

Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty Caravan 2011

15 November to 4 December 2011, Bangladesh

Host:



Bangladesh Krishok Federation
Bangladesh Kishani Sabha

www.krishok.org

- 20 Days duration
- North to South Bangladesh
- 12 Districts, 18 Sub-districts
- Various kinds of activities, like: Exchanges of views, workshops, Mobilizations, discussions, rallies, processions, visits
- Opportunity to accommodate in real peasants and indigenous families in remote villages and observe their life closely
- Opportunity to eat some meal in real peasants, landless and indigenous families

Do you want to join us?

Cost:

Cost for participants from enriched (developed / Northern) countries (also includes covering in-country costs of one Bangladeshi and one South Asian participant): **US \$ 1500**

Dateline for registration:

24 August 2011.

Registration fee: **US \$ 500**. It will be deducted from the aforesaid total cost.

Confirmation of participation:

Please confirm your participation in the caravan before 7 October 2011.

Optional:

One-day pre-caravan cross-cultural training, basic Bengali lesson, & individual locally-appropriate clothes shopping/ tailoring assistance: approx **US \$ 70** (depends on type of accommodation & clothing that you choose).

Optional:

Receiving you in person at the airport and organizing the transfers (both ways)
US \$ 20

Why join us?

Because:

- Climate change is disproportionately affecting low-lying, vulnerable countries like Bangladesh.
- The people of Bangladesh are already experiencing crop failure, devastating cyclones and unseasonal flooding (amongst many other climate change impacts), leading to deaths and malnutrition.
- This is an opportunity to learn, share, participate, increase solidarity networks and strengthen local movements.
- You can take the rich experiences and stories back into your own campaigning.
- Not only that, but the cost for participants from enriched (developed/Northern) countries covers the costs of one Bangladeshi and one South Asian participant.
- It'll be fun!

- Opportunity to accommodate some night with real peasants and indigenous families in remote villages and observe their life closely
- Opportunity to eat some meal in real peasants, landless and indigenous families
- We, the peasants of Bangladesh, are cordially inviting you!

What's included?

- all accommodation - basic: with local peasants, indigenous or in school halls (foam mattress, mosquito net, linen, pillow and blanket provided, but it wouldn't hurt to bring a camping mattress).
- all meals (Rice, roti, fish, dahl & vegetables are generally eaten for all three meals - vegetarians easily accommodated). Hygienic Food, Pure drinking water/ Mineral water.
- all transport costs in Bangladesh during the caravan.
- all climate caravan activities.
- all the above for a Bangladeshi and a South Asian activist as well as yourself! Solidarity in action!
- Medicare facility should be available (Provided that cost for medicine to be paid by his/her who needs)

Caravan Objectives and Expected Results

The Caravan will be organized by the Bangladesh Krishok Federation and Bangladesh Kisan Sabha who will be the host movements in Bangladesh.

The broad aim of the caravan is to address the key issues of climate change, gender and food sovereignty, because there is an ongoing and urgent need to (i) inform and mobilize vulnerable peasant populations throughout Bangladesh in order to respond to the threats of climate change: (ii) increase awareness about gender discrimination and the disproportionate impacts of climate change upon women; and (iii) build upon international solidarity networks concerning climate change and food sovereignty, such as those nurtured within La Via Campesina of which the BKF is a participant.

In particular, the purpose of the caravan will be to deepen and extend networks of grassroots movements in South Asia and build international solidarity around specific campaigns concerning issues of climate change, gender and food sovereignty. Food sovereignty is one of the most important practices that enables peasant communities to both mitigate, and adapt to,

the effects of climate change. Moreover, it also represents one of the most important solutions to the threats that climate change poses for the planet. The caravan will include a gender perspective on these issues throughout its duration. It is expected that there will be participation from grassroots movements from Bangladesh, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

The focus of the caravan will be on (i) movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies, for example concerning sustainable farming practices, and traditional and indigenous knowledges; (ii) education of communities about the effects of climate change; (iii) holding trainings and workshops; and (iv) conducting rallies. For example, it is expected that along the route of the caravan, seeds will be planted as a key symbol of food sovereignty.

