



UNION POWER

NTUI

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Contents

EDITORIAL

STATE REPORTS

Punjab State Council

Gujarat

Chhattisgarh

Karnataka

Madhya Pradesh

Jharkhand

Maharashtra

Kerala

West Bengal

Tamil Nadu

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

**Campaign on Climate
Crisis**

Campaigns on Trade

Campaign for Peace

SOLIDARITY

**For Workers of Ssangyong
Motors, Pyeongtaek Plant,
Korea**

**For Workers of Bosch
Chassis System India Ltd.
and KBX Motorbike
Products Pvt. Ltd. and the
Bosch Chassis Kamgar
Sangathana**

NEWS UPDATES

**Economic Survey Released
on 2 July**

**Ministry of Labour invites
Comments on Payments of
Wages Rules, 2009**

**Supreme Court rules
against Protection of
Employment under ID Act**

**Minimum Wages to
Agricultural Workers in
select States and UTs**

**RSBY extended to all BPL
families**

**Unemployment Allowance
paid under NREGA in 7
states**

E D I T O R I A L

Dear Comrades,

Beyond the rhetoric of *a mandate for continuity, stability and prosperity... inclusive growth and equitable development*, the second UPA government – with a strengthened Congress and a weakened alliance sans a decimated left - signalled in its first budget its intention of persisting with a largely neo-liberal economic programme with considerably reduced commitments to spending on incomes policies and social welfare.

The budget reinforced the Congress Party's commitment to the capitalist class. While the Government has repeatedly expressed the view that India has only minimally been affected by the global crises and has 'weathered the storm', the Government has maintained the concessions in excise duties for industry, made through the two fiscal stimulus packages of December 2008 and January 2009. The stimulus packages do little directly to shore up falling real wages or rising unemployment in particular for workers without tenure. Alongside this, although there has been a rise in the marginal rate of the Minimum Alternative Tax on corporates, there have been significantly large giveaways in the form of continued tax holidays for export units, and a further entirely unjustified reduction in personal income tax.

While the Government is seeking to place the burden of its loss of 'fiscal discipline' on the crisis, in reality, the cost of the government's non-plan expenditure is staggering. Hidden behind the numbers of rising borrowing and interest on it, is the pay-out under the 6th Pay Commission and the phenomenal rise (56%) in the defence budget. While the implementation of the Pay Commission was both urgent and necessary, it continues to discriminate against the working class in so far as it discriminates against Class IV employees. The absence of a sustained policy for resolving the Kashmir dispute based on the aspirations of the people of Jammu & Kashmir, and the persistence of the political class in using differences with Pakistan for short-term electoral ends, are important sources of xenophobia and bigotry in the country, and in a self-serving manner push up the costs of military obligations.

The increased government spending on income policies and social protection has in some cases been presented as deceptively high by using budget estimates rather than real estimates (actual expenditure). Thus while the government projects the increase in spending in 2009-10 under the NREGA as 144% higher than the previous year, the real increase is only about 6%. Similarly the real increase in expenditure for the National Rural Health Mission, the Integrated Child Development Scheme and the Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan are all in the region of about 1%.

Governments have in recent years resorted to using the budget statement for making promises of future policy. In seeking to fulfil the Congress' manifesto commitment, the budget affirms its commitment to a real wage of Rs. 100 per day under the NREGA. But we should note that no Congress state government pays an agricultural minimum wages of Rs. 100 or more. While in promising disinvestment of minority interests in the public sector the Government has defined it as *people's ownership*, the government continues to remain silent on any provision of benefits under the new Social Security Act.

In fact, the budget statement 2009-10 is a carefully calibrated under-statement of commitment to a model of growth strictly in neo-liberal terms, with an over-stated concern for the poor. The budget will continue to contribute to growing inequalities of income, decline of real wages and lack of employment opportunity while failing to provide the promised social protection. Resistance to this can only come from a sustained struggle of the working class to democratise the mechanism of economic policy management in the country.

Ashim Roy
General Secretary

AFFILIATE REPORTS

PUNJAB

PUNJAB STATE COUNCIL: An NREGA Convention was organised by the Punjab State Council on 7 January 2009 in Barnala. Comrades Gautam Mody, Chandrashekhar and Bhagnal Rana along with other state leaders were present in this meeting. It was decided in this convention that the State Council will initiate a programme for education of activists across the state along with following a common strategy for state-wide agitation. 6 district level conventions have been held till July. The Dehati Mazdoor Morcha has led intense satyagraha of mostly women workers in 4 districts of Punjab.

