

Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad, the Chief Martial Law Administrator, went to Rangamati and Khagrachari on the 27th July, 1982. At both places, he met the local people and declared that he wants the political solution of CHITTAGONG HILL TRACTS' problem. Then, on the advice of Major General Monnaf, G.O.C. of Rangamati area, the tribal leaders of the district held a meeting at Rangamati and formed two committees - one headed by Mr. Upendra Lal Chakma, ex-Member of Parliament, to contact the leaders of SHANTI BAHINI and the other headed by Mr. Charu Bikash Chakma to make Charter of Demand.

The committee headed by Mr. Upendra Lal Chakma met the leaders of Shanti Bahini and appraised them of the Government's intention to solve the problems of the district politically. The Shanti Bahini leaders also expressed their willingness to meet the Government leaders to try to solve the problems of the tribal people. Mr. Upendra Lal Chakma appraised the Government accordingly.

The other committee headed by Mr. Charu Bikash Chakma drafted a memorandum(Charter of Demand) for submission to the Government. But it's a great regret that the Martial Law Authority did not take any other step or action to meet the Shanti Bahini leaders. Rather, the said-authority started the work of THIRD PHASE of BENGALEE REHABILITATION PROGRAMME in Chittagong Hill Tracts. To be stated that under this phase, the Government has a programme to rehabilitate 250,000 Bengalee people in the district. By this time, 50,000 Bengalees have already been transported to different parts of Chittagong Hill Tracts; another 50,000 batch is now awaiting in HAJEE CAMP at Chittagong for transportation to the Chittagong Hill Tracts. This time, these Bengalees are being taken to the areas bordering with India and Burma. So the declaration of Lt. Gen. H.M. Ershad at Khagrachari, thereby wishing to settle up the problem of Chittagong Hill Tracts politically, is better termed as HOAX.

The district of Chittagong Hill Tracts though big in area has few cultivable land. For this reason, even during British regime a family could not hold more than 25 acres of land. During the Pakistani period this quota was reduced to 10 acres. Now the Bangladesh Government further reduced to 5 acres.

It is the recognised fact that for want of cultivable land, the then Pakistan Government could not rehabilitate even 16,000 tribal people only out of total 100,000 people affected by the Karnafuly(KAPTAI) Hydro-Electric Project. Now, the question arises - where the Government will rehabilitate the Bengalee people, now being taken to the

Chittagong/-

Chittagong Hill Tracts under Rehabilitation programme? To say, the answer is very clear. It is only on the lands now cultivated by the tribal people. To set examples:-

- i) The lands of Mr. Gogendra Lal Dewan, a relative of Chakma Chief, had to surrender his lands to accommodate the Bengalees.
- ii) In the up-graded Thana(Police Station) of Barkal, Mr. Probodh Chandra Dewan, an uncle-in-law of Chakma Raja Tridiv Roy, had also give up his ancestral lands to rehabilitate the outsiders(Bengalees).

Similarly, thousands of others are being driven out from their ancestral lands. Those who try to protest are summarily driven out or taken to Army Camps where they are detained into the pits for want of house accommodation. Very astonishing fact is that the arrested people are compelled to make their own pits. Recently, the Army when making a searching operation against the Shanti Bahini at Logung under Panchari Police Station arrested one innocent, Mr. Binoy Krishna Chakma who recently passed out from the Bangladesh University of Engineering & Technology, along with others.

To disintegrate the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts, a new district, BANDARBAN, has already been curved out. The present Government of Bangladesh has a plan to divide the Chittagong Hill Tracts district further.

The Government has made a secret plan to force the tribal people to embrace ISLAM, and with this end in view, a big Mosque and a Islamic Cultural Centre with Saudi Arabian help is being built at Rangamati. A separate Islamic Preaching Centre has been established at Rangamati. A very big Hospital Complex is also awaiting completion at the 'upgraded' Thana of Longadu. It may be mentioned here that the Thanas which have become Muslim majority with the influx of the new settlers(rehabilitated Bengalees) have been upgraded or awaiting to be upgraded in Chittagong Hill Tracts. The upgraded Thanas, for Local Administration, will have public representative as CHAIRMAN who will also co-ordinate all development activities within their respective areas. At present, the Martial Law Govt. is giving 'priority' to the upgraded Thanas for development works.

Learned from reliable sources is that the present Bangladesh Govt. has separately and VERY SECRETLY circulated a letter to all the Army Officers, now stationed in Chittagong Hill Tracts, encouraging them to marry TRIBAL GIRLS; and this very step has been taken only with a view to assimilate the tribal people WHO ARE OF MONGOLIAN

ORIGIN/-

ORIGIN AND ETHNICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THE BENGALEE PEOPLE.

The Government is not only uprooting the tribal people who are primarily the cultivators from their ancestral lands, but at the same time is depriving them also from other profession like 'business'. Job opportunities to Government and Non-government concerns are being restricted. Thus, the tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts being deprived of their own ancestral lands and also without business and job opportunities have little prospect for survival in this Islamic country.

Very off & on, the Government of Bangladesh declares that Chittagong Hill Tracts will be developed and many-a-multipurpose projects are chalked out for the betterment of it's ill-fated tribal people; and carrying this very end in view as BLUE PRINT, seeks foreign assistance. But all foreign aids received for this purpose is, in practice, used for the Army and other Para-Military Forces stationed in Chittagong Hill Tracts and also for the rehabilitation of the new settlers. In order to have these things done effectively, Maj. Gen. A. Monnaf, G.O.C., Rangamati has been appointed as Chairman of the Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Board.

So to say, the entire district of Chittagong Hill Tracts has now become a big Army Cantonment. Military and Para-Military personnels get all the facilities like the forces in War Field. The Government also circulated an order vide Memo No. \_\_\_\_\_ dated \_\_\_\_\_ not to register any Voluntary Organisation working in Chittagong Hill Tracts with foreign donation.

\* Bangladesh is one of the poorest country in the world; and in Bangladesh, the poorest section of people are the tribal ones of Chittagong Hill Tracts. So, the tribal people think that they are being deprived of the minimum facilities of HUMAN NEEDS and HUMAN RIGHTS.

In Bangladesh, 75% of the revenue budget of the Govt. is spent for the Defence Forces. A large chunk of foreign assistance is consumed by the defence force. So, the poor people of the country feel that there is no point in helping Bangladesh Government by foreign countries, as the Government does not properly utilise funds.

\* Though not notified by the Govt. all tribal people of Chittagong Hill Tracts require to hold IDENTITY CARDS to move around Chittagong Hill Tracts and produce them at various Check Points established by the Army.