

ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION



Central Office: "PRABHAT NIVAS" Regn. No. 2037
Singapore Plaza, 164, Linghi Chetty Street, Chennai-600 001
Phone: 2535 1522 Web: www.aibea.in
e mail : chv.aibea@gmail.com & aibeahq@gmail.com



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TO ALL UNIONS AND MEMBERS:

Dear Comrades,

**New Year begins with call for struggle
Get ready for Nationwide General Strike
On 23rd and 24th February, 2022
Against anti-labour, anti-people policies of Govt.**

Clarion Call from

**Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and independent
sectoral All India Federations and Associations**

SAVE THE PEOPLE - SAVE THE NATION.

New Year begins with call for struggle: We began the last year 2021 with a call by the UFBU for 2 days Strike on 15th and 16th March, 2021 against the Government's announcement to privatise 2 public sector Banks. We ended the year 2021 again with the massive 2 days strike on 16th and 17th December, 2021 against the Government decision to introduce Banking Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

This new year is no exception. The call has been given by the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and independent sectoral All India Federations and Associations for nationwide **General Strike on 23rd and 24th February, 2022** against the anti-labour, anti-people and pro-corporate policies of Government.

Beware of dangers ahead: The struggle is not only to save the rights and lives/ livelihood of people but also save the country's economy and the entire democratic system and the society as a whole from disaster and destruction being engineered by the authoritarian forces in governance with the active support of private corporate, both domestic and foreign.

Increasing unemployment: The situation has been deteriorating, from bad to worse. Phenomenon of increasing unemployment has been competing with faster pace of job-losses arising out of destruction and extreme degeneration of existing employment and livelihood-avenues, throwing not only the working people in rural and urban areas but also the entire youth-student generations in a situation of futureless destitution and desperation.

Earnings reduced: The earnings of overwhelming majority of people has been pushed below the human-survival level: During the two-three months of the second wave of Covid in April 2021 onwards, the earnings of 23 crore workers have been pushed down to much below the prevalent statutory minimum wage level which has already been below the standard for human survival.

Indian in Global Hunger Index: As a consequence, intensity of hunger, that too among the working people, has increased alarmingly, bringing India further down to **101st rank** in Global Hunger Index out of 107 countries and our country is trailing much behind our neighbouring countries in that regard.

Don't squeeze the people: Each and every policy drive and action of the present Govt at the centre is aimed at continuously squeezing the human survival entitlement of the people only to benefit the handful of private corporate, both domestic and foreign and may be those in governance.

Unhealthy health services: Even health services entitlement has not been spared by the privatisation-deregulation spree of the Government as has been witnessed in the procession of deaths during the pandemic, particularly during second wave when common people died more for want of oxygen, hospital beds and medicine than due to Covid itself.

Skyrocketing Prices: In midst of such widespread impoverishment and hunger, pushing almost half of the populace below the destitution level poverty line, prices of essential commodities are skyrocketing to unbearable level. Price rise is not just happening, it is being made to happen by the Govt's atrocious discriminatory taxation and other policies, only to benefit the small big-business/trader/corporate section of society.

Tax burden for the poor: High indirect tax rates through GST mechanism on essential daily requirements, increasing user charges of almost all public utilities including health, medicine, education etc are further adding fuel to fire - all contributing to increasing intensity of hunger and distress among the mass of the people.

Concessions for the rich: Simultaneously and shamelessly enough, the Government has been continuously lowering the corporate tax rates, abolished wealth tax, declaring moratorium on payment of charges/taxes payable by corporate and also moratorium on debt repayments by the same willful defaulter corporate/ big-business community, who actually gained a fortune during this crisis ridden pandemic period by way of increasing their wealth by more than 40 per cent — all at the cost of misfortunes and miseries being suffered by majority of working population.

Discrimination in distribution: The distribution of GDP, created by the working people only, is brazenly discriminatory against them, with the richest 1% cornering more than 70% of the same and lowest 50% of populace getting less than 10%.

The Govt has in fact waged a war against the common people only to serve their corporate masters.