NTUI has also initiated a joint platform of left agricultural workers unions in Punjab that held a conference which was attended by agricultural workers unions of the CPIML (Liberation), CPIML (ND) and the Dehati Mazdoor Morcha (NTUI). AITUC and CITU have also expressed their inclination to join this platform.

NTUI Punjab State Council has initiated a unity process with other left unions that will attempt to draw up a common minimum programme for trade unions. A Convention was held in Jullandhar that was attended by 1600 delegates from AITUC, CITU, AICCTU and NTUI. It was agreed to launch a joint movement to combat the attack on labour. NTUI has played a crucial cementing role in bringing these unions together.

NTUI has made substantial gains in organising contract workers in Punjab in various sectors. The PRTC Contract Workers Union and Contract and Casual Workers Union have together formed a coordination committee that is leading struggles at the Tehsil/ Taluka level, District level and at the state level. NTUI was the first union to organise the Accredited Social Health Activist (ASHA) workers, 98% of them being women, who are appointed on a contract. ASHA workers have played an enormous role in taking the NTUI to every village in Punjab. NTUI has also led the struggle of contract teachers for a pay revision in consonance with the state pay commission principles.

The Class IV Government Employees Union held a series of day-long dharnas across all districts of Punjab between 10 - 25 July to press the Government for implementation of the Sixth Pay Commission recommendations. The key demands are that the pay commission benefits should be extended to contract workers, outsourcing of work should be stopped and workers should be recruited as regular workers and given due benefits. A state level strategy meeting has been planned at a later date.

GUJARAT

CHEMICAL MAZDOOR PANCHAYAT (CMP): CMP made breakthroughs in unionising of workers in Reliance Malls and of Group IV Securities.

There have been some major advances in organising contract workers in Gujarat, especially in the Baroda hub. Contract workers have been organised in the Munjal industries in Waghodia, in the Suzlon SEZ and in Silvassa. There has been a consolidation of the struggle for regularisation of contract workers. Unions affiliated to NTUI have won major legal battles on contract work in all the fertilizer companies. The Chemical Mazdoor Panchayat has been able to thwart the attempt of the Gujarat Electricity Board and the Government of Gujarat to de-prohibit some work in coal handling plants of Thermal Power Plants and fought back to de facto restore the original status. More than 600 workers gained permanent status with retrospective effect. A notification of prohibition of contract labour in Coal Mill and Coal Yard of Gandhinagar Thermal Power Station was issued following a long struggle. A legal victory was won against illegal lockout in KHRIBCO with an award for full back wages. A negotiation is on for comprehensive settlement for regularisation of 600 contract workers in GSFC, Baroda with lump sum payment for past dues as a result of legal victory in case of Equal Wages for Equal Work and for regularisation.

Settlements of wage agreements were signed in Gujarat Gas, CEMA Lighting (GE Lighting), and Shankar Packaging.

GRAMIN MAZDOOR SABHA (GMS): The GMS has made new inroads in Tapi, Dang and Navsari districts. A series of meetings with local social organisations and GMS have been planned for building an alliance to take forward the implementation of NREGA in Gujarat. These would happen at three levels:

- Awareness and training at District level
- Integrating social audits by various organizations in a common framework for assessing the implementation
- Unionization at district level

CHATTISGARH

KOYLA UDYOG KAMGAR SANGATHAN (KUKS): The Coal India management signed the 8th wage agreement this year with the five 'recognised' central trade unions. KUKS has repeatedly demanded inclusion in the negotiations for wage settlement and has been consistently kept out as it is not a recognised trade union even though it has a critical membership. In several RTI applications filed by the KUKS, it has been found that the Coal India management does not have any official list of 'recognised' trade unions. The RTIs also revealed the corruption of the leaders of the central trade unions who participate in these negotiations. In 2007, three meetings were held between the management and the trade unions and a sum of Rs. 25 lakhs was spent in these meetings! There was also a demand for an interim relief and the trade unions signed on a 15% relief which was far below the expectation. This undemocratic and corrupt IR system in Coal India has created a sense of revulsion in a large majority of workers who are now demanding a ten-year wage settlement to

reduce the role of the central trade unions. Large demonstrations were held in Kolkata. KUKS is going to organise an indefinite dharna in August at Raipur.

