

Insurance Worker



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English & Hindi



**MAY DAY 2025
& the Struggle
ahead**



**LIBERALISATION
is to Ease Labour
Exploitation**



**Jyotirao Phule
& the unity of
the oppressed**

**Broad Agenda
to Destroy LIC &
PSGI Companies**



and

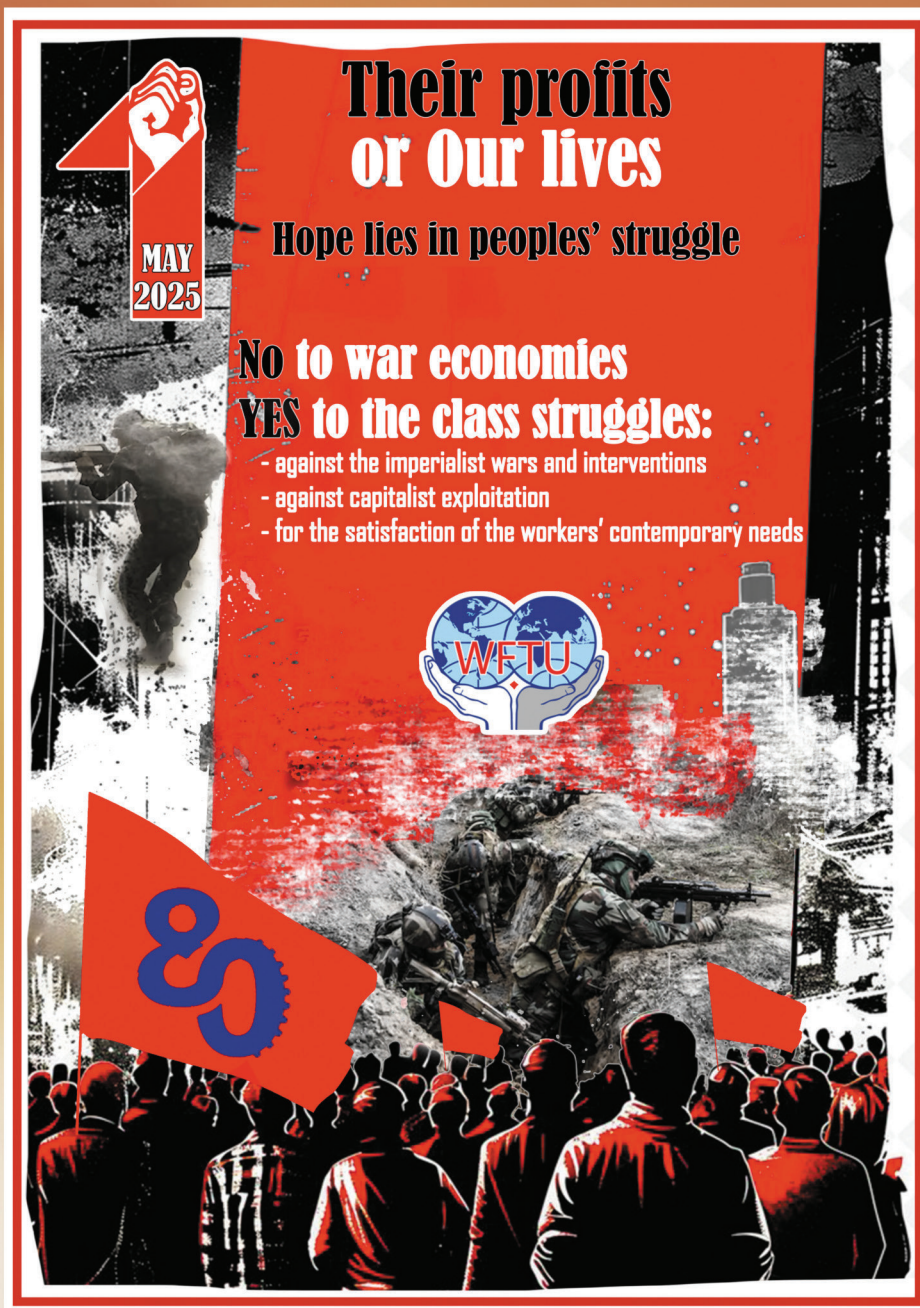
*our Governemnt is silent,
submitting to the demands
of the Global Finance Capital*

but.....

*Insurance Employees
along with India's
Working People
WILL FIGHT BACK*



**MAKE
20TH MAY STRIKE
AN UNPRECEDENTED SUCCESS**



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M Ramu, Kriya Prakashana

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No.1, 1st Cross, CSI Compound,
Bengaluru-560027
Ph: 080-48529910
insuranceworker1957@gmail.com
iw_2005@yahoo.com

PUSH BACK THE OFFENSIVE

What other option do we have, when the Government of India refuses to stand up and defend its own institutions? There can be no reason other than it meekly submitting to the demands of the global finance capital. There is no justification for the silence of the government either on the tariffs imposed by the Trump administration nor its comments on the functioning of LIC. This timidity displayed by a government which boasts that it has made the country a super power is both concerning and challenging. It has become the responsibility of the insurance employees to push back this offensive aggressively.

It is becoming clearer by the day that the amendments the government is contemplating to the Insurance Laws are meant to pacify and meet the demands of the US imperialism and the global finance capital. While there were no apparent reasons for the FDI hike in insurance sector, the government proposes to increase it to 100% allowing multinationals total freedom to operate and control the precious household savings. The government has indicated that the Bill to bring amendments to Insurance Laws with far reaching consequences will be introduced as early as in the monsoon session of the parliament.

However, the US and the global finance capital is not satisfied with the contemplated changes the government wants to bring about. They are demanding much more, intruding into the very sovereignty of the nation in making its economic policies. The report of US Trade Representative makes no bones in demanding the withdrawal of sovereign guarantee on the LIC policies. The USTR Report says that the sovereign guarantee on LIC policies is giving an unfair advantage to LIC. The Report considers the sovereign guarantee as a market distortion that disadvantages private and foreign insurers.

There is a deafening silence from the government over this atrocious demand. Fortunately, LIC gathered enough courage to challenge this demand of the USTR. The sovereign guarantee was given to the LIC policies when the life insurance business was nationalised in 1956 to protect the policyholders from the frauds of the private sector. The LIC has never invoked this guarantee. It remains the market leader not because of the sovereign guarantee but due to its impressive performance and building trust and goodwill among the insuring public.

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The people of India recognise its contribution to the nation building exercise and view it as the most trusted government enterprise. Today LIC has emerged as the most influential and finest public financial institution in the country. Therefore, the silence of the government on the comments and criticism of the USTR becomes suspect. Will the government accept this demand in its eagerness to please the Trump administration? The USTR Report also demands that the regulator should more strictly scrutinise the LIC and PSGI companies. We have already experienced that the policies of IRDAI have been encouraging and facilitating the private sector to the detriment of the public sector companies. Therefore, this observation of the USTR carries the meaning that the regulator is not doing enough to destroy these fine public institutions early. In sum the USTR Report demands removing sovereign guarantees, aligning regulatory oversight, diluting GIC Re's reinsurance privileges, all of which would weaken the LIC and other public sector insurers.

It is not just the USTR that has been making such demands, the IMF has also joined to raise similar demands. The IMF has placed a large agenda as to what the government should do to reform the insurance sector. It makes recommendations that would destroy whatever little autonomy LIC and PSGI companies have relating to their functioning. The IMF recommends that IRDAI be granted greater powers, including overriding Provisions of the LIC Act and principles governing public sector general insurers. The IMF has also suggested that IRDAI's authority should include powers over director removal, board appointments, liquidation, and risk-based supervision on LIC and public sector insurers.

This is the broad agenda to destroy the LIC and PSGI companies. The AIIEA had always been warning that the global finance capital sees LIC as the biggest hurdle in its ambitions to gain and control the savings in India. Therefore, it will demand policies that would weaken, cripple and finally destroy LIC and the PSGI companies. Knowing the character of the government, it is bound to succumb to the demands of the US imperialism and global finance capital. In such a scenario, what is the option before the insurance employees but to fight back. LIC is the ideological commitment of AIIEA and defending this great institution

is the sacred duty of all insurance employees. The AIIEA has decided to meet these offensives through a One Day Strike on 20th May 2025. This strike has to be made an unprecedented success to warn all our adversaries as to what awaits them if they decide to attack the LIC and PSGI companies. Making this strike successful will prepare the workforce in public sector insurance industry to bravely face the huge challenges and meet them successfully.

It is not the public sector insurance industry alone that is under attack. The entire public sector is under attack. The workforce both in the organised and the unorganised sector are facing tremendous difficulties in the face of falling or stagnating wages while corporate profits are soaring as never before. The peasants and workers engaged in agriculture are in real distress. The economic growth is disproportionately benefitting the richer sections

जब भारत सरकार अपने संस्थानों की रक्षा करने के लिए खड़ी होने से इन्कार कर रही है, तो हमारे पास और क्या विकल्प है? यह वैश्विक वित्तीय पूंजी की मांगों के आगे झुकने के अलावा और कुछ नहीं प्रदर्शित कर रहा। न तो ट्रम्प प्रशासन द्वारा लगाए गए टैरिफ पर सरकार की चुप्पी का कोई औचित्य है और न ही एलआईसी के कामकाज पर इसकी टिप्पणी का कोई औचित्य है। वो सरकार जो यह दावा करती है कि उसने देश को एक महाशक्ति बना दिया है, उसके द्वारा प्रदर्शित यह कायरता चिन्ताजनक भी है और चुनौतीपूर्ण भी। बीमा कर्मचारियों की यह जिम्मेदारी है कि वे इस हमले का आक्रामक तरीके से प्रतिकार करें।

यह बात दिन-ब-दिन स्पष्ट होती जा रही है कि सरकार बीमा कानूनों में जिन संशोधनों पर विचार कर रही है, उनका उद्देश्य अमेरिकी साम्राज्यवाद और वैश्विक वित्तीय पूंजी की मांगों को शांत करना है और पूरा करना है। हालांकि बीमा क्षेत्र में एफडीआई वृद्धि के लिए कोई स्पष्ट कारण नहीं थे, लेकिन सरकार इसे 100 प्रतिशत तक बढ़ाने का प्रस्ताव करती है, जिससे बहुराष्ट्रीय कम्पनियों को बहुमूल्य घरेलू बचत को संचालित करने और नियन्त्रित करने की पूरी स्वतन्त्रता मिल सके। सरकार ने संकेत दिया है कि दूरगामी परिणामों वाले बीमा कानूनों में संशोधन लाने वाला विधेयक निकटतम पड़ने वाले संसद के मानसून सत्र में पेश कर दिया जाएगा।

हालांकि, अमेरिका और वैश्विक वित्तीय पूंजी सरकार द्वारा किए जाने वाले प्रस्तावित बदलावों से संतुष्ट नहीं है। वे अपनी आर्थिक नीतियां बनाने में राष्ट्र की संप्रभुता में और अधिक हस्तक्षेप करने की मांग कर रहे हैं। अमेरिकी व्यापार प्रतिनिधि की रिपोर्ट में एलआईसी पॉलिसियों पर संप्रभु गारण्टी वापस लेने की मांग करने में कोई कसर

of the population making the boasts on growth of GDP meaningless. The workers in different sectors are fighting against privatisation and attacks on their hard earned rights. The promises made to the farmers on their demands remain unredeemed forcing the farmers onto the path of agitation. The government is refusing to recognise those working in Anganwadi, Asha and other schemes as workers. They are being subjected to precarious working and living conditions. In order to divert the attention of the people from the real life issues, the party ruling the country and its affiliates are engaged in dividing the society on communal, linguistic and caste lines. The Constitution and its values are flagrantly flayed.

It is in this situation that ten central trade unions, independent federations including the AIIEA and farmers organisation have decided to call the entire working class to strike work

on 20th May 2025 to force the government to abandon its economic policies and give up its servility to US Imperialism and global finance capital. The working class demands policies that would end poverty and force the government to act as a distributor of economic and social justice. Such an alternative also proposes strengthening of federalism and respect for the cultural, religious and linguistic diversity. The insurance employees both in LIC and PSGI companies should not only make the strike in their institutions successful, but should also undertake educative campaign across the society to build a strong force of resistance. It is the time to build solidarities with the other sections of the working class. Only such solidarities and common struggle can safeguard the interests of insurance employees and their great institutions.

आक्रामक तरीके से प्रतिकार करें

नहीं छोड़ी गई है। यूएसटीआर रिपोर्ट में कहा गया है कि एलआईसी पॉलिसियों पर सॉवरेन गारण्टी से एलआईसी को अनुचित लाभ मिल रहा है। रिपोर्ट संप्रभु गारण्टी को बाजार की विकृति मानती है जो निजी और विदेशी बीमाकर्ताओं को नुकसान पहुंचाती है।

इस क्रूर मांग पर सरकार की ओर से चुप्पी है। सौभाग्य से, एलआईसी ने यूएसटीआर की इस मांग को चुनौती देने के लिए पर्याप्त साहस जुटाया। मैं जब जीवन बीमा व्यवसाय का राष्ट्रीयकरण किया गया था, तब पॉलिसीधारकों को निजी क्षेत्र की धोखाधड़ी से बचाने के लिए एलआईसी पॉलिसियों को संप्रभु गारण्टी दी गई थी। एलआईसी ने कभी भी इस गारण्टी का इस्तेमाल नहीं किया है। यह सॉवरेन गारण्टी के कारण नहीं बल्कि अपने प्रभावशाली प्रदर्शन और बीमा कराने वाले लोगों के बीच विश्वास और सद्भावना बनाने के कारण बाजार में अग्रणी बनी हुई है। भारत के लोग राष्ट्र निर्माण में इसके योगदान को पहचानते हैं और इसे सबसे भरोसेमंद सरकारी उपक्रम के रूप में देखते हैं। आज एलआईसी देश की सबसे प्रभावशाली और बेहतरीन सार्वजनिक वित्तीय संस्था बनकर उभरी है। इसलिए यूएसटीआर की टिप्पणियाँ और आलोचना पर सरकार की चुप्पी संदिग्ध हो जाती है। क्या ट्रम्प प्रशासन को खुश करने की उत्सुकता में सरकार इस मांग को स्वीकार कर लेगी? यूएसटीआर रिपोर्ट में यह भी मांग की गई है कि नियमित रूप से एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों की अधिक सख्ती से जांच की जानी चाहिए। हम पहले ही अनुभव कर चुके हैं कि आईआरडीएआई की नीतियाँ सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की कम्पनियों को नुकसान पहुंचाते

हुए निजी क्षेत्र को प्रोत्साहित और सुविधा प्रदान कर रही हैं। इसलिए, यूएसटीआर के इस अवलोकन का अर्थ यह है कि विनियामक इन बेहतरीन सार्वजनिक संस्थानों को समय से पहले नष्ट करने के लिए पर्याप्त कदम नहीं उठा रहा है। संक्षेप में यूएसटीआर रिपोर्ट संप्रभु गारण्टी को हटाने, विनियामक निरीक्षण को संरक्षित करने या जीआईसी-री के पुनर्बीमा विशेषाधिकारों को कम करने की मांग करती है, ये सभी कारक एलआईसी और अन्य सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बीमा कम्पनियों को कमजोर करेंगे।

ऐसा नहीं कि सिर्फ यूएसटीआर ही ऐसी मांग कर रहा है, बल्कि आईएमएफ भी ऐसी ही मांग उठाने में शामिल हो गया है। बीमा क्षेत्र में सुधार के लिए सरकार को क्या करना चाहिए, इसके लिए आईएमएफ ने एक बड़ा एजेण्डा रखा है। यह ऐसी सिफारिशें करता है जो एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों के पास अपने कामकाज के सम्बन्ध में जो थोड़ी बहुत स्वायत्तता है उसे भी नष्ट कर देगी। आईएमएफ ने सिफारिश की है कि आईआरडीएआई को अधिक शक्तियाँ प्रदान की जाएँ, जिसमें एलआईसी अधिनियम के प्रावधानों और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के सामान्य बीमाकर्ताओं को नियन्त्रित करने वाले सिद्धान्त शामिल हैं। आईएमएफ ने यह भी सुझाव दिया है कि आईआरडीएआई के अधिकार क्षेत्र में निदेशक को हटाने, बोर्ड नियुक्तियों, परिसमापन और एलआईसी और सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बीमाकर्ताओं पर जोखिम-आधारित पर्यवेक्षण की शक्तियाँ शामिल होनी चाहिए।

यह एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों को नष्ट करने का व्यापक एजेण्डा है। एआईआईई हमेशा से चेतावनी

देता रहा है कि वैश्विक वित्त पूंजी एलआईसी को भारत में बचत हासिल करने और उस पर नियन्त्रण करने की अपनी महत्वाकांक्षाओं में सबसे बड़ी बाधा के रूप में देखती है। इसलिए, वह ऐसी नीतियों की मांग करेगी जो एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों को कमजोर, पंगु और अंततः नष्ट कर देगी। सरकार के चरित्र को जानते हुए, यह अमेरिकी साम्राज्यवाद और वैश्विक वित्त पूंजी की मांगों के आगे झुकने के लिए बाध्य है। ऐसी स्थिति में, बीमा कर्मचारियों के पास जवाबी कार्यवाही के अलावा और क्या विकल्प है। एलआईसी एआईआईईए की वैचारिक प्रतिबद्धता है और इस महान संस्था की रक्षा करना सभी बीमा कर्मचारियों का पवित्र कर्तव्य है। एआईआईईए ने 20 मई 2025 को एक दिवसीय हड़ताल के माध्यम से इन हमलों का सामना करने का फैसला किया है। इस हड़ताल को अभूतपूर्व सफल बनाना है ताकि हमारे सभी विरोधियों को चेतावनी दी जा सके कि अगर उन्होंने एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों पर हमला करने का फैसला किया तो उनका क्या होगा। इस हड़ताल को सफल बनाने से सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बीमा उद्योग में कार्यबल को बड़ी चुनौतियों का बहादुरी से सामना करने और उन्हें सफलतापूर्वक पूरा करने के लिए तैयार किया जाएगा।

