

Peace in CHT a far cry

NURUL ALAM
The increased incidents of violence have cast a shadow over return of normalcy in the Chittagong Hill Tracts even over five years after the signing of peace agreement. The then Awami League government signed the peace agreement in December, 1997 with the Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), the political outfit of Shantibahini, that ended a two-decade long bush war in CHT, home for 13 tribes. According to official reports, the bush war left 2,500 people killed, but unofficially it was around 5,000. Since the signing of peace agreement, one hundred and sixty-nine people were killed, 254 injured and 363 people abducted in 786 incidents in the CHT. Police and security sources said the unrest in the rugged hills sparked a panicky situation there. Most of the casualties and incidents were linked to the clashes between pro-peace PCJSS supporters and the activists of anti-peace accord, United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), tribesmen and Bengali settlers, security patrols and tribal activists, security sources said.

August 26 incident at Mohalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari that left one tribal killed, 30 others injured and 400 tribesmen homeless, fuelled the unrest in the CHT, locals and law enforcers said. Tribesmen blamed the Bengali settlers for the incident and setting fire to their houses at Mohalchhari on August 26. Tribal leaders also blamed the law enforcers for backing the settlers during the attacks. But the law enforcers denied the allegation. PCJSS President and Chairman of CHT-based regional council, Jotirindrio Bodhiprio Larma alias Shantu Larma, said the situation worsened in the hills after the Mohalchhari incident unleashed by Bengali settlers. Tribesmen have become panicked and felt insecure, Larma said. They still feel shaky as they fear fresh violence, he said. He said delay in implementation of peace accord fully and government's latent support to terrorists here had resulted in the escalation of violence tuning the whole situation volatile. But we are ready to launch movement against all misdeeds here, said.

Larma said adding our hope for restoration of peace through signing of an accord has been shattered as incidents of violence are increasing day by day. Upendra Lal Chakma, former chairman of the Tribal Refugee Welfare Association, said we are again passing our days in panic and frustration. We don't know what is going to happen in future as the situation reached an alarming stage in the CHT, he added. Referring to the Mahalchhari incident, Upendra said this is the third major incident in Khagrachhari in two years after Buachhari and Dighinala incidents. He said the affected tribesmen did not get any help yet from the government for their rehabilitation and survival. The security forces have intensified patrol as tensions mounted in the CHT after the increase of incidents of violence, administration sources said. A senior security official seeking anonymity said we have launched massive raids to defuse tension. The measures were also taken to rehabilitate the homeless tribesmen in Mohalchhari, sources said.

ATTENTION MR MAYOR



Setting up of flower beds along the main thoroughfares of the city has been going on for its beautification. But this "beautification" rather becomes irritating for the passers-by since the flower beds narrow down the footpaths. When a major portion of the footpaths remain occupied by vendors, portable signboards, sentry boxes, heaps of decorating materials and garbages, the space left for public movement is eaten up by the fancy flower beds. It forces the pedestrians to come down on the streets. The footpath on the west side of Noor Ahmad Sarak near Kazir Dewri stands testimony to the suffering of the pedestrians.



Models on the catwalk of Alokito-Konka Eid Fashion Competition organized by Alokito Chattagram, the regional publication of the Prothom Alo, at local Shilpakala Academy on Sunday evening.

Tigers confront Lions in Chittagong

MOHIT UL ALAM
Tigers and lions have been in Chittagong for a five-day war of cricket. By 10.30 in the morning on November 1, fourth day of the war, Bangladesh tigers have already lost two of their valiant frontline fighters. Both of them have self-sacrificed in the most familiar manner, Tiger Sarkar nicked at a ball, which he should have well spared, and the Greatest Tiger of all, Bashar, most foolishly ran for a third run which was not there. And this happened, when Bangladesh needed these two tigers most at the crease, when they did not have to go for the kill, but just stalk and stalk and wait for the right

moment. How many times should Bashar and others play before you can call them batsmen! The answer, my friend, is not blowing in the wind; the answer is here, in the team selection, in the coaching, and in the training, and, probably, in the doubt whether we deserve to be there, to play at the test level. In the evening before the match the players of the teams, and coaches, trainers, managers and officials were invited to a dinner at the poolside of Chittagong Club by Standard Chartered Bank, the sponsor of the tournament. During the tidbits talking at dinner one inquisitive guest remarked to the Bangladesh Coach whether he had taken any look at

the pitch since it was his first visit to Chittagong. He said he had, but though from a distance. It was pointed out to him that the Chittagong pitch was livelier than the Dhaka pitch, and a strong pace department would benefit Bangladesh. This suggestion was ignored, as Tapash was not included. The visiting lions scavenged the biteless pace of the likes of Mushfique and Sujon's from the word go. And, with the recurrence of Mashrafe's knee injury, Bangladesh bowling was shorn of any real power for two whole sessions, the lions scoring freely at four runs per over. Judging by the players' performance it seems that coaching has gone a little flat, the players have become absolutely dispirited, they

duck a lot more (Rajin Saleh) than necessary, and they also seem to have lost their natural touch. The coaching should aim at increasing the players' creative urge for the game, not otherwise. The whole team performed at Chittagong test as if they had been forbidden to show the dare of a cricketer. We seem to have given birth to what in literature is known as misplaced emotion by having faith in a man as captain who is neither a bowler, nor a batter, nor even a fielder. After Mike Brearley of England, the great philosopher-cum-cricketer, Sujon, the captain of the tigers, seems to have become the greatest puzzle in the history of test

cricket. Commentator Ian Chappel clearly said it at Darwin Test that if one did not perform, he shouldn't be chosen just for captaincy. Sujon has blocked either Tapash's chance as a bowler, or Aftab or Nafeez or Moniruzaman's chance as a batsman. Why do we have to show this national indulgence? Oh, to compare Mike Brearley? Yes, he scored a triple century at Bahawalpur just in one day against a regional side in Pakistan in the late sixties. Except for the first-rate commentary, and the slowest outfield, there was nothing to remember from the Chittagong match.