Caravan Activities:

1. Sonarhat

Caravan commences in Sonarhat in Bhurungamari sub-district in Kurigram district.

2. Nageshowari

Rally and workshop with local peasants around the issue of food sovereignty, gender and climate change. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies.

3. Ghogadha

Landless rally concerning food sovereignty demands of peasant farmers.

4. Rangpur

Indigenous rally and discussion with indigenous people about the impacts of climate change. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies. Cultural programme: Visit Rangpur Rajbari (Royal Palace), a historical place.

5. Nilfamari

Peasant rally and education workshop with farmers about gender, climate change and climate justice. Visit Tista Barrage, a barrage which partly accounts for local desertification processes.

6. Dinajpur

Workshop with peasants and workers about climate change and its impacts on women and their lives. Cultural programme: visit Ram Sagor Lake and Raj Bari (Royal Palace).

7. Hilli

Indigenous rally and sharing experiences with indigenous community about adaptations to climate change. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies.

8. Bogura

Workshop training with transport labourers and labouring sector about climate change and impacts on food supply in Bangladesh.

9. Narayangonj

Peasant rally and educational trainings with farmers about climate change, gender and climate justice. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies. Visit handloom small industries and talk with handloom workers.

10. Sariotpur

Peasant rally and discussion with sugarcane farmers about climate change and food sovereignty.

11. Sathkhira

Workshop with shrimp cultivators and transgender people involved in land occupations and demands for food sovereignty.

12. Munshigonj

Visit shrimp enclosure and Cyclone Aila affected people. Educational training with saline affected people about responses to climate impacts. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies. Cultrual programme: visit to the mangrove forest of Sundarban.

13. Khulna

Peasant rally and discussion with farmers about climate change, gender and food sovereignty. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies. Visit organic farms.

14. Patharghata

Visit Cyclone SIDR affected area. Workshop with SIDR affected people and fishing communities about climate change, gender and food sovereignty. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies.

15. Barguna

Landless people's rally. Visit Small Island and workshop with fishing communities. Workshop about food sovereignty. Movement to movement communication, learning, and the sharing of experiences, skills and strategies.

16. Amtoli

Visit Cyclone affected people. Training and education workshop with landless people about food sovereignty.

