



Vol. 34

No. 11

July 2004

Price: Rupee

THE WORKING CLASS

MONTHLY JOURNAL OF THE CITU



Airport Authority Employees Union protesting Against Privatisation Move at Rajiv Gandhi Bhawan, New Delhi

CENTRE OF INDIAN TRADE UNIONS

MEETING OF THE GENERAL COUNCIL

NOTICE

The General Council meeting of CITU will be held on 17-20 July, 2004 at Nasik, Maharashtra, to consider the following agenda:

1. Presidential Address
2. Report of the General Secretary
3. Special discussion on BTR Centenary and PR TU School
4. Membership Verification
5. Resolutions
6. Miscellaneous.

The venue and address for communication are:

The General Secretary
Nasik Workers Union
Khudwad Nagar, Trimbak Road
Sapur, Nasik-422 007
Maharashtra
Phone: 0253 - 2371 341

Notice has been already issued from the centre to the members and state committees. GC members are requested to arrange train journey reservations both ways from their respective centres. Members will have to pay Rs 450/- towards boarding and stay expenses.

TRADE UNION CLASSES

The CITU Secretariat has, in its meeting held on 25-26 May in Delhi, decided to hold three regional Trade Union classes for its senior cadres in the State Committees. The classes will be held as per the following schedule:

1. The Southern region class (in English medium) will be held in Thiruvananthapuram on 6-8 August 2004. The four Southern State Committees of the CITU - Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Kerala and Tamil Nadu- have to nominate **SIX comrades each, which SHALL include the President and General Secretary of the State (in whose place no substitute can be nominated) and at least TWO women comrades.** Any CITU Secretariat member desirous of attending these classes or any other State Committee desirous of nominating one or two comrades for the same may write to the CITU Centre. The names of the participants must be communicated to the CITU Centre before 30th June, 2004.
2. Trade union classes (in Hindi medium) for the Hindi region States (Delhi, Punjab, Rajasthan, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Uttaranchal, Jammu & Kashmir, UP, MP, Chhattisgarh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand) will be held in New Delhi on 11- 13 August, 2004. Concerned State Committees of CITU in the Hindi speaking States/region have to nominate **FOUR comrades each to these classes, which SHALL include the President and General Secretary of the State (in whose place no substitute can be nominated) and at least ONE woman comrade.** The names of the participants must be communicated to the CITU Centre before 10th July, 2004. The CITU Secretariat members desirous of attending these classes may write to the CITU Centre.
3. Trade union classes for the Eastern Region (Bengali medium) will be held in Kolkata on 1- 3 September, 2004. The State Committees of the CITU in the Eastern region- West Bengal, Orissa, Assam and Tripura - have to nominate **SIX comrades each for participating in these classes, which SHALL include the President and General Secretary of the State (in whose place no substitute can be nominated) and at least ONE woman comrade.** CITU Secretariat members desirous of attending these classes may write to the CITU Centre. The names of the participants may please be communicated to CITU Centre before 10th July, 2004.

Staying arrangements in Thiruvananthapuram, Delhi and Kolkata will be made only for those comrades whose names are intimated by the stipulated deadline.

THE WORKING CLASS

CITU MONTHLY

JULY 2004

YOU SAID IT by Laxman



Look, I can't afford to provide both lunch and dinner everyday. Just cook lunch one day and dinner the next day from now on!

Courtesy: The Times of India

EDITORIAL BOARD

M K Pandhe

(Chairman)

W R Varada Rajan

(Working Editor)

Chittabrata Majumdar

Tapan Sen

K Hemalata

Ardhendu Dakshi

EDITORIAL

People's Verdict, UPA CMP and After

The dust has settled and a new government led by Congress Party, joined by RJD, DMK, NCP, PMK, TRS, JMM, LJP, MDMK, AIMIM, PDP, IUML, RPI(A), RPI(G) and KC(J) - an alliance christened as United Progressive Alliance (UPA) - is in place at the centre. With Sonia Gandhi refusing to don the mantle of Prime Minister, responding to her 'inner voice', Manmohan Singh has taken the reign in his hands.

The UPA Government has since adopted a Common Minimum Programme (CMP) worked out by the UPA and endorsed by the Left parties, which are supporting the government from outside. We have published, somewhat elaborate, extracts from the CMP, as a document on record.

This CMP can by no means be construed to be of TOTAL UNANIMITY of all the parties, particularly the Left parties, supporting the UPA Government at the Centre. And, the CITU, is certainly having its critical view of the CMP, which will be debated in the meeting of the CITU General Council at Nasik on 17-20, July, 2004.

But, the trade union movement has to take note of the pro-people, pro-poor, pro-farmer, pro-worker commitments in the CMP and demand the UPA government to get down to the business of fulfilling them in right earnest.

At the same time, we cannot overlook the fact that the first policy statement of the UPA Government, manifested in the President's address to the joint session of Parliament, indicates a trend to dilute some of the CMP commitments.

Two developments are significant. One is the statement of Civil Aviation Minister, proclaiming the intent to involve private players in modernisation of Delhi and Mumbai airports. The other is the statement of the External Affairs Minister on his assessment of the situation in Iraq and reviving the issue of sending Indian troops there. At least for the time being these deviations from the UPA government positions elaborated in the CMP are not final.

The central trade unions have, during the first month of UPA rule, had gone through motions of placing their issues and concerns before the Labour Minister, Finance Minister and the Prime Minister. But the trade union movement - particularly the CITU cadres and unions - must always remain alert. Whether it be the question of getting the positive points in the CMP implemented or the most important issue of getting the anti people liberalisation policies reversed, the working class has to mount pressures through sustained campaigns and mass mobilisations in struggles. Let us remain vigilant and prepare for future struggles!

(The Prime Minister, Dr. Man Mohan Singh invited the Central Trade Union Organisations for a meeting at his Race Course Road office at 5 p.m. on June 23, 2004. The CITU was represented by W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, at the meeting. During the meeting, he presented a memorandum, on behalf of the CITU, to the Prime Minister, supplementing it with oral submissions as well. The text of the CITU memorandum is published hereunder. Copies of the memorandum presented earlier to the Minister of Labour, jointly by the CTUOs, and the CITU memorandum presented to the Finance Minister during his pre budget consultation meeting were also attached. - Editor)

PM MEETS CENTRAL TRADE UNIONS:

CITU LISTS PRIORITY TASKS BEFORE UPA GOVT

"We thank the Hon'ble Prime Minister for his kind gesture in convening this interaction meeting with the representatives of the Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs), providing us with the opportunity to place the view points as well as concerns of the working people of the country for appropriate consideration by the Government of India. We are confident that the Prime Minister will make it a standing practice to hold such consultation meetings with the Central Trade Unions periodically, notwithstanding his many preoccupations.

We had already availed the opportunity of meeting the Union Minister of Labour as well as the pre-budget consultation meeting convened by the Union Minister of Finance and presented detailed memoranda outlining some of the pressing issues for consideration of the Government at the present juncture. We are sure that the attention of the Prime Minister would have already been drawn to the issues highlighted in these memoranda.

We, therefore, desire to confine here to a limited number of issues, which warrant immediate

intervention by the Prime Minister.

WORKERS' RIGHTS

The judgement by a Division Bench, of the Supreme Court, dated August 6, 2003, had pronounced that "no such right (to strike) exists - whether fundamental, statutory or equitable/moral right with the government employees." And the Court's dicta went beyond Government servants and condemned strikes as unjustified "on any equitable ground".

The entire spectrum of trade union movement had emphasised that the Government should take effective steps to negate the pernicious impact of - and clear the impasse created by- the above noted Supreme Court verdict. We fervently appeal to the Prime Minister to initiate immediate action in this regard, in line with the assurance in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP) adopted by this Government, which unambiguously stated: "Rights and benefits earned by workers, including the right to strike according to law, will not be taken away or curtailed."

We also desire that this may

please be followed by steps to ratify the core conventions of the International Labour Organisation on the right to freedom of association and right to collective bargaining (ILO Conventions 87 and 98), as also the ILO Conventions 151 and 154, which specifically relate to the rights of those employed in public services.

NOTIFICATION ON FIXED TERM EMPLOYMENT WORKMAN

The previous government had resorted to issuing a notification, - brushing aside the objections raised by all central trade unions- through which a new classification of "fixed term employment workman" had been introduced under the Model Standing Order Rules, which will wipe out permanency in all jobs even in the organised sector. We urge the Prime Minister to rescind this notification forthwith.

ENACTING LEGISLATIVE MEASURES

This United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government in its CMP had asserted that one of its basic principles of governance would be "to enhance the welfare and well-being of farmers, farm labour and

workers, particularly those in the unorganised sector, and assure a secure future for their families in every respect".

We strongly urge that the under noted, long awaited, legislative measures be given utmost priority for ensuring that this basic principle is translated into action:

1) **C o m p r e h e n s i v e** Agricultural Workers Bill to guarantee minimum wage and to extend social protection to the vast multitude of agricultural labourers.

2) **T h e U n o r g a n i s e d S e c t o r** Workers Bill, duly incorporating the unanimous inputs provided by all the Central Trade Unions.

3) **A l e g i s l a t i o n** to protect women workers from sexual harassment at work places as per the recommendations and guidelines issued by the Supreme Court as far back as August, 1997.

EMPLOYMENT GENERATION MEASURES

The Prime Minister had repeatedly emphasised that the pursuit of economic developmental agenda has, perforce, to be with a human face. Accomplishment of this perspective has necessarily to keep in view the twin tasks of 'employment generation' and 'creation of social safety net'.

The ban on recruitment in government offices, railways and public sector enterprises and systematic down-sizing of workforce pursued hitherto by the government has led to severe aggravation of joblessness and unemployment. We urge the government to reverse these measures and to

undertake a crash programme for creating jobs to reduce the colossal volume of unemployment.

We also urge that "enactment of a National Employment Guarantee Act, providing a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment, to begin with, on asset-creating public works programmes every year at minimum wages for at least one able-bodied person in every rural, urban poor and lower-middle class household", as envisaged in the CMP be immediately implemented.

SOCIAL SECURITY ISSUES

We impress upon the Government to evolve a national social security policy to provide for a comprehensive scheme, for early implementation, covering all sections of workers and extending relief to those who are involuntarily unemployed.

