

Bengal is broken. Bengal is devastated.

The super-cyclone Amphan raged through the state, decimating everything in its path on the evening of 20th of May. Howling winds ripped apart homes, destroyed levees and embankments, flooded countless fields of agriculture and reduced villages to a rubble. Yet, the mainstream news media on that fateful day was indifferent.

As the roofs crashed, we were not even in the footnote. As the electrocuted bodies started to surface we were nothing but a mere ticker. As the desperate cries of help was trying to be louder than the raging storm, it was comfortably muffled by the fourth estate who chose to look the other way.

In a state already reeling under the ongoing war against Covid-19, hundreds of villages had to huddle under whatever structure or protection they could get. Social distancing went for a toss. Infections are likely to rise. Yet, silence!

Well, we, Bangalis, have something to say about that. Due to various circumstances, Bangalis are proficient immigrants. We have spread everywhere and we have taken our culture, our art and our ideas with us. But in this process, we have become disjointed. Our roots have started to shrink, or spirit has started to forget. We say it's time for us to remember who we are. We are Apu, we are Durga. We are born out of the words of Bards and moulded by the ideas of revolution. We are Nazrul Islam, We are Surya Sen.

Remember who we are. Remember Matangini Hazra, remember Mohiner Ghoraguli. We never give up. We have gone through colonisation, oppression, partitions and famine. We have survived, we always do. No storm can destroy Bangla. We are born out of the land where the mind is without fear and the head is held high.

It's time for the world to unite for the Bangalis, the land of Tagore needs our help. It's time for us to stand #WithBengal.

We have our work cut out for us. The priorities are pragmatic.

1. Clean drinking water for countless without access to it.
2. Medicine to prevent outbreak of seasonal water-borne diseases like cholera.
3. Temporary shelter materials like Tarpauline, Twisted core chords etc
4. Warm food..

And for that we have created WithBengal.org, an online platform dedicated to raising money for each priority in the manner of a fundraising campaign. We promise transparency. Each and every donor will have access to data about the expenditure of their donations. We are constantly partnering with different NGOs and Relief groups to ensure better distribution of the aforementioned essentials. But we have to be fast, we have to inform as many people as possible. That is why this note is written in English and not Bangla, so that anybody who loves Bengal and everything that we stand for, to come forth, contribute and help.

It's time to make a stand for our home.

Joy Bangla.

