**Press Release – February 20, 2013**

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| **Issued by All Central Trade Unions on the First day of General Strike****Strike is total in all sectors by all workers**All the Central Trade Unions (BMS, INTUC, AITUC, HMS, CITU, AIUTUC, AICCTU, UTUC, TUCC, SEWA, LPF) hereby congratulate the working people of India for their overwhelming and magnificent response to the united call of two day countrywide general strike that commenced this morning.Unprecedented response to the call of strike throughout the country much beyond our expectations reflects truly the anger of the people against the persistent increase in the prices of diesel, gas, coal, electricity and other essential goods for the bare need of the common people. It is also a protest against the total inaction of the Government to address the basic problems of the workers arising out of the inflation and slowdown of the economy. All the central trade unions supported by thousands of unaffiliated unions have given a two day strike call on the basis of 10 point demand of the workers as approved in the All India Convention held at Talkatora Stadium on 4th September, 2012. The strike has been totally peaceful. Even then there has been attack on the workers, lathi-charge and indiscriminate arrest. In Noida, there was brutal lathi-charge on a peaceful demonstration causing serious injuries to a number of workers and death to one worker. Even a leader of Haryana Roadways Corporation union affiliated to AITUC has been killed in Ambala Transport Depot by the miscreants to disrupt the strike.The strike has been all out throughout the country affecting all vital sectors bringing the life to a standstill. Banking system has come to a collapse. Transport sector has responded magnificently except in two States, Delhi and Maharashtra. There has been massive strike in Petroleum sector, telecom, mining, coal, non-coal, defence, power including atomic power projects, port and dock, insurance, Plantation, State Government employees. Post offices have been closed, income tax offices have largely been hit by the strike. Industrial workers all over the country had shut down the production. Public and private industrial centres have been heavily affected.Unorganised, agriculture, non-agriculture, rural and urban, anganwadi, ASHA workers have participated in lakhs. Contract workers have joined the strike in a magnificent way.All the States from Arunachal to Gujarat from Kashmir to Kanyakumari everywhere the impact of the strike has been significant. Strike has been significant. Strike has been magnificent in Assam, Bihar, Orissa, Punjab, Haryana, Rajasthan, Kerala, Andhra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka. Despite vindictive and victimising threat and attack by the State Govt machinery, in West Bengal, response to strike has been magnificent. There has been strike even in Gujarat, Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh. In Goa strike has been inspiring. Even in Meghalaya where election is to be held on 23rd February there has been strike in Shillong.The central trade unions while congratulating the workers for the strike call upon them to continue the same till tomorrow and build up massive pressure on the Government for a change of policy and peaceful settlement of the 10 point demands.Right to strike is a constitutional right. No State government has any authority to break the peaceful strike with indiscriminate use of the State machinery. We call upon the Government to realise the gravity of the situation and unparallel anger among the masses and take corrective steps having meaningful dialogue with the trade union. |

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