We plead for restoration of the 12 per cent interest on the Employees Provident Fund, all small savings, general provident fund, public provident fund etc. We note that the CMP had in this regard stated: "Interest rates will provide incentive both to investors and savers, particularly pensioners and senior citizens. The UPA Government will never take decisions on the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) without consultations and approval of the EPF board".

But, the present pattern of investment of the corpus of the EPF Schemes and Government guidelines in respect thereof are such that unless the Government revises upwards the administered rates of

interest on small savings, Special Deposit Schemes etc., which had drastically been brought down from 12 to 8 per cent, the injustice meted out to the workers, pensioners and small savings community, comprising mostly the senior citizens, cannot be undone. The Prime Minister may please ensure restoration of the status quo ante, as obtaining till June 2002

We also seek improvements in the present social security schemes in consultation with the central trade unions to ensure their better functioning and universal coverage. In particular we urge that the retrograde measure of replacing the existing 'benefit defined' pension scheme by a new 'contribution defined' pension scheme for new recruits in the government service, with investments channelised to the stock market be reversed.

AIRPORT AUTHORITY OF INDIA CASE

While we had noted this Government assurance in the CMP that "Generally, profit-making companies will not be privatised", we are dismayed by the disquieting developments in respect of Mumbai and Delhi airports, with certain proposals mooted, which will result in privatisation of the Airport Authority of India. We emphasise that such proposals be abandoned and modernisation of these airports undertaken through public investment for which possibilities do exist even in the present dispensation.

(Cont. on page 307)

(After the much debated Supreme Court pronouncements on the 'right to strike', in a case relating to the Telecom Factory of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL), the Bombay High Court had articulated a different view on 'strikes'. We give below a brief summary of the facts of the case and excerpts from the judgement dated the 7th October 2003. - Editor)

BOMBAY HIGH COURT ON 'STRIKE'

According to us, the simple demand of the workmen for adjudication of their industrial dispute ought to have been granted by the appropriate government, particularly when, the petitioner and the workmen acted wisely in not going on their proposed strike to protest against the decision of the respondent No.1. The respondent No.3, however, did not act properly and wisely and even in accordance with law while refusing to refer the simple demand of the workmen for adjudication of their dispute. The workmen, therefore, definitely felt let down and the union felt deceived by the action of the conciliation officer. According to us, whenever the union and the workmen demand for adjudication of their dispute they must be referred for adjudication invariably, unless the dispute is a frivolous, vexatious or mala fide one. If the respondent administration and the governance desires that the workmen should not go on strike or should not resort to trade union actions, the only course open for the workmen is to ventilate their grievance in accordance with law through adjudication. By refusing to refer the dispute for adjudication, the workmen get gagged and the outburst in the form of bandh or strike takes place. In these circumstances we are never justified to criticise or condemn the strikes which take place in the form of protest against the high-handed action of the employers including the Government and the Government bodies. We are sure that by and large the workmen and the government servants do not instantaneously resort to the extreme weapon of strike. They do so only when they are compelled and cornered and when they do not get any relief even for their simple and small demands. By and large they are satisfied if their demands get adjudicated.

The impugned order of the respondent No.3 read as under:

I am directed to refer to the failure of conciliation report No.ALC ©-1/8(1021,104-107.01) dated

15.11.2001 from the ALC (Mumbai) received in this Ministry on 26.3.2002 on the above mentioned subject and to say that prima facie. This ministry does not consider the dispute fit for adjudication for the following reasons:

On the orders of the Government, the management has discontinued the payment of transport allowance to the officers, employees and workers who are availing themselves of the subsidised transport facilities being provided by the management. The management has also served notice u/s 9A of the ID Act, ID Act is not maintainable."

The purported reasons stated hereinabove are no reasons but the conclusions of the Desk Officer of the respondent No.3. He himself appears to have decided the dispute by adjudicating the same. We fail to understand how an industrial dispute cannot be said to be maintainable when a notice of change is opposed by the workmen as prescribed. We further fail to understand why the Conciliation Officer also abruptly closed the proceedings without completing the same as contemplated by the ID Act. According to us the demand of the workmen and in particular the demands pertaining to a large number of workmen, as is in the present case, should be properly attended to not only by the employers and the management but also by the State Government or the Central Government as the case may be to ventilate the grievances of the workmen through the appropriate adjudication forum. What the union and the workmen should be assured is of fair trail of their disputes in accordance with law, so that they are not driven or cornered to resort to illegal and unconstitutional trade union agitations. If, on the one hand we say that the workmen should not go on strike and simultaneously, on the other hand, if we deny the proper access to the adjudication forum for giving an opportunity to them to justify their demands. We can never expect peaceful industrial

conditions in the society. If we try to corner the restless cat of the industrial dispute, such a cat is bound to pounce upon the throat of the administration. It is, therefore, always wise for the employer and the Government administration to allow free and easy access to the workmen and the trade unions for settlement of their disputes through the adjudication forums in accordance with law. If we try to gag the workmen from both the ends, we would be inviting bloody and unconstitutional agitations for which we cannot

blame the workmen and/or trade unions or the Government servants as a class. Let the bloody class struggle be substituted by peaceful and constitutional methods before the adjudication forums. This is the constitutional philosophy of our socialist constitution.

Respondent No.3 is directed to refer the industrial dispute for adjudication to the industrial tribunal under the provisions of ID Act, within a period of eight weeks from today.

WORKING WOMEN CONVENTION IN H P

The first Himachal Pradesh State Convention of Working Women was organised by the State Committee of CITU at the Kali Bari meeting hall in Shimla. Working women from different sectors like anganwadi workers and helpers, bank and insurance employees, lecturers etc, from all over the State participated in the Convention. A presidium consisting of Ranjna, Devki Sharma, Prem Kumari, Indira and Saroj conducted the proceedings.

Inaugurating the Convention, Hemalata, the Secretary of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) told that even after around 57 years after independence working women continue to be discriminated in recruitment, wages, promotions and even retirement. The statutory benefits which they got after decades of struggle like maternity benefit, equal remuneration, and crèche facilities etc were not implemented, particularly in the unorganised sector where most of the women were working. The Supreme Court directions on the issue of sexual harassment at work place are not yet implemented. Working women were the last to be employed and first to be retrenched. She told that women should come forward to take up more responsibilities in the unions so that their specific concerns get due attention in the agenda of the unions. She also appealed them to take initiative to organise the women workers in the brick kilns, construction etc, into unions and strengthen the CITU in the State. She emphasised the importance of mobilising more and more working women in the fight against the policies of globalisation and liberalisation, which were adversely affecting their living and working conditions. Prem Kumari placed a brief report. 11 delegates participated in the discussion and told about their experiences. They agreed fully that working women were discriminated and faced many hurdles in participating in union activities. Even educated women working in LIC and as lecturers faced discrimination, although it might not be as conspicuous as in the unorganised sector.

Kashmir Singh, General Secretary of the State Committee of CITU told that the CITU had decided to take up organising working women in different sectors as a priority. The Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers' Union affiliated to CITU in the State has developed into a strong force and have demonstrated that women can effectively lead unions, organise militant struggles and win them. He told that thousands of women were working as water carriers in schools, as school teachers, in private hospitals etc. He urged the activists to take initiative to organise these women workers. He promised that the CITU State Committee would extend all help and support to the activities of the Coordination Committee of Working Women, which was formed with 15 members. Ranjna, a LIC employee, was elected as the Convenor.

[The Union Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, made a departure from the NDA regime, by convening the pre-budget consultation meetings and invited the representatives of the Central Trade Union Organisations on 5.6.2004 for consultations. CITU was represented by Chittabrata Majumdar, General Secretary and W.R. Varada Rajan, Secretary. AITUC, HMS, UTUC-LS, INTUC, BMS and INFTU were the other CTUOs, which participated in the consultation meeting. We publish hereunder the text of the CITU memorandum presented to the Finance Minister during the consultations, which was supplemented by oral submissions by our representatives. - Editor]

PRE BUDGET CONSULTATIONS WITH CTUOs: CITU DEMANDS IMPLEMENTATION OF PRO-PEOPLE POLICIES

"We welcome re-initiation of pre budget consultation process by the Ministry of Finance, which was discontinued last year by the previous NDA regime. The present Finance Minister, in his earlier tenure, had also a post budget discussion with the Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs). We sincerely hope the same practice would be resumed again.

The Common Minimum Programme (CMP) of the present United Progressive Alliance (UPA) Government perceives a change in earlier direction of jobless corporate centric growth by setting a basic principle of governance as "to ensure that the economy grows at least 7-8% per year in a sustained manner over a decade and more and in a manner that generates employment so that each family is assured of a safe and viable livelihood".

The first budget of the UPA government should, therefore, try to tentatively quantify job growth potential for all investments both in rural and industrial sector.

We desire that the budget proposals should comprise a

time frame for enactment of National Employment Guarantee Act, as promised in the CMP and include, in the interim, the food for work programme on a massive scale.

Successive economic surveys since 1998-99 to 2002-2003 show severe demand compression in all fronts involving common man viz. per capita food grain consumption, urea consumption, diesel consumption, power consumption etc. Nothing tangible had been done in successive budgets to increase the purchasing power of vast rural and urban poor and lower middle class. The budgetary exercises continued to tinker with the supply side of the economy resulting in gains for the privileged few, without commensurate increase in earning level of workers or farmers.

Concrete steps need to be initiated for augmenting demand in the economy through generation of employment and improving incomes of workers and farmers.

■ Incentives to employers for investment should be linked to tangible employment generation targets.

■ Land reforms and bringing rich farmer/farmhouse owners under tax net.

■ A time frame for enactment of comprehensive central legislation for agricultural workers providing inter-alia minimum wages and social security, as envisaged in the CMP.

■ Speedy enactment of the Unorganised Sector Workers Bill, with the unanimous inputs by the CTUOs.

■ Strengthening of Public Distribution System; augmenting supply of kerosene through the PDS.

■ Areas badly affected by industrial sickness like tea, jute, textiles, engineering etc. should be specifically identified for more subsidised PDS as a relief measure.

