



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

***The Working Class Conveys New Year 2021 Greetings***

## **Kisan's Delhi Blockade**



AIKS Leader Amra Ram at Shahjahanpur Border (photo: Anil)

## **CITU Solidarity**



1 January 2021: CITU leaders Tapan Sen, Sindhu, Surekha leading a Solidarity March to Singhu border of around a thousand scheme workers from nearby districts of Punjab & Haryana



CITU leader E. Kareem, MP addressing Kisans at Gazipur border; Kareem led protest in Rajya Sabha opposing the farmers' bills, was suspended, staged dharna inside the Parliamentary premises which led to opposition's boycott of the Parliament on farmers bills

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# More Reports on 26 November Strike

(Reports - Page 5)

## Jammu & Kashmir



## Karnataka



## Jharkhand





## Spread Movement; Open Fronts

With the scale of spontaneity, tenacity and militancy, the ongoing farmers' movement surrounding Delhi is creating history. It must not end in historical failure.

Planned by AKSCC, in coordination with the joint platform of central trade unions and federations, the 2 days *Delhi Chalo* programme on 26-27 November 2020 rolled out in spontaneous indefinite gherao of Delhi. The subjective conditions favoured this spontaneous burst of the movement not foreseen by Modi government either.

This is the response of all sections of the peasantry of an attempt of super-imposition of capitalism in agriculture despite semi-feudal agrarian relation with stratification and deep caste based social relation.

Time has come to go beyond solidarity action with the peasants' movement. The situation demands to expand and heighten the movement in all States in India for sustainability and objectivity. Rightly, the AIKS has given call of 3 days Kisan Mahapadavs in front of the Governors Houses, being Central Government's representatives, in all state capitals during 23-25 January, 2021. These will be joined by the working class and other masses of women, youths and students.

It is necessary to open separate struggle fronts by respective class and mass organisations with their own demands and also in support of the peasants' demands. CITU has already opened second front with 10 point demands.

The historical moment has come to go beyond one issue or one time issue. It has to develop into all embracing movement to take on the capital to resist its neoliberal post-Covid attack, against the neo-normal attempts of corporates and their governments. It is happening in India and across the world.

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### WORKING CLASS

JANUARY 2021

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## Condolence

### Comrade Raghunath Singh



CITU is shocked and deeply grieved on the untimely demise of Comrade Raghunath Singh, CITU national Vice President and General Secretary of Punjab State Committee, on 20 December 2020, after sudden illness and post Covid-19 complications, at the age of 66 years. He was a Punjab State Secretariat member of the CPI(M) till his death.

Born in a political family in the Hoshiarpur district of Punjab, his father being a well-known communist leader and freedom fighter giving shelter to underground Party leaders like Harkishen Singh Surjeet, Pandit Kishorilal and others, Comrade Raghunath Singh became active in mass movement at his young age. As SFI's district leader he organised movement and was jailed for 3 months. Immediately after his student days, Comrade Raghunath joined CITU as a whole timer and became its district president in 1982 and led many struggles of the factory workers in the district. He was elected as the CITU State General Secretary in 2003 and was also elected as CITU national Vice President. He tirelessly worked moving across the State for the success of all national and state movements including 26 November 2020 general strike and in support of the ongoing peasant movement.

CITU paid respectful homage to the departed leaders; dipped its red flag in memory Comrade Raghunath Singh and conveyed condolences to his comrades and family members.

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### From the Pages of History

#### 100 years before; in 1921

- **The First Trade Union Centre -**
  - **Raised demand for 'Swaraj' of India for the first time;**
  - **Extended International Solidarity with the Workers of Socialist Russia.**

The very next conference of the newly formed First Trade Union Centre in India was held in the coal belt of Jharia from 30 November, 1921 attended by Lala Lajpat Rai among others. More than 50,000 workers participated in this historic conference and all the coal mines remained closed continuously for 3 days. The conference, for the first time, adopted the very first resolution on 'Swaraj' against colonial rule and the second resolution expressing solidarity with the starving millions of the first working class state of Russia, surrounded by imperialist countries, to send aid and appealing to the Indian workers to donate one day's wage for the cause of working class of Russia.

- **Strike by the First Trade Union -**

The *Madras Labour Union*, the first organised trade union in India in Buckingham and Carnatic Mills in Chennai were on 5 months indefinite strike from June to October 1921.

- **Wave of Strikes -**

According to British government's records, 600000 workers joined in the wave of 396 strikes in 1921.



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# More Reports on 26 November Strike

[Sector-wise and state-wise reports were published in the December 2020 issue of *The Working Class*. Below are some more reports.]

## Himachal Pradesh

In the State, 62,416 workers in CITU unions were on 26 November All India Workers General Strike. More than 10,000 of them joined demonstrations at 294 places in 11 districts of Solan, Sirmaur, Kullu, Mandi, Shimla, Kangra, Kinnaur, Chamba, Una, Bilaspur and Hamirpur; and of state level unions of state road transport workers, private bus driver conductor and of medical representatives.

## Karnataka

Organised by the Joint Committee of Trade Unions (JCTU), estimated around 65 lakh workers participated in the workers general strike and more than one lakh of them participated in the demonstrative programmes across the State on 26 November.

Public Sector workers participation in the strike was much wider and deeper compared to January 2020 strike. The JAF of PSU unions had issued a joint declaration against privatisation and on other demands. All recognised unions in BEML, HAL, BHEL and BEL issued strike notice; and, despite threats by the managements, the strike was total in all units except in BEL, though better than previous strikes. The contract workers of PSUs also stuck work and joined the protest action at the factory gates.

The strike was also successful in all major private sector factories. Auto rickshaw drivers strike was total in several districts. In Bangalore, auto strike was partial.

CITU alone published more than 9 lakh handbills, 60,000 posters and 9,000 copies of anti privatisation booklet.

