



NREGA Sangharsh Morcha

Ph: 9845371493/ 9433002064 / 7982910587

Twitter: [@NREGA_Sangharsh](https://twitter.com/NREGA_Sangharsh)

Facebook: [@NREGASangharshMorcha](https://www.facebook.com/NREGASangharshMorcha)

Email: nrega.sangharsh.morcha@gmail.com

NREGA Dharna, Day 3, 4th August 2022

On the final day of the 3-day dharna, despite heavy rains, hundreds of mazdoors from 15 states stayed on at Jantar Mantar to continue raising their voices. Currently, 14 states are running a negative balance on NREGA funds, and 64% of the budget for this financial has already been spent. More than Rs. 6800 crores are due in wages to mazdoors only for this year; no payments have been cleared in West Bengal since December 2021. Mazdoors from Andhra Pradesh, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Jharkhand, and Uttar Pradesh spoke today about their grievances, mentioning the weeks of work they have done without pay, the difficulty and distress caused by the National Mobile Monitoring System application and other technological interventions. James Herenj (Jharkhand NREGA Watch) highlighted the issue of non-functional, non-funded social audit units across states. The workers and unions present appealed to citizens, political leaders and representatives, and the media to support them in their cause

Adivasis from Gompad, Chhattisgarh also joined the dharna and shared their decade old ordeal. In 2009, security forces had massacred their village, killed Adivasis, raped women and inflicted grievous injuries on children. Since then, they have been fighting for justice but neither have the perpetrators been punished nor have the victims been compensated. Neither the state nor the central government has acknowledged the police violence. The injustice against them reached new levels recently when the Supreme Court recently rejected their petition for justice and ordered a fine on the petitioners including activist Himanshu Kumar. Kavita Krishnan of CPI (ML) added on how the Modi government is targeting all voices that are protesting against the government's hindutva and anti-people policies. NSM extends its full support to the Adivasis of Gompad and neighboring villages, and the activists standing with the victims.

The Working People's Coalition (WPC), a coalition of informal workers' unions from across India, led a session on the rights of informal workers. Chandan Kumar, Coordinating Secretary of WPC emphasised that informal migrant workers were also MGNREGA workers, and they had suffered the worst throughout the pandemic. The session highlighted the demand for implementation of Employee State Insurance norms, which include healthcare, maternity benefits, and unemployment benefits for informal sector workers, along with housing for informal and migrant workers. Workers from different sectors gave their testimonies, and the session concluded with the declaration of solidarity between WPC and NSM.

Today, mazdoor delegations visited MPs as well. Supriya Sule of NCP accepted the demand charter, and assured that she would raise our demands in Parliament. J Venkatesan and Natarajan of CPI (M) assured us they would write to the Ministry of Rural Development and Prime Minister's Office on behalf of NSM. We also met with Tamil Nadu VCK MP Thirumavalavan, who wants to follow-up on the discussion and invited us to meet him next week. Yogendra Yadav joined the dharna today, encouraging the workers to continue their struggle, and extended his full support. A delegation will be meeting with the Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, as well as Rahul Gandhi's office later today evening.

The day ended with a discussion on the way forward by representatives from different states. The NREGA workers return to their villages today, but the campaign and struggle will go on. The workers vow to continue their agitation in the Panchayats, Blocks, Districts, and States and will return yet again to Delhi as a show of their resolve to protect the MGNREGA and their right to a dignified life. We will also pursue national-level advocacy with national and regional parties, and coordinate our actions across states.

For further details please call Abhay (9845371493), Anuradha (9433002064), Apurva (9313759050), Laavanya (9910746743) or write to nrega.sangharsh.morcha@gmail.com