



## **NEW TRADE UNION INITIATIVE**

UNITY • DEMOCRACY • MILITANCY



### **Those who Dare to Struggle, Win**

November 19, 2021, Secretariat

The New Trade Union Initiative congratulates Sanyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) and its constituents on their extraordinary victory in forcing government to withdraw the three farm laws. We salute the SKM for the historic year-long struggle that took forward, in their campaign, issues faced by farmers throughout the country. We pay homage to the more than 751 farmers and farm workers who laid down their lives in this struggle.

Today is indeed a special moment in our country's history. The sustained, powerful and peaceful farmers' agitation forced an arrogant and heartless government to bend. A heartless, authoritarian government that has spent the last eleven months calling the hard-working rural people of this country everything from terrorists and anti-nationals to props of the parliamentary opposition and professional protesters, was forced to yield. Let this be a message to an arrogant and foul-mouthed Prime Minister, leading an anti-democracy political force, that bullying, abusing, threatening and using state forces, is not the way a government engages with the people.

Of course we would be naive in believing that this has come from a government that has learnt a lesson. It comes from government led by the BJP, a political force that seeks to suppress, if not supplant parliamentary democracy in our country. It comes weeks before assembly elections in Goa, Manipur, Punjab, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh, which is one-fifth of the country, and which are states in which the BJP recognises it faces a severe challenge. It also comes at a time when the economy is in collapse and it is beyond this government's capacity or will to revive. Never to lose an opportunity to directly link politics to religion, the Prime Minister chose today as the day to make the announcement – the birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, the most important day in the year of those of the Sikh faith. He did this at a time when Sikhs are opening the doors of their Gurdwaras to Muslims to hold their Friday prayers as they are being attacked by BJP-RSS vigilantes for conducting their Friday prayers in open grounds which is what they do

traditionally. The BJP, whose advance is rooted in seeding division, is having to deal with unity amongst people at more than one level.

The NTUI and its membership, as of course all other progressive trade unions and their membership, across the country have stood in solidarity with the farmers struggle since it started in November 2020. We have learnt that SKM proposes to continue its protest until the three laws are actually repealed in parliament. We will continue to stand with them. We also support their call for continuing the struggle for the Minimum Support Price at Cost+25% and on the electricity legislation. At this time, we would also urge the SKM to recognise a fair and just minimum wage for agricultural workers too.

The past year has been a year of difficult campaigns in the shadow of the pandemic and economic misery. It has also been a year of unprecedented solidarity. A year that has united organisations, movements and peoples. More than ever before this is a time to reaffirm and recommit ourselves to a robust united front of progressive forces to take on the politics of hate, division, inequality and injustice. Let this also be a moment of assessment of our capacities and learning from each other as many will return from the rich experience of a long sit-in struggle as we go forward strengthening and growing our resistance to the four labour codes and the attack on our democracy.

But today will be a day of celebration.

A celebration of the country's farmers.

A celebration for the entire country.

Let nobody fool themselves: a brute majority in parliament cannot go beyond the will of the people.

A people united will never be defeated!

Worker – Peasant Unity Long Live! Inqilab Zindabad!

N. Vasudevan

Gautam Mody

President

General Secretary