

# **Hill Watch Human Rights Forum**

**January 2008**

**CHT NEWS.COM**

**January - June 2008**

## Army prevents temple uplift work in Maischari

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 01/2008, January 04, 2008*

**Military personnel, yesterday, asked the Jumma villagers to stop uplift work of a Buddhist temple in Maischari under Khagrachari district.**

A group of ten army personnel from Bizitola camp arrived at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir temple at about 1:30 p.m. and ordered the devotees to stop the uplift work they had been doing for the last two months.

They also briefly detained Aungjyo Karbari, the village head of Korngjyo Karbari Para and interrogated him about the temple work.

About 50 Jumma men and women from Choudhury Para village were working when the army personnel came there.

Earlier in the morning, another group of army men from Kiang-ghat camp had visited the temple but said nothing to the devotees.

Hundreds of Buddhist devotees from nearby villages such as Karallyachari, Jadugonala, Rangapanichara, Mubachari, Sabgujya, Manikchari, Bolipara, Bachchupara, Magistrate Para and Choudhury para have been working daily for the uplift of the temple. The work consists mainly of leveling the ground, constructing a dining hall and living rooms for the monks.

The army said such activities cannot be carried out without prior permission of the Mahalchari Thana administration.

### **HARASSMENT**

As we prepare this report, the HWHRF representative stationed in the area informed that the army personnel from Kiang-ghat camp reappeared at the temple in the morning today and briefly detained four Jumma teenagers who had stayed in the temple last night to perform their share of the temple duties - mainly to prepare breakfast for the monks early in the morning.

The soldiers ordered them to sit on a bench for a group photograph, but the boys felt offended and refused to comply.

This enraged the soldiers who held them there and refused to allow them to go back to their homes.

Later, groups of women and their guardians came to the temple and took them out ignoring army's order.

The teenagers have been identified as 1. Bablu Chakma s/o Samal Chakma, student of class nine in Buddha Shishu Ghar School; 2. Miton Chakma (14) a student of class nine in Naniachari school; 3. Eltu Chakma (16) s/o Ulong Chakma, a candidate for Secondary School Certificate; and 4. Nandan Chakma (14) s/o Jibo Moy Chakma.

Meanwhile, despite military presence, groups of Jumma villagers kept coming to the temple. But the army ordered them not to carry on the uplift work.

The soldiers asked them whether they came there under UPDF's instruction. They replied they came to work in the temple of their own volition. Nobody forced them to do that.

The soldiers interrogated one Iner Bap (father of Ina) from Korollyachari village, who also came to the temple to complete his own share of the work.

Army personnel have continued their presence at the temple area till the writing of this report at 4:30 p.m.

Some Bengali settlers accompanied the army to the temple today. They are believed to have surveyed the area nearby the temple for encroachment.

One and a half months ago, the settlers from Maischari, Noonchari and Kiang-ghat cluster villages made attempts to capture these lands.

The settlers have already taken away hundreds of acres of land belonging to the Jumma people in Maischari and its nearby areas with direct assistance from the army.

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## Settlers attack one in Matiranga over land grabbing

Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 02/2008, January 05, 2008

**Oli Mohan Tripura (45) was seriously wounded in a settler attack on 1 January 2008 as he prevented an attempt at illegal grabbing of his land by illegal plain settlers in Matiranga.**

The incident took place in Islampur village (No. 10) of Matiranga Municipality under Khagrachari district and relates to a piece of plow land belonging to Oli Mohan Tripura.

Mr. Tripura mortgaged 2 of his 3 acres of paddy land to Nurul Islam (50), an illegal plain settler implanted by the government of Bangladesh in the 1980s. But the settler now attempts to grab all his land including the one acre which has not been mortgaged and he actually ventured to plough all the 3 acres ignoring the mortgage deed. When Mr. Tripura asked him to adhere to the agreement, Nurul Islam and his two sons - Salam and Alom - mounted an attack on him.

Eyewitnesses said the settlers attacked him with dao (a sharp weapon) without any manner of provocation on his side. When Mr. Tripura screamed for help, peoples from nearby areas rushed to the scene and rescued him.

He was then admitted to Matiranga hospital for treatment.

It is not known whether the attackers have been arrested or whether any case has been filed against them.

The Jummas are always in the receiving end and when the parties to any dispute belong to Jummas and settlers, the former can never hope for receiving justice. The settlers are often encouraged by the army to encroach on Jumma's land and forcible land grabbing has become a serious problem in CHT.

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## Army ransacks Buddhist temple in Lakshmichari

*"We will not tolerate any Buddha house here; we want only Allah's house" says Captain Shohel.*

Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 03/2008, January 06, 2008

**A group of army personnel led by captain Shohel, commander of Indra Singh Karbaripara camp in Lakshmichari under Khagrachari district, ransacked a Buddhist temple-cum-meditation centre at Bhujulichuk hilltop run by one of Rev. Bana Bhante's disciples.**

Rev. Bana Bhante is the most revered and venerated Buddhist monk in Bangladesh and is believed to have attained Arahathood, the supreme stage of spiritual achievement in Buddhism.



*Rev. Shraddha Tissya Thera, Rev. Karuna Thirto Bhikkhu and Shubhuo Priyo Sraman on their alms round.*

The incident took place at around 8 a.m. on 31 December 2007. Captain Sohel and his 15 soldiers destroyed a cottage and smashed the thatched roof and bamboo-wall of the main temple while Shubhopriyo Sramana was in deep meditation inside, unperturbed by the sounds of the destruction. (Photo added in PDF format)

There was another cottage on the north side. The marauding soldiers smashed it too. The latrine, the bath house and the rest house were also demolished while the monk's robes shred to pieces.

To crown it all, the army personnel threw away the statue of the Lord Buddha into the jungle to the north of the temple. However, a few minutes later they picked it up again and kept it on the ground under open sky on the east side of the temple.

Two fully ordained Buddhist monks and Shubhopriyo Sramana, a novice, live in the temple-cum-meditation centre. The name of the chief

priest is Rev. Shradha Tissyo Thera and the other monk's name is Rev. Karuna Tirtho Bhikkhu.

The army commander told the monks that they could live there only if they got permission from the government; otherwise they would have to leave.



*What remains of Bhujulichuk Meditation Centre after destruction by army personnel*

The chief monk Rev. Shradha Tissyo Thera asked him whether it was stipulated in the constitution of Bangladesh that government permission is mandatory for the construction of any religious institution.

The commander said "No".

The Bhante (monk) further asked whether such permission

is required in other parts of the world.

The perplexed army men replied "No" again.

The Bhante then asked: "given that every one has equal rights to practice his / her own religion, what harm does my mode of paying worship and devotion to the Buddha cause to you?"

The utterly devastated commander fell silent and was at a loss for words before he finally found his tongue.

He just uttered "I am forced to do this army job to earn wherewithal" (pether janno chakri korte hochchey) and then left.

### **Previous forays**

The incident represents the third attack since July and the second in December last year.

The army made its first foray into the Bhujulichuk temple on 17 July 2007. At that time army personnel led by captain Raihan, commander of Shuknachari army camp, demolished the Bhujulichuk meditation centre and briefly detained two Buddhist novices - Shasan Ujjal and Nykistic

Sramana - who had been meditating there for months. They were forced to leave the temple. (see HWHRF news No. 24).

Afterwards, the devotees rebuilt the temple-cum-meditation centre and invited the monks to live there.

### **"We want only Allah's house"**

On 21 December 2007, the army launched another assault. On that day at around 8 a.m. a group of 20 army personnel led by Captain Shohel from Indra Singh Karbari Para camp (30 Field Artillery) raided the Bhujulichuk temple cum meditation centre and harassed the Buddhist monks.

Captain Shohel asked the Bhante a few questions and the Bhante gave their answers. The conversation follows:

Captain Shohel: Under whose instruction have you come here?

The Bhante: We came here on the Bana Bhante's order.

Captain Shohel: How many months have you been living here?

The Bhante: Two to three months.



*The shreds of robes lie strewn all over*

Captain Shohel: Where do you sleep at night?

The Bhante: Under the tree.

Captain Shohel: Who provide food to you?

The Bhante: We live by begging alms and if we don't get any we go without food.

Captain Shohel then pulled down the Buddhist flag, burnt it down and then replaced it with a tiny towel (Gamcha).

He told the Bhante that "we will not tolerate any Buddha house here; we want only Allah's house."

Earlier, at the time of conversation the two monks and the novice were photographed and videoed.

**Forced meeting**

On 30 December, one day before the latest raid on Bhujulichuk, Captain Shohel forced the villagers to attend a meeting called by him at a village shop.

At the meeting, the commander said "you can build temple only after you have got permission from the government."

"And if you get permission, then we will assist you in the construction of the temple", he added.

**Religious persecution on rise**

Religious persecution is on the rise in Chittagong Hill Tracts.



*A cottage of the monks stood here*

capture 300 acres of land including 100 acres belonging to Sadhana Tila Bana Vihara in Dighinala, Khagrachari. They smashed the signboard of the Vihara and harassed the monks.

On 5 November 2007, Major Qamruzzaman, commander of Babuchara zone, called Sneha Moy Chakma and Santosh Jibon Chakma to his camp and threatened them not to use loudspeaker for public announcement of the Katin Chivor Danotsav, the biggest religious festival of the Buddhist communities in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The army also halted the car carrying the monks at Babuchara and released them only after the threat to hold a religious gathering in front of the camp.

On 12 September 2007, the Upazilla Nirbahi Officer of Mahalchari, Md. Abdul Matin, issued a public notice prohibiting construction of new religious institutions without prior permission of the authorities

concerned. The notice was aimed at curbing Buddhist religious practice and facilitating illegal Bengali settlement.

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**Army lays siege to Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir in Maischari**

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 04/2008, January 07, 2008*

**Army personnel from Kiang-ghat camp continue to lay siege to Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, a Buddhist temple run by one of Rev. Bana Bhat's disciples in Maischari, Khagrachari.**



*Even older peoples have voluntarily taken part in the temple uplift work.*

On 3 January, the army illegally ordered the devotees to stop uplift activities of the temple and began the siege. Since then, construction work of living rooms and a dining hall for Buddhist monks has remained suspended.

One un-named Major, who is leading the siege, forced hundreds of Jumma devotees to leave the temple and threatened Shushil Jibon Chakma for attending a press conference in Dhaka against continuous land grabbing in CHT.

The army reportedly told the devotees that the Bengali settlers raised objection against the uplift work of the temple and that they were merely acting on their objection.

When one of the devotees asked whether they had injunction order from any law court, the army commander failed to give any satisfactory answer.

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Latest from Maischari:

### **Tension mounts as settlers position at SA Kuthir**

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum*  
*NEWS No. 05/2008, January 08, 2008*

**A group of illegal settlers took position at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir in Maischari today, Tuesday, sparking tension in the area.**

HWHRF representative stationed in Maischari, quoting local sources, said that at around 9 a.m. about 50 settlers from Bizitola and Kiang-ghat cluster villages went to SA Kuthir. They were accompanied by some outsiders believed to be Khagrachari district correspondents for national dailies and other media persons.



**Jumma devotees carrying out uplift work at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir.**

They stayed there for about one and a half hours, until 10:30 and gave false and one-sided information about the title of the Kuthir's (cottage) land and the uplift work that has been going on for the last two months.

Before their arrival and during the time of their stay, the army personnel stationed there since January 3 hid themselves behind

the bushes near the Kuthir so as not to be seen by the journalists.

"This is basically to make it appear that all is normal and that the army has nothing to do with the ongoing conflict over land in the area" HWHRF representative quoted Sunil Jibon Chakma, convenor of Vihara Committee of SA Kuthir, as saying.

The details of the settlers' visit are still emerging.

After the settlers had left the Kuthir area, hundreds of Jumma men and women thronged there to resume the uplift work. But the army personnel, who reappeared by then, harassed them and forced the men to leave the Kuthir.

However, over one hundred women stayed back and resumed the construction work defying the army's ban.

The army personnel led by Kiang-ghat camp commander Subedar Md. Farid are still guarding the temple area.

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### **9-year old Jumma girl raped and murdered**

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum*  
*NEWS No. 06/2008, January 10, 2008*

**A 9-year old Jumma girl has been raped and murdered in Ramgarh under Khagrachari district.**

Ms Shamini Tripura, aged 9, (father's name Mung Chandra Tripura) was raped on 8 January while she was on her way back home from school. She was a class three student of Sonai Aga Government Primary School.

Her mother Jotina Tripura told HWHRF that Shamini set out for school at about 8 in the morning, which is about 2 kilometers from their house in the village of Ghorta Para. "As she was not back home long after the closure of classes, we began searching for her" she said adding that they found her lying dead in a pool of blood only the next day in the jungle between the school and their home.

She confirmed that they found evidence of rape on her body. However, she could not tell who the culprits might be, although she said there are sizable Bengali settlements as well as Jumma houses in Sonai Aga village, previously known as Huneitya and populated exclusively by Jumma people.

Their village Ghorta Para lies about 3 kilometers west of Ramgarh Upazilla headquarters.

Sonali Chakma, president of Hill Women's Federation, a platform for the Jumma women in CHT, condemned the rape and murder of Shamini

Tripura and demanded immediate arrest and exemplary punishment for the culprits.

Recently, sexual violence against the Jumma women has increased. A few days back, on 4 December 2007, a ten-year old Marma girl was raped in Manikchari under Khagrachari district while she was on her way to school. The culprit was identified, but never punished. The police refused to file cases in connection with the incident.

On 26 October 2007, a Bengali settler named Mostafa attempted to rape Ms Myenu Marma alias Anu (23) in Lakshmichari. She was on her way to Shalbon Buddhist temple to offer food to Buddhist monks.

On 22 July 2007, Ms Supta Chakma (17) was gang-raped by some Bengali miscreants at Free Port area in Chittagong. She came there in search of a job at factories in Export Processing Zone.

On 17 April 2007, an unidentified settler made an attempt to rape Ms Arema Marma, a housewife, in Manikchari under Khagrachari district.

On 4 February 2007, a group of settlers kidnapped Nunu Ujai Marma (16) from Lohazhiri village under Byshari in Bandarban district while she was grazing her cows. She has not been traced since then and is believed to have been raped and murdered.

On 2 January 2007, a group of army personnel attempted to rape the wife of one Ranu Chakma (35) s/o Natya Chakma in Bakchari village under Naniachar Thana of Rangamati district.

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Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir update:

### **Cases filed against 500 Jummas including monk and dead**

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 07/2008, January 15, 2008*

**As part of a broader conspiracy to grab the lands of Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, a Buddhist religious meditation centre cum temple run by a disciple of Rev. Bana Bhante, a fictitious case has been filed**

### **against 500 Jumma men and women including the chief priest of the Kuthir and a dead man.**

The case was filed by Abdul Majid (50) s/o late Akad Zaman, an illegal settler from Karallyachari cluster village, under sections 143, 447, 379, 427, 506 and 109 of the Bangladesh Penal Code.

The case (No. 1, dated 11/1/2008) was filed with Mahalchari police station on 11 January 2008.

Broadly speaking, the allegations brought against them range from illegal gathering to theft to destruction to private property.

In the First Information Report, Mr. Abdul Majid, the complainant, stated that 400 - 500 Jummas were involved in the commission of the offences. However, he mentioned only 12 names as accused. They are Bishwajit Chakma, chairman of Kiang-ghat Union Council, Dharmaraj Chakma, member of Kiang-ghat Union Council, Samiran Chakma of Jadugonala village, Sunil Jibon Chakma, ex-member of Kiang-ghat Union Council, Manik Lal Chakma of Karallyachari Mukh village, Kartik Chandra Chakma of Karallyachari Bhitor Para village, Bidya Binod Chakma, headman of Kiang-ghat Mouza, Dev Bharat Chakma, member of Kiang-ghat Union Council, Bijoy Chakma, Karallyachari Mukh Para village, Nikhil Chakma, head of Karallyachari Bhitor Para village, Tumbo Chakma of Karallyachari Mukh and Aryo Joti Bhikkhu, chief priest of Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir.

How ill-motivated and frivolous the case is can be understood by the fact that of the accused, Mr. Tumbo Chakma is dead and Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu is a Buddhist monk.

### **Released**

In the meantime, Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu, who was arrested from his cottage on the morning of 14 January, and 11 others named in the FIR were granted bail when they were produced before the Khagrachari district court.

After his release, Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu has returned to the Kuthir.

### **Conspiracy to grab Kuthir's land**

Situated about 15 kilometers south of Khagrachari district headquarters, Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir (cottage) area comprises 18 acres of land donated by five Jumma villagers. Of the 18 acres, Kartik Chandra

Chakma of Karallyachari Bhiton Para, late Tumbo Chakma and Nagendra Chakma of Karallyachari Mukh Para and Gunodhar Chakma of Kiangghat village donated 4 acres each, while Nanda Kumar Chakma of Karallyachari Bhiton Para donated 2 acres.

The Kuthir was established in 2004 by a disciple of Rev. Bana Bhante, the most revered and venerated Buddhist monk in CHT. At present seven fully ordained monks and four Sramanas (novices) live in the cottage. The monks are Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu, the founder and chief priest, Rev. Artho Dorshi Bhikkhu, Rev. Buddha Dutta Bhikkhu, Rev. Shanta Deep Bhikkhu, Rev. Bibekananda Bhikkhu, Rev. Bishudhachar Bhikkhu and Rev. Kallyan Kirti Bhikkhu.

In November last year, the Jumma devotees began to uplift the Kuthir with hundreds of men and women taking part in it on voluntary basis. The uplift work consisted in the main of leveling the ground and construction of living rooms and dining halls for the monks and the Sramanas.

While all this was going on in full swing, the army and the settlers appeared on the scene from nowhere and raised objections to the construction activities. The settlers laid claim to the Kuthir's land and the army ordered the stoppage of all kinds of uplift work in the Kuthir area. Army personnel have been deployed there since 3 January. But all these could not deter hundreds of Jumma men and women, fired by religious passion and devotion, from carrying on the voluntary work.

As the Jumma devotees refused to obey the unlawful order of the army, the civil administration ultimately intervened and asked them to put a hold on the uplift activities.

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## **Army threatens to demolish Buddhist temple in Baghaihat**

*Hill Watch Human Rights Forum  
NEWS No. 08/2008, January 18, 2008, Friday*

**The Commanding Officer of Baghaihat zone in Rangamati district has ordered Rev. Dwip Bongshaw Bhukkhu, the chief priest of Bishwa Moitri Bouddha Vihar, to leave the temple.**

The verbal order was given on 17 January, Thursday when the CO met the Bhikkhu at his temple in the village of Hazachara. The temple was established in 1991.

"The CO simply said that he would demolish the temple and asked me to vacate it immediately", Rev. Dwip Bongshaw, who is now in Khagrachari to report the incident to the Parbattyo Bhikkhu Sangh president Rev. Sumanalankar Mahathero, told the HWHRF by telephone.

He, however, could not tell the name of the army officer.

Baghaihat lies in the north-eastern corner of Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering Mizoram of India.

Religious freedom has come under increased attack in the recent times in CHT. On 31 December 2007, a group of army personnel led by Captain Sohel, commander of Shuknachari Indra Singh Karbari Para camp, demolished Bhujulichuk Kuthir, a Buddhist meditation centre in Lakshmichari Upazila in Khagrachari district. On 14 January 2008, police arrested a Buddhist monk named Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu from Sarnath Aranyo Kuthir, a Buddhist meditation centre cum temple, at Karallyachari under Mahalchhari Upazilla. The monk was also implicated in a frivolous case along with other 500 lay men and lay women followers.

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**Hill Watch Human Rights Forum provides accurate, objective and reliable information on human rights abuses in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. For further details contact: [hwhrf\\_99@yahoo.com](mailto:hwhrf_99@yahoo.com) or [hwhrf.cht@gmail.com](mailto:hwhrf.cht@gmail.com)**



***CHTnews.com***  
**January - June 2008**

## Press conference held against land acquisition in Bandarban

CHTnews.com

News No. 01/2008, January 19, 2008

**Leaders of the Committee for Protection of Land in Bandarban have called upon the government to cancel the ongoing process of acquiring 9,560 acres of land for the purpose of expansion of Ruma Garrison in Bandarban.**



Leaders of Committee for Protection of Land in Bandarban call for cancellation of land acquisition plan for expansion of Ruma Garrison

The demand was made at a press conference held at Reporters Unity premises in Dhaka today, 19 January.

Committee member Mr. Khoichong Murung read out a written statement in which he claimed that the government is now at the final stage of acquiring the land in three Mouzas of Galenga, Pantola and Sengum under Ruma Upazilla.

Describing the process, he said "the Military Estate Officer of Bangladesh Military had made a proposal to the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Ruma to upgrade Ruma Garrison to a full-fledged cantonment. However, the TNO opined that the proposed expansion plan would affect 1, 569.06 acres of land of private ownership as well as 4,000 acres belonging to the Forest Department and displace 4,315 persons of 644 Jumma families. Again, in 1988 a joint team of Bandarban District Administration and the Bangladesh Military conducted feasibility study of the area and concluded that the acquisition of the said land would result in disastrous consequences. Because of this the past governments of both Awami League and BNP had refrained from endorsing the plan."

Describing the potential consequences of the ongoing land acquisition process, Mr. Khoichong further stated that "if the process is put through a total of about 4 thousand Jummas mostly from Marma, Tripura and Murung nationalities would be affected, many villages would be completely destroyed and thousands of acres of forests would melt away.

On the other hand, there is no suitable and adequate land for the rehabilitation of the displaced persons. This will in turn create enormous pressure on the demands of land, increase dependence on Jum cultivation and pose serious threats to the life and livelihood of the displaced persons."

Criticizing the role of the Bangladesh Military personnel in the land acquisition process he said, "the army is, on the one hand, putting direct and indirect pressure on the village elders including Chairmen and Karbaris (village head) to accept the land acquisition programme, and proposing tantalizingly huge amounts of money as compensation on the other."

He also accused both the civil and military administration of maintaining blanket secrecy about the actual status of the land acquisition process.

The press conference was also attended by Kowla Aung Marma, Hla Mong woo Marma, Mongnu Aung Marma, Singrao Murung, Prusathoi Marma and Mongting Oyong Marma.

During the question and answer session, Mr. Kowla Aung Marma, one of the potential victims, said "We will rather die than leave our lands. If necessary we will take to the streets."

When asked how the process of acquiring the said land can go on when there is an embargo put in place by the Ministry of Land, Mr. told the media persons that the military had also tried to grab lands during the rule of BNP-led four party alliance government.

At least fifteen reporters and photo journalists from different news papers and media organisations attended the press conference.

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## Settlers grab land in Burighat, Rangamati

CHTnews.com

News No. 02/2008, January 20, 2008

**Illegal plain settlers led by Md. Wahab from Burighat under Rangamati district of central Chittagong Hill Tracts forcibly taken away 25 acres of land belonging to the Jumma people in Hatimara village.**

The grabbing of the said lands took place in the month of December 2007.

Of the lands, 10 acres fall into the category of third class grove land and belong to Shukro Moni Chakma s/o late Monno Chakma of village North Hatimara under Burighat Mouza (No. 72).

The rest 15 acres are "fringe lands" belonging to nine individual Jummas. They are Shukro Kumar Chakma s/o Bina Chan Chakma, Progoti Chakma s/o Sobha Kishta Chakma, Subash Chandra Chakma s/o late Nil Baran Chakma, his brother Purno Chandra Chakma, Brisho Ketu Chakma s/o Gupto Moni Chakma and Hiroketu Chakma s/o Kamal Chandra Chakma of North Hatimara and Proti Chakma s/o Suresh Chandra Chakma, Priyo Ranjan Chakma s/o Prabhat Chandra Chakma and his brother Sarathi Chakma of South Hatimara village.

Acting upon a complaint lodged by the aggrieved Jummas, the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Naniachar sub-district made an inquiry into the allegation of land grabbing under army protection on 3 January 2008.

The TNO suggested two options for consideration of the Jummas. He said they can either agree to an equal distribution of the so-called disputed lands between them and the settlers or take recourse to the law to reclaim their lands.

Finally, the TNO ordered both the parties to maintain status quo until a final decision is given by a competent authority.

The failure of the TNO to eject the unlawful occupants of Jumma villager's lands has come under severe criticism. One villager said "the TNO has failed to be impartial in this case".

Another said this would encourage and embolden the settlers to grab more lands. "It is an open incitement to forcible land grabbing" he said on condition of anonymity.

The villagers alleged that after the judgment of the TNO, the illegal settlers were threatening to grab more of their lands.

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## **District Council Chairman visits Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir**

*CHTnews.com*

*News No. 03/2008, January 20, 2008*

**The Khagrachari District Council Chairman Mr. Manindra Lal Tripura, a hand-pick of the government, yesterday, 19 January, visited Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir at Karallyachari under Mahalchari sub-district.**

He was accompanied by Thana Nirbahi Officer of Mahalchari Md. Abul Hossain, OC of Mahalchari police station, an Army Major and three members of the Khagrachari District Council.

His visit comes in the wake of mounting tension over a military ban on uplift activities at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, a Buddhist meditation centre-cum-temple run by a disciple of the Bana Bhante, the most revered and venerated Buddhist monk in Bangladesh. The situation was further compounded by the filing of a criminal case against 500 Jummas by an illegal settler and the subsequent arrest of the Kuthir's chief priest Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu on 14 January. However, he was released on bail along with other Jummas named as accused in the FIR.

During his visit, Mr. Manindra Lal Tripura enquired about the Kuthir's uplift activities as well as the dispute over the land.

The chairman of Kiang-ghat Union Council Mr. Biswajit Chakma and Headman Mr. Bidya Binod Chakma told him that the Jummas had valid documents pertaining to the "disputed land" where as the documents showed by the settlers were fictitious.

The headman further told that according to the land laws now prevailing in the CHT he must be consulted before making any land grants. He alleged that he did not know how the settlers got their land documents.

Mr. Tripura assured that he would take actions after necessary consultation with the Ministry of Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

Two illegal settlers - Md. Mobarak, platoon commander of Para-military Ansar, and Md. Zhurul Haq from Chongrachari cluster village - were also present.

The military personnel stationed at the Kuthir area hid themselves behind bushes nearby and remained outside the gaze of Manindra Tripura and his entourage.

Military patrol increased

CHTnews.com correspondent from Mahalchari said the military have increased their patrol across the area since yesterday. Army personnel have been seen in the villages of Jadugonala, Ultachari Bihar Para, Golakkyapara, Karallyachari, Hazachari, Dadkuppya and Kiang-ghat.

An all pervading sense of fear and an uneasy is prevailing among the Jumma villagers in the area, he said.

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## **Army prevents construction of a makeshift bridge in Karallyachari**

*CHTnews.com*

*News No. 04/2008, January 21, 2008*

**Military personnel have prevented Buddhist devotees constructing a makeshift bridge over the river Chengi at Karallyachari - Paujyachari area under Mahalchari Thana in Khagrachari district.**

Hundreds of Jumma villagers began constructing the wooden bridge early in the morning today for the convenience of the Buddhist monks and the devotees to attend a religious gathering on 25 January at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, a meditation centre-cum-Vihara run by a disciple of the Bana Bhante, the most revered and venerated Buddhist monk in Bangladesh.

However, at around 11 a.m. army personnel from Karallychari camp ordered them to stop the work and threatened to arrest anyone disobeying their order.

"The army asked who gave us order to construct the bridge" one of the volunteers who was present at the scene told chtnews.com and added that the army would not allow them to make the bridge unless they could show permission for that.

"This reminds us of the bad old days when you needed pass for everything except for death", he further said alluding to overwhelming military control over the lives of the Jumma people during pre-Accord years.

After the army order banning the construction of the bridge, many Jumma volunteers left the scene for fear of arrest, while the army kept others inside the house of one Ranga Chakma.

The army personnel also ordered them to shift the wood logs meant for the bridge to their camp at Karallyachari.

People are now seething with discontent and they might soon find it difficult to keep their pent-up anger and growing resentment in check.

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## **ADM orders Mahalchari TNO to issue show cause notice over Sarnath Kuthir**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 05/2008, January 22, 2008*

**In a dramatic development, the Additional District Magistrate of Khagrachari in a communication yesterday ordered the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Mahalchari to issue show cause on the headmen and Karbaris (Village head) of Karallyachari area as to why they failed to notify the administration before hand about the uplift programme of the Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir.**

The ADM, Mr. Manindra Kishor Majumder also ordered the TNO to take legal actions against the headmen and Karbaris if they fail to make any satisfactory answer to the show cause notices.

The ADM's communication - the memo No. of which is je.pra.kha/je.em/tin-75/2008-63 - was prompted by a fictitious report

published in The Daily Star on 12 January 2008 and enclosed a copy thereof.

The subject of the letter is "On illegal cutting of hills and trees in Kiang-ghat area" and as reference the letter has mentioned "The news article published in the Daily Star on 12 January 2008."

In the said dispatch the ADM also requested the TNO to examine the land documents of Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir and take necessary measures in this regard.

The local people believe the ADM was prodded by the military, who calls all the shots in CHT, to write the said communication.

A member of the Kiang-ghat Union Council, who wished not to be named for security concerns, said "the letter issued by ADM is ill-motivated and smacks of religious hatred".

"The local government administration is either exceptionally biased or is unable to carry out its duties independently" he further said. Questioning the justification for the issuance of the letter, he continued: "How can he issue such a letter on the basis of a fictitious newspaper report and that too ten days after its publication?"

"While the administration - both civil and military - turns a blind eye to the forcible land grabbing by illegal plain settlers, it even refuses to allow us to perform our religious duties", alleged another villager requesting anonymity.

Meanwhile, sources from Khagrachari said the programme of religious gathering on 25 January at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir still hangs in the balance as the Khagrachari Brigade Commander reportedly declined to give permission.

The Commander visited Karallyachari yesterday and was reported to have told the organisers of the programme that he would give permission only if he got any green signal from the Ministry of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs.

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Karallyachari situation:

## **DC holds meeting to decide the fate of 25 Jan religious gathering**

*CHTnews.com*

*News No. 06/2008, January 23, 2008*

**The Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari is holding a meeting with the local Jumma elders of Karallyachari to decide the fate of a Buddhist religious gathering slated to be held on 25 January at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir in Mahalchari of the district.**

The details of the meeting are yet to be known.

### **Motor bikes seized**

In another development, the military personnel have begun seizing motor bikes at two points - Bizitola and Mahalchari - on Khagrachari-Rangamati road since yesterday without prior announcement.

The reason for the army action could not be known. However, the army authorities asked the bike drivers to contact them after three days.

Around 80 to 90 motor bikes have been held so far, informed a source from Khagrachari. He further said that motor bikes of Ashish Chakma, lecturer of Panchari College, Monotpol Chakma, lecturer of Mahalchari College and Nantu Chakma, a Jumma businessman, were also seized.

### **Bhantes (monks) barred from alms round**

Another source said Rev. Aryo Joti Bhikkhu and other monks and samanans dwelling in Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir at Karallyachari were barred from visiting lay people's houses for collecting alms-food early in the morning today.

The military halted them on the bank of the river Chengi, flowing between two villages - Karallyachari and Paujyachari.

Later, the army forced them back to the Kuthir and videoed them.

### **Raid on the house of Biddya Binod Chakma**

Army personnel carried out two successive overnight raids on the house of Biddya Binod Chakma, headman of Kiang-ghat Mouza, on 22 January.

The general feeling is that the army wanted to intimidate the people by the raids.

Mr. Chakma was not at home and evaded arrest.

### **Army put up poster**

According to sources, army personnel were seen today putting up posters at village kiosks at Bodanala calling upon the general people to help nab "terrorist Chonchu Moni Chakma".

However, chtnews.com could not verify the report.

Mr. Chonchu Moni Chakma is a young Jumma entrepreneur in Khagrachari. He lives in Mahajonpara at district headquarter not far from Khagrachari army brigade office.

The reason for military's wrath against him is obvious. He is one of those helping to organise the 25 January religious programme.

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Karallyachari situation:

### **DC meeting allows 25 Jan religious gathering**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 07/2008, January 23, 2008*

### **The Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari has decided to allow the organisers to hold the January 25 religious gathering at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir in Mahalchari of the district.**

The decision was made at a meeting between officials of the district administration - both civil and military - and the Jumma organisers. It was also attended, among others, by Rev. Sumaanlankar Mahathero, Ananta Bihari Khisha, Sudha Sindu Khisha, Satyojit Chakma, chairman of Karallyachari Union and Chanchu Moni Chakma.

From administration side, all but the Khagrachari Brigade Commander were present.

Although the decision represents a victory for the Jumma organisers - as they had to wage a long and hard battle even at the meeting to force the administration to concede to their just demands, the permission has come with a caveat.

The organisers had to agree that they would hold the gathering at an open space near Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, instead of the ground prepared by the villagers by leveling it and that the motor-bike rally planned by them would be cancelled.

The meeting began at 3 p.m. and ended at about 6:30 p.m.

### **Military operation in Naniachar**

One of our sources in Rangamati said the military today raided the village of Gorjontoli in Burighat under Naniachar Thana of the district.

The soldiers beat up at least one innocent Jumma villager and arrested two others. The identity of the victims could not be known.

The condition of the torture victim has been stated to be critical.

The army raid followed alleged disappearance of a settler from Gorhed of Burighat 2/3 days back. The settler has remained untraced since then.

The army is using the incident to mount aggressive attack on the Jummas. They were accompanied by some settlers during today's raid.

The distance between the village they have raided today and Gorhed, from where the settler was alleged to have disappeared is about 5 kilometers.

Tensions had been brewing in Burighat area for the last few months. The settlers in the area have already grabbed 25 acres of land belonging to the Jumma villagers (see News No. 2). They have been making further attempts to grab more.

The government administration is reluctant to stop such unlawful acts of the settlers, while the army often takes direct part in them.

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Karallyachari situation:

## Army arrests two Jummas in Bodanala

chtnews.com

News No. 08/2008, January 24, 2008

**Army personnel in Mahalchari yesterday arrested two innocent Jummas in an overnight raid into the village of Bodanala under Maischari Union in Khagrachari district.**

Priti Shankar Chakma (35) s/o Kamini Chakma and Lakshmi Bilash Chakma (42) were roused from their homes and taken to the camp.

The soldiers also raided the house of Shanti Jibon Chakma to arrest him. However, he was not available at home at the time.

The army gave no reason for the raids and arrests so far. The army action comes two days ahead of a religious gathering to be held on 25 January at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir in Karallyachari.

The army is opposed to the gathering and tried flat out to prevent it. In a meeting yesterday the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari finally gave permission to hold it.

Preparation is now underway to make the programme a success.

### Signboard

The army personnel yesterday put up a signboard at the entrance of Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir announcing the imposition of section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code.

Section 145 authorises a magistrate to order status quo in relation to any land disputed by two or more parties.

The signboard reads: "Warning: the authority concerned has declared section 145 of the Criminal Procedure Code in 249 Kiang-ghat Mouza. Legal actions shall be taken against anyone who violates the said section, or directly or indirectly instigates others to violate it or who assembles (illegally). - Ordered by the authority"

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## Tension in Burighat, Jummas fleeing in fear

chtnews.com

News No. 09/2008, January 24, 2008

**Tensions have been running high in Burighat area of Rangamati district after Captian Qamrul of Burighat army camp gave a 72-hours ultimatum for the release of a Bengali settler alleged to have disappeared a few days back.**

The ultimatum will end tomorrow, 25 January. However, the army has already arrested two Jummas from Gorjontoli village and tortured another villager. "Massive operations" are reportedly underway.

Another source said Jumma villagers from Gorhed, Edmara and Krishnama Chara are now fleeing their homes for fear of reprisal attacks.

Information about what is actually happening there is scanty as the army has blocked the Rangamati - Khagrachari road.

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## Karallyachari: Religious gathering held defying overwhelming military presence

chtnews.com

News No. 10/2008, January 26, 2008

**Thousands of Buddhist devotees took part in a religious gathering at Karallyachari, 15 kilometers south of Khagrachari district town amid overwhelming military presence and intimidation yesterday, Friday.**

The event was held at an open ground at Karallyachari Mukh village, about one kilometer from Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, a Buddhist temple which has been at the centre of a conflict between the Jumma villagers and the army.

Rev. Sumanalanker Mahathero, Rev. Jinbodhi and Rev. Shashan Rakshit were among the speakers. About 80 Buddhist monks attended the religious gathering.

They squarely blamed the army for the woes and worries in the Chittagong Hill Tracts and advised the people to stick to the Buddha's noble path for the emancipation from oppression.

Despite a last-minute permission given by the Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari to hold the gathering, the army tried to disrupt the programme and made no stones unturned to make the participation as thin as possible.

Military presence was everywhere and intimidating. In remote areas the soldiers prevented the devotees from attending the programme. The Khagrachari-Rangamati road as well as water-transport in Maischari portion of the Lake Kaptai were blocked and made off-limits to passenger vehicles, while the Bus Owner's Associations in Rangamati and Khagrachari were asked not to ply their buses on the Khagrachari - Rangamati link road.

#### **Harassment of monks**

The roads leading to Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir was effectively blocked and no one was allowed to go there. Even the invited monks were barred from visiting the Kuthir and one of the monks dwelling in the Kuthir was harassed. The soldiers halted Rev. Bibekananda Bhikkhu while he was returning from the said religious gathering.

When about 60 Jumma women protested against it, female members of the so-called Village Defence Party of the settlers were ordered to attack them. But the Jumma women refused to be cowed down and displayed undaunting courage and determination to fight back.

Ultimately, the army had to give in and let Rev. Bibekananda Bhikkhu return to the Kuthir.

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#### **Government decides to put "dispute-free" lands under Forest Department control**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 11/2008, January 27, 2008*

**The district administration of Rangamati has decided to put all the "dispute-free" lands in nine Mouzas of the district under the control of the Forest Department.**

In a communication (Memo No. rajoshwa / tin -3/2007 - 1070) dated 30 September 2007, the Revenue Deputy Collector of Rangamati district stated that Mr. Bhagadatta Chakma, a land surveyor with S. A. branch, had been appointed to hand over the lands in phases to the Forest Department.

It requested the Divisional Forest Officer, Banarupa, Rangamati to appoint a representative to take control of the land from Mr. Chakma.

The nine Mouzas referred to in the said communication are 27 Adrokchara Mouza, 123 Hemonto Mouza, 125 Phulgazi Baperchara Mouza, 128 Basanta Mouza, 129 Kaindia Mouza, 108 Manikchari Mouza, Sapchari Mouza, 110 Shukurchari Mouza and 111 Kudukchari Mouza.

The letter was issued at a time when hundreds of acres of land belonging to the Jumma people were being taken away by the settlers in Khagrachari district.

The move of the Rangamati district administration is viewed as measure to rob the poorest of the poor Jummas of their only source of livelihood - that is Jum cultivation.

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#### **An investigative team to visit CHT 28 - 30 January**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 12/2008, January 27, 2008*

**A 16-member strong team of intellectuals, writers, lawyers, human rights activists and journalists are due to visit Khagrachari and Rangamati districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts from 28 - 30 January, said one of the local organisers of the visit in Khagrachari.**

"The team members will collect information primarily about human rights, land issue, CHT accord and the voter list and then make their findings public at a press conference in Dhaka on 31 January", he further said.



He said the team members will speak to all sections of people and visit some specific places in Khagrachari.

The team will spend two full days, 28 and 29 January, in Khagrachari on the first leg of their CHT visit, before moving on to Rangamati.

The team members include Pankaj Bhattachariya, a leader of Gono Forum, Said Abul Maksuk, a newspaper columnist, Maj. Gen. Amin Ahmed Chowdhury (Rd.) Kamal Lohani, writer, Barrister Z. I. Khan Panna, lawyer, Bangladesh Supreme Court, Barrister Sadia Arman, lawyer, Bangladesh Supreme Court, Dr. Shirin Sharmin Chowdhury, Dr. M. M. Akash, professor of Economics, Dhaka University, Dr. Rashidi Mahabub, ex-pro Vice Chancellor, BSMR Medical University, Sourav Shikdar, Associate professor, Dhaka University, Pinaki Roy, The Daily Sar, Nazrul Islam Mithu, New Age, Kabita Papri, Ittefaq, Ayub Bhuiyan, Chief reporter, Bhorer Kagoj, Anwar Kabir a freelance journalist and a photo journalist from Janakantha.

The visit comes in the wake of allegations of massive human rights violations including forcible land grabbing and attack on Buddhist temples in CHT.

The visit is a big snub to the home ministry instructions "to discourage intellectuals and eminent personalities from attending functions organised by ethnic minority groups", a human rights activist commented.

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## JPNK launches internet radio

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 13/2008, January 28, 2008*

**Jumma Peoples Network - Korea, an organisation of the expatriate and exiled Jummas in South Korea, has launched internet radio service, Radio CHT.**

The debut podcast, released today, features news and entertainment. Ronel Chakma of the Radio CHT said, they will initially podcast in

Chakma language twice a month featuring "history, culture, religion, movement and livelihood of the Jumma people".

News of human rights abuses will be highlighted as well, he further said, and invited feedbacks about their internet radio programme.

The JPNK has its own website [www.jpnk.org](http://www.jpnk.org) and can be reached at [jpnk2@hotmail.com](mailto:jpnk2@hotmail.com).

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## Massive military operations underway in Sajek

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 14/2008, January 28, 2008*

**The Bangladesh military launched a massive operation last night involving about 1,000 personnel in Sajek, the north-eastern frontier region of Chittagong Hill Tracts bordering Mizoram state of India.**

The aim and target of the operation is not known. Even it is difficult to say whether it is a real or mock operation or a military exercise.

Army personnel from Chittagong cantonment as well as from most of the zones in Chittagong Hill Tracts are taking part in it. At least 70 military vehicles were seen moving towards Mazalong using Dighinala-Baghaihat road.

According to sources, the troops split into 36 groups before fanning out over the area.

### House searched

United People's Democratic Front's Bagahaichari unit said army personnel on the night of 25 January raided the house of Sugata Chakma, one of its members, at Mazalong.

The raid was believed to have been conducted by soldiers from Mazalong camp to arrest him. However, he was not available at home at the time.

The soldiers also searched the house and quizzed his wife Mukta Chakma about his whereabouts.

Mr. Sugata Chakma is an active member of the UPDF. He was first arrested on 30 June 2005 from Mazalong bazaar along with another UPDF member and five supporters. He was interned in jail for months before being released on bail.

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## **Dhaka team arrives in Khagrachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 15/2008, January 28, 2008*

### **The investigative team of progressive personalities from Dhaka has arrived in Khagrachari on a three-day tour of the CHT.**

The 16-member team is headed by Pankaj Bhattacharya, a top ranking leader of the Gono Forum party led by Dr. Kamal Hossain.

The team members began their hectic schedule, meeting all sections of people including Buddhist monks and victims of recent illegal land grabbing.

They are also scheduled to meet with officials of the civil district administration as well as members of the army including Khagrachari Brigade commander.

The Khagrachari district unit of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) submitted a memorandum to the visiting team that comprises of writers, university teachers, lawyers, human rights activists and journalists.

The team will stay in the district till tomorrow and then leave for Rangamati.

At the conclusion of the visit, they are scheduled to hold a press conference in Dhaka on 31 January where they will make their findings public.

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## **CHT situation alarming, Pankaj Bhattachariya**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 16/2008, January 31, 2008*

### **Pankaj Bhattachariya, who is leading a fact finding team of writers, intellectuals, university teachers and human rights activists, said the situation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts is alarming.**

He further said eviction of the Jumma people from their ancestral lands were taking place making the situation worse.

After two days in Khagrachari, the team members drove to Rangamati and held separate talks with public representatives, intellectuals and civil society members including Regional Council chairman Santu Larma yesterday. Earlier they also had discussions with the Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati, Md. Nurul Amin.

Talking to the journalists, Mr. Bhattachariya, who is also the president of Sammilito Samajik Andolon (United Social Movement), said the main purpose of their visit was to apprise themselves of the on-the-ground situation on the present status of implementation process of the CHT accord, land problem, the true picture of eviction of the Jumma people and the ongoing voter listing programme in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

"Contrary to the people's expectation that a climate of communal harmony would prevail for a free and impartial national election, the situation remains worrying even after ten years of the signing of the CHT accord", he commented.

He said their visit was undertaken in the backdrop of the deterioration of the situation and asserted that the situation has been compounded by the fact that the Jumma people are being continuously driven out of their ancestral lands.

Mr. Bhattachariya said they would apprise the government of their findings and hold a round table conference in Dhaka.

"If CHT becomes unstable, it creates national problems, and hence there is a need to keep the whole nation informed of the actual facts", he added.

The team also included, among others, Dr. Rashid-e-Mahabub, ex-chairman and pro-vice chancellor of BMA, Rabindranath Tribedi, ex-secretary and human rights activists, professor Ajoy Roy, president of HRCBM, a human rights body, Kamal Lohani, renowned journalist and columnist and Abul Maksud, columnist and cultural personality.

The team members wrapped up their visit and left for Dhaka yesterday.

*[This report has been prepared on the basis of a news article published in the Suprabhat Bangladesh, a Bengali daily newspaper published from Chittagong]*

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### **Fresh land grabbing attempt in Bizitola, Khagrachari**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 17/2008, February 06, 2008*

#### **Fresh land grabbing attempts have been reported from Bizitola, 7km south of Khagrachari district town.**

On 4, 5 and 6 February, the illegal settlers made attempts to capture 0.92 acres belonging to Lal Chakma s/o Nabo Kumar Chakma and 1.30 acres to Shanti Priyo Chakma s/o Lalit Mohan Chakma in Gamaridhala Mouza (No. 256).

Following the same old pattern, the settlers cleared jungle for construction of houses. The identities of the settlers could not be known; however, they are the same people who have already grabbed Jumma people's lands in the area.

The Jumma land owners registered protests, but to no avail.

The Khatian No. of Lal Chakma's 0.92 acre of land is R/12 (Dak No. 809/1221), while Shanti Chakma's R/13 (Dak No. 809/1216).

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### **HWF team meets Ain-o Salish Kendra chief Sultana Kamal**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 18/2008, February 06, 2008*

#### **A team of Jumma students led by Hill Women's Federation president Ms Sonali Chakma met with Ms Sultana Kamal, ex-adviser to the interim caretaker government and executive director of Ain o Salish Kendra, a leading human rights body in Bangladesh, at the latter's office today.**

The team apprised her of the appalling human rights situation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and requested that her organisation monitor the situation more intensely and systematically.

Earlier on 4 February, a memorandum was submitted to her on behalf of the HWF, a platform of the Jumma women in CHT. The memo highlighted the incidents of human rights abuses including land grabbing, political repression, extra-judicial killings, rape and arrest committed in CHT since the declaration of state of emergency on 11 January last year.

The HWF president told her that due to unwritten harsh censorship on the media imposed by the local military authority, who are the defacto ruler of the area, the incidents of rights violations go unreported in the local as well as national newspapers and other media outlets.

The HWF leader also requested her to send a team to CHT to assess the human rights situation, make its findings public and put pressure on the government to stop human rights abuses in CHT.

Ms Sultana Kamal assured the HWF team that she would continue her fight for the rights of the Jumma people and raise the issue of the CHT at national as well as international forums.

The HWF team also included Konica Chakma, Aungyo Marma and Somen Chakma.

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## Army beats innocent Jummas, grabs land

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 19/2008, February 08, 2008*

### **Eleven Jumma villagers were beaten by army as attempts to grab land and expansion of illegal Bengali settlement failed.**

On 3 February, army personnel from Dui Tila camp under Baghaihat zone in Rangamati district detained and tortured the villagers for protesting against the illegal grabbing of their land in January.

The victims have been identified as Chitta Ranjan Chakma s/o Shashi Bhushon Chakma, Guno Sindhu Chakma s/o Krishna Mohan Chakma, Debabrata Chakma s/o Krishna Mohan Chakma, Doya Chand Chakma s/o Ranga Mohan Chakma, Bhadra Sen Chakma s/o Chulo Moni Chakma, Rangabattya Chakma s/o Sudhan Chandra Chakma, Satta Kumar Chakma s/o Leppe Chakma, Sunil Moy Chakma s/o Indra Sen Chakma, Babudhan Chakma s/o Satta Kumar Chakma, Jagadish Chakma s/o Jiodhar Chakma and Subal Chakma s/o Reboti Ranjan Chakma.

They were released the following day after torture.

Dui Tila, also known as Kshetrapur village, is about 12km south-west of Dighinala and sits on Dighinala - Marishya road.

The villagers alleged that the army is also searching for 8 other Jummas for arrest. They are Bijoy Lal Chakma, Shambhu Muni Chakma, Natim Chakma, Suresh Chakma, Chandra Mohan Chakma, Bibra Kanti Chakma, Shashi Punnyo Chakma and Birendra Lal Chakma.

### **Land grabbing**

In a memorandum submitted to the Special Assistant to Chief Adviser in charge of Chittagong Hill Tract Ministry, Barrister Debasish Roy, the villagers of Dui Tila area alleged that their lands were taken away by force for the settlement of illegal settlers after destroying standing banana plantations.

When the Jumma land owners protested, the settlers told them that they were building houses as per instruction from commander of Baghaihat zone in Rangamati district.

On 17 January, the Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Bagahichari ordered Abdul Matin, a settler, to stop construction of houses and see him at his office. When asked, Abdul Matin told the UNO that the Baghaihat zone commander gave the order to grab the Jumma's land and expand Bengali settlement there.

Before the intervention of the UNO, the settlers had build about 10 houses with thatch and bamboo. The UNO himself oversaw the demolition of a few houses on the spot while the army broke down the remaining houses by the night.

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## Army searches house of UPDF activist in Jurachari

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 20/2008, February 08, 2008*

### **A group of about 20 army personnel led by a Major and a Subedar from Lulongchari camp (No. 10) in Jurachari under Rangamati district on 4 February raided the house of Binoy Chakma (26) s/o Ramani Mohan Chakma in the village of West Balukhali.**

The overnight search was believed to have been conducted to arrest Binoy Chakma, a member of the United People's Democratic Front. However, he was not at home at the time.

The soldiers searched the house frantically, apparently for firearms, but they found none and nothing incriminating.

