

AITUC General Council Meeting

5th to 7th February 2022,
Hyderabad, Telangana

Report on Political-Economic Developments

Dear Comrades,

We were in the midst of preparing for starting our journey towards Alappuza, Kerala for our 42nd Session of AITUC (National Congress AITUC) which was scheduled to be held from 1st April to 5th April 2020, when the unplanned lockdown was imposed on Indian people giving four hours of time only, suspending all public transport - railways, roadways, airways, all industrial activities, construction projects, home based productions, hawking and vending and other activities except in essential services that also with restrictions through passes. The life of common people came to standstill.

**AITUC
42nd
National
Session
postponed
due to
pandemic
situation**

It was in this background that our National Congress was postponed and twice we planned dates after that, but the second wave brought halt to our going ahead, finally post this third wave we would be proceeding for our due conference.

For the matter of record and lessons, let us talk a bit about the mishandling and mismanagement of the Corona crises by the RSS-BJP Government which has no respect to democratic values and norms for democratic functioning.

The parliament was in session before the lockdown was announced, neither the parliament, nor the state governments who were to

implement the decisions, taken into confidence, nor the political parties, the trade unions, the organisations of farmers, women, students, youth and other civil society organisations etc taken on board who were to play important role to mitigate the difficulties and miseries of the common masses in such severe lockdown.

Modi Govt. as always chose evening time to announce draconian policies giving shocks to masses as was the case when demonetisation of currency notes of Rs 1000 and Rs 500 were announced putting working masses to great trivialising experience or when GST was announced suddenly without preparations. Those steps had brought ruination to small businesses and retail trade resulting in job loss and perpetuation of poverty, which was quite evident by the time of elections in 2019.

**Demonetization
– a thoughtless
measure by
BJP
Government.**

**Has black
money been
arrested ?**

The sadist ways of Modi Govt. sitting in comfort by giving extreme uncertainties of life and inflicting pain to the common people was exposed before the world when millions of workers, men, women, children and elderly people walked for hundreds of miles to reach back their homes having lost jobs, livelihood, no roof on the heads and no food for survival.

**Unplanned
lockdown**

**Poor people
pay
a heavy
price**

More than 850 people died, in accidents on Railway tracks, on roads, in buses, in trains, and also due to disease, dehydration and hunger during that period.

The govt. after tall claims that the lockdown wages would be given, no eviction from rented places and no retrenchment, not only failed in its promise but shamelessly withdrew its orders when some employers went against the government order in the Supreme Court of India.

The demands of trade unions for giving universal coverage of ration without any document, cash transfer of Rs 7500/ to non tax paying families were met with deaf ears. It was the gurudwara persons at many places and some other religious groups, social organisations, trade unions and individuals who came in the forefront to feed people.

Those miserable times were great tragedy for Indian masses, it was much bigger desperate movement of people on roads, railway tracks, in fields, in jungles, in rivers or sea routes than the partition time.

The students, pilgrims, those who had gone for health treatments, or for family functions, all of them suffered. It must be noted that even Bangladesh govt. gave four days to people before severe lockdown, South Africa gave three days to its citizens to reach their homes.

When the World Health Organisation was warning the World about the new Virus, and had named it COVID-19 and advising the governments and the world community to treat it as the health emergency to strategise to meet this new situation.

Modi government did not pay heed and the necessary precautions needed were not taken as the virus was from outside India, with first case in India, reported in January in the state of Kerala from a traveler from abroad.

The LDF govt. in Kerala started gearing up its health facilities and other necessary steps to be taken in such situations from its earlier experiences of having dealt with Ebola, Swine and Zika viruses.

**Wrong
priorities
of BJP**

But the Modi government was busy in demonising anti CAA campaign, BJP leaders were busy spreading hatred during Delhi elections in February, and then were busy with gala arrangements for Namaste Trump, throwing all advisories of WHO to wind. BJP was also busy in toppling state governments headed by opposition parties.

