Workers connect...

Unions Can Save Workplaces From Becoming A Death Trap

... Yes, 'n' how many ears must one man have
Before he can hear people cry?
Yes, 'n' how many deaths will it take till he knows
That too many people have died?
The answer, my friend, is blowin' in the wind
The answer is blowin' in the wind

Bob Dylan

How unsafe is our workplace?

- **9 October 2018:** A fire in the gas pipelines at Bhilai Steel Plant of SAIL left 12 workers dead and 11 others critically injured during a regular maintenance procedure.
- **8 August 2018**: Another boiler blast, this time at a refinery of Bharat Petroleum (BPCL) at Mumbai, left 45 workers critically injured.
- **13 February 2018**: 5 workers died and many others sustained injuries as an ONGC tanker exploded at the Cochin Shipyard in Kerala.
- **21 January 2018:** 17 workers were charred to death in a plastic factory in Delhi.
- **1 November 2017:** A boiler blast at the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC) plant in Unchahar district of Uttar Pradesh claimed the lives of 40 workers and left several others injured.

The incident of fire at the SAIL plant in Bhilai this month prompts us to revisit the issue of workplace safety. While the number of deaths in factories recorded by the Government of India adds upto 695 in the year 2017, deaths in factories is only the tip of an iceberg.

In a study by the British Safety Council in 2017, it was estimated that 38 fatal accidents take place every day in the construction sector in India. In India, according to an ILO report, workplace accidents cause around 48,000 deaths every year which means 131 workers die every day of the year.

These numbers though grave enough, do not even claim that they are able to provide a correct estimate of the state of occupational safety in our country. A substantial number of work related accidents, including fatalities, remain unreported here and in most other countries in the global south.

Why are our workplaces unsafe?

One of the principle goals of globalisation is to search for new ways to lower the cost of production. One strategy that capital has employed to do this is to move from countries where the value of human life is higher to those where society puts very little value to human life. A few lives lost does not matter to policymakers and to employers as the cost of capital investment to avoid these loss of lives is much greater than the compensation for the loss of lives, even if paid the legal dues. Hence it makes business sense to not invest in safety requirements and at worst pay legal compensation dues in case of an accident. With increasing precarisation of work, the claims for compensation has also declined over the years as most irregular workers and their families in many cases do not even know where to claim for compensations in the maze of employer-employee relation and even if they do, the legal maze and expense is the next level of hurdle that they need to negotiate till they are compensated.

Around 94% of Indian workforce is employed in precarious jobs, employed through multi-tier contracting systems i.e., hiring through labour contractors or manpower agencies thereby veiling the principal employer. Many of them are even employed in unregistered and unregulated enterprises supplying to large companies.

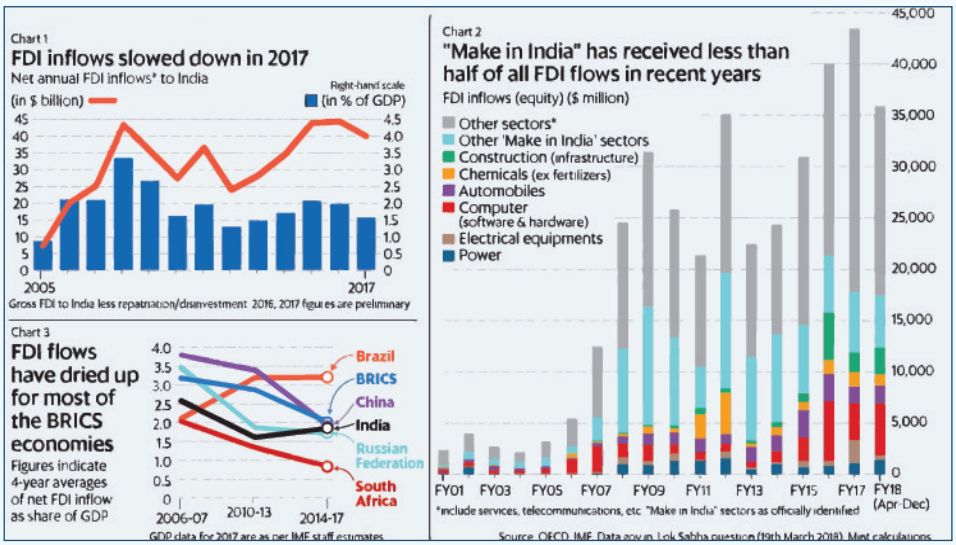
Countries of the global south have been competing with each other in a 'race to the bottom' to become the cheapest manufacturing hubs. Countries try to woo capital by either providing subsidies to capital like tax rebates, land at throw away prices etc., or by promoting legislation which puts a cap on labour costs.

