রফা তিপাঞ্চিক বৈঠকে, ডানলপ খোলায় বাধা কটিল

নিজয় সংবাদদাতা: অব্শেষে মিটল ডানলপের সাহাগঞ্জ কর্তৃপক্ষ ও ইউনিয়ন আলোচনার মাধ্যমে মতবিরোধ মিটিয়ে করিখানার সমস্যা। রাজ্য সরকারের হস্তক্ষেপে ডানলপ ফেলেছেন। দু'পক্ষেরই আশা, কারখানা পুরোদমে চালু হওয়ার পাথে আর কোনও বাধা রইল না। ডানলঙ্গের মালিক পবন কইয়ার দাবি, আগামী সেপ্টেশ্বরে সাহাগঞ্জের কারখানায় উৎপাদন শুরু হয়ে যাবে।

বন্দোপাধ্যয় জানান, কর্মীদের ১১ মাসের বক্ষো পাওনা *মহাকরণে পবন রুইয়া ও ডানলপের শ্রমিক নেতারা। - নিজস্ব চিত্র* ইউনিয়নের প্রতিনিধিরা। সন্ধ্যায় মহাকরণে আসেন দফতরের সঙ্গে বৈঠক করেন সংস্থা কর্তৃপক্ষ ও মালিক পবন কুইয়া। এর পরে ত্রিপাক্ষিক বৈঠকে চূড়ান্ত ফয়সালা হরে যায়। বৈঠক সোমে শ্রমমন্ত্রী মুণাল সোমবার মহাকরণে সকাল থেকে দফায় দফায় শ্রম

কাজ করেছেন, তাঁরা প্রথম কিস্তি হিসাবে পাবেন ৫০০ টাকা। এর কম দিন কাজ করলে মিলবে টাকাই দেওয়া হবে না বলে জানানো হয়েছিল। এখন তাঁরা প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছেন ছ'দিনের কম হলেও २९९० টাকা। মুণালবাবু অবশ্য জানান, পাওন টাকা নিয়ে সমস্যা মিটলেও, কর্মীদের হাজিরা সংক্রান্ত বিত্তকের এখনত নিষ্পত্তি হুসন। প্রথম কিন্তির টাকা ২০ জুন থেকে দেওয়া সংক্রান্ত বিতর্ক মিটে গিয়েছে। যাঁরা এক মাসের বেশি হবে বলে তিমি জানান।

সাহাগজের কারখানা সেস্টেশ্বরেই চালু সর দেওয়ার বিষয়ে আশাবাদী পবন রুইয়া। আপাতত সংস্থার বেতনভুক কর্মীর সংখ্যা ২৬৩১। এর মর্ন্ত ১১৭৯ জনকে স্থায়ী চাকরি দেওয়া হবে। বাকি ১৪৫২ জন ক্মীকে স্বিজ্ঞাবস্ত দেওয়া হবে ব্যক্ত জানান প্ৰন্বাবু। তিনি বলেন, "প্ৰথম কিন্তির টাকা বাবদ ২.২৫ কোটি টাকা থরচ করা হচ্ছে। হাজিবা সংক্রান্ত বিষয়টি মিটে গেলেই পরবর্তী কিন্তির টাকা দেওয়া শুরু

ইয়ে যাবে।" যাঁরা স্বেচ্ছাবসর নেবেন, তাঁদের কারখানা চালু হওয়ার घ्भारमं मरधार्षे भाषमा ठाका भिष्टित्र एमध्या घरव। धनारमत হবে বলে প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছেন রুইয়া। উৎপাদন চালু করার পাশাপাশি কারখানার রক্ষণাবেক্ষণের কাজও শুরু হবে। কর্তুপক্ষের পাওনার ৫০ শতাংশ প্রথম ছ'মাসে, বাকিটা পরবর্তী ছ'মাসে মেটানে মতে দফায় দফায় নিয়োনোর বিষয়টিও চালু হয়ে যাবে।

বলেন, "এর আগে কর্তৃপক্ষ ছ'দিনের কাজ বাবদ ৫৪ টাকা হাজিরা সিটু নেতা দীপঙ্কর রায়ও এ দিনের ফয়সালায় সম্ভোষ প্রকাশ করে "সাহাগঞ্জ কারখানা চালু করার জন্য যে কোনও ইতিবাচক সিদ্ধান্তকে আমরা স্বাগত জানাচ্ছি। হাজিরার বিষয়টিও ইউনিয়নের *সক্ষে* কর্তৃপক্ষ আলোচনার মাধ্যমে মিটিয়ে ফেলবেন বলে আশা রাখছি।" প্রতিনিধির। আই এন টি ইউ সি নেতা প্রমথেশ সেন বলেন এ দিনের আলোচনায় প্রাথমিক ভাবে খুন্সি ইউনিয়নেং

ভাতা দিতে চেয়েছিলেন। কিন্তু ছ'দিনের কম হাজিরা হলে কোনও

দৈনিক ৯ টাকা হিসাবে এই ভাতা পাবেন কর্মীরা।"

দেব ২০০০ সালের অগস্টে কারখানায় তালা পড়ে। সে সময় কর্মী ছিলেন প্রায় সাড়ে চার হাজার। ২০০৬ ১১১৮ সালের ফেবুয়ারিতে ডানলপের সাহাগঞ্জ কারখানা বন্ধ হয়। মাস ক'য়েক বাদে সেটি খুললেও, সালের ২৪ জানুয়ারি রাজ্যের শিক্ষমন্ত্রী নিরুপম সেনের উপস্থিতিতে ইউনিয়ন এবং কর্তৃপক্ষের মধ্যে সমঝোতাপত্র সই হয়। কিন্তু মূল চুক্তি স্বাক্ষর করতে ইউনিয়ন সময় নেয় চার মাস। তার পরে এগারো মাসের বকেয়া বেতনের অঙ্ক কী হবে, তা নিয়ে কর্তৃপক্ষ এবং ইউনিয়নের মধ্যে বিরোধের সৃষ্টি হয়। সেই বিরোধ এ দিন প্রাথমিক ভাবে মিটে গেল বলে মনে করছেন রাজ্য সরকার, ইউনিয়ন ও কর্তৃপক্ষ।

ANADABAZAR FAIRKA

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िर्क (योटिट्र व्यापिक मुश्नित्र (योपिक मुश्निर्धित्र (विकास मरवासमान्तः हुं हुन्। दिन कर्न् भटन कर्ना हिन्दिन हो होत् ।

মোটর কারখানার শ্রমিক সংগঠন এস সভায় সংগঠনের সভাপতি পদ থেকে সাংসদ গুরুদাস দাসগুপ্তকে বহিষ্কারের এস কে ইউ তাদের বার্ষিক সাধারণ সর্বভারতীয় শ্রমিক নেতা, সিপিআই সিদ্ধান্ত নিল।

গ্রহণ করা হয়। স্থানীয় টিটাগড় ওয়াগন শনিবার উত্তরপাড়া গণভবনে করেন গুরুদাসবাবুর গুরুদাসবাবুর বিরুদ্ধে নিন্দা প্রস্তাবভ শ্ৰমিকদের ধ্বনিভোটে ওই বহিষ্কারের প্রস্তাব গৃহীত হয়। এর আগে সংগঠনের অনুগামীরা। তারপর থেকেই সংগঠনের মধ্যে জটিলতার সৃষ্টি হয়। এ দিনের সাধারণ সম্পাদক দীপক বক্সিকে সভায় মালিকপক্ষের সঙ্গে অশুভ অভিযোগ তুলে বহিষ্কার