CHHATTISGARH MAZDOOR KARYAKARTA SAMITI (CMKS): CMKS along with hundreds of workers of Chattisgarh celebrated *Shaheed Divas* on 1 July 2009 in Bhilai, a day of resolve in memory of the 17 workers martyred in a brutal police firing by the BJP govt of Sunderlal Patwa on the Rail Roko Satyagraha of agitating contract workers of Bhilai on 1st July 1992. This year the union resolved:

- to defend the rights won by the 700 presently locked out workers of the ABS Steel, Metal, and DM at Bhilai who had struggled hard to win an 8 hour workday, minimum wages, PF, ESI, and to carry this struggle forward into all industrial areas
- to struggle for the implementation of the Cement Wage Board and abolition of contract labour in the big Indian and multinational cement cartel of Holcim, Lafarge and Ultratech, and to forge a unity of all cement workers across Chhattisgarh
- to continue to support and unite with all the peasants and adivasi organisations agitating against displacement by corporates in mineral-rich Chhattisgarh
- to continue to strengthen the civil liberties movement of Chhattisgarh against draconian laws and for the release of political prisoners - that has won the first victory with the release of Dr Binayak Sen

KARNATAKA

GARMENT AND TEXTILE WORKERS UNION (GATWU): The year long struggle of GATWU for raising the minimum wage for garment workers to a minimum of Rs.200 per day, which is the minimum required for a family of garment workers to survive in Bangalore as per a survey conducted by GATWU in 2007, forced the Karnataka Government to revise the Minimum Wages for all categories of garment workers by a notification (dated 2.3.09). The new Minimum Wage (basic + DA) works out to around Rs.130 per day. Though this is a 25% increase in the statutory Minimum Wage, and the highest ever increase in minimum wages, it is far below the demanded Rs. 200. The struggle continues.

MADHYA PRADESH

JAGRIT ADIVASI DALIT SANGATHAN (JADS):

The Payment of wages under NREGA to workers in Barwani district had been delayed by several months due to non-opening of bank accounts by the administration. JADS has been leading a struggle to demand wages as well as compensation for late payment of wages in this regard. JADS is also active in the Ration Haq Abhiyan, under the Right to Food Campaign demanding universal PDS along with its expansion in scope and area.

JHARKHAND

JHARKHAND LABOUR UNION (JLU): On the issue of occupational health and safety JLU, in conjunction with OSHAJ

(Occupational Safety and Health Association of Jharkhand), JLU has been campaigning for the establishment of Occupational Disease Diagnosis Centres in district level state hospitals. The first such ODDC is expected to be set up soon. JLU is also trying to build up a broad platform to support OSH issues and especially the large number of silicosis victims in the sponge-iron units of Jharkhand.

JHARKHAND KRANTIKARI MAZDOOR UNION (JKMU): In July JKMU organised a union of 220 contract workers in a newly established private steel factory owned by Electro Steel Casting Ltd. 40 kms from Bokaro. All 500 workers employed in the plant are local workers. Services of 100 workers were terminated for participating in union formation activities. JKMU organised a dharna and several blockades with the help of local villagers and forced the management to reinstate all the workers. The Deputy Labour Commissioner also put pressure on management to take back the workers or else the factory license would be cancelled. The newly formed union held meetings with the ALC and submitted their demand notice to the management.

MAHARASHTRA

NASIK MAHANAGARPALIKA SHRAMIK SANGH (NMSS): In the Nasik Municipal Corporation 280 workers

who were fighting for minimum wages were sacked suddenly on 6 July by the contractor. The workers also discovered that the contractor had gotten them to sign on some forms under false pretences, then on the basis of these documents applied for loans from banks in their names and appropriated the loan amounts. The workers discovered this scam when they started receiving notices from the banks to repay the loans taken. NMSS organised a large demonstration which forced the Chairperson of the National Commission for SCs, Mr. Buta Singh, to intervene and direct the Police Commissioner and the Municipal Commissioner to take prompt action under SCs and STs (Prevention of Atrocities) Act and under I P C.