केवल सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र की बीमा कम्पनी ही हमले की जद में नहीं है। पूरा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र हमले की जद में है। संगठित और असंगठित क्षेत्र के कर्मचारी वेतन में कमी या स्थिरता के कारण भारी कठिनाइयों का सामना कर रहे हैं जबकि कारपोरेट मुनाफा पहले से कहीं अधिक बढ़ रहा है। कृषि क्षेत्र में लगे किसान और मजदूर वास्तव में संकट में हैं। आर्थिक वृद्धि का लाभ अमीर तबकों को मिल रहा है, जिससे सकल घरेलू उत्पाद (जीडीपी) की वृद्धि का दावा बेमानी हो रहा है। विभिन्न क्षेत्रों के मजदूर निजीकरण और अपने कठिन परिश्रम से अर्जित अधिकारों पर हमलों

के खिलाफ लड़ रहे हैं। किसानों से उनकी मांगों पर किए गए वादे पूरे नहीं हो रहे हैं, जिससे किसान आन्दोलन की राह पर चल पड़े हैं। सरकार आंगनबाड़ी, आशा और अन्य योजनाओं में काम करने वालों को मजदूर मानने से इन्कार कर रही है। उन्हें काम और जीवन की अनिश्चित परिस्थितियों में रहना पड़ रहा है। लोगों का ध्यान वास्तविक मुद्दों से हटाने के लिए देश पर शासन करने वाली पार्टी और उसके सहयोगी संगठन समाज को सांप्रदायिक, भाषाई और जातिगत आधार पर बांटने में लगे हैं। संविधान और उसके मूल्यों की खुलेआम धज्जियां उड़ाई जा रही हैं।

इस स्थिति में दस केन्द्रीय ट्रेड यूनियनों, स्वतन्त्र महासंघों जिसमें एआईआईईए और किसान संगठन शामिल हैं, ने 20 मई 2025 को पूरे मजदूर वर्ग को हड़ताल पर बुलाने का फैसला किया है ताकि सरकार को अपनी आर्थिक नीतियों को छोड़ने और अमेरिकी साम्राज्यवाद और वैश्विक वित्त पूंजी के आगे अपनी दासता छोड़ने के लिए मजबूर किया जा सके। मजदूर वर्ग ऐसी नीतियों की मांग करता है जो गरीबी को खत्म करें और सरकार को आर्थिक और सामाजिक न्याय के वितरक के रूप में कार्य करने के लिए मजबूर करें। ऐसा विकल्प संघवाद को मजबूत करने और सांस्कृतिक, धार्मिक और भाषाई विविधता के लिए सम्मान का भी प्रस्ताव करता है। एलआईसी और पीएसजीआई कम्पनियों, दोनों में बीमा कर्मचारियों को न केवल अपने संस्थानों में हड़ताल को सफल बनाना चाहिए बल्कि प्रतिरोध की एक मजबूत ताकत बनाने के लिए पूरे समाज में शिक्षा अभियान भी चलाना चाहिए। यह मजदूर वर्ग के अन्य हिस्सों के साथ एकजुटता बनाने का समय है। केवल ऐसी एकजुटता और साझा संघर्ष ही बीमा कर्मचारियों और उनके महान संस्थानों के हितों की रक्षा कर सकते हैं।

SOLIDARITY AND SUPPORT FOR CUBA

The Cuban Revolution completed 66 years on 1st of January 2025. Ever since the Revolution in 1959, Cuba has met with a belligerent stance from the US government. US imperialism has been trying to sabotage the Revolution right from the time the oppressive regime of Fulgencio Batista was dethroned and Fidel Castro was elevated to the position of Prime Minister in February 1959. The US administration severed all diplomatic ties with Cuba in 1961. From then on, the CIA started implementing a series of destabilizing tactics including over six hundred assassination attempts on Castro, terrorist activities under Operation Mongoose and the Bay of Pigs invasion by right-wing Cuban exiles. In 1962, the Kennedy administration initiated an inhuman blockade against Cuba launching a relentless campaign of starvation and deprivation. That genocidal blockage chokes the island nation to this day. What is the crime of Cuban people? It is that their choice was an alternative model of development which over a period of time has proved superior to the system of capitalist exploitation. Despite the inhumane sanctions and economic blocked, Cuba has made spectacular progress in the field of science and health. Today its human development indices are better than most of the industrialised countries. The Secretariat of AIEA that met at Hyderabad on 12-13th April 2025 expressed its support and solidarity to the brave struggle of the Cuban people. It called upon the insurance employees for the monetary support to the fighting Cuban people as a part of AIEA's international working class solidarity.

AIIEA Secretariat Meeting at Hyderabad

Decides on Campaigns and Agitations Endorses One Day Strike on 20th May 2025

The Secretariat of AIIEA met at Hyderabad on 12-13 April 2025. The primary task before the Secretariat was to take stock of the developments in the insurance industry in the background of the prevailing political and economic situation, at the national and international levels, and come out with appropriate organizational strategies to successfully meet the challenges. The Secretariat congratulated LIC employees throughout the country for the massive success of the One-Hour walk-out strike on 20th February 2025 demanding recruitment in LIC. The meeting also congratulated the employees and officers of PSGI companies for their united and spirited struggle on the demands of immediate wage revision, enhancement of family pension to a uniform rate of 30 per cent and enhancement of management's contribution to NPS from 10 to 14 per cent (without prejudice to the demand for abolition of NPS and its replacement with the 1995 pension scheme).

The meeting underscored the need for more intensified actions in the days to come for realising the long pending demands of the employees.

TRUMP'S ACTIONS – REFLECTION OF CRISIS OF NEO-LIBERALISM

The Secretariat expressed concern over the way the Trump administration was trying to upend the international order. Slogans like 'America First' and 'Make America Great Again' are indicative of the hegemonic aspirations of US imperialism, noted the Secretariat. The craven attitude of the government towards the Trump administration even in the face of the latter's hostile actions against India on tariffs, visas and inhuman deportation of Indian immigrants came in for sharp criticism. At a time when countries like Canada, Mexico, China and the EU are standing up to US threats and preparing their economies to meet the challenges, the submissive attitude of



our government stood in direct contrast to its nationalist pretensions. The Secretariat took strong exceptions to the recent remark in the 2025 National Trade Estimate Report of the US States Trade Representative (USTR) that LIC enjoys unfair competitive advantage due to the Sovereign Guarantee of the Government. The Secretariat was equally critical of the recent IMF-World Bank Report titled Financial Sector Assessment Programme (FSAP) which made an oblique reference to the uneven playing field for private insurance industry in India. Terming these insinuations as unwarranted and unbecoming, the Secretariat felt that the US has made bold to interfere in the internal functioning of our financial system because of the tame surrender of the government to the dictates of the US. The Secretariat noted that the demands of US imperialism to further liberalise India's insurance sector was perfectly in sync with the economic ideology of the present government. The recent Union Budget has fixed a target of Rs. 47,000 crore in the FY 2025-26 to be mobilized from disinvestment of PSUs. Further dilution of government equity from the LIC is an easy option for the government; there are already reports in the media that the government is planning to do this through Offer For Sale (OFS)- a method by which promoters of a company sell shares to the public. There are also moves underway to privatise one of the PSGI companies. The meeting cautioned that the government is likely to introduce a Bill in the monsoon session of Parliament incorporating therein provisions to raise FDI limit to 100%, to

introduce composite licenses, to allow insurers to offer multiple categories of insurance under a single license, to empower IRDAI to specify lower entry capital (not less than Rs.50 crore), to bring down the requirement of Net Owned Funds for foreign re-insurers from the existing Rs.5,000 crore to Rs.1,000 crore and a host of issues portending dangers for public sector insurance industry.

PUBLIC SECTOR DOMINATES INDIAN INSURANCE MARKET

The Secretariat was critical of the move of the government to destabilise India's public sector insurance industry at a time when they are performing admirably well in spite of severe challenges. LIC is the unparalleled leader in the insurance industry housing policies with a combined sum assured of ¹ 60 trillion, a share of around 60% in new business premium, 70% of individual insurance policies, almost 90% in group insurance policies and ¹ 55 trillion in assets under management (for perspective, the AUM of India's entire mutual funds industry is ¹ 67 trillion). The LIC is expected to close the FY 2024-25 with a reasonable growth despite the fact that the economy is beset with a severe crisis. Commending the impressive turnaround made by the PSGI companies, the Secretariat noted with satisfaction that the four PSGI companies have mopped up a premium income of ¹ 95,196.04 crore in the FY 2024-25 compared to ¹ 90,252.13 crore in the previous FY, thereby registering a growth rate of 5.47% which is more than the growth of the private general insurance industry. Merger of the PSGI companies, as

PLATINUM JUBILEE CELEBRATIONS

The Secretariat of the AIEA that met at Hyderabad on 12-13 April 2025 decided to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee of the All India Insurance Employees' Association in a befitting manner. The AIEA would enter into its 75th Year on 1st July 2025. Platinum Jubilee celebration for a trade union is a rare milestone and deserves unadulterated celebration. The celebration has to be a vibrant mix of activities that honour the legacy, energize the present and inspire future generations. It was decided that all units should organize a grand Platinum Jubilee Inauguration Ceremony on 1st of July 2025 by way of hoisting of AIEA flag followed by the Pledge to strengthen AIEA. While Divisional/ Zonal Units can plan activities according to their convenience, the year-long celebrations should include felicitation of past leaders, memorial lecture series, seminars and workshops, panel discussions, archives exhibition, blood donation camps, health camps, cultural evenings, family gatherings or picnics, social media campaigns, podcast series featuring AIEA history, oral testimonies, current challenges etc. The Secretariat decided to float a "Logo Designing Competition" among our members for the Platinum Jubilee Year of AIEA, the details of which will be communicated shortly. It was decided to bring literature relating to the glorious struggles and successes of the AIEA in its 75 years of glorious history. It is also decided to take up an educative campaign to give ideological orientation to the younger cadres of the organization.

demand by AIIEA, would go a long way in further enhancing the performance of these companies, felt the Secretariat. The secretariat termed the silence of the government on the merger issue of PSGI companies as duplicitous. The meeting called upon the employees to call out the double-standard of the government on the issue of merger of public sector banks and Regional Rural Banks (One State One RRB) on the one hand and that of PSGI companies on the other. If PSB merger and One State One RRB are intended to improve operational efficiency and usher in economies of scale, how can the stand be different in respect of PSGI companies; questioned the Secretariat. The Secretariat was of the firm understanding that genuine demands of employees of PSGI companies like revision of wages, enhancement of family pension to a uniform rate of 30 per cent and enhancement of management's contribution to NPS from 10 to 14 per cent (without prejudice to the demand for abolition of NPS and its replacement with the 1995 pension scheme) cannot brook any delay. Any delay on these issues would invite industrial unrest, warned the Secretariat.

The Secretariat had a detailed discussion on the changed business model and change in approach of LIC management in the post IPO period and decided to question these through serious agitations. The Secretariat called upon the employees to intensify their campaign against FDI hike in insurance up to 100%, further dilution of government equity from the LIC, privatization of PSUs in general and privatization of PSGI companies in particular, on the demand of merger of PSGI companies,

on the demand of recruitment in LIC and the unilateral approach of the management on issues pertaining to the institution and the employees.

ECONOMIC GROWTH AND RISING INEQUALITIES

The Secretariat had a dispassionate analysis of the state of the economy and came to the understanding that growing poverty, unemployment, joblessness and rising inequalities are acute manifestations of the failure of the neoliberal policies. Having miserably failed in the economy front and unable to meet the aspirations of the people, the ruling class in India was now utilizing communalism as a political mobilization strategy to divert the attention of the people from real issues and thereby remain entrenched in political power. The meeting felt that unemployment and the growing miseries of the people provided the class context in which the threat of communalism was spreading and therefore there was a need to integrate the struggle against neoliberalism with the struggle to protect the unity of the people irrespective of caste, creed and religion. The meeting felt that growing authoritarianism, fast erosion in the autonomy of constitutional bodies, savage attack on principles of federalism and unbridled powers to corporates at the expense of the workers are serious challenges that need to be countered through a broad mobilization of the workers. The meeting was critical of the four Labour Codes which are bound to strip the workers of their hard-earned rights like minimum wages, job security and collective bargaining. The meeting was unanimous in

its condemnation of the draconian laws like UAPA and PMLA



Conference Logo unveiled: The Logo of the 27th Platinum Jubilee Year Conference of AIIEA was unveiled by **Com. V. Ramesh, President AIIEA** during the Secretariat meeting.

The Secretariat placed on record its gratitude to **Com. Kishore Bit** (a retired Comrade from the state of Odisha), **Com. Rabi Narayan Mallick** (former President EZIEA from Cuttack) and **Com. Ramu** of Kriya Prakashana, Bengaluru for conceptualizing, designing and developing the logo.

which were being misused to criminalise dissent including workers' protests. The meeting sought to draw attention of the employees to Section 111 of the recently enacted Bharatiya Nyay Samhita which brands collective worker actions as "organized crime" leading to arrests and repression. The Secretariat was unanimous in its understanding that all the draconian laws were intended to further help the profit maximization of the capitalists while imposing further burdens on the working people already groaning under the burden of price rise, unemployment, job losses and mounting debt.

SECRETARIAT ENDORSES THE CALL FOR ONE DAY STRIKE ON 25TH MAY 2025

In this context, the meeting noted with satisfaction that the joint platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral National Federations/ Associations representing all sections of the working people of our country

held a **National Convention of Workers on 18th March, 2025 at New Delhi** against the anti-labour and neo-liberal economic policies pursued by the BJP led NDA government. [The AIIEA was represented by Coms. V. Ramesh, President; Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary; H.I. Bhatt, Joint Secretary, Bhanu Pratap Singh and Raghunandan Prasad (both from NZIEA headquarters)]. *This national Convention has given a call for a countrywide General Strike on 20th of May 2025 on a 17 point Charter of Demands which includes, among other issues, putting a halt to further FDI hike in insurance, stopping privatization of public sector enterprises, removal of all ceilings on payment and eligibility of Bonus, Provident Fund and increases quantum of Gratuity; scrapping NPS/UPS and restoration of the Old Pension Scheme, no casualization of work in any form like Outsourcing, Fixed Term Employment, Apprentices, Trainees etc. and*

9TH GENERAL CONFERENCE OF AIIPA

The 9th General Conference of All India Pensioners' Association will be held at Mysore from June 2-4, 2025. Around 500 delegates from all over the country are expected to participate in the conference. The ICPA, Mysore which has taken up the responsibility of hosting this conference is making all efforts for its successful conduct.

A Reception Committee was formed on 2nd March 2025 in a meeting held at Ganabharathi Sangeetha Sabha Hall at Kuvempunagar, Mysore with participation of scores of fraternal organisations belonging to pensioners and trade unions.

The meeting was attended by more than 100 comrades representing all strata of TUs and Pensioners. The meeting was presided over by a Presidium comprising of Coms. BS Mahadevaiah, President, ICPA, Mysore Division and Ramachandra Rao, President, GIPA, Bangalore Region. Com AN Jagadish, Vice President, ICPA welcomed the gathering. Smt. Sabiha Bhoomi Gowda, former Vice Chancellor, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi University for Women, Vijayapura was the chief guest.

Com M. Kunhikrishnan General Secretary, AIIPA inaugurated the meeting for formation of Reception Committee. In his brief address, he referred to the various pending issues

of insurance pensioners, neo liberal policies pursued by the Union government, its apathy to pensioners and senior citizens, neglect to senior citizens belonging to unorganised sectors, delay in granting enhanced family pension to PSGI pensioners etc. He called upon all pensioners' organisations to join together with other masses of in - service employees and strengthen united struggles to achieve the demand of restoration of Old Pension Scheme - Defined Benefit Pension Scheme.

Com CR Krishnamurthy, Central Committee Member, AIIPA moved a panel of Reception Committee, which was adopted by the house unanimously. Smt. Sabiha Bhoomi Gowda, Former Vice Chancellor, Karnataka State Akkamahadevi University for Women, Vijayapura was elected as Chairperson. Com B S Mahadevaiah, President ICPA, Mysore Division, Com N P Umapathi, General Secretary, GIPA, Bangalore Region. Com S SNagesh, General Secretary, ICEU, Mysore Division,

Com N K Balaji Rao, General Secretary, CITU, Mysore District Committee were elected as Vice-Chairpersons and Com S.Sridhara, General Secretary, ICPA, Mysore Division was elected as Convenor. 20 members from fraternal organisations were also elected to the Reception Committee.

the most important of all, scrapping of the four labour codes.

Insurance employees under the banner of the AIIEA are already in struggle on these issues. The coming together of a broad coalition of trade unions under the joint platform and putting up a united struggle is naturally a welcome development. The struggle and voice of insurance employees will naturally get a larger amplification because of the development of joint struggle on precisely the same set of issues on which we are already in struggle. **The Secretariat therefore unanimously decided that employees in LIC and PSGI companies will join this One Day Countrywide General Strike on 20th of May 2025 and called upon insurance employees to make this strike action a historic success.**

The Secretariat also authorized the headquarters of the AIIEA to explore the

possibilities of a joint struggle with like minded trade unions across the financial sector to make the strike action truly historic. The meeting of the Secretariat called upon the employees to start preparations for the strike action in right earnest.

The Secretariat of the AIIEA held detailed discussions on issues pertaining to the organization, the Platinum Jubilee Year Celebrations of AIIEA from July 2025 to June 2026, the 27th General Conference of AIIEA at Bhubaneswar and a host of other issues. The AIIEA will come out with detailed circular on all these issues shortly. In the meanwhile, we request our units and members to take the message of the Secretariat to all our members and start preparations in a big way for the all-out success of the ensuing 20th May 2025 Countrywide General Strike.



