

Organ of Federation of Medical And Sales Representatives' Associations of India

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Uncompromising on rights

Wage settlement in Johnson & Johnson



The 9th settlement in Johnson & Johnson between the

management of Johnson & Johnson and the consultative committee of FMRAI, has been signed on 15th of October 2019, at Mumbai. On the day of signing the settlement, Mr. Rachit Garg, Business unit head, Ms. Cecilia Azavedo, Head Human Resources, Mr. Sharon Thomas, Human Resource Leader, Mr. Tridib Adhikari, General sales Manager, Mass Market, Mr. Parminder Singh Ghuman, Head of Employee & Labour Relations-India representing Management and Saumitra Mukherjee, H. Sriram, D. Anandkumar, Krishna Kumer Jha, V. G. Godse, Rakesh Sharma, P. Krishnanand representing FMRAI, were present. The previous

settlement expired on 30th June, 2017 and the present settlement will now remain in effect for three and half years between 1st July, 2017 and 31st December 2020 and covers 126 field workers (MSR), who are presently in bargainable category. This settlement has been arrived at after prolonged discussions, spanning two years, between FMRAI and the management of Johnson & Johnson. This settlement supersedes all previous settlements. This settlement is especially important in view of advancement in terms of protection of rights by attracting corresponding gains. The

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15-16th September, 2019, New Delhi,

FMRAI organized Trade union workshop

Involving functionaries of the state units and those of FMRAI, a Trade union workshop was organized on 15-16th September, 2019 at B.T.R. Bhawan, New Delhi with a view to meet the increasing requirement of the theoretical and practical aspects of movement and organization for fighting out the challenging situation posed by economic liberalization and more aggressive assault of the employers.

There were altogether 93 participants including all those who came from different State Unit and the secretariat of FMRAI.

First session of this Trade union workshop was conducted by Swadesh Dev Roy, Secretary, CITU, who took occasion to recollect the glorious experiences of the working class movement and its remarkable success worldwide. The first working class state, with workers at the helm of the affairs of the state, was constituted by the unrelenting activism of the workers and by pulling to pieces the Tsarist autocracy and by uniting the whole mass of the oppressed people, who were hitherto divided in the line of religion, ethnicity and language and who were spread over an enormous landscape of erstwhile USSR, he explained. He reminded that the leadership role of the working class only made such radical change, namely, the Russian revolution, possible.

K. Sunil Kumar, Secretary, FMRAI dealt on the subject of use of various existing laws, including the SPE Act, in the perspective of protecting the individual field workers and the advancing the collective struggle in the field



workers' movement. He also dealt upon the certain quasi-judicial matter like domestic enquiry. He also explained some means in combatting the situations where the management circumvent the laws and victimize field workers. Finally Tapan Sen, General Secretary, CITU discussed the current social, political and economic and situation of the country. The tremendous attack by the ruling class on the workers and the common people of the country has to be halted with successful intervention by the working class. Working class must have to lead the army of oppressed masses, he asserted. This task can be advanced through building a militant and massive organisation in tune with the Kozikhode document of CITU on organisation. He called upon the field workers of the country to play their valuable role as organizers of organizations and movement, not only within their own establishment, but also beyond that.

A bitter battle fought united by the Trade unions

Workers archive over Rs.15000 per month as minimum wage in Delhi

The Delhi government, i.e., issued gazette notification, on 22nd October, 2019, applicable in the national capital territory of Delhi, and increased minimum wages by around 37% following the Supreme Court's recent order. The minimum wage in Delhi reached a new height through a bitter and long-drawn battle, legal and other wise, by the united forces of the workers in Delhi which was led by the collective strength of all trade unions including CITU.

This notification of new minimum wage give entitlement of minimum wage of Rs.14 842 per month by the unskilled workers, Rs.16341 per

month by the semi-skilled workers, Rs.17991 by the skilled workers, Rs 19572 by graduate (and above) skilled workers (as enlisted in schedule of employment by Delhi govt.). Besides, all the categories of workers will also be entitled for dearness allowances (linking AICPI) as compensation against price rise. A starting wage below this will be unlawful.