■ Alarming increase in Industrial sickness during last five years has to be treated as a socio-economic problem. The number of companies, large/medium scale industries, registered with the BIFR has increased from 2000 odd in 1997 to more than 4000 in 2003, involving 23 lakh employees. These are mostly in private sector, negating the

widely propagated misconception that sickness is a public sector phenomenon. Substitution of BIFR by NCLT would only hasten closure and block utilisation of huge productive assets like land, machinery and other infrastructure. The Government should set up a separate department for Industrial Reconstruction to monitor sickness at incipient stage and take preventive and predictive measures. It should also look into re-utilisation of assets of closed units for industrial purposes, wherever possible. Revival of sick CPSUs should be the model for private sector to follow.

■ Creation of an appropriate mechanism for protection of small scale industries against unfair competition with large units of MNCs, along with concessional credit facilities. Quantitative restrictions on import of goods, particularly those produced by small scale and rural sectors should be re-imposed.

■ Import duty on Coal should be restored to 1998 level.

■ Evolving of a national social security policy to provide a comprehensive scheme covering all sections of workers and extending relief to those who are involuntarily unemployed for early implementation.

■ Restoration of 12 per cent interest on Employees Provident Fund, Small Savings, GPF, PPF etc.

■ Reversal of NDA Govt. decision of replacing the existing benefit defined pension scheme by a new Contribution defined

pension scheme for new entrants in government service.

■ Appointment of new review committee, with due representation to the CTUOs, to devise a transparent mechanism of compiling the cost of living indices.

■ Provision be made for payment of statutory dues to workers of CPSUs in the budget (Rs.1900 crore)

■ Salaried working class who do not and can not evade tax payment on the plea of dispute as the tax is being deducted at source is being squeezed further through tax on basic welfare related perquisites like medical benefits, leave travel concession, education, house building loans at concessional interest, transport, canteen facility, availing company's quarters and related amenities. Taxation on these perquisites should be withdrawn.

■ Exemption limit of Income Tax should be raised to Rs. 1 lakh (with standard deduction) or Rs. 1.5 lakh (without standard deductions).

■ Benefit of standard reduction be extended to pensioners, retirees and self employed, who mainly depend on pension or interest income on savings.

RESOURCE MOBILISATION

In a joint memorandum recently presented to the Union Minister of Labour, seven Central Trade Union Organisations (CTUOs) have emphasised that the Government can mobilise "additional resources to finance the programme of development benefiting the people, by blasting corruption, paving the

way for economic growth, ensuring better tax compliance, curbing tax default, realising the outstanding bank loans and tax arrears, augmenting direct tax revenues by broadening the tax base and incidence on the vastly affluent and rich landlord sections, giving relief to salaried employees by increasing income tax exemption limits, mobilising domestic resources by launching long term development bonds".

◆ We invite your serious attention to ever increasing amount of outstanding dues on income tax, corporate tax, custom duty and excise duty. As per figures furnished in Parliament, the amount of unrecovered taxes on this account has gone up from Rs. 47,000 crore in 1997-98 to Rs.87,000 crore in 2001-2002. These have been attributed to various disputes on assessment raised by defaulting corporates, industrialists and super rich. Raising dispute therefore, has become an easy route for deferment of tax dues for years together. We suggest that as in the case of common man using electricity, telephone, etc., the tax payers in such cases should pay the stipulated amount assessed by the authority first, before their disputes are considered and settled within a time-frame. Legislation may be brought for this purpose, if necessary.

◆ A target must also be set in the budget for recovery of unpaid loan from defaulters in nationalised banks.

◆ Increase the Tax GDP
(Cont. on page 307)

DOCUMENT

(The Congress and its pre-poll allies that include the RJD, DMK, NCP, PMK, TRS, JMM, LJP, MDMK, AIMIM, PDP, IUML, RPI(A), RPI(G) and KC(J), have formed a United Progressive Alliance (UPA) and installed a secular government at the Centre headed by Prime Minister, Man Mohan Singh. The UPA Government had adopted the COMMON MINIMUM PROGRAMME (CMP), which was finalised after intense debate within the alliance and consultations with the Left parties, supporting the new government from outside. The CMP was released on May 27, 2004 at New Delhi. We reproduce extracts from the CMP for information of our readers. - Editor)

UNITED PROGRESSIVE ALLIANCE GOVERNMENT COMMON MINIMUM PROGRAMME

The UPA government will have six basic principles for governance. They are:

To preserve, protect and promote social harmony and to enforce the law without fear or favour to deal with all obscurantist and fundamentalist elements who seek to disturb social amity and peace.

To ensure that the economy grows at least 7-8% per year in a sustained manner over a decade and more and in a manner that generates employment so that each family is assured of a safe and viable livelihood.

To enhance the welfare and well-being of farmers, farm labour and workers, particularly those in the unorganised sector, and assure a secure future for their families in every respect.

To fully empower women politically, educationally, economically and legally.

To provide for full equality of opportunity, particularly in education and employment for the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and religious minorities.

To unleash the creative energies of our entrepreneurs, businessmen, scientists, engineers and all other professionals and productive forces of society.

The UPA makes a solemn pledge to the people of our country: to provide a government that is corruption-free, transparent and accountable at all times, to provide an administration that is responsible and responsive at all times.

CMP on Labour

The UPA Government is firmly committed to ensuring the welfare and well-being of all workers, particularly those in the unorganised sector who

constitute 93 per cent of our workforce. Social security, health insurance and other schemes for such workers like weavers, handloom workers, fishermen and fisherwomen, toddy tappers, leather workers, plantation labour, beedi workers, etc will be expanded.

The UPA rejects the idea of automatic hire and fire. It recognises that some changes in labour laws may be required, but such changes must fully protect the interests of workers and families and must take place after full consultation with trade unions. The UPA will pursue a dialogue with industry and trade unions on this issue before coming up with specific proposals. However, labour laws other than the Industrial Dispute Act that create an Inspector Raj will be re-examined and procedures harmonised and streamlined.

The UPA Government firmly believes that labour-management relations in our country must be marked by consultations, cooperation and consensus, not confrontation. Tripartite consultations with trade unions and industry on all proposals concerning them will be actively pursued. Rights and benefits earned by workers, including the right to strike according to law, will not be taken away or curtailed.

ON ECONOMIC REFORMS

The UPA reiterates its abiding commitment to economic reforms with a human face, that stimulates growth, investment and employment. Further reforms are needed and will be carried out in agriculture, industry and services. The UPA's economic reforms will be oriented primarily to spreading and deepening rural prosperity, to significantly improving the quality of public systems

and delivery of public services to bring about a visible and tangible difference in the quality of life of ordinary citizens of our country.

ON PUBLIC SECTOR

The UPA Government is committed to a strong and effective public sector whose social objectives are met by its commercial functioning. But for this, there is need for selectivity and a strategic focus. The UPA is pledged to devolving full managerial and commercial autonomy to successful, profit-making companies operating in a competitive environment. Generally, profit-making companies will not be privatised.

All privatisation will be considered on a transparent and consultative case-by-case basis. The UPA will retain existing "navaratna" companies in the public sector, while these companies raise resources from the capital market. While every effort will be made to modernise and restructure sick public sector companies and revive sick industry, chronically loss-making companies will either be sold-off or closed after all workers have got their legitimate dues and compensation. The UPA will induct private industry to turn around companies that have potential for revival.

The UPA Government believes that privatisation should increase competition, not decrease it. It will not support the emergence of any monopoly that only restrict competition. It also believes that there must be a direct link between privatisation and social needs - like, for example, the use of privatisation revenues for designated social sector schemes. Public sector companies and nationalised banks will be encouraged to enter the capital market to raise resources and offer new investment avenues to retail investors.

ON INDUSTRY

Take all necessary steps to revive industrial growth and put it on a robust footing.

FDI will continue to be encouraged and actively sought, particularly in areas of infrastructure, high technology and exports and where local assets and employment are created on a significant scale. Indian industry will be given every support to become productive and competitive. All regulatory institutions will be strengthened to ensure that competition is free and fair. These institutions will be run professionally.

Set up a National Manufacturing Competitiveness

Council.

Manufacturing in households and by artisans will be given greater technological, investment and marketing support. A major promotional package for the SSI sector will be announced soon. It will be freed from the Inspector Raj and given full credit, technological and marketing support. Infrastructure upgradation in major industrial clusters will receive urgent attention.

Public sector banks will be given full managerial autonomy.

Interest rates will provide incentive both to investors and savers, particularly pensioners and senior citizens. The UPA Government will never take decisions on the Employees' Provident Fund (EPF) without consultations and approval of the EPF board.

Regulation of urban cooperative banks in particular and of banks in general will be made more effective.

LIC and GIC will continue to be in the public sector and will continue to play their social role. In addition, the social obligations imposed by regulatory bodies on private banks and private insurance companies will be monitored and enforced strictly.

ON INFRASTRUCTURE

The UPA attaches the highest priority to the development and expansion of physical infrastructure; Public investment in infrastructure will be enhanced, even as the role of the private sector is expanded. Subsidies will be made explicit and provided through the budget.

The review of the Electricity Act, 2003, will be undertaken in view of the concern expressed by a number of States. The mandatory date of June 10, 2004, for unbundling and replacing the State electricity boards will be extended. The UPA Government also reiterates the commitment to an increased role for private generation of power and more importantly power distribution.

Railways constitute the core of our infrastructure. Public investment for its modernisation, track renewal and safety will be substantially increased. Railway reforms will be pursued.

The UPA Government commits itself to a comprehensive programme of urban renewal and to a massive expansion of social housing in towns and cities, paying particular attention to the needs

of slum-dwellers. Housing for the weaker sections in rural areas will be expanded on a large scale. Forced eviction and demolition of slums will be stopped and while undertaking urban renewal, care will be taken to see that the urban and semi-urban poor are provided housing near their place of occupation.

The UPA will pay special attention to augmenting and modernising rural infrastructure.

All existing irrigation projects will be completed within three-four years. Household electrification will be completed in five years.

Regional development, Centre-State Relations
The UPA Government is committed to redressing growing regional imbalances, both among States as well as within States, through fiscal, administrative, investment and other means.

Consider the creation of a Backward States Grant Fund that will be used to create productive assets in these States; speed up the industrialisation of eastern and northeastern region.

Alleviate the burden of debt on States; Interest rates on loans to States will be reduced and the share of States in the single, divisible pool of taxes enhanced. Special packages announced for the northeast, for Bihar and for J&K etc. will be implemented expeditiously.

