई भाजपा सरकार ने कारपोरेट के हित में तीन कृषि कानून आनन-फानन में किसानों के प्रबल देशव्यापी विरोध की अनदेखी कर बना लिये और बिना न्यूनतम समर्थन मूल्य की गारंटी के मंडी से बाहर किसानों फसल खरीद और

बेलगाम भंडारण की छूट बड़े कारपोरेट व्यापारी मित्रों को दे दी। इसके विरोध में देशव्यापी प्रदर्शन हुए। पंजाब, हरियाणा, उ.प्र., राजस्थान, महाराष्ट्र, कर्नाटक, तमिलनाडु, उतराखंड में विशाल प्रदर्शन और अनेक विरोध कार्यवाइयां हुईं। पंजाब में 55 दिन किसान रैल पटरियों पर बैठे रहे परन्तु केन्द्र की भाजपा सरकार टम से मस नहीं हुई तो किसानों ने दिल्ली की ओर कूच कर दिया। जब सरकार ने खुद सड़कें काट बोल्टर और बैरिकेटिंग लगाकर रोका और पानी की भारी बोछारें और आसूगैस छोड़ी परन्तु किसान डटे रहे और दमन का सामना करते हुए बैरिकेटिंग पार कर आये और दिल्ली के नजदीक सिंधु बार्डर, टिकरी बार्डर और रोहतक, गुरुग्राम, गाजियाबाद पर डेरा डाल दिया। किसी भी लोकतांत्रिक देश में शांतिपूर्वक विरोध प्रदर्शन का दमन करना तानाशाही रवैया होता है। किसानों के रास्ते को रोकना, बैरिकेट लगाना, सड़कें खोदना आदि साबित करता है कि तानाशाह प्रवृत्ति वाले शासकों को अपनी जनता से ही खतरा नजर आता है। धार्मिक भावनाओं को भड़काकर हासिल की गई सत्ता जनता के बुनियादी मुद्दों के उठने से घबराती है और घबराहट में क्रूर व दमनकारी तरीके पर उतर आती है।

डॉ लोहिया ने कहा था “अगर सड़कें खामोश हो जाएं तो संसद अवारा हो जाएगी!” संसद में कानून पास करने के तरीके पिछले कई सालों से हम देख रहे हैं। आवारागर्दी की सीमाएं लांघी जा चुकी है। ऐसे में सड़कों का आबाद होना सुकून भरा अहसास दिलाता है। हर आंदोलन को शुरू में तोड़कर गर्व महसूस कर रहे तानाशाहों को पहली बार किसानों ने सशक्त चुनौती दी है। ऐसे में हम सभी लोगों का दायित्व बनता है निरंकुशता पर लगाम लगाने के लिए इस किसान आंदोलन का जमकर समर्थन करें।

केन्द्र की मोदी सरकार को लगा था कि महामारी के भय से लोग इकट्ठे नहीं होंगे और किसान कारगर विरोध के लिए सड़क पर नहीं आ पाएंगे। इसलिये महामारी और लॉकडाउन का फायदा उठाते हुए कई श्रमिकविरोधी बिलों के साथ किसान बिल भी फटाफट लोकसभा और राज्यसभा से पास करा लिये थे। अगर सरकार का मकसद कारपोरेट को फायदा पहुंचाना नहीं है ए मंडी और एमएसपी खत्म करना नहीं है तो क्यों नहीं एमएसपी को कानूनी दर्जा दे दिया जाता है घू अगर सरकार किसानों की हितैषी है तो क्यों नहीं स्वामीनाथन कमेटी की सिफारिशों को लागू कर देती घू बीमारी और ठंड की परवाह किये बिना छः छः महीनों का रसद लेकर किसानों का आंदोलन के लिए दिल्ली पहुंचना बहुत बड़ी घटना है। सरकार द्वारा कानून बनाने की प्रक्रिया और जिद को भी किसानों ने चुनौती दी है। वह किसानों द्वारा उठाये मुद्दों का जबाब दे नहीं पा रही हैं, किसानों की मांग को गलत ठहरा नहीं पा रही हैं तो गोबेल्स गैंग पाकिस्तान और खालिस्तान कनेक्शन जोड़ रहे हैं। सरकार को दुष्प्रचार और भ्रम फैलाने के निम्नस्तरीय तौर तरीके छोड़ किसानों से बिना शर्त बात कर उनके मुद्दों को हल करना चाहिये। जो व्यवहार सरकार किसानों के साथ कर रही है वैसा ही श्रमिकों व सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों के साथ कर रही है। LIC के IPO सहित अन्य सार्वजनिक उपक्रमों की वह बोली लगाने पर तुली है। हम सबको मिलकर व्यापक जनसमर्थन के साथ आगे बढ़ना होगा।

Cartoon courtesy: Satish Acharya, sify.com





Image courtesy; BBC NEWS Hindi

If the Laws are Meant for Farmers, Why Not Listen to Them As Well?

Lt. General Harwant Singh (Courtesy: The Citizen 12/2/2021)

Since 2014, over eighty thousand farmers have committed suicide. Majority of the farmers in the country have a very small holding of land and given the vagaries of weather, ever increasing input costs and government's failure to vigorously implement suitable farm policy, which include recommendations, such as that of Swaminathan Committee.

Farmers have been at the mercy of market exploitation. Agriculture when left on its own is not a profitable undertaking and it is variously subsidized across the world.

The farmer's peaceful protest has been on for 80 days now and scores of farmers have died in the course of this protest. There are a large number of women and small children amongst the protesters. The government of Haryana sought to disperse the farmer's peaceful march towards Delhi with teargas shells, lathi charge and in extreme cold weather with water cannons.

A good number amongst the protesting farmers are ex-servicemen. Many have their sons and grandsons in the defence forces and presently deployed on borders with China and Pakistan. They are ever willing to lay down their lives to protect the

territorial integrity of the country.

The government is trying to tire out the farmers in the hope that like the protest at Shaheen Bagh, this too will peter out. It is surprising that the government is not alive to the mental make up of the Indian farmer: his grit and determination.

It may be recalled that farmers were on the forefront of the Independence Movement. If one is to visit the Cellular Jail in Port Blair and scan through the roll of honour of freedom fighters, who willingly and happily kissed the gallows, one will note that they were overwhelmingly farmers.

They were subjected daily to extreme torture and though they could try and seek forgiveness, plead for mercy, beg for release from prison (which unfortunately one from another class did) but not a single farmer ever took that route. One by one they happily walked to the gallows.

A visit to the National War Memorial near India Gate will reveal that those who laid down their lives, in the thousands, in defence of the country, during various wars after independence were essentially from farmer families.

Equally one may remember that when Indira Gandhi imposed emergency in the country, over one

If farmers do not want these laws ostensibly meant for them, surely it is worth listening to their arguments. Instead barriers erected at the protest sites to deter farmers from entering Delhi, completely overshadow the Maginot Line, an obstacle system put up by France to deter German tanks from invading that country. It appears as if the administration has simply gone berserk in raising such a complex obstacle system around Delhi, which even tanks cannot get across. The internet was shut down and the water supply to these protest sites cut off.....

lakh farmers courted arrest and another one lakh had to be put on the waiting list, because there was no more space left in these prisons. Therefore, no one should doubt the farmer's commitment to a cause and loyalty to the country.

It is a blasphemy to brand farmers Urban Naxals, tukre tukre Gang, Pakistanis, Khalistanis, anti-nationals.

The eleven meetings between the government and the farmers did not result in any outcome because the ministers involved had no authority to make any alterations in these three laws. For the agriculture minister to contend in parliament that only one group from one state is involved in these protests, shows either his complete lack of knowledge of what is taking place all over the country, or else a deep seated bias against that one state and an attempt to create division amongst the protesters.

No one is more aware of the sanctity of the national flag than our farmers. It is their sons who every other day, arrive home draped in a Tricolour. Therefore, a farmer is the last person to show disrespect to the national flag.

There appears to be no, justifiable reason for the police personnel to run away from the scene and to escape, jump from the fort ramparts. In the process some of them were seriously injured. Running away from a threat of mere being hit by sticks, amounts to barefaced cowardice. Hopefully some disciplinary action will be taken against them for this act of cowardice.

In the military such an act will for sure lead to a court-martial. In Tripura, a military post was raided by Nagas where four soldiers at the post instead of standing up to the raiders, simply slipped away. They were court-martialed, resulting in their dismissal from service and each awarded four years of imprisonment. I was the presiding officer of that court-marshal.

Over the years the farmer's income has been on the decline. This is so because of increase in the cost of inputs, such as seeds, pesticides, fertilizers, electricity, diesel, labour charges etc, without corresponding increase in sale price of farm produce. Thus if, 8 years earlier a farmer's income was Rs 100, now it is less than Rs 70. Still during the pandemic while every section of the economy declined, it is the farmers of India who brought about an increase in farm output and connected economy by over 3 percent.

