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## ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE 12 FEBRUARY, 2026

































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# ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE 12 FEBRUARY, 2026


























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# Editorial

Workers rejected the Labour Codes by observing strike on 12th February, 2026 all over India. Bank and Insurance employees also participated in the strike on the day opposing introduction of Labour Codes repealing 29 Labour Laws and against the attempt of the Government to dismantle the nationalized Banking Sector at the behest of its cronies and implementation of anti-people and anti-employee reforms. Insurance Sector has been made wide open to foreign capital. In Nationalized Banks Government is mulling to allow 49% foreign capital with their representatives in the Board. Some Private Banks are already in the hands of the foreign multinational banks. In the name of monetization precious jewels of the country are being sold. The economic policy pursued by the Government has widened the gap between the rich and the poor. Handful few have cornered the wealth of the nation. Vast unemployed labour market is being fattened in absence of jobs. Banks used to provide jobs and created jobs also. Banks could free the peasants from the shackles of the money lenders and provided loans. It resulted in green revolution and white revolution. India became self sufficient in food products. Now the social objectives have been relegated back. Government's pro-rich and pro-corporate bias was exposed when it wanted to handover the rural economy on to the hands of the corporate. But Government was forced to retrace its steps against the stiff opposition of the farmers who fought for one year at a stretch. It was a heroic battle against the anti-national policy of the Government. Bank is the mirror of the country's economy. It is essential that banks remain in nationalized sector for the society and for the weaker section of the people of our country. The commendable role played by the bank employees for nationalization of Banking Industry in the interest of the nation and its people are still refresh in our memory.

Time has come when we should recall the past and unite and fight for a bigger cause i.e., for the nation and its people.

# When Govt is ruthless, we have to be more united

We congratulate all our unions and members for the wonderful display of unity and militancy which has made the 27th January, 2926 strike a massive success. Ofocurse the demand for introduction of 5 days banking is a popular demand of the employees and officers and hence that is one of the reason for the overwhelming response to the strike. But we cannot say that it was the only reason.

We all know that in December, 2023, the IBA signed the MOU with UFBU when they agreed for introduction of 5 days banking subject to approval by the Government. This was also further reiterated in the bipartite settlement signed in March, 2024. In every subsequent meeting with the UFBU, IBA had been clarifying that they have already recommended to the Government.

This means that the matter is pending with the Government. Since the Government always claims that under the present regime, there will be less Government and more governance, employees are disillusioned and disappointed that the government has kept the issue pending for the past two years.

Even when UFBU gave the call for strike in March, 2025, a senior officials from the DFS, GOI, talked to the unions and explained that the issue is a priority issue with the Government. So naturally employees are asking the question – where is the priority. Employees are frustrated and angry about the role of the Central Government.

Even the reaction to our strike call was negative and casual. In the conciliation meeting, the government could not list out any development and could not assure any time frame. This highly infuriated and agitated the minds of the bank employees.

Employees really understand why government is reluctant to give their clearance for five days banking even though unions have agreed for 40 minutes of additional working hours every day from all Mondays and Saturdays. It was clear that the government is under pressure from the corporates and chambers of commerce.

It is time that everyone realizes that the government has its agenda.

**C.H. Venkatachalam**

## ON GENERAL STRIKE

*[We reproduce hereunder the Joint circular issued on 12 Feb, 2026 by Unions for the successful strike on 12 Feb, 2026]*

**ALL INDIA BANK EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION-AIBEA**
**ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION- AIIEA**
**ALL INDIA LIC EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION- AILICEF**
**ALL INDIA BANK OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION- AIBOA**
**BANK EMPLOYEES' FEDERATION OF INDIA- BEFI**
**ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION (GEN. INS)**

To All Our Unions and Members — 12th February, 2026

**Today's Strike a success**

We congratulate all our units and members for making the call for strike today in the banks and insurance sector a success.

10 Central Trade Unions – INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, TUCC, SEWA, AICCTU, LPF, UTUC – had given the call for a nationwide General Strike on 12th February, 2026 to protest against the recent notification by the Central Government on the 4 new Labour Codes replacing the existing 29 labour laws and on increasing attacks on the working class.

It is obvious that under the new labour codes and labour policy, various hard-won labour rights are sought to be taken away. Starting a union, running a union, providing stable leadership to the union, organizing strikes, etc. would be rendered difficult.

When we are faced with huge unemployment, instead of generating more jobs for the youth, Fixed Term Employment scheme is proposed, jeopardizing the future of the youth.

When we are fighting for work-life-balance, they are proposing to empower employers to increase working hours to 10 or 12 hours per day.

When strikes by the Unions would become difficult, the employer is given freedom to lock-out and retrench without the permission of the labour authorities.

Bulk of the workers would be taken out from the purview of any labour laws thus facilitating further exploitation of the workers.

The future of the youth, who are the future of our country, will be put as a question mark.

In insurance sector, 100% FDI has been allowed. In the banking industry also, we see aggravated attacks like attempts to sell IDBI Bank, selling our private banks to foreign investors, efforts to privatise PSBs, etc. It is obvious that the Government is moving under the pressure of IMF, World Bank, etc. and under the influence of international finance capital.

Hence we have to be a part of the struggles of the general trade union movement. Hence we had given the call for observing the Strike on the 12th February, 2026 in the banks and insurance sector.

**And to highlight the following issues:**

- Strengthening Public Sector Banks and Insurance Companies
- Stop privatisation and disinvestment in Banks, LIC and GIC
- Withdraw recent hike of 100% FDI in Insurance
- Merge Public Sector General Insurance Companies as one entity
- Ensure adequate recruitments
- Stop outsourcing and contract jobs
- Scrap NPS – Restore OPS ▪ Withdraw Fixed Term Employment scheme
- Take tough measures to recover bad loans from Corporates
- Reduce service charges in Banks for ordinary

customers

As per reports reaching us from various States and Centres, the strike has been well responded by the employees and officers under the banner of our unions. Demonstrations were held at various places protesting against the anti-worker labour policies and new labour codes.

We are happy that by our participation in this General Strike today, we have once again manifested our fraternity and solidarity with the working class and working masses who are engaged in a relentless and persistent battle against multiple attacks on the labour rights in our country.

In the banking sector, AIBOC, NCBE, INBEF and INBOC extended their fraternal support to our strike action. We thank them for the same.

**With Greetings,**

**C. H. VENKATACHALAM**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**
**AIBEA**

**SHREEKANTA MISHRA**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**
**AIIEA**

**RAJESH KUMAR**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**
**AILICEF**

**SANJAY KUMAR KHAN**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**
**AIBOA**

**DEBASIS BASU CHOUDHURY**
**GENERAL SECRETARY**
**BEFI**

**WFTU**

## WFTU'S Greeting to Indian worker for successful General Strike

The WFTU salutes the more than 300 million workers, farmers and other popular sections across India who made the 12 February Nationwide General Strike a grand success.

From industrial zones to rural districts, from mining, transport and public services to agriculture and the informal sector, the masses stood united against anti-worker and anti-people policies, privatization, labour codes, and attacks on social rights, education and public services.

Women workers, youth and students were in the front lines of the mobilisations across hundreds of districts.

International class-oriented trade union movement stands in solidarity with your struggle. Your united action sends a powerful message of resistance and dignity.

Solidarity with the working class of India!

********

**Message of Solidarity with the Working Class of India**

The World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU) expresses its solidarity with the working class of India, on the upcoming Nationwide General Strike on 12th February 2026.

The WFTU notes with pride that ten Central Trade Unions of India have jointly given a call for Nationwide General Strike Action. The issues before the strike include fundamental trade union rights of the Indian working class and the toiling people.

We understand with shock and anguish that the Narendra Modi Government of India has passed and notified Four Labour Codes superseding 29 labour related Acts of Indian Parliament. These Labour Codes are designed to hit hard the Right to Association, Right to Collective Bargaining and Right to Strike. The joint strike action of the Indian trade unions is demanding outright scrapping of these anti-worker Labour Codes along with the

'Shram Shakti Niti, 2025'.

The other important demands include strong opposition to economic onslaughts on the toiling people arising out of imperialist globalization. The joint declaration of the striking trade unions has noted, "The government of the country continues its agenda of privatisation and sale of all strategic Public Sector Undertakings and Public services such as railway, port and docks, coal mines, oil, steel, defence, roadways, airports, banks, insurance, telecom, postal, Atomic energy, electricity generation and supply etc. to the big Corporates of Indian and foreign origin thus endangering indigenous industrial growth and self-reliant economy. The commercialisation of education and health are severe jolt to the people as they cannot afford the unbearable cost. The prices of essential commodities are rising unabated. With inequalities growing, a very large number of people are getting pushed to a life below poverty line." WFTU reiterates its understanding that the deepening of the systemic crisis of capitalism makes the attack against the toiling people all over the world.

Strike actions in India always enjoy special international significance due to inter alia, the vastness of the Indian Working Class. This time the Worker-Peasant-Agricultural Worker unity in India is unique. With the participation of the farmers and agricultural workers in the strike action on 12th February shall attain unprecedented dimension and shall convey a strong message of class oriented militant action to the working class all the world.

WFTU with its 105 million members spread over 133 countries extends total support to the demand and action of the working class and peasantry of India and conveys best wishes for a grand success of the strike action. WFTU also supports the warning sounded by the trade unions that "12th February strike has to convey strong message if the Government still pursue the Labour Codes, Central Trade Unions will be compelled to go for further stronger actions.

On behalf of the World Federation of Trade Unions,

Pambis Kyritsis

WFTU General Secretary

**AIBEA CONFERENCE**

## March on to AIBEA's 30th Conference Just two months away

AIBEA's ensuing 30th Conference being held in Bengaluru in Karnataka is just two months away. It will be held from the 19th to 22nd April, 2026. The occasion is all the more important because it coincides with the 80th Anniversary of AIBEA.

The host unit – Karnataka Pradesh Bank Employees Federation has already started the preparatory work to host the mega Conference in a successful manner. A very spacious venue has been booked in the Palace Grounds in Bengaluru.

Reception Committee has been formed with Prof. Babu Mathew as Chairman and various Sub-Committees are on their job.

More than 3,500 delegates and observers including large number of women employees and youth are expected to participate in our Conference.

Delegations from various countries will be attending our Conference. We are expecting fraternal delegations from Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Nepal, Vietnam, South Africa, Mauritius, Cyprus, Brazil, Greece, Egypt, Bahrain, Iran, Nigeria, Bangla Desh, etc.

The Conference will commence on the 19th April, 2026 (Sunday) with hoisting of AIBEA Flag at 9-30 am. followed by Delegate Session. In the afternoon, there will be a colourful procession followed by Inaugural Public Session.

**20th April, 2026 (Monday) will be a special day** – the 80th Anniversary Day of AIBEA. Various

celebration activities, honouring the past leaders, special commemorative lectures, cultural programmes, etc. have been scheduled for the day.

21st and 22nd April, 2026 (Tuesday and Wednesday) will be Delegate Sessions. The Conference will conclude by around 5-00 PM on the 22nd.

**Delegates:** As per AIBEA's Rules and Bye-laws, all State Federations are eligible for Delegates according to their membership. Equal number of Observers will also be permitted to attend the Conference.

State Federations are requested to ensure that all their units are enabled to participate in the Conference. If any additional Observrs are required, the same can be permitted.

**Accommodation:** Accommodation in various Hotels have been arranged as per the requirements of our State Federations. State Federations will inform the accommodation details to their Delegates and Observers.

**Cultural programme:** Cultural programme will be there on the 20th April, 2026. State Federations who want to participate in the cultural programme (by delegates / observers) should inform KPBEF well in advance.