West Balukhali is a remote hamlet in Rangamati district lying 25km south-east of Jurachari sub-district headquarters and their house is merely about half-kilometer from Lulangchari camp.

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## Settlers sowing paddy as army provides protection

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 21/2008, February 08, 2008*

**Reports reaching from Naniachari in Rangamati district said the illegal settlers began planting paddy saplings on land forcibly grabbed from some Jumma individuals in Hatimara village under Burighat Union today, while army personnel stood guard nearby.**

Army personnel were also posted at Krishnamachara Primary school near the land where the settlers were working so that the Jummas could not lodge any effective protests.

A Jumma government official from Naniachar told chtnews.com that Md. Abul Sharif, an illegal settler from Bogachari, was planting paddy saplings on 1.6 acres of land grabbed from Sunil Kumar Chakma (36) under military protection.

Tensions have been building up since December last year when the settlers from Burighat forcibly took away at least 25 acres of land, of which 10 acres are "fringe land".

Acting on complaint from the Jumma land owners, on 3 January the Naniachari Upazila Nirbahi (Executive) Officer Mr. Humayoon Kabir Sirkar visited the spot under army protection and instead of ejecting the illegal land grabbers advised the Jummas to share their lands with the settlers.

The Jummas rejected the TNO's decision terming it unjust and biased in favour of the settlers and on 26 January raised the issue with the Chakma circle chief Raja Barrister Debasish Roy, who has been appointed as Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser in charge of Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry.

### **Drama of disappearance**

On 20 January, a settler named Shamshu Mollah, who is mentally abnormal and debt-ridden, was rumoured to have been disappeared. Using this as a pretext, the settlers mounted attacks on the innocent Jummas.

They beat up four Jummas who came to East Hatimara from Gorjontoli to buy pineapple saplings.

Two other Jummas from East Hatimara village - Shubho Dhan Dewan, aged 24, s/o Nalini Dewan and Ananda Chakma, aged 24, s/o Karunamoy Karbari - also fell victim. Both of them were roughed up. One of them sustained injuries in one eye and the other got his leg fractured.

More attacks were feared and the innocent Jummas from North and East Hatimara villages began leaving their homes.

By 23 January, the two villages became desolate. 45 families (300 persons) from East Hatimara and 36 families (250 persons) from North Hatimara took shelter in the nearby villages of Bhangamura, Chelozchari and Pudial.

On 29 January, a representative of the Chakma Raja Debasish Roy visited the area to enquire about the situation. This was followed by two visits by Naniachar zone commander and an official of local civil administration.

The civil administration requested the villagers to return to their homes. But they refused to do so without full guarantee for their lives and property. Later, the civil administration officials and local public representatives talked to them and assured them that there would be no further settler attack on them. They returned to their homes between 30 January and 3 February.

Both the civil and military administration showed complete apathy towards the sufferings of the distraught Jummas, who had to live without adequate food and warm cloths in freezing cold. There were none to look after those who fell sick. No one came up to help them. The civil administration's step-motherly behaviour was breathtaking in its palpability. Not to speak of the army.

When Mr. Pranati Khisha, chairman of Burighat Union Council, showed his interest to take actions to mitigate the sufferings of the ill fated Jummas, the settlers from Burighat bazaar harassed him while the army tried to detain him. However, two kind-hearted Bengali settlers came to

his rescue and helped him to run away (the name of the settlers withheld for security concern).

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## **JSS (Santu) guns down two members of its rival faction**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 22/2008, February 11, 2008*

**The armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu group) gunned down two members of its rival faction in Baghaichari under Rangamati district.**

Local people and newspaper reports said the incident occurred on 9 February at Rangadurchari area under Khedarmara Union.

The victims have been identified as Tontu Chakma (35) and Suresh Chandra Chakma (32). They are members of what is known as the reformist faction of the Jana Samhati Samiti, newspaper reports said.

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## **Army arrests innocent villager in Baghaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 23/2008, February 12, 2008*

**Priti Bikash Chakma alias Phena, aged 55, s/o Gujungya Chakma was arrested when a group of about 20 army personnel from Korengatoli camp in Baghaichari under Rangamati district raided his home in the village of Middle Bongoltoli a little over midnight on 11 February.**

He was roused from his bed and taken to the camp. Thereafter, the army placed a home-made gun in his hands and handed him over to the Baghaichari police station. A case has been filed against him under Arms and Explosives Act.

Mr. Chakma has been described as innocent by those who know him. Sukhomoy, his neighbour, said he is a peaceful and amiable man and always help others in the village.

Another villager Swapan Chakma does not see any reason why he should be arrested. "Some people may not like him as he had contested in the last UP elections, but that has nothing to do with the army", he said.

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## **Military operation in Dighinala**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 24/2008, February 13, 2008*

**The military has been conducting operations in Bamey Ugudochari under Dighinala Upazila (sub-district) in Khagrachari district since 11 February.**

Army personnel from Mainee zone and Suburipadachara camp are involved in the operation aimed at nabbing "terrorists".

Local villagers alleged that some armed cadres of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu group) are collaborating with the army. They said they saw masked JSS men along with the troops.

So far, there has been no report of arrest or torture of innocent people.

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## **UPDF activist arrested in Gamaridhala**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 25/2008, February 14, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and a teenage boy have been arrested in East Gamaridhala village of Dadkuppya area, 5km south of Khagrachari district town.**

Shankar Chakma (38) and a male domestic help in their house were arrested during a raid by a group of army personnel from Dadkuppya

camp on his house on the night of 13 February. They were taken to the camp and beaten up severely.

Mr. Shankar Chakma has been vocal against recent land grabbing by illegal plain settlers, who have taken away hundreds of acres of land with active support from the army during the last one year. Parts of his homestead land have also been taken away by the settlers.

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### **Army raids house of UPDF activist again in Jurachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 26/2008, February 14, 2008*

**The military have conducted, for the second time in 10 days, raids on the house of Binoy Chakma (26) s/o Ramani Mohan Chakma in the village of West Balukhali under Rangamati district.**

The latest raid was carried out at around 7pm 13 February by a group of army personnel from Lulongchari camp (No. 10) in Jurachari.

The soldiers searched the house extensively and harassed the inmates, one source said. However, he did not go into details.

The raid comes 10 days after the first one on 4 February.

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### **Jumma NGO worker raped in Khagrachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 27/2008, February 14, 2008*

**Newspaper reports said a female Jumma NGO worker has been raped in Khagrachari. She hails from southern CHT district of Bandarban.**

The daily Prothom Alo and the daily Purbokone reported that police on Tuesday arrested Sultan Mahabub Mian, area manager of Padakshep, a national NGO, and Mithu, another staff, on charge of raping a female employee.

The unnamed victim, who works for the same NGO, alleged that when she went to their office at Matiranga Upazila on last Thursday, Sultan Mahabub Mian told her that her brother had fallen sick and waiting for her at the NGO's area office in Khagrachari district headquarter.

Thereafter, Sultan drove her to Padakshep's Khagrachari area office and raped her the whole night.

Sub-Inspector of Khagrachari police station Mr. Monju Doha said a case was filed in this connection and that the medical test report was yet to come.

The Purbokone said according to case No. 6 dated 12/1/08 medical test of the victim was conducted.

It further said that Sultan Mahabub Mian was produced before the court yesterday. The court granted one-day remand for him.

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### **Land grabbing attempts continue: army orders Jumma villagers to vacate land**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 28/2008, February 17, 2008*

**On 7 February Dui Tila army camp commander Subedar Mohammad Malek unveiled plan to settle 50 illegal Bengali settler families in Tin Tila area under Baghaichari Upazilla of Rangamati district.**

The commander also ordered 9 Jumma villagers to leave their homesteads in Tin Tila. They are Gongotya Chakma (45) of Betagichara village, Banshi Chakma (40) of village Betagichara, Sambhulal Chakma (50) of village Betagichara, Kishor Chakma (35) of village Betagichara, Chikondhan Chakma (35) of village Hazachara, Kanti Chakma (35) of village Hazachara, Kishtojoy Chakma (35) of village Hazachara, Kalomoni Chakma (35) of village Moghban and Purnadarshi Chakma (45) of village Tintila.

Subedar Malek unveiled his plan at a meeting on that day with 5 Jumma elders he called at his camp. The Jummas present at the meeting were

Natin Chakma (village chief), Chitta Ranjan Chakma and Suresh Chakma of Boro Hazachara village, Bharat Kumar Karbari of Noapara village in Tintila and Sumojya Karbari of Rannyabon Chara village.

Malek told them that 50 settler families would be settled in Tintila area and warned: "if the settlers face any troubles (with the settlement), you and all the Pahari people (of the area) will be held responsible for that."

He further said that no one will be allowed to build houses within 300 yards of the (Dighinala - Baghaihat) road. "However, houses can be built and orchards and plantations created outside of that area," he added.

The army commander asked the Jumma elders to produce Pora Chakma (30) of village Rannyabon Chara under Tintila Mouza before him. The army suspects him of carrying out an arson attack on a newly built settler house near the camp.

Apart from the Jumma elders, three Bengali settlers - Abdul Matin Leader, Mohammad Selim Bahari, a leader of Sama Odhikar Andolan, a ultra communal outfit of the settlers, and Mian Member, incumbent commissioner of Baghaivchari Municipality - were also present at the meeting. They suggested that all the lands of Tintila are Khas (not owned by individuals). "If the Paharis can live here, why can't we?" they asked slyly.

The army and the illegal settlers have been trying to grab about 14 acres of land in the area. Of these, 12 acres belong to Chitta Ranjan Chakma and Pora Chakma of Rannyachara village under Baghaichari Upazila. The remaining 2 acres belong to Dildar Chakma of village Boro Hazachara under Merung in Khagrachari district.

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### **Army prevents a Jumma from constructing houses in Maischari, soldiers injured in monkey attack**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 29/2008, February 20, 2008*

**On 17 February, army personnel from Kiang-ghat camp in Khagrachari prevented Pabullya Chakma s/o late Chigono Chakma of village Karallyachari from constructing a house on his own land.**

Mr. Chakma bought two sacks of cement and other house building materials, but the army ordered him not to construct the house. His land lies about half a kilometer from Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir.

The army also prevented the uplift work of the Kuthir, run a disciple of Rev. Bana Bhante, the most revered Arhant Buddhist monk in Bangladesh. Troops have been deployed at the Kuthir area since January 3 to make sure that the order is complied with.

Of course, uplift work has been stopped and the army also succeeded in preventing a religious gathering at the Kuthir (the event took place in the village). But when they were basking in victory it never occurred to them that there is a thing called natural punishment.

And this is what they have met with recently. It is easy for the army to impose its will on the innocent Jumma villagers, but it is not that so when it comes to wild animals. They are not bound to obey human laws and orders as they have their own laws. Therefore, the army and monkeys have come face to face with each other in the theatre of the war.

The war has already broken out and the army has suffered two casualties. A few days back troops of monkeys launched their first surprise attack on the army soldiers posted at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir and injured one. The wounded soldier had to be treated in the hospital. The second attack has taken place today leaving another army man seriously injured. No casualties have been reported from the monkey's side!

Obviously, the army has found its own match!

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### **"I have learnt too much of brushfire"**

*- Major Mahabub*

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 30/2008, February 21, 2008*

**On 9 February a group of 19 army personnel from Ghilachari camp in Kawkhali of Rangamati district conducted search operations**



**following the alleged kidnapping of Hemanta Chakma, a BRAC employee.**

The soldiers searched four village kiosks at Panchari and scattered the merchandise all over the ground. They also interrogated the people about Hemanta Chakma. The soldiers asked Sunil Talukder, headmaster of Panchari High School, whether he knew Hemanta Chakma, whether he had been kidnapped and whether he knew his whereabouts etc.

When he replied in the negative, the army men tried to implicate him with the alleged kidnapping. Major Mahabub threatened him saying: "I am Major Mahabub. I have learnt too much of brushfire".

The army then took him to the school playground along with them. Teachers and students were playing volleyball at the time. Major Mahabub forced them to halt the game and asked each one of them about UPDF.

Five or six soldiers went to Binoyankur Buddhist temple, forced Rev. Dwip Bongshaw Bhikkhu, the chief priest of the temple, and another Buddhist Sramana (novice) out and took them to the playground.

The Major charged that UPDF hid firearms inside the temple. The Bhikkhu denied it and told him that he had never seen them carrying firearms.

The army personnel asked them to report to the camp if they knew about the whereabouts of Hemanta Chakma and then left.

Hemanta Kanti Chakma s/o Patindra Lal Chakma of Dolupara village in Bormachari under Kawkhali thana is an employee of Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee (BRAC), a non-governmental organisation. He was a member of the student wing of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu) and tortured many innocent students alleging them to be supporters of UPDF. He and his gang members did it with full backing of the army and JSS leaders. His usual method of operation was to beat up alleged UPDF supporters and then hand them over to the police or army.

The villagers of the area don't think that he was kidnapped. They believe that he was taken to a safer place by his torture victims to discuss compensation and the cases filed against them.

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**Innocent villager detained, released later**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 31/2008, February 21, 2008*

**Army personnel arrested Horidhar Chakma from his home at Harangi Mukh Para, Kawkghali, Rangamti district on 11 February.**

A group of army personnel raided his home at midnight and took him to Ghagra zone headquarters. He was held there for three days before being released.

He was believed to have been detained in connection with the alleged kidnapping of Hemanta Chakma, a BRAC employee.

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**Supporter of JSS (reformist) shot dead**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 32/2008, February 22, 2008*

**The armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu) shot dead a supporter of its rival faction known as JSS (reformists) in the village of Kadamtali under Baghaichari Upazila of Rangamati district at 8 a.m. today.**

The victim, identified as Tapan Chakma, was gunned down at his home. No further details are available.

Kadamtali is located about 4km east of Baghaichari sub-district headquarters.

The incident comes less than 15 days after the killing of two JSS (reformist) members in a similar attack in the same area.

On 9 February the armed members of the JSS (Santu) shot dead Tontu Chakma (35) and Suresh Chandra Chakma (32) at Rangadurchari area under Khedarmara Union.

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## Villagers tortured in Baghaichari

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 33/2008, February 24, 2008*

### **Three Jumma villagers were tortured by army yesterday, 23 February, in Baghaichari Upazila under Rangamati district.**

The incident occurred when a group of army personnel from Korengatoli camp raided the village of Tulaban. They interrogated Shankar Chakma (30) s/o Melallya Chakma, Manek Bosu Chakma (25) s/o Bindu Lal Chakma and Mongol Kusum Chakma (30) s/o Dhan Chan Chakma about the killing of Tapan Chakma, a supporter of the JSS (reformist), who was gunned down a day earlier, on 22 February.

When they said they did not know who had killed him, the army personnel beat them severely.

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## Seminar on CHT held in Dhaka

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 34/2008, February 26, 2008*

**A seminar on the "struggle for establishing rights of the national minorities of the Chittagong Hill Tracts and democratic constitution" was held at R. C. Majumder Memorial Hall, Dhaka University today. Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir and Hill Women's Federation jointly organised the seminar.**

Presided over by Hasibur Rahman, General Secretary of Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir, the seminar was addressed by Badruddin Umar, noted leftist theoretician and president of Bangladesh Jatiya Mukhti Council, Ms Samari Chakma, member, central committee, United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), A. K. Fazlul Haq, professor of Bangla, Dhaka University, Ricoh Chakma, president of Hill Student's Council and Singpat Mro, a member of Mro nationality studying in Notre Dem College, Dhaka.

Ms Samari Chakma presented a keynote paper on the subject, while HWF President Ms Sonali Chakma conducted the seminar.

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## Three innocent villagers arrested in Dadkuppya

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 35/2008, February 28, 2008*

### **Three innocent villagers were arrested by army personnel from Dadkuppya camp in Khagrachari on 27 February.**

The army personnel raided the house of Rupayan Chakma (25) at midnight and took him and other two persons - Supayan Chakma (18) s/o Bhut-to Chakma and Bhardaj Muni Chakma (19) - to the camp. The later two youths hails from Bodanala and came there to help Rupayan Chakma to arrange for his wedding party.

The raid came as all was set, according to Chakma customs, for the wedding party to set out for a formal visit to the bride's home at Shukujjyapara village in Bizitola next morning. The visit could not take place as the bridegroom himself was arrested.

No reason was given for the arrest. The soldiers also searched the house and took away gold ornaments and wedding dresses meant for the bride and cash Taka 8 thousand. A coupon book for raising funds for a critically sick girl was also seized.

The chairman of Kiang-ghat Union, Mr. Bishwajit Chakma met an army officer of the camp today and discussed the case of the arrested Jummas.

The commander is reported to have told him that they would inquire about the arrested Jummas and release them if found innocent.

However, they have not been released till mid-day today.

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## **Army prevents uplift of yet another Kuthir in Maischari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 36/2008, February 28, 2008*

**Army on 22 February prevented Jumma Buddhist devotees from launching work to uplift Maischari Arannyo Kuthir, a Buddhist temple, in Mahalchari under Khagrachari district.**

Army personnel from Bizitola camp drove away the Jummas when they approached the Kuthir.

In 2006, the settlers set the Kuthir on fire and lands adjacent to it were seized by them. The settlers also built houses near the Kuthir and are making attempts to grab Kuthir's land itself triggering legal battle with the Jummas.

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## **Attempted rape in Dighinala, Army intervenes**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 37/2008, February 29, 2008*

**A 14-year old Jumma girl has been subjected to sexual assault in Dighinala under Khagrachari district.**

A belated report from the area said on 19 January 2008, Saturday, at around 4 pm Ms Orchoto Chakma (father's name Birendra Chakma) of Hatchinsonpur village under Kobakhali Union (No. 3) went to the nearby grazing field to fetch their cows.

Seeing her alone, a settler cowboy named Shukkur Ali, aged 21, s/o Suruj Ali of the same Hatchinson area grabbed her and made attempts to rape her. He was probably lying in wait for her, for he must have known who the cows belonged to.

Orchoto resisted with all her might and as luck would have it, found a wood or bamboo stick to defend herself. As she got a breathing space she cried aloud for help.

Hearing her scream, the villagers rushed there, rescued her and nabbed the culprit red-handed. Later they handed him over to Bishwa Kalyan Chakma, chairman of Kobakhali Union Parishad.

Later in the day, after the incident, an arbitration meeting was held in the house of UP Chairman Biwsha Kalyan Chakma in which elders from both the communities attended. The settlers were represented by Borhan Uddin, member of Ward No. 5, Kobakhali Union Council, Boshor Member, Monnaf Leader and others.

The meeting unanimously decided to fine Shukkur Ali, the offender, Taka 500 for attempted rape.

However, one week after the said arbitration meeting the settlers approached Qamrul Hassan, second-in-command of Dighinala zone, who was the mastermind behind attempts to capture Sadhana Tila land last year, and asked for his help to make the Jummas pay for the "insults meted out to the whole settler community" by slapping a fine on Sukkur Ali for a trivial matter.

Emboldened by their meeting with the army commander, the settlers flouted the decision taken at the arbitration meeting and made a counter-demand that the Jummas must pay Taka 30,000 for "beating" Sukkur Ali.

In the meantime, Qamrul Hassan called the Jumma elders to his camp and threatened to "smash the bones of their body" if the demand of the settlers were not met.

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## **Army prevents villager from cutting trees**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 38/2008, March 02, 2008*

**"There is instruction from high-ups. You Paharis (Jummas) are not permitted to cut trees here. If the settlers are unable to settle at Sarnath Arannya Kuthir, they will have to settle here." said Jasim Uddin, an army Subedar, from Mahalchari zone under Khagrachari**

**district while preventing Prabhat Chandra Chakma from cutting trees in his own land in the village of Karallyachari.**

This happened on 28 February 2008. Mr. Chakma, an incumbent member of Kiang-ghat Union Council, was cutting trees in his own land for construction of a house there.

After a few minutes, a group of army personnel led by Jasim Uddin rushed there, threatened him not to cut trees and ordered him to keep off his own land.

His land is located 1km north-west of Sarnath Arannya Kuthir, a Buddhist temple run by a disciple of Rev. Bana Bhante. Army and settlers have been making frantic attempts to capture the Kuthir's land since December last year.

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**Arrested Jummas handed over to police**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 39/2008, March 02, 2008*

**Arun Chakma alias Hugujiya and two others, arrested from his house in the village of Dadkuppya on 27 February a day before his wedding troupe was to set out for the bride's house in Shugujiya para village , were handed over to the police on 29 February.**

In earlier report (News No. 35) his name was wrongly mentioned as Rupanyan Chakma.

The army from Dadkuppya camp handed them a rickety gun before handing them over to the police. On 28 February, the Kiang-ghat Union Council chairman Mr. Bishwajit Chakma saw the army officers to secure their release. But his request was turned down.

The army personnel searched the house of Arun Chakma again at night and looted away two hand bags, two wrist watches, 28 packets of cigarette and two Burgis (hand-woven blankets) in addition to cash Tk. 8,000, gold ornaments and a coupon book for raising funds for a

critically sick girl Elina Chakma which were taken away on the first mid-night search on 27 February.

The arrest was made one day before Arun Chakma's marriage with Kanak Baran Chakma's daughter Hasina Chakma.

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**UPDF member arrested in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 40/2008, March 03, 2008*

**On 20 February 2008 Chizigala Chakma (25) s/o Guno Mohan Chakma of Kojoichari village under Sajek Union of Baghaichari Upazilla (sub-district), Rangamati was arrested as he was coming out of a voter registration centre at Gangaram.**

Sources in Baghaichari said Chizigala Chakma, a member of the United People's Democratic Front, went to Gongaram Hazachara Voter Registration Centre to register himself as a voter. As he was coming out of the Centre after doing what was required to do for the registration, the on-duty army personnel held him back.

The army dressed him in military fatigue and went round the area taking him along with them. Later, they handed him over to the Baghaichari police station after placing a home-made gun in his hands.

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**BDR raids a Jumma house in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 41/2008, March 03, 2008*

**On 20 February 2008 Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) personnel from Ruilui camp surrounded and then searched the house of Bengua Chakma (40) s/o Jelaram Chakma in the village of Dari Adam under Sajek Union in Baghaichari Upazilla (sub-district) of Rangamati.**

Mr. Chakma was not available at home at the time and the BDR personnel took away his 7-year old son to the camp after asking his wife

to produce her husband before the camp commander to secure the release of her son.

Later, the village elders went to the camp and got the son released.

After that, on 21 February, at dawn the BDR personnel opened brushfire on his house in a trigger happy manner without any reason whatsoever. Luckily, no one was hurt in the shooting spree.

After the incident, the BDR commander (name unknown) boasting to the villagers said: "It is me who shot at the house of Bengua Chakma in the morning, and I am pretty sure he's got hurt. We saw blood on the ground. He may die."

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### **Innocent villager arrested in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 42/2008, March 03, 2008*

**On 25 February 2008, Nibarun Karbari (48) s/o late Lakshmiban Karbari, the village chief of Talchara para village under Sajek Union in Baghaichari Upazilla (sub-district) in Rangamati district was duped and arrested after calling him to Ruilui BDR camp.**

Sources said the camp commander of paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) at Ruilui invited the Karbari to the camp to receive financial assistance in the wake of destruction of Jum harvest due to rat-deluge in vast areas of the CHT.

But when he got to the camp, the BDR personnel beat him up severely. The allegations against his was that he provided support to the members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

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### **Another villager tortured in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 43/2008, March 03, 2008*

**On 27 February 2008 Mon Mohan Chakma (60) s/o late Kali Kumar Chakma of Dari Adam village under Sajek Union in Baghaichari**

**Upazilla (sub-district) of Rangamati was subjected to inhuman torture after the army alleged that he had provided support to the United People's Democratic Front.**

Sources said he was at first asked to appear before the commander of Ruilui BDR camp. When he got to the camp at the stipulated time, he was detained and then handed over to the army.

The army beat him with iron rods and poured hot water over his body. They alleged that he provided support to the members of the UPDF.

Later, Mr. Lal Thang Pankua, headman of Ruilui Mouza, went to the camp and got him released.

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### **Army announcement in Sajek**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 44/2008, March 03, 2008*

**On 1 March 2008, a group of army personnel from Baghaihat under Baghaichari Upazilla in Rangamati district went to Sajek and made a public announcement that they would "install a market" at Ruilui and asked all to give currency to it .**

The army called Mr. Lal Thang Pankua, headman of Ruilui Mouza, and Mr. Sumittang Pankua, headman of Kamlak Mouza, to Ruilui BDR camp and asked them to tell the Chakmas to open shops at the bazaar. "Otherwise, we will bring in Bengali shopkeepers from elsewhere", the army warned.

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### **Barkal TNO orders settlers to grab Jumma's land**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 45/2008, March 03, 2008*

**The Thana Nirbahi Officer of Barkal in Rangamati district reportedly ordered the illegal settlers to grab lands of the Jumma people in the area.**

The order was given on 1 March 2008. Months earlier, the army issued a similar order. They made a public announcement using hand mikes urging the settlers to forcibly occupy as much lands of the Jumma villagers as possible.

Since then, the settlers have been making attempts to capture lands in the area. In Bakchari the conflict over land has become serious. The settlers are destroying the paddy fields moments after the Jummas leave them after planting paddy saplings.

