

FMRAI records highest ever membership

For consecutive two years, the membership of FMRAI reached newer heights. 2024 ended with FMRAI recording 117625 membership, highest ever in the history of the federation. Collective efforts from states and subunits as well as councils ensured that FMRAI reaches to SPES in all corners of the country. Several milestones in state and subunit membership were achieved in 2024. Jalgaon of MSMRA, Varanasi of UPMSRA and Malda of WBMSRU are the new entrants in more than one thousand members club. Hyderabad from TMSRU and Vijayawada of APMSRU regained their position with one thousand figures. At present in FMRAI there are 28 subunits with more than one thousand memberships. The vision to advance the organization at state capitals and major towns has been perceived, planned and achieved battling all adverse employment and socio-political situations. Simultaneously the units of FMRAI are determined to advance the organization in the path of building up consistent movement by enrolling and mobilizing even more number of fieldworkers under the banner of FMRAI on a continuous basis.



■ J S Majumdar leader of field worker's movement in India and former GS FMRAI speaking at the inauguration.

New operational Office of FMRAI inaugurated

New operational office of FMRAI was inaugurated on 20th January 2025 at 60-A, Charu Avenue, Kolkata. The building was inaugurated by former General Secretary of FMRAI, Jnan Sankar Mazumder. During the inaugural address he briefly dealt about the relentless struggle of FMRAI as an organisation in the interest of common people's health and medicine related demands. He also narrated the journey of FMRAI since 1963 to the present context through

uncharted path. The all-India General Secretary of CITU, Tapan Sen was present on this occasion. He briefly spoke about the rights of working class being taken away in the disguise of Labour Codes. He also said that, Sales Promotion Employees should continue the fight in the interest of development of health system. All India leaders of CITU, A.K Padmanavan, R. Karu Malayian were also present in this inauguration programme. Ramesh Sundar, President

FMRAI presided over this programme. Former Secretariats of FMRAI, former All India Council Convenors of different companies and many leaders of FMRAI and WBMSRU participated in this programme. Alope Banerjee, Arun Ghosal, Amitava Guha, Sanjeev Khandelwal, Dipak Bhattacharya, S Sukumar greeted the members and praised the efforts of FMRAI in leading the movement for the Sales Promotion Employees. Santanu Chatterjee, General Secretary, FMRAI greeted all

the former leadership and the members who participated on this occasion. He reiterated that FMRAI shall continue to fight for the medicine related demands for the common people and for the demands of the sales promotion employees. On this auspicious day, leaders expressed their hope that the new office of FMRAI would be the epicentre of struggle in days to come. A memento has been provided to all ex-leaders of the organisation who attended in this heart warming programme.

Industrial action in USV

USV field workers resorted to one day strike on 24th January'2025, protesting unlawful labour practices going on for a long time. USV is a trendsetter in recruiting SPES in franchisee and since 90's SPES are fighting relentlessly to be appointed under principal employer. Management has kept the COD pending since 2008 tagging unlawful conditions like performance linked increment. Management has also transferred All India convenor to a distant state. Since pandemic, management initiated unilateral work loads bypassing discussions with grievance committee. All the above issues were under legal persuasion for long and in spite of declaration from management before the hon'ble court to resolve through mutual discussions, management is non responsive. GC meetings have been due for long. FMRAI, through several letters,

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Lightning strike in Glenmark

Glenmark management unleashed a serious attack on its fieldworkers of the Consumer Care division by handing over relieving letters on 17th January, 2025. This notorious management organised a training programme for the fieldworkers of the Consumer Care division from East, West and North zone at Hyderabad. In the so-called training program the management revealed their pre-planned agenda of

victimisation by handing over the termination letter to around one hundred and fifty fieldworkers working across the aforesaid three zones. As per the available information, the management offered one-month salary as compensation and settled the legal dues. It was quite encouraging to find out that though the majority of these fieldworkers weren't members of any union, all of them resisted

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■ Demonstration against Glenmark in Secunderabad unit by TMSRU

