

NATIONAL CONVENTION OF WORKERS

11TH November 2021

Jantar Mantar, New Delhi

DECLARATION

The National Convention of Workers being held on 11th November 2021 at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi at the initiative of Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent sectoral All India Federations and Associations calls upon the working people to heighten the ongoing united struggles to the level of resistance against the desperate pursuit of anti-worker, anti-farmer, anti-people, pro-corporate and anti-national destructive policies by the Govt of India which has brought the lives and livelihood of the entire people and the country's economy to the brink of disaster. The Struggle now 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.

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. 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.

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.

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. Even health services entitlement has not been spared by the privatization-deregulation spree of the Govt 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. The Govt had in the initial stage thrown the mass-vaccination

also in the hands of private and market forces, but subsequently have to retreat owing to pressure of public opinion. Still 25% of vaccine was left for private procurement and profiteering.

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. The prices of petrol, diesel, cooking gas and other fuels are increased almost on daily basis by the present reckless taxation regime which is having cascading impact of price rise in all other commodities and public transport and other services. Almost half of govt revenues are coming from taxation on fuel. 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.

Simultaneously and shamelessly enough, the Govt of the day 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. 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. Its arrogant refusal to meet at least the basic human survival requirement of the common people by way of free ration and a bare minimum income support of Rs 7500/- per month to all non-income-tax paying households as demanded by the joint trade union movement, drastically curtailing MNREGA, ICDS and other Social Security allocations on the pretext of their coffers being empty, are all reflections of such inhuman criminality.

In the midst of this horrifying situation for the country and the people, the Govt. at the centre has been hastily pushing through its project of all out reckless privatization 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. And to facilitate privatization and at the same time to benefit the debt-defaulting corporates, the Govt. has legalized 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". It is to be noted that the Workers involved in such cases are not allowed any representation in the decision-making process. The latest move is the amendment of the Bank Nationalisation Acts for privatizing the banks in favour of the same defaulter-corporate community, for which the Bills are going to be introduced in the forthcoming Winter Session of Parliament.

The audacity of privatization 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. 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. Can criminality and cronyism go further ? Or should such plunder of our national assets be allowed to happen? This process is also taking away constitutional right of reservation in government jobs for Dalits, tribals and other downtrodden sections of society.

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 privatized. In fact the slogan of the Modi Govt for minimum Government and Maximum Governance is being executed by privatizing the entire government machineries and establish the absolute grip of the corporate class on the entire governance. The employees movement in central government and state governments and also the municipal administrations in most of the states are facing this onslaught. And the pension/social security savings of the people and employees are not being spared from such exercise of loot by private corporate. The Govt employees, both in central and states have been subjected to tremendous loss through the National Pension System (NPS). This was also made applicable to common people through contributory mechanism. Now the entire fund with NPS, both for the Govt employees and people 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 and the people for boundless speculation, endangering even the meagre pension available under NPS. Under neoliberalism, the spree of loot and plunder of people can go to any nefarious extent.

In the same brazen fashion, country's agricultural sector,

providing livelihood to more than 60% of our population is being sought to be plundered in favour of handful of corporates through enactment of three Farm Laws- designed for ultimate corporate take-over of land and entire agricultural sector. The Food security of the people is going to be a big casualty, besides promoting essential commodity speculation to an atrocious extent, contributing to unmanageable inflation and price rise terribly affecting the entire population, not merely the agricultural community which will be the first victim.

The working class movement is fully aware of this atrocious and destructive policy regime and has been struggling against it continuously since the very beginning. And Farmers organizations and their joint platform have also been fighting against these policies; and their almost year-long historic struggle around the borders of Delhi demanding repeal of the Farm Laws, the Electricity (Amendment) Bill and enactment of statutory MSP and other issues with simultaneous joint agitations and actions throughout the country along with the workers and trade unions have changed the dimension of the united struggle of the entire people against the anti-national destructive policy regime to a new height. The Govt has remained arrogantly unresponsive. Farmers struggle is going on combating all offensive by the Govt and its agents, latest being the killing of farmers at Lakhimpur Kheriallegedly by a Minister's son against which the workers and peasants of entire country have registered strong countrywide protest. We, the workers and peasants' movement together, 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.