Make the National Development Council (NDC) a more effective instrument of cooperative federalism. The NDC will meet at least three times a year and in different States. Immediately, the NDC will take up the issue of the financial health of States and arrive at a national consensus on specific steps to be taken in this regard. The Inter-State Council will also be activated. All Centrally-sponsored schemes, except in national priority areas like family planning, will be transferred to States. The Sarkaria Commission had last looked at the issue of Centre-State relations over two decades ago. The UPA Government will set up a new Commission for this purpose, keeping in view the sea-changes that have taken place since then. Long pending schemes in specific States that have national significance, like the Sethu Samuthiram project, flood control and drainage in North Bihar (that requires cooperation with Nepal as well) and prevention of erosion in Padma-Ganga and Bhagirathi flood control in West Bengal will be completed expeditiously.

ON EMPLOYMENT

The UPA Government will immediately enact a National Employment Guarantee Act. This will provide a legal guarantee for at least 100 days of employment, to begin with, on asset-creating public works programmes every year at minimum wages for at least one able-bodied person in every rural, urban poor and lower-middle class household. In the interim, a massive food-for-work programme will be started.

Establishment of a National Commission to examine the problems facing enterprises in the unorganised, informal sector, revamping the functioning of the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC), launching new programmes for the modernisation of the coir, handlooms, powerlooms, garments, rubber, cashew, handicrafts, food processing, sericulture, wool development, leather, pottery and other cottage industries, giving highest priority to growth of agriculture, horticulture, aquaculture, floriculture, afforestation, dairying and agro-processing are envisaged for creation of new jobs.

ON FISCAL POLICY

The UPA Government commits itself to eliminating the revenue deficit of the Centre by 2009, so as to release more resources for investments in social and physical infrastructure. All subsidies will be targeted sharply at the poor and truly needy, like small and marginal farmers, farm labour and the urban poor. A detailed roadmap for accomplishing this will be unveiled in Parliament within 90 days. The UPA Government will not cut deficits by reducing or curtailing growth of investment and development outlays.

Early introduction of VAT after completing all the necessary technical and administrative homework; measures to increase the tax- GDP ratio by undertaking major tax reforms that expand the base of taxpayers, increase tax compliance and make the tax administration more efficient.

Tax rates will be stable and conducive to growth, compliance and investment. Special schemes to unearth black money and assets will be introduced. The UPA Government will take effective and strong measures to control price hike of essential commodities. Provisions to deal with speculators, hoarders and black-marketers under the Essential Commodities Act will not be diluted

in any way.

ON OTHER AREAS

Textile industry will be enabled to meet new challenges imposed by the abolition of quotas under the international multi-fibre agreement in January 2005.

Given its special ecological importance worldwide and within the country, the jute industry will receive a fresh impetus in all respects.

Step up public investment in agricultural research and extension, rural infrastructure and irrigation is in a significant manner; Irrigation will receive the highest investment priority and all on-going projects will be completed according to a strict time schedule.

Nurse back the rural cooperative credit system to health; flow of double rural credit in the next three years; expand coverage of small and marginal farmers by institutional lending; immediate steps to ease the burden of debt and high interest rates on farm loans. Crop and livestock insurance schemes will be made more effective.

Ensure the fullest implementation of minimum wage laws for farm Labour. A comprehensive protective legislation will be enacted for all agricultural workers. Revenue administration will be thoroughly modernised and clear land titles will be established.

Bring forward a Constitutional Amendment to ensure the democratic, autonomous and professional functioning of cooperatives.

Ensure adequate protection to all farmers from imports, particularly when international prices fall sharply.

Farmers all over the country will receive fair and remunerative prices. The terms of trade will be maintained in favour of agriculture.

Steps to clear dues to all farmers, including sugarcane farmers.

A pledge to raise public spending in education to at least 6% of the GDP with at least half this amount being spent on primary and secondary schools. Cess on all Central taxes to finance the commitment to universalise access to quality basic education.

Setting up of a National Commission on Education. Immediate steps to reverse the trend of communalisation of education that had set in in the past five years.

Steps to remove the communalisation of the school syllabus that has taken place in the past five years. A review committee of experts will be set up for this purpose.

A national cooked nutritious mid-day meal scheme, funded mainly by the Central Government, in primary and secondary schools. Universalising the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) scheme..

Raising public spending on health to at least 2-3% of the GDP over the next five years, with focus on primary healthcare.

Steps to ensure availability of life-saving drugs at reasonable prices.

Introduce legislation for one-third reservation for women in Vidhan Sabhas and in the Lok Sabha. Legislation on domestic violence and against gender discrimination.

Complete legal equality for women in all spheres..

Protect the rights of children, strive for the elimination of child labour, ensure facilities for schooling and extend special care to the girl child. Strengthen the Public Distribution System (PDS), particularly in the poorest and backward blocks of the country.

Devolution of funds for poverty alleviation and rural development schemes by Panchayats, accompanied by similar devolution of functions and functionaries.

For Scheduled caste/Tribes, all reservation quotas, including those relating to promotions, will be fulfilled in a time-bound manner. To codify all reservations, a Reservation Act will be enacted. Implementation of land ceiling and land redistribution legislation; No reversal of ceilings legislation will be permitted.

Affirmative action, including reservations in the private sector; a national dialogue with all political parties, industry and other organisations for the private sector to fulfill the aspirations of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes youth.

Implementation of the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1992.

On Ayodhya, await the verdict of the courts, while encouraging negotiations between parties to the dispute for an amicable settlement which must, in turn, receive legal sanction.

A model comprehensive law to deal with communal violence.

Establish a Commission for Minority Educational Institutions.

Strive for recognition and promotion of Urdu language under Article 345 and 347 of the Constitution.

National Integration Council will be restructured and revived.

Make a comprehensive assessment of the feasibility of linking the rivers in the country, starting with the south-bound rivers.

End the acute drinking water shortage in cities. Provide drinking water to all sections in urban and rural areas.

Respect the letter and spirit of Article 370 of the Constitution that accords a special status to J&K. Dialogue with all groups and with different shades of opinion in J&K.

Tackle terrorism, militancy and insurgency in the northeast as a matter of urgent national priority. The Northeastern Council will be strengthened. Territorial integrity of existing States will be maintained.

Set up an Administrative Reforms Commission to prepare a detailed blueprint for revamping the public administration system. Right to Information Act will be made more progressive, participatory and meaningful. The Lok Pal bill will be enacted into law.

Commitment to electoral reforms; initiate steps to introduce State funding of elections at the earliest.

Misuse of double taxation agreements will be stopped.

Interest of small investors will be protected and those who try to deliberately engineer market panic.

Eliminate all delays in the modernisation of the armed forces.

Set up a new Department of Ex-Servicemen's Welfare in the Ministry of Defence. Re-examine the long-pending issue of one-rank, one-pension. Make the National Security Council a professional and effective institution.

Maintain a credible nuclear weapons programme; evolve demonstrable and verifiable confidence-building measures with its nuclear neighbours; promote universal, nuclear disarmament and work for a nuclear weapons-free world.

Repeal POTA, while existing laws are enforced strictly.

Take the strictest possible action without fear or favour, against all those individuals and organisations who spread social discord, disturb social amity and propagate religious bigotry and communal hatred. The law of the land will be enforced effectively.

Strengthen India's vast science and technology infrastructure.

Enhance the country's energy security, particularly in the area of oil; an integrated energy policy linked with sustainable development will be put in place.

Pursue an independent foreign policy, keeping in mind its past traditions; promote multi-polarity in world relations and oppose all attempts at unilateralism.

Closer political, economic and other ties with its neighbours in South Asia and to strengthen SAARC; pursue dialogue with Pakistan on all issues.

Expand trade and investment with China; expand talks on the border issue; intensify relationships with East Asian countries; give a fresh thrust to traditional ties with West Asia; reiterate India's decades-old commitment to the cause of the Palestinian people for a homeland of their own; steps to withdraw Indian mercenaries from Iraq; ban further recruitment for this purpose.

Maintain independence of India's foreign policy position on all regional and global issues; pursue closer relations with the USA; deepen ties with Russia and Europe.

Fully protect the national interest, particularly of farmers, in all WTO negotiations; commitment made earlier will be adhered to even as efforts are mounted to ensure that all agreements reflect our concerns fully, particularly in the area of intellectual property and agriculture. strengthen solidarity of developing countries in the shape of G-20 in the WTO.

Set up a committee to examine the question of declaring all languages in the Eight Schedule of the Constitution as official languages; Tamil will be declared as a classical language.

Maintaining that the CMP for the UPA Government is, by no means, a comprehensive agenda, the UPA has committed to its implementation and make this CMP the foundation for another CMP - collective maximum performance.

ON JOB RESERVATIONS IN PRIVATE SECTOR

Dipankar Mukherjee
Member of Parliament
Rajya Sabha

A nation sets up its own industry not just for profits. There is always a larger social goal behind every economic activity.

Unfortunately, this basic concept of a welfare state is being challenged by global finance capitalists and their associates in developing countries like India. Attempts are being made to give priority to the benefit of a handful instead of prosperity for the majority of the people.

For instance, the mineral wealth of India lies in its tribal belt. The first thing that any industry, public or private, would do to start mining is to displace the tribals from their ancestral land.

In the public sector, they may at least think themselves to be the owners of the produce because it is under parliamentary control through their elected representatives and the state is the owner of industry.

They have reservations for jobs according to constitutional provisions in the public sector to ensure their participation in different stages, from the grassroot level to the policy making forum.

But in the private sector, there is no such constitutional compulsion and the land and labour are utilised to make an entrepreneur richer with no guarantee that the tribal who owns the land or the dalit whose labour went into the mining process would get a share through a job in the company. It is almost like someone asking you to get out of your house so that they can dig for gold while you are being made to beg outside what was once your own house.

The discussion on reservation in the Indian private sector began in the 1950s but not one entrepreneur volunteered to ensure workplace diversity. Even in the US, companies like General Motors and Ford have systems in place to employ African Americans, Asians and so on. There, every company that produces material procured by the government has to have workplace diversity. In the public sector, this social responsibility was partly discharged through job reservations. The technical efficiency in the case

of the public sector was also coupled with allocative efficiency in terms of social justice. Even so, they were able to compete globally as can be seen from the performance of public sector corporations like Bhel, ONGC, NTPC, IOC and so on.