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### **Villagers tortured in Karallyachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 46/2008, March 08, 2008*

**Three innocent Jumma villagers were tortured during an army raid in the village of Karallyachari under Kiang-ghat Union in Khagrachari district on 7 March.**

The raid was conducted by a group of army personnel from Kiang-ghat camp at around 8:30 p.m. The soldiers surrounded some of the houses in the village, forced the inmates out and gathered them at the precinct of Nabarun Sangha Club.

The army then interrogated them about Bikash Chakma, suspected to be a member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), a party of the Jumma people which has vowed to carry on the struggle of the Jumma people for right to self-determination through peaceful and democratic means.

When the Jumma villagers said they did not know any one with that name, the soldiers became furious and beat Anta Lal Chakma (35) s/o Bir Sen Chakma, Tapanya Chakma (18) s/o Prakhar Chandra Chakma and Tara Kumar Chakma (42).

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### **Army officers visit Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 47/2008, March 08, 2008*

The Chittagong unit chief of Directorate General of Forces Intelligence visited Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir at Karallyachari, Khagrachari on 4 March.

He was accompanied by Mahalchari zone commander Nahidul Islam Nahid, Major Awlad and Major Mobin from Khagrachari Brigade, Major Arek from Mahalchari zone, Mahalchari Thana Nirbahi Officer, Officer-in-charge of Mahalchari Thana (police station), Shahajahan Patwari, a leader of so-called Sama Odhikar Andolan and headmaster of Mahalchari Pilot High School, Hemayet Uddin, Assistant teacher of Lemuchari High School, Mobarak, a VDP platoon commander in Kiang-ghat and a host of journalists from different dailies.

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### **Army collects information about Buddhist temples in CHT**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 48/2008, March 08, 2008*

**After its failure to capture lands of two Buddhist temples in Khagrachari district, the army has adopted measures to harass and humiliate Buddhist monks and their lay followers in Chittagong Hill Tracts.**

One of these measures is to force the temple committees and village chiefs to provide data about the status of the temple lands, the monks and the managing committees.

chtnews.com has obtained a document, which is a notice, ordering the village chiefs to appear in the camp to provide information regarding Buddhist temples in their area. (a scanned copy of the notice attached)

Issued by the commander of Shontila camp in Pujgang under Panchari Thana of Khagrachari district, the notice says "It is hereby notified that

all the Headmen and village chiefs under the jurisdiction of Shontila camp are requested to appear in the camp on the 22th of February 2008, by 8 a.m."

In the end, the notice, signed and sealed by the camp commander, ordered its recipients to furnish themselves with documents relating to the temples and meditation centres and names of the presidents of the committees and the monks.

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### **One innocent villager arrested in Panchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 49/2008, March 16, 2008*

**Three innocent villagers were tortured and one of them was arrested during an overnight army raid in the village of Moni Karbari Para under Logang Union in Panchari of Khagrachari district on 19 February, Tuesday.**

Sources said a large contingent of Bangladesh Army personnel led by the Second-in-Command of Panchari zone raided the village at around 2:30 a.m. The soldiers entered Jana Kallyan Bouddha Vihara, a Buddhist temple, and awoke Atul Chakma (25) s/o Laareiy Chakma of village Anil Karbari para. The soldiers beat him and threatened him with death.

They also broke into the house of Shashanka Chakma (37) s/o Duleiy Chakma in the village and asked him whether there was any terrorist in their village. When he said there was none, the army men beat him up.

Latter, both of victims were taken to the house of Arundas Chakma (24) s/o Bitto Chakma.

The soldiers roused Arundas Chakma from his bed and tortured him severely. As he was being beaten, some of the soldiers climbed up the roof of the house and falsely claimed to have found a gun there.

Thereafter, the army personnel forced Arundas Chakma's father Bitto Chakma, Atul Chakma and Shashanka Chakma to sign a written

statement saying Arundas Chakma was a terrorist and that a home-made gun had been recovered from his possession.

The army ended their raid with the arrest of Arundas Chakma, who was taken to Panchari army zone headquarters. Later he was handed over to Panchari police station and a false case was filed against him under Arms and Explosives Act.

Arundas Chakma's father and all others present during the army raid and search said the claim that the army had found a gun was a total lie. "We are poor people and on one in the village are involved in any unlawful activities" said Bitto Chakma adding that his son was completely innocent.

Mr. Chakma is now being held in Khagrachari jail.

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### **Army foils religious programme in Latiban**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 50/2008, March 17, 2008*

**Bangladesh army personnel reportedly foiled a Buddhist religious festival in Latiban Union under Panchari Thana of Khagrachari district.**

Sources said on 19 February 2008 Buddhist devotees organised a religious programme at Digendra Pahar Bidorshon Bhabona Kendra (meditation centre) on the occasion of Maghi Purnima (Full moon day in the Bengali month of Magh). The programmes, which began in the morning with a religious procession from Collage Gate area, included offering of Buddha statue, offering to the Sangha and offering of eight essentials of a Buddhist monk.

However, at 12:30 a group of army personnel from Panchari zone reached at the venue and took position around the Vihara in a threatening manner, reminding the devotees of the gruesome massacre of hundreds of Jumma Buddhists at a temple in Kalampati Union under Kawkhali of Rangamati district in 1980. The soldiers stayed there for about 2 hours hampering normal way of performing religious functions.

The religious mood of the people was soon replaced with a sense of fear and anxiety and the organisers had to cut short the programme as hundreds of worshippers left the venue.

Again, on 21 February, a group of army personnel from Nalkaba camp approached the said Bhabana Kendra and enquired about its managing committee members and the monks dwelling therein. The soldiers also noted down the names of Buddhist monks and the amount of land belonging to the Bhabana Kendra.

One of the devotees said harassment of the Buddhist monks is not unusual. "Before the withdrawal of nearby Gangaram army camp, soldiers would regularly visit the Bhabana Kendra and harass the monks" he informed and added that now Nalkaba army camp is doing just that.

He alleged that 2 to 3 months ago army personnel from Nalkaba came and without permission entertained themselves with pineapples from the orchards grown by the Bhabana Kendra. They caused more damage to the pineapple garden than they ate. Moreover, the soldiers took away banana, papaya and assortment of other items offered to the monks.

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## **Land grabbing continues unabated**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 51/2008, March 19, 2008*

**Forcible land grabbing and illegal settlement of Bengali people from plain districts have been reported from Dighinala and remote frontier region of Sajek under Rangamati district.**

Sources in the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) said the military has begun settling 150 families over a vast area of land stretching between Baghaihat and Gongaram. The settlers are mostly from Longudu and Merung areas.

"The settlers are being planted in Baibachara, Retkaba and around Banani Bana Vihar (Buddhist temple)" a UPDF member said from Dighinala, one of the flushpoints.

He further informed that in the villages of Reserve Para, Gongadhar Karbari Para, Joy Kumar Karbari Para and Headman Para under Kobakhali Mouza in Dighinala Upazilla about 300 illegal Bengali infiltrators have been settled. "We are collecting detailed information about this illegal settlement" he added.

An activist of the Hill Watch Human Rights Forum after visiting the affected areas in Dighinala said the problem of land grabbing has become a source of great concern for the Jumma villagers. "It is the army who is masterminding the illegal land grabbing" he told chtnews.com on condition that he would not be named in the report and added that the civil administration is pathologically biased in favour of the settlers. "There is no justice for the Jumma people who are always in the receiving end" he complained.

According to his estimate, about 350 acres of both hilly and plough land of the Jumma people have been taken away in Kobakhali, Boro Merung and Rengkarjya Mouzas in Dighinala since the state of emergency was imposed on 11 January last year. This figure however does not include the land grabbed recently in Kobakhali as referred to by UPDF leader.

HWHRF said it has compiled most of the information relating to the recent land grabbing in Dighinala and other affected areas of CHT. "But the problem is that you can't keep pace with it; land grabbing is taking place almost everyday and people are afraid to even complain about the loss of their lands" said its field coordinator.

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## **UPDF submits memo to TNO over land grabbing**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 52/2008, March 19, 2008*

**On 13 March, United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) sent a memorandum to the Thana Nirbahi Officer of Dighinala urging him to take urgent actions to stop illegal land grabbing and bring the culprits to justice.**



Signed by Mr. Animesh Chakma, a central committee member of the Party, the memo stated: "It is a matter of great regret that even after the failure to grab 300 acres of land in Sadhana Tila in Babuchara in August - September last year, some of the settlers have, with direct support from a powerful quarter, continued to take away lands of the Jumma people."

"All the victims of land grabbing have valid documents or evidence in support of their title to the lands" it further said and added that such kinds of land grabbing is unprecedented in any country that have minimum respect for any court of law, and a shame for any civilized society.

It said the right to enjoyment of one's own lawful property is sacred and that the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees this right to every citizen.

Article 42 (1) provides: "Subject to any restrictions imposed by law, every citizen shall have the right to acquire, hold, transfer or otherwise dispose of property, and no property shall be compulsorily acquired, nationalised or requisitioned save by authority of law."

The memo urged the TNO to put a stop to land grabbing, restore the grabbed lands to their rightful owners, make sure that each and every citizen can enjoy his own property peacefully and uninterruptedly, and to bring the land grabbers and their cohorts to justice.

The memo attached a document titled "Information on land grabbing in Kobakhali, Boro Merung, Choto Merung and Rengkarjya Mouzas under Dighinala" released by Hill Watch Human Rights Forum in Bengali.

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## **Spectre of famine haunts Sajek: 2 die**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 53/2008, March 19, 2008*

**The spectre of famine continues to haunt Sajek, a frontier region in Rangamati district of Chittagong Hill Tracts.**

Reports said severe crisis of food, triggered by last year's failure of Jum crops due to a deluge of rats following the flowering of bamboos, has led to the death of at least two Jummas in Tuichui Mouza under Sajek Union. Lila Mohan Tripura (40) and Kiron Mala Tripura (42) died after

starving for days on end in the first week of this month, reports Prothom Alo, a Bengali daily, published from Dhaka.

UNDP is providing food assistance to the poor Jumia families in the affected areas including Sajek, said the report.

Quoting UNDP officials the daily said at least 3 thousand families have been affected in Sajek.

The Chittagram Manch, a regional daily published from Chittagong, said about 3 hundred Jumma families have already crossed into Mizoram state of India in search of food and work.

Since August last year NGOs and media have been warning the government of an impending humanitarian disaster as a consequence of the sudden deluge of rats in CHT. But ironically the government continues to remain apathetic, alleged Sugata Chakma, a member of the UPDF in Baghaichari.

"The government is yet wake up to the crisis" he said adding that the shortage of food have reached to such an extent that "money does not ensure that you will get food".

The Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Ministry disbursed a meager amount of Taka 15 lakhs to deal with the crisis. But it is too little and too late.

"It is like a small drop of water in the vast ocean" commented a JSS leader in Rangamati.

"What we need is emergency food aid to be sent to the affected areas without further delay. Given the remoteness and geographical conditions of the area, it is only the government which can effectively deal with the issue. Others such as UNDP, NGOs and civil society members can just complement the government efforts." said central committee member of the UPDF, Ms Samari Chakma.

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## **Five PCP activists walk out of ctg jail**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 54/2008, March 20, 2008*

**Five activists of the Hill Students Council, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, have been released on bail today.**

Sujan Chakma Ekalokkyo, Bergu Chakma, Paithoi Marma, Chungku Chakma and Beauty Chakma were arrested on 20 May 2006 from Moghachari in Lakshmichari while they were returning from Khagrachari after attending their organisation's founding anniversary.

The army halted the jeep carrying them back, interrogated and singled them out for arrest. They were taken to the camp, tortured and then handed over to the Lakshmichari Thana police. A false arms case was filed against them.

They spent 13 months in Khagrachari jail before being transferred to Chittagong prison on 7 June 2007.

On 5 March 2008, the High Court granted them bail.

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## **Two innocent villagers arrested in Naniachar**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 55/2008, March 22, 2008*

**On 20 March 2008, two innocent villagers were arrested in Naniachar under Rangamati district.**

Sources said Dipon Chakma (20) s/o Rabi Joy Chakma and Ushamoy Chakma (27) s/o Sumongol Chakma were arrested during an army raid in the village of Rangipara under Sabekshyong Union, about 10km north-east of Naniachar sub-district headquarters.

A group of army personnel from Naniachar zone conducted the raid, said a UPDF leader from Naniachar town and added that "the victims are poor day labourer. Both of them were arrested from their houses."

After the arrest, local village elders including a Union Council member and the chief of the village pleaded with the zone commander to release them as both of them were the sole wage earners of their families. They also argued that there was no justification whatsoever for their arrest because both of them are innocent and none of them committed any crime.

"But the army refused to listen to us. They were not prepared to listen to any reason" said one of the village elders who were present during the meeting with the army officer.

He said the army commander bluntly warned them saying "those who will recommend for their (Dipon Chakma and Ushamoy Chakma) release will be treated as terrorists".

Afterwards, the army handed the arrested Jummas over to the Naniachar police and filed "a Ganja case" against them alleging that the soldiers found hashish from their possession.

Another source informed that the military had been conducting operations in a large swath of Mahalchari and Naniachari Thanas since 19 March. "Such operations invariably involve raids, arrest, torture and harassment of innocent people" he said.

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## **Two villagers kidnapped by JSS (Santu)**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 56/2008, March 24, 2008*

**Two persons were kidnapped by armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu group) from their homes in the village of Chigon Kojoichari in Baghaichari under Rangamati district in the small hours of 19 March 2008.**

The victims have been identified as Ram Chakma (35) s/o Larey Chandra Chakma and Prosenjit Chakma (30) s/o late Gyana Lal Chakma.

"It was about 2 a.m. when the JSS men came and took Ram and Prosenjit away" said a villager adding the victims were beaten up.

Asked if he knew the reason behind the kidnapping, he said the kidnappers alleged that the victims were supporters of UPDF.

The village elders are said to have been putting pressure on the JSS leaders to secure their release.

Expressing his deep anger and disappointment, one of the village elders said "such actions of the JSS do not do any good to the people and the struggle they claim they represent; it is absolutely senseless and outrageous. More so, when the settlers are taking away hundreds of acres of our land with the support of the army."

A Jumma activist said "where there is JSS, there is killing and kidnapping. They are actually helping the government." He said JSS must stop such senseless killings and kidnappings and instead focus on the immediate fight against land grabbing. "Unfortunately, we don't see JSS doing anything about this burning issue" he said. "It is surprising that Santu Larma has not yet visited any of the areas where the problem of land grabbing has become acute."

About the role of the UPDF in the resistance against land grabbing, he said the UPDF should do more and rely on the people. "However, it is a matter of regret that the party has to use the bulk of its energy to counter JSS attacks" he said.

Echoing the sentiment of all the Jummas, the activist said the JSS and UPDF must shun their differences and forge a genuine alliance or unity to fight against land grabbing.

### **Banditry**

Another report said on the night of 22 March, a group of about 35 armed members of the JSS raided Durchari market in Baghaichari and carried out loot and plunder. A Bengali businessman was reported to have been killed when he resisted the bandits.

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### **BDR searches house of a UPDF member in Logang**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 57/2008, March 24, 2008*

**On 23 March 2008, a group of para-military Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) raided and searched the house of Shukra Sen Chakma, a member of the United People's Democratic Front, in Logang under Panchari Thana in Khagrachari district, sources said.**

No further details are available. Mr. Chakma is also an ex-member of Logang Union Council.

Another source said military operations are still underway in Lakshimichari, Mahalchari, Naniachar and Longudu Thanas.

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### **Army prevents house construction in Maischhari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 58/2008, April 1, 2008*

**Army personnel have prevented Jummas from constructing houses and planting ginger and turmeric in Maischhari, Khagrachari.**

Sources from Maischhari said army personnel from Kiang-ghat camp on 28 March ordered Brio Mohan Chakma s/o Krishna Hori Chakma of Jadugonala village to dismantle his half-built house. He was constructing the house on his own land. The soldiers accused him of not taking "permission" for it.

They also prevented him from planting ginger and turmeric on his own land. However, the army did not provide any reason for this.

On 29 March, more Jumma villagers were warned not to plant ginger and turmeric. In Karallyachari village Ms Chigon Nagori Chakma (husband's name late Shanti Chakma) prepared the soil for planting the cash crops. But the army came and asked her not to plant.

Likewise, Sudhin Bikash Chakma s/o late Nagor Chan Chakma and Manotosh Chakma s/o Din Kumar Chakma of Jadugonala village were also prevented from planting their lands with ginger and turmeric.

The later was also warned not to construct any house. The soldiers seized his bricks meant for the construction of his house. He was carrying the bricks from Karallyachari to Jadugonala.

Maischhari has always been a flashpoint. The area has seen hundreds of acres of land of the Jumma people being taken away forcibly by the

illegal settlers with the help of the army during the last 14 months since the imposition of state of emergency in Bangladesh.

In fact, land grabbing has become a daily phenomenon in the area with the army directly aiding the settlers.

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## **UPDF member arrested in Jurachari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 59/2008, April 1, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front was arrested yesterday, 31 March, in Jurachari Upazilla of Rangamati district.**

Mongol Kumar Chakma (22) s/o Kalachan Chakma was arrested by members of Bangladesh Army (10 Bengal Regiment) near Jurachari bazaar at around 9:15 a.m. while he was on his way to Bilaychari to visit his relatives. He hails from Mandirchara village under Dum Dum Union.

He was taken to the camp and tortured, sources said. However, it is not known whether he has been handed over to the police. The army has been conducting intense operations in many areas of Rangamati and Khagrachari districts.

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## **PCP holds rally on DU campus**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 60/2008, April 2, 2008*

**THE Hill Students Council (PCP), a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, has held a rally on Dhaka University campus.**

The rally was held today, 2 April, in protest against rising prices of essential commodities and army-orchestrated land grabbing in Chittagong Hill Tracts. It was addressed by Aungyo Marma and Sumen Chakma, president and general secretary of the PCP Dhaka branch respectively.

The PCP leaders denounced the grabbing of Jumma people's lands by illegal settlers and urged the government to return the grabbed lands immediately to the rightful owners. They also urged the government to lift the state of emergency and restore the fundamental rights of the citizens.

Lashing out at the interim government for failing to control the prices of essential commodities, the PCP leaders said the situation has already exceeded the tolerable limits of the people.

Describing the food crisis in the rat-hit areas of CHT including Sajek, the PCP leaders said that two Jummas had died after prolonged starvation while many others were forced to cross the border in search of food and job in Mizoram state of India.

They urged the government to take immediate steps to deal with the famine-like situation in CHT. "Send emergency food relief to the hungry people in the rat-hit areas without further delay" they said.

Prior to the rally, which was held at the foot of Aparajeyo Bangla sculpture, the PCP activists took out a procession on the campus.

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## **UPDF member, another Jumma arrested in Kudukchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 61/2008, April 7, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front and another Jumma youth have been arrested in Kudukchari bazaar in Rangamati district.**

UPDF activist Santosh Chakma (19) s/o Gyana Prakash Chakma of village Shiallyapara under Burighat Union and Goanta Chakma (20) s/o Tara Mohan Chakma of Ghilachari village in Naniachar Thana were arrested by a group of army personnel from Kudukchari camp at around 9:30 a.m. on 6 April.

The Jummas were shopping at the market when the arrest was made as the day was weekly market day. No reason was cited for the arrest.

Local Union Council chairman, members and the caretaker of the market (Bazaar Chowdhury) rushed to the army camp to plead for their release. But the army told them that the arrested had been sent up.

After making the arrest, the army also searched the shop of Kanon Chakma at Aabashik area, 3 miles south of Kuduchari bazaar on Khagrachari-Rangamati road. However, nothing incriminating was found during the hour-long search.

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## **Furomoan army camp burnt down in Rangamati**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 62/2008, April 10, 2008*

**An army camp situated at Furomoan hill top in Rangamti district was burnt down yesterday when a jum-fire spread to the camp. However, no casualties have been reported. The camp was built one and a half months ago in violation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Accord signed in 1997.**

A supporter of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) in Ghagra told chtnews.com that the incident occurred later in the day when Jum cultivators set fire to their Jum fields in preparation for sowing paddy in late April or early May when summer rain sets in.

He said "the army has got their comeuppance. For the last few years UPDF has been trying to wean the Jumias away from Jum cultivation as the system is no longer viable these days. This year UPDF has conducted extensive campaign to educate them about environmental impact of Jum cultivation. But to our dismay, the army has encouraged the Jumias of the area to ignore UPDF propoganda and stick to the traditional farming method."

"This is in stark contrast to the army ban on Jum cultivation in Chimbuk where the army has been trying to grab land for military purposes" he added.

Another source said the army commander of Furomoan camp had summoned the Jum cultivators after the incident yesterday. But he could not say what transpired at the meeting.

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## **Boisabi festival begins today amid Boisabi-Bizu controversy**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 63/2008, April 12, 2008*

**The three-day Boisabi festival begins today in the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts under the shadow of a famine-like situation in Sajek, Farua and many other places.**

An unwarranted controversy over the naming of the festival itself and continued military repression and land grabbing will also cast gloom over the atmosphere of the festival.

The controversy began in the first week of March, when the Regional Council issued an official circular ordering all concerned to use the term Bizu instead of Boisabi. Justifying its action the RC argued that the term "Boisabi" does not occur in any of the languages of the Jumma nationalities.

Naturally, the overbearing bureaucratic order met with hostile criticism from all quarters of CHT. Many socio-cultural organisations as well as District Councils simply ignored the order. Marma, Tripura and other nationalities who have their own words for the festival also resented the order.

The Democratic Youth Forum, which represents all the nationalities of CHT, in a leaflet issued on 8 April urged the Jummas to refuse to comply with the controversial order of the RC.

It said the order was the supreme manifestation of an autocratic, fascist and chauvinistic mindset. "It finds analogy only with the Pakistani attempt to impose Urdu on Bangali people and the Sheikh Mujib's

attempt to thrust Bengali nationalism upon the hill people after the liberation of Bangladesh" the leaflet added.

Refuting the claim that the term "Boisabi" does not occur in any of the Jumma people's languages, the DYF said any dynamic language gets richer with the inclusion of new words.

It further said: "Bosabi is not merely a word or phrase; the emergence of this particular word has its roots in the earnest desire of all the Jumma nationalities to forge solidarity among themselves."

The DYF termed Boisabi as the symbol of unity and fraternity among the oppressed people of CHT.

Boisabi is the amalgamation of the Bengali acronyms of three words for the festival namely Boisuk of the Tripuras, Sangrai of the Marmas and Bizu of the Chakmas. This amalgamated word has been in use since early 1980s and it's been widely publicised and well accepted nationally and internationally.

The DYF said the Boisabi-Bizu controversy has been artificially created to help the government divert the attention of the people from the more acute problems of the CHT such as famine in Sajek, Ruam and Farua, widespread land grabbing and relentless military oppression.

It asked: "what is the underlying reason for RC's sudden outburst of vehement objection when it had observed Boisabi for so many years in the past?"

The DYF urged all to reject the RC order and strengthen unity, solidarity and fraternity among all the Jumma nationalities of CHT.

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## **Land aggressors repelled in Merung**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 64/2008, April 12, 2008*

**The Jumma villagers in a Joutha Khamar (collective farm) in Merung area of Dighinala on 8 April successfully resisted the move of the illegal settlers to grab their land.**

Sources in Dighinala said the CHT Development Board settled 50 Jumma families a couple of years back in Rashik Naagor Para of Merung area under its Upland Settlement Programme. Each of the family was granted 6.25 acres of land for horticulture.

But recently the settlers have been making repeated attempts to capture some of the land plots allotted to the Jummas. Certain local army commanders are alleged to be directly involved in inciting the settlers to grab the said land plots.

Describing the background to the 8 April incident a local NGO official told chtnews.com that the Jumma villagers had apprised Boalhali UP chairman Masud Rana and Merung UP chairman Moslem Uddhin of the settler attempts to grab their land. However, both of them refused to take any action against the settlers.

On the day of incident a group of settlers armed with dao and stick went to Kandara Karbari Para village in Joutha Khamar area and began erecting house structures after cutting various fruit trees grown by the Jumma residents.

When the Jummas asked the settlers to stop and keep off their lands, the settlers became furious and began attacking them. The Jumma land owners resisted the attack which left 10 - 12 persons injured including 7 settlers.

Sensing an impending attack, the Jumma villagers sent Dhana Muni Chakma to Dighinala police station to report about the settler attempt at land grabbing. The police refused to register a general diary and set out for the place of occurrence along with Dhana Muni Chakma. The attack had taken place before their arrival.

On the spot, the police refused to listen to the Jummas and arrested Ananda Lal Chakma and Ajit Chakma. However, none of the attackers was arrested.

After the incident, elders from Hindu community took initiatives to find an amicable settlement of the issue. But the Sama Odhikar Andolan, a platform of the illegal plain settlers, persisted in their pressure on the settlers to file a case against the Jummas. On the other hand, the

Boalkhali UP chairman Masud Rana was reported to have told the settlers after contacting Dighinala cantonment that the zone commander had given order to file a case.

Eventually, a case was filed the following day, i.e. 9 April, against an unspecified number of Jummas in connection with the said incident.

