



भारतीय मजदूर संघ

BHARATIYA MAZDOOR SANGH

CENTRAL OFFICE: DATTOPANT THENGADI BHAWAN, 27 DEEN DAYAL UPADHAY MARG, NEW DELHI 110 02.
TELEPHONE: (011) 23222654 FAX: 91-11-23212648 EMAIL: bmsdtb@gmail.com

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SPEECH OF

C.K.SAJI NARAYANAN,

PRESIDENT, BHARATIYA MAZDOOR SANGH

Honourable Minister for L & E Shri MallikarajunKharge, Hon'ble Secretary for L & E, Employer colleague, Trade Union colleagues, colleagues from employer organisations and from Government, dear brothers and sisters,

Ministry of Labour is to be congratulated for once again keeping up the high tradition of convening SLC to fix the agenda for the coming ILC. ILC is known to be the Labour Parliament that has a history of taking important initiatives towards the betterment of workers and industry in the country. Hence we feel the coming ILC should be known in the annals of history for its contribution towards labour sector. Let us formulate the agenda accordingly.

As we know a lot of issues have come up recently related to labour where Trade Unions have raised their concern. In one of such issues, i.e. regarding the anti-worker proposals put forward by Ministry of Commerce with respect to the proposed

NMIZs, we really appreciate the efforts made by Ministry of L&E to stall such ideas. Still it has to do more in this direction.

The action taken report seems like a ritual, with just some hollow efforts done. For e.g. ban on recruitment and creation of posts is still continuing without official declaration. There may be nominal recruitment, but do not tally with the real requirements. There should be a study on comparison of workload for the last 10-20 years in various establishments including PSUs and Banks. For example, during the last 10 years ESI enrolment increased more than double. Further by a recent amendment, the coverage of number of industries has increased. The Union complains that even though lot many employees have retired, no sufficient recruitments are taking place. So Ministry has placed a wrong action taken report.

In the name of replacing LPQ raj, the LPG regime has been formally initiated in India in the year 1991. While it is completing two decades, our growth is termed as a "jobless growth". Organised sector has decreased from 8% to 7%. India has been facing massive closures, VRS, contractualisation, job losses during the last two decades. Still the action taken report says employment has increased, which is totally invisible. Hence a realistic effort is to be made with the active involvement of Trade Unions. The Govt. promised in the 43rd ILC that working days for MGNREGA-workers would be increased from 100 to 200 days, which it could not achieve.

93% of our workforce is the voiceless lots namely the unorganised labour, who are waiting for implementation of the long cherished UOWSS Act, 2008. The Unorganised Workers Social Security Fund is neglected by the Government by allotting a paltry amount of 1000 crores for 42 crores of UO workers.

Supreme Court has rightly pointed out in the latest case of Bhilwara Dugdh Utpadak Sahakaris Ltd. from Rajasthan that the subterfuge (trick, deception) of contract labour system in order to avoid their statutory liabilities should end. The explicit purpose of engaging contract labour is to provide less wages and bad service conditions, leading to sheer exploitation. Permanent jobs are being converted to contract labour even in PSUs and Government departments. In many establishments about 80- 90% of workers are now under contract labour. Government should immediately bring amendments to the Contract Labour (Regulation & Abolition) Act accordingly to prevent all sorts of exploitations.

India has a poor track record on ratification of ILO Conventions including four core conventions, which does not give it a good image at the international fora. India and US are the two important countries mentioned in the Global report of ILO, 2010 as key countries with poor track record on ratifying conventions. Government's strong public stand that it will not ratify C87 & 98 is also a subject of hot discussion in the trade union circle as well as in media. We should remember that C.98 has been ratified by 159 countries and C87 ratified by 149 countries.

The issues of women working as Anganwadi, ASHA, midday meal workers etc. are glaring example of gender discrimination in India. They are working throughout the day, their workload is increasing every day, and their service to rural development is something not comparable; still their remunerations and service conditions are highly exploitative.

Any attempt of rationalization will end up with anti-worker proposals. More important issue is that, employers flouting labour laws are rampant in the country.

Labour laws are not properly implemented, and inspections are not carried out properly due to lack of sufficient staff. The recent issue in Maruti Suzuki is an indication that there are still some employers who behave like shylocks and are still in the feudal age.

There are some other recent issues of concern. Finance Ministry is eager to pass a Pension Fund bill (PFRDA) which is meant to cater only the interests of private investors and speculative market, instead of protecting the interest of millions of Government and other employees. Those joining Government service after 2004 are losing pension as a benefit given by the Government. The Bill is converting the benefit scheme into a contributory insurance scheme.

Government also facilitates back door entry to foreign investors in the large area of Pension Funds which has been opposed consistently by Trade Unions in fora like PF Board of Trustees meetings. Government of India has not learned lessons from what had happened to millions of pensioners in US and European countries where their pension funds were invested in private funds and stock market. It had ended in social calamity from which their societies have not so far recovered. Government should persuade PSU Banks to bid for fund management. Government is also reluctant to raise the PF interest rate even though Bank rates are going up. Government is also not ready to raise the meagre pension given to PF pensioners.

Government is still in the pursuit of disinvestment of PSUs. The Insurance Laws (Amendment) Bill, 2008 proposed to increase the FDI in Insurance sector from 26% to 49%. This would allow foreign capital to gain larger control over the savings of the people. It was also aimed at disinvesting the four General Insurance PSUs. It

proposes to change the existing terms and conditions of service adverse to LIC Agents. The amendments also contain some anti-people proposals.

A committee of Government secretaries approved opening up of India's retail sector to foreign direct investors. This is going to affect 4.1 crores of people in the sector.

The wide variations in Minimum Wages from State to State, from sector to sector and from job to job are stumbling blocks to our balanced development. Interstate migration is a result of this. Hence a National Minimum Wage on the basis of 15th ILC, SC directions in Raptakos Brett case etc. for 5 member family is the scientific solution to the uneven income disparity.

People are hit hard by the ever increasing price of essential commodities due to the wrong economic policies pursued by the Government. There are repeated rounds of hike in prices of diesel, kerosene and LPG which will further fuel the rise in prices of all commodities. Now fuel price is completely at the mercy of private agencies. 7% DA declared by Central Government to Govt. employees is totally insufficient when compared to the steep price rise happening in the country. Price rise of food items was 32.4% and the gross price rise is approximately 13% during the last 6 months. So the DA declared could not meet even half of the perils of Government employees.

Further the issue of corruption has also become very vital. The way in which the Government reacted to it was totally immature and insensitive to the popular feelings and ground level realities.

In the background of all these and other burning issues concerning labour, let us shape the agenda accordingly for the coming ILC to be convened at the earliest, to make it a historic one. Thank you

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