The barriers that have been erected at the three protest sites to deter farmers from entering Delhi, completely overshadows the Maginot Line, an obstacle system put up by France to deter German tanks from invading that country. It appears as if the administration has simply gone berserk in raising such a complex obstacle system around Delhi, which even tanks cannot get across. The internet was shut down and the water supply to these protest sites cut off, forgetting that peaceful protest is a fundamental right of citizens.

. It is not for us to justify or otherwise the three farm laws, and the consequent need or otherwise of the protest. As veterans, we call upon the government of India to resolve the issue of farm laws without any further delay and spare old men, women and small children the hardship by listening to their voices. If farmers do not want these laws ostensibly meant for them, surely it is worth listening to their arguments.

Perhaps the solution lies in suspending these 3 Farm Laws for a period of 5 years and meanwhile ensure that MSP (as worked out by the Swaminathan Committee i.e, input cost plus 50%) for 23 farm products is implemented. After a period of 5 years a set of new farm laws could be worked out in consultation with all stakeholders. A Committee should be with government representatives but also include agro-experts, economists and farmers.

Lt General Harwant Singh
retired from the Indian Army.



The idea of India as envisioned by the makers of India can be seen nowhere else in such graphic reality as at this centre.

The Real Patriots

Those who bring the national flag to life

G.N. Devy *Literary scholar and cultural activist*

(Courtesy: Telegraph 10/2/21)

It is difficult to say when in history but a piece of cloth came to be seen as the most important insignia of the honour of people. The *Homo sapiens* have been in existence for millions of years and have been using clothes made of leaves or animal skin. They fought wars and used colourful objects as war totems during prehistoric times. The ancient Indian word, '*dhvaj*', and the Old Norse, '*faka*' (meaning to flicker or to flutter), have been in circulation for long. The Danish '*Dannebrog*' is fabled to have fallen from the skies and has been in use for the last eight centuries. Yet, the national flag as a semiotic signature of a people is decidedly related to the idea of 'a community of nations', within which each nation is represented by a proudly fluttering piece of cloth — its national flag. Over the last two centuries, as nation after modern nation took birth, it was immediately draped in a national flag symbolizing its being. The Indian tricolour evolved during the freedom struggle and was formally adopted by the Constituent Assembly on July 22, 1947. One of the versions of the Indian tricolour had the *charkha* in the middle. That was the time when *charkha* and *khadi* were the main weapons of our freedom struggle. In fidelity to this historic origin of the tricolour, the official flags continue to be made of *khadi*. The Indian Bureau of Standards continues to regulate its precise dimensions, weave and the folding and stitching for its borders. Most Indians may not know this, but all of these are produced in north Karnataka. The *khadi* spun

on thousands of hand-run *charkhas* at Tulasigeri village in Bagalkot is used by the Khadi Gramodyoga Samyukta Sangha in Hubballi for making India's flag. This flag production centre supplies flags in various specified sizes, ranging from the largest — 21 x 14 feet — to the smallest — 6 x 4 inches. The one that we see fluttering proudly at the Red Fort is made at Hubballi.

The flag-making centre is a microcosm of the spirit of free India in many ways. Its founder, Venkatesh Magadi, was born on January 26, 1903, 47 years before India became a republic. The oldest among the workers at the centre, Nooranna, was born in 1947. He is one of the few men who work there. The workforce there is almost entirely made up of women, the real makers of India. All of us who are proud of India for its composite social weave will be happy to know that the women come



from all communities: Muslims, Jains, Christians, Dalits, *adivasis*, Lingayats, Buddhist and Hindus. A Muslim, Noorjahan, working with a scheduled caste, Nayana, and a Christian, Janet, working with a Lingayat, Akkamma, mark the ethnography of the makers of India's flag. The idea of India as envisioned by the makers of India can be seen nowhere else in such graphic reality as at this centre. As I conversed with these women, the famous line from a W.B. Yeats poem came to my mind: "How can you tell the dancer from the dance?" Speaking to them I said, "We all salute the national flag, the salute is also for you." But, as I was saying this, I must confess, I could not hold my head high, for the plight of the flag-makers is worse than that of the most afflicted, most deprived of India. As they spoke about their life, many just could not hold back the tears in their eyes. They told me that when they work for eight to ten hours a day, they manage to earn about one hundred and fifty rupees. After producing flags for the country for decades, their monthly earnings have stayed the same — in most cases, a little under three thousand a month. They get neither the annual increments in wages nor have the possibility of pension. Paid maternity leave and LTA are words foreign to them.

The centre normally produces flags worth three to four crore rupees in a year. Covid-19 has brought down the sales to 30 per cent. The result is that the women have less work and their earnings have sunk. No pandemic-special relief has reached them. The coordinator of the centre told me that the government has not yet settled the payments it owes to the centre. The amount is in a mind-boggling multiple crores. I asked the women workers why they do not find another occupation? Their response would have left anyone humbled. "We love India. It is our service to the nation. And Gandhi had

used *khadi* as a weapon against oppression. We are keeping it alive. Besides, Sir, tell us where are the jobs for us?"

The flag that went up high in the sky on January 26 this year was made by them — the Noorjahans, the Janets and the Akkammamas of our land, working together for weeks at paltry wages a day. Some of them had their brothers and sons participating in a tractor march in Dharwad on that day in support of the farmers protesting outside Delhi. On the evening of January 26, so many television channels were busy informing the nation on how the national flag was dishonoured at the Red Fort. The veracity of those TV-tales is another matter. But, indeed, none of them had a thought to spare for the real makers of the flag. The shrill public proclamation of nationalism sounds so hollow when one notices how completely neglected the labourers that make India a nation are. The brand of nationalism that is currently on the block needs to know that a nation is primarily its people, its composite society, its vast population capable of love and sacrifice and not just a few mighty or super-rich individuals. The tricolour is our most sacred symbol. Every time I salute it, pride for India wells up in my heart. Yet, is that pride enough to conceal the pathos, suffering, agony, hunger and pain of those who toil in order to keep symbolism for the rest of India alive? In less than a week after January 26 came the national budget. It brought neither relief nor hope for the long-forgotten working hands. Long live India, the Mother India, whose fingers never tire of sewing, whose sight never fails while working at the bobbins and whose hands are not yet fatigued by folding and ironing the flags they make. Let us salute them, for the flag is theirs even if the budget is not.

The flag that went up high in the sky on January 26 this year was made by them — the Noorjahans, the Janets and the Akkammamas of our land, working together for weeks at paltry wages a day. Some of them had their brothers and sons participating in a tractor march in Dharwad on that day in support of the farmers protesting outside Delhi.



A Brand of 'Old Trust'

Harish Bijoor

(Courtesy: Outlook Money 5/2/21)



Life is a four-letter word. So is fear. Life Insurance Corporation of India is a brand that deals with both. This brand is a behemoth both in terms of the width of reach and image – an image of solidity, trust, repute, respect, and literally a sovereign status that competes with the central bank of the country – Reserve Bank of India. LIC is solid as the promise on the Indian currency note.

This entity was put together in the wake of nationalisation of the Indian insurance industry, with a clutch of 245 insurance companies and provident societies, way back in 1956. Ever since LIC has delivered to the expectations of Indians. With reliability and care, the brand has truly lived up to its long-standing slogan – “Yogakshemam Vahamyaham” (your welfare is our responsibility). The very logo, representing the protective hands gently circling a lamp, evokes trust.

This brand is a thought that dwells in the hearts and minds of the citizens. It is a thought that represents protection, and repute that has sailed through the choppy waters, resisting even stiff competition from foreign players since 2000. No insurer could match up to its might.

I remember being consulted by the corporation when foreign insurance brands were entering India. The key question posed was how should we change in terms of the brand – must we change the logo, slogan, colours, or every brand approach? I had studied the brand in detail from the consumer perspective, across urban and rural India. I told them just one thing – Don't change a thing!

My logic was simple. LIC of India is an old brand. Its logo, image (rustic as it looks even today, despite all the minor and soft embellishments), colours, and everything else in the brand kit symbolises “old trust”.

This “old trust” cannot be replaced overnight by the modern imageries that every foreign brand was coming in with. Despite the enthusiasm of many to change and look contemporary, I advised them to stay put. For, the less you change, the more you look like an old brand that Indians trust. I believe that has paid off.

The category of insurance, banking, and finance is all about trust. Brands in these spaces must offer before anything else.

