

Fieldworkers exhibit massive protest at National Capital



More than 6000 sales promotion employees (fieldworkers) staged dharna at Jantar Mantar, New Delhi on 21st November, 2022 at the call of FMRAI. They had converged from all states to the national capital in pursuance of their pending demands to the central government which included framing and notification of Statutory Working Rules as decided in the Industrial tripartite committee meeting of 8th August, 2017, Protection of The Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Service) Act, 1976 and the rules thereunder the only law providing legal immunity to these section of workers through scrapping of the four Labour codes and sending advisory to the employers to stop mass scale victimizations of the Sales Promotion Employees in violation of the laws of the land. These workers are facing massive retrenchment due to inhuman and unfair approach of their employers since the scrapping of the labour laws and in absence of any statutory working rules. Since the outbreak of pandemic, the situation has worsened further. Rampant mass retrenchment and steady degradation of their service conditions are taking its toll on the life and livelihood.

Job protection and fight against the victimization of the Sales Promotion Employees are the defining movements of FMRAI from its inception, but in the present situation it has assumed an alarming situation due to the policies of the central government. In these circumstances, the workers

braving various odds had converged to New Delhi for organising a procession and marching to the Shram Sakti Bhawan to stage a dharna, but the in

leadership met the the senior police officials and then only the dharna was allowed only in the barricaded area at Jantar Mantar. The workers



Tapan Sen, General Secretary, CITU addressing

famous police administration at the national capital lived up to their habit of cubing any democratic movement by not granting the permission at the last moment. A deputation team from our

had started arriving from the previous day from distant parts of the country and in the early hours on the rally day from the neighbouring states. All these workers thronged to Jantar To page 2 ►

Wage settlement signed in AstraZeneca

Memorandum of Settlement on wage between Negotiating Committee of Federation of Medical & Sales Representatives' Associations of India (FMRAI) representing the sales promotion employees referred as PSRs and M/ S AstraZeneca Pharma India Limited has been signed on 3rd November, 2022 at Bengaluru after negotiation on the Charter of Demands submitted by FMRAI on 30th April, 2022. The settlement is effective from 1st January 2022 and will continue till 31st December 2024.



The bilateralism in AstraZeneca has been maintained for the last 11 settlements ensuring rights and legitimate gains of the sales promotion employees in the company. This settlement has nine grades with basic pay ranging from Rs. 8000/- in Grade 1 and Rs.31,600/- in Grade 9. There has been upward revision in fixed dearness allowances and variable dearness allowances. In this settlement Slab 1 and 2 has been merged in Slab 1 in House Rent Allowance (HRA) and Leave Travel Allowance (LTA) component where the tenure of To page 2 ►

Breakthrough for Sales Promotion Employees of Other Industries in West Bengal

After relentless persuasions by WBMSRU, notification has been issued by the Labour Department, Government of West Bengal, on 22nd November, 2022 for scheduling 10 industries Other Than Pharmaceuticals, whose names have been incorporated in "The Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions of Services), 1976", in the year 2011, for fixation of Minimum Wages as per Minimum Wages Act, 1948. WBMSRU delegation has already met with the respective labour department and handed over one representative name of each industry. As informed, soon a meeting will be convened by the Minimum Wage cell of the Labour Commissioner office, for further progress in this regard.

Diamond Jubilee celebration unfurling FMRAI Logo



FMRAI was formed in 1963 and has a history of valiant struggle, organization expansions and also many achievements. In 2023 the FMRAI GCM will be held in Guwahati. The Logo for the next FMRAI GCM was unfurled by General Secretary Santanu Chatterjee and President Ramesh Sundar, during the FMRAI working committee meeting held in Delhi on 19th November, 2022. It is designed by the CRU state unit. This logo was unanimously appreciated and accepted by all working committee members. This will be used not only for the next GCM to be hosted by CRU but also will be used throughout the year as a symbol of 60 years completion of FMRAI. This logo itself described the 60 years of relentless struggle creating examples of sacrifice and upholding of the organisation for protection of job and workers' rights. FMRAI has also continuously pursued the medicine related issues for the common people from the day of inception. During those remarkable moments of unfurling the logo, the General Secretary stated that in 1963 FMRAI was formed, so the organisation will be celebrating the Diamond Jubilee in 2023. He announced several programmes throughout the year across the country involving every member of the organization and reaching out to all other sales promotion employees highlighting the glorious history of FMRAI.