Comrades, we will be meeting in our Bengaluru Conference at a very crucial juncture. On the one hand, it will be an occasion to celebrate the glorious 80th Anniversary of our beloved AIBEA. On the other hand, we will be discussing the emerging hostile and challenging scenario before us and the measures to be taken to further strengthen AIBEA to face all these challenges and attacks.

**It will be great occasion to reminisce the glorious past and reinforce our dear organisation for our onward journey.**

**Welcome to Bengaluru. Let us make the torch burn brighter.**

## 30th Conference of AIBEA
## At Bengaluru – 19th to 22nd April, 2026
## Reception Committee

As all of us are aware, Karnataka Pradesh Bank Employees Federation is hosting the 30th National Conference of AIBEA that is being held in Bengaluru from the 19th to 20th April, 2026. To ensure the best possible arrangements, KPBEF has formed the Reception Committee and already KPBEF started the preparations for the Conference.

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| **CHIEF PATRON** | **P. S. SUNDARESAN,** Former Vice President of AIBEA<br>Former General Secretary, President and Chairman of KPBEF |
| **PATRONS** | **H. V. RAI** Former Vice President of AIBEA<br>Former General Secretary and President of KPBEF |
| | **H. MAHADEVAN**<br>Hon. President, AITUC Karnataka Former Working President, AITUC, Former Deputy Secretary General, WFTU |
| | **P. R. KARANTH** ,Former Joint Secretary of AIBEA,<br>Former Deputy General Secretary of KPBEF |

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|---|---|
| | **M. ANJANI** Former Joint Secretary of AIBEA, Former President of KPBEF |
| | **N. VENUGOPAL** Former Joint Secretary of AIBEA ,Former President of KPBEF |
| **CHAIRMAN** | **PROF. BABU MATHEW**<br>Professor in National Law School of India University, Bengaluru<br>AITUC President - Karnataka |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **M.S. SRINIVASAN** President KPBEF |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **D.A. VIJAYA BASKAR**<br>General Secretary, AITUC Karnataka , Gen Secretary, KSRTC Staff Federation |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **Dr. SIDDANAGOUDA PATIL**<br>CPI Leader, Leader IPTA (Indian people theatre Assn)<br>Managing Director, Nava Karnataka Publications |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **C. MURALIDHARA**<br>All India General Secretary, Indian Lawyers Association. |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **T.K. PARAMESWRA LIC,** Working President, LIC Emp Union |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **R. BHARATH GIC,** Reg Secretary, GIE All India Assn |
| **DY. CHAIRMAN** | **MANISH CHAUHAN** Gen Secretary, AIBOA, Karnataka. |
| **SECRETARY** | **M. JAYANATH** General Secretary, KPBEF |
| **JOINT SECRETARIES** | **VINCENT D'SOUZA** Vice President, KPBEF |
| **JOINT SECRETARIES** | **K. G. PANEENDRA** Deputy General Secretary, KPBEF |
| **JOINT SECRETARIES** | **K. CHANDRASEKHAR** Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **L. SATISH** Vice President, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **VICTOR MENEZES** Vice President, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **DAYANAND D AMBERKAR** Vice President, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **D. ARUN KUMAR** Secretary KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **VIVEKANANDA KINI** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **R. RAMESHA** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |

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| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **B. LAKSHMI** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **STEPHEN JAYACHANDRA** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **M. C. MALLESH** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **K. RAGHAVENDRA NAIRY** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **D. RAMAKRISHNA** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **M. NAGARAJ** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **ACHYUTH NAIK,** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **G.G. GANDHI,** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **BASANAGOUDA PATIL,** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **SRILATA KULKARNI, J**oint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **SRINATH.S,** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **VINOD P. V,** Joint Secretary, KPBEF |
| **ASST. SECRETARIES** | **R.K. BALLAL,** Special Invitee, KPBEF |
| **TREASURER** | **SHIVA KUMAR,** Treasurer, KPBEF |
| **ASST. TREASURER** | **RAJAMANIKAM,** Asst. Treasurer, KPBEF |
| **MEMBERS** | **GANAPATHI GOWDA** Gen Secretary, Apex Bank Emp Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **N. SHANMUGASINGARAM,** Karur Vysya Bank Emp Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **ANAND KARADE** Bank Of Maharashtra Employees Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **SANJAYA KUMAR** General Secretary, P&SB Emp Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **SUSHMA VARMA** General Secretary, SCB Emp Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **I.S. GOPALKRISHNA** Gen. Secretary, HSBC Bank Emp Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **JAYARAM** HDFC Bank Employees Union |
| **MEMBERS** | **K. NARAYAN** IDBI Employees Union |

# AIBEA's 80th Anniversary Celebrations
# Cultural Programmes on 20th April, 2026

All our Unions are aware that our 30th All India Conference being held in Bengaluru from 19th to 22nd April, 2026 coincides with the 80th Anniversary/ 81st Founding Day of AIBEA on the 20th April, 2026.

Hence **it has been decided to celebrate the occasion befittingly. Besides various commemorative programmes and celebration activities, it has been decided to arrange cultural programmes on the 20th April, 2026** to provide a platform and opportunity for the participants from various States to display their cultural talents.

Since the Reception Committee has to make necessary arrangements for these cultural programmes and also allot adequate time for the same, all our State Federations are requested to inform us in advance about their willingness and proposal to participate in this cultural programme.

Each State can be allotted about 10 to 15 minutes so that the total programme becomes concise and time-bound. There are various programmes to be undertaken on that day and hence the time constraint needs to be appreciated by our Unions and participants in these cultural programmes.

We are hopeful that these cultural programmes will be colourful and enjoyable and add to the merriment, gaiety and jollity of the happy occasion of 80th Anniversary of AIBEA.

We seek the co-operation of our Unions in this regard.

