

**Unite and fight back the retrograde policies to
Protect the Industry and the rights
Make the Strike on 23rd & 24th February-2022 a success**

Dear brothers,

The Truck drivers are facing serious problems. Expenses like prices of Diesel, Insurance Premium, Toll Charges, essential Commodities, etc have gone up so high and the income has not increased proportionately. At the same time, hard earned money is being looted as penalties through illegal challans. Harassment by Police and other officials has become the order of the day. To put an end to all these we have to unite and fight back. The Central Trade Unions like CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, AICCTU, AIUTUC etc and many independent All India Federations have called for a general strike against the anti-people, anti-worker, anti-national policies of the Central Government. Participate in the All-India general strike on 23rd & 24th February 2022. Demonstrate strength and make it a historical one.

Crisis deepening: Majority of the workers in this segment also are of single vehicle owner cum drivers. They also have borrowed some money and the rest of the amount was obtained as loan from the private finance companies. Apart from Diesel and other costs, the insurance premium charges have shot up. The number of Toll Plazas and the Toll charges have increased many folds. Even before Covid Pandemic, the Lorry segment was in serious financial crisis. Like other segments, the lorry segment also has badly hit by Covid Pandemic. According to one estimate nearly 30% of the lorries are off the road as of now. Even then they were forced to pay the EMIs of the loans.

Attacks: The attacks of the anti-social elements have become the order of the day. Many drivers were attacked, looted the money and even killed. The harassment of Police and other officials have become the order of the day. Even they were manhandled and tortured. The Truck drivers and helpers are being humiliated and ill-treated. The harassment of the Private finance companies for the payment of EMI is on high side. With all these together, some drivers in different places have committed suicides.

Contd...2

Gross negligence: Facilities to the drivers on Highways like rest, wash rooms, hotels filling stations are not provided. The drivers have to park the vehicles on wayside and rest under the trees or under the trucks. The construction of National Highways even is very defective. Neither proper sign boards are erected nor any other precautionary measures to prevent the accidents are ensured. No segregation of roads for different modes of vehicles are there. There is no special investigation mechanism to examine the causes for the accidents. Simply, the drivers are blamed for the accidents and are sent behind the bars. The profession of driver is highly skilled and most risky. Even though, the drivers are being ill-treated.

Social Security: The Taxi drivers are serving the people at their door step. This is a Public Transport Service. Ironically, they do not have the Social Security. After a prolonged and sustained struggle by AIRTWF, V.V.Giri National Labour Institute was entrusted by the Government to study the problems and to make suggestions. The V.V.Giri Institute has submitted its report with some recommendations. But even after a long period of almost 13 years, the Governments did not pay any attention to that report.

What is the solution? As long as we are divided and keep silence, nobody will come to our risk. We have voted the Government to power. After coming to power, they are serving the Corporates at the cost of our lives. We should not tolerate this crime. It is our right to catch hold off the elected Governments. The victory of the farmers united and sustained struggle is before us. By making the strike on 23rd & 24th February-2022 a success, we should send a warning signal to the Government that whether our demands are addressed or to face more vigorous struggles in future.

DEMANDS

1. Supply Food grains @10 kgs per person till March 2022 without insisting Ration Card.
2. Payment of Rs.7,500/ per month to all the unorganised Transport workers till March 2022.

Contd... 3

3. Withdraw enhanced excise duty in the year 2020 on Diesel/Petrol and roll back the revised prices by the Oil Companies since 07th June 2020.
4. Bring Petrol & Diesel under the purview of GST duly compensating the loss of revenue to the states.
5. State Governments should make arrangements for loan through Nationalised Banks for purchase of new vehicles to the self-employed.
6. Steps shall be taken to control the harassment by the Private Finance Companies.
7. Insurance premiums are enhanced irrationally by the IRDA. It should be controlled and Trade Union representatives also shall be included in the Committee. Transparency shall be maintained.
8. Enact Social Security Act for the unorganised Transport Workers duly implementing the recommendations of V.V.Giri National Labour Institute for the appointment letters, applicability of Acts.
9. Withdraw the Amended M.V. Act 2019 and discuss with all the stakeholders for a better and proper alternative policy.
10. Withdraw anti Working-Class Labour Codes.
11. All the unorganised Road Transport Workers including self-employed shall be recorded in the registers of labour Department.
12. All the unorganised Road Transport Workers including self-employed shall be covered under all the labour laws. Suitable amendments shall be carried out accordingly.
13. Harassment of Police and other Officials should be stopped forthwith.
14. The profession of Driver shall be treated with dignity and respect.

ALL INDIA ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION (AIRTWF)