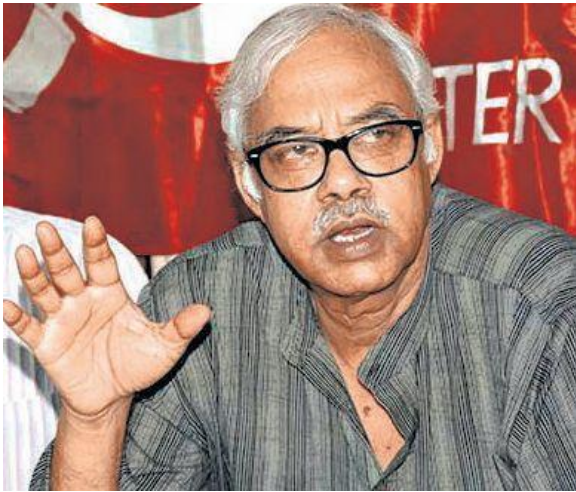


Trade unions reject Dattatreya's plea to call off Sept 2 strike

Our Bureau



Tapan Sen, General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions. (file photo)



'No tangible proactive' steps taken to address 12-point demand charter, they say

New Delhi, Aug 27:

Central trade unions have rejected Labour Minister Bandaru Dattatreya's plea to call off the nation-wide strike on September 2, saying that they find no "tangible proactive steps" by the government to address their 12-point demand charter, such as higher minimum wages, no privatisation or FDI in sectors, such as defence and Railways, and roll-back of anti-labour laws.

Responding to a letter by the Minister sent to all unions on August 26 via e-mail, Tapan Sen, General Secretary, Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), in a letter to Dattatreya said: "The 'updated status' enclosed with your letter is almost the same as that you circulated exactly one year ago, in the joint meeting with the central trade unions held on 26th and 27th August, on the eve of the general strike in 2015."

Sen said the "proactive" steps listed by the Minister, in fact, go against workers, such as introduction of fixed term employment in apparel manufacturing sector through an executive order, increase in the permissible limit of overtime work from 50 hours per quarter to 125 hours through an amendment to the Factories Act, diverting workers' money in the Employees Provident Fund for investment in the share market, and introducing the Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill with provisions that would impact road transport workers.

"All these 'proactive' initiatives are against the basic interests of the workers and their rights. All the central trade unions have vociferously opposed these measures," he said in the letter.

Trade unions also declined to accept the government's claim moves on labour law reforms were the outcome of tripartite consultations.

"It is a matter of record that all the central trade unions have unanimously opposed many of your proposals of labour law reforms and opinions of the trade unions have been totally ignored," Sen said.

Shram Suvidha Portal

On the Shram Suvidha Portal improving efficiency and transparency, Sen said the Minister's own statement that only 12 lakh units had been issued Labour Identification Number (LIN) itself contradicts the claim.

"While the data of establishments and workers captured by Shram Suvidha Portal itself is insignificant compared with the total number, routing inspection through this portal on the basis of 10 per cent randomised selection is nothing but an attempt to minimise inspection and allow more freedom to employers to violate labour laws with impunity," he alleged.

On disinvestment, Sen referred to a report saying that the NITI Aayog had prepared a list of 74 PSUs, including highly profit-making ones, for 'strategic sale'.

“The government has not issued any rejoinders to these reports. No patriotic trade union, for that matter, no patriotic organisation can accept this policy of sell out of PSUs which hold the foundation of our national economy,” he added.

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