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yet another milestone



*75 Years of
Fascinating Journey
A story of Resilience
Resistance
& Dreams*



**Building Solidarities
for Equality
Justice &
Fraternity**



Insurance Worker wishes all its readers a very Happy New Year 2026



THEY LEAD AIEA

The 27th Conference of All India Insurance Employees' Association elected following comrades as the office-bearers for the ensuing term .

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In this Issue

- 7** **AIIEA defeats the LOCKOUT with Brilliant Tactics**
Amanulla Khan
- 10** **AIIEA at 75 Random Reminiscences of an Activist**
Satanjib Das
- 13** **Some Unforgettable events in the annals of the history of AIIEA**
Bhagwan Swaroop Sharma
- 15** **From 'Microscopic Minority' to Mighty Movement**
J.Gurumurthy
- 25** **असमानता और लोकतंत्र**
रामजी तिवारी
- 27** **STOP THE ALMS**
Prof. Prabhat Patnaik
- 17-25** **27th General Conference of AIIEA**

Insurance News - A M Khan
Working Class Struggles - S Sridhar
Economic Notes - J Suresh
For our Field Force - Arivukkadal
Legal Digest - P Ravishankar

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TOWARDS YET ANOTHER MILESTONE

The Platinum Jubilee Year 27th General Conference of AIIEA is bound to be another significant milestone in the fascinating journey of insurance employees' movement. The conference set to take place in the city of Bhubaneswar from 28th December 2025 to 1st January 2026 will have the participation of over 1500 delegates and observers representing the eight zonal affiliates and the general insurance wing of the AIIEA. This conference expects a large participation of the women. These 1500 delegates and observers would not only reflect on the glory of the past but will also pool their collective wisdom to chart the path to face the uncertainties of the future and frame tactics and strategies to successfully overcome every difficult situation.

The insurance employees in the last 75 years have made great progress in securing economic benefits and decent service conditions. These achievements have come on the foundations of their unity and the countless sacrifices made by the earlier generations of leaders and employees. During this period, the AIIEA had to confront every government that ruled this country since independence to secure the legitimate aspirations of the employees. The heavy odds, weight of the struggle and the demand of sacrifices did not deter the AIIEA to deviate from the chosen path. The true character of any trade union is judged on the role it plays not only in improving the conditions of the employees it represents but also its contributions to struggles to make the society just and humane. It must be proudly said that AIIEA never compromised on its principles and foundational values and the events of the last 75 years amply demonstrate the great character and courage of conviction of the AIIEA. This is the reason why AIIEA is admired even by its detractors. This character has earned the AIIEA respect not only in the community of trade unions in India but also in the greater fraternity of the international working class movement.

Every conference of AIIEA had to confront the challenges of its times. It had to find methods to overcome them successfully. But it must be said that the Platinum Jubilee Year Conference is confronted with multiple challenges and it would require deeper political understanding to craft the correct tactics. Today the very survival of the great institutions built through years of sweat and toil is at stake in the face of massive onslaughts of a neoliberal regime. The trade union

movement too is facing the very existential threat with the government arming itself with labour laws hostile to the workers. Today we have in power the most brutal neoliberal regime which is bent upon implementing its agenda which cannot tolerate the existence of public sector and pursuing an ideology which is totally hostile to the working class and its interests. In the past decade we are clearly seeing that the State and the institutions set up as checks and balances in the constitutional scheme of things are slowly being captured by the capital. Therefore, the battle involves not only fighting neoliberalism but also preventing the backsliding of democracy. The strength of the insurance employees alone, however committed they are, is not enough to meet these challenges. It requires building solidarities with other sections of the Indian society. The unity of the trade union movement and its alignment with the struggles of the farmers is the key to the success of this struggle. The Conference, naturally has to discuss and draw up the tactics in this direction. The resistance against neoliberalism should also include the fight against communal polarisation and social discrimination in the name of caste hierarchies.

The humankind today faces the threat of extinction due to unbridled exploitation of natural resources by capitalism in its greed of profit maximisation. Trade Unions can no longer ignore the issues of environment, ecological degradation and climate change. Imperialism is continuously at war to capture the critical natural resources across the world and establish its hegemony. These wars are exacting huge human costs and sufferings. Millions of lives are lost; populations are displaced while the arm manufacturers ensure the swelling of their profits. The AIIEA as a conscious trade union must join the struggle for the survival of planet earth and building up of a strong movement for world peace.

These are a few important challenges that face the delegates and observers when they debate in the 27th General Conference. The challenges are massive and grim. But given the glorious journey of AIIEA in the last 75 years, they are not insurmountable. Let us march towards the Platinum Jubilee Year Conference with this confidence drawing inspirations from the past struggles and successes.

(20th December 2025)

In a capitalist society, the relationship between the labour and employer is inherently unequal. This reality makes any democracy to frame rules and regulate the business activities to ensure some protection to the workers. Rather than doing this, the rules framed by BJP Government further strengthen the capital and paves way for accentuating exploitation of the workers.

The Government while notifying these codes has claimed that consolidation of the 29 labour laws is a major reform which would benefit both the capital and the labour. This is far from the truth. These labour codes would make the relationship between capital and labour much more unequal. It is strange that the government is spending lot of public revenue over advertisements to convince the workers that these codes would immensely benefit them. But the working class is not convinced. The Ten Central Trade Unions and a number of independent federations have registered their protests through demonstrations across the country on 26th November 2025 and have decided to intensify the struggle.

एआईआईईए का प्लैटिनम जयन्ती वर्ष 27 वां महासम्मेलन बीमा कर्मचारियों के आन्दोलन की दिलचस्प यात्रा में एक और अहम मील का पत्थर साबित होगा। यह सम्मेलन 28 दिसम्बर 2025 से 1 जनवरी 2026 तक भुवनेश्वर शहर में होगा। इसमें एआईआईईए की आठ क्षेत्रीय इकाइयों और साधारण बीमा इकाई के 1500 से ज्यादा प्रतिनिधि और प्रेक्षक हिस्सा लेंगे। इस सम्मेलन में महिलाओं के भी बड़ी संख्या में भाग लेने की उम्मीद है। ये 1500 प्रतिनिधि और प्रेक्षक न सिर्फ अपने गौरवशाली अतीत से रोशनी लेंगे, बल्कि भविष्य की अनिश्चितताओं का सामना करने का रास्ता बनाने और हर मुश्किल हालात से कामयाबी से निपटने के लिए तरकीब निकालने और रणनीति बनाने के लिए अपनी मिली-जुली समझ भी साझा करेंगे।

पिछले सालों में बीमा कर्मचारियों ने बेहतर आर्थिक लाभ और सेवा शर्तें पाने में बहुत तरक्की हासिल की है। ये उपलब्धियां उनकी एकता और पिछली पीढ़ियों के नेताओं और कर्मचारियों के अनगिनत बलिदानों के बल पर मिली हैं। इस दौरान, एआईआईईए को कर्मचारियों की जायज उम्मीदों को पूरा करने के लिए आजादी के बाद से इस देश पर राज करने वाली हर सरकार का सामना करना पड़ा। भारी मुश्किलों, संघर्ष के बोझ और कुर्बानियों की मांग ने भी एआईआईईए को अपने चुने हुए रास्ते से भटकने से नहीं रोका। किसी भी ट्रेड यूनियन का असली चरित्र इस बात से आंका जाता है कि वह न सिर्फ अपने कर्मचारियों की हालत सुधारने में क्या भूमिका निभाती है, बल्कि समाज को इन्साफ पसन्द और इन्सानियत वाला बनाने की कोशिशों में भी उसका कितना योगदान है। यह गर्व से कहना होगा कि एआईआईईए ने अपने उसूलों और

THE FOUR LABOUR CODES: PUSHING WORKERS INTO SLAVERY

The government owes explanation to the working class as to why these labour codes were pushed in the parliament during covid epidemic without even a minimum discussion. Why the government shied away from consultations with the trade unions and ignored all the suggestions made by them? The government failed to take into confidence the working class which has the greatest stakes. Not holding a single Indian Labour Conference in the last one decade exposes the autocratic and undemocratic character of the government. It is another matter that it holds regular meetings with the owners of the capital.

The major thrust of the labour codes is to end the permanency of employment. This is what neoliberalism demands. The government has paved the way for fixed term employment and contractualization of labour.

The government also claims that this will reduce unnecessary compliance for the industry. It argues that the existing labour laws are too rigid and the new labour codes will result in ease of doing business. What it fails to mention is that; this ease of doing business will make the life of workers difficult. It is a fact that majority of workers are in precarious condition with the wages remaining stagnant and profits continuing to soar.

The Labour code give the employers owning industries with less than 300 workers total liberty to hire and fire the workers. In a situation where there is a huge army of unemployed, this will result into further intensification of the exploitation of workers. The labour codes will make the unionisation of workers all the more difficult. The government



एक और मील के पत्थर की ओर

बुनियादी मूल्यों से कभी समझौता नहीं किया और पिछले सालों की प्रचुर घटनाएं एआईआईईए के महान चरित्र और पक्के इरादे पर बने रहने के साहस को साफ तौर पर प्रदर्शित करती हैं। यही वजह है कि एआईआईईए की तारीफ उसके विरोधी भी करते हैं। इस चरित्र ने एआईआईईए को न सिर्फ भारत के ट्रेड यूनियन आकाश में, बल्कि अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय मजदूर वर्ग आन्दोलन की बड़ी बिरादरी में भी सम्मान दिलाया है।

एआईआईईए के प्रत्येक सम्मेलन को अपने समय की चुनौतियों का सामना करना पड़ा। उसे इनसे सफलतापूर्वक निपटने के तरीके खोजने थे। लेकिन यह कहना होगा कि प्लैटिनम जयन्ती वर्ष सम्मेलन के सामने कई चुनौतियां हैं और सही युक्तियां निकालने के लिए गहरी राजनीतिक समझ की जरूरत होगी। आज सालों की मेहनत और पसीने से बने बड़े संस्थानों का वजूद ही एक नवउदारवादी शासन के बड़े हमलों के सामने खतरे में है। ट्रेड यूनियन आन्दोलन भी अपने वजूद के खतरे का सामना कर रहा है, क्योंकि सरकार मजदूरों के खिलाफ श्रम कानूनों से खुद को सशस्त्र कर रही है। आज हमारे पास सबसे कूर नवउदारवादी सरकार है जो अपना एजेण्डा लागू करने पर तुली हुई है, जो सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के वजूद को ही बर्दाश्त नहीं कर सकती है और एक ऐसी सोच को आगे बढ़ा रही है जो मजदूर वर्ग और उसके हितों के बिल्कुल खिलाफ है। पिछले दशक में हम साफ तौर पर देख रहे हैं कि राज्य और संवैधानिक व्यवस्था में निगरानी और सन्तुलन के तौर पर बनाए गए संस्थानों पर धीरे-धीरे पूंजी का कब्जा होता जा रहा है। इसलिए, इस लड़ाई में न केवल नवउदारवाद से लड़ना शामिल है, बल्कि लोकतन्त्र

को पीछे खिसकने से रोकना भी शामिल है। अकेले बीमा कर्मचारियों की ताकत, चाहे वे कितने भी प्रतिबद्ध क्यों न हों, इन चुनौतियों का सामना करने के लिए काफी नहीं है। इसके लिए भारतीय समाज के दूसरे वर्गों के साथ एकजुटता बनाने की जरूरत है। ट्रेड यूनियन आन्दोलन की एकता और किसानों के संघर्षों के साथ उसका तालमेल इस संघर्ष की सफलता की कुंजी है। जाहिर है, सम्मेलन को इस दिशा में चर्चा करनी होगी और रणनीति बनानी होगी। नवउदारवाद के खिलाफ इस लड़ाई में जाति के नाम पर साम्प्रदायिक धुंवीकरण और सामाजिक भेदभाव के खिलाफ संघर्ष भी शामिल होना चाहिए।

आज मानवजाति अपने अस्तित्व मिटने के खतरे का सामना कर रही है, क्योंकि पूंजीवाद अपने ज्यादा से ज्यादा मुनाफे के लालच में प्राकृतिक संसाधनों का बिना रोक-टोक इस्तेमाल कर रहा है। ट्रेड यूनियन अब पर्यावरण, पारिस्थितिक क्षरण और जलवायु परिवर्तन के मुद्दों को नजरअंदाज नहीं कर सकते। साम्राज्यवाद दुनिया भर में महत्वपूर्ण प्राकृतिक संसाधनों पर कब्जा करने और अपना दबदबा बनाने के लिए लगातार जंग लड़ रहा है। इन युद्धों से इन्सानी नुकसान और तकलीफें बहुत ज्यादा हो रही हैं। लाखों जाने जा रही हैं, लोग बेघर हो रहे हैं, जबकि हथियार बनाने वाली कम्पनियां अपना मुनाफा बढ़ा रही हैं। एआईआईईए को एक जागरूक ट्रेड यूनियन के तौर पर धरती को बचाने और दुनिया में शान्ति के लिए एक मजबूत आन्दोलन बनाने के संघर्ष में शामिल होना होगा।

has tried to blunt the ultimate weapon of the worker to cease the work. Strikes have been made almost impossible. Over 90% of the workers who are in informal sector without contracts, social security or right to unionise are totally sidelined. The government claims that these codes will give some social security to the gig and platform workers but has not explicitly recognised them as workers as the case with the scheme workers like Anganwadi and others.

We will discuss each of the four labour codes elaborately in due course. But suffice it to say that these labour codes are a surrender to

the capital and abdication of the responsibility of the State to protect the workers. These codes undermine the Directive Principles of the Constitution that demands the State to secure just working conditions and a dignified life to the workers. The AIIEA demands withholding of these labour codes and a discussion with the representatives of the workers to address their concerns. The AIIEA along with the other trade unions is committed to fight these labour codes which makes the workers the slaves of capital ignoring their political and economic aspirations that flow to them from the Constitution of India.

मजदूरोंको गुलामी की और ढकेलती चार श्रम संहिताएं

पूंजीवादी समाज में, मजदूर और मालिक के बीच का रिश्ता स्वाभाविक रूप से ही बेमेल होता है। यह सच्चाई किसी भी लोकतन्त्र को नियम बनाने और व्यावसायिक गतिविधियों को विनियमित करने के लिए मजबूर करती है ताकि श्रमिकों को कुछ सुरक्षा सुनिश्चित हो सके। ऐसा करने के बजाए, बीजेपी सरकार के बनाए नियम पूंजी को और मजबूत करते हैं और मजदूरों के शोषण को और बढ़ाने का रास्ता बनाते हैं।

सरकार ने इन संहिताओं को अधिसूचित करते हुए दावा किया है कि 29 श्रम कानूनों को एक साथ लाना एक बड़ा सुधार है जिससे पूंजी और मजदूर दोनों को फायदा होगा। यह सच से कोसों दूर है। ये श्रम संहिताएं पूंजी और श्रमिकों के बीच के रिश्ते को और भी ज्यादा असमान बना देंगीं। अजीब बात है कि सरकार मजदूरों को यह यकीन दिलाने के लिए कि इन संहिताओं से उन्हें बहुत फायदा होगा, विज्ञापनों पर बहुत सारा सार्वजनिक राजस्व खर्च कर रही है। लेकिन मजदूर वर्ग को यकीन नहीं हो रहा है। दस केन्द्रीय ट्रेड यूनियनों और कई स्वतन्त्र फेडरेशनों ने 26 नवम्बर 2025 को पूरे देश में प्रदर्शनों के जरिए अपना विरोध दर्ज कराया है और संघर्ष को और तेज करने का फैसला किया है।

सरकार को श्रमिक वर्ग को यह बताना चाहिए कि कोविड महामारी के दौरान संसद में बिना किसी चर्चा के ये श्रम संहिताएं क्यों पास की गईं। सरकार ने टेड यूनियनों से सलाह लेने से क्यों परहेज किया और उनके सभी सुझावों को नजरअंदाज क्यों किया ? सरकार श्रमिक वर्ग को, जिसके सबसे अधिक हित इससे जुड़े हुए हैं, अपने साथ लेने में नाकाम रही है। पिछले दस सालों में सरकार का एक भी भारतीय श्रम सम्मेलन न करना उसके तानाशाही और गैर-लोकतान्त्रिक चरित्र को दिखाता है। यह अलग बात है कि पूंजी के मालिकों के साथ तो निश्चित अन्तराल पर बैठक करती रहती है।

श्रम संहिताओं का मुख्य मकसद रोजगार में स्थिरता को खत्म करना है। नवउदारवाद यही मांग करता है। सरकार ने निश्चित अवधि की नौकरी और मजदूरी का ठेकाकरण करने का रास्ता बनाया है। सरकार का यह भी दावा है कि इससे उद्योगों के लिए नियमों के गैर-जरूरी अनुपालन कम हो

जाएंगे। उसका तर्क है कि मौजूदा श्रम कानून बहुत सख्त हैं और नई श्रम संहिताओं से व्यापार करना आसान हो जाएगा। वह यह नहीं बता रही है कि व्यापार करने में यह आसानी श्रमिकों की जिन्दगी दुष्कर बना देगी। यह सच है कि ज्यादातर श्रमिकों की हालत खराब है, वेतन स्थिर है, और मुनाफे, लगातार बढ़ते जा रहे हैं।

श्रम संहिताएं उन कम्पनियों के मालिकों को, जिनमें 300 से कम कामगार हैं, नौकरी पर रखने और निकालने की पूरी आजादी देता है। ऐसे हालात में जहां बेरोजगारों की एक पूरी बड़ी फौज खड़ी हो, कामगारों का शोषण और बढ़ेगा। श्रम संहिताओं से मजदूरों का यूनियन बनाना और भी मुश्किल हो जाएगा। सरकार ने काम को रोक देने के मजदूरों के आखिरी हथियार को कुन्द करने की कोशिश की है। हड़ताल करना लगभग नामुमकिन कर दिया गया है। अनौपचारिक क्षेत्र में काम करने वाले 90 प्रतिशत से ज्यादा ऐसे श्रमिकों को जिनके पास कोई वैध अनुबन्ध, सामाजिक सुरक्षा या यूनियन बनाने का अधिकार नहीं है, पूरी तरह से किनारे कर दिया गया है। सरकार का दावा है कि ये संहिताएं गिग और प्लेटफार्म श्रमिकों को कुछ सामाजिक सुरक्षा देंगीं, लेकिन आंगनवाड़ी और दूसरी स्कीम वर्कर्स की तरह उन्हें साफ तौर पर वर्कर के तौर पर मान्यता ही नहीं दी गई है।

हम आने वाले समय में चारों श्रम संहिताओं पर विस्तार से चर्चा करेंगे। लेकिन अभी इतना कहना काफी है कि ये श्रम संहिताएं पूंजी के सामने नतमस्तक हैं और ये मजदूरों की सुरक्षा के मामलों में राज्य का जिम्मेदारी से पीछे हटना है। ये संहिताएं संविधान के नीति निर्देशक सिद्धान्तों को कमजोर करते हैं, जो राज्य से मांग करते हैं कि वह मजदूरों के लिए काम करने के उचित हालात और सम्मानजनक जीवन सुनिश्चित करे। एआईआईईए इन श्रम संहिताओं को रोकने और मजदूरों की चिंताओं को दूर करने के लिए उनके प्रतिनिधियों के साथ चर्चा करने की मांग करता है। एआईआईईए दूसरी टेड यूनियनों के साथ मिलकर इन श्रम संहिताओं से लड़ने के लिए तैयार है, जो मजदूरों को पूंजी का गुलाम बनाते हैं और उनकी राजनीतिक और आर्थिक आकांक्षाओं की उपेक्षा करते हैं, जो उन्हें भारत के संविधान से मिलती हैं।

AIIEA Protests Notification of Four Labour Codes

Demonstrations held across country on 26 November 2025

The Government on 21 November 2025 notified all four Labour Codes- **Code on Wages (2019)**, **Industrial Relations code (2020)**, **Code on Social Security (2020)** and the **Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code (2020)**- despite serious protests of the central trade unions and independent federations like AIIEA. The AIIEA has called upon insurance employees throughout the country to join the growing chorus of protests against the Labour Codes by holding Gate Meetings and Demonstrations during Lunch Recess on 26th November 2025.