## ORGANISATIONAL NEWS

# Govt/DFS/IBA move to enforce divisive PLI Model
# Unacceptable while dispute is sub judice

All our unions and members aware that a PLI scheme was finalised in the 11th BPS/8th Joint Note in 2020 applicable from Part time employe4s to General Managers in Scale VII. Since then, PLI is being paid to employees and officers at a uniform rate in each Bank according to the performance of that Bank.

Last year, the Department of Financial Services (DFS), Ministry of Finance, Government of India, abruptly advised Public Sector Banks to shift from the settlement-based PLI framework to a discriminatory mechanism for officers in Scale IV and above. Whereas the PLI scheme under the Bipartite Settlement/Joint Note is uniformly linked to the overall performance of the Bank, the DFS-advised model seeks to make PLI for Scale IV and above dependent on individual performance, thereby placing officers in the higher scales into different “risk” brackets and creating an artificial and divisive classification within the cadre.

Accordingly, we have consistently opposed this unilateral and discriminatory PLI dispensation, under which more than 90% of employees, who actually generate the business, are confined to a maximum of 15 days' Basic Pay plus DA, while officers in Scale IV and above would be extended PLI up to 360 days Basic Pay.

On the one hand, this would amount to discrimination between Scale IV officers and above and the bulk of the workmen staff and officers upto Scale III and on the other hand dividing the senior officers by extending PLI on individual performance basis. Therefore, we included this as one of the major issues in our Strike Notice served in March 2025.

Thereafter, in the conciliation proceedings held by the CLC(C), the banks were advised to maintain status quo and to work out an amicable solution through bipartite discussions between IBA and UFBU. It is pertinent that representatives of all

PSBs, along with DFS and IBA, were parties to and signatories to the conciliation minutes—hence any departure from this recorded understanding is unacceptable in principle, untenable in law and practice, and corrosive to settled industrial relations.

During the discussions with IBA, we have suggested changes with certain improvements in the PLI scheme to make it more equitable. These suggestions have been duly forwarded to the DFS for their consideration.

During the conciliation meetings held on 22nd and 23rd January, 2026 in connection with the proposed strike on 5 Days Banking, the representative of UNITED FORUM OF BANK UNIONS (AIBEA-AIBOC-NCBE-AIBOA-BEFI-INBEF-INBOC-NOBW-NOBO) DFS informed the unions that if we proceed with the strike on 27th January, 2026 on the demand of 5 Days Banking, the Government may not take a favourable view on our other pending demands, including the issue relating to change in the PLI Scheme.

On 12 February, 2026, we learn that all PSBs have been advised to credit the PLI for the year ended 31-3-2025, even though the issue is still pending before the CLC. Already Bank of India has credited the PLI today. This is a blatant violation of the requirement to maintain status quo.

This is nothing but an attempt to browbeat UFBU. This is an attempt to divide the workforce in the Banks. We shall take up the matter during the next round of conciliation meeting.

In the meantime, all our unions and members should remain united and vigilant against such attempts of the Government.

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| AIBEA | AIBOC | NCBE | AIBOA | BEFI |
| INBOC | INBEF | NOBW | NOBO | |

*[We reproduce hereunder AIBEA circular no. 100/19 dated 23/2/26 on International Women's Day]*

## Observe International Women's Day – 8th March, 2026

8th March, 2026 will mark the International Women's Day. It is an important day to observe because we focus and highlight the problems of women and our resolve to fight against the injustices to them. It is all the more important for working women who face multiple challenges.

In AIBEA, we believe that the problems of working women are not just the problem of women alone and rather, it is a challenge to the trade union itself. Women are an integral part of the society and no society can afford to ignore their problems. In fact, society that does not care for the problems of women cannot progress.

We are happy that in AIBEA women have been ensured with equal remuneration and service conditions through our struggles since inception. AIBEA has also achieved certain special concessions in their service conditions.

Women in Government sector and public sector are comparatively better protected. But one can imagine the plight of women workers in the private sector, particularly in the unorganised segments and industries. They are subject to unequal treatment, lower wages than men, exploitation of various kinds, and affecting their self-respect and dignity.

We are happy that due to the continuous efforts taken by AIBEA, women employees in Banks are nowadays more active in the trade union. We should continue our efforts so that women employees in Banks are more and more empowered in our organisation at all levels.

World over women have played a leading role. In our country also, women have played their inspiring role in every field and walk of life. Even today, it continues. The President of our country is a woman. The Finance Minister of our country is a woman. These are all matters of pride. In all fields women are outshining. Women have natural

leadership instincts and capabilities.

In AIBEA also we are sure that women comrades would be more and more active in the days to come. In the leadership of AIBEA and our Unions women are there. In the Central Committee and General Council of AIBEA, women comrades are there and playing their role. In many of our Unions women are office bearers. This should further increase in the days to come.

Let us observe and celebrate the International Women's Day with this resolve and expectation.

Observe the Day befittingly:

All our State Federations and our Unions are requested to arrange programmes to observe the International Women's Day in a befitting manner. Meetings can be held at various centres. Various activities can be undertaken like social identification programme, etc. Posters and leaflets, etc. can be published on the occasion. Our Women's Committee, Women's Council, etc can be entrusted with these activities. Some funds should be allocated for the same.

Reports about the implementation of the programme may be sent to us for our information and records.

With greetings,

Yours comradely,

Sd/-

**C.H. VENKATACHALAM**

**GENERAL SECRETARY**

## Com. Saadath completes the 8,000 km All India Motorbike Campaign – "Banks for the nation – Banks for the people"

Com. Saadath, is a young employee of Karur Vysya Bank working in Salem in Tamilnadu and is a regular biker. When Tamilnadu Bank Employees Federation was discussing various programmes to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of AIBEA, he came forward to undertake some campaign with a long distance bike ride. Hence, TNBEF decided and assigned him to undertake an 8,000 km All Inda Motorbike Campaign with the slogan – Banks for the nation – Banks for the people.