সাংগঠনিক সভাপতি গুরুদাসবাবুকে পাঠানো হয়। কিন্তু তিনি তা প্রত্যাখ্যান করেন। এরপরই সংগঠনের সম্পাদককে বহিষ্কার করা হয়। এ দিনের সভায় দীপকবাবুর বহিষ্কারকে অগণতান্ত্রিক আখ্যা দেওয়া হয়। আমন্ত্রণপত্র শ্রমিকদের তরফে সমালোচনা করা হয় এ দিনের সভায়। শমিকদের প্রসঙ্গে ওই সর্বভারতীয় গুরুদাসবাবুর পরিবর্তে শঙ্করানন্দ শমিক নেতার ভূমিকারও তীব্র চক্রবর্তী এস এস কে ইউ-এর নতুন সভাপতি হিসাবে অমিতাভ ভট্টাচার্যকে সভাপতি মনোনীত হয়েছেন। তিনি অসুস্থ থাকায় সভা থেকে কাৰ্যকরী

শমিকদের একাংশ বিদ্রোহ করে যে পাল্টা সাংগঠনিক প্রক্রিয়ার জন্ম দয়েছেন সে ব্যাপারে তীব্র প্রতিক্রিয়া জানিয়ে গুরুদাসবাবু বলেন,''নকশাল অতি ক্ষুদ্র অংশ ওইসুরু করছে। আমি মালিকের দাল্যা**ন্স**ন্**ই। শুধু হিন্দ** মোটর লোকজনের মদতে শ্রমিকদ্রের একটা বাইরের নির্বাচিত করা হয়। মনোভাবাপন্ন

আমাকে সভার কথা চিঠি দিয়েও

জানাননি।" যদিও গুরুদাসবাবুর দাবি, "আমাদের স্ধগঠানের ১৩০ জন

भनाभिकादित्रं मिट्टी ३० जन छाउँ मिट्टी

দীপকবাবু বলেন, ''সাংগঠনিক বিন্যাসে

সাধারণ সম্পাদককে না-জানিয়ে সংগঠনের কৌনও বৈঠক হতে পারে না। যদি হয় তা নিয়মবিরুদ্ধ। ওঁরা

আমরা যদি সেই রাজনীতিতেই বিশাসী হই, তাহলে গত লোকসভা নিৰ্1চনে তাঁর বিরোধীদের সমালোচনা

নন, বহিরাগত।"

প্রসঙ্গত এর আগে এ দিনের সভার

মোটরে ডি এ ফিজ-সহ **টিটাগড় ও**য়াগন লিমিটেডের ৬৮ জন শ্রামিকের হাঁটাইয়ের বিরুদ্ধে নতুন করে করব। সংখ্যগরিষ্ঠ শ্রমিক আমাদের এস এস কে ইউ-এর পক্ষে হিন্দ গুরুদাসবাবু অবশ্য বলেন, "ওঁরা যা খুম্পি যেতে পারে। আমরা ওঁদের উপেক্ষা আন্দোলনের ডাক দেওয়া হয়েছে। করতে পারে। প্রয়োজনে আদালতে দিতে পারি না।" গুরুদাসবাবুর ব্যক্তব্য উড়িয়ে সংগঠনের নব নির্বাচিত কার্যকরী সভাপতি নেতা অমিতাভ ভট্টাচাৰ্য

সঙ্গেই আছেন।"

আমরা আবার বামফন্টের বি**রুদ্ধে প্রা**র্থী দিতে যাব কেন ? হিন্দ মোটরে চাকরি না করাটা অপরাধ নাকি? গুরুদাসবাবু নিজে কি হিন্দ মোটরের শ্রমিক ?" "সংখ্যালঘু ওই সমন্ত শমিকদের মধ্যে করতে গিয়ে গুরুদাসবাবু বলেন, নকশাল মনোভাবাপন্ন লোকজন রয়েছেন। ওঁরা এইবার নির্বাচনে ভোট বয়কটের ডাক পর্যন্ত দিয়েছিল। গত লোকসভা নির্বাচনের সময় এম কে ডি নাম দিয়ে হঠাৎ বামফ্রন্টের বিরুদ্ধে এক প্রার্থীকে দাঁড় করিয়ে দেয়। আমি সঙ্গে সঙ্গে আমাদের সংগঠন থেকে আভাষ বামফণ্ট বিরোধী কিছু আমি চলতে भूभि नात्म छट्टे সদস্যকে বের করে দিই।

ANADARAZAR MATRIKA

10 child labourers rescued The Boys Were Found Working In The Canteen of Govt's World Dairy

By Rukmini Shrinivasan/TNN

Mumbai: Deputy minister R R Patil may have declared that Mumbai will be child labour-free by August 15, but here's a sign that it may not be that easy. On Saturday morning, the task force constituted by Patil to clamp down on child labour rescued ten underage boys from the government's own dairy at Worli.

The boys, who were working in the canteen which caters to employees of the Worli Dairy at Worli Seaface, lived in a small room next to it. The dairy produces drinks like Energee, masala milk and packaged milk. The boys did the cooking, cleaning and serving at the canteen, run by manager Sudhakar Shetty on a contract basis. They said they had been working there between one to five months.

While Shetty insisted that he sent them to school, none of them could give the name of a school or show any books. "I never asked them to work-they do it on their own," Shetty said. He later produced a muster of the number of days each boy



After the rescue, the boys relished a meal at the very canteen they worked in till a few hours ago

had money nor knew if their parents had been given any.

After they were rescued and their names taken down, the boys sat down in the same canteen where they had been serving the

had worked. None of them dairy's employees for a quick meal before they were taken away. After months of waiting on tables, they enjoyed being on the other side, making the staff run around and ordering "rice plate" and lassis. "Aaj tum chai lao mama, said Gokul (13) laughingly to the canteen's older staff.

"We have followed all rules. It's the contractor who may have erred," said V A Gaikwad, general manager of the Worli, Kurla and Aarey Milk Colony dairies. "If there have been any lapses, I will take legal action,' be added.

The task force comprising representatives of the BMC's shops and establishments department, labour department, police and NGO Pratham, acted on a tip-off by a dairy employee and raided the canteen on Saturday morning after

days of planning.
While four of the boys gave addresses in the city, the rest came from outside Mumbai. The children will be sent home after their age and addresses are verified. Shetty has been arrested.

ডানলপ চালু করতে রাজ্য কী সুবিধা দিতে পারে, সিদ্ধান্ত শীঘ্রই

সুপ্রকাশ চক্রবর্তী 🂢

সাহাগজের ডানলপ কারখানা খোলার জন্য মালিক পক্ষের সঙ্গে সেখানকার শ্রমিক ইউনিয়নগুলির দ্বিশাক্ষিক চুক্তি সই হওয়ার সঙ্গে সঙ্গের রাজ্য সরকার এ ব্যাপারে নিজেদের পরবর্তী পদক্ষেপ চূড়ান্ত কারার দিকে এগোল্ডে।

সাহাগঞ্জের কারখানা চালু করতে সংস্থার নতুন মালিক পবন কইয়ার গোষ্ঠী রাজ্য সরকারের কাছে কারখানাটির পুরনো দেনা মেটানোর ব্যাপারে বেশ কিছু ছাড়/সূবিধা চেয়েছে। শিল্প পুনর্গঠনমন্ত্রী নিরুপম সেন কিছুদিন আগে রাজ্যের সংশ্লিষ্ট দফতরগুলির সচিবদের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে ওই দাবিদাওয়াগুলি খতিয়ে দেখেন।

ডানলপ কারখানার পুনরুজ্জীবনের স্বার্থে পেশ করা ওই সব দাবিদাওয়ার সঙ্গে রাজা সরকারের অন্তত সাতটি দফতর বা সংস্থা জড়িত। তার মধ্যে রয়েছে শিল্প-বাণিজা, শিল্প পুনর্গঠন, ভূমি রাজস্ব, পুর দফতর। রয়েছে কলকাতা পুরসভা, রাজা বিদ্যুৎ পর্যদ এবং অর্থ দফতরের অধীন বাণিজ্য কর শাখা।

