



9 MEMBERS OF A HINDU FAMILY ABDUCTED

Kidnappers local goons

<http://www.thedailystar.net/newDesign/index.php>

Monday, August 24, 2009

Mukhlesur Rahman

Those who kidnapped nine members of a joint family from their house at Hrishikesh Das Lane in the capital on Saturday were local goons, victims and locals said. These gangsters are involved in criminal activities including land grab in the area by using political clout of the ruling party, they said, adding that they change their political identities with the change of the government.

One and a half months back, they received a paper from the local land office that says that their land was sold to one Idris Mia of Joydevpur in Gazipur on June 28 in 1974. One of the victims Nitai Chandra Das, 70, said "Abductors are out to dislodge us from our ancestral house with forged documents and involve us in cases. My ancestors were born and brought up in this building and we have been living here for over hundred years." If the land was sold in 1974, why the owner has not claimed the land for all these years, he asked, adding that the local goons are trying to grab the land through forged document. Another elderly local seeking anonymity alleged that the same gangsters were also trying to grab his press with fake document. Four criminals inside the workshop were posted but when police raided the place they caught them but later they got off scot-free, he said. Victims alleged that police are yet to recover the looted things and nab other criminals.

At the victims' residence eight-year-old Swarna said she could not forget the horrified incident that she experienced early Saturday when local armed criminals kidnapped her along with her eight other family members and kept her gagged and tied with others for over eight hours. Swarna, a student of class II in Ekrapur Government Primary School in the area, with tears rolling down her cheeks said, "It was unbearable; I was groaning in agony. The tape on my mouth was removed for only 10 to 15 minutes for drinking water. At that time I requested them repeatedly to set me free so that I could take my exams. But they gagged my mouth again." Panic-stricken family members were so shocked that they did not open their shops--a small tailor shop and a grocery-- their only means of earning. Children of the family did not attend their schools and colleges; even they did not prepare their meals yesterday.

Armed local criminals picked up Nitai Chandra Das, 70, his cousin Shambhu Das, 50, Shambhu's wife Kajol Rani Das, 42, her son Sajal, 14, and daughter Swarna, 8, Shambhu's brother Mohabir Das, 45, his wife Lakshmi Rani Das, 38, her daughters Beauty, 18, and Sweetie, 12, from their houses at around 3:00am on Saturday and confined them to a nearby Janata Engineering Workshop. On information police rescued them after eight hours and arrested four criminals including the owner of the workshop, Hossain Mohammad Babul. Police suspect the kidnapping has links to grabbing the piece of land on which the victims have an over 100-year-old building. Meanwhile State Minister for Home Shamsul Haque Tuku visited the house of the victims yesterday and assured them of their security and safety. Criminals do not belong to any party, he said, adding that the kidnappers would be brought to justice.



A MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF BANGLADESH HINDU BUDDHIST CHRISTIAN UNITY COUNCIL (BNBCUC)
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Case BGD 190809.CC.VAW

VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN / CHILD CONCERN

GANG RAPE OF A GIRL BELONGING TO A MINORITY/ RISK OF IMPUNITY

The International Secretariat of the World Organisation Against Torture (OMCT) has received information and requests your URGENT intervention in the following situation in Bangladesh.

Brief description of the situation: The International Secretariat of OMCT has been informed by ODHIKAR, a member of the SOS-Torture Network, about the ill treatment and gang rape of Ms. Farul Das, a 16 year old Dalit girl, in the Jessore District, in south western Bangladesh. According to the information received, around 1 a.m. on July 5, 2009, Ms. Das was going to collect some drinking water when four men attacked her from behind, gagged her and took her to a nearby garden where they raped her one after the other. When she was found unconscious by some villagers, the perpetrators had already escaped. Ms. Das was subsequently treated at Jessore General Hospital and a complaint was filed with the local police.

Local police authorities have reportedly promised to assist Ms. Parul Das with her social rehabilitation and have provided funds for her treatment. Paritran, a local NGO, has also provided funds for the same purpose. Although many NGOs and the media have publicised the case, and although the police initially made hopeful promises with regard to the investigation and actively tried to find the alleged rapists, the suspects have not yet been arrested. According to the same information, the perpetrators have political connections and are therefore protected by the local elites.

Moreover, according to the same source, supporters' of the alleged perpetrators exercise pressure on Ms. Das' family to withdraw the complaint and some villagers have insulted her moral character. OMCT fears that this harassment and the lack of investigation may have discriminatory grounds because Ms. Das is a Dalit.

The International Secretariat of OMCT expresses its deep concern about the gang rape of Ms. Das and the risk of impunity for the illegal acts allegedly committed. In this respect OMCT would like to recall the legal duty of Bangladesh as a State Party to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child to "take all appropriate legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to protect the child from all forms of physical or mental violence, injury or abuse, neglect or negligent treatment, maltreatment or exploitation, including sexual abuse" (article 19 (1)) and to "protect the child from all forms of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse" (article 34). OMCT also recalls that, according to article 4(c) of the UN Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, States should "[e]xercise due diligence to prevent, investigate and, in accordance with national legislation, punish acts of violence against women, whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons."

Action requested: (Edited).

Editor's note: In Bangladesh Dalits are Hindus



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WE ARE ALL HINDUS NOW

By Lisa Miller | NEWSWEEK <http://www.newsweek.com/id/212155>

Published Aug 15, 2009 (From the magazine issue dated Aug 31, 2009)

America is not a Christian nation. We are, it is true, a nation founded by Christians, and according to a 2008 survey, 76 percent of us continue to identify as Christian (still, that's the lowest percentage in American history). Of course, we are not a Hindu—or Muslim, or Jewish, or Wiccan—nation, either. A million-plus Hindus live in the United States, a fraction of the billion who live on Earth. But recent poll data show that conceptually, at least, we are slowly becoming more like Hindus and less like traditional Christians in the ways we think about God, our selves, each other, and eternity.