Expose the ploy behind sales force digitalization

The pharmaceutical industry in India is one of the largest today in the entire world. With an annual turnover of almost 300,000 crore and a strong ability to regularly supply not only to the domestic consumer but also to other countries have made India one of the strongest exporters of medicines of the world. Since the independence of India the domestic companies have really contested well with the MNCs and have not only produced world class medicines but have been able to reach almost all corners of the country to a plethora of Doctors. Almost all categories of doctors, whether they practice in private chambers or in Institutions are exposed to all kinds of medicines that are produced or imported in India. This has been made possible by roughly estimated more than 2.5 lakhs strong Sales force employed by the pharma companies who reach to all corners of the country to speak about the medicines and their usefulness in various forms of diseases to the Doctors. As per prevailing laws, it is only the Medical Representatives (any nomenclature doing the work of sales promotion) who are authorised for carrying out the promotional activities of the pharma companies in India to disseminate product information, handling any objections related to the product and alleviating any fear or apprehension regarding new molecules to the medical fraternity. This robust networking with the doctors was the foundation for a healthy relationship between the pharma industry and the medical fraternity built on the trust and faith posed on the industry by the doctors. It is with hard labour of the sales promotion employees in the pharma sector that companies built their empires. The ingenuity and disciplined communications of the trained sales force was an inalienable part of the business generation model of the pharma companies all along. Today this organic relationship existing in the industry is being challenged through devices. In fact the first challenge in the field force based communication was done by CIPLA in the early nineties when the company attempted to change the promotional methods of medicines in India through courier based marketing. That was a complete failure and the company returned back to face to face (FF) based promotion within no time. In the early twenties once again the pharma promotion was under experimentation when SPEs were handed over gadgets like laptops to detail to the doctors instead the conventional visual aids. These gadgets were also shunned because of inconveniences. The advent of modern digital gadgets like iPad, tabs, mobile phones added with rapid development and wide spread usage of internet has enabled the employers to bring newer and newer ideas in the realm of promotional practices to the medical fraternity. The timings of detailing to the doctors are recorded real time, the sequence of the products detailed are also controlled and time spent in the doctors chambers for detailing each product is also recorded. If there is deviation from the specified time and sequence of detailing, explanation letters are being issued to the SPEs. It is no doubt that the realities of the workplaces, the mood and priorities of the doctors and other related problems are thus completely ignored in such straight jacketed format of sales promotion activity based on gadgets. The internet enabled sales promotional work has also totally changed the way work is reported by the SPEs. The employers are now opting for call-to-call reporting and thereby putting the SPEs within the net of piecemeal working. Surveillance

Wage settlement....

► *From page 1* service remained same. Increase of Rs.300 per month in House Rent Allowance to all confirmed PSRs working with 1 to 5 years of service. After completion of 31 years and above there is increase of Rs. 900/- HRA and LTA slab will enhance to next higher level as per Years of Service. This settlement has given the benefit of Rs. 5406/- in average with effective from January, 2022. There are upward revision in Kit, Conveyance and Promotional Material Allowances. All confirmed PSRs will be paid medical allowance once in a year and the same will be paid in the month of October every year. PSRs working 1 to 10 years of service will get 2400/- more as compared to last settlement and this benefit remained same in all four slabs. Basic

of the work through geo coordinates has also been introduced by many companies. All these things are being done totally unilaterally without any discussion with the SPEs and without taking any feedback from them. Naturally the violation of applicable laws is an important area emerging repeatedly in many companies. A gadget under surveillance is not only under scanner of the management, the chamber of the Doctors is also exposed when such a gadget is used for detailing. These gadgets are full with such applications that can violate the privacy of a Doctors chamber in the most illegal way. In most of the cases the Doctors themselves are completely unaware about such practices deployed by the company. The SPEs are now expected to report through the same detailing device either while working or after working through unilaterally designed software programmes by the management. The options in most formats are fixed; the field workers have no right to alter or change the options depending on the outcome of his work experience. It goes without saying the options are designed as per the wishes of the management and not according to real work done. For example, in most of the companies there is no option of reporting strike which is a constitutional right of the worker. Furthermore, in many cases the agreed formats and options in the reporting site is changed without any knowledge of the SPE. All these are clear violations of law which the employers are continuously undertaking in the name of technological advancements and bringing in blind IT-isation in the profession of Sales Promotion. All these so-called tech drives are not taking place without a reason. These arbitrary introductions are principally done taking advantage of the complete absence of any lawful working rule for the sales Promotion Employees. Sometimes data collection and forecasting through gadgets are also being asked to be done which is a total departure from the established nature of work of this section of employees. The employers are also settling for a new role of the pharma SPEs that is going hand in hand with the digital agenda. Especially after the COVID pandemic, instead of Medical Detailers who perform the job of Sales promotion for the companies, the new role being designed is that of counsellor, a consulting peer for the Health Care Practitioners. Therefore, the attempt is to transform the job of a Medical representative from a worker who does operational jobs to an “enabler”, who will be solely responsible for meeting all the business objectives. This nefarious ploy has to be understood properly by all of us. All the legal, Trade Union and collective bargaining rights of the field worker is based on the premise that he is a workman. The sales promotion employees under banner of FMRAI have struggled very hard for decades to realise their lawful place in the society. The legal rights are inviolable part of the SPEs journey of struggles to establish their rights in different companies. By transforming them from a workman to an “enabler” or a facilitator is to rob him off their rights. The gadgets and affiliated digital activities are tools in this transformation. It is this agenda of the employers we need to understand and act accordingly. Therefore, proper assessment of the mindless digital manoeuvres by the management is crucial to comprehend the fallouts, which is further necessary to launch suitable movements in this context. This is not only essential to protect our rights, but a befitting step to protect the profession.

pay, Personal Pay, FDA and VDA will attract the benefits of PF, Bonus and Gratuity. There has been upward revision in the rates of daily allowance with increase of Rs.10 in head quarter allowance, ex-head quarter allowance and out station allowance in the year 2022 and it will be Rs. 370, Rs. 400 and Rs. 780 respectively in the year 2024. All other existing facilities to be continued as per previous settlement. Memorandum of understanding also arrived on 3rd November, 2022 between AstraZeneca Pharma India Ltd. and the Field consultative Committee (FCC) of FMRAI on Standard Fare Reimbursement. All towns/market up to 200 kms will be reimbursed @ Rs. 5.25/- per Kilometre of travel irrespective of mode of travel/transport with effect from 1.4.2022. This is the result of unity under the banner of FMRAI.

Massive protest at national capital...

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Mantar, from 10 am. The dharna started from 11 AM and continued till 3 PM. Fieldworkers raised massive slogans with banners and placards in support of their demands. The mass meeting was presided by R. Ramesh Sundar, FMRAI President. Sheshnath Tiwari, FMRAI Secretary and Convener of the Labour Related Movement Sub Committee in the beginning elaborated on the demands. Partha Rakshit, Treasurer FMRAI, addressed the Rally and said that FMRAI Memorandum was submitted at the Central Labour Minister’s Office. He also informed that the Government officials have assured that on 28 November 2022, FMRAI leadership will be called to Labour Ministry Office for discussion on the demands of FMRAI. The Rally was addressed by all the State General Secretaries of the state units of FMRAI. Tapan Sen, General Secretary, CITU, JS Majumdar Vice President of CITU and Amitava Guha Secretary CITU greeted the gathering. The present anti-worker, anti-farmer, anti-people, pro-corporate Central Government has brought four Labour Codes viz. Code on Wages; Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code; Code on Industrial Relations and Code on Social Security, repealing the majority of the labour laws. Major concern of FMRAI is that through the OSH Code, the Sales Promotion Employees Act, 1976 has been repealed and the umbrella of protection of six labour laws shall consequentially be lapsed for the sales promotion employees. So for protecting the achieved rights the demand to Central Government for roll back of the new Labour Codes is in the interest of the working class in general and the Sales Promotion Employees in particular. In the pre and post pandemic situation conventional work of sales promotion has been attempted to be changed through mindless digitalisation. The management of every company has taken various punitive actions and tried to snatch trade union, legal and bargaining rights of the fieldworkers. The sales promotion employees are held solely responsible for sales outcome of the company. Series of mass victimization of the Sales Promotion Employees by the employers is witnessed across the country. Victimization in various forms are being protested by the Sales Promotion Employees organized under the banner of FMRAI throughout the country. In pursuance of statutory working rules the members of FMRAI observed countrywide strike on 19th January, 2022. On 19th July, 2022, the mass victimizations in the form of mass retrenchments were protested by observing “Anti-Victimization Day” throughout the country. In the month of November before Delhi Rally all state units organised several programmes to campaign amongst the general members and common people in the farthest corner of the country with regard to the Labour related demands. Starting from special general body meetings at state level to subunit level meetings were organised. Press

conferences were held in some states. DSMRO and other state units pasted posters at eminent places in their areas. Street corners were also arranged in the subunits alongwith regional language leaflet campaign in market places. Digital flyer campaign was conducted through the platforms of social media. One week prior to Delhi Rally badges were adorned by a large section of members to popularize the demands. The relentless activities of the members of DSMRO from welcoming the participants to making all necessary arrangements for smooth and successful conduction of such a massive programme was highly noted. This Central Government has been ignoring the demands of the Sales Promotion Employees though during the discussion in the Industrial Tripartite Committee meeting the framing of statutory working rules was agreed by the representatives from the industry and labour department. But since then the Central Government is tight lipped and turning deaf ears to the demands and ignoring the outcome of the tripartite meeting. The working rules for the SPEs need to be formed in the pattern of the Model Standing Order under the Industrial Employment (Standing Orders) Act and Central Rules. The central government will have to listen or the movement for lawful working rules for the Sales Promotion Employees will only be intensified in future. When the people were under lockdown fighting for their lives and livelihood during the height of Covid-19 pandemic; Modi government hurriedly passed Labour Codes and made those into laws after Presidential assent on 28 November, 2020. Labour Codes are to end the labour laws and labour rights. Labour Codes are to erase the glorious history of labour movement in the country and several past struggles and sacrifices by the trade unions in pre and post Independent India. Bhagat Singh and Batukeshwar Dutt threw bomb in Central Legislative Assembly to oppose the hated Trade Disputes Act 1928, which declared strike as illegal. Facing huge united opposition by workers there is delay in implementation of the four Labour Codes. There is no rest till the pro corporate Labour Codes are repealed ending attempt of corporate takeover of workers’ constitutional rights. In the follow up meeting scheduled on 28 November, 2022, a three member delegation from our federation met the deputed officials of the Labour department at New Delhi and discussed at length on our demands. On mass victimisation the department assured to send advisory to the respective state governments where the employers have their head offices with copy to the erring employers. On issue of Protecting SPE Act and framing statutory working rules the officials remained non-committal, but after rigorous persuasion with relevant documents assured to continue discussions in the presence of Labour Minister.

Jeep Jatha organized by TMSRU

As a part of nationwide campaign on medicine related issue, an innovative Jeep Jatha was organized by Telengana Medical and Sales Representative Union(TMSRU) in the month of September’2022. The Jeep, decorated with banners and flags of the organization, travelled to several areas and halted at important junctions and squares, where campaign leaflets were distributed. Local people and commuters gathered around the Jeep to listen to the various just demands, briefed by the leading functionaries of different sub units.

Spontaneous reactions of people was observed while signature collection on the memorandum addressed to the PM. More than hundred signatures were collected from each sub units within a very short span of time. Six subunits of TMSRU namely Hyderabad, Kukatpally, Karimnagar, Khammam, Nizamabad and Secundrabad organized this successful and innovative Jatha campaign. A special song with the demands mentioned in the lyrics was recorded for this particular occasion and played all along during the campaign.

Obituary

Suryakanta Rout, age 29 years and **Deepak Kumar Roul**, age 23 years, working as a sales promotion employee in Alembic based at Angul and Cuttak head quarter respectively died on 26th November, 2022 due to major road accident while doing their work. Doctors tried their level best to provide all the possible support but due to severe injuries all the efforts failed. This untimely demise of both the fieldworkers are extremely painful. A large number of OSRU members from Angul as well as Cuttack have met the available managers of Alembic and demanded for adequate compensations. FMRAI expresses deepest condolences to the bereaved family members.