The Jummas are now living in fear of arrest. Many have already gone into hiding.

Land grabbing has become a serious problem in Dighinala. Hundreds of acres of land have already been taken away by illegal settlers. Sources alleged that the army is now putting pressure on the members of Hindu community to take active part in the grabbing of Jumma people's land. Some Hindus were involved in the 8 April attack.

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## **Army sentry post burnt down in Rangamati**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 65/2008, April 17, 2008*

**An army sentry post at Gunumachara, Ghagra in Rangamati, known as Champatoli post, was gutted in Jum-fire on 15 April.**

The army post is maintained by Ghagra zone. After the incident the army called the Karbari or village chief of Gunumachara, Mr. Bimal Kanti Chakma, to the camp and held him for one day and one night. He was released on 16 April.

The incident follows another such incident in which the Phuromoan army camp was completely destroyed in a Jum-fire on 9 April.

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## **Tension in Sajek over land grabbing**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 66/2008, April 20, 2008*

**There have been reports of mounting tension between Jummas and Bengali settlers in Sajek over construction of illegal Bengali settlements on Jumma's land.**

Last month, the settlers, backed by the army personnel, built 15 houses at Baghaihat Mukh under Sajek Union in Rangamati district after destroying a Buddhist temple and driving out many Jumma villagers. Those who had resisted the settlers' move were threatened and subjected to intimidation.

"Leave the area, or else we will burn you to death", Ali (s/o Nawshad Ali), a leader of the settlers, issued threats to Mongol Sadhan Chakma (48).

Ultimately, his house was burnt down on the night of 19 April, resulting in the loss of property amounting to Tk. 90 thousand.

From day one, the Jummas have been actively trying to defend their land and the temple. They appealed to both the army and the settlers not to grab their lands, but to no avail. They even approached the civil administration which refused to take any action against the illegal land grabbers.

While the Jummas were still trying to defend their lands through peaceful means, unidentified arsonists on 17 April burnt down the settler houses.

This provided a pretext for the army and settlers to mount further attack on the Jumma people to grab more land. Panic gripped the Jummas who fled in to the jungle fearing retaliation.

Indeed, the following night the settlers led by Ali and backed by army personnel attacked the Jumma village of Gangaram Mukh and burnt down the house of Mongol Sadhan Chakma (48) s/o Shanka Shur Chakma.

The settlers attempted to launch a second attack on the night of 19 April but it was repulsed. There was chase and counter-chase between the two sides in which the army provided back up support to the settlers.

A source in Rangamati said the Commanding Officer of Baghaihat zone called a meeting between the Jummas and Bengali settlers today. However, he could not say exactly what transpired at the meeting.

Tension is reported to be still prevailing in the area and the Jummas are living in fear and utter uncertainty.

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#### BREAKING NEWS

#### 60 JUMMA HOUSES BURNT DOWN IN SAJEK

*chtnews.com*  
April 21, 2008

**ILLEGAL Bengali settlers backed by a strong contingent of army personnel have burnt down at least 60 Jumma houses in four villages under Sajek Union of Rangamati district. Many Jummas are reported to have been wounded and women raped during the attack that began at 9:45 p.m. on 20 April. Details of the incident are yet to come.**

Sources said tension had been mounting in the area since the settlers began constructing houses in March after grabbing Jumma people's lands.

Sensing an impending attack, the Jummas, 50 - 60 of them, gathered at a point of the village to defend themselves. This somehow leaked to the army who went up to them and asked them not to worry. "Since we are here, nothing will happen and settlers will not attack you" an RP Habilder, Harun, was reported to have told the Jummas.

The CO (Commanding Officer) of Baghahat zone was also present there. However, he did not speak to the Jummas.

While the army engaged the Jummas in talks, a group of Bengali settlers mounted an attack on four Jumma villages namely Gangaram Mukh, Simana Chara, Purbo Para and Baibachara.

They torched the houses, beat up whomever they caught hold of and raped the Jumma girls and women. However, details as to how any have been raped and wounded could not be known immediately.

The Hill Students Council, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, will hold a demonstration in Dhaka later in the day, today, in protest against the barbarous Sajek settler attack.

#### Sajek settler attack: PCP holds protest rally on DU campus

*chtnews.com*  
News No. 67/2008, April 21, 2008

**THE Hill Students Council, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, brought out a procession and held a rally on Dhaka University campus today in protest against a joint army-settler attack on 4 Jumma villages in Sajek.**

The procession started at 5 p.m. from DUS Chattor and paraded round the Arts faculty of Dhaka University demanding punishment to those responsible for the attack that left at least 60 Jumma houses burnt, an unspecified number of Jumma women raped and many wounded.

Later, they held a rally at DU Library ground. Presided over by Aungyo Marma, General Secretary of the Hill Student's Council, the meeting was addressed by Sumen Chakma and Gyana Dutta Chakma.

Besides, representatives from progressive students' organisations also addressed the rally expressing solidarity with the cause of the Jumma people. They are Sajeeb from Sangskritir Naya Setu, Ms Shubra Chakraborti from Prapada, Shiplu from Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolon and Faisal Ahmed from Bangladesh Chattra Union.

The speakers condemned the attack and urged the government to take measures to bring the culprits to justice.

They said the attack was orchestrated by certain members of the Bangladesh Army to evict the Jummas from their hearts and homes and then grab all of their lands. They urged the interim caretaker government of Dr. Fakruddin Ahmed to immediately stop land grabbing in CHT and return the grabbed lands to the rightful owners.

They said so much injustice has been done to the Jummas and for so many years they have been denied their due rights.



"There can be no peace in the CHT hills, until the laws and customs governing Jumma people's land management system are recognised and respected" said Aungyo Marma.

He urged the government to rehabilitate and pay compensation to the victims.

### **"The attack is colossal"**

Meanwhile, sources in Khagrachari, quoting local journalists who had visited the spot along with others, said all the houses and in fact everything lying within an area of about 4 km stretching from Baghaihat to Gangaram have been burnt to ashes. He put number of houses destroyed at 500.

"What I saw is awesome. It is truly a senseless act, a colossal attack that should not have happened", one of the journalists has been quoted as saying.

Local journalists and correspondents who accompanied the District Council chairman Manindra Lal Tripura during his visit to the place of occurrence today included Azim, Sukumar and Al Farooq.

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### **UPDF president condemns Sajek settler attack**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 68/2008, April 21, 2008*

**PRESIDENT of the United People's Democratic Front, Prasit B. Khisha, has condemned the attack on Jumma villagers in Sajek by illegal settlers.**

In a statement issued to the press today, Mr. Khisha termed the attack as "salt in the wound" as the Jumma people of Sajek region have already been suffering from shortage of food. He said the attack had been carried out with a view to capturing the whole of Sajek area after driving out the Jumma people by force of arms.

The UPDF leader urged the government to pay adequate compensation to the victims, take immediate legal actions against the culprits, stop land

grabbing and withdraw the army and settlers from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

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### **CU Jumma students form human chain to protest Sajek settler attack**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 69/2008, April 24, 2008*

**Jumma students of Chittagong University today forged human chain at the University Rail Gate to protest against the settler attack on Jumma villages in Sajek.**

About 250 students took part in the programme organised under the banner of Chattagramosto Oddyoanroto Pahari Chattra Samaj (Hill Students Studying in Chittagong). At the beginning of the programme, Ushetu Marma, a fourth year student of Anthropology Department of CU, gave a brief speech condemning the barbarous attack in Sajek.

One of the students who played a key role in organising the protest programme told chtnews.com that they had to cut short the programme as the JSS-backed students obstructed them.

### **PCP activist beaten up in Dhaka**

Some JSS-backed students beat up Batayon Chakma, an activist of the Hill Student's Council, inside Jagannath Hall of Dhaka University yesterday, 23 April.

A student of CRP (Centre for the Rehabilitation of the Paralysed founded by beloved Valerie Taylor), Batayon Chakma played a prominent role in organising protests in Dhaka.

On the day of incident, he and his friends went to Jagannath Hall to have lunch after attending a protest demonstration on Dhaka University campus.

After lunch, the JSS-backed students told him that they wanted to talk to him. As he was having talk with the president of JSS-backed PCP, Karunamoy Chakma, terrorist Tuhin Chakma came up to him and said "I

hope you know me well" and began beating him with cricket stump and measurement scale. Two other JSS-backed students also took part in the beating. One of them has been identified as Kartuz.

As a result of the beating Batayon Chakma got his right hand fractured and had to be admitted to Dhaka Medical Hospital.

Batayon Chakma told chtnews.com that he had no personal enmity with Tuhin or any other JSS-backed students. He said he was beaten up for purely political reasons.

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## Sajek settler attack: victims holds press conference in Dhaka

chtnews.com

News No. 70/2008, April 27, 2008

**Victims of Sajek settler attack held commander of Baghahat Zone Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz and businessman Golam Mowla responsible for it.**



*Binoy Chakma reading out the press text*

Five of the victims who came to Dhaka for the press conference were speaking to the newsmen at Reporters Unity at Segoon Baghicha today, Sunday. (photo attached)

Reading out a written statement Binoy Chakma alleged that the 20 April incident was preplanned. He said prior to the incident settlers from Merung and Kobakhali in Dighinala and Marishya and Longudu in

Baghaichari were gathered together, while on 19 April a leader of the so-called Samo Odhikar Andolon, a platform of the illegal settlers, Selim Uddhin Bahari, came to Baghahat to confer with Lt. Col. Imtiaz.

He further said "at around 9:45 pm approximately 200 settlers first proceeded towards Dane Baibachara. When they saw the Jumma villagers in an organized way, they went back. Afterwards they came along with the army personnel and burned down our houses. They began the attack by torching the house of Nirmol Kanti Chakma. This was soon followed by the burning down of houses in the villages of Purbopara, Retkaba and Gangaram. They even burned down a church and two village schools (Para Kendra) run by Unicef. In Retkaba village, they settlers destroyed a mixed fruit garden developed with financial assistance from UNDP and then put up a signboard of Baghahat Jeep Employees Association."

Binoy Chakma said the attackers also looted away almost everything that is movable including furniture and utensils. "Even the cows bought with the financial assistance from UNDP were taken away" he alleged.

He said "we tried to resist the attackers. However, when we saw the military we had no other option than to run away."

### Background info

The victims narrated many incidents that ultimately culminated in the 20 April attack. They said 90 percent of the Jummas inhabiting the affected areas were previously displaced due to army and settler attacks. Despite continued military repression, they had been living in peace with a small Bengali community who had come to Sajek on business purpose.

They said "since January this year this scenario began to change" as the settlers grabbed lands belonging to the Jummas.

In the written statement, Binoy Chakma cited 13 instances of intimidation, land grabbing and measures of economic strangulation of the Jummas.

### Damage

He said besides a church and two Unicef-run schools, a total of 77 Jumma houses were burned down. These included 28 houses out of 33 in Purbopara, 11 out of 47 in Gangaram, 5 out of 94 in Retkaba and 33 out of 100 in Dane Baibachara. He said property worth of Taka 15,000,000 was damaged.

### Injured

He said that three Jummas were injured in the attack. They are Newton Chakma alias Kalabo, Bijoy Singh Chakma and Ratan Chakma.

### Aftermath of the incident

According to the victims, after the incident the military has been putting pressure on the settlers to build houses on the Jummas' land. They said on 22 April, two settler families mounted on a Chander Gari (jeep) to leave Baghaichari; however one Kashem pulled them down and showered them with abusive language. On 23 April, zone commander Intiaz dropped a group of settlers at Bana Vihar area lying between Dane Baibachara and Retkaba and ordered them to construct houses on burned land. On 24 April, Zone commander Intiaz held a meeting at his headquarters in which elders from both the communities took part. At the said meeting he warned the Jummas that "if anything happens to the Bengalis in the future, I will kill all of you in brushfire. You have no need to live in this country."

Binoy Chakma said the Jumma villagers were living in fear. "We have to live in constant fear of losing our lands" he wailed.

### The culprits

They said commander of Baghaihat zone, Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Intiaz and Golam Mowla, a businessman in Baghaihat bazaar, were mainly to blame for the attack on Jumma villagers on 20 April. The motive of the attack was to grab the Jumma people's lands after evicting them.

### Demands

The victims placed the following demands before the government: 1. adequate compensation to all the Jumma victims and their proper rehabilitation; 2. arrest of Lt. Col. Intiaz, Golam Mowla and their cohorts and to take legal actions against them; 3. putting an end to intimidation, coercion and torture resorted to by Intiaz to subdue the Jumma villagers; 4. to stop land grabbing and implantation of settlers in Sajek and to withdraw all the settlers from Sajek area; and 5. to stop attack on religious institutions such as churches and Buddhist temples; return all the grabbed lands belonging to Banani Bana Viahra, to rebuild Bishwa Moitree Bouddha Vihara at its previous site and to provide monetary compensation for the damage caused to the Kuthir (temple) built for the use of Rev. Jogashiddhi Bhikkhu at Gangaram.

The press conference was also attended by Gyanendu Chakma (Retkaba Mukh), Clinton Khisha (Gangaram Mukh), Shanti Bikash Chakma (Dane Baibachara) and Dino Mohan Chakma (Retkaba).

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### Sajek news update: investigative team returns

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 71/2008, April 30, 2008*

**A 13-member investigative team of progressive Bengalis, which visited the place of occurrence in Sajek, came back to Dhaka yesterday.**

Jointly led by Ms Moshrefa Mishu, a veteran leftist leader and convenor of Biplobi Okyo Front, and Mr. Manos Chowdhury, teacher of Anthropology Department, Jahangirnagar University, the team reached Sajek on 28 April.

One of the team members told chtnews.com that they were halted by Major Kabir at Dighinala and were not allowed to speak freely with the victims.

"We were boarded their army vehicle and driven to the place of occurrence. During the visit we were not allowed to talk to the Pahari (Jumma) victims and to visit their burned houses." he said.

"It was a guarded and restricted visit, and wherever we went we were flanked by military personnel." said Ricoh Chakma who accompanied the team members.

The team members are expected to hold a press conference on their Sajek visit.

### Memo to Debashish Roy

Victims of Sajek arson attack, who held a press conference in Dhaka on 27 April, submitted a memorandum to Barrister Debashish Roy, Special Assistant to the Chief Adviser and in charge of CHT Ministry, on 28

April demanding adequate compensation to the victims and punishment to those responsible for the attack.

### **Moeen U Ahmed's visit: an eye wash**

Army chief Moeen U Ahmed visited Sajek yesterday and blamed "a section of the population there" who is "always involved in terrorist activities in an effort to sabotage the area's development".

Asked to comment on his visit, Mithun Chakma, General Secretary of the Democratic Youth Forum, said, "the visit of Moeen U Ahmed is nothing but an eyewash, a damage control exercise."

He said the objective of his visit was quite clear and it was to save the culprits like Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz and businessman Golam Mowla, the masterminds behind the brutal attack.

"It is a big question as to why the government had decided to send Gen. Moeen instead of Barrister Debashish Roy, who is in charge of Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry." he said.

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### **Sajek news update: army arrests 4 Jummas on charge of setting fire to settler house**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 72/2008, May 1, 2008*

**On 28 April, at around 10 pm, a Bengali settler named Nasir set fire to his own house built recently on Jumma people's land at Bame Baibachara while a group of army personnel hid themselves in the jungle nearby the house.**

After setting the house on fire, Nasir cried aloud for help and when four Jumma youths from Simanachara village went there to see if another attack was taking place, the army personnel caught them.

The arrested Jummas have been identified as Sushil Chakma aged 26 s/o Asomi Chandra Chakma, Ratna Bikash Chakma aged 22 s/o Gunodhar Chakma, Sangram Chakma aged 22 s/o Ashok Kumar Chakma and Rabindra Chakma aged 23 s/o Shashi Mohan Chakma. All of them were taken to Baghaihat zone.

However, a Daily Star report said "police arrested three indigenous youths on charge of setting fire". Quoting Baghaichari police, the paper said "the three indigenous youths went to Bhai Bhai Dubhai Colony area and wet fire on the house of Liakat Ali, burning it to ashes with all properties when locals caught the three youths from the area and handed them over to police."

"When contacted, a relative of one of the accused said the three youths went there to see the fire and help the victims. The villager caught them as they are from ethnic people." the Daily Star report added.

A member of the Hill Watch Human Rights Forum, who visited Sajek on 27 April, said the arrest of the Jumma youths on charge of setting fire to a settler house only shows the desperateness on the part of the army to absolve itself of its complicity to the 20 April attack.

"Why should the Jummas burn down the settler's house when they themselves are living in fear and anxiety" he questioned.

"My view is that the settler has burned down his own house to get on to the list of the victims and become eligible to receive compensation from the government. It's quite a business." he added.

The chtnews.com has learnt that the burned house of the settler was built with barely four small wooden poles, thatch and bamboo splits and it would not cost more than Taka 400 (or US \$ 6). On the other hand, he would receive a few thousand Taka as compensation.

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### **Tension brewing in Dighinala over land grabbing, international pressure needed**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 73/2008, May 2, 2008*

**Tensions have been building up for the last few months in Kobakhali, Merung and Chaar Mile in Dighinala Upazilla over land grabbing and open hostility may erupt any day, said a human rights activist.**

"The way settlers are grabbing Jumma's lands with the support of the army, there is strong possibility that incidents similar to the 20 April Sajek settler attack may happen any time" he said and added that vast areas of lands belonging to the Jumma people have already been taken away in these areas after destroying banana plantations, fruit trees, teak and bamboo orchards of the Jummas.

The settlers have built small huts like the ones in Sajek and are now dwelling therein. Some of the settlers told the investigative team of progressive Bengalis who visited Sajek on 27 April that they have been brought in from Betchari of Khagrachari and that they have houses there as well.

The settlers said they had come to the new places under duress - on pain of forfeiting the right to receive food ration from the government.

Jumma activists irrespective of party affiliation feel the need for international community to step up pressure on the government of Bangladesh to put a stop to its ethnic cleansing policy.

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## **Sajek investigative team demands judicial probe**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 74/2008, May 2, 2008*

**A team of progressive political and student leaders, university teachers and journalists at a press conference in Dhaka today called for the government to form a judicial committee to probe the Sajek incident and publish the enquiry report within six days.**

They made this demand after a restricted visit to the place of occurrence at Sajek on 27 April.

Held at Reporter's Unity, the press conference was attended by all but those team members who joined the team in Khagrachari.

The press conference was presided over by Ms Mosrefa Mishu, convenor of Biplobi Okyo Front, while Mr. Manos Chowdhury, teacher of Anthropology Department at Jahangirnagar University, read out a written statement.

They said the army blocked them at Baghaihat zone before reaching the place of occurrence on 27 April. "After writing down all our names and identities, checking and listing each and every bag we were carrying with us and then reporting it to the camp authority, we were taken inside the camp complying with the order of Second-in-Command Major Kabir" Manos said.

He further said the team members were taken to the place of occurrence in three army vehicles and brought back after 20 minutes. He said: "We noticed burned houses on either side of the road from Baghaihat bazaar on ward. The area looked desolate as if it were a cremation ground. One of the victims, Buddhi Ranjan Chakma, came up to us, hugged our team leader Moshrefa Mishu and then burst into tears in front of the army and all other team members accusing the Bengali settlers for the 20 April arson attack. At that moment Major Kabir swiftly changed the topic and deprived us of the chance to speak to Buddhi Ranjan Chakma"

In the written statement Manos narrated how another Jumma victim came up to them with fear writ large on his face and whispered into their ears that they (Jummas) were not allowed to say anything about the incident. "We also knew from him that the settlers have been kept under watch of the army at the local bazaar (market place), while the Jummas have taken shelter in a Buddhist temple, in nearby jungles and in the house of their relatives." he added.

He said the team members were informed that after the imposition of the state of emergency on 11 January 2007, the Bengalis continued to build houses after grabbing Jumma people's lands. "This has been verified later on when we visited other areas." he said.

Manos said although they could not interact with the victims on the spot, subsequently they heard the victims' accounts of the incident of that day. The statement quoted a victim as saying: "In January last settlers led by Bengali leader Golam Mowla occupied my house. We did not get the opportunity to speak at the meeting at our council office. When Raja (Devashish Roy) came, we were threatened not to speak to him. It was a humid night on 20 April. I was sitting outside of my house. All on a sudden I heard some Bengali people shouting 'Narayek Takbir Allahu Akbar'. Then I saw fire at some distance from my house. The Jummas were shouting 'Ujo Ujo (advance). At that time I saw an army lorry. By that time my house and the adjacent houses began to blaze. While our houses were on fire, the settlers were busy looting."

The team members also demanded that the government must open up the Chittagong Hill Tracts region to the mass media, must publish a white paper on all cases of genocide, rape and torture committed in the past in CHT and must put an end to grabbing of hill people's land, to repression and torture.

Besides Moshrefa Mishu and Manos Chowdhury, team members also included Udisha Islam (journalist); Ricoh Chakma, president, Hill Students Council; Monjurul Ahsan, coordinator, Sangskritir Naya Setu; Md. Arifuzzaman, member, Sangskritir Naya Setu; Nurur Rahman, convenor, Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolon; Saifuddin Sohel, organiser, Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolon, Chittagong Unit; Sohan, Garments Workers Unity Forum; Nepali Chakma, Hill Women's Federation; Rina Dewan, organising secretary, HWF; Shahadat Hossain, Jatiyo Biplobi Front; Ashik Akbar, poet and little magazine writer; and Nisha Chakma, student, Khagrachari.

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## **Two UPDF supporters arrested in Lemuchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 75/2008, May 7, 2008*

**Two supporters of the United People's Democratic Front were arrested in Lemuchari under Mahalchari Upazilla yesterday, UPDF sources said.**

Sources said army personnel from Mahalchari zone arrested Ananta Chakma aged 24 s/o Sarda Chakma from Kalapahar area at around 4 p.m., while Prem Chakma aged 20 s/o Bashu Chakma was rounded up from his house in Lemuchari village at around midnight. Both of them were taken to the camp and were severely tortured.

The victims are staunch supporter of the UPDF.

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## **Four Jummas tortured in Choleshchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 76/2008, May 7, 2008*

**Four innocent Jumma villagers have been tortured by army in Choleschari village under Burighat Union of Rangamati district.**

According to sources in Naniachar, a joint force of army personnel from Longudu and Naniachar zone raided the village of Choleschari before dawn today. They encircled the village and gathered the villagers at a corner of the village.

The soldiers then singled out four Jummas on fake information provided by two other Jummas who were arrested earlier from Moddhyo Harikaba village in Longudu.

The victims have been identified as Samiran Chakma aged 35 s/o Dulalya Chakma, his brother Mona Chakma aged 28, Ranjan Chakma aged 30 s/o Dhana Mohan Chakma, and Dev Ranjan Chakma aged 18 s/o Pitto Ranjan Chakma.

They were badly tortured and given electric shocks.

The other two Jummas who are believed to have been arrested from Maddyo Harikaba have been identified as Shushil Moy Chakma aged 28 s/o unknown and Brisha Kumar Chakma aged 30 s/o Hori Mohan Chakma. It is not known when and how they were arrested. However, both of them dressed in military combat uniform and accompanied the army.

The villagers believe that the army raided the village after extracting false confession from them through the use of torture.

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## **Army arrests two in Jurachari for helping UPDF**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 77/2008, May 8, 2008*

**Jurachari Army camp commander, warrant officer Md. Nizam arrested two Jummas on 7 March 2008 on allegations of providing support to the UPDF.**

The arrestees are Tarun Bikash Chakma (36) son of Ananda Hridoy Chakma and Surjojit Chakma (38) of village T & T area.

Sources said a group of army personnel led by Nizam surrounded their house at around 9.00pm on that day. At that time they were in sleep. The soldiers woke them up and then took them to the army camp. They were

kept in confinement in the camp for more than 19 hours and were subjected to physical torture.

The army accused Tarun and Surjojit of helping UPDF.

After rigorous interrogation Surjojit Chakma was set free, while Tarun Bikash Chakma was sent to jail after implicating him with a false extortion case. Tarun Bikash Chakma's arrest put his wife Sona Chakma in a helpless situation. She works at Jurachari Hospital as a sweeper.

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### 3 Jummas arrested in Jurachari

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 77/2008, May 8, 2008*

On 5 May 2008, a group of 20 to 25 army personnel under the command of Major Tanvir, who is in charge of Pukirachara camp, arrested three Jummas while on patrol.

Sources said Tanvir arrested Niranjan Chakma after calling him to the camp. Thereafter, the army personnel went to Pukirachara village and arrested Ranangan Chakma(23) son of Nishanto Chakma from his own house.

The following day another Jumma named Lamba was arrested when he was going to Pukirachara bazaar. The day was weekly market day in Pukirachara.

The army tortured them severely and implicated them with false cases after placing one homemade *ek nola* gun and a donation book in their hands. Now they are languishing in Rangamati jail.

Sources told chtnews.com that the army used to pay them regularly for providing information about UPDF activists and their whereabouts. But when they failed to provide any useful information leading to the arrest of any UPDF member, the army became angry and arrested them.

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### UPDF activist arrested from wedding ceremony

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 79/2008, May 9, 2008*

The Army arrested one UPDF activist named Mangol Kumar Chakma (35) son of Kalachan Chakma of village Mandir Chara in Jurachari Thana on 31 March 2008.

