

Subal Sarkar (1960-2022): Short Biography and Work

General Secretary of Bangladesh Landless Association (BBS) and Progressive Krishak Sangram Parishad Founding Convener

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Comrade Subal Sarkar, a pioneer of workers' and peasants' alliance under progressive democratic politics and a fighter against exploitation, died on March 11, 2022 at Shibchar in Madaripur. We are deeply saddened by his death. In this great endeavor of today, we are giving a brief picture of his past life and work activities.

Subal Sarkar, the lifeblood of the peasant movement in the country, was born on the morning of September 27, 1960, in the village of Kashadah in the remote area of Shibluya, Manikganj, in the year of devastating flood. On the one hand, the sound of the erosion of the Padma-Jamuna, on the other hand, panic and cry of a new baby – joy in the whole house. Military junta Ayub Khan's rule has just begun. Roads are being cleared. Usually military rulers do whatever they do after taking power. During this difficult time of development, Subal Sarker was admitted to the village school. He listened to adults. He got acquainted with the activities of the student union in the primary school. After Shibalaya Govt. High School, Devendra College, he passed 1st class in Food Technology Department of Chemical Engineering at Dhaka Polytechnic Institute. But instead of establishing himself as a professional engineer, he decided to work among the landless peasants, the most neglected part of the country.

A number of historical events during this period prompted Subal Sarker to choose the difficult path of politics. First is the mass uprising of '69 and second the war of independence in '71. As a VP of Chemical Department as a student, he traveled across the country as the central leader of Bakachap (Bangladesh Technical Student Council) and led a four-year strike to gain the right to higher education for technical students he became a member of the Bangladesh Landless Association in 1982, gaining more confidence and a desire to establish a healthy style of politics. Then, through the Swadhinata Party of Bangladesh, Unity Process (5 parties) and the Democratic Workers Party, he struggled all his life to consolidate the progressive left democratic unity. Subal Sarkar was elected General Secretary of the 7th Congress of the Landless Association of Bangladesh. He was re-elected General Secretary of the 8th Congress. In the 80's, before thousands of landless peasants he made inflammatory speeches in front of the district commissioner's office in the district. The lion's share of the claim was realized at that time. Subal Sarkar also saw success in the struggle of the landless to establish their rights over Khas land. The establishment of landless people in different Chars of Noakhali, land movement of Satkhira, solution of many old problems of Pabna and Bogra are the achievements of his life. Subal Sarkar was at the forefront of many movements in Jamuna Char, Rajibpur and Manikganj. As a recluse traveler all over the country including Brahmanbaria, Comilla, Barisal, Pabna, Bogra, Dinajpur, Rajibpur, Mymensingh, he regularly organized landless peasants in the villages. He made them excited. Spoke the meaning of social change. He became a man close to the masses to establish the right of the poor. Under his leadership, the movement for waiver of micro-loans of NGOs gained momentum.

Bangladesh Landless Association basically became the focal point of the unity process. Swadhinata Party, Bangladesh Jatiya Sramik Federation, Bangladesh Bhumihin Samiti, Ganatantrik Pathchakra, Chhatra Oikya Forum, Jatiya Chhatra Union and 9 other organizations entered the national process. Subal Sarkar has been working since the establishment of the Unity Process and was elected a member of the National Committee formed at the Manikganj Muktanagar Conference in 1988.

Subal Sarkar played a role as the leader of 5 parties in the mass uprising of 90's of last century. After the fall of Ershad, the outline of the three alliances was thrown in the dustbin and the whole progressive politics became frustrated. This frustration was exacerbated by the collapse of the Soviet Union. In 1996, Subal Sarkar was elected leader of the Politburo of the Democratic Workers' Party. In 2001, he was elected secretary of the Democratic Workers' Party. At that time, the Subal Sarkar accepted the politics of the working class as his intended politics and fought all along his life against all opportunism.

Subal Sarkar last joined the Communist Party of Bangladesh-CPBML in 2017 and was elected a central member and later a member of the party's politburo in the congress held on December 29 of the same year. He held the post till his death.

Subal Sarkar was elected a member of the Central Committee of the National Council of Bangladesh Sramik Federation (the Workers Federation of Bangladesh) in the year 2020. The new journey of Subal Sarkar started on the path of workers-peasant alliance and social change.

Ahead of the ninth conference of Bangladesh Landless Association (BBS), Subal Sarkar convened a meeting of the national committee of BBS on 11 March 2022 at Shibchar in Madaripur district. Subal Sarkar published a leaflet on the occasion of 40th anniversary of National Committee meeting of Landless Association. It was the last best work of his life. He left the body at approximately 1:20 pm (11th March 2022) 9 hours before the start of the meeting of the National Committee of Shivchar.

May the lifelong revolutionary Subal Sarkar be immortal!

[All progressive democratic political parties, peasant organizations and workers' organizations mourned the death of Subal Sarkar. People signed a book of condolences for his memory.]

The Central Committee of Bangladesh Sramik Federation organized condolence meetings in Dhaka and Chittagong and Bangladesh National Sramik Federation in Rajshahi. We hope to publish a memoir if those who know Subal Sarkar well and have worked with him, conveys a written statement with his memory to us.]

Thanks

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