Working Committee Meeting decides for year long Diamond Jubilee celebration

The second Working Committee Meeting of FMRAI in the year 2022 was held on 19th and 20th November, 2022 at H.K.S. Surjeet Bhaban, New Delhi. The meeting discussed and reviewed the programmes implemented since the last Working Committee Meeting held at Kolkata in the month of June, 2022 and discussed on future programmes to be implemented during the Diamond Jubilee year of FMRAI during 2023. A written note was placed by General Secretary, FMRAI on behalf of Working Committee. The meeting was attended by 19 Secretariat members and 69 working committee members and started with placement of condolence resolution and observing one minute silence in memory of the departed. The meeting was presided by a presidium consisting of FMRAI President and Vice Presidents. In his initial deliberation R. Ramesh Sundar, President, FMRAI welcomed all the working committee members and highlighted the international and national situation specifically pointing out the shortcomings of the capitalist system in providing relief to the present economic and health crisis which is affecting the working class. Since the working committee meeting held at Kolkata in the month of June, 2022, members of FMRAI participated in the National Convention of workers-peasants-agricultural held at Talkotra Stadium at New Delhi on 5 September, 2022 at the call of CITU, AIKS, AIAWU, on the 4th anniversary of historic Majdoor Kisan Sangharsh Rally. The meeting called for mobilization of FMRAI members to participate in 'Majdoor Sangharsh Rally 2.0 during 2023 Budget Session of Parliament. The date of this rally has been fixed on 5th April, 2023. The working committee members placed their opinion and it was summed up that the participation of our members in the united democratic movement

have consistently increased and the momentum should be maintained in subunits to resist the anti-worker policies adopted by the Central Government. General Secretary, Santanu Chatterjee, placed the note prepared on different agenda and programmes. Primarily, the implementation of programmes during this period against victimizations happening in the industry was assessed. It was reported that The Anti-Victimization Day programme was implemented successfully in almost all subunits which was attended by large section of members protesting mass retrenchments by the employers in different companies. It was also reported that after the successful implementation of Anti Victimization Day on 19th July, 2022, demonstrative programmes were held in number of companies. The decision of the previous Working Committee Meeting held at Kolkata to organize massive protest programme at Delhi in the area of Policy Related movements was campaigned throughout the country by organizing GB meetings, conventions, street corners, rallies etc. The specific demands to the labour ministry and implementation of the mass memorandum submission were assessed and it was decided to intensify the campaign programme in subunits. The meeting discussed about the massive mobilization of members from all parts of the country in the central agitation and dharna programme at Delhi on 21st November, 2022 and decided to continue the agitation in the state capitals and subunits with more participation of members during entire 2023. FMRAI has been pursuing with the central government on two matters - labour related demands and medicine related demands. The meeting also noted the implementation of jatha programmes by the state units on medicine related

demands of FMRAI. The National Convention on Pharma Marketing and its impact on People was well campaigned and successfully organized. It was discussed in the meeting that the medicine related Jatha, Convention, Rally, distributions of leaflets; signature collections on medicine related demands are well appreciated by the common people and it was decided that subsequent to the National Convention, similar campaigns on reduction in prices of medicines and medical devices, removal of GST from essential medicines, revival of public sector pharmaceutical units for production of quality medicines at affordable prices, universal access to free healthcare, increasing budgetary allocation to 5% of GDP should be conducted periodically by all sub units throughout the year by involving all sections of the people. On the part of organization it was critically assessed that there is a sense of disconnect amongst the members developed due to restrictions imposed due to covid. In the year of 2023, the Diamond Jubilee of FMRAI shall be celebrated with greater emphasis on organization and implementation of programmes at all subunits by sensitizing all members to participate in the programmes. It was planned to organize massive agitation, rallies at Kolkata, Bengaluru, Delhi and Mumbai during 2023 demanding enforcement of law and to stop victimizations. The General Council Meeting of FMRAI will be held at Guwahati during 8-10 February, 2023. The logo of the General Council Meeting was inaugurated which depicts 60 years of relentless struggle by the members of FMRAI and the General Council Meeting in Diamond Jubilee Year shall reinforce the legacy to expand and intensify the struggle further. The working committee noted the dilution of existing labour laws through introduction of

labour codes and consequent repealing of SPE Act 1976 have provoked the employers for resorting to rampant job cuts (terminations). Several incidences of mass terminations and different forms of victimizations has been observed in the industry in recent past in Himalaya, Zydus, Sanofi, Novartis. MSD, GSK, TTK, Pfizer, Albert David, AFD, Biological E and in other companies. The All India Councils and council sub committees at subunits are organizing programmes which needs to be further strengthened. The precarious working condition of the sales promotion employees working in Other Industries and in small scale sector companies were reported in the working committee meeting. As per discussion in few states, movements of the other industries and small scale are conducted on a regular basis e.g. WBMSRU, KMSRA and APMSRU. Urgent programmes have been discussed by the Working Committee for mobilisation. Similarly, the task of mobilizing Women field workers continues to be concentrated in few states only, which must be broadened to all state units by identification and interaction with these section of most oppressed and discriminated workers at the grass root level in the field. The publication of FMRAI News in the current year has been regular, as in the past. The printed copies were sent on time by post. In addition the soft copies have been circulated to the working committee members and the state units. The meeting also discussed on the report on funds and expenses by the Treasurer and approved the proposals. The meeting ended with a resolute determination of the Working committee members to sensitize and reach the mass of the workers for taking forward the struggles and expanding the organization to newer heights in Diamond Jubilee year.