Mr. Chakma was attending a wedding ceremony of one of his relatives when Jurachari camp Commander Md. Nizam arrested him.

The army recovered nothing incriminating from him. Yet, they put hashish into his hands, filed a false case against him and sent him to jail.

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### Army arrests a JSS member

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 80/2008, May 9, 2008*

Army personnel from Jurachari camp arrested a member of the Jana Samhati Samiti on 31 March from Bara Panchari in Jurachari of Rangamati district.

A petrol team comprising 30/35 military personnel led by Lt. col. Abid and warrant officer Nizam arrested Hridoy Chakma from his own house in the presence of the OC of Jurachari, Mr. Mansur Ali and sent him to jail after framing a false case.

Hridoy Chakma had been politically inactive for more than a year before arrest.

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### Army detains suspected UPDF member, releases later

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 81/2008, May 9, 2008*

On 30 March 2008, army personnel arrested Debapriya Chakma (20) from Dumdumi Union in Jurachari when he came to get himself registered as a voter.

He was arrested on suspicion of being an activist of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF). The soldiers took him to the camp and interrogated him for more than four hours.

However, he was released later only when the army became convinced that he was not a UPDF activist. The arrest was made by warrant officer Md. Ibrahim from Pukirachara army camp.

Villagers in Jurachari alleged that recently military searches, raids and harassment of innocent people have increased in the area. The people always live in constant fear of army atrocities. Many have gone in to hiding to avoid military persecution.

"The army officers arrest innocent people and then portray them as terrorists after placing arms and ammunition in their hands in order to secure a promotion for themselves" alleged a teacher of Jurachari High School who wished not to be named for fear of reprisal.

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### **Army beats up five Jummas in Naniachar**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 82/2008, May 13, 2008*

On 6 May 2008, captain Shamim and Sebedar Abdul Kashem from Naniachar zone beat up five Jummas who came to Morachengi Government Primary School ground to get themselves registered as voters.

The incident occurred at around 9:30 am. The Jummas stood up in a long queue in the simmering summer heat. The unwelcome abusive language of the army personnel deployed there to help the voter registration officials seemed to have shot up the temperature level beyond any tolerable point.

Some of the Jummas protested at such rude behaviour of the army, but of no use. At one stage, some of them shouted at captain Shamim: "dhara,

dhara" (catch him, catch him). The soldiers became furious and instantly singled out five Jummas to mete out retribution.

The victims have been identified as Bir Ranjan Chakma (30) s/o Jharbodhan Chakma, Shanti Ranjan Chakma (35) s/o Sur Sen Chakma and Maya Dhan Chakma (22) s/o Allo Chakma of village North Morachengi, Ms Kalabi Chakma (35) d/o Roghunath Chakma of village South Morachengi and Kalamua Chakma (28) s/o Ah-Mua Chakma of village Karallyachari.

After the beating, Subedar Abdul Kashem apologized to the victims, a rare gesture of any army officer in CHT.

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### **Latest from Sajek: merchandise seized**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 83/2008, May 13, 2008*

**The settlers in Sajek appear to have put an economic embargo on Jumma populated areas, with merchandise for village shops of two Jummas seized at Baghaihat bazaar.**

Sources said, on 11 May, two elderly Jummas in their sixties, Leipeda Chakma and Gyana Ranjan Chakma, were ferrying goods from Karengatoli bazaar to their shops at Gangaram Mukh. When they reached Baghaihat, a settler named Nazimuddin seized the goods, apparently on orders of the army officers.

As the Jummas protested at the illegal seizure, Nazimuddin asked them to contact the zone commander, Lt. Col. Sajid Imtiaz, the mastermind behind the 20 April attack on 4 Jumma villages in Sajek.

### **Attempt at capture or effacement of evidence?**

Since 10 May, settlers have been cleaning the ashes and charred beams of the burned houses of the Jummas. "They are doing it on orders of the army and it is not clear if it is an attempt to capture our land or to efface the telltale mark of the brutal attack or a purely generous help" said one villager, who spoke to chtnews.com from Sajek on special arrangement.

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## **UPDF members shot at, 3 arrested by army**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 84/2008, May 15, 2008*

**An activist of the United People's Democratic Front was seriously wounded when army personnel opened brushfire on a group of people in Laxmichari on 4 May. The soldiers arrested 3 UPDF members including the injured one after the firing.**

UPDF's Aungchaching Marma in Laxmichari said the army personnel led by Dullyatoli camp commander Warrant Officer Anwar shot at them without slightest provocation and added that "the UPDF members were on their way to visit Dewanpara Buddhist temple."

Kyalaching Marma aged 22 s/o Chudu Aung Marma of village Shilchari under Barmachari, was hit by bullet. He is now undergoing medical treatment in army custody.

The other two UPDF members arrested have been identified as Nitu Chakma aged 22 (s/o Lakshmidhan Chakma, village Gorgojjyachari, Khagrachari) and Chaila Prue Marma aged 32 (s/o Kongchai Karbari, village North Sapchari, UP: Hafchari, Ramgarh Thana).

The army took them to Laxmichari zone and beat up severely. The following day, that is, on 5 May, the zone authority called in police and handed the UPDF members over to them.

The police filed a case against the arrested UPDF members under sections 144/353/385 of Bangladesh Penal Code (case No. 1, 05/05/08) and sent them to Khagrachari district jail.

In the First Information Report, Mojibar Rahman, Sub Inspector of Laxmichari police station, stated that he had taken charge of the two UPDF members - Nitu and Chaila - from Warrant Officer Habibur Rahman at 16:50 on 5 May 2008.

Quoting a report on the incident prepared by Captain Mahmudul Hasan of 30 Field Regiment Artillery, the police SI further said: "on 4 May, at around 1500, the UPDF members had assembled at Dewanpara temple

area with the objective of collecting money from market-bound people. When a patrol team led by Anwar Hossain from Dullyatoli army camp under Laxmichari zone reached the area the terrorists split themselves into two groups, with one group, three in number, taking position on a hill top. When they were about to shoot at the patrol team, the soldiers got the better of them. Kyalaching Marma was hit in the left leg."

Aungchaching Marma told chtnews.com that at least 30 UPDF members have been arrested since the declaration of the state of emergency on 11 January 2007.

He said the arrested UPDF members were neither armed nor engaged in any illegal activity. "Every party has the right to raise funds for its programmes" he said adding "UPDF does not use force while collecting funds from the people".

He said the military were trying hard to project UPDF as a terrorist organisation, "but it will fail."

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## **NGO accused of grabbing land in Bandarban**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 85/2008, May 18, 2008*

**Development Organisation of the Rural Poor, a local NGO, is accused of grabbing lands belonging to Tripura nationality in Lama Upazila of Bandarban.**

An NGO by the name of DORP has cleared fruit orchards and other trees of the Tripura people in Lama Upazila of Bandarban and then set fire to it, reports Prothom Alo, a vernacular daily published from Dhaka.

Now a signboard reading 'Saistyogram Dorp' (Sanatorium Village Dorp) has been put up over the said land, it added.

Taking responsibility for the destruction of the orchards, Dorp said it had taken those lands on lease. However, chairman of Bandarban District Council, Professor Thanzama Lusai and district administration officials

refuted the claim saying there was no scope for land leases after the CHT peace accord.

The indigenous Tripura people have been living, for hundreds of years, in Tongo Zhiripara village under Soroi Union that lies about 20km north of Bandarban Sadar Upazila on Sualok-Lama road. Although a few families have land documents, others have been practicing Jum cultivation on the hills for generations under traditional land management system. The villagers said 10 - 12 days ago Dorp people cut the trees of their gardens in 25 - 30 acres of land and then set them on fire.

Khenda Tripura (65) said "I grew a mixed garden of teak, Gorjon, Gamari, mango and jackfruit in about 10 acres of land near my 2-acre plough land that I had been granted in 1982. The Dorp people have occupied both the plough land and the garden."

Rongsaha Tripura said "I grew an orchard five years ago. Now my heart breaks when I look at the destroyed orchard."

Zillyamoni, Rungkoma, Bikram Moni and many others said their titled lands and orchards had been grabbed by Dorp people.

Nurul Alam, a labourer employed by Dorp, said on orders of Dorp's Executive Director Noman and its field organisers Ayub and Malek, 20 - 25 labourers cut the orchards of the Tripura people and then set fire to it.

In this regard Dorp's Executive Director AHM Noman said they have 150 acres of hilly land in the area taken on lease. They have now taken initiative to grow a garden and build a hospital there. He claimed that the Tripuras did not possess any land in the said area.

A study of land leases records in the office of the Deputy Commissioner has revealed that Dorp's chief coordinator Babul Kumar Adhikari, AHM Noman, Nurul Islam and some others have been granted lease of 25 acres each in Doluchari Mouza. The leases were granted in the year 2000. However, under the provision of CHT peace accord land leases and transfer of lands already leased out should have ceased. The District Council officials were of the same view that as per the District Council Act of 1998, these leases were illegal.

Professor Thanzama Lusai, chairman of Bandarban District Council, said the Chittagong Hill Tracts Ministry had been requested to revoke all the leases granted after the CHT peace accord and the District Council Acts came into effect and without prior permission of the Councils. He added that he will take actions after an inquiry into the activities of Dorp.

The Officer-in-charge (OC) of Lama police station, Abul Kashem, said he had been informed that an NGO styled DORP cleared the orchards and gardens belonging to the Tripura people and added that the issue was under investigation.

Mohammad Ali, chairman of Soroi Union Council, agrees that what Dorp has done is tantamount to grabbing of indigenous Tripura people's land.

The Tripura villagers further said they had protested when their orchards were being cut. In order to scare the indigenous people off, the Dorp people filed a general diary (GD) with the local police station claiming that the Tripuras demanded Taka 2 lakhs (Taka 200 thousand) as subscription. They also alleged that the Dorp people had threatened them with arrest and even death.

Jonti, Manik Chandra, Bikram and Satyoram Tripura and many others said after the threats the indigenous people get frightened at the mere sight of police personnel in the area.

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*Based on Prothom Alo report published today, 18 May 2008.*

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#### **4 Jummas tortured by BDR**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 86/2008, May 19, 2008*

#### **Four innocent Jumma villagers were tortured in Logang under Panchari Upazilla in Khagrachari district on 17 May, Saturday.**

Sources in Khagrachari said at around 11 am a contingent of 30 - 40 Bangladesh Rifles personnel (30 Rifle Battalion) led by Subedar Ajad from Logang camp raided the village of Lambu Karbari Para.

The BDR personnel rounded up four innocent villagers and took them to their camp. They were tortured severely in the camp and released subsequently.

The victims have been identified as Shyamol Chakma aged 18 s/o Tungo Chan Chakma, Nickel Chakma aged 17 s/o Bindu Chakma and Tuhin Chakma aged 17 s/o Rupo Moy Chakma from Lambu Para village and Ashim Chakma aged 27 s/o Lalit Mohan Chakma of Sujo Mohan Karbari Para village.

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### **Ven. Sumanalankar condemns curbing of religious freedom in CHT**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 87/2008, May 19, 2008*

#### **Ven. Sumanalankar Mahathero has condemned religious persecution of the Buddhists in Chittagong Hill Tracts.**

He was speaking at a religious gathering today at Janabal Bouddha Vihara at Mahazhon Para organised on the occasion of Buddha Purnaima.

He said security forces were harassing Buddhist devotees in many different ways and preventing them from practicing their religion peacefully. He asked why one would have to seek prior permission from the government and the army for constructing any Buddhist temples in CHT. "I condemn such blatant curbing of religious freedom" he said.

He also urged the government to induct Jummas into Buddhist Welfare Trust, a government welfare trust for the Buddhist community in Bangladesh. He said after the death of Upendra Lal Chakma and Khularam Chakma, no one from the Jummas has been inducted into the trusty board.

In celebration of the Buddha Purnima, he led a Mongol Shova Jatra (procession for happiness) of one thousand devotees. The Jatra started at 8 in the morning from Yongdaw Buddhist Temple in Golabari and ended at Janabal Buddhist Temple at Mahazhon Para in Khagrachari town.

About 70 Buddhist monks took part in the procession.

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### **PCP marks 19th founding anniversary**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 88/2008, May 20, 2008*

#### **The Hill Student's Council, popularly known as PCP by its Bengali acronym, has observed its 19th founding anniversary in Dhaka as well as in Chittagong Hill Tracts.**

Pranesh Samaddar, a veteran of anti-British movement, inaugurated the programme in front of DUCSU Cafeteria on Dhaka University campus at 10:45 am today.

In his inaugural address Mr. Samaddar, who is associated with progressive movements in the country, condemned the 20 April communal attack on innocent Jumma villagers in Sajek. At least 77 Jumma houses, one church and two Unicef-run village schools were burned to ashes during the attack. "It's a part of a larger blueprint to wipe out the hill people from the map of the CHT" he added.

He said the media had failed abysmally to play its due role in bringing the CHT issue to light.

Terming the 1997 CHT accord an unnecessary compromise on the part of the hill people, he said it had destroyed the struggle that the Jumma people had built up over many years through untold suffering and sacrifices.

He said there was no alternative to building up a new struggle to establish the rights of the hill people.

After his inaugural speech, a procession of the PCP activists and supporters paraded Dhaka University campus. They carried placards and chanted slogans.

This was followed by a rally, again in front of DUCSU Cafe, which was presided over by Ricoh Chakma, president of Hill Student's Council, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front.

At the rally, Kya Hla Ching Marma, a central committee member of PCP, gave a welcome address, while Samiul Alam Richi, convenor of Bangladesh Chattra Federation, Nurur Rahman Shiplu, president of Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolan, Tofazzal Hossain, central committee member of Jatiyo Chattra Dal and Golam Ahsan Golap from Biplobi Chattra Sangha delivered solidarity speech.

Besides, ex-president of PCP Dipankar Tripura and Office Secretary of Hill Women's Federation Ms Rina Dewan also spoke.

In their solidarity speech, the student leaders said there were clearly two trends in the movement of the hill people: one was the opportunistic trend represented by Santu Larma; and the other a revolutionary trend represented by PCP and others.

They said nothing could be achieved by opportunism. "What we need is a unified struggle led by the progressive forces both in the Hills and in the plain land" they said.

They also demanded of the interim government to stop land grabbing, torture and military rule in Chittagong Hill Tracts, and withdraw the emergency rule from the country without further delay.

In observance of its 19th founding anniversary, the PCP also held discussion meeting in Khagrachari and Bandarban.

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## **Sajek inquiry team holds discussion in Dhaka**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 89/2008, May 22, 2008*

**The Sajek citizen inquiry team held a discussion today in front of DUCSU Cafe on Dhaka University campus to mark the launch of its report on 20 April Sajek arson attack.**

Presided over by Moshrefa Mishu, convenor of Biplobi Okyo Front, who led the team during its visit to Sajek on 27 April, the discussion was also addressed by Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta, Executive Director of Research Initiative Bangladesh, Dr. Akmal Hossain, professor, department of International Relations, Dhaka University, Said Ferdous, teacher of Anthropology Department, Jahangirnagar University and Parth Shankar Shaha, a researcher with Society for Environment and Human Development (SEHD).

The discussion which began at 4:30 pm was conducted by Udisha Islam, one of the members of the Sajek inquiry team.

Ms Moshrefa Mishu narrated her team's experience during its visit to Sajek in the aftermath of a communal attack on four Jumma villages by illegal settlers with full backing of the local military personnel.

Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta said the army had no right to stay in CHT as it has failed to guarantee people's security within a radius of 3/4 km of their camps. "How can they just look on while the houses were in flame" she asked. "The army which cannot save lives and property of the people has no right to stay in CHT" she asserted.

Professor Dr. Akmal Hossain said there was a conspiracy to wipe out the ethnic Jumma people by killing their distinct languages. He said "we must recognise the right of the Jumma people to have education up to primary level through the medium of their own language." He demanded that the government should accord recognition to the languages of the ethnic minorities of the country.

Sayed Ferdous termed the army version of the Sajek incident as their desperate attempt to justify their continued presence in the CHT. He said the army must make its position vis a vis CHT clear. "The army cannot absolve its responsibility about the Sajek attack by merely shifting the blame on unknown terrorists" he said.

Parth Shankar Shaha narrated his own experience on his visit to Sajek to investigate the incident.

The discussion was followed by a play titled "Shing-a" staged by artiste activists of Hatiar Nattyogosti. The play depicts army repression and attack on innocent Jumma people in CHT.

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## Six innocent Jummas arrested in Naniachar

chtnews.com

News No. 90/2008, May 27, 2008

### The army arrested six Jummas from Morachengey village in Naniachar under Rangamati district yesterday, 26 May.

Details of the arrest are yet to come. However, apparently they were arrested from the house of Mrinal Kanti Chakma where villagers were attending the "Satdinnya" feast prepared in honour of his deceased father who died a week earlier, on 20 May.

Mrinal Kanti Chakma's son Joyesh Chakma (27) was among those arrested. He studies homeopathic medicine in a college in Dhaka.

Others arrestees include Morachengey Government Primary School teacher Propon Chakma alias Maya Baran, aged 27 s/o late Bimalendu Chakma; Nitu Chakma aged 22 s/o Tarun Kanti Chakma, a first year student of Naniachar College; Adhiratan Chakma aged 23 s/o Subolal Chakma; Purno Bikash Chakma aged 26 s/o Battya Chakma and Mitu Chakma aged 25 s/o Shushil Kumar Chakma.

They are residents of Morachengey village, which lies 7 miles north of Naniachar Upazilla (sub district) headquarter.

They have neither been produced before any court of law, nor been handed over to the police till the writing of this report at 5 pm. "They are being interrogated in Naniachar zone", one of the sources said adding that the army subjected them to inhuman torture.

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## Settlers attempt another attack in Marishya

chtnews.com

News No. 91/2008, May 29, 2008

### On 25 May, the illegal settlers attempted to use the death of one Abul Hossain (15) to launch a communal attack on Jumma villages in Baghaichari under Rangamati district.

Prothom Alo, a Bengali daily, reported on 28 May that Abul Hossain s/o Mohammad Abu Taher went to the lake water to catch fish on Saturday morning. The following day in the afternoon his dead body was recovered.

However, an NGO activist working in the area told chtnews.com on condition of anonymity that Abul Hossain actually drowned in the water, but his dead body was secretly kept at a place near Sarbotoli village of the Jumma people. "A section of the settlers then whipped up communal sentiment among the Bengalis over the boy's death and tried to mount an attack on Jumma villages in Sarbotoli and Sizok Dore. This happened on the night of 25 May." he said.

He said the Jummas also organised themselves to repulse the attack and the battle cry "Ujo" reverberated throughout 40 to 50 Jumma villages in the area - from Sarbotoli to Tuloban. "Because of this and because of lack of support from the army, the settlers dared not attack" he said adding "otherwise there would have been another communal attack".

"This also goes to prove that the settlers cannot attack Jumma villages without support from the army. Army's support is crucial" he commented further.

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## Army arrests ex -JSS man in Dighinala

chtnews.com

News No. 92/2008, May 29, 2008

### On 13 May, army personnel from Dighinala cantonment arrested Anunoy Chakma (55), an ex-member of the Jana Samhati Samiti, from cantonment's check post under Emergency Powers Act.

Mr. Chakma, who joined the JSS movement during its early phases, is better known by his nom de guerre "Manos". He surrendered arms in 1998 pursuant to a peace deal signed in December 1997.

Disillusioned with JSS politics, he left the party a few years ago and opened a drug store at Baghaihat bazaar. During the 20 April communal attack that left 77 Jumma houses burnt, the settlers tried to assault and

kidnap him, but he was spared when one sympathetic Bengali businessman forcefully intervened.

Manos is believed to share views with the moderate sections of the JSS which want unity with the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF). In 2005 and 2006, he supported the JSS moderates (now reformists) who attempted to effect democratic change within the party. According to sources, at its 2006 congress, JSS narrowly escaped another "10 November" meaning bloodbath. On 10 November 1983, the Priti faction of the JSS attacked JSS headquarters and killed its founder Mr. M. N. Larma.

Father of two daughters, Manos comes from Sizok Dore village in Baghaichari. He was returning from Rangamati to Baghaihat when the arrest was made.

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## **UPDF man handed over to Naniachar police**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 93/2008, May 29, 2008*

**Joyesh Chakma (27), who was arrested by army along with five others on 26 May from Morachengey village under Naniachar Upazilla (sub district), has been handed over to Naniachar police station. He is an active member of the United People's Democratic Front.**

A UPDF source said he was handed over to police today, and the army personnel, who arrested him, filed a kidnapping case against him. However, he could not give further details.

The five villagers, who were arrested along with him, had been freed from Naniachar zone yesterday. They were severely tortured in the camp, said the UPDF source who met one of them after their release.

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## **Sajek arson attack: arrested three youths released on bail**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 94/2008, June 1, 2008*

**The three Jumma youths arrested on 28 April in connection with Sajek arsons have been released on bail, according to a report published in Prothom Alo.**

A Rangamati district judge court granted bail on Thursday, 29 May. The three youths are Novel Chakma (23), Sunil Chakma (22) and Ratan Bikash Chakma (17). All of them come from Bamey Baibachara village in Sajek. They were arrested on the evening of 28 April from their village and were implicated in a case filed earlier by one Nurul Alam in connection with the Sajek incident (case No. GR 121, 2008).

Bangladesh Legal Aid and Services Trust (BLAST) provided legal assistance to the accused.

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## **JSS kidnaps five in Rajstali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 95/2008, June 3, 2008*

**The armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti kidnapped five villagers in Rajstali Upazilla under Rangamati district early yesterday. They have not been traced since then.**

The reason why they have been targeted is that a few days ago their close relatives had joined the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), a party of the Jumma people campaigning for full autonomy through peaceful and democratic means.

Concern for their safety has been heightened dramatically when the JSS men declared the wives of the kidnapped Jummas as "widows" implying that either they had already been killed or would be killed soon.

The victims have been identified as Jolendra Tonchongya (60), a Union Council member, Ironto Karbari (55) and Mukul Bikash Tonchongya (50) from the village of Punorbashon Para, Bihari Kumar Tonchongya of Magain Para village and Anachi Mohan Tonchongya (45) of Mubachari village.

### **Torture**

Earlier, on 24 May, the JSS members beat up two other villagers in Punorbashon Para - Chanu Aung Marma and Apon Tonchongya - alleging that they refused to provide food to the JSS men.

However, the victims refuted the allegation saying they had never received order for food for JSS members.

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### **PCP condemns kidnapping of villagers in Rajstali**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 96/2008, June 4, 2008*

**The Hill Student's Council in a statement today condemned the kidnapping of five innocent villagers by armed members of Jana Samhati Samiti in Rajstali, Rangamati district and urged the JSS to release them unconditionally.**

PCP president Ricoh Chakma and General Secretary Aungyo Marma said the JSS had been carrying on such activities as B-team of the government. They said the struggle of the CHT people cannot be subdued by resorting to murder, kidnapping and disappearance.

Jolendra Tonchongya (60), a Union Council member, Ironto Karbari (55) and Mukul Bikash Tonchongya (50) from the village of Punorbashon Para, Bihari Kumar Tonchongya of Magain Para village and Anachi Mohan Tonchongya (45) of Mubachari village were kidnapped from their homes on 2 June. They are near and dear ones of UPDF members who joined the party a few days ago.

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### **Army conducts searches in Naniachar**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 97/2008, June 5, 2008*

**A group of army personnel led by Naniachar zone Adjutant, Nazmul Hassan conducted a targeted search in about 20 shops at T & T area of Naniachar yesterday morning.**

The shops belong to the Jummas and lie within 500 yards of the zone headquarters. The soldiers pointed their guns at the Jummas present there in threatening manner and searched each and every corner of the shops.

The army said they were searching for UPDF member Tapan Chakma.

One Jumma shop owner told chtnews.com on condition of anonymity that at around 10 a.m. about 30 - 35 army personnel surrounded the T & T area and searched each and every shop of the Jummas. "I was scared out of my wits when one of the soldiers pointed his gun close at me" he said.

Meanwhile, another report said military operations were underway in Kudukchari, Naniachar, Borkal and Bilaichari areas in Rangamati district. "Soldiers have fanned out in all directions. From Kudukchari right up to Mahalchari border army personnel have been deployed" informed an ex-JSS member from Rangamati.

"Their intention is not known" he further said.

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### **Rev. Dr. Jinbodhi Bhikkhu slams Sajek settler attack**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 98/2008, June 6, 2008*

**Rev. Dr. Jinbodhi Bhikkhu, professor of Pali Department, Chittagong University, slammed the settlers for the 20 April communal attack on four Jumma villages in Sajek that left over one hundred houses burned to the ground.**

He was speaking at a religious gathering at Sajek Moitreepur Banani Bana Vihar on 2 June organised by victims of the attack. He said "No true dhamma or religion sanctions violence. Therefore, the settlers who carried out the attack on 20 April have committed great sin."

There was an overwhelming presence of army personnel around the vihar area during the programme, which coincided with the relief distribution of the army. One Jumma was arrested on 1 June reportedly for refusing to accept relief money from the army. His name was said to be Sneha Ranjan Chakma. The second-in-command of Baghaihat army zone, Maj. Anwar Kabir held him before handing him over to the police. He is reported to have been falsely implicated in a previously filed case.

