

Report on
Communal Attacks in
Khagrachari, Dighinala and Rangamati
on 18, 19 and 20 September 2024



Parbatya Chattagram Jana Samhati Samiti

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Incidents of communal attacks and setting fire on the Jumma-people-run business institutions and houses including the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Regional Council office were perpetrated by the Bengali settlers in Khagrachari Sadar and Dighinala on 18–19 September 2024 and in Rangamati Sadar on 20 September 2024. The communal attacks claimed 4 souls of Jumma people of whom 1 was killed by the Bengali settlers in Dighinala, 2 were killed in army firing in Khagrachari Sadar and 1 was killed by the Bengali settlers in Rangamati Sadar. Besides, during the communal attacks, more than hundreds of Jumma people sustained fatal injuries while over 100 houses and shops belonged to the Jumma people including CHT Regional Council office were burnt to ashes and looted.

Beginning of the incidents:

On 18 September 2024, one Bengali settler named Md. Mamun (40) managed to steal a motor bike belonged to one Goldi Chakma from Madhupur area and was fleeing at its speed. But within seconds, the motor bike hit the electric-line pole by the roadside with speed for which Md. Mamun, the thief, fell down from the bike received serious injuries. In no time, the mob of Bengali and Jumma people around while shouting ‘There goes the thief’, caught and beat him. Consequently, Md. Mamun got senseless. Later

on, while taken to hospital, the doctors declared Mamun to be dead.

The police and more than one reliable sources affirmed the bike remover Md. Mamun to have been a professional thief. The local police station has 17 on-going cases against Mamun. Of them, 14 are cases of theft and 3 are cases of drug trafficking. Moreover, on 19 September 2024, Mukta Akhtar, wife of deceased Mamun, filed a murder case with Khagrachari Police Station against 3 Bengali settlers as the prime accused, namely, (1) Mohammad Shakil (27), s/o Abdul Mannan, Shalbon (Shapla More), Khagrachari Sadar, (2) Rafikul Alam (55), s/o late Obaidul Haque, Pankhaiyapara, Khagrachari Sadar and (3) DidarulAlam (50) s/o Obaidul Haque, Pankhaiyapara.

But soon after the death of Md. Mamun, the Bengali settlers went on spreading provocative speeches and propagating that it was the Jumma people who had killed Mamun deliberately. On 18 September 2024, while spreading ill propagation, the Bengali settlers tried to attack in Madhupur. Afterward, the communal attacks were conducted in Dighinala and Khagrachari on 19 September 2024 and in Rangamati Sadar on 20 September 2024.

Attack attempted at Madhupur of Khagrachari:

Following death of Md. Mamun on 18 September 2024, the Bengali settlers attempted to attack Madhupur of Khagrachari since the evening. During this hours, hundreds of Bengali settlers from Hospital and Shalbon areas attempted to invade Jumma houses in Madhupur of



*Shops and houses of Jumma people were burnt to ashes
at Dighinala Station Bazae*

Khagrachari town. But at certain phase, the Bengali settlers had to move back in the face of organized resistance of the Jumma people.

Attack in Dighinala:

On 19 September 2024 at around 4 p.m. the Bengali settlers organized a rally and gathering under the banner titled: Bengali Students Council in Dighinala Sadar amidst provocative utterances on communal line. Towards the end of their event, the Bengali settlers attacked the Jumma people with sticks, bats and with pelting stones. During the attack, one Ripuye Chakma got a stone strike in his forehead.

In order to save own men who came under attack, as the other Jumma people available in and around ran in a mob

while giving out a cry “Advance! Advance!” the Bengali settlers began to move back and right at that moment, a troop of army rushed there and gave a chase to the Jumma people and drove them away. The army men told the Jumma people: “Hey you! Go away; nothing will happen. We are here to oversee. If you stay here, the situation will get heated.”

As the Jumma people went away, the Bengali settlers equipped with fatal weapons came to Dighinala Sadar after few minutes. It was approximately 5:00 pm, the Bengali settlers came to Battala Larma Square and set fire on the shops of Station Bazar in front of the army. This arson attack claimed at least 52 shops and houses, 24 numbers of motor bikes and Auto Rickshaws totally burnt down. It is estimated that the total amount of Jumma people’s wealth approximately worth of BDT 5 crore was blazed. At that time, the army personnel played the role of silent spectators.

