

**PRESS RELEASE**  
*For Immediate Release*

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**Indian Sugar Industry Workers Association (ISWA)  
Commits to Enforcing Landmark Bombay High Court Order for Migrant  
Sugarcane Workers with Global Solidarity**

*March 18, 2025 – Mumbai, India* – In a world historic ruling today, the Bombay High Court issued a transformative order addressing the exploitation and welfare of migrant sugarcane workers, including the introduction of critical measures aimed at improving their living and working conditions. Indian Sugar Industry Workers Association (ISWA), a key advocate in this case, wholeheartedly supports the court’s decision and affirms its commitment to ensuring full compliance with the court’s directives, beginning this year’s sugar-cutting season.

This ruling follows a suo-motu PIL initiated by the Court to protect the rights of sugarcane workers, who often face unsafe and inhumane working conditions. The State government has agreed to implement several key recommendations put forth by the amicus curiae, including:

- **Registration and Accountability:** Mandatory registration of migrant workers and contractors, ensuring that workers receive legal protections under labor laws.
- **Improved Living Conditions:** Ensuring ‘pakka houses,’ clean drinking water, electricity, cooking gas, and safe sanitation facilities for workers.
- **Health and Safety:** Regular health check-ups and medical camps, along with steps to combat unethical medical practices.
- **Women’s Empowerment:** The abolition of the outdated Koyata payment system and enhanced measures to combat domestic violence and sexual harassment.
- **Children’s Education:** Establishing ‘Sakhar Shalas’ to ensure the education of children from migrant families, facilitating continuity of their schooling.

The court has set a clear mandate for the State to enforce these measures by the 2025-2026 sugar-cutting season, with a compliance report due by November 2025. This landmark judgment signals a new era for the rights and well-being of sugarcane workers and sets a precedent for labor rights across India.

“We stand firmly behind this court order and are prepared to drive its implementation through a concerted campaign with global solidarity from other labor and human rights organizations,” says the ISWA. “The migrant workers in the sugarcane industry have long been denied basic human rights and dignity. This judgment is a victory for justice, and we will ensure that it becomes a reality on the ground.”

Furthermore, in light of global scrutiny on the supply chains of major food and beverage brands, ISWA calls on companies such as **Coca-Cola, Pepsi, Mondelēz, Nestlé, Unilever,**

**General Mills, Cargill and others brands**—all of whom are major purchasers of sugar from India—to recognize their responsibility in the supply chain. These corporations must step up, hold their suppliers accountable, and work alongside workers' rights groups, governments, and other stakeholders to enforce this historic court order.

As highlighted in recent reports by the Indian Media, New York Times Series, these global companies are integral players in the sugar trade, and it is essential that they ensure fair practices throughout their entire supply chain. This includes guaranteeing that the workers responsible for producing the raw materials, including sugarcane, are treated with dignity, receive fair wages, and work under safe conditions. These brands must not only meet their legal obligations but also commit to upholding the rights of workers at every stage of the production and supply chain.

The world is watching, and the time for meaningful change is now. We urge all those committed to workers' rights and corporate responsibility to join us in ensuring the full enforcement of this order and the protection of migrant sugarcane workers' rights. This is a global responsibility, and we will not stop until justice is achieved.