

Press Release

# **Bangladesh: Inauguration of Krishak Jote (Peasant Alliance) called 'Pragatisheel Krishak Sangram Parishad' by 15 Krishak organizations with the spirit of Liberation War**

Sunday 6 March 2022, by [PKSP / PPAC](#) (Date first published: 19 February 2022).

**A press conference was held on Saturday, February 19, at 10:30 am in the seminar room of Bangladesh Shishu Kalyan Parishad in the capital city of Dhaka by 15 farmers, farm laborers and landless organizations of the country inspired by the spirit of liberation war. The press conference was presided over by Subal Sarkar, General Secretary of Bangladesh Landless People Association and conducted by Badrul Alam, President of Bangladesh Krishok Federation while Sultan Ahmed Biswas, President of Bangladesh Chashi Samiti(Tillers Association) read out a written statement.**

At the conference, considering the overall situation of the peasant society of the country, a "Progressive Peasants' Action Council" was introduced as an alliance to realize the demands in the interest of the peasantry. This council expressed its commitment to build a movement and struggle in the field with the demands of the peasant society.



The 41-member Central Executive Committee was formally announced at the conference with Subal Sarkar, General Secretary of Bangladesh Landless Association, as convener and Badrul Alam, President of Bangladesh Krishok Federation as Member Secretary.

Abdul Majid Mallick-Bangladesh Landless Association, Kamruzzaman Fossi-National Farmers Alliance, Sultan Ahmed Biswas-Bangladesh Farmers Association, Zayed Iqbal Khan-Bangladesh Krishok Federation, Faye Hossain-Bangladesh Krishak Sabha, Ali Hazari-Bangladesh Landless Association, Zakir Hossain - Bangladesh Khetmajur Union, Professor Md. Nurul Amin Kawsar - National Farmers Alliance, Professor Ashek E Elahi - National Farmers Alliance, Tariq Md. Saiful Islam Liton - Bangladesh National Farmers Association, Rehana Begum - Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Md. Hasinur Rahman - Bangladesh Krishak Sabha, Md. Yusuf Ali - Bangladesh Landless Association, Shamim Ara - Bangladesh National Workers Federation, Bangladesh Samsunnahar Khan Dolly - Bangladesh Kisan Sabha, omoli Kisku - Bangladesh Adivasi Samiti, Shibli Anwar - Samagra

Bangla Krishak Samiti, MN Mostafa - Bangladesh Landless Association, Soleman Chowdhury -Sonar Bangla Krishak Kendra, Ambia Khatun Shila-Bangladesh Kisani Sabha, Pinki-Bangladesh Krishak Federation, Bangladesh Samjukta Krishak O Khetmajur Samiti- Md. Bablu, Samsul Alam Zulfiqar - Shramojibi Andolan, Harun Aur Rashid-Bangladesh Samjukta Krishak and Khetmajur Samiti, Dr. Shamsul Alam-Bangladesh Landless Samiti, Syed Harun or Rashid-Sonar Bangla Krishak Kendra, Sultana Nasrin-Bangladesh Kishani Sabha were present in the conference among others..

The written statement at the press conference is as follows:

You are especially aware that peasant movements and revolts have been organized in this land many times in the past with the aim of realizing the just demands of the peasants, such as Santal Rebellion, Tebhaga Movement, Tank Rebellion, Nankar Rebellion, Kansert electricity Movement and Khashbhumi Movement of Dashmina, Land Movement of Pabna Ghughudaha Bill and others. In its historical continuity, we have formed “Pragatisheel Krishak Sangram Parishad” consisting of 15 peasant organizations initially believing in the spirit of liberation war.

We are holding this press conference at a difficult time when for the last two years, the whole world has been dealing with the pandemic of Covid-19 through panicky situation. The people of our country are also in danger of being hit by this coward. In particular, indescribable financial and life loss has been inflicted on the working-peasant-hardworking people. Although the government has announced repeated lockdowns and taken steps to curb the spread of Covid, the lives of helpless low and middle income people have been threatened.

A significant portion of the rural youth, especially women, are employed in the labor-intensive garment industry of the city. The first blow to the beginning of the Covid-19 fell mainly on this industry. As a result, the garment owners shut down the garments without considering the livelihood of the workers, without thinking of paying their wages. As a result, millions of jobless people are forced to move to rural areas and a sudden strain on rural life and economy. Yet the enormity of our agriculture has been able to capture them. In turn, our agriculture has seen so much success that has largely mitigated the detrimental effects of COVID to the national economy as a whole. At the center of this great success is the proud peasant society of the country. But the sad truth is that farmers can never share in its achievements. The farmer is always hidden like the darkness under the lamp. The children of the peasants who have a glorious role in production are not able to eat to the full content, deprived of education, homeless and empty handed. He cannot improve his standard of living even if he grows crops. Behind this is a well-known business syndicate and middlemen who have been in power for fifty years of independence of the country. Rather, it has taken a stronger position by spreading its stalks. Exploitation, the end of inequality and the establishment of equality, human dignity and justice remained the untouched golden deer.

