

STRIKE BY FRANCO INDIAN FIELDWORKERS

Franco Indian management walked miles away from the spirit of bilateralism by mounting fresh attacks on the fieldworkers in the early days of May. Within a fortnight of a meeting of the negotiation committee and management, fourteen fieldworkers were transferred to distant places in a span of less than twenty-four hours citing business exigency.

The Franco Indian All India Council Committee contacted the management to revoke the transfer orders but the management was adamant in their stand and turned down the appeal letters of the fieldworkers. Fieldworkers of Franco Indian were already in desperation because of long pending charter of demands, large number of transfer issues, delay in reimbursement and arbitrary deduction of expenses, illegal work stoppage and suspensions. Franco management are also grossly violating the statutory provisions under Sales Promotion Employees (Conditions



■ Franco Indian field workers staging dharna before Labour Commissioners office at Mumbai

of Service) Act, 1976 like denying Casual Leaves and not providing leave accumulation data. In spite of such unrest over a considerable period of time FMRAI and the All India Council Committee of Franco Council left no stone unturned to resolve the issues through the process of dialogue and discussions. But, since the situation further worsened with the fourteen unjust transfers, calls for

industrial action became inevitable.

In such a background, a clarion call was given for resorting to two days strike on 21st and 22nd May, 2025 with dharna on the second day before the company's establishments across the nation.

On 21st May, 2025 the first day of strike, fieldworkers of all three divisions gathered in their respective subunits along with their

council subcommittee members. In some states council meetings were conducted with Franco Indian fieldworkers on the first day of strike. Members of the Franco Indian council gathered in large numbers in front of the company's establishments from the early hours of 22nd May, 2025 sending a loud and clear message to the management by strongly raising their demands through

slogans and staging daylong dharna before the cfa's of the company almost everywhere. 750 fieldworkers attended the dharna program in front of 17 establishments of the company across the country. The council subcommittee members were also vigilant in the field on the days of strike and there was a complete paralysation of field work amid efforts by the

management to make the trainee fieldworkers work under coercion. The general unity also participated in huge numbers in every state, extending all sorts of support and cooperation. A team of deputation including All India Convenor met the Labour Commissioner Mumbai and submitted the demands for strike. In almost all the places memorandum submission to the management's representatives took place. Out of nine hundred fifty-seven confirmed/probationer FMRAI members, nine hundred seven fieldworkers reported "On Strike" on 21st and 22nd May, 2025. The task in hand will be of disciplined approach and preparation for resolute struggle in Franco to normalize the industrial situation in favour of the SPEs.

Corrigendum

In the May, 2025 issue page no 4, under the item titled "52nd Foundation Day of CRU(NER), CTA should be read as Commercial Travellers' Association and not as Central Travellers Association. The error is regretted.

GST - Memorandum Submission

27th Conference at Mumbai in February 2025 has identified the miseries of the common people of the country in healthcare system caused by the current regime in India. People of the country are pushed to poverty due to catastrophic OOPE (Out of the Pocket Expenses) for treatment. Less than 2% of the Budget is allocated for healthcare in this fiscal too where WHO recommendation is 6%. Only 14% rural & 19% urban populace are covered under any health insurance scheme. The government is charging 4 slabs of GST (5 to 18 percent) on medicines which has aggravated the miseries of the people.

In this background the Conference has given clarion call to launch for an active movement to expose the anti-people policies of the NDA government. As



■ Memorandum submitted by Mandsaur subunit MPMSRU

decided a memorandum submission to the Finance Minister of India, Smt. Nirmala Sitharaman on 6 pts demand -1. Reduce prices of all medicines and bring all medicines under price control regime 2. Withdraw all slabs of GST from medicines and medical devices 3. Withdraw import duties on all medicines 4. Ensure standardized quality of all medicines. Ensure stringent punishment against spurious drug manufacturers. 5.

Increase allocation of health budget to 5% of country's GDP 6. Stop online sales of medicines is initiated through district administrations from all 400 sub-units, through GST offices of the states and finally from FMRAI centre to the Finance Minister.

As we go to press, many states have executed the programme as planned and the responses

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Workers unite: 9th July General Strike reflects solidarity amidst national crisis

On May 15, 2025, the Joint Platform of Central Trade Unions and independent sectoral federations convened in New Delhi to address pressing national issues following a tragic terrorist attack in Pahalgam that claimed 26 innocent lives. In response to the prevailing crisis and the immediate aftermath, this coalition made the pivotal decision to defer the nationwide general strike originally scheduled for May 20 to July 9, 2025, while emphasizing the necessity of continued mobilization and solidarity among workers.