Privatisation spree : In the midst of this horrifying situation for the country and the people, the Government at the centre has been hastily pushing through its project of all out reckless privatisation through multi-pronged routes of all national productive assets and PSUs including mineral resources, financial institutions like banks and insurance, security sensitive sectors like defence production and major Ports, petroleum and natural gas, Railways, Airlines & Airports, Electricity, Steel, Engineering, Highways, telecom and postal services, selling 500 coal blocks and what not.

Haircut is headcut: And to facilitate privatisation and at the same time to benefit the debt-defaulting corporates, the Govt. has legalised pilferage of banks fund by them through debt-route by enacting Insolvency Bankruptcy Code, 2016 and further amending it which allow the debt defaulter to move free without repayment of large part of their debt and compel the banks to forego the amount in the name of "haircut".

Privatisation – Banks are the targets now: The latest move is the proposed amendment of the Bank Nationalisation Acts for privatising the banks in favour of the same defaulter-corporate community. In fact, the Government decided to bring the Bill in the recent Session of Parliament but due to our struggle and protest actions, the same was not introduced in this Session. But the danger looms large.

Donation of national assets: The audacity of privatisation has gone to such heinous extent that in its latest move, Govt has decided to handover almost all infrastructural assets, built by public funds over past seven and half decades, to private hands, virtually free of cost, for making money out of the same, in lieu of its minority shares to Govt.

Monetisation is nothing but privatisation: It is called the National Asset Monetisation Pipeline Project (NMP). Besides loss and destruction of these infrastructural assets, this will inevitably increase the burden on the people through reckless increase in user charges by those private corporates for free fortuitous profit without any investment.

Outsourcing – a menace: Privatisation spree is not limited to production and services sectors alone. Through mass scale contractorisation and outsourcing of work in most of the Govt departments and administration, entire governance system is being planned to be privatised. In fact, the slogan of the Modi Government for minimum Government and Maximum Governance is being executed by privatising the entire government machineries and establish the absolute grip of the corporate class on the entire governance.

New Pension Scheme (NPS): Government employees, both in Central and States, have been subjected to National Pension System (NPS). This was also made applicable to banks and other sectors. Now the entire fund with NPS, both for the Govt employees and others are being taken out of the supervision and regulatory control of Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) by amending PFRDA Act in order to put the entire NPS fund under a corporate entity or a Society registered under Societies Act with virtually no Govt control, thereby leaving the huge amount of pension/social security savings of the employees for boundless speculation, endangering even the meagre pension available under NPS.

We need to fight together: We must carry forward this struggle to its logical conclusion of decisive defeat of this retrograde policy regime, their perpetrator corporate class and their agents in governance.

“To Save the People and Save the Nation” must be the battle cry of our Mission India.

Increasing challenges: There are challenges before the working class. But we are carrying on our united struggles combating these challenges. Along with the destructive authoritarian measures in economic policy front, the Govt has been overactive in gradually demolishing the democratic governance structure, trampling underfoot all constitutional norms, including basic parliamentary provisions as well.

Attack on labour rights: Labour Codes are enacted by way of repealing 29 existing labour laws and the Codes are aimed at completely demolishing and altering working conditions, rights at workplace and trade union rights in favour of the employers' class.

All to help the corporate masters: It was nothing but a design of imposing conditions of virtual slavery on the working people to ensure "ease of doing business" for their corporate masters, both domestic and foreign. The rules of labour codes which have in many cases gone further beyond the provisions of Codes in curbing labour rights, are being unilaterally finalised ignoring the opposition and pointers by trade unions by the central govt and also in many states.

Unite and fight – our only way: In such a situation of ongoing authoritarian machinations of the entire governance, the governance of the economy, political system and the entire society as such, we must heighten our united intervention to demand a halt to this process of assault on lives and livelihood, employment, alarming intensity of impoverishment and hunger, assault on democracy and also unity of the people and thereby save our dear nation from disaster. The Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions has decided to take the decisive role to build towering resistance to this destructive and disastrous corporate driven regime.

AIBEA Central Committee has decided that AIBEA will join this strike and accordingly we call upon all our unions and members to get ready to participate in this historic strike.

March on to participate
in the Nationwide
General Strike on
23rd & 24th Feb. 2022

Yours comradely,



**C.H. VENKATACHALAM
GENERAL SECRETARY**