

Country Reports to 6th ICOG online meeting on 28 January 2024

India:

Looking in the past year there are various ups and downs that have happened in the auto sector in India. Some of the major developments and status of the Indian automobile sector in the past year are mentioned for your information.

Labor Law changing process.

There is a labour law changing process ongoing. Various state governments modify their labour laws according to the Central labour law. All these laws are in favour of the company and management. Many Trade Unions (Central and sectorial) protested against that but the Central Government as well as some state Governments didn't give any response to Trade Unions. Only says labour policy is investment friendly. General assembly elections in India will happen in the first quarter of 2024.

India is the world's third largest market for the automobile industry. Due to this, many OEM and supply chain manufacturers are interested in this market.

As per the current situation of the auto sector in India.

Auto sale growth of 19% in the festive period 2023. (In last year 2022 it was 3.19 million and this year 2023 it is 3.793 million units sold.)

More and more automakers are investing in developing electric vehicles to meet the growing demand for environment friendly mobility solutions. **General Motors**, Volvo, Jaguar, Land Rover, and Aston Martin, plan to go completely in the electric segment. Even Tata and Mahindra, an Indian automaker, also focused on that.

Due to the growing population, rising disposable income and increasing urbanization India becomes the fastest growing Auto market. Maruti Suzuki is the top Auto Company in India as makers continue to integrate more digital technology in their vehicles in India. Forecast is 49% rise up to 2032 in the electrical vehicle market and auto industry in India.

There are some challenges in India and auto industry, that are related to infrastructure, high taxes and traffic.

There is a dirty little secret that OEMs don't care for their supply chain workers. The automotive industry is growing with the electrical vehicle segment but some units also become closed in India. **ie GM, Ford**

As compared to four wheeler and two wheeler, sales in four wheeler is 17.4% and two wheeler is 76%. Passenger cars are also dominated by small and mid size car

The Production Linked Incentive (PLI) Scheme for Automobile and Auto components. The Union Cabinet approved the PLI-Auto Scheme on 15.09. 2021 with budgetary outlay of Rupee 25,938 crore for a period of 5 years (FY2022-23 to FY2026-27).

The PLI scheme for the automobile sector proposes a final incentive of up to 18%. It is to boost domestic manufacturing and Advanced Automotive Technology (AAT) products along with zero emission (ZEVs) (battery electric & Hydrogen fuel Cell), and attract investment in the automobile manufacturing value chain.

Total 150 companies has filed their application under this scheme

Apart from Indian business group approval, the application for champion OEM incentive scheme includes groups from Republic of Korea, USA, Japan, France, Italy, UK and Netherland.

Auto industry forecasts an expected worth of one trillion dollars (1 Trillion Dollar) by 2035.

Challenges to the automobile industry in India.

- 1) changing customer expectation
- 2) increasing competition

3) need to adopt new technology

The Domestic demand for automobiles in India has been steadily increasing.

Factor such as middle class increasing, disposable income, improved Road Infrastructure and easy access to the finance have fuelled the demand for vehicle.

According to the ICRA (an independent investment information and credit rating agency) report that, in the fiscal year 2024 industry growth will be

Passenger cars 6 to 9%, commercial car 7 to 10% ,two wheeler 6 to 9% & three wheeler 6%

There are problems in General Motors, Tata Marcopolo, Oerlikon. workers are struggling for their justice. Assurance of the job and fair wages is disturbed. Local Governments and Government Officials are not supported to the workers' representatives. Precarious workers and non unionized workers are increased.

Brazil:

WORKING CLASS FACES ATTACKS ON RIGHTS, PRIVATIZATION AND DESTRUCTION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

After 1 year of Lula's government, the Brazilian working class has been facing several attacks.

The labor reform, approved in 2016 by the Michel Temer government, which removed numerous rights from the Labor Law Convention, was not revoked. The Social Security reform that makes retirement in the country difficult has also not been repealed.

The National Congress approved the rules for the Union Budget for next year. The approved Zero Deficit target threatens public investments in the country in health, education, security and others. It also involves the explicit objective of obtaining funds to pay external and internal debt.

Another aspect is that political maneuvers directed a significant part of the Budget to deputies and senators to favor their political strongholds and their own interests. In addition, it increased the funds for the electoral fund to finance the 2024 municipal elections by five times, the same amount authorized for the 2022 general election.