17. Patuakhali

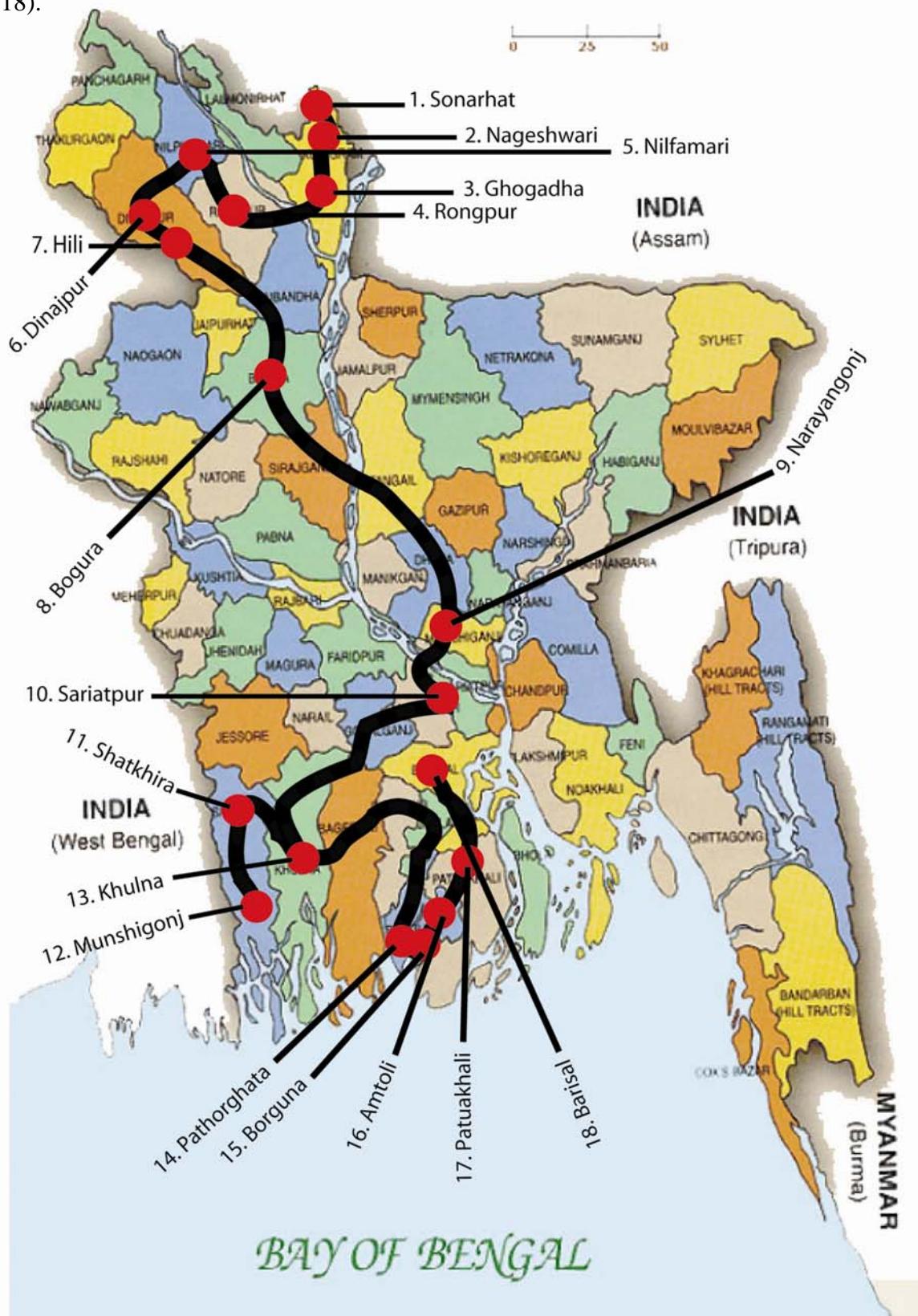
Workshop with SIDR affected people about climate change and adaptation.

18. Barisal

Culmination rally with landless, peasant, labourers, fishing communities and workers.

Caravan Route:

The caravan will commence in Kurigram District in Northern Bangladesh and proceed to the south of the country. It will be twenty days in duration. The route can be seen on the map (1 to 18).



Description:

Bangladesh is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world to climate change and sea level rise. Flooding due to tropical cyclones constitute a devastating hazard through storm surges and accompanying water logging and salinity. For example, in 2007, Cyclone Sidr, caused 3500 deaths and in 2009 Cyclone Aila, destroyed homes and inundated the land of southern Bangladesh with salt water. The coastal areas of Bangladesh comprise low-lying and poorly protected land which supports a large population. The majority of this population are poor and dependent on agriculture, and are thus more vulnerable to tropical cyclones, storm surges, floods, and droughts. For example, in 2004 severe floods destroyed over three quarters of food crops, and left 10 million people homeless. There is also a desertification process occurring in the northern districts of the country. Finally, the coping capacity in Bangladesh remains limited due to the relatively poor physical infrastructure.

These trends were confirmed by the Bangladesh Krishok Federation (peasant farmer's organisation, BKF) and Bangladesh Kishani Sabha (peasant women's organization, BKS) who organized 31 workshops in different parts of Bangladesh from 17th December 2009 to 27th January 2010. Those workshops were organized to assess the impact of climate change. Peasant communities commented on the increasing length of hot dry periods; decreasing water table levels; increased incidence of flooding; changes in weather (such as cold periods and fogs) causing failure of crops; increased cyclone activity and high tidal inundation causing salination of rivers and soil; and changes in the frequency and character of the Monsoon disrupting traditional farming practices.

Further, the impacts of climate change are felt most strongly by women, who already face gender discrimination for example through insecure rights to land. Amongst the most vulnerable and marginalized people in Bangladesh, women have the least capacity or opportunity to prepare for the impacts of a changing climate or to participate in negotiations on mitigation. They have less access to vital information on climate change mitigation or adaptation strategies, not least because they are too busy with child caring and other domestic responsibilities. Drought and water salinization seriously impact women who are responsible for water collection and who frequently must travel long distances to find water. Heavy rainfall and more frequent floods increase women's workloads, as they have to devote more time to collecting water and to cleaning and maintaining their houses after flooding.