The Rig Veda, the most ancient Hindu scripture, says this: "Truth is One, but the sages speak of it by many names." A Hindu believes there are many paths to God. Jesus is one way, the Qur'an is another, yoga practice is a third. None is better than any other; all are equal. The most traditional, conservative Christians have not been taught to think like this. They learn in Sunday school that their religion is true, and others are false. Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the father except through me."

Americans are no longer buying it. According to a 2008 Pew Forum survey, 65 percent of us believe that "many religions can lead to eternal life"—including 37 percent of white evangelicals, the group most likely to believe that salvation is theirs alone. Also, the number of people who seek spiritual truth outside church is growing. Thirty percent of Americans call themselves "spiritual, not religious," according to a 2009 NEWSWEEK Poll, up from 24 percent in 2005. Stephen Prothero, religion professor at Boston University, has long framed the American propensity for "the divine-deli-cafeteria religion" as "very much in the spirit of Hinduism. You're not picking and choosing from different religions, because they're all the same," he says. "It isn't about orthodoxy. It's about whatever works. If going to yoga works, great—and if going to Catholic mass works, great. And if going to Catholic mass plus the yoga plus the Buddhist retreat works, that's great, too."

Then there's the question of what happens when you die. Christians traditionally believe that bodies and souls are sacred, that together they comprise the "self," and that at the end of time they will be reunited in the Resurrection. You need both, in other words, and you need them forever. Hindus believe no such thing. At death, the body burns on a pyre, while the spirit—where identity resides—escapes. In reincarnation, central to Hinduism, selves come back to earth again and again in different bodies. So here is another way in which Americans are becoming more Hindu: 24 percent of Americans say they believe in reincarnation, according to a 2008 Harris poll. So agnostic are we about the ultimate fates of our bodies that we're burning them—like Hindus—after death. More than a third of Americans now choose cremation, according to the Cremation Association of North America, up from 6 percent in 1975. "I do think the more spiritual role of religion tends to deemphasize some of the more starkly literal interpretations of the Resurrection," agrees Diana Eck, professor of comparative religion at Harvard. So let us all say "om." Find this article at <http://www.newsweek.com/id/212155>



গণপ্রজাতন্ত্রী বাংলাদেশ সরকার
 জনস্বাস্থ্য ও মুক্তি বিষয়ক কার্যালয়
 দিনাজপুর পৌরসভা
 ডেপুটি কমিশনার, দিনাজপুর, বাংলাদেশ

জন্ম সনদ
 (বিধি নং ৯, ১৯৯৩ সনদের অধীনস্থ) (পৌরসভা) বিধিমালা, ২০০৬।
 (একটি নিম্নলিখিত বহিঃস্থ জন্ম সনদ)

নিম্নলিখিত ব্যক্তি নং: ৫১ জন্ম তারিখ: ১৬/০৭/২০০৯ সনদ ইস্যুর তারিখ: ১৩/০৭/২০০৯
 ব্যক্তিগত পরিচিতি নং: ১৯৯৫-২৭-২-২৮০৬-১৬৪২২০

ব্যক্তির নাম: **শ্যামলী মন্ডল**
 পিতার নাম: **বকরুল হক** পিতার পেশা: **স্বতন্ত্র**
 মাতার নাম: **জামনা বেগম** মাতার পেশা: **স্বতন্ত্র**
 জন্ম স্থান: **বকরুল হক, জামনা বেগম, মঠ, খানসামা, দিনাজপুর।**

বর্তমান ঠিকানা: **বকরুল হক, জামনা বেগম, মঠ, খানসামা, দিনাজপুর।**
 দিনাজপুর পৌরসভা, ডেপুটি কমিশনার

পিতার নাম: **বকরুল হক** জাতীয়তা: **বাংলাদেশী**
 মাতার নাম: **জামনা বেগম** জাতীয়তা: **বাংলাদেশী**
 স্থায়ী ঠিকানা: **বকরুল হক, জামনা বেগম, মঠ, খানসামা, দিনাজপুর।**
 দিনাজপুর পৌরসভা, ডেপুটি কমিশনার

স্বাক্ষরিত: ১৩/০৭/০৯
 (সিনিয়র সহকারী কমিশনার (জনস্বাস্থ্য ও মুক্তি বিষয়))
 দিনাজপুর পৌরসভা, দিনাজপুর

She is 14, Police says, 'Adult' **Shymoli Mondal Kidnapped for Conversion**

On 27th June 2009 in early morning Shymoli Rani Mondal, 14 was kidnapped and seduced by seven perpetrators from the road towards railway station. The alleged perpetrators are: 1. Rubel (22) son of Biru Badurpur, P.S. Chatmohar 2. Jewel (20) son, of Md. Zamal Uddin, 3. Beauty Begum, 33, Daughter of Abdur Rashid 4. Rousy Begum(26), Daughter of Abdur Rashid, 5. Mst.Nasima (26), daughter of Abdul Hai, 6. Md. Dulal (23), son of Abdur Rahid, 7. Md. Korban Ali, (37) son of Abdur Rashid. The incident was witnessed by 1) Md. Shafikul Islam, 2) Sree Rajen Saha, 3) Sree Kanta Das of village – Bara Bandar, P.S. Kotwali, District – Dinajpur. Witnesses admitted to GHRD that, the girl was kidnapped for conversion, and a false marriage was solemnized between the girl and accused number Rubel to show that the kidnapping was legal. An Islamic name was also given to the victim girl converting from Hindu religion to Islam.

As per forwarding note dated 5th July, 2009 submitted by Nazrul Islam, Investigative officer (IO) of police, it has been stated that the victim was sent to Medical college Hospital. It is also stated that statement under section 22 of the Act the victim was sent to Judicial Magistrate for confessional statements. Father of victim was not informed about the statement. Later father Sukanta Mondal produced a birth certificate where the date of birth of the victim was 23rd Jan 1995, but IO was trying to suppress the date of birth and canvassing that the victim was adult. GHRD Dhaka talked with the Superintendent of Police, Dinajpur over telephone. He informed that he is not aware of kidnapping. GHRD correspondent Mr. Kamal Karmakar reported that the police is not co-operating, because, police already submitted final report without consultation the victim's parents. They suspect that police may be involved with this conversion drama. Daily Karotoa, 11th July 2009. Birth certificate attached.