রাজ্য সরকারের মতে, বিভিন্ন দফতরের কাছ থেকে রুইয়া গোষ্ঠী যে-সব ছাড় বা সুবিধা ঢেয়েছে, তা মূলত এই রকম: রাজ্য বিদ্যুৎ পর্যদের কাছে ডামলপ কর্তৃপক্ষের আর্জি,

- কারখানা বন্ধ থাকার সময়কার (১৯৯৮-র জানুয়ারি থেকে ২০০৬-র জানুয়ারি পর্যন্ত) সমস্ত বকেয়া বিদ্যুতের বিল মকুব করে দেওয়া হোক।
- কারখানা খোলার পরে তাঁদের সুবিধাজনক হারে বিদৃাৎ সরবরাহ করা হোক।

শিল্প-বাণিজ্য দফতর তথা পশ্চিমবঙ্গ শিল্পোন্নয়ন নিগমের কাছে তাদের আর্জি,

- সাহাগঞ্জের কারখানার আধুনিকীকরণে তাদের ১০০ কোটি টাকার মূলধনী ঋণ দেওয়া হোক।
- সংস্থার আগের ঋণ বাবদ শিক্ষোন্নয়ন নিগমের যে ৫ কোটি টাকা এখনও পাওনা রয়েছে, তার ৫০ শতাংশ নিয়ে ঋণটি পুরোপুরি মিটিয়ে ফেলা হোক।

্রিপুর দফতর এবং কলকাত পুরসভার কাছে তাদের আর্জি,

● কলকাতায় সংস্থার যে-সব সম্পত্তি রয়েছে, সেখানে বিভিন্ন পুর পরিষেবা বাবদ দেয় ২২ লক্ষ টাকা মকুব করে দেওয়া হোক। অন্য দিকে, সাহাগঞ্জের কারখানার সম্পত্তি কর বাকি থাকায় সংস্থার বিরুদ্ধে বাঁশবেড়িয়া পুরসভা যে শাস্তিমূলক বাবস্থা নিয়েছে, তা প্রত্যাহার করা হোক।

বাণিজ্য কর শাখার কাছে ডানলপের নতুন পরিচালকদের আর্জি,

 বিক্রয় কর ও আনুষঙ্গিক কর ধরে সংস্থার বকেয়া ৪০ কোটি টাকা ছাড় দেওয়া হোক।

শিল্প পুনর্গঠন দফতরের কাছে ডানলপ কর্তৃপক্ষের আর্জি,

● কারখানাটি নতুন করে চালু হওয়া মাত্র পাওনাদারদের তাগাদা থেকে বাঁচতে সেটিকে 'রিলিফ আন্ডারটেকিং' হিসাবে ঘোষণা করা হোক। এ ছাড়াও, রাজ্য সরকারের কাছে সংস্থাটির নতুন পরিচালকদের আরও নানা আর্জি রয়েছে।

আইন বা বিধি মোতাবেক,
ডানলপ কর্তৃপক্ষের সব দাবিই যে
পুরোপুরি মেনে নেওয়া যাবে না, রাজা
সরকারের বিভিন্ন দফতর সে বাাপারে
একমত। তবে, বেশির ভাগ দাবি
সম্পর্কেই দফতরগুলির মনোভাব
সদর্থক ও সহানুভূতিমূলক।

রিলিফ অভারটেকিংয়ের মর্যাদা দিতে রাজ্য সরকারের কোনও আপত্তি নেই। সাহাগঞ্জে ডানলপ কারখানা যাতে ফের ভাল ভাবে চলতে পারে, সে জনা বিধি মেনে বকেয়ার একটা অংশ ছাড় দিতে এবং বাকি টাকা কিস্তিতে মেটানোর সুযোগ দিতেও তৈরি কেউ কেউ।

কারখানাটির পুনরুজ্জীবনে যে প্রকল্প তৈরি করা হবে, তা অনুমোদনের ব্যাপারে দিল্লিতে এ এ আই এফ আর (শিল্প ও আর্থিক পুনর্গঠনের অনুমোদনকারী কর্তৃপক্ষ)-এর পরবর্তী শুনানি হওয়ার কথা আগামী ৯ জুন। তার আগেই ডানলপ কর্তৃপক্ষকে বিভিন্ন ক্ষেত্রে কতটা ছাড় বা সুবিধা দেওয়া যাবে, সেটা জানিয়ে দিতে চায় রাজ্য সরকার। পুনরুজ্জীবন প্রকল্পটির রূপরেখা তৈরি করার ভার পড়েছে একটি রাষ্ট্রায়ন্ত ব্যাক্ষের উপরে।

Chirac scraps Johnson

Associated Press

PARIS, April 10: President Jacques Chirac today abandoned an employment measure that triggered massive protests and strikes, bowing to intense pressure from students and unions and dealing a blow to his loyal premier in a bid to pull France out of crisis.

Prime Minister Mr Dominique de Villepin, who devised the jobs law, had faced down protesters for weeks, insisting that its most divisive provision, a so-called "first job con-tract" was necessary to reduce high unemployment rates among French youths by making it easier for companies to hire, and fire, young workers.

Students and other opponents had feared the job contract would erode coveted job security and some unions trumpeted the retreat by Mr Chirac and his Prime Minister.

Acting on advice from Mr Villepin, his longtime protege, Mr Chirac "decided to replace" the provision with a measure aimed at "youths in difficulty", a statement from Mr Chirac's office said. The proposal emerged after talks the legislators held last week with unions and student groups to find ways of ending the crisis.

A somber Villepin, in a television appearance, explained that his original legislation was designed to curb the "despair of many youths" and strike a balance "better between more flexibility for the employer and more security for workers". The crisis has discredited Mr Chirac and devastated Mr Villepin and his presidential ambitions. The new measures increase the government's role in the workplace instead of decreasing them, as Mr Villepin had sought. The job contract "is dead and buried", said Mr Jean-Claude Mailly of the Workers Force union. A new, four-point plan sent to parliament would beef up existing job contracts, rather than enact new ones. The government would offer more state support for companies that bring on young workers.

Dunlop to reopen in two weeks

HT Correspondent Kolkata, April 9

DUNLOP Ltd's Sahagunj factory is only a fortnight away from re-opening, the Pawan Kumar Ruia group said on Sunday. Group chairman P.K. Ruia signed an agreement with the Citu-affiliated Dunlop Workers' Union and the Intucaffiliated Dunlop Rubber Factory Labour Union. All pending issues, including compensation to workers seeking early retirement, have been taken care of.



IT'S A DEAL:

Pawan Ruia and Intuc's Ranjit Neogi

The Sahagunj plant will open within a fortnight, but production begins in August or September. The management will retain 1,200 of the 2,700 workers. The remaining 1,500 will be offered an early retirement scheme (ERS). Once operation begins, the company will require another 400-500 contract workers for which preference will be given to employees who have worked for Dunlop before.

The Ruias will initially spend Rs 40-45 crore to begin work at Sahagunj. The agreement was signed at Ruia Centre, the company's plush new office in south Kolkata.

Gratuity payment to the workers will bear two components. First, the company will clear outstanding gratuity (Rs 3-4 crore) to workers who have already retired on or before the factory resumes production. Second, for workers opting to take ERS, the management will pay half their dues in two instalments, to be cleared within three months of reopening. That translates to another Rs 150-200 crore.

In all, the Ruias will have to fork out Rs 400 crore towards settling workers' liabilities, capital expenditure and working capital. Dunlop has a liability of Rs 650 crore, which the new management plans to bring down to Rs 450 crore. The company has approached the government, seeking the status of a relief undertaking.

"We have urged the state government to waive some outstanding electricity dues. Things will be settled soon." Ruia said. He blamed encroachers, including some small-scale industries that have come up in the 233-acre Dunlop Township, for the inflated electricity bills.