Fair competition in a mixed economy means that the public sector and the private sector should have a level playing field. When the public sector is being asked to discharge its social commitment through the reservation of jobs, there is no reason why similar conditions should not apply to the private sector that has been given a lot of concessions to enhance industrial growth.

Everybody knows that our private sector takes a lot of money from public sector banks and financial institutions, and there is a huge default in loan repayment and taxes. Those whose land, labour and capital are being used by the Indian entrepreneurial class can definitely seek some modicum of equality in job distribution.

Under the circumstances, to call upon only the public sector and government departments to discharge their social commitment, keeping the private sector insulated from the national goal of evolving social justice, would be contrary to one of the basic principles of governance in the country - to provide full equality of opportunity in employment for scheduled castes, scheduled tribes and other backward castes.

The Indian private sector should try to understand this basic idea behind the concept of social justice so that the partnership in entrepreneurship that it is clamouring for is matched by its action in partnering the objective of social justice, too.

The president's address showing govt's sensitivity to affirmative action on reservation in the private sector - through dialogue with political parties, industries and other bodies on how best the private sector can fulfill the aspiration of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes - is, therefore, a step in right direction and the private sector should offer its cooperation in a positive manner.

(Courtesy: Business Standard, June 16, 2004)

92nd INTERNATIONAL LABOUR CONFERENCE

Tapan Sen

The 92nd Conference of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) held on 1-17 June 2004 at Geneva reflected rising discontent against and louder disapproval to the ongoing process of neo-liberal imperialist globalisation. Most of the workers delegates attending the conference from both developing and developed countries, and even the Government representatives from many of the developing countries, particularly from Asia, Africa and Latin America had made strong observations against the neo-liberal globalisation process perpetrated by the international financial institutions and allied agencies at the behest of rich industrialised powers and international finance capital.

WORLD COMMISSION ON GLOBALISATION

The Report of the World Commission on Social Dimensions of Globalisation appointed by ILO has been the theme of deliberations in the conference. The Commission was co-chaired by the President of United Republic of Tanzania, Mr Benjamin William Mkapa and Mr Tarja Halonen, President of Republic of Finland and comprised of 26 members from different walks of life with different viewpoints. The Report submitted by the Commission titled "A Fair Globalisation: Creating Opportunities for All" has begun asserting that "The current path of globalisation must change. Too few share its benefits. Too many have no voice in its design and no influence on its course...Immense riches are being created. But the fundamental problems of poverty, exclusion and inequality persist. Corruption is widespread...There are deep-seated and persistent imbalances in the current workings of the global economy which are ethically unacceptable and politically unsustainable...The imbalance between economy and society is subverting social justice...The imbalance between the economy and the polity is undermining democratic accountability."

The Report diagnosed the unfair governance of the global economy creating unethical and unsustainable disparities between the countries

and within countries throughout the globe to be the root cause of such malice on humanity. The Report had to admit that the insatiable greed for profit and wealth by a few powerfults has become the governing force in the global economy to keep the rest of humanity hungry and distressed, when it quoted Mahatma Gandhi saying "There is enough in the world for anybody's need but there cannot be enough for everybody's greed." It called for better policy coherence both in national and global levels and fair rules for trade, finance and investments to ensure, inter alia, greater policy autonomy for the developing countries, and wider respect to the rights of the mass of the people including the labour to be made the essential and irreplaceable ingredients of all exercises for remaining competitive and productive, in order to make the globalisation fair and beneficial for all. The efficacy and the practicality of the concrete measures suggested by the Report may be debatable but one thing must be noted. The rising struggle worldwide by the workers and the people against the neoliberal imperialist globalisation became much powerful than the media-campaign and institutional patronage in favour of globalisation which forced all concerned to admit and recognise the ill effects and unfair designs of the entire process, thus pushing its protagonists to the defensive.

DISCUSSION ON DIRECTOR GENERAL'S REPORT : GLOBALISATION DENOUNCED

In the 90th Conference of ILO held on 2002, the Director General, Juan Somavia had to mention in his opening speech that globalisation is facing a crisis of legitimacy. In the 91st Conference, the Director General's report titled "Working out of poverty" had to observe, "While for some, globalisation has generated wealth and welfare, many see it as a source of persistent inequality and social exclusion...Yet the dominant policy message has been: Grow fast, distribute later. It has not really worked. ...Poverty is the result of failures and ineffective economic and social systems...and of a model of globalisation

incapable of preventing the growth of unemployment and the informal economy ..."

In the 92nd Conference of ILO just concluded, the same Director General, while referring to the World Commission's Report on globalisation has stated in his Report, "Constructing a social dimension to globalisation by strengthening the governance system from the local to global, is a major task." In his opening speech to the Conference while placing his Report, Juan Somavia admitted that globalisation has reduced space for national policy suited to specific domestic needs and commented that "There cannot be successful globalisation without a successful localisation...sound local and national policies in a democratic setting are crucial...We need fair rules for trade capital and technology flows, migration and labour standards. All these will provide more policy space for developing countries to have real national ownership of developmental policies." He advocated strong pursuit of ILO's agenda for decent work for all to confront such a situation.

But as usual, and may be due to systemic compulsions, despite admitting the inefficacy of the present model of globalisation in providing a better humane living for all, the Director General still sought to find a solution within the frame work of free market-globalisation itself. He suggested for making the globalisation more inclusive, open economies to be more responsive to social concerns. He did not mention anything about neocolonial ploy of the economic super-powers to deindustrialise the developing economies and to thrive at their cost. He remained silent about the imperialist game plan to establish hegemony over the rest of the world and combine both their military and economic policy designs in that direction. Although his Report has admitted worsening of the situation in the occupied Arab Territories and 'dramatic social effects of the economic disruptions caused by restrictions and systematic acts of violence and other impositions on the daily life of Palestinians', it remained conspicuously silent about the arrogance and machinations of the Israeli forces on the Palestinians with the active backing of the US imperialists.

DG stressed upon the instrument of tripartite

social dialogue to be the only route for finding a solution to the problems of globalisation but did not bother to mention about the rising waves of strikes and struggles by the working class all over the world including in the developed countries and preferred not to assert the truth that the united resistance struggle by the working class only can create grounds and condition for such "social dialogues" as per ILO vocabulary.

SOME IMPORTANT INTERVENTIONS

Many speakers on the DG's report were forthright in denouncing the present globalisation process as the root of widespread poverty. Mr Mkapa, President of Tanzania and the co-chairman of the World Commission mentioned about the phenomenal increase of poverty in Africa in the process of decade long globalisation, while referring to the anti-globalisation movement worldwide and stated that such globalisation "will always be politically unbalanced, materially unsustainable, morally indefensible and from a security standpoint, graphically catastrophic." Mr Parvanov, President of Bulgaria enquired, "the question is whether, in its present form, globalisation is the best thing for humanity?" Ms Clark, Prime Minister of New Zealand, while narrating the experience of hectic liberalisation in the country's economy during 1990s and its negative results followed by the change in the government in 1999, stated that "the New Zealand people then voted for a change in the direction (of the policies) to reassert traditional values in our country of fairness, opportunity and security." Mr Berozini, from the Labour Ministry of Brazil, mentioned about the "devastating social effects of the globalisation process" and insisted for a proper "international system of governance" to ensure "reduction of inequalities and democratisation of multilateral institutions." Mr Wang representing the Govt of China in the conference stressed upon the urgent need for "establishment of a new political and economic order that is fair and rational" to replace the present one if globalisation is to be made beneficial for all. Mr Morales Cartaya, Labour Minister of Cuba denounced "the selfishness and barbarity which are being imposed through neoliberal globalisation and a world order which is subject to the hegemonic domination of a single

super-power...which (through war and coercion) flagrantly violates and tramples on the basic principles and standards of international law and the Charter of the United Nations." Denouncing the act of allowing platforms to some dubious NGOs in the ILO conference who are serving the US conspiratorial design against Cuba, Cartaya warned that effective action needs to be taken before it becomes too late "to prevent ILO from becoming hostage to discriminatory practices and political manipulation." Sisram Ola, Labour Minister of India and P D Shenoy, Secretary, Ministry of Labour also addressed the conference. Mr Guy Ryder, General Secretary of International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) asserted while referring to the globalisation process that "No issues, no challenge is greater than that of reversing those workings of the global economy which today offer reward for violation of workers' rights." Alexander Zharikov, General Secretary, World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) stated that "The IMF, World Bank and WTO continue to promote policies that amount to neocolonialism....It is essential that ILO adopt a sharper, stronger position towards policies of neoliberal globalisation." Mr Xu, Worker's delegate from China referring to the ills of neoliberal economic order, stated that "key cause of such a situation is the present international economic and trade order" which needs to be replaced by a fair and reasonable one. Mr Doz, worker's delegate from Spain denounced the "violation of democratic principles, human rights and international law which are committed under the cloak of combating terrorism." He asserted that "What is much worse, is the use of terrorist acts and their victims as a pretext for declaring wars and occupying countries." Mr Lee, the workers delegate from South Korea asserted that the resistance struggle against the destructive impact of neoliberal globalisation by the South Korean workers is continuing and workers solidarity around the world to the anti-globalisation struggle is of crucial importance along with ILO's supervisory and monitoring activities on international labour standards.

Sukomal Sen, General Secretary of TUI of public and Allied Employees while addressing the conference, questioned the misplaced optimism

expressed in the DG's report for a fair globalisation within the existing neoliberal framework driven by profit-craze and which is best defined by the observation made in the Report of the World Commission when it comments that "worldwide, many are convinced that the rights of capital are better protected than the rights of workers." Sen referred, as an example, to the atrocious attack on the basic rights of the workers in case of the strike by the Govt employees of Tamilnadu (India) in violation of core labour standards set out by ILO. He called for more consensus-based and non-discriminatory functioning and decision-making in ILO with the involvement of all segments of the trade union movement to make it more effective in combating the challenges. H Mahadevan (AITUC) while speaking in the plenary session on global report referred to the jobless, senseless, futureless and ruthless growth under neoliberal globalisation. H Dave of BMS also spoke in the plenary session on the DG's report.