REPRESSION AGAINST MINORITIES AT DURGAPUR

The Daily Amar Desh, 5th Aug 2009: From our correspondent: Durgapur, Netrakona: Allegations received from a group of minority communities of village Barman Para within Durgapur Upazila of Netrokona district regarding continuous repression against them. In a message they condemned the atrocities against them and it was signed by minority community people. It is alleged that a group of perpetrators continuously commits crime against humanity including physical torture, rape, kidnapping and land grabbing against minorities. They claimed that despite the local administration including their local Member of Parliament were informed, situation has not been changed. A case has been filed by one Bimal Chandra Barman at Durgapur police station.

PHYSICALLY HANDICAPPED JUMMA GIRL RAPED

www.chtnews.com; chtnewsonline@gmail.com; News No. 90/2009, July 31, 2009: A physically challenged Jumma girl has been raped by a Grameen Bank staff in Dighinala, Khagrachari. She has been admitted to Hospital. The incident occurred at around 3:30pm today when Nazrul, a Grameen Bank staff, found Meena Chakma, 20, alone at home in the village of Dighir Par in Boradom. He went there to collect installments on loans payable by her parents to the Grameen Bank. Meena is physically challenged and cannot walk because of damaged spinal cord. Hill Women's Federation president Sonali Chakma, Hill Student's Council president Ricoh Chakma and Democratic Youth Forum General Secretary Mithun Chakma condemned the rape and demanded justice. "The so-called micro credit program is doing much harm to the Jumma people." Sonali Chakma said, adding it is a conspiracy to destroy the Jumma peasants by burdening them with loans and interests. Mithun Chakma said "The Jummas lived without micro credit in the past and they will do so in the future; so we don't need Sherlock Holmes like Grameen Bank."

Hindu Deity Demolished

Miscreants stolen valuables and desecrated Kali Temple demolishing the deity on last Thursday at Raroa Kali Temple at Gopalpur within Sherpur Upazila of Bogra District of Bangladesh. A case has been filed. It is alleged that on 16th July 2009 night some miscreants broke open the iron-grill of the temple, cut the head of Kali Murthi, desecrated the deity and stole valuable ornaments valued at Taka 6,000/- . The news has been published in the national daily "Bhorer Kagaj" dated on 20th July 2009.

HINDU BUSINESSMAN ABDUCTED & KILLED

A Hindu businessman named Sumon Goala (25) was abducted and murdered at Pearpur – Jamalpur Sadar in June 2009 (The daily Sangbad dated 2nd July,2009): From our Correspondent: Unidentified miscreants abducted Sumon Goala, 25, killed him and through the dead body in a jute field. Police on 30th June, 2009 recovered the dead body tied with ropes. A case has been started, nobody was arrested.



TWENTY MINORITY FAMILIES ARE ON RUN BECAUSE OF CONTINUOUS THREATS, KIDNAPPING & FORCEFUL COLLECTION OF MONEY

The Daily Sangbad, 9th August 2009: From our Correspondent: Feni : More than twenty minority families located at village Kazir Hat and Keramatia of Sonagazi Upazila of Feni district of Bangladesh are fleeing because of continuous threat and atrocities by local Muslim perpetrators. They left their homestead for fear of attack. It is learnt that some perpetrators namely, Jafar, Seraj, Younus, Saiful, Ripon, Sabuj, Selim, Nasir and more 20-22 miscreants were regularly collecting illegal money from 20 to 22 Hindu families. If they refuse to pay, the miscreants threat them. It is also confirmed that the miscreants had already collected Taka 45,000/- from Netai Das of village Keramatia. They also kidnapped a minority school girl of Class VIII of Mangal Kandi High School as those Hindu families refused to pay tax. Later on payment of Taka 15,000/-, they returned the girl. They also kidnapped a daughter of Balaram Das at the same village and tried to rape her, she was rescued on payment of Taka 25,000/-. They also attacked many times on the house of Raju Das and broken utensils and tried to abduct women. Yunus, an alleged perpetrator openly declared that, he would marry a Hindu girl of Kali Bari who was reading Class VIII in Mongal Kandi High School. Police is inactive and for their own safety minority families took shelter at the houses of their relatives leaving behind their ancestral landed properties.

REPRESSION AGAINST MINORITIES AT DURGAPUR

The Daily Amar Desh, 5th Aug 2009: From our correspondent: Durgapur, Netrakona: Allegations received from a group of minority communities of village Barman Para within Durgapur Upazila of Netrokona district regarding continuous repression against them. In a message they condemned the atrocities against them and it was singed by minority community people. It is alleged that a group of perpetrators continuously commits crime against humanity including physical torture, rape, kidnapping and land grabbing against minorities. They claimed that despite the local administration including their local Member of Parliament were informed, situation has not been changed. A case has been filed by one Bimal Chandra Barman at Durgapur police station.

HINDU YOUTH ABDUCTED AND MURDERED

The Daily Ittefaq, 2nd Aug 2008: From our correspondent: Assailants confessed their guilt with regard to murder of Ashish Sarkar (25) son of Madhav Sarkar of Mirzapur Upazila-Tangail district. Arrested assailants identified as – (a) Nazim (35) son of Sona Meah (b) Faruque (27) son of Tara Meah (c) Ali Hussain (25) son of Abul Hossain(d) Faruque (28) son of Badar Uddin (e) Abdus Sattar (33) son of Abbas Meah of Baisham Para of Tangail district. Five Assailants abducted Ashish Sarkar on 1 July, 2009 and brutally murdered him, hide the dead body in a pond covered by a jute-bag. Police recovered the after five days of murder, and recovered the motor cycle from the house of Abdus Sattar.