Dipankar Roy of Dunlop Workers' Union said that the workers had faced hardships over the years. Ranjit Guha Neogi of the Intuc-affiliated union said they would be better off after Sunday's agreement.

The Ruia group has already finalised an agreement with workers of the company's plant in Ambattur (Tamil Nadu) and the plant would re-open on Monday for maintenance work.

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See also Page 11

Deal signed, Dunlop set for fresh start

A STAFF REPORTER

Calcutta, April 9: Days before the first phase of polls in the state, the final agreement for the reopening of Dunlop's Sahagunj unit was signed today between the new owner, Pawan Ruia, and the unions.

The long-term wage pact with a built-in productivity clause was forged a day before Dunlop's other factory at Ambattur in Tamil Nadu goes to production.

Ruia and representatives of the two unions, Dipankar Roy of the Citu and Ranjit Guha Niyogi of the Intuc said they were happy, though not all in as many words.

"I am happy that the final agreement has been signed paving way for (the) restarting of (the) Sahagunj factory," Ruia said.

Guha Niyogi said he was "not unhappy" after all.

Having signed the dotted line at Ruia's south Calcutta office, Roy expressed hope that the new owner would invest more in the factory and create more jobs.

Although no state government representative was present today, the development will come as a big relief for the ruling Left Front, whose main campaign planks have been development and industrialisation.

The terms of the pact broadly followed the memorandum of understanding signed by the new management and workers at Writers' Buildings on January 24 at the behest of industries minister Nirupam Sen.

Production at Sahagunj

in Hooghly, about 60 km from Calcutta, is expected to begin in September. Work to ensure a fresh start by that date will begin in two weeks.

According to broad terms of the deal (see box), 1,200 of the existing 2,700-strong workforce will be retained. The rest will offered early retirement schemes (ERS).

Ruia said about 400-500 more people will be deployed on contract and the workers offered ERS would be given preference.

The ERS amount — to be calculated depending on the basis of the number of years left in service — has been capped at Rs 120,000 and will be fully paid within 6 months from the start of production. The gratuity money will also be paid within that period.

The management has agreed to pay Rs 5,000 as dues on account of back wages on April 30. Those opting for ERS will be paid the rest of the amount within six months from the start of production and the rest — in two equal instalments — within a year.

While Ruia has agreed to shell out about Rs 43-45 crore as workers' dues, he also forced them to raise daily production from 90 tonnes a day to 120 tonnes.

Moreover, the salary will remain the same as what used to be in August 2001, when Dunlop closed down. Ruia, however, agreed to give an annual increment of Rs 100 for the next three years.

According to the management's estimate, about Rs 450 crore has to be pumped in to restart the operations.

French PM refuses to back down on job law conflict AGENCE France-Presse

AGENCE France-Presse Paris, March 20

FRENCH PRIME Minister Dominique de Villepin was steeling himself on Monday for a showdown over his contested youth jobs plan, ignoring an ultimatum for its withdrawal from the organisers of a growing protest movement.

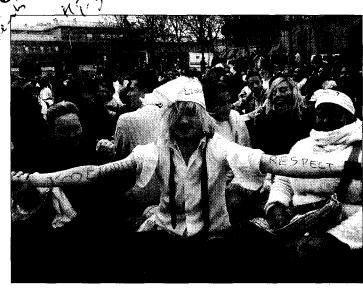
Laws of the Republic, voted democratically by parliament, must be respected," Villepin said in a letter sent to members of his centre-right Union for a Popular Movement (UMP).

Student leaders were to meet later to determine the next phase in their campaign against the First Employment Contract (CPE), amid signs that the standoff with the government will further intensify in the days ahead with a possible general strike. After hundreds of thousands

took part in violent mass protests on Saturday, organisers gave Villepin a 48-hour deadline to withdraw the contract, which allows companies to fire employees aged under 26 without motivation in a two-year trial period. But Villepin told UMP deputies that the CPE was "an essential tool for freeing up the labour

market and creating jobs".

"All young people, whatever their origin, must be able to practice a trade that corresponds with their qualifications." The prime minister urged his party



Students stage a sit-in demonstration in Paris on Monday.

to explain the new jobs programme to the public. Villepin was himself to meet a youth delegation in the afternoon, while education minister Gilles de Robien invited student organisa-tions for talks. Most declined, saying the contract's withdrawal was a precondition.
Conceived by Villepin as a tool

for bringing down France's high levels of youth unemployment, which reaches 50 per cent in areas hit by last year's riots, the CPE was adopted by parliament 10 days ago and is now waiting to be written into the statute books.

But an opposition alliance of unions, students and left-wing parties say it is a charter for employer exploitation and a breach of hard-won social rights

Most of the country's 85 universities remained partially or totally shut down by student strikes on Monday, and for the first time tens of secondary schools or lycees across the country were also affected. The National Union of Lycee students has called for a "day of action" on Tuesday Heart 1 tion" on Tuesday. Union leaders have raised the possibility of a day of strikes during the week.

2 1 Man 2006

THE LILLUSTAN TIMES

Spring of discontent for European youth Rioting in France Over Job Law | Alcohol-Fuelled Mayhem On Spain's Streets

Paris: French students clashed with police outside the Sorbonne University on Saturday after 500,000 people protested nationwide against a new jobs law. More than 150 people were arrested.

Police also fired tear gas to disperse skirmishing youths at the end of a march in eastern Paris. At the Sorbonne, they turned water canons on hundreds of protesters who torched a store and dismantled a barricade. Seven officers and 17 protesters were injured at the Place de la Nation and the Sorbonne. At the Sorbonne, police were seen throwing youths to the ground, hitting them and dragging them into vans. Cars were set ablaze and a McDonald's restaurant and store fronts attacked.

Protest organisers have urged President Jacques Chirac to block a new law that makes it easier for employers to fire young workers. They demanded an answer by Monday-then they will decide whether to continue protests that have paralysed 16 universities and dominated political discourse.

The controversy over the jobs law has threatened to weaken the government as elections approach next year. The law, which is to go into effect in April, allows employers to fire young workers in the first two years on a job without giving a reason. The government says the law will encourage companies to hire young workers.

Youth joblessness—which stands at 23% nationwide, and 50% among impoverished youth-was blamed in part for the riots that shook suburbs last fall. They also left French people wondering whether Prime Minister Dominique de Villepin, in the toughest test of his nearly 10month tenure, would hold out. The usually outspoken premier was conspicuously silent during Saturday's protests. Chirac has pushed Villepin to act "as quickly as possible" to defuse the crisis.

The march in Paris became violent as it ended, with youths setting a car afire, smashing a shop window, trashing a bus stop and hurling stones, golf balls and other obiects at police. AP

Youths rallied revellers by

Protest organisers have urged President Jacques Chirac to block a new law that makes it easier for employers to fire young workers. They demanded an answer by Monday, when they will decide whether to continue the protests

e-mail and SMS messages for 'macrobotellones' in 20 cities around Spain on Friday, while authorities pleaded with parents to keep their children under control and warned them of the danger of under-age drinking

Madrid: A mass street drinking session by Spanish youths turned into a riot in Barcelona in which 68 people were injured and 54 arrested. Another 12 people were hurt and 16 arrested in clashes early on Saturday between police and street drinkers in the historic city of Salamanca, 180km northwest of Madrid, state radio said.

Tens of thousands of young people congregated in cities around Spain on Friday night in an attempt to hold the country's biggest street drinking session or 'botellon' (big bottle).

