

## 75th Anniversary of the national strike against British Govt. by Indian Postmen



# THE GREAT INDIAN POSTAL STRIKE OF 1946

On the eve of 75th anniversary of it, we present a brief article, depicting the Trade Union Struggle in the aura of our Freedom Movement by the P & T employees against the mighty British Government. Those were the days, when the country was passing through a period of transition, formation of a Nation was underway. Thought this struggle in strict sense can't be termed a 'Nationalist Struggle', but it infused the sense of nationalism, a sense of pride and self-belief, faith in the power of unified struggle.

The All India Postmen & Lower Grade Staff Union, led by Shri V G Dalvi with headquarters in Bombay, declared an indefinite strike [from 11th July 1946](#) on a 16 point Charter of Demands. It was a period when the entire country was fighting against the British rule and many struggles were being organised as part of the Independence movement. The government immediately declared the postal strike as illegal. The reformist leadership of the Federation of P & T Employees issued a statement opposing the strike. The Indian Telegraph Union also disassociated from the strike. But this could not deter the strike action. In Bengal, under the leadership of Com. Bhupendra Nath Ghosh (Better known as Dada Ghosh), who later became the Secretary General of NFPTE, full support was given to the strike. The strike spread like wild fire all over India. In the major cities like Madras, Bombay and Calcutta, massive processions with full support of the trade unions were organised. The hartal and bandh organised in Calcutta in support of the strike on 29th July 1946, was one of the biggest Calcutta has ever seen till that time.

The Indian National Congress and the All India Trade Union Congress, which was the only national trade union at that time, gave full support to the strike. The British government had to come down to negotiate and 12 out of the 16 demands were conceded and the strike ended on 6th August after 26 days on a successful note. Government also declared "Good Conduct Pay" to the P&T employees. The strike resulted in a new thinking on the part of workers and leaders on the necessity of having a united organisation in P&T. The leaders who opposed the strike got isolated from the workers.

**Worldometer data:**

# COVID19

**WORLD SCENARIO on 30-6-2021**

**18.30 Crore cases; 39.63 Lakhs Deaths**

<u>Country</u>	<u>Covid Cases</u>	<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Death/10000 cases</u>
World	183022403	3963898	217
USA	34540845	620249	180
India	30411634	399475	131
Brazil	18559164	518246	279
France	5775301	111082	192
Russia	5538142	135886	245
Turkey	5425652	49732	92
UK	4800907	128140	267
Argentina	4470374	94304	211
Italy	4259909	127566	299
Columbia	4240982	106544	251

## INDIA ON THE RECOVERY PATH

**(Figures of top Ten States)**

MAHARASTRA	6061404	121945	201
KERALA	2924165	13235	45
KARNATAKA	2843810	35040	123
TAMILNADU	2479696	32619	132
AP	1889513	12706	67
UP	1706107	22591	132
WB	1499783	17708	118
DELHI	1434188	24977	174
CHATTISGARH	994480	13439	135
GUJARAT	823523	10059	122

**[Some people challenge above official data released by State Govts. saying that actual figures are much higher. We take the official data only.]**

# COMPENSATION TO COVID VICTIMS

Two Lawyers in Delhi , Mr. Gaurav Kumarf Bansal and Mr. Reepak Kansal -approached Supreme Court of India seeking directions to the Government of India for payment of ex gratia assistance to bereaved families of Covid victims under Disaster Management Act 2005. Their arguements were:

1. Disaster Management Act 2005 was notified on 23-12-2005. At that time there was no Covid.

2. In 2015 The Government fixed Rs 4 lakhs as the ex gratia assistance to victims of national diesters. Covid was not heard of at that stage.

3. In March 2020 the Government declared Covid19 as a national disaster. Hence victims of Covid19 are entitled to the ex gratia payment.

4. In March 2020 again Government announced Rs 4 lakhs to the bereaved family of Covid19 but the notification was withdrawn within hours.

5. But Covid19 is still a national disaster.

While the case came up before the Court on 30-5-2021, the Government told the Court that due to financial scarcity it is not possible to make the payment. A day after the government informed the Supreme Court that funds are available but “compensation payout is not a priority.”