The 1990s understanding that transnational corporations (TNCs) are 'footloose' and hence regulation of capital cannot be done by the state where they operate. The Clinton-Blair 'Third Way' concretised this through their understanding that greater equality in society can be achieved through policies to increase the distribution of skills and productive endowments while rejecting income redistribution as the means to achieve this. It emphasized on the commitment of balanced budget, encouragement and promotion of public–private partnerships, minimum government regulation, improving labour supply and individual responsibility. Its core principle was 'equal opportunity for all, special privilege for none' thereby ignoring all forms of historical disadvantages that exist in society which perpetuates the existing inequality. This is true both in terms of understanding relation between nations and the relation of the state with its citizens. Thus core to this philosophy were the cuts in social spending, relying on the private sector for self- regulation and thus laying the foundation for a breakdown of the post-world war social compact. Thus, two decades after the Blair-Clinton roadmap was laid out, we have finally reached the point where the Government of India has finally decided to legally dismantle our systems of regulation and monitoring to encourage private investment.

What do we "Make in India"?

The 'Make in India' programme was launched by the Government of India in 2014 'to encourage companies to manufacture their products in India and also increase their investment' in 25 sectors. States are being pushed by the centre through a system of ranking based on their Business Reform Action plans which are nothing but policy changes initiated by the states in order to create a 'business friendly' investment climate. The indicators deciding the score are Access to Information and Transparency enablers, Single window, availability of land, construction permit enablers and environment registration enablers. This includes labour regulation enablers such as self-certification / third party certification for boilers, introduction of a provision for issuing Factory License and all subsequent renewals with validity of 10 years or more, elimination of the requirement of inspection prior to registration under the Shops and Establishment Act and ensure that the registration is granted within one day from the date of application, Mandate synchronized/ joint-inspection under 10 labour laws. The labour reforms undertaken by the Government is Jharkhand is being advertised as Best Practice in which most inspections have been done away with and replaced by self-certification and most licenses are now through single window clearances with automatic renewals for 10 years or more. Self-certification combined with auto renewal of licenses gives a complete freehand to employers to violate all labour laws and that today is being promoted by the government as 'best practice'.

The 'self-certification' regime scraps the power of labour inspectors to take suo moto action against violations in factories. It now requires labour inspectors to provide prior intimation to the employer before a factory inspection initiated through a complaint. Several state governments like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have gone a step further and mandated that a factory inspection has to have a prior approval of the District Collector thereby defeating the purpose of inspection.



India has ratified ILO Convention 81 on Labour Inspection which mandates frequent and as thorough as possible inspections, free entry of inspectors, free access to workplaces, no prior authorised inspections, and an adequate and well-resourced and independent inspectorate.

Measures such as self-certification system, complaint-driven inspections, randomised inspections and prior authorised inspection systems are in violation of the Convention.

In 2017, the Delhi State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation reported 450 fire emergencies in the state. In Uttar Pradesh, where 40 workers died in the Unchahar boiler blast, there are only 5 boiler inspectors for 3270 boilers. The labour department has been rendered ill equipped to inspect factories falling in its jurisdiction. There is a grave shortage of labour inspectors who are meant to monitor the implementation of the law.

