

BANK EMPLOYEES FEDERATION OF INDIA



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16th June 2020

To all Units, Affiliates, Office Bearers, CC & GC Members

Dear Comrade,

Nationwide Protest on 3rd July 2020 **Struggle of Non Cooperation and Defiance**

The outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdown has created a new dimension of the world order; our country is of no exception. We are concerned to note that more than 330000 people have been found to be infected with the virus and around 10000 died. As per experts, the peak is yet to be reached in our country in the backdrop of 10000 people per day found positive in last 4 consecutive days and rising. The country wide lockdown started on 25th March 2020 and first phase of unlock is continuing with some restrictions for containment areas; following initiation of unlocking the number of infected persons is on the rise.

As a result of lockdown, more than 14 crore jobs were lost during the period in organised and unorganised sectors. As per ILO, more than 40 crore people may be pushed to deep poverty. The migrant workers were put into inhuman misery with sudden declaration of lockdown; many workers died due to starvation; heat; exhaustion while traversing home on foot in absence of transport facilities.

The already fragile Indian economy, suffering from slowdown, is almost in the brink of disaster with continuous fall in GDP growth. A big section of people have lost purchasing power and need of the hour was to support them with monthly cash incentive of Rs.7500 for three months at least. It was required from the Govt. to supply sufficient food grains to all poor families for minimum six months. It is pity that the Govt. did not consider these suggestions put forward by eminent economists of the country and demanded by the trade unions. In the name of so called Rs.20 lakh crore Relief Package, the Govt. extended pittance for the distressed people of the country pushing them into bleak conditions.

The Govt. at the Centre, during the period of lockdown, is desperately pushing through its neo liberal economic agenda. The Govt. shamelessly ignored miseries of the workers who are indispensable in producing wealth of our country. Given the people badly suffering, different state governments are diluting and/or suspending labour laws for the interests of the big business houses; obviously with tacit support from the Centre. Efforts are made to increase 8 hours workday to 12 hours. Attacks have been mounted on the employees and retirees by stopping DA and DR respectively, by the Central Govt. and some of the State Govts. In the disguise of making a new self reliant India, ceremoniously named as 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', wholesale privatisation of the public sector enterprises including strategic sector is contemplated. We

came across media reports that privatisation of some PSBs is under consideration of the Govt.

At the call of Central Trade Unions (CTUs), nationwide protest was organised against continuous attacks on the workers and their rights in which we also joined. Given that the Govt. at the Centre is in the mood of furthering their attacks, the CTUs jointly with the Federations and Associations of various sectors have decided to observe Nationwide Protest Day on 3rd July 2020. It was further decided that countrywide united struggles of Non-cooperation and Defiance against the detrimental policies of the Govt. will be launched; concrete form of the struggle including nationwide General Strike will be finalised by the joint platform in due course.

We call upon our Units and Affiliates to participate in the programme as decided by respective State/area committees of the Central Trade Unions and Federations/Associations of different sectors including ourselves to make the Nationwide Protest Day on 3rd July 2020 a massive success.

Joint Press Statement of the Central Trade Unions and Federations released on 05th June 2020 is appended.

With greetings,

Yours comradely,

(Debasish Basu Chaudhury)
General Secretary

**Central Trade Unions call for 3rd July as Nation Wide Protest
Prepare for Countrywide Struggle of Non Cooperation and Defiance**

The Central Trade Unions (CTUs) in their meeting on 3rd June 2020 congratulated the workers for responding enthusiastically to the nation-wide protest call demanding immediate halt to changes in labour laws, abrogating the rights won over after a struggle of 150 years among other demands. The meeting took serious note of the continuous aggressive attack on the workers' rights ignoring all the joint representations to the Government on the matter including the nationwide protest on 22nd May 2020.

The Government not only failed in getting its own orders and advisories implemented in regard to payment of wages to workers, no retrenchments to be carried during lockdown period. Instead, it withdrew its own decision in the face of the case in Supreme Court by the employers of some companies. The Government did not heed to the demand of cash transfer of Rs.7500/- to all non income tax paying households including unorganised labour (registered or unregistered) for the months of April, May, June, neither the demand for Government support to pay the wages of workers of MSMEs for these three months. The ration to all working people for at least six months to be made

available universally also did not find favour with the Government. Neither our demand for workers safe journey home paid attention to.

The Supreme Court had to take cognizance finally asking the Governments of Centre and States not to demand passenger fares from workers, give them proper shelter and food till they are transported to their homes. Nineteen High Courts had taken cognizance of workers, frontline fighters and hospital services etc during this period.

We re-iterate that the Central Government chose the cover of COVID-19 lockdown to push through its agenda of disinvestment and wholesale privatisation of Public Sector Enterprises, 100 percent FDI in core sectors - Indian railways, Defence, Port and Dock, Coal, Air India, Banks, Insurance etc., steps in favour of Corporates of Indian & Foreign brands to usurp natural resources and business of the country while mouthing behind the slogan of Aatma-Nirbhar Bharat. The earlier decisions and those taken during COVID-19 lockdown on privatization/corporatization/commercialization in Defence, Coal, Space science, Atomic energy, Insurance, Banks and most of the PSUs are being pursued with vigour and arrogance. The decision of DA freeze of 48 lakh Central Government Employees and DR freeze of 68 lakh pensioners, which is also having impact on the state government employees, is not withdrawn despite vehement opposition from Government employees and CTUs.

In this back ground various sections are now in agitation mode. The electricity workers and engineers have jointly observed countrywide protest against Electricity Amendment Bill 2020 on 1st June 2020. While welcoming the sectoral struggles which are developing in various sectors, CTUs support the protest programmes taken up by Defence federations including "strike ballots" and those in the coal mine sector on 10-11 June 2020.