“Funds are available but are being used for Covid management, to upgrade healthcare system. Compensation payout [is] not a priority,” the Centre said in the Supreme Court as the top court heard pleas for compensation to the families of those who have passed away due to Covid-19.

Government reiterated its stand again on 26-6-2021 also.

{Continued in next page}

## **COMPENSATION TO COVID VICTIMS**

**Strange it is, the Government pleader argued that Covid19 is not a national diaster.**

### **Decision of the Hon'ble Supre Court Court:**

The Supreme Court on 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to pay an ex-gratia compensation to the kin of those who died due to Covid, saying the authority is statutorily mandated to provide minimum relief, including ex-gratia to the victims of the pandemic. Holding that by not providing an ex-gratia amount, the NDMA had failed in discharging its statutory duty, a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan directed the NDMA to determine in six weeks the ex-gratia amount to be paid to the family of each Covid victim. The Bench - which also included Justice MR Shah - asked the Centre to frame guidelines for payment of ex gratia to the families of those who died due to the pandemic.

However, it said it would not be proper for the court to direct a particular amount to be paid.

It ordered the Centre to issue appropriate guidelines to simplify issuance of death certificates in deaths due to Covid or complications related to it.

# VACCINATION POLICY IN SUPREME COURT

**[The news item appeared in Hindustan Times on 1-6-2021]**

The Supreme Court on 31-5-2021 asked the central government to “smell the coffee” and modify its policy that requires states to pay more for Covid-19 vaccines, besides ensuring that the marginalised and rural population are not left out of the vaccination drive due to India’s digital divide.

Solicitor general Tushar Mehta, appearing for the government, said the entire eligible population of the country would be vaccinated by the year-end.

Resuming its hearing of the suo motu (on its own motion) case on handling of the second Covid-19 wave, the top court was emphatic that the Union government’s policy lacked a “vision” and it did not take into account several crucial aspects to tackle issues at present and in future.

The bench, led by justice **Dhananjaya Y Chandrachud**, remarked that “policy makers must have their ears to the ground” as it flagged several areas of concern, asking why states had to pay more than the Centre for the vaccine, and how the Centre planned to ensure people in rural areas could get the vaccine when registration on the CoWIN digital platform was mandatory. Appearing for the Centre, solicitor general Tushar Mehta informed the court that the Centre expected to vaccinate the entire population of the country by the end of this year, as he also sought to justify the dual pricing of vaccines. About mandatory registration on CoWin, the SG said it was done in view of limited health infrastructure and to avoid overcrowding at centres.

But the bench, which included justices L Nageswara Rao and S Ravindra Bhat, remained unimpressed with the submissions and regretted that the Centre did not seem to have paid heed to suggestions mooted by the court in its April 30 order on vaccine pricing and rural health care.

**“You smell the coffee and see what’s happening across the country and change your policies. It cannot be a day-to-day ad hoc response to as and when problems occur. Absent guidelines and absent policy, you will have ad hoc decisions. There has to be a clear-cut policy of decision making and a vision for the present and for the future, which is perhaps lacking today. We will like your policy to be amended,”** it said. Asking the government to show a **“little bit of flexibility”**, the court said that it was not enough for the Centre to claim only it knew what was best for the people and that they must also remember that **“our arms are strong enough to come down”** if there was continued resistance to consider changes. **“...Ability to recognise that we have gone wrong is not a sign of weakness but a sign of strength. Our idea is to initiate a dialogue so that we can strengthen the arms of the nation,”** said the bench, giving the government two weeks to come back with a detailed response. It emphasised that the Union government ought to negotiate globally and procure vaccines for the entire country **“in a national crisis”** rather than leaving states in the lurch.

**“What is the rationale behind this dual pricing policy? Centre procures at a certain price but does not want to tell the manufacturers at what price they should give it to states. If the Centre can justify its lower pricing due to block supply, why cannot it procure the vaccines for the states under the same rationale? Ultimately, you have to ensure everyone gets vaccinated at the same price for all sections,”** it said.

The bench added that the criterion of those aged above 45 years being the vulnerable class for Covid-19 has witnessed a change with many less than 45 losing their lives due to the virus in the second wave. **“Can there be a justification for the Centre to now say that we will only take care of those who are above 45? We are aware that we don’t have time to enter the realm of policy making but your policy has to be logical and reasonable,”** said the bench, asking the SG to get unequivocal instructions on the next date if the Centre was ready to act like a national body for procurement of vaccines.

It further asked Mehta if it was realistically possible for all those in rural areas and the marginalised to register themselves on the CoWIN platform.

**“What about the digital divide? You can keep saying Digital India, Digital India. Digital India is alright but can a poor migrant worker from Jharkhand or from Rajasthan get himself registered on CoWIN? Is that possible? How are you answering the digital divide? How are you going to ensure migrant workers can get themselves registered and get vaccinated?”** it asked. While the SG said that walk-in registrations have begun in some circumstances, the bench pointed out there is no policy on record regarding this or to show how and why the Union government decided to usher in differential pricing of vaccines for the 18-45 age group.

**“You cannot say if you don’t register on CoWIN, we will not vaccinate you. Ground reality is that 70% of vaccination is only in urban areas. Vaccines are not reaching the rural areas. If there is a policy document, we want to see what is the policy in black and white. We don’t want to go by the affidavit to say it is evolving; it is dynamic, etc. We want to see what’s the rationale,”** it told the SG. It added that no policy was carved in stone and that the government’s new policy had to meet the test of reasonableness and equality, apart from ensuring right to life that included right to public health.

**“You have to have a policy which is clear-cut, deal with all the issues and provide guidance to states and other institutions in terms of not only present but also in terms of the future. We will also request you to produce the policy document along with the file noting on it. So that we know what prompted you to change the previous policy. The only issue that we are seeing today is that of vaccination policy. The dialogue will continue. If you change the policy, well,”** it said. The bench said it will issue an order on the proceedings but it was not released Monday.

**(As a result of the above effective intervention of the Appex Court the Government had to change its policy on vaccination.**





# AN AWFUL FAMILY TRAGEDY

**Mr. Y. Dasan, a retired Telecom Mechanic of Nedumangad Sub Division in Trivandrum SSA, Kerala Circle expired due to Covid19 on 3rd May 2021.**

**His son, Binu Kumar, expired on 13th May 2021 due to Covid19.**

**Again, his wife Smt. Gracy expired on 16th May 2021 due to Covid19.**

**Now, three members survive the Family Tragedy.**

**1. Daughter of Late Mr. Dasan. She is married and hence is not eligible to Family Pension.**

**2. Daughter in law of Mr. Dasan. She is wife of Late Mr. Binu Kumar (son of Mr. Dasan.) As per rule, daughter-in-law is not eligible to family pension.**

**3. A 2 years old boy, son of late Mr. Binukumar. He is physically disabled. The disability occurred due to some fault of the doctors at the time of delivery. The Doctor/hospital may not accept the responsibility, but the boy is disabled. As per our rules, the grandson is also not eligible to family pension.**

**There was some news item in media those days that family of Covid victims is entitled to a compensation of Rs 4 lakh from the government. But, that hope is gone when the Central Government informed Supreme Court that it is not possible to pay the said amount.**

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## **AIBSNLPWA COMES TO THE RESCUE OF THE FAMILY**

**On hearing the pathetic story of the family, the virtual meeting of our Trivandrum SSA unit held on 13th June 2021 decided to raise a 'DASAN FAMILY RELIEF FUND'. Nedumangad branch of AIBSNLPWA opened a new SB account in Union Bank of India, Nedumangad branch for the purpose.**

**Trivandrum District Unit of AIBSNLPWA issued an appeal through whatsapp for liberal donation. Physical meetings are not possible. Hence our members were called upon to remit the amount on line.**

**Com. P S Ramankutty, National President of AIBSNLPWA issued an appeal through a voice clip on 21st June to our members first in Trivandrum district, thereafter in Kerala circle, to donate to the fund.**

**Shri. C V Vinod, ITS, the respected CGMT of Kerala, an officer very sympathetic to pensioners, remitted online Rs. 3000 as his personal contribution to the noble cause.**

**Com. P Gangadhara Rao, our respected General Secretary, also sent Rs 2000 as his personal donation.**

**Members of AIBSNLPWA responded very positively to the call. By 30th June a sum of Rs. Three lakh was credited by them, on-line, to the fund.**

**Entire amount so received will be made over to the surviving members of Dasan's family shortly.**

# DA FREEZE AND STORIES

As every one of us knows the Government of India decided to freeze DA of serving staff and Dearness Relief of Pensioners in the name of Covid.

