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To  
All the Zonal /Divisional /State /Regional Units

**ONWARD TO THE MAZDOOR KISAN SANGHARSH RALLY ON 5<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2023 AT NEW DELHI**

The working class and peasantry of the country are preparing for an emphatic protest on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023 in the form of the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally. This programme was decided in the joint convention of workers and farmers, organized by the CITU (Centre of Indian Trade Unions), AIKS (All India Kisan Sabha) and AIAWU (All India Agricultural Workers Union) and attended by many independent federations like AIIEA on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022, at New Delhi.

Stopping the indiscriminate privatisation of public sector enterprises, halting the sale of national resources and assets to the Indian and foreign corporates under the national asset monetization pipeline, scrapping the NPS and restoration of OPS, withdrawal of the four retrograde Labour Codes, legalisation of minimum support prices for all farm produce with guaranteed procurement, minimum wages at Rs 26,000/- per month along with the provision of 200 days of work under the rural employment guarantee scheme (MGNREGA), withdrawal of GST on food and other essential commodities, arresting price rise by reducing the central excise duty on petrol, diesel, kerosene and cooking gas are some of the major demands being raised by the Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally.

The neoliberal economic policies have launched a savage attack on the workers, peasants and agricultural workers. This has resulted in the suicides of over three lakh peasants and labourers over the last two decades. This assault has been institutionalized by the present government through its labour codes for the workers and the three infamous farm laws for the peasants. The heroic resistance of the farmers has put the government on the backfoot, but it has not yet given up its intent. The country's economy is in a slump. GDP growth was only 4.1% for the third quarter of 2022-23. The retail inflation rate is at 6.4%, leading to the sky rocketing of the prices of all essential commodities. The unemployment rate at 7.33 per cent as on 18.3.2023 is the highest unemployment rate in decades. The government is trying to control inflation by squeezing the money income of the working people through creation of additional unemployment. MGNREGA has seen savage cuts in the latest budget as a part of this flawed policy framework. Agricultural workers have been the worst affected because of this anti-poor policy.

Alongside this, inequalities have assumed huge proportions in the country today. Inequalities today are said to be the worst in the last hundred years. In stead of combating this inequality, the government is doling out huge tax concessions to the same class of rich corporates in an open and vulgar display of crony capitalism. Sadly enough, social security of the working class has come under increasing attack. Social security laws and trade union rights secured through years of struggle, some conceded by the British colonial rule, are being dismantled through the forceful imposition of the four labour codes.

The government has declared a virtual war on India's public sector. A systematic effort is underway to defame and denigrate public sector at large, even though India's public sector institutions continue to perform wonderfully well. There are

248 operating CPSEs in the country as on 31.03.2022. Net Profit of profit-making CPSEs stood at Rs. 2.64 lakh crore in FY 2021-22 against Rs. 1.89 lakh crore in FY 2020-21 showing an increase of 39.85%. Dividend declared by operating CPSEs in FY 2021-22 stood at Rs. 1.15 lakh crore against Rs. 0.73 lakh crore in FY 2020-21, showing an increase of 57.58%. Contribution of all CPSEs to Central Exchequer by way of excise duty, custom duty, GST, corporate tax, interest on Central Government loans, dividend, and other duties and taxes stood at Rs. 5.07 lakh crore in FY 2021-22 as against Rs. 4.97 lakh crore in FY 2020-21, showing an increase of 2.14%.

Public sector insurance industry is under attack. The GIBNA Amendment Act passed in parliament in the most undemocratic fashion, has paved the way for privatization of PSGI companies. The mindless restructuring exercise and KPI initiatives being implemented in PSGI companies at the behest of the government are surest recipes for disaster. PSGI companies have been singled out for all sorts of obnoxious experimentation like performance linked pay. Similarly, the government went ahead with the IPO of LIC by disinvesting 3.5 per cent of its equity despite serious resistance from a large section of the well-meaning people of this country. The AIIEA is aware that this is the first step towards privatization of this premier public sector institution. The industry regulator IRDAI is trying to bring some obnoxious reforms like reducing agency commission, introducing portability of agency and dematerializing of insurance policies, allowing composite insurance like the pre-nationalisation days, reducing the initial equity capital and solvency margin requirements etc. with a view to promoting private companies at the cost of the public sector insurance.

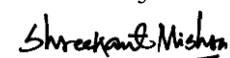
This apart, the government is not giving clearance to very important issues like the enhancement of Family Pension from 15 % to 30 %, increasing the management's contribution towards pension for NPS beneficiaries from 10 % to 14 % etc. for a long time now. Discussions on the Charter of Demands have not yet commenced. Insurance employees led by AIIEA are in struggle on these issues and also for protection of the industry.

Popular protests are erupting all over. However, there is a systematic attempt to brand all critics of the government policy as 'anti-national'. Religion is being used as a political mobilisational strategy to disrupt the unity of the working class. Democratic institutions of the state are being compromised to serve the narrow political interests of the ruling party. The space for the political opposition is being squeezed through adoption of devious means. It is therefore necessary that workers, peasants and agricultural workers should come together on a single platform not only to fight the neo-liberal offensive but to defend democracy and the right to resist, to preserve India as a secular republic and to defend the constitution upon which modern India is founded. The mazdoor Kisan Rally of 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023 is a step in that direction.

Insurance employees cannot afford to remain a mute spectator at such a critical conjuncture. This is a unique opportunity for insurance employees to firm up their alliance with workers of the unorganized sector and make them allies in our struggle. **We therefore call upon our units throughout the country to organise lunch-hour demonstrations on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023, as a mark of solidarity with the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Rally.**

With Greetings,

Comradely Yours



General Secretary