KACHRA VAHATUK SHRAMIK SANGH (KVSS):

KVSS has forced the BMC to implement Maharashtra minimum wages for all 6000 Mumbai contract workers from the month of July. Moreover, the union has got a commitment from the BMC commissioner that the central government minimum wage rate of Rs 180 will be implemented in two months time. A circular to this effect is awaited. The BMC has meanwhile issued a circular stating that a 46% levy will be paid to contractors from which the contractor will pay the workers the amount under different heads, e.g. 12% PF, 4% for uniforms, 6% for leave with wages, 8.33% bonus. Process of forming a union of contract safai karamcharis is underway in Nagpur, Amravati, Parbhani, Aurangabad and Kolapur.

THERMAX KAMGAR SANGATHAN (TKS): Given the attack on unions and the tendency of the management to declare any strike to be illegal, the Thermax Kamgar

Sangathan, the first union to be given a ISO certification, has been using the 'Stoppage of Work' as a struggle strategy to demand an increase in wages of contract workers.

KERALA

KERALA STATE COUNCIL

The NTUI District committees organized district wise protest marches and dharnas against the anti people proposals in the budget presented in the parliament and against the price hike of petrol and diesel by the Central Government. Dharnas were held in Chengannoor of Alappuzha District on 9 July and Kollam on 16 July. Members of the affiliates actively participated in both the districts. A protest march and dharna in Thiruvananthapuram was organised on the 26 July.

On 28 June the Kerala State Council held a meeting to chalk out an action plan to organize in new areas and to initiate united agitations along with other progressive unions. In a series of meetings held with J.T.U.S- a trade union under the leadership of Com. K.R.Gouri Amma, a former leader of the CPI (M) and present leader of J.S.S, a constituent of UDF in Kerala- a consensus was arrived on conducting united agitations to protect the interest of the workers in the Coir and Cashew sectors.



Rally organised by the Kerala State Council

It was also decided to organize a State Union in the construction sector and as an initial step two district level units – one in Ernakulam District and the other in Trivandrum District- have already been organized and are functioning.

The State Council has also decided to organize domestic workers and security workers across the state.

The State Council has also decided to collect a working fund of Rs 6, 30,500 that will be raised from affiliates across the state based on a district-wise quota as decided by the State Council.

KERALA SWATANTRA MATSYA THOZHILALI FEDERATION (KSMTF): KSMTF initiated an open letter to the Environment Minister that was signed by over 200 groups from across the country demanding dropping of the 'hybrid' set

of de-regulatory rules for India's coastal areas. They warned that the revision of Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) guidelines into a Coastal Management Zone (CMZ) would open the floodgates for industrial estates, power plants, ports, harbours and tourism projects thereby accommodating the interests of big business that will endanger both the coasts and the lives of 250 million coastal dwellers, including 10 million fisher people. This would also hasten adverse climate change as it would facilitate massive investment with little environmental safeguards'.

JOINT ACTION COUNCIL OF FUNALUR PAPER MILL WORKERS (JACPPMW):

The JACPPMW continues their agitation to reopen the Mill. The Union was forced to approach the High Court and got a direction to invite the Union to take part in the discussions with the Government to sort out ways to reopen the mill by protecting the rights of the workers. But the government has gone to the extent of filing an appeal petition before the Court against this direction in order to keep the Union, representing the majority of the workers, away from the discussion table and the decision over the appeal petition is still pending. In the meantime, a promoter, M/S Akula Boards from Andhra Pradesh, who came forward to take over the mill has dramatically withdrawn from the scene. Hence the union has decided to further initiate steps to continue the agitation demanding serious intervention of the State Government to get the mill reopened.

WEST BENGAL

NATIONAL FORUM OF SALES REPRESENTATIVE UNIONS (NFSRU):

NFSRU participated in the 2 July rally called by Forum against Monopolistic Aggression and Teachers and Students against Mal-development. It was a no-banner rally demanding the withdrawal of forces from the Jangalmahal. NFSRU continues their campaign for minimum wages for sales promotion employees.

PASCHIM BANGA KHET MAJOUR SAMITI (PBKMS):

PBKMS organised relief work (with the help of doctors and other city level sympathisers) in Sundarbans after cyclone Aila and protests on the inadequacy of Government relief. A survey to assess Government relief has also been done. PBKMS is actively involved in campaigning on the forthcoming National Food Security Act.

