

The Seven Sisters Post, 11 December 2011

Chakmas peeved at 'Bengalee' tag

■ POST BUREAU
GOWAHATI, DEC 10

FIFTEEN Chakma civil society organisations submitted a joint "protest letter" to the visiting Chittagong Hill Tracts Affairs Minister of Bangladesh, Dipankar Talukdar at Kamala Nagar, headquarters of Chakma Autonomous District Council (CADC) in South Mizoram, in protest against branding the community as "Bengalees" in the recently-amended Constitution of that country.

The Chakmas from Mizoram, Assam, Tripura, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh through their civil society or-

ganisations expressed the angst of the Indian Chakmas against the destruction of identity of the Chakmas in Bangladesh as a consequence to the 15th amendment to the Constitution of Bangladesh passed on June 30 this year which has identified the Chakmas and other indigenous people including Lushai, Tripuri, Garo as "Bengalees".

Demanding a written assurance from the Bangladesh minister after his return to the country, the organisations urged him to impress upon the Shiekh Hasina government to recognise the Chakmas and other ethnic communities as "indigenous peo-

ple" in the Constitution of Bangladesh.

The Chakmas also demanded the minister's personal intervention for speedy and full implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) Peace Accord of 1997 signed between the Government of Bangladesh and the indigenous people of CHT.

They maintained that implementation of the Accord would help restore peace and bring development to the "most neglected" region.

The 15 organisations who signed the memorandum to Dipankar Talukdar, the Bangladesh minister, are — Mizoram Chakma Develop-

CHAKMA, Lushai, Tripuri and Garo tribes have been identified as "Bengalees" in an amendment to the Constitution of Bangladesh

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ment Forum, Tripura Chakma Students Association, Arunachal Pradesh Chakma Students' Union, MAADI, Meghalaya Chakma Students' Union, Guwahati Chakma Students' Union, Barak Valley Chakma Students' Association, The Chakma Voice, Mumbai Chakma Association, Dibrugarh Chakma Students' Union, Mizo-

ram Chakma Students' Union, the Central Young Chakma Association, Mizoram Chakma Social Forum, Mizoram Buddhist Association and Chakma Mahila Samiti.

Talukdar was in Mizoram as part of his official visit to India from December 7 to strengthen trade relations between the two countries.