

## Kerala Minister asks State to constitute minimum wages board

- Special Correspondent

Kerala Minister for Fisheries, Cashew Industry and Harbour Engineering and CITU vice-president J. Mercykutty Amma on Sunday said Andhra Pradesh should constitute a board for revision of minimum wages for the workers.

During her visit to CITU office here, she told reporters that Kerala was successfully revising minimum wages for the workers engaged in 83 scheduled industries by constituting a board.

She said for instance, the minimum wage for cashew workers in Kerala was Rs.400 to Rs.450 per day (all inclusive) whereas in AP it was Rs.165 plus DA (around Rs.215).

“We also give pension to all at Rs.1,000 per month and offer ESI and Provident Fund facilities to all categories of workers.

Ms. Amma, who was here to interact with industrial workers to make general strike on September 2 a success, during her visit to CITU office near Jagadamba junction paid rich tributes to two youth, who were killed in police firing at Basheerbagh during anti-power tariff hike agitation in Hyderabad 16 years ago.

She later released a booklet brought out by CITU on the struggle undertaken by the workers of Brandix India Apparel City.

Ms. Amma said the benefits being given by Kerala government were availed by 43 lakh workers belonging to organised and unorganised sector.

She said they were implementing the best Public Distribution System by supplying 13 items including rice and pulses to the poor. Rice is given at Rs.4 per kg. The government is spending over Rs.1,000 crore on the subsidised rice scheme.

The Minister said Kerala also had set up a board for migrant workers to take care of their requirements. She said minimum wages were being revised once in every three years.

On the general strike, she said the working class of the country had decided to fight against the anti-people policies of the NDA government. The strike should be made successful to provide better working conditions and social security for the workers deployed in organised and unorganised sector.

CITU State president Ch. Narsinga Rao, district general secretary S. Ramesh and city treasurer S. Jyothiswara Rao were present.