Abbott Healthcare - field workers in protest action

All sections of sales promotion employees registered a thundering protest against the unjust and illegal actions of Abbott Healthcare management. The management of Restora, a division of Abbott Healthcare, on the eve of the biggest festival in West Bengal, Durga Puja, has nefariously terminated Pinaki Singha, a sales promotion employee of Asansol HQ, under the guise of despotically designed Performance Enhancement Program (PEP), flouting all the set norms of natural justice and statues. When this message broke out, all the sales promotion employees of Abbott Healthcare in the state of West Bengal, erupted in protest and decided to demonstrate

united resentment. Under the tutelage of WBMSRU, 264 SPEs spread over different divisions, on 10th October 2022 at 10 am, sent SMS to the culprit management of Abbott Healthcare demanding immediate reinstatement of Pinaki Singha. FMRAI communicated to Abbott Healthcare management through a Demand Letter on 21st October 22 for intensified industrial action if management doesn't refrain from executing their evil plans and withdrawing termination of Pinaki Singha of Restora Division, D. Arivazhagan of Diabetic Maximus Division, transfer of Madhab Wadje of General Medicine and Lenin. S of Respicare Division. In absence of any reciprocation from the management, on

24th November 2022, the entire sales promotion employees of the country, across divisions, sent SMS to the HR Director Head urging to ensure normalcy, no victimization and to convene grievance committee meeting to resolve all pending issues. On 28th November 2022, large number of Sales Promotion Employees of different divisions from across the country, demonstrated their resentment to the management by wearing demand badges during field work on the demands of Restoring normalcy in Respicare division, early grievance committee meeting and to initiate process of discussion for all section of Sales promotion Employees.

Capacity building workshop in West Bengal on Right to Health

The People's Relief Committee popularly known as PRC is celebrating is 80 years foundation (1943-2022) of dedicated relief work with focus on health services for the economically weaker sections of the society. As a part of this celebration and commemorating the memory of noted health activist Dr Amit Sengupta a workshop was organized by People's Relief Committee in collaboration with Paschim Banga Vigyan Manch (PBVM), All India Peoples Science Network (AIPSN) and other likeminded organizations working in the field of health and medicines from 25th to 27th November 2022, at Iran Society Hall, Kolkata. A group of eminent doctors and health activists from different spheres of society discussed on

various aspects of healthcare system in our country. All the speakers pointed out to the inequity of the health services for the ailing people of the country. The workshop also viewed that there is no such Health Policy in our country to serve the lower economic section of the society, rather state and central governments are both promoting privatization and corporatization of healthcare System and encouraging insurance based healthcare system deviating from fundamental demand "Health for all" policy. It was highlighted that gender inequality in healthcare system is a major concern. Dr Fuad Halim General Secretary, PRC, made a detailed deliberation on understanding and elaborating the concepts of Health. He also mentioned about the various health

camps being conducted by the celebration committee. FMRAI General Secretary Santanu Chatterjee was invited to speak in the workshop on Access to Medicines: Domestic Policies and consequences. During his deliberation, he explained about the wide spread of activities of FMRAI in pursuance of accessibility of medicine and highlighted how the policy of the Union Government is supporting to escalate the price of all medicines, including lifesaving drugs. He emphasized on the demands of FMRAI including 0% GST on all medicines, revival of medicine and vaccine manufacturing public sector units and also making UCPMP statutory. Two members from WBMSRU, Niloy Banerjee and Dipanjan Dey took active part in this workshop.