EDITORIAL

Inflation and real wage: Corporate profits at country's peril

In a situation that can be called as an alarm bell for overall economic condition in India is the fact the common people of this country are unable to cope up with the rising inflation as the wages are stagnated to the pre covid times whereas the prices of essential commodities continue to rise. This holds true for not only the urban middle class but is sharper and more evident in the rural area where the working people have almost not received any increment in wages in one decade. Wage Rates in Rural India (WRI) released by the Labour Bureau of India focuses on occupation-specific money wages for 25 agricultural and non-agricultural occupations (ploughing, sowing, harvesting, carpentry, plumbing, beedi-making, etc) and also includes categories, like "general agricultural labourers", "non-agricultural labourers", and "construction workers". In one of his works, the famed economist Jean Dreze expressed that WRI data points to an alarming stagnation of real wages in rural areas from around 2014 onwards, in contrast with rapid growth in the preceding seven years or so. The latest WRI data, for 2023-24, suggest that this stagnation pattern continues. In fact, the annual growth rate of real wages over the last 10 years is close to zero at the all-India level. The Annual Survey of Unincorporated Sector Enterprises (ASUSE), conducted by the National Sample Survey Organization (NSSO) in 2021-22 and 2022-23 reflects a striking pattern, real wages were growing fast before 2015-16, but came to a virtual standstill after that. The contrast is particularly sharp in rural areas, where the annual growth rate of emoluments per hired worker was close to 7% between 2010-11 and 2015-16, but nearly zero between 2015-16 and 2022-23. This pattern is consistent with WRI data. The Periodic Labour Force Surveys (PLFS) also suggest a dip in real wages in 2022-23. Real wages are among the most important economic indicators. If the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is rising fast but there is no substantial increase in real wages, something is clearly wrong with the pattern of growth. That is precisely what seems to be happening in the Indian economy today. In absolute terms, the ASUSE surveys suggest that average emoluments per hired worker varied between Rs. 1,16,000 per year in the manufacturing sector and Rs. 1,35,000 per year in "other services" in 2022-23. That's roughly Rs. 10,000 per month – a pathetic sum. In rural areas, real wages are even lower. The greatest contradiction in the country is that economy is growing at 6-7% per year for 10 years without much increase in real wages. This puts the pointer

to a deep crisis in the informal sector which suffered from three successive shocks in the forms of demonetization, hasty and unplanned rollout of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), and the Covid-19 crisis. In contrary, the corporate sector performed quite well in this period. The power of financial concentration among top five private corporates that was declining between 2010 to 2015, rose sharply after that. The picture in the urban middle class is equally grim. A recent report by Deloitte says that lasting inflation and low average annual increase in salaries in the corporate sector have resulted in real wages for most urban employees ranging from -0.4% to 3.9% over the last five years. This has negatively impacted disposable income and consumption levels and is likely to remain similar in 2025. The study calculated real wage growth after factoring in inflation based on the Consumer Price Index against average salary hikes by companies. The salary hikes will still be lower than pre covid period in 2025 and real wages growth will be negligible. Inflation posed significant challenges for Indian common people in 2024, with raised cost of essential goods and services and tightening household budgets. Food inflation remained high throughout the year, notably in vegetable prices. There was a slight decrease in retail inflation (CPI) in November, to 5.48% from 6.21% in October, while wholesale inflation (WPI) lowered to 1.89% from 2.36% over the same period. These marginal changes had no impact as high food prices led to reduced miscellaneous spending, especially during the festive season. This trend was attributed to people allocating main portion of their income to purchase of food items, and ignoring non-essential purchases. The GDP growth rate fell to a seven-quarter low of 5.4 per cent in the July-September period, mainly attributed to reduced real purchasing power of people ending in reducing spending on non-essential goods and services. Savings have long been the backbone of financial stability in Indian households. Half of Indian household reported a dip in savings and earnings, according to a Local Circles survey. Household borrowings rose to 5.8 per cent of GDP, marking the highest levels since the 1970s. To maintain their standard of living amid increasing expenses, many families dipped into their savings, leading to concerns about long-term financial security. Contrary to the above dismal image in the wage and purchasing power of the working class, the economic survey 2025 says that the corporate profits touched a 15-year high in 2023-24 even as wage growth for