This decision underscores the profound sensitivity of the

current socio-political landscape in India. The Joint Platform strongly condemned the heinous attack, calling for unity against terrorism and divisive hate campaigns that jeopardize national integrity. However, the meeting illuminated a disheartening reality: even amid national mourning, the employers' bolstered by government support—continued its aggressive onslaught on workers' rights.

The Joint Platform's rescheduling of the General Strike on July 9 highlights an unwavering commitment to defend the rights of workers, farmers, and citizens alike. As they prepare for massive demonstrations

across state capitals and workplaces, the message is clear: solidarity and collective action are essential in these turbulent times.

The Joint Platform calls on the Indian government to engage with trade unions actively, rather than pursue unilateral changes that undermine labour rights. As tensions rise, it is crucial that the government embraces dialogue and addresses the legitimate demands of the labor movement. The rescheduled General Strike stands not only as a protest against unjust policies but as a manifestation of unity and resilience among the working class in the face of adversity.

EDITORIAL

Strike to defend history and protect future

The Capitalist mode of production that started roughly during industrial revolution in Europe in the late 18th century, marks an epoch-making shift in the mechanism and outcome of the social production process in the world. Over the last two centuries, during origin and development of capitalism, we have been witness to the tremendous impact it has had on the world as a whole, be it globally or locally, whether at collective or at individual levels. In the 50 thousand years of chequered history of mankind, no economic process is said to have achieved such deep impact on the direction of human civilization. Undoubtedly the biggest contribution of capitalism is the creation of the modern working class, of which we are a component. And this remains till date the biggest irony of capitalism that however focused the system is, in generating and accumulating profits, it cannot do so without involving the workers. And it is these very workers which the capitalist system must exploit to generate profit. To this date, this is the biggest inherent contradiction of the capitalist mode of production that it cannot advance without fleecing its most essential component, the workers. Therefore, the system must, under compulsion and most unwillingly, create a sub system where the workers can survive and engage itself willingly to work for generating profit for the capitalists. The origin of the labour laws and other welfare measures for the workers should be understood in the above basic premise.

Since the first labour law that was passed in the year 1802 in England, it was clear that the ruling class was compelled to pass legislations to at least put a leash in the necks of bloodsucking capitalist beasts so that the workers can have the minimum chance of survival and ability to work for their employers. These laws primarily was enacted owing to the pressures of various social reformers forcing the owners to have mercy on the pathetic working conditions of 19th century, especially that of children and women. The question of worker's rights was still a distant dream and there was no involvement of the working class in the enactment of these legislations. The working time were still 12 hours which were later attempted to bring down to 10, in the middle of the 19th century. Thereafter series of labour laws were passed in England to reduce the plight of the workers initiated out of compassion secondarily, but primarily to ensure that the reproduction of labour power is assured for the sustenance of the capitalist system.

The first involvement of the workers in bringing laws in favour of themselves was in the area of working hours. It started in the early 1800s but culminated in 1886 in the Hay market massacre in Chicago, immortalized since as the International Workers Day on the 1st of May. Since then, the working class all over the world has spearheaded movements to force their respective governments to enact laws which take care of their interests even at the

chagrin of the capitalist employers. In India industries started to develop in British India from the 1850s. The working conditions were horrible reflecting early capitalism in the Europe. It was the social reformers once again who initiated working for the Indian workers and demanded legislations. Agitation of workers started at the same time in the cotton mills of Bombay and Jute mills of Calcutta leading to the first recorded strike in 1877 in the Nagpur Empress Mill. Thereafter series of labour movements compelled the British and post-independence Indian government to enact laws in favor of protection of jobs, fixing working hours, workplace safety, wages, social welfare measures so on and so forth. Arguably the first labour law, the Indian factories Act, 1891 came into being only after repeated involvement of the workers of the country. Once again, working hours was limited to 11 hours only for the women in the act. But this achievement gave a huge boost to the nascent workers movement of the country as it was followed by strikes after strikes in Bombay, Ahmedabad, Calcutta and Chennai. The labour laws that the Modi government is now hell bent to change thus have a glorious history of direct actions from the Indian working class. This movement was intertwined with the freedom movement of the country.

