

Leaders of 1000 Meet in Gwalior

A lot of work has been done along the Janadesh route to mobilize people and to organise the logistic of the march. On 14th-16th July, a meeting was organized in **Gwalior** in order to review the work done, to evaluate the remaining tasks and bring even more motivation and organization among the Janadesh teams who came from all across India. This meeting was probably the last opportunity for the leaders of each state (especially the leaders of 1000 marchers) to be all together with Rajagopal before the 2nd Oct.

On the 1st day, each group presented the review of their achievements and shared their experience. Then they were asked to focus on 29 specific points including money / grain collected



locally, advocacy work, number of participants, logistic details to bring people up to Gwalior... This impressive collective work showed the amount of preparation already realized. Each one agreed to work late and even stay one extra day to make sure every task was looked into. This was also an opportunity to review the percentage of work done / still to be done before Janadesh in each state, in terms of advocacy, mobilization, logistics and fundraising.

The 25000 marchers have been divided into 5 groups with **Indian River** names and the main information is summarized in the following table:

River name	Narmada	Chambal	Ganga	Mahanadi	Kaveri
States	Madhya Pradesh	Madhya Pradesh	Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh	Chhattisgarh and Orissa	Kerala and Tamil Nadu
Flag colour	Pink	Green	Red	Yellow	Blue
Nb Participants registered up to June 2007	4098	5600	4909	4244	225
Local fundraising	109 Quintals of grain & 210 000 INR	184 q and 51 800 INR	124 q and 72 500 INR	166 q and 243 500 INR	Not yet confirmed

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During the past year, Ekta Parishad had a lot of success stories. Indeed, groups of people were arrested (in **Chattisgarh** or **Madhya Pradesh**) but thanks to the strength of Ekta Parishad (using the truth force and other non-violent tools), they were set free from jail and the court has cut down most allegations.

Today, the people involved in the preparation of Janadesh are committed activists opposing a powerful state. Recently, with the state level demonstration around Patna (**Bihar**) and the sit-in which is going on for the past 160 days, the state is taking some account of our demand for land for homeless. In **Orissa**, thanks to the continuing Satyagraha in Bhubaneswar, the government has announced housing land plots for homeless. These are important example of the success of Ekta Parishad. Samely, the first "**interstate foot march**" (crossing Chattisgarh, Orissa and Jharkhand), which covered 580 Km in 25 days succeeded in mobilizing people from very remote rural places.

Concerning **Delhi**, the "warning march" in October 2006 and the one-day fasting organized on 25th June for the "100 days before Janadesh" had a good impact and created a new momentum, initiating talks with ministers, NGOs...

As **Rajagopal P.V.** (President Ekta Parishad) concluded, a lot of unresolved logistic issues were solved during this meeting in Gwalior and everyone has a greater confidence in Janadesh now.

Moreover, the 2nd October was recently announced as **International Day of Non-Violence** by the United Nations. It has become a day of international importance.

Along the Janadesh Route



On 17th July, after the meeting, most of the participants drove together from Gwalior to Agra (half way of the Janadesh route) to observe each night place, review facilities available along the route and also visit the many groups supporting Janadesh along the route. We visualized the "Mela Ground" where the inauguration meeting will take place on the 2nd October in the morning. This wide place includes toilets, water facilities and a large space to install a stage. We stopped more than a dozen times to greet supporters, discussing seriously with them or enjoying some refreshments and playing music. All of them are really enthusiastic and are ready to offer all their support in October. For example, we met some local leaders or important businessmen offering to provide food and water to the yatries in Morena as well as in Agra.

Apart from mobilization, the Ekta Parishad teams based along the Route have already done a huge work of measurements and painting landmarks or advertisement about the march. At last, in Agra, Rajagopal headed a meeting in Church of North India who is supporting Janadesh.

Latest events in India

•3 new Publications by Ekta Parishad:

- *Case Studies on Land Rights*, Dr K Gopal Iyer (in English).
- *Towards Janadesh*, by Anil Gupta (in Hindi).
- A booklet of Songs for Janadesh (in Hindi).

• "Assemblies of the Deprived" are organized in various states in order to consolidate people's movements and solidarity groups. The objectives are to understand the alienation of land and livelihood resources in each state and to initiate a global discussion to create larger network. This month, on 24th and 25th July, one Assembly of the Deprived took place in Chennai, Tamil Nadu. It was followed with a one-day fasting and discussions with political leaders.

•Support group meetings:

-In **Delhi**: on 8th of July, a Delhi Support Group was created with the help of Mr. Indu Prakash Sing (Action Aid) and Mr. Babu Lal Sharma (Gandhi peace Foundation) during a meeting in Church of North India. Other meetings (on 21st and 28th of July) were also hosted by CNI-Delhi to prepare an action plan for this support group and to launch concrete action for Janadesh. This group gathers around 35 Delhi-based organizations which will help mobilizing people before and during Janadesh (especially during the sit-in from 2nd October onwards). Ms. Vandana Shiva has recently announced she would welcome the marchers when they reach Delhi, end of October.

-In **Madhya Pradesh**: a support group meeting took place in Bhopal on 25th July.