The corporate media and the government have launched a campaign of disinformation on the labour codes. The entire effort is to project these codes as an absolutely worker-friendly legislation from a pro-people government. Strangely, there is no difference between the language used in the government notification and that used in the mainstream media- print and electronic. A large number of the so-called independent media organisations seem to have surrendered their conscience at the altar of government power. They have called these codes as 'historic', 'revolutionary', 'modernising', 'aimed at enhancing workers' welfare', 'free from colonial hangover' and so on. Strangely, no one ever questions why these codes, supposedly so worker-friendly and emancipatory, were not notified for the last five years, even though they were enacted back in 2019/2020! This is particularly surprising, given the government's claim that there is broad consensus among all stakeholders on the issue.

Let's do some deep diving to understand as to why we are opposed to these Labour Codes.

The **Code on Industrial Relations** restricts the definition of 'worker'. Any person who is employed in a supervisory capacity drawing wages in excess of Rs.18,000/- per month or an amount as may be notified by the central government from time to time, is not a worker as defined by this code. This code legalizes fixed-term employment. This means that workers can be thrown out without any notice or compensation after their term. Employers will naturally refuse to renew the contract if the employees engage in union activity. The basic purpose is to minimize the labour costs of the employers and to eliminate trade unions from the workplace. This code will also facilitate the process of 'hire and fire'. This is because the threshold level of the number of workers in an establishment that is required to seek prior approval of the government for layoff, retrenchment, closure etc. has been raised to 'not less than three hundred workers' and this number can be further increased

through a notification by the government. This code will also make registration of trade unions an extremely difficult proposition. It stipulates that no trade union can be registered unless 'at least 10% of the workers or 100 workers, whichever is less, engaged or employed in the industrial establishment or industry with which it is connected' are its members. The IR Code imposes severe restrictions on the democratic rights of the workers to elect the leadership of their choice. On a cursory reading of the code, one gets the impression that any union with a membership exceeding 51% will get automatic recognition. But this is misleading. This is because there would be no secret ballot to ascertain the membership strength of the contesting unions. The government has retained arbitrary powers to decide the procedure for ascertaining the membership strength of the trade unions. The most draconian aspect of the IR Code is that it virtually denies the right to strike, a basic right of the working class. Stringent punishment including huge fine and imprisonment are imposed on workers going on so-called 'illegal strike' and also those who 'instigate' them and support them.

The **Code on Wages** is a clever play on words. The terms 'worker' and 'employee' have been used interchangeably in the Code. This is meant to facilitate misinterpretation and discrimination between worker and employee and allow escape routes for violation. It does not incorporate the basis for fixing minimum wage as recommended by the 15th Indian Labour Conference way back in 1957, reinforced by Supreme Court judgment in the Raptakos and Brett case in 1992, and reiterated again and again in the 44th, 45th and 46th ILC and also recommended by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Labour. As the Code stipulates, the recommendation of Minimum Wage Advisory Boards will not be binding on the government. This code therefore is a cruel joke on the working people who are already groaning under poverty, inequality and unemployment.

The **Code on Social Security** has neither notified any schemes nor earmarked funding for any welfare schemes for the unorganised workers. The unorganized workers are therefore left in the lurch. Under the claim of rationalising the existing social security schemes including EPF and ESI, the Code on Social Security actually laid the foundation to dismantle these time-tested social security schemes. The rate of contribution to the Employees Provident Fund, the only sources of fund, has been reduced from 12% to 10% of wage.

⇒ Continued on page 40

LIC's Press Release on the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill 2025

A feeble attempt at defending the indefensible AIIEA writes to LIC CEO on 19th December 2025

¶ We are surprised to see LIC's Press Release dated 18.12.2025 on the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha (Amendment of Insurance Laws) Bill 2025. Coincidentally, the Press Release has been issued on a day on which almost all the major unions of officers and employees in Banks and public sector insurance industry have gone on a massive protest demonstration against the Bill. In fact, LIC's Press Release appears more like a laboured explanation and a feeble attempt at defending the indefensible. The vocabulary in which the Press Release has been couched sounds more like a propaganda document of the government rather than the hard-chiselled arguments of an 'independent and autonomous' institution. It appears to be a crude attempt to delegitimise the protest of the workforce on this important issue.

We are of the considered opinion that Government has deployed pro-people rhetoric to legitimize a policy that essentially undermines public interest. The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill 2025 has been euphemistically christened as the Sabka Bima Sabki Raksha Bill; it appears more like a clumsy attempt to put on a velvet glove to hide the iron fist rather than any genuine attempt to translate the stated intent into real benefits for the people. This Bill is yet another act of making the interests of the insuring public subservient to the interests of the foreign capital.

The centrepiece of the bill is the decision to raise the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) cap in insurance from 74 per cent to 100 per cent, allowing full foreign ownership of insurance companies operating in India. We have forcefully argued

that FDI hike to 100 per cent will neither benefit the Indian economy nor will it bring any benefit to the insuring public. This will only enable the foreign capital to gain greater access and control over the domestic savings. There is a consensus among the leading economists that foreign capital is a poor substitute to domestic savings for the development of economy. The decision to hike FDI is taken at a time when the net-fdi in this country has hit a historical low and the big Indian corporate houses have been heavily investing abroad. It looks to be a desperate attempt to tide over the crisis of capital outflow and the falling value of the Indian currency.

LIC seems to have naively believed the reasoning of the government that higher FDI would automatically lead to higher insurance penetration. It is common knowledge that life insurance penetration essentially depends on the level of disposable income in the hands of the people; general insurance penetration depends on the size of the asset-owning class in a country. On both the counts India ranks at significantly lower rungs despite the protestations of the government that we are on the fast lane to becoming a 'Vikshit Bharat'. The recent World Inequality Report 2026 has raised serious concerns over the growing inequality in the country where even in terms of the purchasing power parity, the bottom 50% of the population earn no more than Rs.8400 per month. Can the insurance penetration increase without taking steps to increase the purchasing capacity of these bottom 50% of the population?

We simply fail to understand as to how the passage of the Bill will "provide an opportunity to further strengthen our reach,

leverage technology at scale and contribute meaningfully to the national goal of universal insurance coverage", as pointed out in the Press Release. LIC perhaps should know better that when security is delivered through markets, it becomes contingent on the ability to pay. That means, those who cannot pay will be written out. For the vast majority of Indians, especially the 90 per cent working in the informal sector, this would mean exclusion not increased protection, as is being made out. If the real intention were 'Insurance for All', the starting point would have been universal public provision and not FDI enhancement to 100 per cent. The real objective of the Bill seems to be to convert citizens with rights to consumers with choice.

We are pained to see the Press Release because LIC's overall understanding appears to be in complete contradiction to that of its workforce; nay the workforce of the entire country that has stood solidly behind our struggles of over past thirty years in defence of LIC. Today LIC is confronted with humongous challenges. Greater challenges call for greater cohesion, more sincere efforts at synergising the efforts of all stake-holders. Unfortunately, LIC seems to have long forgotten the practice of constructive dialogues on issues relating to the institution and the employees. In this background, the press release has come as the proverbial last straw

The Platinum Jubilee Year 27th General Conference of the AIIEA at Bhubaneswar from 28th December 2025 to 1st January 2026 will certainly discuss these issues and come out with appropriate responses."

AIIEA DEFEATS the LOCKOUT with BRILLIANT TACTICS



Amanulla Khan

The AIIEA has waged and won many a great battle in its glorious history of 75 years. But one struggle stands out. It was the struggle to defeat the partial lock out imposed in six divisions of LIC on 9th January 1974. Unarguably, this was the fiercest battle ever fought. The game of the government and LIC to decimate AIIEA through lock out was defeated with brilliant tactical line supported by the dogged determination of the ordinary employees. This struggle not only enhanced the standing of AIIEA among the comity of trade unions; it also shaped and moulded the character of an entire generation of employees. I am privileged that I had the opportunity of participating in this struggle even though I was a probationer. The role and contribution of probationers from Bangalore in this struggle is well documented in the history of AIIEA. I must say without any hesitation, that it was this struggle that shaped my political beliefs and moulded my character. And this is true of a number of employees of my generation who later became brilliant cadres and leaders of AIIEA. It is important to recall the significance of this struggle

when we are celebrating the Platinum Jubilee of our great organisation and learn lessons in the present difficult times.

BACKGROUND

The early 1970s were the most turbulent period in the history of India. This was a time when the crisis of capitalism hit the Indian economy very hard. Prime Minister Indira Gandhi became the undisputed leader of the country admired and loved by the youth and vast majority of the marginalised sections of the population. She gained this stature after taking some very progressive measures. These measures were abolition of privy purses paid to the royal families, nationalisation of Banks and General Insurance Business and leading India to a great victory in Bangladesh war.

But soon this awe and admiration disappeared with her inability to manage the huge economic crisis. This crisis was the result of the fall in foodgrain production which resulted in massive food shortages and high rate of unemployment. The problem was further compounded with huge increase in oil prices due to the Arab Israel War of 1973 further stoking inflation. It is recorded that substantial

This article with a different title was first published in January 2024 issue to celebrate the golden jubilee of victory over lock out. This battle was the most difficult battle AIIEA ever fought. It is appropriate to remember this struggle when AIIEA is celebrating its Platinum Jubilee. Therefore, the article is again published with some modifications..... This struggle taught employees the importance of democracy and unity of the working class.

sections of the population were desperate for food and there are records to show that in number of places in the country, the ration shops were looted.

The government tried to tackle the problem in the only manner capitalism knows. It decided to attack the wages and other rights of the workers. To tame the growing unrest of the workers, it manipulated to split and weaken the trade union movement. The AIIEA was perhaps the first trade union in the country which foresaw the emerging situation. It sent two clear

warnings to the working class and people of India. After the rigged and a sham of elections in West Bengal in 1972, it warned that Democracy is in danger and it has to be saved. It also warned that the policies of the government will lead to wage freeze and attack on the hard-won rights of the working class.

Unfortunately, a section of the trade union movement not only discarded these warnings but also ridiculed AIIEA. They had a belief that Indira Gandhi and her government represent the national bourgeoisie which is anti-imperialist; an alliance with this section of the bourgeoisie will help bring socialism in India. Therefore, they campaigned that the workers must endure the pains of economic crisis for what they thought to be for a brief period after which socialism can be established in India. It was this naïve thinking and faulty ideological understanding that made them willing partners of the Emergency Regime later on. However, Indira Gandhi through her manipulations was able to disrupt the unity of the working class.

SITUATION IN LIC

It was in this background

that AIIEA and other Unions submitted their Charter demanding upward revision of wages which had fallen due on 1.4.1973 and improvement in other service conditions. The wage negotiations could not make much headway due to the adamant attitude of LIC. The LIC witnessed intense struggle of the employees between November 1973 and early January 1974 to force meaningful negotiations and conclusion of a settlement. The employees led by AIIEA carried out a series of strike actions during this period. Some of those strike actions had the participation of other unions too. Two hours walkout strike was successfully observed on 7th December 1973 and this was followed by another one hour walk out strike on 14th December protesting against suspension of some employees in Mumbai and Bangalore. With the LIC management still remaining adamant, the employees observed another two-hour strike on December 21, 1973 and this was followed by a massive one-day strike on 28th December 1973. The AIIEA also gave a call for work to rule from December 26. The negotiations finally broke down on 1st January 1974. This forced the AIIEA to call

for another two-hour strike on 8th January 1974 which was massively participated by the employees. All these strike actions were very successfully observed and at many places members of the unions which had distanced themselves from the strike actions too participated. The rigidity of the LIC and government had created a situation of total disruption of industrial relations.

PARTIAL LOCK DOWN IMPOSED

Instead of meeting the reasonable demands of the employees, the LIC with the government backing wanted to ruthlessly crush the movement of AIIEA. It placed a number of cadres under suspension, issued thousands of wage cut memos, warned employees of dire consequences if they continue to agitate. But these repressive actions were met with heroic resistance from the employees. The government which had used the weapon of lock out in Indian Airlines to subdue the struggle there, thought to employ it in LIC

This struggle not only enhanced the standing of AIIEA among the comity of trade unions; it also shaped and moulded the character of an entire generation of employees. It informed LIC employees that a just equal and fair society cannot be constructed by aligning with the bourgeoisie. More than fifty years after this great struggle, the LIC employees once again are tasked to defend constitutional values, democracy and unity of the working and toiling masses. They had done so in the past and they will do so now.



too to make the LIC employees movement surrender.

Bangalore which had just emerged successful in the struggle against split of AIIEA, through the alertness of its leadership first got the wind that LIC is upto some mischief and there is a possibility of lock out. It informed the South Zone Insurance Employees' Federation and the AIIEA of its apprehension on the 8th January 1974. Expectedly, LIC declared partial lock out in five Divisions on 9th January 1974.

Delhi, Madras, Bangalore, Patna Divisional Offices and Machines Department of Dharwad were locked out. Later Meerut and entire Divisional Office of Dharwad too were locked out. There was absolutely no confusion in AIIEA as to how to deal with this unprecedented attack. The AIIEA was well prepared. The LIC by partially declaring lock out in Divisional Offices and keeping open the Branch Offices wanted to divide and disrupt the unity of the employees and demoralize the locked out employees. They thought that the demoralized employees would defy the AIIEA and surrender. But their calculations went wrong. The AIIEA called upon all employees in these six divisions to go for a continuous strike. This was a master stroke to unite the employees behind a common cause and defeat all attempts of LIC to create disruption and division. The employees across the country were asked to implement the work to rule program vigorously and independent strike actions followed in different Zones in solidarity with the employees of the six lock out divisions.

It must be noted that it was the solitary act of defiance and courage by AIIEA as all other unions overawed by the situation and the magnitude of attack decided to surrender. Undeterred AIIEA carried on the struggle. It was a magnificent show of conviction and fortitude. Every member of AIIEA became a brilliant soldier. They withstood and fought the massive attacks by LIC and a vicious propaganda war unleashed by the government. The government utilising the entire State machinery, the Press and Radio launched a vicious propaganda to turn public opinion against LIC employees. They termed LIC employees as living in island of prosperity amidst ocean of poverty; how the peons in LIC enjoy better pay than the doctors and so on. In response, AIIEA built solidarities with other sections of the working class and youth organisations. The government finally realised that it had underestimated the courage and resilience of LIC employees and was forced to change the track.

Finally, the Union Labour Minister Shri Raghunath Reddy had to intervene. He met the leaders of AIIEA at Kolkata on 11th January and requested them to come over to Delhi for discussions on 13th January. After several rounds of discussions with the Labour Minister, a tri-partite meeting was held on 17th January and after this, discussions between LIC and AIIEA commenced and continued till 24th January 1974. At around 10 pm on 24th January 1974, a settlement was signed under Industrial Dispute Act. Apart

from the financial benefits, LIC agreed to immediately lift the lock out, pay wages for Sundays and holidays within the lockout and continuous strike period and deduct the wages in six equal instalments for the rest of the period. The LIC also agreed to revoke all orders of suspensions and other punitive measures.

The lockout was lifted on 25th January 1974 and LIC employees entered the offices proudly with their heads held high. In many places the leaders of the AIIEA were asked to open the locked-out gates. Com Saroj Chaudhuri, General Secretary opened the locks of Delhi and was the first to enter the office. While congratulating the employees, he said "One great battle is won and another begins today to retain the benefits secured". Subsequent events proved how prophetic his words were.