In the case of Central government employees and Pensioners, their DA/DR was frozen from 1-1-2020; at the stage of 17%. They were eligible to get an increase of 4% during January-June 2020, it was not paid. They sacrificed  $4 \times 6 = 24\%$  of their monthly Pay/Pension during these six months. During the next six months they sacrificed 36% and again from January to June 2021 they sacrificed at least 60%. In total they sacrificed 120% of their monthly Pay/Pension for combating Covid. With minimum pay being Rs 18000 now, the average pay of an employee can be calculated as Rs 25000 per month. At this rate, one employee has sacrificed at least Rs 30000 per head. There are 48 lakh serving employees and 55 lakh pensioners. Total amount saved by the Government by freezing the DA/DR of central government employees and pensioners is about Rs 30000 crore.

Then take the number of State government employees and pensioners and the public sector employees; and PSE pensioners like BSNL retirees whose DR was also frozen. About 4-5 crore salaried people have sacrificed huge amount in the name of pandemic. Nobody talked about it.

In the recent past, some TV channels, especially one from Odisha, were repeatedly flashing a news that **"HAPPY NEWS for central government employees. Their DA will be increased from July 2021....."** That too linked with 7<sup>th</sup> Central Pay Commission!!!

## IDA FREEZE

As far as we are concerned, our IDR was frozen from 1-10-2020 at the staged of 159.9%. As per calculation we were entitled to increase of 5.5% during October-December 2020, 11.6% during January-March 2021 and 10.5% during April-June 2021. Each one of us sacrificed 82.8% of our monthly pension for the purpose.

## JCM MEETING:

The National Council of JCM met after two years and two months, on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2021. Six staff side members were allowed to participate in it physically and others virtually. Staff

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Side raised the issue of DA Freeze. Cabinet Secretary told the meeting that “*Department of Expenditure will process the matter for obtaining a Cabinet decision*” to restore the frozen DA. At around 8 PM on 26-6-2021, Shri Shiva Gopal Mishra, the Secretary of Staff Side circulated gist of the said JCM meeting giving above information. Processing a case and getting Cabinet decision is not that much simple or quick. At least Cabinet should meet. But, within minutes, a fake letter purportedly issued by Finance Secretary, appeared and became viral. It said that Government decided to pay the frozen DA with arrears in three installments. Some of our comrades also jumped with excitement. Each one flashed it as if it is a great achievement. We told those who contacted us that it was fake. Anyway, within few minutes a clarification was issued by the Government that no such letter was issued by the Finance Secretary. The false propaganda was set at rest.

**NOBODY TALKED ABOUT SACRIFICE OF  
SALARIED EMPLOYEES AND PENSIONERS.**

**EVERYBODY JUMPED ON THE FALSE PROPAGANDA.**

# **ORDERS ANNEXED**

**Dear Readers,**

This time we annexe to this E Journal some orders (in original format) issued by various authorities. You can read the orders by clicking on the links noted against each Annexure given below.

## **Annexure 1**

**Income Tax department has extended the time limit for filing IT returns and some other returns**

## **Annexure 2**

**Many banks are not supplying full details of pension, DR etc. to the pensioners. Now, Banks are directed to issue monthly slips showing such details to every pensioner.**

## **Annexure 3**

**In future only Digital PPOs will be issued. Physical Pension Payment Orders will not be issued in future.**

## **Annexure 4**

**Minister for Personnel Dr Jitendra Prasad has stated that Family Pension Rules are simplified. His statement is attached.**

## **Annexure 5**

**Department of Pension has issued instructions for immediate payment of family pension**

## **Annexure 6, 6A**

**64 posts have been created for few Wellness Centres of CGHS.**

## **Annexure 7**

**BSNL has disclosed how much amount is allotted for payment of medical claims by BSNL retirees.**