Afterwards, the Bengali settlers attempted to attack the College Tilla and Babu Para villages located in Dighinala sadar. By then, the Jumma villagers offered an organized resistance to the invading Bengali settlers. The Bengali settlers tried to attack and set fire till almost 9:00 pm.

During the resistance in Bridge area, one Dhana Ranjan Chakma (52), son of Handara Chakma of Udol Bagan received critical injuries and died. There is an allegation against the attackers to have cut Dhana Ranjan Chakma’s artery veins of hands and legs. By that time, at least 4 Jumma people were injured in the attack by the settlers and beating by the army in Dighinala at the resisting Jumma mob.

Army fire in Khagrachari Sadar:

In protest against the communal attack in Dighinala and to protect the villages, a group of Jumma youth students amalgamated at Swanirbhar and Narankheya areas at around 6:30 pm on 19 September 2024. Right at that moment, several groups of army appeared there. The UPDF (United Peoples Democratic Front) sent a group of students from Gachban and Perachara to protect Ananta Master Para (village). As a result, both the students and army came to a face-to-face position having a little gap in between. This led to hot exchange of arguments and counter-arguments between the two ends that turned the situation tensed.

Towards 11:00 pm, an army vehicle from the Cantonment was on the way to Swanirbhar area. The youth students coming from Gachban and Perachara blocked the vehicle on the road. They got involved in hot exchanges with the army. The youth students used catapult against the army. At certain stage, the army opened fire at them. At this, 20 Jumma



Burnt up vehicles of CHT Regional Council

students were seriously wounded, some sustained bullet injuries at abdomen level while some others received bullet injuries in their knees and feet. At least 2 persons from among the wounded were sent to Chittagong Hospital.

Of them, 2 students were killed in bullet hitting shot by the army at Swanirbhar area. The killed 2 persons were: (1) Junan Chakma (20), s/o Rupayan Chakma, Address: Jamtala, Khagrachari Sadar. He was a HSC candidate from Panchari College, (2) Rubel Tripura (30), s/o Gargaja Moni Tripura, Address: Paltanjoy Para, Perachara, Khagrachari Sadar.

Attacks in Rangamati Sadar:

Around 10:00 am of the 20th September 2024, with an initiative of the Jumma indigenous Youth Students, a rally under the banner titled: “Anti-conflict and Anti-discrimination Hill Students Movement” took to street in protest against the communal attacks upon the Jumma people in Khagrachari and Dighinala on 19 September 2024.

When the procession started from Rangamati Gymnasium premises and reached the Rajbari Petrol Pump area, a group of agitated marchers tried to break the vehicle of Officer-in-Charge (OC) of Kotwali Police Station. When the procession reached Happy More, the marchers chased some Bengalis standing there. When the procession reached the Banrupa Petrol Pump area, bricks and stones were thrown at the procession of hill students by a settler first from the side of a shop called Banrupa Bilas Biponi and later from the roof of the shop, which the people in the rally became furious and began pelting stones at the Bengali settlers and this led to

conflict between the students in rally and the Bengali settlers.

Following this, the Bengali settlers made attack and arson at the houses of Jumma people. The Bengali settlers also attacked, vandalized and torched Jumma-doctors'-run Cevron and Medinet Clinic, Jumma-people-run shops in Bijan Sarani area and District Office of the PCJSS. On the other end, they attacked, vandalized and looted the traditional Maitree Bihar Buddhist temple and pelted stones at Tabalchhari Ananda Bihar Buddhist Temple in Rangamati. The settlers broke the gate of Kathaltali Maitree Bihar and broke the Buddha statues, vandalized and broke and looted the donation box. They looted and taken away 7 numbers of donation boxes, cash amount of BDT 90,00,000 monthly subscription, 10 numbers of metallic Buddha images and laptops. They also pelt stones at the Jumma dwelling houses in Hospital and T&T area.