The religious event was held amidst fear of further attacks and organised boycott of Baghaihat bazaar (market place) by Jumma people. Thousands of people took part in the day long programme that included Sangha Dana (Offering of gift to the Sangha), Aushto Parishkar Dana (Offering of eight essential items) and listening to Maha Mongol Sutta.

About 100 Buddhist monks including Rev. Prajnalankar Mahastobir from Gohira Bouddha Vihara, Chittagong, Rev. Bhrigu Bhante, chief priest of Phuromoan Bana Vihar and Rev. Dev Dhamma Stobir from Dighinala Bana Vihar attended the programme.

Forty five days after the incident, the situation in Sajek has not come to normal. Many Jummas and especially the youths are still hiding in the jungle for fear of arrest. None could rebuild houses due to lack of money.

Out of deep sorrow, one of the victims Gobinda Chakma (aged 56 s/o late Rajmuni Chakma of MSF Para) said "*There is no one in this wide world whose sorrow is greater than the one whose house has been burnt.*"

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## **Forest Department accused of land grabbing in Bandarban**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 99/2008, June 7, 2008*

**There are allegations that Forest Department officials have grabbed lands belonging to 130 Jumma families in Mrokyong Mouza under**

## **Rowangchari Upazilla of Bandarban district, reports Chattagram Manch, a Bengali language daily published from Chittagong.**

In its 7 June issue the Manch further said the people of the area appealed to the Deputy Commissioner for redress (DC's receipt No. 3681 dated 28/4/08). "The Jumma people of Sonai Sepru Para under Mrokyong Mouza said they had been living on slash and burn cultivation in area for many generations", the report said, adding the Jummas have settlement documents pertaining to most of the lands in the area while a few lands still remains under process of settlement.

The report alleged that recently the Forest Department officials had been trying to create gardens after grabbing the Jumma people's lands. "The villagers lodged protest but the FD paid little heed to it."

It continued: "Our correspondent Thoaching U Marma from Rowangchari adds: the Forest Department people have already cut and took away 50 to 60 teak trees from the garden of Sepu Aung Tonchongya. In the meantime, the villagers in an appeal to the Deputy Commissioner stated that about six hundred persons of 130 families would lose their means of subsistence as a consequence of the Forest Department taking away their lands. While contacted, Md. Zulfiqar, Officer of Bagmara Beat, refused to comment on the issue. The Divisional Forest Officer, Abul Monshur also refrained from making any comment."

"However, responsible sources in Forest Department said all these lands in Sonai Sepru Para belonged to Forest Department. The FD people did not occupy anybody's land. There is an attempt to create gardens in Forest Department's land" the report added.

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## **Ex-UPDF member arrested in Ghagra**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 100/2008, June 8, 2008*

**Army personnel in Ghagra yesterday detained Purno Bikash Chakma aged 36 s/o Indra Ketu Chakma, an ex-member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).**



He was arrested from Chowmuhani in Ghagra under Rangamati district. It is not known whether he is still being held in Ghagra army camp.

A resident of Badolchhari village in Ghagra Union, Mr. Chakma quit politics and left the UPDF in 2003. Since then, he has been leading a private life in his village, driving taxi off and on to supplement his family income from farming.

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## **HWF to mark 12th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 101/2008, June 10, 2008*

**Hill Women's Federation, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, has chalked out a detailed programme to mark the 12th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma.**

A press release of the organisation said it will take out a procession from TSC Square on Dhaka University campus on 12 June at 11 a.m. A number of like-minded organisations will also take part in the procession. National political party and women organisation leaders and many others will address the rally.

Besides, a discussion will be held at R. C. Majumder Arts Auditorium of Dhaka University at 3:30 p.m. on the same day.

Kalpana Chakma was abducted on 12 June 1996 from her home at New Lallyaghona village under Baghaichari Upazilla of Rangamati district. Twelve years on, her whereabouts still remain untraced with the inquiry report gathering dust on the home ministry shelves, while the perpetrators including Lt. Ferdous are yet to be brought to justice.

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## **JPNK holds Kalpana Chakma press conference in Seoul**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 102/2008, June 12, 2008*

**The Jumma People's Network - Korea (JPNK) has held a press conference in front of Bangladesh Embassy in Seoul to mark the 12th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma.**

The press conference, held in collaboration with Nawawoori (I and We), Imagination for international solidarity (IFIS), Tahamke (all together), Korea Sexual Violation Relief Center and PNAN (The refuge), began at 10:30 a.m.

The speakers demanded that the judicial inquiry report on disappearance of Kalpana Chakma be published and the culprits including Lt. Ferdous brought to justice. They also urged the government of Bangladesh to stop all kinds of sexual violence against the Jumma women.

JPNK General Secretary read out the text of the press conference while Ms Chakma, an ex-member of the Hill Women's Federation, read out a memorandum addressed to the Chief Adviser of the interim caretaker government. Later, the memo was handed over to the Bangladesh Embassy officials.

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## **HWF marks 12th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 103/2008, June 12, 2008*

**The Hill Women's Federation, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front, staged a rally on Dhaka University campus to mark the 12th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma. The HWF president Sonali Chakma demanded that the inquiry report be published without delay.**



**Kalpana Chakma addressing the first conference of the HWF in Khagrachari in 1995**

Over one hundred and a half members and supporters of the HWF took part in the programme. Besides, representatives from progressive political, students and cultural organisations also participated in it.

Before the rally, a procession was taken out on Dhaka University campus. It started at 11 a.m. and paraded round the Arts Faculty Building and Registrar Building.

The rally was held in front of DU Library building. Presided over by HWF president Sonali Chakma,

the rally was addressed, among others, by Faizul Hakim Lala, General Secretary of National Liberation Council, Lovely Akter, Organiser of Biplobi Nari Mukti, Monjurul Haq, president of Bangladesh Student and Youth Movement, Ricoh Chakma, president of Hill Student's Council, Raju Ahmed from Bangladesh Students Federation, Alamgir Kabir, Member Secretary of Prapad and Mahmud Limon from Sanskritir Naya Setu.



**Partial view of the audience at R. C. Majumder Arts Auditorium, Dhaka University.**

Hill Women's Federation president Sonali Chakma criticized the caretaker government of Dr. Fakruddin Ahmed for following in the footsteps of his predecessor governments and said "if you cannot arrest culprits like Lt.

Ferdous, the mastermind of the kidnapping of Kalpana Chakma, and put them on trial, then all your promise to establish rule of law in the country is a hollow and a macabre joke."

Sonali Chakma urged the government to make the inquiry report on disappearance of Kalpana Chakma public.

Faizul Hakim Lala said the successive governments have failed not only to rescue Kalpana Chakma, the then Organising Secretary of the HWF, but also to publish the inquiry report headed by Supreme Court Justice Abdul Jalil.

He said as far as Chittagong Hill Tracts is concerned there is no difference between the present and the past governments. "Irrespective of which government comes to power - whether it is military or civil or caretaker government - there is no change in the policy on CHT issues. And there will be no change unless the ruling classes which control the state structures of the country are overthrown and a new government of the peasants, workers and the middle class is established through a people's upsurge" he said. "Therefore, a united and centralized struggle of all the oppressed classes and peoples has become the urgent task of the time. The Jumma people must link their national struggle to the larger and broader struggle of the country. They must seek their liberation in the liberation of all the oppressed and exploited masses of peasants and workers and middle class people in the country."

Lala said Kalpana Chakma will never die. "She will continue to inspire hundreds of thousands of Jumma women seeking to free themselves from the shackles of oppression and sexual violence."

The HWF also published a leaflet on the occasion. The HWF activists distributed the copies of the leaflet during the programme.

Later in the day, a discussion was held at R. C. Majumder Arts Auditorium, Dhaka University.

The speakers included Abul Kashem Fazlul Haq, Dr. Akmal Hossain, Dr. Meghna Guhathakurta, Anu Muhammad, Hasibur Rahman, Manos Chowdhury, Sayeed Ferdous, Saydia Gulrukh, Samari Chakma, Sonali Chakma and Konika Dewan.

Kalpana Chakma was abducted on 12 June 1996 from her home at New Lallyaghona village under Baghaichari Upazilla of Rangamati district. Twelve years on, her whereabouts still remain untraced with the inquiry

report gathering dust on the home ministry shelves, while the perpetrators including Lt. Ferdous are yet to be brought to justice.

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### 3 UPDF members arrested in Longudu

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 104/2008, June 14, 2008*

**The army arrested three alleged UPDF members from Bengichara area of Baro Kattoli under Longudu Upazila in Rangmati district on the night of 11 June.**

The arrested are Borpeda Chakma (16) from Boradam village in Longudu, Sonar Sadhi Chakma (27) from Kattoli and Mithun Dewan alias Rikon (21) of village Kushumchari, Suboling Union, Borkal Upazilla.

An army officer claimed to have recovered arms from their possession. However, this could not be independently verified.

UPDF and JSS often allege that such recovery of arms are stage-managed, designed to malign their party image.

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### Nine Jummas tortured in Belaichari

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 105/2008, June 14, 2008*

**There have been reports of widespread military torture in Belaichari Upazila (sub-district) of Rangamati district.**

According to sources, between 3 to 6 June, at least nine innocent Jumma villagers, including an orally challenged person, have been tortured by Lt. Tanvir, commander of Dhupchari camp (8 Bengal) in Belaichari.

**On 3 June 2008**, a group of about 15 army personnel led by Lt. Tanvir raided the village of Down and searched for Bimal Kanti Chakma, a staunch UPDF supporter. The soldiers stripped Riton Chakma (26) s/o Kandara Chakma naked and then beat him up severely. He is a resident of Dujuri Para village in Kaindya, Rangamati.

Thereafter, the army personnel took Bishwa Sagor Tonchongya (35) s/o Roma Kanti Headman to the camp along with his licensed gun, stripped him naked and tortured. He was set free the following day. The seized gun was also returned.

**On 4 June 2008**, Lt. Tanvir and his soldiers took 4 innocent Jummas of Down village to the camp and beat them up alleging that they provided support to the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF).

The victims have been identified as Anil Karbari (52) s/o Dhulon Chandra Chakma, his brother Ranjan Chakma (50), Kanchon Tonchongya and Shanti Kumar Chakma (60). The army released them after torture.

**On 6 June 2008**, Lt. Tanvir tortured another three Jummas. This happened at around 9 a.m. when he detained them Jummas at the camp gate. He took them inside the camp and beat up after stripping them naked.

The victims have been identified as Chandra Chakma (45), Jibon Chakma (25) and Subhash Chakma (30). They were on their way from Bogakhali to Belaichari to collect relief being provided to the rodent-hit Jum cultivators by Belaichari TNO and UP chairmen. The soldiers released them after torture.

**Again on 6 June 2008**, at about 12 noons, another Jumma named Shanti Muni Chakma (18) s/o Jonokdhan Chakma was subjected to physical torture. Mr. Chakma is orally challenged. He was on his way from his village Shalbagan to the village of Down when the incident took place.

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### Hill Literature Forum distributes relief to rodent-hit areas in Bandarban

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 106/2008, June 15, 2008*

**The Hill Literature Forum and UPDF's Relief Collection Committee, Chittagong distributed relief among the rodent-hit Jum cultivators in Ruma of Bandarban district.**

The relief was distributed in two phases starting on 3 June at remote Passing Para village, situated near Keokradong, the highest mountain in the country. To this end, an eleven-member joint team of these two organisations trekked from Ruma Sadar to Passing Para village. A total



**Hill Literature Forum and UPDF members distributing relief at Passing Para, Ruma**

of 352 families were listed as recipients of relief.

In order to distribute the relief in an orderly manner a 10-member committee was formed with Sen Pawng Murung, member of Remakree

Prangsha Union Council, as its convenor. The other members included Khoichong Murung, Milton Marma, Lal Biat Bawm, Ishak Bawm, Mong Ting Oiyong Marma, Kya Ching Marma, Pruching Thoai Marma, Rengthi Murung and Thuikyo Ching Marma.

In addition, an advisory committee was formed to supervise the overall activities of the committee. The advisors were Gingsomliam Bawm, chairman of Remakree Prangsha Union No. 3 and Choton Kanti Tonchongya, a UPDF member, Chittagong Unit.

Mr. Sen Pawng Murung, member of Remakree Prangsha Union Council and convenor of Relief Distribution Management Committee, inaugurated the event while Choton Kanti Tongchongya gave a brief speech on the occasion.

Mr. Sen thanked the relief organisers for the help and urged the recipients to properly use the money.

Choton Kanti Tonchongya said the relief being distributed was like a drop in the ocean and regretted that UPDF could not do much to help the needy families.

Local Union Parishad chairman Gingsomliam Bawm could not attend the programme due to his preoccupation with Council activities, although it was he who had done most of the work to make the event a success.

Each of the affected families was given cash Taka 300 to buy roughly 10kgs of rice.

Over 250 families received the money on that day. The rest would collect the relief on a later date from Ruma bazaar.

The civil administration of Ruma, which was informed beforehand of the event, was very helpful and forthcoming.

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## **Lt. Tanvir conducts house searches, tortures one in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*  
*News No. 107/2008, June 16, 2008*

### **There have been further reports of torture and house searches from Belaichari Upazilla of Rangmati district.**

Sources said on 12 June at around 11 a.m. a group of army personnel led by Lt. Tanvir from Dhupchari camp raided the village of Down and conducted searches into seven houses of the Jummas.

The soldiers broke into the houses of two brothers - Bishwa Sagor Tonchongya (36) and Priti Moy Tonchongya (30) - before searching. Their father's name is Roma Kanta Headman. The doors of the houses were latched as all their family members were away to their jum fields.

The soldiers beat up Nanda Moy Tonchongya aged 45 s/o Badhu Chandra Tonchongya and searched his house. He ran away from army custody on way to the camp.

Other houses searched belonged to Indrajit Chakma aged 45 (he is head teacher of Dujuripara Government Primary School) and his brother Rupayon Chakma (25) s/o Jonmajoy Chakma, Jotonphu Tonchongya aged 35 s/o Rai Charan Tonchongya and Allyabo Tonchongya aged 50 s/o Rotia Tonchongya.

Lt. Tanvir has unleashed a reign of terror on the villagers. As reported in news No. 105, in the first week of this month he tortured as many as 10 innocent Jummas in the area. Some of them were stripped naked to the full view of the people.

Villagers allege that Lt. Tanvir is often seen prowling in the neighbourhood dressed in Lungi (tradition Bengali lower garment), defying army rule that soldiers must put on camouflage combat fatigues while on duty out of camps.

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## UPDF denies army recovered arms from its members

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 108/2008, June 16, 2008*

**The United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) has strongly denied the claim that the army personnel recovered arms from its members arrested on 11 June in Longudu, Rangamati.**

Talking to the *chtnews.com*, Sachib Chakma, a central committee member of the UPDF, said "it's a part of a conspiracy to create occasions to launch smearing campaign against our Party" adding that an armed member of the JSS directly assisted the army in arresting them.

"Every year when we observe the anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma on a national level, the army makes desperate attempts to create its own news to drown out our call to bring Lt. Ferdous, the mastermind of her abduction, to justice. The arrested UPDF members are merely scapegoat of such vicious attempts." he alleged.

He categorically brushed aside the claim that arms had been recovered from the arrested UPDF members.

About the incident, Sachib Chakma said "on the night of 11 June a group of army personnel from Longudu zone surrounded the house of a villager in the village of Kattoli Boradam where the UPDF members were sleeping. Cheol Chakma, an active JSS member in the area, was along with the army during the raid."

He said the soldiers passed the whole night there and made the arrest after dawn.

According to Sachib Chakma, of the arrested, only Soanr Sathi Chakma (30) s/o Purno Chakra Chakma is a full member of the UPDF, while Tukala Chakma (18) s/o Ruidas Chakma and Mithun Dewan (22) s/o Kamini Dewan had come there to apply for party membership.

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## Sajek update: army arrests four Jummas

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 109/2008, June 16, 2008*

**Army personnel from Baghaihat zone arrested four innocent Jumma villagers from their homes in an overnight raid on 14 June, sources said. This comes nearly two months after the 20 April settler-attack on a number of Jumma villages that left 77 houses, two Unicef-run village schools and one church burnt to the ground.**

Sources said the Jummas were arrested from Gongaram Doar and Daney Baibachara villages at around 11 p.m. The arrested are Sunil Bikash Chakma (32) s/o Subhash Bashu Chakma of village Gongaram Doar, Phorakaji Chakma aged 28 s/o Rojonya Chakma and Sumon Chakma aged 30 from Daney Baihachara village, and Badichan Chakma aged 35 s/o Dhonnya Ram Chakma of village Kobakhali, Dighinala.

They were taken to Baghaihat zone and tortured inhumanly. The following day, the army released Phorakaji Chakma and Badichan Chakma, but handed the other two over to the police implicating them in false cases.

The reason for the arrest could not be known. However, the Jummas have been demanding the withdrawal of the settlers from Sajek. They are

enforcing a boycott of Baghahat bazaar to force the government to accept this demand.

When Sunil Bikash Chakma's wife contacted the zone office on 15 June, Warrant Officer Harun told her "We are not responsible for their arrest because they have been arrested by the joint forces."

Sajek has been the scene of a joint army-settler attack that left 77 Jummas houses, a church and two unicef-run Village Centres burnt to the ground.

The incident, which took place on 20 April, evoked national and international outcry, but the government refused to bring back the settlers who are blamed for taking away Jumma's land with the support of the army. The attack was aimed at driving the Jummas from their villages to facilitate new Bengali settlement.

After the incident not a single culprit was arrested. Instead, the army launched a manhunt against the Jummas. They arrested four villagers on 28 April and 1 June.

Although three of them were released on bail, Sneha Kumar Chakma (38), arrested on 1 June after being called to the camp, is still being held in jail. The army implicated him in a criminal case filed previously against unnamed persons on 13 January 2008 under sections 143/144/149/224/332/34 of the Bangladesh Penal Code. (Case No. 3. dated 13/1/08. G.R. No. 14/08)

Sneha Kumar Chakma was arrested because he was vocal against land aggression and expansion of illegal Bengali settlement in Sajek.

After the 20 April attack, Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz, commander of Baghahat zone, announced that he has a long list of "terrorists" who are active in Sajek. The Jummas have been living in constant fear of arrest since then.

A Jumma human rights activist said since there is little scope to organise protest inside Bangladesh due to a state of emergency, the international community especially the UN and EU should put pressure on the government to stop such flagrant violation of human rights. "The international community has a particular responsibility to pay attention to

our plights. It should not sit idle by when we continue to suffer and have come close to extinction as a distinct people" he said. "The voice of the international community should be loud and clear."

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## **Update on Sajek: situation yet to come to normal (First part)**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 110/2008, June 17, 2008*

### **Nearly two months have passed since the 20 April Sajek attack that left 77 Jumma houses burnt to the ground, but the situation is yet to come back to normal.**

Following is the **first** of the two-part series of the latest reports received from our sources in the area.

#### **Sultana Kamal visits affected areas**

On 18 May, a team of human rights activists led by Ms Sultana Kamal, Executive Director of Dhaka-based Ain-o-Salish Kendra, visited the place of occurrence. Her visit was known to the army and settlers well in advance, while the Jummas knew nothing about it.

The Commanding Officer of Baghahat zone, Sajid Md. Imtiaz, briefed the settlers about how to deal with her visit. He, however, did not even bother to inform the affected Jummas about the visit. One Jumma villager commented: "this is such kind of mistrust and an unfair tilt towards the settlers that aggravate the situation here."

As briefed, the settlers surrounded her team as soon as it reached Baghahat. Ms. Kamal told them that she would talk to them later on at the bazaar and proceeded towards Gongaram Mukh. There she talked to the Jummas and distributed Nappi (a semi-dried fish-paste with powerful flavor), cloths and cash Taka 500 to each of the affected families. She also visited Banani Bana Vihar and talked to Rev. Purnabas Bhante.

She visited the burnt huts of the settlers and talked to the settlers at the bazaar. "I cannot just imagine how such an incident can occur in front of the army," she has been quoted as saying. She gave five sacks of cloths and cash Taka 20 thousand to the settlers.

**Attempt at resettlement under the rubric of "Peace and Development Committee"**

On 22 May, using the influence of his position Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz formed a so-called Peace and Development Committee comprising members of both the communities. The 13-member committee is headed by Rokon Uddin, a shopkeeper-trader in Baghahat bazaar. The other members are Bapon Chakma, a former JSS member-turned trader (vice president); Nazim Uddin, drugstore owner, (Secretary); Rafiq, Gobinda Headman (Daney Baibachara), Kamini Ranjan Chakma (Daney Baibachara), Paran Chakma (Retkaba Doar), Gyana Ram Karbari (Gongaram Doar), Joti Lal Karbari (Gongaram Doar), Shneha Kumar Chakma (Guchchagram, Baghahat), Hridoy Ranjan Dewan (Guchchagram, Baghahat), Liton Chakma (Daney Baibachara) and Dhantu Chakma (Hajachara).

On 23 May, a meeting of the Peace and Development Committee was held at Sajek Union Council office. Rokon Uddin presided over the meeting attended by 20 - 25 persons including the committee members.

Speaking at the meeting, Gyana Ram Karbari, a member of the committee, said "There will be no peace in the area if the new settlers are not taken back. There is unrest because they are occupying our lands, building houses on our lands and destroying our orchards."

He further said "if we speak the truth and protest against all these we are labeled as terrorists. This is the reason why many do not dare to speak out about the real problem."

Nuru Islam, a grocery shop owner, who originally hails from Noakhali, said "I came to Baghahat many years ago. There were only 10 -12 shops at that time. I also discharged the duty of the Bazaar Chowdhury (responsible for maintaining the market place). Back then, the Jummas used to cultivate jum on the hills near the bazaar and there was government patronization for that. It was in fact called plantation. The Parharis used to plant teak on their jums or plantations. When plantation activities were closed down, they began to settle down permanently. They built good houses and created orchards. Then, when from 8 January 2008 the new Bengalis began coming in and building houses after destroying the Pahari people's orchards, the Paharis could not tolerate it."

He continued: "Now, my question is: where these new comers (Bengalis) - who are in need of land - had been for so long? My view is that peace will never return in the area unless they are taken back."

Before he could finish his speech, Golam Mowla impatiently interrupted him saying "there is no need to harp on old stories." He made a proposal to settle the new comers on a vast area of land stretching between Gongaram Mukh and Mazalong bazaar. The Jummas vehemently rejected the proposal.

The Jummas also raised a few demands at the meeting. These included withdrawal of the new settlers, release of the three Jummas arrested from Bamey Baibachara, withdrawal of the cases filed against some Jummas of the affected areas, return of the looted goods and rehabilitation of the affected Jummas.

The Bengali representatives at the meeting agreed to, and later returned, the looted valuables to 4 or 5 Jummas. The remaining valuables of two other Jummas have been entrusted to the market committee, which has asked them to contact it and take their belongings back.

At the said meeting Golam Mawla also claimed that 40 Jummas have sold lands to the Bengalis. But the Jumma representatives brushed aside his claim and asked him to show papers in support of his claim.

**"I do not put someone to jail, I shoot him"**

On 24 May, the Second-in-Command of Baghahat zone, Major Anwarul Kabir sent a note to Sunesh Bikash Chakma aged 32 of village Gongaram Mukh ordering him to appear before him in the camp. When he appeared, Major Anwarul Kabir told him: "I have reports that you have become a leader in Gongaram Mukh and provide supplies to the terrorists. Listen, I do not put someone to jail; I shoot him. Therefore, I warn you to be careful from now on."

When asked what did he think prompted the Major to issue such threats, Sunesh Chakma told chtnews.com that "On 20 April, the day the arson took place, I saw some military personnel and Bengali settlers set fire to my house and I told this to the media persons. This might have infuriated the military."

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## Update on Sajek: situation yet to come to normal (Second Part)

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 111/2008, June 18, 2008*

**Nearly two months have passed since the 20 April Sajek attack that left 77 Jumma houses burnt to the ground, but the situation is yet to come back to normal.**

Following is the **last** of the two-part series of the latest reports received from our sources in the area.

### **District Council's Project money used for "peace rally"**

On 25 May, Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz organised a so-called peace rally in Baghahat, Sajek. He arranged lunch for about 1,000 individuals and made Sajek Union Council Chairman, L. Thanga pay the cost from the funds he received from Rangamati District Council for public development projects.

Imtiaz ordered the elderly Jummas to attend the rally. But despite that, the participation of the Jummas was almost zero.

The participants gathered at "Egottor Park" in BDR zone area of Marishya where a few speeches were delivered. But many slipped away before a march towards Sajek began. In the end only a few dozens of the participants reached Baghahat in one bus and two jeeps. In Baghahat, Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz addressed the gathering before the start of the last leg of the so-called "peace procession" that took the participants from Baghahat to Gongaram.