There are challenges before the working class movement no doubt. But we are carrying on our united struggles combating those 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. Most retrograde UAPA has been enacted and any opposition and dissent to their policies is sought to be suppressed by the Govt through arrests, detention under sedition clause, and reckless abuse of CBI, ED, NIA etc, thereby creating a reign of terror. Simultaneously the machinations by Govt sponsored communal divisive forces have been acting overtime to divert peoples' attention to non-issues and divide and polarize the people on communal-casteist-divisive lines.

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. The Govt. has further gone ahead in enacting Essential Defence Service Act in further curbing and over-riding the provisions on right to collective

agitations and strikes in defence production while empowering Govt. to extend such prohibitory curb to any segment of industry and service on the plea of its linkage with defence sector production. 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 finalized ignoring the opposition and pointers by trade unions by the central govt and also in many states,

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, Working People must heighten their 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 have to take the frontline and decisive role to build towering resistance to this destructive and disastrous corporate driven regime. We have to demand from all political parties of the nation to incorporate "protection of right to work, living wage, free quality health and education to all citizens and all legitimate constitutional rights" in their political manifestos for the coming assembly elections in 2022 and for the elections scheduled for 2024 and take oath publicly to fulfill their assurances and to support the demands of workers, farmers and all people of the country if they come to power. The sudden drop in petrol/diesel prices now has more to do with debacle faced by the ruling party in the centre in the recent by-elections than the crises faced by the people. Now it is the turn of the ruling regime to find itself in crises in the coming period. We have to heighten our struggle resolutely pressing for our demands, particularly for

1. Scrapping the Labour Codes;
2. Repeal of Farm Laws and Electricity (Amendment) Bill,
3. No to Privatisation in any form and scrap the NMP;
4. Food and Income Support of Rs 7500 per month to non-income tax paying households;
5. Increased allocation for MNREGA and extension of Employment guarantee Scheme to urban areas;
6. Universal social security for all informal sector workers;
7. Statutory Minimum wage and social security for Anganwadi, ASHA, Mid-day-meal and other Scheme workers;
8. Proper protection and insurance facilities for frontline workers serving the people in the midst of pandemic;
9. Increase in public investment in agriculture, education, health and other crucial public utilities by taxing the rich

through wealth tax etc in order to revive and revamp the national economy;

10. Reduction in Central Excise duty on petroleum product and concrete remedial measure to arrest price rise.

Along with other demands already formulated and being pressed for by the Joint Platform of CTUs and Federations/Associations.

The Programme of action:

Massive Demonstration on 26th November 2021 throughout the country on the completion of one year of last countrywide general strike against the anti-people and anti-national policy regime and the historic Farmers March to Delhi. Effort should be made to coordinate with the peasants' organizations to have joint demonstration wherever possible.

State level joint convention in all the states to plan for further joint activities including district/area level joint conventions during November/mid-December

Joint meeting of public sector unions

Intensive and extensive joint campaign against the policies up to the grass root level through joint meetings, general body meetings, signature campaign and any other forms to be decided at state level during December, 2021 – January, 2022.

State/District/sector level agitations through rallies, demonstrations, jathas, day-long dharna, multiple days mahapadav (continuous dharna) etc to rouse the people for strike action till Mid January 2022

Two days countrywide General Strikes during the Budget Session of Parliament in 2022. (dates to be decided)

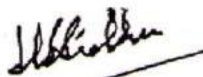
The National Convention calls upon the working people and people in general to make the two days countrywide General Strike a massive success to further heighten the ongoing united struggle to **"SAVE THE PEOPLE AND SAVE THE NATION"**.



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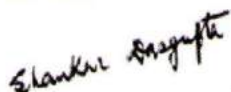
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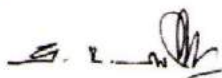
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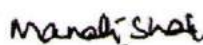
CITU



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And Independent Sectoral Federations/Associations