DELIBERATION IN COMMITTEES

As per usual practice, the conference deliberated on five issues in five different committees. The issues were 1) Migrant worker, 2) On Human Resource Development 3) On workers in the Fishing sector 4) Resolutions Committee, 5) On Application of Standards. Tapan Sen, Secretary CITU represented the workers delegation from India in the Resolutions Committee, Human Resource Development Committee was represented by Ravi Raman(BMS), Committee on Migrant workers by H Mahadevan (AITUC) , Application of Standards Committee by H Dave (BMS) and Shankar Saha (UTUC-LS) and the Committee on Fishing sector by Thampan Thomas of HMS and Pavan Singh Ghatwar of INTUC.

The Committee on Resolution has adopted a Resolution concerning Promotion of Gender Equality, Pay Equity and Maternity Protection. The Resolution pointed to the phenomenon of aggravation of gender inequality, discrimination against women workers in respect of employment opportunity, wages, job security and other rights and serious deficit in maternity protection throughout the world under the neoliberal globalisation. The Resolution also pointed to the

inhuman treatment to the women workers by way of virtual denial of maternity protection and maternity rights and benefits to them particularly in the informal sector. It called for ratification of all related Conventions and Recommendations of ILO and also for appropriate "legislative and affirmative action" by the Govts for detection and elimination of gender disparity in the workplace and the society, and concerted action by the workers and employers' organisations in that direction in their respective fields. It also called upon ILO to strengthen its supervisory and monitoring machineries and supportive activities for effective implementation of the Resolution. Tapan Sen (CITU), while commending the resolution in the plenary session of the conference pointed out that "Aggravation of gender gap and discrimination have been one of the major negative reflections of neoliberal globalisation process signaling speedy degeneration and distortion of social values...the situation started improving to some extent during the preglobalisation period since world war II at the advent of social welfarism in economic regime. But neoliberal globalisation has again put such phenomenon of gender discrimination and repression on the ascending track. Eradication of gender discrimination cannot come about automatically. It has to be achieved and the resolution is an action oriented directional document to be acted upon by all concerned." The Committee on Human Resource Development revised and updated the Human Resource Development Recommendation 1975 by adopting a new Recommendation concerning Human Resource Development: Education, in tune with the changed situation. It called upon the Govts to devise appropriate policies at national level on education, training and life-long learning suitable to changing workplaces and assigned responsibilities to all the social partners in respect of human resource development. It also recognised the rights of the workers to negotiate on their rights to education and training through collective bargaining process at all levels, local to international. Though the Employers group voted against the recommendation in the plenary session, the Recommendation has been adopted by huge majority of votes in the conference.

The Committee on Migrant workers adopted a report on conclusions on a fair deal for migrant workers. Keeping in view the increasing phenomenon of migration of workers across the borders, the conclusion recommended a right based approach and plan of action by ILO and its constituents based on commitment to adopt national policies aimed at equal treatment of migrant workers with nationals in respect of national labour laws, access to applicable social protections, combating exploitation and promotion of basic human rights for all migrants. It also called for ratification of all related ILO conventions and recommendations.

The Committee on Fishing Sector dealt on the paper prepared by ILO for adoption of a comprehensive standard for the fishing sector workers on board in fishing vessels. The Committee unanimously adopted a conclusion recommending adoption of a Convention and a Recommendation on the working conditions, rights, social security, health and safety measures etc of the fishing workers on board on fishing vessels.

The Committee on Application of Standards have reviewed the situation relating to implementation of various conventions and recommendations of ILO in various countries and also scrutinized the cases of complaints of violation of ratified conventions received and examined by Committee of Experts on application of ILO standards. While speaking on the Report of the committee, Shankar Saha (UTUC-LS) from India pointed out that owing to rapid expansion of the informal sector throughout the world in the process of neoliberal globalisation, the core labour standards set out by ILO are facing the threat of being irrelevant to the majority workforce in the world, thus signifying the urgent need for all out struggle against globalisation.

The workers delegation from India to the 92nd conference of ILO consisted of H Dave, Ravi Raman (BMS), Pavan Ghatwar, G Kalan (INTUC), Tapan Sen (CITU), Thampan Thomas (HMS), H Mahadevan (AITUC) and Sankar Saha (UTUC-LS). Md Amin, Labour Minister of West Bengal was also member of Govt delegation along with Union Labour Minister and the Labour Minister of Punjab.

(Excerpts from the speech of com Sukomal Sen, General Secretary, Trade union International of Public and Allied Employees, WFTU in the 60th session of United Nations Economic and Social Commission (UNESCAP) held at Shanghai from 22-28 April 2004. - Editor)

POVERTY AND INEQUALITY REIGN SUPREME

Sukomal Sen

60th Session of UNESCAP is taking place in an unprecedentedly difficult phase of the world situation. Never before, the jobs of the workers and employees have been so jeopardized and the workers have been rendered so completely insecure in respect of their jobs, their economic benefits, social security and trade union rights. Workers' economic and social rights are being drastically curtailed in the present phase of economic globalisation.

On the other side, the 60th Session takes place in a background of the gross violation of international law and the UN Charter as seen in the US-British invasion of Iraq in wanton defiance of world public opinion and the international opposition of the world trade union movement.

The World Bank-IMF dictated neo-liberal economy after about one and half decades of putting into practice, have proved to be definitely anti-worker. WFTU and our Trade Unions International are concerned primarily with the public service and allied employees. The public service and allied employees in general either in the developing countries or in the advanced capitalist countries have become direct victims of this neo-liberal economic regime.

What are the implications of recent economic and social development? Here we are citing a few examples how in the globalised economy, the inequality both in economic and social spheres between the rich and the poor is formidably widening and the poor are reaching the bottommost level.

Although there is great poverty and inequality in the richest capitalist country, this cannot compare to the levels of both of these to be found in the vast majority of the world's economies, which are both capitalist and poor. The World Bank estimates the number of persons in different countries and in the world as a whole who subsist on less than \$1 and \$2 per day. In Nigeria, for

example, in the early 1990s, 90.8 percent of the population lived on \$2 per day or less; in India the figure was 86.2 percent in 1997. In a world population of some 6 billion persons, the World Bank estimates that 2.8 billion survive on \$2 per day or less (about 45 percent); 1.2 billion lived on \$1 (about 20 percent) per day or less.

The World Bank also uses a number comparable to the US poverty level of income. Remember that US level for 2002 translates into \$12.60 per person per day. The Bank's level for poor countries is now a little more than \$1 per day. Using this number it claims that poverty diminished worldwide over the 1990s. However the claim is suspect. It is true that \$1 per day might go further in a poor country because prices are cheaper, so that while \$1 per day in the United States makes a person obviously destitute, such may not be the case in a very poor country. If over time, prices fall in a poor country, then, other things being equal, the number of persons living in poverty will fall.

It should be noted in connection with the World Bank's poverty level that the World bank has been instrumental in promoting large scale agricultural export from rich to poor countries. Many persons living below the World Bank poverty level are subsistence peasants operating outside the money economy. Their economic well-being is often greater than a dollar a day would indicate. As they are in effect dispossessed by Bank-promoted agriculture and move into urban areas, their money income may exceed the World bank poverty level, but in fact, they are considerably worse off than they were in the countryside.

World Bank economist Branco Milanovic has overseen the most sophisticated attempt to measure income inequality worldwide. Using a

massive household survey covering the entire world, he found that, "The richest 1 percent of people in the world get as much income as the poorest 57 percent. The richest 5 percent had in 1993 an average income 114 times greater than that of the poorest 5 percent, rising from 78 times in 1998. The poorest 5 percent grew poorer, losing 25 percent of their real income, while the richest 20 percent saw their real incomes grow by 12 percent, more than twice as high as average world income. World inequality grew because inequality grew between countries. The rich nations grew richer and the poor nations poorer, the rich within each country grew richer at the expense of poor."

Buttressing Milanovic's findings the United Nation's most recent Human Development Report 2003 tells us that the income of the richest 25 million Americans is equivalent of nearly 2 billion of the world's poorest persons (2 billion is 80 times 25 million). In 1920, per capita income in Western Europe was three times that in Africa; by the 1990s it was more than 13 times as high. Adding human meaning to these numbers, the report says, "the statistics today was shaming; more than 13 million children have died through diarrhoeal disease in the past decade. Each year over half a million women, one for every minute of the day, die in pregnancy and childbirth. More than 800 million suffer from malnutrition." In addition, "For many countries the 1990s were a decade of despair. Some 54 countries are poorer now than in 1990. In 21, a larger proportion go hungry. In 14, more children are dying before the age of five. In 12, primary school enrollments are shrinking. In 34, life expectancy has fallen. Such reversals in survival were previously rare." Economist James Galbraith tells us that, "Looking at the board range of developing countries, the University of Texas Inequality Project finds rising inequality in most of them, falling inequality in only a few."

Just as capitalism's proponents proclaim the reality of equality of opportunity, so too do they say that today's poor national economies have every chance of someday becoming rich. Can this be so?

The gap between the rich and the poor within countries is paralleled by that among countries. Since countries have widely different populations, a common way to compare countries is by their gross domestic product (GDP) per capita. Such a comparison shows extremely large differences among countries. At the top are what we can call "rich countries", these are for the most part those capitalist nations which first industrialized and which took command, largely through colonization, of much of rest of the world, from Latin America to Africa to South East Asia. At the bottom are the poorest of "poor countries," — those nations on the receiving end of the forced expansion of the rich nations. Countries such as the United States, Norway, Japan, Germany and France have per capita GDPs 20 to more than 100 times greater than countries like Ethiopia, Malawi, Afghanistan and Bolivia. It is remarkable to observe that most of the rich countries are those where capitalism first arose, while most of the poor countries have long histories of colonial and imperial domination. In terms of per capita GDP, no Latin American country ranks in the top 35, and no African country ranks in the top 55. More than one-half of the poorest 50 countries are in Africa. Sixty percent of the top 50 are either in Europe or North America.

Great and growing inequality saps the political power of those at the bottom, making it more likely that the social welfare programs which help to alleviate the harmful consequences of poverty will be gutted, while at the same time making it more likely that policies which further favour the rich will be put in place. The poor are increasingly filled with hopelessness and despair as they contemplate the yawning gap between them and those at the top.