The so-called fiscal framework imposes dangerous constraints on the country's budget in several aspects. An amendment proposed by far-right deputy Eduardo Bolsonaro prohibits the government from having expenses that promote, encourage or finance the invasion or occupation of land, abortion and that undermine what they call the "traditional family".

This prohibition on land invasion corroborates the Temporal Framework, related to the limitation of indigenous territories that leads to violence and violation of the rights of indigenous peoples. The Yanomami, who made headlines around the world after reporting that they were suffering genocide, continue to be in a dire situation with extreme hunger and disease. Despite the speech in defense of the environment by the Lula government, the Amazon continues to be destroyed by illegal mining and smuggling of wood and by agribusiness.

There is a strong privatization policy in energy, water and transport companies in the states. The privatization of public services.

Lula's election caused the majority of Brazilian Union Centrals, allied with the government, to try to put a brake on the struggles. Our daily battle is to keep the workers' struggle autonomous and independent of governments and bosses.

Strikes at GM and international solidarity

Vehicle production in Brazil still continued at levels below the pandemic in 2023. However, there is a race for the electrification of cars and hybrids, with an entry of Chinese manufac-

turers accompanied by strong restructuring. The Lula government's new industrial policy grants more incentives to large automakers, but does not protect workers' jobs. In this context, GM fired 1,244 employees.

GM workers carried out an important and successful strike in the three factories in the state of São Paulo: São José dos Campos, São Caetano and Mogi das Cruzes. The strike was only ended after a 17-day strike following the cancellation of the layoffs. The fight continues to reinstate directors Mancha (SJC) and Landim (São Caetano) to the company. There will be a court hearing in early March

International solidarity in the automotive sector was a high point in 2023.

In addition to the support that GM Brazil's metalworkers received from international unions, the important strike at the Ford, GM and Stellantis automakers was surrounded by solidarity.

The Metalworkers Union of São José dos Campos and Region and the Central Sindical e Popular CSP-Conlutas sent a delegation to bring solidarity in person to the strike in the USA.

And, together with metalworkers from automakers in the USA, Brazilian metalworkers were able to participate in a demonstration against the genocide of the Palestinian people.

South Africa:

Dear comrades, dear workers of the International Automotive workers movement. It gives us great pleasure to be making this report in this our 1st meeting of the year 2024. We wish to salute you and say militant and revolutionary greetings from South Africa ahead of this year's struggles.

This year promises to be a very busy year towards organising the Shop floors and in the Plants around our country. As can be witnessed around the world already that the Bosses in the Automotive Industry at a Global stage are moving vigorously with their agenda of re-organizing the International Production and therefore the re-organization of the International Labour.

This agenda means amongst others the Closure of certain Plants, the vigorous Outsourcing of certain areas at our workplaces by the main Original Equipment Manufacturers, such as BMW, Toyota, VW, Ford, Mercedes and several other Suppliers of the Automotive Industry. The dangers of Outsourcing alone opens up workers and employees to super exploitation such as Job losses, Reduction of their Benefits, Reduction of their Wages, Increased work load, and unpaid overtime work. This is what is coming to our Shop floors, our Plants and workplaces in general around the country in the year 2024. This kind of attack for profit maximization calls for more Militancy, more Organising, Coordination and agitation for workers' rights in particular and our class in general.

Our struggle on the contrary, is a struggle for more Jobs, Higher wages, better working conditions, strong and militant Trade Unions and heightened working class consciousness for International Solidarity.

The move for heightened competition amongst the producers of locomotives around the world, leads to another worldwide crisis, The Global Environmental Catastrophe. In search for new and more raw materials the profit driven Multinational Conglomerates will do everything to plunder resources for the satisfaction of their profit maximization strategies. This, as can be witnessed today, often leads to extreme destruction of the environment and nature.

This also, leads to Imperialists wars as we witness them again today. The war in the Ukraine and in Gaza as many other wars before them are at the end wars for the influence and control for raw materials.

We need to continue making an International call to end all Imperialist wars now!!!
We need to continue making an International call to end Environmental destruction and Catastrophe now!!!
All power to the workers!!!

Germany:

A lot has changed in Germany in recent months. The government is experiencing a deep crisis of confidence. While the chip company Intel alone is receiving 10 billion in taxpayers' money for its new building in Magdeburg/Germany, cuts are to be made to the masses at every turn.

Mass protests by tens of thousands of farmers against cuts that would mean the end for small and medium-sized farmers in particular are new. Militant forces came out with the slogan "*Workers and farmers - fight together*".