On 3rd March 2017, Delhi government issued notification and increased the minimum wages per month from Rs 9,724 to Rs 13350 a month for unskilled workers, from Rs 10764 to Rs 14698 for

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Albert David Zonal Convention in east Zonal Conventions witness massive participation

Eastern Zonal convention of Albert David All India Council was held on 13th October 2019 at Niranjana Mukherjee Bhawan, Kolkata. The Zonal convention's session commenced with the formation of the presidium. Swapan kr. Dey, Ajay Kumar and. Amrita Chatterjee presided over the convention. Tributes were paid to all the martyrs who laid down their lives for working class struggle.

The report for the convention was placed by Goutam Modak, Zonal Convener, East. State conveners from WBMSRU, BSSRU, OSRU and CRU participated in the discussion on this report and made their contribution. General members of FMRAI from different states, who are also the part of the

Albert David All India Council, also participated in the discussion. Ajay Kumar (Jt. AIC) and R. N. Tiwari (Negotiating Committee Member) addressed the session discussed on the present situation of the company, on council organization and enumerated the impending task. Sanjay Sen, Working Committee Member, FMRAI, greeted the participants of the convention, elaborated the present context and decried the anti labour policies of the management in different companies. He appealed to members to keep guard in view of incessant attacks of the legal, trade union and collective bargaining rights of the field workers. Pranab Kumar Ray, Secretary, FMRAI

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Gurudas Dasgupta

Deeply saddened FMRAI mourns his death

Veteran leader of the trade union movement of the country Gurudas Dasgupta passed away on 31st October, 2019 following a prolonged illness. He was 84. He is survived by his wife and daughter in the family and his comrades in the trade union movement.

He led the All India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), as its general secretary, for more than a decade. AITUC was the first central trade union that came in to existence just one hundred years back, on 31st October, 1919. Co-incidentally, he died



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OSH code to standing committee for review

Code on Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions (OSH code) has been referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee for Labour. OSH code bill was introduced in the Lok Sabha by the central labour minister Santosh Gangwar in July, 2019. OSH code attempts to do away with 13 labour laws including the SPE act to make a heterogeneous and unfair mixture causing serious harm to different section of workers

covered under these existing laws.

The Biju Janata Dal MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, is the chairman of this standing committee. This Standing Committee met on 25th October, 2019 and will further meet on 11th November, 2019. The 25th October meeting was attended by Standing Committee members including E. Kareem,

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Editorial

Raw liberalization calls for mighty mass action

Days are hard and works are harder and there have been hardly any wage increase for long time, argues the worker. The worker asks for an increase in wages. In liberal economy, the employer speaks strait, drops all ambiguity, and set a condition for wage revision: give more productivity and there will be increase in your salary.

In pharmaceutical and other employers in sales promotion industry, great majority of employers link wage with productivity, salary with sales. They proudly announce, bring more ‘sales’ and take home more salary. You need not to be a Harvard-going economist to realize that an increase in salary, by way of yearly increment, or otherwise, is essential and it is not worth being conditional, in any situation. A static salary is incapable of facing every coming day as the same items of consumption are costlier the next day, the age of a worker advances and his or her responsibilities, liabilities and need increases. For survival alone, for being able to give labour the next day, for efficient discharge of duties the next day, wage rise is essential. Logically, a static salary is a bad thing, and it is only a few notches up than the unpaid work.

Most of the field workers, denied of collective bargain right, are unable to strike a bargain individually, and depend in good faith upon the rational behavior of the employers for a substantial wage increase. When mainstream economists glorifies the profit motive as the engine of the nation’s progress, the employers in India takes pride in profit motive, and are not ashamed of their departure from rationality. In recent time, especially, in the euphoric new irresponsible air of liberalization, some of the employers who have hitherto signed several wage agreements consisting of pay scale (corresponding to service seniority) and price neutralization element , wants to make ‘productivity issue’ as part of wage agreement . FMRAI, however, rejects such an offer.

Does more productivity bring home more wages? Do the employers voluntarily increase wages proportionate to rise in productivity? Here in India, where large number unemployed men and women are waiting for employment and are ready at any terms and any condition, more productivity does not bring more wages. The real-life employment picture in our country shows, steady rise in productivity does not trigger proportionate rise in wages. On the contrary, the gap between productivity and wage, becomes wider and wider over the years.