Com. Saadath began his Bike Campaign from Salem on the 30th January, 2026. The Campaign was flagged off from Chennai on the 31st morning. He travelled via Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra (Nagpur), Uttar Pradesh and reached Rishikesh and Nainital in Uttaranchal. On his return, he travelled via Delhi, Rajasthan, Gujrat, Maharashtra (Mumbai), Goa, Karnataka, Kerala and reached Nagercoil / Kanyakumari in Tamilnadu. In Tamilnadu, he travelled through various Districts and reached Chennai on the 20th February, 2026. In Chennai, he was given a warm reception by TNBEF. From Chenni he travelled to Karur (Headquarters of Karur Vysya Bank) and then returned to his place in Salem on the 22nd February, 2026 **after travelling 8,112 km.** In Salem, our comrades gave him a warm welcome on completion of the campaign programme to celebrate the 80th Year of AIBEA.

Enroute, in places like Nagpur, Rishikesh, Nainital, Delhi, Jaipur, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Mumbai, Goa, Mangalore, Thrissur, Nagercoil, Madurai, Trichy, etc., etc. our comrades received him and extended their felicitation to him. He also met number of general public and spoke about AIBEA's campaign against privatisation, strengthening public sector to serve the common people, etc. He also distributed our pamphlets, posters, stickers, etc. to the people.

**We greet and congratulate Com Saadath for this successful All India Campaign.**

# 31st Conference of BPBEA – A Grand Success

The 31st Conference of BPBEA was held on 13 – 15 February, 2026 at Monoranjan Bose Mancha, Shyamal Banerjee Nagar, Mahajati Sadan, Kolkata. The Inaugural Session on 13 February, 2026 was preceded by a mammoth rally of bank employees, members of BPBCEA, Bank Mitras as well as deposit collectors. Nearly 3000 comrades took part in the rally. The rally was led by the leaders of BPBEA, Com. Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary, AITUC, Com. C. H. Venkatachalam, General Secretary, ABEA and leaders of AIBOA (WB-SC). The Inaugural session started with vibrant songs & recitations – a composition dedicated to the people's struggle of India. The conference was inaugurated by Com. Amarjeet Kaur, General Secretary, AITUC. Com. C. H. Venkatachalam, General Secretary, AIBEA spoke both in the Inaugural Session as well as in the Delegate session as Chief Guest of the Conference. Other dignitaries who addressed the Conference were Com. Biplab Bhatta, General Secretary, AITUC-WB State Committee. Com. Atanu Dasgupta, General Secretary, BEFI-WB and Com. Prabir Deb, an eminent social & political worker. Com Gaurav Sharma , the young and energetic General Secretary of Assam Provincial Bank Employees Association also addressed the Delegate Session .

The Presidium was formed under the Chairmanship of Com. Kamal Bhattacharyya, Chairman BPBEA, Com. Pabitra Chatterjee, Vice-Chairman, BPBEA, Com. Partha Chanda, President, BPBEA and Com. Sonali Biswas, Vice President BPBEA. Com Rajen Nagar, General Secretary, BPBEA placed the Report containing 87 pages covering all the matters concerning national, international situations, political and economic scenario, banking industry, trade unions, employees' issues , struggles and movements of AIBEA, joint movement of Central Trade unions and the fight against de-nationalisation and de-unionisation. He called for stronger unity to fight against all injustices and attacks on our trade union. 45 comrades took part in the discussion on General Secretary's report and after General Secretary's reply, the report was unanimously adopted with thunderous applause.

From the Conference Com. Kamal Bhattacharyya, Com. Rajen Nagar and Com. Indranil Mitra were elected as Chief Advisor, Chairman and General Secretary respectively. The conference elected an office- Bearer team consisting of 44 members and 4 special invitee for the next term.

The Conference was a grand success.










***The rally***




*Opening Song by BPBEA Women Council*




*Com Amarjeet Kaur Inaugurating the Conference*



*The Presdium*




*Flag hoisting by Com. Kamal Bhattacharyya, Chairman , BPBEA*



*Com. Rajen Nagar, General Secretary BPBEA placing the report in the Delegate Session*




*The Presdium*



*Greeting by Com Biplab Bhatta, General Secretary, AITUC WB State Committee*



*Com. Gourav Sharma, General Secretary, APBEA speaking on the occasion*




*Com. Indranil Mitra , the newly elected General Secretary of BPBEA speaking on the occasion*




*The New Team of Office-Bearers of BPBEA*

# The strike and the sermon

## Workers protesting the labour codes found themselves also responding to the Chief Justice's courtroom critique of "jhanda unions"

**Hemalata K.**

*[The Author is the national Vice President of Centre of Indian Trade Unions]*

Responding to the call of a joint platform of ten central trade unions and independent sectoral federations, workers across India observed a general strike on February 12, 2026. The strike, called to resist the four labour codes and other policies the unions describe as anti-worker and pro-corporate, also served as a pointed rejection of Chief Justice Surya Kant's recent claim that trade unions were "largely responsible" for slowing down industrial growth in the country. Workers came out in their thousands in hundreds of locations, demanding policies for more equitable distribution of the wealth created by their labour. The joint platform highlighted four demands: scrapping the four labour codes, repealing the Viksit Bharat–Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act and restoring MGNREGA, withdrawing the Electricity Amendment Bill and the Seeds Bill, and addressing longstanding issues related to minimum wages, privatisation, contractorisation, and pensions.

The BJP-led NDA government has notified four labour codes which are meant to curtail the right to organise and the right to collective action, including the right to strike. The strike call received support from the Samyukta Kisan Morcha, the joint platform of agricultural workers' unions, and organisations of women, students, and youth.

### The CJI's remarks

On January 29, 2026, while hearing a PIL petition filed by Penn Thozhilalargal Sangam, a domestic workers' union, the Chief Justice of India (CJI) made oral observations in court. According to reports, he held trade unions responsible for slowing growth, discouraging investment, and hindering industrial expansion. He attributed the closure of traditional industries across the country to "aggressive protests by jhanda unions". He also suggested that minimum wages could discourage hiring and hamper employment generation, and that imposing minimum wages for domestic workers could reduce demand and make household help unaffordable for middle-class families.

