

## **Shri Harekrishna Debnath, the Chairperson of the NFF is no more, now he remains in memory.**

He passed away this morning. Pradip Chatterjee phoned me just now and told me the sad news. He is going to Ashok Nagar, and then only will finalise the date and time of cremation. I called Mr. R. K. Patil the acting General Secretary of the NFF and he is going to Kolkata by flight now itself. I spoke to Matanhy Saldanha (the Acting NFF Chairperson). He has not made up his mind going to Kolkata yet. I cannot go to Kolkata, because I am not allowed to travel by Air. I am under strict order by the doctors to take complete rest.

Harekrishna Debnath was the student leader of Awami League of Mujib Rehman of Bangladesh. He played an important role in the freedom struggle. But Mujib Rehman was under the threat of being killed by the Army Coup. Mujib Rehman as his Emisary to Shrimati Indira Gandhi sent Hare to India. But before Hare reached her, Mujib was murdered by an Army coup. So Hare was not able to go back to Bangladesh. He remained in India as a Refugee and he settled down in Ashok Nagar of West Bengal, and later he got the Indian Citizenship.

I met Hare in 1989 during the Kanyakumari March and he traveled with me from Kolkata to Kanyakumari as part of the Campaign. He was elected later as Chairperson of the NFF. And till today he was the Chairperson of the NFF. We worked together till today. He organized the biggest campaign against CZM draft and led to the victory. MoEF was forced to withdraw the Draft in 2009. We worked together against 1991 Deep Sea fishing Policy of GOI. This was led to the formation of Majumdar Committee. In 1997 while Indefinite Fast was going on in Mumbai, Hare came down to Mumbai from Delhi with the Minister and settled the long standing Agitation to Victory. This fight against Foreign Fishing Vessels was the first victory against Globalization. This led to the formation of the World Forum of Fisher People (WFFP). Hare was the first Secretary General of WFFP.

Hare was Religious in every true sense. He was deep rooted in the religiosity of Tagore. He was singing the Tagore Songs wherever he was addressing Fisher People. In the recent Article written by Maheswara Devi, Hare was complimented by her as the True Son of Bengal.

The NFF, the WFFP and the fisher people in India and the World miss him. But his spirit will continue to guide us always.

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