

# India: An appeal to fellow citizens on Singur

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## Appeal To Fellow Citizens

The May 2008 Panchayat Elections have been historic. The people of West Bengal have spoken out, as never before. All political parties, those that lost and those that gained, now know what the people demand.

They demand an immediate full stop to the devious and shabby ways that have dominated politics in the State for much too long.

They are not against change but demand an end to change done above their heads and in secret by a nexus of political parties and vested interests.

Change seeking shall henceforth be a process that intimately involves the people. Those who want change must be prepared to begin by seeking the open approval of the people concerned and, having got their approval, must then be equally prepared to accept a central role for the people, as ever-vigilant monitors of the implementation process.

That being so, we must:

i) Support the ongoing and just struggles of the people of Singur against the forcible occupation of their lands;

ii) Reject the secret deal between the CPI (M) dominated West Bengal Government and the Tata Motor Company - both of who claim to be benign and people loving - that led to that occupation.

iii) Demand that any resolution of the dispute surrounding the Nano Car factory at Singur shall:

a) Start with an open admission, by the State Government, of the series of mistakes that it made when it acquired 997.11 acres of land, both when it used an unjust law that should have no place in the independent Republic of India, and when it used criminal means - deceit, coercion and the beating up of unarmed and innocent protestors, mostly common folk, the greater part of who were women - to enforce that law.

b) Continue with a genuine attempt, by all involved political parties and civil society organizations to openly negotiate a settlement to the impasse that meets the just demands of the people of Singur.

c) Accept both the people of Singur and the migrant workers who have been part of the economy that Singur's multicrop agriculture has generated for years, as integral partners in those negotiations because it is their land and their livelihoods that are at stake, whether as land owners or bargadars or bhag chaashis or farm laborers.

iv) Appeal to the alert and intelligent people of West Bengal and India to come together once more. The gains that they have made in consequence of the many demonstrations of discontent that they were witness to, and participants in, for almost two years, not only on the streets and fields of Nandigram and Singur, and on the streets of Kolkata and other urban centers all over the state, but

also in similar places elsewhere in the country should not be lost when negotiations happen.

The people of West Bengal want radical change. They must have it.

Signed,