Article 19(1)(c) of the Constitution guarantees the right to form associations or unions as a fundamental right. The Trade Union Act, 1926, provides for registration, collective bargaining, and legal immunity for union activities. The CJI, as custodian of the Constitution, is unlikely to be unaware of these provisions.

The claim that "jhanda unions" are responsible for industrial closures has no factual basis. Reports from the Labour Bureau on industrial disputes, closures, retrenchments, and lay-offs show a drastic decline in disputes. The average annual number of industrial disputes during 2006-14 was 354. This fell to an annual average of 76 during 2015-23. By September 2023, only 30 industrial disputes had been reported—a 17-year low. Man-days lost due to strikes and lockouts fell from 203 lakh in 2006 to 3.4 lakh in 2023.

Industrial closures, meanwhile, occur more frequently where the trade union movement is weak or minimal. In a written response in the Lok Sabha, Harsh Malhotra, Minister of State for Corporate Affairs, informed Parliament that 2,04,268 private companies closed between 2020-21 and 2024-25 due to amalgamation, conversion, dissolution, or being struck off under the Companies Act, 2013. The government did not attribute these closures to trade union activity or

industrial disputes. Industrial closures often result from mismanagement, changing market conditions, diversion of capital, and speculative practices. MSMEs in particular have faced difficulties since demonetisation and the introduction of GST, with thousands of small and medium enterprises closing. Data from the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Board of India shows that large corporate failures and poor debt recovery—not labour disputes—are central to India's industrial crisis.

When industries close, it is the workers who lose their jobs and incomes. Workers and trade unions that represent their interests naturally want industries to run and provide decent employment. It is untenable that they would want industries to close. At the same time, workers cannot be expected to suffer silently when employers attack their wages and working conditions, especially with the State acting as a facilitator of such attacks through neoliberal policies.

The suggestion that minimum wages discourage employment cannot be accepted. Minimum wages are not charity but a right, in line with the constitutional mandate to ensure dignity of labour and the right to livelihood. The Supreme Court itself has affirmed that non-payment of minimum wages amounts to “forced labour”. Several States have notified minimum wages for domestic workers, and this has not resulted in any collapse of employment.

The CJI's reported comments echo a tendency among advocates of neoliberal policies—policies that are now widely acknowledged as failures. Trade unions are maligned and sought to be eliminated from workplaces because they not only fight for the protection of workers' rights but also expose the exploitation of national wealth, including natural resources, facilitated by the neoliberal state.

**Inequality and employment**

Contrary to the assumption that neoliberal policies would see growth trickle down and benefit all sections, what we witness across the world today is a “trickle up” model where the benefits of growth have concentrated at the top. Inequalities have widened. According to a study by the World Inequality Lab, published in March 2024, the top 1 per cent of India's population held 22.6 per cent of the country's income and 40.1 per cent of wealth in 2022-23—the highest levels since 1922 and 1961 respectively. The top 1 per cent, which earned 6 per cent of total income in 1982, earned 22.6 per cent by 2022-23. The share of the bottom half of the population is only 15 per cent. India's top 1 per cent income share is higher than that of Brazil, the United States, and South Africa.

According to a Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy report in 2024, the youth unemployment rate stood at as high as 45 per cent. While permanent jobs are declining, precarious jobs and underemployment are on the rise. Policies are increasingly being formulated to benefit a few large corporates close to the ruling dispensation. Small enterprises are being squeezed, with thousands closing and throwing lakhs of workers out of their jobs.

**The labour codes**

The four labour codes were enacted to facilitate profit maximisation by weakening trade unions and diluting their collective bargaining rights. They make lay-offs and closures easier and weaken workers' job security on the pretext of promoting “Ease of Doing Business”. The logic behind the codes—that legal protection for workers is a barrier to growth—finds reflection in the CJI's comments. This can be construed as an attempt to delegitimise trade unions and embolden employers and governments to attack workers' constitutionally guaranteed rights.

Comments by the highest echelons of the judiciary carry the weight of institutional authority. It is regrettable that in the neoliberal era, courts are seen to be moving away from observations based on constitutional principles and social justice and embracing market-oriented ideology. This is a danger that the working class faces today.

**The role of unions**

Global and Indian evidence shows the contribution of organised labour in national development: forging unity across regional, caste, and religious differences; fighting for social justice; and developing democratic workplaces and broader society. Trade unions have a strong

presence in several public sector enterprises and have opposed their privatisation. This has not affected productivity or come in the way of reaching production targets and enabling these enterprises to contribute lakhs of crores of rupees to the public exchequer.

Trade unions have played a decisive role in India's freedom struggle and nation-building. They have worked for the welfare of workers: higher wages, better benefits, social security, and safe working conditions. These help reduce inequality, particularly raising earnings for low and middle-income workers. They contribute to increasing purchasing power, driving domestic demand and growth. They give workers a collective voice and promote dignity.

In recent years, trade unions have raised not only workers' demands but also issues that concern the common people: price rise, unemployment, affordable health and education, pensions. They have also placed before the government avenues for financial resource mobilisation to ensure these.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development and International Labour Organization (ILO) studies generally show that strong democratic unions correlate with lower inequality, higher social standards, and more resilient economies. By acting as a counterbalance to market forces, trade unions ensure that development is inclusive and the gains of growth are shared more broadly. The ILO, a tripartite body comprising representatives of employers, employees, and governments, highlights the fact that trade unions are indispensable partners in development.