'Make in India' has certainly dismantled the regulatory framework that provided the basis for safety and protection of workers within a workplace to ensure 'Ease of Business', but it is yet to inspire confidence in the private sector to invest in the country. In fact, 'Make in India' has received less than half of all foreign direct investment (FDI) since 2015. An analysis of FDI inflows between October 2014 and March 2016 revealed that only 1.6% of the manufacturing firms that received FDI during this period were incorporated after October 2014. Thus 'Make in India' has had very limited impact on FDI decisions.

New Technology: Driving Isolation and Accidents

We have all see young men, sometimes women too, zipping past us in motorbikes in metropolitan cities delivering just about anything to our doorstep. They deliver food, clothes, grocery, books, medicines, gadgets, even flowers to a friend who is unwell, that are booked online. Domino's Pizza famously advertised: "30 minutes or Free" to gain market control over Pizza Hut. Many have wished for traffic snarls to delay the delivery in order to get a free Pizza. Some of them have even thought that this is a way to extract from a super-rich multinational company. But unfortunately it is the delivery worker who pays for the free pizza that the consumer gets for a delayed delivery. So to prevent this deduction in wage, he zips past all of us, he jumps traffic lights, risks his life and gets the pizza on time. The zipping does not end with the delivery as he has to get back to the point of origin to get his next order as his pay is linked to the number of deliveries he is able to make in day. So he once again drives recklessly to get back. There is no data on the number of road accidents that the delivery workers meet with, minor and major, due to this work schedule. Their jobs are insecure, they have no social security, and their work isolates them from each other as they are always on the move. The work also isolates them as each one of them competes against the other to earn an extra delivery for the day. Further GPS enabled tracking devices are also used to monitor their movement. All the data collected from individual systems is then processed by the company to set standards. A worker who can't furnish the task within the standardised stipulated time falls out of the system. Therefore, the workers perform under high pressure and often meet accidents trying to meet a delivery deadline. These accidents are recorded as road accidents and not workplace accidents and the individual worker is blamed for the accident and the employer takes no responsibility for such an accident. A union of Sales representatives of pharmaceutical companies recorded that the number of road accidents of their members increased exponentially after tracking equipment was provided to the workers. Thus workplace ailments are no longer just restricted to physical illnesses or workplace accidents, new technology along with new management control has meant higher mental stress of workers leading to mental illness.

Big business fascinated with big data collected from the GPS trackers is meanwhile on a spree to reduce the time taken per gig by standardising the time taken for each process. There are processes being developed in Amazon and Tesla factories where workers are given mild electric shocks if the speed at which they are performing is lower than the standardised

speed. Workers have to use these devices that perpetually time their tasks and standardises automatically. This leaves no room for different abilities of individual workers.

Can we turn the Wheel for Workers?

In the policy environment that we live across the world, it seems almost insane to believe that we can turn the wheel for the workers. But that is because we have started believing that workers are powerless. And in fact it is true as long as we are individuals fighting just for our individual right. Then we are fighting a losing battle. The power we are up against, that of our employers, our government, is far more than our own. But when we add up, when we come together, we become stronger. Employers are sometimes even willing to hand out small benefits to the workers if it can avoid allowing the formation of a union. They are often trying to replace unions with different committees such as the works committees, health and safety committees, canteen committees etc. claiming that these are committees that have representation of workers. The difference between a union and these committees is that a union is an organisation of the workers where the leadership is democratically elected and is financed by the members of the union while these committees are bodies created by the employer with worker representatives along with management representatives. In most of these committees the worker representatives are nominated by the management and not elected by the workers. Even if they are elected by the workers, they have very little say within these committees. Unions change the balance of power, these committees don't.

Unions can thus change how work is organised, how workplaces are controlled and how workers are protected. Unions can identify work processes and areas which lead to illnesses and accidents so as to demand changes. It is unions that can empower workers to refuse hazardous work. It is only through collective action and treating safety as a collective responsibility that workplaces can be made healthier and safer for workers.