‘Labour productivity in organized manufacturing increased by six times over the past three decades but wages increased by only 1.5 times. One might expect that as labour productivity grows, wages will grow in tandem. In neither the organized nor the unorganized sector is this, the case. The divergence is stark in the organized sector. Labour productivity is over six times what it was in 1982, but production workers’ real wages have grown by only about 1.5 times ... Even the growth of managerial and supervisory salaries is much slower than productivity growth. As a result of this, the labour share of income in organized manufacturing has collapsed to around 10 per cent’ (Page20, State of Working India, 2018, The Centre for Sustainable Employment, Azim Premji University)

Labour share of income has declined. The said report further states (page 18), **‘but 82 per cent of male and 92 per cent of female workers earn less than ?10,000 a month. Between 2010 and 2015, wages, adjusted for inflation, grew at 2 per cent per annum for organized manufacturing, 4 per cent for unorganized manufacturing, 5 per cent for unorganized services, and 7 per cent for agriculture (for the last, growth has collapsed since 2015). Since 2000, real wages have grown at around 3-4 per cent in most sectors, with the exception of agriculture’**. The report further concludes that **‘at this rate real wages double every two decades’**. Most obviously, prices rise at a rate faster than the rate of wage increase.

The Oxfam India wage report (March 2019) states that the wages, for all workers in India, have increased in the period between 1993-94 and 2011-12 the tune of 3.7% (urban 3.2%, rural 4%). The sales promotion industry is abound with examples where sales have been doubled, tripled or quadrupled, ‘productivity’ increased substantially , but it has not attracted any corresponding increase in salary.

The minimum wage (for group D employees), as recommended by the Seventh Central Pay Commission, is Rs.18000 per month. But up to 18.7 % Regular-wage-earning Workers, 38.5% of Contract Workers and 59.3 % of Casual Workers earns Rs. 5000 or less, per month. Another 19.5 % Regular-wage-earning Workers, 27.9% of Contract Workers and 25% of Casual Workers earns some amount between Rs. 5001 and Rs. 7500, per month. These are 2015-16 figures that have been mentioned in the said report(State of Working India) have been quoted from the Labour Bureau’s Employment- Unemployment Survey. Home-based garment workers(of whom 95.5% are women and 99.35 are Muslims or scheduled caste) in Uttar Pradesh , who give ‘finishing touches’ (embroidery, tasseling, fringing, beadwork, and buttons) on the garments meant to be exported to Europe and USA, earn a wage as low as 15 Paisa (Rs.0.15) per hour (this actually is not wage, but unlawful forced labour) (**Tainted garments, Siddharth Kara**, Blum Center for Developing Economies, University of California, Berkeley, January 2019)

Jean Dreze, in his book ‘Sense and Solidarity’(Oxford university press, 2017, page 28), quoted an old person in Odisha, who lamented over the crisis that has befallen upon the common people, ‘In the old days, a single woman’s work was enough to feed the family; now, even if the whole family works, we go hungry.’ This lamentation exposes a truth bigger than the Global Hunger Index or GDP or consumption data brings before us.

What was a truth in Kalahandi, Bolangir or Koraput in 1999, has now become a truth across the country. The whole family works and still the people go hungry. Workers, especially those who are far away from the union, work for hours together and day together, but they do not earn a remunerative or decent wage.

Such extreme exploitation of workers, underpaid work, forced labour, jobless growth , along with rapid growth of unemployment, reduction in subsidies, especially food subsidy (which amounts to be some sort of ‘income’ of the poor, in kind), now takes its revenge on the whole of Indian economy in the form of economic slowdown. Not only that the cars or the biscuits are not selling, many of the articles are not selling. Common people, the workers and peasants, are now bereft of purchasing power. Even the mainstream economic journals and newspapers, who instinctively side with the employers, now start blaming low wage (of workers) and unemployment for economic slowdown. All sensible economists identify declining real income of the workers and the farmers as the main reason of economic slowdown. Abhijit Vinayak Banerjee, who won Nobel prize in economics this year, commented that more income in the hands of the poor, not in the hands of the rich people, can only make a remedy for the ailing Indian economy in the current time.

But the government and the employers are in a denial mode. The government and the employers are working as a united body. The nationalism, or the majoritarian politics, which has assumed office after last Lok Sabha election, keeps no place for workers and peasants. Making free from old wives’ tale of welfare economics, the government is now obsessed with the task of bringing ‘ease of doing businesses’ at any cost. Labour laws are being abrogated, changed, twisted to enable employers to deny just wages, to deny social security, and to execute ‘hire and fire’ and to exploit the workers to their last rags.