JUBA LEAGUE LEADER OCCUPIED HINDU LANDS FORCEFULLY

The daily Jugantor, 9 August 2009 & Sangbad, 10 August 2009: Our special Correspondent: Sherpur: A group of hoodlums with the leadership of Hafizur Rahman Hafiz and his elder brother Azizur Rahman Aziz, Cultural Secretary of Juba League (Youth Organization of Awami League) Nalitabari Upazila under Sherpur district on last Saturday morning forcefully occupied seven decimals of lands belonging to a Hindu, Surjya Kanta Debnath. They also demolished two shops and their daughter Ms.Lipi Debnath was physically assaulted during operation. But Juba League Leader denied the allegations of forceful occupation of lands, but admitted that the lands were bought by his father and uncle was recovered. Surjya Kanta claimed that the land was purchased from his maternal aunt- Ms.Khuki Bala and as such he is the real owner of the properties. He alleged that, the claim of Hafizur is baseless and illegal.

It is also learnt that this Juba League leader –Hafizur Rahman is the accused of and charge sheeted for the case of murder of Yousuf and Takan who are also President and Secretary of Nalitabari Chatra League respectively and were killed on 25th October, 1999. This case has been stayed by order of the High Court Division.

MOHANA WAS ABDUCTED FROM HER MOTHER'S LAP & KILLED

Ms. Mohana, 4 months 10 days, was abducted and killed from her mother's lap. her and father,. On 2nd August 2009 at about 8pm mother Polly Mondal was sleeping with her baby at home, suddenly she woke up at 9pm and found that the baby girl was not at bed. The family started looking for the girl whole night. Next morning one minor boy found the dead body of Mohana in a nearby pond and started shouting. Local people recovered the body and informed police. An FIR has been lodged by father Goutam Mondal and he mentioned few names. Sign of injury on the right side of the head of dead body was noticed. As per the FIR the informant apprehends that due to previous enmity those five persons mentioned in FIR could have abducted and through the baby in the pond.

(Case No. Keraniganj P.S. case No. 03 dated 3rd Aug 2009 under section 302/201/34 of Penal code. Case description : Kidnapping and murder of children. Identity of the Victim: Name : Ms. Mohana Mondal (Hindu), girl. Date and Place of event: 2nd August 2009. Location: village: Bangnna, Keraniganj police station, District-Dhaka. Mouza No.426 (Gopar) Kalindi U.P. No. 7. Alleged perpetrators: 1) Deen Islam Dinu (45) son of Hossain Hoshna of Bangnna. 2) Seraj (40) son of Kalu of Suvhadda, P.S. South Keraniganj. 3) Nurul Hoque (40) son of not known of Suvhadda, Dhaka 4) Shaheen (30) son of not known of Hizaltali, Dhaka 5) Ali Akbar (45) son of not known of Bangnna, Dhaka. Daily Destiny, 4th August 2009 & GHRD).



MINOR HINDU GIRL CONVERTED TO ISLAM: HOW HIGH COURT ALLOWS THAT?

CASE: 1: Justice Khondakar Musa Khaled and Mr. Justice Md. Azizul Hoque of the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh set free the alleged abductor Kazi Shahidul Islam Rasel in connection with abduction of Hindu minor girl Debasree Halder, 14 (Criminal Appeal No. 4558 of 2009) and (Criminal Appeal No. 5879 of 2008), a student of Class X without hearing the lawyer of the State as well as the legal guardian of the victim girl on 15th July, 2009.

Attorneys on behalf of the parents of the victim girl argued that, (a) As the age of the victim- girl on the date of abduction was determined as per birth certificate 14 years 6 months, the victim should be handed to the legal guardians. (b) As per precedent of the superior courts consent of the minor girl would not be treated as consent of the victim-girl to the alleged marriage and court can not pass any order allowing the minor girl to continue conjugal life along with the abductor without ascertaining the age of the victim (c) It is also argued that the provision under section 491 of the code of Criminal procedure the High Court Division had opportunity to issue a show cause notice why the victim girl detained by the abductors should not be brought before high court for ascertaining the age of the victim-girl; but it was not done by the High Court (d) It is also argued that during abduction of victim girl if there are any marriage documents of conversion purported to have been manufactured for the purpose of conversion to Islam was also illegal and void (e) It was inadmissible that the lawyer of the accused-appellant identified the victim girl while in the court; but High court did not allow legal guardian of the victim to ascertain the identity of victim girl with her baby (f) As per version of the legal guardian no child was born from the victim-girl and there is no probability of having any child while the victim was at that relevant time pregnant.

Lawyer of the accused appellant Adv. S.M. Mahbubul Islam argued that: (a) Victim girl was Hindu by birth converted to Islam on 19.06.2008 by swearing Affidavit to Notary Public and also victim also took new Islamic name as Fatema-tuz-Zohara (b) There was love affair with the accused-appellant and before the alleged date of occurrence they married each other on 30.06.2008 which was registered on the same day in the office of Nikah Register, Painnar Bazar, Keraniganj police station, District-Dhaka. (c) After the marriage of alleged victim and the appellant they were maintaining conjugal life peacefully and on 21.06.2009 a female child born up in OGSB Hospital and as such considering the future of the child on humanitarian consideration the accused appellant may be enlarged on bail.