In Barcelona, the event degener-

tre) cops detain a ia; (bottom) ne burn in Barcelona

ated into pitched battles between police and drinkers in the narrow old streets of the city centre that lasted most of the night. The riot began after midnight when youths began throwing bottles and cans at police who responded with baton charges and fired rubber bullets, according to media reports. Firemen were called to put out 50 blazes as the youths set fire to bins. Shop windows were broken and several shops ransacked, media reports said. A Barcelona municipal police spokesman blamed the disturbances on about 200 people who he said were out to cause trouble. He said the 68 injured included 37 police officers.

Bombarded with noise, the stench of urine and vomit on the streets, many city councils brought in rules to ban drinking on the street. Police now patrol many botellon spots at weekends, moving along groups of teenagers who mix cocktails with cheap spirits or 'calimocho' (red wine and cola).

Youths rallied revellers by email and SMS messages for 'macrobotellones' in 20 cities around Spain on Friday, while authorities pleaded with parents to keep their children under control and warned them of the danger of underage drinking. Some e-mails and Smses read: "Drink, drink, drink, and while you're at it blast the bars' high prices." A police spokesman said: "We've never seen anything like this in Granada. There's no doubt that this is the biggest botellon in Spain." Reuters

Bill for unorganised labour likely in this Session: Minister Security Calls for a Mati-

Calls for a National Social Security Authority

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Government will introduce a Bill for workers in the unorganised sector, most likely before the end of the budget session, Union Minister for Labour and Employment K. Chandrasekhara Rao said on Saturday

He told the Rajya Sabha that he shared the members' concern over the problem of unorganised workers. "The Government is seized of the matter. We will come to the House with adequate legislation.

Unorganised Sector The Workers' Social Security Bill was being finalised. Agriculture labour would be included in it. The Bill calls for establishment of a National Social Security Authority, comprising a supervisory board and an executive office. The Authority will formulate a policy in coordination with the State governments, welfare boards and other agencies for unorganised workers.

Mr. Rao was replying to a discussion on the working of the Ministry.

Asked whether the Government proposed to raise the interest on Employees Provident Fund from 8.5 per cent, he de-

- No comments on EPF rate revision
- Government committed to abolishing child labour
- MNCs covered under national laws

clined to comment. He said

it was a policy decision, which could not be announced, as elections were due in five States. "I am bound by the Election Commission's model code of conduct.'

The Government was committed to abolishing child labour and action would be taken against those who employed children.

The budget allocation for abolition of child labour was raised from Rs. 178 crore to Rs. 602 crore in the Tenth Plan. The National Child Labour Project, launched in 12 districts, was extended to 250 districts all over the country. Fiftyeight hazardous areas were identified and Rs. 2 lakh was given to each District Collector for creating awareness of child labour.

On the problem of contract labourers working abroad, Mr.

Rao said the matter did not relate to his Ministry but he would take it up with the Prime Minister.

Housing scheme

Replying to queries, Mr. Rao said the Government would make efforts to reduce beedi workers' contribution from Rs. 5,000 under a subsidised housing scheme. The Ministry was reviewing all 47 Labour Acts to see if amendments were required to make them more effec-

Mr. Rao said there was no separate rule for multinationals. which were covered under the national laws.

Several members had complained that MNCs were de-recognising labour unions and that they did not recognise the rights of workers.

Superspeciality hospitals

The Minister said Rs. 200 crore was earmarked for setting up four superspeciality Employees State Insurance Corporation hospitals in Hyderabad, Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata. One hundred Industrial Training Inz stitutes were modernised and 400 more would be upgraded with World Bank assistance.

Labour reforms needed to boost productivity: Survey

"Laws of the country are highly protective of labour"

Special Correspondent

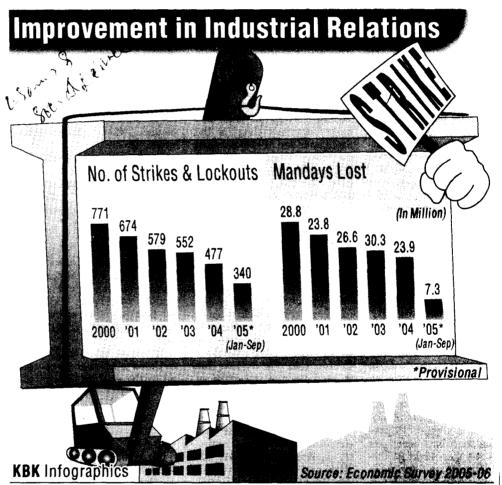
NEW DELHI: India perhaps, has some lessons to learn from China in labour reforms, according to the Economic Survey 2005-06. China, with a history of extreme employment security, has drastically reformed its labour relations and created a new labour market, making workers highly

"Although there have been mass layoffs and open unemployment, high rates of industrial growth especially in the coastal regions helped their redeployment. In spite of hardship, workers in China seem to have benefited from wage growth, additional job creation and new opportunities for selfemployment," says the Survey.

Advocating the need for reforms in labour laws and markets, it says that the Indian labour market is characterised by a sharp dichotomy. While a large number of establishments in the unorganised sector remain outside any regulation, the organised sector has been regulated fairly stringently.

It says that studies indicated that the laws of the nation are highly protective of labour, and labour markets are relatively inflexible. These laws apply only to the organised sector, and consequently, they restricted labour mobility and led to capital-intensive methods in the organised sector, besides affecting adversely the sector's labour demand.

Labour being a subject in the



Concurrent list, State labour regulations are an important determinant of industrial performance. Evidence suggests that the States that have enacted more pro-worker regula-tions have lost out on industrial production in gener-

Taking note of frequent strikes and lockouts, the Survey underlines the need for labour law reforms to enhance productivity and competitiveness of industry.

The number of strikes and lockouts between January and September last year stood at 340. This came out to more than one strike a day. West Bengal experienced the maximum instances of industrial

unrest, followed by Tamil Nadu and Gujarat. The industrial disturbances were concentrated mainly in textiles, engineerchemicals and products industries.

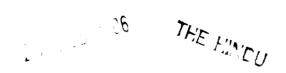
The number of strikes and lockouts went down 13.6 per cent from 552 in 2003 to 477 in 2004, with a sharper decline in strikes than in lockouts.

Protection to seafarers seafarers

the new labour standard scheduled for adoption by the International Labour Organisation at its ongoing 10th maritime session in Geneva — a decennial event with tripartite participation from 100 mem-

ber countries - is appropriate in the context of the exponential growth in seaborne trade under globalisation, the consequent boom in the ship-building industry, and competitive pressures to cut cost. The Maritime Labour Convention (2006) seeks to improve the capacity of states to enforce global standards of social protection on vessel operators by eliminating flags of convenience ships - those which are registered outside the country of ownership, motivated by considerations of low registration fee, low taxes, availability of cheap labour, and poor enforcement of human and trade union rights of crews. Operators of ships would be required under the Convention to obtain a maritime labour certificate and a declaration of compliance from the countries whose flags they fly. This would be a disincentive to shipowners who, with their substandard ships and low cost operations, undercut the lines that follow the international rules and guarantee protection to seafarers. The new Convention also promises enhanced social protection, especially in occupational health, for the world's more than one million seafarers whose value as a source of remittances is marred by their working conditions underpinned by grave personal risk. It provides for inspection and arrest of most categories of vessels for failure to apply social security criteria, in the same way that protection of ships and the maritime environment are enforced by the International Maritime Organisation.

Today, the global scenario is characterised by rapid automation of vessels and the consequent surplus of unskilled ratings and early retirements, coupled with the need to attract youngsters to a harsh life on the sea in the face of the robust demand worldwide for qualified engineers and officers. Another dimension to these changes in the labour market is the entry of countries such as China and India which, given their large manpower, can potentially squeeze out traditional players such as the Philippines. As seafarers invariably work outside their own countries and shipping firms operate overseas, well-coordinated international standards afford the main guarantee for the rights of the workforce in the maritime industry. Paradoxically, however, compliance with some of the key ILO instruments (they number over 60) is said to be significantly low for a variety of reasons. The unique situation that obtains in this sector, more than in any other area of the global economy, should force countries to improve the enforcement of regulation at the national level. The Convention allows greater flexibility as regards implementation, while it remains unambiguous and firm about the rights and standards that must be maintained. This leaves no room for complacency in an environment where trade is assuming importance more than ever before.



