

Participate and make 20th May-2025 All India Strike a success

Repeal the draconian Labour Codes-Protect the Rights-AIRTWF

Dear brothers and Sisters,

May Day greetings to all. All India Road Transport Workers' Federation appeals to all the Road Transport Workers in the country to join the strike on 20-05-2025 against the 4 Labour Codes and to protect the trade union Rights and the livelihood. Except BMS, all other Central Trade unions and the independent Federations have given the strike call. The Coordination Committee in the Road Transport sector consisting of CITU, AITUC, INTUC, HMS, LPF, AICCTU, TUCI has also given a call to join the strike.

Conditions of the road Transport Workers: The unorganized road Transport Workers conditions are very pathetic. It is the need of the hour to enact Social Security Act, develop an App alternative to uber/Ola/Rapido etc, withdrawal of section 106(1)(2) of BNS, strengthen and expand the RTCs, withdraw Vehicle Scrapping Policy, reduce and rationalize petrol, Diesel, Gas, Toll charges are the major demands. We have organized several protest actions including "Challo Parliament" on 24-03-2025. Honorable Transport minister Shri. Nitin Gadkari has agreed for the demand of Social Security in the meeting with the delegation of AIRTWF. The Honorable Home Minister made an announcement in the Parliament on the next day of our Chalho Parliament that the Government will develop an App alternative to Uber/Ola/Rapido etc. The assurances have to be implemented and the other just and genuine demands are to be resolved. At this juncture, the Government is trying to implement the Codes to crush the Trade union activities.

What are the Labour Codes? The Government of India has scrapped/repealed 29 Labour Acts and enacted 4 Labour Codes. They are (1) Industrial Relations Code (2) Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code (3) Social Security Code (4) Code on Wages. The president of India has given her assent. Now the Government of India is making serious efforts for the implementation of the Codes.

What happens if implemented? The fundamental right of the Workers is to form a union. This was guaranteed through the Trade union Act 1926 enacted by the parliament after several struggles. According to this Act 7 members can meet and decide to register a Union and submit to the Labour Department. But in the industrial Relations Code the number has been raised to 10% of the workers in a particular establishment or 100 whichever is less. Raising the limit is aimed at not to form Unions. The authorities are empowered not to register the Unions and to cancel the existing registered unions. This is nothing but to reintroduce the Bonded Labour system. Further, going for strike will be the toughest task in future. In the mask of illegal strike, the workers and any one branding him as instigated or supported the strike will be penalized. Legitimate Trade union activities will be criminalized.

Unorganized Road Transport Workers: They are the most vulnerable sections. They are being harassed by Police, RTA and other officials on filthy grounds. They are ill-treated. It is the experience of the Road Transport Workers that this harassment is controlled to some extent by forming unions. In many places, the unions are giving identity Cards to their members. When the worker operates the vehicle while wearing the ID card, it is giving some sort of protection and dignity. With the implementation of the Codes, there will be neither protection nor dignity.

Efforts of AIRTWF: As of now there is the minimum number for the enforcement of the PF, ESI etc Acts. They are not applicable to the unorganized Road Transport Workers because majority are self-employed. The AIRTWF is demanding to remove the minimum number threshold to make them applicable even to a single worker. After prolonged struggles, in the year 2006, at the representation of AIRTWF the then Prime Minister has referred the representation to the V.V.Giri national labour Institute to study and make suitable recommendations. The Committee of V.V.Giri institute after extensive study has recommended the Government to amend the Acts removing the minimum number in the acts for the applicability. The government instead of removing the minimum number, it has reiterated in the Codes and permanently kept out of the coverage.

Social Security: Social Security Code talks at length that it is the land mark and it will be applicable for the unorganized workers and self-employed. But the Code does not say anything on the allocation of funds by the government. Without allocation of funds how the workers will get the benefit. This is nothing but to deceive the workers.

Public Sector: The workers in the public sector are covered under many of the labour Laws. For example, the duty hours, weekly rest, spread over, notice of hours of work, compensatory off of rest, payment of wages, over time wages, wages during leave period, canteen facility etc are in force as per the Motor Transport Workers Act 1961. This has been repealed and the Codes will apply along with all other workers. The Parliament has enacted different laws for different sections of the workers keeping in view the nature of the work and the environment. But due to the implementation of the Codes all those specific provisions in the earlier laws are removed or diluted in the Codes. Furthermore, the existing PF contribution of 12% will be reduced to 10%. The offences committed by the employers will be decriminalized.

Why the Codes are enacted? In spite of all the hurdles and bottlenecks created by the governments and the employers, the workers are fighting and achieving something. The profit greedy employers could not digest this and forced the Government to do away with the labour laws/rights and give them free hand to squeeze the blood of the workers. Succumbed to the pressures, the government brought the Codes in the name of ease of doing business.

What is the reality? In the era of Globalization and the change in the climatic conditions the conditions of the workers and the people have deteriorated and have become very difficult to work. The working Class in the world is demanding for 7 hours work a day and 5 days work in a week. In India too we are demanding the same and also demanding to amend the laws in favor of the workers to lead peaceful and dignified life. But the Government is doing the opposite.

Shall we allow to snatch away the hard-earned rights? The Government came to power with the votes and support of majority of the workers and the common people. After assuming the power, the Government is serving the interest of the corporates at the cost of the workers and the people. Hence it is the time to rise to the occasion and tell the government that we will not allow you to make the workers slaves and handover the public property and natural resources to the Corporates. By participating and making the strike a grand success, we should warn the Government that we will not allow the barbarity. The kisan organizations and the agricultural Workers organizations have come forward to support the strike and also announced that they will create a bundh like situation on 20-05-2025.

Appel: All India Road Transport Workers' Federation appeals to all the Road Transport Workers to participate in the strike on 20-05-2025 in a big way and demonstrate the strength of the transport.

ALL INDIA ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS' FEDERATION