The scheme workers, ASHA, Anganwadi, MDM, 108 ambulance employees, etc and the nurses and doctors who are in the front ranks among the front line warriors working at the community level for combating Covid 19 Pandemic are agitated for their demands for safety measures not being addressed appropriately and neither they are provided proper health care on falling sick from COVID-19 infection, nor the social security and insurance coverage being extended to the families who are succumbing to the disease. The scheme workers are also being denied payment of honorarium for lockdown period.

ASHAs, anganwadi employees, Doctors, Nurses, Safai Karamcharis, have been in the protests now and then in various parts of the country on similar demands. The CTUs support all these agitations on their just demands.

The so-called 20 lakh crore package of the Government is nothing but a hoax and cruel joke on the suffering people; this mainly comprises of loan guarantee to various sectors and the actual relief package reaching people is not even 1 percent of GDP. Even, previously announced budgetary allocations and welfare schemes such as PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, Construction Workers Welfare Board and District Mineral Funds etc have been unscrupulously repackaged to befool the people.

The workers who have reached back to their villages would need work, so there is dire need of additional amount to cover these workers also along with the existing needs of rural labours. But the sum announced was paltry in face of demand at the ground level. We demand that the coverage of MNREGA must be enhanced sufficiently to meet the demand for livelihood and work for all including the returned migrant workers; similar employment guarantee should also be extended for the urban areas to meet the demand for work and livelihood for all including the most suffering unorganized sector workers; they should also be provided universal social security including health care and food support.

Now with the opening up of some industrial units the complaints are that all workers are not being taken back, only a small percentage is finding their place back in jobs and that also on reduced wages and refusal to pay lockdown period salary. Such denial of employment and pressure for wage-reduction have to be unitedly combated and we also demand upon the governments for immediate corrective interventions in that direction.

The jobless are more than 14 crore and if we add the daily wagers/contract/casual, it is more than 24 crores who are out of livelihood at present. The MSMEs themselves are reporting that 30% to 35% units may not be in position to start their activities. The unemployment rate is already reached 27%. ILO has said in its report that more than 40 crore people would be pushed into deeper poverty. According to eminent scientists & medical experts, India is faced with stark reality, that malnutrition would increase, hunger deaths would become a daily reality, and there is real threat of depression resulting in suicides amongst workers.

Modi Government has most insensitively dealt with the problem of COVID 19 as law & order issue instead of treating it as medical emergency for the human being and society. It has caused immense miseries to millions of workers, farmers and other vulnerable sections of the society; Whereas, Government stood only by Corporates & big businesses.

A Government which has no respect and concern, towards the rights and basic survival entitlements of workers and the people does not deserve any co-operation. We the workers/employees and trade unions need to do everything possible to be in solidarity with each other, unitedly face the disease taking all precautions necessary, stand with each other to defend our rights of unionization, collective bargaining, decent working condition, wages & future securities etc. This Govt. has demonstrated cruel insensitivity of the basic human needs of the workers and people. This cannot be endorsed and cooperated with.

We cannot accept laying down the designs for imposition of slavery on workers through total nullification of all labour laws; nor can we remain onlooker to the Govt. project of wholesale privatization of our PSUs through multipronged routes; we cannot silently accept the aggressive structural changes in the agricultural economy in favour of corporate-landlord lobby putting already distressed majority of the agricultural populace in deeper miseries besides

endangering food security for the entire people. Trade union movement cannot endorse or cooperate with this process; we have to totally non-cooperate, defy and resist through united struggles such disastrous anti-people, anti-worker and anti-national designs being imposed on the society taking advantage of the lockdown situation in an unscrupulous manner. The Central Government has defied its constitutional obligation.


Hence, we the Central Trade Unions, independent Federations and Associations in this back ground have jointly decided to observe Nationwide Protest Day on 3rd July 2020, by the workers and employees of formal & informal sector and service establishments, maintaining physical distancing and other precautions. This programme is in preparation and prelude to further united struggle of prolonged Non-Cooperation and Defiance of the anti-people, anti-national policies of the Govt. and in defence of our rights and basic entitlements. Preceding the nationwide protest, to generate awareness about the changes being made in labour laws and other policy issues, the state level joint meeting/seminars/conventions may be held.

We demand upon the Government to immediately hold the long overdue Indian Labour Conference to dwell upon the 12 point Charter of Demands, the labour and trade union rights, issues of job losses, wages, job security, the migrant workers' issues including their journey to home and return journey to those who desire to join back their work, instead of frequently meeting only the employers and corporates' organisations.

We call upon the working class and trade unions of all affiliations to make the programme of Nationwide Protest Day on 3rd July 2020 a massive success throughout the country, in all workplaces and centres in preparation to countrywide united struggles of Non-Cooperation and Defiance to anti-worker, anti-farmer, anti-people and anti-national policies of the Govt. for at least six-months period to defend the rights of the people and save and defend the national economy. The concrete form of Non Cooperation and Defiance including nationwide general strike will be decided by the joint platform of Central Trade Unions and independent Federations and Associations at appropriate time in the next phase after the observance of the Nationwide Protest Day.



INTUC



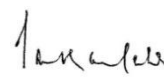
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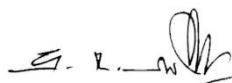
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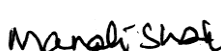
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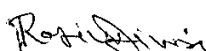
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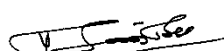
TUCC



SEWA



AICCTU



LPF



UTUC

And Together with the Federations and Associations of various sectors
