

The Call of Gorkhaland in Jantar Mantar



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Nanda Kirati Dewan 21 December 2008 11500 views

Having suffered the barbs of being erroneously described as settlers and foreigners, the Indian Gorkhas have long been demanding the creation of a state for Gorkhas in India. Such a state would reassert their identity as Indians and clear all misconceptions about their origins and nationality. Residents of India since pre-Mughal times and participants in large numbers in the Freedom Struggle, the Gorkhas of India feel that their being misconstrued as citizens of another country has denied them a fuller role in Indian national life. A state called Gorkhaland would help reiterate their Indianness and bring them fully into the mainstream.

The Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh, a national organization of the 1.25 crore-strong Indian Gorkha community, has organized a massive Gorkha Samavesh for Gorkhaland at Jantar Mantar on December 21, 2008 to press for the creation of a new state of Gorkhaland. Representatives of 22 Indian states will gather at Jantar Mantar that day to ask Parliament to consider this century-old demand for a separate state for Gorkhas.

Simultaneously, as part of the Gorkha Samavesh, Gorkhas from all over India have been sending faxes to the President of India, the Prime Minister and the Speaker of the Lok Sabha in support of Gorkhaland. Individuals and organizations have come out in large numbers to request Parliament to do justice to this demand of the Indian Gorkhas.

Also participating in the Samavesh programme are the Communist Party of Revolutionary Marxists and the National Federation for Smaller States, which includes representatives of Telangana, Bundelkhand, Vidharbha and Harit Pradesh.

The Gorkha Samavesh for Gorkhaland is part of the three-day national programme of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parisangh that began on on December 19. Other programmes included the National Council on December 19 and a seminar on December 20. At the two-session seminar, prominent constitutional experts and scholars presented papers on the themes of "The Constitutional Aspects of the Demand for New States" and "The Gorkha Community and National Integration". The papers presented at the seminar recalled the contribution of Gorkhas in the Freedom Struggle and in nation building. The speakers also said that the creation of a Gorkha state was justified and would serve as an icon of India's federal set-up.

Nanda Kirati Dewan

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