In this background only, organizing the workers, as a whole integrated mass, uniting all section of workers on the basis of common issues and common goal, have been essential. And it is encouraging to note that for quite some time working class in India has started sharing a common platform, and now all section of workers are responding in tandem and, thereby, acting as a formidable force as a class. Since independence, the employers, the ruling classes and their parties, kept the working class in India quite divided. -Now, in the face of most virulent attacks on the workers by neoliberal bandits, occasion has come, once again, which has awakened all sections of workers, especially organized sections among the workers. Now, the reformist unions too are forced by the situation to raise a voice of protest. The reformist unions too are pushed to the wall and they too have started thinking about organizing some sort of movement lest the workers may abandon such unions. Now, the situation is ripe enough for united mass action, and class action, by the workers, not just as a part of a singular union but as part of the whole mass of working population. Therefore the forthcoming All India strike on 8th January, 2020 has been called and supported by, not just some major trade unions, but by majority of trade unions and Federations and will be supported by all sections of workers, across the board, across the spectrum of political ideas and opinions. This phenomenon imparts formidable strength to the workers and, indications are clear that this strike will be an unprecedented one. The success of this strike shall have, to the least, threefold impact; it will further spur the working class movement and people’s movement, allow the government and employers to get a message and further it will allow working class to gather confidence for more intervention in days to come. Time has come when resistance to attacks will be a reality. Field workers’ movement, and its organization, FMRAI, will not stay idle at this historic hour. FMRAI, with all its state units and subunits, are befittingly prepared to participate in this massive mass and class action.

Obituary



Abhay Singh
field worker of Indchemie based at Jaunpur, Uttar Pradesh and a member of UPMSRA passed

away on 12th October, 2019 following a road accident. FMRAI deeply condoles his death and expresses heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. Standing beside in the time of inconsolable grief, Jaunpur Unit of UPMSRA handed over Rs. 180,000 to his family.

Anil Mishra



based at the headquarter of Mirzapur, Uttar Pradesh, employed as a sales promotion employee in Abbott India and a member of UPMSRA, succumbed to death on 10th October, 2019 after a road accident. FMRAI condoles his death and expresses heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. Standing beside in the time of grief, Mirzapur Unit handed over Rs. 90,000 to his family.

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Gurudas Dasgupta

on 31st October, the same day Gurudas Dasgupta played important role in broadening the common united platform of trade unions and played very essential role in the struggle against neoliberal onslaught on the workers. In different times, Gurudas Dasgupta was elected as member of both the Houses of the Parliament, the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha. Across two and half decades, he raised questions, asked for clarification, made deliberation, held aggressive debate and brought to the notice of the parliament, the nation and the government the burning issues of the workers and that of the common people. In spite of their own different political affiliations, both the ruling and opposition parties, admitted his brilliant role in the parliament as an outstanding parliamentarian. He was also a veteran leader of communist party of India. Deeply saddened, FMRAI mourns his death.

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OSH code

National Secretary and Kerala State General Secretary of CITU, K. Subbarayan, State President of AITUC, Tamilnadu state and M Shanmugam of DMK. As per media report(Hindustan Times, Oct18, 2019), the standing committee will publish ‘advertisements and invite all stakeholders for their views’ in coming days. Government intended to pass this bill in the winter session of parliament (to start from mid-November, 2019), as labour reform and marginalization of workers at a faster pace have been promised to the employers. Following reference to Parliamentary Standing Committee for Labour this design of the government is most likely fail. The reference to the parliamentary standing committee gives workers and their trade unions a fresh opportunity to contest the code through parliamentary means. Coming down to streets across the country in 8th January All India Strike the working class will challenge this code once again through extra-parliamentary means as well.

Fight for legal right
Workshop of MSMRA

MSMRA organized a workshop on legal rights of the workers at BTR Bhavan at Mumbai, on 13th October, 2019. In view of rapid labour reforms initiated by the present central government, protection of existing legal rights, as ensure through scores of laws of the land including the SPE act, has become an essential front of struggle in recent time. When the ongoing labour reforms attempts to make exploitation easier and denial of rights further smooth, functionaries at different level of the organization require keeping abreast of the situation especially with the very clear objective of building up effective resistance.

This is a follow up programme at state level following the Delhi Workshop which was organized by FMRAI on 15th, 16th September, 2019. The entire workshop of MSMRA was conducted by Swami Vishwerwar, President, MSMRA through power point presentations. There was a special session exclusively discussing on the demands of the forthcoming All India General Strike on 8th January, 2020.