It cleverly used Disaster Management Act to avoid its own responsibility in dealing with health emergency, and rather imposed police Raj without any awareness generation to people about the virus to take necessary behavioural and medical precautions.

Rather Modi himself led the campaign with myth spreading by invoking mythology in his speech. He said Mahabhart was won in 18 days and Corona would be won in 21 days. He made people to act in hysteria for Taali, thali, ghanti and shankh bajao.

**Wrong
handling of
corona
pandemic**

On another occasion to show torchlight, or diyaas etc. followed by the drama of flower showering on front rank fighters, but not taking concrete measures to get them necessary safety materials, or equipments needed at hospitals, not even heeding to their demands of wage payments in time. Government had allowed export of the safety equipment till after the lock down announcement.

Such a chaos created with every now and then changing instructions and guidelines, the state boundaries being treated like Indo Pak boundary, criminalising its own citizens who were desperate to meet their families in the villages and hometowns, an environment of fear created instead of understanding, caring and determination to fight the disease in scientific way.

The workers faced lathi-charge, even writing on their foreheads with black ink that I am law breaker, as well as chemical spray was used on them endangering the lives of infants, elderly and pregnant women.

The orthodox conservative groups were allowed to spread myths and health ministry itself was promoting these ideas. Not only that, even in such a situation the communal group with the backing of ruling party made all out efforts to demonise minorities, with attack on Jamaatis who had held conference eight days before the lockdown with valid permission from administration and central govt. having provided visas to those who came from abroad.

There were attacks on hawkers-vendors from minority community, one person from the administration in Assam openly announced that Muslims should not be given free ration which were being provided to others.

During the time when the common people who were devoid of livelihood, small businesses and traders were demanding packages, the government came out with fanfare announcement of package for several days. But it was true to Modi's statement that "disaster will be converted to opportunity".



**Masses lost
their livelihood
but the
Corporates
increased their
profits**

It is well known now that the package was to allow the monopoly business houses/corporates to continue with profit making. This was allowed to happen through further concessions by lowering corporate taxes and on procedures, no wealth tax on them, whereas reducing interest benefits on the savings of senior citizens, widows and pensioners who live on that money, increased indirect taxes and various cess on the already suffering poor, vulnerable masses, lower and middle classes.

The budget allocations already made for farmers were also included into this package only, even the workers money in construction welfare boards disbursement and that of the mineral workers welfare money was also being shown in these packages. It was camouflaging exercise by the govt. to hoodwink people and to benefit its corporate friends.



**Relief
package –
a relief to
the rich**

The employees and workers in public sector and the government departments were on streets to serve people and the corporates did not extend helping hand rather went into hiding. Their interest was to take maximum concessions from the govt. to accumulate their wealth even out of the miseries of people.

The Medium, Small and Micro Enterprises (MSMEs) and small traders suffered immensely and in turn the working people of these informal sectors were becoming paupers but the govt. did not give any relief package to this sector, rather only giving more time paying back loan but charging tax on interest also.

It was proved beyond doubt that the heart of the ruling regime at centre beats for the big business houses, the corporates and even among them too much cosy to chosen few.

The fact that from March 2020 to March 2021, 100 billionaires got added to making 140 billionaires reflects this reality. Mukesh Ambani increased his wealth by 124 % where as Gautam Adani increased by 480 %. It was 12.97 lakh crore of money amassed by these billionaires in this one year alone.

**Mukesh Ambani's
wealth increased
by 124%.**

**Gautam Adani's
wealth increased
by 480%**

I would like to mention here that our comrades played important role in keeping the activities on during pandemic period. AITUC headquarter took cognizance of the situation on 21st March 2020 itself and a circular cautioning the comrades about the virus and the necessary precautions was sent.

Then after immediate cognizance was taken of each policy of the govt, impact on workers, the statement to press were issued, letters to Prime Minister, Home Minister, Ministry of Labour and all other concerned administrators to bring into focus the immense problems being faced by the working masses and the public at large.