The imbalance thus created in the economy and society is a threat to growth, peace and social progress. The inequality is generating from the very system the present capitalist world order upholds. To combat the widespread phenomenon of poverty and inequality worldwide, that system must undergo a change and those worst affected by that system must direct their efforts for such systemic change.

REPORTS & EVENTS

DELHI CITU 11TH CONFERENCE

The 11th Conference of the CITU, Delhi State Committee, held on 13-14 June, 2004 at Faridabad has called for strengthening the CITU organisation and to intensify struggles.

149 delegates and 25 representatives from fraternal organisations, including AIDWA, DYFI, AIIEA, Sarva Karmachari Sangh and BEFI, attended the conference held at Com. E.K. Nayanar Nagar (Yaday Sabha Bhawan), Faridabad.

Inaugurating the conference, M.K. Pandhe, President, CITU, cautioned the workers that they have to be vigilant against attempts by vested interests to goad the new United progressive Alliance government headed by Prime Minister, Man Mohan Singh to persist with the policies of liberalisation, privatisation and globalisation (LPG), despite its commitment to address people's concerns in the Common Minimum Programme (CMP). Therefore, the workers should prepare for sustained campaign and struggles, not only to get the points in the CMP implemented but also to reverse the World Bank-IMF dictated policies of globalization.

Emphasising the need to overcome some of the weaknesses in the organisation, he urged the Delhi CITU to conduct regular classes to educate the workers and in this

connection he referred to the permanent school being set up at Ghaziabad by CITU. He said that the conference should take up a target of one lakh membership. Satvir Singh, General Secretary, CITU, Haryana, Asha Latha, General Secretary, AIDWA, Delhi, Sinha (AIIEA), Shyam Sunder (DYFI) and Asha Sharma, Sarva Karmachai Sangh, Haryana, greeted the conference.

A presidium comprising S.B. Bharadwaj, Nathu Prasad, Bramjit and Kamala conducted the proceedings of the conference. Subash Lamba, leader of the Sarva Karmachari Sangh and convenor of the reception committee, welcomed.

Thirty three (33) delegates participated in the debate on the general secretary's report placed by Mohan Lal. Those who spoke emphasised the need of the hour was to intensify struggles which would in turn strengthen the organisation. After reply, the report was adopted unanimously.

Resolutions on the charter of demands of the workers in Delhi, Ghaziabad, Noida and Faridabad (which will form the basis of further planned struggles by the State CITU) on "Unorganized Sector", "Against privatisation of JAL Board", "Against communalism and divisive forces", "Against growing unemployment" and "On working women" were unanimously adopted.

In his summing up, W R Varada Rajan, Secretary, CITU, the discussions, pointed out the mandate of the people in favour of a secular government at the Centre is significant for the working people of the country. The increased presence and role of the left forces in Lok Sabha is an important development, which was reflected in the drawing up of the CMP. Nevertheless the workers must prepare for future struggles.

He also underlined the importance of carrying out the tasks laid out in the Bhubaneswar document of CITU on organisation to remove the present shortcomings and strengthen the organisation. Drawing attention to the importance of struggles in the approach of CITU, he said: "for CITU, struggle is a necessity and conciliation a compulsion".

The conference elected the new State Committee, Sudhir Kumar (President), Mohanlal, (General Secretary), H.C. Pant (Treasurer), Nathu Prasad and Bramjit (Vice Presidents), Virender Kumar Gaud and Anurag Saxena (Secretaries).

A largely attended public meeting was held in the evening on 14th June and was addressed by W.R. Varada Rajan, Satvir Singh, Subash Lamba and presided over by Sudhir Kumar. The proceedings were conducted by Mamchand.

The reception committee had made

REPORTS & EVENTS

excellent arrangement for the stay of the delegates and conduct of the conference and took much effort

to decorate the venue and surrounding area over a considerable distance. More than

40 volunteers worked day and night for the success of the conference.

Report by SUDHIR KUMAR

ANGANWADI UNION MEETS NEW AP CM

A delegation of the Andhra Pradesh Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers' Union comprising of its President B Lalitamma, General Secretary, P Roja and the State Committee members met the Chief Minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy and submitted a memorandum on the demands of the anganwadi workers and helpers in the State. The memorandum highlighted the various additional jobs allotted to the anganwadi workers and helpers by the State Government and demanded that they should be paid additional remuneration for the additional work done by them. The delegation strongly objected to the

Government's attempts to hand over the management of the anganwadi centres to the Panchayats and demanded that these should be stopped immediately. The other long pending demands of festival allowance, reservation in the village level posts like Auxiliary Nurses cum Midwives, Primary Teachers etc were also placed before the Chief Minister. The delegation reminded him of his promise on the eve of the elections to the State, that if voted to power, the Congress Government would pay additional remuneration for the anganwadi employees from the State's finances and provide them

job security. They also told that the anganwadi employees in the State played an active role for the defeat of the Telugu Desam BJP combine, which blatantly pursued the World Bank dictated policies, to the detriment of the interests of the common people.

The Chief Minister promised to consider their demands with due seriousness and take proper action at the earliest. The Union decided to organise a State level Convention of anganwadi employees to be followed by district level conventions to explain its efforts to achieve their demands and to mobilise them for the same.

HIMACHAL: WORKING WOMEN CONVENTION

The first Himachal Pradesh State Convention of Working Women was organised by the State Committee of CITU at the Kali Bari meeting hall in Shimla. Working women from different sectors like anganwadi workers and helpers, bank and insurance employees, lecturers etc, from all over the State participated in the Convention. A presidium consisting of Ranjna, Devki Sharma, Prem Kumari, Indira and Saroj conducted the proceedings.

Inaugurating the Convention, Hemalata, the Secretary of the All India Coordination Committee of Working Women (CITU) told that even after around 57 years after independence working women continue to be discriminated in recruitment, wages, promotions and even retirement. The statutory benefits which they got after decades of struggle like maternity benefit, equal remuneration, and crèche facilities etc were not implemented, particularly in the

unorganised sector where most of the women were working. The Supreme Court directions on the issue of sexual harassment at work place are not yet implemented. Working women were the last to be employed and first to be retrenched. She told that women should come forward to take up more responsibilities in the unions so that their specific concerns get due attention in the agenda of the unions. She also appealed them to take initiative to organise the

REPORTS & EVENTS

women workers in the brick kilns, construction etc, into unions and strengthen the CITU in the State. She emphasised the importance of mobilising more and more working women in the fight against the policies of globalisation and liberalisation, which were adversely affecting their living and working conditions.

Prem Kumari placed a brief report. 11 delegates participated in the discussion and told about their experiences. They agreed fully that working women were discriminated and faced many

hurdles in participating in union activities. Even educated women working in LIC and as lecturers faced discrimination, although it might not be as conspicuous as in the unorganised sector.

Kashmir Singh, General Secretary of the State Committee of CITU told that the CITU had decided to take up organising working women in different sectors as a priority. The Anganwadi Workers' and Helpers' Union affiliated to CITU in the State has developed into a strong force and have demonstrated that women can

effectively lead unions, organise militant struggles and win them. He told that thousands of women were working as water carriers in schools, as school teachers, in private hospitals etc. He urged the activists to take initiative to organise these women workers. He promised that the CITU State Committee would extend all help and support to the activities of the Coordination Committee of Working Women, which was formed with 15 members. Ranjna, a LIC employee, was elected as the Convenor.

HYDEL PROJECT WORKERS IN STRUGGLE

The construction workers in Sewa Hydel Project in Jammu have been facing severe repression by the local police in league with the contractor M/s Gammon India Ltd.

The project workers formed their union at the initiative of the project workers union (CITU) of Himachal Pradesh in March 2004 and through united strike action could compel the management to enter into agreement on payment of minimum wages and other basic facilities in May 2004.

But the contractor, Gammon India planned to crush the union after the agreement was signed. On 11th June, Om Prakash, a CITU whole timer and the main organizer of the union was arrested by the police and severely beaten. On 13th June, at the initiative of local Congress

MP, Lal Singh came at the project site along with some people where he raised an inciting and provocative slander-campaign against the project workers' union on the plea that they are all workers from outside the state of Jammu. At that time a dharna was going on there by the workers and local villagers in protest against police repression on Om Prakash. Following inciting speech by the MP, police again started lathicharge on the joint dharna of workers and villagers and arrested more than 65 including many women. Many were injured and admitted in Hospital. Among those arrested were many villagers from the nearby village Gatti including two women, Asha and Shakuntala. The local police authority in close collusion with the contractor,

Gammon India have been trying to give the incident a colour of extremist activity to mislead the people.

Sunil Khan and Sudhangshu Sil, Members of Parliament, along with Yousuf Tarigami, MLA, J&K, and Rakesh Sigsha, CITU leader from HP, went to the spot and had detailed discussions with the local administration, police and other authorities on 18th June, 2004. As a result, an understanding had been reached and those arrested have been released and workers have resumed work in the project.

(Details of the understanding reached are awaited.)

REPORTS & EVENTS

CITU DEMANDS PROBE ON BALCO-SALE

In a letter written to P Chidambaram, Finance Minister, on 8.6.2004, M K Pandhe, President CITU urged upon Govt of India not to sell balance 49 per cent share of Balco to M/s Sterlite, for which that company has been lobbying hard with the Govt.

CITU referred to the Press report that M/s Sterlite has claimed the rest 49 per cent share of Balco to them citing the Balco-sale agreement signed under the stewardship of the NDA Govt. The shady deal between the NDA Govt and the Sterlite was

discussed in Parliament which pointed out to the gross undervaluation of the huge asset base of Balco at the instance of the disinvestments ministry in order to favour Sterlite and the disinvestments minister sought to duck the issue of under-valuation saying that CAG will look into all such matters. But even after passage of two years the CAG Report on Balco deal was not placed in Parliament by the NDA Govt despite repeated persuasion. CITU's letter also drew attention of the Govt to the dubious character of the concerned

company which was also indicted by SEBI for tainted dealings in the stock market debarred for a specified period. The CITU letter thus urged upon the Finance Minister "not to sell balance of the Govt holdings in Balco to Sterlite and undertake a thorough probe into the shady deal between NDA Govt and M/s Sterlite." CITU also requested the Finance Minister to hold a discussion with the representatives of Balco unions along with representatives of Central Trade Unions before any further step in the matter.