Vandalised and looted donation boxes at Moitree Bihar

In Rangamati, the Bengali settlers conducted attack in CHT Regional Council (CHTRC) office and Rest House during which they vandalized and damaged the government asset. During the attack, they set fire in 1 Pick-up, 5 Pajero jeeps, 1 Micro bus, 2 personal vehicles and 1 Pajero jeep and 1 Pick-up of CHT Development Board. Besides, they torched the ground floor of CHTRC Office building. While the CHTRC building was burning, a group of army came and took position at the CHTRC entrance Gate. By then, as the Fire Brigade came to put out the fire, the Bengali settlers standing at the gate prevented the Fire Brigade from extinguishing the fire. They gave permission to the Fire Brigade to put out the fire when everything was burnt to ashes.

During attacks in Banarupa and Kalindipur, 1 Jumma youth was killed while hundred over Jumma people were wounded. It was learnt, of them, 27 wounded are reported to have received medical treatment in the Rangamati general hospital while 25 wounded have received treatment in the Rajbana Bihar hospital. Besides, 28 have had native medical treatment at home. Among the injured, 2 were sent to Chittagong due to serious injuries. Along with vandalism and looting in Maitree Bihar, 24 houses, business establishments and shops of Jumma people were set on fire, vandalized and looted. It is estimated that around BDT 5 crores worth of property was damaged.

The person killed is known as Anik Kumar Chakma (18), s/o Ador Sen Chakma of Noapara village, Moghban Union, Rangamati Sadar Upazila. He was a student of First Year in Karnafuli Government Degree College in Kaptai. He was brutally killed at the hands of Bengali settlers by hitting with



Houses of Jumma people were burnt to ashes at Porhavita, Banarupa

the sticks. Following the attacks and arson events, 144 was declared in Rangamati and Khagrachhari.

It is worthy to be mentioned that in the Rangamati Rally held under the banner named: “Anti-Conflict and Anti-Discrimination Hill Students Movement,” the students of sabotage wing of the Anti-Accord UPDF participated – as it has been learnt. When the procession reached at District Education office, the slogan went on: “Implement the CHT Accord – Implement is a must,” in reciprocation, when almost all the students shouted: “Implement is a must!” but the UPDF planted students shouted: “Bhua, Bhua,” which means “Fake, Fake.” When the rally reached Shilpakala Academy, some 200 unknown youth students joined the rally who were unknown – affirmed the Co-coordinators of Anti-Conflict and Anti-Discrimination Hill Students Movement.

On the other hand, as though the scheduled limit was drawn, according to which, the rally was to return back from Deputy

Commissioner's office to Gymnasium premises, the unknown students made the rally go towards Banarupa. As the rally reached Happy Mor, those unknown students gave a hot chase to the Bengali people. On the other side, no sooner the rally reached Petrol Pump of Banarupa, stones were pelted from the roof of the shops and in turn, the unknown students tensed the situation by reciprocation of pelting stones.

ISPR Statement entangling PCP in the incidents:

On 20 September 2024, the ISPR of Bangladesh Army published out a statement entangling the Pahari Chhatra Porishad (PCP) in the communal attacks occurred on 19 September and 20 September 2024 respectively in Khagrachari and Rangamati. On part of the ISPR, an effort was taken through its statement, in a bid, by resorting to mean option to put the responsibility of the events occurred centering the Anti-Conflict and Anti-Discrimination Students Movement upon the PCP.

The PCP expressed strong protest and condemnation against the statement made by the ISPR and 2-day communal attack and arson. In PCP's protestation, the statement of ISPR was termed as to be a narrative on communal line, irresponsible, one-sided and provocative. Since, the PCP had involvement in the events by no means and ways. Indeed, the communal attacks were conducted upon the Jumma people by the state machineries with a mean objective and thereby to destabilize the situation of CHT to further extent.

The PCP is in opinion that such communal attacks were organized through ill-activities of the communal quarters



Shops and houses of Jumma people were burnt to ashes at Dighinala Station Bazaar

just to worsen the CHT situation. During the protest, the PCP demanded to bring the persons involved in the 2-day incidents to the trial immediately and implement the CHT Accord to its full and in appropriate manner.

Conclusion:

The incidents of communal attacks and arson of the genre are not new in CHT. Following the signing of the CHT Accord in 1997, altogether 21 communal attacks including the recent communal attack had been conducted under direct patronization of vested elements. The prime target behind these kinds of communal attack is to turn the non-Muslim inhabited CHT into a Muslim-dominant region and to that end, to cripple the economy of the Jumma people, to occupy their lands forcibly, to evict them from their ancestral lands and overall to create terror among the Jumma people.

Here, one more point is to be reckoned that in the ISPR statement of 20 September 2024, it was stated: "... the

on-going tensed situation can take a formidable form of riot in the three hill districts...” The statement of ISPR is tantamount to almost an advance articulation of communal riot, which is considered to have been a conspiracy to incite the rioters. The responsible authority like ISPR can never propagate well in advance on “formidable communal riot” in such manner. This propagation may also be treated as to be almost an equivalent to create fear and panic in the mindset of the people.

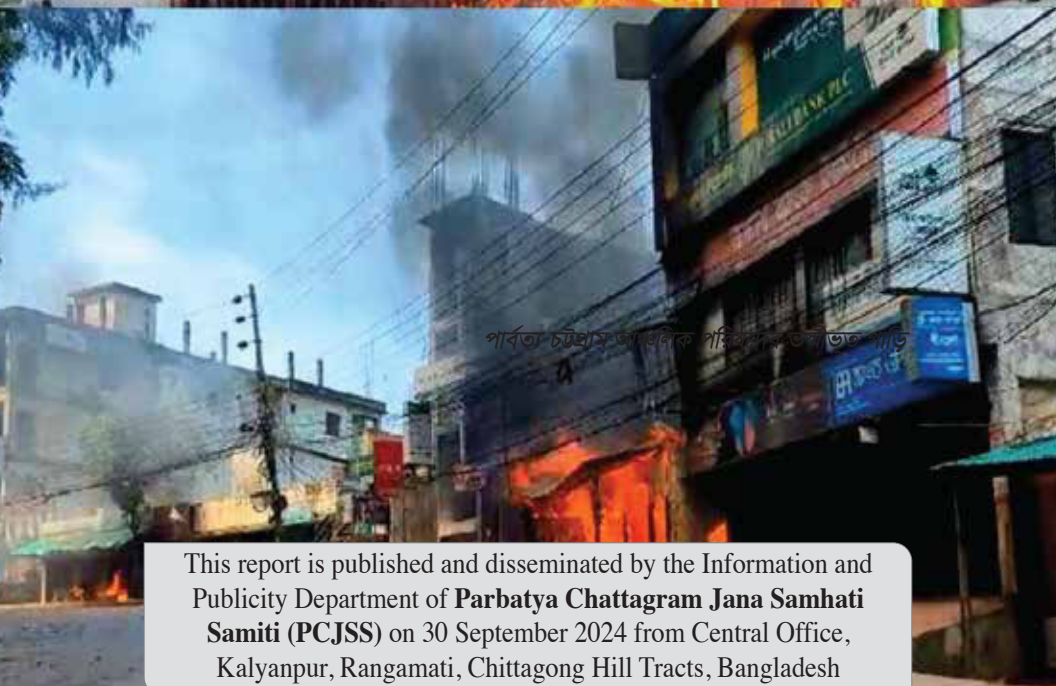
Needless to be mentioned that there is no any other alternative to political and peaceful solution to the CHT crisis with exception to implementation of the CHT Accord of 1997. The solution key to the crisis lies in the implementation of the CHT Accord. Hence, come on! Join the greater movement for implementation of the Accord irrespective of ages.

Under the given circumstances, PCJSS demands to the Interim Government of Bangladesh includes:

1. To take measures for judicial inquiry into communal attacks on September 19-20 in Khagrachari, Dighinala and Rangamati.
2. To provide proper compensation and medical treatment to the persons killed and wounded and the affected families, on the part of government.
3. To bring the persons involved in the communal attacks in Khagrachari, Dighinal and Rangamati to trial and ensure illustrative punishment.



Burnt up vehicles of CHT Regional Council



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