LESSONS OF THE STRUGGLE

The biggest and the most significant gain of this struggle was that LIC employees rediscovered themselves. They realised the strength of unity and their own capabilities. They learnt never to submit to the oppression; never to give up fight for a just cause. They understood that surrender and bowing down can never be an option for a trade union. The struggle gave confidence to the LIC employees that battles can be fought and won looking directly into the eyes of the oppressor.

The role played by the probationary employees in Bangalore revealed the character of the organisation. It must be noted that probationers were not asked

to join the continuous strike. But they decided collectively in Bangalore that they cannot stay away from the struggle when senior comrades were fighting the greatest battle of their life. They consciously decided to join the strike with great courage. In recognition of this role, the AIIEA said **“The most notable part was played by the probationers who in the prime of their career did not even know the tradition of the struggles of AIIEA. They remained in the forefront unmindful of the consequences and remained so till the last making their proud place in the struggling history of the AIIEA”.**

The struggle taught employees the importance of democracy and unity of the working class. It informed LIC employees that a just equal and fair society cannot be constructed by aligning with the bourgeoisie. The capitalist exploitation can end only with sustained class-based struggles of the workers. Over fifty years after this great struggle, the LIC employees once again are tasked to defend constitutional values, democracy and unity of the working and toiling masses. They had done so in the past and they will do so now. The fight back against lock out will remain as one of the most brilliant battles fought in the annals of the trade union movement in India. The Platinum Jubilee of AIIEA gives an opportunity to the LIC employees to celebrate and learn from this magnificent struggle.

It is a matter of immense pride and pleasure for all of us that our great and beloved organisation, All India Insurance Employees' Association has stepped into the seventy-fifth year of its vibrant and militant existence. The Platinum Jubilee year Conference of the organisation is slated at the end of the year at Bhubaneswar. Every conference of the AIIEA constitutes an important milestone in its onward journey and a great school of learning for its cadres and leaders.

As an activist of the organisation my maiden participation in the AIIEA Conference was in 1974. It was the Eighth Conference of the AIIEA held at New Delhi from 16th to 20th December. It was held in the wake of a magnificent victory after a very bitterly fought exacting struggle on the issue of wage revision. In the language of Com. Chandrasekhar Bose it was 'the greatest battle ever fought'. As a twenty two year young activist and a first time participant in such all-India Conference, the deliberations and discussions of the 8th Conference was truly electrifying for me. The whole Conference was bubbling with enthusiasm and a sense of fulfillment after having defeated the most serious challenge posed by the policy of wage-freeze pursued by the then Congress government led by Late Smt. Indira Gandhi. When LIC employees under the banner of AIIEA took up that challenge, most ferocious and unprecedented attacks were unleashed by the government. Six divisions were locked out and hundreds of leaders and activists were subjected to harsh punitive measures including suspensions. All



these are now history. But the LIC employees could not be cowed down as AIIEA since 1972 prepared them for such a bitter showdown. AIIEA forewarned that the realisation of Charter of Demands would be a very exacting battle this time in view of the wage-freeze policy of the government. Booklets were brought out, employees were educated and anti-wage freeze conventions were held throughout the country involving other sections of workers and employees and TUs.

I recall the massive anti-wage freeze convention covering the North Eastern Region that took place in Shillong in Meghalaya sometime in 1973. Com. Saroj Choudhuri the then General Secretary of AIIEA inaugurated it. A huge national campaign against the policy of wage-freeze was organised and unleashed. All these steeled the employees in the struggle and when the attacks came, they hit back successfully under the leadership of AIIEA. I vividly remember that in Guwahati Division twelve leaders and leading activists of GDIEA including a women employee were placed under suspension and their entry was barred in the office campus. A reign of terror was unleashed and the Conference room of the

AIIEA AT 75

RANDOM REMINISCENCES OF AN ACTIVIST

SATANJIB DAS

President, AIIPA & Former Vice President, AIIEA

Divisional office was turned into a virtual police station with police officials camping there. But nothing could browbeat the employees. On the following day of the issuance of suspension orders all the employees of the divisional office en masse came out defiantly and took out a huge procession throughout the streets. Later a massive rally was held in the office premise which was joined by other trade unions. Such was the militant mood of the employees.

AIIEA gave a call for continuous strike in locked out divisions and intensification of struggles in other divisions. Ultimately the power of the struggle forced the authoritarian government of Indira Gandhi to come down. A bipartite settlement on wage revision was signed on 24th January, 1974 which provided apart from handsome wage revision, an annual cash bonus

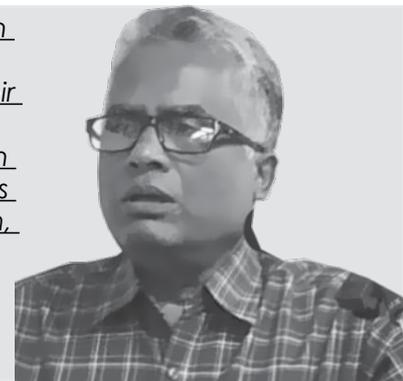
of 15P.C. without any ceiling. All the punitive measures had to be withdrawn. In the backdrop of such an epic battle the 8th Conference of AIIEA took place.

But even at the moment of the great victory worth celebration, the Conference warned against self-complacency. Rather it sounded a note of warning. It declared that one phase of struggle we carried out successfully no doubt, but henceforth another phase of struggle began. The phase of protecting what we realised. Because the policy of the government which was moving in an authoritarian direction won't allow us to take rest. There lies the genius of AIIEA. The Conference stressed on the need of forging solidarity with other sections of the working masses. It heard in pin-drop silence that unique and illuminating two and a half hour long speech of Com.

Saroj Choudhury while moving a resolution on policy holders' servicing. From a class point of view, he analysed the urgent need of focusing on servicing to the policyholders in the office which can go a long way in helping our struggle by forging ties with common policy holders who are mostly working people. That speech was a master piece that still ring in our ears. It galvanised the conference and put the whole issue of policyholders' servicing in a new perspective.

The forewarning and assessment of the AIIEA did not take much time to become a reality. In a span of almost six months since the conference, internal emergency was imposed on the country. All democratic rights and civil liberties were suspended. But AIIEA could visualise this wanton onslaught on democracy three years before. Because the dress-rehearsal of this countrywide authoritarian offensive began in West Bengal, the advanced outpost of the working class and democratic movement, in 1972 when the assembly election of the State was thoroughly rigged and a semi-fascist terror regime was imposed. Even in such a difficult situation AIIEA took up the cudgel for democracy. In an editorial captioned 'Save Democracy' in the March 1972 issue

What a fascinating and awe-inspiring journey it had been for the last seven decades and a half in defence of the public sector insurance industry, for upliftment of the lives and livings of the insurance employees as well as their empowerment and in defence of the interests of working masses and the country as a whole. This odyssey has turned the insurance employees as an advanced contingent of the working class movement of the country. It has created a noble heritage that continually exhorts the employees to dream, dream of a better world, a decent world, a world that will 'give men a chance to work, youth a future and old age a security'. This heritage propels all of us to act as an instrument of social change to realise this great dream and create a heaven in this earth itself.



of the Insurance Worker AIIEA declared, 'We shall fight to the last to hold aloft the banner of democracy and democratic rights'. A long winter of struggle ensued. Indira Gandhi expressed her displeasure at the bipartite settlement in LIC. Soon after the promulgation of emergency her government by an ordinance changed the Bonus Act. and virtually took away the right of the working class to bonus. Thereafter a pernicious piece of legislation called the LIC (Modification of Settlement) Act 1976 was passed in the Parliament to annul the bipartite settlement dt. 24th January, 1974 so far as it relates to bonus of LIC employees. This was something unprecedented. AIIEA combined both organisational and legal struggles to defend the agreement. It was a prolonged legal battle in the Kolkata High Court and later in the Supreme Court the outcome of which ultimately went in favour of the AIIEA. Meantime the democratic people of the country asserted and ended the emergency regime through the general election of 1977. In West Bengal the Left Front Government headed by Com. Jyoti Basu came to power. Tripura also witnessed the ushering of the Left to power. The whole political complexion of the country underwent a positive change.

It is in this backdrop the Silver Jubilee Year Conference of the AIIEA took place in Kolkata in the month of January 1978. The venue was the Sprawling Campus of St. Thomas School, Kidderpore. It was also a historic and memorable conference that was held in the wake of the victory of the democratic forces

throughout the country and the overthrow of the semi-fascist regime in West Bengal. The changed political situation found its reflection in the Conference. The enthusiasm was unbound. Com. Jyoti Basu inaugurated the Conference. His very presence electrified the conference. I still can very well recall his inimitable terse expression in his speech, 'If Congress lives democracy dies, if democracy lives Congress dies'. In the present scenario one has to replace Congress by BJP. Com. B.T. Ranadive, the doyen of the Indian trade union movement also addressed the conference in a sprawling lawn outside the Conference Hall. Com Somnath Chatterjee Bar-at-Law who was looking after our bonus case and already snatched a victory in the Kolkata High Court was also there. It was indeed a star-studded Conference. This is the first Conference of AIIEA where as a delegate I got the opportunity to take part in the discussion on the Working Committee Report. While the major thrust of the conference was to dismantle the authoritarian regime and defence of democracy the Report declared Socialism as the ultimate goal of AIIEA. The message of the conference even after four decades and a half is still relevant though in a completely altered political context.

The highly enriching and rewarding experiences of the above-mentioned two conferences at the prime of my life were reinforced later by the host of AIIEA Conferences including the Golden Jubilee Year Conference held at Chennai in 2001 or Diamond Jubilee Year Conference held

at Delhi in 2010 that I had the opportunity to attend. Each Conference bears testimony to the great democratic culture of AIIEA where contemporary issues are debated thoroughly, challenges of the times are identified, not only challenges to the insurance industry and its employees but to the society as a whole and courses of actions are being chalked out to meet those challenges effectively. Such a culture ensures the collective leadership of AIIEA which is the real strength of the organisation. It percolates at all level of the organisation.

In hindsight, what a fascinating and awe-inspiring journey it had been for the last seven decades and a half in defence of the public sector insurance industry, for upliftment of the lives and livings of the insurance employees as well as their empowerment and in defence of the interests of working masses and the country as a whole. This seven decades and a half long odyssey has turned the insurance employees as an advanced contingent of the working class movement of the country. It has created a noble heritage that continually exhorts the employees to dream, dream of a better world, a decent world, a world that will 'give men a chance to work, youth a future and old age a security'. This heritage propels all of us to act as an instrument of social change to realise this great dream and create a heaven in this earth itself. The Platinum Jubilee Year Conference will certainly carry this heritage forward boldly in face of the multiple and serious challenges ahead.

Some Unforgettable events in the annals of the history of AIIEA

Bhagwan Swaroop Sharma

Former Vice President, AIIEA



Platinum Jubilee Year Conference of AIIEA, Scheduled to be held at Bhubaneswar from 28th December 2025 to 1st January 2026, would certainly provide a unique occasion to impart and instill in the delegates and observes a much needed new orientation and a fundamental understanding of the glorious history of AIIEA. I am sure that the conference would succeed in achieving this.

The future of our movement is cast on the shoulders of the present generation of insurance employees and given the tradition to which all of us have been baptized into, we can say with pride and confidence that we shall continue the march ahead to a greater glory and overcome all the attacks and obstacles. Today, an ideologically oriented trade union with political understanding has become

extremely important to survive and to go forward. We can't shy away from this class politics.

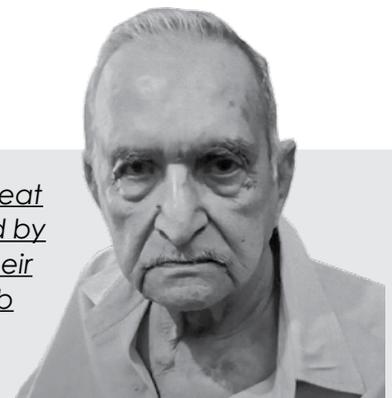
If I were to address the conference, I would prefer to speak on the following unforgettable events to make the audience feel proud of AIIEA and to imbibe in them a sense of confidence, determination with unwavering faith in AIIEA's policies and programmes.

STRUGGLE AGAINST AUTOMATION

The Lucknow conference of AIIEA held in July, 1966 was dominated with heated debate about the future course of struggle against Automation of clerical work in LIC. It was not needed at that time. Several questions were raised and drawn into the vortex of debate; can we fight against the policy of automation? Can it be defeated in the capitalist

society? Can such a fight be fought and won. etc. Com Saroj Chaudhuri, the General Secretary, while summing up the debate, assertively replied that it is true that mere strength of LIC employees was not enough to defeat the policy of Automation and for that greater unity was needed i.e. an enlightened public opinion, mass mobilization of the working class with their active participation in the movement but simultaneously cautioned that all this would be meaningless if LIC employees themselves were not prepared to spearhead the struggle. **"Movement inside LIC will bring movement outside in the country"** This dominant view of AIIEA became the guiding policy in developing the

..... let us not forget that the present generations have inherited a great precious legacy. This should be nurtured, nourished, and cherished by all. Let us not forget that many Comrades in the past gave up their own career for us and suffered a lot for our welfare and for our job prosperity.



struggle against Automation including round the clock vigil of ILACO Bldg where the computer was to be installed. LIC could not face the rising crescendo of the movement & had to abandon the scheme of Automation of clerical work. Needless to add following this decision, LIC recruited thousands of employees which would not have been the case, had AIIEA not fought against Automation then.

AIIEA MADE STATE FINANCE MINISTER TO EAT HUMBLE PIE

A fresh settlement on the issue of wage revision fell due on 01/01/1967 but remained pending for almost two years due to obduracy of the management. AIIEA decided to go on indefinite strike from 05/12/1968; the Govt. referred the charter for adjudication to N.I.T on 28/11/1968. AIIEA launched agitation for settlement outside the NIT. T.A Pai a newly appointed chairman commenced negotiations but the offer made were not satisfactory. Ultimately, Shri R.K. Khadekar State Minister for finance came to Bombay and reeled out certain details of wage-revision with the preface that these terms are not negotiable. Com. Saroj instantly rejected the proposals.

The Minister was feeling emboldened by the demonstration then being held at the gate of Yogakshema chanting slogan 'sign the settlement sign now' by a section of the leadership who subsequently formed a separate union. The leadership of the AIIEA remained undeterred and unmoved by those developments and carried

country wide intensified work to rule. Western Zone (splitters) did not participate in this movement, yet management of LIC & the Govt had to reconvene negotiation & concluded the settlement conceding the demands of AIIEA. Thus the movement led by AIIEA forced the Minister to eat humble pie.

AIIEA refused to be cowed down & Blackmailed on the question of its Recognition

On 16th November 1968, the Ministry of Labour, Government of India called a meeting of Implementation and Evaluation Committee to consider LIC's proposal for derecognizing the AIIEA. In the meeting Mr. M.R. Bhide, the then Chairman of LIC, let it be known that if his offer regarding the settlement of charter and introduction of the computer at Calcutta were accepted he would not press for derecognition of AIIEA. The AIIEA General Secretary contemptuously shot back stating that if the employees recognized the AIIEA as their only representative organization, AIIEA cares two hoots about the official recognition. AIIEA informed that it refused to barter the interest of the employees for the sake of recognition and be blackmailed. The recognition was withdrawn. It needs to be appreciated that recognition was withdrawn not because AIIEA lost the support of the overwhelming number of employees but because it refused to accept the anti-employees proposals.

Soon after 1970 settlement, LIC management at the behest of Shri TA. Pai

sought permission from the Implementation and Evaluation Committee for re-recognition of AIIEA. In that tripartite meeting, the General Secretary of INTUC urged the Labour Minister to ask AIIEA to tender apology for the alleged violations of the Code of Conduct and only if AIIEA do so the matter of re-recognition could be considered. AIIEA retorted by saying that the struggles launched in the past were inseparable part of its glorious history and the question of tendering any apology did not arise. INTUC succeeded in derailing the issue & the proposal was not considered. The grit shown by AIIEA simply enthused the employees as they felt that their interests are in the safe hands of AIIEA.

There are two more issues, amongst many other, which need elaborate mentioning but space constraints prevent me to do so. They are;

1. Defeat of Lockout a shining example in the annals of AIIEA.
2. AIIEA succeeded in preserving the monolithic character of LIC of India by preventing passage of the Bill to split LIC into 5 independent Corporation.

While summing up this writeup, I am of the firm view that let us not forget that the present generations have inherited a great precious legacy. This should be nurtured, nourished, and cherished by all. Let us not forget that many Comrades in the past gave up their own career for us and suffered a lot for our welfare and for our job prosperity.

From 'Microscopic Minority' to Mighty Movement

AIIEA's Landmark Struggles in General Insurance



J.Gurumurthy

Former Vice-President AIIEA

The All India Insurance Employees' Association (AIIEA) stands today as a formidable force within the general insurance sector, a testament to decades of principled struggle and unwavering commitment. As AIIEA prepares to celebrate its Platinum Jubilee Year Conference in Bhubaneswar from December 28, 2025 to January 1, 2026, it is essential to reflect on the landmark movements that forged its strength, especially in general insurance, transforming the organisation from what was once taunted as a 'microscopic minority' to a powerful, recognised organisation.

Rebuilding Strength Post-Nationalisation

Following the

nationalisation of the general insurance industry in 1971, the organization faced an ideological split. AIIEA had to undertake the challenging task of reorganising its units in the newly nationalised Public Sector General Insurance Companies (PSGICs). Despite a smaller initial membership post-split, AIIEA's core ideological conviction, especially amongst cadres in the East and South Zones, proved resilient. This strength allowed AIIEA to organise powerful movements in defence of employee rights and privileges, even as the splitter group advocated a non-struggle stance within the nationalised setup. Over time, AIIEA's principled stands resonated deeply. New recruits and younger employees increasingly preferred AIIEA, joining its ranks in substantial numbers and rapidly transforming the

organization into a force to reckon with.