ACTION AGAINST UNION CARBIDE - CITU INTERVENES

In the meeting held on 23.6.04 with the central trade unions, Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh was requested by CITU and other unions to immediately respond to a US District Court order directing the Union Carbide to clean up the toxic contamination

in and around the factory premises in Bhopal. The Prime Minister assured that necessary action is being taken by the government in this regard. It may be recalled that the multinational chemical company was responsible for the Bhopal Gas tragedy in 1984 which

killed thousands of innocent people. The whole area is still contaminated and even clean drinking water is not available for more than 20,000 people who live in areas affected by contamination.

COM. RAM SUMER YADAV

Ram Sumer Yadav (77), veteran leader of the working class and CITU, died in Lucknow on May 31, 2004. He was suffering from cancer.

Com. Ram Sumer was a Central Committee Member of CPI(M). He was a prominent leader of the working class and democratic movement in Uttar Pradesh. The CITU pays its homage to the departed leader.

COMRADE M NANJAPPAN

Com. M Nanjappan, a senior leader of the working class and democratic movement in Tamil Nadu, breathed his last in Coimbatore.

Com. Nanjappan, who was a former vice president of Tamil Nadu CITU and a Working Committee member of CITU, had been a tall leader of the textile workers in Tamil Nadu and Coimbatore.

The CITU and The Working Class pays homage to the memory of Com. M Nanjappan and offers condolences to all the bereaved.

CONSUMER PRICE INDEX NUMBERS FOR INDUSTRIAL WORKERS ON BASE 1982=100

State	Sr. No.	Centre	Month		State	Sr. No.	Centre	Month	
			Mar.' 04	Apr.' 04				Mar.' 04	Apr.' 04
Andhra Pradesh	1	Gudur	471	475	Maharashtra	38	Mumbai	596	597
	2	Guntur	502	505		39	Nagpur	510	512
	3	Hyderabad	506	507		40	Nasik	538	542
	4	Visakhapatnam	493	494		41	Pune	565	566
	5	Warangal	520	517		42	Solapur	521	526
Assam	6	D.D. Tinsukia	423	418	Orissa	43	Barbil	443	442
	7	Guwahati	505	508		44	Rourkela	438	442
	8	Labac-Silchar	400	411	Punjab	45	Amritsar	446	446
	9	Mariani-Jorhat	437	435		46	Ludhiana	462	461
	10	Rangapara-Tezpur	423	421	Rajasthan	47	Ajmer	494	500
Bihar	11	Monghyr	474	467		48	Jaipur	461	457
Chhattisgarh	12	Bhillai	451	447	Tamil Nadu	49	Chennai	536	534
Gujarat	13	Ahmedabad	494	496		50	Coimbatore	499	492
	14	Bhavnagar	507	509		51	Coonoor	494	493
	15	Rajkot	453	456		52	Madurai	485	483
	16	Surat	480	474		53	Salem	477	473
	17	Vadodra	472	472		54	Tiruchirapally	528	528
Haryana	18	Faridabad	525	528	Uttar Pradesh	55	Agra	473	467
	19	Yamunanagar	473	479		56	Ghaziabad	513	507
J & K	20	Srinagar	598	588		57	Kanpur	483	474
Jharkhand	21	Jamshedpur	471	469		58	Saharanpur	463	464
	22	Jharia	404	402		59	Varanasi	521	516
	23	Kodarma	416	412	West Bengal	60	Asansol	482	488
	24	Noamundi	453	453		61	Darjeeling	417	417
	25	Ranchi-Hatia	456	454		62	Durgapur	570	574
Karnataka	26	Bangalore	490	492		63	Haldia	602	601
	27	Belgaum	552	554		64	Howrah	561	568
	28	Hubli-Dharwar	501	508		65	Jalpaiguri	431	428
	29	Mercara	477	484		66	Kolkata	554	558
Kerala	30	Alwaye	505	506		67	Raniganj	439	440
	31	Mundakayam	491	494	Chandigarh	68	Chandigarh	543	543
	32	Quilon	527	530	Delhi	69	Delhi	583	584
	33	Thiruvananthapuram	569	559	Pondicherry	70	Pondicherry	533	538
Madhya Pradesh	34	Balaghat	450	451					
	35	Bhopal	532	532					
	36	Indore	520	512					
	37	Jabalpur	495	495					
								ALL-INDIA	504
									504

Additional Series of Labour Bureau

State	Centre	March 2004	April 2004
Andhra Pradesh	1 Kethgudem	486	490
Himachal Pradesh	2 Himachal Pradesh	478	481
Rajasthan	3 Bhilwara	496	493
Madhya Pradesh	4 Chhindwara	453	448
Tripura	5 Tripura	441	460
Goa	6 Goa	609	604

(Cont. from page 285)

ETHOS OF TRIPARTISM

We look forward to the present Government strengthening the ethos of tripartism for which a revamp and activation of various tripartite fora and committees is needed making their composition non-partisan and truly representative. We also desire that the apex tripartite forum of the Indian labour Conference be taken into confidence on all matters concerning labour, industrial legislations, welfare and social security measures, occupational health and safety and other subjects. The status of the Indian labour Conference be enriched into a policymaking and monitoring machinery instead of a mere 'talking shop', not followed up by tangible actions, which has hitherto been the case.

AIRPORT WORKERS OPPOSED PRIVATISATION MOVE

The employees of Airport Authority of India Ltd held a massive demonstration before the AAI headquarters against the move for privatisation of Mumbai and Delhi Airport on 3rd June 2004. Similar demonstration was also observed in all the Airports of the country on the same day.

The Common Minimum Programme of the UPA Govt clearly stipulates that "profit-making companies will not be privatized." Even before the ink of document dried up, the Civil Aviation Minister, Praful Patel made an announcement in Mumbai on reduction of private or foreign investment limit for the two airports in Delhi and Mumbai to 49 per cent. This led to severe resentment among the employees of the Airport Authority throughout the country leading to spontaneous demonstrations countrywide.

The demonstration at Delhi was addressed by M K Pandhe, President CITU, Sitaram Yechury, CPI(M) politbureau member, Dipankar Mukherjee, MP, Secretary CITU and Sunil Khan, MP. It was pointed out by the speakers that both the Mumbai and Delhi Airports are profit making centers and cannot be allowed to be privatized. Rather these airports can very well be modernised through internal resource generation. The speakers also mentioned that the airport privatisation should not be allowed on security consideration as well.

On 18th June 2004, the AAI Employees Joint Forum comprising of Airport Authority Employees Union and Officers' Associations of Airport Authority and Indian Airlines have submitted a memorandum to Chairman, Airport Authority alongwith a joint proposal for modernization of these two airports through internal resource-generation within the PSU framework.

(Cont. from page 289)

ratio, which has declined during the reforms era since 1991, with a hike in the direct tax component; the burden of indirect taxes on those already over-burdened is to be reduced.

While promoting a higher degree of tax compliance, a rigorous drive towards resource mobilisation through recovery of tax arrears, tapping of black money, on the spot taxing on vulgar public display of squandering of money in the name of social function, etc. should be resorted to with beneficial results in the long run for a capital-starved country, rather than one time sale of public assets through disinvestment.

(Postscript: The Finance Minister made a careful note of all the points made and said that he would give the same appropriate consideration. He also assured that he would meet the trade unions for a post-budget discussion as well. The CITU State Committees and Industrial Federations should campaign among the workers popularising the contents of the CITU memorandum.)

B T R CENTENARY

Wage a Continuous Battle Against Communal Elements

The illusion of equality guaranteed under the constitution persists and generally the trade union movement and the democratic forces act as if the minority has no grievance. Therefore, in every communal riot they only see the communal leaders, are blind to the real grievances of the Muslim masses and their actions get paralysed. They behave as if it is a communal outburst which has not root in democratic genuine grievance. Therefore, they abandon the task of winning these Muslim masses and explaining to them the real situation. They equally abandon the task of intervening and convincing Hindu masses that they are being used against the Muslim as pawns by vested interests. This is not fighting riots but promoting them. In large industrial towns where the united trade union movement has got a big following it can prevent all riots by marshalling its strength on the street and challenge those who are indulging in the communal riots. The possibility of this development in states like West Bengal and elsewhere prevents riots from taking place. What an administration led by the left parties can do at administration level in quelling riots was shown by the Left Front Government of West Bengal a couple of months back. But the real antidote against growing communal riots and divisive forces is the strength of the common movement intervening and defeating the disrupters. Enduring confidence in national secular unity will be created when minority masses see the working class and the democratic forces defending them and fighting for their rights. This confidence will give a big blow to the influence of the Muslim communalists, but the major difficulty here for the working class and the advanced section is to convince large sections of the nationalist opinion that discrimination does exist and has to be fought against. The cruel reality of the Indian situation must be properly exposed before them to rally them in defence of the Minorities.

Such intervention which will forge ties of confidence between the working class, the nationalist forces and the minority masses will facilitate criticism and exposure of all communal elements.

It is incumbent on all, the working class and the democratic forces, to wage a continuous battle against the aggressive activities of Hindu chauvinism which is based on no genuine grievance. It is just a wanton attempt to rouse false feelings and pit the majority against the minority in the name of Hindu culture and Hindu nation. The political culprits are BJP, RSS and other organisations like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad. It is a general weakness of the nationalist opinion that it treats the Hindu chauvinism with indulgence and does not see the danger arising from its spread. The Hindu chauvinistic activities arising from it spread. The Hindu chauvinistic activities automatically help to consolidate the hold of the Muslim communalists over the minorities aided and abetted by the imperialists in their game of destabilisation. The main mass of the working class and the peasantry coming from the Hindu community are not yet able to see the real danger from the communalists of their community.

This is a weakness which has to be overcome quickly. In the connection it must be realised that even among the intelligentsia there is a tendency to treat the rise of Hindu chauvinism lightly and not take a denunciatory stand against it. This is because a large section of intelligentsia, in spite of its advanced thought, observes all the rituals and outdated customs and is unable to break completely from the appeal of Hindu religiosity. Unless there is sharp and continuous struggle to win over the advanced sections to consistent secularism the battle against disruptive forces cannot be carried on effectively.

(From the article titled "Our National Problems and the Role of the Working Class by B T Ranadive)