employees lagged. Citing State Bank of India's analysis, the survey said the revenue of 4,000 listed companies rose 6% in FY24, while the growth in their employee expenses slowed to 13% from 17% the year before with wage stagnation being remarkable. Meanwhile, profit grew by 22.3%, but employment expanded by a mere 1.5%, the survey noted. It is clear that the employers are focusing on cost cutting instead of expansion of workers which means squeezing of new job opportunities. This trend, seen predominantly among big companies, raises concerns about income inequality. The same is the picture for the SPEs working in the pharma industry. One of the lowest paid amongst the highly skilled categories of workers in India, most of the SPEs are deprived of even a decent living wage. Most of their employers are happy to maintain an abysmally low wage and pour in their money in variable earnings like incentives to attract and retain the large pool of skilled sales professional who are the interfaces of their marketing grand plans to fetch business. In a society where young men and women are struggling with their societal and familial obligations, the management is systematically pushing them towards an area which is beyond them. Achievement of sales targets, daily and monthly call objectives are variables which depends on a plethora of physical factors. But the hapless SPE is running like mad to achieve the given objectives at the end of the month so that he can manage to have a decent increment at the end of the year. The concept of increment has been conveniently shifted by the employers to unreliable factors instead of inflation, CPI and WPI. There is neither expendable money in the hands of the Indian workers nor is there any chances of new employment generation. One does not need to be an expert to understand that both are basically disastrous recipe for any nation which aspires to be a major economic force through expansion of market. The impact is visible and now realizing that things are turning bad for the overall economy of the country, the mainstream media that worships the corporates throughout the year is ill at ease. The absolutely parochial view of earning hefty profits and depriving the employees who generate the profit smacks of a mentality which is sick and diabolical. It is reflective of the early days of capitalism when capitalists only thought about profits and not for the workers. In this era of Modiconomics, capitalism seems to have shed off all veneers of welfare concept and has landed us in a disastrous trajectory.

Condolence meeting

Jyotish Dutta, our organization has been upheld by late comrade Jyotish Dutta. Vice President of General secretary of WBMSRU, retired employee of Glaxo Smith Kline and based at Malda till his retirement passed away on 30th December 2024 after suffering a prolonged illness at the age of 83 years. He'll be always remembered for his valiant fight, an uncompromised Sales Promotion Employee, who never bowed at the diktats of management till his last day of service, sacrificing and being deprived of increments. WBMSRU on 18th January, 2025 organized meeting in memory of Jyotish Dutta where all former leadership of WBMSRU along with present members and FMRAI General Secretary and Treasurer were present and paid tribute to Jyotish Dutta. During his deliberation, WBMSRU General Secretary expressed how the principles of



■ Arun Ghoshal, former GS WBMSRU speaking in the meeting.

Lightning strike in Glenmark

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...and staged unified protest against the unjust move of their own management and stopped them from leaving the hotel. By the time TMSRU and CITU leadership reached the hotel on being informed by FMRAI, the management personnel escaped the hotel premises with the help of police escort. To give a befitting reply to such a heinous act of Glenmark management FMRAI gave a call for one-day lightning strike across the country irrespective of division. Almost the entire

section of fieldworkers of Glenmark across the country resorted to the All India strike on 23rd January, 2025 with one-point demand of job protection. It was indeed a successful strike as more than sixteen hundred fieldworkers reported "on strike" and participated in demonstration programs along with the state council subcommittee members of respective state units before the company's establishments. However, it will be a long drawn struggle for the fieldworkers against this oppressive management.

Obituary

Samya Bhattacharya

Working in Mankind Pharma based at Kolkata passed away untimely on 21st January, 2025 due to a tragic incidence leaving behind his wife and a son of two and half years' age. On the midnight from short circuit his house got damaged and he got burnt. After struggling to survive at hospital for few hours, he succumbed to death. We dip our flag in mourning of this untimely death and express heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family.

Spurious Drug takes away a mothers life



■ Tinka Maji, Treasurer WBMSRU, addressing the audience on medicine related issue.

FMRAI had been vociferously advocating against the absence of a policy of proper mechanism of quality checks in drug industry especially drugs manufactured by small manufacturers where lack of infrastructure and investments results in compromised quality of medicines produced therein. Becoming the largest producer & suppliers of Generic Medicines of the World, policies of the Government are also responsible to provide licenses of manufacturing units in a rampant manner all over the country where basic infrastructure is lacking. There are many incidences in recent past in different countries where many children were died due to administration of below par quality medicines produced in India. Even during Covid period it has been reported that many such medicines are extensively marketed despite being alerted by different drug agencies of states. Issues of FMRAI NEWS made elaborate coverages on such matters few months back too. We also reported about how those spurious drug producers were let unpunished despite been identified by the different state drug controllers. The

FMRAI News made elaborate coverages after apex court judgement & scrapping of Electoral Bond system in the country introduced by Modi government where it was found around 800crs of such bonds were purchased by the Pharmaceutical companies, who are responsible for marketing spurious drugs & irrelevant medicines during Covid periods & looted thousands of crores from the poor country men. Such criminal nexus of unholy businessmen producing subpar and sometimes adulterated medicines frequently go un booked in our country. In West Bengal the death of a 31 years lady during child birth & other four critically ill new mothers in Midnapore Medical College & Hospital is such an example of gross negligence from administration where below par quality (adulterated) Ringer Lactate saline is administered, produced by such a company whose RL & other 14 products are already declared banned by the West Bengal Health Department following directives of Drugs Control General of India but remained in supply to Govt hospitals. This is big question as to how a product which is already banned by State drug