**Initiatives
from
AITUC**

The AITUC took initiative to keep the joint platform of the Central Trade Unions actively engaged and beginning from joint representations, to observation of joint May Day, the National calls for protests, including protest at Rajghat and Jantar Mantar, Parliament Street etc. Dozens of meetings of the joint platform were organised, virtual as well as physical.

Joint representations to Finance Minister on Budget as well as joint stand on labour codes and rule framing etc. The connectivity with ILO and other institutions for common consultation were also attended to. There was online national convention by the CTUs on Facebook and Zoom and YouTube on 2nd October 2020 which called upon organising Nationwide strike on 26th Nov. 2020, which was carried out successfully by our states to whatever extent it was possible.

AITUC HQ remained connected with comrades with 15 zoom meetings during this period apart from meeting with our PSU leaders. The first physical meeting called as extended office bearers but then converted into working committee as almost whole of committee members got invited, held on 5th September 2021, at AITUC Bhawan, New Delhi was sort of fresh breathing and rejuvenation. We did attempt to make it physical and virtual both.

After that the meeting of working committee held on November 22nd and 23rd 2021 at Nagpur was another important organisational exercise for our comrades to feel further rejuvenated.

We could discuss forthcoming AITUC session. Also apart from the developments in the country, the outcome and direction given by the National Convention of Workers held on 11th November 2021 at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi were discussed including the two day strike call during budget session 2022.

The State Committees carried forward the activities on all the AITUC independent calls as well as joint calls from the trade unions apart from organising their own state campaigns on various issues.

We are not listing the activities here, but we acknowledge the difficulties as well as the initiatives of state chapters, the respective unions, our sister Federations and Associations during this tough period in the life of our people.

**AITUC
Working
Committee
Meeting at
Nagpur in
November,
2021**

Despite problems, 100 years of AITUC was observed by the state committees. We also tried to meet the International obligations being part of WFTU.

Let us look at the post Covid present scenario prevailing at the International and National level for us to understand the growing challenges and the necessary response.

In the inequality survey released in World Economic Forum's online Davos Agenda Summit. Agenda summit it has been exposed how the World Capitalism, the Corporates Indian and of other countries were busy in accumulation of wealth, at a time when the producers of wealth in manufacturing & production and those in service sector were suffering immensely. Oxfam India report is part of this.

**True colour
of world
capitalism
nakedly
exposed
.... WFTU**

“World Capitalism is Naked” was the heading of article written by Comrade George Mavrikos the General Secretary of World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

Let us look at what this report says and no powers have refuted the facts placed in this report.

At a Glance

Oxfam Report At a glance

- **Wealth of India's 10 richest enough to fund school, higher education of every child for 25 years: Study**
- **Wealth of richest 98 same as bottom 552 million, says Oxfam report**
- **Oxfam report: In 2021, income of 84% households fell, but number of billionaires grew**
- **Number of billionaires increased in India, household income declined: Oxfam**

- **India 'poor and very unequal' with affluent elite: World Inequality Report**
- **Billionaires' club has record 126 members; combined wealth is \$ 728 billion now**
- **India's health inequality made worse by reduced health budget: Oxfam report**
- **Minimum global tax rate should be 25%, says World Inequality Report**
- **Statsguru: Six charts explain another dimension of poverty in India**
- **Poverty ratio 32.75% in rural areas against 8.81% in urban: NITI report**

Oxfam India further said that an additional one per cent tax on the richest 10 per cent can provide the country with nearly 17.7 lakh extra oxygen cylinders. (We know that when people were dying for lack of oxygen and ventilator beds, 10 corporates dealing in Pharma Sector were busy making business of Rs. 500 crore every day)

This Oxfam report further said that 142 Indian billionaires collectively own wealth of US\$ 719 billion (over Rs 53 lakh crore), while the richest 98 of them now have the same wealth as the poorest 55.5 crore people in the bottom 40 per cent (US\$ 657 billion or nearly Rs 49 lakh crore).

