

## Kolkata - Rally of Workers of Closed Industries on 11th March

### **Our Demands**

- Open all closed factories and tea-gardens
  - \* Increase the closed industry workers' allowance to 3000 rupees per month
  - \* Remove the ceiling of 58 years for paying the allowance. The allowance has to be paid till settlement of gratuity and PF is done
  - \* Government has to take care of the health issues of the closed factory workers and their families
  - \* Closed factory workers have to be issued BPL cards
- Comrades,

The problem of closed industry is a general social phenomenon in our state. Thousands of factories (and many tea-gardens) have shut down rendering a huge mass of people unemployed. The workers and their families are immensely suffering to just earn a square-meal. The government statistics show that almost 98% of the closures are due to incorrect policies of the management. The workers of these closed industries (and tea-gardens) want their work places to open at the earliest so that they can earn their livelihood through their hard labor. Till then, it is the duty of the government to provide alternatives to these workers. In 1998, the West Bengal government started payment of a monthly allowance to the workers of closed factories. The initial 500 rupees have till date only increased to a 1000.

However, this allowance is only paid till the age of 58. After that, even if the factory does not open or the worker fails to receive his legal claims to PF or gratuity money, the allowance is stopped. Because of the closure, these workers cannot use the ESI facilities, as a result of which, health care issues have become a nightmare for them. So, the workers of these closed industries demands an increase in their monthly allowance to 3000 rupees. If this allowance has to go beyond tokenism and provide for the basic living requirements for these workers, then it is obvious that considering the current inflation, 1000 rupees is too small an amount. Is this an unjust demand? Government had allotted 1000 crores for this scheme, but in no fiscal years the total expenditure has crossed 50 crores. Further, we would urge the government to get rid of the ceiling of 58 years or take care of payment of all their legal dues like PF and gratuity. Also, the government has to take care of the health issues of these workers and their immediate families. These are our basic demands that we want to make to the labor-minister and the labor-secretary.

The problem of closed industries is huge long-standing problem. Factories in well known industrial belts in this state have come to a grinding halt. Their doors are locked out. And the workers wait impatiently to get back to work and lead a life of wellness and dignity. Hence these workers and their families have decided to walk the streets of Kolkata on 11th March, 2010 and present their just demands. We wish enthusiastic cooperation from the general public in support of this just cause.

In Solidarity

Joint Action Committee of Various Closed Industries

[Bauria Cotton Sangrami Sharmik Union, National Jute Sangrami Sharmik Union, Sign Up Fibres Sangrami Sharmik Union, Poddar Projects Sangrami Sharmik Union, Pashupati Sangrami Sharmik Union, Save Kanoria Jute Mill Committee, Perfect Steel Sangrami Sharmik Union, Papyrus Papers Limited Sanjutko Sangram Committee, Himalayan Rubber Sangrami Sharmik Union, Somani Steel Sangrami Sharmik Union, Allied Chemicals Sangrami Sharmik Union, Winpower Hindustan Employees Union, Bidyut Udyog Sangrami Sharmik Union, Darjiling-Tarai-Duars-Chiacoman Mazdur Union, U-Chemical Sangrami Sharmik Union and other Organizations]

*Venue - Rally will start from Gandhi Statue, Mayo Road, Kolkata*

*Time - 1pm*