controller months back is supplied to Medical College & used on the patients. It is not very clear whether it is a gross negligence from administration to treat poorest of the poor's patients of the State, where the CM herself is the responsible minister of the department or there is again any foul play for which hospital management is compelled to use such banned medicines to the patients. Why doctors are being punished or held responsible rather than the people who are responsible for purchase of such drugs is also another point to be considered. An investigation under proper authorities can only reveal the real perpetrators of the crime. FMRAI from very beginning has been speaking about the real picture of generic medicine and drug quality control system in India. Immediately after the incident WBMSRU launched state wide protests and organised memorandum submission to Government hospital authority CMOH, street corners in every district. WBMSRU Treasure Tinka Maji addressed at a Convention organised by Doctor for Democracy regarding the truth of generic medicines in the country.

Torrent fieldworkers raised demand for grievance committee

Field workers at Torrent are voicing their concerns as management continues to ignore their calls for a grievance committee meeting. Despite submitting a memorandum during the cycle meetings outlining their long-pending demands, the management is yet to respond. Earlier

the all-India council leadership met the management with the demand of recognizing the grievance committee and also to initiate periodical discussions on the grievances for amicable resolutions. Several issues and grievances are being precipitated by the management in

different divisions of the company. In December 2024, all field workers escalated their efforts by emailing the General Managers of their divisions, urging them to address the pressing issues affecting their livelihoods. Solidarity is crucial in the fight for fair treatment and recognition of workers' rights.

The battle for rights continues

Albert David Limited's (ADL) movement showcased the evidence of the sacrifice and struggle of FMRAI in this decade. Under intolerable pressure, huge victimization, and lucrative allurements, most council members are still in the movement to achieve rights across the country. Those who stepped into management's trap have been suffering a lot. Most of them have left the company or surrendered to the unethical practices of the management. Some of the victimized members crossed the age of superannuation without any benefits, one of them died of cancer but the ire and oppression of the management did not spare him also. Some are fighting for reinstatement and the rest of the council members



■ Sasanka Mouli Roy addressing members in demonstration

who are in payroll, have been cornered in Sunrise division with the objective of isolation and harassment. In these circumstances the Albert David members along with the council subcommittees across the country are fighting a spirited battle under the banner of FMRAI. COD is pending for adjudication along with 14 industrial disputes in Kolkata, 8 cases in Delhi and 1 in Tamil Nadu Labour Court regarding terminations, transfers, wage cut. Demonstration programmes are regularly being organized in front of company establishments of Albert David along with campaign seeking support of the medical fraternity. In the month of January demonstration was organized at Kolkata, Chennai, Hyderabad and Lucknow in front of company establishments, which were attended by good number of members. The intensified fight to establish the rights of the fieldworkers against the oppressive Albert David management would continue with all might.



■ Demonstration against Ozone in Howrah.

Fight continues against Ozone

The Ozone fieldworkers remained steadfast in resisting the attack of the employer. On 21st January, 2025 in front of OZONE establishment at West Bengal, the council subcommittee members of WBMSRU demonstrated in huge numbers. OZONE is operating with two divisions. Management has been threatening the fieldworkers to accept GPS enabled reporting system and stopped disbursing salaries. Fieldworkers are fighting against the management's unilateral implementation. On behalf of organization the demand has been placed for releasing pending salary, withdrawal of imposing surveillance through reporting system and restoration of bilateral discussion.

Organisational Conventions in WBMSRU

Organisational convention was organised in all subunits of WBMSRU in November and December 2024 with enthusiastic participation of sub unit leaderships. Leaders of 20 subunits discussed on the note prepared by WBMSRU. The basic motto of such convention is to enrich the emerging leaderships of all the tier with various aspects of the organisation. All subunits emphasised on strengthening the Local Committees. In three tier organisation structure, the Local Committees are the most important tier to maintain live contact with the members. Beside this, Local Committees are the matrix of our future leadership. Therefore, it is of utmost importance to encourage independent and democratic functioning of the local committees for the developments. Expansion of the organisation, particularly amongst field workers of Other Industry, Small Scale Sectors and Women Field Workers are also discussed in these Conventions. To consolidate the advancement and to sail through the path of further organisation development in 2025 should be the mission of all sub units. Most of the subunits arranged commission based discussion and discussed the areas of weaknesses and gave valuable suggestions to overcome the same. The organisation slogan remained, "Strengthen the Local Committees, Strengthen WBMSRU".