Post-independence, the enormous influence of socialist USSR and the general influence of socialist camps all over the world from the 1950s to 70s exerted the desired push to the working-class movement in India and one after another labour laws were enacted that restrained the unbridled oppression of the workers. With the decimation of the USSR and gradual evaporation of the socialist bloc, the world became unipolar and trade union movement faced definite setback. At the same time now, the capitalism of the twentieth century is obsolete in the sense that it no more can protect itself from the inherent crisis. The twenty first century capitalism is a free market economic formula. The existing labour laws in India and elsewhere has become impediments for them for the advancements of their exploitative infrastructure. And in India they have a government who is ready to comply with their diktats. The consequence is codification of 29 labour laws and that is precisely why now the members of FMRAI should come down on the streets to secure their future. The liberal veneer of capitalist welfare measures is now ripped open by this government and the working class including the members of FMRAI should strike hard to oppose this near criminal conspiracy to snatch whatever was achieved through centuries of struggles. Our only specific act, the SPE Act has been repealed by this anti worker dispensation at the center. The 9th July strike is a clarion call for the SPEs of the country to get integrated to the nationwide fight to raise their unified voice against this conspiracy of intense exploitation in the offing. Therefore the fight is for our future.

The deceit of the generic campaign

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regulatory systems transparent, predictable and verifiable," according to a health ministry media release. "Our vision is to be known as the world's most respected and recognised drugs regulator. This can only happen when we move from generic to quality-generic drugs and medical devices production in the country. Our drugs regulatory systems ought to meet the needs to R&D, innovation, organisation strengthening and capacity enhancement", he stressed. "Quality by design" should be our motto, he said. The above statements by the government are enough vindication of the current

state of quality concerns of the generic drugs in the country. It cannot be denied that one important aspect of the generic drugs not being popular among the doctor and the Indian people in general is the lack of trust people have on the quality of these medicines. Doctors and patients are resistant to accept generic medication because they perceive them as inferior to their branded counterpart. Generics are often seen with great degree of suspicion due to lack of transparency about quality compliance and absence of detailed knowledge to the patients.

(To be concluded next month)

Observing 102nd International Labour Day

Inspite of its significance worldwide, many Indian states have also not considered 1st May as a holiday though it is a holiday as per N.I Act. In this era, workers are competing with automation, digitalization and artificial intelligence. 10 to 12-hour work has been recommended by most of the leaders of world business undermining the working conditions. This is done through changing labour laws. To protect the rights, it is necessary to recall the history of May Day, to build unity against anti labour policies of the Government. May Day has been observed by all state units of FMRAI. In the center, FMRAI Vice President Shubranshu Bhattacharjee hoisted the federation flag. A special hall meeting was organized where Sudip Dutta, Secretary, CITU spoke on "Neo-fascism and new phase of struggle". In this meeting, FMRAI General Secretary Partha Rakshit and Secretariat member J.S. Naruka also addressed the members. OSRU organized subunit base flag hoisting, mass meetings to address members, and colourful rallies with strike demands. In BSSRU, all subunits observed May Day, after flag hoisting, some subunits organized special GB meetings, in some places blood donation camps, and elsewhere members took part in joint platform rallies with CITU. UPMSRA submitted a

memorandum to the state Labour Commissioner to amend Sec 2(Z) of the ID Act, to stop illegal wage deduction, transfer, termination of SPEs and demanding holiday in 1st May. Subunits arranged for blood donation camps also. PCMSRU organised 12 hall meetings and also participated in a joint program with CITU. In the national capital, DSMRO observed May Day in the Delhi Center of FMRAI. RMSRU organized the program individually in some places and also jointly in other. In Madhya Pradesh, MPMSRU subunits organized rallies, and members also participated in street corner and mass meetings of CITU. In the South Zone, all states observed the day enthusiastically. In Tamil Nadu, 3 subunits of TNMSRA organized GB meetings and the rest participated in a Joint rally with CITU. Members of KMSRA participated in Joint Platforms programs. In Karnataka, 17 subunits of KSM&SRA observed May Day. TMSRU organized GB meetings in all subunits; members were explained regarding the gist of the last FMRAI conference by FMRAI Working Committee Members and General Council Members belonging to the state. WBMSRU at state center combined the program with FMRAI, all other sub units observed the May Day successfully.

Obituary



Pradip Kumar Roy

We deeply mourn the passing of Pradip Kumar

Roy, a dedicated leader and committed activist born in 1956 in Agartala. Comrade Roy was actively involved in the students and youth movement during the emergency, reflecting his lifelong commitment to democratic values. He was a devoted cadre of CITU and later took on key leadership roles within the organisation.

Beginning his career in 1979 with Vetmeds, later with Astra, eventually he joined in Rallies India Ltd (now Shreya Life Sciences), where he continued till retirement in 2017. In Agartala, he served as District Secretary and later as President, where he was a much beloved and respected leader. He held the position of President of CRU (NER) for two terms and also served as Vice President of FMRAI. Affectionately known as "P.K.," he is survived by his wife and son.



Tapan Chatterjee

Former President of Deoghar subunit of B.S.S.R

Union passed away on 15th May, 2025. FMRAI deeply mourns the death of Tapan Chatterjee and sends heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family members.



Sayan Mukherjee

A member of North 24 Parganas sub unit of WBMSRU

working in East India Company passed away untimely due to illness on 19th May, 2025 leaving behind his mother. We deeply mourn his untimely death and express heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family.

Baisakhi Ghosh

Working in Pfizer based at Kolkata passed away on 20th May, 2025 due to hypoxia while travelling in Arunachal Pradesh leaving behind her husband and a daughter of six years old. FMRAI expresses deep sorrow over the untimely demise of Baisakhi Ghosh and sends heartfelt condolence to the bereaved family.

The deceit of the generic campaign

The mainstream media is suddenly abuzz with news reports of an observation of an Hon'ble Judge of the Supreme Court on the mandatory usage of generic drugs by the doctors. The observation came when in course of hearing an argument of the case W.P. (C) no. 000323/2021 by FMRAI on the issue of making the UCPMP statutory with provisions for punishments for all those drugs companies which violates the code by offering bribes to the doctors. The case in question was lodged by FMRAI in the year 2021 when repeated plea by FMRAI and various other organisations were not heeded that the UCPMP 2014 did not have any impact on the companies which indulge in unethical marketing practices. The revelation in the Dolo 1000 episode gave a huge fillip to the claim that the pharma companies are in fact continuing their sordid practices without bothering about the code at all. It is in relation to that the Court ordered the government to submit its view through counter affidavit on 2022. In its submission the government maintained that the existing laws of the country are sufficient for taking punitive measures on the issue of unethical trade practices. The Government also formed a high-powered committee under chairmanship of a member of Niti Ayog. More than a year has passed no one has any clue what the HPC has done but a new avatar of the UCPMP has been introduced in 2024 once again without any penal provisions. FMRAI termed the new UCPMP as "old wine in new bottle" suggesting that only cosmetic changes have been done to satisfy, may be the Apex Court and the people of the country.

In the meantime, because of the retirement of the then CJI the bench where the hearing of the said case was taking place got dissolved. FMRAI appealed for a fresh enlistment of the case in a new bench and the first hearing took place on 1st May. The case in point was that the freebies, illegal sponsorships and pay for prescription model is thriving in the industry comfortably. A

burning example is that of the company AbbVie which was officially reprimanded by the DoP because it spent more than Rs. 1.9 crores behind doctors to provide travel tickets and hotel accommodations in contraventions to the codal provisions. The interesting part of the story is that in the order dated 23rd December, 2024 clause no. 10, it is explicitly admitted by the DoP, "Upon perusal of the facts and after hearing M/s. AbbVie at length, the Apex Committee is of the opinion that M/s. AbbVie has violated the provisions of the Uniform Code for Pharmaceutical Marketing Practices by sponsoring foreign vacations to Monaco and Paris for 30 HCPs in violation of the codal provisions." Yet it limits itself to only "reprimand" the company and forward the case to the CBDT for necessary tax evasion case and the names of the doctors to the NMC for necessary punishments. As expressed by FMRAI number of times this is the exact magnitude of helplessness that a code statutorily unbinding to the companies has rendered to the regulatory authorities. They can identify, investigate and establish that wrongdoings exist. But they can only "reprimand" and do nothing else. In this case the DoP has urged the CBDT to file tax evasion case against the company in question. The real issue of bribery remains unpunished.