Evil attempts of repealing SPE act and replacing it through one contentions OSH code, has made the protection of SPE act a very important agenda in the field workers’ movement in the current time. This part, dealing with SPE act and rules therein, was presented in the workshop by K.B. Kadam, Joint General Secretary, FMRAI. The workshop was guided by D.M. Deshpande, WCM, FMRAI. The role and responsibilities of the members of MSMRA in making the forthcoming 8th-January-General-Strike a resounding success across all units in MSMRA, was elaborately discussed by Shrikant Phopse, General Secretary, MSMRA.

Sixty eight members participated in the workshop. Similar Workshop was organized at Nagpur unit of MSMRA in presence of D.M. Deshpande on 19th October, 2019 at CITU Bhavan, Nagpur, where around 150 members were present. More Workshops are likely to be conducted in the sub units in coming days.

British Biologicals Field workers went on mass casual Leave in Telangana

At the call of TMSRU, British Biologicals field workers across Telangana availed mass Casual Leave on 30th and 31st October, 2019 protesting anti-labour practices, high-handed action, intensified harassment, denial of redress of the grievances and transfer of D Prashanth Goud from Hyderabad to Bengaluru. The struggling field workers demanded of, implementation of SPE Act, making end to illegal deduction of expenses, timely confirmation, complete cessation of the practice of arbitrary denial of leaves.

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Johnson & Johnson

legally tenable draft protecting FMRAI's position on the question of creation of a new sales office category (Associate District Manager, ADM) by the management has been incorporated in this Memorandum of settlement. Thus, in the background of labour dispute raised by FMRAI on the question of newly created ADM category, the present settlement keeps unhurt the right and privilege of the union (FMRAI) and the management has agreed to remain respectful of the outcome of the judicial process in this matter. This settlement embodies an example where the field workers of Johnson & Johnson upheld the principled stand of FMRAI and fought a bitter battle and finally, realized durable gains without surrendering their basic rights

The average increase in this wage settlement is Rs. 6300. The minimum and the maximum benefit (including terminal benefits) stands at Rs. 3678 and Rs.15887, respectively. The starting point (the entry point) in the pay scale recorded a rise of Rs. 500 which is the highest as compared to the last 8 settlements. This revised pay scale (basic), with substantial increase, now ranges between Rs. 3850 and Rs. 23650, depending on year of service.. There has been upward revision in Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA, price-rise neutralization rate) with Rs.0.25 per point increase up to 15yrs of service slab and Rs. 0.30 per point increase in 15 yrs. & above slab. In the last settlement there was no increase in V.D.A. This increase will offer very significant benefits to the field workers in future. Besides, increase in Fixed Dearness Allowance amount there have been substantial increases in all non-wages components including the daily allowances.

This is the first time all the M.S.R will get L.T.A & Medical Allowance and such benefits will be available to all from the date of joining. In the last 8 settlement M.S.R used to get such benefits only after completion of probationary period . There have been upward revisions (slab wise) in H.R.A, Educational Allowance, Daily Allowances, Conference Allowances, Metro City Allowances, Hill Station Allowances & Business Communication Allowances.

In the background of this settlement FMRAI warmly greets all field workers of Johnson & Johnson for their uncompromising and unrelenting struggle on the question of rights, which finally, and robustly too, brings home resultant gains.

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RMSRU

movement of Rajasthan and the coming challenges. CITU State President, Ravindra Shukla, inaugurated the Conference & briefed the delegates regarding the latest amalgamation and codification of Labour Laws & it's impact on the workers and the working class movement in India . Dr Vijay Sardana, Principal, Kota Medical College and one of the leading neuro-physician in Rajasthan also greeted the delegates as Special Guest and expressed Solidarity with the cause of the field workers. He also sung a patriotic song on this occasion. Dr J K Arora one of the leading Medical practitioner of Kota (who is also involved in number of charitable activities) also greeted the conference. Dr. M L Agrawal Ex HOD of Neuro-Psychiatry Dept in MBS Hospital and the 2 times winner of Sir R C Hunter international award for work of Community service, also greeted the delegates . Kota IMA President Dr S. Sanyal greeted the delegates & appreciated role of RMSRU as a fighting organization . Laxman Nainani leading pharmaceutical whole seller of Rajasthan and the Treasurer of Kota Chemist Association was present in the Conference as Co-Chairperson of the Reception Committee . He expressed Solidarity and extended outright support to RMSRU . Dooli Chand Borda, Vice President of All India Kisan Sabha also greeted the