A logo designed to commemorate the conference was released by Smt Sabiha Bhoomi Gowda. Speaking on the occasion, she stressed the need for involving women in day today functioning of the organisations, be it that of pensioners or in-service employees. She referred to various issues confronted by workers in unorganised sector, particularly by women workers. She wholeheartedly accepted the post of Chairperson and extended her full cooperation and support for the success of the 9th conference of AIIPA to be held at Mysore.

The Reception Committee decided to organize two seminars on the issues of unemployment and universal social security. Accordingly, the seminar on the subject “Unemployment, under-employment and jobless growth” will

be held on 26th April 2025. This seminar will be presided over by the Reception Committee Chairperson, Smt Sabiha Bhoomi Gowda and will have Coms Meenakshi Sundaram, General Secretary, CITU, Karnataka, H>S.Sunanda, General Secretary, Karnataka Anganwadi Workers Union and S.S.Nagesh, General Secretary, ICEU, Mysore Division.

The Seminar on Universal Social Security is planned for 10th May 2025 which will have Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIIEA as the chief speaker.

The ICPA, Mysore Division is making all efforts to popularize the peoples issue and make the 9th General Conference a great success.

A delegation of the All India Insurance Pensioners' Association consisting of its President Satanjib Das, General Secretary M. Kunhikrishnan and Vice President J

Gurmurthy met Shri P. K. Goel, IAS, Joint Secretary, Department of financial Services (DFS) at his office at New Delhi and held discussion with him on some of the very pressing issues of the insurance pensioners. The discussion took place in a very cordial atmosphere. The gist of the discussion is as follows:

1. Enhancement of family pension to PSGIC pensioners.

The delegation pointed out that the AIIPA had been continuously representing the issue of increasing the family pension at a uniform rate of 30% of the last pay drawn sans ceiling. Though this benefit has been provided to the pensioners of all Public Sector Financial Institutions including LIC of India, the pensioners of PSGI Companies have been left out. This amounts to blatant discrimination. The delegation submitted that when on 2nd August, 2023 a delegation of the AIIPA met Hon'ble Union Finance Minister seeking her personal intervention to provide this benefit to the Public Sector Insurance pensioners, it was given the impression that the benefit would be provided soon to the pensioners of both LIC of India and PSGI Companies. But the Government notification dated 11th September, 2023 extended the benefit to the LIC pensioners leaving out the PSGIC pensioners despite the fact that the governing body of the GIPSA had recommended to the Government to provide this benefit to the pensioners of the PSGI companies as far back as in December, 2021. Consequently, about 16,000 family pensioners of PSGI Companies are passing their days in dire straits. The delegation submitted that the settlement of this vital issue brooks no further delay and urged upon the Joint Secretary to take necessary steps to accord sanction for grant of family pension at a uniform rate of 30% to the PSGIC pensioners at the earliest.

Responding to our submission the Joint Secretary, DFS said that the Government has been positively considering the issue and assured the delegation of a positive outcome soon. When the delegation urged for an early

AIIPA meets Joint Secretary Dept of Financial Services

notification on this issue, he said that he would consider the matter.

2. Periodical updation of pension.

The delegation submitted that the Pension Schemes in the Public Sector Insurance Industry (both LIC and PSGI Companies) were introduced in 1995. These schemes were formulated on the basis of Central Civil Service Pension Rules. But the improvements that came to the Central Civil Service Pensioners on the recommendation of Pay Commission providing Pension Updataion consequent to the pay revision of the in-service employees have not been extended to the Pensioners of LIC and PSGI companies. Such an updation scheme was also extended to Reserve Bank of India pensioners later, though in a different format. Unfortunately, however, this benefit is being denied to the pensioners of the Public Sector Insurance Industry despite repeated representations. As a result, the basic pension of the pensioners of LIC and PSGI Companies remain stagnant. This has created serious distortion, anomaly and discrimination. The delegation, therefore, requested the Joint Secretary to review the matter and introduce a scheme for periodical updation of pension in PS insurance industry as available to the pensioners of Central Civil Services and Reserve Bank of India.

The Joint Secretary listened patiently to our submission but did not commit anything. He remarked that this demand needs to be backed by the financial strength of Institution and requires deeper consideration.

3. Full DA neutralization rate to the pre-August, 1997 Pensioners and Family Pensioners.

The delegation submitted that the pensioners who retired from the services of the LIC and PSGI Companies prior to 1st August, 1997 are continued to be denied 100% percent DA neutralisation rate while those retired after this date are getting this benefit. This is highly discriminatory. The delegation pointed out that in the Public Sector Banks full neutralisation of DA is being provided to all pensioners and family pensioners. The delegation also pointed

out that as far back as in November, 2001 LIC Board recommended to the Government to provide this benefit to the pre-August, 1997 pensioners. But unfortunately, this issue still remains unresolved. The delegation, therefore, urged upon him to extend this benefit to the affected pensioners and family pensioners of the LIC and PSGI Companies. The joint secretary assured to look into the matter.

4. OMOP to the left out TAC employees.

The delegation submitted that a small number of the erstwhile Tariff Advisory Committee employees are yet to be given one more option to join the 1995 pension scheme. GIPSA recommendation in this regard is pending with DFS for several years. The delegation urged upon the Joint Secretary to consider the matter favourably as the number of the employees are very small. The Joint Secretary assured to consider the matter.

Besides the above issues, the delegation

also placed before the following matters for consideration:

a) Number of years of qualifying service required for full pension for pensioners of LIC and PSGI Companies should be at par with Central Government and RBI pensioners.

b) Last drawn pay to determine basic pension should be revised identical to Central Civil Service Pensioners.

c) Additional pension/ family pension @ 20% and more on attaining 80 years of age as available to Central Government pensioners.

Meeting with Chief Executive, GIPSA.

Later in the day, the delegation met Smt. Madhumita Jena, Chief Executive, GIPSA in her office and apprised her of the discussion we had with the Joint Secretary, DFS on the issue of enhancement of the family pension to the PSGIC pensioners. The delegation requested her to ensure that the GIPSA pursues the issue vigorously for an early notification.

Group Mediclaim Policy for 2025-26 AIIPA WRITES TO LIC CEO ON 4/4/2025

“The Circular regarding renewal of Group Mediclaim Policy for the year 2025-26 was issued by the Central office on 3rd April, 2025. But, we are dismayed by the fact that none of the issues raised by our Association for incorporation in the policy have been addressed and included. In this regard, we like to refer to the representation dated 17th February, 2025 we submitted to you. The issues we raised are the following:

1. Cadre Sum Assured to be enhanced to Rs. 20 lakhs / Rs.30 lakhs with subsidy to the extent of 75% in view of the price escalation for treatment, procedures and medicines.
2. Provisions to cover the expenses for dental treatment and also for reimbursement of cost of hearing aids and other age related treatments.
3. Provision to cover the expenses incurred for all types of robotic surgeries.

In that representation we also referred to the discussion our Association had with the ED (Personnel) on 24th May, 2024 in the course of which the latter responded positively to some of the issues including the coverage of expenses for all types of robotics surgeries. But to our

utter disappointment, we find that the renewed Group Mediclaim Policy has not incorporated any of the issues mentioned above. On the other hand, the premium has been increased on an average by 8.3%. This is most unfortunate and would put heavier burdens on the pensioners and family pensioners who are also made to bear the brunt of 18% GST.

We, therefore, earnestly request you to take immediate steps to incorporate the issues we raised in the Group Mediclaim Policy of the current year and relieve the pensioners and family pensioners of the burden of GST.

We also request you to recall our earlier representations to you to provide the Cash Medical Benefit to cover the domiciliary medical expenses of the pensioners and family pensioners. This is in vogue in RBI and Central Civil Services. ED (Personnel) in course of the discussion held on 24th May, 2024 assured a positive consideration of the matter. But nothing came about so far.

We would request you to consider the matter urgently and provide this benefit to the pensioners and family pensioners of LIC without further loss of time.”

PUBLIC SECTOR INSURERS OUTPERFORM PRIVATE PLAYERS - A STRONG CASE FOR WAGE REVISION

G.Anand

The Indian general insurance sector has witnessed a historic turnaround in 2024-25, with Public Sector General Insurance Companies outpacing their private counterparts for the first time in over a decade. Earlier in 2009 and 2014 the PSGI companies outpace the growth of Private General insurance companies by a small decimal percentage. This remarkable achievement not only highlights the resilience of these state-owned insurers but also underscores the dedication of their employees – who have consistently delivered excellence despite challenges. With such stellar performance, it is time to recognise their contributions through a fair and timely wage revision

PSGI Companies

Script History:

The combined Gross Direct Premium Income (GDPI) of the four PSGI companies – National Insurance, New India Assurance, Oriental Insurance and United India Insurance grew by 5.47% in 2024-2025, surpassing the 5.03% growth of private insurers (Excluding SAHI Companies). This is the first time that since 2001 (barring 2009, 2014 wherein the PSGI companies outpace the private insurance companies by a small decimal percentage) that PSGIs have outperformed private players, marking a significant milestone in India's insurance sector.

National Insurance recorded the highest growth

of 10.28% compared to the industry's average growth rate of 6.2% among all PSGIs, expanding its market share from 5.22% to 5.42%

Oriental Insurance grew at 8.41% compared to the industry's average growth rate of 6.2%, further consolidating its position and increasing its market share from 6.31 to 6.45%

New India Assurance maintained its leadership position among all General Insurance Companies (including Private and SAHI) with a 12.56 market share continuing its 55 year dominance.

United India Insurance crossed the 20000 crore GDPI mark becoming only the second PSGI to achieve this feat.

Employees are the Driving Force behind success:

This exceptional performance did not happen by chance. It is the result of relentless efforts by thousands of insurance employees who have worked tirelessly – often under demanding conditions – to strengthen these institutions. From underwriters and claim handlers to marketing force and support staff, every employee has played a crucial role in this turnaround.

Yet, despite their contributions, wage revision for public sector insurance employees have been delayed, unlike their counterparts in banking and other sectors. The last wage settlement was implemented after prolonged negotia-

tions and employees have been awaiting the next revision amid rising inflation and economic pressures.

Why a wage revision is justified:

When PSGI companies deliver growth surpassing private players, it is only fair that employees share in the success has to be compensated. Competitive salaries are essential to retain skilled professionals who might otherwise migrate to private insurers or fintech firms. Recognising hard work through fair wages boosts employee morale, leading to even better performance. With private insurers offering attractive packages, wage revisions are necessary to maintain parity and attract talent.

Time for Recognition:

The 2024-2025 performance of PSGI companies is a testament to what can be achieved when dedicated employees and strong institutions work together. However, financial success must translate into employee welfare. The government and management must act swiftly to ensure a fair and timely wage revision – one that reflects the important role insurance employees play in safeguarding India's economic growth.

After all, if the employees can deliver record growth, shouldn't they also receive their rightful due?

(Writer is Vice-President, AIIEA)

The significance of May Day & The Struggle ahead

In the neo liberal era, even the basic rights workers won through years of struggles are denied by the Capitalist class. Ruling classes around the world, curtail the rights of workers and intensify their exploitation in their pursuit of profits. In India, the Labour Codes are nothing but the designs of the neo-liberal government to exploit the workers further without any hurdles, to the satisfaction of the Corporates and the big business. These Labour Codes have to be prevented from implementation. In these circumstances, the May day and the nation-wide struggle on 20th of May 2025, assume importance.



Image courtesy:..facebook.com/thomasisaaq/f

S.Sivasubramanian, Treasurer, SCZIEF

On May 1 this year, the Working Class is going to celebrate the 136th May Day. May day signifies the struggles and the sacrifices the working class had to make to break the oppression of the Capital class. It was because of the struggles and sacrifices, sometimes even their lives, the working class could get some minimum basic rights including the rights on working hours and minimum wages. In the neo liberal era, even those basic rights won through struggles are denied by the Capital class. Ruling classes around the world, curtail the rights of workers and intensify their exploitation in their pursuit of profits.

Attacks throughout the world

This was seen in Chile during the period of Pinochet. The US seen this during the periods of Reagon and the UK during the periods of Thatcher. The attack on the working class is carried out in the name of Labour Law Reforms. According to a World Bank study, between 2007 and 2017,

a total of 99 countries adopted labour law reforms. And then major reforms were sought to be implemented during the period of COVID. Many of the companies were allowed to dismiss or walkout of the contract without any penalty.

The El Khomi act of 2016 passed in France, simplified "dismissals for economic reasons". The Act also allows for wage cuts and additional working hours when a firm faces economic difficulties. Now the workers are agitating against pension reforms brought out by Macron. Similar situation is prevailing in many of the countries of Europe. In Greece, the length of the notice period is reduced and the severance payment reduced. In Italy, the definition of unfair dismissal was revised and its consequences eased. In UK, the reforms since 2010 have shifted the pattern of labour market policies further towards more flexibility and less protection.

Labour Codes - An intensified attack on the Labour

Ten years of Modi led BJP government has seen a

relentless attack on the lives and livelihoods of the Working Class of this country. The hardwon rights of the workers are being curtailed/snatched away by the subsequent neo-liberal regimes headed by Modi. To further satisfy the corporates and the big business to earn more and more profits at the cost of labour, there is an intensified attack in the form of Labour Codes. The Modi government merged 29 existing labour laws in to four labour codes.

The Code on Wages was passed in the Parliament in August 2019. The Industrial Relations Code, the Code on Social Security and the Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions - all these were passed on September 22 and 23, 2020 in the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha respectively.

The four labour codes signify a clear neo-liberal economic shift and are bound to undermine/snatch away the hardwon rights of the Working Class.

Curtailing Trade Unions/ Banning Strikes

The labour codes grant arbitrary power to the Registrar of Trade Unions to grant or revoke the registration of Trade Unions. The Factory Act, which is within the code raises the threshold for the number of workers in a factory/company for the applicability of labour laws. The Labour Codes potentially exclude about 75% of factories/companies from the coverage of labour laws. In the year 2024, the struggle of the workers of Samsung in Sriperumbudur near Chennai to form a Trade Union of their own is to be remembered here.

The new Labour Codes, as per their provisions, tend to ban strikes by the workers terming them illegal. Just before the introduction of the labour codes, the government enacted the Essential Defence Services Act in 2020 through the ordinance route. This not only prohibits strikes by civilian defence service employees but also labels strikes as a “criminal act” with provisions even for the imprisonment of participants.

The Labour Codes empower the labour authorities to extend the Essential Defence Services Act (EDSA) to any other industry/establishment, in addition to the Essential Services Maintenance Act (ESMA). In the Industrial Relations Code, stringent conditions for strike are outlined, requiring a 60 day advance notice, preventing strikes if the dispute is admitted for conciliation, and imposing a 60 day prohibition on strikes after conciliation, among other restrictions. The code imposes fine on Trade Unions, Office bearers and members for illegal strike, helping, abetting or continuing strike and for failing to submit

required returns, submitting false information, or not serving notices as per the code. Serving of the notice of strike leads to conciliation, and strike pending conciliation is deemed illegal attracting punishments. The new laws brought in by the Modi government, namely, Bharatiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS), Bharatiya Nagarik Suraksha Sanhita (BNSS) and Bharatiya Saakshya Adhiniyam (BSA) establish a legislative framework that criminalises even protest demonstrations.

The Labour Codes grant powers to the Centre and the States to formulate rules within their jurisdictions extending the working hours upto 12. This opens the door for the employers to exploit the working class of this country. The Labour Codes, by introducing fixed term employment and encouraging it, throws the biggest challenge of making post retirement social security irrelevant. Pension and other social security provisions which are available post retirement as of now will be thrown to the winds pushing the lives of crores of workers who avail these benefits in to pains.

Concessions galore to the employers

The four labour codes provide a lot of concessions to the employers/companies diluting the existing provisions under various acts. The Jan Vishwas Act of 2023 decriminalised 180 provisions across 41 legislations through which imprisonment clauses for violations or non-compliance are removed along with replacing the term ‘fine’ with ‘penalty’.

The Labour Codes allow employers to pay reduced fines for violations through the process of ‘Compounding of offences’ instead of imprisonment. When it is

compounded, the Court is requested to discharge the accused. Codes provide for an advisory of the Inspector cum facilitator to the employers to rectify the offences committed and avoid payment of even fine also.

The debate on Working hours and the reality

In India, in the neo-liberal environment today, which is being promoted by the government itself, we could observe open discussions on extending the working hours of the workers. Narayan Moorthy, co- founder of Infosys, has, some time back expressed his views on work hours, advocating for a 70 hour workweek to boost India’s global competitiveness, citing his own long working hours as an example. L&T Chairman S.N.Subrahmanyan advocated for a 90 hour workweek including working on Sundays. During an internal company meeting, Subramanian expressed regret at not being able to make employees work on Sundays and suggested that working 90 hours a week was key to success. These are all a few examples how the Corporates are waiting for the opportunity to implement their agenda.

The neo-liberal Modi government promptly responds to the aspirations of the Corporates. Modi’s government grants the appropriate governments the authority to dilute the concept of an eight hour work day, at the behest of the Capital class. The spread over time specified in the Factories Act was initially ten and a half hours. Now it has been extended to twelve hours. Modi government eliminated the fixed weekly holiday on the first Day of the week, that is Sunday, through the Occupational Safety Health

and Working Conditions Code, granting the appropriate government the power to deny this right to the workers.

According to the latest data from the ILO, in 2023, Indians work an average of 47.7 hours per week. Americans work roughly 36.4 hours a week, South Koreans 37.9 hours, Russians 37.6 hours, United Kingdom 36 hours and Germany 37 hours. According to the ILO report, India ranks 5th among the countries with the longest working hours in the world. Only Gambia, Mongolia, Maldives and Qatar are the countries where workers have average working hours longer than India.

The Labour Codes are nothing but the designs of

the neo-liberal government to exploit the workers further without any hurdles to the satisfaction of the Corporates and the big business. These Labour Codes have to be prevented from implementation.

The struggle ahead

In these circumstances, the May day and the nationwide struggle on 20th of May 2025, the call for which was given by the National Convention of Workers assume importance.