If each of the 10 richest Indian billionaires were to spend US\$ one million daily, (About 8 crores daily) it would take them 84 years to exhaust their current wealth.

If annual wealth tax applied to multi-millionaires and billionaires, it would raise US\$ 78.3 billion a year that would be enough to increase government health budget by 271 per cent or eliminate households' out-of-pocket health budget and leave some US\$ 30.5 billion. (The fact

**Capitalism
utilised the
pandemic
to
comfort the
rich and
confront the
poor**

is that almost 6% families are getting indebted each year due to health expenses)

The report reveals that wealthiest 10 per cent have amassed 45 per cent of the national wealth while the share of the bottom 50 per cent of the population is a mere 6 percent.

Oxfam report clearly says that the inadequate governmental expenditure on health, education and social security has gone hand-in-hand with a rise in the privatisation of health and education, thus making a full and secure COVID-19 recovery out of reach for the common citizen.

Oxfam said "we call upon the government to redistribute India's wealth from the super-rich to generate resources for the majority by reintroducing the wealth tax and to generate revenue to invest in the education and health of future generations by imposing a temporary one per cent surcharge on the rich for health and education," it said.

It quoted that India's 2021 budget allocation for the Ministry of Women and Child Development is less than half of the total accumulated wealth of the bottom ten of India's billionaire list. If 2 per cent tax on individuals with an income of over 10 crore imposed, it could increase the ministry's budget by an astounding 121 percent.

A 4 per cent wealth tax on the 98 richest families in India would finance the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for more than 2 years. There is revelation of the fact that the combined wealth of 98 richest families is 41 percent more than the Union Budget of India.

The study said a 1 per cent of tax on wealth of the 98 billionaires in India can fund the total annual expenditure of the department of

If the wealth of the first 100 billionaires is accumulated, they could fund the National Rural Livelihood Mission scheme, responsible for creating Self Help Groups for women, for the next 365 years.

school education and literacy under the Ministry of Education, while 4 per cent of tax on their wealth can take care of Mid Day-Meal programme of the country for 17 years or Samagra Sikshya Abhiyan for 6 years.

Similarly, a 4 percent tax on them would be enough to fund the Mission POSHAN 2.0, which includes Anganwadi Services, POSHAN Abhiyan, Scheme for Adolescent Girls, and National Creche Scheme, for 10 years.

Modi regime has made India more indebted as well as the black money outflow from India increased in his period substantially. Between 1948 to 1980 the outflow was about 10 percent of the total black money generated in the country whereas it increased in 1980s to near 18 percent, further rising to 40 percent in 1995 during Neo liberal economic policies adopted but today it stands in Modi Raj at 62percent, who had said "Na Khaonga, Na Khane doonga".

The interest will account for 52.4percent in 2022, the highest in 18yrs and the government is expected to pay Rs 8.1 trillion as interest against net tax revenues of Rs15.5 trillion.

Indian economy is brought to shambles. It according to well known economists is below the 2019 level, which was termed as economy in ICU. The irresponsible and criminal way of dealing of Covid 19 crises has further added to deterioration of the already crises ridden economy.

Unemployment rate is unprecedented, pre Covid it was 7.1percent, during covid it rose to 23 percent and now it is with 8.1 percent more than that of pre Covid figure which itself was termed as highest in 45 years.

In seven year period of this govt., the indebtedness of India has increased by 142 percent. In 67 years, the debt on India had reached to Rs 55,87,449 crores whereas in 7 years of Modi govt. alone Rs 24,12,077 crore were added and today it stands at Rs 79,99,526 crores.

There was a time when in April 2021, 1,70,000 job-loss every hour was happening. The survey shows that the number of unemployed youth 15 years and above are double than the available jobs. Thirty to thirty five percent persons did not get back their jobs.

