

# Nationalwide General Strike on 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> March

## **Response from Working Class and Support from Farmers, Students, Youth & Women**

A Two days General Strike decision was taken in a convention held on November 11. Actually it was scheduled on 23&24th, February. Due to Covid conditions it was postponed to 28th & 29th March. The call was given by Central Trade Unions and Independent Sectoral Federations and Associations.

The main demands are scrapping of 4 Labour Codes, support for the demands of Samyukth Kisan Morcha, no Privatisation in any form, scrapping of National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP), Regularisation of Contract Workers, equal pay for equal work, a minimum salary of Rs. 26,000 per month. Save India and Save People is the Central Slogan of the call.

**AIFTU(N)** supported the strike call and took active part in the strike call. It participated in the Propaganda Campaign jointly and separately.

On 28<sup>th</sup> huge rallies were conducted all over India and on 29<sup>th</sup> protesting workers formed human chains before the Central Government Offices. In AP Trade Unions added the demands of withdrawal of Privatisation of Vizag Steel Plant and cancelling the decision made by AP govt. to lease the AP Genco run Thermal Plant to Adani group in Nellore District.

The participation crossed 20 crores facing all odds, ESMA, intimidation, and obstructions of all kinds including the high handedness of police in some cases and high court order in Kerala prohibiting strike for BPCL and Govt. employees.

The workers and employees in Banks, Insurance Companies did not enter their work places anywhere in India. The Coal, Vizag Steel, Oil and LPG plants, Power grid, Copper, Telecom Sector, Cement Sector Workers struck work in a big way from the morning of 28th March. Electricity Workers went on strike in all the states, including in Maharashtra, where the Government had invoked ESMA. The port workers at Tuticorin and Paradip also struck work. The Kerala State unions began strike action from midnight of 27-28 March itself. The Employees of Railways and Defence sector are reported to have organized militant demonstrations at more than one thousand places across the country. The Anganwadi, ASHA, Mid-day Meal and Domestic Workers, Construction, Beedi and Agricultural Workers, Hawkers-vendors joined the strike and participated in

protest actions in several hundreds of spots in Chakka jam, road roko, rail roko programmes in various parts of the country. The Road Transport workers in Haryana began their strike by picketing at Depots from early morning of 28th March, also in defiance of ESMA and continued on 29th. Private sector industrial units including many MNCs witnessed massive strike action on both the days in Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Haryana. Hydel power projects also witnessed massive strike in Assam, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Jammu & Kashmir.

There is bandh like situation in the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Puducherry, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Tripura, Assam, Haryana, Jharkhand and also in many Districts in other States. The strike is substantial in the industrial areas in the States of Goa, Karnataka, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Bihar, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Meghalaya and Arunachal Pradesh. The Security Workers even in Sikkim have gone on strike. The Industrial areas of Delhi, HP, Gujarat, J&K, are reported strike. 50,000 Government employees picketed Central Government Offices in 300 places in Tamil Nadu. Central Govt. employees in postal dept., Income Tax audit, GSI and others too have joined the strike in massive way. Even fisherman did not go for fishing in the morning.

The farmers have mobilized in rural areas as per the decision to the Samyukt Kisan Morcha, in favour of the strike action, pressing for their six demands, along with the support to workers' demands. The farmers and agricultural workers also participated along with striking workers in organizing road-blockade including many national highways and rail-blockade actively.

The protesters were addressed by those leading the strikers and the protesters. They alleged that the national resources and the national assets including infrastructure, all has been put on sale by BJP led govt., at Centre for the benefits of the Corporates of Indian and foreign brand. The working class, which creates national wealth, is being made defenseless with draconian changes in labour laws, weakening their trade unions, taking away their right to strike, doing away with factory inspections, and so on. The voice of workers will be stifled. They expressed their worries that the unemployment level has reached 12 percent and the youth below 25 years of age are the majority among the unemployed as per govt's own statistics. The prices of petrol, diesel and gas are once again rising after elections in five states. National Monetisation Pipeline Project is being pushed through to hand over all infrastructure PSUs virtually free to private corporates. Emboldened by the results of election in five states the policy of selling out of land of the Central Pubic Sector enterprises has been rolled out, the interest rate on the provident fund of workers has been brought down from 8.5 to

8.1 percent, the Privatisation of Banks is being talked about vigorously, selling of substantial portion of LIC funds, the talks of report of Supreme Court Committee on farm laws is being in the air.

The unionists recognised that the demand of time is to strengthen the workers-peasants unity to put up vigorous struggle against tyrant regime at Centre which has not only failed the nation but is also letting loose the vicious divisive agenda in detriment to the core values of Indian constitution and harmonious living of Indian people with diverse religious beliefs, cultures, languages.