Climate change threatens the food security of peasants that has already been undermined by issues such as unequal land distribution (especially landlessness); the lack of credit; and land grabbing by corporate and state interests and corrupt local officials, which displace the poor from their means of survival. As a result, there is an urgent need for both education concerning climate change and gender amongst the peasant population, and mobilisation of the population around key issues such as access to land and food sovereignty.

Food sovereignty has been recognised by peasant communities and movements as one of the most important practices that enable peasant communities to both mitigate, and adapt to, the effects of climate change. Food sovereignty implies control over territory and biodiversity;

self-governance; and ecological sustainability and has acted as a point of encounter, common interest and solidarity. As a result, the BKF has been actively involved in the international farmer's network, La Via Campesina (LVC), whose opposition to dominant responses to climate change has combined a commitment to the importance of localized forms of agriculture, and food sovereignty. Important here are ideas of agroecology concerned with the productivity, stability, sustainability and equitability of agricultural systems, frequently utilising indigenous systems of agricultural knowledge.

The BKF and BKS are planning to organise a Climate Change, Gender and Food Sovereignty Caravan during late 2011, in order to begin to address these pressing issues, and seeks funding in order to support such an important initiative. Representatives from the BKF participated in the 'Trade and Climate Change' caravan that preceded the COP15 mobilisations in Copenhagen in 2009 and also participated in those mobilisations as a member of LVC.

Dateline for registration:

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Confirmation of participation:

Please confirm your participation in the caravan before 7 October 2011. Confirmation fee \$ 500 USD. It will be deducted from the aforesaid total cost too.

Frequent Asked Question:

This is frequent question about Caravan that people ask to us and we put answer below. If you have any other question please ask to us in any time to pathaklal@yahoo.com or in our blog : <http://bkf-bks.blogspot.com>

Question: Will there be translators available for non-bangla speakers?

Answer: Translator will be available English to Bangla. Main language of the Caravan will be English. If there are any participants speaking in other language like Spanish, she/he should bring her/his own translator. Voluntary translator should be appreciated.

Question: What information on booking flights to Bangladesh?

Answer: Information on flight booking is available in online.

<http://airlinesthatflyto.com/http://airlinesthatflyto.com/airlines-that-fly-to-bangladesh/>

Air Asia also flies to Bangladesh.

This is participants own responsibility.

Question: Do I need a VISA to enter the country?

Answer: Many countries require VISAs, it is usually easy to get tourist visas. Some more information is here: <http://www.virtualbangladesh.com/faq/pass.html>

Question: I cannot attend all the caravan. Can I join it half-way through?

Answer: People can join even half-way. But participation in the whole event is advisable.

Question: Can I stay on after the caravan is finished?

Answer: You are most welcome to stay – there is always plenty for people to help out with! Also it is a great opportunity to travel personally and see more of our beautiful country. India, Nepal and Bhutan are within easy reach too.

Question: I have a low-income and have difficulties with the cost involved – is there a chance of reduction?

Answer: The price goes to helping Bangladeshi peoples attend the caravan, and all the organizing for it. However, in cases of special financial need it may be able to be reduced. Contact us in this case.

Question: What should I bring?

Answer: Logistic arrangement will be confirmed closer to the date. But Participant can bring along mosquito preventive lotion (though there is no malaria germ available in the route of entire Caravan) including first aid box, personal medications which may not be available in Bangladesh, light warm cloths, personal torch light, toiletries, sleeping bag, travel mattress, medical health insurance who needs, etc. Camera also.

Question: I cannot attend but would like to make a donation to help?

Answer: We would best like you to come, but if you cannot, a donation will help local Bangladeshi attend the caravan. Please contact us if this is the case.

Arrangements for Evaluation:

There will be feedback sessions organized in the communities visited during the caravan. Members of participant movements will also be asked for feedback on the caravan, through the use of a questionnaire survey.

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www.krishok.org

We are in facebook:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Climate-Caravan-November-2011-Bangladesh/189574114425684>

And in blog too:

<http://bkf-bks.blogspot.com>