TAMIL NADU

GARMENT AND FASHION WORKERS UNION (GAFWU):

Members of GAFWU, from Celebrity Fashions Limited, a garment export company in MEPZ-SEZ, who have spearheaded struggle for fair wages and increments and better work conditions in their factory have been facing much harassment and victimization at the factory for their union activities. Two of the leaders in the union have been suspended.

Following protest by more than 1000 workers of the ColorPlus garment factory, Ambattur against abuse and harassment by the HR managers, the management illegally declared a lock-out on 3 July 2009. The protesting workers have joined GAFWU and made representations to the Assistant Commissioner of Labour who declared the lock-out to be illegal and advised the company to lift the lock-out and reinstate all the workers. The management refused to recognize this and did not come to dialogue with the workers representatives. Following continued protest, the management was forced to lift the lock-out on 7 July.



GAFWU activists in Rally Demanding Increase in Wages

WORKING PEOPLES TRADE UNION COUNCIL (WPTUC): A Wage Revision Committee was setup by Government of India for Wage Revision in Public Sector Units. Under its guidelines a wage settlement was negotiated and concluded with the management and it was approved by the Board of Madras Fertilizers Limited. As MFL is a loss-making unit, the present CMD has not taken steps to implement the wage agreement. MFL has one union, affiliated to WPTUC, that is recognized by the management. This union has been regularly reporting the misdeeds of the present CMD to the GOI. Antagonized by the action of this union, the CMD has instigated a negligible rival group within the recognized union to start a rival union and got it registered. This has created a division among the workers. The struggle to unite the workers and to implement the provisions of the wage agreement is on.

WPTUC is spearheading the struggle at Hinduja Foundries, Sriperumbudur where 100 workers were hired as trainees but were engaged on regular jobs. They were assured that they would be regularized after completion of their training period. But at the end of their training period all the 100 workers were terminated from service. Fierce struggle is on for their reinstatement and regularization.

WPTUC also supported the agitation of Hyundai Motors India Union for their recognition. The management dismissed nearly 100 workers including the office bearers and active cadres of the union after they formed the union.

All affiliated unions of the WPTUC participated at the gate meeting at Sriperumbudur, hunger strike and demonstration at Tamil Nadu Labour Commissioner's office to draw the attention of the Government on the issue. WPTUC has also supported the union at MRF – Arakkonam that has been agitating for recognition. Donations have been collected by WPTUC from various unions to help their struggle.

CAMPAIGN UPDATES

CAMPAIGN ON CLIMATE CRISIS

TAKING CLIMATE JUSTICE TO THE IMF: NTUI represented by Comrades R. Kuchelan and Gautam Mody of WPTUC made considerable gains at the 32nd World International Metalworkers' Federation Congress on 24-28 May 2009 in Gotenburg, Sweden in taking the South-South alliance forward among metalworkers' unions within IMF. The Southern unions successfully forced the IMF to adopt a resolution on global warming which was based on the principle of less than full reciprocity.

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON CLIMATE CRISIS:

A National Consultation was held in Ranchi on 20-21 June 2009 to evolve a people's understanding to the climate crisis. It was hosted by NFFPFW and co-organised by many organisations including NTUI. It was decided in this meeting that efforts would be made to expand the platform and use internal and other resources to prepare advocacy materials on this issue and work closely with organisations that are currently engaged in struggles for their lives and livelihoods typically in forest areas, mining belts, hills and in the coasts against corporate interests that is also endangering the environment.

CAMPAIGNS ON TRADE

NATIONAL CONSULTATION ON INDIA AND ITS FREE TRADE AGREEMENTS:

The Forum on FTAs, of which NTUI is a member, will organise a National Consultation on *India and its Free Trade Agreements*, in New Delhi on 31 August - 1 September 2009. The consultation will attempt to arrive at a collective understanding of the political and economic considerations at these the negotiating tables. It will also aim at assessing the impact of these FTAs on the lives and livelihoods of working people.

NATIONAL STRATEGY MEETING ON THE UPCOMING WTO MINISTERIAL:

A half day National Strategy Meeting on the upcoming WTO Ministerial is being organised on 2 September 2009 in New Delhi. The meeting is being organised by NTUI and HMS along with La Via Campesina (South Asia), Third World Network, Focus on the Global South, Centre for Education and Communication, and others.