Generic is not the answer

The reality is that in India the concept of generic medicines and the format of generic business is totally different than Europe or America where branded medicines mean patented medicines with extremely high prices that cause huge pressure not only on the patient's pocket but also on the government exchequer. After expiry of the patents generic medicines are allowed in the market which substantially brings down the prices of these medicines. In our country only about 5% of medicines are patented the rest are essentially generics which are sold under different brand

names. These branded generics (an oxymoron actually) are sold in the market through distribution channels of the company and are prescribed by the doctors in their brand names.

Price difference?

Various non branded formulations are being today sold at various counters at the government hospitals officially approved by the state governments. The central government also have opened up Amrit pharmacies and Jana Aushadhi outlets. These are all private firms and they sell generics by displaying huge ads of discounted medicines being available there. As such, attracting patients through ads of discounts is prohibited under the in India. Furthermore, if the pricing pattern is carefully analysed it will be seen that the medicines available after discounting is almost same priced with other branded medicines available in the market. The poor patients are thus duped by clever businessmen through discount-traps into purchasing from their outlets only.

Shift of choice

The important issue here is that the shift of choice of medicines goes from the doctors to the chemists which is concerning. Anyone who has even a basic knowledge of the process how a brand gets prescribed from the doctor's pen, is aware that the quality of the medicine, affordability according to the patient's financial condition, regular availability of the medicine in nearby chemists, and other factors get priorities while choosing the said brand by the doctor. In case of generics there is practically no choice at the doctor's end. Whatever is available in the chemist's counter will have to be compulsorily purchased by the patients. Needless to say, that the profit margins, trade discounts, gifts, rewards and freebies offered to the chemists will be the determinant factors in stocking of such medicines.

Freebies to chemists

Today, it is a misconception that

if generics are made mandatory then unethical marketing practices will stop. Firstly, it will still be done by the generic marketing companies. Secondly, an unholy alliance will develop between some physicians-companies-chemists to push generic medicines of those companies who indulge in such unfair activities. Third, the flow of rewards and freebies (cash and kind) that will take place at the chemist level will be impossible to detect and stop as at trade levels there are no laws or protocols to stop such activities. Already we know for sure that many companies offer bonuses, vouchers, cash discounts, trips and various goods to stock their medicines. In a generic driven market this will increase manifold and the government will have no control over that.

Quality takes a backseat

The biggest victim of the above system will be the quality aspect of medicines. While in the US the generic drugs, whenever introduced pass through rigorous tests on quality so that there is absolutely no difference in any analytical parameters with the patented brand that may adversely impact the clinical effect of the drug, that is always not the case in India. In fact, reports of serious violations in quality control have erupted time to time with India made drugs that have resulted in deaths in other countries.

In the not-so-distant past, generic cough syrups have killed dozens of children, its eye drops have caused blindness and its chemotherapy drugs have been contaminated. According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC) the children who died — mostly under the age of five years — were given Indian-made over-the-counter products contaminated with industrial solvents and antifreeze agents that are fatal in even small amounts. The eye drops that contained extensively drug-resistant bacteria. So far 68 patients across 16 US states have been affected. Three people died, several had to have their eyeballs

removed, some went blind. The Chennai based company, Global Pharma Healthcare, issued a voluntary nationwide recall for the drops. There are other reports of well-known companies of India accused of and later hugely fined for selling adulterated medicines in developed countries like the US.

The Truth Pill: The Myth of Drug Regulation in India by Dinesh Thakur and Prashant Reddy, which was published in October 2022 states that adulterated Indian drugs are responsible for death of children in developing export markets like Gambia and Uzbekistan. These products are also responsible for death of children in India. In 2019, at least 11 infants died in the state of Jammu because of cough syrup containing diethylene glycol. It is reported that mass poisoning of children with medication containing DEG has happened in India on five previous occasions — in one 1998 case, 36 children died due to acute renal failure after consuming contaminated cough syrup.

The FDA publishes different reviews of new drug applications on its website, along with detailed notes. The European Medical Agency gives similarly expansive information. There is no such openness in India, neither is there any national law for recalling of drugs. A report published in The Economic Times dated 16th March 2025 cited a study published in the journal Production and Operations Management which said that out of 2443 generic drugs made in the USA and emerging countries (93% of which is India made) India made generics were related to 54% more adverse events including hospitalisation disability and death compared to equivalent drugs made in the US. These were all "mature generic drugs" meaning that they have been in the market for a pretty long time.