**Unemployment
is
increasing**

The truth of the matter is that highly skilled shifted to semi skilled and even unskilled jobs or to self employment. One youth commits suicide every one and half hour due to unemployment was another shocking revelation in a report.

The Manufacturer association in its own published report in late 2020 which had admitted that almost 33 percent of MSME died in Covid period with no chance of revival at all, another 33percent of MSMEs started back but could not reach to the pre Covid level.

The report stated that rest of the MSMEs were yet to begin business in 2021 and how long they would take for doing business is not yet known. MGNREGA became fall back for many, an act of parliament which Modi had joked about and desired to weaken, its funds having been reduced in consecutive budgets.

The urban poverty was exposed and the demand for Urban employment guarantee act also came in public discourse.

The price rise situation is worsening with petrol-diesel prices having been increased 24 times in last year reaching Rs 100 with cascading impact on the prices of almost all essential commodities and the services.

**Control
priceline**

**We
Demand**

The government report itself admitted that whole sale price reached 14.25 percent highest in last 30 years. The prices of daal, rice, wheat, edible oil are forcing people to consume less.

This will further worsen hunger index, where India already stands at 102 out of 117 countries. South Asian countries are in better position

than India. Presently Indians are almost one third of the total malnourished in the world.

The inequalities in the living standards of our top 10 percent population and those from below 50 percent have increased immensely. It is one is one to twenty two at present. The gap between the income of richest and the poorest is what it was 80 years ago in pre independence India.

One percent at top Indians have four times wealth than the wealth of 73 percent of Indians from below. One of the government report a few months ago mentioned that 75percent households in India have income less than Rs 5000/ only.

Same report mentions that 95 percent households have income less than Rs 10,000/ only. The world inequality report mentions vividly the growing gaps in life in its chapter on India.

Digital divide has furthered this reality. The children who missed online education and those whose parents lost livelihood are re-entering into the child labour, according to UNICEF 4.9 Crore could get dragged to this situation. ILO predicted 40 crore Indians to be more poor than pre Covid situation.

But the government of the day appears to be least concerned of the plight of workers, farmers and other vulnerable sections of the society. It had rather reduced the gas subsidy to people from Rs 22635 crores to Rs 3559 crores.

No lessons learnt by Modi Govt. rather shamelessly this year's budget becomes another bonanza for his Corporate friends. It was not a budget for the year 2022-23 rather an exercise of meaningless phrase mongering. The whole exercise appeared to be a farce as it was claimed to be budget vision for 100 years of independence. The exercise of budget has been devalued year after year by this Govt.

- The Finance Minister did not give account of what happened to all the tall claims and targets set up for employment, smart cities, skill India,

double income of farmers by 2022, relief to poor and middle income groups, improvement in health infrastructure etc.

- There was no mention in her speech from where the income would be generated and how the expenditure would be distributed in various heads.
- The tax concessions to corporates increased from 18 % to 15 %, tax waiver extension to start up projects on the one side and increase of Rs.2/- on unblended oil (Petrol, Diesel) is another exercise to facilitate the flow of money from the common man to the Corporates. This would further help accumulation of wealth in the hands of billionaires to continue the trends shown in the Inequality Report presented in Davos agenda summit by Oxfam.

It would give boost to price rise in essential commodities, the unemployment, job loss, wage reduction, expensive civil services.

- The privatisation agenda has been further strengthened and a new slogan of "seven engine gatishakti" has been coined, which is nothing but sale of assets and promoting the National Monetisation Pipeline project (NMP). The Govt. claimed a "new PSU policy" which listed Air India, Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd. and LIC IPO as shining examples of privatisation.

**HANDS OFF
PUBLIC
SECTOR**

- In most of the announcements for investment, the FM mentioned PPP mode without specifying who and how much would be investing. Elite should be happy to have more Vande Bharat trains, while the public railway facility improvement for common citizens does not find any place in the budget.
- The budget also fails the farmers on their needs and rather talks of change in syllabus of agricultural universities. The MSP budget has been reduced from 2.43 lakh Cr last year to 2.37 lakh Cr.