LIC of India is made-in-India, made-for-Indians, and in many ways made-by-Indians. It is a statement of pride for the country. Its reach and evangelical work in advising and educating the masses about financially securing and protecting their near and dear ones even after death is in itself a piece of unenviable work. The corporation owes its gratitude to the hundreds of thousands of agents and development officers, who spent every waking moment, trying to harness a soul for LIC's kitty.

In the post-pandemic era, I do believe LIC has an invigorated future ahead. Those who otherwise live a life of immortal existence suddenly got a jolt, with mortality within a touching range. The need for insuring life, or providing financial security for the family after demise was never felt so strongly.

The contribution of LIC to the valuation of the corporation is humongous. LIC stands for its reach, width, reliability in settling claims, massive outsourced-insourced field force, and indeed its reputation. Long live brand LIC of India!

(The author is a Brand Guru and Founder of Harish Bijoor Consults)



Cartoon courtesy: Subhani, Deccan Chronicle



Com. H I BHATT felicitated on superannuation

Comrade H.I.Bhat, Joint Secretary, AIIEA and General Secretary, WZIEA retired from LIC of India on 31st January 2021 after 39 years of dedicated service. Due to SOP guidelines initially Gandhinagar divisional unit his home division organised a felicitation programme at local level for local employees/officers on 30th January 2021 at Jeevan prakash building Gandhinagar which was attended by around 175 employees/officers/Senior Divisional Manager. In this function the leadership of class 1 federation, NFIFWI, Welfare Association gave their valuable speeches and greeted com H I BHATT.

Following revised SOP guidelines issued by Gujarat Government, a decision was taken to arrange a larger befitting Organisational Felicitation Programme at C.K.Patel Farm, Koba, Gandhinagar on 13.02.2021. The Gandhinagar Comrades began the preparations in the right earnest. A Galaxy of leaders from AIIEA, WZIEA and other zones, Fraternal Associations / Unions, Well Wishers apart from large number of Comrades and Activists from Gujarat, Maharashtra & Goa Divisions were present on this important occasion. The entire function was conducted by following the prescribed safety norms and social distancing. The AIIEA and WZIEA leadership, Com. Bhatt & Mrs. Bhatt were warmly welcomed by the over more than 500 Comrades present for the function amidst vociferous slogan shouting.

The function started with a Prayer Song by Mahi Patel and Chorus followed by a wonderful group song by Gandhinagar Comrades. The entire function was conducted in a smooth manner by Com.Anand , President-LICEU,Gandhinagar Unit. Com. Anand

described the background in which the felicitation function was planned and the wide contributions of Com.Bhatt. Com. Dhokpande President-WZIEA thanked Com.Bhatt for the services rendered to the AIIEA and LIC employees. He also pointed out that this function has provided an opportunity where activists could meet at one place physically after a long period of around a year. He remembered the constant guidance provided by Com.Bhatt in the entire Western Zone in very difficult circumstances. He also was confident of Com. Bhatt's active involvement in the activities of the AIIEA in the coming days.

Com. V Ramesh, President-AIIEA in his address discussed the Government's economic Policies and the farmers' movement. He criticized the way the Government treats the peoples' movement against the policies of the government. He said that Com. Bhatt was a role model for all units on how to prepare and train the second line of leadership. Com.Ramesh said that we shall continue to use the experiences and rapport painstakingly built by Com. Bhatt amongst the Management for our representations on employee matters.

Com.Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary-AIIEA in his elaborate speech mentioned that AIIEA had always followed the philosophy of treating humans as humans and Com. Bhatt did exactly that within and outside the industry. AIIEA has always faced challenges with enormous grit and came out successful but today's times are very testing times. He came down heavily on the Government's Policies of unabashed haste in selling of the Public Assets.

Continued on next page



HRGIEA felicitates Com.K.V.V.S.N.RAJU and Com.SAILAJA on their retirement

Com.K.V.V.S.N.Raju, Vice President of AIEA and Com.N.S.Sailaja, Vice President of GIEA (South Zone) retired from the services of National Insurance Company Limited and United India Insurance Company Limited respectively on 29th January, 2021. To felicitate the valiant comrades, HRGIEA (Hyderabad Region General Insurance Employees Association) has organized a function at Sundaraiah Vignana Kendram, Hyderabad on 6th February, 2021. The felicitation function started at 11 am and Com.Y.Subba Rao, General Secretary, HRGIEA invited the guests on the dias Com.A.Narayana Rao chaired the Presidium and conducted the proceedings. Apart from the family members of Com.K.V.V.S.N.Raju and

Com.N.S.Sailaja, galaxy of leaders Com.K.Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIEA, Com.Amanullah Khan, Former President, AIEA, Com.K.Venugopal, Former General Secretary, AIEA, Com.B.V.Raghavulu, Polit Bureau Member of CPIM, Com.Tammineni Veerabhadram, Secretary, CPIM, Telangana State, Com.Paladugu Bhaskar, Secretary, CITU, Telangana State, Com.Sudha Bhaskar, Editor, Nava Telangana, Com.Clement Xavier Das, Joint Secretary, AIEA, Com. Sanjay Jha, Secretary, Standing Committee (General Insurance), Com.G.Anand, General Secretary, GIEA, South Zone and large no. of comrades from twin cities participated and cherished the occasion.

The leadership addressed the gathering with

Com. H I BHATT felicitated

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The change in the LIC Act was cleverly incorporated in the Finance Bill to facilitate the LIC IPO. He assured that LIC Employees will get a good wage revision commensurate with the performance, paying capacity and expectations of the employees. He also praised the quality of Com. Bhatt to gel not only with the generation of his times but with the present generation too.

Com. Amanulla Khan Ex-President, AIEA discussed his association with Com. Bhatt. He also discussed the role of AIEA in improving the life style of LIC Employees, for which a broader unity needed to be formed and maintained. This would be possible only if unity is given priority over religion, caste and creed. The Organization played a major social responsibility as well. Com. K Venugopal (Ex-Gen.Secretary-AIEA) said that the uniqueness of Com.Bhatt was

his vast popularity amongst all Divisions. He had so many qualities that time may run short to fully discuss about the same. He described the various movements undertaken successfully by AIEA that was implemented in letter and spirit by WZIEA under the leadership of Com. Bhatt. He also recollected the All India Signature



mind blowing informations on the ongoing struggles in the Public Sector Insurance Industry against the privatization move of the government, the need to



organize strong joint movements to achieve our justified demands and also the political scenario in India, the policies pursued by the central government affecting the work force and common public. The leaders during their address greeted Com.K.V.V.S.N.Raju and Com.N.S.Sailaja highlighting their commitment and services to the cause of public sector insurance employees, more particularly the general insurance employees.

Com.KVVSN Raju and Sailaja in their receiving address highlighted that how AIIEA shaped their life in the personal and socio political front and the organization-AIIEA is the sole mentor for what they are today and also resolved to continue to work for the betterment of the workforce orienting themselves with the struggles of the working class.

On the occasion, Com.KVVSN Raju donated

Rs.1,00,000/- to the CIP(M), Rs.10,000/- each to CITU, Insurance Worker, Sundaraiah Vignana Kendram,Hyderabad and PATNAM organization. Com.N.S.Sailaja donated Rs.20,000 each to Insurance Worker, HRGIEA & CPI(M) and Rs.10,000 each to AIDWA and VRGIEA.

Com.A.Narayana Rao proposed vote of thanks and declared felicitation meeting as closed. Office bearers of AIIEA, HRGIEA, VRGIEA, KSGIEA, CHRGIEA, CRGIEA, MRGIEA, HDRGIEA, BRGIEA, GIPA, HYDERABAD, OICOA, NICOA, AI SC/ST EMPLOYEES WELFARE ASSOCIATION and BEFI, RBI EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION, BSNL Employees union, POSTAL EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION(NFPE), MEDICAL REPRESENTATIVE ASSOCIATION, PATNAM ORGANISATION greeted the two comrades with bouquets.

Campaign against Privatisation of Insurance Sector which received world acclaim.

Com. R N Patne (Ex- President,WZIEA) said that Com. Bhatt came as a successor to a tall leader Com. Deo due to his organizational capacity, knowledge, commitment. Dr. M.I.Bhatt (Reputed Surgeon and Brother of Com. Bhatt) thanked all the dignitaries and the attendees on behalf of the family and reminisced the inclination of Com. Bhatt since childhood towards activism and change. Other notable speakers included Com. B.S.Ravi (Treasurer-AIIEA), Com.T.Senthilkumar (Gen.Secretary-SCZIEF), Com. Pragjibhai Bhambhi (Secretary-CPM-Gujarat), Com.Naveen Chand (Gen.Secretary-NZIEA), Com. Asha Velingkar (Gen.Secretary, Goa Unit), Com. Sudhir Jadhav (Gen.Secretary – MDO-I), Com. Prakash Macwan (Gen.Secretary-Nadiad Unit), Com. Jaimin Desai (Surat Unit).