Labour leader hangs himself to protest tea garden lockout

AMITAVA Banerjee Darjeeling, February 25

BABURAM DEWAN could have lived on to fight another day. The 62-year-old retired tea garden *chowkidar* — who also was a writer, a social worker and a humanist — chose instead to die, for nothing short of death, he thought, would stop the rampant exploitation of workers by the garden owners' community.

Baburam committed suicide on Saturday by hanging himself from the ceiling of the leaf-weighing shed at the locked-out Chongtong Tea Estate some 28 km from Darjeeling where he was a guard until 2002.

The suicide note pinned to his coat lapel had a question addressed to the administration: "What kind of justice is this that a single man can push 6,500 men to the brink of starvation?" Blaming the garden owner for his death, his note warned. "The administration must punish him. Otherwise there will be many such cases."

Workers confirmed that lockouts were an annual feature at Chongtong Tea Estate. "Over the past 23 years since the garden was taken over by East India Produce Ltd only three winters have gone



SUMAN BARAILY/HT Baburam's lifeless body in a garden shed.

without a lockout. Winter is a lean season when tealeaves don't grow. Every winter, the owner shuts down the garden on some pretext or the other. This time, Baburam decided to do something about it," a worker said.

Baburam's son Laxman, a jobless man, is in a state of shock. "He left home around 3 am. I thought he was going to the toilet. When I woke up around 5 am,

he was still not back, which was unusual. Then we got news that some people who had spotted him hanging from the weighing shed ceiling," Laxman said.

ing shed ceiling," Laxman said.

"Having retired as a guard in 2002, Baburam devoted his time to social work. He was always concerned for Chongtong and its workers. A member of the Red Cross, he used to dole out aid to the disabled and organise blood donation camps. He had also pledged his eyes," Baburam's nephew Amar said.

"To bear hunger and not stand up against suppression is to live like a coward," he would tell the workers. In a recent publication titled *Subh Kamana*, he wrote, "Anyone can touch my body after I die; anyone can shed his tears and shower his ultimate love for me after I die. This will give peace to my departed soul."

Soon after the news of his death spread, the Chongtong tea Estate Joint Action Committee called a 24-hour bandh on Sunday in the three hill sub-divisions of Darjeeling district. Sources in the administration said the bandh could spin out of control because lockouts at the Chongtong tea Estate had pushed about 1,252 workers and 5,000 dependents to the brink of starvation.

THE HIDUSTAIN TIMES

Dunlop stand-off continues Trust of Incite 19

KOLKATA, Feb. 18. - The stand-off between Mr Pawan Kumar Ruia led management of ailing Dunlop India and workers' union remained unresolved today, but the new management expressed confidence that all pending issues would be sorted out soon paving the way for re-opening of the plant.

The differences still persist and a unanimity on pending issues could not be reached at the day's meeting, a spokesman of the management said, adding that a series of meetings would be held next week to sort out the matter. To a query that what were the points of differences, he said that it mainly revolved around production norms, "but we want to make it clear that the negotiation is an ongoing process and we are confident of sorting out the matter soon and hence there is no

uncertainty over the re-opening of the Dunlop plants.

He also said, "the state government has been playing a very pro-active role on the Dunlop issue and we are sure that if we fail to sort out the matter the government will help." Both the Citu and Intuc affiliated Dunlop workers unions were present at the meeting. Mr Ruia had earlier signed aMoU with the workers union on early retirement scheme and back-wages for the period plants were closed and on the basis of it an agreement was to be signed by February 15.

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THE S. TESMAN

চুক্তিসই হল না, ডানল্প খোলায় অনিশ্চয়তা

নিজস্ব সংবাদদাতা: রাজ্য সরকার চাইলেও ইউনিয়নের সঙ্গে মতানৈক্য হওয়ার ফলে বিলম্বিত হতে পারে ডানলপের দরজা খোলার দিনক্ষণ। ছাবড়িয়াদের কাছ থেকে পি কে রুইয়া গোষ্ঠী ডানলপ কিনে নেওয়ার পর কারখানা খোলার জন্য ইউনিয়ন এবং নতুন কর্তৃপক্ষের সঙ্গে একটি সমঝোতাপত্র বা মউ স্বাক্ষরিত হয়। কিন্তু তার পর তিন সপ্তাহেরও বেশি সময় কেটে গেলেও কারখানা খোলার ব্যাপারে মূল চুক্তি এখনও স্বাক্ষরিত হয়নি। তবে এ সপ্তাহের শেষেই কর্তৃপক্ষ ফের ইউনিয়নের সঙ্গে বৈঠকে বসবেন।

চুক্তি স্বাক্ষরের ব্যাপারে কর্তৃপক্ষের বেশ কিছু প্রস্তাব ইউনিয়ন মানতে রাজি নয়। ডানলপের সিটু ইউনিয়নের সাধারণ সম্পাদক দীপঙ্কর রায় জানান, কর্তৃপক্ষের দেওয়া 'নো ওয়ার্ক নো পে' সংক্রান্ত প্রস্তাব তাঁরা মানতে রাজি নন। তিনি বলেন, "কোনও কর্মী নিজে থেকে কাজে হাজিরা না দিলে সে দিনের মজুরি আমরা চাই না। কিন্তু কোনও কর্মী কারখানায় হাজিরা দেওয়া সন্থেও, তাঁকে কাজ না-দিয়ে বেতন কাটা হলে আমরা তা মানব না।" দীপঙ্করবাবুর বক্তব্য, এই প্রস্তাব মানা হলে ঠিকা কর্মী এবং স্থায়ী কর্মীদের মধ্যে কোনও পার্থকা থাকে না।

বি আই এফ আর এবং এ আই এফ আর-এর কাছে কর্তৃপক্ষের পেশ করা বক্তব্য সমর্থন করে ইউনিয়নকে সই করতে বলা হয়েছে, দীপঙ্করবাবু জানান। এটিও ইউনিয়ন মানতে নারাজ। এ ছাড়া তাঁর অভিযোগ, ক্যান্টিন তুলে দিয়ে খাদ্য বাবদ কর্মীদের ভাতা দেওয়া হবে বলে কর্তৃপক্ষ এর আগে রাজি হয়েছিলেন। এখন সেটাও দেওয়া হবে না বলে তাঁরা জানিয়েছেন।

এ দিকে, ডানলপের সাহাগঞ্জ এবং অস্বাত্ত্বরের দু'টি কারখানাই তাঁরা অবিলম্বে খুলতে আগ্রহী বলে জানিয়েছেন ডানলপের নতুন মালিক পবন কুমার রুইয়া। তিনি বলেন, "ডানলপকে স্থায়ী ভাবে চাঙ্গা করে তোলাই আমাদের লক্ষ্য। আমরা চাই না খোলার কিছু দিন পবেই কারখানা ফের বন্ধ করে দিতে। সংস্থাটিকে লাভজনক করে তুলতে পারলেই ওই লক্ষ্যে পোঁছনো সম্ভব। এই উদ্দেশ্যের কথা মাথায় রেখেই পুনরুজ্জীবন পরিকল্পনাটি তৈরি করা হয়েছে।"

ডানলপকে চাঙ্গা করতে ইতিমধ্যেই গৃহীত ব্যবস্থা সম্পর্কে রুইয়া জানান, সংস্থার মোট আর্থিক দায়ে প্রায় অর্থেকে নেমেছে। তিনি বলেন, "ডানলপ হাতে নেওয়ার সময়ে সংস্থার আর্থিক দায় ছিল প্রায় ৬৫০ কোটি টাকা। তা ৩৫০ কোটিতে নামিয়ে এনেছি।" ব্যান্ধ, অন্য আর্থিক সংস্থা ও রাজ্য সরকারের সঙ্গে আলোচনার মাধ্যমেই তা সম্ভব হয়েছে, তিনি জানান।

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Strike by airport employees called off

Written assurance by the Union Government that there will be no job loss due to proposed privatisation

ity. Prime Minister Manmohan Singh had appealed to them on ployees would resume duties Ghoshal, adding that the emimmediately to restore normal-NEW DELHI: THE Airports Authority of India (AAI) employees on Saturday ended their four-day-old tion of the Delhi and Mumbai strike following a written assurdue to the proposed modernisaance by the Union Government that there would be no job loss

test against the privatisation of employees were agitating in pro-There would also be no victimisation of those who took part in the strike. The 20,000-odd the two airports.