Fighting Discrimination and Resolving Critical Issues

Facing a hostile environment, where the PSGIC management, often in connivance with the splitter organisation, began discriminating against employees based on union affiliation, AIIEA refused to be sidelined. With management often refusing to discuss issues, AIIEA units had to systematically take recourse to the labour machinery to achieve resolution. Through this persistent legal and organisational approach, AIIEA successfully resolved numerous critical issues, both individual and collective, including:

- * Fixation of salary during wage revisions.
- * Securing scale wages, bonus, and other benefits for Part-



Faced with an ideological split, AIIEA had to undertake the task of reorganising its units in the newly nationalised Public Sector General Insurance Companies. Despite a smaller initial membership post-split, AIIEA with its core ideological conviction, was able to organise powerful movements in defence of employee rights and privileges, even as the splitter group advocated a non-struggle stance within the nationalised setup. Over time, AIIEA's principled stands resonated deeply, transforming the organization into a force to reckon with.

Time Employees (PTEs).

- * Enforcing maternity leave for women employees, which was being arbitrarily denied during their probation period.
- * The crucial fight for regularisation of temporary and contract employees.

A Jewel in the Crown: Regularisation of Over 5,000 Employees

The long-drawn struggle for the regularisation of Part-Time, Temporary, and Contract Employees in PSGICs remains a towering achievement in AIIEA's history. Beginning in 1985, AIIEA launched a series of concerted organisational actions alongside filing industrial disputes. A powerful turning point came on June 3, 1987, with a massive demonstration outside the Regional Office of United India Insurance Co. (Tarapore Towers) in Chennai. The growing support for AIIEA's struggles provoked a swift and vindictive crackdown by the management.

Four leaders Coms R. Santhanam, J. Gurusurthy, P.V. Nandakumar, and S. Ramachandran were arrested and had criminal charges foisted against them. Eleven leaders were suspended from service on June 10, 1987 (9 from UIIC & 2 from NIC) and Twenty-three comrades (including a woman comrade) were charge-sheeted and domestic enquiry proceedings were instituted.

Despite this intense repression, AIIEA maintained the momentum of the agitation. The continuous and heroic struggle bore fruit on May 11, 1988. The settlement achieved two historic objectives:

- * The withdrawal of the

suspension of the 11 comrades with full back wages (11 months) and the closure of all 23 chargesheets.

- * Preceding this, the regularisation of over 5,000 part-time and temporary employees in the PSGICs.

Significantly, the beneficiaries of this mass regularisation were predominantly from SC, ST, and OBC communities. These employees not only secured permanency of their jobs and later retired from service in promoted cadres with full pensionary benefits, marking this victory as a 'jewel in the crown' of AIIEA's struggles.

This success was followed by another notable victory: the regularisation of all 20 workmen of the United India HO Learning Centre, Chennai (engaged through contractors), into permanent service with effect from August 22, 1990, followed by the regularisation of other contract employees like gardeners and security guards. These victorious employees soon became active cadres and leaders within AIIEA units, adding further strength to the organisation.

Another Milestone: Arbitrary TMP Policy Abandoned

AIIEA successfully countered the management's attempt to destabilise the workforce through an arbitrary Transfer and Mobility Policy (TMP). In August 2016, the management attempted to issue over 4,000 transfer orders, including 700 outstation transfers, seemingly as an act of vengeance. Even leading union functionaries, including the Secretary, Standing Committee (GI) of the

AIIEA, were served with transfer orders. The management's stated purpose - to 'break the nexus created by the senior employees who have developed vested interest' - revealed the policy's intent to disrupt trade union activity and cause maximum discomfort.

AIIEA resisted this severe attack heroically, deploying both organisational actions and industrial disputes to stall the maximum number of orders. The unrelenting pressure from AIIEA eventually forced other trade unions (who were initially consenting parties to the TMP) to join the movement. This united front successfully compelled the management to abandon the arbitrary TMP, bringing immense relief to the employees.

Looking Ahead from Bhubaneswar

The Platinum Jubilee Year Conference at Bhubaneswar is a moment to celebrate these glorious historical struggles and, more importantly, to draw vital lessons. The history of AIIEA in general insurance demonstrates that ideological clarity, unyielding organisation, and principled struggle - even when starting as a 'microscopic minority' - can overcome discrimination, vindictiveness, and powerful institutional resistance. Taking up issues proactively and organising movements will pave the path of progress.

These past victories serve as a powerful inspiration, equipping the organisation with the knowledge and energy required to meet the current and future challenges facing the insurance industry and the workforce.



27th PLATINUM JUBILEE YEAR CONFERENCE OF AIEA CALLS FOR SUSTAINED CAMPAIGN AGAINST NEOLIBERAL POLICIES DECIDES TO FIGHT AGAINST FDI HIKE AND PRIVATISATION AND FOR RECRUITMENT ENDORSES AGITATION IN GENERAL INSURANCE FOR WAGE NOTIFICATION

The Platinum Jubilee Year 27th General Conference of All India Insurance Employees' Association held at Bhubaneswar, the capital and largest city of Odissa also known as "Temple City" with a rich and ancient history was a magnificent success in terms of participation, emotions, high standards of debate, confidence to meet the challenges and hopes of a better future for the humankind. The five day Conference held from 28th December 2025 to January 1, 2026 had the participation of 1524 Delegates and Observers from all parts of the country creating yet another historical record with the participation of 368 women comrades and the presence of sizeable number of young comrades particularly recruited in the year 2020 as Delegates and Observers. The conference had the presence of the past leaders of the AIEA who made significant contributions to the development of the movement of insurance employees adding emotional moments.

The conference began on 28th Dec 2025 with the firm resolution to carry on our campaign more vigorously against the onslaught of the neoliberal policies of the Government, protect

our industry from the attack of privatization and to build up a unified movement against the economic as well as communal agenda of the present ruling class at the Centre.

AN IMPRESSIVE BEGINNING

The Conference began in the morning of 28th December 2025 with the hoisting of the red flag of the organisation by Com V. Ramesh amidst thunderous revolutionary slogans reverberating in air. The leaders also released balloons symbolising freedom and liberty and determination to carry forward the fight for social and economic justice. Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIEA greeted the delegates and observers and explained the context in which the conference is being held. Respectful floral tributes were offered at the Martyrs Column.

DELEGATE SESSION

The delegate session commenced thereafter with two revolutionary group songs rendered by the Comrades of the host division. Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIEA presented a comprehensive report on behalf



of the working committee. The 101 page report succinctly analysed every aspect of humanity and the problems faced across the globe including our own country. The chapter on insurance industry dealt with the dangers looming ahead with the public sector insurance industry facing the very existential threat. In the organisation chapter the General Secretary very briefly but clearly narrated the glorious legacy of AIIEA since its inception and some of the recent activities and achievements. Report highlighted the struggle against GST on insurance premium and the historic victory in ultimate removal of 18% GST on individual and health insurance premium. Attack on the working class by trying to implement four labour codes which are detrimental to the interest of the workers also got the mention in the report. Finally, and most importantly the report was opened for discussion with laying down of the important task for our organisation in the “Task Ahead” chapter.

The audited statements of accounts of AIIEA, Insurance Worker and Standing Committee [General Insurance] for the previous three years were placed by Com B.S.Ravi, Treasurer, AIIEA.

The discussion on the report was initiated by Com P P Krishnan, President, SZIEF. He expressed serious concern over the brutality of imperialism and the economic direction of the Indian government. He highlighted the achievement of the Kerala Government in eliminating extreme poverty and the welfare measures to ensure a dignified life to the people and said it is necessary to project a people centric alternative while continuing our struggle against neo-liberalism.

Com Tapan Sen, Former Rajya Sabha Member and General Secretary of CITU intervening in the delegate session, congratulated the AIIEA for the relentless struggle to safeguard the LIC in the public sector even in the hostile situation due to the policies of the ruling class. He lamented the policy of the government in writing off 60 -70 percent of loans borrowed by big corporates. There is increase in unemployment, inflation and inequality in the country, he said. He explained how the policies are made without proper scrutiny and discussion. As part of vigorous pursuance of neo-liberal policies, government is handing over mines, lands, airports, railways to private players in the National Monetisation Pipeline. Apart from Insurance laws amendment, the rural guarantee bill, the nuclear bills are hurriedly passed in the parliament. The government and the affiliated



organisations of the ruling party are diverting the attention of the people from real issues by raking up issues that divide the people, he said. In this scenario the need of the hour is to understand the issues, educate about them, mobilise public opinion and resist these policies through strong movements. With this we can kindle the hope and confidence in the people, he asserted.

The delegate session was adjourned for the next day to enable the conduct of the open session.

A SPECTACULAR PROCESSION

In the afternoon, preceding the Open Session of the conference, an impressive procession was led by the Leadership of AIIEA. There were 27 women comrades in uniform holding high the red flags and the banner of the AIIEA followed by around 3000 comrades assembled from the vast stretches of India. Comrades from various divisional units covering themselves with different coloured dresses, with their divisional banners made the rally livelier and more attractive. People issue centric slogans reverberated the atmosphere with many languages spoken across the country truly displaying the unity in diversity of our country.



The mammoth rally covering 2 kms received wide appreciation from the people who observed such a colourful procession unseen before in the city of Bhubaneswar. The procession culminated at the venue of the conference where the open session was held. The conference venue at the KIIT campus was decorated with hoardings, displaying slogans depicting the messages of the working class.

OPEN SESSION

The open session began with Com V. Ramesh in the Chair. The dais was filled with a host of leaders from across a number of fraternal organisations besides leaders of AIIEA both past and present and representatives of CITU, BEFI, LIC Class I Officers Federation, NFIFWI, AILICEF, Central Government and State Government Employees Unions.

Following a brief presentation of the objective of the Conference by the President, the Chairperson of the Reception Committee Sri Rajesh Mahapatra, Veteran Journalist, former editor of PTI and Editor at Large of Hindustan Times welcomed the gathering with his inspiring address.

Prof. Prabhat Patnaik, Renowned Economist, while inaugurating the conference saluted AIIEA for not only relentlessly advancing but spearheading the struggle against privatisation. He flayed the government for increasing FDI in insurance sector to 100% which is not in the national interest and it facilitate increase in monopolisation in the sector. He said more control of domestic savings to private players means more out-flow of our funds from the country. Already many insurance companies have deserted their Indian partners and lakhs of crores of rupees has been repatriated. The FDI hike is done due to the pressure from international finance capital. There is a systemic economic crisis all over the world and the developed countries are exerting pressure on

the third world countries through dictate as to what they want. He termed neo-liberalism as the encroachment of people's basic rights. These policies are in the line of prioritising speculation over productivity. New labour codes are framed in the name of ease of doing business to favour corporates. Under these codes there is no accountability, production criteria or guarantee of employment creation, he said.

He opined that the Indian economy remained stable despite severe crisis in developed countries because major part of the economy is state owned. The neoliberal economic policies have raised distress of peasantry and the entire working class. By allowing total freedom to foreign capital, our economic sovereignty must not to be compromised. In this scenario, protecting our public sector industries is a prolonged and difficult struggle, but our continued struggle is very essential. He hoped that as a responsible trade union, the All India Insurance Employees' Association will continue its effort despite the difficult and challenging situation.

Com Tapan Sen, General Secretary CITU elaborated how the ruling class is hell-bent upon facilitating the corporate sector by handing over the precious national assets, privatising public sector institutions and enacting laws in ways to favour them at the cost of welfare of the work force who are the real wealth creators and the common people. The FDI hike in insurance is totally unwarranted and the competition for profit maximisation will result in the neglect of poor and marginalised. He gave a call to make the upcoming February 12th general strike called by all the central trade unions a total success to show our opposition to these anti-worker policies.

Leaders of the fraternal organisations, Com Debasish Basu Choudhary, General Secretary BEFI, Com Rajesh Kumar, General Secretary



Rajesh Mahapatra, Chairperson Reception Committee



Prof Prabhat Patnaik

AILICEF, Com S B Yadav, Leader of Central Government Employees, Com Sreekumar, All India State Government Employees Federation, Com B P Singh Chavan, Federation of LIC CI-I Officers' Association, Com Umakanth Behra, Leader of NFIFWI greeted the conference and wished its success.

The Open Session concluded successfully with Com Shreekant Mishra proposing the vote of thanks.

DELEGATE SESSION RESUMES

The delegate session resumed on the second day with continuation of discussion on the report. 74 delegates including 10 women took part in the debate. It was a fascinating debate where not only the issues relating to the insurance employees and their institutions were discussed but also the greater problems humanity is facing. There was total condemnation of imperialism which is engaged in unending wars to capture natural resources and establish its hegemony. The speakers expressed concern over the growing inequalities and the concentration of wealth. They were critical of the attitude of the administration

in LIC and its attempt to attack the hard won trade union rights. The speakers exuded the confidence that despite the difficult situation, the united struggle of the working class can successfully challenge the anti-worker policies. It was amazing to see the fluency and clarity of thought in the young comrades who participated in the debate giving clear indication of a bright future for AIIEA. The intervention by Coms Chandrasekhar Bose, Amanulla Khan and K.Venu Gopal enriched the deliberations.

SUMMING UP BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY

Summing up the debate Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary praised the comrades of Bhubaneswar, Berhampur and Sambalpur working day and night for the success of the conference. This conference is another milestone in the history of AIIEA, he said. Discussion was very rich in identifying issues and showing tremendous unity. He highlighted the issue of attack on the life and livelihoods of people by capitalism, rise of right wing forces across the world and the stand of Indian govt on genocidal war by Israel in Gaza killing

TWO SEMINARS

The Conference organised two seminars on 29th December 2025 on Cultural Diversity and Unity with Prof Rajendra Chenni, Kuvempu University of Karnataka as the speaker and another on the subject Democratic backsliding and role of Media with Shri V. Sridhar, Former Associate Editor of Frontline as speaker. Their deliberations were very rich and educative and were widely appreciated. The salient features of their speeches are reproduced.

PROF RAJENDRA CHENNI

This nation is not made by politicians and elite but by working Class. We, being part of working class have only one singular identity and we should work for the larger interests of Nation. Famous poet Kuvempu said every baby at the time of birth is considered as universal man/women (Vishwamanava). It is the society which confine him/her to narrow identities of religion and caste. We need to transcend such narrow identities. The conference of AIIEA reflects diversity of country and it is a miniature India with those present speaking different languages and practicing different faiths. But in this conference, they have a singular identity, that of a member of AIIEA. Essential attribute of our civilization is coexistence of varied religions and cultures. We must understand that Unity is not Uniformity. Unity has been a defining feature of Indian Civilization. Today Idea of India is sought to be undermined with aggressive nationalism. Gurudev Tagore, the greatest thinker of India was



against narrow definition of nationalism and asked the people to embrace the wider concept of humanity.

Spirituality doesn't mean hating any religion or any culture but respecting the rich diversity. Basavanna in 12th century postulated for establishment of an egalitarian society. Thousands of Men and women took recourse to spirituality under the guidance of Basavanna. Culture propagated by Vachanakaras in Karnataka, hail toiling sections like Cobblers, Menial job workers and sexual workers too. The vachanakaras questioned the authorities including the divine supremacy.

India is a land of many civilizations and many cultures. These diversities are building bridges and not walls. secularism is a gift to India by the working class who through its unity is fighting against the exploitative capitalist system. The Idea of India as emerged during the freedom struggle is under attack today.

over 70000 Palestinians including over 20000 children.

Referring to the FDI increase in insurance sector, Com Mishra said that this move not merely an economic decision but a political and ideological statement of Government. The attempt to handover the savings to foreign capital and privatisation of public sector insurance industry has to be resisted. He was highly critical of the use of religion for political advantage. Our PM says rights are entitled to only those who do their duties to undermine the Constitutional Guarantees. So, our rights are under threat and there is a threat to our constitution itself.

Com Mishra clarified on several issues pertaining to the employees raised in the debate and assured that AIIEA will continue to pursue them with the administration. He deplored the inaction of the government in notifying the agreed wage settlement in the general insurance industry and endorsed the struggle of the Joint Front of Trade Unions in General Insurance. He said it is the duty of every insurance employee to rise up to the occasion to protect not only public sector insurance industry but also protect

economic sovereignty of the country.

With the summing up of the debate, the conference unanimously adopted the report of the Working Committee along with the audited accounts of the organisation.

RESOLUTIONS

The conference unanimously adopted 24 resolutions on wide ranging issues of national interest, which included demanding reversal of neo liberal policies, recruitment in LIC, recognition to AIIEA, collective bargaining right to AIIEA, merger of four PSGI companies, expeditious notification of wage revision and improvements in family pension, NPS for PSGI companies, an end to genocide in Gaza and for a two nation solution, against disinvestment of PSUs, four labour codes, criminalising democratic dissent, the onslaught on education, appointment of private sector candidates to top positions of LIC and PSGI companies, insurance laws amendment bill, growing attack on women, children, Dalit and Adivasi, govt policy on pension and in support of communal harmony.

NEW OFFICE BEARERS:

The conference unanimously elected Com

Diversity and plurality which is the country's strength is undermined in the name of uniformity. We have to strive to continue the legacy of culture as future wars will be on cultural front. We must ponder why poison of hatred is reaching so fast to remote areas also. We all need to get infected by the disease of Love and spread the message of love and brotherhood. We need to rededicate ourselves to erase hatred from the body politic of our Country and prepare ourselves for better society.