Com.Dishant Patel read out the messages received from Chairman LIC, Managing Directors, Executive Directors, Zonal Manager, WZ, Com Sitaram

Yechury, Com Chandrasekhar Bose and a number of other prominent leaders.

Com. H.I.Bhatt in his elaborate speech thanked the galaxy of leaders from all over India, activists, well wishers, colleagues present in massive numbers in the function. He shared the details of his journey in life, education, career, support from family and organisation. He credited AIIEA for the direction, aim, thinking, ideology and the chance to work for people. He assured the leadership that he will not retire from AIIEA and was confident of the movement led by AIIEA to succeed in every task it has set for itself.

The vote of thanks was proposed by Com. Himanshu Suthar (Jt.Secretary-WZIEA) after which the felicitation / honouring of Com. Bhatt was done by various Branch / Division Units, well-wishers, friends and individuals.With the presence of many All India Leaders, the Programme was hugely successful in mobilizing the cadre for the various impending struggles.

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIC IPO INTENSIFIES

The units of AIEA across the country have intensified the campaign against LIC IPO, FDI hike and privatisation of General Insurance Company. Apart from the mobilisation of public, our cadres have been meeting the Members of Parliament to appraise them of the dangers to the national economy these proposals pose. We publish a few photographs of the units meeting the MPs.



Comrades of Raipur Division handed over the memorandum to Sri Sunil Soni, MP, Loksabha, Raipur, BJP.



Karakudi MP Sri.Karthi Chidambaram met by Madurai Comrades



Memorandum given to Dhanush M kumar MP by Srivilliputhur and Rajapalayam comrades



Mayiladuthurai MP Sri.Ramalingam by Thanjavur Comrades.



Memorandum to Com PR.Natarajsn MP, Coimbatore Parliament Constituency..



Mettur comrades met Shri.Chandrasekaran, Rajya Sabha MP.



Shri Rakesh Singh MP Jabalpur

A.Raja Nilgiri MP





Palani Comrades met Dindugul MP Veluchamy



Ravikumar, MP Villupuram, VCP



Shri M.K.Stalin, President, DMK



Sh Santokh Singh Choudhary, Congress MP from Jalandhar Constituency met by Jalandhar comrades



Salem MP Sri. NR Partheeban by Salem Comrades.



Rajya Sabha MP Sri. Vaiko met by Madurai Comrades



Thiru T.K.S. Elangovan, MP, DMK



Thiru. Shanmugam, MP, DMK



Shri D.M. Kathir Anand, DMK MP of Vellore Constituency

Thanjavur division comrades handed over memorandum to Shri. Thirunavukkarasar, Trichy MP.



Sri G.K. Vasam MP met by Madurai comrades



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MahaPadav in support of Farmers at Hyderabad

As per call given by Central Trade Unions in solidarity to agitating farmers, MAHA PADAV Dharna Programme was held at Sundarayya Park, Hyderabad on 23rd January, 2021 under the banner of All India Kisan Sangharsh Co-ordination Committee (AIKSCC). As many as 80 Comrades of ICEU Hyderabad and Secunderabad Divisions participated in this Dharna under the leadership of Com. Clement Das, General Secretary, SCZIEF, who shared the presidium with leadership of Central Trade Unions viz., CITU, AITUC, IFTU, TNTUC, TRSKV and other Independent Associations from Banking, Insurance, Postal, Telecom, Railway, Defence and Medical Representatives etc.

Com. Vijju Krishnan, Joint Secretary, AIKSCC, Prof.K.Nageshwar, Ex-MLC along with leadership of Central Trade Unions addressed the gathering with clear cut analysis on the ill effects of the Farm Laws. They urged the Government to withdraw these retrograde steps, benefiting the Corporates at the cost of the farming community, which is already under stress due to the imposed Neo-Liberal agenda. They were critical about the undemocratic attitude of the Govt in forceful implementation of the “Reforms” without proper consultations with

Kisan Associations. They posed questions as to why there was no assurance on MSP; why there was no proper legal remedial mechanism in dispute resolution; how could the Food Security challenges be met, which will arise due to lifting the ban on hoarding the Food Stocks in bulk; and How would the malnutrition challenge in poor be addressed? All the speakers were equivocal in projecting the ill-intentions of the rulers, who are not interested in resolving the crisis. Yet, they are complicating the issue by using tools like arbitration, Supreme Court etc. Com.G.Thirupathaiah, General Secretary, ICEU, Hyderabad, in his speech explained that the Insurance employees completely empathise with the agitating lakhs of farmers, who are fighting for their rights in chilling boarders of Delhi, in conviction. The determination and struggling spirit of the farmers inspire Insurance workers across the country and will translate into the agitations being taken up in opposing threats like IPO/FDI hike etc., he said. He also expressed that every citizen in the country must associate with the farmers’ agitation as they are the only source of our Food. All the leaders spoke with genuine arguments and statistical data, which enlightened the hundreds of workers, participated.

Com.N.AdhishReddy, President, Com. G.Thirupathaiah, General Secretary of ICEU, Hyderabad Division, Com.D S Raghu, President, Com.Rajesh Singh, General Secretary of ICEU, Secunderabad Division, Com.V.Mythili, Convener, Women Sub-Committee of Hyderabad Division and Com.NC Anuradha, Co-Convener, Women-Sub-Committee of Secunderabad Division along with 5 women comrades, altogether 80 comrades participated in the MahaPadav Dharna. Our Comrades presented revolutionary songs and enthused all with thunderous slogans.



33RD General Conference of Kolkata Suburban DIEA

The 33rd Annual General Conference of Kolkata Suburban DIEA was held at Com. Subhash Choudhury Manch (Mahanayak Mancha, Unnayan Bhavan, Saltlake, Kolkata) on 9th and 10th January 2021. The Organization under EZIEA and affiliated to AIIEA walked the path as guided by the all India Organization and took up the challenge of holding the two days annual conference of the divisional unit comprising of 25 base units including one at Andaman & Nicobar Islands.

Special initiative was taken in this regard so that proper care regarding health & hygiene of the delegates was a priority and the volunteers did a commendable job. The sleeping chambers and the venue was duly sanitized and the meeting was restricted to delegates only and observers were not allowed into the venue this year keeping in mind the abnormal situation arising due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With a very open session where only the Secretary of Pensioners association was invited to speak, the event shifted to the delegates session where the report of the Executive Committee was read out and then discussions were invited from the delegates to enrich the report. Twenty five members and four women's subcommittee members spoke on the occasion. Earlier to this, the accounts of the divisional organization was placed and passed. A new initiative was taken where 02(two) members of the Secretariat gave speeches on the relevant topics at the seminar with one being on "Identity Politics" and



another being "International Scenario and its effect on Indian Economy". Com. Subrata Basu, the Joint secretary of EZIEA, spoke at length on the various issues of the contemporary political and economic scenario of the country.

After the deliberations of the delegates, the General Secretary of KSDIEA summed up the debate covering all the aspects of present political and socio-economical problems that the members of this organization is facing and the nation as a whole and indicated the path to be chosen for its solution.

After that a panel of the working committee for the current year was placed and passed unanimously. The conference elected Com. Samar Bhattacharjee as President, Com. Ujjal Paul as General Secretary and Com Atul Prasad Tudu as Treasurer for the ensuing term. 33 resolutions were adopted with solidarity with the farmers' movement being one of them.

Com. Sudip Halder proposed the vote of thanks.

Insurance Worker Readers' Forum formed in Panruti

An INSURANCE WORKER Readers Forum was formed in Panruti Branch under Vellore Division to deliberate, debate and understand the issues raised in the journal. The first meeting of the Forum was held on 20.1.2021.

The second meeting was held on 16.2.2021 and the participants showed keen interest and enthusiasm. The articles were analysed in greater detail. There was total agreement that India today has too little democracy. This is seen in the vindictiveness of the government in arresting a

climate activists Disha Ravi under draconian laws and the insensitive manner in which the farmers struggles is being handled. The meeting also discussed the pitfalls of preferential treatment given to Arnab Goswami by judiciary while human rights activists are languishing in jails without trial for years together.

The meeting appreciated the good work being done by Editorial and supporting staff of Insurance Worker.

11th Thrissur Divisional Conference

The Annual General Conference of LICEU, Thrissur Division was held on 3rd January, 2021. COVID-19 has brought about a tectonic shift in the life of human beings. It exposes the fragility of the development paradigm offered by the neoliberalism. Its senseless promotion of private capitals and insatiable lust for resources has widened environment fault lines through which virulent viruses like Covid-19 enter to invade us.