- On health, while talking of setting up Mental Health University, the budget provision has actually been reduced from 0.41percent to 0.37 percent of GDP. No lessons learnt from Covid crises period.
- The Scheme Workers await that their demands of recognition of worker status and the benefits there on would be resolved.
- Similarly on education, day dreaming that the children of poor who do not have pucca house or electricity or Television would get education on TV and mobile etc. Nothing about school and college infrastructure or the recruitments of teachers etc.
- Rural India ignored with reduction in allocation from 1.09 to 0.89 percent of GDP. MGNREGA which came as a rescue to people during severe loss of jobs during Covid 19, finds reduction in allocation down from Rs 98,000 crores to Rs 73,000/ crores.
- India is poor in hunger index but the food subsidy is reduced from 2.74 percent to 1.23 percent. Similarly, the state share is not increased, but the centrally sponsored scheme allocation reduced from 1.94 percent to 1.79 percent of GDP and further reduction projected to reduce it to 1.72 percent in 2023.
- The budget adds to the gloom of the middle classes, no tax concession to them.

It needs to be emphasized that the demands raised by Central Trade Unions during the pre-budget consultations with the FM find absolutely no place in the budget.

Modi govt. has used this Corona period to push at high speed its agenda of privatisation, disinvestment of PSUs and now selling national assets in infrastructure sector in the new name National Monetisation Pipeline project.

**Monetisation
is nothing
but
privatisation**

All sectors are under attack for their privatisation push, railways, airports, ports, petroleum, coal, other minerals, steel, copper,

telecom, postal services, banks, insurance, defence ordnance factories, including even atomic energy, electronics, research institutes and space science in its ambit. With NMP, it is putting nation on sale. What is being covered under NMP as per Finance Minister.

The assets which are included for proposed Monetisation are:

- * 26700 kilometres of roads**
- * 28698 kilometres of power transmission assets**
- * 6000 MW of hydel and solar power assets**
- * 8154 kilometres of natural gas pipelines**
- * 3930 kilometres of petroleum products pipeline**
- * 210,00,000 metric ton of warehousing assets**
- * 400 railway stations**
- * 90 passenger train operations**
- * 265 goods sheds**
- * Konkan Railway and dedicated freight corridor**
- * 2,86,000 kilometres of fibre and 14917 telecom towers**
- * 25 airports and 31 projects in major ports and 2 national stadia.**

Air India is gifted to Tata with meagre amount of Rs 18000 crores while having invested Rs one lakh crores a few years ago in the name of revival, and also having bought 111 new aircrafts amounting more than Rs 50000 crores.

The people's money was invested and now the people have to pay back debt of Rs46,262 crores out of total debt Rs 61,562 crores as Tata is to take responsibility of only Rs15,300crores. One does not know it even that would be scrapped in future.



There was bidding for Central Electronics Limited (CEL) at Sahibabad in election bound state of Uttar Pradesh (fully government controlled company) for Rs 210 crores for the assets whose market value is more than Rs1600 crores, the land alone costs Rs420 crores.

Now we hear that life insurance is to be sold for four lakh crores where as its market evaluation is 15 lakh crores.

The package promised to BSNL is not implemented citing no funds, but the government becomes buyer of largest shares in Vodaphone. Govt. claims public sector is inefficient, and buys a debt ridden inefficient company's shares to its salvage.

Most of the banks which failed were salvaged by merging them to Public sector banks. Our public sector banks are being ruined and the NPAs (the people's hard earned money) are being written off.

Modi govt. has written off NPAs to the tune of about 13 lakh crores. The government not only brought insolvency act to legalise the loot of corporate houses but is now bringing in Bad Bank idea to further allow such loot of people's money.

Economist analyst Aunindyo Chakravarty terms the economic reforms as "Privatisation of public assets and Nationalisation of private liability".

