

Stop Privatisation of Indian Railways

- CITU

Centre of Indian Trade Unions opposes the privatisation measures incorporated in the 100 days Action Plan proposed by the Ministry of Railways with the approval of the Minister of Railways. The Railway Board has directed that immediate action to be taken to implement the Action Plan by 31st August 2019.

The Action Plan proposes operating private passenger trains. Within 100 days 2 passenger trains will be offered to IRCTC which would provide ticketing and on board services. These trains will run on the important routes like Golden Quadrilateral and Diagonals and connecting major cities. It is reported that the government wants to hand over running of premier trains including the Rajdhani and Shatabdi express trains to private operators, for which tenders would be floated within four months.

Hiking Railway fares is also on the cards. The government wants to reduce the subsidies through a 'Give it up' campaign. It is important to note that overwhelming majority of the railway passengers today belong to the poor and low income sections. Providing cheap and affordable travel is the Constitutional responsibility of the government. Reducing subsidies and raising fares is nothing but a ploy to favour the private operators who would be operating the trains only for profits. The government who has come to power with the votes of the common people and the poor, has, within less than a month started imposing burdens on the common people, just to pay back their bosses, the big Corporates, domestic and foreign.

Another proposal in the Action Plan is the corporatisation of the production units. The 7 production units including the associated workshops are proposed to be 'hived off' to the 'Indian Railway Rolling Stock Company'. This is nothing but an attempt to hand over and outsource production to the private players killing our public sector's indigenous manufacturing capacity.

The proposal to consult the trade unions appears to be only an eye wash. Till today, the Modi government, in its earlier avatar as well as since it returned to power, has been blatantly ignoring the voices of the trade unions on many issues. In fact all the central trade unions have been consistently opposing privatisation of the public sector undertakings. But this government has already declared privatisation of 46 PSUs despite this opposition

CITU calls upon the people and all its affiliated unions and federations to oppose the privatisation of the cheapest mode of transport available today for the people and unitedly resist the move.

It also calls upon all the unions of the railway employees to strongly oppose the privatisation of Indian railways in any form and mobilise their entire strength through united actions to stop such disastrous measures.

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