CAMPAIGN FOR PEACE

JOINT INDIA-PAKISTAN TRADE UNIONS' STATEMENT ON TERRORISM IN SOUTH ASIA:

A Joint Indo-Pak statement was signed on 6 July 2009 by the Muttahida Labour Federation; Pakistan Workers' Federation; Allied Bank Staff Union of Pakistan; Railway Workers' Union Collective Bargaining Authority Workshops; All Pakistan Trade Union Federation; Railway Workers' Union Open Line; Working Women Organisation from Pakistan and 25 affiliate unions of NTUI including JKTUC calling upon the governments of India and Pakistan to overcome mutual suspicions and build mutual trust by:

1. Exchange of information and intelligence without any misgivings and reservation
2. Providing access for interrogation of arrested persons
3. Ensure legal rights and assistance to the arrested persons in accordance with international human right standards

The unions also called upon the people of India, Pakistan and South Asia to deepen the process of democracy, contend ideologically and politically with all forms of regressive and chauvinistic viewpoints and ideologies, and build a secular framework for peaceful co-existence.

SOLIDARITY

The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) went on general strike on 22nd July. This general strike is to condemn police operation aimed at clamping down the striking workers at Ssangyong Motors Pyeongtaek Plant and to attain overall job security by reasonably normalizing Ssangyong Motors. On 20th July 2009, riot police entered the Ssangyong Motors Pyeongtaek Plant under the pretext of implementing forced execution (eviction) orders, and surrounded the paint shop building, which 800 workers are sitting-in, vigilantly waiting to violently clamp down on the workers. The management has ordered all non-striking employees back to work, and has also cut off electricity, water and gas to the paint factory. NTUI issued a statement in support of the struggle on 22 July 2009. The statement is as below:

NTUI hails your courage and bravery in standing against the violent suppression of your human rights, democratic and labour rights by the management of Ssangyong Motors, the police and the Government of South Korea. We condemn the denial of food, water and access to medical care to the 800 workers sitting for over 60 days in protest against unilateral layoffs. We condemn the intimidation and harassment of families of workers by company managers. We stand in solidarity with the KMWU Ssangyong Motors Branch policy director on the death his wife due to harassment by management. The management of Ssangyong Motors must be held criminally liable.

The unrest at Ssangyong Motors is not simply a management-labour problem. Blind adherence of neoliberal policies and prioritising shareholder profits over the future of industry and job security of workers is the root cause of the crisis. As far back as 2006 nine directors of Ssangyong Motors, controlled by China's Shanghai Automotive Industry Corp (SAIC), were accused of embezzlement and theft of technology from the company to give to its Chinese parent company.

Since then workers through their union have already contributed immensely to a revival by agreeing to wage cuts, bonus delays, and welfare cuts, as well as giving guarantee for almost 100 billion won on behalf of the company. It has also proposed self-sacrificing job sharing measures such as the 5+5 work pattern. Yet SAIC has demanded that Ssangyong Motors slash nearly half of its factory workers in return for financial assistance, when in fact the crisis is the result of its mismanagement and bad policies.

In the case of Ssangyong Motors, the South Korean government must also take responsibility, since it had given a loan through the Korea Commercial Bank to Shanghai Motors, to allow the latter to purchase Ssangyong Motors at an excessively cheap price, take the core technology and renege on the promise to make investments. The South Korean government should thoroughly investigate into and take firm legal action against Shanghai Motors; impose taxes on earnings gained; and hold foreign capital and major shareholders accountable before demanding that workers and employees bear the burden. The South Korean government must agree to the Union demands of immediately withdrawing layoffs and police operation; writing off the 51% share of Shanghai Motors that is under receivership; and immediately initiating talks with the Union to come up with alternative revival plans including bail out.

We stand in solidarity with you in your fight for justice and in defence of labour rights. We extend solidarity to your call for a General Strike and sit-in protest on 22-24 July against police repression of labour rights and retrogressive revisions of labour laws and the National Workers' Rally in Pyeongtaek on 25 July.