conference and emphasized upon the need of broader unity involving the working class , the peasants , the youth and the Students with a view to fight out the atrocities of the present Central Government and its anti-people policies . Organizing Secretary & Vice President of RMSRU Rakesh Galav greeted the delegates described the sincere efforts made by Kota Unit members in making the Conference historic in terms of the publicity and hospitality, especially, staying arrangements , food and conference hall . Galav specifically thanked the donors and the Medical fraternity for making the 25th Conference successful . He also thanked the print & electronic media people for exclusive coverage of the Silver Jubilee Conference which was the talk of the town among the Medical Fraternity & the common masses . Members of Reception Committee, Uma Shanker, Kota CITU's General Secretary , Padam Patodi, District Secretary of AIBEA , Irshad Khan, Zonal Treasurer of West Central Railway Employees Union , M S Walia, Secretary All India Northern Zone Insurance Employees Association , Nagendra Kumawat, District Convenor, Janwadi Lekhak Sangh , Pushpa Khinchi, District Convenor,AIDWA and Ravindra Singh, Patron of Kota Building Workers Union also greeted the delegates . All guests & reception

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Minimum wage in Delhi

semi-skilled workers and from Rs 11830 to Rs 16182 for skilled workers. This minimum wage notification was challenged in the Delhi High Court by 44 Employers' Associations. The Delhi High Court ruling on 4th August, 2018 turned down the wage hike notification by Delhi government . CITU and other trade unions in Delhi appealed to Supreme Court against this High Court ruling and fought the case united. The objections raised by the employers' associations were rejected by the Supreme Court on 14th October, 2019 and cleared the wage hike. The SC bench comprising Justices UU Lalit and Aniruddha Bose upheld the minimum wage computation method as unanimously agreed upon in15th Indian Labour Conference in 1957 (which was attended by Employers' organization, Trade unions and the Government) and as subsequently improved upon by the Supreme Court Judgment in the Raptakos Brett case in 1992. This 15th Indian Labour Conference's method consists of counting of cost of food, clothing, housing, fuel, lighting and other miscellaneous expenses. Supreme Court in its 1992 order added in this computation method the cost of children's education, medical treatment, recreation, festivals. Following this method the 7th Pay Commission, computed minimum wage and finalized it to be Rs 18,000 per month, (Rs 692 a day) as on 2016. The Supreme Court's order on 14th October,

2019 upheld this computation method. Previously, Supreme Court directed the Delhi Government to reconstitute the minimum wage advisory board, hold its meeting, finalize the draft of minimum wage notification and submit such draft before the Supreme Court. Delhi government reconstituted the minimum wage advisory board, held its meeting, finalized the draft of minimum wage notification and submitted the draft before the Supreme Court for approval. In its order, the Supreme Court had said: "We allow the petitioner state (Delhi government) to take the draft notification to the logical conclusion and direct that till said notification comes into effect, the relationship shall be governed by and in terms of the notification dated March 3, 2017, as directed in the order of October 31, 2018. Once the notification is issued, the appropriate legal consequence and sequitur shall follow." Here it is not out of place to mention that union cabinet in a meeting decided a minimum wage and Mr. Santosh Kumar Gangwar, union labour minister, declared this (National Floor Level) Minimum Wage of Rs 178 per day (monthly Rs 4,628 taking 26 days for a month) in July, 2019, which all states should mandatorily follow. In fact, no state in India has minimum wage as low as this (except Nagaland). This is the 'new starvation-level wage' which the labour minister proudly announced. Even the Central labour

ministry's own Expert Committee made recommended (after curtailing food costs, and reducing the minimum calorie intake norm from existing 2,700 to new 2,400 Kcal, for the workers and deleting other essential costs by inventing a new arbitrary method of calculation of minimum wage with a view to arrive at a lower quantum of minimum wage) of Rs. 375 to Rs. 447 per day (or Rs. 9,750 to Rs. 11,622 per month) as the National Minimum Wage.