Hundreds of thousands of people are currently taking to the streets against the „Alternative for Germany“ (AfD) party and fascism. The reason for this is a secret meeting of fascists, including AfD members, who are campaigning for the deportation of tens of millions of people with a migration background from Germany.

However, people are also being driven onto the streets by a general dissatisfaction in the face of high inflation of officially just about 6%, increasingly visible appearances of the global environmental catastrophe with floods, droughts, etc., and in the face of Israel's imperialist aggression in Gaza and the war in Ukraine. Both are causing tens of thousands of deaths and injuries, but also costing billions in taxpayers' money.

Trade union struggles have picked up in the steel sector (IG-Metall), in the public sector (Ver.di), at the railroads (GDL and EVG) and others for more money and a reduction in working hours with full wage compensation. The locomotive drivers are currently on strike for 6 days.

The workforce at Ford Saarlouis already went on strike in 2022 against the planned closure of the plant. Till today, they are being stalled and attempts are being made to steer their struggle towards the goal of a "*social collective agreement*". This would mean accepting the job losses and the sale on the best possible terms. But this is a betrayal of class interests instead of fighting for every job. Such agreements are intended to deal with redundancies and keep the workforce quiet.

Particularly significant for the class struggle as a whole was the independent strike by Hamburg dock workers over three shifts at the beginning of November against the sale of the port (previously publicly owned) to a private investor, which would have meant job losses and a deterioration in working conditions. The strike also received broad solidarity from automotive workers because it was conducted independently with proletarian democratic principles. The workers took the right to strike, which was lacking in Germany, despite the ban.

However, social-chauvinist influences are also on the rise under the slogan "*Germany first*" in line with the "*America first*" slogan propagated by Trump and Biden, which aims to subordinate class interests to the profit goals of German corporations. The fascistoid AfD achieves electoral success. The CDU party and the ruling "traffic light" (red, yellow, green) parties (SPD/FDP/GRUENE) are moving further to the right with a further tightening of asylum policy, laws on internal security, further subsidies for the monopolies and a real roll-back in environmental policy. In contrast, we are currently experiencing the largest anti-fascist mass movement since the 1990s. Last weekend alone, almost 1.5 million people took part in anti-fascist protests in at least 80 cities across Germany. It sends a self-confident signal against the intensified rightward development and worldwide fascist tendency.

We are holding discussions about this in the workplaces, for class independence and against reformist subordination to the co-management of the right-wing trade union leadership.

In October 2023, the IG-Metall trade union conference took place in Frankfurt, where important debates were held on issues such as the reduction of working hours, a clear position against fascists, the question of environmental destruction and the rules of incompatibility against Marxist-Leninists.

In the automotive industry, the intensified global competition is increasingly being passed on to the workforce. Large-scale job losses have been announced at suppliers in particular: 3,200 at Bosch, including 1,500 at a plant near Stuttgart, 12,000 at ZF and 5,500 at Conti worldwide.

Temporary workers and those on fixed-term contracts are being sacked in all car companies. At Audi Neckarsulm, all 600 agency workers were deregistered (terminated) at the end of 2023. At Mercedes-Benz Düsseldorf, 150 contract workers will be laid off. At VW Zwickau in the all-electric car plant, 2,000 temporary workers are facing termination. In all companies, mostly older workers are being pushed into severance payments and confronted with bullying.

The IAC groups in Germany supported the 3rd International Miners' Conference and the 1st World Conference of the Anti-Imperialist United Front, which took place in Germany at the beginning of September and gave the order of "*no struggle will be left to stand alone*".

A short time later, when the UAW in the USA struck the big three car companies GM, Stellantis-Chrysler and Ford, there were several solidarity addresses and statements from the ICOG, from IAC activists, from IG Metall shop stewards, from departments, and so on. But this was still far too timid, especially as almost nothing was reported in the media in Germany.

An IAC delegation traveled to Paris for a Europe-wide rally on Environmental Struggle Day on 9 December. IAC groups took part in local demonstrations.

We consider the strikes against Tesla by 11 trade unions in Sweden, supported by others in Scandinavia, to be significant. The aim is the recognition of collective agreements in Elon Musk's empire. In Grünheide, the Tesla Gigafactory near Berlin, the assembly lines will be shut down for 2 weeks from January 19 to February 11, but mainly because of the detour of the container ships around Africa instead of through the Suez Canal.

We want to develop further solidarity work for the fight against Tesla in any case, solidarity visits are being considered.