

Bijoy Dibosh, safety and security in the CHT

KABITACHAKMA

ON December 16, *Bijoy Dibosh*, the victory of justice over injustice, I learnt about the murder of Umraching Marma (Chabi), a class-XIII student. Her throat was slit on December 15, allegedly by two Bengali settlers, Mohammad Nizam Uddin (aged 19/20) and Masud Rana (aged 19) from the village of Kaptai in the CHT. She had been working on her family's *jum* farm, collecting vegetables. The accused confessed that she was murdered when she resisted rape.

Is murder of minors like Umraching unusual in the CHT?

A 2013 submission on CHT Jumma indigenous rural women, under Article 14 of CEDAW, notes that a high number of indigenous women have been sexually assaulted, raped, and murdered by non-indigenous men during daily activities, such as going to and from work on farms, tending cattle, collecting food and firewood from the forest, fetching water, and going to school, markets and temples. It stressed that sexual violence against Jumma women by settlers has intensified with the increased mobility of settlers in the post-Accord CHT. Indigenous women of all ages are losing their freedom of movement in the CHT. Kapaeeng Foundation documented that in the last 7 years, till April 2014, 96% of the alleged perpetration of violence against indigenous women in the CHT were committed by Bengali settlers and 4% by law enforcement officers. It argued that while sexual violence against CHT women was used initially as a 'weapon of war,' it was later used for land grabbing (Sexual Violence against Indigenous Women, *The Daily Star*, May 4, 2014).

Police work on the Umraching murder case has been exemplary. The victim's father was able to file a case with the local police station. The police took immediate action to arrest the men and bring them before the court. However, earlier this year, the alleged rape and

murder of 30 year old mother of Sabita Chakma received different treatment. Police initially refused to file the case. Amnesty International pointed out that in the Sabita murder case "the local police superintendent, when reporting that no arrests had been made, stated that 'the upazila parishad election was our first priority. Arresting someone could have raised Bangalee-Pahari tensions. So, we are taking our time.'" Amnesty International added that "in cases where indigenous women report rape by Bengali settlers, doctors are pressured by the authorities to report

Of these, 166 cases were served with charge sheets, and only nine of these cases were tried, with no convictions. Human rights organisations speculate that absolute impunity enjoyed by perpetrators remains the major reason for continuation of sexual violence against indigenous women in the CHT.

The Umraching murder was not the only news on *Bijoy Dibosh*. A national Bangla daily revealed that on that day there were arson attacks on indigenous peoples of the CHT at Bogachari, in Rangamati, allegedly by 'some miscreants.'

Padma Ranjan Chakma.

Grabbing of land belonging to indigenous peoples by Bengali settlers, powerful Bengalis and organisations, often using terror and deceit, has been practiced in the CHT since the late 1970s. Asfar Ali's apparent land grabbing again brings sharp attention to the government's failure to establish a just and functioning Land Commission, which is an important provision of the 1997 CHT Accord. The Bogachari arson poignantly shows how full implementation of the CHT Accord is necessary for a just Bangladesh.

with maintaining law and order, but instead thwart it, must also be brought to justice.

In the days after *Bijoy Dibosh*, we learnt that the arson victims' families, including babies and the elderly, are homeless in December's harsh winter. However, they demand nothing but safety and security from the state. They refused to accept relief in the form of food grain, metal roofing sheets and cash assistance offered by the government on December 18. Only when Mostafa Kamal, the Rangamati Deputy Commissioner, made assurances of security, did the victims accept the metal roofing sheets. It is imperative that all victims of Bogachari be justly compensated.

Is it possible to ensure safety and security for indigenous peoples in the CHT?

It may appear difficult. But I am confident that all Bangladeshis, whether Bengali or non-Bengali, have the capacity to distinguish right from wrong. They have the capacity to respect justice, to respect humanity, and to stand by the oppressed.