## Rajasthan

Around 2.85 lakh CITU- led workers in industries and in unorganised sector and others joined the 26 November general strike; and more than 24,000 of them participated in demonstrations at 46 places in the 11 districts of Rajasthan. Sectorwise strike was joined by over 15,000 contract workers and leading CITU union activists among permanent workers in Rawat Bhata atomic power plant; 900 workers of textile industry in Sikar; 4,940 loading and unloading workers of FCI godowns, state warehouses, agri mandis in Sriganganagar and Hanumangarh districts; about 500 brick kiln workers at Sriganganagar; 1100 engineering workers at Jaipur; total medical representatives across the State; income tax, GSI, survey employees of the central government; total in bank and insurance; 80 workers of Agro-Tech.

## Uttar Pradesh

CITU state centre has report of general strike from 18 districts. There was sectorwise unevenness in the spread and intensity of the strike. Strike was widespread in the financial sector – bank and insurance except in State Bank. 600 to 100 workers participated in each of the dharnas and demonstrations. 93 trade union leaders and activists were arrested and detained by police till evening. 2330 Anganwadi workers at 78 blocks in 25 districts joined the strike. Medical Representatives' strike was total throughout the State. Central government employees strike was 20% - 60%.

## Haryana

26 November workers general strike was effective in wide areas of the State. Large number of striking construction, scheme and other workers came out on the streets. In public sector, the workers

and employees strike was massively successful in electricity, three tier municipal bodies, universities and education board, tourism, PWD, ITI etc. However, there was no strike in private organised sector except the CITU workers and activists who were on strike.

Workers pre-strike preparatory activities include holding physical conventions in most of the districts joined by hundreds of workers in each. CITU unions pasted large number of posters and distributed handbills.

Along with the strike preparation, CITU in the State also made joint preparation with Kisan organisations for their *Delhi Chalo* programme on 26-27 November. Since 26 November strike, CITU in the state was also in continuous solidarity actions with the peasants first front fighting against Modi government mobilising the ranks at Delhi borders and campaigning spreading out among in the villages. To suppress both the streams of the movements, of the workers and the peasants, BJP state government arrested more than 50 leaders of the both, the trade unions and farmer organisations, since 23 November night itself. Several leaders had to go underground and work for the success of workers general strike and Kisans *Delhi Chalo* programme.

On 25 November itself, the Haryana state Kisans started their march from Ambala to Delhi. Police created several hurdles for the march. On the other side, the Haryana police stopped Punjab Kisans at Punjab-Haryana border itself. CITU worked hard, with others, helping Kisans from Punjab and for reopening Haryana–Punjab border for Punjab Kisan contingent.

On 26 November, on the day of workers strike, Haryana police arrested hundreds of workers demonstrating near Kundali on the national highway. Similarly, police arrested the Kisans marching from Sampla and also from Bilaspur to Delhi in which majority were members of CITU, mostly scheme workers.

### **State Government Employees**

There was good response to strike by the state government employees in Kerala, West Bengal, Tripura, Maharashtra, Bihar, Assam, Haryana, Punjab and in 20 districts of Tamilnadu.

In Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Odisha the strike was partial.

In Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Madhya Pradesh the state government employees participated only in solidarity demonstrations.

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## **Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions Insists on physical meeting with Government**

In response to the Union Labour Minister's invitation for an online consultation meeting on 24 December on the draft rules of four labour codes, the Joint Platform of Central Trade Union Organisations rejected in writing the Minister's proposal and insisted on physical meeting for fruitful discussion. This kind of exercise, involving more than a score of stakeholders, through one single day video conference, on the draft rules of all the four labour codes, is meant only for the record and would serve no fruitful purpose, the trade unions pointed out. They are of the opinion that this exercise is being under taken only to meet the criticism that this Government at the Centre is violating tripartite consultations. On the one hand they cancel the winter session of the Parliament, while on the other they are throwing all precautions of distancing during the Covid pandemic for the election campaigns political rallies etc. Hence the undersigned central trade unions would not be part of such a farce.

# On Unemployment

## Joint Campaign by CITU-DYFI-SFI

At the initiative of CITU and through rounds of mutual consultation on the issues of unemployment, job losses and quality of employment; CITU-DYFI-SFI decided countrywide joint campaign and mobilisations at grass root level.

### Programmes

1. Joint meetings of the state leadership of CITU-DYFI-SFI; CITU to take initiative;
2. Joint National Convention in Delhi on 2 February 2021;
3. Followed by Joint State and District Conventions;
4. Extensive Joint and Independent Campaigns on the Charter of Demands in all States up to Grass-root aiming at reaching widest sections of the youth, students, workers, unemployed and people in general may be in the form of
  - (a) Survey to understand the extent of unemployment / its impact at the grass root level;
  - (b) Wide distribution of campaign material;
  - (c) Jathas/ processions/ meetings/ dharnas etc jointly decided at the respective level;
5. State level demonstrations in all states on a date / or within a week's period;
6. All India joint mobilisation, if possible as may be jointly decided.  
*[This is the first phase of CITU-DYFI-SFI joint initiative on the unemployment to prepare ground for joint countrywide struggles in the next round.]*

### Demands

1. Formulate policies that generate decent permanent employment;
2. Regularise all employees under contract, casual employment, and under the camouflage of voluntary work in government schemes in welfare, education including child-labour schools and other services;
3. Fill up all vacancies in different government departments and PSUs including all backlogs in reservations as per constitutional provisions for SC/ST etc;
4. Strictly enforce all statutory provisions for reservation in employment; Extend and enforce these reservations to employment of all kinds in the private sector;
5. Introduce 35 hours working per week and four-shift workdays through appropriate statutory enforceable measures;
6. Seriously address the issue of proliferation of child labour; strengthen the special child labour schools to prepare their enrolment into regular schools; rehabilitate the affected households with Govt assistance;
7. Increase public expenditure/investment on infrastructure development, education, health etc and create decent permanent jobs;
8. Withdraw premature compulsory retirement of government/PSU employees;
9. Directly link incentives/concessions/rebates/exemptions provided from government exchequer to private corporate investment, in concrete verifiable terms, with decent and permanent job creation;
10. Withdraw/scrap all measures/policies that facilitate precarious employment, insecure employment, including fragility of employment relations;
11. Extend MGNREGA to every individual jobseeker instead of one per household; Increase workdays under MGNREGA to 200 a year with minimum wage of Rs.600 per day; Formulate Urban Employment Guarantee Scheme with appropriate statutory measures;
12. Unemployment allowance of Rs 5000 per month to be introduced and enforced through statutory measures;
13. Free compulsory education with appropriate enforceable statutory measures for all up to university level along with expanding the education infrastructure from entry-level onwards through public investment; This should include vocational education and skill development institutions;
14. Right to Work to be made a fundamental right through appropriate amendment in the Constitution.



(Information Document)

**ESIC- Meeting held on 7 December, 2020**

183<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the ESI Corporation took place physically as well virtually concurrently on 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2020. Important aspects as outcome of the meeting is appended below for information of the IPs as well CITU leadership/organisers.

1. ESI Corporation as per statute adopted its Annual Report for the year 2019-20 in this meeting. Comparative chart with respect to previous year indicates Nos. of employees covered; as well nos. of beneficiaries is lower than the year 2018-19. Table below is notable.

Particulars	As on 31.03.2019	As on 31.03.2020	Variation +/-
Nos. of employees	3,14,01,920	3,09,66,930	-4,34,990
Nos. of Insured Persons / Family Units	3,49,67,080	3,41,44,140	-8,22,940
Total Nos. of Beneficiaries	13,56,72,270	13,24,79,263	-31.93,008
Total Nos. of Dispensaries	1520	1502	-18
ESI Hospitals	155	159	4

2. Report reflected that in view of reduction in rate of contribution in the year 2019-20, revenue income of the corporation has fallen to the tune of Rs. 5,150.71 Crore but expenditure towards medical benefit and cash benefit has grown to the tune of Rs, 646.91 Crore and 696.21 crore respectively.

3. Experience shows quality of service in ESIC Hospitals is better than the state run hospitals. Henceforth, it has been decided, ESIC will directly run the newly constructed / approved Hospitals unless the state insists to run the Hospital.

4. In view of limitation in availability of ESI dispensary / Hospital in the newly covered area, it has been decided that IPs not having ESI dispensary / Hospital within a radius of 10 Kms of his / her residence, may avail the primary health care service in any ESIC / Ayushman Bharat empanelled Hospital without any referral. For admission as inpatient treatment, if approval is required will be obtained online by the Hospital authority.

5. ESIC will step by step strengthen super speciality services in major Hospitals for Cardiology, nephrology, urology and oncology.

10 December, 2020

- Prasanta N Chowdhury

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# From the Adopted Report of the Secretariat Meeting

(21-22 December, 2020)

- We congratulate the working class and all committees of CITU at all levels –state, district and industrial, and the coordination committees at the lower level for their hard work and efforts for the success of the 26<sup>th</sup> November 2020 country wide general strike. It must be noted that this strike, unlike any of the earlier ones, was observed during the Covid pandemic, in the midst of constraints and restrictions on mobility even within the states. It is altogether a new experience right from the preparatory stage of activities. Several of our leaders and active cadres were themselves victims of Covid and had to be confined to their homes.
- We also congratulate the working class and people of Kerala for ensuring massive victory of Left Democratic Front in the elections of municipalities, corporations and all the tiers of panchayats in the state defeating the Congress-led UDF and BJP. This victory assumes significance because Congress and BJP have been operating in tandem since long to create a vicious atmosphere in the state to discredit and dislodge the LDF Govt there.
- We also congratulate the toiling people of Bihar for ensuring increased presence of the Left in the Bihar assembly. The Left parties have also made significant gains in Bihar, winning 16 out of the 29 seats in the assembly elections.
- It is also of significance that in a very difficult situation, the Left won all the five seats it contested in the recent elections to the District Development Council in the Kashmir region.
- A unique public meeting was held by CITU centre on 7<sup>th</sup> November to commemorate the 103<sup>rd</sup> centenary of the Great October Revolution, the centenary of the first national trade union centre and the Golden Jubilee of the foundation of CITU. This was also utilised to emphasise the importance of the strike. Our message to the workers across the country was conveyed in 7 languages – English, Hindi, Malayalam, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada, through the national and the concerned state leadership. A draft was sent from the CITU centre to facilitate conveying uniform content. The public meeting is reported to have reached 81703 people and viewed by 51101 people. In addition, it has been reported to have been shared and cross posted widely.
- We have already decided that our actions must be three pronged – i) independent from our own platform, ii) joint along with AIKS and AIAWU and iii) as part of the joint trade union platform. We have to continue all the three vigorously.
- We have to take up campaign against railways, electricity and health privatisation as priority issues. All our federations and state committees have to plan massive campaigns and struggles on the specific burning issues of the workers in the concerned sector/ state, linking them to the policies of the BJP government at the centre and its politics of favouring the capitalist class.
- Constitute village/ block/ mohalla level coordination committees of CITU affiliated unions
- The surging anger reflected in the widening spontaneous struggles among all sections of the toiling people, the workers and the peasants provide the opportunity to expose the dubious politics aimed at sustaining the discredited capitalist system. Such exposure alone will enable us to take the struggle to the level of defiance and resistance and change the correlation of forces in favour of the working class and the toiling people. Our multifarious activities during the period of the Covid pandemic and lockdown – starting from providing relief to the migrant workers, leading them into struggles on their rights, the unprecedented strike during the pandemic on 26<sup>th</sup> November and the solidarity to the peasants' struggles including our role in the 8<sup>th</sup> December Bharat bandh – clearly prove that we can do this

## **WORKER-PEASANT UNITY**

### **Against Modi-led BJP Government** **CITU Opens Second Front**

**CITU has opened Second Front against Modi-led BJP government to further mount protest actions:**

- At work places / block level on 30 December;
- District level demonstrations including courting arrest etc on 7-8 January 2021;
- Regional jathas within each State from 15 January 2021 onwards culminating in massive State level mobilisations.

*[These will be followed by further intensifying independent as well as joint trade unions actions as will be decided by the joint trade union platform.]*

#### **Demands**

1. Scrap all four Labour Codes;
2. Repeal three Farm Acts;
3. Withdraw Electricity Bill 2020;
4. Stop Privatisation;
5. Rs.7500 per month Cash Transfer to all non-income tax families;
6. Food Grains 10 kg per person per month to all needy;
7. 200 Days Work under MNREGA with daily wage of not less than Rs.700; Extend legally enforceable employment guarantee scheme to urban areas;
8. Scrap NPS; Implement the old pension system;
9. Social Security for all;
10. Ensure Universal Free Public Healthcare.



## **WORKER-PEASANT UNITY**

### **Against Modi-led BJP Government**

## **Peasants First Front**

### **Demands**

- 1. Repeal three Farm Acts;**
- 2. Withdraw Electricity Bill 2020.**

## **CITU's Solidarity Actions**

- **Workers Solidarity Actions are continuing almost daily in all States, in almost all districts and up to grass-root level responding to almost all calls of Sanjukta Kisan Morcha and AIKSCC;**
- **Call for Fund by AIKS has had wide response from CITU unions, federations and its state committees;**
- **CITU centre and CITU state committees of nearby states are regularly sending their leaders and large contingents of worker volunteers, in rotation, to all Delhi/onto-Delhi borders at Singhu, Tikri, Gazipur, Shahjahanpur and Palwal;**
- **Other CITU state committees to send 10 volunteers in each contingent for 2 days on relay basis to join in peasants' mobilisations at Shahjahanpur and Palwal borders;**
- **CITU state level jathas from 15 January will also campaign on peasants demands and AIKS Mahapadav programme;**
- **CITU and the workers will join in full strength AIKS' 3 days Mahapadav before the Governors' Houses in state capitals on 23-25 January;**
- **This will be followed by Kisan-Mazdoor Parade on the Republic Day on 26 January 2021.**

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## **Against Modi Government, CITU Opened Second Front**

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### **30 December - Country Protest**

Despite short time notice after CITU's extended Secretariat meeting on 21-22 December, there was countrywide wide response to CITU's call of workers' work-place / block-level protest in pursuance of 10 point demands. Following are some initial reports from the States. More reports are awaited.

#### **West Bengal**

According to the initial report, CITU's protest programme 30 December was implemented in 67 blocks of 11 districts in the state, where workers have participated in the programme enthusiastically. In other districts also the programme was implemented but detailed report is awaited. 4 districts have re-scheduled the programme under unavoidable local conditions.

The programme was also implemented by the different industrywise federations before their establishments and at block levels.

#### **Kerala**

The protest programme has taken place at 218 centres in 14 districts of the State. Due to election of local bodies' Presidents and Vice Presidents on the same day in the State, the programme could not be implemented at desired level as was planned.

#### **Punjab**

CITU district committees in the State implemented the protest programme at 35 places in 18 districts joined by around 2,500 workers. However, three state level CITU unions – the Lal Jhanda Pb. Bhatha Mazdoor Union, Anganwari Mulazam Union and Lal Jhanda Pendu Chwokidar Union independently organised programme at 125 work places across the State joined by around 9000 workers. This is despite the fact that large number of Anganwadi, MNREGA, construction, brick kiln and transport workers are continuing their participation at Delhi borders with agitating farmers.

#### **Bihar**

In 11 districts of Patna, Samastipur, Bettiah, Begusarai, Muzaffarpur, Katihar, Purnea, Kishanganj, Dehri-On-Some, Chapra and Gaya protest demonstrations and dharnas were organised by CITU committees and independently by BSSR Union and the unions of construction, transport, Anganwadi, Seedcraft workers; railway contract workers, safai Karmacharis and others.

#### **Jharkhand**

At about 700 places in 17 districts the protest programme was organised at work places by the workers in coal, steel, transport, construction, beedi and stone quarry industries. In addition, scheme workers in ICDS, Mid Day Meal, Asha staged protest at work places

#### **Chhattisgarh**

At 10 places in 5 districts, 1053 workers participated in the protest day programme.

#### **Delhi-NCR**

Protest programme was held in Ghaziabad in front of factory gates of Atlas Cycle, MBD Group, M Gulab Singh & Sons, Halifax International, SFC Solution, ECI, Coca Cola, etc. On the day a workers general meeting was held at Nadgram.

# Against Modi Government, CITU Opened Second Front

## 30 December - Country Protest

Haryana



Himachal Pradesh



Assam



Chhattisgarh



Bihar



Shahibabad (Delhi-NCR)



Kerala





# Against Modi Government, CITU Opened Second Front

Uttarakhand



Uttar Pradesh



Tamilnadu



Rajasthan





# Against Modi Government, CITU Opened Second Front

## Jharkhand



## Odisha



## Karnataka



## Coal





## Against Modi Government, CITU Opened Second Front

### BHEL



### CITU Solidarity with Kisan's Delhi Blockade



Medical & Sales Representatives Union UPMSRA  
in Solidarity Demonstration at Gazipur border on 31 December 2020



## **Maharashtra**

Reliance Petrol Pump at Nashik-Dhule Highway was shutdown anticipating the Maharashtra Kisan Sabha Jatha to Delhi.

After due deliberations, the joint platform trade unions - Kamgar Sangathan Samyukta Kruti Samiti (Maharashtra State) have taken decision to launch mass action of boycotting the Ambani Adani Groups' products and services including Jio, Reliance Fresh, Reliance Petrol pumps, Adani Wilmar consumer products etc beginning on 1 January 2021. In addition parallel programme of badge wearing, demonstrations at retail outlets and petrol pumps and poster campaign are being organized.

## **Uttarakhand**

Demonstration and PM's effigy burning were organised in front of CITU Rajpur office in Dehradun. In addition the construction workers staged demonstration at work place of under construction Hydro-electric project. Anganwadi employees union staged demonstration at Sahaspur and Vikasnagar project sites.

## **Uttar Pradesh**

Demonstration was staged in front of DLC office In Allahabad.

## **Tamilnadu**

Demonstrations were staged in 37 districts at more than 170 centres across the State participated by more than 11,500 workers. Around 80,000 leaflets were distributed and 3000 posters were pasted.

## **Coal**

At the call of CMSI of CITU, protest demonstrations were staged at 40 coal mines on 29-30 December and 10 point demands were submitted to the administration.

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## **CITU Condemns Govt on DA Freeze**

CITU issued statement on 21 November 2020 condemning Modi government for issuing notification on 19 November imposing DA freeze on public sector employees, at present on executives and non-executive supervisors, for the period 1 October 2020 - 30 June 2021. DA freeze is being justified on ground of "crisis arising out of Covid-19". At the same time the Government is extracting maximum from the CPSEs, even from the most financially strained ones, by forcing them to pay special-dividend, buy-back their own shares and by numerous other means.

Such atrocious design of DA freeze must be fought back resolutely as the Government adopted the policy of DA freeze the extension of which on the legitimate earnings of other workers and employees cannot be ruled out.

CITU called upon the public sector employees to unitedly oppose and resist such nefarious design of freezing and forfeiting legitimate DA.

# Trade Unions Solidarity Actions

## With ongoing Kisan Movement

### Call for Further Solidarity Action

After successful Bharat Bandh on 8 December in support of Kisan's ongoing struggle, CTUs (Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral Federations / Associations) in a joint statement on 11 December reiterated their wholehearted support to the ongoing united struggles of the farmers demanding scrapping of draconian Agri-laws, Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 and legislation guaranteeing MSP.

CTUs received letter from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha appreciating continued support from the CTUs in their just struggle and informed about their next phase of movement and requesting for support. The CTUs called upon the workers, employees and their unions, irrespective of affiliations, to be ever vigilant and extend their active solidarity to the call of Farmers' Joint Struggle in the coming crucial period which include - *From 12 December to block the Delhi - Jaipur National Highway; - From 12 December to open Toll Plazas throughout the country; - State/local level actions of the farmers on 14 December 2020; and - Boycotting the products of Ambani and Adani like Jio, Reliance Malls, Adani Fresh etc.*

### Working Class Contribution to Kisan's Struggle Fund

[There is spontaneous and enthusiastic response of the workers, unions, federations and CITU committees to the all India call of CITU to contribute fund to the ongoing Kisan struggle. Substantial amounts have already been deposited in AIKS account as workers contribution. Details are being collected. Following are some reports from CITU state committees and federations.]

#### Andhra Pradesh State Committee of CITU

On 16 December, Rs.10,69,000 were remitted to AIKS account as collected amount from the workers and unions in the State in solidarity with the nationwide ongoing farmers struggle.

#### Kerala State Committee of CITU

Kerala State Committee of CITU, on 1 January 2021, has sent a total amount of Rs.8,39,495 to AIKS account as workers contribution towards the ongoing Kisan struggle. Unionwise contribution is as follows:

Kerala State Committee of CITU, on 1 January 2021, has sent a total amount of Rs.8,39,495 to AIKS account as workers contribution towards the ongoing Kisan struggle. Unionwise contribution is as follows:

1.KSEB Workers Association	-	Rs. 4,00,000
2.KSRT Employees Association	-	Rs. 25,000
3.KSFE Staff Association	-	Rs. 50,000
4.Kerala Co.Operative Employees Union	-	Rs. 25,000
5.Kerala Petroleum Gas Workers Union	-	Rs. 10,000
6.Kottaym Dist Committee	-	Rs. 10,000

7.Kerala state Bewarage Staff Union	-	Rs.	10,000
8.Keltron Employees Union	-	Rs.	2,500
9.Automobile Sales and Service mp.Union	-	Rs.	5,000
10.Khadi Board Employees Union	-	Rs.	5,000
11.Kasragode Dist. Constuction Workers Union	-	Rs.	5,000
12.Multi Level Marketting Employees Union	-	Rs.	5,000
13.Trivandrun Dist Municipal Contigent Union	-	Rs.	10,000
14.Titanium Employees Union	-	Rs.	5,000
15.Trivandrun Dist Head Load Union	-	Rs.	5,000
16.Trivandrun Dist Matsya Thozhilali Union	-	Rs.	1,000
17.Cochin Shipyard Employees Federation	-	Rs.	18,420
18.Traco Cable Company Employees Union	-	Rs.	5,000
19.HOC Workers Union	-	Rs.	13,225
20.General Construction Workers Union (FACT CD)	-	Rs.	1,000
21.Cochin Refinery Workers Association	-	Rs.	48,350
22.FACT Employees Association	-	Rs.	50,000
23.Cochin Port Employees Organisation	-	Rs.	10,000
24.Kerala State Tanklorry Workers Union	-	Rs.	11,000
25.Kerala Petroleum And Gas Workers Union	-	Rs.	10,000
26.Kerala State Videshamadhya Vyavasaya Thozhilali Union	-	Rs.	10,000
27.Co.operative Employees Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	50,000
28.Anganwadi Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	10,000
29.Sahakarana Karar Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	2,000
30.Asha Workers Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	2,000
31.Toddy Workers Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	13,000
32.Lottery Agents Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	3,000
33.General Workers Union Trissur Dist Committee	-	Rs.	2,000
34.Kollam Dist Cashew Union	-	Rs.	5,000
35.Kollam Dist Construction Workers Union	-	Rs.	2,000

## BSNL Employees Union



A 5-member delegation of BSNL Employees Union met the agitating Kisans at Singhu border of Delhi on 29 December 2020 and expressed telecom workers solidarity with Kisan struggle. At the venue, they also handed over a cheque of Rs.1 lakh to AICS Finance Secretary Krishnaprasad as contribution to Kisans struggle fund.

## All India Coal Workers Federation

Sending a cheque of Rs.50,000 as coal workers contribution to the ongoing Kisan movement, All India Coal Workers Federation's General Secretary and CITU's National Secretary D. D. Ramanandan

in his letter informed AIKS General Secretary Hannan Mollah that the coal workers have been resorting to solidarity actions with Kisan movement in all coal bearing areas across India.

## **Electricity Employees Federation of India (EEFI)**



A 7-member delegation of national and state leaders of EEFI led by its Working President and CITU national Secretary Swadesh Dev Roye with Subhas Lamba, K. Jayaprakash, L.R. Sreekumar, R. Karumalaiyan, Suresh Rathi and Naresh Kumar met the agitating Kisan leaders at Singhu border on 16 December.

EEFI has contributed Rs.6 lakhs to AIKS as electricity workers contribution to Kisan's ongoing national struggle.

## **North Zone Insurance Employees Association (NZIEA)**

At the call of NZIEA, Karnal and Rohtak Divisional Committees Secretaries Harish Nagpal and Pawan Malik on 5 December handed over a cheque of Rs.1 lakh to AIKS Haryana State Secretary Sumit at Rohtak as contribution of insurance employees of the divisions to the ongoing Kisan struggle and conveyed full solidarity with the struggling farmers against the Agri Acts and Electricity Bill. State Vice Presidents of AIKS Preet Singh and of CITU Surender Malik were also present on this occasion.

On 4 December, all units of NZIEA had lunch hour demonstrations in support of the demands of the farmers and against undemocratic measures of Modi Govt.

## **Sarv Karmachari Sangh, Haryana**

Sarv Karmachari Sangh, Haryana paid Rs.3 lakhs to AIKS leaders in Haryana as state government and semi-government employees' contribution to the Kisan struggle.

## **All Haryana Power Corporation Worker Union**

All Haryana Power Corporation Worker Union has paid Rs.1 lakh to AIKS leaders in Haryana as State electricity workers contribution to the ongoing Kisan movement in Delhi and the country.

## **MNREGA Workers of Punjab**

Led its General Secretary, CITU's MNREGA Workers Union, Punjab has collected Rs.22,0300 and 10 quintal 70 kg of wheat flour, 40 kg dry milk and 50 kg onion to send to help the fighting farmers at Delhi border.

# STATES

## West Bengal

### **Para Teachers Protest against TMC Government's Betrayal**



**18 December Rally**



**30 December College Street Blockade**

Protesting against the betrayal of the TMC government of not implementing the assurance given to them; the Para Teachers (contract teachers) of West Bengal launched agitation by staging a 3,000 strong demonstration on 11 November and beginning indefinite day-night sit-in agitation on 18 December 2020 near *Bikas Bhavan*, the office of the state government's education department.

It was on 11 November, 2019 that the Para Teachers of the State began their indefinite 32 days work boycott and state level sit-in with 28 days indefinite hunger strike which ended after the State Education Minister gave categorical assurance in the meeting with their leaders to resolve all job-related issues within one month and half month which include their main demand of regularisation in jobs as Elementary Teachers in all schools across the State.

The Covid-19 pandemic and related severe restriction the initial stage prevented the para teachers from starting struggle afresh. TMC government also tried their best to prevent the para

teachers from launching agitation by blocking the 11 November 2020 rally, despite earlier permission, and arresting all leaders and 19 other teachers and releasing them on bail in the late evening after hours of long detention.

The joint forum of the para teachers and a human rights body moved petition before the Kolkata High Court praying for permission of peaceful agitation. Well-known lawyer Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, CPI(M) MP argued their case and the High Court allowed the Para Teachers to hold their sit-in demonstration until the government fulfils their demands. Permission was also granted in the late night for holding a rally to hold the rally and next morning on 18 December, more than 3,000 para teachers joined it.

Besides, the para teachers will be joining the united joint mass movement of teachers and non-teaching staff working under various schemes on 28 December and will be courting arrest on 7 January to protest against NEP, labour codes and farm Acts.

On 30 December, about 5,000 Para Teachers of West Bengal blocked the College Street, a main thoroughfare of Kolkata city.

## Andhra Pradesh

### **Struggle & Victory of KPCL Port Workers**

Under CITU-affiliated Krishnapatnam Port Clearing and Forwarding Workers Union, all 12,000 workers, except 500 administrative staff, of the Krishnapatnam major port of Krishnapatnam Port Company Ltd (KPCL) in the Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh were on 24 hours total strike - in all three shifts, operational berths and logistics - on 26 November 2020, the day of country-wide workers general strike. It was the first strike in 13 years since the construction of the Port. On 2 October 2020 KPCL was taken over by Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) completing acquisition of 75 per cent stake in KPCL from the CVR Group. Since then the workers intensified their struggle.

The strike was in pursuance of the workers long pending legitimate demands for payment of minimum wages, bonus, leave wages, against 12 hours work, for overtime wages, PF etc.

The strike was followed by indefinite sit-in in front of Nellore collectorate; 10 December *Karmika Gharjana* rally; refusal and stoppage of 12 hours working by Volvo Vehicle drivers since 11 December; 48 hours dharna at KPCL Port on 22-23 December, attended and addressed by Narendra Rao, the General Secretary of CITU's Water Transport Workers Federation of India and AP state President of CITU Ch. Narasingha Rao.

Ultimately, a MOU was signed on 31 December in a tripartite meeting attended by the Principal Labour Secretary. It is a victory for the workers particularly in an Adani Group company.

#### **Salient Points of the MOU**

1. 12 hours work system replaced by 8 hours work with immediate effect;
2. Bonus for 2019-20 FY will be paid before 30-01-2021 to all contract workers;
3. All the workers in KPCL with old contractors will join work under the new service providers with continuity of service.
4. All the workers will claim accrued pending benefits under previous management;
5. Primary responsibility of KPCL as principle employer for all statutory benefits of the workers in case of failure by the contractors;
6. DLC, Nellore will enquire and submit report on 26 workers, who went to the native places and management's refusal to take them back in service; on compensation not paid in case of accidental deaths of workmen;
7. The Principle Secretary, Labour directed KPCL management to recognize the CITU union, the only operational union in KPCL;
8. No victimization of the workers.



# INTERNATIONAL

## Waves of Workers General Strikes in the World

During October-December, 2020 the world has witnessed waves of workers general strikes in several countries under world capitalism – Indonesia, India, Greece, Italy, South Korea and France. In addition there are sectoral struggles in several other countries.

These strikes and struggles are taking place in an abnormal situation created by Covid-19 pandemic. The issues of the strikes are almost similar. The governments of these countries have been mounting unprecedented offensive on the workers and the people for increasing corporate profitability by increasing exploitation of labour, attacking on their livelihood and by imposition of restriction on labour and people's rights and movements.

The workers of Indonesia were on 3 days general strike on 6-8 October, 2020 protesting against Omnibus 'Job Creation Law'. On 26 November, 2020 the workers of India and Greece resorted to the general strikes on almost similar demands. A day before, on 25 November, the workers were on general strikes in Italy against anti-workers and pro-corporate legislations and measures by the government and in South Korea against the government's move to impose restriction on workers strikes and movement. The workers of France were on strike on 5 December against Macron government's decision on one pension scheme.

Covid-19 pandemic has direct bearings in all these strikes as the governments of the respective countries are ignoring the workers and people's health concerns in absence health infrastructures and safety measures; and taking advantage of Covid-19 pandemic, are attempting to impose anti-workers laws and measures; and putting restrictions on strikes and agitations.

*[Reproduced & Edited from CITU Central Bulletin ... and The Working Class ... ]*

### Indonesia

The so called Omnibus 'Job Creation Law' was hurriedly approved by the Indonesian Parliament on 5 October, 2020 just before the countrywide workers scheduled general strike on 6-8 October. It abolished sectoral minimum wage; reduced severance pay from maximum 32 months to 19 months; increased overtime to 4 hours a day and 18 hours a week; reducing two weekly off days to one day; reducing restriction on outsourcing including hiring workers from outside the country. The law has been made inviting transnationals in expectation of their exit-China soon. Indonesian's Chambers of Commerce & Industry has welcomed it.

Indonesia's Security Minister, flanked by the Military Chief and other top leaders, threatened protesters and National Covid-19 task force spokesperson said "there is a public health emergency."

At the call of the trade unions joint forum, thousands of the workers resorted to countrywide 3 days strike on 6-8 October and thousands staged demonstrations in cities and industrial centres. The Confederation of Indonesian Trade Unions (KSPI) said that over 2 million workers representing 32 labour unions and federations took part in the strike and rallies for several days beginning on 6 October.

The police in Jakarta blocked the streets leading to the Parliament preventing the workers from holding a mass rally there; and detained at least 200 high school students who attempted to reach the compound. Across the country several workers and students were arrested. A coalition of 15 activists groups including trade unions and students led the movement.

## **Workers General Strike in Greece**

On 26 November 2020, workers of Greece were on countrywide general strike at the call of the All Workers Militant Front (PAME), Civil Servants Confederation, Federations of Associations of Hospital Doctors, the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE) and the base unions in hundreds of workplaces across the country. The strike was mainly in protest against the right-wing government's move to abolish the 8-hours-a-day work system and to put new restrictions on right to strike. The strike was for the protection of the workers lives, health and rights. The strike demands also included benefits to all unemployed, without conditions; no redundancies and no cuts in employment rights.

The 24 hours strike spread in large workplaces and factories with almost complete participation in public transport, public hospitals, educational institutions and protests all over Greece. Strike paralyzed all public transport including rail, metro and tram services across the country and ferry services to the islands. Civil servants joined the strike demanding better workplace protections against corona virus. Greek journalists also participated in the strike with two-hour work stoppage during which no news broadcasts was aired. Flights were canceled or rescheduled though the air traffic controllers called off their strike after a court ruled their participation as illegal.

Hundreds of protesters marched to Athens' Klafthmonos square. Similar demonstrations took place across the country. The government filled the city centre of Athens and other big cities with riot police, armoured vehicles and police to suppress the movement. Police detained seven trade union activists and fined hundreds of Euros to dozens of workers and union functionaries for participation in the strike and demonstrations.

## **Workers General Strike in Italy**

Called by the USI (Unione Sindacale Italiana) central trade union, representing public workers; the national general strike by the public sector workers in Italy on 25 November paralyzed all modes of transports, schools and healthcare. Domestic and international flights were seriously affected as the air controllers were on strike. The strike was mainly in protest against attempt of privatisation by the government, in defence of workers' rights and safety at workplaces during Covid-19 pandemic.

The private sector workers, particularly in small scale sector, have been facing serious joblosses and wage cuts during Covid pandemic.

## **Workers General Strike in South Korea**

Around 2 lakh workers participated in the nationwide workers general strike in South Korea on November 25. The strike was organized by the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) in protest against the proposed amendment in labour laws that would prohibit the workers from occupying

a worksite while on strike. The strikers held demonstrations across the country. 30,000 workers at Kia Motors also went on strike against job cuts and for higher wages.

The Prime Minister had called to KITU to cancel strike and rallies on the grounds of threatened Covid-19 spread and students exams; and held meeting of Central Disaster Management; and called on police and local governments to ensure Covid restrictions.

## **Workers General Strike in France**

CGT's public service trade unions including in transport, postal, education sectors have given call of nationwide public sector workers strike on 5 December and to prepare ground for 'rolling' strikes to oppose government's 'pension reforms'. France experienced one of the biggest strikes in decades as public sector workers are protesting against President Macron's proposed 'pension reforms' with single national pension plan replacing the existing sectorwise 44 different pension plans.

The strike paralysed entire transport system including rail, metro, road, air and waterways. La Poste (postal department) has been affected by the strikes for several weeks. "Working conditions and the protection of public service" are interlinked said CGT-Fapt.

The French national rail company, SNCF, canceled 90% of its trains; and metro in Paris closed 11 lines. France's teaching staff were on nationwide strike. Their union, Unsa-Éducation, said that the pension reforms are to penalize the teachers. The Eiffel Tower and the Orsay Museum, the two biggest landmarks of Paris had also reported reduced staff. Philippe Martinez, leader of CGT, told reporters that the strike would not end 5 December evening.

French newspaper, *Le Monde*, reported that more than 1.80 lakh of striking workers joined in the street demonstrations in 30 different parts of France on 5 December.

## **MNREGA Workers Elected in Panchayat**

### **Kerala again created history**

Out of newly elected total 15,961 Panchayat members (50% reserved for women), 2007 are MNREGA workers; and out of total 2000 plus block panchayat members 147 are MNREGA workers, 140 of them are women. Most of them were LDF candidates. 10 of the elected members are office bearers of MREGP Labours Union in Kerala.

For the first time, in any State in India such large number of MNREGA workers are the elected people's representatives setting an example in the entire capitalist world. On two counts they have set examples – one, that they are in the low rung of workers in the unorganised sector and two, that large number of them are women in a patriarchal society. It is grass root democracy with grass root elected representatives.

The editorial of Indian Express had to comment "This Kerala model of political representation and empowerment can be replicated in other states."

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

State	Centre	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020	State	Centre	Oct. 2020	Nov. 2020
AP	Guntur	123.0	121.3	MHR	Mumbai	114.8	114.0
	Nellore	115.3	116.0		Nagpur	118.4	118.2
	Visakhapatnam	128.9	129.8		Nasik	114.9	116.1
ASM	Biswanath-Chariali	128.1	130.9		Pune	115.3	115.8
	Doom-Dooma Tinsukia	134.9	137.8		Solapur	116.6	117.0
	Guwahati	129.1	128.8		Thane	113.3	113.4
	Labac-Silchar	119.1	121.1	MEG	Shillong	126.6	126.3
	Numaligarh-Golaghat	118.7	119.7	ODI	Angul-Talchar	127.6	128.3
	Sibsagar	121.1	121.7		Cuttack	126.9	126.6
BIH	Munger-Jamalpur	120.2	120.8		Keonjhar	125.8	124.9
	Patna	122.5	121.8	PUD	Puducherry	117.6	122.2
CHD	Chandigarh	123.2	123.7	PUN	Amritsar	124.3	123.8
CHS	Bhilai	113.8	112.3		Jalandhar	124.3	123.9
	Korba	121.9	121.3		Ludhiana	121.4	121.7
	Raipur	115.9	115.0		Sangrur	116.2	117.0
DNH	Dadra & Nagar Haveli	115.6	116.6	RJN	Alwar	117.9	118.9
DLI	Delhi	113.2	113.8		Bhilwara	116.5	116.3
GOA	Goa	111.5	111.9		Jaipur	115.0	114.2
GUJ	Ahmedabad	117.8	118.1	TN	Chennai	119.5	122.6
	Bhavnagar	114.0	114.0		Coimbatore	119.3	119.1
	Rajkot	115.2	116.1		Coonoor	122.2	122.2
	Surat	115.9	114.7		Madurai	119.2	118.0
	Vadodara	118.2	115.6		Salem	116.7	118.9
HRY	Faridabad	118.6	119.0		Tirunelveli	123.1	124.5
	Gurugram	122.0	121.9	TEL	Virudhu Nagar	120.7	121.2
	Yamunanagar	115.6	115.6		Hyderabad	120.4	119.7
HP	Himachal Pradesh	122.1	122.5		Mancheriyal	129.4	127.7
J&K	Jammu & Kashmir	122.3	122.6		Warangal	121.1	120.9
JRK	Bokaro	119.9	120.0	TRP	Tripura	120.1	122.1
	Dhanbad-Jharia	122.7	123.7	UP	Agra	119.8	119.4
	Jamshedpur	130.9	132.2		Ghaziabad/G.B. Nagar	121.8	121.9
	Ramgarh	129.1	129.4		Kanpur	120.3	120.9
KNT	Belgaum	118.3	119.9		Lucknow	126.4	124.6
	Bengaluru	115.5	115.5*		Varanasi	122.7	124.4
	Chikmagalur	112.9	111.8	UTK	Udham Singh Nagar	129.6	127.6
	Davanagere	122.1	122.8	WB	Darjeeling	114.9	115.6
	Hubli-Dharwad	115.5	117.9		Durgapur	117.6	119.9
	Mercara-Kodagu	108.7	109.9		Haldia	116.3	115.7
	Mysore	114.9	113.8		Howrah	122.5	123.1
KRL	Ernakulam/Alwaye	122.6	124.2		Jalpaiguri	126.2	125.3
	Idukki	122.8	122.8		Kolkata	128.3	129.1
	Kollam	119.4	118.8		Raniganj	128.0	129.9
MP	Bhopal	117.1	115.0				
	Chhindwara	115.3	117.7				
	Indore	115.8	115.8				
	Jabalpur	116.3	117.3				
ALL INDIA INDEX						119.5	119.9

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Haryana





## Waves of Workers General Strikes in the World

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### Italy



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