Policy News

Assam: Government amends ID Act, allows companies to retrench up to 300 workmen without prior approval

14 October 2018: President assented to the Industrial Disputes (Assam Amendment) Bill, 2017 which would replace the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 in the state. The amendment allows companies to retrench up to 300 workers without prior approval from the government. As per the ID Act, 1947 companies were required to seek prior approval from the government if retrenching more than 100 workers. The amendment also hikes severance pay for workers from 15 to 60 days. To fulfil the promise of 'Ease of Doing Business' for companies the government at the centre has been pushing states to amend key labour laws. Since 2014 Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Haryana have similarly amended the ID Act, 1947.

Delhi: Government mandates retention of 80% of old workers for new projects

10 October 2018: Taking cognizance of complaints from workers and trade unions of contractors hiring new workers or bringing in their workforce in case of fresh tenders and/or renewal of contracts and rendering existing workers jobless, the Delhi cabinet has mandated for labour contractors to retain at least 80% of the workforce from their previous contract when they are awarded a fresh tender or the contract is renewed. Delhi government is the largest employer of contract workers hired through various labour contractors, the move will ensure employment security to migrant contract workers.

Andhra Pradesh: Government launches unemployment allowance scheme for youth

02 October 2018: The Andhra Pradesh government has launched the Mukhyamantri Yuva Nestam scheme which will benefit 2.08lakh unemployed youngsters of the state. Under the scheme the state will provide a unemployment allowance of Rs.1000 per month. Any unemployed youth with a 'White Ration Card' can apply for the unemployment benefit scheme online.

Assam: Government introduces maternity benefit scheme for tea garden workers

01 October 2018: Assam government has introduced a maternity benefit scheme for tea garden workers which includes a compensation of ₹12,000 paid in four instalments - ₹2,000 (in the first trimester), ₹4,000 (in the second

trimester), ₹3,000 (for institutional delivery) and ₹3,000 (for registration of the child's birth). In addition, pregnant workers will get assistance for ante-natal care and the first cycle of immunization of the child. Women will also be entitled to leave from third trimester of pregnancy to three months after delivery. Women form the bulk of the workforce in the state's 800-odd tea gardens.

The tea gardens have a bad record of Mother Mortality due to labour. The Annual Health Survey of 2012-13 puts MMR at 404 in the tea gardens, whereas the state's average is 301.

Legal News

Tamil Nadu: Madras High Court bars MSI Automotive from using contract workers

09 October 2018: Justice S. Vimla hearing the plea of contract workers of Myoung Shin India Pvt. Ltd.(MSI) barred the company from hiring contract workers.

MSI is the Indian subsidiary of the Korean manufacturer Myoung Shin which produces automobile parts for manufacturing giant Hyundai.

The contract workers of Yamaha, MSI and Royal Enfield have been on strike in the Kanchipuram district's automotive manufacturing hub against the hiring and firing policies of companies towards contract workers and meagre wages paid to them.

The High Court observed that there were gaps in implementation of labour laws by the company based on the reports filed by the Industrial Labour Safety and Health department and directed the company not to use workers other than that on its muster roll for production within the factory.

The company employs 150 permanent and 550 contract workers.

Delhi: High Court orders government to provide skill training to manual scavengers

04 October 2018: The division bench of Justice Ravinder Bhat and Justice A.K. Chawla hearing the matter in National Campaign for Dignity and Rights of Sewerage and Allied Workers vs MCD & Ors) rapped the government for its laxity in acting on the rehabilitation of manual scavengers. The court has ordered the Municipal Corporation of Delhi to identify manual scavengers within a month and formulate a skills training program for them to equip them for alternate employment.

Collective Bargaining

Puducherry: Trade Unions jointly call for indefinite dharna against non-payment of wages

16 October 2018: Trade Unions jointly called for indefinite dharna in front of the legislative assembly against the non-payment of wages to workers employed in different government boards and corporations. The wage arrears date back from 10 months to even 3 years for some workers. The protest was joined by more than 10,000 workers employed at the 13 Public Sector Undertakings.