16th GCM of WBMSRU

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placement of general secretary and treasurer's report by Basab Roy Chowdhury and Tinka Maji. A presidium consisting of Sanjay Sen, Arpita Mitra Roy, Pratish Bhowmik, Shyamal Majumder, Ranadip Chowdhury and Kaushik Banerjee conducted the proceedings. Next day on 5th November, 2022, the session started with deliberation of Sumahan Chakraborty, state Secretary, CITU. Sumahan Chakraborty, highlighted the situation of working class in the state and the country both of which are passing through an absolute authoritarian rule and praised the role of WBMSRU members for their contribution in the fight against this authoritarian regime. Four commissions were formed to discuss on special note on organization, council related movement, policy related and other movements. After thread bare discussion in the commissions, four speakers, two from organization and one each from council and policy related commissions placed the recommendations and suggestions. 34 speakers from the subunits of WBMSRU discussed on the report placed by general secretary and treasurer. Also two delegates from other industry and women sub committees discussed on the report and placed their recommendations. Eight resolutions- on Fund, Rest house, Minimum Wage, membership, statutory working rules, labour law changes, current political situation and against victimizations were moved in this GCM which were unanimously adopted. Santanu Chatterjee, General Secretary, FMRAI deliberated at length on 6th November, 2022 on company-wise developments, movement on policy issues and the need to build robust organization at sub units to carry out all the programmes with mobilization of maximum members. The report of general secretary and treasurer were unanimously adopted. 263 General Council members from 20 subunits of WBMSRU participated in the General Council Meeting. The meeting concluded with felicitations and the oath to implement all the programmes at subunits in the days to come with a new height of membership in 2022.

National Convention on pharma marketing practices and its impact on people

Medicine related policies adopted by the government and the pharma industry and how it affected the common people has been one very important issue raised repeatedly by FMRAI since its inception. One disturbing phenomenon that is rampantly on the rise, is the various illegal and unfair practices adopted by the pharmaceutical companies for generation of prescription inter alia business. The "Pay-for-Prescription" model has been criticized everywhere including media, social groups and also by various sections within the Government and Medical fraternity. FMRAI has been raising its voice against this menace for a long time, but without any avail. In the year 2021, FMRAI filed a writ petition in the Supreme court to bring the UCPMP, a voluntary code to control the unethical promotion of medicines by the companies, under the purview of statute. Recently, the Government also filed their response on the issue to the Apex court denying the necessity for a law in this area. The Government also formed a High Powered Committee in October, 2022 to look into the matter. In the meantime various reports continued to appear in the media on the issue somewhat distorting and sometimes fabricating the main purpose of the principle position of FMRAI on the issue of unethical marketing practices prevailing in the industry. In the above background, FMRAI organized a National Convention on "Pharma marketing



National convention at NCUI auditorium, Delhi

practices and its Impact on People" at NSUI Convention Centre, New Delhi on the 20th of November, 2022. R. Ramesh Sundar, President FMRAI and moderator of the Convention, spoke at length on the role historically played by FMRAI in bringing forward issues of medicines, policies and its impact on the people of the country. While placing the Declaration of the Convention from

FMRAI, Santanu Mitra, Secretary and Convener of Medicine related movements of the Federation also pointed out that on the issues of taxation, pricing and health care allocations by the central government, FMRAI has conducted nationwide Jathas, signature collections, state level conventions and submission of memorandum to authorities this year. Unfortunately there is no

response from the Government till date. Various speakers of eminence, spoke in the convention supporting the declaration at length and also raising the necessity to convert the voluntary UCPMP into law. Dr. Sanjay Nagral, eminent Surgeon and editorial Board member of Indian journal of Medical Ethics, Sanjay Parikh, Eminent Lawyer of the Supreme Court of India, T.J. Rajalakshmi-Senior editor of the Frontline, Amitava Guha Secretary Jana SwasthyaAviyaan and former Joint general secretary of FMRAI. Dr Dinesh Abrol from the Delhi Science Forum also participated in the convention. Rajib Singhal General Secretary, AIOCD could not attend the convention but sent his greetings through a video message which was displayed in the convention. In the concluding speech, Santanu Chatterjee, General Secretary, FMRAI spoke at length on the importance FMRAI is putting movementally on the issues impacting people's health in India. He also emphasized that the prevention of unethical marketing practices of the Industry has to be in the forefront of government policies in the country and FMRAI is duty bound to carry the issue forward till its logical conclusion. More than 600 members of FMRAI filled the auditorium to the brink from all corners of India. FMRAI conveyed greetings its members, the state unit leadership and the eminent speakers to make the convention a huge success.