-In **Uttar Pradesh**: support groups were created in Agra and Lucknow and meetings were held on the 28th & 29th July. The objective is to have more and more organizations, institutions and individuals supporting Janadesh (in terms of logistics and dissemination of information along the route). They might also organize support rallies all across India on the 2nd October.

Review of Janadesh monthly newspaper in Hindi

Here are some of the subjects developed in the newspaper published in June about Janadesh and distributed to around 2000 people:

- An article about the International Day of Non-Violence (2nd October)
- Slowly, slowly, Janadesh is making noise
- Standing on the land, we are struggling for land (women are not behind)
- The unfinished Employment guarantee scheme (announced but not done properly)
- Scheduled Tribes are in the focus
- Dalit groups are joining Janadesh to fight for their rights
- In Bihar, the Communist Party will launch agitation against land policy of the government
- About the visit of Gandhi Peace Foundation Team in Luneburg (Germany)
- Intellectuals (such as people from Supreme Court, Vice Chancellors, Journalists, Poets...) asking the government to leave the idea of Special Economic Zones.

Wikipedia

Check online for the articles on Janadesh and Ekta Parishad on the Free Wikipedia Encyclopaedia (<http://en.wikipedia.org/>), in English and in French.

Guinness Book of Records

We have applied to register Janadesh as the longest non-violent foot march ever (25000 people will march 350Km in 27 days).



Award

On 10th July, Rajagopal received a "Friend of the Poor" award from the Law Minister in Bhubaneswar, Orissa.

More foreigners have arrived to support Janadesh: Jonathan from Scotland - international communication and case studies; Emma from UK - financial management; Sébastien, Camille & Pachinee from France & Thailand - preparing a film on non-violence.



Foreign support to Janadesh

- At the international level, Janadesh team keeps on contacting new people or organisations. Recently, a legal support was asked to "Lawyers Without Borders" in France, with the help of Mr. Hugues Reiner (member of the International Committee of Janadesh).
- Rajagopal also invited some chief guests to support the movement and to come for the 1st day of the march, among the most famous ones are Nelson Mandela, HH Dalai Lama, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Kofi Annan, Mr. Yunus...
- In the UK, Action Village India displayed a new exhibition of photographs by Simon Williams during Womad Music Festival; in the same time, they continue their post-card campaign.
- Recently, Cléa Chakraverty published an article on SEZ issues in Orissa, in the French magazine "La Vie". She also describes the work of Ekta Parishad there.
- The Ekta Canada is led by Jill Carr-Harris and has started spreading information and brochures about Janadesh in North America. A website will be available soon, prepared by Shannon Moran.



National Campaign Committee on Land

In late 2003 'Ekta Parishad' and other like minded organizations created a 'National Campaign Committee on Land' (NCCL), a national alliance for advocacy on land rights. This Committee aims to bring together various stakeholders working on the issue of land rights in different parts of India on a long term basis. During the past 2 years, it was difficult to fix a long term team but at the beginning of July, a new team was consolidated in order to enhance the NCCL network. From now on, NCCL will give full support to Janadesh for the next 3 months and will then launch its own campaign focussing on:

- Advocacy for control over livelihood resources (mainly land and forest);
- "Right Campaigns" to demand that livelihood resources are controlled by the local people / communities so that people's basic survival is guaranteed;
- Protecting the tribal culture and their way of life, especially that of the primitive tribes, which is increasingly being threatened by a 'mainstream' model of development;
- Lobbying for implementation of pro-poor policies and legislations that have been enacted but were never implemented.

In the coming weeks, NCCL will improve networking and mobilizing for Janadesh inside Delhi and all across India. The action plan includes developing state consultations, contacting and informing national and international media, identifying human resources available all along the Janadesh route... NCCL is also in the process of appointing a new member to start working specifically on the issues of women land rights and how to provide them more power (notably with land entitlements).

Events to come in India

- A workshop for journalists on non-violence is organized by SAPA (South Asia Peace Alliance) in Gwalior from 5th to 8th August. Ekta Parishad is taking part.
- Release of a movie from Vinod Raja about Mining industries in East India (8/08).
- An Assembly of the Deprived will take place in Himachal Pradesh from 18th to 20th August, near Manali, with the participation of a Former Chairman of Planning Commission for Himalaya.
- Meeting with a group of doctors to coordinate healthcares during Janadesh.
- Visit of a Japanese team to Ekta Parishad Delhi, including NGO, media...

Announcements

Interns for short term: Anybody who is interested in coming to help us in the run-up to and during Janadesh please contact us to discuss where and when you would be able to contribute.

Health: We are still looking for organisations which can support us in the provision of healthcare for Janadesh. If you know of any that would be able to help us with medical supplies, trained medical staff, or support vehicles (i.e. ambulances) please send us details.

Sanitation: We are still looking for organisations that can help us with the provision of sanitation during Janadesh. If you know of any that would be able to help us either through direct provision of sanitation services, or through providing funding to us to purchase these services commercially, please send us details.

Interns for long term: Finally, we are also looking for people interested in working to help us set up and run a new Ekta Parishad agricultural training centre near Mumbai. Although an agricultural background will be useful it won't be essential for all positions, so don't be put off if you don't have one.

For more information on any of these announcements, please write us at

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