Puducherry Road Transport Corporation workers held a flash strike bringing transport services to a halt in the union territory in solidarity with the striking workers.

Delhi: East Delhi Municipal Corporation suspends 71 striking workers

08 October 2018: The East Delhi Municipal Corporation has suspended 71 workers to suppress the 26 day long strike of safai karmcharis who have been demanding timely payment of wages and permanency of contract workers. EDMC has been infamous for delay in payment of wages and exploitation of contract workers. This is the ninth strike of Safai Karmcharis in the EDMC since 2015.

Haryana: Workers protest outside Deputy Commissioner's office in Gurugram against anti-worker labour policies

08 October 2018: More than 1500 workers came together to protest against the anti-labour policies of the Haryana government. The workers demanded that the government repeal Fixed Term Employment and amendments in the Industrial Disputes Act, 1947 which allow companies to retrench up to 300 workmen without prior permission from the government.

The workers were also opposed to the National Employability Enhancement Mission claiming that the scheme has allowed companies to hire and fire contract workers at meagre wages in the name of skill development. Haryana government has been boasting amendments in 18 labour laws to boost 'Ease of Doing

Business'.

Andhra Pradesh: Vizag Steel Plant accepts worker demands, puts conveyor contract system on hold

05 October 2018: The Vizag Steel Plant has retracted its decision to contract out the maintenance of conveyor systems under pressure from Trade Unions. The Trade Unions has launched a joint campaign against the conveyor contract system as it would increase the expenditure of the company to contract out a vital function of the steel plant.

VSP has asked Trade Unions to submit their recommendations within a month for a feasible contract system for the sinter plant.

Workers and farmers march to Delhi demanding universal pension

01 October 2018: Around 10,000 farmers and workers from across the country marched to Delhi under the banner of Pension Parishad demanding a universal pension scheme. According to a report released by HelpAge India less than one third of elderly receive pension in India. Pension Parishad demanded a that the pension be increased from existing ₹200 to ₹3000 per month as the purchasing power of the existing pension amount which was set in 2007 has declined considerably when adjusted for inflation.

Workplace Safety Watch

Construction

4 workers Pramod (30), Sonu (25), Sonu (27) and Raj Kumar (25) died on 29 October, when the hydraulic lift of a tower crane collapsed at a **DDA flats construction site in Narela**, New Delhi. No safety equipment were provided to the workers.

Murtaza (26) and Sunny (20) fell to death on 29 October from the 14th floor fell in an under-construction site of **ATS Infrastructure Ltd.** in **Sector 132, Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh.** A portion of a concrete column came off the main structure of the building and fell on the scaffolding, triggering the collapse.

On 24 October Madhusudhan (24) died in a construction site when a pile of sand caved in at Navya Nagar, Jakkur, Bengaluru, Karnataka. The workers were standing in a pit that was dug to install pillars in a private house. Police has registered a case against Chandrashekhar Reddy, owner of the house.

On 8 October, 4 workers Naushad (28), Vijaypal, Ashok, Karan died and 5 others Mahesh, Ajay, Shadab, Nisarul and Ram Jai Kumar were severely injured, when a scaffolding collapsed in an under construction 18-storey building, **'Capital City'** by real estate group BPTP in **Sector 94, Noida, Uttar Pradesh.** An FIR under Sections 304A (causing death by negligence) and 288 (negligent conduct with respect to pulling down or repairing building) of the IPC has been registered against the construction company.

On 7 October construction worker Vimla Ganesh Patre(26) lost her life after falling from the 2nd floor into the open elevator duct of an under-construction building in the Kakadevasti in Kondhwa, Pune, Maharashtra. The safety provisions were not being followed and there was no barricade on the open duct. The police have booked the builder Zaid Mohammad Sayyed (30) and contractor Ramzan Ismail Shaikh (20) under section 304 (a) (causing death due to negligence) and section 34 (common intention) of the IPC.

