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Artificial
Intelligence:
Certain Dangers



When Vishwaguru
Succumbed



Imperialism's
Revival
Strategy



Inclusive Insurance & Universal Social Security

FOR FULLY INSURED INDIA BY 2047



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casual, & contract
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can not become
VIKASIT
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STAFFING CRISIS IN LIC

The staffing crisis in LIC is real. But the stand of LIC on recruitment remains strange. The administration agrees with AIIEA in discussions that there is a need for recruitment to adequately staff the offices. But it takes no steps towards recruitment. The situation has remained the same for the last five years. Perhaps LIC has chosen procrastination as a policy. This will not help. This inaction and procrastination is raising questions about the very functioning of LIC to meet the demands of its vast clientele. This situation has created industrial unrest and the AIIEA had to call the employees to register their protest against the callousness and procrastination of the management on such an issue of vital importance through a one-hour strike action on 20th February 2025. The response to this call was overwhelming, demonstrating in clear terms the anger against the attitude of the management and once again proving the truly representative character of AIIEA.

There is no doubt that there is an alarming decline in the overall staff strength of LIC. This is acknowledged by the government in the Parliament in an answer to the question raised. The total staff strength of all classes of employees as on 31.3.1995 was 121410 when the number of in-force policies were 6.55 crore. Thereafter, one can observe sharp decline in the staff strength with each passing year. The staff strength sharply declined to 98661 as on 31.3.2024 which is a reduction of 22749 in the total strength compared to 31.3.1995. The number of in-force policies as on 31.3.2024 grew to 26.85 crore. This means that the in-force policies between the period 31.3.1995 to 31.3.2024 grew 410% while the staff strength came down by nearly 18.74%.

The fall is much more drastic in the class III and IV strength. From 89856 as on 31.3.1995 to 45762 as at 31.3.2024. This shows an overall reduction of 44094 translating to a sharp decline of over 49%. The LIC realised that recruitment is necessary and advertised recruitment of 8000 Assistants to fill some vacancies in the year 2019-2020. The LIC succeeded in recruiting only around 6000 Assistants and the balance of 2000 posts still remain vacant despite a number of representations by AIIEA to fill them up urgently. Additionally, there have been thousands of exits through superannuation, voluntary retirements and deaths. Despite the existence of such a large number of vacancies, it defies all logic as to why the LIC is procrastinating on the issue of recruitment. A realistic assessment suggests that by 31.3.2028, the total number

of Class III employees will come down to just around 26000.

Why then, LIC is procrastinating on this issue? The reasons are simple. Unemployment is an inherent feature of capitalism. The capital always desires to lower the labour cost creating what Marx called a reserve army of unemployed. This helps the capital to keep wages low and reduce the effectiveness of trade unions. The capital maximises profits by adopting technology and replacing the human capital. It is with this understanding; we have to look at the policy of the government to abolish permanency of jobs. It is driving the job market towards casual, contract and temporary employment. The government took decision to abolish Class D post which is equivalent to Class IV in LIC totally and replace it with contract employment. This has hit very hard the less skilled and marginalised sections looking for stable jobs. Secondly, in a country which has such acute unemployment, the government is aggressively pushing for a knowledge and digital economy. In such an economy, the accessibility of information replaces physical capital and has huge impact on the job market. The LIC too has decided to rely more on technology rather than human capital for its functioning. The entire focus of LIC has shifted to generation of greater profits and values for the investors post-IPO. One of the areas it is concentrating to generate more profits is to reduce the fixed cost on wages. This can be seen from the fact that the total wage bill of LIC came down by nearly Rs.4900 crore as at 31.12.2024 from that as on 31.12.2023. This is what the AIIEA had been warning ever since the decision for IPO was taken by the government.

The LIC has to understand whatever may be its technological innovations, it cannot solely rely on them for servicing the policyholders. The LIC has a large number of policyholders from the rural India. This apart looking at the ticket size of LIC, it becomes obvious that its most loyal customers are those who belong to lower middle and marginalised sections. This clientele still values the personal contact and are more comfortable visiting the offices for their servicing needs. The LIC would be committing a grave mistake if it does not take immediate steps to arrive at a balance between technology implementation and required human capital. For the very survival of LIC and to retain its competitiveness and market leadership, it

is necessary that it initiates steps towards immediate recruitment of posts in Class III and IV. The failure to do so urgently will put the institution into unnecessary industrial unrest impacting its ability to meet the present day challenges of a very competitive environment.

This situation is not peculiar to LIC. The public sector banking industry is also facing similar problems and its officers and employees are on agitation to demand recruitment. The banking unions claim that there is a shortage of 150000 clerks and 50000 subordinate staff leading to great stress for the existing workforce. The entire public sector is facing staffing crunch. To overcome this situation, they are resorting to contract and temporary employment. This situation does not augur well for the equitable economic growth. The dream and vision of a developed India by 2047 would fall flat in the face a pressing job crisis with an unemployment rate of 4.2% and

एलआईसी में स्टाफ का संकट वास्तविक है। लेकिन भर्ती के मामले में एलआईसी का रुख अजीब है। प्रबन्धन एआईआईईए के साथ चर्चा के समय तो सहमत रहता है कि कार्यालय में पर्याप्त स्टाफ की आवश्यकता है, लेकिन भर्ती के लिए कोई कदम नहीं उठाता। पिछले पांच वर्षों से स्थिति जस की तस बनी हुई है। ऐसा लगता है कि एलआईसी ने टालमटोल अपनी नीति बना ली है। इससे कोई मदद नहीं मिलेगी। यह निष्क्रियता और टालमटोल एलआईसी के अपने विशाल ग्राहक बल की मांगों को पूरा करने की कार्यप्रणाली पर ही सवाल खड़े कर रही है। इस स्थिति ने औद्योगिक अशांति पैदा कर दी है जिस कारण एआईआईईए द्वारा कर्मचारियों को 20 फरवरी 2025 को एक घंटे की हड़ताल के माध्यम से ऐसे महत्वपूर्ण मुद्दे पर प्रबन्धन की उदासीनता और विलम्ब के खिलाफ अपना विरोध दर्ज कराने के लिए आवाहन करना पड़ा। इस आवाहन पर लोगों की जबरदस्त प्रतिक्रिया मिली, जिसने प्रबन्धन के रवैये के खिलाफ गुस्से को स्पष्ट शब्दों में प्रदर्शित किया और एक बार फिर एआईआईईए के वास्तविक प्रतिनिधि चरित्र को साबित किया।

इसमें कोई संदेह नहीं है कि एलआईसी के कुल कर्मचारियों की संख्या में चिन्ताजनक गिरावट आई है। संसद में उठाए गए प्रश्न के उत्तर में सरकार ने भी इस बात को स्वीकार किया है। 31.03.1995 तक सभी श्रेणियों के कर्मचारियों की कुल संख्या 121410 थी, जबकि चालू पॉलिसियों की संख्या 6.55 करोड़ थी। उसके बाद, हर गुजरते साल के साथ कर्मचारियों की संख्या में तेज गिरावट देखी जा सकती है। 31.03.2024 तक कर्मचारियों की संख्या में भारी गिरावट आती गई और यह 98661 रह गई, जो संख्या में कुल 22749 की कमी है। 31.03.2024 तक चालू पॉलिसियों की संख्या बढ़कर 26.85 करोड़ हो

youth unemployment soaring to over 15%. It is estimated that 10-15 million enter the job market every year and India is not in a position to create that many jobs, thus squandering its demographic advantage. The slogans of Make in India and Skill India have not worked on the ground. The manufacturing sector continues to lag behind. While it employs over 25% of the workforce, it contributes between 16-17% of the GDP while services contribute more than half of GDP employing around 31% of the workforce. Agriculture which employs around 44% of the workforce contributes just around 17% to the national GDP. This shows the precarious nature of work and miserable living conditions for the vast majority of our fellow citizens.

With the Trump administration initiating a brutal tariff war, more industries and services are bound to be impacted. It is reported that Bangalore IT firms alone are preparing to shed their labour force by over 50000 this year

alone. The MSME sector is in turmoil. More than 75000 Medium and small manufacturing enterprises have closed down in the last few years resulting in job losses of over half a million. A number of reports have pointed out that the consumption in India is restricted only to 10% of its population. In such a bleak situation, how India can become Vikshit Bharat by 2047? The government, therefore should take immediate steps to create stable and decent paying jobs if the economic growth has to benefit the entire population.

The LIC can no longer remain inactive on the issue of recruitment. It must take immediate steps to recruit and adequately staff the offices to meet the policy servicing needs of its customers. Failure to do so will not only harm the long term interests of this great institution but it will also drown LIC into avoidable industrial unrest.

एलआईसी में कार्मिक नियोजन का संकट

गड़ी इसका मतलब यह है कि 31.03.1995 से 31.03.2024 के बीच चालू पॉलिसियों में 410 प्रतिशत की वृद्धि हुई, जबकि कर्मचारियों की संख्या में लगभग 18.74 प्रतिशत की कमी आई।

तृतीय और चतुर्थ श्रेणी की संख्या में गिरावट कहीं अधिक गंभीर है। 31.03.1995 को 89856 से 31.03.2024 को 45762 तक। यह 44094 की समग्र कमी दर्शाता है जो 49 प्रतिशत से अधिक की तीव्र गिरावट है। एलआईसी ने महसूस किया कि भर्ती आवश्यक है और वर्ष 2019-2020 में कुछ रिक्तियों को भरने के लिए 8000 सहायकों की भर्ती का विज्ञापन दिया। एलआईसी केवल 6000 के लगभग सहायकों की भर्ती करने में सफल रही और शेष 2000 पद अभी भी रिक्त हैं, जबकि एआईआईईए द्वारा उन्हें तत्काल भरने के लिए कई मांगपत्र दिए गए हैं। इसके अतिरिक्त, सेवानिवृत्ति, स्वैच्छिक सेवानिवृत्ति और मृत्यु के माध्यम से हजारों लोग बाहर निकले हैं। इतनी बड़ी संख्या में रिक्तियां होने के बावजूद, यह समझ से परे है कि एलआईसी भर्ती के मुद्दे पर क्यों टालमटोल कर रही है। एक यथार्थवादी आकलन बताता है कि दिनांक 31.03.2026 तक कुल तृतीय श्रेणी कर्मचारियों की संख्या घटकर मात्र 26000 के आसपास रह जायेगी।

फिर, एलआईसी इस मुद्दे पर टालमटोल क्यों कर रही है ? कारण सरल हैं। बेरोजगारी पूंजीवाद की एक अंतर्निहित विशेषता है। पूंजी हमेशा श्रम लागत को कम करना चाहती है, जिससे मार्क्स के कथनानुसार बेरोजगारों की एक आरक्षित सेना बनती है। इससे पूंजी को मजदूरी कम रखने और ट्रेड यूनियनों की प्रभावशीलता को कम करने में मदद मिलती है। पूंजी प्रौद्योगिकी को अपनाकर और मानव पूंजी की जगह लेकर अधिकतम लाभ कमाती है। इसी समझ के साथ हमें

नौकरियों में स्थायित्व को खत्म करने की सरकार की नीति को देखना होगा। यह नौकरी बाजार को आकस्मिक, अनुबन्ध और अस्थायी रोजगार की ओर ले जा रही है। सरकार ने एलआईसी में क्लास डी पद जो क्लास चतुर्थ के बराबर है, को पूरी तरह से खत्म करने और इसे अनुबन्ध रोजगार से बदलने का फैसला किया। इसने स्थिर नौकरियों की तलाश कर रहे कम कुशल और हाशिए पर पड़ें वर्गों को बहुत मुश्किल में डाल दिया है। दूसरे, ऐसे देश में जहां बेरोजगारी इतनी तीव्र है, सरकार सुलभ ज्ञान और डिजिटल अर्थव्यवस्था को आक्रामक रूप से आगे बढ़ा रही है। ऐसी अर्थव्यवस्था में, सूचना की सुलभता भौतिक पूंजी की जगह ले लेती है और इसका रोजगार के बाजार पर बहुत बड़ा प्रभाव पड़ता है। एलआईसी ने भी अपने कामकाज के लिए मानव पूंजी के बजाय तकनीक पर अधिक भरोसा करने का फैसला किया है। एलआईसी का पूरा ध्यान आईपीओ के बाद निवेशकों के लिए अधिक लाभ और मूल्य सृजन पर केन्द्रित हो गया है। अधिक लाभ उत्पन्न करने के लिए जिन क्षेत्रों पर यह ध्यान केन्द्रित कर रहा है उनमें से एक वेतन पर निश्चित लागत को कम करना है। यह इस तथ्य से देखा जा सकता है कि 31.12.2023 की तुलना में 31.12.2024 को एलआईसी का कुल वेतन बिल लगभग 4900 करोड़ कम हो गया। यह वही है जिसके बारे में एआईआईईए उसी वक्त से चेतावनी दे रहा था जब से सरकार ने आईपीओ का फैसला लिया था।

एलआईसी को यह समझना होगा कि चाहे उसके पास कितनी भी तकनीकी नवीनता क्यों न हो, वह पॉलिसीधारकों की सेवा के लिए केवल उन पर निर्भर नहीं रह सकती। एलआईसी के पास ग्रामीण भारत से बड़ी संख्या में पॉलिसीधारक हैं। इसके अलावा एलआईसी के टिकट

आकार को देखते हुए, यह स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि इसके सबसे वफादार ग्राहक निम्न-मध्यम और हाशिए के वर्गों से हैं। यह ग्राहक अभी भी व्यक्तिगत सम्पर्क को महत्व देते हैं और अपनी सेवा सम्बन्धी जरूरतों के लिए कार्यालयों में जाने में अधिक सहज हैं। यदि एलआईसी प्रौद्योगिकी कार्यान्वयन और आवश्यक मानव पूंजी के बीच सन्तुलन बनाने के लिए तत्काल कदम नहीं उठाती है, तो यह एक बड़ी गलती होगी। एलआईसी के अस्तित्व और इसकी प्रतिस्पर्धात्मकता और बाजार नेतृत्व को बनाए रखने के लिए, यह आवश्यक है कि यह तृतीय एवं चतुर्थ श्रेणी के पदों की तत्काल भर्ती की दिशा में कदम उठाए। ऐसा करने में विफलता संस्था को अनावश्यक औद्योगिक अंशाति में डाल देगी, जिससे वर्तमान समय में बहुत प्रतिस्पर्धी माहौल की चुनौतियों का सामना करने की इसकी क्षमता प्रभावित होगी।

यह स्थिति सिर्फ एलआईसी तक सीमित नहीं है। सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंकिंग उद्योग को भी ऐसी ही समस्याओं का सामना करना पड़ रहा है और इसके अधिकारी और कर्मचारी भर्ती की मांग को लेकर आन्दोलन कर रहे हैं। बैंकिंग यूनियनों का दावा है कि, क्लर्कों और अधीनस्थ कर्मचारियों की कमी है, जिससे मौजूदा कर्मचारियों पर बहुत दबाव है। पूरा सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र कर्मचारियों की कमी से जूझ रहा है। इस स्थिति से निपटने के लिए वे अनुबन्ध और अस्थायी रोजगार का सहारा ले रहे हैं। यह स्थिति समतामूलक आर्थिक विकास के लिए अच्छी नहीं है। 2047 तक एक विकसित भारत को देखने का सपना 4.2 प्रतिशत की बेरोजगारी दर और 15 प्रतिशत से अधिक की युवा बेरोजगारी के साथ बढ़ते रोजगार संकट के कारण विफल हो जाएगा। अनुमान है कि हर साल एक से डेढ़ करोड़ लोग नौकरी के बाजार में प्रवेश करते हैं और भारत इतनी नौकरियां पैदा करने की स्थिति में नहीं है, जिससे उसका जनसांख्यिकीय लाभ खत्म हो रहा है। मेक इन इंडिया और स्किल इंडिया के नारे जमीनी स्तर पर कारगर नहीं हुए हैं। विनिर्माण क्षेत्र लगातार पिछड़

रहा है। जबकि यह प्रतिशत से अधिक कार्यबल को रोजगार देता है, यह सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में 16-17 प्रतिशत के बीच योगदान देता है जबकि सेवा क्षेत्र सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में आधे से अधिक योगदान देता है जो लगभग 31 प्रतिशत कार्यबल को रोजगार देता है। कृषि जो लगभग 44 प्रतिशत कार्यबल को रोजगार देती है, राष्ट्रीय सकल घरेलू उत्पाद में लगभग 17 प्रतिशत का योगदान देती है। यह हमारे अधिकांश साथी नागरिकों के लिए काम की अनिश्चित प्रकृति और दयनीय जीवन स्थितियों को दर्शाता है।

ट्रम्प प्रशासन द्वारा क्रूर टैरिफ युद्ध शुरू करने के साथ ही और भी अधिक उद्योग और सेवाएं प्रभावित होने के लिए बाध्य है। यह बताया गया है कि अकेले बेंगलोर की आईटी फर्म इस साल अपने कर्मचारियों की संख्या में 50,000 से अधिक की कटौती करने की तैयारी कर रही हैं। एमएसएमई क्षेत्र उथल-पुथल में है। पिछले कुछ वर्षों में 75,000 से अधिक मध्यम और लघु विनिर्माण उद्यम बंद हो गए हैं, जिसके परिणामस्वरूप पांच लाख लोगों की नौकरी चली गई है। कई रिपोर्टों ने बताया है कि भारत में खपत इसकी आबादी के केवल 10 प्रतिशत तक ही सीमित है। ऐसी निराशाजनक स्थिति में, भारत 2047 तक विकसित भारत कैसे बन सकता है? इसलिए, अगर आर्थिक विकास से पूरी आबादी को फायदा पहुंचाना है तो सरकार को स्थिर और सभ्य भुगतान वाली नौकरियां पैदा करने के लिए तत्काल कदम उठाने चाहिए।

एलआईसी अब भर्ती के इस मुद्दे पर निष्क्रिय नहीं रह सकती। इसे अपने ग्राहकों की पॉलिसी सेवा सम्बन्धी जरूरतों को पूरा करने के लिए कार्यालयों में भर्ती और पर्याप्त स्टाफ की व्यवस्था करने के लिए तत्काल कदम उठाने चाहिए। ऐसा न करने से न केवल इस महान संस्था के दीर्घकालिक हितों को नुकसान पहुंचेगा, बल्कि एलआईसी को उस औद्योगिक अंशाति में भी डुबो देगा जिससे बचा जा सकता है।

LIC ranked world's 3rd strongest insurance brand

The Life Insurance Corporation of India has been ranked third among the world's strongest insurance brands, achieving a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 88 out of 100, according to the Brand Finance Insurance 100 2025 report. SBI Life was ranked at 74th position.

