

MARUTI SUZUKI EMPLOYEES UNION (MSEU)

Press Release: 15th October

WE, the workers of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., IMT Manesar organized as Maruti Suzuki Employees Union (MSEU) have been on strike since 7th October 2011. Along with us, all the workers of Suzuki Powertrain India Ltd, Suzuki Castings and Suzuki Motorcycle India P. Ltd. have been on strike from the afternoon of 7th Oct. On that day itself, workers from Lumax Auto Technologies Ltd (165, Sector-5), Lumax DK, Satyam Auto Components Limited (26 C, Sector - 3), Endurance Technologies Ltd (Plot No. 400, Sector 8), Hi-Lex India Pvt Ltd, (Plot No.55 Sector-3), Bajaj Motors and a few more companies had gone on a one day strike. The workers from the four plants of Suzuki group have continued their strike.

From 7th October when we were forced to go on strike, a lot of misinformation campaign has been undertaken by the company blaming us for ‘violence’ on fellow workers and of ‘seizing’ the factory, while the fact was that the management and its contractors have indulged in violence, and employees and company officials have been free to go in and out of the factory. We have been on strike because of our just demands and our struggle for work with dignity.

After the settlement on 30th September post the 33 day long agitation from August 29th, while we have acted in complete good faith, the management began violating the terms of the agreement from the very next day. Going back on its word of treating the workers with respect, it has on the contrary been acting with vengeance. On the workers reporting for duty the day after the strike, the management flatly refused to let the over 1,200 contract workers enter the factory, so as to break our spirit and divide the unity between permanent and contract workers. It shuffled permanent workers from their workstations so that allegations of ‘production sabotage’ and ‘go slow’ could again be put on us and show the workers of having violated the agreement. Such a shuffling of skilled workers, accustomed to and specialized at their specific tasks is far from being conducive to optimal production in the factory. Such a move therefore makes evident that full production targets are not a priority with the

management at this point. The already inadequate bus service was also stopped to further harass us.

While 'violence' has been blamed on us, it is a fact that contractors on the behest of the management used bouncers who threatened and attacked us recently in front of the factory gate on the morning of 7th Oct, this incident took a more blatant aspect when some goons came and beat us up at the factory gate on the 8th and threatened us for our lives. They even attempted to actualise their threat by coming with guns inside the Suzuki Motorcycle plant on the 9th morning and firing three rounds on our fellow workers there. All legal and illegal means have been used by the management now as in June and then again in August-September to break the legitimate raising of our voices.

Violating the spirit of the agreement by acting with bad faith and vengeance, the over 1200 contract workers have not been allowed entry since the settlement on 30th September. Apart from the 44 suspended, a fresh list of 50 workers to be terminated and suspended has been put up in MSIL after 7th October. 18 workers from Suzuki Powertrain India Ltd have been dismissed yesterday. As of last night after High Court order, we the workers of MSIL are sitting outside the factory gate.

The government earlier gave us empty promises after the company broke the spirit of the settlement by acting in anti-worker bad faith. Ever since we have been on strike due to circumstances created by the management, it has been issuing us show-cause notices instead of acting against the company which is habitually reneging on its promises and violating all labour laws. Our fight is for a just cause but the administration instead sent a show cause notice to Suzuki Powertrain Employees Union which threatens the cancellation of registration of this Union.

Since yesterday, the state administration has used intimidation when around 1500 police personnel, now increased to around 2500, have been posted in and around the factory. Yesterday the police arrested MSEU's body member Sushil, and went to the houses of all the

workers who have raised their voices. They entered the factory gate joined by police already occupying the canteen and dismantling our set-up to cook food outside for those inside the factories.

The management yesterday tried to push us into starvation by blocking the entry of food, water supply and locking up the toilets.

Given that it had no problem in arresting our leaders last month on false charges, and knowing the attacks on some of our fellow workers and the brutal lathicharge on the workers of Honda in 2005, and looking at the deployment of police, it has now become evident that the Haryana administration is preparing for taking brutal and violent steps to smash our movement and disperse us from here. Such an assault will not just be on us but the right of all working people.

WE are concerned that the factory runs quality production and we are given our rights. Our struggle is a struggle for our dignity and right to our own Union. We struggle also more importantly for the contract workers among us, whose insecurity and precarious condition of existence is a burning issue before all people of the country today. The struggle in Maruti Suzuki has emerged as the concrete struggle of the around 8000 workers of the four plants of Suzuki group- Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., Suzuki Powertrain India Ltd., Suzuki Castings, Suzuki Motorcycle India Ltd and we have also received support from workers of many other factories all who face similar situation today.

We reiterate our demands:

1. Unconditionally take back on duty all the terminated and suspended workers- permanent, trainee and contract.
2. Immediately revoke all the pending and ongoing charge-sheet imposed on the workers as they are false and only a means to harass us.
3. Recognize our right to form our own Union. The situation that had arisen on 3rd June 2011 due to the management's refusal to recognise our Union should be resolved.

4. Immediately stop all repressive measures, and stop police action on workers, release our Union members arrested on the morning of 14th October and stop further arrests and detentions. Punish the perpetrators of the case of firing on 9th October morning.
5. Stop management's ploy to blame 'industrial sabotage' and 'indiscipline' on us, by various harassment techniques, including changing workstations.
6. Resume the already inadequate bus service.
7. The termination of 18 workers of Suzuki Powertrain India Ltd must be revoked immediately. All the demands of the workers' Unions of Suzuki Powertrain India Ltd, Suzuki Castings and Suzuki Motorcycle India Ltd. must be met, and the termination and suspension should be withdrawn unconditionally in these plants, and the respective managements' vindictive attitude should stop immediately.

Shiv Kumar

General Secretary

Maruti Suzuki Employees Union