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VIOLENCE IN CHT

# Indigenous students want UN probe

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

A group of indigenous students, youths, and local residents yesterday called for a United Nations inquiry commission to investigate recent attacks, murders, and arson in Khagrachhari's Dighinala and Rangamati.

At a rally held at the Raju Memorial Sculpture on Dhaka University campus, under the banner of Samateler Adibasi Chhatra Jubo O Sadharan Janagan, the group also demanded full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord within six months to ensure a political solution.

The protesters urged for the protection of indigenous people in CHT, compensation for the families of those killed in the attacks, treatment for the injured, and compensation for damaged monasteries, shops, and homes.

Bangladesh Adivashi Chhatra Sangram Parishad President Alik Mree said, "The families of the four who died must be compensated, and treatment for the injured needs to be ensured."

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PHOTO: PALASH KHAN

People from all walks of life march through the Dhaka University area in the capital yesterday, demanding an end to the violence currently taking place in the Chittagong Hill Tracts. They also brought various placards, demanding that the indigenous communities are given constitutional rights and for demilitarisation of CHT.

# Nahid denies claims of internet shutdown in CHT

Says there were isolated instances of disruption

UNB, Feni

Posts, Telecommunication and Information Technology Adviser Md Nahid Islam yesterday said internet was not shut down by the government in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) during Friday's violence in Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

"There were isolated instances of temporary internet disruption which was exaggerated as internet shutdown. No such instruction was given. There is no evidence that the internet was suspended in Chittagong Hill Tracts or any other place for a long time," he said.

He came up with the remarks responding to a question from reporters during a visit to a flood-affected area in Andharmanik in Feni.

He further mentioned that he had personally spoken with the deputy commissioners and other officials concerned, who confirmed that no long-term internet shutdown had occurred.

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# 'Conduct fair probe, punish those involved'

Rights groups demand justice for indigenous communities

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Manusher Jonno Foundation (MJF) has expressed deep concern over the recent widespread violence and casualties in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region.

In a statement yesterday, MJF highlighted reports from national media, citing that at least four people have been killed and over 50 injured in clashes in Khagrachhari and Rangamati.

The violence has also caused extensive damage, including the vandalism of shops, religious sites, vehicles, and attacks on indigenous communities.

MJF Executive Director Shaheen Anam strongly

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# Fascism's grip remains strong

Speakers tell discussion, urge for unity and widespread reforms

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Only key government figures have been changed since the fall of the previous regime, but the fascism they fostered remains deeply rooted in society, said speakers at a roundtable yesterday.

The event titled "The Lone Wolves of Freedom: Their Dream and Reality," organised by the Centre for Governance Studies at the BIIS auditorium, called for a united effort to eradicate this fascism through national and political consensus.

Syeda Rizwana Hasan, advisor to the environment ministry, said the rise of fascism was not solely the fault of the former government. She highlighted the complicity of bureaucracies, law enforcement, media, and intellectuals.

"The partners of fascism are everywhere," she said, stressing that reforms must extend beyond the top tiers of law enforcement.

"Who will implement these reforms if the rest of the system remains unchanged?" she asked. "We urge people to critique us constructively to hold the

current and future governments accountable," she added.

Badiul Alam Majumder, head of the electoral system reform commission, underscored the necessity for collective action to realise the vision of a new independence.

"If we don't work together, our dreams and expectations will remain unfulfilled," he said.

Zonayed Saki, chief coordinator of Ganosamhati Andolan, said fascism continues to thrive. He called for political and national

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# Fakhrul senses conspiracy behind unrest in CHT

Says Khaleda still unwell

UNB, Dhaka

BNP Secretary General Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir yesterday expressed concerns over the recent unrest in the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT), alleging that it may be part of a calculated plot to destabilise the interim government.

"I do not consider the recent incidents in the Chittagong Hill Tracts to be isolated ones. There are many factors involved," he said.

While speaking to journalists at the BNP Chairperson's Gulshan office, the BNP leader stressed the importance of the interim government engaging in discussions with major

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# 'We want justice, equality and safety'

Say female activists who took part in mass uprising

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Afifa Anjum, a student from Independent University, stood before the crowd at the Sagar-Runi Auditorium of Dhaka Reporters Unity yesterday, recounting her involvement in the July movement.

With courage and conviction, she shared how she and her friends bravely resisted police and Chhatra League goons from harming their male comrades.

After August 5, for some days, Afifa believed they had achieved something monumental -- a shift towards a freer, more just Bangladesh.

She hoped women in the "New Bangladesh" won't have to worry about how to reach home safely, or travelling alone.

But recent events have made her realise that true freedom for women is still a far cry.

She concluded her speech by saying she feels insecure about whether she would be able to return home safely after the event, referencing the recent rape of a 70-year-old woman at Suhrawardy Udyan.

"If we could ensure exemplary punishments for a few rape cases in the 'New Bangladesh', it could potentially reduce sexual violence against women," she said.

The event, organised by the Outraged Women's Community -- a platform uniting women from all social classes who played a vital role in the July protests -- brought together a diverse group of participants.

Women leaders, activists, artists, journalists, sex workers, domestic workers, teachers, theatre activists, lawyers, and family members of martyrs from the July movement gathered to share their experiences, demands,

and visions for a safer, more equitable future.

Two female advisers were also present to listen and respond to the concerns raised.

Female basketball player Ashreen Mridha highlighted the lack of support for women athletes, noting that out of 46 sports federations in Bangladesh, only 15-20 have dedicated wings for women. She addressed salary disparities, the absence of female leadership, and the need for more female-friendly facilities such as gymnasiums and transport.

"Age, marital status, or motherhood should never be a barrier for women athletes," she said.

Only 5 percent of the sports budget is allocated to women and youth, she added.

Tanjiba Nowrin Tori from Independent University criticised

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