It is also pertinent to note that the Supreme Court , through its various judicial pronouncements, has played an important role in shaping the minimum wage policy in India. Significant cases in this respect include the Crown Aluminum Works v. their Workmen (1958), Kamani Mehta and Alloys v. the Workmen (1967) and People's Union for Democratic Rights v. the Union of India (1982). In these cases, the SC ruled that the concept of minimum wages, which are determined by applying the principle of the subsistence minimum to ensure the sustenance of workers, is a worker's legal right. The SC further pronounced that no industry has a right to exist unless it is able to pay its workmen at least a bare minimum wage (Crown Aluminum Works v. their Workmen, 1958), and that employment at wages below the minimum wage is forced labour (People's Union for Democratic Rights v. Union of India, 1982). In this background only this achievement of the workers and their trade unions in Delhi is extremely important.

RMSRU . 30 working committee members were also elected from 17 units . FMRAI Joint General Secretary & President Sanjeev Khandelwal gave vote of thanks . Newly elected President Rakesh Galav addressed the delegates and made his concluding remarks.

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Albert David Zonal Convention

and Convener, All India Council Subcommittee, made deliberation and detailed situation of the industries, the challenges and the struggles ahead.. He also discussed various company wise developments, the aggression of the management and the valiant struggles of the field workers led by different All India Councils and the All India, State and sub unit Council Subcommittee. A resolution, as was adopted unanimously in three other Zonal conventions, was also adopted here. The Eastern Zonal Convention of Albert David Council , like three other conventions, recorded a massive success. Eighty five out of one hundred and fifteen members in the entire zone, including those from the farthest corner of the North Eastern States , attended this convention. The convention concluded with a vote for thanks by Com. Swapan kr. Dey. He appealed to all for standing together, standing united and to stand prepared for future struggle.

SFIL : Interim Agreement on VDA Signed

A Memorandum of Interim Agreement on Variable Dearness Allowance (VDA) was signed on 22 October, 2019 between the management of Sun Pharmaceuticals Industries Limited (SPIL) and the Progressive Committee, formerly known as Central Grievance Committee (CGC) comprising of the sales promotion employees of erstwhile Ranbaxy. The agreement is effective from 1st April, 2018 and will be paid on Adhoc basis linked to AICPI based on the calculation of the settlement dated 23 December, 2013. The agreement will be binding on both the parties till the final disposal of the case of COD pending in the Industrial Tribunal of Mumbai. It may be recalled that management of SPIL froze VDA and a case was filed in Industrial Court of Mumbai. The order of the Industrial Court was in favour of the union but the same was challenged in the High Court of Mumbai by the management which is still pending for disposal. Meanwhile, management agreed to revive VDA as per the order of the Industrial Tribunal dated 10 August, 2018 till the final disposal of the case on COD pending in the Industrial Tribunal in Mumbai. It is agreed upon that all cases related to VDA will be withdrawn by both the parties. This agreement will provide relief to the sales promotion employees of SPIL (Ranbaxy) by around Rs. 5000 per month and to be revised on quarterly basis as per AICPI Index. The payment of arrears will commence along with the salary of November, 2019. The Interim Agreement was signed on behalf of the management by J.B. Shah, Sanjay Sabarwal, R. Sridharan, S. Darwekar, P. Nair and R. Chavan. On behalf of The Progressive Committee Sanjeev Khandelwal, V. Vasudevan, Vivek Sawant, Ranjit Ujwal, K. Jayakrishnan and Sisir Saha signed the agreement. The sales promotion employees are in the path of relentless struggle to regain their legitimate rights related to their service and working conditions.

Not just brick and mortar

New union office, new building in Erode

A new union office in Erode unit of TNMSRA becomes functional from 11th October, 2019, in a newly constructed building that has been built jointly by TNMSRA and Transport Workers Union in heart of the Erode City. The building was inaugurated on 11th October, 2019 only and A. Soundararajan, State President, CITU, opened the new building. The ground floor of the building will consist of the TNMSRA office, the office of the Transport workers Union and that of CITU, Erode District. The first floor has been earmarked for giving free teaching facilities to the poor students and the children of the distressed workers. A meeting involving large number of members and family members of TNMSRA and Transport Workers Union was organized on the occasion of inauguration of the building. What is mentionable that the building was built with not just brick and mortar but also with the cementing unity of two fraternal trade unions.