Fact of the case is that: Kazi Shahidul Islam Rasel along with his accomplices abducted a Hindu minor girl- Ms. Debasree Halder (14 years 6 months as per Birth certificate) on 2nd of July, 2008 on way to her school at Chand Kati Bazar -Jhalakati Upazila. Ms. Debasree Halder- the victim was the student of Class X of Jhalakati Government High School. Samarendra Shekhor Halder – father of the victim lodged FIR at Jhalakati police station against the perpetrators on 6th July, 08. Police after investigation submitted charge sheet No.151 dated 30.09.2008 under section 7/30 Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2003 against the perpetrators namely : 1) Kazi Shahidul Islam Rasel (20) son of late Kazi Enayet Karim, 2) Kazi Rokeya Begum (40) wife of Kazi Enayet Karim, 3) Aminul Islam Didar (25) son of Abdul Matin and 4) Sawpan Mridha (50) son of late Ledhu Mridha, all of district –Jhalakati. Accused number 2 Kazi Rokeya Karim confirmed by an



undertaking on 28.08.2008 in writing before the Officer-in-Charge of Jhalakati police station stating that she would produce the victim girl along with the principal accused within 03.09.2008 which was recorded as general diary number 1172 on 28.08.2008. But that was never fulfilled. Ultimately RAB arrested the accused- Kazi Shahidul Islam Rasel on 26.04.2009 and lower judiciary sent him to jail custody. After released on bail from High Court Division principal abductor Kazi Shahidul Islam and some powerful perpetrators with the help of local leaders of political party started put pressure upon the legal guardian of victim to concede to their illegal marriage and threatened to withdraw the case and also demanded compensation of Taka 12,00,000/- (twelve lakh). Father of victim also lodged a general diary number 86 dated 02.08/09 at Jhalakati police station, but police did not take any action against the perpetrators.

CASE: 2

Kidnapping case of Ms. Mary Das- a Hindu minor girl (11 years 8 months) was not handed over to her parents by the lower judiciary and the High court Division in Criminal Appeal number - 5879 of 2008. High Court Division of Supreme Court of Bangladesh consisting Mr.Justice Sikdar Mokbul Hossain and Mr. Justice Md. Fazlur Rahman refused custody of minor Hindu girl to her legal guardian by order dated 28.10.2008.

Fact of the case is that Ms.Mary Das and her cousin were going home on 18.10.2006 at Sadarghat Area of Chittagong District. Accused Bashir and Md. Hanif stopped their rickshaw, pull down Mary Das from the rickshaw and took her away forcefully. Dayal Kanti Das, father of the victim lodged FIR against six Muslim perpetrators for recovery of his daughter and for punishment of the perpetrators of crime. Double Mooring Police submitted charge sheet number 19 dated 28.01.2007 against those six abductors under section 7/30 of Nari-O-Shishu Nirjatan Daman Ain, 2003 as police found preliminary evidences of abduction after investigation. GHRD & BDMW also conducted investigation on this abduction case and found that the victim girl was aged about 11 years 8 months as per school certificate given by the Head Master of Lions School, Sadarghat Chittagong.

Mr.Shamsul Alam Khan – Trial Judge Chittagong detained the minor girl in custody and found guilty the principal accused, Bashir Ahmed and convicted him for 14 years. He also acquitted 5 other accused on 06. 07.2008 arising out of Special Tribunal Case number -65 of 2007. GHRD & BDMW filed an appeal against the judgement before High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh (Criminal appeal number -5879 of 2008) on 28.01.2008. High Court delayed the hearing of custody of the minor girl rendering the victim girl in great anxiety and hardship; although the minor girl in custody prayed for handing her over to her Hindu legal guardian. The minor girl is still suffering in the custody. On the contrary the High Court Division of the Supreme Court of Bangladesh consisting Mr.Justice Sayed Mahammad Dastigir Hossain and Mr.Justice Md.Raisuddin freed the convicted Bashir Ahmed on bail on 28.05.2009.

Adv.Rabindra Ghosh

Founder President of Bangladesh Minority Watch (BDMW)
and Observer of Global Human Rights Defense, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

www.bdmw.org

BHBCUC EUROPE CONFERENCE IN FRANCE ON SUNDAY, 6TH SEPT 2009

Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist & Christian Unity Council, Europe & Bangladesh Hindu Buddhist & Christian Association, Paris, France jointly organized an international conference on Sunday, 6th September 2009 ‘religious minorities want their rights back’ in Bangladesh. Conference Convener Udayan Barua, President, BHBCUC, Europe had invited all to join. Detail of the program will be announced on a later date.

BHBCUC EUROPE CONFERENCE 2009

THEME: ‘MINORITIES WANT THEIR RIGHTS BACK’



Human Rights Today Bangladesh



International Indigenous day and Indigenous community of Bangladesh

8 August 2009 by Jahangir Alam Akash: 9th August is International Indigenous Day. Indigenous community has facing many problems in Bangladesh. Still the indigenous are not recognize by the constitution. Every day the indigenous are tortured by majority Muslims. They are grabbing the land of indigenous. Indigenous women and girls are raped by Muslim majority. On the other hand, state tortures indigenous people. Various indigenous tribes, including Hajong, Choch, Bonai, Tripura, Marma, Chakma, Garo, Santal, Urao, Munda, Khashia, Manipuri, Khoang, Lushai, Bom and Rajbongshi have in Bangladesh. At least 45 indigenous small groups are there. As per UN statistics about 370 million indigenous people now live in 37 countries through over the world.

The constitution does not give proper identity to the indigenous peoples. This is Bangladesh! We demand indigenous persecutions stop right now and that the government give all rights to them



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and bring the perpetrators to justice. Indigenous children's have no rights for education. 1, 50,000 indigenous children's have not been getting education in Bangladesh. Northern part of Bangladesh where some private primary education centers had started but without proper patronization those centers are with worse conditions. Every year Kalajor (One type of fever) attacks indigenous in Rajshahi region and people dies without any treatment. The children's of indigenous are facing malnutrition.

Day by day the indigenous are become landless, and percentage has increased from 20 percent to 95 percent. Bangladesh doesn't have any statistics about indigenous people. Only in northern part of Bangladesh have 15 Hundred Thousands indigenous peoples. In 16 district of northern part of Bangladesh have Santal, Orao, Munda, Mahato, Malo, Paharia, Malpaharia, Kol Kamar, Bhumali, Mahali, Turi, Rajwar, Rajbongshi, Koch, Gorat, Bhuia, Chai, Baichani, Dohora, Patni, Hari, Ghatoal, Bagti, Dusat, Chral, Lohora, Bhumiz, Anguar Rajoer, Betia, Nuniapahari etc small cast indigenous.

