

Karamat Ali: “We lost one of best trade union leader of South Asia”

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Karamat Ali executive director Pakistan Institute of Education and Research (PIER) was a tireless advocate of labour, working classes, women and other repressed communities. He died in the morning of 20th June 2024 at Karachi.

This is a big loss for the labour movement of Pakistan and South Asia. He was a dedicated working class leader, who was involved so deeply with all the good causes we could imagine of—from trade Union movement in Karachi, to fishermen rights, from social and democratic movements to peace in the subcontinent, etc.

A very imaginative and undogmatic Marxist that he was till his last breath, Karamat never shied away from challenging tasks and faced lot of atrocities and imprisonments. Karamat's, is an unsung hero of our times,

He was a well-read person and a true supporter of democracy. Many of the renowned economists have been associated with PIER. Karamat promoted the cause of the Labour movement based on relevant research.

He was not only a labour leader but always desired to change the economic system for the betterment of the poor. He always worked for alternative ideas to build a peaceful and just society

Karamat Ali was from a working-class family, born in the city of Multan(Punjab), two years before the Partition (1945). His father worked as a department worker. Karamat himself worked in a factory and attended the Government Emerson College in Multan in 1962. at that time, a group of 12 activists belonging to the National Students Federation (NSF), who were expelled from Karachi by then Ayub Khan's regime because of their political activities, visited many cities of Punjab including Lahore and Multan. “When Ayub Khan kicked out Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from the position of foreign minister, we invited him at a gathering near Gurumandir where he mobilised the students.” Ali said

Karamat Ali was founder of People's SAARC and South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication. He was in fact a real South Asian who always advocated unity among South Asian.

He was main organizer of World Social Forum 2006 in Karachi. He has invited many hundreds of Indian activists to Pakistan to forge people to people contact.

He was suppose to attend and speak Gent AEPF event but at the last moment, his health deteriorated and he could not come.

He did his master in labour studies at Institute of Social Studies at Den Haag.

Married to an Indian Amrita Chachi and father of a son.

We lost one of best trade union leader of South Asia.

Farooq Tariq

General Secretary

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee
