

Tripura woman hit by bullet from army's target practice

chtnews.com

News No. 01/2009, January 18, 2009

A Tripura woman has been grievously wounded when she was hit by a live bullet fired by the army conducting target practice in Latiban under Panchari Upazila in Khagrachari district.

The incident occurred yesterday, 17 January, at about 10am near Rajamoni Army Camp when 29-years old Madhuri Tripura of Karigorpara village was on her way to work. She was hit in the thigh.

The soldiers under the command of Subedar Mohammad Hannan had been conducting target practice without giving prior notice to the nearby villagers.

Quoting Madhuri Tripura's husband Horendra Tripura, a human rights activist in Khagrachari told chtnews.com that after the incident village elders went up to the camp commander to make a complaint.

However, the commander at first refused to acknowledge that his soldiers were involved, and suggested that she was hit by UPDF firing.

The village elders strongly protested his remarks, and in the end the commander had to retract and admit the fact of the incident.

He then asked them to bring her to the camp. From the camp she was taken to Panchari Health Complex. But when her condition deteriorated, she was transferred to the Combined Military Hospital in Chittagong.

.....

Army forcing Jummas to sell goods at cheaper price

chtnews.com

News No. 02/2009, January 19, 2009

The army is forcing the Jummas to sell their produce such as dried turmeric and ginger at throwaway prices to the Bengali traders in Baghahat bazaar of Sajek in Rangamati district, alleged a human rights activist, who requested anonymity, citing security reasons.

He said Saturday is market day in Baghahat. On last Saturday, 17 January, the Commanding Officer (CO) of Baghahat army zone, Lt. Col, Anisuzzaman, forced five Jumma villagers to sell their ginger at Taka 40 per kg, much cheaper than the market price.

At the market it sells at Taka 65 per kg.

According to him, Arun Mohan Chakma (53) s/o Lakshmi Chakma, Anil Kanti Chakma (52) s/o late Kanti Chakma, Shanti Bikash Chakma s/o Badi Chandra Chakma, Joton Kumar Chakma of Bhaibonechara village and Anil Kanit Chakma (30) s/o Shukar Singh Chakma of Hazachara village were forced to sell their produce at such a throwaway price.

“The Jummas each brought 80 kgs of ginger to the market, the aggregate value of which stands at Taka 26,000. Therefore, clearly they have been made to lose Take 10,000.” he said.

He said he also received reports of such forced selling from Dighinala, but could not give details.

.....

Terrorist attack in Sajek, one terrorist dies when resisted

chtnews.com

News No. 03/2009, January 20, 2009

Reports say one terrorist has been killed when villagers resisted an attack on a UPDF house in Sajek under Rangmati district.

The terrorists, 15 in number and led by Chinu Marma, encircled the house at Choinoichara village in the small hours last night and then set it on fire after looting valuables.

When the villagers came to know of the incident, they blocked the road and fought the terrorists. One of the terrorists was killed in their own “friendly fire”, sources said. However, the name of the deceased could not be known immediately.

The terrorists also beat up five villagers during the attack. They have been identified as Kina Chan Chakma (45) s/o Rangahulo Chakma, Chikkakala Chakma (30) s/o unknown, Kalacheda Chakma (22) s/o late Budu Chakma, Bhagyojit Chakma (25) s/o Bannya Chakma and Ripon Chakma s/o Bharat Bijoy Chakma.

Besides being tortured, the victims were also made to carry the dead body up to the river bank of Sajek and were tortured there again.

The terrorist attack is believed to have been carried out to foil an election meeting called by UPDF. The meeting is scheduled to be held today.

The terrorists are remnants of an armed group patronized by a regional party whose headquarters are based in Rangamati.

Members of this armed group have recently ganged up with the military and the local leaders of the Awami League to make sure their favourite candidates win in the upcoming Baghaichari Upazilla elections.

They have been terrorizing, intimidating and coercing the innocent villagers in Baghaichari for the last few days.

On 14 January, the terrorists looted away cash Take 35 thousand and other goods from three shops in Ugalchari of the area. Three persons were wounded when they resisted the terrorists. They are Mohiuddin (20), Nazrul Islam (24) and Abbas Uddhin (30).

A local newspaper published from Chittagong treated the incident but stopped short of revealing the identity of the terrorists.

The army also did nothing either to prevent the looting or to nab the terrorists after the incident.

.....

Armed terrorists kidnap a UZ candidate in Barkal

chtnews.com

News No. 04/2009, January 21, 2009

A gang of armed terrorists allegedly kidnapped Santosh Chakma, a candidate for Barkal Upazila Chairman, yesterday while he was returning from a campaign meeting held at Tripurachara bazaar under Barkal Upazila in Rangamati district.

“Mr. Chakma was kidnapped from Kukichara area” newspapers said without mentioning the identity of the kidnappers.

But some described the incident as a “friendly kidnapping”, designed to garner sympathy votes in the election.

The terrorists belong to a small armed group which has ganged up with Awami League and the military in Baghaichari to make sure their favourite candidates win in the Upazila election.

Mr. Santosh Chakma is an active member of the Awami League.

The terrorist gang is harboured by a powerful leader of a regional political party whose headquarters are based in Rangamati.

Most of the time during the state of emergency the group members remained dormant in a corner in Baghaichari area, but they have been most active in the last few days under the auspices of the military.

They are being used to curb the influence of the UPDF in the area and intimidate and coerce its supporters in the election.

.....

Army arrests supporters of a candidate in Mahalchari

chtnews.com

News No. 05/2009, January 21, 2009

There are serious allegations against the military of breaking neutrality and campaigning for its favourite candidates in various Upazilas of Khagrachari district.

One report said the Bizitola camp commander, Captain Mohammad Alamgir (13 Bir), is pressurising the voters to cast their votes in favour of Ula Prue Marma.

Mr. Marma, an Awami League member, is contesting for the post of Chairman in Mahalchari Upazila.

Today, at around 1pm, soldiers led by a Warrant Officer from Bizitola camp detained four supporters of his rival candidate Mr. Sona Ratan Chakma from the village of Bodanala.

The arrested have been identified as Amiyo Kanti Chakma s/o Karmasur Chakma age 40 and Mera Chakma s/o Zin Mohan Chakma age 40 of Bodanala village and Mohammad Bokkor age 35 and Mohammad Nasiruddin age 22 from Lemuchari village.

They have been taken to the camp, sources in Khagrachari said.

Mr. Sona Ratan Chakma is known to be backed by the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) and commands support from both the Jummas and Bengalis.

The Mahalchari Zone commander and his second in command Ziaul Haq (13 Bir) are also alleged to be pressurizing the Bengali voters to cast their votes in favour of the Awami League candidate, Ula Prue Marma.

The army is also allegedly campaigning for Bakul Chakma in Panchari and Animesh Dewan alias Sudukya in Khagrachari Upazilas to stem the victory of the UPDF-backed candidates.

In Lakshmichari, the army is intimidating the supporters of Remrachai Marma, who is contesting for the post of Chairman. He is believed to have the blessing of the UPDF.

The army is openly backing Deva Rani Chakma, wife of Anil Chakma, in this Upazila.

Anil Chakma was a member of the UPDF but was expelled for embezzling party funds and breaking party disciplines a few years ago.

Since then he and his wife have been working for the army, alleged most of the voters in Lakshmichari.

.....

Two supporters of a candidate arrested by army in Lakshmicahri

chtnews.com

News No. 06/2009, January 21, 2009

Two supporters of Remrachai Marma, a candidate for the post of chairman of Lakshmichari Upazila, were arrested in Lakshmichari, Khagrachari district.

The army arrested Ani Chakma (20) s/o Prabin Bikash Chakma and Dipak Chakma (19) s/o Hridoy Kumar Chakma yesterday at around 4:30pm from in front of the Zone's canteen while they were returning home riding Remrachari Marma's motor bike.

Both of them are students and hail from the village of Morachengey. Ani Chakma passed Higher Secondary Certificate exam last year and is seeking admission to Universities, while Dipak Chakma is a candidate for HSC exam in Manikchari College.

Lt. Col. Sharif, commander of Lakshmichari zone, ordered their arrest.

They were later handed over to the police. But it is still unclear what charges have been brought against them.

The army is openly backing Mrs. Deva Rani Chakma, a candidate for the post of chairman, and has been intimidating the supporters of Remrachai Marma.

Mr. Marma is believed to have the blessing of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF).

.....

UPDF member arrested in Belaichari

chtnews.com

News No. 07/2009, February 12, 2009

A member of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) has been arrested in Belaichari Upazila under Rangamati district.

Sources said UPDF member Kanak Baran Chakma alias Rupen, aged 20, s/o Bimalendu Chakma (mother's name Ratto Chakma) was arrested on Wednesday, 11 February, at about 1 pm from a tea shop at Dhupshil. He is a resident of Basanta Nichpara (Downhill) village.

Captain Tanvir from Dhupshil camp made the arrest. Mr. Chakma was tortured badly and taken to the camp.

.....

Army raids UPDF leader's house

chtnews.com

News No. 08/2009, February 12, 2009

Army has raided the house of Ruikhoi Marma, a central committee member of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), in the village of Bot-toli under Lakshmichari Upazila in Khagrachari district.

According to sources a group of 13 army personnel led by Lt. Col. Sharifuddin Ahmed, Commanding Officer of Lakshmichari zone, carried out the raid at 11 am today.

The soldiers beat up Rajeshwari Chakma, wife of Ruikhoi Marma, and their daughter-in-law Mrs. Najjai Marma and interrogated them about his whereabouts.

Ruikhoi Marma was not at home during the raid.

The army personnel also ransacked the house and placed his family members under house arrest.

The incident comes within two days of the first raid on 10 February when four Jumma villagers were tortured.

They are Chokkya Chakma, aged 45, his wife Sneha Moyee Chakma,

aged 35, their daughter Bali Chakma, aged 20, and Jagadish Chakma, aged 70.

The soldiers also took away Taka 1,000 from Jagadish Chakma.

A group of 26 army personnel led by Lt. Col. Sharifuddin Ahmed conducted the raid.

.....

Two Jummas including a woman arrested in Lakshmichari

chtnews.com
News No. 09/2009,
February 16, 2009

Two Jumma villagers including the wife of a UPDF member were arrested during an army raid in Lakshmichari Upazila under Khagrachari district.

Reliable sources said in the small hours of 16 February (3am) a group of army personnel from Lakshmichari zone raided

Breaking News

JSS (Reformist) leader Chanra Shekhor Chakma shot in Rangamati

chtnews.com
February 25, 2009

Chandra Shekhor Chakma, a top ranking leader of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Reformist) and ex-General Secretary of the JSS, has been shot near his home at Champaknagar in Rangamati town. The incident occurred at around 10AM when he was coming back home after a meeting with his supporters. The assailants, who waylaid him, shot him at point-blank range.

Mr. Chakma has been rushed to Chittagong Medical College hospital in critical condition.

The Reformist leaders of the JSS has condemned the terrorist attack on Chandra Shekhor Chakma and blamed the Santu Larma faction of the JSS for it.

United Peoples Democratic Front's (UPDF) Rangamati unit organiser, Shanti Dev Chakma, also condemned the incident and urged all the democratic and peace loving people of the CHT to unite against the armed gangs let loose by Santu Larma.

the house of Lakshmi Chakma, a member of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF), in the village of Golachari.

The soldiers turned the house upside down in the name of search and took away Lakshmi Chakma's wife Sumitra Chakma (26) and another villager Bigunnya Chakma (26) s/o Chaga Chakma to the camp.

None of them has been released till the writing this report at 12 noon.

.....

Two UPDF activists arrested in Naniachar, released later

chtnews.com

News No. 10/2009, March 4, 2009

Two members of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) were arrested yesterday, Tuesday, from Ghilachari under Naniachar Upazila in Rangamati district.

UPDF office in Kudukchari said the UPDF men were on their way to Naniachar unit office of the party and were carrying coupons of the Hill Women's Federation with them. The coupons have been issued by HWF to raise funds for its programme to mark the 8 March International Women's Day and HWF's founding anniversary.

The arrestees are Sonamoni Chakma, aged 24, s/o Baghaia Chakma of village Kudukchari Uporpara and Sunendu Chakma, aged 20, s/o Hiron Kumar Chakma of village Biharpur, Rangamati Sadar.

They were arrested at around 8am by army personnel from Ghilachari camp and were handed over to the Naniachar police station subsequently.

No case has been filed against them, and the police had to release them last night after HWF activists and local Jumma elders put pressure on the Officer-in-charge.

However, the army refused to return the coupon books to the HWF.

.....

One Jumma girl child raped in Dighinala

chtnews.com

News No. 11/2009, March 9, 2009

As the world observes International Women's Day, a girl child is raped in a village in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, a region where an overwhelming presence of military and settlers makes the ethnic Jumma women most vulnerable to sexual assaults.

Four-year old Ety Chakma was raped by Mostafa Mian, a Bengali settler from Betchari village in Dighinala Upazila, yesterday, 8 March, sources in Khagrachari said.

Quoting the victim's father Zhimit Chakma and mother Joshi Chakma of village Shanti Lakshmipur in Madhyom Boalkhali under Dighinala Upazila, sources said the incident occurred at 1pm when Ety Chakma went to Miyeeni River, half a Kilometer away from their house, to have a bath.

At 3pm she was taken to Dighinala hospital from where she was referred to Khagrachari District Hospital.

“She is now lying on bed number 8 in the Child Unit of the hospital”, sources said.

Victim’s parents said the Officer-in-Charge of Dighinala police station had contacted them and taken their signature on a blank paper. They did not know the reason why the police did this.

Sonali Chakma, president of Hill Women’s Federation, condemned the incident and urged the government to bring the culprit to justice.

.....

Rape of Ety Chakma: HWF stages protest rally

chtnews.com

News No. 12/2009, March 9, 2009

The Hill Women’s Federation, a front organisation of the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF), today brought out a procession and staged a rally in Khagrachari in protest against the rape of Ety Chakma in Dighinala. (photo attached)

The procession took off from Red Square and paraded the main road of the town before ending at Swanirbhor Bazaar.

Thereafter, the processionists held a rally which was presided over by Rina Dewan, President of HWF Khagrachari District Unit. Konika Dewan, Organising Secretary of the HWF and Arpan Chakma, Secretary of PCP Khagrachari District Unit, also addressed the rally.

The speakers condemned the rape of four-year old girl Ety Chakma and demanded immediate arrest rapist Mostafa Mian.

The leaders regretted that no perpetrator of human rights violations has ever been arrested and punished, and added that “the life of the Jumma women will never be safe and such kinds of incidents are bound to recur until and unless the army and settlers are withdrawn from the Chittagong Hill Tracts.”

.....

Three innocent villagers arrested in Karallyachari

chtnews.com

News No. 13/2009, March 16, 2009

Three innocent Jumma villagers were arrested by army yesterday from Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir area in Karallyachari under Mahalchari Upazila in Khagrachari district.

Warrant Officer, Md. Wahid of 13 Bir, stationed at Sarnath Arannyo Kuthir, made the arrests at 9am while they were sawing logs in the Kuthir (Buddhist temple) area.

The arrested have been identified as Shanti Ranjan Chakma, 45, s/o late Ram Charan Chakma, Amar Singh Chakma, 40, s/o Biro Sen Chakma and America Chakma, 45, s/o Kalabiza Chakma. They are from the village of Karallyachari.

The army handed them over to the police station in Mahalchari. However, no case has yet been filed against them, said Sunil Jibon Chakma, ex-chairman of Kyang-ghat Union Council.

He further said newly-elected Mahalchari Upazila Chairman, Mr. Sona Ratan Chakma contacted the Mahalchari zone headquarters of the army yesterday and pleaded for their release; but his request went unheeded.

“I have heard that there will be a meeting this morning at 10am at Karallyachari where the issue will be discussed. Sona Ratan Chakma and army officers are expected to attend this meeting.” Mr. Sunil said.

During the state of emergency in 2007 and 2008, the army and settlers made repeated attempts to capture the Kuthir’s 8 acres of land and its adjacent areas. The local administration imposed section 145 in the area prohibiting the gathering of people and banning uplift work in the Kuthir.

Army personnel have been deployed to the area since January.

.....

UPDF leader’s house searched in Kudukchari, one arrested

chtnews.com

News No. 14/2009, March 16, 2009

The army has searched the house of a central committee member of the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) at Kudukchari and arrested a neighbor, sources in Rangamati said.

A group of army personnel from Kudukchari camp raided the house of Ananda Prakash Chakma, a member of the central committee of the UPDF, in the village of Pora Adam today at 5:45pm.

The house lies within 250 yards of the camp, near Kudukchari bazaar.

The soldiers turned the house upside down, searching for firearms or incriminating materials, but found none.

Mr. Ananda Prakash Chakma was not at home during the search, and the army personnel interrogated his wife Monica Chakma about his whereabouts.

Eyewitnesses said the soldiers were accompanied by a person with a bandanna covering his face.

“The masked man stood at a corner of the house and talked something into the ears of a soldier.” said an eyewitness who refused to be named for security reasons.

He said after the search the army picked up Tindukkya Chakma, 32, from his house.

Tindukkya Chakma, an innocent villager, has a false case against him and is on bail.

The army left the scene at 6:10pm.

.....

Two innocent villagers arrested in Kudukchari

chtnews.com

News No. 15/2009, March 18, 2009

Two innocent villagers have been arrested by army in Kudukchari under Rangamati district.

Sources said a group of army personnel led by a captain from Kudukchari camp raided the village of Kabukchari today and arrested Amal Chakma, 45 and Dharma Chan Chakma, 45.

The name of the commander could not be known; he came to the camp only two days ago.

The Jummas were picked up in the afternoon, and the army has taken them to the camp, the sources said without giving further details.

Kabukchari lies about one and a half km west of the camp. Today's raid follows another two such recent raids into the village in as many days.

.....

Conspiracy to capture Sadhana Bana Vihara continues

chtnews.com

News No. 16/2009, March 20, 2009

Conspiracy to capture 300 acres of land belonging to Sadhana Bana Vihara in Babuchara is still continuing as the army refuses to allow house building materials into areas north of Babuchara army check post. The army suspects that the materials will be used to construct a Buddhist temple there.

Forcible grabbing of Jumma people's land had become rampant after the declaration of a state of emergency in the country in January 2007. Even lands belonging to religious institutions were not spared.

At that time, the army and settlers also made numerous attempts to capture Sadhana Bana Vihara's land by force. But when the Jumma people of the area put up an organised resistance, they retreated but continued their efforts by changing their strategy.

The settlers filed a number of false cases against the Jummas, but in the end of the day the Jummas came out victorious.

On 18 February 2009, two Bengali settlers filed another law suit with the Khagrachari district judge's court, and the court issued an injunction ordering parties to maintain status quo.

After obtaining the court order, the army imposed an embargo on house building materials such as brick, cement, iron rod, corrugated iron sheet and sand to be carried beyond Babuchara army check post in the direction of Sadhana Bana Vihar area.

This resulted in immense suffering of the common people who are not being able to build new houses or repair old ones before the onset of the rainy season which is not far off.

One Juboraj Chakma, who resides near the office of Babuchara Union Council office, sought to import in corrugated iron sheets for the reparation of his house. But the army and Village Defense Party members prevented him from doing so. Like him, many other Jummas have faced similar experience.

Apart from the embargo, the army regularly checks vehicles carrying Jummas and holds them back for hours on end, for reasons best known to it.

On 12 March, an ambulance carrying the dead body of a Jumma was halted at the check post for 4 hours. On the same day, a jeep of a wedding party was also halted and held back for three hours.

"But the army never checks or halts the vehicles of the Bengali people", alleged a Jumma villager of the area.

"This is awfully discriminatory, and we are really sick of it", he further said.

Apparently to check out if the court order was being complied with, soldiers from Babuchara sub-zone regularly visit Sadhana Bana Vihara.

On 7 March, they entered the dining hall of the Vihar with their boots on and showered insults on Ven. Buddha Bongsha Bhikkhu, the chief priest of the temple. He and other monks were taking their pre-midday meal at the time.

On another occasion, the army ordered the chief priest to remove the bricks, iron rods and other house building materials from the Vihar area. But the monk told the army point blank that “that is not possible”.

While there is smoldering resentment against the unlawful embargo imposed by the army, the Jummas are also showing resilience. “We will no more take such injustices lying down. We will fight the legal battle, and do whatever we can to save Sadhana Bana Vihar.” said a villager echoing the general sentiment of his fellow Jummas in Babuchara.

.....

Sudhasindhu Khisha urges Santu Larma to quit party and RC

chtnews.com

News No. 17/2009, April 4, 2009

In an unprecedented and dramatic development, Sudhasindhu Khisha, a top ranking JSS leader, asked his boss Santu Larma to quit his party and RC posts, accusing him of being undemocratic, autocratic and morally depraved.

Mr. Khisha made the call yesterday while addressing a small gathering of students at Khagrachari town hall as a chief guest.

The meeting was also addressed, among others, by another JSS leader, Tatindra Lal Chakma, popularly known as Major Pele, Rasamoy Chakma, Sudhakar Tripura, Sudirgho Chakma and Kankon Chakma.

Mr. Khisha said Santu Larma’s intransigence and aggressive behaviour had been one of the contributory factors responsible for the non-implementation of the accord, and urged the government to implement the accord in toto.

About his party’s internal affairs, Mr. Khisha said “there is no central committee at the moment as per the constitution of our party” and added that Santu Larma has reduced the JSS into a “Samiti” or private company by running its affairs with the sole help of his relatives and cronies.

He urged him to quit the party and Regional Council posts in the interest of the Jumma people and lead a reclusive life outside the gaze of the public eye.

His remarks brought to the fore the deep division within the Jana Samhari Samiti party, which signed the 1997 CHT accord with the then Awami League government.

Mr. Khisha has been a long-time aide to Larma and one of the architects of the said accord.

The rift within the JSS camp surfaced in early 2006 when an attempt was made to topple Santu Larma at its national congress. The rift was over Mr. Larma’s corruption, nepotism and sex scandal.

Most of the central committee members became united against Mr. Larma, but ultimately their attempt failed when one of them, believed to be the second-in-command of Mr. Larma, betrayed and took the side with him at the last moment.

Subsequently, those who opposed Santu Larma came to be known as “reformists”, and a bloody infighting ensued between them killing over a dozen from both sides.

A reformist leader told chtnews.com on that they “cannot take it any more; enough is enough. Santu Larma must go.”

He heaped blame on Mr. Larma for the ongoing violent conflict among the Jummas and said “there can be no Jumma unity as long as he remains the top boss of the JSS.”

“What we want is JSS san Santu babu; and unity with UPDF.” he further said.

(The article is mostly based on a report published in the Daily Samakal today, 4 April 2009. The scanned copy of the Samakal report is attached herewith.)

.....

Committee formed to organise Boisabi rally in Khagrachari

chtnews.com

News No. 18/2009, April 5, 2009

A 31-member Boisabi Celebration Committee has been formed with noted educationist Ananta Bihari Khisha as its convenor and Nirapad Talukder as member secretary.

Besides, Kshetra Mohan Tripura and Monkyoching Chowdhury have been made joint convenors of the committee, which will be responsible for organising a rally on the occasion.

The committee was formed at a meeting held on 2 April at Khabangpujjya.

Boisabi -- whose name is derived from the acronym of Boishuk, Sangrai and Bizu in Tripura, Marma and Chakma languages respectively – is the biggest social event in the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

The committee’s Member Secretary Mr. Nirapad Talukder, who was elected vice president to Khagrachari Upazila in the last January elections, said they are working to make sure the rally is held smoothly and peacefully.

The committee will also publish a poster asking people to uphold the tradition and refrain from displaying ostentation in preparing food items during the festival, he said.

Our sources said preparations are also underway in Rangamati to organise a similar rally there.

.....

Jumma – settler communal tension in Ghilachari

chtnews.com

News No. 19/2009, April 6, 2009

There have been reports of heightened tension between Jumma villagers and illegal settlers in Ghilachari under Rangmati district over ownership of land.

Democratic Youth Forum leader, Alakesh Chakma from Rantgamati told chtnews.com that tension had been brewing over the last few days as the settlers began planting pineapple saplings on lands Jumma villagers claim to be their own.

The Jummas lodged a strong protest about it, but the settlers paid no heed.

The matter came to a head 3 days ago when the Jummas destroyed the planted saplings.

The settlers instantly made it an issue and tried to whip up communal sentiment against the Jummas.

Hundreds of settlers came out on the Rangamati – Khagrachari road yesterday, blocked vehicles and forced the passengers to witness “the destruction” of their pineapple gardens.

Alakesh Chakma farther informed that they were worrying for four Jumma villagers who had gone to Islampur bazaar, a settler dominated market place, yesterday. “They have not returned till now”, he said quoting villagers in the area. Two of them are from Nanakrum village and the other two from Guchagram (cluster village).

Another source said vehicular movement on Rangamti – Khagrachari road remained closed today.

“No vehicle is plying on the road, and some Bhantes (Buddhist monks) from Naniachar were supposed to attend a religious function in Ranamati town; but they could not go.” he said.

UPDF’s Rangamati district organiser Shanti Dev Chakma expressed concern over the incident and urged both the Jummas and settlers to stay calm.

He also urged the government to prevent the settlers from grabbing Jumma people’s lands.

.....

ADC, SP visit Ghilachari

chtnews.com

News No.20/2009, April 6, 2009

In a bid to quell the ongoing tension between the Jummas and Bengali settlers over land grabbing, the Additional Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati, Bishwajit Bhattacharya Khokan and the Superintendent of Police visited Ghilachari today at noon.

The ADC is reported to have promised to provide compensation to the settlers and urged them to withdraw the road blockade.

The Jummas expressed surprise at what they consider to be ADC’s misplaced attempt to placate the settlers.

A Jumma UP member accused the ADC of being biased, and said “It is unbelievable that the ADC should reward those who grabbed Jumma people’s lands in the first place.”

In another incident, the army carried out a raid into a Jumma village at Ghilachari where large numbers of villagers gathered together to defend themselves in the event of a possible settler attack.

No arrest was made during the raid on “17 Mile” area but it forced the Jummas to disperse.

.....

Section 144 clamped in Panchari

chtnews.com

News No.21/2009, April 9, 2009

The Panchari civil administration has imposed section 144 in College Gate area, where the Hill Student’s Council is scheduled to hold a commemoration meeting tomorrow for those killed in Logang massacre in 1992.

“The section 144 prohibiting assembly or gathering of people will be effective from 8am to 5pm tomorrow”, the announcement said.

Talking to chtnews.com, PCP president Ricoh Chakma said they had sent a letter to the TNO informing him about the program.

He further said there was no ground whatsoever, no law and order problem calling for the imposition of section 144, and added that “It has been done to foil the peaceful program of the PCP.”

Independent sources said the situation had been calm and peaceful before the announcement of the imposition of section 144 at 7:30pm. “There was no tension, no treat to public peace; and hence the notice came as a surprise to us all” said Khokon Chakma, a school teacher in the area.

.....

Section 144 withdrawn in Panchari

chtnews.com

News No.22/2009, April 9, 2009

The Panchari civil administration has withdrawn section 144 it imposed in College Gate area, where the Hill Student’s Council is scheduled to hold a commemoration meeting tomorrow for those killed in Logang massacre in 1992.

The withdrawal decision comes within two hours of its announcement at 7:30pm today. An official from Khagrachari Deputy Commissioner’s office phoned UPDF leader Ujjal Smriti Chakma at around 9:30pm to let him know the decision of the government to withdraw the section 144.

The PCP leaders said they will go ahead with the program as scheduled as there is no bar to it now.

.....

PCP observes Logang Massacre Day

chtnews.com

News No. 23/2009, April 10, 2009

The Hill Student’s Council has held a rally today in Panchari in Khagrachari district in commemoration of those killed in Logang Massacre in 1992.

At least at two points –Pujgang and Panchari army zone -- the army prevented hundreds of participants from coming to the meeting venue at College ground, one kilometer south of Panchari bazaar.

Despite that, the turn out has been satisfactory, PCP sources said, putting the figure at 1,200.

Presided over by PCP president Ricoh Chakma and conducted by its General Secretary Aungyo Marma, the meeting was addressed by Konica Dewan, Organising Secretary of Hill Women’s Federation and Sukiron Chakma, a member of the PCP, while Ratan Chakma read out the commemoration message.

Before the meeting, a team of the PCP and HWF met the TNO at his office and lodged a strong protest at the way the army was preventing the people from participating in the program.

However, the TNO brushed aside the complaint and instead ordered them not to use mike in the meeting. He also asked them not to bring out any procession, and to confine themselves to the rally.

In a bid to foil the commemoration meeting, the local military and civil administration in Panchari had imposed section 144 last night. However, they had to withdraw it subsequently after UPDF and its front organisations made a strong protest to the Khagrachari Deputy Commissioner.

Longang Massacre Day is a day which will never be forgotten by the Jumma people. It is often viewed as the My Lai of Chittagong Hill Tracts. On this day in 1992, a group of settlers in league with the paramilitary Bangladesh Rifles and Village Defense Party (VDP) personnel carried out an attack on unarmed Jumma civilians in Logang cluster village, killing at least 200 persons, including women and children, and burning down thousands of houses.

The incident evoked national and international condemnation, and acted as a catalyst to the formation of the National Committee for the Protection of Human Rights in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, which played a crucial role in drawing media attention to the just cause of the Jumma people.

To eyewash the international community, the then Khaleda government formed a one-member inquiry committee headed by Justice Sultan Hossain Khan. In his inquiry report, which was made public -- an unusual phenomenon in Bangladesh where such inquiry reports usually never see the light of the day -- Mr. Khan absolved the perpetrators and laid down the army version of the incident verbatim.

Not only that, he went to the extent of making a recommendation that the government should arm the murderer settlers for "self-defense". On the other hand, Mr. Khan maintained a complete silence about the need for safety and security of the Jumma villagers, who were the victims of the massacre.

The Jumma people, including the PCP, rejected the inquiry report of Sultan Hossain Khan and demanded exemplary punishment to the perpetrators.

.....

UPDF member arrested in Lakshmichari

chtnews.com

News No. 24/2009, April 11, 2009

A member of the United People's Democratic Front, popularly known by its acronym UPDF, was arrested by army in Lakshmichari under Khagrachari district on 7 April.

Party sources said UPDF member Rashik Chandra Chakma, 17, s/o Undujjya Chakma of Bardona village under Dullyatoli Union was arrested from the house of his relative at Jurgachari.

"Around 10pm a group of army from Lakshmichari zone raided the house of his relative and picked him up", UPDF's Niron Chakma in Khagrachari said and added that he was badly tortured in the camp before being handed over to the police the next day.

Quoting local sources he further said Rashik was booked under section 54 of the criminal procedure code and was sent to Khagrachari jail on 10 April, after 2 days confinement in the police station.

.....

UPDF greets CHT people on Boisabi

chtnews.com

News No. 25/2009, April 12, 2009

The central committee of the United Peoples Democratic Front (UPDF) has greeted the people of Chittagong Hill Tracts on the eve of the Great Boisabi festival, the main social event in the area.

In a statement issued to the media today, UPDF said Boisabi is a symbol of unity, solidarity and fraternity among all the nationalities in the CHT. However, a vested interest group is trying to destroy this unity in a planned way by imposing the “Bizu” of the Chakmas on all other nationalities. “Such an attempt will never be acceptable to the CHT people”, it further said.

The statement went on: “For the people to celebrate a national festival like Boisabi, what is required is a peaceful and democratic environment and people’s rights. Therefore, where people are continuously being subjected to repression and humiliation, where they are losing their lands and where there is no justice against such injustices, there can be no conducive environment for the celebration of the festival.”

“UPDF hopes that the present government will withdraw the military from CHT, resolve the land issue and establish full democratic environment in CHT as per its election pledges.” the statement further said.

.....

Boisabi rally held in Rangamati and Khagrachari

chtnews.com

News No. 26/2009, April 12, 2009

In celebration of the Great Boisabi festival in a somewhat revolutionary fervour different socio-cultural organisations have organised rallies in Rangamati and Khagrachari towns this morning, where placard wielding participants shouted against human rights abuses and land grabbing.

In Rangamati, the main banner reads “Festivity will be meaningful only when people enjoy their political rights”.

About 2,000 people took part in the rally that began at 11:30am from Poursova (Municipality) Auditorium. It ended in front of the Deputy Commissioner’s office at Kalindipur.

Another estimate put the figure at 4,000.

In northern CHT, Khagrachari, organised by Boisabi Celebration Committee, the rally was inaugurated by noted educationist Mr. Ananta Bihari Khisha and addressed among others by Shaney Alam, Chairman of Khagrachari Upazila, Kiron Marma, a businessman and social activist, Banshari Marma, Vice-chairman of Khagrachari Upazila, Ms Shapla Tripura, President of Khagrachari Mohila Samiti and Milon Dewan, Councilor of Khagrachari Poursova.

Various socio-cultural organisations, including Surya Shikha Club, Tannyabi and JUSAS, took part in the Boisabi procession which took off from Eyangdaw Buddhist temple and ended at Upazila ground.

According to an estimate, about 1,500 people from all walks of life and from different parts of the district participated in the procession.

They carried placards inscribed with various demands and slogans.

JSS men beat up five in Jibtoli

chtnews.com

News No. 27/2009, April 12, 2009

The armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti beat up five villagers at Jibtoli while they were on their way to Rangamati to attend a Boisabi rally today, UPDF sources said.

UPDF's Alkesh Chakma from Rangamati told *chtnews.com* that the incident occurred at 8:30am. The Jumma villagers were coming from Belaichari in a passenger boat and heading towards Rangamati to participate in the Boisabi rally, organised by pro-UPDF sympathizers.

The JSS members forced them to get off the boat, beat them up, and then forced them to go back home.

The victims are Swapan Bikash Chakma, 20, s/o Kalamon Chakma, Haladhar Chakma, 30, s/o Anuruddha Chakma and Regan Chakma, 20, s/o Shanti Lal Chakma of village Bangalkaba; Sushil Chakma, 20, s/o Milon Shankar Chakma of village Rajdhan and Madan Chakma, 20, s/o Chandra Lal Chakma of village Headman Para in Belaichari.

Army beats up Khg Municipality Councilor

chtnews.com

News No.28/2009, April 13, 2009

Army personnel have beaten up Monang Dewan, an elected Councilor of Khagrachari Municipality, at Zero Mile check post, sources from Khagrachari said.

Mr. Dewan went there to enquire into an allegation that the army at the check post was providing shelter to some miscreants who had kidnapped a Jumma woman.

After the beating, hundreds of Jummas converged on Zero Mile to lodge their protest.

An unconfirmed report said the army personnel involved in the beating have been closed.

UPDF President Prasit Khisha in a statement condemned the beating of Monang Dewan and demanded exemplary punishment to those involved in the incident.

He said there is no chance of peace in the CHT as long as the army remains there, and demanded that the authorities withdraw the army from Zero Mile check post permanently.

Withdraw check posts on Rangamati – Khagrachari road, demands UPDF

chtnews.com

News No.29/2009, April 14, 2009

United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) has called upon the government to stop harassing people in the name of checking, and withdraw all the so-called security check posts from Rangamati – Khagrachari road. *(photograph of a soldier checking a bus attached)*

Speaking to the *chtnews.com*, UPDF’s central committee member Ujjal Smriti Chakma said: “each and every vehicle plying on Khagrachari – Rangamati and Khagrachari – Chittagong road is halted and checked.”



“The security forces often harass passengers at these check posts” he added.

A government employee said: “Why there should be any check posts? I do not see any changes between pre and post accord situations in the area.”

All – Bengali and Jumma alike - are unanimous in their demand to withdraw all the check posts from Khagrachari – Rangamati road.

According to Democratic Youth Forum’s General Secretary Mithun Chakma, there are as many as eight check posts on Khagrachari – Rangamati road. These are at Mainikchari (Rangamati), Kuduksuri, Ghilachari, Bogachari, Betchari, Kerenganala, Bizitala and Zero Mile.

“They have become anachronistic even in the present-day Chittagong Hill Tracts although the area is still under military occupation and the army rules the roost.” he said.

.....

Two Jumma villagers arrested, released later

chtnews.com

News No. 30/2009, April 16, 2009

Two innocent Jumma villagers were arrested by army in a midnight raid in the village of Duluchari Headman Para in Kudukchari of Rangamati district on 13 April, as the whole of Chittagong Hill Tracts was busy celebrating 3-day Boisabi festival beginning 12 April.

The arrested Jummas – Gyana Ranjan Chakma, age 40, s/o Punong Dhan Chakma and Elin Chakma, age 22, s/o Dayal Krishna Chakma – were taken to Kudukchari army camp and beaten up severely.

They were, however, released the next day as the village elders exerted pressure on the army, who agreed to place the two in the “custody” of Mr. Prabha Ranjan Chakma, Chairman-in-charge of Kudukchari Union.

While Gyana Ranjan Chakma was arrested from his own house, Elin Chakma was picked up from the house of his brother-in-law, Sunil Kanti Chakma in the village.

Elin Chakma, who hails from Bhangamura in Naniachari Upazila, came there on a visit.

Sunil Kanti Chakma alleged that during the raid the army took away cash Take 1,250, 6 VCDs, 4 charge lights and a photo album from his house.

Of these, the army returned Taka 550, 1 VCD, 2 charge lights and the photo album. However, the army kept one photograph from the album, he added.

The raid was believed to have been made to arrest UPDF members in the area. Though the attempt failed, three of their families have been forced to go into hiding for fear of torture and harassment.

.....

JSS reformist activist shot in Rangamati

chtnews.com

News No. 31/2009, April 26, 2009

An activist of the Jana Samhati Samiti’s reformist faction has been shot and wounded in Rangamati town.

Sources in Rangamati said Pragati Chakma, age 35, a member of the JSS reformist faction, was shot at Devashish Nagar of the town today at around 8pm. He was shot in the head.

He has been admitted to Rangamati Sadar Hospital.

An ex-Chairman of Ghilachari Union, Mr. Chakma joined the JSS in 1998. However he broke away from it in 2006 differing with Santu Larma over many substantial issues including the question of handling UPDF-JSS conflict.

He has been highly critical of Santu Larma, and has provided open support to the UPDF in the recent months.

UPDF's Rangamati District Organiser Shanti Dev Chakma condemned the attack and urged the government to bring the culprits to justice.

He also called upon the people to resist the evil forces responsible for such acts of violence.

.....

Settlers destroy paddy field in Kudukchari

chtnews.com

News No. 32/2009, April 28, 2009

Settlers have destroyed a paddy field belonging to Brio Kumar Chakma, age 45, s/o Badipurno Chakma in Nabin Talukderpara of Bogachari under Rangamati district.

Quoting villagers, UPDF's Rangamati District Organiser, Shanti Dev Chakma said at around 4pm on Saturday, 25 April, Md Joynal (50) and his son Nurul Islam (18) from Bogachari cluster village began destroying the standing paddy crops with their daos (knife).

However, when Biro Kumar Chakma and his father resisted, the settlers ran away.

Land grabbing

A small plot of plough land measuring .15 acres belonging to Dhana Kumar Chakma (45) s/o Choidya Chakma of the same village has been forcibly occupied by a Bengali settler.

The settler erected bamboo fences around the said land one month ago.

Dhana Kumar Chakma lodged a complaint with the local Union Council member, Md. Phul Mian, but to no avail.

.....

Youth rally held in Mahalchari

chtnews.com

News No. 33/2009, May 4, 2009

The Democratic Youth Forum organised a youth conference in Mahalchari on May 1, with the slogan: "Strengthen national unity and fraternity, join the movement to protect land and national property of the Jumma people". (photo attached)



Held at Tholipara ground, the conference was presided over by Michael Chakma, Organising Secretary of the DYF and convenor of the preparatory committee of the conference.

While Remin Chakma conducted the conference, it was addressed, among others, by Mithun Chakma, General Secretary of DYF, Konica Dewan, General Secretary (in charge) of Hill Women's Federation, Sumen Chakma of PCP and Sorbananda Chakma and Zamini Kumar Chakma of DYF.



The conference was followed by a rally that paraded the streets of Mahalchari.

In the conference the leaders said: “the Semutang gas field belongs to the CHT people. While it is heartening to know that the government is taking initiative to launch production of gas at this field, we want to make it clear that the CHT people must have share in the use of the gas.”

They added that the CHT people did not get electricity after the construction of the Kaptai dam. They have always been discriminated against. Even the right of entrance to the Kaptai Electricity House has been almost restricted for the Jumma people. Although the Karnaphuli Paper Mill is situated in CHT area, the Jumma people do not have partnership in it.

“The CHT people have become alien to their own homeland. Thousands of acres of land have been forcibly taken away from them. The government and the army are direct participant in this orgy of land grabbing.” They said.

The leaders demanded that the government must withdraw army check posts, stop grabbing of land and put an end to military rule and repression in all its forms that is in place under code name Operation Uttoran.

Later a 19-member Mahalchari Thana committee of the DYf was formed with Sarbananda Chakma as President and Ushamoy Khisha as General Secretary.

.....

JSS (Santu) kidnaps UPDF member in Langudu

chtnews.com

News No. 34/2009, May 6, 2009

Armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu faction) have kidnapped an activist of the United People’s Democratic Front in Langudu of Rangamati district, said Michael Chakma, Organising Secretary of the Democratic Youth Forum.

Quoting local sources, he said, the incident occurred at about 3pm on 5 May when UPDF member Paresh Chakma, age 28, was on his way back home from Rangamati town after medical tests.

The JSS men led by Sandi alias Sidollya from Digholchari village halted the boat carrying him at Subolong bazaar and forced him to get off the boat.

Paresh Chakma is a full time member of the UPDF and had been working in Kattali area of Longudu.

His whereabouts has not been traced.

.....

Fresh tension mounts in Sajek

chtnews.com

News No. 35/2009, May 9, 2009

Tension has been mounting in Sajek area of Rangamati district since the announcement of an army deadline for the release of two settlers alleged to have been disappeared a few days ago.

The deadline ended at 10am yesterday, 8 May.

One source said on 7 May army personnel from Baghaihat Zone had arrested five Jummas from Gulokmachara and Nuopara villages. However, they were released later. Four of the victims have been identified as Gharbenga Chakma, age 26, Jibonneye Chakma, age 41, Phara Hulo Chakma, age 42 and Biju Kumar Chakma.

The source further said the residents of four villages – Retkaba, Gangaram Mukh, Baibachara and Jarulchari – had fled their homes for fear of arrest or settler attacks.

These villages had seen brutal attacks last year that led to the destruction of hundreds of houses and the killing of an innocent Jumma villager. The attacks were launched to facilitate land grabbing in the area.

Although information are still scanty, recent developments suggest the bad old days are staging a comeback.

One Milan Chakma told chtnews.com from Marishya by phone that about a week ago a group of settlers from Baghaihat had gone to village Simanachara to grab lands.

“They just came and began clearing the jungle.” he said. However, he could not clarify further as the phone line was noisy and cut off abruptly.

A UPDF leader in Dighinala said he had no idea, whatsoever, of any settler being kidnapped, and suggested that the story of disappearance of two settlers was merely a rumour that was spread in a calculated way to create pretexts for mounting attacks on Jumma villages.

“It has very much to do with land grabbing schemes of the settlers” he commented.

While the army has demanded the release of the allegedly kidnapped settlers, they have not yet disclosed their names.

.....

UPDF condemns killing of two innocent youth in Rangamati

chtnews.com

News No. 36/2009, May 12, 2009

The central office of the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) in a statement today, 12 may, condemned the killing of two Jumma youths in army firing on the night of 10 May at Badalchari in Rangamati district.

UPDF also demanded unconditional release of two others arrested during the same incident.

Terming the newspaper reports of the incident, published in a section of the national media quoting military sources, as untrue and distorted, the statement said the ill fated Jummas were killed in a premeditated manner in “exchange of fire with the army” to malign the image of the UPDF.

The statement further said not very long ago some over-ambitious army officers, out to get a quick promotion, arrested many UPDF members as well as innocent people, put weapons in their hands and sent them to jail after branding them as terrorists. These arrested Jummas are still languishing in the dark cells of the jails.

The statement termed as regrettable such incidents as this one that is happening during the present rule of Awami League, which came to power through an election, and said UPDF is a democratic organisation which has clearly stated in its constitution that it would carry out the struggle for people's rights through peaceful and democratic means.

.....

JSS goons attack PCP activists

chtnews.com

News No. 37/2009, May 20, 2009

Dozens of Hill Student's Council activists had been wounded in JSS attack yesterday in Bandarban, said Thui Kyo Ching Marma, a central committee member of the organisation.

He said the attack took place at Tambulpara area of Wagga Union at around 2pm as the PCP (Bengali acronym of Hill Student's Council) activists and supporters were on their way to Khagrachari to participate in their organisation's 20th anniversary.

"The JSS goons halted two jeeps carrying them (PCP activists), sent the female members and supporters back to Bandarban and took the remaining to a nearby jungle at gun point" said Mr. Marma quoting victims who returned to Bandarban.

"The PCP men were beaten up seriously", he added. "However, all of them were released subsequently."

Three of them have been seriously wounded and had to be treated in Rajstali Hospital. They are Mongyo Marma, Member Secretary of PCP Bandarban Unit, Sajeeb Tongchongya, Joint Convenor of PCP Bandarban Unit and Rung Bawm, member of the PCP.

The JSS goons also took away their money and mobile phone sets.

Mr. Thui Kyo further informed that earlier at around 1pm, prior to the JSS attack, the jeeps carrying PCP activists were also stopped by police at Dongchari, near Bangalhalia in Bandarban.

Police Sub-Inspector Al Amin checked their vehicles, searched their bodies and harassed them in the name of interrogation.

He kept them waiting for about an hour, Thui Kyo said quoting the victims.

"Obviously, the police and the JSS men carried out their actions in a coordinated way. There is certainly cooperation and understanding between the police and the JSS in thwarting PCP." Mr. Thui Kyo said.

He further informed that the intelligence agency personnel as well as armed members of the JSS have been threatening UPDF to close down its Bandarban Unit office that was opened a few days ago at Balaghata.

.....

Army harassment of Buddhist monks leads to public resentment: two arrested

chtnews.com

News No. 38/2009, May 21, 2009

Two members of the Hill Women’s Federation have been arrested while they were returning from a rally held in protest against harassment of a group of Buddhist monks at Bogachari under Naniachar Upazila of Rangamati district.

Sources from Rangamati said Ven. Bishuddhananda Mahathero, chief priest of Ratnankur Bana Vihara, and his fellow monks and novices were returning to their temple in Naniachar after attending a religious event in the village of Tarachari in Hengelchari area this morning.

When they reached Bogachari army check post at around 10:30am, the jeep carrying them was halted, and they were ordered to get down to allow the soldiers to carry out searches.

“The army wanted to check our vehicle and asked us to get down. However, I refused to obey their order, although all others in the vehicle got down reluctantly.” Ven. Bishuddhananda told chtnews.com by phone from Naniachar.

“I told the army that the jeep belongs to a Buddhist temple, and so there is no need to check it” he added.

But the on-duty army officer, Captain Shamim, was not ready to see his order being disobeyed.

He flung abusive languages at Ven. Bishuddhananda Mahathero and tried to intimidate him. At his order, a group of

army personnel came down to the scene with clubs and ropes in their hands. But the Bhante (monk) remained calm and peaceful, and refused to be daunted.

One and half hours later the Second-in-Command of Naniachar zone rushed there and asked for forgiveness from the Bhante for the mistake committed by overbearing Captain Shamim.

Protest and arrest

The news of the harassment of the Buddhist monks spread quickly, and people in Naniachar took out processions and held a protest rally instantly.

They condemned the harassment of Buddhist monks who have renounced their worldly life and been seeking Nibbana or supreme bliss.

However, the army arrested two of the participants – Ms Juthika Chakma, convenor of HWF’s Naniachar Unit, and Ms Mika Chakma, a member of HWF – while they were returning from the rally.

Latest: released

Latest reports said the army took the girls to the zone headquarters, forced them to put their signature on a blank sheet of paper, took their photographs and then set them free.

.....

Harassment of Buddhist monks: protest rally demands punishment of Captain Shamim

chtnews.com

News No. 39/2009, May 22, 2009

A protest rally in Naniachar today demanded punishment to Captain Shamim for harassing Buddhist monks yesterday.

About 2,500 took part in the rally that was presided over by Ramani Mohan Chakma, Chairman in charge of Naniachar Union.

The rally was addressed among others Kumentu Chakma, Vice-president, Naniachari Upazila, Pranati Ranjan Khisha, Chairman of Burighat Union, and Sentu Chakma, member Naniachar Union Council.

The speakers condemned harassment of Ven. Bishuddhananda Mahathero and other monks and novices and demanded exemplary punishment to Captain Shamim of Bogachari camp for the incident.

“If our demand is not met within a reasonable timeframe, we will go for tougher action.” they warned.

The rally was followed by a procession which took off from Rest House and ended at Old Market.

Later, the processionists handed the TNO a memorandum addressed to the Prime Minister.

A school teacher who attended the rally told chtnews.com that initially the TNO had refused to accept the memo. “Only when he saw the anger of the people, he agreed to take it” he added.

.....

Harassment of Buddhist monks: protests continue

chtnews.com

News No. 40/2009, May 24, 2009

Protests against harassment of Buddhist monks are continuing in and outside of the Chittagong Hill Tracts.

In Lakshmichari of Khagrachari district, more than 200 Buddhist followers staged demonstration today and submitted a memorandum to the Prime Minister through the UNO.

The memo was received by Md. Salimullah, Upazila Nirbahi Officer of Lakshmichari.

Mr. Sunity Bikash Chakma, Chairman of Laxmichari UP, Mr. Rajendra Chakma and Mr. Karunamoy Chakma led the demonstration and submitted the memo on behalf of the participants.

They demanded punishment to Captain Shamim for being responsible for the harassment of Ven. Bishuddhananda Thero and other Buddhist monks on May 21, an end to harassment of Jummas including monks at check posts, and withdrawal of all military and paramilitary check posts in the CHT.

Rangamati

In Rangamati town, about 500 people participated in a protest rally today. Held at Shilpakala Academy, the rally was addressed by Saranga Dhanu Chakma alias Shankar, a retired member of Bangladesh Air Force and also President of Banduk Bhanga Bana Vihar; Subhash Chakma, member, Jurachari Bana Vihar; Biswajit Barua, member, Naniachar Bana Vihar; Rahul Chakma, member, Banduk Bhanga Union; Ramani

Ranjan Chakma, Chairman in charge of Naniachar; and Sadananda Chakma, a lay follower.

After the rally, the participants marched to the office of the Deputy Commissioner in a procession and handed him a memorandum.

Protest in Chittagong

On Friday, 22 May, Buddhist followers organised a rally in front of press club in protest at the harassment of Ven. Bishuddhananda Thero.

The rally was addressed among others by Dr. Jina Bodhi Bhikkhu, professor of Chittagong University, Rinku Chakma, central committee member of Democratic Youth Forum, Dhiman Chakma, from Bandar area and Shyamol Chakma, a youth leader in Bandar.

Press club chairman Abu Sufian also addressed the rally expressing solidarity with the demands of the protestants.

The rally was followed by a procession which ended at Dosth Building Square, near New Market.

Khagrachari

In Khagrachari, an 11-member committee was formed yesterday to organise a rally in protest against the harassment of Buddhist monks.

Renowned educationist Ananta Bihari Khisha is heading the committee.

It will organise a protest rally tomorrow, one of the committee members told chtnews.com.

More protests are planned in and outside CHT, sources said.

.....

Harassment of Buddhist monks: Naniachar zone commander threatens Jummas

chtnews.com

News No. 41/2009, May 25, 2009

Naniachar zone commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mushfikur Rahman (Bir-1) has threatened the leaders of a protest rally with dire consequences if they continued their agitation against the harassment of a group of Buddhist monks.

The commander on Sunday, 24 May, called 18 persons to the zone headquarters and ordered them to refrain from organising further protests against the 21 May incident involving Captain Shamim of Bogachari army camp.

Lt. Col. Mushfikur Rahman categorically denied that Ven. Bishuddhananda Bhante was subjected to harassment and said he had video footage of how the Ven. Bhante behaved at the check post.

He said he would call a press conference and make it known to all.

He warned that if the protests were not stopped within 24 hours he would go tough and do his job as he had always done in the past.

Among those present at the meeting with the army commander were Bishwajit Barua, assistant teacher, Nannyachar High School; Pranati Bikash Chakma, Chairman, Burighat UP; Mithu Chakma, Chairman, Ghilachari UP; Ramani ranjan

Talukder, Chairman, Nanyachar UP; Onadi Ranjan Chakma, Chairman, Sabekkhang UP; Shasil Jiban Chakma, President, Ratnankur Bouddha Bihara, Naniachar; Sentru Chakma and Rupayan Chakma.

Commenting on Mushfikur Rahman's threat, one of those present at the meeting with him said it was a desperate bid of the army to cover up the incident of harassment and save Captain Shamim, the army officer responsible for the harassment of Ven. Bishuddananda Bhante.

“And it is to be expected from an army officer like him who have been terrorising the whole of Naniachar.” he said requesting anonymity for fear of reprisal.

“But people cannot be intimidated any longer... such tactics have become obsolete. The harassment of the Bhante is an insult to our religion and we cannot let it go unprotested.” he added.

.....

Harassment of Buddhist monks: Jummas stage demo in Khagrachari

chtnews.com

News No. 42/2009, May 25, 2009

A demonstration has been held in Khagrachari in protest against the May 21 harassment of a group of Buddhist monks at Bogachari army check post in Naniachar, Rangamati.

Hundreds of people irrespective of religious affiliation took part in a procession braving heavy downpour.

The procession, which started at 10am, marched from Sujo Shikha club at Mahajonpara to the office of the Deputy Commissioner to submit a memorandum.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner received the memo on behalf of the government.

Renowned Jumma businessman Chonchu Moni Chakma, Khagrachari Upazila Lady Vice President Banshari Marma, Khagrachari Municipality Councilor Milon Dewan alias Monang and PCJSS (reformist) leader Roktotpal Tripura were present at the submission of the memorandum at DC office.

.....

Six Jummas arrested in Sajek

chtnews.com

News No. 43/2009, May 27, 2009

At least six Jumma villagers have been arrested by army since 10 May over alleged involvement in the killing of two Bengali settlers in Sajek, sources said.

On the night of 10 May, a group of army personnel from Baghaihat zone arrested two Jummas from their houses. Dipayan Chakma age 25 s/o Anil Baran Chakma was arrested from Gattowatuli village while Priya Moy Chakma age 27 s/o Bijoy Karbari from his village Baibachara.

On the night of 21 May, Baghaihat army raided the village of Nakshasuri and arrested Subarna Chakma age 35 s/o Shubha Mohan Chakma.

On 22 May, Mao Satung Chakma s/o Phidikke Chakma was arrested from his village Nangal Mara.

On 25 May, the army arrested Bar Kana Chakma age 30 s/o Aarech Mohan Chakma from Samitry Chara village.

On 26 May, Arun Shanti Chakma age 14 s/o Hiran Chakma Sajek was arrested from his house in Sajek.

A villager from Sajek told chtnews.com that the army was carrying out raids and making arrests of innocent villagers almost daily. “We live in constant fear of arrest” he said requesting anonymity.

On 6 May two settlers were allegedly kidnapped from a tea shop at Gangaram Mukh in Sajek. Their dead bodies were said to have been recovered from the same area four days later on 9 May in mysterious condition.

The army blamed the Jummas for the incident but a Jumma teacher denied the allegation and said it was a deliberate plan of the army and the settlers to create communal tension and capture Jumma’s land of the area.

“The settlers have been trying to find pretexts to launch fresh communal attacks on our villages so that they can grab our lands.” he said requesting anonymity for security reasons.

.....

Harassment of Buddhist monks: army arm-twists protesters

chtnews.com

News No. 44/2009, May 28, 2009

Jumma villagers in Naniachar have alleged that the army is threatening them after they staged a demonstration in protest against harassment of a group of Buddhist monks at Bogachari check post on 21 May.

The army called the prominent Jumma individuals who had taken part in the demonstration to the zone headquarters separately and forced each one of them to give a video statement saying that Captain Shamim was not involved in the harassment of the Buddhist monks.

Ramani Mohan Talukder, Chairman in charge of Naniachar Union, was called on 25 May, Sentru Chakma, a member of Naniachar Union Council, on 26 May and Anadi Ranjan Chakma, a member of Sabekyong Union Council and also the Karbari or village head of Morachengey village, on 27 May.

The army also called a group meeting on 31 May with 18 Jummas including these three.

Captain Shamim, who was involved in the harassment of Ven. Bishuddhananda Thero and other Buddhist monks, was also present at the meetings.

He and Riaz, another army personnel, took video of the meetings.

.....

Police foils DYF rally in Dighinala

chtnews.com

News No. 45/2009, May 31, 2009

Army and police have foiled a youth rally organised by Democratic Youth Forum in Dighinala today, sources said.

As the organisers were setting the stage for the program at 10am, the police led by SI Shamim Shafiq came and ordered them to disperse on the plea that they could not show any written permission for the program.

The police also tried to snatch the mikes and dismantle the podium at Upazila Station Ground where the rally was to be held.

When contacted, DYF's General Secretary Mithun Chakma, who was present at the meeting venue, said they had informed the local administration about the program a few days ago.

He also said that his supporters had been stopped at Jora Bridge army check post. They were coming from Kobakhali and Kangarimachara areas south of Dighinala Headquarters in a jeep or Chander Gari as it is locally called.

After police actions, a team of DYF organisers led by Merin Chakma and Ripan Chakma met with UNO Manuruzzaman Mian at his office.

“When we lodged a strong protest against the undemocratic behaviour of the police, the UNO said he had to take this measure (foiling the rally) because a certain interest group is opposed to our program”, Remin Chakma told chtnews.com after his meeting with UNO.

“He assured us of his cooperation in our future programs.” Remin added.

In protest against the fascist behaviour of the police the DYF brought out a prompt protest demonstration in Dighinala.

The Hill Students' Council (PCP) will also stage demonstrations in capital Dhaka in the evening, PCP sources said.

.....

Six including 3 UPDF members arrested in Laxmichari

chtnews.com

News No. 46/2009, June 09, 2009

Six persons including three members of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) were arrested in Laxmichari, Khagrachari.

Reports reaching from the area said on 7 June at around 1pm a group of army personnel from Laxmichari zone raided the village of East Chailyatoli and picked up three UPDF members and two supporters. They were making preparations for holding a meeting with the villagers when the arrest was made.

The arrested UPDF members have been identified as Bochai Marma alias Monu, age 30, s/o Mong Hla Ching Marma of village Chowdhuri Para, Betbunia, Kawkhali, Rangamati; Shimul Chakma alias Nipon, age 23, s/o Motilal Chakma of village Dujjyapara, Ghagra, Kawkhali; and Dilmoni Chakma alias Pratap, age 26, s/o Harbo Chakma of village Dullyatoli Union, Laxmichari.

The arrested UPDF supporters are Dipayan Chakma, age 22, s/o Erokko Chakma and Tejendra Chakma, age 30, s/o Nanda Chakma. Both of them hail from East Chailatoli village, Laxmichari.

The army took them to the zone headquarters and beat them so severely that all of them had to be admitted in Laxmichari hospital at 2am the next day. While the two supporters were released later on after medical treatment, the UPDF members were handed over to the Laxmichari police station.

They had been kept in the police station till yesterday, according to sources. It is not known under which section they have been shown arrested.

Another report adds another Jumma villager was arrested on Monday, 8 June, in Laxmichari. The army arrested Nilondo Chakma, age 40, s/o Boidyo Chakma of Badorkaba village from a tea shop at around 1:30pm. He was handed over to the police, but the reason for the arrest could not be known, it said.

.....

Jumma organisations submit memo, demand publication of Kalpana Chakma inquiry report

chtnews.com

News No. 47/2009, June 11, 2009

Three Jumma organisations campaigning for full autonomy for Chittagong Hill Tracts today, 11 June, called upon the government of Bangladesh to make the inquiry report on disappearance of Kalpana Chakma public.

The demand was made in a memorandum submitted to the Home Minister by Hill Women's Federation, Hill Student's Council and Democratic Youth Forum. A three-member delegation of these organisations handed over the memo to the Home Minister's Private Secretary, Md. Shahinoor Mian Shahin.

The delegation comprised Mithun Chakma, General Secretary, Democratic Youth Forum; Aongay Marma, General Secretary, Hill Student's Council and Rina Dewan, Office Secretary, Hill Women's Federation.

Before submitting the memo, the three organisations held a rally on Dhaka University campus at 11:30am.

The rally was addressed by Mithun Chakma, Aongay Marma and Rina Dewan, and moderated by Thuikyo Ching Maram, office secretary of the PCP.

Besides, representatives from a number of progressive Bengali organisations delivered solidarity speech in support of their demands. These speakers included Faizul Hakim, General Secretary, Bangladesh Mukti Council; Shibli Qyum of Naya Gonotantir Gono Morcha; Shubhra Chakravarti, Convenor, Seven Organisations Against Imperialism; Minhaz Ahmed, Joint Convenor, Bangladesh Chattra Federation; Hillol Roy of Biplobi Chattra Moitree; Nurur Rahman Shiplu, Convenor, Biplobi Chattra Jubo Andolon; Ashish Sharma, General Secretary, Biplobi Chattra Sangha; Mashud Khan of Prapada; and Sajeeb of Sanskritir Naya Setu, a Marxist study group.

The speakers urged the government to make the findings of the inquiry into the abduction of Kalpana Chakma public, and said the government must immediately withdraw military rule from the CHT in the interest of ending repression on the Jumma people.

“Peace has not descended on the hills even after the signing of the 1997 CHT accord, while human rights violations such as unlawful arrest, false cases, harassment and disruption of peaceful meetings and demonstrations still continue unabated as before”, they further said.

After the rally, the participants started to march in a procession towards Home Minister's office at Bangladesh Secretariat but the police prevented them near Shishu Accademy. Later, a delegation went to the Home Minister's office and handed over a memorandum to the Minister's private secretary.

Ms Kalpana Chakma, a leader of the Hill Women's Federation, was kidnapped from her home at New Lallyaghona village under Baghaichari Upazila in Rangamati district by Lt. Ferdous, then commander of Kojochari army camp, on 12 June 1996. The incident occurred merely seven hours before voting for the 7th national parliamentary elections began.

The incident provoked CHT-wide protests as well as national and international condemnation. In one of the protests, a schoolboy named Rupon Chakma was killed in VDP firing in Baghaichari while three other Jumma youths were disappeared while on their way to participate in a peaceful road blockade.

In the memorandum, the three organisations said "the then government of Awami League had formed a three-member committee headed by a retired justice, Abdul Jalil to probe the incident. The other members of the committee are Dr. Anupom Sen, professor of social science department, Chittagong University, and the then divisional commissioner of Chittagong. According to press reports, the committee, after conducting inquiry, submitted its findings to the government. However, the previous governments have failed to make it public. Nor those responsible for the murder of Monotosh, Sukesh, Samar Bijoy and Rupon have been tried."

"We have every right to know what happened to Kalpana Chakma and whether the committee recommended punishment for Lt. Ferdous and his accomplices." the memo adds.

The memo put forward the following demands: 1. immediately publish the inquiry report on the disappearance of Kalpana Chakma and bring Lt. Ferdous and his accomplices to justice; 2. punish those responsible for the death of Monotoh, Sukesh, Samar Bijoy and Rupon who were killed for protesting the abduction of Kalpana Chakma; 3. remove all the army check posts put up across the CHT and end military rule enforced under codename "Operation Uttoron"; and 4. stop arrest of

innocent people including members and supporters of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), release all the political prisoners and take effective steps to stop human rights abuses.

HWF rally in Baghaichari

Hill Women's Federation, a front organisation of the UPDF, will organise a mass rally in Baghaichari tomorrow to demand publication of the inquiry report on disappearance of Kalpana Chakam.

Progressive Bengali intellectuals including noted poet Abu Bakr Siddiq have been invited to participate in the rally, organisers said.

.....

Three innocent Jumma villagers tortured in Naniachar

chtnews.com

News No. 48/2009, June 12, 2009

Three innocent Jumma villagers were tortured by army in Naniachar on 9 June, according to independent sources.

Sources said the incident occurred at around 10pm when the victims were returning home in a country boat after selling jackfruits in Rangamati town.

When they reached Komtoli near Burighat some patrolling army personnel from Burighat camp led by Warrant Officer Akbar signaled them to come to the shore, but they took the army for robbers and sped up their engine boat.

However, the soldiers pursued and caught them up at a corner of the Kaptain Lake and beat them mercilessly.

The army freed them after torture.

The victims are Subrata Chakma, age 35, s/o Mongol Mohan Chakma of Mongtola village under Burighat Union, Mithon Khisha, age 16, s/o Anil Kumar Khisha of Mongtola village under Burighat Union and Tontu Bikash Khisha, age 28, s/o Chigon Dhan Khisha of Kengelchari village under Sabekyong Union – were returning home from Rangamati town after selling jackfruits there.

13th Anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma: HWF holds rally in Baghaichari

chtnews.com

News No. 49/2009, June 12, 2009

The Hill Women’s Federation has held a rally in Baghaichari today to mark the 13th anniversary of disappearance of Kalpana Chakma, one of its leaders, who was kidnapped from her home by Lt. Ferdous of Bangladesh Army.

Held at Upazila ground, the rally was presided over by Sonali Chakma, President of Hill Women’s Federation.

Noted poet Abu Bakr Siddiq and Bangladesh Lekhok Shibir (Writer’s Association) member Moinuddin Ahmed spoke as special guests.

The speakers criticized the successive governments for their failure to make the findings of the inquiry report public, and

urged the present government of Awami League to break with the past.

They were also outspoken about the overwhelming military presence in the CHT and urged the government to demilitarize the area without further delay.

“What role is the military playing in CHT?” they asked, and demanded that the government put an end to so-called “operation Uttoron” which gives the army sweeping power to arrest and kill any Jumma in CHT.



“So long as the army remains in CHT, human rights situation will not improve”, they remarked.

The speakers said land is one of the major problems in CHT and urged the government to recognise the customary land rights of the Jumma people.

Attempt at land grabbing in Ramgarh

chtnews.com

News No. 50/2009, June 12, 2009

A settler attempt to steal about 300 acres of land belonging to Jumma people in Ramgarh has been failed, according to independent sources.

Sources said a group of illegal Bengali settlers had begun cutting jungles to capture the land in Boroitali under Hapchari Union (No. 3) on 7 June and erected a house structure with bamboos.

The army provided support to the settlers in their attempt to capture the land. They were present at the site when the settlers worked.

Because of the presence of the army the Jummas could not protest openly but destroyed the structure overnight after the settlers had left, sources said.

The next morning the settlers came back along

with the army to see the demolished structure, however, they refrained from showing any reaction.

The Jummas use the said land as common property. Previously when it was covered with forests, it provided them with food, medicines and household materials.

In 1981-82, during the rule of dictator general Hussain Muhammad Ershad the army for the first time made an attempt to settle newly-arrived Bengali infiltrators on that patch of

land, but the attempt failed when the Jummas put up a fiery resistance.

The second attempt was made in 2004 but again frustrated when the Jumma villagers protested.

Breaking News: (chtnews.com June 13, 2009):

A member of the Hill Student's Council (PCP), Kollol Chakma, 22, has been shot and wounded in Rangamati town.

An armed gang patronized by Santu Larma, president of Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu faction), shot him point blank at Banarupa at around 8:45pm today.

Mr. Chakma was rushed to Rangamati hospital but the attending doctors referred him to Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

He was a member of the Santu Larma-backed PCP but broke away from them in May and joined the UPDF affiliated PCP.

Since then he has been playing an important role in organising PCP in Rangamati, and he was one of the delegates who had participated in the national convention against imperialism and fascism held in Dhaka on 5 June and a special meeting of field level campaigners organised by UPDF on 6 June, also in Dhaka.

This is the third armed attack by Santu Larma on his rivals in Rangamati town.

JSS (Santu) kidnaps UPDF supporter in Ghagra, releases later

chtnews.com

News No. 51/2009, June 13, 2009

The armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu) kidnapped a supporter of the United

People's Democratic Front (UPDF) on 2 June and released him 8 days later, on 10 June, UPDF sources say.

Babu Chakma, aged 24, s/o Purno Rajjyo Chakma of Sapchari Shalbon village under Rangamati Sadar, was kidnapped at gun point by a group of JSS men led by Bappi Chakma at around 10am from Banaphul Studio at Ghagra bazaar.

He was first taken to JSS Ghagra Unit office and then shifted to Assam Bosti in Rangamati town via Chompatoli hill.

Mr. Chakma, former president of Santu Larma-backed PCP's Ghagra Unit, was beaten up severely, and was released from Rangapani area after his parents made a payment of Taka 30,000.

He had deserted JSS side couples year ago and helped UPDF build a strong base in Ghagra.

His parents filed a general diary (GD) with Kotwali police station in Rangamati.

.....

Jumma villagers resist land grabbing attempt in Ramgarh

chtnews.com

News No. 52/2009, June 14, 2009

A communal riot has been broken out in Ramgarh over a settler attempt to grab 300 acres of land belonging to Jumma people.

Jumma villagers in Ramgarh resisted a settler attempt to grab their land this morning, sources from the area say.

According to eyewitness, the incident occurred at around 9am when a group of illegal settlers from Jaliapara, Sindukchari and Guimara went to Boroitali under Hapchari Union (No. 3) and began cutting jungle for the construction of houses.

A clash ensued when hundreds of Jumma villagers resisted the settlers.

Tension had been brewing in the area since June 7 when the settlers backed by army began cutting jungle to the land.

The army, who is believed to have instigated the settlers to grab the land, provides protection to the settlers as they worked.

After facing initial resistance from the Jummas, the settlers increased their reinforcements.

Eyewitness said seven jeeps load of settlers have been mobilized in the area under army protection.

Another report said the settlers have seized Hapchari Union Parishad Chairman Krathoai Marma.

The Jummas are fearing for the worst, and many Jumma villagers, mostly women and children, have already fled their homes.

UPDF Khagrachari district unit has urged all human rights organisations to act immediately to prevent the situation from worsening further.

.....

Protest against attack on Kollol and land grabbing in Ramgarh

chtnews.com

News No. 53/2009, June 14, 2009

There have been protest demonstrations against attack on PCP activist Kollol Chakma and settler attempts to grab land in Ramgarh.



Rangamati

Hundreds of people demonstrated in Rangamati town to demand that the government immediately arrest Santu Larma-backed armed terrorists responsible for the attack on Kollol Chakma last night.

Mr. Chakma is currently undergoing treatment in Chittagong Medical College Hospital, and his condition has been stated to

be stable. He received bullet wounds beneath his right shoulder.

The demonstration was organised by UPDF Rangamati Unit. At a rally held in front of Deputy Commissioner's office, the UPDF leaders held Santu Larma responsible for ordering the attack on Kollol Chakma, and urged him to stop terrorist activities.

The rally was addressed by DYF leaders Michael Chakma and Alakesh Chakma and Jurachari Upazila Vice Chairman Rup Kumar Chakma.

Earlier, they took out a procession from in front of Rangamati Poursava office.

Khagrachari

Hill Student's Council held a rally in Khagrachari to protest against settler attempts to capture land in Ramgarh and JSS attack on Kollol Chakma in Rangamati.

PCP Khagrachari District Unit leader Arpon Chakma and Batayon Chakma addressed the rally held in Swanirbhor.

Later, the participants brought out a procession in the town.

Dhaka

In the afternoon, PCP Dhaka Unit held a rally and brought out a procession from Muktangon to National Press Club.

Democratic Youth Forum's General Secretary Mithun Chakma, Hill Student's Council leaders ThuiKyo Ching Marma, Prusing Thoai Marma and Ashim Chakma addressed the rally held at Muktangon.

The speakers condemned the attack on Kollol Chakma and demanded of the government to arrest the culprits.

They also urged to the government to stop the settlers from stealing Jumma people's land in Ramgarh and expressed their concern about the escalating tension in the area.

Mithun Chakma held the army responsible for instigating the settlers to grab Jumma people's land, and said there can be no peace in the hills as long as the army remains there.

.....

DYF Dighinala unit stages demo against attack on Kollol

chtnews.com

News No. 54/2009, June 16, 2009

The Democratic Youth Forum Dighinala Unit yesterday staged a demonstration against the shooting of PCP activist Kollol Chakma in Rangamati.

About two thousand (hundred) attended the demonstration which paraded the sub-divisional town of Dighinala.

At a rally, DYF leader Remin Chakma condemned the attack on Kollol Chakma and urged the government to immediately arrest the culprits.

He held the Santu Larma-backed armed groups responsible for the recurrent acts of violence in Rangamati town.

Alleging that the government is not only showing leniency towards Santu Larma but also actively supporting him, Mr. Chakma said police's failure to arrest the culprits was untenable.

"It is regrettable that while they fail to arrest the real culprits and terrorists, they continue to arrest and harass innocent villagers in Lakshimichari, Naniachar, Kudukchari and many other places." he further said.

Mr. Chakma said following his surrender Santu Larma had changed his role and become a part of the government.

"Larma is now leading the reaction and is the only obstacle to the unity of the Jumma people." he said and added that "His rejection of UPDF's peace overture only helps the enemies of the Jumma people."

.....

Indigenous healer shot dead in Manikchari

chtnews.com

News No. 55/2009, June 16, 2009

Unknown assailants last night shot dead Mesh Kumar Chakma alias Goppua, 55, s/o Battya Chakma, a traditional healer locally known as Boidya, in Manikchari Upazila of Khagrachari district.

The incident occurred around 11:30pm in the village of Kalapani Adarsha Gram, which sits on Manikchari – Lakshimichari road. Mr. Chakma was killed with a single shot, neighbours said. His house is situated close to some six settler houses in the village.

His wife Sundari Bala Chakma, 43, said she could not recognise the killers, who melt into the darkness of the night after the incident.

The reason behind his killing could not be known. However, Mr. Chakma was embroiled in a land dispute with a Bengali settler.

Army have been deployed in the area after the incident.

.....

Army conduct house searches in Baghaichari

chtnews.com

News No. 56/2009, June 16, 2009

Bangladesh Army soldiers conducted house searches in Jumma villages in Baghaichari under Rangamati district.

Sources said that on the night of 14 June, soldiers from Baghaihat zone led by Lt. Col. Anisuzzaman, Commanding Officer of the camp, took position in Babupara village and began searching houses the next morning.

“They (the army) searched each and every house of the village.” a high school teacher said on condition of anonymity, and added that “the soldiers marked the houses with colours after the search.”

On 16 June, searches were also carried out in the same way in Jeebtoli and Talukder Para.

The army action came on the heels of a HWF rally to mark the 13th anniversary of the abduction of Kalpana Chakma.

The army is blamed for her disappearance on 12 June 1996.

.....

Rival JSS factions clash in Rangamati

chtnews.com

News No. 57/2009, June 16, 2009

At least four persons have been injured in a clash between two rival factions of the Jana Samhati Samiti in Rangamati town.

Sources said the clash erupted around 5pm in Devashish Nogar area of the town when members of the Rupayan Dewan-led faction of the JSS, known as Sangskarbadi or Reformist, came under attack of its rival Santu Larma faction.

Both the factions chased and counter-chased each other before the police arrived.

All the injured belong to the Reformist faction and have been admitted to hospital.

Members of the Santu group seized two members of their rival faction and handed them over to the police, it is learnt.

One of them has been identified as Nanda Chakma of village Chongrachari, Dighinala. However, the identity of the other one could not be known.

Reformists allege that the attack came after the JSS (Santu) failed to get the police to act on their behalf.

“The Santu group tried to file a false kidnapping case against us.” said a Reformist member.

Today’s factional clash comes barely two days after an attempt on the life of Kollol Chakma, a UPDF-backed PCP activist, who joined the organisation in May after breaking ranks with the JSS.

JSS is also blamed for assassination attempts on its former General Secretary Chandra Shekhor Chakma and another influential leader Progoti Chakma in February and April.

.....

7 including PCP General Secretary detained in Guimara

chtnews.com

News No. 58/2009, June 17, 2009

Seven persons including Hill Students' Council (PCP) General Secretary Aongai Marma have been detained by army in Guimara, as Jummas from Ramgarh area travel to Khagrachari to attend a protest rally against the recent land grab attempts in Boroitali.

Sources said around 10am two jeeps carrying about 70 people to the Khagrachari protest rally were halted by intelligence personnel at Guimara.

They snatched away the keys of the jeeps but returned them when the people protested.

A few minutes later, army came and took all the participants to the camp. The army kept 7 of them and released the others.

Among the detained is Aongai Marma, General Secretary of the Hill Students' Council. He was one of the organisers of the protest rally.

Others detained by the army include Apruchi Marma, a PCP member, Manikchari barnch; Labray Marma, 30, s/o Mong Shey Marma of village Sindukchari Mukh; Ruiyo Marma, 28, s/o Modhu Marma, Kukichara; Aroi Marma, 27, s/o Labray

Chai Marma, Chaiindya Toli; Mong Kro Marma, 23, s/o Boni Marma, Kukichara; and Mragyo Marma, 23, s/o Aungyo Chai Marma, Boroitali.

Hill Students' Council is scheduled to hold a rally later in the day in Dhaka to protest the unlawful detention of its leaders and other Jummas.

Latest

As we are about to release the report at 1:10pm, sources from Khagrachari informed that the army have released Aongai Marma and others detained in Guimara Zone.

.....

Boroitali villagers stage demo against land grabbing

chtnews.com

News No. 59/2009, June 17, 2009

Jumma villagers have staged demonstrations in Khagrachari in protest at attempts by illegal settlers to grab land in Boroitali of Ramgarh Upazila.



They also submitted a memorandum to the Deputy Commissioner demanding that the government immediately stop settlers from occupying 300 acres of land belonging to the Jumma people.

Hundreds of people and villagers took part in the demonstration.

Before submitting the memo, the demonstrators took out a procession at 11:30am which paraded the city roads.

Thereafter, they held a brief rally in the town which was addressed by Niong Karbari, the Head of the village, and Mong Chai Aungyo Marma, another villager.

Mr. Karbari said “since 7 June, the settlers have been attempting to grab 300 acres of land in our village which we have been using for generations. On 14 June, the settlers began constructing houses there, and when we tried to prevent them, they attacked us.”

He urged the government to take immediate steps to stop land grabbing and ensure safety and security of his village people.

After the rally, Mong Chai Aungyo Marma submitted a memorandum to the DC on behalf of the villagers.

Democratic Youth Forum leader Remin Chakma and Hill Students’ Council leaders Batayon Chakma and Niko Chakma helped Mr. Marma submitting the memo.

.....

JSS Reformist stage protest demo as Santu group attempts to disrupt

chtnews.com

News No. 60/2009, June 18, 2009

The Reformist faction of the Jana Samhati Samiti led by Rupayan Dewan, a member of the CHT Regional Council, held a protest rally at Paura Chattar in Rangamati town yesterday, as its rival faction led by Santu Larma made attempts to disrupt it.

The Reformists were protesting against attacks on its leaders and supporters by Larma-backed armed gangs.

The rally, attended by hundreds of its supporters, was addressed by ex-General Secretary of JSS, Chandra Shekhor Chakma, Aungshuman Chakma, Sudhirgho Chakma and Ashin Chakma.

The speakers condemned the attack on their four supporters the previous day at Devashish Nogor by Santu Larma-backed armed cadres, and demanded immediate arrest of the culprits.

Santu group’s terror tactics

Santu Larma made serious attempts to foil the Reformist’s rally yesterday. His men, with active support of the police and armed with stick and catapult, halted vehicles at Vedvedi and prevented people suspected of having sympathy with UPDF and Reformist JSS from entering the town.

Four innocent school boys from Kudukchari were injured in JSS attack in Vedvedi. They were going to Banarupa bazaar in the town.

Two of the injured – Monghol Dhan Chakma s/o Indra Bhushan Chakma of Kalabunnya village and Jibon Chakma s/o Gullo Chakma of Gado Chara village – were admitted to Rangamti Sadar Hospital with serious wounds.

However, according to hospital sources, the JSS men stormed the hospital and snatched them away by force and were believed to have been taken to the JSS office in Kalindipur.

The kidnapped boys are class ten students in Kudukchari High School.

Later in the day, Santu group members also attacked the houses of Reformist JSS member Advocate Shaktiman Chakma at T&T area and UPDF sympathizer Mintu Chakma at Kathaltoli.

They asked Mithu Chakma's wife to tell her husband to surrender himself to Santu Larma within seven days and warned that in the event of failure they would kidnap her two children.

Members of Santu Group also exercised their muscle power in Premtoli, Trabel Adam and Banarupa, holding sticks and catapults, and searched for the Reformists.

Police support for the Santu group was palpable also at the venue of the rally where police protection was withdrawn well before the rally was to be ended.

This prompted the Reformists to cut short the list of the speakers and to end the rally abruptly.

Santu Larma supporters gathered together behind the police and were poised for attack.

.....

BMSC forms human chain to protest Boroitali land grab attempts

chtnews.com

News No. 61/2009, June 19, 2009

The Bangladesh Marma Students' Council (BMSC) yesterday formed a human chain to protest attempts by a group of settlers to grab 300 acres of land belonging to Jumma people in Boroitali in Ramgarh. (Please see photo attached)

The leaders of the organisation also sent a memorandum to the State Minister for Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs via Deputy Commissioner of Khagrachari.

At the human chain formed at Shapla Chatter in Khagrachari town, the Marma leaders expressed concern over the systematic way the Jumma people's lands are being taken away by illegal settlers.



“We are observing with serious concern that the CHT situation is becoming unstable again. The settlers continue to build houses after grabbing lands of the innocent Jumma villagers.

This has become a regular phenomenon.” said Upasing Marma, President of BMSC Khagrachari District Unit.

Mongshi Prue Marma, another BMSC leader, said the settlers had been constructing houses in Boroitali village under Hapcahri Union in Ramgarh after taking away Hill people’s lands.

Mr. Marma accused a certain state agency of instigating the settlers to go about grabbing other people’s lands.

Legal adviser of the BMSC, Upathoai Marma termed the settlers’ attempt to grab lands as violation of the constitution of Bangladesh and human rights law.

He condemned the use of the settlers as human shield and as a mean to destroy Jumma people’s age old tradition and culture.

Ming Prue Chai Marma of BMSC Chittagong Metropolitan Committee urged the authorities to stop instigating the settlers.

In the memo addressed to the state minister for CHT Affairs, the BMSC leaders made the following demands:

- a. to take immediate steps to stop attempts by settlers to build houses on lands belonging to Jumma people in Boroitali;
- b. to constitute a high level parliamentary committee to investigate the incidents taking place Boroitali area;
- c. to settle land disputes through the CHT land commission with emphasis being laid on the traditional land use system of the Jumma people; and
- d. to try all cases relating to human rights violations including illegal land grabbing, incidents of communal riots and rape of Jumma women in the CHT.

The memorandum was signed by the President and General Secretary of BMSC Khagrachari District unit.

.....

Army threatens Daily Star correspondent

chtnews.com

News No. 62/2009, June 19, 2009

The army was reported to have threatened Jasim Majumder, Khagrachari district correspondent for The Daily Star, for publishing a report on a protest rally organised by Boroitali villagers against settler attempts to grab their lands.

The rally was held on Wednesday, 17 June, in Khagrachari and the report appeared in the Daily Star on Thursday -- yesterday.

Quoting Jasim Majumder, Hill Women’s Federation leader Rina Dewan told chtnews.com that he was called to the zone headquarters by an army Major who did not disclose his name, and was threatened not to send such reports because these reports are “injurious to the interest of the army”.

“The Major asked me why I, being myself a Bengali, write against the interest of the Bengali people.” Ms Dewan quoted Jasim as telling her.

“But I told the Major that I am writing the truths, that I have written (the report) after verifying the allegation of the Boroitali people to be true.” Jasim was quoted as saying.

“But I am not afraid of the army threats.”

.....

Terror victim demands justice

chtnews.com

News No. 63/2009, June 19, 2009

Mintu Chakma, Director of Bhumihin Samabay Samiti (Cooperative Society of the Landless) and a victim of 17-June terror attacks by JSS men, at a press conference today urged the government to take immediate steps to put an end to JSS-sponsored violence and arrest those responsible for the attack on his house in Rangamati.

Calling himself a staunch supporter of the United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), Mr. Chakma, 42, alleged that a group of JSS members on 17 June attacked his flat of a house at Gorjonltoli and smashed the window panes.

“Immediately after the attack, I contacted the DC, SP and OC to inform them about the incident and asked for justice. But so far nothing has been done.” Mr. Chakma lamented.

He listed the violent attacks carried out by the JSS men in Rangamati town in the last few months, and demanded that they be brought to justice.

He said he has been feeling insecure since the attack on his house, and urged the government to restore peaceful environment in the town.

Mr. Chakma was flanked by his friends and colleagues at the press conference.

.....

UPDF opens office in Subholong

chtnews.com

News No. 64/2009, June 20, 2009

The United People' Democratic Front (UPDF) has opened an office in Subholong bazaar under Rangamati district.

The inauguration of the office was held yesterday, Friday, at 11am. Hundreds of UPDF members and supporters attended the ceremony.

Presided over by Milon Shankar Chakma, a Headman, the inauguration ceremony was addressed by UPDF's Rangamati district organiser Shanti Dev Chakma, UPDF member Charan Singh Chakma, Hill Women's Federation President Sonali Chakma and Democratic Youth Forum's Organising Secretary Michael Chakma.

The ceremony was conducted by DYF leader Alakesh Chakma.

Thanking the people for their continued support for the party, the speakers said there is no force strong enough to thwart the advance of the UPDF in CHT.

“Without the support of the broad masses of the people it would not have been possible for the party to open this office here today.” UPDF leader Shanti Dev Chakma said.

Jumma people's struggle for Full Autonomy will continue, he declared and sought a stronger bond between the party and the people.

“If the party and the people act like one single person, then they can do wonders”.

Milon Shankar Chakma in his speech thanked UPDF for opening the Subholong office and hoped the new party will be able to guide the people in the right direction.

He further said without a party the people have nothing. “Therefore, we need a good party, a strong and disciplined party, and we must support UPDF – the party of the new era -- and help it to grow stronger.” he said.

.....

Two UPDF supporters arrested in Kudukchari

chtnews.com

News No. 65/2009, June 20, 2009

Two supporters of the United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) were arrested last night in Kudukchari, Rangamati.

The arrested have been identified as Motilal Chakma (22) s/o Bizu Kumar Chakma of Suridas Karbari Para village and Unuching Marma from Bandarban.

They were arrested by army personnel from Ghilachari camp from Choddo Mile area.

Unuching Marma was in Kudukchari to meet his friend, who is a member of the UPDF.

On the other hand, the army picked up Moti Lal Chakma from his own shop at Choddo Mile on Rangamati – Khagrachari road.

.....

UPDF supporter kidnapped by JSS in Barkal

chtnews.com

News No. 66/2009, June 20, 2009

One UPDF supporter has been kidnapped by armed members of the Jana Samhati Samiti (Santu faction) in Barkal, Rangamati.

Mr. Modhu Mongol Chakma alias Markin, 42, s/o late Sudhon Moni Chakma was kidnapped from his home in the village of Korpotichara under Barkal Union No. 2 around 8pm on 18 June.

His whereabouts is still unknown. United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) sources said he might have been taken to Halamba-Billochara, a small patch of area bordering Mizoram of India, where the remnant of JSS members holds up.

Korpotichara is a remote village in Barkal Upazila, accessible only by foot and is about 6 miles north-east of Subholong bazaar.

UPDF’s Rangamati district organiser, Shanti Dev Chakma condemned the incident and demanded his immediate release.

.....

Police frustrate land grab attempt in Khagrachari

chtnews.com

News No. 67/2009, June 21, 2009

Police have frustrated a settler attempt to grab land in Khagrachari.

The settlers have been trying to occupy approximately 600 acres of land in Betchari under Kamalchhari Union No. 2.

On 19 June, a group of settlers went to Moddyo (Middle) Betchari and began planting trees there. But the local people informed the police about the illegal act of the settlers, and police immediately swung into action and drove the settlers away.

The police also arrested a few settlers and uprooted the tree saplings.

Earlier on 16 June, the settlers went in droves to Betchari to cut jungles for construction of houses. However, as the local people resisted they had to come back.

The following day Khagrachari Upazila Chairman Shane Alam and the Khagrachari UNO went to Betchari and held a ‘compromise meeting’ with Jumma and Bengali elders.

It was decided in the meeting that until the CHT Land Commission decides on the issue, no one should enter the ‘disputed’ land.

But within two days, the settlers violated the decision by planting trees on the said land.

Local villagers alleged that most of the settlers are peaceful and don’t want a conflict with the Jumma villagers.

They said the settlers are instigated by Abul Hossain, ex-UP member and leader of Bhuachari Settler Para, Habibur Rahman, ex-UP member and Mostafa.

Another JSS Reformist leader shot and wounded in Balukhali, Rangamati

chtnews.com

News No. 68/2009, June 22, 2009

Yet another leader of the Jana Samhati Samiti’s Reformist faction have been shot and wounded in Rangamati.

Mr. Aungshuman Chakma (40), who was shot at his home in Balukhali yesterday, is now undergoing treatment in Chittagong Medical College Hospital.

Mr. Chakma received bullet injuries in his left elbow and has got his bone fractured. Doctors said he needed to be operated on.

His father Dharendra Kishore Chakma, also a former JSS member, blamed Santu Larma for the attack on his son and said he would file a criminal case in connection with the incident.

Eyewitnesses said at about 7pm Aungshuman Chakma and his friend Ashin Chakma were taking rest in the courtyard of his house when a group of five JSS (Santu) men appeared and shot at them.

Ashin Chakma, a former leader of Santu Larma backed student front, told chtnews.com “we were sitting in the courtyard after taking a stroll. Suddenly five people armed with sophisticated weapons appeared before us, with one of them saying ‘oh, I see, you are here!’.”

“At first they tried to catch us alive. But we knew who they were, and immediately began running away. Then they shot at us.”

Both of them escaped – Ashim Chakma unhurt.

Mr. Ashin said the armed men came in a boat from Manikchari Dore via the edge of Assam Bosti in Rangamati town.

“Each of them had a gun” he said.

Mr. Aungshuman Chakma was a staff member of the central committee of the JSS. He is one of those highly critical of Santu Larma’s corruption and questionable policies.

.....

JSS Reformist rally in Khagrachari

chtnews.com

News No. 69/2009, June 23, 2009

The Reformist faction of the Jana Samhati Samiti led by Rupayan Dewan has held a rally in Khagrachari against armed attacks on its leaders and activists by rival Santu faction.

The rally, held today at Shapla Chattar of the town, was addressed by JSS leaders Samiron Chakma, Sudhakor Tripura and Sudhasindhu Khisha.

The speakers condemned the attacks on their leaders and activists and demanded immediate arrest of those responsible.

They termed their faction as the real JSS and vowed to carry on the movement for full implementation of the CHT Accord.

.....

Who is pulling the string?

chtnews.com

News No. 70/2009, June 24, 2009

Panchari Upazila Nirbahi Officer’s volte face over a reception to the successful SSC candidates has raised many eyebrows.

The reception is scheduled to be held today at Panchari Pilot High School. Initially, it was decided that the program would be held under the banner of the Panchari branch of the Hill Students’ Council (PCP).

However, PCP agreed not to use its banner to facilitate UNO’s participation as special guest at the reception.

On 21 June, UNO Mohammad Abdul Kader Sheikh agreed to attend the reception if it is not held under the banner of PCP.

After obtaining his consent the PCP began preparation under the banner of Organising Committee.

But the following day, the UNO changed his decision and told the organisers that he would not be able to attend the program and that no such program could be held within the boundaries of Panchari Pilot High School.

On inquiry, it was learnt that the UNO was summoned to the Panchari army zone on 22 June, and it is believed that the zone commander, Lt. Col. Hamidul Haq forced him to change his mind.

The organisers were taken aback at the volte face of the UNO. They ask who is running the civil administration in Panchari and who is pulling the string behind the scene?

However, they are determined to hold the reception as scheduled.

.....

Six innocent villagers tortured in Sajek

chtnews.com

News No. 71/2009, June 24, 2009

Six innocent Jummas were tortured in Sajek in Rangamati district during an army raid on a village.

Sources said on 20 June, at 2pm a group of Bangladesh Army soldiers from Baghaihat zone carried out a surprise raid into the village of MSF Para.

The soldiers surrounded the village and began searching for what they said “terrorists”. Finding no ‘terrorist’, the soldiers picked up 6 innocent villagers, took them to the camp and tortured them severely.

They army beat them with stick and gave electric shocks in their bodies.

Five of the torture victims have been identified as Ballya Chakma, 50, of village MSF Para; Chuchyang Naga Chakma, 40, of Bhuachari; Jagadish Chakma, 40, of Karengatoli; Amar Dhan Chakma, 45, of Nakshachari; Kaladhan Chakma, 50, of Gangaram Dore.

The victim whose name could not be known is a friend of Jagadish Chakma, himself a torture victim. Both of them are day labourers.

Ballya Chakma was picked up from his home, while Chuchyang Naga Chakma was arrested while he was on his way to Baghaihat bazaar.

Jagadish Chakma and his friend were preparing to float bundles of bamboo down the river Kachalong to be carried to Kaptai for Karnaphuli Paper Mill, while the army arrested them.

The army arrested Amar Dhan Chakma while he was on his way to Baghaichari Upazila headquarters to draw UNDP’s Village Development Project money from a bank.

Kaladhan Chakma was arrested from his home in Gangaram Dore.

The army released Ballya Chakma, Chuchyang Naga Chakma, Jagadish Chakma and his friend in the evening, the same day, while the rest two were set free the following day.

Baghaihat zone is notorious for carrying out raids, torture and arrest of innocent villagers.

The army takes these repressive measures as part of a general plan to capture land in the area.

In April last year, the settlers burned down hundreds of Jumma houses in ten villages and made a series of attempts to grab land belonging to the Jumma people.

Following the April incident, many human rights organisations including International CHT Commission have visited the area. Yet, the conditions have not improved.

Close on the heels of the CHT Commission’s visit last year, the settlers launched further attacks and killed one Ladu Moni Chakma in the most brutal fashion.

A few days ago, the army made a number of arrests in connection with the alleged abduction and murder of a Bengali settler.

Baghahat zone, under Khagrachari brigade, is commanded by Lt. Col. Anisuzzaman of 14 Bir.

.....

Reception for successful SSC candidates held in Panchari

chtnews.com

News No. 72/2009, June 24, 2009

Reception for successful SSC candidates was held today in Panchari.

The program was organised by Panchari Degree College Organising Committee in close cooperation with the Hill Students' Council (PCP).

It was scheduled to be held at Panchari Pilot School. But the organisers shifted the venue to College Gate after the TNO refused to give permission.

The TNO and Upazila Chairman were also scheduled to participate in the program. But under intense pressure from the army, both of them had to decline in the last moment.

Presided over by Chandra Dev Chakma, a student of Panchari Degree College, the reception was also addressed among others by Rina Dewan, President of Hill Women's Federation Khagrachari District Unit, Arpan Chakma, General Secretary of Hill Students' Council Khagrachari District Unit and Sona Gulo Chakma, a second year student of Panchari Degree College.

Reception was accorded to over 150 students in Panchari Upazila who passed in the last Secondary School Certificate examination.

The speakers said the Jummas are being subjected to discrimination in all spheres of life including education.

“There is no congenial atmosphere for education in CHT. Jumma students who go out of the CHT to pursue studies in different higher educational institutions of the country also face harassment.” they alleged.

They said conspiracy was afoot to replace “Pahari or Hill quota” reserved for the Jumma students with “Parbottyo (CHT) quota” to provide reserved seats to the settlers at the cost of the Jumma students.

Rina Dewan said children of all the ethnic nationalities have an inalienable right to education up to primary level in their own languages; but the government is depriving them of this right.

Terming the primary education system in CHT as unsatisfactory, Arpan Chakma said hundreds of children drop out every year at primary level, while many children suffer malnutrition.

He urged the government to give priority to primary education and end discriminatory policies in respect of education in CHT.

.....

200 Mro families in fear of land-grabbers and terrorists in Bandarban

chtnews.com

News No. 73/2009, June 25, 2009

About 200 ethnic Mro families in Ronjupara, Penaipara, Chakkoipara and Bhattypara under Tonkaboti Union in Bandarban Sadar Upazila have been living in fear of land grabbers and terrorists, says Prothom Alo, a leading national Bengali daily.

In a news article today, 25 June, the daily says “Since the attack on a villager of Penaipara on 18 June, the residents of the area have been living in fear of further terrorist attacks on them.”

“The villagers spoke of their sense of insecurity at a press conference held at Bandarban press club on Sunday. The chairman and members of Tonkaboti Union Council and village chiefs at the press conference demanded that land-grabber Shaha Alam and his terrorist gang members are arrested and brought to justice.

“At the press conference Tonkaboti Union Council Chairman Purna Chandra Mro said: ‘Shah Alam, a resident of Choromba area under Lohagora Upazila in Chittagong, has occupied without legal documents hundreds of acres of land belonging to Mro people with the help of his Rohingya terrorist gang. As a result the Mro people of Ronjupara and Penaipara have been unable to cultivate Jum for the last three years, plagued by dire financial crisis and compelled to live a substandard life. Complaints have been lodged with the government administration but to no avail, and the lack of effective measures on the part of the government has been a shot in the arms of terrorist Shah Alam.’

“Expressing anger village chief of Ronjupara, Luring Mro said: ‘I can no longer enter the land where we have been cultivating Jum for generations.’ He said Shah Alam and his terrorists tortured Rengrao while he was working at Jum field. He is still undergoing treatment in Bandarban Sadar Hospital. A case has

been filed against six persons including Shah Alam; however police has so far failed to arrest any of them.’

“UP member Majeda Begum and Ashraf Mian told the press conference that they have been living in peaceful co-existence with the Mro. As Shah Alam has illegally occupied the lands of Mro people, who are simple and peaceful, they cannot cultivate their Jum fields and have to live in starvation.

“Bandarban Upazila Nirbahi Officer (UNO) Anupam Barua said Shah Alam has no land in Tonkaboti Union. He is doing this defying an order not to occupy Jum lands belonging to Mro people.”

.....

Army raid two villages in Kawkhali

chtnews.com

News No. 74/2009, June 27, 2009

A villager was tortured during an army raid into the remote villages of Manji Adam and Gongotyatoli under Fatikchari Union of Kawkhali Upazila in the small hours of Saturday, 27 June.

The two villages are situated 3 kilometers apart, and about 15 kilometers north-west of Kawkhali town.

The soldiers are from Ghagra zone, but the name of the army officers who led the raid could not be known.

While it is not yet known what happened during the raid in Gongotyatoli village, in Manji Adam the army beat up Sona Ram Chakma, a Jumia farmer (or Jum cultivator), and forced him to climb and pick green coconuts from trees.

It is not known whether the soldiers paid for the coconuts.

The soldiers searched all the eight houses of the village and found a homemade gun from the house of Shanti Ram Chakma who used it to keep away hordes of monkeys from his jum field.

Mr. Chakma ran away fearing arrest.

The army personnel also interrogated the villagers about the whereabouts of the “terrorists” meaning UPDF.

Two Jummas wearing bandanas around their faces were seen along with the army during the raid.

“They put off their bandanas at Khiram army camp, and they have been recognised,” claimed a UPDF leader.

The soldiers left the village at 8am.

.....

Commemoration held for four martyrs in Baghaichari

chtnews.com

News No. 75/2009, June 28, 2009

A commemoration meeting was held yesterday for Rupon, Samar Bijoy, Sukesh and Monotosh, who were killed in the course of a protest against the abduction of Kalpana Chakma in 1996.

Held at Rupokari High School ground at 9am, the commemoration was presided over by Abhinoy Chakma, president, Baghaichari Unit of Hill Students’ Council.

Among those spoke were Jewel Chakma, UPDF organiser in Baghaichari; Bishwajit Chakma, Chairman of Rupokari Union;

Ranjit Chakma, leader of Democratic Youth Forum Baghaichari Unit; Rina Dewan, president, Hill Women’s Federation Khagrachari district unit; and Arpan Chakma, General Secretary, Hill Students’ Council Khagrachari District Unit.

The commemoration began with the leaders placing floral wreaths at the altar of the martyred.

About 1,000 took part in the program.

Of the martyrs, Rupon was shot dead by a settler when he was picketing in Baghaichari town in support of a peaceful road block. PCP members Samar Bijoy, Sukesh and Monotosh were disappeared from a place called Muslim Block, a settler area, while they were on their way to Baghaichari town to participate in the picketing. They were believed to have been murdered. All these incidents took place on 27 June in 1996.

The speakers said the supreme sacrifice of these four valiant fighters will not go in vain. The Jumma struggle could not be subdued with these brutal murders, and it will never be subdued in the future, no matter how much repression the Jumma people are made to endure.

“The Jummas will always hold their heads high.” declared the speakers.

Terming the cold-blooded murder of the four valiant fighters preplanned, the speakers said it was aimed at covering up the kidnapping of Kalpana Chakma.

They demanded punishment for those responsible for the murder of Rupon, Samar Bijoy, Sukesh and Monotosh.

Expressing concern over the increase in army repression since the 12 June Baghaichari rally marking 13 years after abduction

of Kalpana Chakma, peoples are being tortured and harassed in the name of house searches.

They demanded that all sorts of repression are immediately stopped.

They also urged the government to publish the inquiry report on the abduction of Kalpana Chakma and punish Lt. Ferdous and his cohorts.

.....

Ex-Law Minister Maudud admits they made mistakes with regard to CHT

chtnews.com

News No. 76/2009, June 28, 2009

Former Law and Parliamentary Affairs Minister Maudud Ahmed has admitted that their government (2001 – 2006) had made mistakes with regard to the Chittagong Hill Tracts and said the present government can rectify them.

He was speaking at a round table conference on ‘UN International Day in Support of Victims of Torture’ at CIRDAP Auditorium in Dhaka yesterday, Saturday, organised jointly by Odhikar, a human rights organisation, and RCT Denmark.

During question and answer session Democratic Youth Forum General Secretary, Mithun Chakma questioned the legality and justifiability of the continuing military rule in the Chittagong Hill Tracts in the name of “Operation Dabanol” and Operation Uttoron”.

Maudud Ahmed asked Mithun Chakma whether the military rule was still continuing during the rule of the present AL

government. When Mithun replied in the positive, he said “we made mistakes, and for this the people (of CHT) have punished us by voting us out.”

He continued: “the present government can rectify the mistake, if it so wishes.”

The conference was presided over by Dr. C. R. Abrar Chowdhury, President of Odhikar, and moderated by its Secretary Advocate Adilur Rahman Khan.

Dr. Salimullah Khan, Chief Academic Adviser, Department of Law, Stamford University, presented the keynote paper on torture.

The conference was also addressed among others by Asafuddollah, ex-secretary and incumbent Executive Director of private TV channel Bangla Vision; Maudud Ahmed, former Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs; Dr. Mohiuddin Khan Alamgir MP; Mahmudur Rahman, Chairman, Amar Desh Publications; Saber Hossain Chowdhury MP, Organising Secretary, Bangladesh Awami League; Advocate Sigma Huda, Motiur Rahman Chowdhury, Editor, Manob Jamin; and Saiful Haq, leader of Biplobi Workers Party.

Participants to the conference from Chittagong Hill Tracts were UPDF member Ripon Chakma, General Secretary of Democratic Youth Forum Mithun Chakma and Information and Publicity Secretary Alakesh Chakma.

.....

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 the right to self-determination. For further information please contact at:

chtnewsonline@gmail.com