Bijoy Dibosh is significant in marking an end to the injustices of 24 years of cultural, economic, racial and religious oppression suffered by the people of Bangladesh under Pakistan. While the spirit of *Bijoy Dibosh*, which represents victory over injustice, is weakened by incidents like the Bogachari arson and the murder of Umraching, the police's dutiful work in bringing Umraching's murderers to justice is making a difference.

Perhaps the spirit of *Bijoy Dibosh* can rekindle the hearts of millions of Bangladeshis to do what is honourable. We can only hope that the spirit will prove to be indomitable, and help bring safety and security to indigenous peoples in the CHT.

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no evidence of rape in their medical reports, arguing that a finding of rape would contribute to tensions between Indigenous Peoples and Bengalis." (Live-wire: Amnesty's global human rights blog, June 24, 2014). The well-known 1996 Kalpana Chakma abduction case still awaits effective police action.

The Women and Children Repression Prevention Tribunals have all but been ineffective since they came to the CHT in 2009. A 2014 CHT Commission report recorded a total of 215 cases of violence against women from January 2010 to December 2011.

Reports stated that at least 50 homes and seven shops owned by indigenous people in 3 villages were torched, allegedly by Bengali settlers in the presence of some military personnel. The arson attackers also vandalised Karuna Kutir, a Buddhist temple, physically abused monks, and looted seven bronze Buddha statues. Police suggested that the arson attack was retaliation by settlers in response to the destruction of part of Asfar Ali's pineapple and teak plantation by indigenous persons. Reports further revealed that Asfar Ali had previously grabbed the land from

Harm was done to the people of Bogachari. There has been no judicial investigation. An 11 member probe committee has been set up to inquire about the arson. Such committees should not replace proper legal procedures. It is the responsibility of the government and its institutions to ensure that the law is followed. Those who destroyed the plantations, those who took the law into their own hands by torching 3 villages, vandalising and looting the Karuna Kutir temple, and those involved in land grabbing must be brought to justice. Those charged

OUTCOME OF LIMA Bleak prospect of COP 21

M. INAMUL HAQUE

BANGLADESH has faced some big natural calamities, e.g., devastating flood of 1954, severe seaborne cyclone of 1970, countrywide flood of 1988 because of heavy rainfall, cross boundary flood of 1996, flood from a depression in 2000 and flood in the *haors* in 2004. Those calamities could be taken as natural phenomenon as usual, but on December 11, 1997, the Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) adopted a protocol in Kyoto of Japan, to address climate change due to global warming. Global warming is changing the world climate, by melting the ice in the poles and glaciers of the mountains. It is caused mainly by the consumption of fossil fuel and greenhouse gases (GHG) emitted by the developed countries (carbon footprint), which leads to increase of carbon dioxide (CO2) in the atmosphere. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) estimated in 2007 that the atmospheric concentration of CO2 was 0.038% in 2005, compared to 0.028% in the pre-industrial times. According to the IPCC estimates, sea level could rise from 9cm to 48cm by 2080 in a 'Low Emissions Scenario,' and from 16cm to 69cm in a 'High Emissions Scenario.'

In the twentieth century, the sea level had risen @ 1.8mm per year; during 1993-2000 it rose @ 3.1mm per year.

Bangladesh faces an increasing threat of submersion of the coastal areas from sea level rise, drought, flood, etc. because of global warming. Netherlands, Denmark and Maldives may go under sea water in near future if this trend continues. In recent years, cyclone Katrina hit New Orleans on August 29, 2005; cyclones Irene and Sandy hit New York City on August 29, 2011, and October 29, 2012, respectively, and inundated vast low lying areas with sea water. They are also thought to be the effects of sea level rise. In Bangladesh, cyclones Sidr of November, 15, 2007, and Aila of May 25, 2009, are thought to be effects and signs of global warming.