Today's fragile state of peasant society does not in any way indicate its weakness. Our farmers have a glorious tradition of long uncompromising struggle. The blood of that farmer is flowing in our arteries. Therefore, we are firmly committed to protect the interests of the farmers.

Almost every person in the country as a whole is interested and dependent on domestic agricultural products. However, the country has lagged behind in agriculture due to lack of importance towards agriculture, domination of middlemen and conspiracy of importers. In the context of which agricultural production is being disrupted to an extreme extent. The country is still heavily dependent on imports for agricultural products. As a result, the prices of some daily necessities are going up today. Farmers - workers - lower middle class - middle class have almost lost their purchasing power. The only way to change this situation is to increase productivity and achieve prosperity through sustainable agricultural production.

This country is mainly an agricultural country. If we want to save the country, we have to save the farmers and agriculture. In the light of this realization, we are submitting the following demands to the government through you (journalists) -

Demands:

1. a) Evict all types of middlemen by ensuring profitable prices of crops produced by farmers;
- B) Ensure profitable prices of agricultural products including granular crops, vegetable crops, oil crops, pulses, spices and potatoes;
- C) Build adequate silos, warehouses and cold storage for storage of agricultural crops;
- D) Reduce the cost of edible oil, water, gas, electricity and other essentials;
2. Distribute among the farmers all agricultural inputs (machinery) including fertilizers, seeds, irrigation water at free of cost;
3. A) Distribute Khasland among the real landless peasants and evict illegal occupants from Khasland;
- B) Lease out Khas and fallow water bodies between real fishermen and evict illegal occupants;
4. Introduce government employee-like pension for all farmers above 60;
5. A) Guarantee 150 days of work per year for farm laborers and landless;
- B) Increase the amount of Kabikha (Food for Work) , Tabikha (Cash Money for Work), old age allowance, VGD(Vulnerable Group Diet), VGF (Vulnerable Group Feeding), distressed allowance and number of beneficiaries, and eliminate the corruption associated with it;
- C) Introduce universal rationing system;
- D) Bring all agricultural workers and landless men and women under the social safety net;
- E) Ensure its multiple use by providing smart cards to all farmers with health facilities;
- . A) Stop all types of GMOs(Genetically Modified) seeds, crops and food including Bt. Brinjal, Golden Rice and stop the intervention of multinational companies in agriculture;
- B) Ensure food sovereignty and eco-friendly agro-ecology;
- C) Ensure government incentives for farmers to set up community seed banks;
- D) Stop production and marketing of private seed companies by making BADC stronger and more effective
- E) Introduce agricultural cooperative based production and market system in villages;
- . A) Implement agricultural land use and protection policy;
- B) Stop using agricultural land for non-agricultural purposes such as urbanization, industrialization, housing, brick field, etc .;
- . C) Give interest free loans to all farmers, stop interest business of NGOs and moneylender

business;

9. A) Ensure diversified use of betel leaf-sugarcane-jute-salt in government initiatives, and improve the livelihood of salt farmers;

B) Give tea workers ownership over arable land and fair wages for their work;

C) Ensure land rights of all Adivasi, Dalit, Rabidas communities like ordinary farmers;

10. Ensure free health care, including vaccination for farmers and landless farm laborers during epidemics including Corona;

11. Ratify and implement ILO Conventions 11 and 141 immediately.

Program:

1. Large gathering of farmers, landless and farm laborers in 4 divisions of the country at different times of the year.

2. A national rally in Dhaka later this year

Thank you for attending the press conference amidst the time of Corona and listening to us. We hope that you will be especially kind enough in publishing our news in the most widely circulated newspapers and electronic media.

*Names of component organizations of the council:*

1. Bangladesh Krishok Federation 2. National Farmers Association 3. National Farmers Alliance 4. Bangladesh Landless Association 5. Bangladesh Farmers Association 6. Bangladesh Agricultural Workers Union 6. Bangladesh National Farmers Association 6. Bangladesh Krishak Sabha 9. Bangladesh Kishani Sabha 10. Bangladesh Adivasi Samiti 11. Bangladesh United Farmers and Agricultural Workers Association 12. All Bengal Krishak Samiti 13. Sonar Bangla Krishak Kendra 14. Landless Mass Council 15. Bangladesh Labors Movement

*News Sender*

Badrul Alam

Member Secretary

Pragotisheel Krishak Sangram Parishad (Progressive Peasants Action Council)

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