

INDIAN JOURNALISTS UNION

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Press Statement

Delhi, 8 August, The Indian Journalists Union (IJU) takes a serious view of the reported plans of the new Union Government to rush the so-called “labour reforms” through the current session of Parliament. What is being billed as “labour reforms,” in fact constitute changes in labour laws to make it easier for the employers to deprive the workers of their due wages, rights and privileges by giving them uncalled for concessions in the Factories Act, Apprenticeship Act and other labour laws. What is required instead is a national debate on real labour reforms to regulate the wages and other benefits of the workers, guarantee their job security and codify their terms and conditions of service and work, including post-retirement benefits. Steps in this direction alone will entitle any Indian government to claim that it is upholding and safeguarding the Constitution of India, including its Preamble, which is committed to the ideal of a welfare state the nation inherited from the freedom struggle.

In a statement issued here on Friday, President S N Sinha and Secretary-General D. Amar, said the Government may be in a hurry to boost GDP growth but it would do well to appreciate that a higher growth rate is impossible to achieve without the willing participation of the working classes. In other words, a higher GDP growth is inconceivable unless it is inclusive, particularly in a country with hardly any security net for the workers.

We, therefore, call upon the Government to withhold its plans, if any, to force anti-labour changes in these and other labour laws, including the Industrial Disputes Act, and to initiate genuine steps to set the stage for inclusive GDP growth and an adequate security net for the working people of the country by discussing real labour reforms at an extended national Labour Conference to be attended by all Central trade union organizations as well as national professional trade unions. The IJU would be happy to fully participate in such a conference with concrete proposals for labour reforms that will help boost GDP growth and ensure that it is inclusive not only of workers but also the entire nation.

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