Poland-based PZU secured the top spot with a BSI score of 94.4, followed by China Life Insurance, which ranked second with a BSI score of 93.5.

In terms of overall brand value, the LIC holds the 12th position among the most valuable insurance brands globally. LIC's brand value is estimated at \$13.3 billion which is an increase of 36% over the value last year. Based on Brand Finance's market research data, LIC recorded high scores for the "familiarity" and "appeal" metrics in its home market, alongside its sustained AAA brand strength rating.





INCLUSIVE INSURANCE & UNIVERSAL SOCIAL SECURITY

Amanulla Khan

The government must be clear about its responsibilities as enshrined in the Constitution
No health insurance can be a substitute to an efficient public health system.
No life insurance can be a substitute for a much-needed social security.
They can only complement.
The effort of IRDAI for inclusive insurance and the set goal of a fully insured nation by 2047 should be supported.
But this requires a political and economic will of the government.
The government must reorient its economic policies to enable adequate disposable income in the hands of the people.



India needs a universal social security scheme. The IRDAI and the Government of India are working towards this goal through insurance. The IRDAI has set an ambitious target of every Indian covered by a life, non-life and health insurance policy by 2047. Though this is a laudable goal, its success depends upon the economic growth and increase in the disposable incomes. Even if their efforts succeed in making India a fully insured country, it may not succeed in building a universal social security system. This brings us to the larger question, is the State failing its citizens in fulfilling the constitutional obligation towards ensuring a universal social security? We will very briefly discuss the possibilities and the risks such a policy entails.

India is the fastest growing among the large economies of the world. It has a population size of 1.43 billion and is having the advantage of second largest working age population. It has the advantage of having a young population with the median age of 28.4 years. The

total work force of India is close to 500 million. Nearly 42% of the work force is engaged in agriculture, while industry and services employ 26.18 and 33% of the workforce respectively. More than 94% of the workforce is employed in the unorganised sector and a very negligible proportion of workers are regular salaried class. A little over 10% of the population is over 60 years of age.

Despite the fact that Indian economy is growing faster than the other major economies, the distribution of wealth so generated is skewed. A number of recent surveys have pointed out that economic growth has disproportionately benefited the top 10% of the population while the bottom 50% continue to live on the margins. This inequitable distribution of wealth has created a situation where there is no social security for overwhelming sections of the population. Therefore, there is a wide consensus that the GDP growth is not necessarily a correct reflection of the life standards of the people. This understanding

This is the paper presented at the National Seminar jointly organised by JSS College of Women and Insurance Institute of India, Mysore on 14/3/2025)

is further strengthened from the fact that global ranking of India is very low in all human development indices. Such a situation demands that as a Welfare State, India must work towards ensuring a decent life to all its citizens.

SOCIAL SECURITY - PRIMARILY A RESPONSIBILITY OF THE STATE

The Directive Principles of the State Policy (Part IV of the Constitution) clearly lays down the responsibility of the government to provide a decent living to all citizens. Articles 36 to 51 of the Constitution clearly outline how to achieve social and economic justice. Since we are concerned about the need for social security, it is necessary to read Article 41 of the Constitution. This Article mandates the State to provide public assistance in cases of unemployment, old age, sickness and disablement. This makes it clear that it is the responsibility of the State to ensure social security to all citizens. But unfortunately, there is no real social security system existing in the country. Though the government through budgetary allocations earmark some funds for Indira Gandhi National Widow Pension Scheme and Indira Gandhi National Old Age Pension Scheme, the benefits are meagre and only a fraction of the population is covered. Under the first, widows belonging to households that are below the poverty line are paid a monthly pension of Rs.300/- if they are between the age 40-79 years and Rs.500/- for those aged 80 and above. Similarly, under the second scheme, the monthly pension for those aged between 60-79 years

belonging to below poverty line is Rs.200/- and Rs.500/- for those aged 80 and above. As can be seen, the coverage is restricted and benefit is too small.

The suggestion for a non-contributory universal pension scheme is negated with the argument that India lacks resources. This is not entirely true. The Indian taxation system is regressive as taxes on corporate income are much less compared to what the State generates from the indirect taxes. India has one of the lowest taxes to GDP ratio and its corporate tax is much less than the individual income tax. Therefore, there is a great scope to raise revenues through an equitable taxation system.

Some of the leading economists have urged that India, which the Constitution describes as a social welfare State must make five important issues relating to the life of the citizens as fundamental rights; they are

- right to employment,
- right to education,
- right to food,
- right to health and
- right to old age pension.

The issue under discussion here is the need for universal social security. Towards this, we can make a beginning with a non-contributory universal pension scheme where every

citizen above the age of 60 is entitled to a monthly pension of Rs.3000 with protection from inflation.

The resource generation for these guarantees can be mobilised by levying a small tax on the rich 1% of the population. Wealth tax can be levied on those holding wealth of over Rs.100 crore. Similarly, all developed nations impose an inheritance tax on massive wealth inherited, so India can also introduce the concept of inheritance tax. If only these two steps are taken, it would be possible for the State to generate the necessary resources and ensure the aforementioned five rights to all citizens.

With ever growing income and wealth inequalities and the possibility that India will have nearly 20% of the population over the age sixty in the next one decade, it is necessary that the government should seriously work towards introducing a non-contributory pension scheme. Insurance at best can complement such a scheme and in no case, it can be a substitute for the non-contributory universal social security which is the Constitutional obligation of the State.

INCLUSIVE INSURANCE

The IRDAI has declared that it wants to ensure that

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all citizens have a life, non-life and health insurance policy by 2047. This is a very noble and laudable objective. But to achieve this goal even to a substantial extent requires empowering the citizens with adequate disposable incomes. We will briefly analyse this situation.

A case is being made out that Indian insurance market is under-penetrated. The life insurance business was nationalised in 1956 and the General Insurance business was nationalised in 1972. Till 1999, the government had the monopoly over both the life and non-life business.

With the country embracing neoliberal economic policies, insurance sector was opened up for private participation through the IRDA Act 1999. Almost all big corporate houses in partnership with the foreign capital have since been operating in the insurance sector. Today 26 private life insurance companies along with the State owned Life Insurance Corporation are operating in the life insurance market. Similarly, 27 companies including the four public sector companies are in the general insurance business.

According to the latest statistics, the life insurance penetration in India is 2.7% and that of General insurance

is 1%. Insurance penetration is the total premium mobilised as a percentage of the GDP. However, it is often confused as the number of people covered and therefore there is criticism that adequate number of people are not covered by insurance.

The growth of life insurance is critically dependent upon the disposable incomes in the hands of the people. Similarly, the non-life business depends upon the number holding assets.

Seen in this context, the performance of insurance industry in India is creditable. India ranks 10th in the global life insurance business and LIC, the market leader is adjudged as the 3rd top global insurance brand. The general insurance industry is ranked 14th in the globe. The life insurance penetration in India compares favourably with that of United States, Germany, Canada, Spain etc. This is creditable since the per capita income of these countries is many times greater than that of India.

According to the Annual Periodic Labour Force Survey under Ministry of Statistics, the average monthly wage in rural India is Rs.8842 in 2023-24 and Rs.13006 in the same period in the Urban India. The Indus Valley Annual Report 2025 published by Blume Ventures says that

overwhelming majority of the workforce in India lead a hand to mouth existence and they do not have any disposable incomes. This is vindicated from the fact that the Gross Domestic Savings are steadily going down and India's household share of savings has dropped from 84% in Financial Year 2000 to just around 60% in Financial Year 2023.

Despite such adverse conditions, the insurance industry has been registering impressive growth. Both the life and non-life segments have been registering growth much higher than the world average. It is estimated that nearly 40 crore Indians have a life insurance policy – both individual and group taken together. This amounts to nearly 70-75 percent of the total insurable population of India. This is significant coverage of the insurable population. The non-life business has been growing mostly backed by mandatory motor insurance and health insurance. The non-life insurance can grow only with the expansion of the business activities and the general prosperity enabling a larger number of people to own the assets.

IRDAI must rethink its policies

The IRDAI is taking certain measures to develop the insurance market. On its recommendation, the government has announced FDI limit to 100% in the insurance sector. There is a proposal to amend the Insurance Laws to reduce the capital requirement, issue of composite licences and allow the agents to sell the products of more than one company. The understanding of the IRDAI is that India requires a large number of companies to

The understanding of the IRDAI is that India requires a large number of companies to expand the insurance business. But the experience of the last two decades suggest that it is not the number of companies that can expand the market but the availability of disposal incomes that would enable the people to purchase insurance to cover the risk to their life and property. India today has become a country of daily, casual and contract workers. These workers do not have the guarantee of their earnings. How then can one assume that they will have the incomes to purchase the insurance.

expand the insurance business. But the experience of the last two decades suggest that it is not the number of companies that can expand the market but the availability of disposal incomes that would enable the people to purchase insurance to cover the risk to their life and property.

Some of these decisions and proposals of the IRDAI and the government have the potential to disrupt the market adversely. The decision to allow 100% FDI and foreign control over the company carry the risk of allowing the foreign capital to gain greater access and control over the domestic savings. This also has the risk of reverse flow of capital if the 100% foreign owned companies repatriate the profits. The proposal to reduce the capital requirement, allow smaller companies to operate will take the industry back to the period existing before the nationalisation of life insurance business. The safety and security of the policy money will be put to risk.

Yes, it is necessary to promote insurance and help the population to have some security against the risk. But unhealthy competition will make the insurance companies compete for the most profitable business to the neglect of the insurance needs of the lower middle class and the marginalised. The IRDAI must rethink its policies and at the same time without the government revisiting its economic policies, the task of inclusive insurance and every Indian having an insurance policy looks really daunting. The economic policies must be so framed that they benefit all the citizens. For this, the government must create decent

and well-paying jobs. Today while the wages are stagnant or even declining, the corporate profits are zooming. This requires a correction. India today has become a country of daily, casual and contract workers. These workers do not have the guarantee of their earnings. How then can one assume that they will have the incomes to purchase the insurance. Let it be clear that insurance is still a sold product and not a purchase product. The responsibility of equitable economic development lies with the government. If this is done, surely, insurance industry in India has a bright future. The government must be clear about its responsibilities as enshrined in the Constitution and awareness should be created among the people about the benefits of insurance. No health insurance can be a substitute to an efficient public health system. No life insurance can be a substitute for a much-needed social security. They can only complement.

The effort of IRDAI for inclusive insurance and the set goal of a fully insured nation by 2047 should be supported. But this requires a political and economic will of the government. The government must reorient its economic policies to enable adequate disposable income in the hands of the people. It must immediately as a first step, do away with the GST on life and health premium. The industry too must make necessary contribution to this effort. The responsibility of the public sector is much greater here.

An avalanche of predatory attacks have been unleashed on the PSU Insurance Industry, in the form of 100% FDI in Insurance, Insurance Laws Amendment Bill-2024, FPO in LIC etc and the latest salvo being fired in the name of National Trade Estimate Report on Foreign Trade Barriers -2024(NTE Report) by US Trade Representative, which rebuked the Govt of India for providing Sovereign Guarantee on every policy of LIC as unfair competitive advantage.

Challenges posed by Government:

The fall in private consumption over the years indicate that households have less disposable income, which in turn stifles economic growth. The tax sops announced in Budget 2025-26 failed to generate additional income to the people either to consume or to save. Though, the annual growth of per capita Income of India is around 7%, yet it is not growing for vast majority of the people. The share of disposable income available for investment in savings, more so in insurance, has not gone up. The government policy on taxation is not providing any incentives for savings.

Bowing to pressure exerted by MNCs, Government of India had already decided to raise the cap of FDI in Insurance from 74% to 100% and is contemplating to bring in Insurance Reforms Bill which contains obnoxious provisions like Multiple Agencies, Mushrooming of Private Insurance Companies etc. Media report suggests that Government may allow overseas Insurance firms to appoint Key Management persons and permit repatriation of dividend Income. IRDA has recently set

Confront Challenges Embrace Opportunities



P. Satish, President SCZIEF

Notwithstanding the innumerable challenges confronting us, there are opportunities available for the PSU Insurance Industry to move forward.

The goodwill earned through decades of hard work by its workforce will help LIC to meet the challenges successfully.

The IRDAI must revisit its proposals on amendments to the insurance laws and the government must not allow the foreign capital to gain dominance...

This also requires action from the public in forcing the government to reconsider its policies.

up 7 member committee under former SBI Chairman, Dinesh Khara to suggest changes in line with the objectives of Government.

While increasing (FDI) limit in the insurance sector from 49% to 74%, several restrictions were placed viz Majority of directors on the board and key management personnel must be resident Indian citizens, with at least one from among the board chairperson, managing director, or CEO being a resident Indian citizen. For insurance companies with more than 49% foreign investment, at least 50% of the directors must be independent directors, unless the chairperson of the board is an independent director, in which case at least one-third of the board must comprise independent directors. A specified percentage of profits must be retained in the general reserve, and not less than 50% of the net profit for the financial year shall be retained in general reserve if dividend is paid on equity shares and the solvency margin is less than 1.2 times the control level of solvency. In this background,

the assertion of Finance Minister that guardrails and conditionalities associated with foreign Investment will be reviewed and simplified is shocking.

Whether the Indian Insurance Industry really withstands the Global headwinds like the way it unfolded during International financial crisis in 2008??

Challenge of Multiple Agencies:

As per Proposed amendments to Insurance Laws, Agents will be allowed to sell products of multiple companies. Most of the Private insurance companies are procuring around 30% business only from Agents as they procure beyond 50% business through Bank assurance channel. Even the IRDAI is now concerned that excessive dependence on bancassurance by private sector have given rise to innumerable frauds. Despite this, it is unable to rein in the private sector. On the other hand, LIC procures nearly 92% of its business through its agency force. Therefore,

allowing a open architecture for agents permitting them to sell policies of any company is an open attack on the public sector LIC.

Already, the changes brought in by IRDAI viz Special Surrender Value, Cooling off period etc are causing impediments for the growth of PSU Insurance Industry. The proposed Bima Trinity, Viz; Bima Sugam, Bima Vistaar and Bima Vahak which has no legal sanctity, is a frontal attack on the agents and creating roadblocks for the PSU Insurance Industry.

GST on Life & Health Premium

AIIEA has brought removal of GST on Insurance premium to the centre stage through its heroic campaign. On one hand the ministerial panel on GST rationalisation is still in the process of reaching a consensus, on another hand, insurance companies want GST to continue on the specious plea that the move will result in withdrawal of input tax credit (ITC) benefit which according to them will increase their costs. What the

government need to consider is the reduction of burden on policyholders with increasing health insurance premium and the totally unjustified GST on life premium.