Despite consistent opposition through agitations including strike action by the defence Federations, the government went ahead to corporatise 41 Ordnance factories, converting OCF into seven corporations. To check them from going into strike action, the govt. brought an ordinance and then converted it to EDSA without discussion in parliament.

These policies are being resisted by the trade unions and they organised actions during this Covid crises also.

The Coal sector unions had gone on three days strike against commercial mining, Defence sector federations organised consistent campaign including strike, banks unions went on strike for three days and then for two days, insurance sector unions also organised strike,

so did the electricity federations, scheme workers went for agitations including strike, steel sector also on agitation specially the big battle is on to save Vishakhapatnam steel plant from privatisation having turned into people's movement, similarly broad level movement to save Nagarnar steel plant, in several states roadways unions have been waging agitations against any privatisation move.

On the other side the construction unions, beedi workers, workers/employees in hospitals, in municipalities and in panchayati-raj institutions, domestic workers, hawkers and vendors, private transport workers, MGNREGA and other agricultural workers have been in agitation for redressal of their grievances in various states despite all difficulty and restrictions due to Covid crises.

The COVID-19 situation as said earlier was used by BJP Government as an opportunity. Having an eye on the land to be made available to their corporate friends, the privatisation move of PSUs, and Govt. infrastructure assets and the route of Corporatisation of defence ordnance factory, the govt. brought three agricultural sector Farm Laws also.

The farmers organisations launched a massive movement under the banner of Samyukta Kisan Morcha, were not allowed to enter Delhi, they sat on Delhi borders for more than a year facing all extreme weathers, worst abuses, defamation, allegations and provocations. They received support from all sections of the society.

**Red Salute to
farmers and
agricultural
workers**

Trade unions were in support from the very beginning when the ordinance route was adopted for farm laws in June 2020. The yearlong agitation by the Farmers ultimately resulted in the Prime Minister announcing the repeal of the three farm laws.

But the Samyukta Kisan Morcha has not let its guard down and have observed 31st January as the Day of Betrayal because the government

is not implementing the written assurances given prior to the Farmers lifting their yearlong agitation.

The CTUs are fully with this decision and the SKM also has promised to observe rural strike on 28th - 29 March 2022. The Worker-Farmer unity is the most valuable outcome of this saga of struggle.

This historic movement left indelible mark on our students, youth, those involved in the field of art, culture, theatre, writers.

This long agitation brought the working class movement and farmers movement closer which needs to be strengthened in future in the interest of our country and the people.

The trade unions have been in the fore front to challenge the anti people, anti national policies of the govt. It was natural that the regime would come heavy against the working class and its trade unions.

The attacks on trade unions were a part of the Neo liberal economic agenda, the world over. We resisted all moves.

But Modi govt was offensively pursuing this as per his political understanding and contempt against working class.

He used the Corona crises period to rush the Codification of 29 central labour laws violating all democratic norms, no Indian Labour conference (ILC) held and no discussion in parliament as whole opposition was absent as they were on walkout seeking revocation of suspension of MPs from Rajya Sabha.

The rule framing is also rushed through despite the joint platform of Central Trade Unions raising serious objections.

The Codification of labour laws and the rules on them are designed to make union registration and recognition very difficult, derecognition



**Withdraw
draconian
LABOUR
CODES**

is made easy, the threshold of 100 workers as the earlier provision in the Industrial Disputes Act being raised to 300 which would throw out 77 percent of industrial units out of the ambit of coverage of labour laws for protection of jobs, making closures and retrenchments easy, the right to strike being snatched, the definition of wage being revised which would result in reduced take home salary, minimum wages act to be made redundant and floor level wage Rs.178/ per day as suggested is one third of the minimum wage which was recommended by the govt. constituted Satpathy committee, there would be bigger possibility of keeping workers as apprentice, trainees etc to take work from them but denying worker status to keep them out of unionisation rights, contract act being amended to make contractualisation as norm, outsourcing promoted and denial of equal pay for equal work, fix term employment brought which is continuous sword on workers to gag them from speaking as well as no promise of continuation of contract, the occupation safety and health code is exclusive and 22 laws being subsumed, including the interstate migrant act (out of 36 clauses only 6 included), Code on social security also very damaging as it is subsuming all independently functioning 14 social security acts and the government has an eye on their money etc.

