

## **DECLARATION**

# **NATIONAL CONVENTION OF WORKERS**

## **PYARELAL BHAWAN, NEAR ITO, NEW DELHI**

### **18th MARCH, 2025**

This National Convention of Workers being held in New Delhi on 18th March 2025, at the call of the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral National Federations/Associations representing all sections of the working people of our country, takes stock of the alarming situation before the workers and all sections of common people in our country, because of the anti-worker, anti-people policies being pursued by the NDA government at the Centre for the third term.

After managing to come back to power at the centre for the third term through coalition arrangement the Govt has become atrociously desperate to push through its corporate servile policy machinations on the lives and livelihood of the overwhelming majority of toiling populace. This is resulting in continuing phenomenon of deepening and widening impoverishment, spread of hunger and malnutrition below destitution level, skyrocketing unemployment and joblessness together with drastic degeneration of quality of jobs to inhumane level and what-not. Simultaneously, the profit by the corporate and big-business got multiplied to all time high. Even the latest official Economic survey, could not hide the blatant bankruptcy of the perverse policy regime. It exposes that the wages of the informal economy workers have fallen in 2023-2024 from the level of those in the year 2017-2018. On the contrary the employment-increase was only 1.5 percent. Casual male workers were drawing earnings between Rs.203 to Rs.242 whereas women were getting between Rs.128 to Rs.159. The very same report also reflects that the profits of corporate sector grew by 22.3 percent.

Inequalities are rising in our country. 5 percent top population owns 70 percent of wealth whereas for the 50 percent people from the bottom, their share in wealth is 3 percent only. Richest Indians are richer than those of the European billionaires whereas poorest Indians are poorer than Madagascar with poverty having increased by 17 percent during more than ten years of present ruling regime. 90 percent families were termed poorer than international standards in 2018 as per international studies conducted by reputed institutions.

In its third term of governance, this Govt. has become furiously over-active in implementing the Labour Codes, which is a comprehensive blue-print of imposing conditions of virtual slavery on the working people as a whole. These codes would snatch from them almost all rights and entitlements of workers at their workplaces. The CTUs/Federations take it as a serious challenge to all the basic rights of the workers relating to defined working conditions including working hours, minimum wages, social security etc. and also their collective rights to unionization, recognition, collective bargaining, agitations/struggles and any form of collective expressions of protests including right to strike etc. being sought to be snatched away, together with atrocious and vindictive punitive measures against any collective dissents by the workers. In essence the Labour Codes are a blue-print to impose conditions of virtual slavery on the working people in the interests of the corporate/employers' class.

The National Convention notes that the decision of implementing Labour Codes is integral to the ongoing project of the corporate class to drastically curb the basic democratic and constitutional rights of the common people including the rights to freedom of expression and assertion of dissent including collective dissent through numerous enactments like UAPA, PMLA including the latest edition of Bhartiya Nyaya Sanhita (BNS).The numerous administrative and executive measures aimed at abridly authoritarianise almost all forms of governance with a fascistic intent are being taken. These are aimed at bulldozing all democratic and collective opposition to the pro-corporate, policies against national interest. The collective action, even collective lodging of complaints by the workers and their unions are being sought to be interpreted as "organized crime" as per section 111 of BNS leading to harsh police action including non-bailable imprisonment of the workers and their union leaders. Already such events of criminal actions against workers and union leaders for collectively representing their grievance either to management or even to Labour Department have started taking place in many states implicating trade union leaders and activists in numerous cases. And such a repressive exercise resulted in overactive authoritarian interventions including threats by the employers/management in various industries and establishments including even in various Govt departments towards restraining and virtually prohibiting day to day collective activities of the workers and their unions like holding gate/departmental meetings, distributing leaflets, submitting memorandums etc. and thereby seeking to create an atmosphere of fear among the workers. The united working-class movement cannot remain a silent onlooker to such disastrous machinations on the country and the people.

The Convention upholds the charter of demands formulated by the Joint Platform of Trade Unions through previous national convention on 30.1.2023 covering the basic rights to lives and livelihood of the working people of both the organized and unorganized sector and self-employed occupations, In order to pursue struggle to realise these demands, the implementation of Labour Codes must be stalled and decisively defeated through countrywide united struggles of defiance and resistance by the working class both at national level united actions and also through united sectoral resistance. It is a life and death question for the working-class movement as well as for defending the constitutional and democratic structure of country's governance. Hence the National Convention asserts that the resistance struggle to defeat and scrap the Labour Codes has become central prerequisite in the united struggle of the working class to achieve their just and legitimate charter of demands for a decent and humane working life and also their right to quality employment.

The National Convention considers the all in unity of the toiling people irrespective of religion, caste, community, ethnicity, linguistic and cultural diversities, as a united toiling class, in forthcoming battle for their just and legitimate rights and demands, is of crucial importance. Therefore, it is also most crucial front line task for joint movement of the toiling people to consciously confront all poisonous divisive and conspiratorial machinations on the society as these are meant to weaken and divert the united resistance of the toiling people against the crimes being committed on the people and national economy. The government agenda of Wakf of Board Amendments Bill is brought with the intention of promoting divisive politics. As a diversionary tactics and ulterior motive "one nation one election" agenda is being pushed despite disagreement by the whole opposition.