Sanitation

On 26 October, 3 sanitation workers Devidas Pajage (30), Mahadev Jhope (35) and Ghanshyam Kori (38) suffocated to death inside a manhole in **Dombivali, Mumbai, Maharashtra.** The workers were employed on contract through a contractor by the **Maharashtra Industrial Development Corporation (MIDC)** for the maintenance of a private sewer line. No saftey gears were provided to the workers according to the police which has arrested the contractor Lakshman Chavan (36) under 304A (for causing death by negligence) of IPC.

On 21 October, Dooman Ray (32), drowned while cleaning an 8 foot deep sewage tank at a Delhi Jal Board pump house in Jahangirpuri, New Delhi. Dooman had gone inside the tank to open the valve when the water gushed in drowning him. The contract for repair and rehabilitation of sewage in Jahangirpuri was provided KK Spun India Ltd by the **Delhi Jal Board (DJB).** A case under IPC Section 304A (for causing death by negligence) and sections 7 and 9 of the Prohibition of Employment as Manual Scavengers and their Rehabilitation

Act has been registered and the police have arrested the Project Manager Ashwini Kumar Jha, Site Supervisor Subodh and Safety Officer Shubham Notiyal.

Manufacturing

On 29 October, Ram Phal (42) died and 2 other workers were severely injured after the cover of a hydro machine burst in an industrial unit at at **Global Enterprises Industrial unit** at Bari near Gannaur, **Sonepat, Haryana.**

On 10 October, 4 workers Dhananjay Pandey (28), Satya Prakash (28), Mohammed Rabhan (19) and Mohammed Azad (20) asphyxiated to death as a fire broke out due to a short circuit in the first floor of a hosiery factory, **Kalra Knitwears** in Kalyan Nagar, Daresi, Ludhiana, Punjab.

The workers couldn't escape as the gates of the factory were locked by the owner and there were no ventilation vents in the building. The police have arrested the owner **Sumit Kalra** under Section 304 (culpable homicide) of the IPC. According to the police, no fire safety arrangements were in place and the owner had also not obtained the no-objection certificate from the fire department.

Mining

On 25 October, 4 workers Rajesh (40), Rafiq (45), Ramprasad (48) and Ravishanker (40) died when a roof of the Neharia underground coal mine **Western Coalfields Limited** collapsed in Parasia, **Chhindwara, Madhya Pradesh.**

2 colliery workers Chandrasekhar Giri (50) and Kaleshwar Mahato (42) died on 8 October when part of a roof collapsed and fell on the workers while they were working at the Khottadih colliery of **Eastern Coalfield Ltd in Pandabeswar, West Burdwan, West Bengal.** The workers were working 700 feet under the ground The Eastern Coalfield Ltd is a subsidiary of the state run Coal India Ltd.

News from around the World

Zimbabwe: Constitutional Court outlaws rule which prohibited demonstrations without clearance

18 October 2018: In a case filed by the National Vendors' Union of Zimbabwe (Navuz) and National Election Reform Agenda (Nera) in May, 2018 Zimbabwe's Constitutional Court has outlawed section 27 of the Public Order and Security Act (Posa), which prohibits demonstrations without clearance from the Zimbabwe Republic Police (ZRP), saying the piece of legislation is open to abuse by State machinery. Justice Rita Makarau, while handing down the order said the rule failed to pass the test on fairness, necessity and reasonableness and is prone to abuse by a despotic regulating authority.

South Africa: 10,000 workers of the plastic industry strike for better pay

15 October 2018: Led by the The National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) more than 10,000 workers employed in 450 plastic manufacturing companies have gone on strike against the scaling down of pay and benefit to workers. Leave entitlement of four weeks has been scaled down – the fourth week has been taken away for workers who've served less than four years. Hours of work have been increased from 40 to 45 per week and Grade H minimum wage has been reduced from R40 to R20 while leave enhancement pay (bonus) has been taken away. NUMSA is demanding, among other things, wages and other employment terms to be regulated by the council's Main Agreement, the MEIBC and a 15 percent wage increase across the board.