**Contrary to the views of neo-liberalism's proponents, trade unions in India have played an important role in the fight for people-oriented development and protection of workers' rights. They will continue to do so.**

## NEWS ON BANKING

# Banks Collected Rs 8621.12 Crore as Penalties From Account Holders For Not Maintaining Minimum Balance

**The Wire Staff**

New Delhi: Between 2020-21 and 2024-25, public sector banks in India have collected Rs 8,621.12 from account holders as penalty for not maintaining minimum balance, according to data placed before the Lok Sabha' Committee of Petitions, reported Deccan Herald.The parliamentary panel has urged banks to do away with the penalty for not maintaining minimum balance. As per the data, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Maharashtra have collected the most number of penalties, followed by other states such as Karnataka and Bihar.Uttar Pradesh has topped the list with a collective penalty of Rs 1,233.97 crore in the five fiscals followed by Tamil Nadu with Rs 1,21.38 crore. Maharashtra ranks third with Rs 1,088.18 crore penalty collected. PSU banks in Karnataka and Bihar collected penalties to the tune of Rs 529.20 crore and Rs 464.53 crore, respectively.

The Deccan Herald report added that while the collection of penalties were increasing between 2020-21 and 2023-24 but it declined in 2024-25.Notably, the State Bank of India (SBI) had withdrawn the penalty on savings bank accounts in March 2020. But the penalties still increased from Rs 1,148.71 crore in 2020-21 to Rs 1,415.65 crore, Rs 1,785.90 crore and Rs 2,225.10 crore in the next three fiscals. This figure decreased in 2024-25 with penalties estimated to be around Rs 2,045.74 crore.

Despite the national trend of a decline in penalties in 2024-25, six states and three Union territories registered an increase compared to 2023-25. Tamil Nadu saw the highest growth of Rs 43.22 crore – from Rs 233.12 crore to Rs 276.34 crore in 2024-25, reported Deccan Herald. All south Indian states apart from Karnataka while Uttar Pradesh registered the biggest decline of Rs 51.84 crore in collection of penalties – from Rs 339.10 crore in 2023-24 to Rs 287.87 crore in 2024-25.The

Parliamentary panel said it was of the firm view that the decision of some banks to waive penalty on non-maintenance of minimum balance on savings bank accounts is in the best interest of all stakeholders. It added that it wants both public and private sector banks to favourably look at micro-entrepreneurs, self employed and small traders, who maintain current accounts, instead of troubling them with repeated penalties for not maintaining minimum balance..

## LEGAL NEWS

# Compassionate Appointment Rejection - SHOCKS Court

**Special Correspondent**

In a strong message to Punjab National Bank (PNB), the Allahabad High Court (Lucknow Bench) has set aside a careless one-line rejection order issued against a deceased employee's son seeking compassionate appointment. Justice Shree Prakash Singh called out the bank's non-application of mind and directed PNB to reconsider the case within 8 weeks.

The petitioner's father, a PNB employee since 1982, died while in service on 04.08.2016. His family applied for compassionate appointment in 2018, well within time. The bank even asked them to complete formalities — which they did. Yet, shockingly, after delays and shifting of offices, PNB rejected the claim in September 2023 with a single-line order, giving no reasons at all.

The Court reminded authorities that "compassion" means human sympathy and kindness, and such cases must be handled with humane consideration, not bureaucratic arrogance. It also referred to the landmark Supreme Court ruling Mohinder Singh Gill (1978), stating that an order must stand on its own reasons.

Result: Rejection quashed. Fresh decision ordered.

A big win for justice — and a tight slap to insensitive administration!

## VIEWPOINT

# India's workers made industrial history. So where was the noise?

**Claudia Webbe**

***[The author was previously the Member of Parliament for Leicester East (2019–2024)]***

THERE is an old trade union proverb, forged in the coalfields of Bengal and borrowed by every liberation movement since: the boss needs the worker, but the worker does not need the boss. On February 12 2026, 300 million workers in India made that proverb flesh.

They shut down their whole country in protest against four anti-worker "codes" pushed through the Indian parliament by the Modi government. The strike involved the working class — from gig workers, textile makers, miners and farm labourers to bank staff and postal workers, across more than 600 districts of the world's most populous nation — and they brought India to a standstill. Markets shuttered. Red flags filled every arterial road from Mumbai to Kolkata. It wasn't just the largest strike in India's history, it was the biggest in global history.

Ten central trade unions, the Samyukta Kisan Morcha farmer coalition, agricultural workers' organisations, student groups, and women's collectives all converged on a single demand: the withdrawal of the Modi government's four anti-worker labour codes, and an end to a decade of policy engineered to transfer wealth upward while stripping protections from those who generate it.

Eleven days later, most of the Western media has still not told the story. That silence is not negligence. It is editorial complicity with a class project that depends on Indian workers and their labour remaining invisible, exploitable, and, above all, quiet.

Surely such a seismic and unprecedented event is compulsory viewing or reading and merits extensive coverage and analysis. Yet it was entirely ignored by British media besides the Morning Star. A search of the BBC News website for the words “India” and “strike” reveals, at the time of writing, zero results about the industrial action: the only 2026 result is about Modi “striking” trade deals. A search for coverage anywhere in British media yields only mentions on socialist websites. That silence is complicity in Modi's war on workers' rights. But it's also more – an act of self-preservation by Britain's political and financial elites and the media they own or run.

Why are UK and other Western elites determined to ignore the uprising of India's working classes — and even more determined to do what they can to keep ordinary people ignorant about it?

Despite widespread poverty — one in 40 live in extreme poverty — India is often cited as one of the world's most economically equal societies. World Bank consumption data ranks it near the top globally, with a Gini coefficient of 25.5 — lower than the UK's 32.7 and below any G7 or G20 country. On that measure, most Indians appear to live at broadly similar spending levels.

But income and wealth tell a different story. The World Inequality Report 2026 describes India as one of the most unequal countries in the world: the top 10 per cent capture 58 per cent of national income, while the bottom 50 per cent receive just 15 per cent. The richest 10 per cent hold 65 per cent of total wealth, and the top 1 per cent alone controls 40 per cent. Female labour force participation remains at 15.7 per cent, and 90 per cent of workers — more than 400 million people — toil in the informal sector without contracts, enforceable minimum wages or social security. Women in that sector earn roughly half as much as men. India may be statistically equal in consumption, but it is sharply unequal in income, assets and economic power.

