



THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

CITU WORKING COMMITTEE MEETING

Shimla; 14 – 16 July, 2017



(From Top Left) **Flag Hoisting; Paying floral tribute to Martyrs; Welcoming the Participants: Meeting in Session; President Hemalata Addressing**

March to Secretariat in Kerala



Led by CITU state committee, thousands of workers, coming from several districts, staged a massive rally and sit-in before the government secretariat demanding Rs.18,000 as minimum wage, resolution of construction sector's problems, scheme workers wages increase; to stop privatisation of CPSUs. CITU state president A. Anandan presided and general secretary E. Karim inaugurated.

Construction Workers Rally in West Bengal



Thousands of Construction workers, coming from Kolkata, North 24 Parganas, South 24 Parganas, Howrah, Hoogly, Nadia, Murshidabad, Bankura and East Medinipur districts, marched under CITU banner from Lenin statue at Dharmatala to Sealdah station where it converted into a huge rally in protest against West Bengal Social Security Yojna Bill, 2017, introduced by TMC government on 11 July, 2017. The Bill proposed to combine 5 welfare schemes of the workers, all introduced during Left Front rule including State Assistance Scheme for Provident Fund for Unorganised Sector Workers, 2001; West Bengal Unorganised Sector Workers Health Security Scheme, 2001; West Bengal Bidi Workers Welfare Scheme, 2007; West Bengal Transport Workers Social Security Scheme, 2010 and construction workers welfare scheme 1996 in combination with central Acts. It is in tune with Modi government's single 'Code on Social Security'. (Cont,page..)

Addressing the rally CITU national secretary Dipak Dasgupta said that state's TMC government is following the path of centre's BJP government by combining Left-led government's several social security schemes into a single scheme and depriving the workers, including the construction workers, of their rights. Construction workers federation, CFWI general secretary Debanjan Chakraborty said that the way TMC government merged the social security schemes into one is undemocratic; that central schemes cannot be merged with the state schemes and that this is a anti-worker fraudulent maneuver of TMC government against which the construction workers would resort to legal and agitational steps including strike. Leaders of the union S. M. Sadi, Pranab Biswas, Sannyasi Dolui also addressed the rally presided over by Sukanta Konar.

WORKING CLASS

AUGUST 2017

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Inside	Page
Domestic Workers	4
CITU Working Committee Meeting	5
GST, the Biggest Neoliberal Push	9
CITU's All India Protest Day	12
Industries & Sectors	13
Three Years of Modi Government	17
Surging Kisan Movement	18
States	20
Consumer Price Index	26

Struggles Waves

At this point of time, people's anger and agitation are spontaneously bursting out. Different sections are increasingly coming out on the streets to join the waves of protest against the corporate – communal combine under BJP rule at the centre and states, heaping huge miseries on them.

Prominent among them is the peasantry reeling under agrarian crisis, crop failures, impact of demonetisation, ban on cattle trade and unbearable debt burden causing large number of suicides across the country. Some protesters are martyred by police firings. Their legitimate demands are comprehensive loan wavers; crops MSPs on total production cost plus fifty per cent under Swaminathan formula; restoration of cattle trade etc.

Different sections of traders, small producers and transporters are resorting to agitations and Bandhs under serious adverse impact of GST and MV Act on them causing the shifting of their business to big corporates and e-commerce ruining their own business and livelihood.

People as consumers are yet to comprehend the enormity and perpetuality of the indirect tax burden of GST on them which remain a potential ground for incoming protests.

Protests are developing against lynching of minorities and Dalits by communal Hindutwa forces in different BJP ruled states.

Countrywide workers sectoral strike struggles is taking place including in coal, steel, transport, port and dock, schemes, sales promotion, banks, central and state governments etc; and also in different states both in organised and unorganised sectors. CITU is having its countrywide independent campaign and struggle.

The central trade unions and federations have called for Workers National Convention on 8 August to decide on working class joint struggle.

Noting these waves of struggles, CITU Shimla working committee meeting called upon all its units, unions, federation

to join all these struggles. These different streams of struggles must be channelized into a confluence with gigantic waves to break the barriers and confinement to release the people's energy for change. CITU must fulfill the historical mission that is bestowed on it.

For Domestic Workers

Private Members Bill in Lok Sabha

On 21 July 2017, CITU Tripura state general secretary Sankar Prasad Datta, MP introduced a Private Members Bill in Lok Sabha as "The Domestic Workers (Regulation of Work and Social Security) Bill 2017". Following is the Statement of Objects and Reasons.

STATEMENT OF OBJECTS AND REASONS

In the last few decades there has been a tremendous growth in the demand for domestic workers. Poverty has also forced people to migrate in search of work and workers, with no other *skills*, turn to domestic work. This has also led to the trafficking and other forms of exploitation of millions of women and children of both the sexes. To meet growing demand for domestic help, there has been a spurt of thousands of placement agencies providing domestic workers in metro-towns of many States who remain outside the purview of any legislative control.

Absence of any legal protection, has led to severe exploitation of women and children which includes depriving domestic workers of a decent wage and excessive working hours of work. For the live-in domestic workers, there is absence of proper food and living/sleeping space, lack of freedom of mobility, isolation, exposure to harassment and sexual exploitation by agents during transit and work.

In 2011 the domestic workers won a victory at the International Labour Conference when an overwhelming majority of member countries voted in favour of a Convention to uphold the rights of domestic workers. Convention 189 and Recommendation 201, to which the Government of India is a signatory, explains in detail how domestic workers need to be protected and awarded. Whereas the Government of India has not yet ratified Convention 189, the Government of India has included domestic workers in the Anti Harassment at the Workplace Act and some schemes like the *Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana (RSBY)*.

A few State Governments have notified minimum wages for domestic workers and included them in some welfare schemes while the State of Maharashtra has enacted a welfare Act for domestic workers. Nevertheless in the absence of a central legislation capable of reaching all domestic workers none of these State level measures will deliver justice to domestic workers.

As domestic workers are an important segment of the service sector of the Indian economy and who have a multiplier impact on the economy by enabling the women in particular to work by sharing the family burden, only a comprehensive Central Legislation specifically designed to meet the working condition of the domestic workers can ensure the end of the exploitation of these workers.

It is in the public interest that domestic work, employing, as it does, a very large number of poor and vulnerable women and whose conditions of work and living need amelioration and to whom regularity of employment must be assured, placement agencies must be regulated so that the Directive Principles of the Constitution, more particularly the relevant provisional articles 39, 41, 42, 43, and 43-A of the Constitution are given effect to by a law made by Parliament with reference to entries 22, 23 and 24 of List III in the 7th Schedule to the Constitution.

CITU Working Committee Meeting

14-16 July 2017; Shimla

CITU's first Working Committee meeting after its 15th conference, held at Shimla from on 14-16 July 2017, was attended by 26 of 36 office bearers and 81 of 125 members of the committee, including 17 women members - 6 office bearers and 11 other members; - and 3 invitees.

Reception committee chairman Rakesh Singha welcomed the members in the open session. After presidential address by K. Hemalata, Tapan Sen presented the General Secretary's report with future tasks.

47 members participated in the discussion and endorsed the formulations made in the General Secretary's report with the Future Tasks.

General Secretary Summed Up the Discussion

Summing up the discussion, general secretary Tapan Sen said that;

- The BJP government is resorting to most organised onslaught on the working class and the toiling people. The RSS is utilising the administration and putting its cadres in senior government positions and supervisory mechanisms in the name of public monitoring.
- It is not just Modi or the BJP that is resorting to such onslaughts on the working class, the people and the democratic polity. The present crisis is so acute that the capitalist class has to resort to fascistic path to protect and increase its profits and amass wealth. This must be fought comprehensively. The why and how of the economic assault must be explained to the activists and members up to lowest level and prepare them for the struggle.
- The government is also resorting to fraudulent methods to create false impressions about economic growth, employment generation etc.
- The documents, adopted by the working committee, should be taken to all state committee members. The formulations and decisions of the working committee should be reported to all CITU members up to the lowest level utilising the points of reporting being sent from the CITU centre.
- During August - October 2017, CITU should conduct independent campaign on 12 point joint charter of demands of CTUOs and 10 points of CITU which include the demands of all sections of toiling people ensuring that it reaches to all workers.
- CITU must ensure effective participation in the National Convention of the Workers on 8 August 2017 and huge participation of workers, thereafter, in all the calls given by that convention.
- CITU has to organise, at micro level, all sections of workers focussing on their immediate demands linking those to the policies of the government to expose the anti-worker, anti-people, anti-national, chauvinist and divisive character of this government.
- Special attention should be given to organise the contract workers and raise their demands. CITU's permanent workers unions must take initiative to organise the contract workers.

President's Conclusion of the Meeting

In her concluding address president Hemalata;

- Thanked the Himachal Pradesh state committee of CITU, which made excellent arrangements for the working committee meeting. The members of different CITU unions – of hotels, security, private hospitals, hydel projects, anganwadi and midday meal, construction etc; - middle class employees; activists of SFI, AIDWA etc have worked hard as volunteers and ensured that the sessions proceeded as per schedule.

- Emphasised on the effective implementation of the meeting's decisions always keeping in mind the ultimate objective CITU, as in its constitution – of ending exploitation in society, - while taking up these tasks; not merely their ritualistic implementation.
- Issues have to be linked to the policies and the politics behind these policies. These have to be exposed in the language that the common workers understand. Using complicated words and jargons does not help in taking down the message.
- It is necessary to actively involve the activists and cadres at the lowest level committees, who are directly connected with the workers and who can speak in their language and use their expressions.
- The creativity and initiative of the workers has to be unleashed. This will be possible only by ensuring democratic functioning up to the lowest level committees.
- CITU's 15th conference decided to prioritise organising workers in the private organised sector and develop national level coordination among the unions in different sectors. Efforts should be made to develop such coordination among CITU unions in textile, garment, cement, automobile, automobile ancillaries, tyres, distilleries and breweries industries; airports and of municipalities. CITU state committees should ensure their participation in the meetings as and when CITU centre decides.
- It is necessary to pay more attention and make consistent efforts to develop cadres, particularly young cadres, starting when campaigns and agitations are planned; with the conscious efforts to identify the activists, train and develop them, give them responsibilities, review their work regularly, help them to improve and promote them to the decision making bodies. It is not possible to effectively address today's challenges without such conscious efforts to develop cadres.
- The task of conducting workshops on sexual harassment should not be viewed as something related only to women. It is part of CITU's class task of uniting the working class, of attracting more women into its unions and by addressing their specific concerns. The cadres should be sensitised on the issue of sexual harassment. While both women and men need to be sensitised, it is more important to sensitise men because they are in leadership positions today.
- It is important to develop consciousness among the workers that our struggles are part of the global struggle against capital and the need to extend solidarity to workers' struggle taking place in any corner of the world. WFTU's call to observe 26 July 2017 as Cuba Solidarity Day, with the slogan '*Cuba Is Not Alone*' should be effectively observed in all state capitals, and wherever possible at district headquarters, to create awareness about imperialist interventions and machinations across the world.

Tasks for the State Committees and Federations

1. Report the understandings on various issues, formulated by the working committee, the decisions and the tasks taken up by it to all levels of the organisation up to the primary committee level by 20 August 2017;
2. Activate and involve the entire organisation, up to the lowest tier of the committees of CITU / its affiliated unions / federations in the planning, execution and review of the decisions related to independent actions of CITU as well as joint trade union activities;
3. Make serious efforts for intensive campaign and implementation of the programmes of agitation, mobilisation and action, decided by the National Joint Convention of Workers to be held on 8 August 2017;
4. Take up simultaneous extensive independent campaign and agitation in the months of August to October 2017 on the twelve point charter of demands of the joint trade union movement and the ten demands formulated by us; all state committees to plan details of the campaign aiming to reach workers beyond our membership;

5. Campaign against communal and divisive forces should form an integral part of this independent campaign of CITU;
6. Extend active solidarity to the struggles of farmers and agricultural workers at whichever level they emerge - district, subdivision, blocks etc; take initiative to hold meetings with the leadership of AIKS and AIAWU at state level to discuss and explore possibility of joint actions; extend support, in whatever possible way, physical, financial, moral etc, to the programme taken up by the joint peasant's movement – March to Parliament on 18 July; district level demonstrations on 9 August etc;
7. Take up countrywide campaign among CITU members and also among the people against the mass scale privatisation drive of the government through distribution of leaflets, pamphlets, meetings, seminars and other appropriate forms; organise militant agitation and strike in PSUs facing attack of privatisation; mobilise non-PSU workers in solidarity with the struggles of PSU workers against privatisation;
8. Conduct seminars and interactive symposiums with maximum participation of workers and other section of society at all district headquarters and lower level wherever possible on the relevance of the Great October Revolution today and the role of the working class before 7 November 2017; all state committees should hold big meetings on the topic on the culmination of centenary year of the October Revolution on 7 November 2017;
9. Identify activists of CITU in the process of independent and joint campaigns and conduct state level classes for them in September and October 2017. The classes should be meant for their ideological development;
10. Conduct workshops on sexual harassment at the state level and wherever possible at the district level, within next three months;
11. Constitute state level, and wherever possible, district level coordination committees of working women, as per guidelines of the 15th conference of CITU before the meeting of CITU General Council;
12. Take special initiative to organise migrant workers and take up their specific problems;
13. Organise meetings of young activists in our affiliated unions and take all the necessary measures to ensure their active involvement in day to day activities of the unions—including training, interactive classes aimed at their ideological and political education, promotion to decision making bodies etc; all our initiatives must aim at unleashing initiative and enthusiasm among the young workers; our leadership must also prepare themselves for this crucial task;
14. Send appropriate representatives to the national level meeting on the specific issues of the dalits, followed by a national level meeting of the leadership of our unions among the municipal workers on the next day; the quota and date of the meeting to be held in Delhi will be decided by CITU centre;
15. Conduct state level conventions on unemployment either before or after a national convention on the issue to be held before the end of 2017;
16. Strengthen our activities and develop national level coordination committees in the following sectors: a) Textiles, b) Garments, c) Cement, d) Automobiles, e) Automobile components, f) Tyres, g) Distilleries/Breweries, h) Airports, i) Railway contract workers, and j) Multi unit MNCs having units in different states, where CITU/friendly unions are there;
17. Intensify sectoral struggles, both independent and joint depending on the situation;
18. Have a conscious organisational focus on expanding CITU membership; concretely plan for expanding membership base to achieve the yearly targets decided by the 15th conference of CITU; membership drive must be a continuous initiative throughout the year along with our other activities, agitation and struggles;
19. All state committees to prioritise organising road transport workers and electricity workers by deploying necessary financial and human resources;

20. TUIs of WFTU, in which CITU and friendly federations are associated to play more active role in strengthening relations and solidarity with the other WFTU member organisations in respective TUIs in different countries and strengthening CITU's role in WFTU related responsibilities;
21. The national workshop, in the process of updating the Bhubaneswar document on organisation as decided by the 15th Conference of CITU to be organised in October 2017.

Resolution on GST

The Working Committee meeting of CITU, being held on 14-16 July 2017 at Shimla notes with serious concern the grievous impact of the GST launched by the Govt of India with much fanfare on 1st July 2017. The GST has adversely impacted the common people at large, particularly the workers in the unorganised sector, people engaged in small and decentralised manufacturing like tailoring, garments, textile, beedi, small drug manufacturing, construction, matches & fireworks and passenger & goods transport etc and also small traders. Even the insurance premium is not spared from high taxation. Normal activities in many of these sectors have been affected and/or collapsed leading to massive job losses. Tens of thousands of people, including traders and small manufacturers are coming out in spontaneous protests countrywide to voice their opposition to GST regime that threatens the viability of their occupations pushing them to virtual collapse. CITU members and cadres all over the country have joined the surging protest actions in a big way demanding relief and protection of employment.

The Working Committee of CITU notes the negative impact of the GST regime on small manufacturers, traders and the lakhs of workers employed in these establishments and fully appreciates the participation of the CITU cadres in the protests to express their anger and disapproval of the pro-corporate GST regime. The GST regime has also resulted in enormously higher burden of taxation on many essential commodities including medicines, making them costlier. It has imposed heavier burden on the mass of the people. This calls the bluff on the loud claims of the Govt that GST will result in reduction of prices. The GST regime has also subsumed the welfare related cess on non-coal mining, beedi, cine-sector etc, thereby taking away the welfare/social security related rights of the workers in concerned sector.

CITU also notes with serious concern the serious implication of the GST regime in severely undermining the federal structure of the Constitution, ultimately abrogating substantially the taxation related rights of the state governments. It makes the state governments more dependent on the central government in respect of resource generation and management. This is going to have serious adverse impact on the democratic set-up owing to greater concentration of resources and power with the central govt, promoting authoritarian trends.

CITU demands that the already heavy burden of indirect tax on the common people should not be allowed to cross the pre-GST levels. Instead, it must be lowered substantially on all essential commodities and it should be zero on all essential medicines. The cess-funded welfare benefits for the workers of beedi, mining, cine and other sectors should continue unhindered. At the same time, in the context of the post-GST impact on the people and various sectors of the economy, the GST regime warrants a thorough review and reconsideration.

The working committee of CITU calls upon the working class and CITU unions in particular to extend full solidarity to the emerging protests against the GST regime and its disastrous impact on workers and small traders/manufacturers. It calls upon all its committees to actively intervene in channelizing the anger and unrest among the people in different parts of the country into struggles against the anti-people and anti-worker and pro-corporate policies of the government.

GST, the Biggest Neoliberal Push

J. S. Majumdar

GST regime began on 1 July, 2017. Thousands of pages and large volumes, mostly government's and corporates' ads and paid news, appeared in print and electronic media on the 'great virtues' of GST. And, to take credit of it, there is a public debate between the former union finance minister Chidambaram and present finance minister Jaitley as to who fathered GST - was it UPA or NDA - Jaitley claiming Vajpayee government appointing Kelkar Committee in 2003 for rationalisation of tax structures and Chidambaram claiming his original concept of VAT to GST beginning the process in 2006.

Jaitley claimed of total unanimity of central and state governments, MPs and MLAs and political parties on GST. Critique of GST, if at all, was on being 'hasty' or on some technical ground in implementation. BJP opposed UPA government's attempt for approval by the Parliament on GST structures in 2010. BJP's opposition, at that time, was mainly on state's shares and on GSTN structure.

Jaitley's claimed-unanimity on GST emboldened BJP government to call for midnight session on 30 June – 1 July, 2017. Opposition parties, who boycotted the session, gave non-GST reasons for their not attending the session. But, this was a moment for the foreign and domestic corporates to herald a beginning with the speech of the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi '*stepping out from the old to new*' imitating the 'Tryst with Destiny' midnight speech of the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on the eve of India's Independence. So, it was stepping out from the old indirect tax to new GST regime; it is 'liberation' for the corporates breaking all 'barriers' in one-India market on the stroke of 30 June – 1 July 2017 midnight. It is time to celebrate. It symbolized the GST as the biggest neo-liberal push of Indian economy.

Big Neoliberal Drive

In a press interview on 2 July 2017, the main architect of GST, Chidambaram, now admits that "*Small, medium and micro-entrepreneurs and traders will be affected severely*"; that it "*will lead to inflation*" and that "*GST will put a heavy burden on the common man, as 80 per cent of all goods and services will bear higher taxes and prices.*" Chidambaram accuses NDA government of being hasty and for designing defective GST and its administrative structures.

But, GST is the pro-corporate biggest neoliberal push. It will result in rapid movement of informal to formal economy. Crores of mostly self-employed small traders, goods producers and service providers will have to enter into unequal one-India-market competition with their counterparts in big organised sectors, domestic and foreign. It severely weakens centre-state relation.

Already, lakhs of different sections traders have been agitating at national, state, districts and local levels across the country. It is the question of their very survival.

About 7.5 lakh self-employed medicine retailers, with their 2/3 employees each, total number being more than 20 lakhs; resorted to countrywide complete strike on 30 May 2017 protesting against government's granting permission of portal retailing of medicines by big e-marketers. It is not without reason that Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi on 24 June mainly and selectively met the top executives of consumer, IT and banking industries like Amazon, Wal-Mart, Apple, Google, Adobe, MasterCard, JPMorgan Chase, Carlyle Group and others ahead of his meeting with the US President Donald Trump. Earlier, US MNC and the world's biggest e-retailer Amazon chief Jeffrey Bezos called on Prime Minister Modi and committed \$2 billion investment in India and publicly stated, "*The pace at which Internet penetration was increasing in India was stunning and that was one of the tailwinds for the growth of e-commerce.*" Recently, the Government has permitted Amazon to enter in food retailing sector with \$5 billion investment.

Several labour intensive industries, like textiles and others in small scale sector, are on the verge of closure. Many workers, mostly in unorganised sectors, have been laid off. As GST is totally consumption-based and has no relation with production, it will affect production particularly in MSMEs and will affect employment, mostly in unorganised sector, in a big way.

Discouragement to Industrial Development and Employment

As GST is consumption-based, in one-India market under the GST structure only consumption states gets the SGST and manufacturing States are in loss. Though, compensation package has been designed for limited period, it is a discouragement to manufacturing and, thereby, employment. It is free one-India market for goods and services irrespective of manufacturing / origin including imports.

Role of Finance Commission

The 13th Finance Commission totally approved the proposed GST plan and structure at that time and the 14th Finance Commission mainly dealt with compensation package in GST plan. But, Finance Commission remains as the anchor in devolution of non-plan finances. In post-GST situation, big question remains about the future role of the Finance Commission in the distribution and allocation of IGST and CGST to States and about how to adjust GST in the 42% distribution of revenue to states as per recommendation of 14th Finance Commission.

Against Development of NE and Hill States

“Area-based excise exemptions given to the industry in the North-Eastern and hill States, including Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and Jammu and Kashmir, will shrink considerably under the GST regime,” reported *Businessline*. Period of excise duty exemption has been extended one time, only for existing industrial units under certain conditions, not for new industries. Further, ‘Exemption’ has become a misnomer for there will not be any exemption. Units have to pay the excise duty (IGST) first and then will be reimbursed later. Again it will not be full reimbursement. Such IGST will be divided in 58:42 ratio to Centre and concerned State and refund will be only on Centre’s share of 58%. Such GST regime is definitely a discouragement to industrialization and development in North East and hill States.

Huge Burden of Indirect Tax on Common People

GST mainly consists of Centre’s Excise Duty (CED) and Service Tax, and State’s Sales Tax. In one stroke the Central Government has increased its indirect taxes manifold. CED is origin-based taxation while GST is the destination-based taxation. There is huge difference on cost/price at origin and consumer’s price in destination; and, therefore, huge difference in taxation between CED to Central Government at origin and CGST at destination. For example, 6% was the CED on a medicine on cost per kg. Assuming the cost is Rs.10,000 per kg, the CED would be Rs.600. Assuming again, the same medicine, in formulation, per kg at retail level is Rs.50,000 and the GST is 12%, as fixed in the GST Rate Schedule; the GST would be Rs.6,000. Out of this, the CGST to the Central Government would be Rs.3,000 and SGST to the consumption State Government would be Rs.3,000 as against VAT. It shows that Central Government increased its tax burden on the people on the same medicine from Rs.600 to Rs.3,000, a 5 times rise.

Further, CED generally is fixed with some variations in inputs; while there is spiraling increase of GST with every increase of retail prices. Central and State Governments are happy in sharing the windfall gain.

GST has been imposed on all public services like rail, road, water transport; postal communication and on other essential services.

Structure and Role of GSTN

Collection, compilation and conclusion of all GST related data have been bestowed by the Government to a private entity as GST Network (GSTN), created in 2013, with shares of 24.5% to Central Government; 24.5% to State Governments together and 51% to five private firms. Some of these private firms are controlled to the extent of 75 percent by FIIs. Questions were raised inside and outside the Parliament about the confidentiality and security of the data collected by GSTN on trade and business, including of public sector enterprises and services, which may be easily available to others including foreign firms.

Yet, as reported by PTI on 25 November 2016 the Government admitted that there was no security clearance was obtained for the private institutions that hold stake in GST- Network.

Being a private enterprise GSTN remains outside the ambit of audit by CAG and RTI. Recently, GSTN refused to give CAG access to its network. How then CAG auditors will have access to GST data?

Attack on Social Security of the Workers

Finance Act 2016 repealed several social welfare Acts for the workers and abolished Cesses. Based on that, the Union Ministry of Finance, by their notification on 27 July 2016 directed that *“none of these Cesses is collected w.e.f. 01st April, 2016”* from industries of Mica Mines, Salt, Merchant Shipping, Textiles, Limestone and Dolomite Mines, Tobacco, Iron Ore Mines, Manganese Ore Mines and Chrome Ore Mines and Cine-workers directly affecting about 1.5 crores of the workers. Cesses for the workers' welfare in other industries have been subsumed in the GST. On the other side, the Modi government has already combined all social security Acts for the workers like ESI, EPF, CMPF, Building and Other Workers Welfare Fund etc into the proposed single 'Code on Social Security' to mop up about Rs.12 lakh crores accumulated funds for the workers, including workers' own contribution, to be managed by the 'National Council of Social Security' directly under the Prime Minister on the plea of an universal and omnibus scheme (not yet prepared).

Increase in Drug Prices

By a notification on 29 July 2013, the then UPA government (i) exempted Central Excise Duty (CED) on all formulations based on 348 drugs / combinations of drugs in the National List of Essential Medicines (NLEM) under Drugs Price Control Order (DPCO), 2013; (ii) nil CED on several other drugs and (iii) 6% CED on rest of the drugs at cost / kg.

GST Rate Schedule on pharmaceutical products, notified after GST Council meeting held on 18 May 2017, relied on Central Excise notification of an earlier date of 17 March 2012 ignoring subsequent 29 July 2013 notification. The GST Rate Schedule (i) exempted only human blood and contraceptives from GST; (ii) fixed 5% GST on all formulation as per List I of DPCO 1995; and (iii) 12% GST on rest of the medicines.

As a result the prices of essential medicines increased at least by 2.5% and there is spiraling price increase of other medicines. This 2.5% price increase of essential medicines is due to 2.5% CGST to Central Government out of 5% GST as against zero CED on all medicinal formulations of 348 drugs and drug combinations in NLEM under earlier 29 July 2013 notification based on which NPPA had fixed ceiling prices under DPCO, 2013.

Further, GST Rate Schedule in 2017 considered List I (based on 74 essential bulk drugs) of DPCO, 1995 when DPCO, 2013 has a different and much broader essential drug list as NLEM. As a result, several drugs / combination of drugs in NLEM have 12% GST. This has forced NPPA to revise upward the ceiling price of NLEM drug formulations.

In place of 2013 notification of CED from 'Exempted', 'Nil' and 6% on cost/kg, as stated above; the Central Government will earn 6% CGST on ultimate retail price on almost all medicines with exception of human blood and contraceptives; and 2.5% on retail price of all earlier exempted list of essential drugs.

CITU's All India Protest Day

29 June, 2017

West Bengal

All India Protest Day was observed on 3 point demands, by organising district, sub-division and block level programmes in all the districts on 29 June in a befitting manner. A central rally was held in Kolkata despite heavy rains.

Tripura

Protest Day on 29 June was observed in a befitting manner. Despite heavy rain, in hundreds and thousands people took to the streets protesting against the anti-people policies of Modi government by shutting in the public distribution system, withdrawing distribution of sugar and kerosene in PDS, downsizing MNREGA and other social security schemes.

Rallies, led by CITU leaders, were brought out in all sub-divisions at 40 centres culminating into public meetings in street corners joined by about 15,000 people. In the state capital Agartala, the procession, led by CITU state general secretary Sankar Prasad Datta, MP, started from Rabindra Satabarshiki Bhavan and ended at old Motor Stand.

Tamilnadu

Tamilnadu state committee observed the day by holding protest demonstrations in all district headquarters also demanding extension of MNREGA to all town panchayats and ensuring 200 days work in a year; to stop privatisation of PDS; to effectively implement labour welfare schemes. All district committees staged demonstrations, except Kancheepuram and Villupuram North. Around 2887 workers participated. About 5000 posters were pasted and 65,000 handbills were distributed.

Punjab

Protest Day was observed in Punjab and Chandigarh by holding rallies, dharnas, demonstrations and *Chakka Jam* at more than 50 places. Despite heavy rain, industrial, MNREGA, construction, transport, village chawkidars, scheme, forest and contract workers of various government and semi-government departments took part in this protest in good number.

Contact workers of Punjab Roadways PUN BUS observed 2 hours strike and at several places road traffic was also blocked. At Garhshanker, MNREGA workers halted trains for over an hour.

Andaman and Nicobar Islands

All India Protest Day, the state committee staged mass dharna and public meeting at Port Blair and Diglipur demanding Rs.18,000 as minimum wage, restoration of sugar and kerosene to through PDS, and for protection of social security schemes.

At Port Blair, the mass dharna and public meeting were held at Tiranga Park joined by large number of workers. At Diglipur, mass dharna, procession and public meeting were organized.

Defence

Employees Relay Hunger Strike



CITU Secretary Swadesh Dev Roye and AIKS General Secretary Hannan Mollah addressing the participants on the 15th and 16th day of relay hunger strike of defence employees at Jantar Mantar

Against privatisation of defence establishments and outsourcing of defence production and against NPS etc, defence employees, under all India federation AIDEF, are on their 45-days planned relay hunger strike before the parliament at Jantar Mantar since 3 July. Several members of the parliament including P. Karunakaran and Sreemathi Teacher of CPI(M), visited the relay hunger strike place and assured to raise the issues in the monsoon session of the parliament. Leaders of CITU, AITUC, HMS and of trade unions in railways, insurance, telecom, central government employees confederation also extended their support.

Greeting AIDEF and 163 participants, coming from RFI, MSF and GSF establishments at Dum Dum and DGQA units in West Bengal, in the 15th day of the relay hunger strike; CITU national secretary and WFTU dy. general secretary Swadesh Dev Roye informed about CITU Shimla working committee's 14-16 July meeting's firm resolve to oppose privatisation of and outsourcing in CPSUs including in defence establishments and to extend all support to the demands and movement of AIDEF. He called upon all unions in defence PSUs to join hands with AIDEF to fight against these issues. These issues will be part of CTUOs 8 August joint convention declaration and in the agenda of WFTU secretariat meeting in Athens, he said.

On the 16th day of hunger strike, AIKS general secretary Hannan Mollah, former MP, addressing the participants, coming from Tamilnadu, criticized the BJP government for compromising with national security by privatizing and outsourcing in defence.

On 18 July, on invitation, a AIDEF delegation with its president, general secretary and additional general secretary had elaborate discussion with the defence secretary, criticized the defence ministry and department of defence production for taking arbitrary decision, without discussion with the trade unions, to outsource 143 plus 39 products; raised the other long pending demands of the civilian defence employees; and submitted memorandum. The defence secretary assured discussion on the issues within the government and further discussion with AIDEF. However, AIDEF decided to continue with their 45-days planned relay hunger strike unless there is written commitment on further discussion from the government.

In the Parliament

Outsourcing, Privatisation of Defence production is Antinational Act of Modi Government

19 July:

Raising the issue of privatisation and outsourcing in defence production during zero hour in Rajya Sabha on 19 July, CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, MP accused Modi government of destroying country's defence production capability while mouthing 'nationalism'.

Despite, admittedly, 75% of defence requirements being produced indigenously, the government decided to outsource 182 out of total 273 products which are currently being produced by the country's ordnance factories. Already 200 licenses have been issued to private players. This will make at least 7 ordnance factories totally and 14 others 50% capacity redundant.

On the other hand, outsourced defence production by the domestic corporates with foreign joint ventures has no provision of 'transfer of technology' despite the fact that Defence Procurement Policy underlined to get the 'cutting edge technology'.

It has been announced that all fighter aircrafts would be assembled in India by Tata in collaboration with Lockheed Martin. Similarly, the Reliance and Dassault Aviation are making aircrafts. "*They are doing only assembling part, there is no technology transfer,*" Tapan Sen said. "*The BEML, which is a moral to Defence PSUs, is being targeted for outright privatisation.*"

"Destroying our ordnance factories and destroying our defence PSUs is thoroughly anti-national," he said.

20 July

In prime minister Narendra Modi's presence in Rajya Sabha today, replying to a question on H1B Visa by USA, External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj claimed that PM's recent visit to USA and Israel was for promoting self-reliance in defence production.

Through a supplementary, Tapan Sen said that he totally disagreed with this claim. On the contrary, the Modi government is destroying country's defence production capability.

In the Parliament

Government's False Claim on H1B Visa; Huge Jobloss in IT Sector in India

20 July

Replying to the same question on H1B Visa in Rajya Sabha, Sushma Swaraj claimed that Modi – Trump joint statement addressed the concern of India in respect of H1B Visa without mentioning the same.

Countering this claim, Tapan Sen said that the ground realities in India are different. In IT sector, be they foreign entity having business in India or Indian entity having business in USA, all assured increased employment in USA and resorted to huge job cuts in India.

Banking

Oppose the Draconian FRDI Bill, 2017

C P Krishnan

Dangerous Provisions of FRDI Bill, 2017

The union cabinet on 14 June, 2017 approved the 'Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill, 2017' to be introduced in the parliament.

Under FRDI, a 'Resolution Corporation' would be established. The Board of the Corporation will have the chairperson, one member each from the finance ministry, RBI, SEBI, IRDA, PFRDA, and 3 full time and 2 independent members to be nominated by the government.

The Board will have sweeping powers to order amalgamation, merger, liquidation and acquisition of any bank including the SBI and other nationalised banks, regional rural banks, co-operative banks and payment banks; and any insurance company including the LIC and other nationalised general insurance companies; if in its opinion and judgement the concerned institution has 'imminent' or 'critical' risk of viability. The Corporation can hand over any such institution to another entity, public or private; order discontinuation of service of the employees, transfer of their employment or reduction of their remuneration in case of decision for amalgamation, merger, transfer of ownership or liquidation. FRDI envisages closure of the 'Deposit Insurance and Credit Guarantee Corporation', established in 1961, which, so far, remained the insurance cover for the savings of the depositors.

This is the most dangerous attack on the public sector financial institutions. The draconian nature of the Bill will have deep negative impact on the safety and security of the people's deposits and the job security of the employees. The public sector financial institutions were created to serve the ordinary masses, the marginalised and under-privileged sections of the people, and not for earning huge profit at the cost of ordinary masses.

No Intension to recover NPAs

88.4% of the total Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) is the creation of large borrowers of Rs 5 crores and above. 12 large borrowers constitute 25% of the NPAs.

According to the *Economic Times* of 26 June, 2017, RBI told banks to set aside at least 50% of the loan amounts as likely losses for all cases to be referred to the insolvency process; and 100% for those cases that do not get resolved in the initial mandatory period for loan restructuring. It is now clear as to how 'efficiently' the 'Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), 2016' would be utilised. If banks have to make 50% or 100% provision, then what is the use of this law?

The present BJP government has intention to recover the NPAs from the corporates. Hence it attempts to show the performance of the PSBs in poor light and then liquidate them through the new FRDI Bill.

Regional Rural Banks

56 RRBs in 600 districts with around 23,000 branches have been rendering excellent service to the rural people by lending almost 80% of their total advances to the poor and marginalised. Further, there is a demand from the unions to strengthen RRBs by providing adequate man power and improving their infrastructure. Despite poor support from the government, only four RRBs incurred loss. But, that may be cited, as an excuse for the government, to wind them up.

Cooperative Institutions

The co-operative institutions which have been extending real service to the common man, have been weakened, to some extent, as 370 central co-operative banks with around 14,000 branches and 93,000 primary agriculture co-operative societies were kept away from the note-exchange exercise during demonetisation period. In addition, the losses incurred by these institutions due to farm loan waivers, announced by the several and successive state governments were not fully reimbursed by them. This has further weakened their financial stability. Further, these institutions, which were exempted from payment of income tax, are forced to pay the same through a change of law made about a decade ago.

Due to these faulty policies, some of the co-operative institutions suffer losses for some period. The same may be attributed as their inefficiency and quoted as the reason for liquidating them.

Encouragement for Private Banks

This is yet another deliberate attempt to serve the corporates by encouraging more and more private banks in the name of small banks or payment banks and universal banks and keeping our country's door wide open for foreign banks.

Attack on Insurance Sector

Despite stiff competition posed by the private insurers, the public sector LIC stands number one in terms of market share and service in the life insurance sector with no competitor anywhere near the LIC. The four public sector non-life insurance companies continue their dominant position with regard to market share and service to the common man in spite of unethical competition by the private insurance companies imposed due to the defective policy of the government. There cannot be any reason for their closure, even remotely.

Oppose the Bill

This move of the central government on FRDI Bill deserves strong condemnation from all quarters. It is incumbent on the part of all the central trade unions, sector-wise unions and democratic forces to resist the move of the government to close down public sector financial institutions and defeat the same. All the patriotic minded MPs should oppose when the Bill is introduced in the parliament.

Bank Employees, Officers Struggle

Against the so-called banking sector reforms, particularly against this FRDI Bill, 10 lakh bank employees and officers under the banner of United Forum of Bank Unions (UFBU) will observe a day's strike on 22 August; stage a massive 1 lakh strong dharna before the parliament on 15 September; and resort to 2 days' country-wide strike in October / November 2017.

Rush Relief to Flood Victims in Assam

CITU Working Committee meeting, held in Shimla on 14-16 July, gave call to all its state committees, federations and unions to immediately send financial contribution for relief to the victims of devastating flood in Assam in which about 12 lakh people in 1795 villages in 24 districts are reeling; over 60 persons lost their lives; over 66,516 hectares of agricultural land is affected. CITU Assam state committee is fully engaged in relief work among the affected people.

Send contribution to:

Assam State Committee CITU; Account number – 0303010014036; IFSC – UTBIOLU319; United Bank of India; Branch: Ulubari; Guwahati – 781007

Three Years of Modi Government

These three years have been marked by a total betrayal of the electoral promises made by this government to the people of our country. Instead of the promised “*aache din*”, people’s miseries have been mounting and their hardships growing.

Galloping Unemployment

The youth were promised the creation of two crore jobs every year, instead what we see is the job growth in the industrial sector is the lowest in the last eight years. As far as rural employment is concerned, the government itself has admitted that every one of these three years it has refused to release sums of Rs. 20,000 crore plus under the MNREGA i.e. they are denying wages for those poor people who are already suffering. In the IT sector, the international agency Mckinsey has projected that nearly 50 to 60 per cent of the current 40 lakh employees will turn redundant by the end of this year. Infosys, Wipro and Cognizant are reportedly considering the retrenchment of 60,000 workers. Infrastructural giants like L&T and others have already downsized their workforce considerably.

So far from generating additional employment of 2 crores per annum, this government’s policies are leading to an economic slowdown and rendering even those employed earlier into the ranks of the unemployed.

Rural India

BJP and PM Modi had promised that the kisans of our country would be provided a new deal under their government. They were promised an MSP that would be one and half times the cost of inputs as measured by the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices. This has not been done. As a result of its other policies like reducing the import duties on agricultural products, our farmers are increasingly finding their harvests not being able to meet both their own family’s needs and to service their debt. Succumbing to the debt burden the peasants’ suicides in the country are alarmingly rising. The government has itself admitted to the apex court that in each of the last three years 12,000 plus farmers have committed distress suicides due to debt burden, i.e. more than 36,000 during these three years.

This government instead of providing relief to the farmers through loan waivers is considering providing relief to the rich corporates who have looted our nationalised banks by taking loans and not returning them. While a poor peasant is penalised with property and cattle attached, the rich corporates go away scot free. Under these circumstances of an economic slowdown, growing unemployment, rising prices and agrarian distress, there is no cause for celebration.

The Polit Bureau of the CPI(M) condemns the government pressurising the Public Sector Units and undertakings to conduct the celebration campaign of the completion of three years of the Modi government, from their resources. The oil PSUs have been asked to cough up huge amounts of money for the construction of the Prime Minister’s pet project of a giant statue of Sardar Patel. This is a gross misappropriation of public resources for personal aggrandisement and represents corruption of the highest order.

Platform for Popular Struggles

The Polit Bureau heard reports on the proposed platform of various mass and class organisations of the Left parties and progressive secular people’s movements organisations to hold a national level convention in the near future and to launch massive people’s protest programmes against the all-round mounting of economic burdens and miseries on large sections of our people by this government’s policies.

Attacks on Media

All institutions of parliamentary democracy are coming under attack under this BJP-led NDA government. This is a dangerous authoritarian trend that is growing.

Among these attacks is the attacks on the media which seek to prevent the media from discharging its responsibility effectively. Freedom is an inviolable principle of our democracy. The law must prevail but harassment of media houses is not acceptable.

(From: *Communiqué of the Polit Bureau of CPI(M); 7 June, 2017*)

Surging Kisan Movement

Kisan Mukti Jatha and Rally



CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury addressing the rally

Beginning on 6 July from Mandsaur in Madhya Pradesh, where 6 peasants became martyrs in BJP government's police firing on 6 June, 2017; a 'Kisan Mukti Jatha' travelled through 6 states of Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh and, on reaching New Delhi, joined a 162 organisations' All India Peasants Struggle Coordination Committee, including AIKS and others in Bhumi adhikar Andolan, massive Peasants, Agricultural workers, Adivasi, Dalit joint 'Kisan Sangsad' rally at Jantar Mantar on 18 July mainly demanding legislation for cost plus 50% as MSP, comprehensive loan wavers and for other demands. The rally had 40 children of peasants of Maharashtra who committed suicide under debt burden.

Those who addressed the rally include CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, MP, AIKS general secretary Hanna Mollah, CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, MP, CITU Tripura state general secretary Sankar Datta, MP, Kisan coordination committee convener V. M. Singh, Medha Patkar, CPI(M) MPs Jitendra Choudhury (Adivasi Adhikar Rastriya Manch convener), Md. Salim, P. Karunakaran, M. B. Ragesh, JD(U) leader Sharad Yadav, Yogendra Yadav and others.

Odisha

CITU Solidarity with Bhumi Adhikar Andolan



Thousands of peasants and agricultural workers of their different organisations, supported by CITU and other mass organisations, staged a state level dharna in Bhubaneswar on 18 July under the banner of Bhumi Adhikar Aandolan, Odisha (BAA) in protest against the anti-farmers policies of central and Odisha state governments and the police repression killing farmers in Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. A delegation met the Governor and submitted memorandum on 10 point demands including cost plus 50% as MSP; Rs.3000 / quintal paddy MSP in Odisha; comprehensive loan

wavers; MNREGA wage and work; social security, withdrawal of central government's notification on cattle sale; repeal of 'Odisha Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement (LARR) Rules, 2016'; return of occupied land by IDCO for POSCO etc.

The meeting was addressed by leaders of BAA and other mass organisations including CITU state president Lambodar Nayak. (*Inputs: Narendra Mohanty*)

Workers-Peasants Unity Move

All India conference of Bhumi Adhikar Andolan (BAA), held at Ranchi on 29-30 June, 2017, decided a 12 point Plan of Action to carry forward countrywide peasants' protracted struggle. As was resolved to seek support of the central trade unions, BAA wrote to CITU general secretary on 13 July requesting for building united resistance of the peasants, workers and the people.

WFTU Call on Cuba Solidarity Day

CITU Shimla working committee meeting called upon its state committees to organise at state centre, and wherever possible in districts, well-attended meetings to observe Cuba solidarity Day on 26 July, 2017 with slogan 'Cuba Is Not Alone' demanding - i% Immediate end of the imperialist blockades against Cuba i% unconditional return of the Guantanamo territory to Cuba – and exposing the imperialist military interventions and machinations in different countries and the Modi led BJP government's shift in the foreign policy in its eagerness to become a junior strategic partner of US imperialism.

Robotisation

Robot Lawyer

The "world's first robot lawyer" – which has so far overturned parking tickets worth \$10 million in the UK and the US – can now help people tackle legal disputes regarding landlords, credit card fraud and harassment at work free of cost. The online tool, developed by 20-year-old British student Joshua Browder at Stanford University in the US, has been upgraded to fight legal disputes in 1,000 different areas. These include fighting landlords over security deposits and house repairs, and helping people report fraud to their credit card agency. To get robot advice, users need to type their problem into the DoNotPay website, which directs them to a chat bot that can solve their legal issue. It can draft letters and offer advice on problems from credit card fraud to airline compensation. The Telegraph reported. It can also understand complex disputes such as employment right and offer a range of suggestions. DoNotPay had negated more than 375,000 tickets worth around \$10 million in the UK New York and Seattle.

Robots at Airport

Robots will start roaming South Korea's largest airport this summer, helping travellers find their boarding gates and keep its floors clean as the country prepares for its first Winter Olympics game. Starting this month, Troika, a self-driving robot made by LG Electronics, will rove the Incheon International Airport, telling travelers how long it takes to get to boarding gates and escorting them to their flights. A jumbo cleaning robot will help cleaning staff swab the wide expanses of floors in the airport west of Seoul. Troika, about the size of a young teen, is equipped with a rectangular display on its front that looks like a giant smartphone screen and can show flight information, an airport map and weather data. Its partly rounded head has a flat touchscreen face that displays blinking or smiling eyes or information. The guiding bot responds to its name. Travellers can insert their tickets into its scanner to get flight information and Troika will then ask if they want to be escorted to their gates, warning laggards to "please stay closer so I can see you,"

(From: The World of Artificial Intelligence')

STATES

Activities Report

Struggle on Common Demands



Mahadharna in East Godavari district

As culmination of CITU's month-long statewide massive campaign, *Chalo Collectorate* programme was held successfully in all the 16 districts headquarters on 3 July with participation of 90,000 plus workers of 282 unions in 11 sectors coming from 563 mandals. *Maha-Dharnas* were staged in front of the collectorates. Memoranda, with about 2.8 lakh mass signatures of the workers, demanding revision of minimum wages, pending since 5'6 years; equal wage for equal work; effective implementation of labour laws and against their unilateral change; for scheme workers wages, social security, recognition as workers and against schemes' privatisation; against diverting construction workers welfare fund; for social security for

unorganised sector workers; and on transport and home-based workers demands were submitted to the collectors. Participating workers in 3 districts were arrested.

For campaign preparation, 16 district-level workshops were held followed by holding meetings in 247 mandals, 72 towns, 41 clusters, 17 zones and of sector committees and 503 local unions' general bodies. 16 districts organised round table meetings in 86 centres.

1,312 teams campaigned in 389 mandals, 91 towns, 73 clusters, 4 to 12 state sectors in each district and in 138 local unions. 14 districts committees brought out jeep jathas for 3 to 15 day each covering 471 mandals, 89 towns and 47 clusters. 15 districts committees staged relay hunger strike for 1 to 6 days in 169 centres. 9 district committees brought out rallies in 34 centres. During the campaign, over 16.55 lakh pamphlets of state committee, sectoral organisations and of local unions; and more than a lakh state committee booklet were distributed. During the campaign, new contacts were established in 44 new sectors in different districts.

Municipal Workers Struggle

4 regional directors' offices were gheraoed by municipal workers opposing works' contracts in place of workers' contracts on 13 June. Agitating workers resorted to *rastra roko* in Guntur bringing the traffic to a grinding halt. Rallies were held in Guntur and Rajahmundry. On 14 June dharnas were staged at 7 municipal corporation offices with participation of 5000 workers.

In Nellore, 4 days strike on 16-19 June opposing the tender process for works contracts. 50 workers were injured, including women, due to police lathi charge. Ultimately, negotiation was administration held discussion with the union leaders and the tender process was stalled for the time being. All opposition political parties supported the strike. In Tenali in Guntur district, workers were on 2 day strike picketing the municipal office for 8 hours. 120 workers were arrested. In Srikakulam, dharna was held at the residence of ruling party TDP MLA. In a municipality of Vizianagaram district, strike was held for 3 days opposing tenders.

Subsequently, the municipal workers unions joint action committee has served 3 days strike notice on 11-13 July demanding scrapping of tenders for works contracts and implementation of 151 GO regarding wages.

Workers went 5 days strike when a local municipal administration tried to cut the wages of the workers, who refused to attend a government held programme. The management has withdrawn the proposal. In Srikakulam, 70 engineering workers resigned from BMS and joined CITU. In that corporation, workers went on 2 days strike when the administration removed two workers from service. The strike was withdrawn after

the removed workers were taken back. When the commissioner imposed 25 unilateral conditions on the workers, workers went on strike again on 6 July.

Midday Meal Workers Struggle

Protesting against government's order (GO) to establish centralized kitchens, mid day meal workers submitted memoranda; burnt GO copies; distributed pamphlets to the workers and beneficiaries; and staged dharnas before the collectors on 19 June joined by 4,490 workers from 254 mandals. In Vizianagaram district, union minister Ashok Gajapathi Raju's residence was picketed. Police resorted to lathi charge and arrested 200 workers. Two workers received severe head injuries.

SSA Workers Struggle

2,500 contract and outsourced employees, out of total 25,000 employees of Sarva Siksha Abhiyan (SSA), joined *Chalo Vijayawada* programme on 7 July demanding regular payment of wages, wage increase, job security, maternity leave and annual renewal of contract, etc. Big procession was held and a dharna was staged. Ultimately, government conveyed message at dharna place on payment of wages.

Uttarakhand

Mid Day Meal Workers Burnt Ministers' Effigies

CITU affiliated Uttarakhand Bhojan Mata Kamgar Union of mid day meal workers brought out processions, staged demonstrations and burnt the effigies of the chief minister and education minister in different parts of the state on 20 July in protest against education minister's declaration to close smaller schools, resulting in jobloss of mid day meal workers, and against the government not responding to the long pending demands of the union.

In Dehradun, the union brought out procession from CITU office and through Indra market reached to Lansdown Crossing where it converted into a rally and burnt effigies. The rally was addressed by CITU district secretary Lekhraj and union's district secretary Monica. Union members staged demonstration, held rally and burnt effigies in Doivala block. The rally was addressed by unions block president Vimala Kaushal, CITU state working president Birendra Bhandari and others. In Rishikesh, the union submitted memorandum to the SDM.

Karnataka

Activities Report

Municipal Contract Workers Struggle: 45,000 contract workers of 12 municipal corporations, 260 municipalities and town panchayats were on statewide joint strike on 12 June. The government agreed to regularise 11,000 contract workers retrospectively from 1 April, 2017 and assured to regularise the rest of the workers in phased manner. Minimum wages of contract workers in corporations is increased to Rs.15,200 per month.

Gram Panchayat Workers Struggle: The government notified minimum wages for the workers in local bodies and gram panchayats without budgetary support. Demanding state budgetary support for 56,000 gram panchayat workers in 6022 gram panchayats in the state and demanding repeal of government's notification enhancing educational qualification for promotion, CITU union staged 26 days relay dharna and decided 'March to Assembly'. Finally, the government invited the leaders for discussion which is in progress.

Mid Day Meal Workers Struggle: Demanding wage increase, opposing privatisation of the scheme and proposed centralised kitchen; mid day meal workers staged statewide district level demonstration on 25 May; and demonstration in front of central ministers and MPs residences to protest against central government's circular directing the states to establish centralised kitchens. The union was also preparing for Vidhana Soudha march on 13 June. However, the government held meeting with the union and issued order not to establish centralised kitchens and agreed to enhance existing wages by Rs.200.

Beedi workers Struggles: CITU union staged demonstration against the state government's notifications exempting employers from paying VDA under minimum wage notifications and filed a writ in Karnataka high court. The high court struck down the notification. Now the unions are fighting for recovery of dur VDAs since 1 April 2015 as per the notifications.

Construction workers Conference: After 16 district conferences, state conference of construction workers union was held in Kundapura in Udupi district on 2-3 July attended by 230 delegates from 23 districts. All India federation, CFWI president Singaravelu and general secretary Debanjan Chakraborty participated and guided the conference. The conference elected 13 office bearers and 39 state committee members with Veeraswamy as president and Mahantesh as general secretary.

Transport Workers: •Auto rickshaw drivers held demonstration on 17 June following which the transport minister held meeting with CITU union on the demands of housing, reduction of RTO fees, enhancing subsidy to Rs. 50,000 for changing old 2 stroke autos to 4 stroke autos. •CITU union in BMTC and KSRTC staged repeated demonstration demanding to hold secret ballot for negotiation status and for other demands. •60 members from 6 districts participated in a state level workshop of transport workers on April 18-19 June in Bangalore guided by AIRTWF general secretary K. K. Divakaran.

Others: •Demonstrations were held in front of all head offices of 5 electricity supply companies in the state. On 3 July discussion was held with the MDs of the electricity companies. • In the elections in BOSCH, in one unit CITU-led team has won.

Tamilnadu

Activities Report



Protest against Sale of Kamarajar Port to Adanis

Massive demonstrations were held in Kamarajar Port premises in Ennore on 22 and 29 June against the proposed sale of this profit earning port to Adanis by Modi government.

This port started with Rs.4,800 crore and by acquiring around 3,000 acres of land of the poor farmers.

This port handles export of 3 lakh cars and 250 lakhs tonnes of coal annually, which amounts to 19% of the total exports by all ports in India. It earned a profit of Rs.353 crore in 2015 and Rs.450 crore in 2016. The government invested Rs.8,000 crores recently for its infrastructural expansion and the work is in progress. A campaign among the people in the nearby villages was conducted by CITU district committee.



Fishermen's Agitation

Tamilnadu Fishermen Unions Coordination Committee staged demonstration to protest against the state government's draconian bill which proposes to prohibit the fishermen from going beyond 3 nautical miles; demanding separate Act for the fishing and the fishing boats separately for the state; against imposition of rules of commercial boats act on the native boats; and not to pressurise the fishermen to purchase the boats and the nets from the MNCs.

Earlier, demanding to stall Enayam Harbour, for inclusion in ST category, pension, housing, to secure jobs of Hogenekal Colacel workers, a delegation met the state minister of finance and fisheries on 27 June and submitted memorandum.

Municipal Corporation Workers' Struggle: More than 4000 workers of Chennai Municipal Corporation staged a 48 hours sit-in-dharna inside the corporation office premises nearly demanding regularisation of their job. CITU leadership helped and guided the agitation. The management settled the demands after the negotiations.

The workers of Tirupur Municipal Corporation has been staging sit-in-dharna inside the corporation office premises since 20 June demanding regularisation and payment of wages. 56 workers were arrested by the police on 27 June. A delegation met the local administration minister and the finance secretary on 28 June.

Campaign against Sexual Harassment: Responding to CITU's call, its Tamilnadu state committee initiated a massive signature campaign along with AIDWA, FMRAI, TNGEA, AIIEA, BEFI & BSNLEU. South Chennai, Pudukkottai and North Chennai committees have campaigned among the public and collected signatures in the crowded areas like market, railway station and other busy areas. A campaign meeting was conducted by North Chennai committee on 27 June. South Chennai committee has collected 22000 signatures and submitted to the same to the collector.

Bihar

Centenary Celebration of Great October Revolution

On the occasion centenary celebration of Great October Revolution, Bihar state committee of CITU organised a workers –peasants convention at Patna on 9 July attended CITU unions members, leading functionaries of state government employees organisations and of AIKS and AIAWU and others. Addressing the convention, the main speaker CITU general secretary Tapan Sen highlighted the historical evolution of and the important role played by the workers and the peasants in the October Revolution. He also dealt with today's situation of the workers and the peasants in the country; the burning issues of the toiling and repressed masses and the communal agenda of the communal and divisive forces serving the purpose of the corporates.

CITU national secretary A R Sindhu, state Kisan Sabha general secretary Vinode Jha and AIAWU state president Devendra Chourasia also addressed the convention. CITU state president Deepak Bhattacharya presided.

The convention adopted resolution demanding to stop pro-employers labour laws amendments, MSP and loan wavers for the peasants and action against the communal and divisive forces.

Haryana

Activities Report

MESL Workers Struggle: Against deregistration of their union and dismissal of the leaders in a MSEL plant in Gurgaon, 496 contract workers are on indefinite relay hunger strike and dharna in front of the factory gate since 24 April. They joined CITU on 7 May. Three times conciliation meetings failed due to adamant attitude of the management. On 20 June *Naya Panchayat* was held.

In their support, all other CITU unions in Gurgaon staged demonstration at different locations from 23 to 28 May joined by about 700 workers. 24 hours fasting took place on 29-30 June.

Construction Workers Statewide Agitation



Under the banner of Bhavan Nirman Kamgar Union (CITU), thousands of construction workers staged demonstration in district headquarters during 15 – 20 June. The workers were agitated particularly against stoppage of off line registration; welfare benefits not being available in time; absence of commonality in districts etc. In 3 districts of Fatehabad, Mahendragarh and Bhiwani, the workers continued 10 days long padav forcing the district administration to agree to their demands. 30,000 handbills were distributed during campaign and large number workers meetings were held for preparation of the agitation.

As a result of the agitation the state labour secretary had meeting with the union's delegation and agreed on most of the just demands particularly on offline registration, timely availability of benefits and commonality in all districts. However, in Bhiwani district, demanding appointment of officers for registration and on other demands, the padav was continuing.

Ison Workers Struggle: When the workers attempted to form a union, the management of Ison factory in Rohtak removed 20 workers from jobs and demanded undertaking from the rest of the workers before allowing them to enter the factory. In protest, about 700 workers of the factory staged day-night indefinite dharna in front factory gate since 3 May under open sun as the district administration refused did not allow to put up any tent.

On 31 May, police resorted to brutal lathi charge at the dharna place and arrested 425 workers and members of other unions and mass organisation including 35 women and sent them to jail under different sections. The jailed workers include CITU state committee member Vinode, DYFI state secretary Sandip Kumar and AIDWA district secretary Anju. Vinode was specially targeted and was seriously injured in police lathi charge.

CITU and Sarb Karamchari Sangh of government and semi-government employees jointly staged demonstrations before the district administration throughout the state on 7 May. A joint demonstration was staged in front of factory gate on 24 May. Joint demonstrations were staged in front of deputy commissioners' offices on 1 June and protest letters were sent to the chief minister on 2 June from all districts. Joint demonstrations were staged in all districts including Rohtak on 7 June. Pressure on district administration resulted in release of workers from jail. Still the workers are on indefinite dharna at about 400 mtrs away from factory gate under court's order.

Brick Kiln Workers Struggle: Wage settlement took place in Hissar and Feteahbad district. On charter of demands the workers were in agitation in Bhiwani and Jhind districts. After discussion, settlement was arrived at for entire district in Bhiwani. In Jhind, workers were on indefinite strike from 12 April involving 36 brick kilns. During this movement, the brick kiln owners with hired goondas attacked CITU office on 20 April against which demonstration was staged and FIR was filed. Yet, the owners and goondas attacked CITU leader Ramesh and others at Nagura village bus stand on 24 April when they were campaigning in jatha for 25 April demonstration in support of the continuing strike. In protest against this attack, about 1500 workers staged militant demonstration in front of Jhind district deputy commissioner's office on the very next day.

Punjab

Agitation in Hero Cycle against Victimisation



Lal Jhanda Hero Cycle Mazdoor Union held workers general meeting in front of the factory gate in Ludhiana on 29 June. The meeting decided to intensify their agitation against retrenchment of 312 workers. The meeting was addressed by CITU state vice president Jatinderpal Singh and other CITU leaders. Later, hundreds of workers staged dharna in front of the factory gate.

Martyrdom Day of Shaheed Parampal Singh

On 8 July, Swaraj Mazda Workers Union observed 30th martyrdom day of Shaheed Parampal Singh who laid down his life in the prime of his youth while mobilizing the workers of Swaraj Mazda Ltd at Ason to form a union with affiliation to CITU. He was subjected to mental and physical torture by the management. Resisting all kinds of torture and pressure Parampal Singh sacrificed his life but did not surrender. His sacrifice encouraged other workers to organize the union. It was his sacrifice that the Swaraj Mazda Workers Union got registered and affiliated to CITU in July 1987.

On this occasion, CITU state general secretary Raghunath Singh and its district leaders, Swaraj Mazda Contract Drivers Workers Union general secretary Tarlochan Singh and Shaheed Parampal Singh's family members paid homage. His sister hoisted CITU flag at the factory gate. The president of the Swaraj Mazda Workers Union Gurgent Singh presided.



MNREGA Workers Agitation for Work & Dues



Under the banner of CITU affiliated MNREGA Workers Union, hundreds of MNREGA workers staged dharna in front of block development officers at Sudhar in Ludhiana district on 25 July demanding payment of dues, 100 days work or unemployment allowance under the MNREGA Act.

**CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS (GENERAL) FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS
(BASE 2001=100)**

State	Centre	May 2017	June 2017	State	Centre	May 2017	June 2017	
AP	GUNTUR	273	272	MHR	MUMBAI	285	287	
	VIJAYWADA	271	272		NAGPUR	306	308	
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	274	274		NASIK	287	291	
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	256	258		PUNE	273	272	
	GUWAHATI	243	245		SHOLAPUR	288	290	
	LABAC SILCHAR	255	257	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	294	294	
	MARIANI JORHAT	241	241		ROURKELA	289	288	
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	240	240	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	295	295	
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	292	293	PUN	AMRITSAR	278	275	
CHD	CHANDIGARH	275	275		JALANDHAR	276	275	
CHS	BHILAI	304	305		LUDHIANA	273	270	
DLI	DELHI	251	252	RJN	AJMER	257	256	
GOA	GOA	294	295		BHILWARA	271	271	
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	259	262		JAIPUR	263	264	
	BHAVNAGAR	261	261	TN	CHENNAI	256	258	
	RAJKOT	264	264		COIMBATORE	260	263	
	SURAT	253	253		COONOR	278	282	
	VADODARA	256	257		MADURAI	268	273	
HRY	FARIDABAD	252	257		SALEM	263	269	
	YAMUNANAGAR	271	271		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	286	285	
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	248	247	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	291	292	
J&K	SRINAGAR	257	260		HYDERABAD	241	242	
JRK	BOKARO	269	272		WARRANGAL	283	285	
	GIRIDIH	296	298	TRP	TRIPURA	249	253	
	JAMSHEDPUR	319	320	UP	AGRA	297	296	
	JHARIA	301	302		GHAZIABAD	271	270	
	KODARMA	313	317		KANPUR	283	282	
	RANCHI HATIA	307	310		LUCKNOW	271	270	
KNT	BELGAUM	284	289		VARANASI	273	271	
	BENGLURU	284	284	WB	ASANSOL	300	302	
	HUBLI DHARWAR	294	296		DARJEELING	258	258	
	MERCARA	295	294		DURGAPUR	299	301	
	MYSORE	291	295		HALDIA	307	306	
KRL	ERNAKULAM	282	286		HOWRAH	262	265	
	MUNDAKKAYAM	298	299		JALPAIGURI	265	265	
	QUILON	317	316		KOLKATA	262	264	
MP	BHOPAL	269	269		RANIGANJ	248	245	
	CHHINDWARA	279	278		SILIGURI	252	253	
	INDORE	252	254					
	JABALPUR	275	275					
						ALL INDIA INDEX	277	278

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