In 1998, an indigenous leader, Alfred Soren, was brutally killed. The day of the attack, the perpetrators looted his house, destroyed his belongings, and set the house on fire. Until now, his family members and the public have never seen the light of justice. Not only that, still the peoples has very fearing at Indigenous village under Mohadevpur police station in Naogaon district in Bangladesh. Alfred Soren was lived in here (Indigenous village or Sarderpara). Still the influential have giving threat to the sister and brother of Soren.

Cholesh Richil, an indigenous Christian leader, died in custody on March 18, 2007, following brutal torture. Richil's civil rights were grossly violated by government. It is puzzling why the government has not yet made a proper investigation to unearth the mystery behind this leader's death. The killing of Richil is not registered as a criminal case to date. An ill-fated ten-year-old indigenous child, Klanto Chiham, was killed after being tortured at Mymansingh. A robber killed a Christian school teacher at Madhupur in Tangail. On 20th March 2001 another indigenous Geetida Rema was killed, no report was yet published. Indigenous community members Biher Nokrek, Nintonath Hadeema, Piren Sanal, Sentu Sanal, and Odhir were killed in Madhupur. A sensational kidnapped history of Kalpana Chakma is well known to the country. No investigation of tea worker Obinash Mura murder in Moulovibazar.

The indigenous peoples have no human rights in Bangladesh. They are living without good health, education, food, clothes and housing. But, they are troubled by Muslim majority, sometimes influential political as well as state. An indigenous woman Andrina Murmu living at Joykrishnopur village at Godagari in Rajshahi told, indigenous Santal are very poor. For money problem indigenous peoples have no sanitary bathroom. Jamuna Rani (23) informed, radio-TV is still dream to them. No indigenous dramas, cinema in Bangladeshi TV-Radio.

In 2006 as a journalist I had visited an indigenous village at Godagari in Rajshahi in Bangladesh. Joykrishnapur is a small village. 600 indigenous lived there. 200 indigenous voters there. Though, the village was declared by the local administration as a 100 percent sanitary system, there have been only 5 sanitary bathrooms, only 1 tubwel, and no school or health center. Aged indigenous villagers Lalon Hemrom told that, once upon a time they had many land of ours. But, now we have no land. I asked him, what happened? He told, our lands were grabbed by influential Muslims. In this village there are government ponds. He told: We used to fish in those, but now



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administration is giving lease these to the rich Muslim peoples. Agriculture worker Sajoni Baski (55) said, government has not to do something for us. We don't want anything from local Chairman and Member of Parliament (MP). Because, they didn't give us anything. Another agriculture worker Sumitra Murmu (26) told, we are working equal both man and woman. But, we haven't got equal wages.

Vimpur Sarderpara is an indigenous village of northern part of Bangladesh. Vimpur is under Naogaon district. Here lived 19 indigenous families. On 18th August, 2000 a group of armed terrorists attacked the village. There killed indigenous leader Alfred Soren. Local political influential grabbed their (indigenous) lands and killed Alfred, burned their houses, ransacked and looted indigenous houses. In this attacked at least 25 indigenous man, woman and children were seriously injured. After that attacked five indigenous families fled from Vimpur. Now, 14 families are living there. After this attack a case has been filed to the local Mohadevpur police station, that's all, no action. An indigenous woman from Vimpur Anjona Rani told that, 'we are not getting justice. At Vimpur total land is 275 Bigha (3 bigha=1 acres). Out of that, 120 bigha lands were under possession of indigenous. After 18th August attack only 14 bigha lands are under possession of indigenous people. How? Nobody knows. The known killers are giving death threat to Rebeka Soren; she is the sisters of killed indigenous leader Alfred Soren. Rang Lai Mro is the head of a community of Indigenous Mro people in the CHT, in the south-east of Bangladesh. He was arrested in February 2007, charged with possessing a pistol without a license. Four months later he was sentenced to 17 years' imprisonment for the offence, though his lawyers informed the court that his pistol was licensed. After his arrest he was severely beaten in custody.

In Bangladesh, the brutal persecution of the indigenous ethnic minorities is going ahead full stream. Until now, the persecuted never saw the light of justice. A culture of the denial of justice in Bangladesh is the root of all the persecution against the ethnic and religious minorities, which isn't only affecting a part of the country, but is plaguing the entire criminal justice system in Bangladesh. Many NGOs are said to be working protecting the rights of Indigenous in Bangladesh. But, conditions of the indigenous are decorating day by day. Why?

SEXUAL ASSAULT ON MINORITY GIRL POLICE DID NOT RECORD CASE

Daily Samokal, 26th Aug 2009: From our correspondent from Manikganj: Harirampur police within Manikganj district of Bangladesh refused to record abduction/sexual assault case on a minority girl of village Sultanpur since last two months. Victim's family then appealed to the Superintendent of Police, Manikganj for help. It is alleged that on 24th of June, 2009 at night the accused 1) Sadhan Sarkar (35) Halem Uddin (34) Golap Shikder (25) and Eman Bepari abducted the minority girl, looted her gold ornaments and sexually assaulted her and she was injured. The perpetrators fled away when the victim girl started shouting. The same day, local chairman and police were informed. Police talked with the girl, visited the occurrence place and demanded Taka 7000 to register the case.

Dhirendranath Datta: Glimpses of a life

M. Waheeduzzaman Manik

Shaheed Dhirendranath Datta (1886-1971) was the harbinger of the formative phase of the Bengali language movement, and he had made history on February 25, 1948 by demanding that Bengali to be recognized as one of the State languages of the new nation of Pakistan even though his proposal was meant to be an amendment permitting the use of Bengali along with Urdu and English in the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan. During the early years of Pakistan, he had remained an ardent defender of the Bengali language both in the CAP and the East Bengal Legislative Assembly. He became a martyr of the liberation war of Bangladesh in April 1971. Despite his pivotal role in jumpstarting the formative phase of the Bengali language movement during the most defining moment of Bangladesh's quest for freedom and self-determination, his name has thus far remained essentially forgotten and neglected. It is also ironic that there exists a serious paucity of literature on the formative phase of his life and political struggle.