About 350 permanent and contract workers of Bosch Chassis Systems (India) who are members of the Bosch Chassis System Kamghar Sangathana have begun an indefinite strike at the Pune plant from early July demanding a regularization of contract workers under the Contract Labour Act. NTUI issued a statement on 27 July supporting the workers of Bosch Chassis System India Ltd. and KBX Motorbike Products Pvt. Ltd., and the Bosch Chassis Kamgar Sanghatana

NTUI hails the courage and bravery of comrades of Bosch Chassis System India Ltd., KBX Motorbike Products Pvt. Ltd., and the Bosch Chassis Kamgar Sanghatana, in

standing against the suppression of your human rights, democratic and labour rights by the managements of Bosch Chassis System India Ltd. and KBX Motorbike Products Pvt. Ltd. The continuing victimisation, verbal abuse, intimidation and harassment of workers and Union leaders by company managers is deplorable and a violation of your labour and human rights.

It is clear that the management of Bosch Chassis System India Ltd. is violating not only the Indian law but also the *Basic principles of social responsibility at Bosch*, an international framework agreement signed in 2004 between Robert Bosch GmbH, Europa Committee of the Bosch Group and the International Metalworkers' Federation.

We condemn the violation by management of the settlement signed with the Union on 3 November 2007 and the unfair suspensions on false charges on 14 June 2009, of the General Secretary of the Bosch Chassis Kamgar Sanghatana (BCKS), Comrade P. M. Thakare. Not only are these acts violations of the Industrial Disputes Act 1947 and the Trade Union Act 1926, but also a violation of clause 6 of the international framework agreement where the Bosch Group states, "Associates will neither receive undue advantage nor suffer any disadvantage as a result of their membership in trade unions."

In clause 7 of the international agreement, the Bosch Group states that "We observe the provisions of ILO Convention no. 100 with respect to the principle of "equal remuneration for work of equal value." Therefore, it is incorrect for Mr. Sonar, General Manager of IR at Bosch Chassis Systems India Ltd. to threaten and abuse Union leaders for demanding that the contract workers employed alongside permanent workers at the Bosch and KBX plants be paid the same wages as per the settlement dated 3 November 2007. Mr. Sonar has also shown his ignorance of the law by arguing that the Union can not raise issues relating to contract workers as these workers are not members of the Union.

In clause 11 of the international framework agreement, it was agreed that these principles would be implemented throughout the Bosch Group by "the senior management of the respective divisions, regional subsidiaries and company locations." Thus, the management of Bosch Chassis System India Ltd. should be held responsible for violating 45% of the clauses of this international framework agreement.

The agreement further states that "Complaints regarding possible breaches of the above principles will be investigated; any action required will be discussed and implemented by the senior management and associate representatives responsible." Victimisation of workers and office bearers of the Union for writing regarding breaches of these principles, to Mr. Peter Delhey, Chairman of the Bosch Group, on 11 March 2009 is a clear violation of this international framework agreement.

We also condemn the practice of forced labour imposed upon the contract workers at KBX Motorbike Products Pvt. Ltd. and

the refusal of the management to talk or negotiate with the Union for the last two years.

Managements of both companies, Bosch Chassis India Ltd. and KBX Motorbike Products Pvt. Ltd. must be held accountable for violating the workers' labour rights, human rights and democratic rights.

We hail the unity of all workers (trainees, contract and permanent workers), who have been united in their protest and are sitting outside the Bosch Chassis factory since 17 July 2009. We stand in solidarity with you in your fight for justice and in defence of labour rights.

A meeting was subsequently organised by the Bosch Chassis System Kamghar Sangathana that was attended by Comrades D Thankappan, N Vasudevan, Franklin D Souza and Uday Mahale.

NEWS UPDATES

Economic Survey Released on 2 July: The Economic Survey 2008-09 presented to the Parliament attributes the resilience of the Indian economy to a large domestic market, the resilient banking system and a policy of gradual liberalisation of capital account. According to the Survey the major concern at this stage is the sharp dip in the growth of private consumption that could be attributed to one to the uncertainty in the labour market and decline in employment.

The Survey goes on to note that there are early signs of recovery in the global economy manifested in rising stock prices and increasing price of commodities. It however, acknowledges that it is debatable whether rising prices are an indication of recovery or a result of position taken by financial investors seeking to benefit from global recovery expectations. The Survey however expressed concern over the existence of hunger and widespread malnutrition despite mounting public food stocks.

The Survey points out that despite the slowdown in growth, investment remained relatively buoyant growing at a rate higher than at the rate of the GDP.