16th General Council Meeting of WBMSRU



Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, President, AILU addressing in the open session

16th General Council Meeting of WBMSRU was held during 4th - 6th November, 2022 at Bolpur town of Birbhum district, which is known for its rich cultural heritage inherited from "Biswakabi" Rabindranath Tagore. In recent past Bolpur was always in the headlines of media due to political news. It was indeed a brave decision by the leadership of WBMSRU to hold its 16th General Council Meeting at Bolpur which saw hundreds of red flags after a long time. The General Council meeting started with a big colorful procession organized by the members of WBMSRU which started from Rail Maidan and went through different thoroughfares of Bolpur Town and gathered at Utsav Hotel, the venue for the GCM. The big procession was the talk of the town for next few days as it brought a fresh ray of hope and relief from the panic stricken atmosphere surrounded by greed and corruption. This feeling was eminent for the next couple of days as people from various sections of the town welcomed the delegates coming to attend the GCM. The venue of GCM was named as Atanu Roy, Somnath Samadder Manch and S. R. Laskar and Tarun

Majumder Nagar. On 4th November after culmination of the rally, the open session was held at the auditorium inaugurated by Dr. Pradip Ganguly, Chairman of the Reception Committee. Advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya, president of All India Lawyer's Union (AILU) was the chief speaker in the open session. Advocate Bikash Ranjan Bhattacharya placed a brief but crisped oration on the necessity of struggle against inequality and fight for social justice, economical injustice and adherence to constitutional provisions. Santanu Mitra, secretary FMRAI made his deliberation on the movements of FMRAI on medicine related demands and the movement against mass victimizations happening in the industry due to unholy nexus of the corporate and Central Government. Basab Roy Chowdhury, General Secretary, WBMSRU deliberated on the movement of WBMSRU on the various programmes of the organization and greeted the people of Bolpur who have lend their support in organizing the GCM. After conclusion of the open session on 4th November, 2022, the delegate session commenced with **To page 3 ►**

6th All India Conference of Dey's Field Workers' Council



6th All India Conference of Dey's Field Workers' Council under the banner of FMRAI was held at Moulali Yuba Kendra, Kolkata on 13th and 14th November, 2022. The triennial conference was last held at Hyderabad on 2018. Schedule next meeting which was supposed to be held on 2021 could not be organized due to Covid 19 and subsequent restriction from the Government authority. This time the conference march was named after Goutam Chowdhury and Nagar was dedicated to Goutam Ghosh, for their enormous contribution towards the formation of Dey's All India Council and till their last service day. The two days conference started with hosting of the FMRAI flag of by Sailendra Sharma, All India Convener of Dey's and floral tributes were paid by all the dignitaries in the martyr's colour. The meeting was inaugurated by Sumohan Chakraborty, CITU Secretary of West Bengal followed by welcome address by Basab Roy Chowdhury, General Secretary of WBMSRU. The conference was also addressed by Sudip Sen and Sukumar Das (Jt. Secretary and Vice President) of Dey's employees union which is affiliated to CITU and expressed their solidarity towards the council movement and assured to be an integral part of the movement in particular. Shubrangshu Bhattacharya Secretary, FMRAI also addressed the delegates. In his deliberation he briefed about the history of FMRAI's movemental path and expectation from our members working in Dey's in particular in all the units to play a leading role.

Subrata Banerjee ex all India convener and Samir Ghatak ex Zonal Convener Zone-I were also present in the conference and kept their deliberation and explained the background of the movement of Dey's council. The report was placed by Sailendra Sharma all India convener and it was supplemented by Tuhin Chakraborty Joint All India Convener on behalf of the ten members committee. Members from all the states both from pharma and CPD discussed on the draft report.

A special session took place on second day of the conference discussing specifically on the problems being faced by the members in particular working in CPD with the sole purpose to address their issue in a much focused manner. The conference got enriched by the presence of General Secretary of FMRAI, Santanu Chatterjee and treasurer Partha Rakshit. General Secretary in his deliberation gave direction to build up a strong organization in particular to combat in present scenario the anti worker policies being adopted by the Government of India which is detrimental for the working class and promoted to snatch all the rights achieved by years of struggle. The conference unanimously adopted a resolution on the issues/grievances of the sales promotion employees. The committee members met the Board of Directors of the company on 14th November, 2022 after the conference and discussed various issues of mutual interest in a very cordial atmosphere upholding bilateralism.