V.SRIDHAR

Media in India is widely recognized as the fourth pillar of democracy alongside legislature, executive and judiciary. It's core responsibilities include informing citizens, enabling public debate, ensuring transparency and scrutinising those in power. A functioning democracy depends on a free and responsible media. However, the mainstream media is losing its credibility and has become a mouthpiece of the government.

Despite not being an elected entity the media enjoys a special status because it serves the public interest. Yet unlike the other three pillars media remains largely unaccountable. Some parts of the media have become platforms that enable fascist tendencies while simultaneously serving the neoliberal interests rather than

supporting the rising voices against the power. Democratic backsliding is evident when there is a systematic and escalating attack on freedom of speech leaving little space for dissent. But organisations which operate to organise violence and spreading fear among people are indirectly getting the state support. Legal safeguards are being weakened and judiciary and the police are increasingly influenced or undermined. Coercive and draconian laws are used to silence the opposition. These contributes to the erosion of democracy and unfortunately the media has failed to defend the constitutional values. In such a climate it is the responsibility of every citizen to understand the situation and act responsibly to educate the public to ensure that our democratic values are strengthened.



Dharmaraj Mahapatra (CZ) as President, Com Shreekant Mishra as General Secretary, Com B.S.Ravi as Treasurer and Com BD Naresh Kumar as Assistant Treasurer for the ensuing term.

It also elected Coms P Satish. (SCZ) P P Krishnan (SZ) Dhruvajyoti Ganguli (EZ) Pradip Mukherjee (ECZ) Jitendra Parikh (NZ) Sanjeev Sharma (NCZ) S Y Bhujbal (WZ) Ajit Ketkar (CZ) G Anand (GI) as Vice-Presidents and Coms TVNS Ravindranath (SCZ) M Girija (SZ) Amitav Ghosh (EZ) Trinath Dora (ECZ) Naveen Chand (NZ) Rajiv Nigam (NCZ) Harshad Popat (WZ) Sanjay Jha (GI) as Joint Secretaries. The conference also elected a Working Committee comprising of 158 Members.

DECISIONS:

1. Endorse one day strike in General Insurance on 9th January 2026 demanding immediate notification of wage revision. Lunch hour demonstration at all centres in LIC in support.
2. To continue efforts to defend LIC and PSGI through sustained campaign and public outreach.
3. All India Workshop for young comrades at Hyderabad for developing future leadership of the organisation.
4. Observe the Platinum Jubilee on 1st July 2026 with appropriate programs. A centralised program to release a book on the major struggles of AIEA.

Intervention in the debate by the Leaders



Com. CHANDRASEKHAR BOSE

I am very happy that I am able to come to the conference of the AIEA. I have been hospitalized for 10 days. After discharge, I could come over here. I was in the day-to-day activities of the AIEA, many who worked with me are not in this world today.

When we are meeting here, we have to understand that we are in a very difficult position. Because Life Insurance Corporation has changed. Now, it has become a company. The functional autonomy of LIC is taken over by the Government.

Our fight for removal of GST and on other demands, is being supported by many of the political parties in the parliament as well outside. Bigger struggles are in the offing. Are we ready to face them. We have to prepare ourselves to take up these tasks. I was present on the day foundation of AIEA was laid

and I am happy to note that the small plant which was planted there in 1951 in Bombay has become a big banyan tree now. Through sustained struggles we must force the government to change direction of its policies.

Com. K. VENU GOPAL

Very happy to note that Bhubaneswar, a young division under ECZ which was formed 17 years ago has taken a huge responsibility of hosting 27th Conference of AIEA in a befitting manner.

Com. Saroj Chudhuri, Com. Sunil Moitra and Com. Chandrasekhar Bose, trio leaders of AIEA were role model leaders for my generation. Com.NMS was a towering leader who brought glory to the organization through his exceptional efforts. Com.RP Manchanda through his sacrifices, untiring efforts endeared himself to the rank and file across the country. There are countless leaders and cadres whose unstinted efforts have enlivened the spirits of AIEA.

Our Assam comrades stood firm against secessionists. The houses of our comrades were burnt, murder attempts were made. Still, our comrades fought against secession. In Punjab, our comrades fought against extremists. In Gujarat, our comrades fought against those who opposed reservation for SC/ST Sections. Hence, we



5. To have an Anthem for AIIEA, website, Youtube channel and a new Pledge.
6. Secretariat is authorised to decide organisational actions on recruitment, attitude of LIC management and Four Labour Code in consultation with other Unions.
7. To organise cultural events showcasing the beauty of India's rich syncretic culture.

INSURANCE WORKER

The Conference requested the continuation of services of Com. Amanulla Khan as Editor and Com N.K.Vedaraja as Publisher and Com R.Padmanabha as Manager of the Insurance Worker. The Conference appreciated the

tremendous work being done by the Team Insurance Worker and thanked Com Ramu of Kriya Prakashana for his contribution not only to the Insurance Worker but also in designing the backdrops of the Conference.

EXPRESSION OF GRATITUDE:

Coms V.Ramesh, President, Com R.C.Sharma, Vice-President, Com H.I.Bhat, Joint Secretary and Com K.S.Rajasekhar, Asst. Treasurer of AIIEA relinquished their posts. These comrades made great contribution to the movement of insurance employees led by AIIEA. In an emotional manner, the conference expressed its gratitude and recorded their tireless and selfless work for the cause of the

need to carry on the campaign & expose the people who are causing disintegration of our country. We must understand that AIIEA was built due to the cumulative selfless work of thousands of comrades across the country.

In the AIIEA conference held at Cuttack in 1990, it was decided to organize women in a big number. We could see almost 400 women Delegates and Observers attending this conference who are holding important positions at various levels of the organization. It is a good augury that more and more young comrades are coming forward to carry the mantle of the organization.

The Government is intentionally delaying clearance for wage revisions for NABARD, BSNL & PSGI Companies. We have to be prepared for serious agitation on the issue of Recruitment. Organization is a continuous movement and together we need to protect and advance this movement.

Com. AMANULLA KHAN

AIIEA gave us direction and purpose for life and taught us virtues of camaraderie. It gave us courage to stand up for truth and justice. The AIIEA believes that entire Universe rests on foundations of Love. The 75 Years of the fascinating journey of AIIEA is a story of courage, commitment, resilience, resistance, abiding faith in unity and the power of a dream. A dream which was so poetically painted in thousand rainbows by Com Saroj Choudhuri – a society where everyone is free from want and where people live in peace, harmony and dignity. Today our rulers say that we have no right to dream and we have to accept the inevitability of living in an exploitative society. We reject this and continue to dream and make efforts for the realisation of our dreams. AIIEA is great not just because of its leaders but by the faith and loyalty of its members who defended its ideals in Jammu & Kashmir, Assam and Gujarat when the unity of the country and working class was under threat.

Nationalization of insurance business was a unique experience, which has no parallels across the world and this experiment greatly succeeded. There is today an existential threat to the public sector and the trade union movement and we must develop our strategies and tactics to successfully overcome this threat.

The Capitalists are today organized and have become politically influential, while the working-class movement has become fragmented and precarious. Therefore, the government is implementing policies that favour the ruling classes. Such a situation is a threat to democracy and the very stability of the society. There is a propaganda that socialism is a dead concept. But we assert that Socialism, as an idea of an egalitarian and just society, can never die. Its values will continue to inspire struggles for justice and equality.

We have to wage relentless campaign not just on our issues but the broader issues of the society. We have to work for reclaiming a space for the Left in the Indian Parliament. We have to campaign on people's issues and build broader unity to defeat the neoliberal and communal agenda and educate the people about the beauty and virtues of our great syncretic culture.

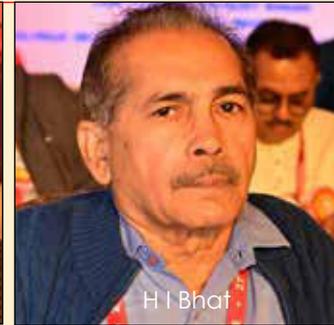




V. Ramesh



R.C. Sharma



H I Bhat



K.S. Rajasekhar

insurance employees. The Conference was confident of getting their continued guidance to the AIIEA.

FELICITATION TO FORMER LEADERS OF AIIEA

The Conference had the inspiring presence of Com Chandrasekhar Bose, the 104 year old living legend and founder member of the AIIEA along with 20 Former Office-Bearers and Secretariat Members of the AIIEA. They enriched the conference with their great experience of struggles and achievements and set an example for the present generation of commitment to a cause. The conference expressed deep gratitude for their contributions and the hall witnessed unforgettable moments of emotions when they were felicitated. It was a moment to cherish and will remain in the memory for a very long time.

WELL DONE COMRADES OF BHUBANESWAR

The Bhubaneswar Divisional Unit commands nearly 100% of the employees but has only around 250 members in 10 Branch offices and Divisional Office. They made tremendous efforts for months together to make the conference a great success. They were helped by the other units of AIIEA in Odisha. The bubbling enthusiasm and the pride in organising the AIIEA conference was clearly seen on the faces of every volunteer. It was a splendid organisation.

They also organised programs every evening of the days of the conference to showcase the rich culture of Odisha and the beauty of diversity of India's culture. The Conference thanked the comrades of Bhubaneswar, Odisha and East Central Zone for making the conference a great success. This appreciation was evident with the loudest applause for Com Ramakant Dash when he took the mike to participate in the debate. The manner in which this conference was organised by the hosts made AIIEA proud.

The Conference came to a successful close with the presidential comments by Com V. Ramesh. The 27th General Conference was a magnificent success. The deliberations set new standards of new heights, reflecting a s t o u n d i n g unanimity and decisions emerging thereafter, renewed confidence with conviction among all the participants. At the end of the conference all the comrades returned rejuvenated, with a clear-cut directional objective of AIIEA to be carried on till the next conference due three years hence.



Shri Ramakanta Dash, Convenor, Reception Committee

(Report by: H K Narsimhamurthy, Bangalore-II)



Former Secretariat Members with President, General Secretary and Treasurer

Standing :From Left :Coms A.G.Dokhpande K.Swaminathan, Ashok Tewari, Jayanto Mukherjee, J.Gurumurthy Shreekant Mishra, P.Baghchi, KVVSN Raju, PV Nanda Kumar, M.Kunhikrishnan, B.S.Ravi,
Sitting: VVR Shastry, RN Patne, VS Nalvade, N.Chakraborty, SR Urdwareshe, K.Venu Gopal, V Ramesh, Amanulla Khan, K.Natarajan, RD Dharnipathy, VD Somasundaram, Anil Bhatnagar

असमानता और लोकतंत्र

रामजी तिवारी

वी.डी.आई.इ.ए. (वाराणसी)



एआईआईईए के कानपुर अधिवेशन (2007)में प्रसिद्ध विचारक पी साईनाथ ने लोकतंत्र में बढ़ती हुई असमानता को लेकर चिंता व्यक्त की थी.उनका कहना था कि कोई भी व्यवस्था एक सीमा तक ही किसी विसंगति को झेल सकती है. तत्पश्चात उस व्यवस्था के बिखरने का खतरा उत्पन्न हो जाता है. मसलन दुनिया के अर्थशास्त्रियों ने इस बात का अध्ययन किया कि कोई भी व्यवस्था आखिर किस स्तर की असमानता को सहन कर सकती है. तो वे इस निष्कर्ष पर पहुंचे कि सबसे गरीब और सबसे धनी व्यक्तियों की संपत्ति भागीदारी में 1=1000 के अनुपात को हमारी लोकतांत्रिक व्यवस्था झेल सकती है. फिर उन्होंने इस दौर का मूल्यांकन किया और पाया कि इस समय की दुनिया में सबसे गरीब और सबसे धनी व्यक्तियों की संपत्ति भागीदारी का अनुपात 1= 10000 से अधिक का हो गया है. एशिया और अफ्रीका में यह अंतर और अधिक है. मसलन भारत में असमानता का यह अनुपात 1=18000 तक पहुंच गया है. साईनाथ का कहना था कि यदि हम आधुनिक लोकतंत्र को बचाए रखना चाहते हैं तो हमें असमानता की इस खाई को कम करना होगा. अन्यथा हमारी यह व्यवस्था छिन्न- भिन्न हो जायेगी. संभव है कि उसका स्थान कोई अधिनायकवादी व्यवस्था ले ले.

अफ़सोस कि लगभग दो दशक बाद का परिदृश्य पी साईनाथ की चिंता को सही साबित करता हुआ दिखाई दे रहा है. असमानता की खाई और चौड़ी होती गयी है. जिसके परिणामस्वरूप लोकतंत्र में आम आदमी की आवाज

लगातार कमजोर होती जा रही है. दूसरे शब्दों में कहा जाय तो तंत्र ने लोक को एक तरह से अपनी गिरफ्त में ले लिया है. दरअसल पिछले सप्ताह दुनिया के मानिंद अर्थशास्त्री थामस पिकेटी की टीम ने बढ़ती हुई असमानता को लेकर एक अध्ययन प्रकाशित किया है. जिसका सारांश यह है कि दुनिया इस समय पिछले किसी भी समय से अधिक असमान हो गयी है. मसलन शीर्ष के एक प्रतिशत लोगों के पास दुनिया की संपत्ति का 37 प्रतिशत हिस्सा है. और शीर्ष के दस प्रतिशत लोगों के पास दुनिया की 75 प्रतिशत संपत्ति है. भारत में शीर्ष के एक प्रतिशत धनी व्यक्तियों के पास देश की 40 प्रतिशत संपत्ति एकत्रित है. और शीर्ष के 10 प्रतिशत लोगों ने देश की लगभग 65 प्रतिशत संपत्ति पर कब्जा कर रखा है.

दुनिया के लोगों के बीच आय को लेकर जो अध्ययन हुआ है, वह भी लगभग यही कहानी कहता है. उसके अनुसार 1990 के बाद से दुनिया के अरबपति लोगों की आय में, नीचे के पचास प्रतिशत लोगों की आय के मुकाबले दोगुना का इजाफा हुआ है. और इसका दूसरा आंकड़ा यह बताता है कि ग्लोबल साउथ ने प्रति वर्ष लगभग एक प्रतिशत की दर से ग्लोबल नार्थ को संपत्ति का हस्तांतरण किया है. यानि कि दुनिया की संपत्ति का सबसे कमजोर देशों की तरफ से, सबसे धनी देशों की ओर लगातार प्रवाह हो रहा है.

Recently, a team led by the renowned economist Thomas Piketty published a study on rising inequality. The summary of this study is that the world is now more unequal than at any other time in history. As inequality increases in the world, the space for democracy is also shrinking. Sociologists have already pointed out that every system has a limit to the level of disparity it can tolerate. And now economists are saying that our society has long since crossed a dangerously high threshold. This means that we are receiving signals from both sides that this model of development and progress in the world is unsuitable. It not only increases inequality but is also, in a way, an enemy of democracy.



अर्थात् गरीब और गरीब होते जा रहे हैं, जबकि धनी और अधिक धनी. और यह प्रक्रिया उदारीकरण के बाद से लगातार चलती जा रही है. इस रिपोर्ट में जलवायु परिवर्तन का आंकड़ा भी महत्वपूर्ण है, जिसमें कहा गया है कि शीर्ष के दस प्रतिशत लोगों द्वारा 77 प्रतिशत कार्बन का उत्सर्जन किया जाता है. जबकि नीचे के 50 प्रतिशत लोगों के द्वारा सिर्फ 3 प्रतिशत कार्बन उत्सर्जित किया जाता है.

इस रिपोर्ट को यदि हम पी साईनाथ की चिंता से जोड़कर देखते हैं तो उसकी गंभीरता का पता चलता है. जैसे-जैसे दुनिया में असमानता बढ़ रही है, वैसे-वैसे दुनिया में लोकतंत्र के लिए जगह भी कम होती जा रही है. हालांकि ऊपर से देखने पर आपको दुनिया का लगभग हर एक देश लोकतान्त्रिक दिखाई देता है. मसलन उसके संविधान में लोकतंत्र की बात कही गयी होती है. उसके नेतृत्व द्वारा लोकतंत्र के प्रति निष्ठा व्यक्त की जाती है. वहां कमोबेश लोकतान्त्रिक संस्थाओं का ढांचा भी दिखाई देता है. न्यायपालिका और प्रेस की स्वतंत्रता का गुणगान भी किया जाता है. यानि कि सिद्धांत रूप में लोकतंत्र के लिए जरूरी हर एक चीज का पता मिलता है. लेकिन व्यवहार में स्थिति लगातार खराब होती हुई दिखाई देती है. बहुत दूर नहीं, अपने पड़ोसी देशों में लोकतंत्र की स्थिति को देख लीजिये, हमको यह अंदाजा लग जाएगा कि सिद्धांत और व्यवहार में कितना अन्तर आ गया है. और फिर इस कसौटी पर हम अपने देश को भी कस सकते हैं. जिसमें न्यायपालिका, प्रेस, चुनाव आयोग, लोकपाल, सतर्कता आयोग, सूचना आयोग, सीबीआई, ईडी, और सीएजी जैसी संस्थाओं के कार्य-व्यवहार को देखा जा सकता है.

दुर्भाग्य से यह कहानी सिर्फ दक्षिण एशिया या तीसरी दुनिया के देशों की नहीं है. अपने आपको सभ्य और आधुनिक कहने वाले यूरोप और अमेरिका में भी कमोबेश लोकतंत्र इसी तरह से व्यवहार करता हुआ दिखाई दे रहा है. बेशक कि इनमें कुछ एक देशों में नियमित चुनाव हो रहे हैं. वहां सत्ताएं बदल भी रही हैं. लेकिन कुल मिलाकर उन देशों की नीतियों में कोई खास परिवर्तन नहीं होता हुआ नहीं दिखाई दे रहा है. अब यदि अमेरिका में डोनाल्ड ट्रम्प आकर यह घोषणा कर रहे हैं कि

हम तीसरी दुनिया को दी जाने वाली सहायता में कटौती कर रहे हैं. याकि तीसरी दुनिया के देशों पर अधिक कर लगाने जा रहे हैं तो अमेरिकी नागरिक इस पर खुश हो रहे हैं. पर्यावरण संबंधी उनके प्रतिगामी निर्णयों का भी उनके देश में समर्थन मिल रहा है. उनके दबाव में यूरोप के लगभग सभी देश दिखाई देते हैं. वहीं दूसरी तरफ चीन, रूस और अरब देशों में लोकतंत्र की स्थिति कैसी है, यह किसी से छिपी हुई बात नहीं है.

अर्थात् असमानता का सीधा सम्बन्ध लोकतंत्र के व्यवहार में दिखाई दे रहा है. अब लोकतंत्र उदार होने के बजाय अधिनायकवादी व्यवहार की तरफ उन्मुख होने लगा है. यहाँ तक कि कुछ एक देशों में उपजने वाले असंतोष के बाद जो सरकारें सत्ता में आ रही हैं, वे भी सेना की मदद से कट्टरता की तरफ अधिक झुकती हुई दिखाई देती हैं. जाहिर है यह सब निर्वात में नहीं हो रहा है. यह पूँजीवाद की मूल विशेषता है, जिसमें शोषण के द्वारा अधिकाधिक संपत्ति पैदा की जाती है. और उसको बचाने के लिए दमन का सहारा लिया जाता है. यानि असमानता और दमन दोनों एक दूसरे के पूरक हो जाते हैं.

ऐसे समय में, जबकि घड़ी की सुइयां विपरीत दिशा में जाती हुई दिखाई देती हैं, रिपोर्ट में प्रस्तुत की गयी कुछ सलाहों पर भी ध्यान देना उचित लगता है. हालांकि इस दौर की सरकारों से यह उम्मीद करना बेमानी लगता है कि वे इन सुझावों पर ध्यान देंगी. फिर भी हमें यह जरूर जानना चाहिए कि अधिक न्यायपूर्ण व्यवस्था के लिए आखिरकार कौन से सुझाव प्रस्तुत किये गये हैं.

तो रिपोर्ट का पहला सुझाव प्रगतिशील कर प्रणाली की बात करता है. अर्थात् जो लोग अधिक अर्जित कर रहे हैं, उन्हें अधिक टैक्स के दायरे में रखा जाय.

दूसरा सुझाव कहता है कि सार्वजनिक खर्च को बढ़ाया जाय, जिसमें उच्चस्तरीय शिक्षा, स्वास्थ्य, बच्चों पर ध्यान और उनके समेकित विकास पर फोकस हो. और यह जिम्मेदारी राज्य की हो.

तीसरा सुझाव कहता है कि सरकारों को पुनर्वितरण का कार्यक्रम तेजी से चलाना चाहिए. इसमें जनता के हाथ में नकद पैसा देना, पेंशन देना और बेरोजगारी भत्ते देना जैसा कार्यक्रम

शामिल है.

चौथे सुझाव में लैंगिक समानता पर जोर देने की बात कही गयी है. क्योंकि देखने में यह आता है कि इस पूरे भेदभाव की सबसे अधिक मार स्त्रियों को ही झेलनी होती है.

पांचवा सुझाव पर्यावरण पॉलिसी को लेकर दिया गया है, जिसमें विकसित देशों के द्वारा विकाशशील देशों को आर्थिक सहायता देने की बात कही गयी है, जिससे कि उनका विकास भी हो सके. और पर्यावरण को नुकसान भी न हो.

और छठवां सुझाव कहता है कि ऐसे अंतरराष्ट्रीय वित्त सुधार किए जाने चाहिए, जो विकसित देशों की तरफ झुके हुए पलड़े को थोड़ा बैलेंस कर सकें. और इस दौरान विकासशील देशों को सहायता मिलती रहनी चाहिए.

जब हम इन सुझावों को दुनिया के देशों की नीतियों के परिप्रेक्ष्य में देखते हैं तो एक तरह की निराशा ही हाथ लगती है. अर्थशास्त्री कहते हैं कि असमानता को दूर करने के लिए अमीर लोगों को त्याग करना होगा. जबकि दुनिया के नीतिनियंता ऐसी दिशा में आगे बढ़ रहे हैं, जो धनाढ्य लोगों के हितों का अधिक ख्याल रखती हो. यह आश्चर्यजनक ही तो है कि जिस कोरोना समय में देश और दुनिया का सामान्य आदमी रोजी-रोजगार के लिए कराह रहा था, उसी कोरोना समय में दुनिया भर के अरबपति और अधिक धनी होते चले गए.

वापस पी साईनाथ की चिंताओं की तरफ लौटते हैं. किसी भी व्यवस्था की एक सीमा होती है कि वह किस स्तर की भिन्नता को सहन कर सकती है. समाजशास्त्रियों ने इसे बता दिया है. और अब अर्थशास्त्री कह रहे हैं कि हमारा समाज खतरनाक स्तर की सीमा रेखा को बहुत पहले ही पार कर गया है. यानि दोनों तरफ से हमें यह संकेत मिल रहे हैं कि दुनिया में विकास और प्रगति का यह माडल उपयुक्त नहीं है. वह न सिर्फ असमानता को बढ़ाने वाला है. वरन एक तरह से लोकतंत्र का दुश्मन भी है.

ऐसे में दुनिया के नीति नियंताओं को यह तय करना है कि वे हमारे समाज को किस दिशा में ले जाना चाहते हैं. जाहिर है दुनिया के अवाम की भी यह जिम्मेदारी है कि वह अपने रहनुमाओं को सही रास्ता दिखाए. ●

STOP THE ALMS

Prof. Prabhat Patnaik

(Courtesy: Telegraph 03.12.25)



Cartoon courtesy:
Satish Acharya, facebook

Almost all analysts of the Bihar election results are agreed that the transfer of ten thousand rupees each to lakhs of women on the eve of the elections, ostensibly to promote entrepreneurship, was an important factor behind the landslide victory of the National Democratic Alliance. This transfer has been rightly called a 'bribe' that was given even after the Model Code of Conduct had come into effect; and the Election Commission of India has been justifiably criticised for allowing it.

Given the distress in much of rural India, one cannot cavil at any such transfer from the government to the people; but it is indicative of the sorry pass to which the country has come today. In the 1954 Raj Kapoor film, *Boot Polish*, the incomparable lyricist, Shailendra, had put the following words in the mouths of destitute children in a song: "Bheekh mein jo moti mile toh bhi hum na lenge (we would not take even pearls as alms)". These words were by no means incongruous in 1954, for the same children in the same song talked of becoming citizens of a country where there would be a crown on every head, no hungry masses and no prevalence of deprivation. The betrayal of this promise of

freedom is so palpable today that people can ill-afford the dignity of citizenship: they are willing to exchange their votes, which are the insignia of citizenship, just for a few thousand rupees. Franchise, which should be judiciously exercised, keeping in mind the best interests of the country, is instead exercised in gratitude for some personal benefit. On the other side, the ruling elite, having enriched itself at the expense of the people, is willing to purchase their votes to perpetuate this arrangement.

The Opposition, which has objected to the distribution of largesse after the MCC came into effect, does not, alas, flinch at the fact of this distribution of largesse. The issue goes beyond the timing of the distribution of largesse; it goes even beyond morality, whether a government should or should not purchase votes by distributing largesse. These, no doubt, are important; but even more important is the fact that the material conditions of life of the people are so abysmal as to make this purchase of votes possible. These conditions convert the proud citizens of a country that had earned its freedom after years of anti-colonial

More important is the fact that the material conditions of life of the people are so abysmal as to make the purchase of votes by distributing largesse during elections possible. Authentic democracy requires transcending this situation that converts the proud citizens of a country that had earned its freedom after years of anti-colonial struggle into mere mendicants, and that can be achieved with the institution of a set of guaranteed fundamental economic rights, on a par with the civil and political rights we already have under our path-breaking document, our Constitution, so that a minimum material life is assured to every citizen by the sheer fact of being a citizen. At least five economic rights are urgently required. These rights can be easily financed; they would usher in a welfare state that would make democracy meaningful.

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struggle into mere mendicants.

Authentic democracy requires transcending this situation, and that can be achieved with the institution of a set of constitutionally-guaranteed fundamental economic rights, on a par with the civil and political rights we already have, so that a minimum material life is assured to every citizen by the sheer fact of her being a citizen.

We are justifiably proud of our Constitution, which, in turn, is based on the 1931 Karachi Congress Resolution. The fact that France, the country with the most outstanding bourgeois revolution in history, introduced universal adult franchise in an election only in 1945, while India had envisioned it in 1931 and introduced it in 1952, a mere seven years after France, is a remarkable achievement. Likewise, measures like separation of religion from the State, equality before law, and a set of fundamental rights for every citizen marked a profound advance in a country with millennia of institutionalized inequality embodied in the caste system. The one gap that remains, however, in this path-breaking document upon which modern India is founded, is the absence of a set of fundamental economic rights. Such rights would have breathed life into our democracy and placed India ahead of most other

countries in this respect.

True, the mere institution of such rights is no guarantee that they would be realized. The executive today is riding roughshod over the existing fundamental rights of citizens; and the judiciary is too intimidated to defend these rights consistently. Even the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which confers a right of sorts (a quasi-right) on rural households, is being violated with impunity. What, it may be asked, would prevent a similar violation of fundamental economic rights even if they are legally enacted?

There is, however, a basic difference between rights in the economic domain and rights in other domains. Violations of the former would typically occur *en masse* and not just in individual instances; they would therefore constitute grotesque instances of rights abuse. Political formations that feel compelled to give 'freebies' at present for winning elections, would be chary of such grotesque violations of fundamental economic rights.

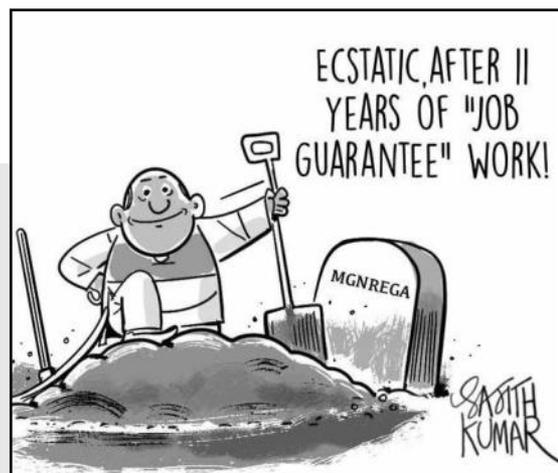
For that reason, there would be massive opposition to the institution of fundamental

economic rights, even of quasi-rights enacted not into the Constitution but as laws, as in the case of the MGNREGS. But this is precisely why those concerned about the current erosion of democracy in the country, and abhorring the corruption involved in doling out 'freebies' for votes, should be pressing for such rights or quasi-rights, instead of engaging in a competitive race for offering larger 'freebies'.

At least five economic rights are urgently required: a universal right to food, through a generalisation to the entire population of the scheme operated for the below-poverty-line population before the pandemic; a universal right to employment (failing which a person must be paid a full wage); a right to free quality healthcare through a National Health Service; a right to free quality education at least up to the higher secondary level; and a right to a non-contributory living pension and disability benefit for those not already enjoying them. These rights can be easily financed; they would usher in a welfare state that would make democracy meaningful.

Cartoon courtesy:
Sajith Kumar,
Deccan Herald

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, which conferred a right of sorts (a quasi-right) on rural households, but was being violated with impunity (as Prof. Prabhat Patnaik puts in this article) is now virtually dismantled, with the President of India granting assent to the Vikasit Bharat Guarantee for Rojgar and Ajeevika (Gramin) Bill, 2025 on Dec. 21, 2025, despite the warning of leading global academics that such a dismantling would be a historic error.



15th Triennial Conference of EZGIEA

The 15th Triennial Conference of Eastern Zone General Insurance Employees' Association was held at Cuttack on 22nd & 23rd November 2025.

The Open Session commenced after hoisting the AIIEA Flag by EZGIEA President Com. Satyanaryan Prasad, then paying the tributes to Martyrs' Column by the leadership of Standing Committee, EZGIEA, Pensioners' Association and the dignitaries who were invited in the Open Session. The Conference was inaugurated by Com. G. Anand, Vice President of AIIEA. He explained the present political scenario and its impact on our industry. Com. Sanjay Jha, Secretary Standing Committee (G.I.), in his special address focussed on the protection of economic sovereignty of the country and our constitutional rights. Com. Partha Ghosal, General Secretary, EZGIEA welcomed the delegates and observers of the Conference and the Reception Committee felicitated the leadership and the guests.

The Guests who spoke in the Open Session were Com. Dushmantha Das, Ex-President OSGIEA, Com. Dr. Santosh Mohapatra, President CDIEA, Com. Managobinda Barik, Jt. Secy. AIIPA, Com. Abhay Ku Das, Jt. Convener Cuttack City Coordination Committee, Com. Rabindranath Dhal from Central Govt.

The delegate session started at S.N. Sircar Memorial Hall of AIIEA Union Office. Presidium was formed comprising of Com. S.N. Prasad, Com. S.R. Dev and Com. Manas Pattanaik.

Com. Partha Ghosal, General Secretary of EZGIEA, placed the report of the Working Committee and 30 delegates out of 87 delegates & observers

participated and enriched the report. Com. G. Anand and Com. Sanjay Jha addressed the delegate session, informing the present position of the Wage Revision and situation of PSGI Companies.

Senior Leaders Com. K.C. Behra, Com. A.B. Kumar, Com. Surajit Das and Com. Sunil Kumar also addressed the delegate session. Everyone expressed their concern over the pending Wage Revision and danger after the introduction of Insurance Law Amendment Bill & Labour Code bill.

While summing up Com. Partha Ghosal, General Secretary stressed the need for a stronger AIIEA and unity amongst our members. He emphasised to join in the broader movements to save our industry as a public sector. General Secretary gave thanks to the OSGIEA & Pensioners' Association members for their tireless efforts to success this Triennial Conference of EZGIEA, in a magnificent manner. The Conference has decided to celebrate the 75th year of AIIEA in manifold throughout the Eastern Zone. Secondly, to intensify the campaign programme in various forms demanding the merger of 4

PSGI Companies and withdrawal of Insurance Laws Amendment bill 2025. Thirdly, effort should be made to enrol the maximum number of membership under the fold of AIIEA in upcoming check off exercise. Lastly, to participate in the broader working class movement to protect Indian Constitution and interest of marginalised people of the country.

Proposed 14 resolutions were passed unanimously. The Draft Report of the outgoing Working Committee and Audited Accounts for the years 2022, 2023 & 2024 were accepted by the Conference after summing up the debate. The quarries regarding accounts were replied accordingly.

59 members including 24 office bearers were elected as Working Committee members by the conference. The Conference unanimously elected Com. Satyanaryan Prasad, Com. Partha Ghosal and Com. Chandan Debnath as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively.

The Conference concluded with the vote of thanks given by Com. Debasish Nayak, General Secretary of OSGIEA.



8th Conference of Women Coordination Committee of CZIEA

The 8th conference of the Women Coordination Committee of Central Zone Insurance Employees' Association was organised by JDIEU in Jabalpur. Around 200 comrades representing the eight divisional unions of CZIEA participated in the conference.

The conference began with the CZIEA flag hoisted by Com. Sangeeta Jha, President of BDIEA, Bilaspur. Com. Sangeeta Jha, Bilaspur, Com. Smriti Kapoor, Bhopal, and Com. Varsha Umathe, Jabalpur formed the presidium to conduct the conference.

Com. Jagmati Sangwan, former General Secretary of the AIDWA, international volleyball player was the chief guest. She said that LIC employees are doing commendable work for the advancement of their industry. We stand with you in your fight against FDI hike. In her inspiring presentation she said that the present dispensession want to amend labor laws mandating 12-hour workdays for employees, and making it mandatory for women to work in night shifts. This will increase the risk of working women losing their jobs. We must remember if injustice occurs in one area and isn't opposed, it grows rapidly. It's important to join the voices of workers, farmers, and women. The present laws for women's rights enacted through struggles are being weakened. We need to be vigilant against all kind of fudual and divisive politics. She said that Unity is the only weapon we have in democracy, whose edge is being tried to be blunted in the name of religion, caste, gender, language; hence we have to work consciously to build a broader unity.

CZIEA President Com. Ajit Ketkar, Former CZIEA President Com. Navendu Chakraborty, AIIPA Vice President Com. Vijay Malajpure and Mrs. Aarti Verma, President of Class I Officers Association, Com. DR Mahapatra, General Secretary, CZIEA also greeted the conference.

In the delegate session, Com. Usha Parganiha, convener of the Zonal Working Women's Coordination Committee, presented a report. Com. Smriti Kapoor from Bhopal, Varsha Parekh, Roshni Deshmukh, Sangeeta Jha from Bilaspur, Alka Gupta, Bhumika Sen, Sunita Singh from Gwalior, Laxmi Jain, Deepika Saxena from Indore, Sunita Goyal, Jayshree Chouksey from Jabalpur, Nitisha Patel, Shweta from Raipur, Anusuiya Thakur from Satna, Monica Awasthi from Shahdol, Rupali, Sangeeta Malik along with retired colleagues Manju Sheel and Vandana Choubey participated in the debate. The young women comrades through their enthusiastic participation in the discussion enriched the deliberations. Com. Usha parganiha summed up the debate and called upon to remain prepared for a continuous struggle for the progress of our industry and strengthening our organization.

The conference made an



appeal to all the woman comrades for active participation in every organizational call of AIEA and CZIEA. 14 resolutions including demanding immediate recruitment in Class III and IV cadre in LIC were passed in the conference.