CRU(NER) organizes 25th Central Conference

The 25th Central Conference of CRU(NER), the union of Sales Promotion Employees working in the seven states of North East Region was held at Agartala during 9-11 January, 2025. The Conference was organized in befitting manner battling hurdles in the political arena. The Conference commenced with hoisting of the red flag at Town Hall, Agartala by Jamini Barbaruah, President, CRU(NER) and was inaugurated by Purushottam Roy Burman, chairperson of the Reception Committee. During his inaugural speech he urged upon he delegates to build up movement for protecting the rights of working class and not to get swayed away by the divisive corporate communal nexus. After the inaugural session, a colourful

rally on the medicine related demands was organised which passed the thoroughfares of Agartala town and attracted mass attention. General Secretary, FMRAI, Santanu Chatterjee deliberated in the business session. During his speech the movements of FMRAI was explained and he called for building up movement to against the exploitation of the employers as well as against the economic policies of the Union Government influenced by the capital. He also emphasized on the task of reaching all the SPEs at the remote corner of every towns, villages and mobilizing the SPEs in the movement. The General Secretary's report was placed by Rahul Purkayastha and Amitava Das placed the Treasurer's report. A resolution on common demands and movements

was placed for building up movement for the rights of the SPEs with specific demands to Central and state government and the employers. Sankar Prasad Dutta, General Secretary, CITU, Tripura greeted the delegates. State general secretaries of Tripura state Student Federation of India and Democratic Youth Federation of India also greeted the delegates. Two separate resolutions on price rise and on the demands of Other Industries were also moved. 48 delegates from 17 subunits discussed on the reports placed by General Secretary and Treasurer which includes delegates from women and other industries. Dr. Pradip Bhowmick, an eminent doctor associated with Government Medical Collage of Tripura made a presentation on changing employment

scenario and social responsibilities fulfilled by the Medical Representatives. Kaushik Roy Chowdhury, Secretary, FMRAI deliberated on the discussion of the delegates regarding the policy and council related movements of FMRAI. Both the reports and resolutions were unanimously adopted during the Conference. The 25th Central Conference unanimously elected Rahul Purkayastha, Jivan Jyoti Dwarah and Dwipayan Chakraborty as General Secretary, President and Treasurer along with 15 Office Bearers and 55 Executive Committee Members. The conference concluded with the resolve to build up more intensified movement for protecting the rights of the SPEs and to further expand the organisation by reaching all the unreached fieldworkers.

General Council Meeting of MPMSRU

General council meeting (GCM) of MPMSRU has held on 3rd and 4th January, 2025 at B. Vijayan and S.K. Soni Nagar (Muhurat Garden, Katni). The meeting was inaugurated by FMRAI Vice President Devasis Roy. Pramod Pradhan, National Secretary of CITU graced the event and addressed the gathering. He explained

Tomar, delivered the presidential address. General Secretary Anurag Saxena and Treasurer Viresh Pandey placed their reports respectively. 40 delegates representing the subunits participated in the discussion on the General Secretary's and Treasurer's report. The General Council also adopted



Anurag Saxena, General Secretary placing his report the anti-worker three resolutions on communalism's impact on working class, membership and state related demands. The meeting was attended by 80 general council members and 6 invitees representing different units of MPMSRU. The Katni unit organised a grand vehicle RALLY on the second day of the GCM. Sailendra Sharma, Secretary member, FMRAI summed up the discussions and extended revolutionary greetings to Katni Unit for organizing this GCM successfully.



Demonstration against USV in Lucknow by UPMSRA

Industrial action in USV

Turn from P 1 reported "on strike" on 24th of January'25. Demonstrations were organized in front of company's establishments across the country where sizeable number of members participated demonstrated, gave slogans against the atrocities of the management.

FMRAI responds to AIOCDs call

Blood donation camp was organized by AIOCD on the occasion of 75th birthday of Shree Jagannath S Shinde, President of the All India Organisation of Chemists and Druggists (AIOCD) all over India on 24th January 2025. Mr. Shinde is known for his vision and work for the pharma trade and services to the society for the welfare of common people. AIOCD has specially invited FMRAI on this occasion to take part

in the programme through all state units. In medicine-related movements of FMRAI, AIOCD also participates supporting the cause in various states. Large number of members from UPMSRA, MPMSRU, TNMSRA, APMSRU, MSMRA, BSSRU, KSM&SRA, GOAMRA and RMSRU donated blood. During this program, Shri Shinde promised to ignite their protest to stop unethical pharma trade practices in every nook and corner of the country.



Officials of AIOCD felicitating GOAMRA member for donating.