The National Convention of Workers held in March 2025 has given a call for a nationwide strike on 20th May 2025. Urging all the workers to join the movement and the national strike on that day, the statement issued by the

Convention also said that the implementation of Labour Codes must be stalled and decisively defeated through countrywide united struggles of defiance and resistance by the Working Class both at national level united actions and also through united sectoral resistance.

The May Day this year and the strike on 20th May 2025 reminds the working class of this country the need to remain united and defeat the ill designs of the government in the form of Labour Codes.



20 मई 2025 की हड़ताल को मई दिवस का ताप दो

गीता शान्त

किसी भी और समय से भारत के श्रमिक वर्ग को आज याद करने की ज़रूरत है कि मई दिवस की शहादतें किसी राष्ट्र, धर्म, जाति, नस्ल, रंग, भाषा, लिंग की श्रेष्ठता या दोयमता सिद्ध करने के लिए नहीं दी गई थीं। ये शहादतें पूरी दुनिया के श्रमिक वर्ग के शोषण के खिलाफ जारी संघर्ष के दौरान हुई थीं।

श्रमिकों के अथाह शोषण के वैश्विक साम्राज्य का मुकाबला दुनिया के मजदूरों एक हो के ऐलान के साथ करने के दर्शन ने दुनियाभर के पूँजीपतियों की चूल्हें हिला दी थीं। 1 मई 1886 को शिकागो में हुई सभा और उसके बाद का सम्पूर्ण घटनाक्रम इसी संघर्ष का हिस्सा था। पूँजीपतियों ने प्रयास किया कि श्रमिक नेताओं को झूठे मुकदमों में फंसाकर, फांसीपर चढ़वाकर उस आवाज़ को दबा दिया जाये। लेकिन पूँजीपति वर्ग यह नहीं समझ पाया कि श्रमिक वर्ग का यही तो क्रांतिकारी चरित्र है कि वह खोकर पाने के संघर्ष में यत्नीन रखता है।

मई दिवस की शहादतों के बाद

श्रमिकों का संघर्ष और तेज़ व व्यापक होता हुआ पूरे विश्वमें फैल गया। अथाह कुर्बानियों के पश्चात् जीत हासिल हुई जिससे काम के अधिकतम घण्टे, कार्यस्थल पर सुरक्षा प्रबन्ध, परिभाषित वेतन, अवकाश व सामाजिक सुरक्षा जैसे अधिकार कानूनी रूपसे हासिल किये गये।

श्रमिक वर्ग को सदा याद रखना चाहिए कि श्रमिक व पूँजीपति के हित परस्पर विरोधी होते हैं। पूँजी के बढ़ाने अर्थात् मुनाफे के लिए पूँजीपतिको श्रमिक चाहिए तोपर उस पर खर्च होनेवाला हर पैसा उसे अपना नुकसान लगता है इसलिए श्रमिकों की इतनी बड़ी जीतको पचा पाना पूँजीपतियों के

लिए सम्भव न था।

श्रमिक वर्ग से निपटने के लिए उसने अपने समस्त संसाधनों मुख्यतः पूँजीपोषित राजनैतिक दलों व मीडियातन्त्र की मदद से बहुत योजनाबद्ध तरीके से श्रमिक वर्ग को राष्ट्र, धर्म, जाति, भाषा, नस्ल आदि में विभाजित करनेमें जो सफलता पाई है उसने मई दिवस के मुख्य आधार दुनिया के मेहनतकशों एक हो तहस-नहस कर दिया है। इसविभाजन ने लगभग दुनियाभर के श्रमिकोंका पुनः शोषण के दल-दलमें धकेल दिया है।

एक श्रमिक जैसे ही अपने आपको सार्वजनिक जीवन में श्रमिक की बजाय हिन्दू, मुसलमान, जैन, सिक्ख, ईसाई,

When the Capitalists, for their profit, go anywhere, strike deals of any kind with anybody, why we, the Workers be divided into caste, religion, language, country, race etc., and destroy our lives? To stop this destruction, let us imbibe the energy of May Day, and of the slogan, 'Workers of the World Unite' and surge forward towards May 20th Strike.

ब्राह्मण, बनिया, दलित, शेख, पठान... कुछ भी मानने लगता है उसी पल एक श्रमिक के रूपमें उसके हासिल अधिकार मुट्ठीसरेतकी तरह फिसल जाते हैं और वह शोषण की अनन्त गुफामें प्रवेश कर जाता है।

हम अपने चारों तरफ यही देख रहे हैं...

- * काम के घण्टे 16.18 हो चुके हैं। कामकरते-करते लोग कार्यस्थल पर मर रहे हैं।
- * कार्यस्थलों के सुरक्षा प्रबन्ध तिरोहित हो रहे हैं, इनके अभाव में प्रतिवर्ष लाखों मजदूर हादसों से मर जाते हैं।
- * 70: से ज़्यादा श्रमिक बिना किसी अनुबन्ध से काम कर रहे हैं अर्थात् परिभाषित वेतन व अवकाश की अवधारणा वजूद खोती जा रही है।
- * पेंशन, पी.एफ., ग्रेच्युटी आदि जैसे सामाजिक सुरक्षा प्रबन्ध से करोड़ों श्रमिक वंचित हैं।

अर्थात् मई दिवस की सभी उपलब्धियाँ विदाई बेला में प्रवेश कर चुकी हैं।

श्रमिक वर्ग की एकता को तोड़ने में पाई सफलता ने ही सत्ताको यह साहस दिया है कि सारे श्रम कानूनों को समाप्त कर के ऐसी चार श्रम संहितायें प्रस्तुत करे जो श्रमिकों को संगठन बनाने तक के अधिकार से वंचित दें और पूँजीपतियों का कानूनी तौर पर अपराध की श्रेणी में आनेवाले तमाम कृत्यों से बरी कर दे।

ये श्रम संहितायें श्रमिकों को गुलामों में तब्दील करने का दस्तावेज़ है।

गुलाम शब्द कुछ अतिशयोक्ति भरा लगता है, लेकिन महसूस कर के देखना चाहिए कि-

- * एक भी साप्ताहिक अवकाश तक के बिना नौकरी ? एक भी त्यौहार की छुट्टी नहीं ? सरकारी/सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र में आज लगभग : संविदा/ठेका/दिहाड़ीवाले लोगोंको सार्वजनिक व साप्ताहिक अवकाश का पैसा नहीं मिलता है। कोई अपनी ज़रूरत पर छुट्टी लेनी पड़ी तब तो वेतन कटना ही है।

क्या एक सभ्य संवैधानिक समाज में कार्य की यह मानवीय परिस्थिति है ?

- * अपनी या परिवार में किसी की थोड़ी-सी लम्बी बीमारी के लिये ली गई छुट्टी (भले ही बिना वेतन हो) नौकरी से ही छुट्टी करवा देती है।

* तमाम निजी संस्थानोंमें शौचालय जाने की संख्या व समय निर्धारित है उससे ज़्यादा बार या ज़्यादा समय लगने पर कार्यवाही हो जाती है।

ऐसी तमाम शर्तों से जूझती 70% से अधिक श्रम शक्ति क्या गुलामों से बेहतर कही जा सकती है ?

देश के समस्त श्रमिक संगठनों (ऑकड़ को छोड़कर)ने भारत के श्रमिकों को गुलामों में तब्दील न होने देते और मई दिवस की सभी उपलब्धियों को वापस खींचलाने के उद्देश्य से मई को एक शानदार हड़ताल का निर्णय लिया है।

इस हड़ताल में करोड़ों श्रमिकों की भागीदारी, श्रमिक एकता की ओर एक बड़ा कदम होगी, यही मई दिवस के शहीदों के प्रति हमारी सच्ची श्रद्धांजलि होगी।

मई की हड़ताल हम बीमा कर्मचारियों के लिए इसलिए विशेष महत्व की है कि बीमा क्षेत्र में 100% ऊईल व बीमा कानून संशोधन विधेयक का विरोध इस हड़ताल का एक महत्वपूर्ण बिन्दु है। करोड़ों साथियों द्वारा उठाया जानेवाला यह बिन्दु निश्चित रूप से हमारे उद्योग के लिए रक्षा कवच सिद्ध होगा।

इसके अतिरिक्त स्थायी भर्तियों (सभी विभागों में) व पुरानी पेंशन बहाली की माँग हमारे संघर्षों में सहायक है।

इस हड़ताल द्वारा महंगाई व बेरोजगारी के खिलाफ उठनेवाले स्वर हमारे उद्योग की प्राथमिक आवश्यकता हैं क्योंकि यदि लोगों के पास दीर्घ अवधि की बचत योग्य आय नहीं होगी तो बीमा बिकेगा कैसे ?

कुल मिलाकर यह हड़ताल एक अवसर है इस देश के पूँजीपतियों व उसकी कठपुतली सरकार को यह बताने का कि यह देश केवल तुम्हारा नहीं हमारा भी है।

हम श्रमिकों को समझना है कि जब पूँजीपति जाति, धर्म, राष्ट्र, भाषा, नस्ल आदि किसी में भी बाँटे बिना अपने मुनाफों के लिए कही भी जाते हैं, सौदे-समझौते करते हैं तो हम श्रमिक इस खाँचों में बाँटकर अपना जीवन क्यों तबाह करते हैं ?

इस तबाही को रोकने के लिए मई की हड़ताल को मई दिवस की मुख्य ऊर्जा दुनिया के मेहनतकशों एक हो का ताप देते हुए सफल करने की ओर बढ़ो...

- Gita Shant, General Secretary,
Bareilly Division



Smashing global trade norms, Donald Trump on April 2, 2025 announced sweeping tariff measures against major trading partners. Trump imposed a baseline 10 percent tariff on imports and targeted dozens of countries with higher “reciprocal” tariffs that were deemed to have unfair trade barriers. These included a 34% tariff on imports from China, 20% on the European Union, and 27% on India, 46% in Vietnam, 25% in South Korea, 24% in Japan. While the universal a baseline 10 % tariff was supposed to take effect on April 5, reciprocal” was set to begin on April 9, 2025. Trump’s reciprocal tariff signals his commitment to economic protectionism, a cornerstone of his “America First” and Make America Great Again (MAGA) policies, which have pushed the entire world into a quagmire of unpredictability that could reset the ground rules of the global economy.

However, Trump’s “Liberation Day” tariffs came under their first major legal challenge on April 15 in the U.S. Court of International Trade brought by a libertarian public-interest firm that argues the president overstepped his authority. Jeffrey Schwab, senior counsel at Liberty Justice Centre, which is leading

Trump's 'Beggar thy neighbour' policies

Dr Santosh Kumar Mohapatra
President of CDIEA, Cuttack

the lawsuit, said, "Our system is not set up so that one person in the system can have the power to impose taxes across the world economy.

Though, the U.S. has been considered as the greatest champion of free trade and the chief architect of globalisation since the middle of the 20th century, it enforces that policy which enhances its imperialistic hegemony— exerting its political, economic, and military influence beyond its borders, often through means that are perceived as exploitative or domineering. Trump's approach is more a power grab than a trade policy – one forcing his capricious, malicious and erratic decisions on America without the consent of Congress. According to Nobel laureate, Michael Spence, although Trump's blizzard of executive orders looks chaotic, the administration may well be pursuing a larger strategy, designed to dilute and weaken potential opposition. The strategy allows him to hit political opponents while granting lucrative exemptions to reward big donors and corporate behemoths.

The announcement of the trade war rattled stock and bond markets, triggering fears of an impending economic apocalypse. Over \$10 trillion

was wiped off major stock markets worldwide, with the United States bearing the heaviest losses. This bloodbath in global markets revived memories of similar market turmoil after the Covid pandemic and the last global financial crisis. It raised fears of an international recession and triggered criticism even from within his own Republican Party.

Under colossal pressure due to the unanticipated crash in the US bond and treasury markets after the US stock market crash, Trump was browbeaten to bite his own dust and hit a 90-day hiatus on the imposition of most illogical and destructive reciprocal tariffs, while keeping baseline tariff of 10% intact to allow time for negotiations. Experts say that the US bond market usually moves in the opposite direction of the equity market. Still, after the imposition of Trump's tariff, investors sold in both equity and bond markets. The greatest danger to the US economy emanates from the fact that the US has bonds worth over \$35 trillion in circulation and much of it in foreign hands.

America does not normally see interest rates or yield spikes on its debt

Trump's reasoning behind imposing reciprocal tariffs is that other countries have much higher tariffs than the US for which America has a huge trade deficit. Actually, the purpose was simple: slashing the US trade deficit, through "Beggar thy neighbour" policies - protectionist measures taken by a country to improve its own economic situation by damaging the economies of other countries.

since its bonds are viewed as among the safest investments. Further, liquidity crisis, debt-income imbalance (depreciating US dollar led to a rise in debt repayment), higher inflation concerns, Trump's crony Elon Musk's Tesla losing Asian business to the Chinese BYD Company in electric vehicle markets., and US Fed hawkish on interest rates exacerbated the situation. However, Trump continued to escalate the trade war against China by raising tariffs to 125%. Beijing retaliated by raising its tariffs on US imports from 84% to 125% with President Xi Jinping denouncing the game of chicken via tariffs as "economic bullying". Again, the US has slapped a staggering 145% in tariffs on Chinese



Courtesy: Satish Acharya
@ Facebook

goods. On April 16, it was raised further to 245%.

The sheer scale of China's dominance is unprecedented; no other country in recent decades has matched this level across such a broad range of products. China makes almost a third of all manufactured goods — more than the US, Japan, Germany and South Korea combined. America's total goods trade with China was an estimated \$582.4 billion in 2024. The US exported \$143 billion worth of goods to China in 2024 while imported \$438.9 billion and has a trade deficit of \$295 billion. China's resurgence and emergence as a global power has threatened the suzerainty of America. That is why America has imposed a higher tariff against China.

Trump's reasoning behind imposing reciprocal tariffs is that other countries have much higher tariffs than the US for which America has a huge trade deficit. Last year, for example, the United States ran bilateral trade surpluses with 116 countries globally. It ran bilateral trade deficits with 114 countries, according to World Bank data. The U.S. trade deficit in goods hit a record \$1.2 trillion in 2024, with record imports of \$4.1 trillion and exports of reaching \$3.2 trillion in 2024. Actually, the purpose was simple: slashing the US trade deficit, through "Beggar thy neighbour" policies —protectionist measures taken by a country to improve its own economic situation by damaging the economies of other countries.

A trade deficit occurs when a country's imports exceed its exports, meaning it's buying more goods and services from other countries than it's selling to them. Similarly

trade surplus occurs when a country's exports exceed its imports. A country has an overall trade surplus or deficit for the economy as a whole and with respect to individual countries too. When both goods and services are considered, the resultant figure is called the current account surplus or deficit. India recorded a trade deficit with China while surplus with the US. The U.S. total goods/merchandise trade with India was an estimated \$129.2 billion in 2024- exports being \$41.8 billion and imports from India totalled \$87.4 billion in 2024. The U.S. goods trade deficit with India was \$45.7 billion in 2024. "Reciprocal" Tariff (Percent) = U.S. Trade Deficit with Country \$45.7 billion ÷ U.S. Imports from Country (\$87.4 billion) = 52.28%. To soften the impact, the result is then halved to 27% —what officials have called a "discounted reciprocal tariff."

There is another reason, an idea dear to Trump's heart. He believes income tax that Americans pay can be replaced with tariffs. He has argued that income tax came into existence a little more than a century ago and before that the US used to make do with tariffs. Experts have picked holes in Trump's quirky idea of replacing income tax that Americans pay with tariffs on imports. It's just not a realistic proposal."

Trump has long viewed that trade deficit as evidence that America is being "ripped off" by other countries. The trade deficit is not a major economic problem. Sometimes, it is considered as a sign of over consumption linked to higher income. Trump does not talk about the benefits of the dollar as reserve currency. The real problem for the US is ballooning

fiscal deficit and burgeoning debt. The US federal deficit in 2024 was \$1.8 trillion, equal to 6.4% of GDP while the federal debt reached \$36.2186 trillion with a debt-to-GDP ratio of 123%. In 2024, the US GDP was \$29.167.78 trillion. The US has hit the debt ceiling on certain occasions. The Treasury Department's ability to borrow money to make payments on that debt has repeatedly run into a congressionally mandated limit on borrowing known as the debt ceiling.

The Peterson Institute for International Economics, a leading think tank, has estimated that Trump's policies would slash the GDP of the US by between \$1.5 trillion and \$6.4 trillion through 2028. Peterson also estimated that Trump's proposals would drive prices sharply higher within two years. Recently, 23 Nobel-winning economists signed a letter warning that Trump actions "will lead to higher prices, larger deficits, and greater inequality. Trump's incoherent trade policy will do lasting damage. Even after his backtracking, the president has done enormous harm to the world economy. As the historian Arnold Toynbee observed, great civilizations tend to die not by murder, but by suicide. The billionaire hedge fund boss Ray Dalio has issued a stark warning for the US economy. Dalio, who had accurately predicted the 2008 housing meltdown in the US, said that the "disruptive" nature of US President Donald Trump's tariff policy is pushing the country closer to recession and even it may assume something worse than a recession if this isn't handled well."

Contd on P 21

LIBERALISATION is to Ease Labour Exploitation & Profit Accumulation

P.P.Krishnan, President, SZIEF

Why the workers are always on the street against the policies of the Union Government? Because they learned from experience that these policies are anti-worker and pro corporate in its content. This in no way will help them fulfill their rights for a decent life. Being pro corporate, its focus is always to maximize the profit of the capital. The easiest way to increase profit is to reduce the cost. For the Corporates the most preferred option to reduce their cost is to reduce cost pertaining to the labour which is possible only by furthering exploitation on worker. Under neo liberal policy regime every act of those in power is directed towards easing labour exploitation to reduce labour cost and increase profit. Also in a class divided society, struggle for wages is the most difficult one as the Capital will always try to minimise the labour cost to maximize its profit. We are witnessing since early 90s various methods being adopted in this direction in different sectors.