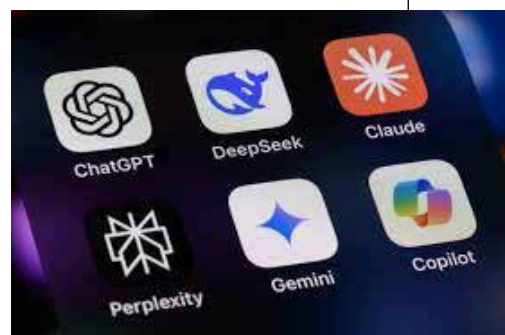
Embracing Opportunities:

Notwithstanding the innumerable challenges confronting us, there are Opportunities available for the PSU Insurance Industry to move forward. According to the Swiss RE report, total insurance premiums in India will grow by an average of 14% per annum over the next decade and will make India the sixth largest in terms of total premium volume by 2032. India's insurance penetration was pegged at 3.7% in FY 2023-24, with life insurance penetration at 2.8% and non-life insurance penetration at 1.0%. India's overall density stood at US\$ 70 in FY24. Being the market leader, LIC has a great opportunity to tap the potential to a big extent.

The goodwill earned through decades of hard work by its workforce will help LIC to meet the challenges successfully. Its claim settlement ratio, its servicing standards combined with on the streets campaign by AIIEA has helped LIC to continue to dominate the insurance market. Yes, it is true that today the consuming classes in India are just around 10% of the population but this itself is a big market. Despite the fact that life insurance industry has covered nearly 65% of the insurable population, there is an opportunity available in terms of insurance protection gap. This is the insurance secured and the insurance needed to maintain the present living standards. This market has to be tapped. Equally, LIC cannot forget the insurance

needs of the lower middle class and the marginalised. There has to be a focussed attention on these sections through affordably insurance and micro insurance. There is huge scope for LIC to improve its market share in micro insurance. With the government bent upon creating an insurance based health care system, there are huge possibilities of growth in the health insurance. This opportunity should be worked out to the advantage of their advantage by PSGI companies.

To sum up, there are huge challenges for insurance industry particularly the public sector. In the absence of disposal incomes and the bottom 50% of the population not owning any assets, growth is not going to be easy. Despite these adverse conditions, both life and non-life insurance sector has been recording one of the highest growths in the globe. This is creditable. Insurance plays a very important role in the national economy and the lives of the people. Therefore, the government policies and the regulatory actions should encourage the growth of the sector rather than promoting policies that may result in the degrowth. The IRDAI must revisit its proposals on amendments to the insurance laws and the government must not allow the foreign capital to gain dominance by allowing it total freedom to operate with 100% FDI. This also requires action from the public in forcing the government to reconsider its policies. Such public pressure can be brought about only by a sustained campaign led by the AIIEA.



Many countries of the world are developing their Artificial Intelligence models. Malaysia is also one of them. This country, which recorded a lot of economic growth in the past, has all possibilities to develop its own AI model. Recently, Malaysia's Prime Minister Anwar Ibrahim issued instructions to his professionals to include Islamic values in the AI Model. He said that we need AI with Islamic sentiments, which can better serve humanity.

When, Anwar Ibrahim was teaching religion for AI, at the same time, the India's Information Technology Minister Shri Ashwani Vaishnav said that India is developing its own AI, which is being made according to the linguistic landscape and culture of the country. The matter of linguistic landscape is easily understood, but what is the meaning of making according to the culture? Exactly here, it is necessary to recollect the Economic Survey of 2024-25 presented in the Parliament some days back, which stated that AI has a lot of bias, especially about minorities.

When we talk about AI, it is told the unemployment is the biggest danger. It is said that AI can make millions of people jobless. There are

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE:

Certain Dangerous Developments

Sanjeev Kumar Sharma President, NCZIEF

many human skills that may become unnecessary after the deployment of AI. But the people who see the world from the perspective of religion and culture have biggest fear. We have reached a world where the emotions of the people are hurt more by religion and culture of other community. Usually, the hurting of emotions starts with the words and comments of a person or community and on many occasions it causes many unpleasant situations. What will happen, if AI becomes the reason for hurting of feelings of different communities?

So far, two types of AI model are available. One, which is commercially developed by the US. The other, is DeepSeek, which has been developed by China. A lot has been written by the Western media about hiding the facts by DeepSeek model. The same things are said regarding the US-developed ChatGPT and Jaimini AI model. They also have their own prejudice. Who does such prejudices hurt, cannot be said at the moment.

There is an old saying of computer programming-garbage - in, garbage - out, that is if you put garbage in a computer program, then resultant output will also be a garbage. What we call

AI's prejudice is actually the prejudice of those who have prepared it. The fake wisdom of the computer has taken it from the intellect of those people. Various forms of AI bias are detrimental too. Speaking to the New York Times, Princeton computer science professor Olga Russakovsky said AI bias goes well beyond gender and race. In addition to data and algorithmic bias (the latter of which can "amplify" the former), AI is developed by humans — and humans are inherently biased.

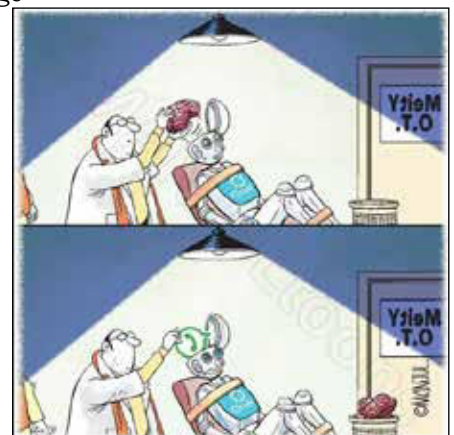
"AI researchers are primarily people who are male, who come from certain racial demographics, which grew up in high socioeconomic areas, primarily people without disabilities," Russakovsky said. "We're a fairly homogeneous population, so it's a challenge to think broadly about world issues."

The narrow views of individuals have culminated in an AI industry that leaves out a range of perspectives. According to UNESCO, only 100 of the world's 7,000 natural languages

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have been used to train top chatbots. It doesn't help that 90 percent of online higher education materials are already produced by European Union and North American countries; further restricting AI's training data to mostly Western sources. The limited experiences of AI creators may explain why speech-recognition AI often fails to understand certain dialects and accents, or why companies fail to consider the consequences of a chatbot impersonating historical figures. If businesses and legislators don't exercise greater care to avoid recreating powerful prejudices, AI biases could spread beyond corporate contexts and exacerbate societal issues.

When we want to prepare AI model according to our religion or according to our culture, we actually want to remove the prejudices of the West



Cartoon courtesy:
Manjul, Mumbai Meri Jaan,
Facebook

from AI and pour our bias in it. It is irony that we find the prejudice of others bad, but we do not accept our prejudice. Such thinking is anti-pluralist. Denying the plurality is to deny science. We want the benefits of science, but do not want to accept the fundamentals of science.

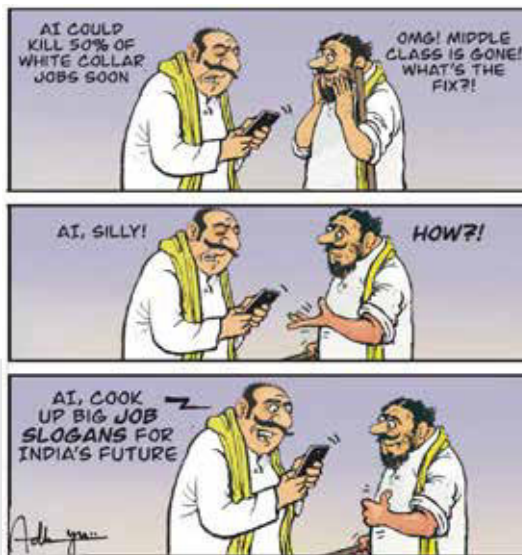
Science is not limited to pluralism, the strength of modernity it has created, it strengthens the democracy, the rights of individual and the freedom of expression. Exactly here, if you look back at Malaysia once again, some time back it was a flourishing democracy, but now this country has been going in reverse direction. Religious fanaticism is rising and many restrictions are being imposed on the media by the government.

As of now, the forms in which AI model are developing are commercial AI, whose aim is to earn profits. But after China 'AI model, efforts are being made to develop Government Controlled AI model. Along with technologists, journalists and political figures, even religious leaders are sounding the alarm on AI's pitfalls. Some experts are also warning that Government Controlled AIs can be more dangerous than a dictator.

There has been a lot of discussion to avoid this, but no special success has been achieved.

Only one thing has been understood that if every caste, every community, every color, every country, every culture are taken to develop AI model, then such prejudice can be reduced to a great extent.

This means that the more pluralist we make the AI Model, the more it will be useful for the world. Equally, it will also learn to respect the sentiments of all and perhaps the people hurting will be less. Actually, like other forms of science and all its gifts, AI is representative of a majority in a pluralistic society. The whole world accepted all other gifts of science very comfortably. In most cases, there were no obstacles in religion or culture in accepting them. But after AI model, many people are seeing a threat to religion and culture because it has a linguistic model. It explains everything in the society in its own way or according to his programming, whether it is right or wrong. The biggest thing is that anyone can use it to their advantage and also to the disadvantage of the others.



Cartoon courtesy:
Sandeep Adhwaryu,
Times of India

उत्तर-प्रदेश के मुख्यमंत्री द्वारा उर्दू भाषा पर दिए गए बयान की व्यापक स्तर पर प्रतिक्रिया हुई है। उन्होंने विधानसभा के सत्र में बोलते हुए कहा था कि आप अपने बच्चों को अंग्रेजी माध्यम के स्कूलों में पढ़ने के लिए भेजते हैं। लेकिन दूसरे लोगों को ऐसी सुविधाएं नहीं देना चाहते। बजाय इसके आप उर्दू को बढ़ावा देकर बच्चों को मौलवी बनाना चाहते हैं। आप देश को कट्टरता की तरफ ले जाना चाहते हैं।

मुख्यमंत्री का यह वक्तव्य उस बहस के दौरान आया, जिसमें उत्तर-प्रदेश विधानसभा के अध्यक्ष ने विधान सभा की कार्यवाही को चार क्षेत्रीय भाषाओं में अनुदित करने का आदेश दिया था। ये भाषाएँ हैं भोजपुरी, ब्रज, अवधी और बुन्देली। इनके साथ अंग्रेजी में भी सदन की कार्यवाही को अनुदित करने का फैसला लिया गया था। विपक्षी समाजवादी पार्टी ने इस फैसले का विरोध करते हुए तर्क दिया कि उत्तरप्रदेश की भाषाई स्थिति को ध्यान में रखते हुए यह जरूरी है कि विधान सभा की कार्यवाही का उर्दू भाषा में भी अनुवाद किया जाय। उनकी तरफ से कहा गया कि अंग्रेजी के बजाय उर्दू भाषा को प्राथमिकता दी जानी चाहिए। उसके बाद की बहस में मुख्यमंत्री ने उपरोक्त बयान सामने आया।

राजनीतिक आरोप-प्रत्यारोप को यदि हम छोड़ दें, तो भी इस बहस से भाषा को लेकर कुछ महत्वपूर्ण सवाल जरूर खड़े होते हैं। अब्बल तो यह कि क्या उर्दू पढ़ने से हमारे बच्चे सिर्फ मौलवी ही बन सकेंगे...? दूसरा यह कि उर्दू भाषा को कट्टरता से कैसे जोड़ा जा सकता है...? और तीसरा यह कि भाषाई विविधता को बढ़ावा देने के प्रयास में यदि हम ब्रज, अवधी, बुन्देली और भोजपुरी को शामिल कर सकते हैं, फिर उर्दू भाषा को क्यों नहीं...? जबकि उत्तर भारत की एक बड़ी आबादी द्वारा यह भाषा बोली और समझी जाती है। यह बात अपनी जगह सही है कि वर्तमान परिप्रेक्ष्य में अंग्रेजी को लेकर दुनिया भर में एक आकर्षण पाया जाता है। और ज्ञान-विज्ञान की भाषा के रूप में उसके महत्व को दरकिनार भी नहीं किया जा सकता है। इसलिए एक रास्ता तो यह हो सकता है कि हिंदी और स्थानीय



कटटरता नहीं, सरौकार की भाषा है उर्दू

اردو

It is a tragedy that we are trying to look at a rich language like Urdu through the lens of religion. The idea that one can only become a Maulvi by studying a language in which

so much progressive literature has come out, or that studying that language will only lead to fanaticism, is actually ridiculous. If we intend to take the debates and work of public representatives to the general public, then why should we avoid Urdu. It is unfortunate that politics is once again heating up in India regarding languages. There are already many apprehensions in the South Indian society about Hindi that an attempt is being made to impose it on them. And here an attempt is being made to link the Urdu language, which is widely spoken in the country's largest state, with fanaticism. The truth on the contrary is that linguistic diversity is not portrayed as a weakness in the country and the world. Rather, it is seen as a rich heritage.

The author is an activist of Varanasi Division of LIC.

रामजी तिवारी

भाषाओं के साथ-साथ अंग्रेजी और उर्दू में भी विधानसभा की कार्यवाही का अनुवाद हो. लेकिन जिस तरह से उर्दू को लांछित किया जा रहा है, उसमें यह सवाल उठना लाजिमी है कि क्या इसे किसी खास धार्मिक समुदाय की भाषा मानकर यह उपेक्षित किया जा रहा है...?

यह दुर्भाग्यपूर्ण है कि भारत में इस समय भाषाओं को लेकर एक बार पुनः राजनीति गर्म हो रही है. हिंदी को लेकर दक्षिण भारतीय समाज पहले से ही बहुत सारी आशंकाएं हवा में तैर रही हैं कि इसे उनके ऊपर जबरदस्ती थोपने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है. और इधर देश के सबसे बड़े सूबे में व्यापक रूप से बोली जाने वाली उर्दू भाषा को कटटरता से जोड़ने का प्रयास किया जा रहा है. जबकि इसके उलट सच्चाई यह है कि देश और दुनिया में भाषाई विविधता को किसी कमजोरी के रूप में चित्रित नहीं किया जाता है. वरन उसे एक समृद्धशाली विरासत के रूप में देखा जाता है. भाषा वैज्ञानिक तो किसी एक व्यक्ति द्वारा बोली जाने वाली भाषा को बचाने की बात करते हैं. अभी हालिया वर्षों में अंडमान के सूदूरवर्ती इलाके में एक ऐसी महिला की मृत्यु हुई जो एक अलग तरह की भाषा जानती थी, तो उस पर काफी अफ़सोस किया गया. कहा गया कि उनके जाने से हमारा समाज एक भाषा से वंचित हो गया. ऐसी स्थिति में किसी भाषा को नीचा दिखाने का क्या औचित्य बनता है...?

आईये, हम उर्दू भाषा के विकास और योगदान को समझने का प्रयास करते हैं. उर्दू की प्राथमिक शुरुआत 12 वीं सदी के आसपास मानी जाती है. कहते हैं कि दिल्ली और उसके आसपास के इलाके में स्थानीय भाषाओं के अपभ्रंश से इसकी शुरुआत हुई थी. हालांकि इसने लिपी के रूप में

अरबी-फ़ारसी को अपनाया. लेकिन ध्वनि और व्याकरण का इसका आधार हिंदी के जैसा ही रहा है. बोलचाल में तो लगभग समान. भारतीय उप-महाद्वीप में विकसित होने और हिंदी के आधार को अपनाने के कारण यह हिंदी के समनार्थी के रूप में भी प्रचलित रही है. हिन्दी की तरह इसका वही आर्य-भारतीय भाषा आधार भी है. इस भाषा को लिखित रूप में सबसे पहले हमारे सामने रखने वाले साहित्यकार का नाम अमीर खुसरो है. उन्होंने इसका प्राथमिक नाम हिन्दवी रखा था. मध्यकाल में इसे हिन्दवी, हिंदी, रेख्ता, जबान-ए-हिंदी, जबान-ए-देल्ही, जबान-ए-उर्दू, और उर्दू जैसे नामों से भी पुकारा जाता रहा. यहाँ तक कि इसका एक नाम हिन्दुस्तानी भी कहा-समझा गया.

यहाँ से उर्दू का विस्तार होना शुरू हुआ. उत्तर-भारत के शासकों और कवियों के साथ यह दक्षिण भारत तक भी पहुंची. फिर अंग्रेजी हुकूमत के दौर में भारतीय समाज में विभाजन की कोशिशें शुरू हुईं, जो लगभग प्रत्येक क्षेत्र में दिखाई देने लगी. भाषा के क्षेत्र में यह काम कलकत्ता के फोर्ट विलियम कालेज की स्थापना ने किया. जबकि इस दौर में उर्दू भाषा का साहित्य अपनी उंचाई पर पहुंच चुका था. 19 वीं सदी में मीर, सौदा, इंशा, मोमिन, जौक और ग़ालिब जैसे लीजेंड्स पैदा हो चुके थे. नजीर अकबराबादी और बहादुर शाह जफ़र जैसे क्रांतिकारी शायर अपने दौर को रोशन कर रहे थे. जब 1857 की क्रांति के बाद अंग्रेजी हुकूमत ने भाषाई विभाजन पर और अधिक ध्यान देना शुरू किया, उसी समय यह भाषा अंग्रेजी हुकूमत के खिलाफ प्रतिरोध की भाषा बनती चली गयी. पत्रकारों ने उर्दू

में अख़बार निकाले और कवियों/शायरों ने कालजयी कवितायें लिखी. यहाँ तक कि तत्कालीन स्वतंत्रता सेनानियों ने भी हिंदी और उर्दू को जोड़कर हिन्दुस्तानी जुबान पर बल देना शुरू किया और अपनी आवाज को आम जनता तक पहुंचाया. दिल्ली, लखनऊ, लाहौर और हैदराबाद इसके मुख्य केंद्र बनकर उभरे.