Dr K K Aggarwal, Padma Shri Awardee, President Heart Care Foundation of India wrote, "In 2017, five medicines were recalled from Jan Aushadhi stores— the

government's initiative to provide affordable medicines to all. There were quality lapses in these drugs. Moreover, 6 drugs were rolled back in the first four months of 2018. In 2014, 15 women died after undergoing mishandled sterilization operations performed in Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh. In addition to the 15 deaths, 70 women were hospitalized in critical condition, 20 of whom were put on mechanical ventilation. One of the major reasons for these mortalities was the substandard quality of drugs used in the sterilization camps. The drug manufacturing companies which produced cheaper versions of drugs were charged with the possibility of zinc phosphide found in the samples of antibiotic tablets and the viscera of the deceased. The verdict of the Chhattisgarh High Court also confirmed that the deaths were due to substandard generic drugs used during the treatment. Speaks volumes about the market of generic only drugs we are all set to rely on, doesn't it? Though generic drugs may sometimes be a bit cheaper than branded generics, they fail to foster trust unless from a standard company. They cannot be compared with the tried and tested branded generics who have built an image keeping safety and quality as the sole parameters". He goes on to say, "With the government's backing to allow generic- generics to capture the market, can we let trusted brands take a back seat? The quality, potency and years of research that goes into creating a drug fit for the patient-specific conditions cannot be overlooked. Deciding a medicine should be based more on the quality and safety aspects rather than the economics of it".

After a two-day "brainstorming session" held in February, 2023, accepting the inherent weakness of the regulatory system in India, the Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya remarked India needed to "move from generic to quality-generic drugs." Discussions involved "how to make the country's drugs

KSM&SRA General Council Meeting

The 4th General Council Meeting of Karnataka State Medical & Sales Representatives' Association (KSM&SRA) was held on 3rd and 4th May, 2025 EMS Bhavana, Bengaluru, in the venue named after N H Sridhar Murthy. The GCM commenced through flag hoisting by Anand Raju K H, President, KSM&SRA. Ashok Kumar G B, the Organising Secretary, initiated the inaugural session by welcoming the delegates and available guests. H J Suresh, Treasurer of Karnataka State Electricity Workers Federation addressed the delegates and guests of the GCM in his welcome speech by highlighting the intense attacks presently being faced by the SPEs from the MNCs and regarding their growing influence over the central government's anti-worker policies. P Krishnanand, President FMRAI deliberated on the challenges being faced by SPEs and also stressed on the need of unified struggle across the country for combating the aggressive expansion of corporate power. Ratnakar Shenoy, All India Vice President of Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) also addressed the meeting.

Gururaj Desai placed the General Secretary's and A S Sathya Poorna placed the Treasurer's report. Three resolutions were placed namely 1. Fixation of working hours for the Sales Promotion Employees in Karnataka. 2. Strategic approaches to defend the rights and dignity of Sales Promotion Employees. 3. Appreciation for Bengaluru unit. All the three resolutions were adopted unanimously.

A. Jayaganesh, Vice President KSM&SRA presented the commission paper on changing employment scenarios and its emerging attacks. The meeting was also addressed by S. Vasudevan, Secretary FMRAI and B Chandrakumar Vice President KSM&SRA. C B Kulkarni, Jt. General Secretary, KSM&SRA placed the credential report. 45 delegates from 12 subunits attended the GCM. A. Sadananda Chary, Secretary TMSRU attended the 4th GCM of KSM&SRA and greeted the delegates.

2nd council convention by WBMSRU

WBMSRU successfully organized the 2nd Council Convention cluster-wise across 5 sub-units in May 2025. This initiative will continue through June, covering all members of 12 all India councils and 8 multi-division state councils, namely: Indoco, DRL, Indchemie, Emcure, Mankind, Eris, Abbott (India), and Glenmark.

The objective is to engage wider section of members by involving them in day-to-day functioning and strengthening organizational framework of the councils in the sub-units, enhancing the sub unit council's capacity to act as an extended arm of the state organisation. Moreover, reorientation and reorganising the council structure, with focus on grassroots level functioning is also needed. This will lead to more effective implementation of council related programs with greater participation of members.

