



**JOINT COUNCIL OF ACTION**  
**INCOME TAX EMPLOYEES FEDERATION &**  
**INCOME TAX GAZETTED OFFICERS' ASSOCIATION**  
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## OBITUARY

### COM. PRAVEEN. S. RASHTRAPAL.

With deep sorrow, we convey the sad demise of Com. Praveen S. Rashtrapal, Member of Indian Parliament, on 12.05.2016. Rajya Sabha was adjourned paying high tribute to his services as a member of the house. Before he became a Member of the Upper house of the Parliament, he was a member of the Lok Sabha. Com. Rashtrapal was a beloved leader of the tax employees and started his career as a public personality through the trade union movement of Income Tax Employees.

Com. P.S. Rashtrapal was recruited to the Government service as an Inspector of Central Excise and Customs Department in Mumbai in 1967. On inter-departmental transfer he got posted as Inspector of Income tax at Baroda, Gujarat in 1968 and was later transferred to Ahmedabad, his home town, in 1969. Com. Manishinath Ghosh, who was the President of ITEF, met this young and talented comrade when the ITEF met in its Central Working Committee at Baroda. Com. Manishia da persuaded him to take active part in the Union activities and requested him to mobilise the employees of Gujarat Charge, which had virtually become defunct after the one day strike action in 1968. In 1970, he was elected as the President of Gujarat Income Tax Employees Association, then called as GITA. He travelled extensively throughout the length and breadth of Gujarat Charge and with the active assistance of Com. Jethalal Jadav and involvement of com. Umesh Mehta (who later became the all India President of ITEF) a militant movement of Gujarat Tax employees could be brought into existence.

ITEF, which played a pivotal role in the movement of the Central Government employees in the 1960s and 1970s and consequently in the affairs of the Confederation of Central Government employees and workers, took the right but bold and extra ordinary decision to take part in the struggle for Bonus along with the Railway organizations , according to which a historic indefinite strike action was to commence in May, 1974. The said struggle saw Com. Rashtrapal emerging as a National leader of the entirety of Central Government employees, galvanizing them into a militant and industrial action of indefinite strike. Gujarat was in fact a budding unit of ITEF not able to organize the glorious strike action of Central Government employees in 1960 and very partial or meagre participation in the one day strike action on September, 1968. In 1974, under the able leadership of com. Rashtrapla, Gujarat surprised everybody in the tax employees movement, recoding 98% participation in strike. It is a widely recognized fact that but for the excellent leadership provided by com. Rashtrapal, the sterling performance of the employees of Gujarat Charge would not have been possible. Not only that, the Western Railway workers owed a great deal to Com. Rashtrapal for their excellent record of strike participation in 1974.

Com. Rashtrapal was a great orator, witty and humorous and was capable of captivating his audience not only in his mother tongue, Gujarati, but also in Hindi and English. He was a keen observer and was able to see things from a different perspective than the general and normal connotation such happenings had. He was the unanimous choice of all the delegates at the All India Conference of ITEF held at Ahmedabad to be the Secretary General. There were no takers during the emergency to host the all India Conference of ITEF. It was Com. Rashtrapal's courage and capacity to galvanize his colleagues into action that made the conference possible. Those who were fortunate to be participants in that Conference will never forget the speech he delivered in reply to the exhortations made by the then Member ( P &V) CBDT, who inaugurated the said Conference. In the packed hall of the open session of the Conference, com. Rashtrapal made such a scintillating and emotion packed speech, denigrating the mis-deeds of the authorities, especially in the matter of imprisonment of two stalwarts of Income Tax Employees movements from Bengal, Com. Pushpendu Sen and Com. Samir Banerjee, invoking the dreaded provisions of DIR in the dark 19 month of National emergency proclaimed by Mrs. Indira Ganadhi's Government. Com. Rashtrapal was, unlike many, fully aware of his strength and weakness. He made it known to his well wishers and colleagues of his difficulties in taking over as the Secretary General of ITEF and his preference to work as deputy to his leader, Com. K.N. Nayagam. Com. Rashtrapal was elected as the Joint Secretary of ITEF at that Conference.

On his promotion as Income Tax Officer, he took active interest in the functioning of the ITGOA (then ITGSF), the organizations of the promotee officers of the Income Tax Department. He was instrumental along with many other stalwarts of the movement of the employees and promotee officers in the formation of JCA. The famous one day strike of the Tax employees and the promotee officers under the banner of JCA in December, 1987, which galvanized the joint functioning of the employees and officers (barring the 3% IRS Officers) and which led to laying the foundation for very many struggles later and achievements had become possible only due to the able and active leadership provided by Comrades like Rashtrapal. Com.Rashtrapal became the Secretary General of the All India Income Tax Gazette Services Federation in 1992 and the President in 1994 and was instrumental in transforming the promotee officers militant and ITGSF as a fighting organization.

Because of his courage of conviction, steadfastness and ability to call a spade a spade, he was the most disliked personality of the authorities. Mumbai had been his second home. On innumerable occasions, he had addressed the members of the ITEF and ITGOA in front of the Aaykar Bhawan, Queens Road, Mumbai. His name on the Notice Board was sufficient for a mammoth and massive gathering at the gates of Aaykar Bhawan, Mumbai. His immense help to the then Bombay Income Tax Employees Union, when their leader Com. Sharad Narain Parab was dismissed from service is the most memorable in the mind of the members of ITEF at Mumbai for all time to come. The extreme anger and dislike nursed by the authorities and especially the IRS fraternity was evident from the witch-hunting like disciplinary proceedings initiated against him and continued even after his retirement. In fact the authorities were a bunch of cowards that they could not do anything against him when he was in service and the leader of the tax employees. For several years after his retirement from Government service, the case was dragged on one pretext or the other and his retirement benefits were withheld.

After his retirement, he entered the Indian politics as he was too big a personality to restrict himself to a calm and quiet retired life. He joined the Rashtriya Janatha Party founded by Shri Shankar Singh Waghela and contested from the Dhandhuka constituency in Gujarat as a member of Parliament. He was defeated in that attempt, though he made an indelible impression amongst the voters of that constituency, especially amongst the most backward

and Dalit community . On the merger of RJP with the Indian National Congress, he was asked to contest from the Pattan constituency of Gujarat. He defeated the two-time Member of Parliament of BJP from that constituency and became a member of the Lok Sabha in 2004. In the next election, he could not however, retain that seat. The Indian National Congress nominated him to Rajya Sabha twice and he continued as a member of Rajya Sabha till his demise. Throughout the period of 16 years as an MP, Com. Rashtrapal worked tirelessly, for raising the voice of the voiceless, depressed and marginalized segment of the society in the Parliament. He was accessible to all and tax employees in particular. He raised innumerable points on taxation matters and a great many issues pertaining to the suppressed, backward and Dalit community.

Com. Rashtrapal was indeed a great personality, risen in the Indian Political arena, by sheer ability, who could make an indelible mark and above all who could stand tough against divisive and vindictive politics. In his demise, the common people and workers and all those who wanted India to be a secular democratic, socialist republic and especially the downtrodden communities lost a great friend and fighter. ITEF and ITGOA in its humble way dip their red flags in memory of their great leader and friend at all times. The Tax fraternity conveys their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved members of his family and especially to all those belonging to Indian working Class and oppressed communities.



**(Bhaskar Bhattacharya)**

**(Rupak Sarkar)**  
**Joint Convenors**