

Bangladesh / India: 163rd Santal Peasants Revolt Day Observed

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Today on 30th June 2018, in the historic day of 163rd peasants' revolt Bangladesh Krishok (Farmer) Federation, Bangladesh Adivasi (Indigenous) Samity and Bangladesh Kishani (Peasant Woman) Sabha jointly organized a gathering of peasants (both male and female) in Dinajpur Press Club with paying homage to the martyrs of this revolt together with discussion session and cultural program.



Dinajpur is the largest district among all sixteen northern districts of Bangladesh.

Adivasi communities of Bangladesh are victim of extreme marginalization. They are deprived of right and privilege provided by the state declared by United Nations on account of the missing constitutional acknowledgement. As they remain as an outcast community in the mainstreaming process, their vulnerability and marginalization continues to a great extent. Moreover, they encounter profound abuse and exploitation as a part of minorities. Setting fire in their house, incidence of rape and eviction from the land are also experienced by Adivasi community. They never get the justice of these rights violation incidences.



Badrul Alam, President of Bangladesh Krishok Federation



Omoli Kisku, general secretary of Adivasi samity

In the society they still remain as untouchable. They are also losing their land through different cheating technique and process. Forest department is also responsible for evicting Adivasi from their land. Leaving the country appear as an option for a segment of Adivasi community. The cultural distinctiveness and language of Adivasi community is getting extinct gradually. The government has no significant initiative to preserve their cultural entity.



The peasants revolt commenced in the early stage of British occupation in 1762. This revolt continued for the next 122 years up to in the year of 1885 when congress formed with the representative of middle class. During that period of time no political party was formed. The strength of organized peasants were the sole threat for the British regime. This long 122 years movement was characterized with its uncompromising features though the peasants of Bengal was killed and defeated in different occasions. The politics of compromise started with the birth of congress in subcontinent. The peasants of today inherits of those uncompromising rebellious peasants. The struggle of these peasants will not be stopped as well.





In 1855-56 the great peasants' revolt of Santal started with leadership of 4 brothers, Shidu, Kanu, Chand and Bhairob , 25000 peasants were killed by British police force. Their 2 sisters were killed also in this revolt. There was no trial of this mass killing rather the members of Adivasi community were killed after the the revolt. The prime object of this revolt was to abolish the Zamindari (Land Lord) system completely together with the end of British regime in this subcontinent. The Adivasi peasants sacrificed their life to establish the rights of Adivasi peasants that was undermined with the introduction of permanent settlement law introduced by Lord Cornwallis. The Adivasi peasants contributed to a great extent in different phase of history of independent movement and war though their rights are still illusive towards them.



Present government declared national budget on 7th June, 2018. The peasants together with Adivasi community had a much expectation though the allocation for agriculture sector is less in comparison with the size of the budget. It is true that there is no alternative to empowering peasants and Adivasi and gaining food sovereignty for economic development of the nation. On the other hand, the people of coastal belt and Adivasi community are mostly impaired with the negative impact of global warming and climate change. This budget is not prepared considering the climate change particularly. The burden of indirect tax has imposed on the mass people through the expansion of income tax. It is also true for Adivasi people. This budget will far more deteriorates the life and livelihood of Adivasi community.



The context and challenges associated with the land for plain land Adivasi, for example, Santal, Orao, Munda minority people is different and distinctive from the Adivasi people living in hill tracts. A Land Commission dedicated for plain land Adivasi should be formed.



In this respect, we are placing these demands.

1. The constitutional rights and recognition of Adivasi people should be given and separate Land Commission for plain land Adivasi should be formed
2. The ethnic right and social dignity of Adivasi people should be given
3. The national and international plot of destroying the religion and culture of Adivasi should be stopped
4. Necessary steps should be taken to preserve the culture and religion of Adivasi people
5. Adivasi children should be educated using their own language through introduction of education system and they should be given the rights of complete education
6. The Adivasi quota for the government job should be expanded
7. The unemployed Adivasi people should be employed otherwise they should be given unemployment allowance
8. All sorts of exploitation, abuse and torture against Adivasi people should be stopped
9. Adivasi people should be protected from the exploitation of land grabbers including forest department and money lender
10. All agriculture loan of Adivasi people should be exempted and certificate case and arrest warrant should be withdrawn
11. Special financial package should be provided to Adivasi people to combat climate change
12. Adivasi people should be included in adaptation and mitigation system to combat climate change





Omoli Kisku , the general secretary of Adivasi samity presided over the 163rd Santal peasants revolt day. Comrade Badrul Alam, President of Bangladesh Krishok Federation was the chief guest of the occasion.

Communist Party of Bangladesh-ML Polit Bureau member Comrade Mukhlesuddin Shahin, Comrade Krishok Federation General Secretary Zayed Iqbal Khan, Bangladesh Bhumihin Samity General Secretary Subol Sarker, Bangladesh Adivasi Samity General Secretary Omoli Kisku, Bangladesh Kishani Sabha General Secretary Sabina Yasmin, Revolutionary Garment-Textile Workers Forum Convener Shahidul Islam Sabuj were special guest while the meeting was addressed, among others, by Bangladesh Krishok Federation central member Masudur Rahman Swapan, Sazzad Sazu, Dinajpur District Unit President Taroq Kabiraj, Secretary Anisur Rahman, Member Hobibor, Rashidul Islam Juel, Bangladesh Adivasi Samity Central Leader Julius Murmu, Swapan Akka, Ram Hasda, Bahamoni Kisku, Bangladesh Kishani Sabha Dianjpur District Unit President Sabiha Begum, Secretary Morjina Begum, Organizing Secretary Lota Akter, Member Sufia Begum, Hajera Begum, Nurun Nahar Begum and Sabitri Rani.



The person in the photo is Santal indigenous peasant leader. His name is Ram Hasda. At the age of 118, he joined the commemoration meeting of martyrs of Santal Revolt Day against British regime.

P.S.

* 30 JUN 2018:

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