Trade union activities have to be moulded to suit the situation that demands social distancing and indoor confinement. Our conferences and meetings could not have done without adhering to it. That is why we also opted for virtual gatherings.

Contrary to the convention, we conducted our General convention first on 20th December, 2020 inaugurated by SZIEF President, Com P P Krishnan. While exposing the hollowness of the arguments by the Government of India to open up IPO in LIC, Com Krishnan urged us to close the ranks with other Trade Unions to keep off the attack of the powers that be and foster unity among the working class along secular values transcending caste and religious sensibilities.

Com.Deepak Viswanath, General Secretary who had earlier welcomed the delegates and observers also presented the report after the inauguration followed by it was the reading of the statement of Accounts by Com K Vinod, Treasurer. Com K Rajesh, Jt. Secretary initiated the discussion on the report. Altogether 13 comrades expressed their views on report by participating in the debate. After clarification given by the General Secretary & Treasurer, the report & Statement of Accounts

were unanimously approved. 11 resolutions were also adopted.

Our apprehension that how our comrades would adopt to the pandemic-created milieu disappeared after the meeting as they demonstrated that nothing could dampen their commitment and enthusiasm in trade union activities and their preparedness to go to any length to defend LIC as strong as ever.. The meeting elected Com.R.Rajeev, Com Deepak Viswanath and Com K Vinod as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively. General Council meeting was jointly presided over Com R Rajeev and Com K R Vini Vice President and came to an end with the vote of thanks by Com Rekha R Prabhu Vice President.

Felicitation to Com.V V Asokan

The General Conference clubbed with the reception to Com V V Asokan, Jt Secretary LIC Employees' Union, Thrissur Division following his retirement from the services of the Corporation on 31.12.2020, was held on 3rd January 2021 at NGO Union Hall, Thrissur. Though we ensured only representative nature participation at the venue, others could watch the proceedings virtually with special arrangement. AIEEA Jt Secretary Com. M Girija inaugurated it under the Presidentship of Com K R Vini, Vice President. Amid the advance of COVID -19 and the decimation of the livelihood of common people, it is the Corporate who are making the bonanza of profits, she opined. The Central Government not only gives largesse to big businesses during this period but also seizing on the opportunity to sell shares of profit-generating public



sector undertaking including LIC. This will definitely undermine the interest of our nation. She reminded us that fighting is the only way out of this situation. She also appreciated the services of Com V V Asokan for building up a strong unit in Thrissur. His dedication to union work along with office responsibility was inimitable, she highlighted.

Com T Narendran, State President, BEFI, Com T Joseph General Secretary, LIC Pensioners' Association, Thrissur Division, Com M Rajeev, Former President of LIC Employees' Union, Thrissur Division, Com.N.S.Bindu, General Secretary LIC Class I Officers' Association, Com.C.R.Rajan, President, NFIFWI and Com P B Baburaj, General Secretary, LICEU Ernakulam Division greeted the conference and narrated about the priceless services of Com V V Asokan.

AIIEA Vice President Com P P Krishnan, Former

AIIEA Vice President, Com M Kunhikrishnan and SZIEF Jt. Secretary Com I K Biju, delivered greetings through online.

The acceptance speech of Com Asokan was stirring. He was eloquent while speaking about organization and its leaders. He recalled that he tried his best to comply with the values of AIIEA in carrying out union work while deriving satisfaction that he had been part of anti privatization struggle right from the initial stage of his career. He averred to continue to work for the organisation in the need of hour.

Earlier Com Deepak Viswanath, General Secretary, LIC Employees' Union, Thrissur Division welcomed the gathering and the curtain wrung on the Conference after the Vote of Thanks by Com C Anitha, Jt. Secretary.

49TH CONFERENCE OF IEU, DHARWAD

The 49th Annual General Conference of Insurance Employees' Union, Dharwad Division was held on 23rd January, 2021 at Dharwad. The Conference commenced with the hoisting of flag of AIIEA by Com. A.H.Archak President of IEU, Dharwad amidst raising of slogans by comrades.



Com. Uday Gadagkar, General Secretary extended a hearty welcome to Com. J.Suresh, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF, Com. S.K.Kulkarni, Gen.Secretary, IEU,Belgaum and his team, Com. M.K.Deshpande, Com. R.G.Bhandiwad, and Com. B.N.Poojary, General Secretary, Com. A.M.Khan, Joint Secretary of LIC Retired Employees' Association, Dharwad.

The delegate session commenced with the placing of the Report on behalf of the Executive Committee by Com. Uday Gadagkar, General Secretary. The Audited Statements of Accounts were also placed in the house.

Com. M.K.Deshpande, Founder Member of IEU, Dharwad, Com. S.K.Kulkarni, Gen.Secretary, IEU, Belgaum and Com. B.N.Poojary, General Secretary

of LIC Retired Employees' Association, Dharwad addressed the Conference and extended their greetings. Com. M.K.Deshpande while greeting the Conference informed in detail the journey of IEU, Dharwad from its formation on 15/02/1971, about Lockout, automation struggle, splitting up of LIC, against LPG policies etc. Com. B.N.Poojary while greeting the Conference gave details on present economic situation prevailing in India, negative growth of GDP, highest ever unemployment level etc. He also told that this situation has emerged as the result of de-monetization and introduction of GST.

Com.J.Suresh, Jt.Secretary, SCZIEF while addressing the house greeted the participants. He dealt in detail on the issue of Wage Revision,

Recruitment of Class-III & IV employees, CGIT issue and Labour Law reforms, Quarantine leave issue and donation to Formers struggle, Graduation increment to Development Officers becoming Assistants on termination etc. He also clarified on the issue of slow Network connectivity raised by the Branches.

15 comrades including 2 newly recruited Assistants from Branch Units participated in the discussion on the report. Com. Uday Gadagkar replying to the debate appealed to the comrades to strengthen the Union at all levels. He also requested the comrades to actively participate in all union

activities. While replying to the debate he clarified all the queries raised by the branch units. The report of the Executive Committee and audited Statement of Accounts for the year ending 31st December 2019 been unanimously adopted by the house.

The house unanimously elected Com. A.H.Archak, Com. U.M.Gadagkar and Com. V.K.Kaginelli as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the coming year.

Finally Com. A.H.Archak, President, IEU, Dharwad proposed vote of thanks.

Bardhamaman Division: TU Class for newly recruited Assistants

BDIEA organized a trade union class for newly recruited Assistants of Burdwan Division at Burdwan on 7th February 2021. This day is significant as the Assistants joined in LIC on this date in 2020. About sixty comrades participated. The TU class was presided over by com. Prabir Dutta, President of BDIEA. Com Sajal Raja, General Secretary of BDIEA welcomed the gathering. Com. Pravash Paul, G.S of UFBU of Bardhaman region attended as invitee.

The class was held in two sessions. In the first session, Com. Amitava Ghosh, Treasurer of EZIEA spoke on "History of AIIEA". He started the class quoting that it is a discussion rather than just a traditional history class. He highlighted the difference between AIIE Association and other territorial Associations. Need of such trade related association in work place was pointed out by him. He narrated in which context AIIEA was formed on 1st July 1951, before nationalization. He also pointed out the first demand of AIIEA "Nationalisation of Insurance companies" and the first slogan 'from isolation to solidarity and from solidarity to success'. In his speech the name of only living founder member of AIIEA, Com. Chandrasekher Bose has been quoted. He narrated elaborately about the movements and struggles of AIIEA on various trade related issues like Charter of Demand, recognition of AIIEA, demand of bargaining rights, anti-automation movement in 1963, acceptance of Microprocessors in 1980, Illaco House movement in Calcutta, bonus movement, movement against the recommendation of Malhotra Committee of 1994, IRDA bill of 1999, TMP policy of LIC management,

signature campaigns on different issues, recruitments of Class -III & IV in LIC, movements against the neo-liberal policies of Government. He stressed on the need of movement to protect democracy, to spread the democracy, to keep healthy atmosphere in work place, to keep intact our rights, to unify our organization in the background of the divisive and politics of hate being played out in the country. He also stated that the beauty of AIIEA is to transform any issue into national issue. Few new recruits also discussed on the topic and Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, G.S. of EZIEA explained the queries raised and gave thanks them for participation in the discussion.