US: Amazon's software found to be discriminating against women

10 October 2018: E-retail giant Amazon which employs over 575,500 workers globally has reported that the machine-engine or software it uses to chaff the increasing number of resumes it receives is biased against women applicants.

Amazon has been using this software for hiring process since 2014. The software program which was coded by an all male team and used the applications company received over the years mostly from male candidates as database used to eliminate resumes with the mention of the word "women" in it. The fallacy of the language used to train the software and growth of artificial intelligence in a lopsided fashion has ensured that women are kept out of tech jobs.

Morocco: Government passes Domestic Workers Law

02 October 2018: The Domestic Workers law which got its assent from the parliament in July,

2018 is finally going to be implemented from 02 October 2018. The law provides protection to domestic workers including a requirement for a standard contract, limits on working hours, a weekly rest day, and a minimum wage. Human Rights defenders however are disappointed over the dilution of the bill as it was presented to the government and the final act which has been promulgated.

South Korea: Supreme Court finds Bosch Electrical Drives guilty of anti-union practices

1 October 2018: The Supreme Court of South Korea has found Bosch Electrical Drives guilty of anti-union practices and sentenced the CEO Lee Man-haeng and the company with a fine of $4,500 and the labour affairs director and vice president of $2,700 each.

The Apex Court upheld the decision of the lower which had found the CEO and labour affairs director guilty of abusing a multiple union system to discriminate against and neutralize its existing union by actively supporting a second union. And diverting funds from the Korean Metal Worker's Union, the union of workers choosing, to the company backed union.

Costa Rica: Trade Unions strike against government's proposal to tax essential food articles

1 October 2018: Costa Rica's new government introduced value-added tax to replace the existing sales tax claiming it would help the government tackle the economic situation. The proposed Law on Strengthening Public Finance includes 1% duty on staple food items and limit on salary increases, bonus payments and severance packages in the public sector.

Trade Unions have come together to oppose the law and proposed an alternative bill called the Justice and Solidarity Tax Reform which includes combating tax evasion and fraud, as well as eliminating "luxury" pensions for former presidents and reducing state financial support for political parties. However, the government has ignored the proposal of Trade Unions forcing them to go on strike from 10 September 2018.

Corporate Watch

What's on your mind Facebook?

In addition to snooping on its users and storing their personal data in the guise of legally verbose privacy and consent agreements, Facebook has also been found guilty of emotionally manipulating its users, running psychological experiments on them and in a recent case it has accepted its role in inciting violence against the minority community in Myanmar.

Facebook has around 500MB data on an average user which is equivalent to approximately 400,000 word documents. It monitors user activity not only on Facebook but other websites that its users access. All this data is mapped for patterns and sold to advertising companies which then run targeted campaigns. This behavioural mapping has led to the plethora of fake news on the Facebook platform. And though Facebook claims to be 'invested in combating fake news' it has been infamous for suspending user accounts and pages and at times hiding posts from activist and rights based groups against authorities.

While Facebook's role in manipulating U.S. elections is being probed after data breach from election consultancy firm Cambridge Analytica came to fore, it is a reality that Facebook divulges sensitive user data to governments. According to a report released by Facebook, Indian government demanded user data of 13,752 accounts in the first quarter of 2017 a 9,853 times hike from 2016. A similar trend has been observed in the U.S. and France where right wing leaders have rose to power.

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg and his wife Prescilla Chan together started Chan Zuckerberg Initiative in 2015. Its website claims it 'is a new kind of philanthropic organisation' which it indeed is, as it a for-profit limited liability company and invests heavily on lobbying against net-neutrality and laws defending user's privacy. The Chan Zuckerberg Initiative had faced flak when it lobbied against net-neutrality in India through its 'free-access' program in rural India in 2016. It has since dropped similar programs in African countries.

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