On October 24, 2014, member states of the European Union (EU) arrived at a landmark deal to cut GHG emission into the atmosphere. They set a target to cut about 40% emission by 2030, compared to that of 1990, to check global warming. In addition to the GHG, two more targets were agreed upon: 27% renewable energy market share on EU as a whole, and 27% increase in energy efficiency improvement. The former target is not binding on all states and the latter remains optional to all with a possibility to raise it to 30% by a review in 2020. The EU had already set 20% reduction target by 2020, though environmentalists say it could do more. But the EU Commissioner for Climate Action, Connie Hedegaard, said she was "very

proud" that the leaders "were able to get their act together on this pressing climate challenge" (bbc.com).

The IPCC released a Synthesis Report on November 1 on its fifth assessment on climate change, looking into its cause, impact, and possible solution to the slow warming of our world. The 116-page document shows how energy consumption by nations is altering the planet. It blames fossil fuels for contributing to 78% of the total GHG emitted into the atmosphere from 1978 to 2010. The IPCC has set a deadline for phasing out fossil fuels by 2100. With this follow up from IPCC, it appears that the climate change issue is gaining momentum.

The 20th Conference of the Parties (COP) on climate change was held in the first week of December in Lima to prepare a deal to be signed in the 21st COP Conference to be held in Paris, in the middle of December 2015. The Lima conference virtually collapsed as nations were too far apart to arrive at an agreement. Finally, a document was produced, but it is non-binding on the nations.

The Lima Conference document, reiterating the works of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Durban Platform for Enhanced Action under the UNFCCC, noted with grave concern the significant gap between the aggregate effects of Parties' mitigation pledges, in terms of global annual emissions of GHG by 2020. Nevertheless, it affirmed its determina-

tion to strengthen adaptation action through the protocol, another legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention (UNFCCC), to be adopted at the 21st COP Conference in December 2015. But in Article 8 it noted that the arrangements specified in the Lima document in relation to intended nationally determined contributions (INDC) are without prejudice to the legal nature and content of the INDC of Parties or to the content of the protocol, another legal instrument or agreed outcome with legal force under the Convention applicable to all Parties. So, in Article 9 of the Lima document, it invites each Party to communicate to the Secretariat its INDC towards achieving the objectives of the Convention (UNFCCC). According to Articles 13 and 16, all Parties are invited to communicate their INDC well in advance of the 21st session of the COP Conference (not binding).

The Kyoto Protocol has support of 196 states and international organisations (Parties) so far. Germany, leading the 28-nation EU, is playing a major role in combating climate change. Its share of renewable energy in its national energy budget has risen from 6.3% in 2000 to 30% in 2014. EU was pressing for an agreement to reduce emission of GHG globally. But the biggest polluter today, China, insists that by 2030 it will reach the peak, after which it is likely to decline. The next

big polluter, USA, wants to cut emissions by as much as 28% by 2025. The 3rd polluter, India, has priority on economic development, so directly opposes any agreement. The 4th polluter, Russia, wants to ignore the whole process. Canada had left the protocol in December 2011. Australia is no more



interested in reducing emission of GHG. With the collapse of the Lima Climate Conference, the future of the 21st COP conference in Paris appears to be gloomy.