In the second session, Com. Jayanta Mukherjee, G.S. of EZIEA, spoke on "Idea of India". Com. Mukherjee explained in details the national policy of modern India. He criticized the role of present government in the context of economic, religious and political perspectives. He explained clearly how the neo-liberal policies have put India in a precarious situation and said the biggest challenge before us is to defend the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity of India. If anyone oppose the prevailing National policy, Govt. is accusing the person as anti-national people. He also criticized the govt. role to give importance the 5th August in lieu of memorable 15th August by introducing 370, establishing Rammandir etc. on 5th August. The Governments are attacking the scientific temper of India. He also said that the origin of word "Hindu" is from Iran in lieu of India. Actually this word 'Hindu' has come from the word 'SINDHU' for linguistic problem. He also stated that the Govt. of Centre has

chosen this moment to intensify the attacks of lives and livelihood of the workers and farmers in order to serve the interests of private monopoly capital, both indigenous and foreign. He also condemned the government policy of selling the PSUs which were considered as foundation stones of Indian economy. To fight this attack, he stressed upon the need for united struggle. He cautioned that we should also be careful about the harmful propaganda to divide

the working class unity on the lines of caste, religion and gender. He also suggested the comrades to read the books of Irfan Habib.

Divisional leadership of BDIEA, Base Secretaries of different bases of Burdwan Division and new recruits participated. All participants have benefitted from this TU class. The class came to an end with vote of thanks proposed by Com. Swati Chakraborty of Panagarh Base.

Madurai Division: Special Seminar on PROTECTION OF PUBLIC SECTOR

The 64th Conference of ICEU, Madurai Division held in the month of Dec. 2020 decided to conduct Special Seminar on Protection of Public Sector on 19th of January being the day of Life Insurance Nationalisation in India. As per the call, Special Seminars were conducted at six centers, Madurai, Dindigul, Periyakulam, Virudhunagar, Sivagangai and Paramakudi covering all the six districts of Madurai Division. Our office bearers, Com. G. Meenakshi Sundaram, President, N.P. Rameshkannan, General Secretary, N. Sureshkumar, Vice-President, T. Vanjunathan, Vice-President delivered Special addresses in the Seminar. Leaders from fraternal trade unions such as LIC Class I Federation, NFIFWI, MRGIEA, CITU, BEFI, BSNLEU, DREU, EB Employees Union, TN Primary Teachers Association, Freedom Fighters' Heir's Association, Sarvohdaya Sangam greeted the

Seminar and they shared their experience in their respective sectors and exposed the ill conceived policy of Central Government to privatise the public sector. MDRT Agents in the respective Districts were honoured in the Seminar held in their Districts. A total of **125** MDRT agents were felicitated in all the events. MDRT agents emotionally shared their life long association with AIEA and expressed their whole hearted commitment to protect LIC in the public sector along with AIEA. They were very much overwhelmed by the felicitations of AIEA and assured us that joint effort of AIEA and agency forces would strengthen our movement to fight LIC IPO. The experience of conducting the Seminar has instilled confidence among us to continue our campaign embracing all sections of working class with more dynamism



AN INTERACTIVE SESSION WITH LEADERSHIP AT HYDERABAD

ICEU Hyderabad & Secunderabad organised an inter-active session with Com. Amanulla Khan, making use of his presence in the city on 7th Feb'2021. SCZIEF General Secretary Com. Clement Das, Office bearers of both the Divisions, secretaries of City Branch units along with a number of activists attended the meeting. ICEU Hyderabad General Secretary Com.G.Thirupathiah welcomed the gathering and gave a brief description about the activities of both Divisions. Com.N.Adhish Reddy and Com.DS Raghu, Presidents of Hyderabad and Secunderabad respectively conduct the proceedings.

The session started with brief address by AIIEA General Secretary, Com.Shreekant Mishra. He spoke on the latest budget, its relevance to insurance industry in general and LIC, in particular. He gave a clarion call for protests involving all LICians under the umbrella of Joint Front on the issues of LIC IPO, FDI, Privatisation of Banks and GIC. He assured the comrades that a very handsome wage revision will be clinched shortly.

Com. Amanulla Khan addressed the large number of concerns raised by the participants in a session lasting for over two hours. Explaining the spirit and soul behind the great poem Dastoor by Habib Jalib which was recited by Com Giridhar to signal the commencement of the meeting, he said it was



a call to reject the policies, traditions that favour the few at the expense of many. It is a call to reject exploitation and concentration to wealth. In this context, he pointed out that Indian Constitution is very progressive. The constitution promises equality to all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, gender, religion and region. The constitution and its foundational principles are under attack today, he said. Never in post-independence India, the society was so much polarised and divided on the basis of so many issues. The basic fundamental rights are being denied to the citizens. Any difference of opinion with the government is stamped as anti national. Com.Amanullah Khan remembered the long history and struggles of AIIEA in defending the noble ideals of the working class philosophy and the unity and integrity of the country. Striving towards an exploitation free society is the path our great leaders have laid and it is for us to walk through it with sincerity and commitment. He also stated that AIIEA has fought against all governments in power when they brought in policies adversely impacting the life of the working class and the insurance industry. He outlined the struggles of AIIEA in protection of the workers rights, protection of policy holders' funds while advancing the interests of LIC. Addressing the concerns raised by comrades regarding the future of LIC and the employees' security, he informed the participants that AIIEA is committed to the protection of industry and the securities of employees. This can be done only through sustained struggles and deriving inspiration from the magnificent campaign that halted



privatisation of public sector insurance industry for over 25 years. He laid great importance on building common struggles with other sections of the toiling people and expressed happiness over the support and solidarity extended by AIIEA to the heroic struggle of the farmers. Com.Amanulla Khan called upon the insurance employees to be responsible and conscious citizens of India and not fall prey to those elements who work to destabilise the democratic structure of the nation. He also urged all to identify themselves as LICians and not be divided on caste, cadre and religion.

The interactive session with Com Amanulla Khan was very educative, inspiring and clear on the duties, we, as AIIEA soldiers have to discharge. As he has beautifully put it – any individual – before belonging to any community or class or even an LICian or AIIEA ian – it is important to realise that first and foremost one is a human being. YES. This realisation in everyone will make this world a better place to live.

The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks proposed by Com.Rajesh Singh, General Secretary, ICEU, Secunderabad Division.

PEOPLE'S UNITY Street Corner Meetings in Madurai Division

ICEU, Madurai Division conducted People's Unity Street Corner Meetings under the banner of PFI remembering Mahatma Gandhi on the Martyr's day. It was decided to conduct such meetings in each of the six districts of Madurai Division. Street Corner Meetings were held at Sivakasi, Thiruppathur and Palani. Our Office bearers Comrades S. Thanikairaj, Joint Secretary, P. Mahalingam, Asst. Treasurer and T. Vanjunathan, Vice-President delivered special address in the meetings. Fraternal Trade Union leaders and leaders of other democratic associations such as LIC Class I Federation, NFIFWI, LIAFI, LICAUI, CITU, JCTU, MRGIEA, TNGEA, BSNLEU, Farmer's Union, Construction Workers Union, TNP-WAA greeted on the occasion. Leaders remembered the immense contribution made by the great leader



Mahatma Gandhi and emphasized the need for the unity of people today. The Street Corner Meetings were a great success with participation of public in good number in all the three centers. Meetings conducted at prominent places attracted a no. of audience and this vibrant movement has gained us confidence to conduct such campaigns among public to uphold peoples unity at the current juncture.

CONGRATULATIONS

Com.R.M.Narayanan, Assistant working in P&GS Dept., Divisional office recently won the Chief Minister's Award for Best Coach in Athletics for the year 2017 - 18. He is a Sports Coach, trains athletes in his spare time. He received the award from Chief Minister Shri.Edappadi K.Palaniswami on February 8th 2021 at Chennai. Some of the athletes trained by him includes Javelin thrower N.Hemamalini (participated in the Common Wealth Youth Games), Discus throwers S.Mithravanun (finalist in the Youth Olympics Games) and M.Karuniya (represented the country at the Asian Youth Games). Insurance Worker congratulates Com Narayanan on this achievement and wishes him best in his future endeavours.



INSURANCE NEWS in brief

■ A.M. Khan, Dharwad

* With effect from February 1, 2021 whoever purchases a ULIP policy whose annual premium exceeds Rs.2.5 lakh will now be taxed at 10 per cent at maturity with the Budget taking away Section 10(10D) tax exemption. In the future, the aggregate of policy premiums in ULIPs will be taken into account to calculate whether you are eligible for Section 10(10D) tax exemption. So, splitting your ULIP premiums among companies to avail of tax exemption will not work.

* The IRDA has introduced a standard individual immediate annuity product "Saral Pension". This product has to be sold by all life insurers by April 1, 2021. The product will offer life annuity with 100 per cent return of purchase price. It comes with joint life annuity and a provision of 100 per cent annuity to the secondary annuitant upon death of the primary annuitant and return of the full purchase price on death of last survivor. This means the annuity will be paid to the annuitant for life and after his/her death, the spouse continues to get the annuity for life until his/her death. Furthermore, on the death of the spouse, the legal heir will get the purchase price back. The minimum annuity payable under the policy is Rs 1,000 per month, Rs 3,000 per quarter, Rs 6,000 half yearly, and Rs 12,000 per annum. However, there is no limit on the maximum annuity.

* All eases, seem, only to pave way for IPO of LIC. Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has eased the listing norms for large companies – large companies can now divest a minimum 5 per cent in the IPO, instead of 10 per cent and they will get five years, instead of three, to raise the public float to 25 per cent. Issuers with post-issue market capital exceeding Rs 1 trillion, the requirement of the minimum public float will be reduced from 10 per cent of post-issue market capital (existing provision) to Rs 10,000 crore, plus 5 per cent of the incremental amount beyond Rs 1 trillion. These issuers shall be required to achieve at least 10 per cent public shareholding in two years and at least 25 per cent public shareholding within five years from the date of listing,

* Around 12.8 million lives have been covered under all Covid-specific products with a premium of more than Rs 1,000 crore and a total sum insured of more than Rs 12 trillion as of end of first week of February

2021. Insurers (general and health) have paid more than Rs 6,500 crore worth of Covid claims so far, against more than Rs 13,500 crore worth of claims.

* Gross premium written by all the non-life insurers during April-January period of FY21 grew by 2.76 per cent to Rs 1,63,670.13 crore as against Rs 1,59,275.33 crore in year ago period.

* Complaints of mis-selling received against banks and brokers received were nearing 10,000 during the financial year 2019-20, reveals the IRDA annual report. The report also reveals that during the same period the number of unfair business practice complaints received against life insurers has reduced by 12.36 per cent to 43,444, of which 3,994 were against Life Insurance Corporation of India and 39,450 against private insurers.

*** LIC remains at the TOP:**

While the life insurance industry witnessed a decline of 84 per cent in net profit, from Rs.8,435.81 crore in 2018-19 to Rs.7,728.30 in 2019-20, LIC earned a net profit of Rs.2712.71 crore in 2019-20 as against Rs.2,688.50 crore. The 24 private insurers put together registered a negative rate of 12.11 per cent at Rs.695.72 crore

The private sector of the life insurance industry pulled down the investment income of the industry by Rs.51,056.63 crore at the same time LIC increased its investment income by Rs.13,207.41 crore.

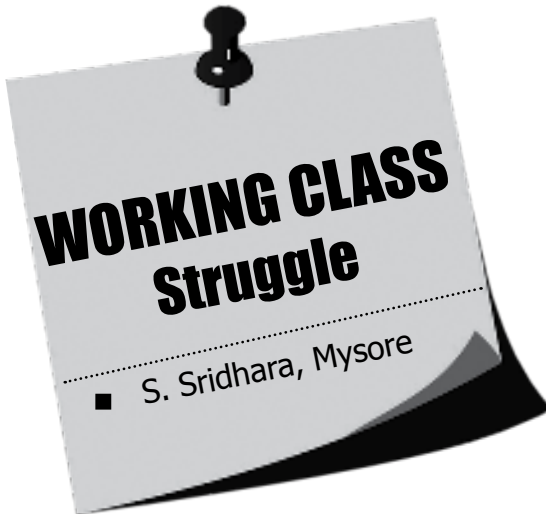
Only six private life insurers could pay dividend of Rs.1215.75 crores, less by Rs.502.51 crore than what they had paid last financial year. LIC has proposed a dividend of Rs.2697.74 crore as against Rs.2660.60 crores paid last year.

Out of a total of 8,74,849 death claims settled by the life insurance industry, LIC has settled 7,58,916 claims at a settlement ratio of 96.69 per cent.

New individual policies issued by LIC are 218.96 lakhs while 23 private insurers put together have issued 69.50 lakhs.

New business premium collected by LIC during the FY 2019-20 is Rs.1,78,276.24 crore and that by the private insurers is Rs.80,986.14 crore. Market share of LIC in this segment for the year is 68.76 per cent.

Total investment by LIC increased by 11.24 per cent at Rs.30,70,852 crores during the year 2019-20 while that of the 23 private insurers together invested Rs.8,19,422 crore.



WORKING CLASS Struggle

■ S. Sridhara, Mysore

The US Bureau of Labour Statistics (BLS) an agency within the US Department of Labour (DOL), reported that 5333 US workers died due to workplace injuries in 2019, an increase of 2% from previous year. This is the highest number of workplace deaths in US since 2017. As horrific as they are, the BLS figures are in fact a vast undercount, in part because it does not count death due to workplace related diseases.

Engineers at Energy Company British Gas, part of the Centrica Group, are continuing their strike action. British Gas supplies gas and energy and services equipment and has around 20000 Employees. A four day strike began on 11th February 2021, and with further four day strike planned for 19th to 22nd February 2021. The workers are opposing "FIRE AND REHIRE" plans by British Gas to undermine workers condition and cut pay 20% over 7500 workers are on strike.

Over 4500 UK workers at London's Heathrow Airport Limited (HAL) walked out on February 5th and again on 9th, 13th, 16th & 18th February 2021. The workers held strike in December 2020. The workers are opposing management proposal for 25% wage cut. The HAL management, using the pandemic to impose long planned attacks, threatens to fire the workforce on lower pay and inferior terms.

Lecturers in Scottish Further Education Colleges are taking part in a consultative ballot over plans by the National Employment Body, Colleges, Scotland to replace college lecturer posts with Instructor/ Assessor post. The New posts would open to less qualified staff as lower pay inferior conditions. Lecturers at Forth Valley College have been involved in Industrial Action over what amounts to a hire and fire threat by management.

Hundreds of technical workers at state owned HHLA Subsidiaries SCA & SCB, Hamburg, Germany held a 3 day stoppage strike on February 2nd to 4th February 2021, following one day strike on 27th January 2021 demanding improved working conditions.

Workers at the Delta Company for Fertilisers and chemical industries at DAQAHLIA, in Egypt's NILE DELTA, are continuing their sit-in-protest. Thousands of workers oppose Company plans to relocate to Suez. The Sit in Protest is supported by family members..

University workers in Nigeria walked out on 5th February midnight. The strike is over non payment of minimum wage, delays in negotiations and failure to honour an agreement from 2009. A three week stoppage by Teachers in EDO-state ended on 8th February 2021, when the National Leadership of the Nigerian Union of Teachers

intervened. Workers demands including unpaid salaries and improved working conditions.

Doctors in Northern Capetown, South Africa walked out on 3rd February to protest staffing levels and over work. They are demanding appointment of new Doctors and medical officers.

Hundreds of Municipal workers in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape Town, South Africa stopped work on 2nd February 2021 and protested outside the provincial Government Offices. The workers are demanding COVID-19, compensation allowance, discounts on Electricity and water, the ending of outsourcing and permanent employment of all contract workers.

Thousands of plantation workers from several tea estates in ANN FIELD, Dickoya, Aiton and UP-COT began an indefinite strike on February 3rd to demand a 1000 Rupee basic daily wage. Striking workers blocked the transportation of tea to Colombo for shipping.

Transport workers Union members at Hanson Quarries in Rivervale, a Suburb & Western Australia's Capital Perth, on strike on 27th January 2021 to demand improved wages and conditions in the Company's proposed enterprise agreement. Workers are fighting for job security and a fair share in Company's profits.

The General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and other leading trade unions of France held Nationwide General strike and demonstration on 4th February 2021 to denounce to the Government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, in particular the impact of the response on jobs and wages. Union representing public sector workers, including civil servants, education workers and public health care workers have participated in strike.

A week after military coup, protests have spread through out at Myanmar. Textile workers, together with students went on strike against army take over. Lakhs of people participated in General strike on 10th February 2021.

- Moody's Investors services report on credit conditions in Asia noted that India's high government debt could limit its ability to give fiscal stimulus to the economy. Job losses, income shocks and the gap in health infrastructure pose "highly negative risks" for the country's growth prospects.

Moody's expects income and social inequality in India to widen in 2021, while the

number of people falling into poverty will rise significantly, erasing three to four year's gain in poverty reduction. The rating agency said the traditional emphasis on infrastructure spending to support growth may now have to expand to include social spending on health care and pensions.

- According to a new study by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the US population has had the greatest drop in life expectancy since 1940s, while another study has shown that a staggering 20 million years of human life have been lost due to Covid pandemic. The study shows that in the first half of 2020, the life expectancy at birth for the total US population was 77.8 years, declining by an entire year from 78.8 years in 2019. According to the "Scientific Reports" study, while older people are suffering a disproportionate number of deaths, those below the age of 55 are being robbed of a large percentage of their adult years by the virus.