स्वतंत्रता आन्दोलन में प्रतिरोध और राष्ट्रवाद की भाषा के रूप में उर्दू का विकास देखने लायक है. इसी भाषा में मो.इकबाल ने लिखा कि सारे जहाँ से अच्छा हिंदोस्ता हमारा / हम बुलबुले हैं इसकी ये गुलसितां हमारा. कहना न

होगा कि ये पंक्तियां आज भी हमें प्रेरित और रोमांचित करती हैं। आजादी के दौर में ही प्रोग्रेसिव राइटर्स एसोशिएशन की स्थापना हुई, जिनमें अधिकांश साहित्यकार उर्दू भाषा में अपना प्रतिरोध व्यक्त कर रहे थे। मसलन असरारुल हक़ मजाज ने लिखा..

तेरे माथे पे ये आँचल
बहुत ही खूब है लेकिन
तू इस आँचल से इक
परचम बना लेती तो अच्छा था.

हसन नईम ने लिखा
कुछ उसूलों का नशा था
कुछ मुक़द्दस ख्वाब थे
हर ज़माने में शहादत के
यही अस्बाब थे.

और फिर कैफ़ी आज़मी ने लिखा कि
आज की रात बड़ी

सर्द हवा चलती है
आज की रात न फ़ुटपाथ पे
नींद आएगी
हम उठें, तुम उठो,

आओ सभी मिलकर उठें
कोई खिड़की इसी

दीवार में खुल जायेगी
साहिर लुधियानवी ने लिखा कि
जंग तो खुद ही एक मसअला है
जंग क्या मसअलों का हल देगी. और
फिर यह भी कि

जुल्म फिर जुल्म है बढ़ता है
तो मिट जाता है

खून फिर खून है टपकेगा
तो जम जाएगा

एक और बड़े शायर फैज अहमद
फैज ने विभाजन की त्रासदी पर
लिखा कि

ये दाग दाग उजाला
ये शब-गज़ीदा सहर
वो इंतज़ार था जिसका
ये वो सहर तो नहीं.

इसी भाषा में इन्कलाब ज़िंदाबाद और सरफरोशी की तमन्ना जैसे क्रांतिकारी नारे भी लिखे गए, जो आज भी हमें प्रतिरोध की सबसे सशक्त आवाज लगते हैं.

प्रोग्रेसिव आन्दोलन ने उर्दू भाषा में तमाम बड़े नाम दिए. सज्जाद जहीर, इस्मत चुगताई, फ़िराक़ गोरखपुरी, कुर्रतुल ऐन हैदर, राजेन्द्र सिंह बेदी और अली सरदार जाफरी को कोई कैसे भूल सकता है. महान अफसानानिगार

सआदत हसन मंटो भी इसी भाषा में लिखते थे. साथ ही हमें यह भी याद रखना चाहिए कि हिन्दुस्तान के सबसे बड़े कथाकार मुंशी प्रेमचंद ने अपनी लेखनी की शुरुआत उर्दू भाषा में ही की थी. यहाँ तक कि उनकी आरंभिक शिक्षा-दीक्षा भी एक मदरसे में ही हुई थी. कहना न होगा कि आज भी जिंदगी से जुड़े तमाम मसलों पर उर्दू अदब में बहुत सार्थक और प्रगतिशील लेखन हो रहा है. अभी हमारे पास गुलज़ार, जावेद अख्तर, बशीर बद्र, फहमिदा रियाज, अंजुम रहबर, जाहिदा हिना, इरशाद कामिल और इरशाद खान सिकंदर जैसे नाम लेखन कर रहे हैं.

उर्दू अदब की दुनिया इतनी बड़ी और समृद्ध है कि उसे एक छोटे से लेख में नहीं समेटा जा सकता है. हाँ, इतना इशारा जरूर किया जा सकता है कि उर्दू भाषा हमारे अपने भाषा परिवार से ही पैदा हुई है, जो यहीं पर पली और बढ़ी है. इस भाषा ने हमें न सिर्फ़ एक समृद्ध साहित्यिक विरासत सौंपी है, वरन देश-काल और परिस्थिति के अनुसार विपुल लेखन भी उपलब्ध कराया है. इसमें एक तरफ़ प्रेम और मोहब्बत से भरपूर खानगी है. तो दूसरी तरफ़ प्रतिरोध और प्रगतिशीलता के सरोकार भी दिखाई देते हैं. साहित्य की लगभग हर विधा के साथ-साथ ज्ञान और विज्ञान की भाषा के रूप में भी इसका योगदान बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है.

यह त्रासदी ही है कि हम उर्दू जैसी समृद्ध भाषा को धर्म के चश्मे से देखने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं. जिस भाषा में इतना प्रगतिशील लेखन हुआ हो, उस भाषा को पढ़कर सिर्फ़ मौलवी ही बना जा सकता है, या उस भाषा को पढ़ने से सिर्फ़ कट्टरता ही पनपेगी, दरअसल यह सोच ही हास्यास्पद है. यदि हम जन-प्रतिनिधियों की बहस और काम-काज को आम जनता तक पहुंचाने का ईशदा रखते हैं, तो हमें उर्दू से क्यों परहेज करना चाहिए. यह तो आम अवाम के लिए और बेहतर ही कहा जाएगा कि हिंदी, अंग्रेज़ी, भोजपुरी, अवधी, ब्रज, बुन्देली के साथ उर्दू में भी यदि सदन की कार्यवाही का अनुवाद हो.



Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trip to Washington DC to meet United States President Donald Trump, making him the fourth global leader to do so since Trump took office, warrants some clarification. While the saffron ecosystem and Godi media are busy celebrating the 'chemistry' between 'two great friends', the rest of the world is reading the real signals emanating from it. The visit has been presented uncritically in India as an early engagement signaling India's global influence. But it looks very much like the infamous Advani adage during emergency, "You are asked only to bend, but you crawled". India's response could be termed as "anticipatory obedience", coined by Yale University Professor Timothy Snider. Anticipatory obedience in diplomacy is described as a pre-emptive action that involves giving up even before the contest has begun because of fear of consequences of differing with or disobeying a superpower.

There was no tearing hurry for Modi to have an official meeting with President Trump. After failing to get an invitation to the inauguration ceremony, the government did not wait to see the direction of policies that Trump was going to unfold. But to show how close he was to President Trump, Modi was forced to accept the disgrace

When VISHWAGURU SUCCUMBED before DISRUPTER-in-Chief

Trinath Dora, General Secretary, ECZIEA

and ended up returning with national humiliation. It was clear that his Vishwaguru narrative was deflated. Trump's desire to demand subservience to power was expected. That Modi would succumb so easily came as a surprise.

Even before Trump took office on January 20, India was making efforts to placate him. In response to Trump's claims that India is "a very big tariff abuser" and the "tariff king," India extended an olive branch to his administration. On February 1, during the presentation of the Union Budget, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman unilaterally lowered tariffs on a range of products imported from the United States. These include the Harley-Davidson motorcycles. The Modi government also announced its decision to amend the nuclear liability laws and add 100 gigawatts of nuclear energy by 2047. This is supposed to create new business opportunities for companies such as General Electric and Westinghouse.

Just a week before the Trump-Modi meeting an American military aircraft had landed in Amritsar carrying 104 Indian illegal migrants in fetters and handcuffs. A second aircraft with another batch of 119 deportees took

off even as Modi was winding up his US trip. A list of 18000 Indians liable to be deported in the coming days has already been handed over to India's Foreign Minister Jaishankar during his meeting with US foreign secretary after Trump's swearing-in. There are talks of 7,25,000 undocumented Indian migrants facing the threat of deportation from the US. The issue of deportation of Indian citizens came up during the Trump-Modi press conference and Modi did not have the courage to call for a dignified deportation of Indian nationals. He supported the American action and sought Trump's cooperation to root out the 'ecosystem of human trafficking'. Shamefully, Foreign Minister Jaishankar told Parliament that it was as per standard operating procedure of the American authorities. In sharp contrast, other smaller countries like Colombia and Mexico have stood up for their



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Never in India's post-colonial history has India appeared so helpless and bereft of self-respect as today
The great anti-colonial legacy of India's freedom movement is being tarnished at every step by a Prime Minister who hypocritically claims to be vishwaguru.



Cartoon courtesy:
Sajith Kumar,
Deccan Herald

citizens. Colombian President Gustavo Petro refused to allow the two military transport aircraft carrying Colombian undocumented nationals back from the US. Petro sent his Presidential aircraft to bring back his people.

India also lost its position as the leader of the Global South in not criticizing Trump's declaration of ethnic cleansing of Palestinian land and announcing like a real estate dealer that he intends to convert "unlivable" Gaza into the "Riviera of the Middle East". India has offered many more concessions. It has dropped the idea of de-dollarization, earlier championed as a part of BRICS, terrified by annoying Trump. One of the key goals of BRICS is to shift away from the US dollar by promoting trade in local currencies through the alignment of member countries' payment systems. China, Russia, and Iran have already embraced this approach. If India fails to follow suit, its position within BRICS could become unstable. Despite his urgency, Modi's actions may risk rendering India insignificant within the BRICS alliance.

True to his characteristic demagoguery, Modi has coined a new phrase to camouflage his government's betrayal of India's interest. Imitating Trump's imperialist slogan of MAGA (make America great again), Modi coined the slogan MIGA (make India great again) and combined MAGA and MIGA to conjure the fiction of a MEGA partnership between the US and India. The Modi government's own slogans of 'Make in India' and 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' now stand all but abandoned. The much-hyped defence

partnership with the US is designed to increase India's military dependence on the US. Trump had already got most of what he wanted during Modi's visit. The United States secured an agreement from India to acquire military equipment, such as F35 stealth fighters, through a direct government-to-government transaction without an open tender, tailored to India's needs. This deal also includes Poseidon long-range surveillance aircraft, Javelin anti-tank missiles, and Stryker infantry combat vehicles. India also agreed to buy more US oil and gas.

In exchange, India has received only grandiose promises, such as the US India COMPACT (catalyzing opportunities for military partnership, accelerated commerce, and technology) for the 21st century, the plan to establish a new 10-year framework for a major US-India defense partnership for the 21st century, an Autonomous Systems Industry Alliance, and 'Mission 500', which aims to increase bilateral trade to \$500 billion by 2030. All these initiatives are still in the proposal phase.

The joint statement, consisting of 33 paragraphs, can be categorized into four main areas: trade, defence, energy, and emerging technologies. Trump has urged Modi to dilute the \$46 billion bilateral trade which favours India through purchase of oil and gas. Last year, the value of US-India trade was \$192 billion. India's export to US, both goods and services, were worth \$119 billion and imports worth \$73 billion, leading to a US trade deficit of \$46 billion. Relying heavily on

the US for purchases will lead to higher crude oil prices for Indians. Trump has warned that the US might implement reciprocal tariffs on Indian products, which contradicts the WTO's regulations that ensure India receives preferential trade treatment as a developing country. After the Modi visit, Trump in two separate announcements threatened 25 per cent tariffs on Steel and Aluminum goods as well as cars, semiconductors and pharmaceuticals. India supplies 47% of the generic medications to the United States, with pharmaceutical exports to the US reaching \$8.73 billion in fiscal year 2024, representing almost 31% of the industry's total exports.

In the energy sector, Trump is encouraging India to increase its purchases of crude oil and gas from the United States. Currently, India's preferred sources for crude oil are Russia (40%), followed by Iraq, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and the US. Additionally, the US is interested in selling its small modular nuclear reactors to India, especially after the Modi administration eased the liability clause that had previously delayed the acquisition of US nuclear reactors under the US-India 123 nuclear agreement. Presently, France and Russia are assisting India with its civil nuclear energy requirements.

India will rely entirely on the United States for emerging technologies, such as AI infrastructure, quantum and cyber technologies, and subsea cables. META has already unveiled its Waterworth project, which aims to construct a

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Imperialism's Revival Strategy

Prof. Prabhat Patnaik
(Courtesy: Macroscan 3/3/2025)



Image courtesy: Newslick

DONALD Trump's foreign policy has left commentators in a real tizzy. His markedly differing positions with regard to Ukraine and Gaza, in the first case apparently pursuing peace, and in the second asking for ethnic cleansing of an entire population, have left them wondering whether his influence on world affairs is a "positive" one or not. The reason for such bemusement however lies not in anything that Trump has done, but in not cognizing the phenomenon of *imperialism*. There can be little doubt that western imperialism led by the US had pushed itself into a corner, where the choice was between either a disastrous escalation of the war in Ukraine even to the point of a nuclear confrontation, or a gradual erosion of imperialist hegemony. Donald Trump is attempting to extricate imperialism from such an impossibly tricky corner. The point is not whether he is "for peace" or "for war" or whether he is mindful of European interests or not; the point is that he is pursuing an alternative imperialist strategy that would rescue imperialism from this *cul-de-sac*, and he is in a position to do so because he is untainted by the earlier policy that created this *cul-de-sac* in the first place.

His method for re-asserting imperialist hegemony that was getting gradually eroded is a combination of carrot and stick. The basic assumption that underlay the provocation that produced the Ukraine war, namely that Russia can be made to surrender to western dictates as a result of it, has been proven false. Not only is it the case that Ukraine has been steadily losing ground during the war, but the economic sanctions against Russia that were supposed to "reduce the rouble to rubble" were totally counter-productive; the rouble, after a brief temporary fall, recovered to a level vis-à-vis the dollar that was even higher than before the sanctions, and, what is more, these sanctions produced a reaction where a challenge to the hegemony of the dollar came onto the agenda.

The Kazan summit of the BRICS countries posed "de-dollarisation" as a serious possibility. Unilateral imperialist sanctions, as long as they are directed against a few small countries can be quite effective; but when they target a large number of countries and that too countries as large, as developed, and as resource-rich, as Russia, they not only lose their effectiveness as sanctions, but encourage

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His method for re-asserting imperialist hegemony that was getting gradually eroded is a combination of carrot and stick. The stick part of his carrot-and-stick method is well-known.

Of course Trump's project of extricating imperialism from the corner to which it has been driven, is simultaneously a project of assertion of U.S. hegemony over the imperialist bloc as a whole.

There is however a major contradiction in Trump's strategy. Biden had pushed imperialism into one corner. Trump's extrication of it from that corner will only lead to its being pushed into another corner.

the formation of a bloc of countries arrayed against the entire dominant imperial arrangement that passes as the international economic order, and this alternative tends to draw into its fold even non-sanctioned countries.

This is exactly what has been happening and what Trump faced when he came to office. The stick part of his carrot-and-stick method is well-known. He threatened to impose heavy tariffs against countries that went in for de-dollarisation, which is a blatant imperialist act and against all rules of the capitalist game; after all any country according to these rules has the freedom to trade in any currency it likes provided its trading partner is willing, and also to hold its wealth in any currency that it fancies. To curtail that freedom by imposing high tariffs against such a country is blatant arm-twisting that no international order can explicitly endorse; but Trump as an open and unrelenting imperialist had no qualms about exercising such economic coercion quite explicitly.

His attempt to bring about an end to the Ukraine war is the carrot in this carrot-and-stick method. Instead of an alternative power bloc being formed against the US and against western imperialism in general, an end to this war on terms that are not unfavourable to Russia will keep Russia out of any such alternative bloc. It will thereby undermine the ongoing attempts at challenging imperialist hegemony.

Of course any end to the Ukraine war based on negotiations should be welcomed by all, but seeing this end as the outcome of

a desire for *peace*, or as the pursuit of US interests at the expense of European “security concerns”, is wholly erroneous. Trump is not on a peace mission, otherwise he would not have made the utterly belligerent remarks about Gaza; indeed capitalism is by its very nature against peace: as the French socialist Jean Jaures had famously remarked “Capitalism carries war within it, just like clouds carry rain”. It is a desire to put imperialist hegemony on a better footing that motivates Trump not a desire for peace. Likewise the question of European security is a complete red herring: European security was never threatened by Russia, and all talk of a threat of “Russian imperialism” overrunning Europe was just an excuse to justify NATO expansionism. So, there is no question of European security being undermined by Trump’s peace move.