Modi's moves to weaken the working class follow a pattern seen for decades in most Western nations: attacks on unions and collective action to weaken our class and siphon wealth upward.

The four labour codes — on wages, industrial relations, social security, and occupational safety — were rammed through Parliament in 2020, two of them during the pandemic when most opposition MPs had walked out and pushed into force in November 2025 despite unanimous trade union opposition. Strip away the bureaucratic language and their purpose is naked. The Industrial Relations Code criminalises the right to strike by mandating 60 days' notice and banning action during conciliation or tribunal proceedings — proceedings the state or employers can trigger at will, creating an indefinite legal blockade against any walkout. The threshold for layoff protections has been tripled from 100 to 300 workers, meaning the vast majority of India's manufacturing workforce can now be hired and fired at managerial whim. Overtime limits have been extended to one 125 hours per quarter. Contract labour safeguards have been gutted by raising licensing thresholds from 20 to 50 workers.

These are not reforms. They are the legislative architecture of a corporate wish-list, assembled by Modi's government and presented as modernisation.

Meanwhile, the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act — the lifeline of tens of millions of India's poorest rural families — has been repealed and replaced with the euphemistically named Viksit Bharat Guarantee for Rozgar and Ajeevika Mission (Gramin) Act, which shifts the fiscal burden onto states, bans work during harvest season to ensure landlords a supply of cheap labour, and strips the guarantee of its rights-based legal foundation. The insurance sector has been opened to 100 per cent foreign direct investment. Military expenditure has been hiked by 15 per cent. The Shanti Act has opened nuclear energy to private and foreign operators while absolving suppliers of liability in the event of disaster.

Modi's measures against the working class of India follow the same template against a population already in far greater poverty. They are also being imposed against a backdrop of unequal trade deals that will further suck wealth from the Indian people to US and other Western corporations.

Five days before the strike, the White House announced a $500 billion US-India trade framework under which India committed to purchasing US energy, aircraft, technology, and coal — while in January, India and the EU signed what Al Jazeera called “the mother of all deals,” a free trade agreement covering two billion people and a combined market of $27 trillion. Not one clause in either deal contains a binding, enforceable protection for workers' rights. These are not trade agreements between nations. They are contracts between ruling classes, underwritten by the sweat of people who were never consulted and will never benefit

US companies profit to the tune of more than $40bn a year from India, yet Trump's narrative of a $100bn deficit underpinned a new US-India trade deal so unfair that it has been rightly compared to those imposed by imperial powers on colonies and vassals in the 1800s. The “deal” forces India to accept 18 per cent tariffs on its exports to the US while charging no tariffs on US goods to India. It is also allowing the US to pressure India into buying more from the US.

The new UK-India Free Trade Agreement is hardly better, cutting Indian tariffs on British products from 15 per cent to 3 per cent without any requirement for improvements in human rights and working conditions for Indian people. It also “entrenches asymmetries between the two economies,” according to the Trade Justice Movement and does nothing to help India produce more sustainably.

This is Modi's class war in favour of corporate power and advantage. But the Indian working class is saying no; not just saying it but acting to enforce its refusal on a scale that the world has never seen before.

The international working class should take note. Those who think they have a right to rule cannot afford us all to see what is happening in India and its significance for the class struggle in countries worldwide. India's general strike is the future that the billionaires and ruling class fear most.

**What solidarity demands**

For the international left, this strike is not a distant event to admire. It is a front line in a global class war whose logic operates identically in London, Lagos, and Lima. The same deregulatory playbook that produced Modi's labour codes produced the UK's anti-union legislation, the gutting of collective bargaining across the European Union, and the race to the bottom that defines every bilateral trade agreement of the neoliberal era.

Genuine solidarity means demanding that the EU-India and US-India trade deals be reopened with binding, enforceable labour rights clauses — or opposed outright. It means pressing for universal ratification of ILO Conventions 87 and 98 on freedom of association and collective bargaining. It means recognising that when 300 million workers rise against a far-right government backed by global capital, they are fighting the same fight as every worker in Britain facing fire-and-rehire, every nurse confronting real-terms pay cuts, every gig economy courier denied the status of employee. An injury to one is an injury to all — but only if we mean it, and only if we act like it.

The unions have already warned that if the Modi government does not withdraw the four labour codes, longer and more sustained general strikes will follow. Three hundred million workers have delivered their verdict on the BJP, on the trade deals of Washington, UK and Brussels, and on every institution — from Parliament to the Supreme Court — that has chosen capital over labour. That verdict is unambiguous, it is historically unprecedented, and it is damning. The only question left is whether the rest of the world's working class will hear it — or whether we, too, will choose the silence of the comfortable over the solidarity of the just.

## ALL INDIA GENERAL STRIKE 12 FEBRUARY, 2026





















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# Nice way to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of AIBEA Com Eswara Rao shows the way - He will donate blood on 20th April, 2026 during our Conference for the 95th time

Com Eswara Rao is a young employee working in Karnataka Bank in Visakhapatnam and is an activist of our All India Karnataka Bank Employees Association. He has been regularly donating blood for needy patients. Blood donation is a very noble cause and Com. Eswara Rao has been a motivation for many people to donate blood.

All of us are aware that we shall be holding the 30th National Conference of AIBEA at Bengaluru from 19th to 22nd April, 2026. We will also be celebrating the 80th Anniversary and 81st Founding Day of our beloved AIBEA on the 20th April, 2026 during the Conference.

Com. Eswara Rao will be a Delegate to our AIBEA Conference and hence he desired to celebrate the 80th Anniversary in a noble way.

**He will be donating Blood for the 95th occasion at Bengaluru on the 20th April, 2026.**

Trade union does not merely teach us militancy. It also inculcates in us humanism and humanitarianism.

LONG LIVE AIBEA

To

From

**BANKFLAG**

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