The search for labour cost reduction reaches first at curtailing the benefits being enjoyed by the workers. We have witnessed in the recent past the working class losing many of their hard earned benefits. Benefits are withdrawn partially

or fully, delayed or deferred or denied. Government servants losing their guaranteed pension was beyond imagination till it was taken away by Union Government. State Governments and PSUs including LIC followed the same. PSGI employees are yet to get wage revision due on 01.08.2022. BSNL employees are still drawing salary as per 2007 pay scales and HMT employees as per 1997 pay scales. Answering a question in parliament, Government disclosed that an amount of Rs. 983.02 crores are due to employees/ Pensioners of seven Central PSUs under Heavy Industries Ministry. Despite repeated demands from workers, Government is unwilling to ensure a minimum monthly wage of Rs.26000 to all or to provide a wage of Rs. 600 per day under MGNREG Programme or to enhance the minimum pension under EPS to Rs.9000 per month or to implement a universal social security scheme to support the people. We can quote many instances of benefits being withdrawn from workers or being denied to them under the neo liberal policies.

Another way to reduce labour cost is to reduce the number of workers so that total amount to be spent for them will come down. Today

Image courtesy: The Week



We cannot forget Anna Sebastian, a 26 year old Audit Executive, who is no more with us. The pressure she had undergone and the inhuman attitude of the Management came in public sphere through a letter from her mother. What disturbed us more was a comment from a Union minister that workers should practice yoga to overcome stress in workplaces. That sends a message to the Corporates that whatever be the level of exploitation or their inhuman attitude, government won't interfere. Now, Union government is eager to notify Labour Codes which they enacted four years back amending 29 Labour Acts. Through these labour codes government is legalising many of the exploitative practices that the workers are being subjected to including their tactics to reduce cost and maximise profit....

no regular recruitment is there in government departments or PSUs even to replace the natural exits. As a result the workforce is made slim and trim in every sector. In LIC, in the seven year period since 31.03.2017 the number of Class 3 & 4 employees is less by 11679 (as on 31.03.2024). In public sector banks, compared to 2011, the number of employees as on 1.1.2025 is less by 41817. Bank unions assess that there is almost 150000 vacancies of Clerks and 50000 vacancies of substaff. As per Finance Ministry report on Pay and Allowances, for the third consecutive year, one in every four civilian posts in Central Government was vacant as of 1.03.2023. As of 31st March 2023 over 9.7 lakhs or a little over 24% of sanctioned strength was vacant. While replying in Parliament, Government has admitted that as on August 2023 nearly 9.64 Lakhs vacancies are there in Central Government Departments. As per Public Enterprises Survey Report 2023-2024 the number of permanent employees in CPSEs came down by 26392 in one year.

These deliberate attempts to bring down number of permanent workers is to be seen in the background of worsening unemployment situation, especially among educated youth. As per India Employment Report 2024 published jointly by ILO and Institute of Human Development, 83% of jobless Indians are youth. Among total unemployed youth the proportion of educated youth possessing atleast secondary education has almost doubled from 35.2% in 2000 to 65.7% in 2022. It is also important to note that the growing

miseries under neo liberal economic policies including unemployment, inequality etc are providing a class context for growing communal polarization.

Third way adopted by capital to reduce its cost is to create a new group of workers who are eligible for no benefits as available to permanent workers. Today, engaging employees as Casual, Contract, Daily wage, temporary, outsourced employees etc are confined not only to private sector, but is routine in public sector too. They are doing same job as a permanent employee, but with a paltry sum as remuneration. Government has legalised Fixed Term Employment. NDA government, forgetting its earlier promise of two crore jobs a year, is now campaigning on appointment as apprentice or on internship. Already some PSGI Companies has started appointing apprentices with a monthly remuneration of Rs. 9000 and some PSBs with Rs. 15000. There are lakhs of Scheme Workers under various central government schemes like ASHA, Anganwadi, Mid day meal etc. They are not even categorised as workers, hence not getting any benefits including minimum wages. Central Public Sector Enterprises witnessed an increase of 56950 in number of non permanent employees in a year (while permanent employees down by 26392) and 53.6% of total employees is falling under non permanent category, as per Public Enterprises Survey 2023-24. With the support and consent of Government, formal employment is getting replaced by informal

employment in every sector. Policy makers are happy with this not merely because of the cost saving, but more because they are getting a less unionised workforce so that their exploitation won't be resisted or challenged as required.

Fourth is the attempts to increase the working hours so that reduction in workforce will not affect output. Through struggles workers world over established their right for eight hour work. A few months back we heard Infosys Chief advocating for 70 hours work per week. Going beyond that, recently L& T Chief demanded 90 hours work a week, including Sundays. He was asking, " what do you do sitting at home (on sunday)? How long can you stare at your wife?". To reach 90 hours a week naturally one has to work for nearly 13 hours a day, with no weekly off. This emerging trend is to be looked upon keeping in mind the working hours in organised sector today. Also world over today demand is to reduce working hours or working days. Under neo liberal policies capital consider workers as instruments for

EY employee death: FM calls for 'stress management lessons'



Courtesy: Sajith Kumar, Deccan Herald

production only, with no human values. The much talked work life balance is nowhere in its consideration.

Lastly, adoption of newer and higher form of technology is the most preferred method today. Workers or trade unions also cannot say no to technology as failure to suitably upgrade the technology will sometimes lead to failure of industry itself. Earlier technology was used to supplement manpower, but today it is used to replace the manpower. This naturally demands a more scientific and realistic approach from all so that scope for human interface is retained along with adoption of technology.

The greed of Capital for more and more profit and attempts to further the exploitation are putting workers under tremendous pressure in every sector. Sometimes they even fail to survive this pressure. We had reports of many such incidents even from public sector. We cannot forget Anna Sebastian, a 26 year old Audit Executive, who after completing CA with distinction joined Earnst & Young, a global consultancy with much aspirations, who is no more with us. The pressure she had undergone and the inhumane attitude of the Management came in public sphere through a letter from her mother. What disturbed us more was a comment from a Union minister that workers should practice yoga to overcome stress in workplaces. That sends a message to the Corporates that whatever be the level of exploitation or their inhuman attitude, government won't interfere. Further to this, now Union government is eager to notify Labour Codes which they enacted four years back amending 29 Labour Acts.

They could not implement the same because of the resistance from trade unions. Through these labour codes government is legalising many of the exploitative practices that the workers are being subjected to including their tactics to reduce cost and maximise profit as explained earlier. This will have serious repercussions in organised sector too, including public sector undertakings like

LIC. The only way forward is to recognise the class interest of neo liberal policies, realise the need to resist it and join the united movement of workers and peasants. 20th May 2025 Strike provides a great opportunity for the working class to unite and push back the offensive of neoliberal regime.

'Beggar thy neighbour'

Contd from P 18

Instead of fighting Trump's trade war, the Indian government has surrendered meekly. India is reportedly open to slashing tariffs on over half of the \$23 billion worth of US imports in this first phase - potentially the biggest tariff cut in years. India has already overhauled its tariff regime over the recently reduced import duties on some 8,500 industrial items, including on prominent American goods like bourbon whiskey and high-end motorcycles made by Harley-Davidson Inc. India

should be cautious when it comes to the farm sector. The US demands - such as flagging India's minimum price support system for farmers, allowing genetically modified food imports, dropping agricultural tariffs, changing patent laws to extend drug monopolies, and letting American e-commerce giants sell directly to consumers - pose major threat. According to economists, India's growth will be reduced by 0.5 percent too.



Cartoon Courtesy:
Nala Ponnappa @
Ponnappa cartoon

Freedom of Expression through Movies & Books

The obfuscation of the harsh realities of an unequal India, through tampering with mass media like movies, books and the press is being attempted. The misuse of social media to gloss over such harsh living standards must also be seen in this context.

Govind Menon, LICEU, Kozhikode



Our Constitution has succinctly given much innateness to the Freedom of Expression. Article 19 (1) (a) has in detail, expressed that Right to Freedom of Expression, encompassing various forms of expression like writing, speaking, printing and visual representations, subject to restrictions of a very liberal degree.

The above integral part of our Constitution has been forcefully authenticated by the Supreme Court in its various observations. As recently as on March 28th, the SC once again reiterated, that the fundamental right to free speech through poetry, theatre, stand-up comedy and satire must be cherished, while quashing a criminal case against MP Imran Pratapgadhi. It went onto add that in the 75-years into our Republic, we cannot be seen to be so shaky on our fundamentals, that any form of entertainment can be seen to lead to religious animosity. Subscribing to such a view, can lead to stifling of all legitimate forms of expression in the public domain, so fundamental to a free society. _

Cinema has been a forceful medium of expression catering to the masses. Indian cinema, being the largest industry of

its kind in the world; churning out 1000's of movies of all genre, in almost 13000 theatres across the country, has had a vibrant history of challenging social taboos and norms. It has brought to fore the underlying contemporary issues; be it social issues, labour rights, women empowerment, caste tensions and religious bias. Movies with varied themes over the years like Mother India, Pather Panchali, Arth, Ennu Ninthe Moideen, Charulatha, Fire, The Great India Kitchen, Taare Zameen Par, Hichki, Article 15, Jai Bhim, Bandit Queen, Hey Ram and Jana Gana Mana to name a few, have explored various facets of private and public life.

The Cinematographer Act 1952, laid down the formation of the Central Board of Film Certification; a body responsible for issuing certification to films, for public exhibition. It may suitably take decisions on deleting certain scenes or non-exhibition of the film itself, in the larger interests of the society. However, the above prudence must be juxtaposed with the ruling of the SC, in KA Abbas v Union of India (AIR 1971 SC 481), that censorship of films was constitutionally valid, as long as it

was within the ambit of Article 19(2) of our Constitution. Any regulation which went beyond this scope was an abuse of power.

However, in the background of the above narrative, a discordant line is being swept, where cinema is being used as a political tool. The indoctrination of the masses with communal colours is essentially a violation of the ethos of our Constitution. The socio-political embers, which are spewed out, threatens the vital essence of the "Idea of India". The cinema landscape has been recently dove-tailed into a minefield, where political narratives clash and intertwine, to produce a grotesque psyche of the current political-religious situation. Many of these movies are so timed, that the hyper-nationalistic agenda are served just before elections. Many of these films glorify communal ideologies and attempt to intensify it. Opponents are sought to be belittled, with even national icons like Gandhiji and Nehruji at the receiving end.

Politically charged movies like the Article 370 (2024), Sabarmati Report, Aakhir Palayaan Kab Tak, Kashmir Files, Jahangir National University

and the Kerala Story received Pan-India release, with leaders expected to adhere to our nationalistic secular credentials, themselves fanning trouble. An outright wrong portrayal through the Kerala Story, with wide tax-free screenings in certain states, vitiates our federalistic character, along with the theme being utterly false and erroneous. It is also seen, that the rise of threat and intimidation through investigation agencies on medias airing documentaries, not palatable to the official chorus, is a new phenomenon. The BBC offices in India were a target of this ire. Orchestrated riotous elements, targeting films like Tandav, Parzania, Kai Po Che which portrays the other side of oppression of the minorities, is also being seen. The recent and flagrant hostility towards the Malayalam film Empuraan, with cuts ordered, despite it being a sensitive movie, must be seen as a disruption of Freedom of Expression.

The present regime has turned books into an ideological battle. A nation where the founding fathers had laid faith on secularism combined with our internal diversity, is been attempted to be turned topsy-turvy. From pluralism, attempts are being made to turn our bearings, into one of majority religiosity, homogeneous ethnicity and othering of the minorities.

One of the main planks in ushering in this, is re-writing a new age of history. Removing the historical background of Gandhiji's fight against communal majoritarianism, his assassination, the blacking out of the Mughal rule, amnesia about the contribution of Nehruvian era and the further-

ing of an ethnic Vedic-Aryan civilization are all part of this agenda. Usurping great Indians with blatant falsities, are also part of this plan. Subtle but egregious hints, are given to change our 1000-year history. Good literature including those on history are precursors, to how a generation develops and thinks.

The year 2020 onwards, has seen a blatant overhaul of school textbooks to promote a mono-cultural view of our nation's past and present. The buck did not stop there. Verses of Urdu poet Faiz Ahmed Faiz and Dalit writers were also withdrawn. Struggles and movements like that of Medha Pathkar's Narmada Bachao Andolan also came in the line of fire.

These portends to wiping out the rich history of struggles and achievements of the workers and lesser privileged communities. Throwing to the wind, the need for creating scientific temper, outright myths and superstition like that of conceiving a baby; as taught in BAMS 3rd year, opining that collecting branches of the Banyan tree which is north-facing, also came into vogue. India has been a crucible of many cultures, which resonates in our nation being rich in plurality. Art, music, medicine, philosophy and literature have been syncretistic or unifying; a joint effort of over several centuries of Hindu and non-Hindu influences including Islam. It is no gain-said that such compartmentalisa-

tion of history and literature have come to grief in multiple countries, following such rigid hierarchies.

The obfuscation of the harsh realities of an unequal India, through tampering with movies and books is being attempted. The World Inequality Lab has stated that the present Billionaire Raj in India has produced soaring inequality; now amongst the highest in the world. The report has also concluded that over the past decade, the inequality has accentuated, with an authoritarian government centralising power, coupled with a growing nexus between the big business and the government. With us being termed as in the serious category of hungry nations, by the Global Hunger Index, the obliteration of these actualities, is being attempted through tampering with mass media like movies, books and the press. The misuse of social media to gloss over such harsh living standards must also be seen in this context.

Satyajit Ray had said "A good film should entertain, engage and leave a lasting impression on its audience". Therefore, the socio-economic hardships of today must be the starting point for movies and books, to create this lasting impression on the masses.



Courtesy: Sajith Kumar,
Deccan Herald



Jyotirao Phule and the unity of the oppressed

Phule has been heralded as an iconic figure for the social and economic empowerment of socially marginalised groups. However, in contemporary political discourse, his thoughts and actions can be seen as antagonistic to the ideological orientation that the current political regime champions.

Harish S Wankhede (Courtesy: Deccan Herald 11/ 4 / 25)

Assistant Professor, Centre for Political Studies, JNU, New Delhi

India's ruling national party, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), has reframed the conventional caste question by incorporating the cultural and economic concerns of Dalit-Bahujan groups into its political programme. In the era of assertive 'Subaltern Hindutva' politics, when a significant section of Dalit-Bahujan groups has come to identify with and actively promote Hindutva, reflecting on Jyotirao Phule's life and mission becomes a complex task. Phule has been heralded as an iconic figure for the social and economic empowerment of socially marginalised groups. However, in contemporary political discourse, his thoughts and actions can be seen as antagonistic to the ideological orientation that the current political regime champions.

Phule envisioned unity among the oppressed to challenge the repressive authority of Brahmanical caste elites and called for radical social transformation. He dedicated himself to the liberation of women, Dalits, and peasants, advocating for their unity as a revolutionary necessity to build a modern, egalitarian India. While the

participation of oppressed social groups in democratic processes has increased, the socio-economic realities of their lives have not seen significant change. In this context, Phule's ideas are more relevant than ever.

In 1848, in the heart of colonial India, Phule, with the help of his wife Savitri Bai Phule established the first school in the country for Shudra and Dalit girls. The bold, transformative act challenged the oppressive social structures of his time and set the foundation for a revolutionary vision of social justice. Unlike many of his contemporaries who were part of the social elite and relied on empty rhetoric, Phule was a man of action.

Phule's revolutionary journey was not just about education or reforming the existing caste system. It was about dismantling the very foundations of what he saw as an oppressive, historical ideology rooted in Brahmanism. He was not merely advocating for cosmetic changes in the social structure but for a complete overthrow of the oppressive system. His ideas were bold, visionary,

and uncompromising in their commitment to dismantling the power structures that oppressed women, lower castes, and the peasantry.

At a public meeting in Bombay in 1885, Phule advocated for a radical shift in the lower castes' approach to religious and ritualistic practices. He suggested that they organise their social customs and rituals free from the dominance of Brahman priests. This was a revolutionary stance: to eliminate the role of the priesthood that was so entrenched in maintaining the power of the upper caste. It was not just a question of social reform; it was a call to challenge the very power dynamics that held the oppressed in place.

Phule's ideological framework was simple but radical. Instead of seeing the social order in terms of the traditional Chaturvarna system, he formulated a bipolar framework – dividing society into two broad categories: Brahmins and the majority Shudra-Atishudra castes. Caste was not about social stratification, but a relationship of power and dominance. His focus was not on divisions within the oppressed groups

but on the potential for unity amongst them.

This binary structure acknowledged the inherent conflict and oppression between the two groups. Brahmanism, Phule argued, was not a divine or sacred system, but a historically constructed ideology of domination and oppression. Its purpose was clear: to subjugate and maintain control of social elites over the socially marginalised masses. Such an order had to be smashed.

Gender in focus

What made Phule's critique so powerful and ahead of its time was his inclusive and gendered approach to oppression. For him, women, regardless of whether they were born into the Brahman or Dalit caste, were part of the oppressed Shudra-Atishudra collective. In this sense, his critique of Brahmanism went beyond caste. His assertion that a Brahman woman was as much a victim of the system as a Dalit woman represented a radical, modern view of oppression that saw gender, not caste, as the core source of subjugation for women. For Phule, the oppressed needed to come together, transcending the caste and gender divisions, to challenge the Brahmanical structures that bound them.

Phule proposed a theory

of social revolution, a call for a complete dismantling of the existing system, both ideologically and materially. Most importantly, he believed that revolutionary ideas had to be rooted in everyday praxis. The Shudra-Atishudras, Phule argued, would lead a revolution on behalf of the entire society, liberating all people from the shackles of Brahmanical oppression.