Dhirendranath Datta was born on November 2, 1886 in a village named Ramrail, approximately three miles away from Brahmanbaria, a sub-divisional town of the then Tripura (then spelled as Tipperah) district (later renamed as Comilla district). Dhirendranath Datta was very intimate with his father, who was a very kind man, and he was very inspired by his father's idealism. He inadvertently did not mention his mother's name in his memoirs. However, he mentioned that his father got married with a daughter of Bhubanmohan Rakhhit of Chapitala village under Sadar subdivision of Tripura district. He lost his mother when he was only 9 years old

After finishing his education at Ripon College, Dhirendranath Datta decided to go back to his home district to live and work, and he made this determination instead of seeking a job or pursuing a legal career in Calcutta, a city where he lived and studied for almost six years. He left Calcutta on February 27, 1910 to start a teaching job in a high school that was located in a remote village named Bangra under the jurisdiction of Muradnagar Thana of the then Tripura district. He worked there as Assistant Headmaster of Bangra Umalochan High (English) School from March 1, 1910 through February 2, 1911. Although he enjoyed his teaching job in that rural high school, he decided to quit this job to pursue a law practice at Comilla town. He formally started his law practice on February 8, 1911 in Comilla town, and he continued to be a distinguished lawyer there till his brutal murder in April 1971 at the hands of the murderous Pakistani army.

Dhirendranath Datta's debut in Bengal politics dates back to his student days at Ripon College. His subsequent political life was enormously conditioned by the life experiences and insights that he had gained during his student days in Calcutta from 1904 to 1910. He was a first year F.A. student in 1905 when he got involved in the anti-British movement to annul the partition of Bengal. In those turbulent years, both the Indian National Congress and the Bengal provincial Congress were dominated by two groups of leaders. While Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), Bipin Chandra Pal (1870-1932), and Aurobindo Ghosh (1872-1950) led the extremist group, Surendranath Banerjee was the leader of the moderates. Dhirendranath Datta was the supporter of



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the moderate group in the Congress. However, he was also deeply inspired by the dedication and oratory of Bipin Chandra Pal, the leader of the extremists.

Dhirendranath Datta worked as a volunteer at the annual meeting of the Indian National Congress which was held in Calcutta in December 1906, and he was deeply inspired by Dadabhai Naoroji's demand for Swaraj (self-rule) for India. In 1908, he also attended the annual conference of the Bengal provincial Congress at Boharampur. Although he was deeply inspired by the Congress demand for boycotting foreign goods, he had protested when some delegates to the Congress conference at Boharampur proposed the creation of the so-called 'Bentwood Chair'.

Dhirendranath Datta also participated in the social conference that was held in Comilla during the 1914 provincial Congress meeting, and he opposed a proposal for 'widow marriage'. He regretfully recapitulated that incident in the following words: "I am saying this with a sense of shame that I had opposed the question of widow marriage even though I completely changed my view later about widow marriage." In fact, he became a champion of various social reforms even within his own religion throughout his political career, especially during the years between the two World Wars. As a delegate from Tripura district, he attended the Bengal provincial Congress in April 1919 in Mymensingh, and on his return to Comilla he was devastated at hearing the news of the barbaric massacre of innocent civilians by the British on April 13, 1919 at Jalianwalabagh.

By mid-1920s, Dhirendranath Datta had emerged as a champion of various social reforms even within his own religion. In 1921, he was instrumental in founding the 'Mukti Sangha' at Comilla, the principal aim of which was to eradicate untouchability and caste system from the Hindu society. In 1923, he was also involved in the establishment of 'Abhoy Ashram' at Comilla. He also worked hard to forge a durable unity between Hindus and Muslims. Although he was a supporter of the Congress, he was greatly inspired by many admirable efforts of C.R. Das and his Swarajya party toward forging Hindu-Muslim unity. He was deeply shocked after he heard the news about the sad and sudden death of C.R. Das on June 16, 1925.

In its historic Lahore Session in late December 1929, the Indian National Congress had demanded 'Purna Swaraj' (full independence) for India, and it was stipulated that if the British Government failed to grant independence by January 26, 1930 then a Civil Disobedience movement would be launched throughout all provinces of India. Dhirendranath Datta made a conscious determination to follow through the Congress directives at any cost. When the time for real action against the British came on January 26, 1930, he wholeheartedly supported and followed all directives of the Congress through his direct participation in the civil disobedience movement.

Dhirendranath Datta organized a huge mass procession at Comilla town on July 2, 1930 protesting Motilal Nehru's arrest. In defiance of the police order, the protestors under his leadership had refused to disperse the procession. On that day, he was mercilessly lathi-charged by the then British Superintendent of Police of Tripura district. Dhirendranath Datta and a host of other protestors were arrested on July 2, 1930 for defying police orders. After keeping him for several hours in the police station, the law enforcement authority presented him and his fellow protestors at the Deputy Magistrate's Court in the afternoon of the same day. As a gesture of goodwill, the presiding Magistrate had expressed his desire to release them on bail on the condition that they have to attend the Court on the scheduled dates for trial. He firmly replied, "I refuse to recognize you as a Court." The entire Court was filled with 'Bande Mataram' slogans. He was then sent to Comilla jail in the evening of July 2, 1930. After 15 days, he was summarily tried by a Court inside Comilla jail on July 17, 1930 in which he had again refused to recognize the legitimacy of the Court. This summary Court, presided over by the then Sub-Divisional Officer (S.D.O.) of Comilla, Nepalchandra Sen, who was his former roommate and classmate, sentenced him to three months' rigorous imprisonment.