Later, a discussion meeting was held at Sajek Union Council office with Lt. Col. Sajid Md. Imtiaz, the Baghahat zone commander, as chief guest and Shibir Bichitra Barua, UNO of Baghaichari Upazila, as special guest. The other participants were Joynal Abedin, chairman, Khagrachari Municipality, Md. Selim Mian, General Secretary, Sama Odhikar Andolan, Baghaichari Unit, Diptiman Chakma, Secretary, JSS Baghaichari Unit and L. Thanga, chairman, Sajek Union Council.

Selim Mian in his speech said: "We must maintain communal harmony at all costs. This is independent Bangladesh. If there are any Indian or Bhutanese agents, I want to warn them: be careful."

Shibir Bichitra Barua said the problems of the area will not be resolved by such peace rallies. "We must sit together - Paharis and Bengalis - in cordial atmosphere and find out the root causes of the problems." he said.

Shanti Bikash Chakma, one of the Jumma participants, said "We have not received our lands back as per the peace accord. We came to this Reserve Forest area just to eke out a living. But there is no peace here."

Local journalists of Khagrachari were present at the discussion, which was followed by a cultural programme.

Only a handful of Jummas were present at the discussion meeting. They are Bipon Babu, Hridoy Ranjan Dewan, Kamini Ranjan Chakma, Shanti Bikash Chakma, Badu Moni Bap, Brisha Moni Chakma, L. Thanga Pankua, Nayan Member and Diptiman Chakma.

The Jummas alleged that on the morning of 25 May military personnel forced Jumma villagers in Hegeye Toli, Champatoli and Nandaram areas to take part in the so-called peace rally.

On the night of 24 May soldiers raided the house of Shanti Jibon Karbari aged 42 in the village of Uluchara and ordered him to participate in the next day's peace rally taking 30 - 40 people along with him. "Otherwise, you are damned" they warned.

The same day, 24 May, Md. Rafiq from ECB Army reportedly told Din Lal Chakma aged 38 and Amor Shanti Chakma aged 37 from Gongaram Doar village: "Case has been filed against both of you. So, be careful."

### **Attempt at land grabbing continues**

The settlers continue to make attempts to grab lands in Sajek. Some of the incidents are mentioned below:

On 21 May, Nuru Alam's father entered the paddy land of Kinadhan Chakma (60) s/o Sen Chakma of Retkaba village and began cutting the ripen paddy. When protested, the settler said that the land belonged to the Forest Department and suggested that he who would cut the paddy first



would get it. However, when Kinadhan called out to the nearby people, the settler left the scene.

On 22 May, Siraj, a settler, planted a coconut seedling on the land of Lakxmindra Chakma aged 45 in Purbapara village. The next day Md. Ayesh, his nephew, cut down 18 coconut seedlings which many villagers had seen. Later, Siraj came, saw the cut saplings and called the Jumma villagers names.

On 3 June, Alam aged 30, a settler, planted banana saplings on the land of Niharu Chakma aged 36 in Balughat.

On 4 June, Jamal aged 35 (elephant keeper) and his four labourers planted banana saplings on the land of Kiron Chakma aged 37 s/o Natun Chandra Chakma in Balughat. The same day, Shaha Alam aged 40 planted various kinds of saplings including banana on the land of Pattor Moni Karbari. Another settler named Kamal (known as Lambaya among the Jummas) aged 55 planted Jackfruit and other fruit tree seeds on the land of Lalu Chakma aged 55 in Gongaram Mukh.

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## **Fresh land grabbing in Longudu**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 112/2008, June 19, 2008*

**Fresh land grabbing has been reported from Longudu Upazila, host to the largest concentration of the Bengali settlers in Rangamati district.**

Sources said in the last week of May 2008, Mokbul, a settler, pulled out and then destroyed all the 200 teak saplings planted by Gurudev Chakma (60) s/o late Probhu Charan Chakma of Harikaba village under Kattoli Mouza on his own land. When Gurudev protested, Mokbul said that the land belonged to him and that the government gave it to him back in 1982. The settler also threatened Gurudev not to enter the land. "Otherwise, there would be bloodshed", he warned.

Thereafter, Gurudev Chakma lodged a complaint with the Mainee army zone commander. The commander assured him that he would look into the matter. But, he has not taken any action so far.

In another incident, a group of settlers led by Md. Rashid and Md. Fazlu from Tila Gram No. 3 of Bhaibone Chara cleared shrubs in 5-acre land belonging to Dayal Chandra Chakma (s/o Lakshmi Charan Chakma) in the village of Harikaba.

Another settler named Nupur Ali illegally occupied Goyeshur Chakma's one-acre land in Baro Harikaba village. Ali, who is a VDP commander in Bhaibone Chara, has already renovated the land. Goyeshur Chakma's wife complained to the Headman of the area about it. However, Nupur Ali is defying the Headman's order to refrain from encroaching on Goyeshur's land.

On the night of May 23, some identified persons cut the paddy belonging to Ranjan Chakma s/o Bajigor Chakma of Harikaba village and took it away. "The stolen rice paddy would amount to 160kgs," he said. He suspects that Md. Rahman and Theda Buro, two settlers from Rajnogor School Tila of Bhaibone Chara, might have done it. He said they have similar records in the past.

In the same way, unknown pilferers cut the paddy belonging to Ashwatma Chakma in Moddyo Harikaba and took it away. The stolen rice paddy would amount to 100kgs. The villagers blamed the pilferage on the settlers because of their close proximity to the paddy field.

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## **Outbreak of diarrhea in Thanchi, 100 affected**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 113/2008, June 19, 2008*

**Diarrhea has been broken out in some Jumma villages of remote Tindu area under Thanchi Upazila of Bandarban district, report the Daily Purbokone and the Daily Suprabhat Bangladesh, two local dailies published from Chittagong.**

The use contaminated water led to the outbreak of diarrhea affecting 100 persons including young children in five villages. The BDR personnel are struggling to provide medical service to them. So far no medics from the Health Department have visited the area.

The acute watery diarrhea began to spread on Monday in Kamchipara, Bojupara, Grouping para, Halimpara and Tindu Bazaar Para. Besides, 37 persons including women and children have been affected by diarrhea in Mizn Para of Thanchi Sadar.

Eight of the diarrhea affected patients have been admitted to a health complex.

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## **Hilly Multi-purpose Cooperative Society sends relief to Sajek victims**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 114/2008, June 20, 2008*

**The Hilly Multi-purpose Cooperative Society, a Chittagong-based socio-cultural organisation of the Jummas, sent relief for the Sajek arson victims Friday.**

A 15-member team led by Nani Jibon Chakma, president of the HMCS left for Dighinala today. The team will hand over the relief materials to the representatives of the victims in Dighinala.

The team also included five members from the HMCS - Sunil Chakma, Kollol Chakma, Tapan Chakma, Nation Chakma and Shanti Bikash Chakma - and nine Buddhist monks.

Of the Buddhist monks included in the relief team, two are from Hill Chadigang Temple, two from Rangamati Moitree Vihar and one each from Fatikchari Bouddha Vihar, Cement Crossing Buddhist Temple and Agrabad Biswa Moitree Bouddha Vihar, Chittagong. Another two monks joined them in Khagrachari.

The team will hand over cash Taka 25 thousand and 40 sacks of clothes to the representatives of the Sajek victims. Additionally, it will give each affected Jumma family three saplings - one of mahogany, one of litchi and one of Belgium tree (?).

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## **Breaking News**

### **UPDF members arrested from Chittagong**

*chtnews.com*

*June 21, 2008*

**JOINT FORCES have arrested Alkesh Chakma, a central committee member of the Democratic Youth Forum, a front organisation of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), from Hathazari, Chittagong.**

Another member of DYF, Pulok Chakma, and a paramedic student, Ani Bikash Chakma, were also arrested. The joint forces arrested them at 2 p.m. from house rented by Ani Bikash Chakma.

## **Attempted rape of a minor Jumma girl in Baghaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 115/2008, June 25, 2008*

**An unidentified settler has attempted to rape a 13-year old Jumma girl in Nalkata under Baghaichari Upazila of Rangamati district.**

The incident took place on 23 June about 8 a.m. when Ruma Chakma d/o Ananda Chakma went to a nearby stream to fetch water. Finding her alone, the settler, who is of 35 to 40 years of age, grabbed her.

As she screamed for help, the settler struck her with his *dao* (a one-edged sharp knife) leaving a cut-wound of a few centimeters deep in her right elbow. The settler had run away before the villagers reached the scene. The girl could not tell his name.

Ruma Chakma was then admitted to Baghaihat Health Complex.

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## **Raid, torture and search in Belaichari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 116/2008, June 25, 2008*

**Military personnel have tortured 3 Jummas and searched a house during a raid in Bangalkaba village under Belaichari Upazila of Rangamati district. The whole operation lasted for about 4 hours, between 6 to 10 a.m.**

On 24 June, a group of military personnel led by Captain Tanvir from Merangchara camp raided the village of Bangalkaba. "Two half-masked JSS members were along with them", a human rights activist quoted one of the victims as saying.

The soldiers interrogated three bazaar-bound Jummas about the whereabouts of the local activists of the United People's Democratic Front and when they said they did not know anything about it, the infuriated army men beat them up. The torture victims are Ananda Talukder (20) s/o late Dharendra Talukder, Toroi Chakma (26) s/o Bijoy Basanta Chakma and Dipak Chakma (20) s/o unknown.

The soldiers then broke into the house of Sonaram Tonchongya (25) s/o Sojit Tonchongya and searched it. No one was there in the house, as the family was away to their Jum field.

The army personnel also looked for Kalamon Chakma (45). But when they did not find him at home, they picked up his wife Kalapudi Chakma (40). However, they released her from a place near Belaichari bazaar on way to the camp.

The soldiers forayed into the tea shop of Dulal Tonchongya (28) s/o Kalendra Tonchongya, ate refreshments and walked away. Not a single penny was paid for this.

Villagers alleged that two JSS members were seen along with the army. "One of the victims told me that they could recognise the half-masked JSS members who boasted that they had found ally in the army. He also said that the JSS men had told the villagers that they would finish off the UPDF very soon", the human rights activist told chtnews.com on condition that his named is not mentioned in the report for security reasons.

Over the last two years, the JSS has been routed from most of the areas it held for decades. Recently, it lost almost the whole of Belaichari area to the UPDF which has gained in popularity for the role it has played in the campaign against land grabbing in CHT. Since then, the JSS has been trying to regain the area. They have become so desperate that they had no qualm about finding ally in the military to oust their rival.

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## **Alakesh Chakma and others released**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 117/2008, June 25, 2008*

**Alakesh Chakma, Publication Secretary of the Democratic Youth Forum, was released yesterday after 3 days of captivity. The three others, arrested along with him, were also freed.**

Plainclothes security personnel arrested them on 21 May from Hathazari, Chittagong, and kept them incommunicado in detention until their release.

Alakesh Chakma, who has just completed his Masters courses in Social Sciences from Chittagong University, was set free from Agrabad area of Chittagong city. He came to Chittagong to know his result of the exams.

The security personnel released Ani Chakma on 24 June from Gate No. 2 of Chittagong University. He is a paramedic student of a private institute in Chittagong.

Pulok Chakma and Simon Chakma were released today. Pulok was in Chittagong for medical treatment for his wound sustained when he was attacked by a wild bore. Both of them hail from Kawkhali under Rangamati district.

After release Ani Chakma told chtnews.com that a man of mongoloid stock accompanied the security personnel during the arrest. He believes that there was ample evidence to suggest that the arrests were made after tip-off from a Jumma.

He said the plainclothes security personnel, who arrested them, spoke Chakma and Marma fluently and added that he was tortured during interrogation.

On the day they were arrested, security personnel also searched for Sonali Chakma, President of Hill Women's Federation and wife of Alakesh Chakma, at her father's residence at West Naranghia, Khagrachari.

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## **Fresh tensions in Sajek as settlers build houses on Jumma's land**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 118/2008, June 27, 2008*

**There have been reports of fresh tensions in Sajek, the scene of the 20 April deadly arson attack, as the settlers have begun building houses on lands belonging to the Jumma people.**

Sources said on 24 June, Tuesday, about 2 pm, Md. Helal (23) began building a house on the lands of Mongol Sen Chakma (45) in Purbopara village. Helal's father and mother were assisting him in the work.

When Mongol Sen Chakma's wife, Mrs. Poran Sona Chakma (38) protested, a heated altercation ensued between them. In the face of the protest the settlers stopped work and left.

However, a few minutes later they came back with more fellow settlers - among whom was "butcher" Shah Alam - and chased Poran Sona Chakma away. The settlers were armed with *dao* and other sharp weapons.

On 26 June, a group of military personnel from Baghaihat zone surrounded the house of Poran Sona Chakma and searched for her husband Mongol Sen Chakma. He was not available at home at the time.

Sources said while the army personnel continue to intimidate the Jummas with arrests and house searches, the settlers keep on building new houses on the lands of the Jumma villagers. "They (the settlers) have already built a number of houses in Purbopara in the last few days" said a resident of Sajek, adding that the situation was tense.

He further said that more settlers had been brought in from Marishya, and that there was growing fear among the Jummas that another attack was being planned.

On 20 April, the illegal settlers, backed by a strong contingent of army personnel, launched an attack on four Jumma villages in Sajek and burnt 77 houses, a church and two Unicef-run schools to ashes.

There have been protests and condemnation against the attack, and national human rights organisations demanded a judicial inquiry into the incident. They sent their own inquiry teams into the area, held press conferences and published reports on the incident.

Yet, the government has failed to bring those responsible to justice. Not a single settler has so far been arrested in connection with the incident.

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## **Two UPDF members, 3 villagers arrested in Kudukchari**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 119/2008, June 28, 2008*

**Two members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) and three villagers have been arrested from Kudukchari under Rangamati district, sources said.**

Sources in Rangamati said at about 10:30 a.m., military personnel from Kudukchari camp arrested Sadallya Chakma (25) s/o Bagya Chakma from his house in the village of Hazachari Purbo Para, while Kalatukya Chakma (21) s/o Bhupati Chakma and Rupa Moni Chakma (18) s/o

Gollya Chakma of village Headman Para were arrested from the house of Amalendu Chakma, an ex-member of Ghilachari Union Council.

Both Kalatukya Chakma and Rupa Moni Chakma went there after hearing noises made by the army personnel.

Rupa Moni Chakma is a student of Rangamati Government College.

The soldiers also arrested two UPDF members. One of them has been identified as Jagot Chakma (30). The name of the other one could not be known.

All of them have been handed over to Rangamati police station.

The army personnel also searched the houses of UPDF members A P Chakma (45) and Tapan Chakma (38) in the village of Hazachari Purbo Para. After that, the soldiers took the wives of AP Chakma and Tapan Chakma to the R.P. check post at Kudukchari camp. However, they were released subsequently.

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## **UPDF activist killed in Bandarban**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 120/2008, June 29, 2008*

**A member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) was gunned down in Kanayapara, Bandarban, on the night of 26 June.**

Sources said a group of armed miscreants led by Rajan Chakma, a local JSS commander, surrounded the house of Priya Tonchongya (32) a little past midnight on that day.

They called him out of the house and shot him point blank in front of his wife and two daughters. The miscreants then left the scene.

Priya Tonchongya joined UPDF a few months back along with many others from the area.

Choton Kanti Tonchongya, an active member of the UPDF in Bandarban, blamed the armed members of the JSS for the killing and demanded their immediate arrest.

Some national newspapers, including the Daily Star and the Bengali daily Ittefaq, carried the news, but stopped short of blaming the JSS.

A case has been filed with Bandarban police station in connection with the incident. But no one has been arrested till the writing of this report at 7 p.m.

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## **Army commander orders Jummas to transact in a new bazaar**

*chtnews.com*

*News No. 121/2008, June 29, 2008*

**On 23 June, an army commander in Marishya ordered the Jummas to transact in a new bazaar or market place opened at Dui Tila after settling hundreds of Bengali settler families in the area.**

The commander of Dui Tila camp has been trying to force the Jummas to go to the new bazaar for the last few months, sources in Dighinala said. But they could not give his name.

"You must come to this new bazaar and sell all your produce here. You are barred from selling them in any other market." the commander was quoted by a Jumma resident in Dighinala, Khagrachari district as ordering the Jumma villagers in Dui Tila area.

Over the last few months, the military has settled hundreds of new Bengali settlers after taking away land from the Jummas. In the process the settlers have destroyed many houses, orchards and fruit gardens of the Jumma villagers.

Now the army wants a new market to be open in the area in the interest of the settlers. But Jummas has opposed the idea.

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**chtnews.com** is an independent and voluntary online news service dedicated to projecting and analyzing the current events in the Chittagong Hill Tracts from the perspective of the Jumma people's struggle for right to self-determination.

For further information please contact at: **chtnewsonline@gmail.com**

## Photo feature

### Changing Life in a Murung Village

chtnews.com

March 20, 2008

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of Murung nationality, the third largest ethnic group in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We intend to release the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the first of the six-picture series.*

#### Photo1 of 6:

Kapru Para, a Murung village nestled on picturesque Chimbuk hill 45 km south-east of Bandarban town in South CHT. The Bangladesh army has reportedly planned to acquire 2,400 acres of



01- partial view of Kapru Para, Chimbuk

land inhabited by Murung nationality. Kapru Para is one of many villages that will face total destruction if the plan is implemented. In 2006, the BD Army built so-called "Neelgiri", a posh tourist resort, on 16 acres of traditional Jum land of the Murung people. It was inaugurated by the incumbent army chief General Moeen U Ahmed. The Chief Adviser Fakruddin Ahmed will stay here during his tour of Rangamati and Bandarban on 27 March. Another dignitary who graced this tourist resort is

Foreign Affairs Adviser, Mr. Iftekar Ahmed, who visited Bandarban in the end of last year.

One of the lesser known facts about the attitude of the Jumma people towards the liberation war of Bangladesh is that during the war's initial period the slain President General Ziaur Rahman took shelter in a Murung village. It was because of sincere cooperation of the "savage" Murung people that the General could conduct successful military operations against the marauding Pakistani Army.

But what did the Murungs get in return? After 36 years of independence, they still remain one of the most backward communities in Chittagong Hill Tracts. Governments have come and gone, but they remain where they had been. During the last decades, they only saw their jum lands being taken away by outsiders.

During his visit, the Chief Adviser is scheduled to speak to the residents of Kapru Para. Will he assure them that his government will not take any decision that might cause their displacement and that they will be able to live as dignified citizens?

### Changing Life in a Murung Village

chtnews.com

March 21, 2008

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of Murung nationality, the third largest ethnic group in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are releasing the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the second of the six-picture series.*

**Photo 2 of 6:**

Nowadays Murung girls and women wear western dresses alongside their traditional ones. The males also no longer grow long hair. Most of the Murungs have converted to Christianity. Previously, they were either Buddhist or followers of a homegrown faith called Krama. The new religion has begun to change their lifestyle thanks to the influence of the Christian NGOs.



**02-Murung girls and women**

But the Murungs are still lagging far behind in education. One of the causes for this scenario is language problem. The Murungs cannot and do not communicate in Bangla. In Kapru

Para, there are two churches and one primary school established by Mrochet, a local NGO.

Neither the government, nor the local representative bodies takes care of the needs and interests of the Murung people. The Regional Council has only one seat for Tanchangyas and Murungs combined. It is now held by Nilu Tanchangya. The Murungs allege that he has never enquired about their well being, nor visited any of their villages. Around 80 percent of the Murungs did not even hear his name.

### Changing Life in a Murung Village

*chtnews.com*

*March 22, 2008*

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of*

*Murung nationality, the third largest ethnic group in Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are releasing the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the third of the six-picture series.*

**Photo 3 of 6: Murung women at work**

Murung women are hard working. They work both at home and in the Jum field. In the Jum they grow rice, cotton, sesame, chilli, ginger, turmeric and vegetables. They also grow different kinds of fruit orchards such as pineapples, orange, papaya and jackfruit. Nowadays many of them have turned to teak and other cash yielding tree plantations. In the area bamboo grows abundantly - however this year the bamboos have begun to die out.



**03-Murung woman at work**

The Murungs also tend cows, buffalos and pigs; and rear poultry at home. Generally, they live in a subsistence economy.

There is a rumour in the village that their lands will be taken away for expansion of military facilities. This has made them worried about their future. None save one has documents concerning ownership of their lands.

Of the 38 families, only Lachyong Murung got documents for his land. He was a commander of a militia formed in the days of "insurgency" to counter the Shanti Bahini guerrillas. He used his clouts to register his land with the government land office. None others of village have been granted land settlement. It is quite irony that the government should deny them the right to have documents in relation to their lands while thousands of illegal Bengali settler

families have been provided so-called khas lands along with title documents. It would be singularly inhumane if they are forced to leave their ancestral village in order to make room for expansion of military facilities.

Generally, the Murungs are not familiar with the idea of private ownership of land. Their society is a kind of communistic society in which land is own by the whole community. There is a increasing demand that the government of Bangladesh respect this customary land laws of the Jumma nationalities including Murungs.

## Changing Life in a Murung Village

*chtnews.com*

March 24, 2008

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of Murung nationality, the second largest ethnic group in Bandarban district of Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are releasing the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the fourth of the six-picture series.*

**Photo 4 of 6:** Climbing up and down hills a part of everyday life

Life is quite hard in the mountainous region of Chimbuk. The Murung people have to trek long distances to reach a market place. If their village and their traditional jum land are taken away, they would have no other place to go. The only option open for them is to cross over to Myanmar.

The government is tight-lipped about the possible land acquisition in Chimbuk. Our correspondent inquired with the government Land Office in Bandarban. But unfortunately the office was not forthcoming. One Jumma office clerk informed: "as far as I know the process has already begun to acquire land in Chimbuk." But he

refused to show the documents or divulge details. The village elders in Kapru Para said that in 2005, the commander of Ruma garrison held a meeting with Headmen, Karbaris (village chief) and village elders and made known the plan to acquire lands in four Mouzas, namely Sepru Mouza (500 acres), Galenga Mouza (900 acres), Lemupalong Mouza (500 acres) and Lulain Mouza (500 acres). He urged them to accept compensation and leave the area.



*04-climbing up and down hills a part of everyday life*

But the Murungs refused to accept such blatant disregard of their life and livelihood lying down any further. On 14 December 2005, they submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner of Bandarban to scrape the plan. Mr.

Ranglai Murung, Headman of Raingkong Mouza and chairman of Sualok Union, played a leading role in organising opposition to the said land acquisition plan. This is because of this that the joint forces arrested him on 23 February 2007, immediately after the imposition of state of emergency in Bangladesh.

On the other hand, the army put an embargo on Jum cultivation in these areas in 2005. Since then, Murungs have not been able to cultivate jum in the designated areas. This year many Murung families tried to prepare their land for jum farming, but the soldiers prevented them. The government did not arrange any alternative to jum cultivation for them. Deprived of the right to jum farming, many Murung families now find it hard to make both ends meet. Many go starving. Their economic life has begun to shutter.



## Changing Life in a Murung Village

chtnews.com

March 25, 2008

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of Murung nationality, the second largest ethnic group in Bandarban district of Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are releasing the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the fifth of the six-picture series.*

**Photo 5 of 6:** filling pots with water at a reservoir near the village

The Murung children help their parents with household chores. They even work at the Jum fields. However, nowadays the children



*05-filling pots with water at a reservoir near the village*

go to school. In Kapru Para, there is a primary school built by Mrochet, a local NGO dedicated exclusively to the overall development of the Murung nationality. The Christian missionaries are also active in the area. They have built schools and churches in almost every

Murung village. Caritas, a Christian NGO, has one school in Emoy Para in Chimbuk area. In Niak Para village there is one Buddhist temple, but no school.

The literacy rate of the Murungs is not known. In Kapru para, our reporter did not meet any one who passed Secondary School Certificate exam. However, if the current enthusiasm for education

in Murung society continues, in the next 10 years the CHT will see a dramatic increase in the literacy rate of the Murung people. But with one BIG caveat: they are not displaced by the government plan to acquire 2,400 acres of land for military purposes.

## Changing Life in a Murung Village

chtnews.com

March 26, 2008

*Recently, our reporter visited Kapru Para in Bandarban to investigate the impact of outside interaction on the life of Murung nationality, the second largest ethnic group in Bandarban district of Chittagong Hill Tracts. We are releasing the findings in a series of photographic expositions. Please find attached the last of the six-picture series.*

**Photo 6 of 6:** Long Drun Murung: a torture victim

Last year, members of Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) from Neelgiri camp picked up Long Drun Murung and tortured him mercilessly. No body, except perhaps the BDR men, knows what his crime was. From Neelgiri camp he was sent to Thanchi police station and from there to Bandarban Thana. Later on, the village elders of Kapru Para pleaded with the district administration and got him released.



*06-Lung Drun*

As a result of the torture, Mr. Long Drun Murung lost his mental balance. He cannot recall what really happened after the arrest, falls into delirium and gets frightened out of his wit when he sees any soldier. The army and BDR often come to visit him to enquire about his physical and mental condition. One wonders whether the BDR is testing any drug on him. His relatives

said he was completely healthy - both physically and mentally - before the arrest. They specifically accused Md. Jashim, the camp commander, for the mental illness of Mr. Long.

The Murungs are a simplistic and over credulous people. They do not understand ethnic cleansing, nationalism and politics. Such words are alien to them. But they are quite worried about their future and conscious of the conspiracy to grab their land.

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