



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU



**CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS**

**GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING**

23-26 March 2018, Kozhikkode, Kerala



**Leading the March**



**Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan addressing  
The Huge Workers Rally at Calicut Sea Beach**



# CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

## GENERAL COUNCIL MEETING

23-26 March 2018, Kozhikkode, Kerala



General Secretary Tapan Sen placing Report;  
(Right) Chairman, Reception Committee E. Karim welcoming G.C. members;  
(Left) K. Hemalata delivering Presidential Address

## Historic 2 April strike in Kerala

(Report Page )



**WORKING CLASS**

MARCH 2018

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**Growing Resistance**

The recently concluded general council meeting of CITU at Kozhikode underlined the growing resistance of different sections of the economically and socially sections of the people in a scale not seen in recent time. Working class massive mahapadav in Delhi in November, countrywide 60 lakh scheme workers strike on 17 January with 20 lakh on the streets in 60 per cent of country's districts; peasants weeklong Long March in Maharashtra following the massive peasant movement in Rajasthan; and the recent outburst of Dalits against the attempt to dilute the SC ST Prevention of Atrocities Act and death of at least 10 persons in police firing, highest number being in Madhya Pradesh. Country's marginalised and oppressed sections are rising.

Broad based united movement in coming days include 23 May countrywide protest against neoliberalism, communalism and caste oppression under JEJAA; followed by Satyagraha movement including courting arrest of peasants led by AIKS and joined by working class led by CITU; 5 September massive 2 lakh workers rally led by CITU and joined by peasants and agricultural workers led by AIKS and AIAWU; and trade unions joint sectoral and general workers agitation and multiple days strike as will be decided by the trade unions.

Such class and mass movement have potential of lifting the movement at political level. At this juncture CITU needs strong organisational consolidation and hard work with firm commitment and iron will. CITU must and will fulfill its historical responsibility.

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## **Condolence**

# **Comrade Ramakant Pandey**

Veteran national trade union leader of fertilizer workers and president of Fertilizer Workers' Federation of India (FWFI) Comrade Ramakant Pandey passed away at the age of 81 at his residence at Gorakhpur on 14 March. He was FWFI president since its foundation in 1974.

Comrade Pandey, with a team of young trade union leaders in different units of erstwhile Fertilizer Corporation of India, successfully brought 32 unions of CITU, AITUC, HMS affiliates and independent unions in fertilizer sector forming FWFI. He led several militant struggles including strike of fertilizer workers on workers issues and against successive central government's decisions to close public sector fertilizer units.

CITU pays its respectful homage to the departed leader Comrade Ramakant Pandey and conveys heartfelt condolence to his bereaved family members.

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## **CITU Condemned Atrocities and Police Firing On Peaceful Protest of Dalits**

In a statement on 3 April, CITU condemned atrocities and police firing on peaceful Dalit protesters on 2 April.

Various Dalit organizations called for a Bharat Bandh on 2 April 2018 protesting dilution of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act by a recent judgment of the Supreme Court which received significant response in many places in the country. CITU had also demanded upon the Government to file review petition and argue strongly to prevent such dilution of the Act passed by Parliament and take appropriate legislative action.

BJP Government has built up infamous record during its four years' rule of continued organized atrocities against Dalits throughout the country by its various wing organizations, with patronization and indulgence by the government administrations. It reacted by way of brutal police atrocities on protests organized by various Dalit organizations on 2 April at various parts of the country leading to killing of six people in Gwalior, Bhind and Morena in Madhya Pradesh and one in Alwar, Rajasthan and two in UP - all ruled by BJP. Similar police attacks have been launched on the protest programmes of Dalits and common people in many other places in the country.

CITU condemned such brutal killings of Dalits and atrocities on them by the BJP led governments and called upon the workers to raise united voice of protests against such atrocities and killings. CITU, while expressing solidarity with the struggles by Dalits for justice and protection against atrocities, reiterates its demand for strong intervention by the Government for urgent review of the concerned Supreme Court judgment and other appropriate legislative measures to prevent any dilution of the SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act.

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# CITU General Council Meeting

## Clear in Direction & Firm in Action

425-members 4 days national General Council Meeting (GCM) of CITU, held at Comrade Md. Amin Nagar (Town Hall) at Kozhikode in Kerala on 23-26 March 2018, was attended by its 375 members, including 53 women; and 14 invitees from independent national federations and 12 special invitees from the states. The GCM adopted resolution expressing solidarity with the people of Tripura who are fighting against the barbaric attack of the BJP, IPTF goons.

Addressing the GCM, the chairman of the reception committee, CITU national secretary and its state general secretary Elamaram Kareem narrated the alternative path of development being pursued by the Left-led LDF government in Kerala, within Constitutional limitations, which include (i) revival and strengthening of public sector undertakings; (ii) encouraging and rejuvenating the traditional sectors; (iii) increasing minimum wages in various sectors; (iv) refusal to implement the Centre's anti-labour policies and legislations in the State etc.

Footprint on this alternative path was deeply marked by the entire working class of Kerala through a statewide strike, all other sections of the people joining in spontaneous bandh, on 2 April demanding withdrawal of Central government's notification on 'fixed term employment' replacing permanent jobs. The GCM adopted a resolution in support of the strike in Kerala and gave a call for simultaneous countrywide protest action on 2 April. The chief minister of Kerala Pinarayi Vijayan, while inaugurating the huge workers rally and public meeting held on the conclusion of the GCM, began his speech narrating the threat posed to the workers and trade union movement by the fixed term employment notification of the BJP-led Central government and fully supported the strike in Kerala and countrywide agitation against the same on 2 April and narrated the pro-people Kerala's alternative path of development.

K Hemalata, in her presidential address, explained the main features of development and the emerging struggles of various sections of the working people world over against the policies of globalization. She said that it is our responsibility to place the alternative before the working class and the people and mobilise them to fight for such an alternative.

GCM was held in two separate sessions. In the first session, Tapan Sen placed general secretary's report and the proposed amendment to the Constitution; and Hemalata made power point presentation of the Programmes and Tasks. 49 members participated in the discussion on all three documents together. In the second session, general secretary placed the draft of CITU's updated document on organization generally known as Bhubaneswar document. 37 members participated in the discussion on this draft. Summing up the discussion, general secretary pointed out about the unanimity in direction and contents of the discussion.

### Discussion Summed Up

G. S. Report: Discussion on general secretary's report focused on 8 areas – (i) impact of GST; (ii) BIFR to NCLT; (iii) Left-led government's alternative policy implementation within Constitutional limitation; (iv) need of projecting countrywide alternative policy to the people against neoliberal policies and class politics behind these; (v) attacks on lives and livelihood of the people and on the society are the neoliberal policy reflection of capitalism; (vi) growing workers-peasants unity and united struggle; (vii) united class and mass movement against neoliberal policies and against communalism and formation of JEJAA; and on (viii) building of independent and joint united trade union movement.

Updated Organisational Document: Discussion on updated organizational document focused on the basic spirit of democratization; collective efforts with individual responsibility; technology and property relation; issue of unemployment and building movement involving the youths; consolidating the response on action beyond membership; innovative new method of campaign; new work culture; using social media for campaign; cohesion between the federations and states; attention in rail and defence privatisation which are linked with people's issues and country's sovereign interest; specific priority attention in Hindi speaking states; midterm review by the full secretariat and by the states; restriction of leaders in multi-unions, serving persons in key position of establishment unions; for all India federations serving persons, non-serving persons when required.

On Constitution: (i) Re.1 has been raised to Rs.2 per member per annum as CITU affiliation fee to be collected from the members of the unions in 2018 and to be paid as affiliation fee in 2019; (ii) Rs.12 as minimum membership subscription of the union shall remain; (iii) district and lower level committees are not intermediate committees of CITU, but coordinating bodies of unions and their units.

Conclusion: With adopted Programmes and Tasks, CITU's responsibility increased with opportunity to expand and intervene.

The GCM also adopted resolutions - Expressing serious concern about Supreme Court's judgment diluting the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (Prevention of Atrocities) Act; Condemning police atrocity on agitating students and teachers of JNU; Extending solidarity and support to 3 days strike of Regional Rural Bank employees on 26-28 March 2018; Condemning state sponsored terrorism against Rohingyas and calling upon the Government of India to initiate step for their safe return and rehabilitation under the supervision of international agencies; Organising the IT and ITES employees; and on Issues of Pensioners under EPF.

In her concluding speech president Hemalata stressed upon developing CITU politically, ideologically and organizationally. Referring to the report of the General Council level AICCWW (All India Coordination Committee of Working Women) meeting, held a day before the GCM, she pointed out about the attacks on CITU activists by different ruling dispensations in the states of Punjab, Haryana, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. For organisational consolidation she referred to priority areas in organised sector - electricity, transport and private sector industries; and importance of scheme workers, organizationally spread over in 60 per cent of districts in the country that they can play politically and ideologically. She emphasised in strengthening CITU centre by inducting cadres from the states, some of them joining shortly. She pointed out about the need of political and ideological development and the role that P. R. Bhavan, becoming operational shortly, can play with proper planning for its utilisation and preparing the syllabus for class room education. She emphasised on planning and development of cadres.

Reception committee general convener A. K. Ramesh while thanking the GC members spoke on GCM preparatory activities involving the workers and the people of the entire district by organising 18 seminars, progressive street theatres and door to door collection by the members to make the GCM successful and memorable.

### **The Public Meeting**

2 months long preparation by the reception committee and the CITU district committee for the GCM involving not only the workers and their family members, but also the general public through union wise meetings, area and district level seminars on different issues, public meetings, jathas, family meetings etc was visible in the more than one lakh strong gathering in the public meeting held on 26 March in the Calicut sea beach. The workers mobilisation, which was only from the district, gathered in the beach through small rallies with attractive flags, festoons, cultural shows etc had significant women's participation.

The public meeting was presided by T.P. Ramakrishnan, minister for labour of LDF government of Kerala. Pinarayi Vijayan, chief minister of Kerala, who was the main speaker, began with congratulating the working class of Kerala for their decision for one day strike on 2 April against the central government's

decision on fixed term employment. He narrated how the Modi government is pursuing anti worker and anti people policies and each section of the people, particularly the workers and the peasantry, is resisting these policies and its impact. He explained as to how LDF government within the limitation is trying to implement some pro-people alternative measures. He narrated how his government had revived the public sector units within a short time and strengthening the public utility services. He mentioned the effort by the government to recognise the contribution of the migrant workers in Kerala's development and the new social security and legal measures introduced by the LDF government for the inter-state migrant workers.

Tapan Sen, Hemalata, A K Padmanabhan, Anathalavottam Anandan, president of Kerala state committee of CITU, also addressed the gathering. Elamaram Kareem proposed the vote of thanks.

## **Highlights of Programmes**

(Adopted by the GCM)

April-August, 2018

### **CITU's Independent Campaign**

23 May 2018

### **Joining District and Lower Level Demonstrations by JEJAA**

- Weeklong preparatory campaign among workers

30 May, 2018

### **CITU Foundation Day: All India Pledge Day**

- Workers will take pledge on pledge declaration prepared by CITU Centre

9 August, 2018

### **Quit India Day: Joining AIKS' Courting Arrest Programme in Districts**

- With separate workers demands

14-15 August, 2018 Night

### **Independence Day: Nightlong "Samoochik Jagaran"**

- To imbibe and propagate the vision of freedom struggle

5 September, 2018

### **CITU's Delhi Chalo: AIKS and AIAWU will Join**

- Not less than 2 lakhs workers mobilisation from across the country

In October-November, 2018

### **Joint Trade Union Programmes**

- Preparing for sectoral and general workers multiple days strike as may be decided jointly by central trade unions and federations

In 2020

### **1 crore membership of CITU**

- To give all-round membership drive immediately

## **Tasks & Time Frame**

(Adopted by the GCM)

### **1. Preparations for 5 September Delhi Mobilisation**

İ% April-May – at All India and State Centres; İ% June in districts; İ% July – at lower level; İ% August – All India and Regional Jathas

### **2. Effectively Implement Updated Document on Organisation**

### **3. All India Centre**

İ% By 7 April finalize and send updated organisational document & send 'Points for Reporting'; İ% Prepare drafts on 'Pro-people Alternatives' on Different Issues; İ% Prepare draft for campaign materials – booklets, talking points, slogans etc; İ% Enlist supporters for help; İ% Constitute a team to monitor / follow up;

### **4. State Committees**

İ% Translate and print 'Updated Document on Organisation' in local languages by 15 April and reach to the members of - state committees - state level unions committees - state committees of all India federations - CITU district committees - district level unions committees - conveners of lowest level committees and president and secretaries of all affiliated unions of CITU;

İ% Translate and print 'Points for Reporting' in adequate numbers to reach to all members upto lowest level committees;

İ% Organise state level workshops, with proper preparation, preferably for 2 days – İ% on Updated Document on Organisation; İ% Prepare State Document on Organisation focusing on Consolidation and Expansion; İ% Those already prepared – review / update as required;

İ% Draft document with concrete analysis of the existing state of the organisation and plan to utilize Opportunities for Expansion; İ% Prepare detailed plan for Independent Campaign and Mobilisation;

### **5. State Workshops on Organisation**

İ% Focus on – Democratic Functioning – Expansion and Prioritisation – Political & Ideological Development of Cadres – Concrete Future Organisational Tasks in the state in line with adopted all India Tasks; İ% Discuss CITU's Perspective on Tasks among Working Women; İ% Plan work among Working Women in the state;

### **6. State Workshop on Independent Campaign**

İ% Fix time frame for district and lower level committees meetings; İ% Plan translation materials from all India Centre; İ% Plan preparation of state level campaign materials

İ% Decide Method of Campaign; İ% Fix district & sectorwise target of workers to be approached beyond membership to Reach the Unreached;

### **7. State Workshops**

İ% All India Office Bearer-in-charge of state to participate and guide; İ% Give district and sector responsibility to state office bearers to plan campaign as per state workshops decisions; İ% State centre and office bearers to regularly review and monitor implementation; İ% Fix accountability;

**8. Maintain Quantitative Details of Activities:**

(Districtwise & Sectorwise) 100% Publications of leaflets, booklets, posters etc; 100% Workers Approached through different meetings and jathas; 100% Workers mobilized in Delhi;

**Time Frame**

**For States in June:** 100% Reporting of Updated Document on Organisation focused on democratic functioning of the unions, consolidation and expansion; 100% Detailed planning for Independent Campaign in districts with concrete target of workers to be approached and mobilized unionwise;

**For States in July:** 100% Campaign at the lowest level – gate meetings, group meetings, family meets, residential area meetings; 100% Discussion on Talking Points – Cultural Forms, Leaflets, booklets, banners, posters etc; 100% Reach upto remotest village using scheme workers, construction workers, panchayat workers etc;

**In August All India and Regional Jathas:** 100% Jathas to be led by Central leadership / all India office bearers; 100% Participated by State leaders; 100% State Sub-Jathas to be planned to cover all major district headquarters and major industrial clusters / areas; 100% Wherever possible, district sub-jathas to cover all blocks.

**Objectives**

- To create enthusiasm among all sections of the working people;
- Heighten level of consciousness;
- Maximum Mobilisation to Delhi not less than 2 lakh

**Critical Test for Us**

- Put to Practice the Updated Document on Organisation;
- Develop Politically and Ideologically Conscious Cadres;
- Create Atmosphere of Political Change to BJP-led Governments' Neoliberal & Communal Policies;

**Resolve**

- ✓ We Can and Will Definitely Succeed;
- ✓ We Shall Develop CITU as an All India Militant and Powerful Organisation, Politically and Ideologically Equipped to Discharge its Constitutional Responsibilities.

## GCM Resolutions

# **Stand in Solidarity with the People of Tripura; Defend Democracy and Unity**

The meeting of the General Council of CITU, being held meeting in Kozhikode, Kerala, on 23-26 March 2018 expresses grave concern at the barbaric attacks by BJP/RSS hoodlums on the people of Tripura, particularly targeting the supporters of the left parties and the left oriented mass organisations, immediately after coming to power in the state.

Attacks by the BJP and its ally, the IPFT started on the same day of counting, as soon as the BJP front's victory became clear. Physical attacks on members, cadres and supporters of the left parties and burning of their houses, looting and ransacking of properties, vandalising, capturing and burning of the offices of left parties and several mass organisations including the offices of CITU have been continuing throughout the state since then. The state administration has remained a silent spectator. Hundreds of left cadres and activists have been injured in these attacks and several of them had to be hospitalised. The offices of CITU, particularly those of the Tripura Motor Shramik Union have been targeted for attacks by the BJP goons. Many of these offices have been locked; the CITU flags bought down and the BJP flags have been hoisted forcibly. Many offices of the cooperative societies have also been similarly captured driving out the organisers and beneficiaries. While the ideologues of RSS, the parent organisation of BJP admire fascists like Hitler and Mussolini of Germany and Italy, who have cold bloodedly murdered hundreds of thousands of common people, their followers have brought down the statue of Lenin, who led the struggle for emancipation of the toiling people in Russia. Such is the hypocrisy of these fascistic forces in the country.

Owing to this violence, in many areas, the male members of the families had to flee their homes. The BJP hoodlums are attacking even the women left in the house and extorting huge amounts of money threatening to set the house on fire and kill their kids. Thousands of working people have become homeless and are unable to go to their workplaces due to the terror. An atmosphere of terror is sought to be created throughout the state in order to mime all opposition to BJP rule. This violence, meticulously planned in advance, is aimed at annihilating the Left, particularly the trade unions, the other mass organisations and welfare societies so long run democratically for the benefit of the people.

CITU General Council notes with pride that despite such terror and violence patronised by the state government, the activists of the Left, trade unions and democratic movement are bravely facing the situation. Leaders of left parties, CITU and other mass organisation are visiting the affected people across the state and providing them all the necessary help and support. They are trying to mobilise the people to raise their voice against such organised attacks being promoted by the BJP led state government.

The General Council of CITU affirms that such barbarism and fascistic violence is inbuilt in the ideology and modus operandi of RSS and BJP. This has to be combated both politically and organisationally. The General Council recalls the glorious tradition and record of the working class movement in Tripura which has heroically fought and successfully defeated such violence and attacks by the earlier Congress regime, when it allied with the separatist and terrorist outfits. It is to the credit of the Left Front government in the state that it has established peace and harmony in the state after coming to the power again in 1993. CITU General Council expresses its total confidence that this time too, the working class movement in Tripura will politically, ideologically and organisationally defeat the onslaught of the divisive, disruptive and communal forces.

The General Council takes proud note of the protest demonstrations organised at the initiative of CITU state committees, against the attacks by the BJP and in solidarity with the people of Tripura. The General Council calls upon the working class all over the country irrespective of affiliations, to come forward in support of the Left and working class movement of Tripura, to defend democracy and unity of the people in the state.

## **Against Dilution of SC & ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act;**

This General Council of CITU, being held at Kozhikode, Kerala on 23-26 March 2018 expresses serious concern about the judgment delivered by the Supreme Court that has diluted the provisions of the Prevention of Atrocities (SC/ST) Act.

The judgment delivered by a bench of Justice U.U. Lalit and Adarsh Goel ignored the social reality of caste oppression, harassment and atrocities perpetrated on Dalits on a daily basis. It has made the arrest and prosecution of those accused under the Act almost impossible by removing the restrictions on granting anticipatory bail and imposing a condition that a public servant can be prosecuted only after obtaining permission from the higher authorities. In the case of private employees it had said, the senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) concerned would have to allow it.

It is unfortunate that the central government counsel did not respond properly and raise objections against the dilution of the provisions of the Act. Unless immediate remedial measures are taken by the Central Government to undo the damage done by the judgment, the forces inimical to social equality and justice will be further emboldened to perpetrate violence against Dalits.

This General Council of CITU urges the central government to immediately move a review petition against the retrograde judgment of the Supreme Court bench.

## **Condemning Police Atrocity on Agitating Students and Teachers of JNU**

The General Council meeting of CITU being held at Kozhikode, Kerala 23-26 March, 2018 strongly condemns the police atrocity on agitating students and teachers of Jwaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi.

The meeting noted with concern that utter administrative misrule with political motive at the direction of the BJP government at the centre, the premier teaching institute has become hurdle to the famous learning and teaching ambience maintained since decades. The autocratic and pseudo nationalistic actions of the authorities have compelled both students and teachers of JNU to express disagreement and distrust on the decisions of the administration leading to peaceful agitation including hunger strike.

Students and teachers were fighting for academic freedom, against change in the admission policies which were to ensure social justice, arbitrary decision on compulsory attendance. The administration and the VC refused to take any action against the Professor who was accused of sexual harassment by many students.

On the martyrdom day of Bhagat Singh, the JNUSU and JNUTA the representative bodies of the students and teachers have jointly called for a Padyatra to Parliament. The peaceful march was not even blocking the traffic. They were countered with police force much away from destination and resorted to brutal lathicharge which was unprovoked. Many students including girls were seriously injured. Even journalists were not spared. The barbaric attitude of the authorities towards the rally of the JNU students and teachers rally was in demonstration with deployment of water cannon targeting the students.

Police also arrested 23 students and was not even ready to disclose where they were taken to. The students and teachers have to sit in front of the police station to get them admitted to hospital.

This General Council meeting of CITU sternly condemns this unprovoked police assault on the agitating students and teachers of JNU and demands that all autocratic decisions of JNU authority should be withdrawn to ensure academic freedom and proper action should be taken against the sexual harassment allegation.

## Save Rohingya Refugees

The brutal and inhuman attacks against the Rohingya people amounts to the dastardly act of “ethnic cleansing” only comparable to Nazy holocaust during *the world war second* . The government of Myanmar is still not able to control the atrocities committed by the military. The continuing inflow of refugees from Myanmar and the issues of their relief and rehabilitation are becoming serious and grave day by day.

The government of India tries to communalise the issue. The Rohingya’s forefathers are Indians and they do not have any political or civil rights in Myanmar. Even for marriage, they have to get prior approval of the government. They are mentioned as the ‘most persecuted people’ by the UN.

The meeting of the All India General Council of CITU here by calls upon all sections of people to condemn the “state sponsored terrorism” against the Rohingya people and also upon the government of India to initiate step for their safe return and rehabilitation under the supervision of international agencies. Merely sending them back will be forcing the refugees into death traps. So this general council express deep concern on the issue of Rohingya refugees and demands that the Government should refrain from false propaganda and urgently provide as per the International Convention On Refugee Rights

### New Affiliations

CITU GCM, after scrutiny by the credential committee, granted affiliation to 109 new unions, having 44,395 members; and provisionally to 8 more unions having 1016 members, subject their submitting required documents and verification by the Centre. These include unions 18 in Andhra Pradesh (1723 members); 1 in Assam (163); 1 in Delhi (748), 3 in H.P. (187); 4 in Jharkhand (9480); 3 in Karnataka (715); 18 in Kerala (5058); 3 in M. P. (471); 6 in Maharashtra (788); 3 in Odisha (467); 2 in Punjab (472); 3 in Rajasthan (286); 4 in Tamilnadu (464); 37 in Telangana (2560); 1 in U.P. (70); 3 in Uttarakhand (1000); and 7 in West Bengal (20759).

## The Context of CITU General Council Meeting

K. Hemalata

The presidential address by Hemalata and the general secretary’s report by Tapan Sen put the organisational and movemental tasks before the general council in the context of international and national situation.

The workers and other toiling sections are increasingly coming out on struggles, including strikes, in various parts of the world including in the advanced capitalist countries which are expression of discontent and anger against the attacks on their livelihood and working conditions by the neoliberal policies being pursued by their respective governments. Despite the claims of upswing in the global economy, there has been no improvement in the conditions of the workers. Youth unemployment in many countries continues to be alarming. Even the World Bank, which said that the world economy was in ‘full swing’ for the first time since the global crisis was compelled to warn that this upswing would be short term without much prospect of improving the living standards of the people or reducing poverty. Many economists were of the view that another crisis may be round the corner.

Inequalities have reached vulgar levels. According to the Oxfam Report, released in January 2018, 82% of global wealth produced in 2017 was cornered by the top 1% people who now owned

more than half of the total global wealth. In India, the top 1% cornered 73% of the wealth produced by the toiling people in the country in 2017. Only 42 richest persons in the world owned the same wealth as the poorest half in 2017.

This amassing of wealth in a few hands is not because of their extraordinary talent, hard work or innovations, as many people are made to believe. The Oxfam report makes it clear that this is due to inheritance, monopoly, cronyism, tax evasions and of course, increased exploitation of the workers. Unemployment continues at alarming levels, particularly among the educated youth, due to these policies. In India, unemployment among the graduates and above has reached 23.8%. New technology including robotics, artificial intelligence, Internet of Things etc are used, not to reduce working hours of, or ease the burden on the workers, but to increase the profits of the big corporates and business houses who own this technology.

This discontent against the impact of the neoliberal policies is not being channelised in proper direction in many countries. It is being utilised by the right wing forces. This is particularly so in countries where the left forces and social democratic parties have betrayed the working people whom they were earlier supporting, and switched to the side of neoliberalism. The traditional left and social democratic parties which have been implementing neoliberal policies while in power are being rejected by the people. The right wing forces utilise the discontent among the people and divert it against other sections of the toiling people on the basis of race, religion, region, gender etc. They disrupt the unity of the people and weaken the struggle against the neoliberal policies. When they come to power, they have been implementing the same policies. This is seen in several European countries like Italy, France, Germany, Greece, and the Scandinavian countries.

At the same time where the left gained where it firmly supported and led the struggles of the workers against the neoliberal policies, as seen in Greece, Portugal, Spain, the increased influence of the Labour Party under Jeremy Corbyn, the growing popularity of the Democratic Socialists in the USA etc, particularly among the youth.

Today, the working class and the toiling people are searching for alternatives. There is growing interest, particularly among the youth, in 'Capital', the magnum opus of Karl Marx, which was first published more than 150 years ago. The influence of World Federation of Trade Unions, the only militant and class oriented global trade union is also increasing across the world.

Neoliberalism, the latest phase of capitalism, is totally discredited and has become unsustainable. But what needs to be understood clearly is capitalist system itself cannot be free of crisis. The decade long global crisis is only the latest in the series. In each crisis, the capitalists try to protect their profits by thrusting more burdens on the working people, which in turn bring down their purchasing power and lay the ground for another crisis. Even before the world came out of the 2008 crisis, apprehensions are being expressed about another crisis looming around. In such a situation, international finance finds it necessary to support and promote right wing forces which seek to divide the working class and the people on the basis of race, religion, region, gender, language etc, disrupt the unity of the working people and weaken the struggles against neoliberal policies. This has become the worldwide phenomenon now, including in India as seen in the support of the big corporations, both domestic and foreign, that have been supporting the BJP and Modi by providing all the necessary resources to it.

US imperialism is also trying to use its military and political might to intervene and suppress the progressive and left leaning governments in Latin America and other countries to undermine left forces and suppress resistance to the neoliberal policies there as well as gain control of the rich natural resources in these countries. On the one hand US imperialism has been talking of 'fighting terror'; on the other it has been promoting terrorist outfits by providing them with financial and other

types of support. India under the BJP regime has become a junior strategic partner to US imperialism abandoning the country's long standing independent foreign policy.

It is significant in this situation to note that since the onset of the global crisis in 2008, China has taken several measures to increase domestic demand in the form of increasing minimum wages, providing housing to the rural and urban poor etc. These measures have resulted in increasing personal per capita disposable income, reduced unemployment to its lowest level in decades, and lifting 6 crore people above poverty. It is transforming itself into an advanced manufacturing country focussing on information technology, robotics, aerospace, railways, electric vehicles etc. In the recently held National Peoples' Congress, Xi Jinping, President of China has declared 'History has already proven and will continue to prove that only socialism can save China'. Not only China, only socialism can save the world.

The general secretary's report highlighted the conditions of the working class and other sections of the toiling people under the BJP led Modi government. The three significant features of the government's domestic policy were - aggressive pursuit of neoliberal policies, open support to the communal and disruptive 'Hindutva' agenda of the RSS and increasing authoritarian tendencies. All these three have to be fought simultaneously by the working class movement to protect the unity of the working class and intensify the struggle against the neoliberal policies.

The general secretary's report exposed the deceptive slogans and features in the various measures undertaken by it including demonetisation, the GST, the Union Budget 2018-19 and the various notifications it has been issuing time to time. All these were utilised to transfer wealth, created by the blood and toil of the people, to the few big corporates, domestic and foreign. While the big capitalist and landlord classes were given huge concessions, huge burdens were imposed on the workers and other common people who saw worsening of their working conditions and erosion of their incomes. Public sector is being dismantled. Coal mines have been opened up for private commercial mining. The BJP government, which never fails to evoke sentiments of nationalism, is privatising strategic sectors like defence and railways, jeopardising national interests. The Financial Resolution and Deposit Insurance (FRDI) Bill 2017 puts the financial institutions on dock for non payment of loans but not the corporations which defaulted. On the one hand this will pave the way for privatisation of these institutions and on the other the common people are put at risk of losing their deposits fully or partially, when the banks become bankrupt.

In addition to the amendments to the labour laws, which have been discussed several times, the government has recently amended the Contract Labour Act removing whatever protection the contract workers had till now. The whole concept of permanent and perennial nature of jobs is being changed to 'core and peripheral jobs'. Thus a worker performing permanent nature of work cannot claim regularisation. Similarly, workers working for an agency to which a particular job has been outsourced cannot be considered as contract worker and the principal employer has no obligation to ensure implementation of labour laws in that case. Penalties for violation of the amended Act have been reduced to a minimum. The government has also introduced Fixed Term Employment through a notification despite serious opposition to the move first introduced by the former NDA government led by Vajpayee in 2002, which the UPA I government was compelled to rescind under pressure from the trade union movement and the Left parties in 2007. The entire process is aimed at improving its 'Ease of Doing Business Index' at the cost of the workers.

The attacks on dalits and minorities, particularly the Muslim minorities have increased. Their livelihood is being attacked by the so called 'gau rakshaks', to benefit the big corporate cattle traders. The communal outfits are seeking to control all the aspects of the day to day lives of common people, dictating what they can eat, what they can wear, whom they can befriend or marry etc. They are trying to throttle all voices of dissent or opposition through physical attacks, black mailing, intimidation etc.

The government is also resorting to authoritarian measures by bypassing the Rajya Sabha, by claiming them as 'Money Bills', issuing notifications etc. While the government claims to be super nationalist, it is resorting to anti national measures like privatisation including of railways, defence, handing over our natural resources to foreign and domestic private players etc.

It is in this context that there was a surge in struggles, by the workers, peasants, students, dalits and other sections of the society. The various sectoral struggles and the huge unprecedented joint trade union 'mahapaav' reveal this.

The general council has also adopted the updated document on organisation introduced by Tapan Sen and the concrete future tasks placed by Hemalata. These include an independent campaign and massive mobilisation of not less than 2 lakhs in Delhi on 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018 preceded by extensive and intensive campaign on the 12 points demands of the joint trade union movement, the 10 points adopted by the CITU secretariat and also the local issues and demands of the different sections of workers and other sections of toiling people, related to their working and living conditions. The major demands of peasants, agricultural workers, dalits, adivasis, women, youth, students and minorities will also be included in the campaign. The campaign will focus on alternative pro people pro worker policies in opposition to the present neoliberal policies.

A detailed plan - for preparing the entire organisation to take the Updated Document on Organisation up to the grass root level to ensure its effective implementation and for the independent campaign to implement the CITU's slogans of 'Reach the Unreached' and 'Link up issues with policies and expose the politics behind the policies' – was also adopted by the general council

The general council decided to - mobilise the workers for the 23<sup>rd</sup> protest demonstrations at the call of the Jan Ekta Jan Adhikar Andolan (JEJAA), to play an active role in the week long campaign preceding it, to participate in the district level courting of arrest call of AIKS on 9<sup>th</sup> August 2018 highlighting the demands of the workers, observe night long 'Samuhik Jagaran' programme on the night of 14<sup>th</sup> August. It was also decided to effectively participate in whatever programme is decided by the joint trade union movement during this period.

## **In Support of United Strike in Kerala**

### **Against Modi Govt. Introducing *Fixed Term Employment in All Sectors***

This General Council meeting of CITU, being held at Kozhikode in Kerala on 23-26 March 2018;

- Congratulates the working people of Kerala and its leadership; the state units of central trade unions and state unions of INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, UTUC, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, STU, HMPK, TUCI, AKTU, KTUC, KTUC(J), KTUC(M), INLC for the bold and timely response they have shown by giving one day statewide strike call on 2 April 2018 against the draconian notification of the GOI replacing permanent employment with term-based employment and extending the Fixed Term Employment to All Sectors thereby enslaving the workers and throwing them to the mercy of the corporates; permanency of the jobs, thereby, given a goodbye;
- This move, which is a part of the ongoing implementation of the neoliberal policies that caters to the needs of the big corporates, has to be fought tooth and nail and the decision of the working men and women of the Kerala State would necessarily enthuse the entire Indian people who are in militant struggles against the anti-people policies of the GOI;

This General Council meeting calls upon all affiliates, other fraternal organizations and CITU state committees to organize simultaneous countrywide protest demonstrations on 2 April in solidarity with this strike action in Kerala

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# **Demanding Central Government to Withdraw ‘Fixed Term Employment’ Notification**

## **April 2 Strike in Kerala: A Historical Success**

Elamaram Kareem

Workers of Kerala resorted to 24 hours statewide strike on 2 April raising the demand to withdraw Central government’s notification on implementation of fixed term employment in place of permanent employment. All trade unions except BMS gave call for the strike. With support of all sections of the people, it became a general strike bringing the entire state to a grinding halt.

Strike became a historical success in the state. All commercial shops were shut down, only few two wheelers and private vehicles moved on roads. Workers of all public transport system joined the strike. Cochin port, Vallarpadam container terminal, Aluva-Kalamashery industrial sector, Kanchikode industrial sector, special economic zone, Techno-park, Info-park etc., which come under IT sector, were on strike. Industrial sector, plantations, traditional employment sector, construction sector were completely closed. Press workers union also participated in the strike and attended the March. Important public sector undertakings such as Electricity Board, Water authority, Transport corporation etc were on complete strike. The working of Central Government institutions such as VSSC, Cochin shipyard, Instrumentation, BSNL etc were motionless. Educational institutions, co-operative sector, private and public sector banks, local bodies, postal service, etc. were shut down. BMS employees working in Central public sector organization also co-operated in the strike by not attending work.

Striking workers organised March and staged dharna in front of the Raj Bhavan in Thiruvananthapuram.

In all other districts, March and dharnas were held in front of Central Government offices.

March to Raj Bhavan was inaugurated by CITU state president Ananthavattom Anandhan. INTUC state president R. Chandrashekharan, AITUC state general secretary K. P. Rajendran, UTUC state leader Shibu Babyjohn, CITU state secretary V. Sivan Kutty and others also joined. About 15000 workers participated in it.

For pre-strike campaign district/area wise propaganda Marches were organised. Trade unions jointly gave strike notices to all institutions. Press conference and poster propaganda were done in all districts. Members of joint trade union gave handbills and requested the shop owners and traders to participate in the strike. Workers conducted torchlight March in the evening of 1 April. In various district the agitations were led jointly by state leaders of trade unions.

Within a short period, efficient work was done for the success of the strike. Public greatly supported the strike. The strike was a warning message of the deceptive policy of Modi Government. The strike got wide and massive welcome from all sections of the society.

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# **Peasants Historic 'Long March' in Maharashtra**

## **Fadnavis Government Accepts 95% of Demands**

Under the red flag of All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS), with the hammer and sickle joined together in it symbolizing the workers-peasants unity; about 25,000 peasants of Maharashtra, including women and old, large number of them Adivasis and poor; began their historic 'Kisan Long March' from Nasik on 6 March for a 200 kilometers grueling journey to Mumbai on foot under the blazing sun as a unique form of struggle against agrarian distress causing large number of peasants' suicide in the State. As the 'Long March' advanced, more peasants joined swelling the number.

Initially, BJP leaders and Fadnavis government tried to ridicule the 'Kisan Long March' and called the struggling Kisans as 'extremists'. But, as the determined and disciplined March continued despite exhaustion, dehydration, infirmness and blistered feet of thousands of farmers, particularly the old, drawing huge wave of sympathy and support of the people across the State and India; the print and electronic media vying for lead stories; the opposition and BJP allies inside and outside the Assembly coming out in support; the BJP leaders ran for cover and the chief minister saying that his government was "sensitive and positive" towards the demands raised AIKS. The Long March' received further support of the people, when the Kisans walked at night in its penultimate stage to ensure that children's movement in daytime, for their scheduled exams, were not disturbed.

On 12 March, the historic 'Ling March' of 50,000 Kisans entered the historic Azad Maidan of Mumbai in a huge flow of red halting before their final destination, outside the state legislative Assembly in case the Fadnavis government fail to accede to their just demands.

AIKS delegation and ministerial committee of Fadnavis government held 3 hours long discussion on all demands of AIKS. As demanded by AIKS tribal Kisan leader and CPI(M)'s seven consecutive times MLA in Maharashtra Assembly J. P. Gavit, the government accepted three pre-conditions for discussion – to keep minutes of discussion, agreement in writing and placing the written agreement in the Assembly to make it a part of legislative records. Ultimately, the government accepted almost all demands which were just, reasonable and fair. On behalf of the government, the chief secretary signed the agreement. As was agreed earlier, the copy of the written agreement was placed on the floor of the Assembly on the very next day 'during discussion on the "Long March' of the farmers". "A meeting was held with the representatives of farmers and adivasis at Vidhan Bhawan today. We have agreed to set up a committee to allot agricultural land to tribals provided they submit a proof of pre-2005 land cultivation. We have accepted almost all their demands," Fadnavis said,' reported the press.

On behalf of the government, the State's revenue minister Chandrakant Patil reached Azad Maidan and announced, in presence of CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, who was present in the Kisan rally, about the agreement in which the government accepted "all their demands."

The opposition Congress, NCP, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena and also Shiv Sena, which is part of the BJP-led ruling coalition in the State and at the Centre, had extended support to the farmers' agitation and demands. MNS chief Raj Thackeray and Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray also met the farmers at Azad Maidan.

In his address, Yechury described farmers as the "new soldiers of India" who can "uproot governments" if they do not accept their demands. The Long March was led by and the Kisan rally at Azad Maidan was addressed by AIKS national president Dr. Ashok Dhawle and state leaders of AIKS. The March was also joined and rally was addressed by CITU leader Dr. D. L. Karad,

With this glorious victory at the end of Kisan Long March, participating peasants started their journey back home. The Central Railway ran special train from Mumbai to Bhusawal to ferry them back home. Such was the impact of this struggle.

AIKS demands, which Fadnavis government accepted in writing, include unconditional loan waiver with deficiency corrections; transfer of forest land to Adivasi and traditional forest dwellers under Forest Rights Act; minimum support price (MSP) of agricultural produce at one-and-half time of comprehensive cost as per Swaminathan Committee recommendation; change in link-rivers project in Nashik, Thane-Palghar districts replacing big dams, to ensure no submersion and no displacement of tribal lands, by smaller dams with lift irrigation and diverting water to draught prone districts of Maharashtra instead of Gujarat as was in the plan; to stop land acquisition by the government for projects including high-speed railway and super highways etc.

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## Congratulatory Statements

### **CITU Congratulated Maharashtra Peasants**

In a statement on 13 March, CITU congratulated the farmers of Maharashtra for their historic 'Kisan Long March' in gruelling conditions and for their comprehensive victory compelling the BJP state government to concede in writing all their just demands.

CITU congratulated AIKS for leading successful farmers' struggles in Maharashtra and in other states, and for taking initiative of joint farmers' struggles. These struggles, as the earlier struggle in Rajasthan, indicate farmers' determination to take struggle path instead of suicides in desperation.

Successful Maharashtra farmers struggle has inspired the toiling sections particularly the workers across the country. The working class stood in solidarity with the struggling farmers. CITU is committed to work for continued working class support to farmers' demands and solidarity with their movement.

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### **WFTU Congratulated the Victorious Maharashtra Farmers**



**WORLD FEDERATION**

Class oriented - uniting - democratic - mo

#### **WFTU congratulates victorious strug farmers of Indi**

The World Federation of Trade Unions, repres members in the 5 continents, congratulates th farmers who participates to the great march, stru

The great march started on 6th March and the fa Mumbai. During the 200 kilometers march m campaigns took place on several regions. The with successfully forcing the state government t demands.

## **Polit Bureau of CPI(M) Congratulated Maharashtra Kisans**

The Polit Bureau of CPI(M), having noted in its meeting on 16-17 March, congratulated the Kisan of Maharashtra for the success that they achieved in their struggle for the implementation of the Forest Rights Act, remunerative prices and pension; loan waiver for the indebted farmers etc following the huge success of their 'Long March' led by AIKS from Nasik to Mumbai.

"The march forced a written assurance from the Government of Maharashtra accepting the demands of the farmers. This has had a nation-wide impact. It is now incumbent upon the Maharashtra government to honour its promises in a time bound manner," the statement said.

The Polit Bureau also "hailed the support received by the Long March from all sections of people of Maharashtra and the wide spectrum of political and social movements."

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# **Kisan Sabha Long March in Maharashtra Ends in a Resounding Victory**

Ashok Dhawale

The class oriented trade union movement, which has not been seen in Maharashtra in recent times. It received the unstinted support, not only in Maharashtra but in the adopted states where the conditions of thousands of farmers. The Long March of nearly 200 Km lasted, it became the centre of attraction for the entire national and state media, both print and electronic, and also the social media. #KisanLongMarch was the number one trending All India hashtag the whole day March 12.

Beginning at Nashik with over 25,000 farmers marching in unison, including thousands of peasant women, it concluded in Mumbai with over 50,000 farmers. Red flags of the Kisan Sabha, red banners, red caps and red placards highlighting the main demands of this Long March, made it a huge ocean of red. By far the largest mobilisation was that of thousands of Adivasi peasants from Nashik district, under the inspiring leadership of AIKS former state president J P Gavit, MLA. The next was that from Thane-Palghar district, followed by Ahmednagar district. There was representation from several other districts in the state, which rose markedly in the last two days of the Long March.

The Long March was the culmination of three years of constant struggle led by the AIKS in Maharashtra, which has been briefly outlined in these columns earlier. Meticulous preparations for the Long March, including planning its logistics to the last detail were carried out by the AIKS collective state leadership right from February 16, when the decision was taken at the extended meeting of the AIKS state council at Sangli. Grains, oil and firewood for the food of the participants was collected from the villages themselves. Water tankers for drinking were stationed at various points along the way. An ambulance with a doctors' team and the necessary medicines was kept along with the Long March.

The way that tens of thousands of poor and landless peasants, along with their leaders, marched with determination 30 to 40 Km per day for seven days in the searing heat of the sun, hundreds of them

without footwear on tar roads, with bruised and bleeding feet, evoked not only massive public support for their cause, but also massive public anger against the callous and insensitive BJP-led state government.

All this was reflected in the overwhelming response from the working class, the middle class, Dalits, Muslims, Sikhs and all other sections in Mumbai and Thane cities. The Long March was not only welcomed with open arms in several localities, but the people themselves donated generously in both cash and kind in both these cities. The CITU, AIDWA, DYFI and SFI in Mumbai and Thane-Palghar districts launched a mass campaign amongst the people in support of this Long March, but the mass response went far, far beyond that.

The magnificent humanitarian decision of the AIKS of walking day and night on the last day, from 11 am on March 11 to 6 am on March 12, from Thane city to Azad Maidan in the heart of Mumbai city, to avoid disrupting the final board examinations of tens of thousands of SSC students in Mumbai, drew the unstinted admiration of people across the country. Several prominent celebrities in India also expressed their appreciation at this gesture.

All this put tremendous pressure on the BJP-led state government. On March 12, chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, ministers Chandrakant Patil, Girish Mahajan, Eknath Shinde, Pandurang Fundkar, Subhash Deshmukh and Vishnu Savra, along with a battery of top officials of various departments, held a three hour discussion with Kisan Sabha leaders in the Vidhan Bhavan. Also present during the discussions were leaders from the opposition benches Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil (Congress), Dhananjay Munde, Ajit Pawar and Sunil Tatkare (NCP).

General secretary of the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP) Jayant Patil, MLC, who had helped the Kisan Sabha struggle all along, and state president of the Janata Dal (Sharad Yadav group), Kapil Patil, MLC, were also present during the discussions.

The Kisan Sabha delegation included Dr Ashok Dhawale, J P Gavit, MLA, CITU former state president Narasayya Adam, ex-MLA, Kisan Gujar, Dr Ajit Nawale, Subhash Choudhari, Savliram Pawar, Sunil Malusare,,Irfan Shaikh, Ratan,Budhar, Barkya Mangat, Radka Kalangda, Umesh Deshmukh, Sidhappa Kalshetty, Vilas Babar and DYFI state vice president Indrajeet Gavit. Almost all the above are AIKS state office bearers who actually walked in the Long March, along with AIAWU state leader Manohar Muley and CITU state leader Vinod Nikole.

In the light of earlier bitter experiences with the present government, the Kisan Sabha had taken the clear position right in the beginning that it would not withdraw this struggle without official written assurances. These written assurances on all the demands were given within an hour of the conclusion of the talks, with the signature of the chief secretary of the state government. Three ministers of the state government – Chandrakant Patil and Girish Mahajan of the BJP and Eknath Shinde of the Shiv Sena – came to the victory rally at Azad Maidan and pledged to implement the agreement that had been reached. The Kisan Sabha also insisted that the agreement arrived at should be placed on the table of the House by the chief minister in the state assembly that was then in session. Accordingly, the chief minister tabled that agreement in the House on March 13.

Concrete assurances have been given by the government on AIKS demands concerning the implementation of the Forest Rights Act (FRA), river linking proposal adversely affecting tribals in Nashik, Palghar and Thane districts, loan waiver to farmers, remunerative prices, temple lands, pasture lands, old-age pensions, the public distribution system, compensation to lakhs of farmers in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions who have suffered huge losses of the cotton crop due to pink bollworm pest attacks, hailstorms and on other issues. The details of the demands conceded have been given elsewhere on this website.

The resounding AIKS victory rally of over 50,000 farmers at Azad Maidan in Mumbai on the evening of March 12 was addressed by CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury, ex-MP, CPI(M) state secretary Narasayya Adam, ex-MLA, PWP general secretary Jayant Patil, MLC, Janata Dal (Sharad Yadav group) state president Kapil Patil, MLC, former AIKS president Amra Ram, ex-MLA, AIKS joint secretaries K K Ragesh, MP and Vijoo Krishnan, renowned journalist P Sainath, CPI(M) central committee member Mahendra Singh, AIDWA general secretary Mariam Dhawale and its vice president Sudha Sundararaman, CITU vice president Dr D L Karad and by the leaders of this Long March - AIKS president Dr Ashok Dhawale, AIKS

former state president J P Gavit, MLA, AIKS state president Kisan Gujar and AIKS state general secretary Dr Ajit Nawale— and, earlier in the day by other leaders of the AIKS, CITU, AIAWU, AIDWA, DYFI, SFI and by a wide spectrum of the supporting political parties, organisations and individuals.

All the farmers left Mumbai on the night of March 12, with tremendous confidence generated by this victory, buttressed equally with deep gratitude towards the people of the State and the country who had supported them to the hilt in this struggle. The massive nationwide public response to this Long March was an acknowledgement of the valiant, peaceful and democratic struggle waged by the peasants under Kisan Sabha leadership. It was also a reflection of the fact that their demands of land rights, loan waiver, remunerative prices and pension, which were essentially directed against the neo-liberal policies of the BJP-led governments in the state and the centre, were actually the demands of the peasantry of India as a whole. And one of the most important gains of this Long March was that the peasantry struggled together as a class, rising above the divisions of religion, caste and creed. It showed the way to fight the dark forces of communalism and casteism.

One battle has been won, but the war still remains. And after the victory in this battle, it shall be fought with even greater grit and determination all over the country!

*(Ashok Dhawale is the national president of AIKS and who led the Long March)*

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## **Maharashtra Workers Solidarity with Kisan Long March**

Wholeheartedly supporting the historic Kisan Long March organised by AIKS, CITU Nasik district committee welcomed the assembled farmers displaying banners and hoardings in Nasik and on the road upto Thane; were greeted by the CITU national vice president and its state president Dr. D. L. Karad at the start of the rally who, along with CITU district president Sitaram Thambare, joined the Kisan March to some distance symbolising workers solidarity. On their way the farmers Long March was greeted by workers led by CITU local leaders at Cherful Ghat; Ghot, Kalamgaon, Vikroli and Sion. The Kolhapur workers donated Rs.1 lakh through CITU state leader Adam Narassaiya, former MLA and AIIEA state unit donated Rs.21,000. The concluding rally at Azad Maidan was addressed by Karad and Adam Narassaiya was joined by all CITU state leaders including Vivek Monteiro, Sayeed Ahmad, K. R. Raghu, S. K. Raje, Shubha Shamim, Bapu Kavar and others. Fraternal CTU leaders including the state general secretary of HMS Sanjay Wadhavkar, Raju Desale of AITUC, Keni of AIIEA, state government employees' leaders, Viswas Utagi of TUJAC, Milind Ranade of NTUI conveyed their support.

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## **Raise High The Red Flag of Kamgar-Shetkari-Shetmajoor Ekjuti**

Vivek Monteiro

The hammer and sickle, symbolizing worker-farmer alliance, which emblazons the flags of both the CITU and the AIKS has achieved a new significance for Maharashtra, as the outcome of the historic six day Kisan Long March organized by the AIKS from 6 to 12 March.

The Long March was organized in the background of growing struggles of the farmers and Adivasis of Maharashtra in the recent years. In 2016, a massive two day mahapadav and road blockade in Nasik organized by the AIKS had won assurances from the Maharashtra government on several demands. In May/ June 2017 there was a historic six day strike by a joint action committee of farmers. In each of these agitations demonstrations in support were organised by industrial workers at Nasik, Mumbai, Sholapur and at

various centres by CITU. In October 2015, a Shramik Sangharsh Parishad of workers, farmers and agricultural workers, jointly organized by CITU, AIKS and AIAWU; was held at Parbhani which resolved to strengthen the worker-farmer alliance to fight against neoliberal economic policies and build mass support for alternative policies. Thereafter, in January 2016, Rasta Rokos were held all over the State in which both industrial workers and farmers participated in large numbers. The All India Kisan Sabha and All India Agricultural Workers Union activists also held support demonstrations and Rasta Rokos all over the State to support the all India strikes of the trade unions on September 2 of 2015 and of 2016.

On 6 March, the first day of the Long March, to express solidarity with the Kisan brothers and sisters, D.L. Karad, president of Maharashtra state committee of CITU and Raju Desale of the AITUC, along with worker-activists accompanied the March. As the March descended from the Nasik ghats and proceeded towards Mumbai like the Vaitarna River, it grew in strength. En route it was joined by tributaries from Akole, Thane and other districts.

At various intermediary locations at Igatpuri, Shahpur, Bhiwandi etc. it was enthusiastically welcomed by CITU workers from the factories and power looms along the route. When the Kisan March entered Mumbai from the north-east suburb at Mulund, a rousing welcome was organized by hundreds of activists of the CITU, CPI(M), DYFI, AIDWA, SFI and other left organizations who had gathered at the Kanjurmarg flyover on the Eastern Express Highway and at Ramabai Nagar, Ghatkopar.

But, what was not planned was the overwhelming response of the citizens of Mumbai, social and political organizations, who came on the streets spontaneously to welcome the marchers with food and water supplies. This response was so massive and varied that it is difficult to list all the organizations involved. It included housing society groups, youth mandals, social service groups, Dalit organizations, minority organizations from Sikh, Muslim, Christian and Buddhist communities, and several political parties. The only organizations conspicuously absent were the BJP-RSS, a point which has been commented upon in the media.

Addressing the mammoth gathering of the All India Kisan Sabha at Azad Maidan, Mumbai on March 12 on behalf of CITU Dr. D. L. Karad said that the historic six day Kisan March from Nasik to Mumbai, and the massive support that it has received from the working class in Maharashtra is a living example of the concept of the alliance of the workers and peasants put forward by Comrade Lenin as the foundation for changing the world and building a new society. It is a fitting and fighting response to the BJP-RSS goons who destroyed the Lenin statue in Belonia, Tripura. On the basis of this unity of the working people, it is we who will uproot and throw away the anti-people, communal and divisive political forces in our country. The importance and relevance of the unity of worker-farmer at this present conjuncture was also stressed by the other trade union leaders of the Kamgar Sangathana Samyukta Kriti Samiti (Trade Union Joint Action Committee) who spoke at the meeting, including Milind Ranade of Sarva Shramik Sangh, Vishwas Utagi, Joint Convenor of KSSKS and Sanjay Wadhawkar, state general secretary of HMS.

There is no doubt that the unique Kisan Long March, with its discipline and determination, has won new support for the left and democratic ideology in Maharashtra, not only among the toiling people, but also from the democratic sections of the middle class. Most sections of the media were compelled to report the progress of the March, in terms of respect and sympathy for the problems of the agriculturists. The Long March has raised the confidence of all the sections of the working people who are in struggle, in both the organized and unorganized sector. It has raised the prestige of the red flag with the hammer and sickle. It is a significant step forward toward exposing the real face of pseudo-nationalist and anti-people politics of the BJP-RSS led the government in Maharashtra.

# INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

## Electricity

### **Electricity Employees March to Parliament**

At the call of the National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees and Engineers (NCCOEEE), about 25,000 electricity workers and engineers, coming from different parts of the country, marched to the Parliament and held a massive rally at Parliament Street in New Delhi on 3 April protesting against anti-employees and anti-people Electricity Bill, 2014. The rally gave call for employees and people's unity and countrywide strike during monsoon session of the parliament against the Bill. A resolution, moved by the convener of NCCOEEE Prasanta Nandi Choudhury, proposed to declare the day of countrywide strike of electricity employees in the national convention of central trade unions and federations.

The rally also extended support to the struggle of electricity employees of Uttar Pradesh against privatisation and warned UP government against adopting repressive policies on the struggling employees.

The speakers condemned the Bill targeting the poor. The rally also demanded equal pay for equal work and regularisation of contract workers.

Those who addressed and greeted the fighting electricity employees include CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, AITUC general secretary Amarjit Kaur, CITU national secretary and EEFI working president Swadesh DevRoye and its national president K. O. Habib, Mohan Sharma of AIFEE, Shailendra Dubey of AIPEF and leaders of AIPF, AIFOPDE and TNEBPWU.

### **Massive Protest against Electricity Privatisation in U. P.**



**Protest before Shakti Bhavan in Lucknow**

Under the banner of Bidyut Karamchari Sanjukt Sangharsh Samity (Electricity Employees Joint Struggle Committee), Uttar Pradesh; the workers and engineers of all state electricity corporations resorted to daylong 'work boycott' en massé and staged demonstrations and held meetings in front all establishments throughout the state on 27 March; and resorted to 'work-to-rule' from 28 March demanding reversal of the decision of privatisation of electricity by the state government in Uttar Pradesh. Dharna, demonstration and public meetings were held in front of project headquarters of production at Anpara, Obra, Pipri, Panki, Harduaganj and Pariksha; and in front of district offices of distribution corporations throughout the state.

More than 5000 workers and engineers staged protest demonstration and held meeting in front of Shakti Bhavan, the headquarter of Power Corporation at Lucknow addressed by leaders of the joint committee and central trade unions.

# STATES

## Andhra Pradesh

### **ASHA Workers State March**

Led by their CITU union, thousands of ASHA workers held a state level March in Vijayawada on the International Women's Day on 8 March demanding minimum wage, accidental insurance coverage, immediate payment of long accumulated dues etc and staged hours-long sit-in at Vijayawada railway station before breaking the huge police cordon and marching via Eluru Locks to Alankar Centre where they staged sit-in there for 5 hours bringing the traffic movement in a grinding halt. ASHA workers rally was addressed by state leaders of the union and of CITU.

Finally, the state additional director of medical and health, joint commissioner of family welfare and program officer visited the place of agitation and assured the workers that a joint meeting would be arranged before 10 April to consider their demands. With this assurance, the agitation was called off.

## Rajasthan

### **Protest against Fixed Term Employment**



In response to all India call of CITU general council meeting and in solidarity with striking workers of Kerala, a workers procession from Kisan Mazdoor Bhavan marched to state labour department office and staged demonstration on 2 April at Jaipur demanding withdrawal of 'fixed term employment' notification of the Central government. The state labour minister on reaching the office faced demonstration. Fixed term employment will deprive the unemployed youths from getting regular jobs and deprive the contract workers of getting their jobs regularised. Memoranda containing the demands were submitted to

the prime minister and union labour minister through the additional labour commissioner.

The meeting was addressed by CITU state president Ravindra Shukla, secretary Bhanwar Singh Shekhawat, district president Kisan Singh Rathore, AITUC state leader D. K. Chhangani and several others.

The workers rally also supported the Bharat Bandh called by several dalit organisations this day against dilution of SC ST Prevention of Atrocities Act by arecent judgem,ent of the Supreme Court.

# INTERNATIONAL

## WFTU Presidential Council Meeting

A meeting of the Presidential Council of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) was held in Tehran, Iran on 26-27 February 2018. The Presidential Council has 48 members representing their trade unions in 42 countries in all the 5 continents. Over 50 members and invitees participated in the meeting. CITU was represented by Hemalata, president of CITU and member of WFTU Presidential Council, and Swadesh Dev Roye, deputy general secretary of WFTU and national secretary of CITU.

Alireza Mahjoob, Member of Parliament and secretary general of Iran Workers' House which hosted the meeting, welcomed the participants and said that the presence of the members of Presidential Council in Tehran strengthened their anti imperialist movement. The presidium in the inaugural session of the meeting comprised representatives from Asia including Hemalata from CITU and Amarjeet Kaur from AITUC.

George Mavrikos, general secretary of WFTU extended solidarity and support to all the anti imperialist struggles across the globe, particularly Iran, Cuba, North Korea, and Venezuela etc. He condemned US attacks on Syria, Yemen and extended support to the peoples of Palestine, fighting heroically for their motherland. He said WFTU supported the right of people to decide freely and democratically, their future without imperialist pressures and interventions.

Formally placing the report of activities during the last year and proposals for action in 2018 Mavrikos said that 2017 was a year of rich actions for WFTU, which saw its influence expand. 40 delegations from 180 countries visited the WFTU headquarters in the year. WFTU affiliates in India mobilised around 20 crores workers from different sectors in different campaigns and struggles all over the country. He also said that though there were many solidarity actions, still, internationalism and solidarity remain inadequate, in the face of the onslaught of international finance dictated neoliberal policies on workers across the world. WFTU affiliates need to be in the frontline in extending solidarity. He also emphasised the need to strengthen WFTU financially to meet the present requirements. Mavrikos called for reaching a membership of 100 million by the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of WFTU in 2020. He also proposed that the year 2018 be observed as 'The Year of Trade Union Education and Training' by the WFTU and the Action Day on 3<sup>rd</sup> October, the Foundation Day of WFTU, be observed focussing on the demand of 'Social Security for All'.

37 speakers participated in the discussion on the report placed by the general secretary and endorsed the formulations and proposals for future action. Hemalata and Swadesh Dev Roye from CITU spoke on behalf of CITU.

The meeting adopted several resolutions unanimously – against the denial of visa to visit the US for a meeting of workers to the WFTU general secretary George Mavrikos, against imperialist threats and interventions and in solidarity with North Korea, Iran, Afghanistan, Venezuela, Syria and Lebanon. The meeting also adopted resolutions in solidarity with Cuba and demanding homeland for Palestine with East Jerusalem as its capital. It was decided that the next meeting of the extended Presidential Council will be held at WFTU headquarters Athens.

The meeting concluded on a confident note that WFTU will grow stronger with increased ideological consciousness of its cadre in the coming days.

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

State	Centre	Dec. 2017	Jan 2018	State	Centre	Dec. 2017	Jan 2018
AP	GUNTUR	281	280	MHR	MUMBAI	293	292
	VIJAYWADA	281	280		NAGPUR	316	327
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	287	285		NASIK	295	311
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	261	258		PUNE	279	289
	GUWAHATI	251	250		SHOLAPUR	298	297
	LABAC SILCHAR	261	262	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	304	307
	MARIANI JORHAT	245	241		ROURKELA	310	308
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	244	241	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	313	309
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	301	306	PUN	AMRITSAR	287	296
CHD	CHANDIGARH	279	287		JALANDHAR	288	291
CHS	BHILAI	313	314		LUDHIANA	277	278
DLI	DELHI	263	267	RIN	AJMER	262	267
GOA	GOA	293	303		BHILWARA	280	277
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	271	269		JAIPUR	271	274
	BHAVNAGAR	268	267	TN	CHENNAI	268	266
	RAJKOT	274	277		COIMBATORE	267	267
	SURAT	263	261		COONOOR	284	292
	VADODARA	269	268		MADURAI	284	279
HRV	FARIDABAD	259	261		SALEM	275	271
	YAMUNANAGAR	275	275		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	289	287
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	259	258	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	293	292
J&K	SRINAGAR	271	270		HYDERABAD	251	251
JRK	BOKARO	283	285		WARRANGAL	290	293
	GIRIDIH	308	310	TRP	TRIPURA	265	263
	JAMSHEDPUR	331	332	UP	AGRA	309	317
	JHARIA	318	319		GHAZIABAD	285	292
	KODARMA	327	336		KANPUR	292	298
	RANCHI HATIA	329	331		LUCKNOW	275	285
KNT	BELGAUM	296	298		VARANASI	283	288
	BENGLURU	287	287	WB	ASANSOL	309	310
	HUBLI DHARWAR	305	310		DARJEELING	273	270
	MERCARA	302	299		DURGAPUR	313	310
	MYSORE	302	300		HALDIA	315	317
KRL	ERNAKULAM	297	298		HOWRAH	271	276
	MUNDAKKAYAM	301	301		JALPAIGURI	278	279
	QUILON	331	325		KOLKATA	269	271
MP	BHOPAL	284	291		RANIGANJ	257	260
	CHHINDWARA	293	293		SILIGURI	268	263
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# WFTU Presidential Council Meeting, Tehran

(Report Page 25 )



# Andhra Pradesh ASHA Workers Agitation

(Report Page 24 )



The March

# Employees Rally in Delhi

(Report Page 23 )



## Kisan Long March in Maharashtra



The Long March



At Azad Maidan, Mumbai,  
CPI(M) General Secretary Sitaram Yechury



CITU leader D. L. Karad addressing



A Long March participant



Treating the blistered feet

