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CITU rallies to say IT: Want fast growth

[Express News Service](#)

Kolkata, November 14: After upping its ante for the need to unionise IT units in the state capital, CITU, the trade union wing of CPI(M), is singing an entirely different tune and speaking a completely new vocabulary.

At the newly formed West Bengal Information Technology Services Association's (WBITSA) first rally in the Salt Lake Electronics complex on Tuesday, CITU's state unit president Shyamal Chakraborty gave an open invitation to major IT company owners to join the platform as "well-wisher".

Chakraborty is also advisor of the new association, aimed to comprise IT sector and business process outsourcing (BPO) employees.

Describing the IT sector in Bengal as a "sunrise industry" that is flourishing rapidly with the government's patronage, Chakraborty said: "In no way we are going to be a hurdle to its development. We want an unhindered growth of the IT industry."

Besides the CITU state chief, state Transport minister Subhas Chakraborty and CPI(M) Member of Parliament Amitava Nandy were also present at the rally.

"The association will devote itself for the welfare of all concerned in the IT and ITes (IT-enabled sector) industries in general," the CITU state president said. "The specific focus will be the interest and welfare of employees in IT and ITes organisations."

When CITU first mooted the idea of a union, it had argued that the forum will be called an "association", and not a "union", to ensure participation of all segments of the IT industry, including professionals, executives and officials. The idea, however, reportedly got extremely lukewarm response from IT professionals and executives.

On Tuesday, CITU leaders clarified that IT engineers and top officials do not come under the purview of trade unions, and thus the question of "unionising" them does not arise. But Chakraborty said the IT industry might as well join the association for the "wider issue of welfare".

With little response from IT sector employees, WBITSA now seems to be looking for a whole new approach in dealing with the industry, as is evident from its new website. "Are you stressed out at workplace? Contact ITSA," announces the website. The site, however, does not showcase the CPI(M)'s trademark hammer and sickle symbol.

Today's meeting was also kicked off on a different note, with hundreds of white balloons let off to signify peace. The turnout, however, was a mere 300-odd, mostly from the non-technical and non-professional segments of the industry; and a large chunk being contract labourers who are into jobs like cleaning, security and other services.

At the rally, the association listed five companies that allegedly failed to keep their commitment regarding payment of provident fund and ESI facilities. According to association members, these are issues that can be sorted out across the table.

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