New kind of slavery to be imposed on working class, taking it back to British era, by snatching hard won rights through struggles of 150 years. This is with the objective to cripple the trade unions, the biggest resistance to Modi Government's. policies to undermine sovereign rights of our people on national resources and assets, the policies to sell the nation, the policies of curtailing democratic rights of the people.

The draconian laws such as sedition, UAPA, NSA, NIA, are used to silence the voices of dissent. ED, CBI, Police system are used to hound opposition leaders. Even all out efforts to intimidate judiciary are made.

The spying has been used as a method to frame people. The Peguses episode revealed that 40 Civil persons among them journalists, politicians, social activists, some of those in judiciary and even in

election commission were in the list for surveillance. The NSO Company of Israel claimed they sell their app only to Govts, but the Central Govt. kept avoiding the question, when asked if it has bought this app.

They could not deny in Supreme Court but used the cover of National Security to avoid answer. The formation of a committee by Supreme Court is a welcome step. Now the lie of the Govt. has been nailed and the Report in New York Times has revealed that Indian Govt. purchased Pegasus App from NSA during the defense deal of Rs.15000/- crores with Govt. of Israel. Modi Govt. is shamelessly compromising with the security of nation.

The politics of hatred to polarise the society on religious lines endangering India's secular democracy, the way of living in peace and harmony, is another instrument of RSS-BJP to win elections and to continue in power.

The vigilante groups are given shelter, they indulge in violence, commit mob lynching. The Muslim women were targeted, specially the journalists through Sulli Deals App, but no actions taken despite so much of demand from all sides. That encouraged those indulging in this activity to bring out another attack on these women through Bulli Bai App, online auction of women.

It is painful fact that our youth are being poisoned so much against the minorities that they are indulging in such acts. RSS-BJP leaders continue to indulge in minority bashing in clandestine manner including Prime Minister, Home Minister and the Chief Minister of UP, the biggest populated state of India, as one could clearly understand from their campaign trail in five election bound states.

Even in this back ground the people are still daring to speak up but the Govt. continues to create an environment of fear.

We the trade unions have to continue in breaking this cycle of Nazi-style fear psychosis being created by the ruling regime with motive to stifle any voices of opposition.

What is the way forward:

- * *The agitations have to be more extensive in the coming days in the background of continued attacks on the working class, the farmers and other weaker sections of the society. (as evident from the budget)***
- * *There is need for thorough campaign to expose the policies of RSS- BJP and prepare for the strike action of 28th -29th March a stepping stone to oust this anti national government.***
- * *We need to strengthen AITUC organisationally at centre and state headquarters, and also at the union level functioning.***
- * *We must expand in the fast changing situation due to technology up gradation and digital platform workers of new areas of work.***
- * *We also need to increase our efforts in new industrial areas for unionisation.***
- * *The contract and outsourced workers must get more attention from state headquarters, from our formal sector unions, Govt. and public sector unions.***
- * *Special efforts to bring women and young workers into union folds.***
- * *Trade union education is becoming utmost necessary, we need to revive our education programmes.***

A robust, politically sound, organizationally strong AITUC with vision of broad based movements is the demand of time.

The forthcoming 42nd Session of AITUC (National Conference) must be discussing about the challenges to the politics, economy and core values of secular-democracy in our country, to gear up the organisation for expansion and consolidation to meet these challenges.

**Long live the working class unity
Long live the unity of workers the world over
Long live the workers and farmers**

Comradely yours,

Amarjeet Kaur

General Secretary-AITUC

**Hit back at those who hit the workers and people
with their anti-people economic policies**

March on to

Nationwide General Strike

28th and 29th March, 2022