Trump’s difference from the European ruling cliques arises on account of two different alternative strategies that imperialism can pursue at present. One is the old Biden strategy of aggression against Russia that had run into a *cul-de-sac*; and the other is an alternative strategy of ending the Ukraine war and weaning Russia away from an oppositional bloc against the hegemony of western imperialism. European rulers are wedded to the former while Trump is attempting the latter. One has to see the opposition of the neo-Nazi AfD in Germany to the Ukraine war in exactly the same terms: its extreme aggressiveness vis-à-vis Palestine in contrast to its desire for an end to the Ukraine war, is symptomatic neither of

any general desire for peace nor of an unconcern for “European security”, but of a certain strategic position.

Of course Trump’s project of extricating imperialism from the corner to which it has been driven, is simultaneously a project of assertion of US hegemony over the imperialist bloc as a whole. His slogan “Make America Great Again” is a project of recreating a world unquestioningly dominated by western imperialism with the US as its unquestioned leader. It is a continuation in this sense of the strategy of making Europe dependent upon American energy sources that had been represented by the blowing up of Nord Stream II gas pipeline from Russia to Europe, allegedly by the US “Deep State”.

There is however a major contradiction in Trump’s strategy. There is a price to be paid for “leadership” of the capitalist world; and Trump wants a “leadership” role for the US without paying this price. The price is the following: the “leader” must tolerate trade deficits vis-à-vis other major capitalist powers in order to accommodate their ambitions and prevent the capitalist world as a whole from sinking into a crisis. This is what Britain had done during the years of its “leadership” and this is what the US has been doing in the more recent period. Britain’s running a trade deficit vis-à-vis Continental Europe and the US who were the other major powers at that time did not hurt it because it balanced this deficit, among other things, by claiming a surplus of invisible earnings vis-à-vis its colonial empire, the bulk of which was a cooked up surplus against

which it extracted a “drain” from these colonies of conquest, with which it settled its deficit with other major capitalist powers.

Post-war US however has not been in a similar “fortunate” position; its running a trade deficit vis-à-vis other major powers has made it sink deeper and deeper into debt. Its attempt to avoid getting even deeper into debt, which is a part of Trump’s “Make America Great Again” project and for which he is in the process of imposing tariffs against all its trading partners, *in a situation where the overall demand in the capitalist world economy is not expanding because of the pressure from globalised finance capital to shun fiscal deficits and taxation of the rich for enlarging government expenditure everywhere*, will only accentuate the world capitalist crisis, with a particularly heavy burden falling on the non-US capitalist world.

The Trump strategy for the revival of imperialism therefore amounts to having one’s cake and eating it too. His attempt to assert US leadership while seeking to impose tariffs on others amounts to a “beggar-thy-neighbour” policy vis-à-vis the rest of the world. Such a “beggar-thy-neighbour” policy, which amounts to ensuring growth for oneself by snatching markets from others, is fundamentally inimical to the project of reasserting imperialist hegemony. If Biden had pushed imperialism into one corner, Trump’s extrication of it from that corner will only lead to its being pushed into another corner.

WHEN VISHWAGURU SUCCUMBED.....

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50,000 km subsea cable linking five continents to enhance Internet and AI growth, with India being the sole South Asian country digitally connected to the US. Elon Musk’s Starlink will offer satellite internet services to India. Following a recent meeting between Modi and Musk at the White House, Musk has solidified plans to establish Tesla manufacturing facilities in Delhi and Mumbai

The joint statement issued by Trump and Modi, particularly on trade, appears heavily skewed in favour of the US. During the press conference on February 13, Trump launched a scathing critique of India’s trade policies, accusing the country of imposing “very, very high tariffs” and creating an uneven playing field. Trump’s rhetoric reflects a “My way or the Highway” approach to trade negotiations. It prioritizes American interests at the expense of its partners. By indicating that the US will impose allegedly unilateral reciprocal tariffs and undermining the WTO. The US has consistently flouted the principles of non-discrimination and fair trade enshrined in the Marrakesh Agreement. Now the question is whether India’s concessions, as negotiated by our commerce minister, are part of a strategic compromise or a sign of capitulation. The timing of Piyush Goyal’s visit



to the US, coinciding with the imposition of reciprocal tariffs further raises doubt about India’s negotiating strategy. Amid concerns over potential export disruptions due to US reciprocal tariffs set to take effect on April 2, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry has urged Indian Industry players to explore areas where imports from China and other countries could be substituted with goods sourced from United States. By appearing to prioritize short term gains over long term interests, India risks undermining its economic sovereignty and weakening its standing in the global trade negotiations. The troubling reality is that when push comes to shove, India did not stand firm in defending its national interests.

Never in India’s post-colonial history has India appeared so helpless and bereft of self-respect as today under Modi government. The great anti-colonial legacy of India’s freedom movement is being tarnished at every step by a Prime Minister who hypocritically claims to be Vishwaguru. With the economy in doldrums, Constitution being subverted and national pride mortgaged to the US, the people should react and force the government for a policy correction.

Comrade R. Janardan

Com R. Janardan, veteran leader of insurance employees passed away on 7th March, 2025 at Hyderabad after a brief illness. He was 93. His mortal remains were donated to Gandhi Medical College as per his wish. Com Janardan served AIIEA as the President of ICEU, Machilipatnam. He also discharged responsibilities as Joint Secretary, AIIPA. He was respected and loved by the insurance employees for his humility and kindness. Coms Shreekant Mishra, General Secretary, AIIEA, TVNS Ravindranath, General Secretary, SCZIEF and Com K. Venu Gopal, Former General Secretary AIIEA visited the residence along with a number of leaders to pay their respect. Insurance Worker mourns his death and shares the grief with the bereaved family.

Com Sudha Bhasker, Editor, Navatelangana Daily, son of Com Janardan has paid emotional tributes in memory of his father. The same is reproduced



Yes! He is not just a father like many mortals. To us, he was a mentor into communist movement, though ironically, he himself had never been a formal party member of any communist party in India. He had just showed a path to tread. According to him, a path that was set ablaze by Com. Saroj (Choudhuri) and Com. Sunil (Maitra), the icons, whom he held in great esteem and admiration throughout his life. Thus, my brooding goes; had they been alive and ordered him to bring a car to airport, he would have jumped out of his bed, pulled off his catheter, and driven the car. That was his commitment to AIIEA and his beloved leaders.

In those last few days, when he hardly ate anything, or uttered a single word for almost 10 days nor did he recognize his grand children when I called him aloud "Babu! You know Com. Chandrasekhar Bose?" I could see his eyes glowed with sparkles! He replied assertively and uttered those "mystical" words involuntarily in low voice. I was enthused and pulled up more courage and said to him

SOLILOQUY OF A SOLDIER'S SON

that 'you were considered to be united Andhra Pradesh's Chandrasekhar Bose! So, you must pull on. Don't lose the battle!' In answer, his eyes glittered. I never thought they would shut down permanently so soon.

This 'Soldier's' phenomenon needs some explanation. Dr. Kuppa Venkatrama Sastry of Machilipatnam, whom my father regarded with reverence during his Swami Vivekananda followership days and also later days of 1960s, used to call him "The Hanuman", the synonym for a soldier. Though he had been President of ICEU, Machilipatnam Division for many years, and Joint Secretary of All India Insurance Pensioner's Association for some time, he served with great humility. Unmindful of camera clicks, he served humanity. This was once noticed by one of the Ramakrishna Mutt monks when he saw my father feed a leper, with his own hands, when many of the monks were standing on lookers.

Once the 'soldier' decided, the commitment and steadfastness with which he carried his works were unparalleled. He completed the construction of our house in 1969, exactly within his individual LIC loan eligibility of Rs14,000 in spite of his spouse being a co-LIC employee. The Soldier taught us not to live beyond our 'means' by practice. He taught us to shun pompous life. The Soldier's path of austere life brought me to path of Com. Puchalapalli Sundarayya and CPI(M). In this, the contribution of Smt. Indravathi, my mother had been no small. She followed him in all his travails and stood like a rock.

I am neither Shakespear's Hamlet to brood over my father's demise nor would I ever have to avenge any individual. The 'Soldier' taught us to fight for the downtrodden, the distressed and the oppressed. The Soldier taught us to train our guns towards the class enemy in India, and avenge them only.

6th All India Insurance Women's Convention - A Resounding Success



Smt. TK Rajalakshmi inaugurating

The Jaipur Conference of AIIEA in 1988 took the decision to give importance to organising the women employees and mobilising them in the activities of the trade union. Since women formed a large section of its membership, the AIIEA has been making continuous efforts to organise, educate the women and bring them into decision making forums. These efforts have met with great success with hundreds of women cadres across the country working for the organisation. Today a

number of women are leading the divisional unions of AIIEA either as Presidents or General Secretaries. They have also worked their place in the All India and Zonal unions. What is more heartening is that a number of women cadres of AIIEA have been working outside insurance sector in various democratic and progressive organisations. The AIIEA has succeeded in convincing the women cadres that the constitutional guarantees alone cannot bring the desired gender justice;

the battle has to be fought against feudal patriarchy that still dominates the Indian society. Therefore, the AIIEA is continuing its efforts in this direction.

The 6th All India Insurance Women's Convention of AIIEA was held at Lucknow on the 8th of March 2025. Over 300 women employees from across the country enthusiastically participated in the Convention. The convention started with the hoisting of the AIIEA flag by Com Sanjeev Sharma, Vice President AIIEA and President NCZIEF amidst thundering slogans hailing the struggles of AIIEA and calling for the broader unity of the working class. Com Geeta Shant, Convenor of the North Central Zone LIC Working Women's Coordination Committee, welcomed all the delegates, observers, invitees and the Chief Guest to the



Convention. The inaugural session commenced with the choir song presented by the women comrades of the host Lucknow Division.

The Inaugural Session was presided over by Com. Sanjeev Sharma, Vice-President AIIEA. The convention was inaugurated by Smt. T.K. Rajalakshmi, Senior Deputy Editor, Frontline. Inaugurating the convention, Smt. Rajalakshmi, said that 8th March being a historic day in the struggle for emancipation of women, it was commendable that AIIEA was organising its women convention on that particular day. She said that 8th March is a day to re-dedicate ourselves for the political, economic and social emancipation of women and to carry forward the struggle for equality and dignity of women. International Women's Day is not meant for celebration of individual achievements. The corporate sector celebrates women's day with the perception of women as consumers for their products, remarked Smt. Rajalakshmi. The history of women's day is about issues concerning the majority of the masses and the struggle for a peaceful, just and equal society. Today, over 50% of the Indian population is in dire



poverty. The Government fails to provide decent living for women and children. Unemployment is rampant and inflation is making lives miserable. Women and children are most vulnerable. There is a double burden on women due to the necessity of domestic work, care giving and demands of the workplace. Though the Government seems to encourage women, the working conditions are not congenial. Women are also being utilised as vehicles of reproduction of the labour force. Smt. Rajalakshmi lamented that the media, including the entertainment industry, is used by corporate sector and vested interests to propagate regressive ideas about women. The entire media including social media is bombarded

with fake news, so that people don't think of the actual issues and fight for them. Journalists do not have the freedom to report true news. Public sector is shrinking and a push back on the recruitment in PSUs is observed, while more and more contractualisation is resorted to. There is a debate on working hours and pressure is exerted on the individual workers for more output. Such a pressure will result in women resigning their jobs. The society expects women to leave their jobs and stay home for their families, thereby pushing them from salaried jobs to unpaid labour. Therefore, a collective struggle is required to defeat these regressive trends, observed Smt. Rajalakshmi. She opined that all the rights and laws have come out of great collective struggles and today the need is again for collective struggles, and to accelerate action towards establishing a fair, just and equal society.

A Presidium consisting of Comrades Geeta Shant (NCZ), H.R. Gayathri (SCZ), Jyoti Patil (CZ), R. Radhika (SZ), Ritu Aban (NZ), Lalita Khemani (WZ), Khana Chakraborty (EZ), Manorama Mohanty (ECZ) and S. Sobhana (GI) conducted the proceedings of the Convention.

Com. M.Girija, Joint



Com Sanjeev Sharma,
President, NCZIEF



Com Geeta Shant, Zonal Convenor



Com. M. Girija, Joint Secretary AIIEA

Secretary AIIEA presented the Report to the Convention on behalf of AIIEA. Presenting the Report, Com. Girija spoke about gender inequality, precarious condition of women workers in India, rising violence against women, sexual harassment at workplaces and the activities taken up by our women subcommittees all over the country during the last two and a half years. Thirty four comrades representing all the eight zones in the life sector and general insurance sector participated in the debate.

Com. G. Surya Prabha from South Central Zone initiated the discussion on the Report. She was followed by Comrades K. R. Vinni, R.S. Chenbagam, D. Chitra and Subhashini from South Zone; Comrades Sangeeta Jha, Monika Awasthi, Deepika

Saxena, Anasuya Thakur and Usha Parganiya from Central Zone; Comrades Mary Michael Xess, Sanghamitra Sarangi and Mousumi Choudhary from East Central Zone; Comrades Fullara Talapatra, Mousumi Banerjee, Rajakumari Chanda and Jhinuk Roy from Eastern Zone; Comrades Geeta Shant, Poonam Gupta, Pratibha Mishra and Neerja Pandey from North Central Zone; Comrades Ritu Aban, Deepa Sharma, Pushp Lata and Manju Goel from Northern Zone; Comrades V. Mythili, H.R. Gayathri, Shanta L.K. Rao and Vasu Pradha from South Central Zone; Comrades Pragna Vasani, Heena Jibkate, Belaben Shah and Varsha Kumari from Western Zone; Com. Mareer. Joseph from General Sector. The experience shared by these comrades

about the activities of the women's subcommittees all over the country enthused the participants.

Summing up the debate, Com Shreekanth Mishra, General Secretary AIIEA complimented the women comrades for their enthusiastic participation. He said that apart from working as insurance employees, our women comrades also contribute to the development of the larger society. He called upon the women Comrades to actively participate in the future struggles of AIIEA on the issues of FDI hike in insurance from 74 to 100 per cent, further dilution of equity from the LIC, the proposed Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill 2025 and other challenges being thrown up by the IRDA and government. Congratulating the employees for the historic



Com. Shreekanth Mishra



Com. Rajiv Nigam, GS, NCZIEF

success of the one-hour walk-out strike of 20th February 2025, he implored the women comrades to groom young talents for future leadership roles so as to keep the fighting spirit of AIIEA intact. Com. Shreekant profusely thanked the comrades of NCZIEF, particularly those of Lucknow, for organizing the convention in a befitting manner. With his summing up, the report was adopted unanimously.

The Credential Committee consisting of Com. K. Tulasi (South Zone) as the Convener, Comrades Nisha Kumari (East Central Zone), Rubi Nigam (North Central Zone) and Mousumi Paurkayastha (Eastern Zone) as the members compiled the details pertaining to the Delegates to the Convention. The Minutes Committee of the Convention consisted of Comrades Tejinder Kaur (Northern Zone), Hima Bindu (South Central Zone), Varsha Deshmukh (Western Zone), Smriti Kapoor (Central Zone) and Venu V Kani (General Sector).

The Convention came to a close with the customary vote of thanks proposed by Com Rajiv Nigam, Joint Secretary – AIIEA. The leadership of Lucknow Division under the guidance of North Central Zone Insurance Employees Association had made elaborate arrangements for the successful conduct of this 6th Convention. It could be seen that not only the female and male comrades of Lucknow Division, but also their family members were working as volunteers. AIIEA profusely thanks all these Comrades who toiled day and night for the successful conduct of the Convention.

International Women's Day at Hyderabad

International Women's Day was celebrated in true spirit on 7th March by Women Sub-Committee of ICEU, Hyderabad Division. A meeting was organised for all women comrades from the Base Units of Zonal Office, Divisional Office, P&GS unit and also City branches of Hyderabad during lunch recess. The meeting, which was presided by Com. N Jhansi Lakshmi, Vice President, ICEU, Hyderabad Division, was attended by around 200 women comrades.

Com. V Varalakshmi & Com. SV Padmaja rendered a melodious thought-provoking song, after which Com. V Mythili, Convener, Women Sub-Committee welcomed the guests and comrades. Chief Guest Com. Mallu Lakshmi, General AIDWA, Telangana while addressing the comrades narrated the historical origin of Women's Day. She also noted that the sacrifices and struggles made by earlier generation of women should be remembered and valued. She drew the attention of the audience to the current regime, where in women are being pushed again to the dark ages of suppression. She said understanding of the current scenario by being aware of the bias, gender disparity prevalent in the society will broaden the horizon and increase the scope for sustained struggles. She congratulated the Women Sub-Committee for mobilisation of huge participation and making the program a grand success.

Com. Shreekanta Mishra, General Secretary,

AIIEA appreciated the role of women in nation building and especially women participation in the union. He said while fancy slogans like 'Beti Bachao - Beti Padhao' are raised, ground reality is far from being rosy. He expressed his concern over the increasing crime on women and reminded the comrades the safety and security being enjoyed now should not be taken for granted. He emphasized the need of being ever vigilant and proactive.

Com. TVNS Ravindranath, General Secretary, SCZIEF while conveying his wishes on International Women's Day said the woman comrades should never lose sight of the working women struggles, which laid the formation of Women's Day. He observed Women's Day should be celebration of achieving legitimate working hours, equal wages, equal rights rather than portrayed by the social media and mainstream media.

Com. P Sujatha, Vice-President, SCZIEF drew their attention to the remarkable achievement of women from





earlier days to present day referring to the Constitution, which grants equal rights to all irrespective of the gender. She elaborated on each elite learned

women, who contributed in great measure in framing the Constitution. She gave a call to all women comrades to shoulder responsibility and play an active

role in the union.

Shri Pramoda Kumar Sahoo, Senior Divisional Manager of Hyderabad Division conveyed his greetings on the occasion and urged women to come forward and accept higher responsibilities. He also opined women at the helm are more competent and capable in steering any organisation to greater heights.

Com. L Maddileti congratulated women comrades for their huge participation and extended his greetings.

The meeting concluded with the vote of thanks by Com. BS Saraswathi, Co- Convener, Women Sub-Committee, ICEU, Hyderabad Division.



International Women's Day observed by CHRGIEA

Chennai Region General Insurance Employees' Association observed International Women's Day 2025 in Chennai with a momentous meeting at the Head Office of United Insurance Co Ltd. More than 150 employees and officers drawn from the 4 PSGI companies in Chennai participated in the meeting. The meeting was also graced by the presence of Senior Executives of United India Corporate Management -Smt Pushpalatha Natarajan & Smt Uma Swaminathan, Deputy General Managers. Women comrades from LIC also participated in large numbers.

Com U. Vasuki, Vice-President, All India Democratic Women's Association delivered an excellent and inspirational speech which also served as an eye opener to the women employees about the plight of women in society at large. She traced

the roots of her organisation – AIDWA to the Independence Movement and women socialist and left movements in India. She also narrated the role of great women leaders like Ahilya Rangnekar, Godavari Parulekar, K.P. Janaki Amma to name a few in shaping the growth of the organisation. She exposed the false and negative narratives spread around women regarding their status in society. She also

explained the role of AIDWA in Tamil Nadu in bringing to light the violence and harassment against women particularly Dalit and Tribal and bringing justice to the aggrieved women after prolonged legal battles.

The Meeting was presided by Com Sharmila Balaji (United India RO), while Com P C Nandhini (United India HO) welcomed the gathering. Com Sarvamangala, General Secretary, ICEU DO II Chennai, Com S. Manjula, Convenor, Women's Sub-committee, ICEU DO I Chennai, Com R.K. Gopinath, S. Sivasubramanian,



S.Ramesh Kumar from SZIEF and Com Giridharan, President, ICEU DO I Chennai also participated in the meeting as Special Invitees.

The meeting passed resolutions regarding constitution

of Internal Complaints Committee at work places, provision of creche facilities at offices and demanding action against perpetrators of crimes against women.

Smt Maamani, Chief Manager, United India Head Office proposed the Vote of Thanks.



International Women's Day at Ballari

Insurance Employees' Union LIC branch 2 Ballari observed International Women's Day 2025 in the true tradition of AIEA. It identified a Government Lower Primary School at Anjinappa Nagar

and donated a RO WATER FILTER. This will benefit over 300 children studying in the school. The IEU, Ballari II has been fulfilling such social responsibilities successfully for the last 8 years.

In a function organised for the purpose, the Head Master, staff and children gave a warm welcome to the delegation consisting of Sri. Sampath Kumar, BM, ABM(S) I.K.Gopal, Branch 2 unit secretary Com.DV Suryanarayana, President R. Dathatreya, Treasurer Vignesh, Senior comrade Smt.Kusuma, and all women employees including 2 women Development Officers . In the program presided over by Sri Vasu, Head Master, the children were taught the basic hygiene, importance of education and treating the women with respect. The school authorities and the children were very appreciative of the gesture of IEU. It was a very satisfying and successful program.

Cuttack Division Insurance Employees' Association (CDIEA) observed International Women's Day on 11th March 2025 at LIC Divisional Offices premises with other constituents of Cuttack City Co-ordination Committee of Unions & Associations. The notable feature of this meeting was that LIC Class-1 officers became part of the celebration too. Com Manorama Mohanty, zonal convener of ECZIEA and Smt Debajani Padhi (women convener of Class-1 officer association) presided over the meeting.

Cuttack City Co-ordination Committee observes Women's Day

Addressing the meeting as chief guest, Smt Sarmistha Nath —noted social activists, feminist, and vice-president of Project Swarajya—spoke on how women are experiencing gender inequality, discrimination and violence from birth to death and are not allowed to become part of decision-making process and don't get support of others even from women in fight against violence and sexual harassment.

She discussed how religious fanaticism and neoliberalism are causing more problems to women today. She stressed the need for fighting gender based violence and accelerating gender equality.

Addressing as guest of honour, Smt Sailaja Srivastav, spouse of esteemed Sr DM, emphasized on ensuring rights, equality and empowerment of women. Others who spoke included Smt Debajani Padhi and Smt Anupama Nanda (Class-1 officer), Com Kabita Das (joint women convener of Cuttack division) Com Suvadra Soren (BEFI), Com Rasmi Khatua, Com Jharana Jena (Nursing Association).

Smt Puspallata Mohanty who has arranged blood donation to more than 5000 people was felicitated. While responding to her felicitation, she urged



women comrades to fight against injustice perpetrated on them. However, she cautioned that women should not forget their moral responsibility, family obligations.

Com Abhaya Das, General

Secretary of CDIEA gave an introductory speech while Com Manorama Mohanty spoke about the importance of Women's Day. The vote of thanks was proposed Com Debashree Mukherjee, a recruit of 2020 batch. She also

played an important role in the conduct of the program. A large number of women comrades and male comrades were present in the meeting.

International Women's Day observed in Visakhapatnam Division

A seminar was organized on 05/03/2025 by Working Women Coordination Committee (WWCC) & ICEU Visakhapatnam division on the occasion of International Women's Day at LIC Divisional Office Club premises, on the topic: **Equality Empowerment and Rights for all Women and girls- Accelerate Action**. Dr. Priyanka, Asst Prof, Andhra University was the Chief Guest. She said that it all started in Vietnam Coal mines where both men & women workers fought for regular working hours and wages according to working hours. After industrial revolution the demand for stipulated working hours increased and women fought for their rights. Hence IWD is not just a day of celebrations, but a day to remember the achievements and act further. Today women are being raped every hour and the atrocities are rampant. One third of women are victims of various atrocities. Domestic violence is increasing day by day. Reform should start from our homes, teach our children, especially boys, good habits and become responsible citizens in the society. Gender equality is still very far away. There are many problems not only for women, but also for men, hence, women and men have to fight the evils of the society together. International Women's Day is not limited to just one day, it is a continuous process. It is not confined to a special day, rather it should be a way of life of people, she said amid cheers of the audience.

Com. M Kameshwari, Vice President, SCZIEF while greeting the seminar spoke about the need of joint struggles to achieve an equal society where women can lead life with respect and dignity.

The seminar was presided over by Com.G.Surya Prabha, WWCC Convenor, and concluded with vote of thanks by Com. J Satyavani, Co- Convenor

WWCC Visakhapatnam.

Women comrades of Vizianagaram branch and Gajapathinagaram SO distributed groceries and necessary items to local ABCD old-age home on 08/03/2025.

Women comrades of City branch V(Port) arranged breakfast for old people at Ashraya Destitute home on 07/03/2025.

Women comrades of CB1 and CB2 observed the IWD by distributing groceries to mentally challenged children and needy people at Santhi Ashram.

Women's Convention of LIC Employees Union Kottayam Division

17th Women's Convention of LIC Employees Union Kottayam Division was conducted at Kottayam on March 1, 2025. Com. K J Shine Teacher, State Committee Member of Kerala School Teachers' Association (KSTA) inaugurated the convention.

Smt. Nisha Jose K Mani, writer and social worker delivered a talk on 'United by unique: Cancer Survival and Social Status of Women'. More than 100 comrades attended the convention. Com. Anu Mariam Jose who won a Gold Medal in 800 M sprint and a Silver Medal

in Long Jump in the All India LIC Games held at Jaipur was honoured in the meeting. Com. Preeja P Thankam who designed a logo for LICEU for the campaign "Strong LIC for a Stronger India" was also honoured. Com. K Suresh, President, LICEU felicitated the convention.

Com. P B Bindu, General Secretary, LICEU Kottayam Division presided over the meeting. Com. R Radhika, convenor, women's sub-committee delivered the welcome address and Com. V S Rakhi, Joint Secretary, LICEU proposed the vote of thanks.



'Constitution a living document and Public Sector' -Convention at Chennai

A Convention on the topic "Constitution a living document and Public

Sector" was organised by ICEU, CHENNAI DIVISION 2 on 22nd Feb 2025 at YMCA Hall, Chennai. Sri S.SASIKANTH SENTHIL Member of Lok Sabha from Tiruvallur Constituency and former IAS Officer inaugurated the Convention. In his speech he clearly explained in detail to the audience about the preamble of the Indian Constitution and also the contribution of the Public sector to the economic development in this country. He said that a strong fight is the need of the hour now, a fight not between the political parties but a fight against the

ideology of the present hindutva forces ruling this country. He also gave a clarion call to our Trade Union to continue such type of movements to uphold democracy in this country.

Com R.K.Gopinath, Coordinator SZIEF greeted the Convention. Com V.Janakiraman Asst Treasurer,

SZIEF made the concluding remarks. Com K.Manoharan President, Chennai Division 2 presided over the Convention. Com R.Sarvamangala General Secretary welcomed the gathering and Com R.Kiran kumar Vice President proposed the Vote of thanks. Around 100 comrades including leaders from LICAOL, fraternal trade unions - CITU, AIDWA, DYFI, TNUEF and Southern Railways union attended the Convention.



Seminar on Economic Rights at Asansol

Insurance Employees' Association, Asansol organised a Seminar on the topic "Economic Rights as Fundamental Rights & our Tasks Ahead" at LICI Divisional office campus, Asansol on the 23rd Day of February 2025. Although it was a holiday, over 350 comrades attended the Seminar. After introductory speech of General secretary, IEA, Asansol, Comrade A Dutta, Assistant Secretary, EZIEA,

Mr. A K Das, Sr. Divisional Manager, LICI Asansol Division, Comrade Amitesh Sarkar, Joint Secretary, EZIEA spoke on various issues affecting the life of working people. They threw light on important issues like unemployment, challenges of FDI hike in Insurance sector, changes in labour Laws & Constitutional Rights along with present economic scenario.

The main speaker of the

Seminar Com. Dharmaraj Mahapatra, Joint Secretary, AIEA emphasized the need to protect the Constitution of India & to raise our voice for the fundamental rights of the citizens & working class as a whole. He also dealt with the 100% FDI hike in Insurance sector & attitude of the Government & IRDAI. He discussed how CEOs of corporate houses are trying to exploit the working class by



asking them to work for 70 to 90 hours per week which is a threat to the existing trade union rights of working

class people. He concluded by pointing out the economic rights can only be secured when our Constitutional

rights are protected & working class should protest unitedly against the ill designs of the Government.

National Conference organised by Mysore Insurance Institute

Mysore Insurance Institute organised a National Conference in collaboration with Adichunchanagiri University BG Nagar on 7th March 2025. More than 250 students, academicians and Representatives from Insurance industry participated in the seminar.

Com G Anand, FIII and Vice president AIIEA delivered the Key note Address. He highlighted the challenges, and opportunities to achieve Insurance for all by 2047.

To truly achieve objectives, Insurance for all by 2047, India must strengthen regulatory oversight, ensure Government support for public sector insurance, promote financial literacy, address socioeconomic disparities, invest in health care infrastructure, and utilize technology responsibly. We must prioritize consumer protection and social welfare while fostering innovation and growth. By negotiating these complexities with strategic foresight and collaborative efforts, India can transform its insurance sector into a powerful engine of financial security and social stability paving the way for a prosperous and inclusive future.

He also spoke about role of Regulator; IRDAI plays a crucial role in shaping the

sector. He explained how proposed changes such as reducing capital requirements have raised concerns about sector stability. The move to hike FDI to 100% in insurance poses risks of profit repatriation and the entry of failed foreign insurers as evidenced by instance like All-State and state farm denying coverage during US wildfires. He explained how GST on Health insurance and Life policies are affecting the policy holders.

Inaugural session was presided over by Dr M A Shekar, Vice Chancellor, Adichunchanagiri University (ACU), Dr K Sridhar, Diabetologist, Branch Head (DVP) KMD Reinsurance Bangalore also addressed. Smt Uma Maheshwary, Region Manager New India Assurance Co limited and Vice Chairperson Mysore Insurance institute also spoke.

There was two technical sessions. 1. Risk Management and Health: an Indian perspective, Mr John Pulinthanam, Retired Director and General Manager National Insurance company Ltd, spoke on this subject..

2. Regulatory and Compliance Landscape: Navigating the complexities in Insurance, Dr Ramesh K G, Dean Sahyadri College of Engineering and Management, Mangalore was resource the person.

There was a panel Discussion on "FUTURE OF INSURANCE TRENDS, OPPORTUNITIES and CHALLENGES: In the panel were Mr Pulinthanam, Dr K M Shivakumar, chief Hospital, AIMS-AHRC, Dr Hema Patil, Associate Professor, VTU-CPGS Mysore and Mr Girish Madla, Director, Shree Bharathi Group of Institutions Udupi.

48 Students and academic professionals presented Research papers on various Insurance related topics. The organising of the seminar came in for wide appreciation.



Inclusive Insurance- A Vision for 2047 and Need for Universal Social Security

A National Seminar on the above subject was jointly organised by Mysore Insurance Institute and JSS COLLEGE for Women at Mysore on 14th March 2025. The Seminar evoked wide interest and response and more than 500 students, lecturers from different colleges and academics participated in the Seminar.

Com A manulla Khan, Former President AIIEA, delivered key note address. He said that goal set by IRDAI for insurance to all by 2047 is laudable. But for it to succeed, there should be a proper regulatory framework and supportive government policies. The insurance industry, thanks to LIC has done creditably well despite low per capita incomes. Its life insurance penetration is



comparable to US, Germany and many other developed western countries. Today it is estimated that more than 65% of insurable population has been covered by the life insurance industry. There is no doubt that there is scope for further growth and this critically depends upon the availability of disposable incomes. Various surveys suggest that only 10% of the Indian population is consumption class while the vast majority continue to live on margins. The government should create adequate disposable incomes by creating decent well paying jobs and incentivise the insurance sector by removing the unjust GST on life and health premiums.

He also said that with the economic policies benefitted only a small number of people and alarming rise in income and wealth inequalities, it is unfortunate that India does not have a universal social security. With estimates of over 20% of the population above age 60 in the next few years, it is necessary that the government must introduce a non-contributory old age pension as a universal social security. The government's plea that it lacks resources for such a policy is untenable. If the government has a political will, it can collect little more taxes from the 1% richest Indians by way of wealth and



inheritance tax. Insurance alone cannot provide social security. The government must not abdicate its responsibility and take speedy steps for a non-contributory universal social security scheme. Such a policy is mandated by Article 41 of the Constitution. The Paper presented by him is published elsewhere in the journal.

Dr Nagaraja, Registrar of Evaluation University of Mysore inaugurated the seminar and appreciated the role of LIC of India in spreading Insurance in nook and corners of the country. The Inaugural Session was Presided by Prof Morabada Mallikarjuna, Director, College Education Division, JSS

Mahavidyapeetha. Dr Rechanna the Principal of JSS COLLEGE and S Sridhara Hon. Secretary of Mysore Insurance Institute were present.

There were 2 Technical sessions one on " Role of Insurance in Achieving Road safety " Dr Dileep Kumar SD, Assistant Professor and Coordinator PG department of commerce PES Institute of Advanced Management Studies, Shivamogga, spoke on the Subject.

And 2nd Technical session on the Subject " Insurance Vision for 2047". Shri Sathya Kumar, Retd Executive Director, LIC of India and Former Member National

Insurance Academy, Pune and Sri K Srikanth, Manager Sales, Divisional office LIC of India Mysuru were the speakers.

The concluding session was Chaired by Dr Niranjana Murthy, Director of Education, JSS institutions. Sridhara S, Hon Secretary proposed vote of thanks.

More than 50 papers were presented by the students and lecturers on insurance related issues. The Seminar was a grand success. There was wide appreciation from the student community and other academics above the presentations of the speakers and smooth conduct of the Seminar.

State Level Women Trade Union Class at Yercaud

A State level Trade Union class for women was held on 8th and 9th February of 2025 at YERCAUD on behalf of SZIEF. Women Comrades from Tamil Nadu divisions have attended the classes with all enthusiasm.

Comrade M. Girija, Joint Secretary, AIIEA inaugurated the Class. Comrade R.K. Gopinath, Joint Secretary, SZIEF coordinated the entire class. On 8th February there were two classes. Comrade C. Muthukumarasamy, Vice President, SZIEF took the class on the topic "The challenges before the Industry". Comrade Kalapiran, one of the State Secretaries of Tamil Nadu Progressive Writers' and Artists Association took the class on the topic "Trade union and the need to function in a wider area". On 9th

morning, the class was taken by Comrade U. Nirmala Rani, the leading lawyer and the leader of All India Democratic Womens' Association, Tamil Nadu on the topic of "Hate politics and Sexual Harassment".

After each class, there was a group discussion among the comrades of respective Divisions and the teachers gave clarifications to the questions raised by our comrades. Comrade S. Siva Subramanian, Treasurer, on

behalf of SZIEF, summed up the classes and suggested some activities to be taken up the Women Sub Committees of divisions. Comrade R. S. Chenbagam, Joint Convenor, South Zone Working Women Coordination Committee gave a concluding address. Comrade Ramesh Kumar, Joint Secretary, SZIEF delivered Vote of Thanks. Around 100 women comrades from 8 Divisions participated in the class of which around 30% are young newly recruited women comrades. Salem Division Comrades have excellently made the arrangements for the successful conduct of the class.



TU Class for Young at Visakhapatnam

ICEU Visakhapatnam Division organised trade union classes for all the comrades who were recruited in the last 10 years on 9.2.25 at its new Aikyatha building. The topic of the class was "Human Evolution and the Present Day society", which was dealt by Com AV Satyanarayana, CITU leader in Visakhapatnam Steel plant. The class in power point was dealt extensively.

He explained the Darwin's theory, the evolution of human being, the progress of mankind from the ancient man to the present day human being and the evolution of the society from a primitive one to the present day capitalist society, primitive accumulation of wealth, present Government policies and an alternative to the capitalist society.

The young comrades from

across the Division, who attended the session were very much impressed and expressed their interest in further classes of the kind. Com G Varaprasad, General Secretary, and ICEU leadership interacted with the young comrades, who expressed their commitment to make AIIEA stronger. Com M Kameshwari, president, ICEU, acted as the principal for the class.

Trade Union workshop by Bangalore DO 1 & 2

ICEU Bangaluru Division. 1 and 2 organized a Trade union class on 22nd February 2025 at Kaiwara near Chintamani. More than 70 comrades from both the divisions attended the classes. The composition of participants included, 30 Comrades who have more than 15 years of service and also young 2020 recruits.

The first session "**History of AIIEA and its role in social transformation**" was dealt by **Com. Amanulla Khan, Former President AIIEA**; this session was very lively, educative and interactive. He explained the historical background in which AIIEA was formed and its role in Nationalisation of the Life Insurance business and formation of LIC OF INDIA. He

elaborately explained various struggles fought by AIIEA to advance the interests of the employees as also to defend the great institution, LIC. He pointed out that AIIEA is of the firm opinion that it has social responsibility and therefore it must make necessary contribution to the construction of a just, fair and equal society. He quoted various instances, where AIIEA defended national unity, democracy and secularism despite difficult odds. The participants in the class could understand the great legacy of AIIEA and also its role on the social transformation.

The second session "**Employees Benefits and Struggles of AIIEA**" by **Com. B.S.Ravi, Treasurer, AIIEA**, received



a very good response from participants. He gave details of various benefits achieved by AIIEA and the uncompromising struggles to achieve them. He explained that in the class divided society no benefit can be achieved with the benevolence of the employer, every benefit has been achieved with bitter struggles. He also explained the poor working environment during pre-nationalisation period and how exploitative the situation was; from that



position AIIEA has united the employees and with supreme sacrifice by the erstwhile leadership, cadres and employees we have achieved the benefits brick by brick. The session was lively, interactive and he answered many questions raised by the comrades.

The third session **“Organisational matters” was dealt by Com. K.Gopal, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF.** He thoroughly

explained how a base unit has to be effectively run, how we should keep live contact with the members, organize, motivate and make them ideologically committed. He appealed to the young comrades to take the leadership in the units and make AIIEA stronger for the future of LIC OF INDIA and also insurance employees.

Earlier Com. R.Padmanabha, General Secretary,

ICEU DO-1, welcomed the participants and faculty and made initial remarks. Comrades P.T. Satyanarayana, T.P.N.Murthy and Shantha L.K. Rao were Principals for the three classes respectively.

ICEU Bangalore 1 and 2 appreciates the wonderful work done by the Comrades of Chin-tamani Base Unit for making the Trade Union workshop a successful.

General Conference of LICPA Howrah Division

The 29th Annual General Conference of LIC Pensioners' Association, Howrah Division held at Kolkata on 08.02.2025 was conducted by a Presidium formed with Comrades Mohanlal Ganguly, Rathindra Nath Chakraborty and Subhas Mitra started with a welcome address by the President of the Association and a condolence resolution.

A large number of Pensioners, Family Pensioners and many guests were present.

Comrade Samir Banerjee, Organising Secretary of Co-ordination Committee of Central Government Pensioners' (West Bengal) inaugurated the Conference. He criticised the anti people attitude of the N.D.A Government and was critical about the economic policy and religious fanaticism of the government. He criticized the apathetic attitude of the Government towards the legitimate demands of the Insurance Pensioners and appealed for joint struggle in all spheres.

The conference was greeted by Comrade Priyabrata Bagchi, Joint Secretary, AIIPA, Comrade Dev Prasad Gayen (Vice-President, AIIPA), Comrade Jyotirmoy Bhattacharya, General Secretary, KMDO-1 Pensioners'

Association and Comrade Paul Mondal , General Secretary, Howrah Division Insurance Employees' Association) and representatives on behalf of GIC Pensioners' Association (West Bengal), Pensioners' Association of KMDO-2.

Comrade Rathindra Nath Chakraborty, Vice President of this Association (Ex Vice President of AIIEA) in his speech vented the feelings of the Insurance Pensioners towards the indifferent attitude of the Government and expressed discontentment about the government's anti people and undemocratic policies.

The report of the Executive Committee placed by Comrade Rammohan Das, the General Secretary, dealt with the political, economic and social situation of the country and the world. It discussed the demands of the Insurance Pensioners, the struggle of AIIPA, Joint movement, duties of the members and protection of Nationalised Insurance Industry.

The report of the Executive Committee and Audited Accounts for 2024, after discussion, were accepted unanimously. Twenty Six Resolutions on different issues including our protest against the

proposal of the Government for 100% FDI in Insurance Sector were passed.

Special felicitation was given to Com Sankar Prasad Sen-sarma, a veteran Trade Union leader of Insurance Employees and Comrade Samarsh Roy, the senior most delegate present in the Conference was felicitated.

Comrade Gopal Das and Comrade Paul Mondal were elected as Honourary members of the Association for 2025.

The message of the Conference was broad based joint struggle by the Pensioners with other toiling masses for the welfare of the people, realisation of legitimate demands and to strengthen AIIPA by taking every effort to increase the number of members and participation in all programmes.

A new Executive Committee of 22 members for 2025 with Comrades Mohanlal Ganguly, Rammohan Das and Dulal Jana as President, Secretary and Treasurer were unanimously elected by the Conference.

The Conference concluded after vote of thanks given by Comrade Mohanlal Ganguly, President of the Association.

General Body Meeting of ICPA Bangalore

The 27th Annual General Body Meeting of the Insurance Corporation Pensioners' Association (ICPA) held on 11th March, 2025 at Souhardha Union Office was a grand success. Initially, the ICPA comrades rendered a revolutionary song that set the tone for the meeting.

Delivering inaugural address Com.B.Bhaskar Somayaji, Joint Secretary, AIIPA, expressed happiness about the total membership of the ICPA having 1553 as NUMBER ONE at the All India level and expressed happiness over the involvement of the members and the leaders in implementing all the programs of the AIIPA, latest being the Dharna organized on 10th January, 2025. He explained in greater detail as to how the AIIPA at all India level has been projecting various genuine demands of the Pensioners and for its achievement. While the demand of the 30% family pension has been achieved in LIC, the same has not been conceded in General Insurance Sector. He criticized the Government and the Management for not coming out with solutions to various demands of the Pensioners such as Updation of Pension; uniform 100% DA Neutralization; Improvement in

Mediclaim Scheme, Domiciliary Treatment and Cash Medical Benefit. He called upon the Pensioners to be in readiness to wage a powerful struggle to achieve these demands.

Com.Amanulla Khan. Former AIIEA President and the Editor, Insurance Worker, speaking on the occasion, appreciated the AIIPA and its Units throughout India for launching various struggles in projecting important issues like Universal Pension Scheme to all and the ICPA Bangalore Division played a pivotal role in organizing a State Level Seminar. He also appreciated both AIIEA and AIIPA in launching a powerful campaign against the government's decision of imposing 18% GST on Health Insurance premiums and meeting as many nearly 400 Members of Parliament. He said GIPSA has recommended for wage revision and increase in family pension to 30% but the government has been delaying a decision. He asked the audience to support the struggle of general insurance employees and pensioners. He criticised the mass media especially TV channels for diverting the attention of the common people from real issues like unemployment, price rise and debating only on the emotive issues which affects the unity

and social harmony.

Com. K.Gopal, Joint Secretary, SCZIEF and General Secretary ICEU DO-2, Com. Umapathi, General Secretary, GIPA, Bangalore and Com. R.Padmanabha, General secretary, ICEU, DO-1 greeted the General Body Meeting.

The Report of the Executive Committee and the Statement of Accounts were approved by the General Body unanimously.

Com. C.R.Nagaraj, Com. M.Chandan and Com. S.R.Dwarakanath were elected unanimously as President, General Secretary, and Treasurer.

Com.G.K.Gangadhar, who demitted his position as General Secretary of ICPA, was felicitated by Com.B.Bhaskar Somayaji and the meeting recorded the services rendered by the him for the growth of the Organisation.

A TALK BY DOCTOR SANDHYA RAVI: Doctor Sandhya Ravi, Founder and Managing Director of Prameya Health, who has experience as a Surgeon for 3 decades, along her team of doctors, gave various health tips that are necessary at an advanced age. The talk by the Doctors and the interactions by the participants was very lively and the entire programme was a thorough success.

Thus, the Annual General Body Meeting was a Grand Success. Around 175 members participated in this meeting. Com. C.R.Nagaraj presided over the meeting. While Com. D.Suresh, Joint Secretary welcomed the leaders and members, Com.V.Latha, Joint Secretary, proposed vote of thanks. .





Constitution and Workermen:

In The Light of Engagement Of Temporary Workmen
By Life Insurance Corporation of India

The important Constitution provisions which speak about the workers will be worth mention, like Article 39, 41 and 43. It is relevant to note that these articles are placed in the Part IV of the constitution under the head Directive principles of state policy. These articles and other articles in part IV of the constitution shall not be enforceable in court but the principles therein laid down nevertheless are fundamental in governance of the country and it shall be duty of the state to apply these principles on making law.

Life Insurance Corporation of India being a state Under Article 12 of Constitution is equally responsible to travel in the same direction in elevating the standard of citizen. No doubt the contribution to nation building is laudable and must be appreciated. Like the same way expanding Insurance Cover to rural mass is another important aspect which calls for every once appreciation and applauds.

But in the case of engagement of feeder cadre namely Class-III and Class-IV post's the Corporation functioning does not speak good of the Corporation. In all cases the only plea taken is based on ruling in "State of Karnataka Vs Uma Devi" 2006 (4) SCC1. Without appreciating the real spirit of the Judgment, the Corporation and many State Undertaking are relying on the same. Whenever the workers approach for the court for regularization, the employer takes shelter under Uma Devi's case for all wrong and illegal engagement of workers.

One such case decision which traveled from Madras High Court up to Supreme Court wherein the Hon'ble Supreme Court dismissed the special leave petition preferred by the Life Insurance Corporation of India upholding the Division Bench Judgment of Madras High Court in WA NO.1229 of 2024 dated 22/10/2024. The Division Bench set aside the order passed by the single Judge of the same in court in WP.No.25295/2015 dated 29/09/2023.

Hence, it becomes important to know brief facts of the case. The petitioner Sri.K.S.Krishnan Rao and six others have been working in Class-IV as watchmen and subsequently worked in different post in Class IV and that they have worked for more than 480 days. Based on the precedent of an earlier judgment in WP.No 29529/2018 of the same court

this present writ petition filed by the Krishnan Rao and others was dismissed.

The Corporation immediately dismissed all the petitioners from the service. It is to be noted that the petitioner were employed in various work falling under Class-IV. Aggrieved over the decision the petitioners preferred a Writ Appeal before the Division Bench wherein also the management took the same stand and argued that the Single Judge order need not be interfered with.

The appellant/workers submitted that they were in service for more than three decades from 1993 till the dismissal of Writ petition. In 2011 when the regularization was considered through limited examination the appellant's applications were rejected as they lacked required education qualification. It was submitted on behalf of appellants/petitioners that even after 2011 they were continued in the service of the Corporation. One more contention of the workers was as per Tamilnadu Industrial Establishment (Conferment of permanent status) Act 1981 employees become permanent on completion of 480 days of service within in a two years. The corporation contented that appellant were engaged in accordance with LIC of India (Engagement of Temporary Staff) Instructions 1993 and that the education qualification must be pass in Standard-IX and that on the question of engaging the petitioners after 2011 the Corporation answered that it was on humanitarian grounds.

The Division bench after hearing both sides; the point for determination was whether the Appellants are entitled for regularization of their employment along with the associated benefits as prayed for. The division bench observed that the appellants worked for about 30 years performing the same tasks as similar to permanent employees but with much lower wages and longer working hours. And that they are at the verge of retirement. The appellants who have worked continuously for more than 480 days without any interruption are entitled to regularization. Given this, the denial of regularization is a clear violation of the right to equality in employment.

It can be concluded by saying LIC of India being a State shall respect the verdict of the Hon'ble Supreme Court and put an end to these kinds of litigation and improve its brand image in changed Economic scenario instead of fighting litigation for decades by exploiting Workers.

INSURANCE NEWS IN BRIEF

● **A.M. KHAN, Dharwad**

Allianz SE, the German insurance company, which has 26% stakes in Bajaj Allianz General Insurance Company and Bajaj Allianz Life Insurance Company, has agreed to sell all its share to Bajaj Group. It further goes to say that it will consider options for the proceeds in the projects that support their strategic ambitions, in particular the reinvestment of sale proceeds into potential new opportunities in India. It is expected to start new insurance new companies in India soon either by partnering with another Indian company or with full ownership after the government allows 100 per cent FDI in the insurance sector. There are also market rumours Allianz joining hands with Mukesh Ambani's Jio Financial Services to promote two insurance companies.

The Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) has issued comprehensive guidelines permitting insurers to utilise equity derivatives to hedge their equity portfolios. It will facilitate insurers to hedge their existing equity exposures against volatility in equity market and ensure preservation of market value of equity investments and thereby reducing risks in equity portfolio. These guidelines aim to provide insurers with enhanced opportunities for risk management and portfolio diversification. In line with these guidelines, insurers will be able to buy hedges in stock & index futures and options against their holding in equities subject to the exposure and position limits. The equity derivatives shall be used only for hedging purpose. Any Over The Counter (OTC) exposure to equity derivatives is prohibited.

Government of India has notified that the entire Obligatory Cession is to be placed with General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) only. Obligatory cession refers to the part of the business that general insurance companies have to mandatorily reinsure with GIC Re. To begin with, it was 20 per cent and reduced to 4 per cent over a period of time. The obligatory cession was reduced from 5 per cent to 4 per cent in FY23. The percentage cession of the sum insured on each general insurance policy to be reinsured with the Indian Re-insurer (GIC Re), will be 4% (four percent) during the financial year beginning from 1st April, 2025 to 31st March, 2026, except the terrorism premium and premium ceded to Nuclear pool wherein it would be made 'NIL', said the notification. There would be no limit on sum insured applicable for the cessions made during FY 2025-26.

According to regulatory disclosures, Patanjali Ayurved will be acquiring Magma General Insurance at a valuation of Rs.4,500 crore !

The Global Federation of Insurance Associations (GFIA), whose members account for around 89 per cent of total insurance premiums worldwide, has urged the Indian government to reconsider rules that impose additional restrictions on insurers with foreign partners. India is one of the world's most promising insurance markets, but competing economies have implemented more liberal investment regimes.

Health insurance costs have gone up sharply this year, making it harder for some people to afford their policies. About one in 10 policyholders have missed renewing their policy in the current financial year. According a report by Policybazaar, over the past 10 years, more than half of policyholders saw their premiums grow by 5-10 per cent per year. For them, Rs 100 premium increased to Rs 162-259 over the decade. Another 38 per cent of policyholders saw a 10-15 per cent annual increase, making their Rs 100 premium rise to Rs 259-404. However, 3 per cent of policyholders experienced the steepest hikes, with their premiums rising by 15-30 per cent annually.

Fast Track to FDI: Who Needs Caution When You've Got a Bullet Train?

Minister of State for Finance, Pankaj Chaudhary said the Department of Financial Services is in advanced stages of finalisation of the Draft Insurance Laws Amendment Bill which will be presented in Parliament, shortly. He further said that increasing the FDI limit to 100 per cent from 74 per cent will not only attract foreign capital and advanced technology but will also improve insurance penetration, providing increased insurance coverage at affordable premiums to a larger section of the population.

The Standing Committee on Finance, in its Report, has urged the government to have safeguard measures in place while raising the FDI in insurance sector from present 74 percent to 100 percent to deal with these concerns: Profit repatriation i.e. foreign investors sending earnings back to home countries rather than reinvesting in India; reduced decision n-making power of domestic firms; job security concerns arising due to potential automation and cost-cutting measures; focus on high margin policies, neglecting rural and financially weaker sections.

In Bullet Train hurry, the IRDA has set up a seven-member committee headed by former chairman of State Bank of India (SBI) Dinesh Khara to look into the proposed amendments to the Insurance Act, 1938 and suggest a framework for implementation of the same!.

WORKING CLASS STRUGGLE

● S. SRIDHARA, Mysore

Bengaluru: The Karnataka State IT/ITES Employees' Union (KITU) held a mass gathering at Freedom Park on 9th March demanding the right to disconnect:

The union also called for the enforcement of daily working hour limits, the removal of the IT sector's exemption from the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, and strict action against labour law violations. The gathering's slogan was "A healthy work-life balance is every employee's right". This agitational program received massive support from different sections of the society.

Ongoing protests across Iran as social and economic conditions deteriorate:

Protests took place in the Iranian capital, Tehran on 11th March. Volunteer teachers rallied to protest the government's refusal to give them employment contracts despite having the required qualifications. Tehran also saw protests outside the National Inspection Office by customers of the state-owned Maskan Melli housing company. They paid money over years for homes that did not materialise. Qeshm in the south of the country saw protests by boat owners against plans to pass ownership of the wharf to a private company. They fear fee increases would impact their livelihoods. Cities across Iran including Abbas, Bandar, Bijar, Marivan and Sanandaj witnessed protests by retirees of the Telecommunication Company of Iran. They demanded the government implement the law for pensions to rise in line with inflation. On 10th March, truck drivers from the Turkish border area held a further protest in Tehran outside the National Inspection Office. They were demanding the release of their trucks illegally seized by government authorities, depriving them of their livelihoods.

The same day, Social Security Organisation retirees protested in Ahvaz. They were demanding increased pensions and improved health and social conditions. In Mazandaran, steel industry pensioners also protested at their inadequate pensions. Protests continue to roil all areas of Iran as deteriorating economic and social conditions affect vast swathes of the population. Embedded rising inflation is exacerbated by US sanctions and war plans, which are fuelling the unrest.

Nationwide teachers' strike in Mexico over pension changes:

Teachers belonging to the National Public Employees Union and to the National Teachers Union (CNTE and SNTE) carried out a national two-day strike on March 6 and 7. On March 7, striking educators carried out a mass protest march and rally in Mexico City. At issue are recently approved changes in public employee pension legislation. The new law (SSSTE 2025) increased pension contri-

butions from teachers and public employees by 2.7 percent, and lowers what teachers and other employees will receive once they retire. Workers occupy Buenos Aires printing plant, issue call for support following an announcement of bankruptcy by the Anselmo Morvillo printing company in the industrial district of Avellaneda in Metropolitan

Buenos Aires its hundreds of workers decided to occupy the plant on Wednesday, February 26th in order to protect the integrity of the plant and defend their jobs. Rumors of the plant's closure had circulated days before the bankruptcy announcement as the news spread that stockholders were demanding mass layoffs and wage cuts. In addition to the production of newspapers and magazines, the Avellaneda plant also produced material for the Ministry of Education, now under attack by the Milei administration. The Avellaneda plant first opened in 1974. The striking workers denounced management for breaking all links to the plant, refusing even to answer telephone calls, and not recognizing workers' rights. At issue is the defense of the workers' rights to jobs with decent working conditions and wages. The occupying workers intend to run the plant under workers' control. The striking workers have called on the entire working class, including printing press workers, to "surround with active solidarity this struggle."

Over 2,000 water workers protest in Guadalajara, Mexico:

On Tuesday March 4, 2,430 employees of the Intermunicipal Water and Sewer workers (SIAPA) went on a 24-hour strike and carried out protest marches and rallies in Guadalajara, Mexico's sixth-largest city. At issue was the demand for better working conditions, higher wages, and more equipment, tools and vehicles to carry out their jobs. The workers' contract expired on March 1; negotiations began on February 27. At Guadalajara's government house, government officials locked the doors and prevented the workers from presenting their petitions. The strikers' demands include new high-quality street working equipment and materials, vehicles in good repair (half of the 500 vehicles in use have mechanical problems), plus and wage increases that exceed inflation.

Hundreds of Americans rallied to support the federal employees in their fight against the attacks on jobs initiated by the Department of Government Efficiency (DPGE) headed by Elon Musk, richest person on earth. On March 3, demonstrations were held in all major States in United States. Earlier big demonstrations were held in San Francisco on 1st March 2025.

ECONOMIC NOTES

● J. SURESH, Mysore

- ▶ According to data from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, India's goods trade deficit was down to a 42 month low of \$ 14.05 billion as imports of gold, silver and crude dipped in February. The difference between exports and import of goods was \$ 22.9 billion in January. In February 2024, the trade deficit stood at \$ 19.5 billion. India's gold and silver imports were at \$ 2.7 billion, which is the lowest since June 2024, when the value was at \$ 2.5 billion. India exported goods worth \$ 36.9 billion in February 2025. Imports, however slipped to a 22month low of \$ 50.9 billion. On a year-to-year basis, exports dipped 10.84% in February 2025. Imports however shrunk 16.3% in February 2025 as against the corresponding period last year. The trade deficit was significantly lower than the average of over \$ 23 billion during the first 10 months of FY 2025. According to an estimate by ICRA, India can expect the current account to witness a surplus of around \$ 5 billion in Q4 of FY 2025, equivalent to 0.5% in GDP. India exported services worth \$ 35.03 billion and imported services worth \$ 16.55 billion in February 2025 compared to \$ 28.33 billion and \$ 15.23 respectively during the corresponding period last year. This trade data assumes significance at a time when India's currency is depreciating and uncertainties persist from US trade policy.
- ▶ Prices of manufactured products rose to a two-year high of 2.86% in February 2025. Non-food primary inflation hastened to 4.84% against 2.88% in the previous month. Wholesale price inflation hastened to 2.38%. Excluding food, core manufacturing WPI inflation rose to a 1.3% Y-o-Y basis from 1% in January. Food price inflation was at four month low of 3.38% in February 2025. Non-food primary inflation rose to 4.84% in February as against 2.85% in the previous month. Fuel and power sector experienced a deflation of 0.71% slowing from a fall in prices by 2.75% in January.
- ▶ The US government has imposed a 25% tariff on aluminium and steel imports refusing to grant any concessions for long time US allies including Japan, South Korea, Taiwan and Australia. The European Union has responded with a series of retaliatory measures imposing tariffs on \$ 26 billion worth of goods, including Kentucky bourbon whiskey and Harley-

Davidson motorcycles. Further tariffs are to be imposed in April. The response in Australia is no less significant. While the economic fallout is not so great – Australia is only a minor exporter of Steel and Aluminium – the political consequences are enormous. The refusal of the US to grant an exemption, or even to take a phone call from Prime Minister is

being regarded as an essential blow to the US-Australia alliance that has been foundational to the post-war political order. The tariff measures went ahead, despite lobbying from US businesses concerned they will have a major impact on the economy. The lobby group even included USA's largest aluminium company, Alcoa, which warned that the tariff hikes could threaten tens of thousands of jobs and raise prices for American consumers. In its explanation of the refusal to grant exemptions, the White House pointed to the central issue of China. It said that carve-outs, such as those that has been made in the past, "inadvertently create loop holes" which allowed Chinese made steel to come into US via those countries, duty free. April 2nd is the date on which a range of US government departments will report on the implementation of the central thrust of his tariff wars, the so-called "reciprocal tariff" program. This goes far beyond the imposition of like tariffs on countries such as India which have relatively high tariffs on the US goods. It will set in motion retaliation via tariffs for internal policies of individual countries that are deemed to be inimical to US Corporations. The global Trump tariff war will accelerate the recessionary trends already showing up in the US economy. These were highlighted in the report on job tracking by the firm Challenger Gray and Christmas which detailed the largest number of job losses since 2008 crisis. "US-based employers announced 1,72,017 job cuts in February, the highest total for the month since 2009 when 1,86,350 job cuts were announced", the report said. February 's total is 245 % increase from the 49,975 cuts announced one month prior. It is a 103% increase from the 84,638 cuts announced last year. These developments are a clear indication of recessionary trends in US economy and of a global economic war which is looming large in the name of tariff war.

FOR OUR FIELD FORCE

● **A. ARIVUKKADAL**
Thanjavur

World's Strongest: According to the Brand Finance Insurance 100–2025 report, LIC has been ranked third among the world's strongest insurance brands, achieving a Brand Strength Index (BSI) score of 88 out of 100. In terms of overall brand value, LIC holds the 12th position globally among the most valuable insurance brands.

LIC OMO: The initiative, which went live on 17 February 2025, aims to enhance efficiency and productivity among LIC agents, development officers, senior business associates, chief life insurance advisors, LIC associates, and chief organisers. OMO (One Man Office) is designed to facilitate digital policy sales, provide after-sales services, track business performance, and act as a training and knowledge resource for agents. LIC describes it as a mobile digital office that aims to become a single platform for all business and service-related tasks, accessible via mobile phones. The service is built on LIC's ANANDA (Atma Nirbhar Agents New Business Digital Application) platform, which helps agents onboard customers. It offers features such as a premium calculator, benefit illustrations, E-NACH registration, change of address requests, online loan applications, renewal premium payments, and claim-related document submissions.

Infosys: LIC is now the largest shareholder in Infosys, holding 9.53% stake (395.77 million shares) valued at Rs.8,694 crore. This is more than what is being held by its founder Narayana Murthy and family.

Systemically Important: IRDAI has once again designated Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC), The New India Assurance Company, and General Insurance Corporation of India (GIC Re) as Domestic Systemically Important Insurers (D-SIIs) for the year 2024-25. These insurers are considered critical to the stability of the Indian financial system due to their size, market importance, and interconnection with the domestic and global economy.

LIC's Workforce: The number of permanent employees in LIC has declined 13.83% to 98,661 over the past five years. In a written reply in Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said the number of permanent employees in LIC was 1,14,498 as on March 31, 2020.

New Agents: Recent Life Insurance Council data suggests that the life insurance industry has appointed over 2.41 lakh new agents in one year to reach a total agent count of 30.34 lakh in January 2025. LIC has added 62,946 new agents. Its agency force has increased from 13.83 lakh in Jan 2024 to 14.46 lakh in Jan 2025. TATA AIA and HDFC Life have followed LIC by adding 49,908 and 38,662 agents, respectively.

Patanjali in Insurance: Patanjali Ayurved, consumer goods company owned by Baba Ramdev, has entered the insurance sector. The company has purchased a majority stake in Magma General Insurance.

Monthly car policy: Policybazaar has launched a new "monthly mode" car insurance policy, a first for the motor insurance industry.

This option allows customers to pay premiums on a monthly basis, unlike traditional car insurance policies that require annual or long-term payments. Unlike standard policies, which remain valid for a year, the new monthly policy is renewed with a fresh policy number each month.

Bima-ASBA: Insurance companies have approached IRDAI and sought an extension in implementing its new payment mechanism Bima-ASBA (Applications Supported by Blocked Amount) - system of One-Time Mandate (OTM) on Unified Payments Interface (UPI) for insurance companies. The amount towards the insurance premium will be debited only after the insurer decides to accept the proposal. In case the insurer does not accept the proposal, the amount shall be unblocked and shall be available at the disposal of the prospect. In mid-February, IRDAI introduced the Bima-ASBA facility and mandated insurers to offer this facility to the policyholders by March 1.

Bima Sugam: IRDAI has directed insurance companies, which will be shareholders in Bima Sugam, to inject an initial capital of Rs.300 crore by the end of this month. This was communicated to the insurers at 'Bima Manthan', a two-day event hosted by the insurance regulator, where industry issues were discussed.

Commission limits: In April 2023, IRDAI decided to remove limits on commissions in individual business segments and instead put limits on the total expenses. IRDAI feels that general and health insurers misused the relaxation, increasing commissions significantly and reducing operating expenses. The decision to change the commission rules would be reviewed after 3 years i.e. in 2026. The regulator has warned insurers that the limits on individual categories may return if some of the benefit isn't passed to the policyholders.

Private fraud: An investigation revealed that between 2017 and 2023, Aviva India paid approximately \$26 million to vendors supposedly providing marketing services. However, authorities found these vendors were merely fronts used to funnel illegal commissions to Aviva's agents beyond regulatory limits. Aviva was ordered to pay this amount along with a 100% penalty, bringing the total to 653 million rupees (\$7.5 million).



‘We are not your slaves’:

IT employees in Bengaluru protest for work-life balance

The IT employees under the banner of Karnataka IT Union swung into action when the founder of Infosys N.R.Narayanamurthy and L&T Chairman S.N.Subrahmanyam advocated for increased in the working hours. While Narayanamurthy said workers must work for 70 hours a week, the suggestion of Subrahmanyam was 90 hours. The KITU carried out a systematic campaign against these nonsensical utterances of these two corporate bosses and held meetings in different parts of the city to mobilise workers against these suggestions. It is common knowledge that most of the IT employees do not have a regular working hours and work much beyond their normal working hours. This is causing huge stress and impacting the health of the workers. Infact the IT industry has seen some suicides too due to the work related stress and strain.

The KITU culminated this campaign with a mass mobilisation at Freedom Park on 9th March 2025. They demanded the State to intervene and regulate the working of the IT industry. Holding red flags and placards bearing messages such as ‘We are not your slaves’ and ‘A healthy work-life balance is every

employee’s right,’ the protesting workers demanded legal protection against after-hours work demands -an issue that has already gained legal recognition in countries such as Australia, France, and Spain.

The union also demanded strict enforcement of daily working hour limits, the removal of the IT sector’s exemption from the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act, and action against widespread labor law violations in the industry.

KITU Vice-President Rashmi Choudhary pointed out that the culture of long working hours disproportionately affects women in the IT industry, many of whom are forced to leave their jobs due to unsustainable work-life expectations.

“We already work 14-16 hours a day, and then return home to unpaid labour. When corporate leaders advocate for 70-hour workweeks, it’s a clear signal of what they intend to normalise. If the government doesn’t intervene, this will become our reality,” Rashmi said. The gathering burnt the effigies of Narayanamurthy and Subrahmanyam despite the police trying to prevent them from doing so. The KITU has decided to keep up the momentum to take this message further.

DONATIONS

TO INSURANCE WORKER

Com. Geetha Yaji, Dharwad D.O.	Rs. 2000
Com B.Tripura sundari, Hyderabad	2000
Com S. Lakshmi,Hga, Palakkad	5003
Com C. Anitha, (Former Jt secy Liceu Trissur)	10000
Com. B. Rabindranath,hga Trissur	10000

TO AIEA

Com Dattatreya Eknath, Satna	5001
Com K Shruti,Satna	2000
Com. K. Srinivasa charyulu	30000
Com. J.J.Tytus, Machilipatnam	2000

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

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

Base1960=Base 2001x22.8259

Base 2001=Base 2016x2.88



LIC EMPLOYEES'

CO-OP. STORES LTD. No. D- 2027

LIC BUILDINGS, LIC ROAD, KOZHIKODE - 673 001

Mobile : 9495721579, 9446682871

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Going Past The GOLDEN JUBILEE
Milestone (1974 - 2024)



NORTHERN ZONE INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION DELHI DIVISIONAL COMMITTEE 3



**ONWARD TO
ONE DAY GENERAL STRIKE
ON 20TH MAY 2025**

OPPOSING
FDI HIKE IN INSURANCE TO 100%
OPEN ARCHITECTURE FOR AGENCY FORCE
FURTHER DISINVESTMENT IN LIC &
DEMANDING IMMEDIATE RECRUITMENT
OF CLASS III & IV CADRES IN LIC