During last couple of years, the Govt started decriminalizing various defaults/offences by the corporate/big business class through so called Jana-Vishwas Act which is nothing but a license to them to violate various laws including labour laws with impunity. The Govt has decriminalized already 180 offences of corporate/big-business class under 41 legislations including the Boiler Act, Forest Act, Tea Act etc. withdrawing all provisions of imprisonment for any violation of those laws and get scot-free by paying some fines, which is much less than the gains from violations. Again, the Last Union Budget has declared their decision to decriminalize 100 more offences. And such decriminalization of offences by corporate employers also includes violation/non-fulfillment of obligations under many labour laws. All these are being done by the Govt under the dubious and shameless plea of "**Ease of doing Business**".

Even before the implementation of labour codes, the so-called Shram Samadhan and Shram Suvidha Portals has practically done away with the long-established system of complaint-based inspection of establishments, thereby making labour-law-violations by the employers a free game with continuing impunity.

The entire governance while promoting such perverting process of labour related governance system has without any camouflage opened the entire national exchequer generated by huge tax-burden on the common people for liberal exploitation by handful of corporates through various so-called incentive schemes, production-linked, capex-incentive and latest employment linked incentive scheme. The production linked incentive (PLI) scheme of Rs.1.97 lakh crores for 14 industries in the manufacturing sector, Rs.76000 crores capex incentive to the semiconductor manufacturing industries, and Rs.2 lakh crores of employment linked incentive (ELI) scheme in the process of last two/three years have neither generated any additional employment, nor any worth-noting increase in production in the concerned sector, nor any worthwhile increase in investment which are all matters of record.

On the other hand, we note consistent decline and drastic cut in budgetary allocations in real terms in all people-related heads like MNREGA, Public Health, Education and various other welfare schemes and programmes.

In a nefarious way the Govt is attempting to bring back the provisions of the already-scraped draconian three farm laws through the recently released Draft National Policy Framework on Agricultural Marketing which is being rightly opposed by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM). The commitment on Statutory MSP based on C2 plus 50 and ensured procurement based on that basis has not been implemented for which the SKM has been continuing its relentless agitation/struggle activities.

The Govt has notified grossly truncated Unified Pension Scheme (UPS) as an alternative option to New Pension Scheme (NPS) ignoring the just demand of employees for restoration of Old Pension Scheme (OPS). It is reluctantly making halfhearted attempts to implement and also block the implementation of the Supreme Court directions for higher pension under EPS.

Along with continuing its ongoing privatization policy, the Govt is aggressively pursuing its new format of privatization through National Monetization Pipeline (NMP) that too in the infrastructure sector of Roadways, Railways, Airways, Port

and Dock, Telecommunication and also in Mining through the nefarious Mines Developer and Operator (MDO) model enabling loot of public assets at a throw away price, rather almost free in terms of net worth of the assets. 100% FDI in Insurance, amendment to Postal Act doing away with the Govt monopoly over the postal service allowing the private, enabling private corporates in defence manufacturing, research & development, including the space exploration and technology are all done to favour the corporate at the cost of national interests, against which the sectoral struggles of resistance and defiance are mounting across.

The electricity employees are on continuous movement against the handing over of Discoms to the private players as witnessed recently in Chandigarh and Uttar Pradesh. And people across the nation at several places are opposing the installation of smart meters. The recent joint national convention of electricity employees, engineers held at Nagpur on 23rd Feb 2025 has decided to join the joint strike call action of this convention and has also resolved to again go on for sectoral strike on its demands independently on June 26th, 2025.

The recent govt. policy on ship-breaking industries will bring death knell to the livelihood majority of the women who are dependent on this sector for survival.

Is this not a government totally against what we want? We can clearly see that whatever the Govt does is to illegitimately benefit the Corporate Class, the rich people at the expense of vast work force? This ruling dispensation is not only working against the interests of workers, farmers, students, youth, women and the other vulnerable sections of the society, against the intelligentsia etc., but its policies are facilitating the loot of natural resources and the national assets by the Corporate of Indian and foreign brand. These policies are against the national interest.

All our demands are just and legitimate and are also crucial for saving the national economy from disaster and de-growth.

Labour Codes and accompanying restructuring of the entire governance system are aimed at promoting such direly anti-people and anti-national policy regime and therefore defeating and scrapping the Labour Codes through united actions of the working people with a continuity has become the prime task of the hour along with demanding fulfilment of the 17 points of charter of demands of Joint Platform of CTU's and Federations

Indian Labour Conference (ILC), the highest tripartite body has to be convened immediately. ILO Conventions 87, 98, 190 must be ratified. Fundamental Principles of Rights at Work (FPRW) as per ILO Convention 155 and 187 have to be adhered to with regard work place safety and Convention -81 for inspection has to be implemented. ILO Convention 177 on home-based workers and ILO Convention 189 on domestic workers should be ratified immediately.