This marks a step towards greater mobilization for achievement of rights for all section of field workers. More than 1800 members have participated so far, especially the participation of new members is noteworthy. Respective council leaderships placed a note in front of the members for discussion.



■ General Secretary, FMRAI placing his views on medicine pricing in the convention.

WBMSRU convention demands quality medicine at affordable price

The demand of availability and accessibility of life saving medicine at affordable prices to the common people is an important agenda of FMRAI's movement. Consistent awareness programme through conventions, mass meetings, campaign with leaflets, signing of digital petition have been implemented across the country by FMRAI. In recent past news of spurious and counterfeit drugs regularly seized from the market annoyed and scared the common people considerably. In such a volatile situation when, the common people are confused about the quality of medicines sold across the retail outlets and online platforms, the mass convention organised by WBMSRU attempted to answer many queries related to the topic.

The convention was held on 10th May, 2025 at Mahajati Sadan, Kolkata which was attended by eminent personalities across different spheres of activities and tried to bust popular myths associated with medicine and role of the authorities in providing quality medicine at affordable price.

Banerjee, convener of Medicine Related Sub Committee of WBMSRU placed the resolution on the demands. Partha Rakshit, General Secretary, FMRAI placed the loopholes of current drug pricing policy and the inaction of the Union and state governments in assuring quality medicine at affordable price. He explained the faulty pricing policy responsible for steady rise of medicine price and demanded to put cap on MRP and also to revert to pricing policy based on ex-factory cost. Dr. Fuad Halim, an eminent doctor associated with health movement was present and deliberated on the need to initiate movement for affordable healthcare for the common people. Dr. Subarno Goswami, Additional General Secretary, AIFGDA, Dr. Nirmalya Das, Secretary of Association of Health Service Doctors highlighted the inaction of Government in framing health policies in favour of the common people and criticized the central government for neglecting the cause of the mass and favouring the corporate to amass profit at the expense of people's health.

Sabyasachi Chatterjee, Advocate deliberated in the convention and emphasized that failure on the part of Central and State Governments to provide affordable medicine with quality is a breach of the constitutional provision of protecting life and livelihood as entailed in the constitution. Other eminent speakers included Monodip Ghosh, of the Bank Employees Federation, Sumahan Chakraborty, Treasurer-CITU, West Bengal state committee, Srijan Bhattacharya, leader of the student movement, and. Md. Salim, leader of left democratic movement in West Bengal. Basab Roy Chowdhury, General Secretary, WBMSRU, summed up the discussion and assured to generate consistent campaign to the people. An informative booklet was also inaugurated on the occasion by Arun Ghoshal, former General Secretary of WBMSRU. Shubrangshu Bhattacharjee, President, WBMSRU presided over the convention where more than 900 members and common people attended with wide media coverage.

Reception Committee of 20th State Conference of WBMSRU formed

The 20th Conference of WBMSRU is going to be held at Baharampur town from 12th to 14th September, 2025. The Reception Committee was formed on 8th May, at Collectorate Club, Baharamput, was attended by 150 members. Eminent doctors and leaders of CITU, DYFI SFI, AIDWA, 12th July committee, BEFI and others along with many eminent personalities attended the meeting and assured their co-operation for hosting the conference. Dr. J N Pal, an eminent surgeon, was elected Chairman of the Reception Committee. Dr Ranjan Bhattacharya (Secretariat, IMA), Dr Buddhadeb Bhattacharya (AHSD) and leaders of BCDA, ABPTA, Vigyan Mancha addressed the meeting.

The meeting was addressed by Basab Roychowdhury (GS WBMSRU), Shubrangshu Bhattacharya (President). Amlan Dasgupta, Supriya Chandra and Rakesh Barai were elected as President, Secretary and Treasurer of the Reception Committee respectively.

...Memorandum Submission

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are overwhelming. Government officials are also acknowledging our demands as justified. In BSSRU 20 out of 35 units have already done the programme. APMSRU has also initiated and 18 out of 20 units have completed the task. In KSM&SRA 11 sub-units have done the submission through district authorities. MPMSRU have almost completed the process by submitting memorandum through 19 out of 20 units. The same has been followed by TNMSRA & KMSRA where 16 out of 20 and 13 out of 14 sub-units respectively accomplished the submission process. From WBMSRU 17 units out of 20 did the same. 16 sub units of CRU and 9 sub units of OSRU also submitted the memorandum. The rest of the states are expected to follow soon.