A Coordination Committee for the ensuing term was unanimously elected with Com. Jyoti Patil of Raipur as Convener and Smriti Kapoor, Roshni Deshmukh from Bhopal division, Sangeeta Jha, Alka Gupta from Bilaspur division, Amita Gwalhelkar, Sunita Singh from Gwalior division, Sangeeta Ketkar, Deepika Saxena from Indore division, Varsha Umathe, Jayshree Chouksey from Jabalpur division, Anusuiya Thakur, Urmila Kerketta from Raipur division, Monica Awasthi, Sandhya Tiwari from Satna division, Sangeeta Malik, Santoshi Panika from Shahdol division as members.

CZIEA General Secretary Com. Dharmaraj Mahapatra praised Com. Usha's contributions and felicitated her with the confidence that she would continue to contribute to the broader democratic movement.

(Report: Jyoti Patil)



34th General Conference of IEU Raichur Division

The 34th General Conference of IEU, Raichur Division was held at Raichur on 16th November 2025. The conference started with the hosting of AIIEA flag by Com. Shranagouda, President IEU Raichur Division amidst raising of thunderous slogans by around 200 participants. The conference dais was named in memory of Com. Sanyal former Vice President of AIIEA. Com. A. Sridhar Joint Secretary welcomed the dignitaries to the dais. Com. Krishna Murthy placed the resolution on Homage.

The conference was inaugurated by Com. T.V.N.S. Ravindranath, General Secretary, SCZIEF with compliments that it was commendable to note that 97% of the employees of Raichur Division participated in the All India Strike held on 9th July. As part of our struggle, the Govt. was forced to withdraw GST not only on insurance but also many other goods, which is another victory for AIIEA. Recruitment was another demand of our struggle which will commence soon.

He also said that Trump's Tariff policy is disastrous to the country's economy and the direction of the economy in which, 83 crore Indians still rely on rations supplied by the Govt. In spite of attacks on public sector LIC, the employees and agents stood like a rock behind the institution in serving the policyholders and doing well in business, maintaining the market leadership. Govt continuously attempting to weaken the LIC by bringing amendments to insurance laws. One side Govt. says that "Swadeshi" and "Make in India" as its mantra, other side with red carpet inviting 100% FDI in insurance sector. This move will pave way to loot the Indian savings



and to take LIC way back to 1956. Employees under the banner of AIIEA will unleash both political and public campaign against the move of proposed amendments to Insurance laws amendment bill during the winter session by the Central Govt.

Com. K. Venugopal, Former General Secretary, AIIEA, Chief Guest explained as to how our organisation had been resisting the attacks on LIC by successive governments. Despite the recent extensive propaganda by the Washington Post, LIC could not be shaken even a little. LIC is a transparent organisation and has been investing its money in the market within stipulated laws and earning profits which would be shared to policyholders in the form of bonus. He said that Govt. should not yield to pressure of international capitalist and hike FDI limits. He called the employees to protect the public sector LIC and strengthen the weapon that is AIIEA.

Mr. B. Prasad Baswaraj, Senior Divisional Manager, LIC of India, Raichur Division greeted the conference and appealed all the employees to create awareness

about zero GST on insurance which is the result of the struggle of AIIEA.

The report presented to the conference by the Com M.Ravi, General Secretary IEU evoked an enriching debate. 16 comrades from various branches of the Division participated in the debate. The level of maturity shown and the deliberations on important issues were appreciated.

6 Resolutions including - Opposing increase of FDI in insurance sector and privatisation of PSUs, Four Labour Codes and demanding of immediate recruitment in LIC were adopted in the conference.

The Conference unanimously elected Com. M. Sharanagouda as President, Com. M. Ravi as General Secretary and Com. Krishnamurthy as Treasurer of IEU Raichur Division.

The Conference began with revolutionary songs sung by Com. Huligappa, Venkatesh and team and successfully came to an end with the vote of thanks by President.

67th General Council Meeting of IEU, Udupi

The 67th Conference of the Insurance Employees' Union, Udupi Division, was convened on 22 November 2025 at the Diamond Jubilee Building of the LIC Employees' Co-operative Bank Ltd., Udupi.

The event commenced with a vibrant ceremony as Com. Prabhakara B. Kunder, President, hoisted the Union flag amidst spirited slogans. Floral tributes were offered at the martyr's column at the entrance.

Com. K. Venugopal, Former General Secretary, AIIEA in his inaugural address, outlined the challenges confronting the Union, emphasizing that resistance is essential for survival. He recalled the historic role of Com. Sunil Moitra, former MP and AIIEA leader, in defeating the LIC Split Bill of 1984. He congratulated members for AIIEA's success in securing the withdrawal of GST on LIC policies and praised LIC's continued leadership in the insurance sector, holding 65% of the market despite competition from 24 private players. He criticized the four labour codes notified by the Government as anti-worker, condemned the proposed *Shrama Shakti Neethi* for

undermining constitutional rights, and warned of adverse impacts from the IRDAI (Amendment) Bill permitting agents to represent multiple insurers. Addressing reports on LIC's investment in Adani bonds, he clarified that LIC has reduced its holdings by 3.27% and transferred them to the Policy holders' Account. He urged members to remain vigilant and united in confronting future challenges.

Com. Shashidhar Golla, President, CITU, Udupi District condemned Government efforts to deny pensions to workers and criticized the misuse of LIC's funds.

Com. M. Ravi, Vice President, SCZIEF denounced the economic policies of the Trump Government and international finance capital, noting that the imposition of a 25% additional tax on Indian products undermines India's trade sovereignty, with the Indian Government remaining passive.

Com. G. Thirupathiah, Joint Secretary, SEZIEF reminded members of their duty to protect the Union's legacy. He criticized the Government's promotion of "GST Utsav," demanded accountability for years of heavy

GST collection, and expressed concern over the rise of fascism and religious intolerance.

Sri Ganapathi N Bhat, SDM, greeted the conference.

Com. Prabhakara B Kunder, President, IEU, Udupi, presided over the Conference.

In the Conference, Com. Deric A Rebello, Vice President, due for retirement on 30th November 2025 and Com. Umesh, Joint Secretary who retired in November 2024 were honoured for their distinguished Service to the Union.

Com. Kavitha S, Joint Secretary of the Union welcomed and compered the programme. Com. K. Vishwanatha, General Secretary, proposed the Vote of Thanks.

Delegate Session: Com. K. Vishwanatha, General Secretary presented the Report of the Executive Committee for debate by members. 13 members from Base Units debated and enriched the report which was passed unanimously. Audited Statements of Accounts for 2024-25 and budget for 2025-26 were presented by Com. Sripada Herle P, Treasurer and were passed unanimously.

12 Resolutions on industrial issues and issues of national importance were passed unanimously.

The Conference unanimously elected Smt. Nirmala as President, Com K. Vishwanatha as General Secretary and Com. Kavitha S as Treasurer for the ensuing term.

The conference instilled confidence among members, empowering them to confront the challenges facing LIC and to strengthen the Union.



Cluster Meeting of AOLICPA at Bargarh

A Cluster Meeting of Pensioners and Family Pensioners of Bargarh, Balangir, Padmapur, Titlagarh and Patnagarh S. O. was held on 12th October 2025 at Agrabami Yubak Sangh Hall, Bargarh hosted by Bargarh Centre of AOLICPA with active support and cooperation of SDLIEA Base Unit of Bargarh. Pensioners in good numbers from Sambalpur Divisional Centre also attended.

Com. Biswajit Mishra, Joint Secretary of AOLICPA welcomed the participants and explained the objectives of the Cluster Meeting and dealt at length the Glorious History of Struggles of Bargarh including the Independence struggle and martyr Madho Singh, the origin of left movement from Bargarh the militant Farmers Organisation and movement.

Com. Ashish Mohapatra Organising Secretary greeted the

Pensioners and Family Pensioners on behalf of SDLIEA and spoke on the current economic - political situation, the attack on LIC, the role of Finance Capital and cautioned the Employees and Pensioners about the ensuing and lurking danger on LIC and the rights and benefits achieved through struggle.

Com. Sadanand Parija, the Working President informed the audience that AOLICPA is the first Pensioners Organisation in the Country envisaged and formed by the then Veteran Leader of Insurance Employees and Trade Union Movement of Odisha, the venerable Late Com. Sourindra Nath Sircar whose farsight gave Insurance Pensioners Stability, Dignity and Financial Security. Com. Gadadhar Kuanr refreshed the memory of LIC Employees and Pensioners how the farsight

of Late Com. N. M. Sundaram and the struggle launched by AIIEA alone along with three Organisations of PSBs brought us the Pension, the fruit of which we are enjoying today.

Com. R. N. Mallick, Former President of EZIEA spoke about the achievement of pension, struggles and sacrifices made and the need to protect this benefit through vigilance and preparedness of struggle. He also dealt with the international and national situation and stressed on building the unity of the working class to defeat neoliberalism and communal agenda of the present regime.

Com. Muralidhar Seth gave Vote of Thanks. There were more than 50 Pensioners, Family Pensioners and SDLIEA Comrades. Com Babulal Bibhar and others formed presidium of the meeting.

State level convention at Hazaribag on Constitution

A convention of Jharkhand State was organized at Hazaribag on 16th Nov. 2025 on the topic **"Constitution - a living Document"** as a part of the Platinum Jubilee celebration of AIIEA. The convention was jointly organized by Insurance Employees' Association Hazaribag Division and Insurance Employees' Association Jamshepur Division. The convention was presided by Com. Hemant Kumar Mishra, President of IEAHD. Com. Jagdish Chand Mittal General secretary IEAHD welcomed the gathering.

The approach paper on the topic was presented by Com. J.C.Mittal, General secretary IEAHD explaining how the Indian Constitution is a living document that respond to societal changes, judicial interpretations and political realities.

The chief speaker of the convention Dr. Vikram Singh in his address said that our constitution is a set of fundamental principles that governs a society and provide frame work for its political and legal system. It protects democracy and guides us to celebrate our pluralism and tolerance. The Indian constitution is not merely a legal document but a Magna Carta of Socio-economic transformation

of the country. It represents the hopes and aspirations of billion plus Indians. Constitution was framed to bring the concept of democracy, equality, liberty not only in bigger political domain but also to our personal existence vide different provisions such as Right to equality, Abolition of Untouchability, Provision of free and compulsory education for children etc. The Indian



Constitution broke down the stereotypes, superstitions, and rigid traditions prevalent in Indian society and provided the foundation of rationality, justice, and equality. The Indian Constitution became the vehicle of modernity and promoted national unity and stability.

Com. Trinath Dora General secretary ECZIEA initiated the discussion on the topic. He explained the structure of the constitution and its features. According to him the creation of Indian constitution is not a matter of mere days. Various committees of constitutional assembly worked to shape the constitution through various meetings. The constituent assembly encompassed diversity.

There are disagreements among members on many provisions but despite these deadlocks, a definitive conclusion was reached. The Indian Constitution is truly a living document. It is flexible enough to amend certain parts, while others contain rigid provisions. This combination prevents misuse, and the amendment feature preserves the spirit of the Constitution. Our Constitution contains a basic structure, which the legislature cannot amend, thus preventing the destruction of its original spirit. The amendment process also requires the participation of the states in some cases, which makes our Constitution perfect.

Com. Pradip Mukherjee

President ECZIEA also addressed the convention and stressed the need to protect the constitution since it is the guiding principle of formation of PSU. Com. Samir Das CITU leader also addressed the convention. The convention was attended by more than 400 comrades including the members of pensioner’s association, NFIFWI, LIAFI and Class-I officers association. It is worth mentioning that the good number of comrades of DVC Shramik Union, BSSRU (medical representative) and members of local CITU participated in the convention. Com. Subash kumar Karn General Secretary of IEAJD delivered vote of thanks.



AIIEA Platinum Jubilee & 70th Year Celebration of EZIEA & IEA Asansol

On December 3, 2025, the Jhalda Base unit of Insurance Employees’ Association, Asansol, organized a significant outreach programme. This event was held to commemorate two historic milestones: the 75th Platinum Jubilee Year of the All India Insurance Employees’ Association (AIIEA) and the 70th Anniversary of the EZIEA & IEA Asansol.

Beyond the celebrations, the primary objective of this programme was to address a critical need in the local community:

providing essential support to underprivileged children who attend schools where government aid and grants are entirely absent.

The core aim of this initiative was to identify and support segments of the student population that have fallen through the cracks of public welfare systems.

While many schools receive basic state support, there remain pockets of the “downtrodden” population in rural Jhalda where students lack essential amenities that government grants do not

cover or have not reached.

Recognizing this disparity, Jhalda Base unit of IEA Asansol stepped in to act as a bridge. The association views its Platinum Jubilee not just as a time for internal celebration, but as a mandate to serve the broader society, ensuring that economic hardship does not hinder a child’s right to education and dignity.

The programme targeted 60 local school children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. These children belong to families where purchasing seasonal clothing and supplementary educational materials is a significant financial burden. Without external support, these students often attend school without adequate protection against the winter cold or without the necessary tools for learning, impacting both their health and their academic performance.



⇒ Contd on page 40



Dr.P Ravishankar

LABOUR CODES

The Government of India announced the implementation of four labor codes on 21/11/2020 though they were gazette on 28/9/2020 except the code of wages on 8/8/2019. The four labor codes are Code on Wages, 2019, Industrial Relations Code, 2020, Code on Social Security, 2020 and Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020. The rules under the Codes are yet to be framed and notified, the codes will come into function fully when the rules are framed by Appropriate Government.

Only Code of Wages 2019 and Industrial Relations Code 2020 are discussed briefly here for the present. These two codes weigh more importance than the other two codes. Code of Wages 2019 and Industrial Relations Code 2020 has definition for various terms and has introduced certain new concept of Negotiating Union, Inspector-cum-facilitator. Many relevant issues for the day to day running of the Labor codes like contract Labor, Fixed Tenure employment, worker, employee, Industrial Disputes, Trade union, enforcing officials' etc are discussed. The Code on Wages, 2019 seeks to simplify, consolidate, and rationalize the provisions of four existing laws- *The Payment of Wages Act, 1936; The Minimum Wages Act, 1948; The Payment of Bonus Act, 1965.* Section 69 of the Wage Code has repealed the four Acts.

The other code which is discussed is Industrial Relation Code 2020. This code has consolidated Trade Union Act 1926, Industrial Employment (Standing Order) Act 1946 and The Industrial Disputes Act. This

code unlike Wage Code has not repealed the applicability of the Act but has vested the power to Central Government, which may specify date of effect of the various provisions. Combined reading of Section-1(3) with Section 104 of the Code will clarify the powers vested with the Appropriate Government to enforce the provisions of law by Notification. Code on Wages has completely repealed the four Acts as mentioned above but the Industrial Relation Code vest with the Government of the day to enforce by Notification which may not require any legislative sanction though the Code has same. While framing the rules one may get some more clarity on the issue.

These codes will be applicable to both organized and unorganized sector. The wages code without any wage limit includes both supervisor and Manager, and then the question which will arise in our mind is whether a Manager can raise a Dispute before the Tribunal which is not allowed in ID Act. The code requires maintenance of only two registers and filing one consolidated return compared to the requirement for maintenance of more than ten registers and four returns in the old Act. The new concept of Facilitator-cum-Inspector has been named in the code but Territorial Jurisdiction has not been clearly specified.

The definition for Industry has undergone considerable change; there are many debatable questions which can be answered only when the Code becomes functional fully. One more concept newly introduced in the code is negotiating union or negotiating council (Section 14). This may

fundamentally have some effect in identifying negotiating union and the modalities involved in successful negotiation. We may get more clarification when the rules are framed in consultation with state Government wherever the law requires.

In case of permission for Lay-off, Retrenchment and Closure is required only when the number of employees exceeds 300 compared to 100 earlier. Most of the undertaking the number will be less than 300 which may not call for any permission. Section 62 of IR Code deals with Strikes, it reads as, No person employed in an industrial establishment shall go on strike, in breach of contract without giving to the employer notice of strike, as hereinafter provided, within sixty days before striking; or within fourteen days of giving such notice. Further during the pendency of proceedings before a Tribunal or pending arbitration proceedings.

These provisions have far reaching consequences in running a trade union and also the right to protest. It is also very important in a Democratic set-up to protect the right of protest and strikes to impress the authority for immediate relief as they form part of hard earned democratic right.

The New labor codes have many innovative ideas for doing business with ease, but at the same time the rights of labor need to be protected. Its success depends when the code comes into operation and is tested by Public at large and labor in particular in the changed economic and social structure of the society.

INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

● **A.M. KHAN**, Dharwad

- ▶ Under the Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme, 2025, the victims are entitled to cashless treatment up to Rs 1.5 lakh per victim per accident for a maximum period of 7 days from the date of the accident and applicable to all road accidents caused by the use of a motor vehicle on any category of road. : Out of the total 6,833 treatment requests raised by road accident victims under the Cashless Treatment of Road Accident Victims Scheme so far, only 5,480 victims have been found eligible, and the remaining 1,353 cases (nearly 20 per cent) have been rejected by the police.
- ▶ Government of India on the issue of merger of three PSU general insurance companies, Oriental Insurance(OIC), National Insurance(NIC) and United India Insurance(UII), the Ministry of Finance(MoF) has for the first time set up a merger cell for developing a comprehensive plan after undertaking due diligence of all knotty issues for its smooth implementation.
- ▶ The Indian government held road shows in London and Singapore to assess investor interest for a minority stake sale in state-run GIC Re. Top officials of Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) and GIC Re jointly met international investors in London on Dec 9 and in Singapore on Dec 11 and 12.
- ▶ The government is actively planning to disinvest in Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), It is planning a multi-phase sale, potentially starting with a 2.5-3%, or lesser quantity, stake via Offer for Sale (OFS) to bring in more public investors while retaining majority control. It will help the government primarily to meet SEBI's public shareholding norms (10% by May 2027) and raise funds for its FY26 targets. India plans to sell a total of 10% stake in the insurer in tranches to meet the market regulator's minimum public shareholding norm.
- ▶ Intermediaries which include bancassurance partners, OEM-linked partnerships, or similar high-volume channels are likely to see a decline in their payouts, post the new Insurance Amendment Bill, which gives the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) power to disgorge unlawful gains made by insurers and intermediaries as well as the right to limit commissions paid to the intermediaries.
- ▶ The Bill has also opened new investment avenues (?) for the insurance sector by omitting Section 27A of the Insurance Act, 1938, which prohibits insurance companies from investing in shares and debentures of unlisted private entities.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India on 18-12-2025 proposed permitting insurers to invest up to 20 per cent of their funds in debt instruments issued by public limited special purpose vehicles (SPVs) operating in the infrastructure sector,

- ▶ The Bill has also introduced a new class of insurance in its definition of insurance companies and another class among insurance intermediaries – managing general agent (MGA) – which is a popular concept in the developed world for general insurance segment. They are specialised intermediaries who possess the authority to underwrite binding insurance directly on behalf of the insurer.
- ▶ Claims-based loading refers to an increase in premium solely because a policyholder made a claim in the previous policy year. The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) Health Insurance Regulations, 2016 clearly prohibit this. Insurers cannot raise premiums merely because a claim was made. But the Health insurance companies are quietly bringing back claims-based loading.
- ▶ The impact extends beyond hospitalisation claims. Many insurers offer complimentary annual health check-ups. These are now treated as claims, regardless of cost. Availing such a check-up can reduce the claims-experience discount and raise the next year's premium. In effect, the benefit is no longer complimentary. Policyholders pay for it through higher future premiums.
- ▶ The Chairman LIC says "The insurance amendment Bill strengthens the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority's ability to guide sectoral development, safeguard consumer interests, and foster innovation in alignment with national priorities! ". He appears to be parroting the justification of the Bill advanced by the government
- ▶ The Bill also applies to the \$177 billion pension fund sector, paving the way for 100 per cent foreign ownership, according to the industry regulator.
- ▶ The Bill takes away the rights of Parliament in case of LIC and smoothly hands over to IRDA.
- ▶ * The life insurance industry is debating the introduction of a commission cap, which could exist with regulations on expenses of management. The industry, under the aegis of the Life Insurance Council, has formed a committee to build a consensus on the matter, following which it will submit a representation to the insurance regulator by the end of 2025-26.

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

● S. SRIDHARA, Mysore

- The trade unions held powerful demonstrations on 26 November 2025 to resist the Government of India's unilateral implementation of four new labour codes. These codes, which came into force on 21 November 2025, consolidate 29 existing labour laws into a single framework that the government acclaims to be a "historic reform" aimed at "simplification and enhancing ease of doing business". The trade unions have termed these four labour codes as "blatantly unilateral". "anti-worker, pro-employer imposition, amid repeated objections and demands for meaningful consultations.
- In a memorandum addressed to the President of India, the joint trade union forum condemned the Labour Codes for negating fundamental labour rights and shrinking democratic space for workers, while demanding their immediate repeal.
- Unions in South Korea representing national rail and Seoul subway workers announced on 2nd December that their members will strike on December 11 and 12 after failing to narrow differences with management and the government during wages and conditions negotiations. The Korean Railway Workers' Union announced that it would begin a full strike on December 11, affecting Seoul line 9, unless management meets its core demands of restoring performance-pay standards, integrating high-speed rail services and implementing stronger safety measures. The union also accused the government of ignoring their demand that the current system, which bases performance pay on 80 percent of base salary, must be overhauled. Three unions covering workers at Seoul Metro, which operates subway lines one through eight, have declared a December 12 walkout unless the city fulfills its earlier agreement to increase staffing. Protesting workers said that if the city continues to ignore their demands and hides behind repetitive cost-cutting rhetoric, a general strike will be inevitable.
- About 94,000 members of the National Solidarity Council of School Irregular Workers in South Korea began a series of nationwide stoppages on November 21, calling for higher pay, safe working conditions and improved benefits. Non-teaching staff include cafeteria cooks and assistants, childcare workers, meal distributors and administrative aides.
- The action was called after negotiations with the education ministry and 17 provincial and metropolitan education offices stalled. The union claimed that none of their longstanding demands, from raising meagre base pay to installing basic

ventilation systems in kitchens, have been met.

- The strike began in Seoul, Incheon, Gangwon, Sejong, and North Chungcheong, and expanded southward to Gwangju, Jeolla and Jeju on November 29; Gyeonggi, Daejeon, and South Chungcheong on December 4; and the Yeongnam region on December 5.
- Thousands of bus drivers in Buenos Aires and other cities went on strike on Friday December 5 against those lines that still owe drivers 50 percent of their November wages. Strikers denounced the privately-owned companies for delaying the payment of wages in order to pressure the Argentine government to increase subsidies. Anticipating the strike, the Milei administration had raised subsidies to city bus lines by 15 percent for November and December, with the intention of preventing the walkout. However, the drivers have indicated that until their wages get paid, the walkout will continue.
- On December 3, International Day of Persons with Disabilities, workers and retirees and people with disabilities marched and rallied in Buenos Aires protesting the Milei administration's brutal attacks on the rights and living conditions of those suffering from physical impairments. The protesters rejected President Javier Milei's veto of emergency legislation to protect disabled people. Though the veto was overturned by a vote of the national legislature, the Milei administration has yet to implement the law, let alone appropriate the necessary funds. Joining the protest was the Garrahan Pediatric Hospital's Association of Professionals and Technicians (APYÖ). Pensioners, who have been protesting every Wednesday since Milei took power, denounced Milei's labor reform project that limits bargaining rights and raised the retirement age to 70.
- Karnataka ASHA workers hold protest: The march, which was organised by Karnataka Rajya Samyuktha ASHA trade union, called for a 10,000-rupee fixed honorarium, inclusion in the Employee Provident Fund and Employee State Insurance, reinstatement of 2,000 former ASHA workers and reduced workloads. Other demands include the provision of smart phones with properly functioning communications. Karnataka ASHA workers also held protest march in Mysuru. Around 4,000 Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) workers from across Karnataka held a "Go to Belagavi" march in Mysuru on December 10. The protesters represented around 42,000 ASHA workers from across the state.

ECONOMIC NOTES

● J. SURESH, Mysore

The upheavals in the global trading system flowing from Trump's tariff war against China and much of the rest of the world are reflected in the trade surplus figures announced by China. In the first 11 months of this year, China's trade surplus reached \$ 1.08 trillion beating the previous record of \$ 993 billion for 2024 with still a month to go. The Wall Street Journal characterised it as a "remarkable figure, never before seen in recorded economic history." The tariffs imposed by Trump on Chinese exports to the US, now averaging around 37%, have brought a reduction of exports of around one-fifth. But this decline was more than compensated by the surge in Chinese exports to other market. The Chinese trade surplus for the month of November surged to \$ 111.68 billion, the third highest level on record, and a 21.7% increase in the same period last year. If the Trump administration believed that its tariff measures would constrict China's trade, then it badly miscalculated. So far this year, Chinese exports to Africa, South east Asia and Latin America have risen by 26%, 14% and 7.1% respectively. Exports to the European Union are up by 15%. South-East Asia is a crucial destination for Chinese exports, some of which are aimed at skirting around the imports imposed on its goods by the US. The Financial Times reported that Chinese exports to these regions "are growing at almost twice the rate of the past four years, as Trump trade war pushed Beijing to tighten trade links with neighbours." In the first nine months of this year, Chinese exports to the six largest economies in the region - Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Philippines, Vietnam and Malaysia - have risen by 23.5%.

◆

According to Financial Times, the private Credit sector, which has grown to around \$ 3 trillion globally - is, a ticking time bomb. It also pointed out to the unmistakable signs that conditions are maturing for another crisis. The boom in private credit markets "has its roots in the tighter regulation placed on banks following the global financial crisis. That has channelled more credit through the less transparent and less regulated shadow banking system." There has been concern over the growth of private credit for some time. But alarm bells started ringing following the collapse in September of US car parts maker First Brands and the auto lender Tricolour Holdings, both of which had taken considerable loans from non-banking financial institutions. Rating agency Moody

in an analysis, drew attention to the fact that loans by banks to non-depository financial institutions (NDFIs) now account for more than 10% of all bank loans, three times their level a decade ago. Banks are not the only institutions involved. "A particular concern in insurers' growing investments in the opaque asset class, which could leave policyholders' money exposed if things go wrong." It

also raised questions about underwriting standards. Describing the global economy as showing "resilience", it nevertheless remained "fragile" - how both conditions are simultaneously possible it did not explain - with uncertainty surrounding US President Trump's policies adding to the "unease". Private credit assets under management had "tripled over the last decade, a growth rate far outpacing that of most other forms of credit." A report of the rating agency Fitch also underscored the growing risks, nothing that a shock to the financial system could reveal the extent to which the private credit sector had moved from being a niche for "sophisticated investors to an increasingly relevant component of global capital markets."

◆

The World inequality Report 2026 presents a comprehensive multidimensional analysis of global disparities, drawing on the most recent data collected by more than 200 researchers linked to the World inequality Database. The report shows how today's inequality of opportunity becomes tomorrow's inequality of outcomes. Nowhere is this cleared than in education - average spending per child in Sub-Saharan Africa is just Euro 200 (PPD) compared with Euro 7,400 in Europe and Euro 9,000 in North America and Oceania - a gap of more than the global per capita GDP gap. These vast differences shape life chances across generations, reinforcing a geography of opportunity that locks in amplifies global wealth hierarchies. Wealth, meanwhile has reached historic highs but remains uneven. The top 0.001% - around 60,000 multi-millionaires in the world now holds three times as much wealth as entire bottom half of humanity in nearly every region of the world, with top 1% of the world's population controlling more wealth than the bottom 90% of the world. The report also reflects the disparity in income distribution with top 10% of global earners garner more income than the remaining 90% with poorest half of the world receives less than 10% of global earnings.

FOR OUR FIELD FORCE

● **A. ARIVUKKADAL**
Thanjavur

LIC - India's SWF: Sovereign wealth funds are generally funded by national surpluses such as oil windfalls, export profits, fiscal savings, or excess foreign reserves. They deploy a country's excess capital into productive assets. LIC, by contrast, runs on policyholder money. But, LIC undeniably displays the traits of a sovereign investor. LIC already invests in government bonds, equities, PSUs, and even infrastructure bonds. Whenever the government needs a reliable anchor for an IPO, a backstop for a struggling bank, or a stabiliser during market stress, LIC often steps in. India does have a sovereign wealth fund. And until India has the surpluses to build an actual SWF, LIC must remain exactly what people signed up for, a safe, stable institution that protects lives.

LIC supports Nepal: The Physical Infrastructure Reconstruction Fund established by the Government of Nepal has received 10.1 million rupees from Life Insurance Corporation Nepal. The Fund is established by the government for the reconstruction of physical structures damaged from arson and vandalism during the Gen-Z protests that happened on September 8 and 9.

LIC on GST: LIC MD Ratnakar Patnaik said, the GST structure should be modified so that insurance services are treated as 'zero-rated' instead of 'exempt'. Under an exempt category, insurers cannot claim ITC on inputs such as commissions, technology services, office rentals and vendor costs, making these expenses a direct cost. In contrast, zero-rated supplies allow the insurer to claim and even refund unutilised ITC.

FDI increase: Even when the FDI limit was raised to 74% from 49%, insurance penetration did not change meaningfully, nor did it lead to a surge in capital inflows. Only three to four of the roughly 50 life and general insurers have foreign joint venture partners holding the upper 74% FDI limit.

PSUs pay more: IRDAI flagged concerns about the widening gap between health insurance claims and the amounts actually settled. Public sector insurers shelled out more than what they collected as premium to settle claims.

Medical Inflation: The government has begun discussions with the insurance regulator, industry executives, and hospital groups on ways to rein in surging health insurance premiums, as rising medical costs and uneven claim settlements strain the system. Officials are evaluating measures such as capping premiums, limiting agent commissions, and tightening disclosure norms. According to Aon's Global Medical Trend Rates Report 2025, medical inflation in India is expected to rise to 11.5% in 2026,

higher than the global average medical trend rate of 9.8%.

Health Complaints: There has been a surge in health insurance complaints. As a percentage of total complaints received, it continues to be the dominant category, accounting for about 80% of all grievances at the Mumbai Ombudsman office. IRDAI held a high-level meeting with Chief Compliance Officers (CCOs) and

Grievance Redressal Officers (GROs) of all insurers. The Authority expressed concern over the rising number of complaints and emphasised the need for insurers to significantly improve the quality and timeliness of resolutions.

Ombudsman - Digital: The Council for Insurance Ombudsmen is going to develop a complaint management system with a digital platform that will enable online submission of complaints. It will facilitate recording consent for mediation of complaint, uploading documents, tracking the complaint status and filing appeals against the award of the Insurance Ombudsman.

Grievances Ranking: In order to improve the grievance redressal framework, the finance ministry has initiated the ranking of public sector banks, private sector banks and public sector insurance companies, based on quality and timely redressal of grievances. Besides, the ranking of private sector insurers is also in the pipeline.

Private mis-selling: The national consumer disputes redressal commission (NCDRC) has upheld a series of orders against Reliance Nippon Life Insurance Company Ltd, concluding that insurance agents had mis-sold long-term insurance policies to vulnerable customers through deception, misrepresentation and concealment of actual policy terms.

Behaviour-based premiums: IRDAI member Satyajit Tripathy said India should move towards the next generation of packages in the insurance sector. For example, if someone joins a weight loss or diabetes reversal programme and health indicators improve, premiums should drop instantly, he said, adding that insurance and wellness will come under one ecosystem.

Unclaimed funds: The Finance Ministry is collaborating with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to build a single unified portal that will allow savers and retail investors to claim unclaimed assets across multiple financial instruments, including bank deposits, pension funds, shares, and dividends, according to Department of Financial Services (DFS) Secretary M. Nagaraju.

AIEEA on Four Labour Codes....

Contd from page 5

The Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSHC) Code reluctantly mentions eight-hour work but allows for its violation with impunity. It gives enormous scope to *alter the eight-hour duty* by the employer; the same can be decided by the appropriate governments. The shrill cries of corporate leaders like Narayan Murthy (Infosys) and S.N. Subramanyan (L&T) to increase the work-weeks up to 90 hours can be understood in this context. The OSHWC Code *takes away a substantial section of the industrial workers out of the coverage* of any legal safeguards. The definition of 'factory' excludes factories with less than 20 workers, if power is used and less than 40 workers without power. As per this code, Contractors employing less than 50 workers are no longer required to obtain license, compared to the previous number of 20. It enables an overwhelming majority of *contractors to exploit workers* without any regulation and control. The concept of permanent and perennial nature of work for prohibiting contract employment is removed. The obligation of the principal employer to ensure welfare and even *payment of statutory wages has been thoroughly diluted*.

The labour codes are therefore not for 'Ease of Living'; these are only for 'Ease of doing Business'. The existing labour laws were achieved through prolonged struggles of the working class and, with all their flaws, provided some protection to the workers in terms of workplace rights, wages, social security, health, safety and welfare etc. Labour Codes will drastically curtail all these for the benefit of the employers.

As per the call of AIEEA, insurance employees throughout the country held Gate Meetings and Demonstrations during Lunch Recess on 26th November 2025 as a mark of protest. The AIEEA has decided to join the broader trade union movement to intensify the agitation against these labour codes.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2016	2001	1960
Apr 2025	143.5	413.28	9433.49
May	144.0	414.72	9466.36
June	145.0	417.60	9532.10
July	146.5	421.92	9630.70
August	147.1	423.65	9670.15
September	147.3	424.22	9683.29
October	147.7	425.38	9709.59

Base1960=Base 2001x22.8259
Base 2001=Base 2016x2.88

RESPONSE

The December 2025 issue is very rich in content. The Editorial justifiably raises concern over the growing inequality and demands urgent action from the government. In this era of neoliberalism, Kerala's Left Democratic Front government stands as a prime example of how to improve people's welfare. The elimination of extreme poverty should make India proud of Kerala. Comrade Amanulla's article on the historical background of the nationalization of general insurance can be considered a historical treasure. I feel proud of AIEEA reading the contribution of our union to the fight against caste discrimination and brutality of honour killings. Thank you, Insurance Worker for expanding the horizon of our understanding.

P. Muthukumar, Tiruvannamalai.



.....Asansol

Contd from page 34

To comprehensively address the needs of these students, comrades of Jhalda Base unit distributed a carefully curated set of relief materials. The aid was designed to cover health, comfort, and education: Winter Protection (Sweaters & Woolen Caps), Educational Empowerment (Notebooks & Pencil Boxes) and Nutritional Support (Tiffin Packets).

The success of this noble cause was bolstered by the generosity of individual members. A special note of gratitude is due to Com Goutam Karmakar, who graciously contributed a sum of Rs 5,000/-. His donation exemplifies the spirit of collective responsibility that defines the AIEEA.

DONATIONS

INSURANCE WORKER

Com. Dipankar Debnath ,Alipurduar Br. Rs.5000
Com. Mahesh Shetty,
Retired HGA(A), Udupi-II Branch Office 5000
Com. VVK.Suresh, BO-688, Guntur 5000

Insurance Worker heartily thanks these comrades for their love and affection.



**AN IMPRESSIVE
BEGINNING**





cultural evenings
showcasing
the rich culture
of Odisha

& the beauty of
diversity of
India's culture