- According to the latest Oxfam report, the wealth of world's billionaires increased by a stupefying \$ 3.9 trillion between March 18 and December 31, 2020. The richest 10 people have increased their wealth by \$ 540 billion during this period. This \$ 540 billion, according to Oxfam is more than enough to prevent anyone on earth from falling into poverty because of Covid-19 and to pay for Covid -19 vaccines for all the humanity. Collectively, the wealth of 2300 people in the world is approximately \$ 11.95 trillion, which is equivalent to what G20 governments have spent collectively in response to the pandemic. The report also notes that the total billionaires nearly doubled in the ten years after the financial crisis of 2008, and between 2017-18, one billionaire was created every two days.



Meanwhile, the Oxfam estimates that globally, 56 percent of the population lives on between \$ 2 and \$ 10 a day.

- The IMF has revised its 2021 global economic growth forecast. The IMF forecast a 2020 global contraction of 3.5%, an improvement of 0.9 percentage points from the 4.4% slump predicted in October 2020. It predicts

global growth of 5.5% in 2021, an increase of 0.3 percentage points from earlier prediction. The US economy which has contracted 3.5% in 2020, is expected to grow 5.1% in 2021, an upward revision of 2 percentage points. China is expected to expand 8.1% in 2021 and 5.6% in 2022. According to FICCI Survey, India's GDP is expected to contract 8% in the financial year 2020- 21.

- According to a latest report by RBI, stressed assets of non-banking financial companies (NBFC's) are likely to touch 1.5 – 1.8 lakh crores or 6-7.5% of their assets under management (AUM) by the end of this fiscal. The RBI, in its Financial Stability Report released last month, had said GNPA's of NBFC's increased to 6.3% as of March 2020 from 5.3% in March 2019. The report further said that the asset quality of NBFC's is expected to further deteriorate due to disruption of business operations caused by the pandemic, especially in the industry sector, a major recipient of NBFC credit. However, according to experts, the level of stress in NBFC's is likely to recede in by 2021-22.

- According to a World Bank report, the global economy has contracted 4.3% in 2020. The global economic output is expected to expand 4% in 2021 but will still remain more than 5% below the pre-pandemic projections. In a worse scenario, the World Bank projects, global economy recovering only by 1.6%. US economic activity in the first half of 2020 fell by nearly three times of the peak decline during 2008 global financial crises. For 2020, output has fallen by 3.6%. EU region saw a sharp contraction of 7.4% in 2020. Japan contracted 5.3% in 2020. Low income countries witnessed a shortage of 0.9% in 2020 – the first aggregate contraction in a generation. China's GDP expanded by 2.3% in 2020.



For our FIELD FORCES

■ Arivukkadal, Thanjavur

Rs.5 Lakh Crore: LIC's investments will exceed ¹ 5 lakh crore in FY21, said its chairman, MR Kumar. This will be an all-time high for LIC. Kumar said that as of January 31, 2021, LIC has made a gross investment of ¹ 4,44,919 crore which is a 14.2% year-on-year rise. In the same period last year, LIC had gross investments of ¹ 3,89,552 crore. Total investments for FY20 was ¹

4.38 lakh crore investments and this year (FY21) it will cross Rs.5 lakh crore.

Digilocker: IRDAI has asked insurers to issue digital policies to their policyholders and also tell them how to use these documents. IRDAI said that Digilocker will drive reduction in costs, elimination of customer complaints relating to non-delivery of policy copy, improved turnaround time of insurance services, faster claims processing and settlement, reduction in disputes, reduction in fraud and improvement in customer contactability.

Corona Insurance: As many as 1.28 crore lives have been covered under corona-specific insurance products in the country so far with a premium collection of over ¹ 1,000 crore, IRDAI Chairman Subhash Chandra Khuntia said.

Vaccine Coverage: "There is no provision of insurance for recipients of COVID-19 vaccine against any kind of side effects or medical complications that may arise due to the inoculation" said Minister of State for Health Ashwini Choubey in Rajya Sabha. However, General insurance industry sources told that they will be covering any vaccine-related hospitalisation, in line with regular policy terms.

Tax confusion: In the budget, the finance minister has proposed to bring parity between taxation of Ulips and MFs. However, the gains in Ulips would be taxed only if the annual premiums are ¹ 2.5 lakh or more. For those who pay annual premiums below that, they would still get the benefit of EEE taxation. Due to lack of clarity, the proposal has created confusion. The government has not clarified how the taxation would work if an investor switches from an equity to a debt fund during the policy tenure.

Sub-brokers: The committee to review the motor insurance service provider (MISP) guidelines on Wednesday suggested that automotive dealers can act as one of the distribution channels on a stand-alone basis, soliciting motor insurance business similar to insurance brokers. The committee noted that the motor insurance business sourced by MISPs through brokers and insurers constitutes around 25% of the total motor

insurance business or around 11.25% of the overall general insurance business in India.

Separate Cheques: IRDAI panel has recommended to pay cost of vehicle and insurance premium through separate cheques. Under the present system, it said there is a lack of transparency in the cost of insurance premium when the customer buys the vehicle for the first time through the

automotive dealer and makes the payment through one single cheque. It suggested that this lack of transparency is not in the interest of the policyholders as the true cost of insurance is not known to the customer. The panel also suggested that an MISP should mandatorily disclose to the customer the remuneration and reward that it gets from the insurance company or the insurance intermediary. Motor Insurance Service Provider (MISP) refers to an automobile dealer appointed by the insurer or the insurance intermediary to distribute and/ or service motor insurance policies of automotive vehicles sold through it.

ILIP: A committee set up by IRDAI has recommended the introduction of index-linked insurance policies (Ilips). The index-linked insurance plan is one of those insurance products wherein the returns are linked to the benchmark indices. The index-linked insurance plan could be linked to the ten-year equity indices, for instance, Nifty or Sensex and the government bonds. The index-linked insurance plan returns are likely to be benchmarked till an index that permits the policyholder to obtain the guaranteed value. IRDAI will approve the benchmark index.

Drone Insurance: The rapid rise in the number of people owning and using unmanned aerial vehicles or drones, IRDAI is ramping up efforts to extend sufficient insurance protection to drone-related incidents. In a circular sent to insurance companies, the IRDAI urged all general insurance companies to launch covers for mishaps related to remotely piloted aircraft systems (RPAS) or drones.

Health Sector: Health insurance segment, which has seen strong growth over the last five years, will continue to witness a higher double-digit growth in the medium term helped by low penetration, according to a report. During FY15-FY20, the segment expanded by a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20%.

Film insurance: Mega claims following movie production cancellations and delay in releases last year have burnt insurance companies. But a renewed demand for film insurance could see the industry's annual premiums grow from the current ¹ 150-200 crore

CAMPAIGN AGAINST LIC IPO INTENSIFIES

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 27

Sri N.R Elango
DMK



Sri Su.Venkatesan, MP, Madurai met by ICEU & MRGIEA comrades



Smt Riti Pathak
BJP MP, Sidhi
met by Shahdol
comrades



Sri.Nawaz kani, Ramnad MP met by Madurai Comrades
Theni MP Sri.O.P.Ravindranath by Madurai Comrades.



Sri.Thirumavalavan, MP, Chidambaram
Shri Shanmugasundaram MP,
Pollachi Parliament Constituency



DONATIONS

Com. Manju Sheel, Bhopal Division	Rs.1000
Cuttack Division I E A	5000
Com. Sujata Rajan V.M	10000
Com. Shobha Prabhu, C.A.B Dharwad DO	2000
Com. N.S.Sailaja, HRGIEA, Hyderabad	20000
Com. K.V.V.S.N Raju, HRGIEA, Hyderabad	10000
Com. S.B.Balaram, BRGIEA, Mysore	5000
Com. Hemanth Kumar Kar, NIA Co. DO-II Cuttack	3000

Insurance worker heartily thanks these comrades for their love and affection

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2016	Base 2001	Base 1960
June 2020		332	7578.20
July		336	7669.50
August		338	7715.15
Sept	118.1	340.13	7763.73
October	119.5	344.16	7855.76
November	119.9	345.31	7882.06
December	118.8	342.14	7809.74

Base1960=Base2001x22.8259;
Base 2001=Base 2016x 2.88

**बीमा कर्मचारी संघ हजारीबाग मंडल,
सोनार दम्पति को भारतीय जीवन बीमा निगम
तथा संगठन में दिए उनके शानदार योगदान के
लिए क्रांतिकारी अभिनन्दन करता है**



Com. S.P. Sonar



Com. Gita Sonar

KATRASGARH BRANCH, HAZARIBAGH DIVISION

**Long Live AIEA
Long Live ECZIEA
Long Live IEAHD**

**Com. Prabir Kumar Choudhury, Dhanbad-2
Com. Shankar Dutta, Dhanbad-2**



With best wishes ...

EAST CENTRAL ZONE INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION