



# THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU

## CITU General Council Meeting

Hassan; 7-10 August, 2019



**AIKS General Secretary Hannan Mollah addressing (Top);  
CITU President Hemalata addressing the meeting (Below) (Report Page 5)**

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# **Countrywide Protest**

## **Against Attacks on Labour Rights**



**Tapen Sen addressing convention at Durgapur (West Bengal)**



**Trissur (Kerala)**



**Arson (Punjab)**

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## On Trade Union Democracy

CITU General Council meeting, held at Hassan this August, in the reports and discussion, has sharply brought out the fact of existing wide gaps in the ideological, socio-political and organisational understanding among and between different levels of leadership and grass root cadres in the committees of thousands of unions, the real bricks of CITU structure; and there upon failure to take the political message of the movement to the mass of the workers and other toiling sections.

The failure is not just absence or failure of the structure of dissemination network; though there are serious weaknesses in it which also need immediate attention and correction. Its root is much deeper. It is related to the class understanding of trade union democracy. Trade union democracy is not just democracy in organisational matters, though these are also important because these are the vehicles.

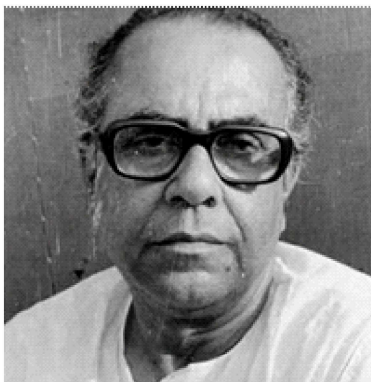
Trade union democracy is based on the mass of the workers participating in decision making process, by mass approval of the proposals taken by the leadership and in their conscious implementation.

Through this process only, the working class realises that collectively they are the real power in taking decisions, their effective implementations and the successes achieved. From this only their class consciousness develops and they realise that they are the real destiny makers and builders of human history.

Class unity, mass struggle, political campaign linked with every mass struggle and practice of trade union democracy are inseparable and pre-requisite for working class advancement.



## **Comrade Ajay Mukherjee**



CITU is deeply grieved at the demise of Comrade Ajay Mukherjee, the tallest leaders of the state government employees; on 24 July 2019 at Kolkata at the age of 92.

Under Comrade Ajay Mukherjee's leadership, braving atrocities and victimization, including dismissal, break in service and physical attacks; the state government employees had numerous militant struggles in West Bengal since sixties,; and the state government employees struggle remained in the forefront in strikes, struggles and bandhs, not only on the employees' own demands but also on the democratic demands of the working class as a whole and of the people; and making it the leading component of the struggle against semi-fascist terror

in West Bengal in the seventies followed by 'Internal Emergency'.

He also played frontline role in building and expanding the All India State Government Employees Federation making it the single biggest federation of employees at national level and also rallying the strength of federation in the united countrywide actions including strikes by the working class on common issues.

Comrade Ajay Mukherjee was an able Parliamentarian championing the cause of the working people in Lok Sabha during nineties.

Comrade Ajay Mukherjee's demise is great loss to the working class and employees' movement. CITU conveyed its heartfelt condolences to his comrades and family members and paid respectful homage to the departed leader.

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## **Gujarat**

### **Bank Mitras Union Formed**



Organised by CITU Gujarat state committee, 400 Bank Mitras (Bank correspondents), coming from 24 districts, held a state level convention and decided to form a union. CITU state General Secretary, and its state committee member and Anganwadi union's General Secretary addressed the convention.

# CITU General Council Meeting

**7-10 August, 2019; Hassan (Karnataka)**

Coming from all over the country, CITU General Council members reached at Hassan in Karnataka to attend its General Council (GC) meeting, held on 7-10 August; took stock of the grave situation in the country; decided the future course of independent and joint actions to defend the rights and livelihood of the working people and to combat the mounting attacks on the national economy, labour rights, PSUs and on the country's Constitution and democracy by the corporate-communal-fascistic nexus; and to consolidate and expand CITU's organisational strength to effectively face these challenges. - Brief report.

Out of total 425 GC members of CITU, 355 members (36 women) including 31 office bearers (having 3 invitees) attended the meeting. Four invitees from fraternal federations also attended the meeting. Reception Committee chairman Vijaya Kumar welcomed the participants in the inaugural session presided over by its president Hemalata. CITU treasurer M. L. Malkotia moved condolence resolution on the departed leaders and martyrs. Special guest and All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) general secretary Hannan Mollah (ex-MP) addressed and greeted the GC members pointing out about the growing workers-peasants unity and united actions and the need of their further expansion and intensification facing big challenges from the ruling elites.

General secretary Tapan Sen moved a resolution '*Against the Government's onslaught on Constitutional order, federalism and democracy in Jammu and Kashmir*'. The resolution was unanimously adopted.

## Protest on Street

Immediately on getting news of detention of the CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury and CPI general Secretary D. Raja at Srinagar airport on 9 August; the ongoing session of CITU General Council meeting was suspended and, led by the president and the general secretary, CITU general council members poured out of the meeting hall on the street in torrential rains, joined by CITU local activists, holding a protest march raising slogans condemning Modi government's attack on democracy and gagging people's voice in J&K and for restoration of civil liberties of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and of India.

Other resolutions - '*On Violence against Women and Children*', moved by vice president A. K. Padmanabhan; '*Against Attacks on Dalits, Adivasis and Minorities*', moved by secretary A. R. Sindhu; '*On the flood situation*', moved and seconded by vice presidents G. Sukumaran and S. Varalakshmi were adopted unanimously. The General Council also adopted a resolution, moved and seconded by vice presidents Basudev Achariya and S. Varalakshmi extending support to the proposed month long strike of the employees in all the ordnance factories from 20 August against government's move to corporatize the ordnance factories on way to privatisation.

After presidential speech, general secretary Tapan Sen placed report and the statement of accounts was placed by the treasurer Malkotia. General secretary also placed three task documents

as annexures of the report – one, on ensuing CITU's 16<sup>th</sup> Conference; two, as Immediate Tasks; and three, on Working Women. 75 GC members, representing all states and sectors, participated in the discussion contributing and enriching the reports highlighting their understandings and struggle experience. After reply and summing up by the general secretary the reports were adopted unanimously including the Task Documents.

- The GC meeting also called upon all CITU committees, federations and affiliated units to start popularising the idea of 'multiple days strike action', as and when decided jointly by CTUs, among the workers through organisational, movemental and agitational activities.
- AIKS decided to hold demonstrations to reiterate the issues highlighted in the historic 'Mazdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally' of 5 September 2018. The GC meeting decided to hold workers – peasants' joint demonstration in commemoration of the day this year on 5 September 2019.

The meeting concluded with greeting the CITU Karnataka state committee and its Hassan district committee and the volunteers for successfully hosting the meeting, concluding in time, despite inclement weather and the State reeling under severe flood situation.

## President's Speech

In her presidential address, Hemalata highlighted the grave and challenging situation requiring in-depth introspection to decide on correct approach and future tasks discarding ritualism; = Continuing country's anti-people economic direction and political developments; = Aggravating deterioration of working and living conditions of the workers and other toiling sections under attacks by big corporates and the governments working for them.

Explaining the international developments, she pointed out about the worsening global economy, confirmed by surveys by international institutions including IMF; World Economic Forum predicting its further worsening; = Widening inequalities, wealth increasingly getting concentrated in fewer hands. In India, 9 individuals own wealth equal of to half the country's population; bottom 60% population owning only 1%.

She pointed out about US imperialism's continuing political, economic and military interventions to consolidate its global hegemony and control over crucial natural resources and strategic areas; = Continuing to use economic and trade sanctions; = Provoking / promoting right reactionary and divisive forces to create disturbance and subvert democratically elected governments and force regime changes in countries that refuse to succumb to its arm twisting; = continues to support authoritarian regimes.

While China, Cuba, Venezuela and Iran are challenging such imperialist interventions and refusing to surrender to its diktats; Modi-led BJP government, mouthing 'nationalism' and 'patriotism', is succumbing to US imperialist diktats and stopped buying oil from Iran. = It was US imperialism's interventions that led to the spread and strengthening of terrorists like the Taliban, IS etc, she said.

Workers across the world continue to struggle to protect their rights and benefits; = Growing struggles reflect their and peoples' anger against the international finance capital dictated neoliberal policies; = Neoliberal policies have failed, discredited and are unsustainable; = Capitalism itself is losing credibility, she said.

Drawing attention to the national situation, she said that the working class in India is faced with challenges of multipronged attacks of the corporate communal regime, led by Modi; = Unity of the working class, the only weapon to fight against neoliberal regime, is under severe threat by the communal and casteist forces.

The same working class, who responded magnificently to the joint call of the trade union movement against the neoliberal attacks; ignored the political call to defeat the 'anti-worker, anti-people and anti-national' BJP. It was for the first time, since Independence, that the joint trade union movement gave such a political call.

CITU played a prominent role in formulating the 'Workers' Charter' as an alternative to the neoliberal agenda; but was unable to take this to the workers at the grass root and convincing them the need to defeat the BJP government, whose policies have led to increased unemployment, jobloss, attacks on the workers' basic rights and worsening agrarian crisis.

She said that BJP was able to utilise the Pulwama attack to divert the people's, including the workers, attention successfully rousing jingoism misusing people's patriotic feelings and in creating illusion about Modi to lead the nation; = CITU Visakhapatnam working committee meeting had warned of such machinations by the BJP; yet, many states committees did not take up the campaign among the working class as CITU's political task.

She highlighted certain points for introspection to correct weaknesses for effectively countering the communal and divisive attempts of RSS – BJP and neoliberal attacks = As to why we failed to take this political task with due seriousness; = Have we internalised the direction of the Kozhikode document; = Are we seriously trying to reorient work to ensure active involvement of lowest level committee members in all activities and to raise their political and ideological consciousness and organisational capabilities?

Answering these will lead to strengthening the organisation and achieve CITU's constitutional objective of eliminating exploitation and achieve an exploitation free society; this should be our objective when we observe the golden jubilee of the formation of CITU and are preparing for its 16<sup>th</sup> conference, she concluded.

## General Secretary's Report

The General Secretary's Report noted;

- Continuous struggles by the working class, peasants and other toiling sections during the last few years culminated in 2 days general strike on 8-9 January 2019. = For the first time, joint TU movement adopted a 'workers charter'; = and called for the defeat of the 'anti worker, anti-people and anti-national' BJP in the 17<sup>th</sup> general election. = CITU had decided to take up this call very seriously putting into practice the slogans - 'Reach the Unreached'; 'Link up Issues with Policies, Expose the Politics that Determine the Policies'.
- However, election results show that the working class ignored this call. Vast majority of them, who actively participated in the struggles against BJP government's policies, voted for BJP. = We failed to take the message to the common workers and the people; and in keeping their livelihood issues in public discourse during the elections. = RSS-BJP succeeding in diverting people's issues to Pulwama, Balakot and rousing jingoist feelings utilising people's genuine patriotic feelings. = Despite Visakhapatnam working committee meeting's warning about such possibility, most of CITU committees did not take this as political task during election.
- True to their class character, major bourgeois opposition parties did not raise people's issues linking with policies, as they follow the same policies when in power. But, we failed to convince even our own members that the Left, who, despite their limited strength, are strongly and consistently opposing the anti-worker policies, is the only alternative. This needs serious introspection.
- In their strongholds - West Bengal, Kerala and Tripura - the Left parties are being targeted mainly because they are seen as the real opponents to the neoliberal regime. Attacks on the Left

by the TMC in West Bengal and the BJP in Tripura are taking place. RSS and BJP are now targeting Kerala.

- Immediately after coming to power second time, the BJP government declared its commitment to hasten the neoliberal 'reforms'; announced 'labour law reforms', 'privatisation' and 'land banks' as priority for 'Ease of Doing Business'; started aggressively implementing this agenda; and going ahead to expand the 'Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) to further liberalise imports from Asian region.

- The Union Budget is a 'pay back' to their domestic and foreign corporate masters. = Instead of seriously addressing burning unemployment situation, budget announced funny steps for 'promoting entrepreneurship' like 'Livelihood Business incubators' and 'Technology Business Incubators'. = Contrary to the pretensions of taxing the rich more and relief to common man, the Budget displays clear bias favouring big corporates and finance capital, engaged in speculation. = The allocations for most of the welfare schemes, including MGNREGA, have been cut.

- BJP government totally ignored consensus formula on fixing minimum wage recommended by the 15<sup>th</sup> ILC and Supreme Court's 1992 confirmatory judgement on it. = Even government's 'Expert Committee' recommended floor level minimum wage with regional variation ranging Rs.375–Rs.447 per day (Rs.9750–Rs.11662 per month); = But the government decided floor level minimum wage of only Rs.178 per day (Rs.4628 per month), which is lower than the already prevailing minimum wage in 31 locations in the country.

- Under BJP rule, the process of de-industrialisation has become more pronounced. = Systemic crisis of the neoliberal capitalism and the global recessionary trends are reflected in India also. = Profit levels are under stress due to lower capacity utilisation and market contraction. = To face this situation, capitalists want to cut labour costs and impose slave like conditions on the workers through the so called 'labour law reforms' and facilitating policies of BJP government. The adopted Code of Wages will be followed by other three Bills - on industrial relations, social security and occupational health and safety and working conditions - last one has already been introduced.

- The government is bent on privatising the resources and asset-rich PSUs, which are being put in 'conveyor belt' for disinvestment. Defence and railway production units are being corporatised. This is the real face of crony capitalism – expropriation of national resources and assets; and the cruel exploitation of workers and the people. All these are being done in the name of 'nationalism'.

- BJP government, under the grip of imperialist international finance capital, is not ready to reverse neoliberalism, which is the only way to bring the country out of the present crisis. Instead, it expects to come out of the crisis by imposing more burdens on the people and facilitating the corporates for more inhuman exploitation of the workers.

- This is sought to be achieved by dividing the working class and the toiling people on the basis of religion, caste, region, language etc; diverting their attention from their day to day burning problems; disrupting their unity and united struggles. Incidents of violence, lynching and killing of minorities have increased in the few months of the BJP government returning to power with increased mandate. 'Jai Sriram' 'Jai Hanuman' are being used to intimidate, terrorise and attack the minorities.

- BJP government is also attacking Constitutional and democratic institutions and resorting to authoritarian measures. Revoking of 'Article 370', amendments to 'Unlawful Activities Prevention Act' and 'Right to Information Act' are some such measures.

- These are indicative of bigger challenges before the working class and the people. = These challenges can be met by forging wider working class unity and heightening the struggles on economic demands and against social oppression. Already large numbers of workers, who have voted for the BJP in the Parliament elections, are in struggle against its anti-worker policies - fighting against corporatisation of railway production units; defence trade unions jointly decided to



go on month long strike from 20 August against corporatisation of the ordinance factories; Steel workers, BSNL employees, bank contract workers, scheme workers in different states are on struggle opposing privatisation and pursuing their other demands. The central trade unions and independent federations held massive demonstrations across the country on 2 August opposing the labour law reforms. These need to be carried forward and strengthened.

- The central trade unions, except the BMS, are planning effective action programmes including countrywide multiple days strike. = The struggle programme, once finalised, must be taken to the entire working class through effective massive campaign by CITU applying in practice its slogans of 'Reach the Unreached' and 'Link up issues with policies, expose the politics that determine the policies'.

- The most crucial task is to further widen the working class unity and heighten struggle towards offensive intervention championing not only the demands of the working class, but of entire toiling sections including issues of social repression in which the toiling classes are biggest victims. = We have to widen alliance with suffering population in entirety both economically and socially. This broadest alliance for struggle has to be built up on the premise of uncompromising battle against neoliberalism and its socio-political instrumentalities to sustain it in the midst of crisis.

- The golden jubilee of CITU's foundation and the centenary of the first national trade union centre, in the initial struggles of which the founding fathers of CITU had contributed and made immense sacrifices, is being observed this year. This should be observed in a befitting manner aimed at developing the political and ideological consciousness of the working class in general and CITU cadres and activists in particular. It should aim to equip all grass root level committee members with organisational and leadership abilities to strengthen the organisation as a countrywide militant organisation of the working class.

## Tasks Decided by the GC Meeting

### **Tasks related to 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of CITU**

1. The 16<sup>th</sup> Conference of CITU will be held at Chennai, Tamil Nadu, on 23-27 January 2020 on the basis of 2018 membership;
2. The affiliation fees, including all dues, should be remitted at the CITU centre before 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019;
3. Unions that do not remit affiliation fees by the time of the conference will have to apply afresh for affiliation;
4. The General Council authorised the CITU centre to finalise the statewise number of delegates on the basis of the membership received by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2019;
5. Women delegates should not be less than 25%; State committees should try to include working women from different sectors where they work, not only confining to scheme workers;
6. Conscious efforts should be made to include as many serving workers as possible in the delegation;
7. The delegate fee will be Rs.1600 per delegate;
8. The venue of the conference will be named as 'Md Amin Nagar' after the former general secretary of CITU; the dais will be named as 'Sukomal Sen Manch' after the former vice president of CITU and the venue of the public meeting will be named as 'Singaravelu Nagar' after one of the founders of the trade union movement in India, who was the first to observe May Day in the country.

## **Immediate Tasks**

### Immediate Tasks should Aim at:

(1) Prepare for higher struggles; (2) Strengthen the organisation – politically, ideologically and organisationally; (3) Develop cadres.

### Immediate Tasks

#### **1. 14<sup>th</sup> August Night Long Samuhik Jagaran**

The pre Independence Day programme must be observed focusing on self-reliance of the country and unity of the people;

- In as many places as possible; Involve as many workers as possible; ● Each general council member to take responsibility; ● Each state office bearer to attend the 'jagaran' at one district as per responsibility decided by the state office bearers / centre; ● All India office bearers to participate; ● Banners 'We are Workers; We Build the Nation; We Protect the Nation; We Have Been, We Always Will' should be prominently displayed wherever 'jagaran' is held and also during its preparation; ● The Pledge 'India I Dream of' should be undertaken in the 'jagaran'; ● Send detailed quantified reports of the observance and also the preparatory activities to CITU centre.

#### **2. 5<sup>th</sup> September programme of All India Kisan Sabha in solidarity with the demands of the workers**

- State CITU leadership to coordinate with the state committees of Kisan Sabha and take serious initiatives for joint worker peasant demonstrations; ● Send quantified reports to CITU centre immediately thereafter related to the number of places, participation of workers, peasants etc and the manner in which it was held.

#### **3. Further Action Programme**

The central trade unions have been discussing about calling a multiple days' strike against the attacks of the BJP government on the working class. The details are yet to be finalised. However, the working class must be made ready by creating awareness about the need for multiple days' strike to face the challenges squarely and defeat the policies. Preparations must start at once, aiming to activate our primary level units.

The major focus of the entire campaign should be –

- (1) Self-reliance and sovereignty of the country, (2) Against labour law 'reforms' that impose slave like conditions on working class and (3) Against massive job losses and unemployment;
- Joint sectoral struggles should be developed in as many sectors as possible;
- Along with this the communal divisive machinations of the RSS and BJP should be exposed.

### For the preparatory campaign of the strike

- Approach all our members; ● Involve all our grass root level committee members; ● combine general issues with local issues/ demands; ● Plan joint campaign up to the lowest level possible; ● Effective independent campaign simultaneously must be the target; ● Use sector/ segment/ industry specific campaign material; ● All campaign material to focus on – i) how specific issues are linked to the government policies and ii) exposing the ruling class politics that determine these policies; ● Use the 'Talking Points', 'Pamphlets' and 'Booklets', published earlier, making the necessary modifications, using local examples.

### How

- Crucial responsibility of planning the campaign lies with the state centres/ office bearers/

committees; ● Detailed planning (related to the number/ places/ unions etc, the method of campaign, number of leaflets, pamphlets and booklets to be published, who will be in charge where etc) to be done in the district/ state conferences that will follow the decision of the joint trade union movement at the appropriate time; ● State/ district committees responsible for making the campaign material available on time; ● Budget for campaign to be prepared, collection planned; lack of funds should not be a reason for cutting short the campaign or campaign material; ● Focus must be on leaflets, pamphlets and booklets rather than on stickers, banners, flex boards etc; ● Speakers in meetings must be well prepared with the concerned issues and policies; avoid general speeches; ● Wherever possible, conduct workshops/ classes to prepare speakers; ● Campaign material must be 'agitational', i.e. expose ruling class politics, stir the workers to action; ● Each campaign and agitation activity should be followed by appropriate propaganda activity to raise political ideological consciousness; ● All unions to hold meetings of their office bearers/ committees/ centres to plan campaign; ● Possibilities of 'padayatra', 'jatha' etc along with fraternal trade unions, fraternal organisations of peasants, agricultural workers etc to be explored and planned wherever possible; however this must be after our primary union level committees and members are activated.

### **Targeted Results**

● Total strike in the sectors worst affected by the labour law amendments and privatisation – public as well as private organised sectors; ● Overall more encompassing and intense strike reflecting the anger of the working class; ● Raising confidence among the working class about their united strength; ● Raising consciousness of the working class about the ruling class policies and politics; ● Expanding our influence; ● Identifying cadres; ● Increasing our strength.

All activities must involve the entire CITU, up to the primary level units, with a determined pursuit of our call to 'Reach the Unreached' and 'Link issues with policies' and 'Expose politics that promote these policies'

### **Review**

Review of the strike should be undertaken at all levels on the basis of the above targets.

### **Tasks Related to Work among Working Women**

● Review of the functioning of the CCWW (CITU) should be made in the 16<sup>th</sup> conference of CITU as well as in the state conferences; ● Conventions of the CCWWs to be planned along with the district and state conferences of CITU and held after the CITU conferences; ● National convention of working women will be held in March 2020; district and state conventions to be completed in all states before this; ● Women delegates in 16<sup>th</sup> conference should not be less than 25%; ensure women delegates from all sectors where women work, not confining to scheme workers alone. Women must be adequately represented in the committees elected in the CITU conferences; ● Double women membership in CITU as part of the target to increase CITU membership to 1 crore by the end of 2020; ● Special efforts to develop women cadres at all levels; ● Increase circulation of 'The Voice of the Working Woman' and 'Kamkaji Mahila'.

### **Movemental Tasks**

● Organise a national workshop on POSH (Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace) Act and its implementation along with AIDWA and AILU; ● National seminar/ workshop on various aspects of women's labour to formulate specific demands related to women's work; ● Two month country wide campaign on specific issues of women culminating in 'jail bhara' of working

women on International Women's Day on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2020, involving all sections of women. This call is to be given from the 16<sup>th</sup> conference of CITU.

### **Meeting of AICCWW**

A meeting of the GC tier of All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (AICCWW) of CITU was held on 6 August, a day prior to the GC meeting, in Bengaluru. Out of total 73, 48 women GC members and conveners of state coordination committees of working women from 11 states participated in the meeting. CITU's President Hemalata and general secretary Tapan Sen participated in the meeting. Its vice president Malathi Chittibabu presided. Tapan Sen made introductory remarks. Convener of AICCWW and CITU secretary A. R. Sindhu placed the report. 16 members participated in the discussion. The AICCWW (CITU) finalised the recommendations related to the work among working women to be placed in the CITU GC meeting. Hemalata made the concluding remarks.

## **GC Meeting Resolutions**

### **On Flood Situation**

*The General Council of Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) which is in session at Hassan, Karnataka, deeply mourns the heavy death tolls due to the floods triggered by the incessant monsoon rain in mostly in the western parts of India.*

*The monsoon rains have wreaked havoc in Kerala, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Assam, Odisha, Uttarakhand and some eastern parts of India. Assam and Bihar which have been facing heavy floods since the first spell of Monsoon and also again got affected in the current floods. Many people have lost their lives in floods and over lakhs of people have been evacuated to safe places. At least 27 people drowned in Maharashtra. In Karnataka 9 people have been drowned, while 44000 people have been displaced. Around more than 40 people were reportedly missing in Kerala. The incessant rain have also triggered flooding in several parts of Madhya Pradesh, Goa, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal leading to major devastations and the districts adjacent to the Western Ghats in Tamil Nadu also got affected.*

*Kerala Government has issued a red alert in the wake of excess rainfall. The Cochin International Airport has suspended all its operations till Sunday as the runway in the airport is water logged due to floods. Most of the affected State Governments declared holiday for education institutions. The army and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have already been called in to rescue people stuck in flood-prone areas. As per the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD), the next two days will see more rains especially in Karnataka, Maharashtra and Gujarat.*

*While deeply expressing condolence of the deaths, the General Council of CITU expresses its unflinching solidarity with the affected people and request the Central and respective State Governments to speed up the rescue and relief operations on war-footing. In addition to this CITU General Council demands that Government of India must immediately release emergency relief funds and dispatch necessary rescue teams and materials to the flood affected areas.*

*CITU calls upon all its members in the concerned states and the working class in general, to plunge into these relief operations to save the effected people and to ensure maximum possible relief measures including financial help at the earliest.*

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## ***Ensure Safety for Women – In the Society, At the Workplace; Stop Atrocities and Violence against Women and Children; Stringent Punishment for the Guilty***

*The CITU general council meeting, being held in Hassan, Karnataka on 7-10 August 2019 expresses serious concern and anguish at the increasing violence and atrocities on women and children, which have seen a sharp rise under the BJP rule.*

*Incidents of rape, gang rape including of horrific cases of rape of small children and infants, in different parts of the country, are being reported in the media with increasing frequency. Neoliberalism with its vulgar commercialisation of women's bodies, being pursued by the BJP government, has created a fertile ground for the increase of such violence. The retrograde attitude of the RSS and the members of its parivar, including the BJP, which is guided by their commitment to Manusmriti, have highly contributed to the worsening of the situation.*

*It is appalling to see leaders of the ruling parties, particularly of the BJP and other outfits of the RSS, brazenly coming out in support of the culprits of such crimes against women and children, while the government and the administration remain totally apathetic. Conscious attempts are made to blame the victim and silence her instead of punishing the culprit.*

*The latest is the ghastly attack on the Unnao rape survivor, her family and her lawyer on 28<sup>th</sup> July in what sought to be masqueraded as an accident. The Adityanath government in UP totally ignored the complaints of rape against the BJP MLA who allegedly raped the then minor girl when she sought his help for a job. It was only after she attempted to immolate herself in front of the house of the chief minister and the issue made headlines all over the country that the MLA was arrested. Her father was beaten up by the brother of the MLA and died in police custody. The MLA continued to threaten her and her family from inside the jail to withdraw the case. It is alleged that the police personnel in charge of her security informed the MLA in the jail about her travel. Two of her aunts were killed while the girl and her lawyer are fighting for life.*

*No action has been taken by the BJP against Kuldeep Sengar, its MLA. It is to be recalled that two BJP ministers in Jammu and Kashmir participated in the rally shamelessly carrying the national flag, demanding the release of the accused in the horrifying gang rape and murder of an eight year old girl in Kathua. The rape and murder were part of the conspiracy to evict the Bakarwals, to which community the girl belonged, from their customary rights to live in the area. No action has been taken by the BJP against the ministers.*

*The incidence of sexual harassment of women at workplace, both in the organised sector and unorganised sector, has also been increasing. The Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace Act remains only on paper. Complaints committees are not formed; their recommendations are not implemented. The culprits are rarely punished.*

*This meeting of CITU general council demands stringent punitive action against the culprits of violence and atrocities against women and children and also against those who encourage directly or indirectly such acts.*

*This meeting of the CITU general council calls upon all its affiliated unions, federations and state committees to mobilise all workers, male and female, irrespective of caste, religion or region against the acts of violence, harassment and discrimination against women. This is not just an issue to be addressed by women or their organisations alone. As a class oriented trade union CITU should be in the forefront in fighting against all types of injustice against women and children, in the forefront in demanding dignity and equality for women.*



## Stop Attacks on Dalits, Adivasis and Minorities; Punish the Guilty; Strengthen People' Unity

*The CITU general council meeting, being held at Hassan, Karnataka, on 7-10 August 2019 strongly condemns the increased attacks on the Dalits, Adivasis and minorities and demands firm action to stop these immediately.*

*The attacks on the Dalits, Adivasis and minorities in the country have been rising since the BJP came to power with Modi as Prime Minister in 2014. They have further escalated under the Modi 2 regime. What is all the more alarming is that many of these incidents have been taking place with the utter complicity of the concerned BJP led governments and the administration while some BJP leaders have been publicly felicitating the culprits. This has emboldened the criminals, land mafia and the Hindutva communal forces under the patronage of the RSS.*

*Ten landless Adivasis farmers, including three women were killed by the land grabbing mafia in Umbha village in Sonbhadra district of Uttar Pradesh. Truckloads of armed men opened fire on the Adivasis who have been tilling the land for the last seventy years.*

*Names of popular gods are being used to threaten, lynch and kill people. It is a Constitutional right to follow or not to follow any religion and worship or not to worship any god. Since the Modi 2 government assumed office 'Jai Shriram' is being used by certain groups associated with the RSS, not for worshipping, but as a war cry for intimidating, lynching and killing people, particularly the Muslim minorities. Totally degrading the secular credentials of the Parliament, BJP MPs started chanting 'Jai Shriram' to heckle the Muslim and some opposition MPs while they were going to take the oath in Parliament. Several Muslim youth have been killed after forcing them to chant the slogan.*

*The National Crime Records Bureau data reveal that atrocities against Dalits rose tremendously under the BJP regime while the rate of conviction dropped drastically. The data from the Citizen's Religious and Hate Crime Watch show that 90% of lynching that occurred during the last nine years, was after 2014; 62% of the victims were Muslims.*

*Such attacks are nothing but attempts to polarise society by using gods, cows, beef etc and divert their attention of people from their burning issues, while the government and the ruling classes go ahead appropriating people's wealth, exploiting the toiling people and attacking their rights; in short implementing the neoliberal agenda to benefit the landlords, big domestic and foreign corporations and businesses. Society is sought to be polarised, people's unity is sought to be disrupted to weaken united struggles against the neoliberal policies.*

*It is the responsibility of the working class to defeat any machinations to disrupt harmony and to protect and strengthen unity of the entire working class and the toiling people irrespective of religion, caste and region. It is also the responsibility of the working class to resolutely fight against all kinds of social repression and defend the interest of rights of the most downtrodden of the society who are integral part of the toiling class. This is of utmost importance and urgency when the Modi 2 government, blind with its increased numbers in the Parliament is speeding ahead with the so called 'reforms' bulldozing all opposition from the working class in different parts of the country.*

*This meeting of the CITU general council calls upon the entire working class to discharge this responsibility with utmost vigilance and diligence.*

### **Simultaneous Translation in Regional Languages**

**For the first time in CITU, simultaneous translation in 6 languages - Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil and Telugu – was arranged in the GC meeting and it was decided to continue this in the forthcoming 16<sup>th</sup> conference of CITU.**

## **Sideline Meetings**

**During GC meeting recess, several sideline meetings were also held to develop / strengthen sector wise movements and coordination at the national level including textile, automobile, cement, distilleries and breweries, scheme workers, defence, steel, coal etc sectors.**

### **Against Govt.'s Authoritarian Onslaught on Constitutional Order, Federalism and Democracy in Jammu & Kashmir**

*The General Council Meeting of CITU, being held on 7-10 August 2019 vehemently condemns the unilateral and authoritarian move by the BJP Govt at the centre to virtually scrap and abrogate all the provisions of article 370 of the constitution relating to status of Jammu and Kashmir. This was done by resorting to trickery, unscrupulously evading the constitutional amendment procedure requiring specific advance notice and also not less than two third majority in parliament.*

*It is an atrocious blow at democracy and the Constitutional order besides being murderous to the entire democratic process. The Indian union was formed on the basis of the unity of our people recognising the immense diversities that exist, which is the legacy of our freedom struggle. Clearly, the RSS/BJP cannot tolerate any diversity and are converting Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh as two separate centrally administered Union Territories. Besides, such perverse exercise of tampering of the constitutional provisions for the purpose of dismantling the status of state within the federal structure, to be brought under Central rule, smacks of a bigger attack on federalism, the main foundation of Indian Constitution. This certainly is intended for authoritarian and fascist centralisation of power.*

*Besides the serious political fall-out of such misadventure, completely devoid of minimum scruples, on the unity of people and national integrity, in which BJP was never interested, it will provoke and pave the way for further dishonest trickeries for subversion of the Indian constitution on the part of ruling class and their agents in polity. The basic secular democratic foundation and also other constitutional provisions relating to peoples' democratic and other fundamental rights in various parts of the country will be under attack. It bears ominous portents of similar attacks on the rights of the working class, the people and on the democracy as well.*

*The General Council of CITU views such unilateral move as brazenly authoritarian and fascist and tantamount to murder of democracy and subversion of the constitution.*

*The General Council also denounces the authoritarian move of the Govt in putting the leaders of the J&K based political parties under arrests or house arrest, besides scrapping their internet and mobile/telephone services on 4th evening onward. This authoritarian move was preparatory to their conspiratorial unilateral move of subversion of constitution on J&K. CITU also condemns the house arrest of com Yusuf Tarigami, MLA als who is also President of J&K Committee of CITU.*

*The General Council of CITU calls upon the working people to protest against such arrogant, authoritarian and fascist action of the BJP Govt through countrywide united agitation. It calls upon the working class to integrate **its** struggle against authoritarianism and centralisation of power with the united struggle of the working class against exploitation and onslaught on their rights and livelihood and against the exploitative system itself.*

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# Government's Action in Jammu & Kashmir: Ominous for the People of Indian Republic

J. S. Majumdar

With unprecedented speed - from Monday, August 5, to Friday, August 9, - RSS-led BJP government at the Centre amended the Constitution of India, dissolved and dismantled the State of Jammu & Kashmir and brought its entire geographical territory and 1.25 crore population (2011 census) under its direct control.

As a first step, on August 5, bypassing the Parliament and the people of Jammu & Kashmir; the Union Ministry of Law & Justice issued Government's order - "The Constitution (Application to Jammu and Kashmir) Order, 2019" - making "*All the provisions of the Constitution, as amended from time to time, shall apply in relation to the State of Jammu & Kashmir etc*", thereby, ending the special provision under Art. 370.

Not stopping there, Modi government took the second step on the same day. A 55-pages Bill was placed and passed by both Houses of the Parliament in just 2 days, August 5-6; the President giving his assent on August 9 and, on the same day, gazette notification on "*The Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019*" was issued dissolving the State of Jammu & Kashmir; dismantling it into two separate entities; and bringing both under direct control of the Central government as Union Territories (UTs). This action of the government is not just ending so called discriminatory special status of Jammu & Kashmir; but the government's action itself being discriminatory and punitive by dissolving, dismantling and downgrading a State, first time since India became a republic.

In the meantime, the state remains locked down; commerce, business, educational institutions closed; all movements on roads blocked; telecommunications snapped; civil liberties curbed; state leaders of opposition national and regional parties remain under house arrest; leaders of national political parties, the general secretaries of CPI(M) and CPI, were detained in Srinagar airport. A situation, worse than emergency, prevails.

The arrested political leaders of Jammu & Kashmir include CPI(M)'s central committee member, CITU state president and four times MLA from valley Md. Yusuf Tarigami who is politically a forefront fighter against the terrorists and separatists and became the target of attack by the terrorists killing 6 members of his family. His MLA flat at Srinagar was attacked twice. CPI(M)'s 12 Party members in Jammu & Kashmir have been killed by the terrorists. Yet, Modi government kept Tarigami and others under House arrest in the name of controlling terrorism in Kashmir!

This is how; the present power centre at the Centre brought the State of Jammu Kashmir in 'One Nation with One Constitution' as proclaimed by the Prime Minister in his Independence Day speech this year from the rampart of the Red Fort in line with the statement of RSS Chief Mohan Bhagawat, issued earlier on August 6, saying, "The intention of the makers of the Constitution was to apply it to all states equally which has been fulfilled by the Union government," quoted by PTI. (*Underline added for emphasis*). Public discourse and media hype revolve round the removal of special status of J&K. Prime Minister's claims of 'One Nation' and RSS Chief says of 'all states' equality including J&K. These are just the opposite of what actually happened in those 5 fateful days in early August. Dissolving and dismantling of the State of Jammu & Kashmir through the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019 is the biggest assault on the federal Republic of India.

Part I of the Constitution begins with "*India, that is Bharat, shall be a Union of States*". (*Underline added*). There is defined division of power between the 'Union' and 'States'. The UTs (some even with legislatures) are directly administered by the Union government and are devoid of power of the States.

Schedule I of the Constitution gives the 'List of the States' each with defined territories, 15<sup>th</sup> being the State of Jammu & Kashmir with some more autonomous power than other States, who themselves also having autonomous power as per List II and shared power with the Centre as per List III in the Constitution. Modi government, not only removed the special status of J&K state; but also, through the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, ceased all powers of the State of Jammu & Kashmir, dismantled it and brought the entire territories and its people directly under Union government's administration without any say of the people of Jammu & Kashmir. These are against the basic features of the democratic federal Republic of India and ominous for the people of other states. It is step forward towards unitary 'one India' as envisaged by RSS.

Since the formation of the Indian Republic, several states were created as per the will of the people mainly through re-organisation Acts of several existing states latest being the State of Telangana as the 29<sup>th</sup> State. However, for the first time since the formation of the Republic of India; a State has been dissolved, dismantled and removed from the 'List of States'. Total number of States has been brought down to 28 in the Constitution of India.

Another aspect is an attempt to rewrite the history of Jammu & Kashmir, in which the present Union Home Minister Amit Shah play acting as the 'second' Ballabhbhai Patel, whose statute has been unveiled as the 'Symbol of Unity'.

Looking through RSS prism, the present dispensation at the Centre has misreading of the history Jammu & Kashmir with that of the then State of Hyderabad. The then Home Minister Ballabhbhai Patel initiated 'police action' against the State of Hyderabad in 1948 forcing the Nizam to sign the 'Instrument of Accession' with the Indian Dominion in the background of Telangana peasant armed uprising, reflecting the will of the people, against the atrocities committed by the Nizam' private armed force – the hated 'Razakars'.

In contrast, it was Maharaja Hari Singh, the then ruler of Jammu & Kashmir, who initially wanted to remain independent, forced by circumstances, invited Indian army to save Srinagar from Pakistani invaders and, as against that, signed the 'Instrument of Accession' at the behest of Sheikh Abdullah who was leading the heroic Kashmiri people's resistance against Pak invaders. Certain special status associated with the 'Instrument of Accession' was inserted later in the Constitution as Art. 370.

Present 'Action' against the State of Jammu & Kashmir initiated by the present Home Minister Amit Shah is directed against the whole of the people of Jammu & Kashmir and their successive political leadership who resisted Pak invaders, backed the 'Instrument of Accession' with India, faced attacks of the local and Pak-sponsored terrorists, participated in the democratic electoral process in Parliament, State and local bodies elections giving a strong ground for India to reject UN's resolution on plebiscite.

The 'Instrument of Accession' was for the entire the then State of Jammu & Kashmir including the Pak-occupied areas. Total rejection of the 'Instrument of Accession' of the then Jammu & Kashmir and dissolution and dismantling the State of Jammu & Kashmir reopens the old wounds and old disputes and denying any solution between two neighbours through bilateral discussion as per Shimla Agreement. Amit Shah's action has alienated the people of J&K further and widely opened the ground for new internal and external disputes.

Another aspect is PM Modi's Jammu & Kashmir 'development programme' as a neoliberal assault on the people of Jammu & Kashmir after removal of the protective cover inviting the domestic and foreign corporates to loot land and natural resources of Jammu & Kashmir. There is scramble among Modi's crony corporates to 'develop' Jammu & Kashmir and several of them announced participation. Adani remains in forefront to grab the entire erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir in his own 'developmental programme' announcing appointment of a 'Task Force'. There will be none to question them in absence of any democratic forum and people remaining periodically locked in and locked out under 'security vigilance' directly by Modi administration at the Centre.

# INDUSTRIES & SECTORS

## Defence

### **CITU GC Meeting Resolution**

In Support of the Defence Sector Employees Struggles against Corporatisation of Ordnance Factories; In solidarity with Defence Employees Month-Long Strike from 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019

*The General Council meeting of CITU, being held on 7-10 August 2019, reiterates its continuing support to the ongoing united struggles by the employees of Ordnance Factories and related defence sector establishments against the disastrous move of the BJP Govt. at the centre to privatise the Ordnance Factory network through mass scale outsourcing of more than half of items being produced by the Ordnance Factories in favour of private sector thereby disrupting and sabotaging the capacity utilization of these Ordnance Factories.*

*After winning election for the second term, the BJP Govt. now has been trying to deliver a fatal blow to the Ordnance Factories network through corporatization of the Ordnance Factories with the ulterior aim of fully privatizing them, to facilitate handing over the huge asset and most modern production infrastructure to private hands on a platter much to the detriment of national interests.*

*All the employees' federations of the defence sector employees viz. All India Defence Employees Federation (AIDEF), Indian National Defence Workers Federation (INDWF), Bharatiya Pratiraksha Mazdoor Sangh (BPMS) and others have protested this retrograde move and jointly decided to stage one-month-long strike in all Ordnance Factories from 20<sup>th</sup> August onward demanding withdrawal of such decision. Preparatory campaign has been going on in full swing in all the 41 Ordnance Factories throughout the country.*

*General Council while congratulating the defence employees and their federations for such brave decision for resistance struggles extends full solidarity with their heroic strike struggle.*

*General Council calls upon all the CITU unions to express their active solidarity to the strike preparation of the defence employees in their respective areas in coordination with the Ordnance Factory unions in their respective areas and state and organize solidarity mobilization near/before the Ordnance Factories all over the country both before and after 20<sup>th</sup> August. CITU must render all support to the striking workers during the continuity of the strike action, and organize campaign in support of their struggle among the mass of the people and workers throughout the country.*

## **Defence Employees on 30 Days Historic Strike**

On 20 August, over 82,000 defence civilian employees in all 41 ordnance factories across the country and the employees of the Directorate General of Quality Assurance (DGQA), attached to the ordnance factories, began their historic 30 days' strike against corporatisation of the ordnance factories.

Betraying the categorical assurance by successive defence ministers to the employees and in the Parliament in March 2015 during the Modi-1 regime that ordnance factories would not be corporatised; Modi-



2 government has decided to corporatise the ordinance factories, on way their privatisation. The strike is against this betrayal.

The month-long strike call was given by the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of three federations - AITUC-CITU-HMS supported All India Defence Employees Federation (AIDEF), INTUC's Indian National Defence Workers Federation (INDWF) and BMS' Bharatiya Pratiraksha Mazdoor Sangh (BPMS). Even the Confederation of Recognised Staff Associations (CDRA), who did not serve Strike notice, also fully joined the strike.

Till filing this report on the third day of the strike, the strike was total except Group A officers. Small number of employees in essential duties was exempted from strike.

At many places the central trade unions, including CITU, held rallies, street corner meetings, demonstrations etc in solidarity with the striking workers. National federations of bank, central government employees and others also stood in solidarity with the strikers.

CITU distributed handbills at Dehradun in support of the strike; joint trade unions meetings were held at Kanpur; CITU took multiple initiatives in solidarity of the strike at Hyderabad; CITU in West Bengal organised street corner meetings, rallies and public meetings at Cossipore and Ichhapore.

In a statement, CITU greeted the defence employees for the successful beginning of their month-long strike. "BJP and Modi, who campaigned on the plank of 'nationalism', have no qualm in placing national security at the mercy of the profit greedy corporates including foreign companies by privatising the defence sector including allowing 100% FDI", CITU said. The ordinance factories played crucial role in ensuring timely and quality supplies to country's armed forces including during the Kargil war and the surgical strikes. The employees worked day and night during the Kargil war to ensure supplies to armed forces without taking single paisa as overtime. Through their hard work and dedication while the workers and the employees proved their commitment to the nation, the BJP government is trying to mortgage national security, CITU statement said.

CITU called upon all its affiliated unions and federations to extend all types of help, assistance and solidarity to the defence employees and also urged the common people to support the struggle of the defence employees who are fighting to protect the national interests.

*(The report is till 23 August, 2019 before The Working Class going to press)*

## STATES

### Bihar

#### **Anganwadi Union Conference**

The open session of the 6th confrence of Bihar Rajya Anganwadi Sevika / Sahayika Sangh, held at Arwal on 6-7 July, 2019, was inaugurated by AIFAWF President and CITU national Secretary Usha Rani and also addressed by CITU state leaders Ganesh Sankar Singh, Deepak Bhattacharya and others.

The business session, attended by 300 delegates from 7 districts, was inaugurated by AIFAWH general secretary and CITU nation secretary A. R. Sindhu. The conference adopted several resolution including the one on the death of more than 150 children due to AES in Muzaffarpur and condemning the failure of the State government.

After conference reports were adopted, it elected a 40-memebrs state working committee having 19 office bearers with Soni Kumari as President, Shova Sinha as Working President, Md Yushuf as General secretary.

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## 100 Years of Struggle & Sacrifice

### 50 Years of Fight for Unity of the Working Class

# Trade Union Movement in Coal Industry

G. K. Srivastav

## Curse of Private Coal mines

Coal is the prime source of energy and about 65% of electricity in the country is generated from coal. Excavating coal through unscientific mining is very hazardous. Burning of Jharia coalfields is the worst example of such slaughter mining. First Jharia fire was detected in 1916 at Khas Jharia mine, privately owned by Seth Khora Ramji Chowda. According to a rough estimate, there are 84 prolonged major fires burning coal underground. Such slaughter coal mining in the days of private coal mines remains a curse for Raniganj and Jharia coalfields till this day.

Coal mining under private ownership started in 1774 at Narain Kuri in Raniganj coalfield in present day West Bengal and produced 2500 *Maund*, delivered to the government in 1775. After about 40 years, second mine was opened near Egra in 1814. Thereafter, during 1820 - 1825 several mines were opened in Raniganj coalfield. Later, private coal mining was extended to Jahria coalfield during 1894 - 1900, Jainti in 1915, Ramgarh in 1920, Rajmahal during 1858 - 1890, Bokaro in 1908 – all in present day Jharkhand; to united Andhra Pradesh at Sasti in 1920 and Singareni in 1872; in the then Central Province - at Umeria in 1884, Johilla in 1898, Panch Kanhan Vally in 1903, Sohagpur in 1921, Ghugus in 1920; in Odisha – at Talcher in 1923, I.B. valley in 1913; in Assam - at Ledo and Namdeng in 1881 and in some other parts of India.

## Exploitation and Inhuman Conditions of Workers in Private Coal Mines

Early mining was being done manually with implements like pickaxe, crowbar etc. The miners used lantern or *Dhibri* for lights in underground tunnels / galleries having poor ventilation. Later, the pickaxe mining was converted into blasted mining using explosives; electricity was used inside the mines and ventilation through mechanized ventilators. Underground haulage, tracks, pumps were installed.

In early stages, the workers of coal mines were recruited locally mostly belonging to socially marginalized sections, Dalits like Bouris and Adivasis like Santhals. Due to high rates of accidents and deaths, local people avoided working in mines and absenteeism rate became high. The protest by local people also started growing against inhuman working conditions.

All these and for making more profit through exploitation of workers, the coalmine owners started bringing migrant workers, mostly from present day U.P., Bihar, Odisha and Madhya Pradesh. All such migrant workers used to stay in groups in company-made or self-made hutments. The persons, who brought them, had different status and were called as 'Sardars'. The mines owners used the 'Sardars' to control and exploit the workers. The workers were pushed to take country liquors or other intoxicants. A nexus of Sardars – *Lathaits* (in the name

of guards) - owners - money lenders carried brutal physical torture, snatching of workers' wages etc.

The migrant workers, who came through Gorakhpur labour depot (Coalfield recruiting organization), were kept in confined camps with boundary walls and with fooding facilities, for which workers had to pay lump sum amounts. These camps were like prisons. The inmates had no right to interact with outsiders, who were called civilians. The head of camp was called as 'commander'. The workers were forced to work more with speed while on duty. Absence from work or breaking any system in the camp invited physical punishment.

## Beginning of Trade Union in Coal Mines

Mine owners were making workers lives unbearable; their grievances started accumulating. They were getting restive. Some incidents had deep impact on the mine workers and inspired them to unite. In 1918, Tata's Sijua colliery (Dhanbad) manager J.W. Case ordered one worker Indu Bhusan Chatterjee to work in night shift though he already worked in two consecutive shifts from early morning that day. He desperately required rest and urged exemption. Infuriated Case assaulted Chatterjee. Against this there was spontaneous coal workers protest. Later, Patna high court judgment awarded Case with fine and written apology as punishment. Success in this case, galvanised the workers to form collective organisation and the first coal workers organisation as Indian Collieries Employees Association was formed in June 1920.

As in post 1<sup>st</sup> World War, the essential commodity prices soared and their wages remained static, the workers became more restive and began to get organized under the popular political leadership. These also contributed in the formation of the first AITUC coal union at Dhanbad in December, 1920. On the 19<sup>th</sup> December, 1920, AITUC first president Lala Lajpat Rai visited Jharia coalfields. His visit made the European mine owners panicky.

2<sup>nd</sup> AITUC conference was held in 1921 in coal belt Jharia. Panicked coal mine owners sent telegram petitioning to the Viceroy to stop this conference; but, the British government dared not stop it. The conference began its session on 30 November, 1921 attended by Lala Lajpat Rai under the presidentship of Joseph Baptista. More than 50,000 workers participated in this historic conference of AITUC. Thousands of coal workers attended this conference and all the mines remained closed for continuous 3 days.

The conference adopted first resolution on 'swaraj', for the first time against colonial rule. The second resolution was the expression of proletarian internationalism expressing sympathy with the starving millions of socialist Russia, surrounded by imperialist countries. The session resolved to send token aid and appealed to the Indian workers to donate one day's wage for the famine-stricken people of Russia. The third resolution was on coal workers issues and demands giving a call to organize the coal workers.

Coal workers started getting organised under AITUC. Hundreds of their leaders were murdered by the goons of private owners. Thousands of cadres were put in jail implicating in false cases. Despite these repressions, AITUC coal unions continued to champion the cause of coal workers through relentless struggles. In 1922, the workers of the Standard Colliery went on strike demanding improved working condition. In January 1923, the coal cutters at Giridih went on strike for higher wages. In 1926-27 another successful strike by workers on demand of higher wages and improved working conditions took place in Simla Bahal in Bhalgora Colliery. Several other strikes and struggles were also held.

Initially, Indian Colliery Employees Association was the representative organisation of coal workers. Subsequently, Tata Collieries Labour Association was formed on 27 April 1930.

Later the Indian Colliery Employees Association changed its name as Indian Colliery Labour Union and it was registered in August 1932 under Trade Union Act, 1926. Led by AITUC, several coal workers unions were formed including Indian Miners Association (1933), Coal Workers' Union (1938), Chhota Nagpur Mazdoor Sangh (1939), Kustore Workers' Union (1939), Indian Federation of Labour (1939), Loyabad Coke Plant Workers' Union & Loyabad Power House Workers' Union (1941), All India Colliery Mazdoor Union (1943), Indian Collieries Union (1946), Bhowrah Coke Plant Workers Union (1946). The trade unions in the coalfields were supported by several political parties. Mazdoor Congress union under the presidentship of Deven Sen was organized in Raniganj in 1946. Bengal Coal Workers Union was formed under leadership of Bankim Chatterjee in the same year.

During 1967, strikes took place in different collieries for wage increase. In Raniganj coalfields workers was facing problems due to inter union rivalry which led to violent incidence. In Jharia coalfields a series of murder of union leaders and its activists including a veteran INTUC Leader B. P. Sinha had jolted the trade union movement. The prevailing situation in coal industry created a number of craft unions and industry mafias who became a tool of exploitation of coal workers

## **Coal Nationalisation; Coal Workers Struggles and CITU**

Coal industry was nationalised in 1973 and Coal India Ltd (CIL) as PSU was formed. After the formation of CITU, big struggles were launched in Jharia and Raniganj coalfields on workers' demands, against the mafias and money lenders. They were led by Haradhan Roy, Robin Sen, Bamapado Mukherjee, Sunil Basu Roy, Bikas Choudhury in Raniganj coalfields. In early seventies more than 20 CITU activists were murdered in Raniganj coalfields, several were jailed on false cases.

In Jharia-Dhanbad coalfields A. K. Roy and S. K. Bakshi were leading the coal workers movement. In Jharia-Dhanbad and adjoining areas more than 55 CITU cadres and leaders were murdered by the mafias in connivance with the management. Thousands of workers were implicated in false cases and 15 leaders / activists in Dhanbad, including veteran founder-leader of BCKU Sadhan Gupta, were awarded life imprisonment. In the course of these struggles, CITU became a dominant force in ECL and BCCL. CITU unions also have reasonable influence in CCL and some presence in SECL and WCL.

In 1979, All India Coal Workers Federation (AICWF) of CITU was formed with M. K. Pandhe as its president and Sunil Basu Roy as general secretary which gave call for united action of coal trade unions. After continuous persuasion by AICWF, first all India strike was called by all central trade unions for early settlement of 2nd wage negotiation on 5 February 1979. The strike was complete in entire coal industry. After that, other central trade unions were reluctant to go for united action in coal with CITU. In next two decades, CITU alone had to resort to 6 strikes in coal. These strikes were partial with 25% - 60% participation. CITU cadres were targeted and hundreds of cadres were charge sheeted, transferred and awarded other punishments.

Strike in 2000 was a milestone for CITU in coal industry. Four central trade unions had signed wage agreement which was not acceptable to the coal workers. Initially AICWF leadership was reluctant to go alone for the strike action. But, after pressure from the union level leadership of the then Bihar, AICWF gave call for 3 days strike. The entire coal industry was paralyzed by successful strike. Strike of 2000 gave a momentum to united action of all central trade unions. Appropriate tactics by AICWF under the leadership of Jibon Roy forced

BMS also in 2015 to go for 5 days strike in coal industry against commercial mining which was called off by other CTUs, except CITU, after 2 days.

The trade union unity in post nationalization period and its striking power brought better wages and living conditions and better social security for coal workers.

On the other hand, after few years of nationalization, government started diluting Coal Mines Nationalization Act, 1973 through a number of amendments. 1993 amendment allowed captive mining by private operators for end use. In 1995-96, the budgetary support was withdrawn. Modi-1 government enacted Coal Mines (Special) Provision Act, 2015 opening the way to allow private players to produce and sell coal on their own administered price. Modi government's second blow was 29.04% divestment of Coal India shares till date and, according to its road map, to disinvest more 5.96% shares bringing it to near 35% at the end of this fiscal.

Outsourcing has become a threat to permanent workforce in coal industry. CIL, which had 6.8 lakh permanent workforce at its inception, has now reduced workforce of 2.6 lakhs. Government is taking steps to close in large scale the small mines which employ major number of workers in the industry. CIL's total number of mines has been decreased from 711 to 386.

Despite these constraints, coal workers have compelled the government better salary and social security with five years agreement. With the agreement for permanent workers, the wage and other welfare benefits of the contractor workers were also settled through Joint High Power Committee.

The policy of central government is to reverse the entire scenario of coal industry - through disinvestment, commercial mining and disintegration of CIL and its subsidiaries - back to old era of private ownership. Only united and militant trade union movement can check the government from taking such devastating steps. The task is to prepare the workers for struggle against the anti-PSU and anti-worker policies. Organising continuous interactive meetings in the residential colonies of workers and having closed relation with them will ensure their participation in forthcoming movement. Our effort will certainly stop the darkness that is hovering over the public sector coal mines and its workers.

*(G. K. Srivastav is the jt. general secretary of AICWF)*

## **Trade Union Movement of Construction Workers**

Debanjan Chakrabarti

Construction work means construction, alteration, repair, maintenance or demolition of a building or structure which includes the works of masonry, carpentry, painting, electrical work, plumbing and fittings. It is the major industry as regards to the number of workers employed and value of goods produced. According to 1961 Census, over 20 lakh workers were employed then in construction including 2.4 lakh women. As per last 2011 census report, total number of construction workers are 4.5 crore. Our unions' estimation is 6 crores workers, 20% of them women.

### **Formation of Trade Union**

In 50's and 60's, the construction workers, engaged by construction companies, like Hindusthan Construction Company (HCC) engaged in some national projects in Assam and West Bengal; started agitation for higher wages, overtime, uniform and safety and health at work places. In retaliation, management resorted to large scale retrenchment and dismissals without assigning any reason and without any compensation. The working conditions became worse. In this background, the workers of HCC formed their national federation in 1969 with headquarter in West Bengal.



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In 70's the workers and employees of different central PSUs in the construction work like HSCL, NPCC, NBCC and BBJ, launched agitation in different work sites in different parts of the country demanding implementation of Central Pay Commission recommendation, wage increase etc. In the HSCL movement two workers lost their lives - one in Bokaro and the other in Bhilai. All these struggles led to the formation of All India Co-ordination Committee of HSCL unions of West Bengal, Bihar, M.P., Tamilnadu, Andra Pradesh etc in 1978. The similar organizations came up in NPCC and NBCC also.

Following these, CITU took initiative to organize the construction workers in a bigger platform. On 4th March 1978, an eastern region preparatory committee was constituted in a workers convention in Kolkata. Through sustained effort, contacts were established with more unions in Tripura, Assam, Bihar and Odisha and another bigger convention was held in Kolkata on 27 September, 1979 and Eastern Region Co-ordination Committee of Construction Unions was formed under active guidance of Monoranjan Roy and M. K. Pandhe. With CITU's help, the Coordination Committee established contacts with construction workers unions northern and southern states. During 1980-1983, the Coordination Committee held all India meetings in Kerala, Kolkata, Kanpur and in Delhi. In the Delhi convention, All India Co-ordination Committee of Construction Workers Unions (AICC of CWU) was formed.

Led by this AICC of CWU, statewide construction workers movement were organised pursuing construction workers demands like increase in minimum wages, overtime and social security like PF, ESI, gratuity, workmen's compensation, maternity benefits etc. These struggles achieved success in realising some demands in some states.

After long 7 years efforts, with spread of the organisation and the movement, the AICC of CWU was changed to 'Construction Workers Federation of India' (CWFI) in a foundation conference at Farakka in West Bengal in April 1989. From there on, it started planned journey.

During next 30 years (1989 – 2019), the CWFI has established units in 21 states and union territories - West Bengal, Tripura, Manipur, Assam, Bihar, Jharkhand, Delhi, U. P., M. P., Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, H.P., J&K, Tamilnadu, Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Puducherry and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. During this period CWFI membership has grown from 1.50 lakh to 13 lakhs. CWFI held 9 conferences in different states.

CWFI's most important achievement is getting a separate central legislation for the welfare of construction workers. CWFI organised two decades long statewide agitations in 70s and 80s for this legislation. CITU leader and CPI(M) MP Samar Mukherjee and other CPI(M) MPs Hannan Mollah, M. M. Lawrance raised the issue repeatedly in the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha. Ultimately, during UF ministry in 1996, both Houses of the Parliament adopted the Bill and the 'Building and Other Construction Workers' Welfare Cess Act, 1996' was notified and enforced.

Now construction workers can get pension, house building loan, medical treatment cost, children education subsidy, maternity benefit, accidental & natural death benefit from the statewide Construction Workers Welfare Boards.

However, anti-workers policies of the present central state governments, except in Kerala, construction workers are deprived of effective implementation of welfare schemes under the Act and, when getting are also not getting full benefits. More than Rs. 42,000 crores are accumulated in the Construction Workers Welfare Fund in different states but benefits given to the beneficiaries are only 12,000 crores, the state governments diverting most of the accumulated funds. CWFI in different states are on struggle for proper distribution of benefits to the beneficiaries.

CWFI is on the move and has been carrying forward the policies and programmes of CITU in all India, states and districts.

# ILO's Categorical Assurance

## **Not to 'Delve' in National Minimum Wage Setting Process**

[CITU general secretary Tapan Sen, in a letter addressed to the director of ILO country office in India on 5<sup>th</sup> July, accused ILO of its complicity with Modi government in changing the “*consensus recommendation of successive Indian Labour Conferences about the concrete formulation of wage setting supported by Supreme Court judgment*” and its attempt to promote the same in ILO-sponsored workshop.

In reply, the director of ILO, in her reply of 11 July, stated that having taken into “*cognizance of the concerns expressed by CITU on the subject*”, assured that “*this particular workshop will not delve into national minimum wage setting process.*”]



K. HEMALATA  
President

TAPAN SEN, Ex-M.P.  
General Secretary

5<sup>th</sup> July, 2019

The Director  
ILO Country office for India  
India Habitat Centre  
Core 4B, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Lodhi Road  
New Delhi-110003

Dear MS. Dagmar Walter,

We have received invitation from you for National Workshop on Wage Concepts and Wage Setting Process scheduled at Coimbatore on 16-18 July, 2019. From the note and topics narrated in the letter we are dismayed to find that despite there being in place the consensus recommendation of successive Indian Labour Conferences about the concrete formulation of wage setting supported by Supreme Court judgment in which Govt of India, state governments, employers organization were a party, then how that agenda is re-opened for further discussion in workshop that too with the involvement of ILO.

We also need to mention that all the central trade unions while attending the meeting called by ILO on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2019 had strongly criticized ILO for involving to a process which was violative of the consensus formulation by the highest tripartite forum in the country and that process is aimed at legitimizing such violation and deviation. We also find no reason of ILO for their enthusiasm for pursuing such anti-worker as well as anti-tripartism process.

On behalf of CITU we insist that ILO should desist from such process and stick to the relevant Convention No. 131 of ILO.

Yours sincerely,  
  
(Tapan Sen)  
General Secretary

ILO DWT for South Asia and Country Office for India

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Mr Tapan Sen  
General Secretary  
Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU)  
B T Ranadive Bhawan  
13-A, Rouse Avenue, New Delhi- 110 002.  
Tel: 23221288


11 July 2019

Dear Brother Sen,

This is in reference to your letter dated July 5, 2019, in response to our invitation to CITU to the National Workshop on Wage Concepts and Wage Setting Process in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu on July 16-17-18, 2019, organized under the ILO/Japan project, “Towards fair and sustainable global supply chains: Promoting decent work for invisible workers in South Asia”. We have taken due cognizance of the concerns expressed by CITU on the subject.

At the outset, kindly accept our apologies for any inconvenience that may have been caused by the invitation letter of the above-mentioned programme. This workshop aims at strengthening capacity of constituents to better support informal economy workers, engaged in the lower tier of metal products and garment supply chain, in particular, home-based workers (including own account workers), to effectively calculate wage linked to productivity (and work-time) and bargain better remuneration (or profit-sharing) in accordance with C 131 and R 135. The workshop will specifically focus on equipping participants on the methods of calculating piece rate wages, which is expected to contribute in improved collective bargaining approaches by piece-rate workers, in the informal economy. As such, this particular workshop will not delve into national minimum wage setting process.

Thanking you in anticipation of your kind understanding and looking forward to CITU's valuable contribution during the proposed workshop.

Yours sincerely,  
  
Dagmar Walter  
Director

# STATES

Punjab

## **Conference of Asha Workers and Facilitators Union**

State conference of Asha Workers and Facilitators Union Punjab was held at Jalandhar on 14 July, 2019 attended by over 500 delegates coming across the State. CITU State General Secretary Raghunath Singh inaugurated. AIFAWAH President and CITU national Secretary Usha Rani also addressed. The conference elected Ranjeet Kaur Ropar as Chairperson, Saroj Kumari as President and Sukhjeet Kaur as General Secretary. The conference was followed by rally despite heavy rain.

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

State	Centre	May 2019	June 2019	State	Centre	May 2019	June 2019
AP	GUNTUR	293	297	MHR	MUMBAI	308	309
	VIJAYWADA	293	301		NAGPUR	389	393
	VISHAKHAPATHNAM	293	297		NASIK	360	360
ASM	DOOM DOOMA TINSUKIA	276	278		PUNE	341	344
	GUWAHATI	277	278		SHOLAPUR	332	331
	LABAC SILCHAR	277	278	ORI	ANGUL TALCHER	333	332
	MARIANI JORHAT	261	262		ROURKELA	317	319
	RANGAPARA TEZPUR	253	259	PUD	PUDUCHERRY	319	323
BIH	MUNGER JAMALPUR	347	345	PUN	AMRITSAR	337	338
CHD	CHANDIGARH	310	311		JALANDHAR	321	323
CHS	BHILAI	330	332		LUDHIANA	296	297
DLI	DELHI	301	302	RJN	AJMER	289	290
GOA	GOA	327	333		BHILWARA	292	293
GUJ	AHMEDABAD	282	283		JAIPUR	306	309
	BHAVNAGAR	295	299	TN	CHENNAI	282	287
	RAJKOT	300	299		COIMBATORE	287	293
	SURAT	270	276		COONOR	333	341
	VADODARA	278	279		MADURAI	301	305
HRY	FARIDABAD	275	278		SALEM	295	301
	YAMUNANAGAR	294	299		TIRUCHIRAPALLY	302	305
HP	HIMACHAL PRADESH	271	272	TEL	GODAVARIKHANI	329	335
J&K	SRINAGAR	279	276		HYDERABAD	262	270
JRK	BOKARO	303	307		WARRANGAL	324	327
	GIRIDIH	346	345	TRP	TRIPURA	263	265
	JAMSHEDPUR	358	357	UP	AGRA	355	357
	JHARIA	363	361		GHAZIABAD	337	335
	KODARMA	386	386		KANPUR	342	343
	RANCHI HATIA	382	383		LUCKNOW	336	339
KNT	BELGAUM	308	309		VARANASI	3332	335
	BENGLURU	298	300	WB	ASANSOL	338	337
	HUBLI DHARWAR	332	335		DARJEELING	277	278
	MERCARA	311	312		DURGAPUR	3332	333
	MYSORE	317	319		HALDIA	340	339
KRL	ERNAKULAM	321	325		HOWRAH	294	294
	MUNDAKKAYAM	318	322		JALPAIGURI	280	280
	QUILON	366	373		KOLKATA	289	290
MP	BHOPAL	328	330		RANIGANJ	292	293
	CHHINDWARA	308	311		SILIGURI	283	283
	INDORE	285	285				
	JABALPUR	321	323				
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# Strike in Ordinance Factories

(Report Page 18)



**Jabalpur (Madhya Pradesh)**



**Ichhapore (West Bengal)**



# CITU General Council Meeting

Hassan; 7-10 August, 2019 (Report Page 5)



(Top) General Secretary placing report;

(Middle & Below) Protest at Hassan for civil rights in Kashmir