'Prisoner of Conscience'

Rajendra K Sail writes :

The much awaited trial of Dr Binayak Sen, General Secretary, Chhattisgarh PUCL begins on 30th April 2008. The prosecution submitted a schedule on 14th March with a list of six witnesses who would depose before the trial court during the four days of the first session of the trial from 30th April to 3rd May.

This clearly indicates that the State is trying to drag the proceedings thus subjecting Dr Binayak Sen to a longer period of incarceration (detained since 14th May 2007). The State seems to have gained some sort of legitimacy as the Supreme Court of India dismissed the Bail Petition in a very strange manner, without even assigning reasons for refusing to grant bail to Dr Sen. Remember that the Case of illegal detention of a human rights activist which has drawn the public attention all over resulting in a sustained protest and demand for his release, the Supreme Court of India just uttered five words: 'This Special Leave Petition is dismissed'.

In the mean time, protest against illegal detention of Dr Sen and others by the Chhattisgarh State is entering yet another phase with a series of public meetings and yatras being organised in different parts of Chhattisgarh beginning 13th April (Jalianwala Massacre Day) culmina-ting in a public protest demonstration on 14th May 2008, which would mark one year of illegal detention of Dr Binayak Sen.

It is in the fitness of things for people's organisations to observe the LABOUR DAY (May 1, 2008) protesting against the growing State Repression in Chhattisgarh, demand the repeal of the Chhattisgarh Special Public Security Act 2005, and release of Dr Binayak Sen, and all others detained under this anti-democratic law. Incidentally the trial proceedings will be held on this particular day too!

The Amnesty International has selected Dr Binayak Sen as the Prisoner of the Conscience, and protest letters demanding uncondi-tional release of Dr Sen are being sent to the Home Minister, Govern-ment of Chhattisgarh. □□□