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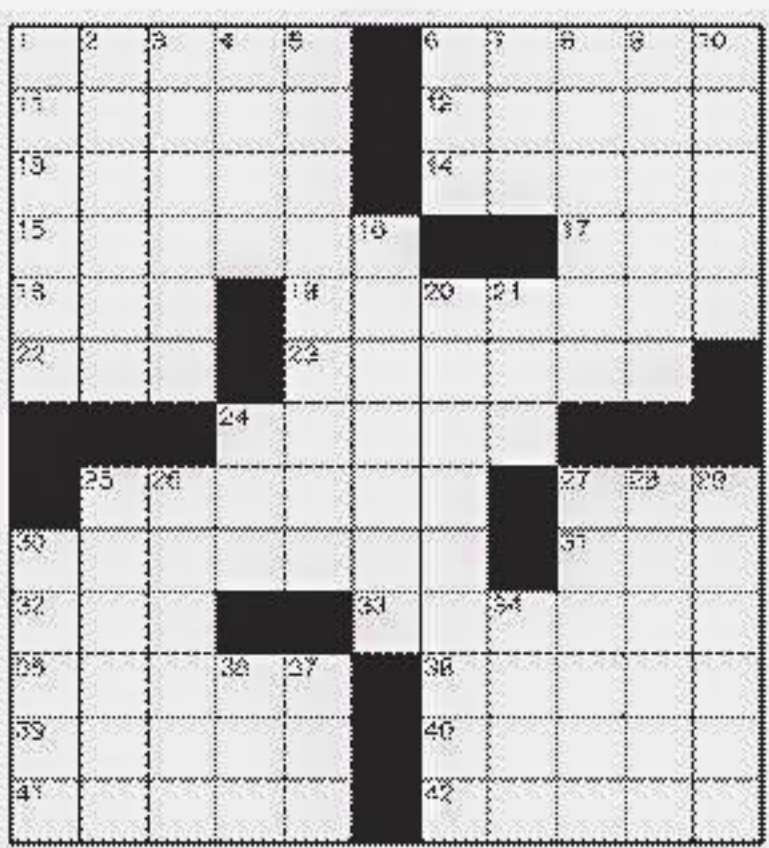
QUOTABLE Quote

The actions of men are the best interpreters of their thoughts.

James Joyce

CROSSWORD by Thomas Joseph

- ACROSS**
- Turn aside
 - In the future
 - Jimmy, e.g.
 - Fosse forte
 - Bakery come-on
 - Map division
 - Pole VIP
 - May honoree
 - Writer Follett
 - Faces, slangily
 - Reduce drastically
 - Pitches
 - Dorian Gray's creator
 - Sweatshirt variety
 - Pricing word
 - Did without
 - Supporter's vote
 - Trio
 - Hold of myth
 - Studio sign
 - Walled Spanish city
 - State game
 - New York's -- Island
 - Worry
 - Shoelace problems
- DOWN**
- 1867 purchase
 - Angle point
 - Tennis great
 - Coalgong
 - Do followers
 - Spot for some bettors
 - Spots on TV
 - Bowler, e.g.
 - Tooth layer
 - Cast makeup
 - Judges
 - "Gunga Din" writer
 - Divert
 - Spot
 - Impress greatly
 - Rhyming greeting
 - Decorative
 - "Serpico" star
 - Grommet
 - 29 Puts another way
 - Ninnies
 - Stratford's river
 - "Give -- rest!"
 - Go bad



Yesterday's answer

S	L	U	S	H	A	C	U	T	E
P	I	N	T	O	T	O	N	O	W
A	D	D	O	N	L	O	D	G	E
E	V	E	N	L	E	S	S		
F	A	R	E	O	M	A	R		
R	U	G	F	R	A	N	C	I	S
E	R	A	S	E	S	T	U	N	T
T	A	R	T	A	N	S	R	T	E
M	E	R	E	P	R	O	M		
B	R	E	W	T	A	L	E		
L	U	N	A	R	T	A	N	G	O
A	S	T	R	O	T	T	E	R	
T	E	S	T	Y	P	O	S	E	R

CRYPTOQUOTE

DVHUEVU AHVNHME HD EM RMTU LTHNNU EAMT DVHUEHNDND NGQE PGMDN DNMTHUD QTU LTHNNU EAMT PGMDND. -- YTHQE QSCHDD

Yesterday's CRYPTOQUOTE: THERE IS A CHILD IN EVERY ONE OF US WHO IS STILL A TRICK-OR-TREATER LOOKING FOR A BRIGHTLY LIT FRONT PORCH. -- ROBERT BRAULT

BEETLE BAILEY



by Mort Walker



HENRY