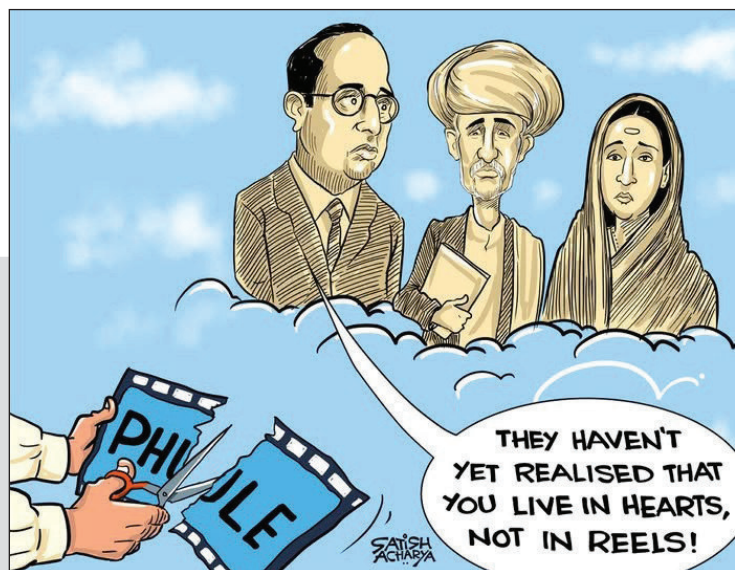
His critique of caste was inseparable from his critique of gender, and his rejection of Brahmanism was intertwined with a call for an inclusive, egalitarian society. Phule was perhaps the first Indian thinker of the nineteenth century who insisted on a radical transformation of India's socio-economic order, envisaging the liberation of Dalits, women, and peasantry from the Brahmanical-feudal order. He saw the liberation of the oppressed not as a distant dream, but as an achievable goal, one that required the collective action of the marginalised. In the long trajectory of India's social

and political struggles, Phule's revolutionary vision remains a cornerstone of the movement for equality and justice.

Contemporary India is still struggling to overcome caste and gender-based disparities. The situation is more acute for the poor peasantry and landless agricultural labourers. The deprived social groups continue to live as powerless and passive participants in political and economic developments. The political elites overtly neglect the pressing issues of agrarian poverty, farmers' suicides, indebtedness, and social marginalisation of the worst-off social groups, and often engage with them on emotive cultural issues. Phule's ideas can be used to critique the governing class for such distancing towards the problems faced by the Dalits, women, and the poor peasantry, and to ignite a radical consciousness amongst these groups to bring substantive change in social and economic order.

April 11 is the birth anniversary of Jyotirao Phule.

The release of a biopic on Jyotiba & Savitribai Phule on April 11 (Jyotiba's birthday) had to be postponed due to the objections raised by certain caste organisations, based on its trailer, though the filmmaker implemented the CBFC suggestions. CBFC granted U certificate on April 7, asking for certain edits, including removal of references like 'Mahar', 'Peshwai', and a modification of the phrase "3000 saal purani ghulamii" to 'kai saal purani ghulamii.'



Cartoon Courtesy: Satish Acharya @ Facebook

A NEW ORDER

The inclination to reconcile with immediate surroundings is a noticeable characteristic of societies and of nations too. We are witnessing the vulnerabilities of democracy's freedoms, including political rights and civil liberties. Even more so, we are witnessing a lack of resilience on the part of the institutions of civil society — the media, courts of law, and academic institutions — to weather the storm. An important lesson in this connection is that the fragility of freedom and liberties in the US is as brittle as that seen in any Third World nation. We are possibly heading to an era of Colonialism Mark 2.



Anup Sinha, former Professor of Economics,
IIM Calcutta (Courtesy: Telegraph 11.04.25)

By the beginning of the twenty-first century, it had become universally accepted that capitalism was the best economic system the world has known and, along with some form of representative democracy, was the hallmark of a modern society. It was as if history had come to a halt and there could not be any alternative to the prevailing order of things. This system was prone to troubles though. The most frequent ones were economic - the periodic ups and downs and the uncertainty of employment, incomes and prices. Whenever there were economic troubles - whether it was a mild recessionary dip or a more severe, global financial crisis - the diagnosis invariably turned to deficiencies in policies. Hence, the remedy sought pertained to the realms of politics and governance. It was taboo to question the logic of the underlying economic system of capitalism. This was akin to treating a chronic belly ache in a person by altering the diet rather than examining the root cause of the pain.

One could argue that democracy (with its many subtle variants) is a strategic ploy to keep the focus away from the structures of the capitalist economy. Democracy has many safety valves; it allows for dissent and the venting of frustrations by nurturing a pluralist polity and the possibility of a peaceful transfer of power through the ballot box. Democracy seemingly allows for the freedom to do many things: participate in government and pursue material goals as well as non-material objectives. The democratic State's *raison d'être* is to perpetuate the economic structure of capitalism. To attain this goal, on behalf of the economically powerful, the State uses both coercive methods as well as persuasive techniques to attain effective control. There are many instruments available to the State to achieve its goals, from the military and the police force to elements of culture such as education, media, theatre and films: in other words, the options range from brute force to subtle propaganda. The State

chooses its actions depending on the nature of the crisis at hand and an understanding of what might work best in a given situation.

There are, however, many tensions between capitalism and democracy. The economic system works on the basis of private property, the profit motive, and the institution of the market. Markets are notoriously fickle and the macroeconomic order is fraught with chronic unemployment, inflationary pressures and cyclical ups and downs. The system also allows for amassing property and it invariably creates massive doses of income and wealth inequalities. Those who become rich ensure their progenies also remain rich. They enter the market with more power to influence and sway outcomes - the rich vote with their dollars in the marketplace. On the other hand, to countervail this situation, as it were, the political system has a one-person-one-vote rule. Hence, the richest and the poorest persons are deemed equal as voters. This, of course, is only

an illusion. Anybody voting in a democracy knows that the rich influence electoral outcomes through their donations, lobbies, the outright bribing of politicians as well as by using the media and a sophisticated propaganda machinery to ensure that the outcomes are within their comfort zone. Even if governments change, the economic system is hardly ever put under stress. While this best describes the daily grind of managing capitalism, there are times when the magnitude of the crisis can call for more direct methods of control using fear, violence.

Capitalism has its own logic of continuous expansion - growth in size, adoption of new technologies, creation of new products, and the emergence of new markets. The whole world is its domain. But as changes in the economic apparatus take place, people get affected. Some lose their jobs and livelihoods, others go bankrupt, cities decay, whole industries disappear, new products appear in the market, and unfamiliar neighbours appear out of nowhere. Occasionally, these changes happen on a very extensive scale. This is when frustrations and anger reach a boiling point. Soothing balms do not suffice. Social and political re-setting become inevitable.

During periods of fundamental change, the State's soft powers of persuasion and subtle propaganda do not work. Global capitalism is going through one such transformative phase. The core of capitalist production of value has moved away from commodities- the old-fashioned, brick-and-mortar industries of the twentieth century. High-end services, data science,

information, and Artificial Intelligence are the new areas of knowledge and domination. These changes are obviously most visible in the United States of America. Two things are happening there and in many other parts of the developed capitalist world. The first is that the disruptions caused by the disappearance of the twentieth-century economic apparatus have been so obvious and widespread that anger and frustration have mounted sharply with the soft State being considered the enemy of the people. On the other hand, the oligarchs who have emerged as the new 'masters of the universe' need new resources, new competences, a new order, new control over people's thoughts and actions and, above all, obedience to power. To retain its hegemony, the State must be more coercive in its methods of controlling not only American society but also the global order. There is some logic underlying the various unrelated demands of the Donald Trump administration - from creating a Riviera in Gaza to the purchasing of Greenland, from owning the Panama Canal to the annexation of Canada. It has to show the rest of the world that capital must get what it wants in its own terms. The rest of the world will have to change according to the new set of requirements - trading patterns, payment systems, military alignments, geopolitics, and labour markets. We are possibly heading to a era of Colonialism Mark 2.

Whatever may be the outcomes in the long run, the short-run effects are clearer. The US will end up with new friends and new enemies. Global economic growth rates will be falling due to the emerging

trade war. Geopolitically, the world will be a more dangerous place to live in. Add to these the heightened existential threats like nuclear war and climate change. Opposition to the forces of change in the US and in other parts of the world is likely to be muted. Indeed, similar changes and a rise of authoritarian governments have been seen in many other countries during the past decade.

The inclination to reconcile with their immediate surroundings is a noticeable characteristic of societies and of nations too. We are witnessing the vulnerabilities of democracy's freedoms, including political rights and civil liberties. Even more so, we are witnessing a lack of resilience on the part of the institutions of civil society - the media, courts of law, and academic institutions - to weather the storm. An important lesson in this connection is that the fragility of freedom and liberties in the US is as brittle as that seen in any Third World nation.

In the past, even during generally peaceful times, wars have occurred, oligarchies risen to power, genocides have taken place, racial inequities deepened, and economic and social inequalities exploded. There have been other forces too - debates on ethics and public policy, a search for political alternatives, the courage to speak out, the tolerance for diversity, and care about the future of the world we live in. The former changes are disturbing trends. The latter discussions are pregnant with possibilities. Outcomes are always a matter of our choice. However, giving up on the possibility of even the existence of feasible alternatives is like giving up on life itself.



30th General Conference of Shahdol DIEU

The 30th General Conference of Shahdol Division Insurance Employees Union was held on 22nd & 23rd March 2025 at "Com. Aasan Singh Manch" and "Com. Vishwajeet Bhattacharya Nagar" Shubham Palace Shahdol. The two days conference was inaugurated by Com. D.R.Mahapatra, Jt. Secretary, AIIEA & General Secretary CZIEA. Before the Inaugural session a huge rally passed through the streets of Shahdol city near about 2 km. procession was led by local folk troops called 'SHAILA NRITYA'.

The flag of SDIEU was hoisted by Com. Abdul Hafeez Khan, President SDIEU. Later floral tributes were paid at the martyrs' column. After the Welcome address given by President of Reception Committee Shri Vijay Kumar Namdeo, (member of the Nation Committee IPTA) the Presidential address given by president of SDIEU, Com. Dharmaraj Mahapatra, inaugurated the conference. He gave a graphic picture of the prevailing situation at

the international, national and industrial level. He was critical of the policies of the government that are creating divisions in the society and resulting in increased income and wealth inequalities.

Sri Dinkar Tiwari, Div. Secy. LIAFI, Com. Vijay Upadhyay, General Secretary. SDIPA, Shri Ajay Vijra-Zonal secretary NFIFWI also addressed the inaugural session. Representative of various fraternal organization were presented and extended their support and greetings to the conference. The inaugural session came to a successful close with vote of thanks by com. Swarnendu Das General Secretary of SDIEU. In the evening a Cultural programme was also organized by host unit.

The delegates session started with General Secretary placing the report on behalf of the executive committee. The discussion was initiated by Com. Mayank Aditya, Jt. Secretary, SDIEU. 17 delegates from various branches participated in the lively discussion. The delegate

session was also addressed by Com. Dharmaraj Mahapatra, Com. V.S.Baghel Jt. Secy. CZIEA and Com. Sandeep Soni, Treasurer CZIEA. Com Mahapatra spoke about the challenges the institution and organization are facing due to the policies of a hostile government, a biased regulator and competitive environment. He said organization has to be strengthened and all programs of AIIEA and CZIEA have to implemented with full force to confront the emerging situation.

The report was unanimously adopted after the summing up by Com. Swarnendu Das. The audited statement which was placed by Com. Shyamlal Rajak Treasurer were also approved unanimously. The conference adopted 17 resolutions.

The 30th conference unanimously elected Com. Abdul Hafeez Khan, Com. Swarnendu Das and Com. Shyamlal Rajak as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

Tamil Nadu State Level Convention

resolves to fight against the move to hike FDI in Insurance Sector

The Tamil Nadu State Level Special Convention held on 15.03.2025 at COIMBATORE has demanded the Central Government to drop the proposals for 100% FDI in Insurance sector. The convention was massive with the participation of more than 700 comrades from various parts of Tamil Nadu.

The convention was presided by Com.V.Suresh, Joint Secretary, SZIEF and Com.K.Thulaseetharan, General Secretary, ICEU, Coimbatore Division welcomed the gathering.

Com Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIIEA delivered the inaugural address highlighting the insurance penetration achieved by the LIC and Public Sector General Insurance Companies. The Government decision to hike FDI limits in Insurance sector to 100 % from the present 74% is unwarranted and carries with it serious consequences for mobilization of precious resources for the development of Indian Economy and meeting the obligation of the State towards its citizens, he said. He also explained that, Indian Capital, to operate in the Insurance industry in partnership with the foreign companies was restricted to 26 % in 1999. Since then, it has been raised to 49%, 74%.

“A large number of private insurance companies with foreign partners have been operating in both the life and non-life insurance industry. The capital has never been a restraint for these companies

to run their businesses, as they are owned by big business houses partnering with top multinational companies. Perhaps with the exception of three, no insurance company is anywhere near breaching the 74% FDI limit. Infact the total FDI in insurance is only around 32% of the capital employed. This being the case, it is surprising as to why the government has taken the step to give total freedom to foreign capital to operate in India. This decision will also have serious consequences for the Indian companies and the Indian economy if the existing foreign partner decides to pull out to form a separate company. There could also be hostile bids to take over the existing companies.”

Com.G.Anand, Vice President, AIIEA greeted the convention. He explained that the experience of the global economy is that many multinational insurance companies collapsed in the 2008 global financial crisis. Not only did they collapse there, here in India, the American company AIG, which had joined hands with TATA, exited from the Indian joint venture. Australia's AMP also exited.

Since the crisis began in 2008, it is the experience that mere increase in investment limits does not bring the intended investments here. He insisted that merger of Public Sector general insurance companies would be the real solution for spreading the cover further to the untapped sections of the society. He explained that private insurers are interested only to procure the business of high end market leaving the burden of low end market on the shoulders of the public sector institutions.

Com.K.Swaminathan, Former General Secretary, SZIEF delivered a special address in the mass gathering. “For the past 40 years, we have been in the field of struggle continuously in the insurance industry. If we say that an organization that has fought for such a long time to protect a industry, to protect an institution, is recorded in history, then it is certainly the All India Insurance Employees' Association” he said.

On the eve of the State level convention, ICEU COIMBATORE Division has given a call for New Business on 14th MARCH 2025. On that day, Coimbatore Division



completed 1717 policies and collected Rs.3.89 crore as premium income. A resolution condemning the attempts of the government to increase the FDI in Insurance was moved by Com.R.K.Gopinath, Joint Secretary, SZIEF and was seconded by Com.S.V.Shankar,

GIEA SZ was unanimously adopted.

A small booklet on the perils of FDI written by Com.C.Muthukumaraswamy, Vice President, SZIEF was released by Com. Com.P.P.Krishnan, President, SZIEF who handed over

the first copy to Senior Leader of the movement Com.A.R.Kalyanasundaram.

The convention came to a successful conclusion with vote of thanks by Com.RameshKumar, Joint Secretary, SZIEF.

'Read the Constitution' Education Camp at Udupi

The Udupi District level "Read the Constitution" education camp was held at LIC Employees Co-operative Bank hall, Udupi on 8th and 9th March 2025 as a part of state-wide campaign. The camp was organized by IEU, Udupi Division, jointly with like minded social organizations and was attended by the members of the Union, Students and representatives from all over the District.

Honorable Justice H N Nagamohan Das (Rtd. Judge, High Court of Karnataka) inaugurated the camp and said that the campaign is carried on for 6 years in different parts of the country and in Karnataka 15 districts are covered and Udupi emerges as 16th district of campaign.

He said, even after 75 years of Constitutional experiment, problems still persist and he argued that the Constitution is not the reason for all the ills and challenges of the Nation. Mistakes are with us and without correcting those mistakes and saying, Constitution is not right, change the Constitution talk are efforts to pursue a particular political ideology. Today all our activities are governed by the laws of Constitution and in many



instances due to ignorance of Constitutional provisions people become criminals in the society and he called on participants to gain enough knowledge on Constitution and become the soldiers to protect the Constitution for our future.

Five useful sessions on Constitution were conducted for the benefit of participants. The first session "Structure and Basic Principles of Constitution" was dealt by Justice H N Nagamohan Das who explaining the subject said, unless one understands the Nation, it is not possible to understand the Constitution. Explaining secularism as an integral part of our Constitution, he said it is important to understand the inequalities existing among castes in order to achieve equality of castes.

Sri Nagesh Kumar, President, Udupi Rathbeedi Geleyara Balaga, a progressive theatrical organization presided

the session.

The session on 'CONSTITUTION AND WOMEN' was presented by Ms. Shanthi Nagalapur, a progressive women thinker, who viewing the civilization of India and the civilizations world over had said that the women are treated as second grade citizens, she analysed that the representation of women is marginal in elected constituencies. She demanded that a major surge in the direction of women empowerment is required as per constitutional provisions. Dr. Suma.S., Professor, Govt. Pre - University College for Girls, Udupi, Presided the session.

The session on "CONSTITUTION AND DEMOCRACY" was handled by Com. Vijayakumar, Former President, ICEU, Mysore Division who viewed constitution or an epic of Democracy as our vision and Democracy as our opinion. He said now instead of debating



on the constructive elements of our constitution, we discuss, why the constitution is required for us? He described constitution as a social order where no one enslaves himself to the other and no one conquers and suppresses the other and said in Dr. Ambedkar's words it is a process of social change without shedding a drop of blood. Sri Idris Hoode, President, District Muslim Council, presided the session.

The session "CONSTITUTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE" was taken by Sri B. Rajashekar Murthy (Member of Read the Constitution Abhiyana Karnataka) who listed out the set of social injustices prevailing in the society and said inequalities in social, political, economic, educational and cultural fields cause people's revolt against the system and that in turn demands for social justice.

Sri. Manjunatha Giliyar (Chief convener, Dalith Sangarsha Samiti) presided the session.

Sri Ramakrishna (Member of Read the Constitution Abhiyana Karnataka) took the session "CONSTITUTION AND SECULARISM". Defining secularism, he said secularism is a part of political system where politics is separated from religions and the system does not encourage or deny any religion and acts neutral. He said a Democratic state shall not rule

on the basis of caste, religion and sex.

The programmed witnessed the august presence of guests, Sri. Muralidhar Upadhyaya, Former Member, Central Cultural academy, New Dehli, Sri Narayana Swamy M, Joint Director, Social Welfare dept., Udupi, Sri Roshan Kumar, Asst Director, Social Welfare Dept, Udupi and Dr. Niketana, Professor, G Shankar Govt College for Women.

VALEDICTORY

Justice H N Nagamohan Das presiding over valedictory function complimented all for the successful conduct of the camp and assured of similar help and support in future. Veteran Comrade P Vishwanath Rai, Sri Prasad Raj Kanchan, entrepreneur and Sri. Raju Goruru (Member of Read the Constitution Abhiyana Karnataka) participated and spoke befittingly on the occasion.

Com. Prabhakar B Kunder, President, IEU, Udupi, Com. K Vishwanath, General Secretary, IEU, Udupi together with Com. Balakrishna Shetty, CITU, Com. Shashidar Golla, CITU, Com. Sanjeeva Balkur, Com. Suresh Kallager and Sri Udaya Gaokar, Editor, Teacher Magazine conducted the proceedings of the Program.

International Women's Day at Belagavi

Insurance Employees' Union, Belagavi Division, observed the International Women's Day in a befitting manner on 9th March 2025, by conducting a Rights, equality and social justice session in honour of the long and arduous struggles of Women Rights activists. Apart from the women comrades of union, a cross section of women working in different fields were also invited; a woman driver who drives the garbage van, two post-women of the postal department, women employees working in LIC HFL Belagavi, women cleaners who keep our offices tidy and clean, a lady who serves in the D.O. Canteen were felicitated.

The Chief Guest of the function Radha M N, Asst.

Professor at SSS Govt. First Grade College, Mudalagi, presented a very apt and powerful narration of the history of women rights movement over the ages, the present times where women still find the social, gender political and cultural discrimination; the patriarchal system still stigmatise women who seek equal spaces in the society. The power-point presentation on the theme presented by Prof. Radha was educative, exhaustive and eloquent. The graphics spoke volumes about the journey of women empowerment. Prof. Radha's speech was very well received by the congregation.

Com. P A Joseph, Former General Secretary, IEU Belagavi

Division, dwelled about the perils and onslaughts unleashed by the vested forces on the workers rights. Recent statements by top industrial honchos to raise working hours was a direct attack on workers' right.

The interactive session was revealing as the participants from other sectors spoke about the trials and tribulations of their jobs. All of them expressed their views and thanked the union for recognising their services.

Com. K R Bhat, General Secretary, IEU, Belagavi Division, made his submission on the theme, while greeting the gathering. Mrs. Kalpana Gouda, MDRT agent for four consecutive years was honoured for her achievements.

Com. Rajlakshmi Kulkarni introduced the chief guest, Prof. Radha to the assembled gathering. She also read a poem 'A new Dawn, A new Day' about the journey of women over the ages. Com. Shubha Taware, compered the

programme, providing timely information and tidbits about the initiatives taken by the AIIEA in protection of women in LIC. Com. Sudha Ingale shared her experience as an activist and office bearer of the union.

Com. D S Kulkarni, Vice-President of IEU Belagavi Division presided over the function and Com. Shashikala Bangareppanavar proposed the vote of thanks.

Com T. Jagadeeshan passed away

Com T. Jagadeeshan, Former Treasurer of ICEU Bangalore passed away peacefully at home on 4th April 2025 morning. He was 84 and ailing for some time.

Com. T. Jagadeeshan joined LIC in the year 1961 and served the institution for nearly 42 years. He was a very highly qualified person holding a Masters in Law and a Fellowship of the Insurance Institute. Despite such high qualification, he did not pursue a career in LIC but devoted his entire life for the cause of the working class. Com. Jagadeeshan was a respected and well known leader of the insurance employees in the State of Karnataka and he served the composite Bangalore division and thereafter Bangalore division 1 as the Treasurer for over 3 decades.

Com. Jagadeeshan played a very important role in the fight against split of AIIEA attempted during 1970-72. When the then existing leadership of the

union decided to take away the organization and form a new trade union in pursuit of partisan political interests, Com Jagadeeshan along with Coms KV Sreenivasan, KS Ramanujam and NR Lakshmiikantha stood up bravely to defend the AIIEA. Their magnificent struggle thwarted the attempts to split the AIIEA and today the divisions under then Bangalore Division have become the strongest divisional units of AIIEA. Com Jagadeeshan showed exemplary courage during Emergency and held the banner of AIIEA aloft during that brutal period when all democratic rights remained suspended.

Com. Jagadeeshan was loved by the employees for his sincerity and the manner in which he helped and sympathised with the employees in solving even their personal problems. Com. Jagadeeshan also played a prominent role in building the Insurance Corporation Pensioners Association in



Bangalore. In the death of Com Jagadeeshan, insurance employees have lost a great warrior in the cause of the AIIEA.

The ICEU, Bangalore I & II organized a condolence meeting on 8th April 2025 where Coms Amanulla Khan, B. Bhaskar Somayaji, T. Surendra Rao, C.V. Kumar, S.K. Geetha, K. Gopal and Com Jagadeeshan's son in law Shri Subburaman paid rich tributes and spoke on different facets of his rich life. Insurance Worker condoles the demise of Com Jagadeeshan and shares the grief with his family, friends and comrades.



Thrissur Division LICPA Conference

The Conference passed resolutions on Withdrawal of proposed Insurance Amendment bill, implementation of Pension revision in LIC, full neutralization of DA for those who retired before 01.08.1997 and introduction of Cash medical benefit for retirees in LIC.

Smt C Geetha, General Secretary, LIC Class I Officers' Association Thrissur Division, Sri V A Balu, General Secretary NFIFWI Thrissur Division and Com Deepak Viswanath, General Secretary, LIC Employees' Union Thrissur Division greeted the Conference.

The Conference elected a panel of Office bearers with Com K Unnikrishnan, Com M Rajeev and Com P K Bahuleyan as President, General Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term.

The curtain on the Conference was wrung down after the Vote of thanks by Com M J Vincent, Jt. Secretary, LIC Pensioners' Association, Thrissur Division

The 12th Annual Conference of LIC Pensioners' Association, Thrissur Division was held at NGO Union Hall, Thrissur on Saturday, the 22nd February, 2025 under the Presidentship of Com. K Unnikrishnan, President. The meeting commenced with the welcome speech by Com N Vasudevan, Vice President.

Com M Kunhikrishnan, General Secretary AIIPA inaugurated the Conference. At the outset, he pulled up the Central Government for not initiating measures in the recent budget that could have alleviated the hardship of the ordinary people instead showering the corporate with munificence. This Government is turning back on the concept of welfarism including pension by systematically diluting fund-allocation for welfare programmes, he said. The long-cherished dream of pension revision in

LIC has not been materialized due to the lethargic attitude of the management. While concluding he reminded us that the presence of LIC in public sector was an inevitable life line for our country and we must be in utmost vigil to resist any attempts by the government or IRDA to groom private insurers at the expense of Life Insurance Corporation of India.

General Secretary Com M Rajeev presented the Annual Report and the Statement of Accounts was introduced in the house by Com P K Bahuleyan, the Treasurer. After discussions, both the Report and Statement of Accounts were unanimously approved by the Conference.

As part of honouring elderly comrades, Com M K Balakrishnan and Com C C Thavappan were presented with golden shawls by Com M Kunhikrishnan.

GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING OF LICPA VELLORE

The 10th Biannual General Council of LICPA, VELLORE DIVISION was held on 25th February 2025. on Com.R.Kesavan presided over.

Com.V.Sugumaran, Secretary & Com.D.Manavalan, Treasurer placed secretary's report and account statements for the period 2023 & 2024

respectively.

After discussions, both the reports were adopted unanimously.

COM.S.SANTHANAM, Secretary, LICPA of Chennai division gave a special address. New Management Committee was elected.

Coms R.Thangavelu T.Sent-

hilvel and A.Rajendiran were unanimously elected as President, Secretary and Treasurer respectively for the ensuing term. The Meeting also elected Coms R.Thangavelu, A.Rajendiran and B.Chinnaiyan as delegates to the 9th General Conference of AIIPA to be held at Mysore in June 2025.

LICPA has been collecting donations for the conference as per the call of AIIPA. A sum of Rs.20,000 was sent as first instalment to the AIIPA.



'Indian Constitution- A Living Document' Seminar on at Visakhapatnam

Insurance Corporation Employees' Union, Visakhapatnam Division organised a seminar on the topic, "Indian Constitution as a living document", commemorating the birth anniversaries of Jyotirao Phule and Dr BR Ambedkar. Com G Kishore Kumar, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF, addressed the seminar. Addressing the seminar, com Kishore Kumar said that the constitution which is 75 years old is relevant everyday in our lives. He dealt at length on the aspects taken into consideration by the drafting committee under the leadership of Dr BR Ambedkar and emphasized the need to protect the constitution. The constitution gives us the Right to free speech, which is under attack today, the right to practice any religion, the right to form trade unions and the trade union rights. The right to

equality was first referred to in the LIC of India Vs Union of India case, he said. The constitution emphasises the Unity in Diversity which is a unique feature of India, the Federal structure where the states have their own governance and yet are controlled by the centre. The constitution was drafted keeping in view the aspirations of the people of the country and the necessity during the post colonial period. The preamble of the constitution states the country as a secular, sovereign, socialist republic wherein all religions are equal, wherein religion has to be kept apart from the state governance, sovereignty is to be protected and a welfare state to be established. The present ruling dispensation has given up the sovereignty, in that it has voted in favour of the war in Gaza,

which is very much against the spirit of the constitution. The USTR today is questioning the sovereign guarantee attached to the policies issued by LIC of India, which is nothing but questioning the sovereignty of our country, he said. The educated sections need to be alert to such dangerous trends and fight for the rights attributed by the constitution, he said.

Dr Kaladhar, Joint Secretary, ICEU Machilipatnam, Com BB Ganesh, General Secretary, ICREA, Com B Ganapathi Ramu, General Secretary, LIC SC/ST Employees Association and Com B Srinivasa Rao, President, LIC OBC Employees Association, Com G Suryaprabha, Working Women Convenor, Com G Varapasada Rao, General Secretary, ICEU Visakhapatnam Division participated. Com M Kameshwari, President, ICEU presided over the meeting. Com G Suryaprabha proposed the vote of thanks. The seminar had large participation from insurance employees, retired employees and members of other unions of CITU.

'Relevance of Ambedkar Philosophy' -Seminar at Cuttack

On the 135th birth anniversary of Dr. Babasaheb Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar, the chief architect of the Indian Constitution, a seminar on the "Relevance of Ambedkar's Philosophy in present context" was jointly held by CDIEA, Cuttack, and OSGIEA jointly on April 14, 2025, in LIC Cuttack Divisional Office premises. Addressing the seminar as chief speaker, renowned senior advocate and a progressive intellectual Sri Laxmidhar Pangari, discussed the legacy of the architect of the Constitution, his continuing relevance, and the challenge of casteism and advocated

for annihilation of caste system. He said that Ambedkar's philosophy is more relevant today than ever before as there is democratic slide, media is being subverted, constitutional values are undermined, secular credentials are annihilated by present ruling dispensation at centre.

Com (Dr) Santosh Kumar Mohapatra (CDIEA) and Com Mans Ranjan Pattnayak (OSGIEA) jointly presided

over the meeting. Com Mohapatra in his presidential address spoke about the need of constitutional morality, social and economic democracy, independence of media, judiciary and most importantly equity in every aspect of life. He stressed the need for

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Gender bias in Life Insurance Contract

The right how to dispose/disperse self-earned property should be given to female policy holder. When equal right is given to the girl child in her father's property denying the right to dispose of her personal savings after her death is a clear bias.

It may look the topic taken is to attract readers and to make some sensational writing. The essence of the subject would become clear as one reads it.

Normally the Insurance Company settles the claim based on the Nomination which is registered in the Life Insurance Policy and on payment as per Nomination the Company gets valid discharge. Beyond this the company does not go into the aspect of who are heirs of deceased policy holder, whether they got their correct share etc., and this aspect of sharing among the heirs leads to lot of litigation called as Rival Claims. This leads to many partition suits seeking appropriate share in the claim amount.

There are many conflicting Judgment on the question of effect of Nomination in Insurance Policy and in certain financial transaction like bank deposit, Redemption of Bank Mortgages, Share Certificates etc. Here, discussion is only on Life Insurance Contracts. The Hon'ble Supreme Court settled the law in *Sarbari Devi vs Usha Devi* case, [(1984) 1 SCC 424], still there are many cases pending at various courts and the question of law has not yet been settled even after the Amendment to Insurance Act.

The Insurance Act 1938 was amended in the year 2015 which took some of the important observations and recommendations made by the Law commission. A brief discussion on the Amended provision of Section 39 will highlight Gender Bias has been done away with and how equal right is given to the female policy holder to dispose of her self-earned property (*only Life Insurance Claim*) as she wants.

There are two types of succession, intestate succession and testamentary succession. Intestate will be of important for our discussion. When claim arises by way of death the Sum Assured is payable to the beneficiaries as per the directions of the Policy holder that is why nomination is registered. If it is to be paid as per Law of Succession every payment will take long time to settle. To avoid such a situation Nomination clause is present in the Insurance Contract. It is to fulfill the policy holder's desire and wish.

Unlike other financial transaction Life insurance is savings of the individual from personal income. Hence it is self-earned property and must be disbursed as per Policy holder's wish. If we take will for consideration it need not be registered, it need to have two attesting witness and there need to be clarity about the beneficiaries. In the same way at time of registration of

nomination the Insurance Company asks for Correct particulars of nominate, witness for Proposal form and also it registers the nomination in its book. When a will is recognized the same way Nomination effected by the policy holder has also to be recognized. It has become very difficult to convince this aspect when a dispute reaches for a decision by a Judicial Authority.

The Amendment to Insurance Act has introduced a new term Beneficial Nominee in Section 39(7) which gives equal right to both male and female policy holder. As per the provision only the parents, spouse and children can only be nominated as Beneficial Nominee. If any other person is nominated he/she can only be a collector nominee and procedure will be as per un-amended provision Insurance Act.

In case any one of the heirs of the Policy holder who is aggrieved over claim payment as per the Nomination approaches the civil court for a share, Law of Succession comes into operation. The wish of the policy holder takes a back seat. It may be correct if the terms Beneficial Nominee were not introduced in the Amendment. Having a place in the Act and which only includes Parents, Children and Spouse without any discrimination between Male policy holder and female Policy holder. Once again going back to the *Sarbari Devi* can only be reversing the clock.

In case an aggrieved Legal heir approaches civil court the Law of Succession is different for Hindu Male dying intestate and Hindu Female dying intestate. Section 15 and 16 of Hindu Succession Act deals with succession in case of Female dying intestate and Section 8 deals Rules of succession for male dying intestate.

If we closely read the provisions of the section the Mother and father of the Female comes after the husband and children. But in case of Male the mother gets equal share along with wife. This may be acceptable if the property is Joint property, ancestral property etc, but not in case of Life Insurance claim, because the entire premium is paid by individual from her personal earning and it is self-earned property.

The right how to dispose/disperse self-earned property should be given to female policy holder. When equal right is given to the girl child in her father's property denying the right to dispose of her personal savings after her death is a clear bias. It is necessary to revisit the amended provisions of the Insurance Act from this angle also.

INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

● A.M. KHAN, Dharwad

- ▶ Attack on LIC and public sector general insurance companies intensifies. Two international bodies – USTR and IMF – bring out special reports on Indian insurance sector which try to highlight that LIC and public sector general insurance companies are being given “preferential treatment”! Under the garb of bringing global standards in Indian insurance sector LIC and public Sector General Insurance Companies are being attacked.

This is what USTR says and wants -

- ▶ While the sovereign guarantee is presented as giving LIC an “unfair competitive advantage,” the USTR report implicitly criticizes this as a market distortion that disadvantages private and foreign insurers. The USTR suggests that this guarantee tilts the playing field, potentially pressuring India to remove or dilute such guarantees.
- ▶ The report further states that state-owned companies, including LIC and other public sector insurers, are not subject to the same laws and prudential supervision as private firms. This implies lighter regulatory scrutiny or exemptions for public sector entities. The report’s tone implies a push for stricter, uniform regulations for public sector insurers.
- ▶ The report frames GIC Re’s “preferential” treatment as a barrier to foreign reinsurers, suggesting that this policy unfairly benefits the state-owned reinsurer. By terming this as concentration of reinsurance business with GIC Re, the USTR is advocating for reforms that could reduce GIC Re’s dominance and open the market to foreign players like Munich Re, Swiss Re, and Lloyd’s.
- ▶ The report advocates for reform of public sector entities. This will involve removing sovereign guarantees, aligning regulatory oversight, or diluting GIC Re’s reinsurance privileges, all of which would weaken the LIC and other public sector insurers.
- ▶ IMF bombards LIC and public sector general insurance companies with missiles
- ▶ IRDAI lacks adequate powers to supervise LIC and other state-owned insurers effectively, limiting IRDAI’s ability to remove directors/officers, appoint administrators, issue reinsurance directions, or apply for liquidation. Similarly, IRDAI cannot enforce liquidation or resolution requirements for state-owned general insurers.
- ▶ IRDAI’s supervisory approach is primarily compliance-based and does not adequately assess the effectiveness of governance structures, particularly for state-owned insurers. IRDAI has limited influence over board appointments in state-owned insurers, and corporate governance requirements do not ensure independent decision-making. The lack of uniform supervisory standards undermines IRDAI’s ability to enforce robust governance and risk management practices in LIC and public sector insurers.

- ▶ There is no legal framework for voluntary market exit or involuntary liquidation that applies to state-owned insurers. This gap hinders IRDAI’s ability to manage the resolution of financially distressed public sector insurers. Without these powers, IRDAI cannot effectively address potential failures of state-owned insurers, which could have broader implications for policyholder protection and financial stability.