The decision to call off the al, convener of the AAI Employ-ees' Joint Forum, at Delhi strike was taken by M. K. Ghosh-

including job security. However,

and employees-related issues, the Delhi and Mumbai airports

modernising airports by the AAI

employees and proposals for

would have representatives from the AAI, employees' unions and the Civil Aviation Ministry. handed over the written comance given by the Government, I call off the strike," said Mr. mitment. "In view of the assur-

assurance on the commitment will be no victimisation of any trade unions met Mr. Patel in the afternoon to seek a written being made by the Government. Emerging from the 90-minute meeting, the Minister said the normality restored in the next by Mr. Patel said: "... In addition, it is also made clear that thore kind for participation in the agitation. I hope this letter will assuage the feelings of all those Leaders of the employees' and strike would be called off and few hours. The statement signed

Friday to end the stalemate in

the larger public interest.

The Government also agreed

to set up a tripartite committee to look into issues raised by the

Special Correspondent Aviation Minister Praful Patel view of the committee, which and necessary steps will be taken to end the stalemate immediate-

icant victory for the trade unions its privatisation policy. Besides ly."
"We are satisfied with the as-All-India Trade Union Congress surances given by Mr. Patel. Our gupta told reporters after the and a jolt to the Government on Mr. Ghoshal and Mr. Dasgupta, (CITU) president M.K. Pandhe general secretary Gurudas Dasmeeting He said it was a signif-Centre of Indian Trade Union was also present at the meeting demands have been conceded,

Addressing the employees afgupta said though the strike was

tinue our agitation to ensure over the battle would continue. government and we have to conthat other airports are not priv-"We don't trust the capitalist atised."

Earlier in the day, the Left trade union leaders criticised withdrew the support of 61 MPs the privatisation process and said it was against the National Common Minimum Programme of the ruling United Progressive Alliance. Mr. Pandhe warned the Government that if the Left to the Government, it would fall

ÄÏR STRIKE

lackmail has become another name for trade unionism in India. Trade unions believe that they can hold the nation to ransom to secure their demands, and even to intervene in matters that are not their concern. The threat held out by the airport staff is a clear case in point. Employees of the Airports Authority of India have threatened to close down all airports if the government went ahead with its plans to privatize major airports. The decision to privatize airports is closely related to the urgent need to modernize airports in all the big cities. No airport in India meets international standards in terms of infrastructure and facilities. Modernization is no longer an option but an imperative. The modernization project requires massive investment. There is no reason why the state should involve itself in the project and in the raising of funds needed for it. It is not the state's business to run airports or to subsidize their running. The decision to privatize is based on these perfectly justified premises. But the employees of the Airports Authority of India under their left leadership find it impossible to accept this logic because the unions are caught in a time warp. They continue to believe that India must be governed on socialist principles, and that the government, through various public sector undertakings, act as the principle source of financial subvention. This belief is a cover for incompetence and the absence of any kind of accountability and transparency. The threat to close down all airports is evidence of the utter irresponsibility of left trade unions.

Privatization of airports is in many ways a test for the United Progressive Alliance government. Its outcome will send out a global signal about who is calling the shots in the government, the left unions or Mr Manmohan Singh and those who support liberalization. If the unions succeed in making the airports non-functional, the impact will echo beyond the civil aviation sector. Even worse will be the fallout if the government backs out because of the threat. The bids for privatization have been opened and the airports are witnessing agitation by the staff. The battle lines have thus been clearly drawn. The question now is who blinks first? It will not be an exaggeration to suggest that this agitation and the larger threat are the left's last desperate throw against a historical process which has become irreversible.

Court notice to Centre, States on child labours:

Plea to enforce right to education

Legal Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court on Wednesday issued notice to all the States and the Union Territories on a public interest petition seeking enforcement of the right to education of every child in the age group 6-14 by abolishing child labour in all forms.

"Furnish figures"

A Bench, comprising Justice K.G. Balakrishnan and Justice G.P. Mathur, also asked the Registrar-General of Census to furnish figures for child labour in the country.

Bench concerned

In December last, the court issued notice to the Centre. When the matter came up for hearing on Wednesday, the Bench expressed concern over continuance of child labour. After the constitutional amendment providing for compulsory education up to 14 years, there could not be child labourers. "They have to be in school. It is the duty of the States to provide them

schools."

Finding that the States had not been issued notice, the Bench ordered notice, returnable in four

Child rights protection panel

Special Correspondent

NEW DELHI: The Government will set up a National Commission for the Protection of Child Rights.

Aimed at examining and reviewing the safeguards provided by the law to protect child rights, the Commission will recommend measures for their effective implementation. It will suggest amendments, if needed, and look into complaints or take suo motu notice of cases of violation of the constitutional and legal rights of children.

THE HINDU

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Haryana unveils new labour polic

It aims at protecting rights of workers and improving conditions of women

Special Correspondent

labour laws in an atmosphere of on Thursday jointly unveiled a proving conditions for women workers, eliminating child labour, preventing industrial strife and streamlining implementation of CHANDIGARH: Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda and Labour Minister Birender Singh new labour policy. It aims at protecting the rights of workers, imindustrial safety and health, immeasures mutual trust. plementing

he operation of the provisions of told media persons that the Lawards creating an atmosphere of tions to ensure that there were no Conditions for women workers special needs at the workplace. In-Technology Enabled oour Department would work tofaith and trust in industrial relastrikes or lock-outs in the State. would be improved as per their cormation Technology and Infor-Services and Industry besides mails would be encouraged by granting them exemption from Mr.Hooda and Mr Singh later mation

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redressing the grievances of con- Women allowed to work during Child labour to be eliminated night shiffs

Overseas placement society to

be set up

Punjab Shops and Commercial Establishments Act regarding opening and closing hours.

strikes and lock-outs without due notice and help in creating a more employment of women during night shifts in this sector while The Information Technology ernment has also decided to allow ensuring their safety and suffibeen added to the First Schedule of the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 to declare it as "Public Utility congenial atmosphere. The Govabled Services Industry has also Service", which would prevent and Information Technology Encient protection of their rights.