The dismal failure of the Second Round Table Conference in December 1931 and the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi immediately after his return to India on January 4, 1932 had given birth to the final phase of the Civil Disobedience movement. Dhirendranath Datta was arrested from his Comilla residence on January 9, 1932, and he was kept in jail for one month without any trial. This was his second internment. He was released from jail on February 8, 1932.

Aimed at courting arrest and violating the conditions of the notice, Dhirendranath Datta addressed a meeting in the evening at the Bar Library on the same day he was released from jail. He did not report to the police station. He was arrested at 8 p.m. on February 8, 1932. After he was kept in jail for a couple of days, he was put on trial in front of a magistrate inside the Comilla jail. He demonstrated his uncompromising commitment to the cause of the civil disobedience movement by refusing to take part in that trial but he had issued a pungent statement in which he stated the following: "The notice that has been served upon me is intended to kill the man in me and I have prevented this murder by disobeying the notice." He was sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for one year. He was released from jail in February, 1933 after he had served the full term of his sentence. On his return to Comilla in February 1933, he found out that his family had to move out of his Comilla residence and started living in his village home under extreme financial difficulties. By 1933, the Civil Disobedience movement died out.

Dhirendranath Datta was overwhelmingly elected to the Bengal Legislative Assembly during the historic provincial legislative election in 1937. Although Dhirendranath Datta had to spend 18 months behind bars during his first tenure (1937-1945) as the member of the Bengal Legislative Assembly, he was one of the most articulate and committed legislators at a critical juncture of the history of the Indian subcontinent. Despite the fact that he was in the opposition in the provincial legislature, he was actively involved in the passage of the Bengal Tenancy Act, the Bengal Debtors' Act, and the Bengal Money Lenders' Act. In 1940, he was elected Deputy Leader (Kiran Shankar was elected as the Leader) of the Congress parliamentary party in the Bengal Legislative Assembly. It was Dhirendranath Datta who brought a cut motion during the budget session in June 1945 that literally led to the downfall of Khwaja Nazimuddin's provincial Government. Pursuant to the fall of the Khwaja Nazimuddin Ministry, the then Governor of Bengal had dissolved the provincial assembly in November 1945 and declared to hold the assembly elections during early (February-March) 1946. As a Congress candidate, Dhirendranath Datta was reelected in 1946 to the Bengal Legislative Assembly. On behalf of the Congress party, Kiran Shankar Roy and Dhirendranath Datta were elected to be the Leader and Deputy Leader respectively of the opposition party in the assembly. Since the possibility of partition of India and the province of Bengal was gaining ground in 1946, he had to take some of the most critical decisions of his entire political career.

A life-long champion of Hindu-Muslim unity, Dhirendranath Datta was horrified to see the rise of communalism and the Hindu-Muslim riots in 1946. On the eve of the division of India, he had several options. As the Deputy Leader of the Congress parliamentary party in the Bengal Legislative Assembly, he could choose to opt for India where his political career would have been protected. He could realize that his future was at best problematic in a Muslim majority country if he opted for Pakistan. Yet Dhirendranath Datta made a conscious determination to opt for the new nation of Pakistan. On a matter of principle, he was unwilling to abandon his constituents. He became a member of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) in December 1946 and continued to be a member of the CAP till this body was arbitrarily dissolved in October 1954. He attended the first session of the Constituent Assembly of Pakistan (CAP) on August 12, 1947. He also attended the historic session of the CAP on August 14, 1947 in which Lord Mountbatten, the last Viceroy of India, had transferred power to M.A. Jinnah, the newly appointed Governor



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General of the new nation of Pakistan. Dhirendranath Datta had moved an amendment at the CAP on February 25, 1948 for adopting “Bengali” as one of the official languages of the CAP. It is clearly evident from his speech that he also demanded for adopting Bengali as one of the “State” languages of Pakistan. Among many others who were in the vanguard of the formative phase of the Bengali Language Movement, his role was seminal in the process of jumpstarting our resistance against those forces that were engaged in repudiating the rudiments of Bengali language and culture through the imposition of Urdu.

It is evident from whatever scanty literature is available on the formative phase of his life that his motto of social service was greatly shaped by his concern for his country and his compassion for common masses. Doubtless, he was a good lawyer-politician. However, the most distinctive quality of this extraordinary man of integrity and honesty was that numerous opportunities could not add luster to his reputation. He never shunned the code of ethics of his legal profession. Nor did he ever deviate from his cherished life-long motto of social service. He was regarded as a person of amiable disposition, and it is fair to suggest that he was a gentleman par excellence. His was a graceful and courteous presence both inside and outside of the courtrooms or legislative chambers. However, on a matter of principle, he was not willing to demonstrate any kind of timidity even before the most powerful.

Dhirendranath Datta performed a yeoman's service during the non-cooperation movement. At a personal level, however, he went through a social and political transformation during this historic movement. His direct participation in this volatile movement also gave him a rare opportunity to practice politics at the grassroots level in the rural areas even though his extended family had to endure untold financial difficulties. His life was also impacted by the historic Civil Disobedience Movement that was launched by the Congress in early 1930s. During different phases of the civil disobedience movement, he suffered three separate prison terms totaling a period of sixteen months. As a participant in the Satyagraha and the 'Quit India' movements that took place in early 1940s, he was put behind bars twice for a total period of eighteen months. The way he had courted arrests and jail terms during those tumultuous years of Bengal politics is an exemplary testimonial to a true freedom fighter and patriot. Since his direct participation in various anti-British movements involved a great deal of personal risk and sacrifice, his deep sense of patriotism and selflessness and his commitment to other people can be identified as the chief incentive behind his bold decision of staying back in Pakistan for which he had to endure humiliation and various forms of hardship. However, his sacrifices did not go in vain. Dhirendranath Datta's profile in courage that was demonstrated both before and after the partition of India and his role as a dauntless defender of the Bengali language and culture will be remembered beyond the boundaries of time.

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http://www.thedaily_star.net/suppliments/2007/21stfeb/dhirendranath.htm