And thus recommends IMF:

- ▶ Amend primary legislation to clarify IRDAI’s objectives and extend its supervisory powers to include LIC and other state-owned insurers, ensuring consistent oversight.
- ▶ Expand IRDAI’s preventive and corrective powers to cover all insurers, including LIC and public sector general insurance companies enabling actions like director removal, administration, and liquidation.
- ▶ Establish a legal framework for voluntary and involuntary exits that applies to LIC and PSG insurance companies, ensuring IRDAI can manage resolutions effectively.
- ▶ Engage with the Ministry Finance to extend IRDAI’s authority over LIC’s and PSG insurance companies’ governance, particularly board appointments and independence.
- ▶ The IMF recommends that IRDAI be granted greater powers, including overriding Provisions of the LIC Act and principles governing public sector general insurers. IRDAI’s authority to include powers over director removal, board appointments, liquidation, and risk-based supervision on LIC and public sector insurers.
- ▶ The insurance industry has witnessed a wave of deals over the past two weeks, with transactions totalling more than Rs 38,000 crore. The biggest among them is the Bajaj Group’s acquisition of Allianz’s stake in their two insurance joint ventures for Rs 24,180 crore. Meanwhile, Patanjali has entered the insurance sector by acquiring a stake in Magma General Insurance from Adar Poonawalla. In another major deal, IndusInd International Holdings Ltd (IIHL) completed its acquisition of Reliance Capital, which owns two insurers - Reliance Nippon Life Insurance and Reliance General Insurance. Separately, the UK-based Prudential Group has partnered with HCL Group to establish a standalone health insurance company.
- ▶ In FY25, premium of non-life insurers rose to ₹ 3.08 trillion, marking a 6.2 per cent year-on-year (Y-o-Y) increase. This was down from a 13 per cent Y-o-Y growth in FY24, when premiums reached ₹ 2.89 trillion, and a 16.3 per cent YoY growth in 2022-23 (FY23). This is mainly due to a slowdown in health and motor segments, as well as changes in premium accounting norms introduced by the insurance regulator. Rating agency, India Ratings, says
- ▶ Pricing pressures persist for general insurers due to increasing competition and decreasing consumer affordability, thereby impacting insurers’ underwriting profitability.

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

● S. SRIDHARA, Mysore

Tens of Thousands take out protests in US Cities Against United States Divisive Policies: The protesters flooded the streets of Major US cities on 5th April 2025 to protest Divisive policies of US president Mr Donald Trump, in the Demonstration Since his return to the white House. From Government staffing cuts to Trade tariff and eroding Civil Liberties - Rallied in Washington, New York, Houston, Florida, Colorado, Los Angeles and other Locations. In Washington thousands of Demonstrators, many travelling from across the United States, gathered on National Mall where dozens of Speakers rallied opposition to US President policies. The "Hands Off!" protests today were nothing short of monumental, marking a powerful and unified stand against what organizers have called the most audacious power grab in modern history. With over 1,400 events spanning all 50 states and hundreds of thousands of participants, this movement brought together a diverse coalition of workers, activists, and everyday citizens to demand an end to billionaire influence, cuts to essential programs like Social Security and Medicaid, and attacks on marginalized communities. From bustling rallies in Washington, D.C., to smaller gatherings in conservative towns, the message was clear: Americans are fed up with policies that prioritize the wealthy at the expense of democracy and basic rights. The energy on the ground was electric, with chants of "Hands off our jobs, our healthcare, our democracy!" echoing across city halls, federal buildings, and even international cities like London and Berlin. Today's turnout was not just a protest-it was a resounding declaration that grassroots power is alive and ready to fight for justice and equity. The rallies even extended to some European Capitals where Demonstrators voiced opposition to Mr Trump and his trade policies.

★

India: Telangana state road transport workers to strike indefinitely: On 7th April, the unions representing Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TGSRTC) workers announced a state-wide indefinite strike from May 6. The TGSRTC Joint Action Committee (JAC) accused the Government administration of not fulfilling promises made during the election campaign, despite being in office for 16 months. The workers' main demand is for state government employment status. They complained of the lack of wage revisions, non-payment of pending dues, delayed salary credits and violation of the Motor Transport Workers Act, forcing many to work for 12 to 16 hours a day. The JAC said that their grievances extend beyond current employers, with retired workers still awaiting arrears, pay scale corrections, and other retirement benefits. Workers also

fear that increasing uses of electric buses operated by private entities is jeopardising their jobs.

Sari weavers in Telangana strike for higher pay : Sari weavers, who operate hundreds of power-looms and handlooms in the township of Sireilla, Telangana, began an indefinite protest hunger strike on Monday demanding the state government set fair wages. The

strike was supported by the Centre of Indian Trade Unions All looms were stopped, bringing sari production to a standstill, Union leaders accused both officials and political leaders of ignoring workers' repeated pleas for a wage revision. They want the rates paid for saris to be increased and broader welfare measures for handloom workers, particularly women, to be implemented without delay.

★

Uttar Pradesh power utility workers to strike against privatisation:

The union covering 25,000 workers at two state-owned power distribution companies announced this week that its members will strike on May 29 against privatisation of the utilities. Their union, Vidyut Karamchari Samyukt Sangharsh Samiti, held a protest outside the Uttar Pradesh Power Corporation headquarters in Lucknow on 9th April to demand a roll back of the Electricity (Amendment) Bill and permanent jobs for contractual workers. The union has planned an "awareness" campaign between April 16 and 30 and a motorbike protest on May 1 followed by an eight-day hunger strike. The government recently issued a tender inviting advisers and consultants to devise a public private partnership model for the distribution utilities. Dakshinanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam and the Purvanchal Vidyut Vitran Nigam. The government claimed it is exploring options to improve efficiency and service quality in electricity amid financial losses. Workers are concerned that the Government's plan is about job losses.

★

Nestlé factory workers in Goa begin hunger strike protest:

Contract workers from the Nestlé factory in Bicholim, Goa state, began an indefinite hunger strike protest on March 31. They are demanding immediate employment for hundreds of contract workers retrenched in 2013. The workers are organised by the Rashtriya Mulnivasi Bahujan Karmachari Sangh. A union spokesperson said the workers were retrenched illegally on false charges that were later cleared. He said the union submitted a charter of 25 demands to Nestlé, but the company is delaying and adopting hire-and-fire tactics.

●

GLOBAL TRADE UNCERTAINTY

* According to the latest report by WTO, the outlook for global trade had “deteriorated sharply” because of the US tariff hikes and the “trade policy uncertainty” they have created. It estimated there would be a 0.2% contraction for 2025, compared to an increase in trade of 2.9% in 2024. It added that trade growth could have been as much as 2.7% this year had tariffs remained low. The WTO forecast has taken into account the 90-day pause Trump announced on the imposition of “reciprocal tariffs” which range between 30-50 percent for a number of countries.

The contraction may be even more significant than is indicated in the report, which has been issued just two weeks after Trump’s “liberation day” announcement. This is because of both the fact that the ‘reciprocal tariffs’ may well go ahead after the pause and the uncertainty generated by the tariff war. “Risks to the forecast include the implementation of the currently paused reciprocal tariffs by the United States, as well as a broader spill over of trade policy uncertainty beyond US linked trade relationship”, according to WTO.

It forecast that if the reciprocal tariffs were enacted, this would bring a further reduction in global trade by 0.6% points. And if trade policy uncertainty spread, this would bring a further reduction of 0.8 percentage points, leading to a “1.5% decline in world merchandise trade volume in 2025. With the imposition of 145 percent tariff by the US against China, the WTO expects trade between the two countries, the world’s number one and two economies respectively, to contract by 8-90%.

The WTO warned that among other things, trade policy uncertainty could “dampen business confidence, reducing business investment and thereby impairing economic growth”. In its worst case scenario, which may well come to pass, the trade body said the global growth rate would fall to just 1.7%. Both the World Bank and IMF consider global growth of less than 2% to be indicative of recession.

DECLINING US DOLLAR SUPREMACY

* The voices are growing louder that US dollar could lose its role as the world’s global currency amid the breakdown of all the arrangements and the mechanisms of the post war period under the impact of US economic war against the world initiated by US President Trump. The concern has been sparked by an unusual development in financial markets. Under “normal” conditions, financial disturbances bring about a rise in the dollar’s value as investors seek a

ECONOMIC NOTES

● J. SURESH, Mysore

safe heaven and move to acquire US Treasury bonds. But since so-called “liberation day”, when Trump unveiled his “reciprocal tariffs”, there has been a move out of US government debt, and the value of the dollar has fallen. The price of gold, a real store of value, as opposed to debt and credit, continues to reach record highs. There was a slowing of this movement when Trump announced

a 90 day pause on the reciprocal tariffs, which range between 30 and 50 percent for a wide range of countries, to allow for negotiations. But the question remains what happens after the pause ends? Whatever the immediate answer, one thing is certain; There will be no return to the status quo ante, with Trump warning that nobody “gets off the hook”. This was evident in the discussion between US and Japan took place and Japan trade representatives returned home empty handed. In previous periods of political and economic stress, US equities and the currency rose because of the “heaven status” of the dollar. It did not seem to matter that all the things that had bolstered American companies from low rates to financial engineering to globalisation itself were trooped out. US asset markets seemed impervious to the notion of the dollar-dooms day scenario that would send both the currency and asset prices tumbling. Trump has finally ended America’s exorbitant privilege. According to Financial Times, the possibility of America becoming epic centre of an emerging market style debt crisis are imminent. Trump’s measures – the tariff hikes that will slow the economy and proposed tax cuts for Corporations – will add trillions of dollars to what is increasingly being characterised as an “unsustainable” debt mountain, currently at \$ 36 trillion and rising. Despite President Trump’s reversal on tariffs, the damage to the US dollar has been done. The market is re-assessing the structural attractions of the dollar as the world’s reserve currency and is undergoing a process of de-dollarisation. However, the crisis is not merely a product of Trump’s actions. It has been long in the making – the outcome of a protracted decline in the economic position of USA.

Seminar at Cuttack Contd from P 34

independent and critical thinking. Com Abhaya Kumar Das, General Secretary of CDIEA gave introductory address and described Dr Ambedkar as a jurist, economist, social reformer, and politician and one of the greatest intellectuals that world has produced. Com Debashis Nayak, General Secretary, OSGIEA, proposed vote of thanks while Com Mans Ranjan Pattnayak felicitated chief speaker. A large number LIC/GIC employees, pensioners, fraternal trade union leaders attended the seminar.

FOR OUR FIELD FORCE

● **A. ARIVUKKADAL**
Thanjavur

No special treatment: LIC has stated that it does not receive preferential treatment from the government or any regulatory authority. According to the United States Trade Representative (USTR) report, LIC and the National Payments Corporation (NPCI) were cited as entities receiving favourable treatment from the Indian government, which the US claims is creating barriers for foreign firms looking to enter India's financial industry.

◆
LIC Health: LIC, with Rs.4.97 lakh crore market capitalisation, will acquire 40-49% of ManipalCigna, valuing it at Rs.3,500-3,750 crore, making it a three-way partnership with Pai's Manipal Education & Medical Group and Cigna Corporation of the US. The latter two are currently 51:49 partners in the venture. LIC will be primarily infusing fresh capital, diluting the two existing shareholders. The transaction will also involve a smaller chunk of secondary share sales by the two. LIC has one of the strongest distribution networks in India with 14 lakh individual agents, 85 banks, 85 corporate agents, 309 brokers, and 154 insurance marketing firms (IMFs), along with thousands of common service centres. If LIC starts offering regular health insurance too, this entire network instantly becomes a powerful channel for selling health insurance policies as well.

◆
Insurance Repository: Centrico Insurance Repository, a subsidiary of Central Depository Services, has entered into an agreement with the LIC to provide insurance repository services. Centrico is already in partnership with 43 insurance companies, including 23 life insurers.

◆
Insurance Loans: Banks have pitched for creation of a common insurance repository and shared access to key customer data to help curb fraud in loans backed by life insurance policies. "Banks have said that there has been an increase in cases where fake surrender value certificates were provided, and on that basis, a higher loan amount was availed," said a government official.

◆
AI Fraud: ChatGPT's image-generation tool is allegedly generated fake damage on images of cars and altered receipts to claim refunds or insurance payouts. Experts worry that with tools becoming increasingly sophisticated and accessible, fraudulent activities may surge, posing serious challenges for insurance companies and financial institutions. If the implications of such misuse go beyond individual scams—if AI-generated fraud becomes widespread, insurance companies may tighten their policies, making legitimate claims more difficult for everyone.

◆
Insurance complaints: A recent report by Insurance Samadhan, an insurance grievance redressal platform, shows that 46% of the insurance related grievances have come from the age group of 25 to 38, also known as millennials. Of this group, 42% were women. 88% of all complaints were towards claim rejection, which was

the top major issue among millennials. This was followed by short settlement of claims by insurers and delay in claim settlement by the insurers.

◆
Health Claims: IRDAI has discovered serious lapses in the claim settlement practices of stand-alone health insurer Star Health and Allied Insurance. While the official investigations are yet to conclude, the regulator is likely to take action against the

insurer. Apart from Star Health, IRDAI has also scrutinised 8-10 other general and health insurers in the country.

◆
Flipkart fined: IRDAI has imposed a penalty of Rs.1.06 crore on Flipkart Internet Pvt Ltd (FIPL) for breaching multiple regulatory provisions related to insurance e-commerce operations and corporate agency norms. According to IRDAI, Flipkart has used unauthorized method of insurance solicitation.

◆
TPA Warned: IRDAI has warned Heritage TPA against unilaterally closing health claims, saying that such actions violate regulatory norms, which mandate that only insurers are authorised to communicate claim decisions to policyholders.

◆
Insurance mis-selling: The National Housing Bank (NHB) has reprimanded home financiers for mis-selling insurance policies bundled with housing loans. The regulator has instructed these companies to stop bundling insurance products without adequately informing borrowers about the terms and conditions of the policies.

◆
Aadhaar linking: IRDAI has extended the deadline for linking 12-digit unique identity number Aadhaar with various insurance policies. "For existing insurance policies, the date of linking Aadhaar is extended till the matter is finally heard and the judgement is pronounced by Hon'ble Supreme Court of India," IRDAI said in a circular to insurers.

◆
Self-employed Insurance: India's self-employed community is increasingly prioritising financial protection, with term insurance purchases in this segment rising by 58% in FY25, according to data released by Policy bazaar. Significantly, the share of women buyers has grown from just 9% in FY20 to 15% in FY25.

◆
Allianz & Bajaj: German financial giant Allianz SE is in talks with Mukesh Ambani-led Jio Financial Services (JFSL) for a strategic partnership in India's insurance sector. Allianz is seeking a minimum 50% stake in the new insurance venture. This move comes after Allianz announced its exit from Bajaj Allianz General Insurance and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance. After acquiring Allianz's 26% stake in Bajaj Allianz General Insurance and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance for Rs.24,180 crore, Bajaj Finserv is planning to explore listing of its insurance ventures.

Quiz on History of AIIEA at Thamarassery

The Thamarassery base unit of Kozhikode Division held its Annual General Body meeting on 22/03/2025. On this day it conducted a competitive MCQ TYPE examination for its members mainly based on the subject: "THE FORMATION, EVOLUTION AND HISTORY OF THE AIIEA." On 22nd March 2025.

Comrades Shaji K, Radhakrishnan KK and Sreena C won the First, Second and Third prizes respectively. Com. IK Biju Joint Secretary, SZIEF distributed prizes to the winners.

During the year 2024-25 this base unit conducted 12 classes on the insurance Worker under the Insurance Worker Readers Forum (IWRP). Those who conduct and attend the classes include development officers and Class 1 officers besides our members.



Thamarassery continues to conduct the QUIZ program on every 4th Friday based on the Insurance Worker of the month. Though the unit has only 11 members, it has 58 subscribers for the Insurance worker. They include all the staff members and officers, Development officers and agents.

Response

The article "INCLUSIVE INSURANCE & UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SECURITY" in April issue is very informative and makes out a case of urgent steps by the State towards a Universal Social Security Scheme. It is painfully noted

that the meagre monthly pension for widows and senior citizens mock at their poverty and miserable living conditions. It is necessary that the united trade union movement should launch a big struggle demanding non-contributory pension scheme to all citizens above 60 years. It is the responsibility of the Welfare State to implement such a scheme.

- P. Gurusamy, Salem

DONATIONS TO INSURANCE WORKER

Com. Priyanshee, Asst, BDIEA	Rs.1000
Com. Dipak nath Purkayastha	5000
Com. Manas Kr. Roy	5000
Com. Shankar Sambrani, Belgaum DO	1111
Com Somanath Masani, Belgaum DO	1000
Com. H.Y Tolagi, Belgaum DO	1000

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

The March 2025 issue of Insurance Worker is very educative. It helps us in understanding the times that we live in. I am very much delighted after reading article written by Com. Girija JS AIIEA "Founding Mothers of the Indian Constitution". The role of these women's cannot be ignored by people of this nation in general and women in particular. Such articles help us to show the brilliant role of women in nation building to our women members particularly the young and motivate them to take up organisational activities.

Thank you Team Insurance Worker

Nikunj Vaghela, Gandhinagar Division

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX

Month	Base 2016	2001	1960
July 2024	142.7	410.98	9380.90
Aug	142.6	410.69	9374.32
Sept	143.3	412.70	9420.34
Oct	144.5	416.16	9499.23
Nov	144.5	416.16	9499.23
Dec	143.7	413.86	9446.64
Jan 2025	143.2	412.42	9413.77
Feb	142.8	411.26	9387.47

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





Homes for the people, By the people

A group of employees of the Life Insurance Corporation of India, came together with an idea of having permanent residences for fellow colleagues in Panvel. The employees who are staying in government quarters during their service tenure, always dream of a permanent home in Mumbai. Superb Group is developing this mini township of over 1200 built to suit affordable flats. In the lap of nature, 10 minutes to Karnala Sanctuary.

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**2.5 kms. from
Palaspe Square
JNPT Road**



3D Visual Tour

**1.2 kms from
Somatane
Railway Station**



Visual Tour





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