Immediate halt should be put to the entire privatization drive of Indian Railways, and Road transport, Coal mines and other non-coal mines, Port and Dock, Defense, Electricity, Steel, Petroleum, Postal, Telecom, Banks and Insurance sector etc. in the national interest. The NMP Scheme to be scrapped. The defense ordinance factories are vital for national security and should be in the government sector and corporatization should be rolled back. 100% FDI in Insurance Sector should be stalled along with the scrapping of policy and agency portability.

Rs 26000/- as minimum wage with regular revision every five years with price indexation should be ensured. 8th pay commission should be constituted at the earliest. Fixed term employment and Agni Path scheme should be scrapped and outsourcing/ contractualization of Jobs should be stopped. Equal pay for equal work should be ensured. The Government should begin forthwith for recruitments of sanctioned posts and also to revive the lapsed posts. Violation of 8 hours of workday, a hard won right of working class should be curbed. The violation should be dealt with stringent punitive action against the violator establishments.

The New Education Policy meant to encourage commercialization, centralization and communalization in education making it unaffordable for poor, lower and even middle-income groups of society must be withdrawn. Sufficient fund for education and health should be provided.

Non-contributory Old Pension Scheme should be restored. Rs.9000/-minimum Monthly pension under EPS 95 with link to price-index should be ensured. Those not covered under any scheme be given Rs.6000/- per month by creating special fund/corpus through sharing of budgets of the states and the centre.

75 lakh beedi workers, the multifaceted welfare scheme under the previous cess-regime should be restored with govt funding. The social security benefits for more than 57.5 million constructions and other building workers enrolled in the BOCWB's should be substantially improved. 30crores plus e-Shram portal enrolled unorganized workers have to be

covered under social security through necessary budgetary funding. Gig and platform workers to be recognized as workmen and all labour laws be applicable to them. Climate Resilience Fund to cover the risks and damages caused due to extreme climate conditions including heat wave, floods, cyclones, unseasonal rains and so on should be set up. The National policy on migrant workers is urgently needed and interstate Migrant Workers Act 1979 be revived and revisited, strengthened and implementation assured. There is need for changes in immigration policies as well as the protection needs of our international migrant workers.

Indian Labour Conference recommendation to provide worker status to scheme workers-Anganwadi, Asha and Mid-day-meal, Asha Kiran etc. should be implemented and Gratuity to them as per judicial directions must be immediately ensured.

200 days' work per annum with increased minimum wages under MNREGA through sufficient budgetary allocation should be ensured along with expanding it to urban areas as per the recommendation of 43rd ILC.

Hence this National Convention of Workers, calls upon the working people of our country to take united struggles to a higher level of combative resistance both at national and sectoral level through a series of joint actions with a continuity. To begin with, **this National Convention calls for observance of a massive Nationwide General Strike on 20th May 2025** to be preceded by series of preparatory campaign/agitations/mobilizations focusing on our firm determination to continue our resistance struggle to defeat the retrograde Labour Codes to save the people and save the nation.

This National Convention of Workers, while reiterating their demand for the Scrapping of Labour Codes and re-affirming 17-point charter of demands, which projects the alternative to the entire gamut of the disastrous neoliberal policy regime, resolves to make success the **20th May 2025 Nationwide General Strike** and proposes the following actions/programmes throughout the nation for its success:

- \* Organize state/district/and sectoral conventions in the month of March 2025 to middle of April 2025.
- \* Organize protest actions as resistance and defiance, very next day once the labour codes implementation announced and thereafter continue extensive campaign to culminate in General Strike on 20th May 2025.
- \* Undertake intensive campaign at local level and reach out every working people through Padayatras/jeep jathas/cycle jathas/motorbike jathas etc., in the month of April/May 2025.
- \* In the month of April, a decentralized Nation-wide mobilization to give boost to campaign for strike be organized (Date may be decided later) Delhi mobilization with participation from NCR areas be organized on that day.
- \* Issue General Strike Notice in the respective sector/industry through the respective unions and federations before 3rd May 2025.
- \* Issue the General Strike Notice jointly signed by all the Central Trade Unions to the factories even where the Unions are not there at local level latest by 3rd May 2025.
- \* Multiply the Joint signed appeal for General Strike in millions in the local language and reach out to every worker.
- \* Hold gate meetings /work place level/ residential area meetings to reach out all sections of workers and the people at large.
- \* There should be review of activities after the General Strike to further heighten the combat of resistance and defiance to labour codes and anti-people policies to save nation from these anti national policies.

### **Onward to massive mobilization and Nationwide General Strike on 20th May 2025**



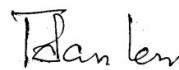
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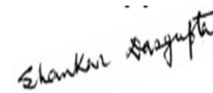
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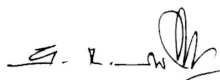
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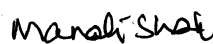
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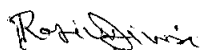
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**And Independent National Sectoral Federation/Associations.**