Mr.Hooda said child labour would be eliminated and the District Vigilance Committees for bonded labour prevention of

tion of industrial disputes would that the system of inspections plementation of labour laws would be to ensure compliance rather than prosecution.
The conciliation and mediation and achieving a high percentage of settlements at the initial stages. **Fripartite** consultations would be departmental policies. In-house bipartite settlements and prevenbe encouraged. Mr.Hooda said rights and preventing their exploitation. The approach towards imskills of Conciliation Officers held by the Department with Industries Associations and Workers' Organisations for free and frank exchange of ideas regarding would be developed and strengthened for prevention of disputes tract labour, protecting their

these wages from time to time on ing provided to them. He said that the minimum wage of an unskilled 2,359.54 per month and Rs.90.75 per day. The Government would continue to review and increase the basis of tripartite consultahance the existing assistance beworkers in Haryana was one of the worker had been fixed at Rs. wider section of workers and enthe minimum wage of industrial highest in the country. At present,

The functioning of the Labour Department would be modernised tions.

would have ten official members Minister, said that the Society Singh, who is also the Finance and two non-official members and Principal Secretary, Labour Mr.Hooda also announced the formation of Haryana Overseas Placement Assistance Society to help the youth of the State in over-Mr.Birender with the Financial Commissioner and Employment Department as seas placements. and computerised. its chairperson

existing welfare schemes for industrial workers. It would also introduce new welfare schemes for would be rationalised and made complaint- oriented rather than a ensure enforcement of legal welfare provisions of the labour legislations and implementation of routine. The Government would the Factories Act and the Contract tion) Act would be streamlined gated to the field officers. He addthe rapid industrial development proval of factory building plans under the Factories Act would now be submitted to the Senior Safety and Health in their respective areas who would forward these to the Chief Inspector of Factories. The procedure for grant of Registration and License under Labour (Regulation and Abolied that the focus would be on would be energized. He reiterated that his regime was committed to of the State to ensure greater ecoditional jobs. The applications for registration, licensing and for ap-Assistant Director, Industrial and some powers would be delenomic growth and creation of ad**TUS ERUPT OVER 8.5% DECISION**

EPF on panel meet agenda

Statesman News Service

NEW DELHI, Jan. 11.—The government's unilateral announcement of 8.5 per cent interest rate on EPF for the current fiscal is to figure at the UPA-Left Coordination Committee meeting tomorrow.

The CPI-M has taken a strong exception to the decision and has threatened to launch a nation-wide agitation. The EPF interest rate cut has upset not only the Left parties but also the central trade unions. The CPI said the Left parties would impress upon the government that it should have avoided tak-

Left to hold rallies during Bush visit

NEW DELHI, Jan. 11. — The Left parties will organise demonstrations against US policies during President Bush's visit next month. This was announced by the CPI's national secretary, Mr D Raja, here today. He said the campaign would culminate in big rallies across the country. — PTI

ing a decision on the EPF rate in the interest of at least 40 million fund members and their 100 million dependents. Instead, it could have increased the interest rate on the Special Deposit Scheme to mop up Rs 700 crore in order to retain the 9.5 per cent EPF interest rate.

The meeting assumes significance as it is being held ahead of the Assembly elections in four states and Pondicherry. The Left parties will certainly be keen to raise the pitch against the government's "anti-poor and anti-people economic policies".

The CPI-M said if the government remained adamant on the EPF rate, it would result in a loss to 40 million employees and their families. A majority of these workers are in small and medium industries and the EPF is their only social

security and old-age benefit, the party said. The trade unions affiliat-

The trade unions affiliated to the Left parties today flayed at the government notification that the rate of interest on the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) would be 8.5 per cent in this fiscal and demanded its restoration to 9.5 per cent. "It is unfortunate that the government has notified the EPF rate of interest at 8.5 per cent this year. This will be a loss for four crore workers and employees, a majority of whom are employed in small and medium industries," the CPI-M Politburo said in a statement here.

THE STATESMAN

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প্রিক্ত সদক্ষেত্র (গলি জাজকালের প্রতিবেদন: দিল্লি, জবাব চাইব। তিনি বলেন, সম্পাদক ও সমন্ত্র কমিটিং

১০ জানুয়ারি— কর্মচারী ভবিষ্যনিধির সুদের হার সেই ৮.৫ শতাংশেই নামিয়ে আনল সরকার। প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও অর্থমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে শ্রমমন্ত্রীর আলোচনার পর ভবিষ্যনিধির কেন্দ্রীয় অছি পর্যদের সুপারিশ মেনে শ্রমমন্ত্রক ৮.৫ শতাংশ হারে সুদ দেওয়ার বিজ্ঞপ্তি জারি করল। অর্থাৎ বামপন্থীদের কাছে প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও শ্রমমন্ত্রী যে পুনর্বিরেচনার প্রতিশ্রুতি দিয়েছিলেন, কার্যত তা অৰ্থহীন হয়ে গেল। ক্ষুব বামনেতারা জানিয়েছেন, সরকার কথার খেলাপ করেছে। ১২ জানুয়ারি সকালে ইউ পি এ সরকার-বাম সমধ্য কমিটির বৈঠকে বিষয়টি তোলা হবে। তা ছাড়া ওই দিনই বিকেলে অর্থমন্ত্রী চিদম্বরম বাজেট নিয়ে আলোচনার জন্য ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন নেতাদের বৈঠক ডেকেছেন। সি পি এম পলিটব্যুরো সদস্য ও সিটু সভাপতি পান্ধে জানান, ওই বৈঠকেও আমরা সরকারের

জবাব চাইব। তিনি বলৈন, শ্রমমন্ত্রী চন্দ্রশেখর রাও আমাদের কথা দিয়েছিলেন, তিনি পি এফ সুদ ৯.৫ শতাংশ রাখতে প্রধানমন্ত্রী ও অর্থমন্ত্রীর সঙ্গে কথা বলবেন। কিন্তু দেখা গেল, অছি পর্যদের সিদ্ধান্তই শেষ কথা। ৪৪ জনের পর্যদে ১০ জন ট্রেড ইউনিয়ন প্রতিনিধি একযোগে দাবি জানিয়েছিলেন, ৯.৫ শতাংশ রাখার। কিন্তু দেখা গেল, শ্রমিকদের টাকা হলেও সে ব্যাপারে কথা বলার অধিকার তাদের নেই। সরকার ৯.৫ শতাংশের প্রতিশ্রুতি ভঙ্গ করেছে। পান্ধে বলেন, সরকারের ঘাটতির যুক্তি আমার। সরকারি হিসেবেই দেখা যাচ্ছে ৮.৫ শতাংশ সুদ দিলেও ঘাটতি থেকে যায়। ঘাটতিহীন করতে হলে সরকারি সূত্র অনুযায়ী সুদ নামাতে হয় ৭.৫। তা হলে যখন নিজেদের ঘাটতির সূত্র না মেনে সরকার ৮.৫-ই করছে তখন ৯.৫ করে কেন অন্য পথে ঘাটতি মেটানো যাচ্ছে না ? ফরওয়ার্ড ব্লক সাধারণ

সম্পাদক ও সমার্য কমিটির সদস্য দেবব্রত কিশাস বলেন, আমরা ৯.৫ শর্তাংশ ফিরিয়ে দেওয়ার দাবি জানাব ১২ তারিখের বৈঠকে। সেই সঙ্গে খাদ্যে ভর্তুকি তুলে দেওয়া ও রেশনে খাদ্যশস্য কমিয়ে দেওয়ার সিদ্ধান্তের বিরুদ্ধেও রুখে দাঁডাবেন বামরা। তিনি বলেন. সরকার কথা না শুনলে এই সমস্ত দাবির ভিত্তিতেই বামপঞ্চীরা গণ-আন্দোলনের ডাক দেবেন। এদিকে, সরকারি বিজ্ঞপ্তিতে বলা হয়েছে, ৮.৫ শতাংশ হারে সুদ চালু হলেও ই পি এফ-কে ৩৬৫.৮৯ কোটি টাকার ঘাটতির মুখে পড়তে হবে। মোট সুদের পরিমাণ ৬৮৮৯ কোটি ৪ লাখ টাকা। অথচ চলতি আর্থিক বছরে সুদের পরিমাণ ধরা হয়েছিল ৬.৫২৩ কোটি ১৫ লাখ টাকা। মার্চ, ২০০৪ পর্যন্ত ই পি এফ ও-র তহবিলের পরিমাণ ৭২,০০০ কোটি টাকা। মার্চ, ২০০৫-এ তা বেড়ে দাঁড়িয়েছে ৭৯,০০০ কোটিতে।