

ALL INDIA INSURANCE EMPLOYEES' ASSOCIATION
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To,
All the Zonal/Divisional/State/Regional Units

Welcome 2022

We wish all the insurance employees, their family members and the Indian working class a very happy and eventful New Year. We hope that the New Year 2022 would bring peace, progress and happiness for the working class across the globe. The Year 2021 ended with great hope with the victory of the farmers' movement. This movement created democratic space and inspiration for struggles of the working and toiling people. Let the Year 2022 witness growing solidarity and struggles of the working class in pursuit of a society that is just, fair and equal.

Death and disease have been two of the most defining images of the year gone by. The Covid19 pandemic unmasked the ugly face of neoliberal capitalism and its fragile health care. The profit driven system came in the way of universal vaccination. The *Economist* editorially comments that the world is divided into "*Jabs and Jab Nots*". The rich countries having 16 percent of the global populations have pre-purchased 50 percent of the globally available doses. The inhuman enforcement of patent regime on vaccine continues to prohibit many countries from accessing required number of vaccines due to high price. The vaccine inequality and woeful public health are having increasingly disastrous impact over a vast section of the global population. Public health systems in the socialist countries, however, have been more effective in fighting the pandemic.

The world economy continues to be in the midst of a crisis. Global poverty and inequality have acquired menacing proportions. While a large section of the people suffers the pangs of deprivation, the finance driven speculative economy soared to such an extent that 1% of the richest have increased their wealth by 32%. One redeeming feature in the crisis period is that many countries in Europe have shifted towards increasing public expenditures on various public services, particularly on health. Even the US and UK have gone for trillion-dollar stimulus packages with decisions of direct cash transfer for the low income population. Neoliberal capitalism driven by imperialism got thoroughly exposed in the last year. A large number of countries in Latin America are moving towards the left in search of an alternative to capitalism. It is noteworthy that the year ended with a leftward shift in Chile. The working class in Europe, America, and Africa has been organizing popular protests including strikes.

The Indian government refused to learn any lesson from the crisis. Rather, it brazenly used the crisis for aggressive execution of neoliberal policies. The planned weakening of public health system caused death of thousands of citizens due to lack of medical oxygen. The calamitous health crisis coupled with deepening economic crisis has worsened the living conditions of the vast majority of people. Millions of jobs have been lost and a large number of formal jobs have been informalised squeezing the wages. The rate of unemployment is growing and during the pandemic period 21.80 crore people have been pushed below the poverty line. India's place in the Global Hunger index or

in the Global Inequality index is abysmal. India today is the most unequal society in the world after Russia. The serious demand constraint in the economy is corroborated by the FICCI report, which says that the rural business has shrunk by 71%. The government should have increased public expenditure to increase disposable income by adopting direct cash transfer policies. It is now essential to strengthen the public sector and gain more control over the public savings for making finance available with the government. But the government continues to remain faithful to the neoliberal agenda. The announcement of National Monetization Pipeline is a brazen attempt to handover the public assets for private gains.

The government is in desperation to list LIC through IPO. The Bill for privatisation for PSGI companies has also been passed. The Government has also decided to privatise the public sector banks. AIIEA and the working class movement see privatization as a serious assault on the '*Directive Principles of State Policies*' enshrined in the constitution. As the year draws to a close, possibilities of new struggles developing in the New Year seem brighter. While the wage issue was settled in LIC to the satisfaction of the employees, there is absolutely no headway on the wage issue of PSGI employees. The struggle has to be intensified in the days to come and the legitimate aspirations of employees in PSGI companies fulfilled.

The year 2021 was really troubling for Indian democracy. The democratic values were seriously subverted by authoritarian and autocratic rule. Democracy was used to subvert democracy. Constitution was used to undermine constitution. Parliament was used to make parliamentary democracy futile. Any voice of dissent is treated as treason. On the other hand, a rabid form of communalism is being used to threaten the minorities. A religious congregation is being used as a hate fest and minorities places of worship are under constant attacks. Communal forces are openly calling for genocide and abusing Father of the Nation has become new normal. The fringe today has become mainstream. The secular, democratic fabric of India was never so fragile as it is now.

At the dawn of the New Year, new waves of struggles are building up. The unity of the working class and peasantry has gained more traction and has become a formidable force of resistance. The year 2021 ended with the huge success of the historic farmers' movements which forced the much touted invincible government to beat an ignominious retreat. The victory of the farmers and the retreat of the government gives an important message: that democracy can be saved through popular mobilisation and struggle. Almost in every public sector, the privatisation is being challenged. Insurance employees under the banner of AIIEA have successfully stalled privatisation for almost three decades. It will be our most important task to prepare ourselves with right earnest to mobilize the insurance employees and the people at large to make the Two-day strike on 23-24, February, 2022 successful and march towards a policy change.

Let us strive through working class actions and democratic movements to bring about the dawn of happiness, peace and prosperity. We once again wish the entire working class a very happy and eventful New Year 2022.

With Greetings

Comradely Yours



General Secretary