

Asia/Pacific News - N° 2 , 2003

Indian unions plan a protest march on Parliament

The Central Trade Unions and Independent Federations representing a cross section of the working class of India met throughout the country on 8 January to register a protest against the economic policies of the Central Government. The meeting resolved to march to the Indian Parliament during the Budget session on 26 February in protest against the Indian governments' position on privatisation of public services and proposed changes to Labour Legislation. The unions are also calling on the government to restore restrictions on imports, develop employment generation policies and programmes and develop a social security scheme including provision for unemployment insurance.

For more information contact J.L. Bhan at psisouthasia@vsnl.com

CPSU calls for hold on Australian role in any Iraq war

PSI affiliate the CPSU of Australia has called on the Howard Government to avoid committing Australian troops against Iraq without a United Nations mandate as well as to vigorously promote diplomatic and non-military means to achieve a peaceful resolution resulting in the compliance of Iraq to United Nations directives. The union has also pledged to work with other Australian and International Labour organisations to achieve this goal.

For more information contact: www.cpsu.asn.au

HIV/AIDS in Fiji

PSI affiliate the Fiji Nursing Association is calling on government, religious institutions and civil society leaders everywhere to work to replace silence, fear and blame surrounding HIV/AIDS with solidarity and hope. General Secretary Kuini Lutua said, "fear of becoming stigmatised prevents people vulnerable to HIV infection from accessing testing and treatment services. Stigma directly affects the capacity of governments to respond effectively to the devastation of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Opportunities for prevention are missed, care and treatment remain inaccessible and the toll of death and misery escalates. Interventions to address stigma will only work if effective partnerships are built between governments, health care professionals and civil society, and with the active involvement of people infected and

affected with HIV/AIDS.”

For more information contact Kuini Lutua at
fna@connect.com.fj

Wage freeze lifted public service strike off in PNG
The planned strike in the Papua New Guinea public service unions (see Asia Pacific News 01-03) was called off as the Public Service Minister, Puka Temu, announced a deal had been reached after two weeks of negotiations. Dr Temu said the public service unions agreed that because of the financial situation, any wage increases agreed during negotiations this year will not be awarded until next year at earliest. The Government also gave its word that it will direct the Independent Consumer Competitions Commission to ensure that prices of goods and services to the community remain reasonable.

General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS) Campaign in Australia

The Australian Services Union (ASU) has moved quickly after the PSI promoted seminar in Sydney in December 2002. The ASU is actively promoting the issue with a number of publications and a range of stickers alerting the membership and the community of the risks involved in the up and coming round of GATS negotiations. For more information contact:

www.asu.asn.au/campaigns/gats.html

Third World Water Forum

PSI is involved in the preparations for the 3rd World Water Forum (WWF) to be held in Kyoto, Japan, 16-23 March. PSI has organised a one-day union session for 19 March. Ms. Uemoto from Jichiro, PSI Japanese affiliate, is a member of the 3rd WWF steering committee. The PSI office in Tokyo is also involved in the preparations for the Forum. PSI has two priority action areas: to strengthen public water systems and to resist privatisation.

For more information contact:
David.Boys@world-psi.org

Pay Equity Campaign, New Zealand

In March 2003, PSI affiliate the NZPSA, in conjunction with the NZCTU, are hosting three national symposiums. Dr Jane Pillinger (Consultant to PSI, and author of “Pay Equity Now”) will be the guest speaker. Holding three symposiums will allow an in-depth look at the different sectors - core public service, health and local government – and enable relevant stakeholders to attend.

“The British government have stated that they will halve the pay gap by 2005 and remove it entirely by 2008 - we in NZ should aim to do better, and by maintaining an ongoing plan of activities we can again lead the world in social democracy. “First to get (women) the vote – First to close the gap,” said Lynn Middleton, National Secretary NZPSA.

For more information contact: www.psa.org.nz

Vanuatu joins the ILO

At a PSI sponsored seminar/workshop on the proposed

merger of the Vanuatu National Workers Union and the Vanuatu Teachers Union, the participants learnt that the Vanuatu Government is to become a member of the ILO. The local unions have been seeking this move for some time and now they are looking forward to new Labour Legislation and later in the year Workers Compensation and Health and Safety Legislation.

March 8th 2003 International Women's Day

PSI affiliates have agreed to commemorate International Women's Day on March 8th with the theme "Equality: Our Right!" This theme was adopted at the meeting of the International Women's Committee held after the World Congress in Ottawa in September 2003. Affiliates are asked to mark the day by calling for women's work to be recognised and valued fairly. Around the world, whether in developing or industrialised countries, women community care workers are expected to work long hours providing critical primary health services and childcare but receive a small subsidy or "grant" not a wage. For more information about the campaign, including a model press release, a background article for your union journal and publicity stickers, available in 3 languages, please contact the PSI at psi@world-psi.org.

Indonesia "Full Collective Bargaining for Public Sector" Campaign

The Indonesian affiliates of both PSI and EI Indonesia Teachers Association-PGRI, Pharmaceutical and Health Workers Unions-PHWU, SP.PLN-Persero have jointly developed a campaign as part of the Trade Union Rights Network Project. The Network members have identified as a priority the need to have a national campaign to enable "Full Collective Bargaining for Public Sector Workers". Teachers and others civil servants have not got complete collective bargaining rights even though Indonesia ratified ILO Convention No. 98 in 1956 (Right to Organise and Collective Bargaining). The campaign was launched on 29 January with meetings planned in six major cities to follow.

For more information contact the EI-PSI Indonesian coordinator Dr. Rindo Rindo at fax: 0062.21.3446504 or the PSI-EI regional coordinator Ramanathan prpsiap@myjaring.net.

Contributions to the Asia Pacific News

If you have any items for the Asia Pacific News please forward them to: mike.ingpen@psa.org.nz or fax Mike Ingpen 00644.917.2051.

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