Reflecting on the high oil and other energy prices, the Survey notes that as long as domestic prices remained below the cost of imports, demand would continue to grow, accentuating the negative impact of the terms of trade effect on national income. Referring to the volatility of global oil prices, the Survey noted that the fall could be a temporary respite and provide an opportunity to reform the pricing and control system.

The Survey notes that while there are indications that the economy may have weathered the worst of the downturn, the situation warrants close watch on various economic indicators including the impact of the economic stimulus and developments taking place in the international economy.

Taking policy measures that squarely address the short and long term challenges would achieve tangible progress and ensure that the outlook for the economy remains firmly positive.

Ministry of Labour invites comments on Payment of Wages (Nomination) Rules, 2009. Last date to send in comments is 29 September 2009.

Supreme Courts rules against protection of employment under Section 25 F of ID Act: A bench of Justices Tarun Chatterjee and R M Lodha ruled that the protection offered under Section 25-F of the Industrial Dispute Act, which forbids sacking without notice an employee who completed 240 days of continued service will not apply in cases where the worker had worked in two separate establishments under the same management.

Minimum Wages to Agricultural Labourers in select States and UTs

Appropriate Governments	Minimum Wages for Unskilled Agricultural Workers (in Rs. per day)
Central Sphere	127.00 - 142.00
Andhra Pradesh	112.00
Arunachal Pradesh	80.00
Assam	81.31
Bihar	97.00
Chhattisgarh	72.23
Goa	110.00
Gujarat	100.00
Haryana	147.69
Himachal Pradesh	110.00
Jammu & Kashmir	66.00
Jharkhand	92.00
Karnataka	107.92
Kerala	72.00 (for light work) 125.00 (for hard work)
Madhya Pradesh	105.23
Maharashtra	72.00 (Zone – I) 70.00 (Zone - II) 68.00 (Zone – III) 66.00 (Zone – IV)
Manipur	72.40
Meghalaya	70.00
Mizoram	103.00
Nagaland	80.00
Orissa	90.00
Punjab	133.11 (Without meal) 117.59 (With meal)
Rajasthan	100.00
Tamil Nadu	80.00
Tripura	85.00
Uttar Pradesh	100.00
Uttarakhand	100.00
West Bengal	80.98
Chandigarh	143.90
Delhi	151.00
Puducherry	80.00 (for 6 hours)

Rashtriya Swasthya Bima Yojana has been extended to all BPL families in the unorganised sector from the year 2009-10 to be covered over five years:

The premium under RSBY is shared between Central Government and State Governments in the ratio of 75:25 and in case of States of North East Region and Jammu and Kashmir, the sharing of premium is in the ratio of 90:10. An amount of Rs. 250 crore and Rs. 350 crore has been allocated during the financial year 2008-09 and 2009-10 respectively for release of Centre share of premium.

Unemployment allowance paid under NREGA in 7 States:

As per reports available from the State Governments, unemployment allowance has been paid by Government of Madhya Pradesh, Orissa, Karnataka, West Bengal, Kerala, Tripura and Jharkhand. Details of the unemployment allowance paid by these States are as under:

S. No.	State	Details of the Unemployment Allowance
1	Madhya Pradesh	During 2006-07, In Badwani district, 1574 applicants were paid a sum of Rs. 4,75,386 as unemployment allowance*
2	Orissa	A total of 543 job seekers have been paid Rs. 1, 03,462 as unemployment allowance in three districts viz. Nawarangpur, Kalahandi and Bolangir.
3	Karnataka	679 applicants have been paid Rs. 1,68,068 as unemployment allowance in 8 Gram Panchayats of Raichur district.
4.	West Bengal	Eight job card holders in South 24-Parganas district of the State have been paid 14 days unemployment allowance each in 2007-08.*
5.	Kerala	An amount of Rs. 1063 was sanctioned to a job seeker as unemployment allowance for 32 days during the year 2006-07 in Wayanad district.
6.	Tripura	51 registered job seekers were paid unemployment allowance during the year 2008-09.
7.	Jharkhand	78 workers of Jerua & Kope villages in Latehar district were paid Rs. 138330.00 as unemployment allowance.

* Following prolonged struggle by Jagrit Adivasi Dalit Sangathana in Badwani and PBKMS in West Bengal