Protest day across Odisha

OSRU up in arms over denial to workplace

Field workers once again came down to street in cities and towns, across the state of Odisha on 1st October, 2019, protesting against the brazen denial of their legitimate right to workplace by some administrative authorities at the instance of the state government. Odisha Sales Representatives' Union, OSRU, decided to organize All Odisha Protest Day on 29th September, 2019 instant and within 24 hours all District Committees and Base Committees throughout Odisha mobilized large number of field workers, both members and non-members, organized the protest day programmes. In the district town field workers, under the leadership of respective units, took out huge rallies, travelled the main streets of the city and then held demonstration in front of the office of the District Collectors. Memoranda, addressed to the Chief Minister, were submitted the District Collector and deputation team everywhere met the authorities and briefed them once again that the field workers enter the hospitals, medical institutions and clinics, not as trespassers, not vested interest, but to promote modern medicine and they enter rightfully as law-abiding citizens. Even if every entry of an individual field worker to a hospital or medical institution is backed by three Indian laws (SPE act, Magic remedies act, drugs and cosmetics act) Police came, picked-up innocent field workers and detained them in unjust manner and created a gory example of unlawful acts of the law-enforcing authorities. Incident took place on 25th September, 2019 in Capital Hospital, Bhubaneswar. When OSRU convened a lightning protest action, field workers came down to streets in massive number, spontaneously. Field workers across Odisha went on one day's strike across the state on 9th September, 2019, at the call of OSRU, where there were several state related demands including the demand of the protection of the right to workplace. OSRU will organize further agitational programmes and the field workers of Odisha are up in arms in defense of their right to workplace.

TNMSRA GCM in Dindigul



General Council Meeting(GCM) of TNMSRA was held on 5th and 6th October, 2019 at Dindigul. The open session was inaugurated by Ms. K. Balbarathi, Ex M.L.A, CPI (M) on 5th October, 2019. K. R. Ganesan, State Secretariat Member, CITU, Dr. Ramalingam and Dr.Veeramani from IMA made welcome address. The session was addressed by leaders of different fraternal organisations including BSNLEU, AIDWA and Transport workers union. R. Singaravelu, State Vice President, CITU, appealed to all the participants for making the forthcoming General Strike on 8th January, 2020 a grand success.

Following the open session, the delegate session of the General Council Meeting commenced with placement of respective reports by the General Secretary C. Prabhakar Devadoss and the Treasurer R. Venkatesan. Twenty Eight General Council members participated in the discussion on the reports., The GCM held a special session on 'change in labour laws and its implications' in the evening hours of 5th October, 2019. R. Ramsehsundar, President, FMRAI stressed upon the need for a strong united resistance in defense of existing laws and the consequent rights.

The report of the General Secretary and the Treasurers', with correction and incorporation made by the delegates, were adopted unanimously in the GCM

The GCM also adopted resolutions, unanimously, pledging active and involved support to the 8th-January-all-India-General-Strike, decrying privatization of PSUs, denouncing outrageous violation of rights in Wallace and SPIL, demanding Zero GST on medicines, reiterating the State-related demands and also opposing the change in labour laws. 159 General Council Members attended. P.S. Sekhar Reddy, Vice-President, FMRAI addressed the GCM and emphasized on the need of effective implementation of all agitational programmes of FMRAI and that of broad and democratic movements shoulder to shoulder with other fraternal unions and organizations.

The General Council meeting concluded with an inspiring note with pledges, resolves and optimism.

Silver jubilee conference of RMSRU held at Kota

25th State Conference of RMSRU was successfully held at Kota on 12th & 13th October, 2019 at Mohammad Amen Nagar. The Conference started with Flag Hosting by RMSRU President Sanjeev Khandelwal. It was followed by flower-tributes to martyrs column in memory of departed Leaders of Working Class & FMRAI. At the beginning of Inaugural session Chairman of the Reception Committee, Mukesh Galav, who is also the Joint General Secretary of All India Railway-men's Federation, welcomed the delegates to the conference hosted in the city of Kota, the biggest study centre in India. He expressed happiness over the decision of State Committee of RMSRU to hold the Silver Jubilee Conference at Kota. Mukesh Galav briefed the delegates regarding the current national and international socio-economic scenario in the background of Labour movement. RMSRU President Sanjeev Khandelwal delivered his presidential address and expressed happiness over the way the field workers' movement and organization has progressed both qualitatively and quantitatively, over these years. He also discussed the role of RMSRU in the labour

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