the week that was

Afforestation programme soon
Minister for Environment and Forest Shahjahan Siraj said an afforestation programme will be taken soon at the already destroyed forests and "Parabans" in Cox's Bazar. Shahjahan Siraj told a delegation of Cox's Bazar Environmental Journalists' Forum at his office on Saturday. The minister said the government has taken measures to preserve environment of Cox's Bazar including the "Parabans" at Sonadia Island. Legal action will be taken against those involved in destruction of forests, he said. Earlier, the Forum leaders appraised the minister of destruction of mangrove, other forests and collection of rocks and oysters resulting in erosion in the sand layers at different points of vast shore in the district. Forum leaders Muhammad Nurul Islam, Priyatosh Pal Pintu, Fazlul Quader Chowdhury and Ikram Chowdhury Tipu were present.

Kathin Chibor Dan ends
The 30th Kathin Chibor Dan of Buddhist community ended at Rajban Bihar in Rangamati on Friday with a call for practice of truth and right shunning falsehood and wrong. Thousands of Buddhist people took part in the ceremony and offered Chibors (hand-woven piece of cloth worn by Buddhist monks) amid religious festivity. The Bihar (temple) principal

Sreemoth Sadhanananda Mohasthorib alias Banobhantey received the Chibor offerings and made speech for the Buddhist devotees and disciples. Chief patron of Rajban Bihar and king of Chakma circle Raja Barrister Debashish Roy and Deputy Minister for CHT Affairs Moni Swapon Dewan addressed the ceremony as guests of honour. Rajban Bihar Upasoke-Upashika Parishad General Secretary Murati Sen Chakma made the address of welcome, Vice-President Nalini Kumar Chakma read out letter of acclamation. Acting President Samar Bijoy Chakma conducted the Panchila prayer at the ceremony. Deputy Commissioner of Rangamati Dr. Zafar Ahmed Khan, Rangamati District Council Chairman Dr. Manik Lal Dewan, former chairman of the Tribal Refugee Welfare Association Upendra Lal Chakma, Dr. AK Dewan, Dr. Niharendu Talukder, Tara Charan Chakma, Sudipta Dewan and Sugata Chakma also attended the ceremony.

Projects needed
Mayor ABM Mohiuddin Chowdhury said we do not want fund, but need approval of projects from the government for the development of Chittagong. The mayor was addressing a seminar, titled, "Four Tests" organised by the Rotary Club of Islamabad at the Institute of Engineers, Bangladesh (IEB), Chittagong centre auditorium on Thursday as the chief guest. He said Chittagong is blessed with vast resources and its proper exploration and utilisation can turn the city a rich one within a short time. The mayor called upon the Rotarians

to create awareness among the people in this regard and draw attention of the government. Rotary Club of Islamabad President Rotarian Dr. Md. Jahangir presided. Former governor Rtn. Abdul Ahad presented the keynote paper. Assistant High Commissioner of India Ashoka Das, Deputy Governor ABM Wadood Ullah, former deputy governor Aminuzzaman Bhuiyan, Assistant Governor Jasimuddin Chowdhury, Rafi Ahmad and Aftab Uddin Siddiqui, vocational director Engineer Rashid and Immediate Past President Farid Uddin Khan also spoke at the seminar.

Imams receive certificates
The certificate-giving ceremony of the 484th batch of Imam Training Academy (ITA) was held in the city on Thursday. One hundred and four imams received certificates at the ceremony at the academy in Pahartoli. Chittagong WASA chairman Azizur Rahman was present as the chief guest with Islamic Foundation Director General AZM Shamsul Alam in the chair. Chittagong Govt. City University College Principal Prof NM Habibullah and Islamic Foundation, Chittagong division, director Mohiuddin Nurul Absar were special guests. ITA, Chittagong Deputy Director AOM Ibrahim Faruqi, Moulana Abul Hasan and National Imam Samity, Chittagong President Maulana Zafar Ahmad also spoke. Khwaja Ahmed Mianjee of ITA, Chittagong, conducted special prayers.

Alokito Konka Eid

Fashion Competition
Amid a colourful fashion show in participation of over fifty models, the final round of Alokito Konka Eid Fashion Competition ended here on Sunday. Alokito Chattagram -- the regional publication of the Prothom Alo, organised the final round of the competition at local Shilpakala Academy auditorium. Over one thousand garments were submitted in seven groups of the competition while eighty of them were selected for show in the catwalk of the final round. Winners of Lux and Lili Photo Beauty contests and other popular model artistes of Chittagong took part in the catwalk. Materials used, distinctiveness of designs, up-datedness and overall appeal were the main four features to judge the garments. Names of the 21 winners of seven groups would be announced on the prize-giving ceremony day of the fashion competition on November 10.

Ctg to be made regional hub for entertainment
State Minister for Civil Aviation and Tourism Mir Md. Nasir Uddin said Chittagong would be the entertainment hub of this region and the visitors of Foy's Lake would enjoy facilities of international standard soon. Mir Nasir said this while he was inaugurating construction work of Foy's

Lake connecting road at Pahartoli here on Wednesday. Local Government and Engineering Department (LGED) is implementing Tk. 1.5 Lakh connecting road project. Bangladesh Parjatan Corporation (BPC) Chairman Harunur Rashid Bhuiyan, Biman Bangladesh Managing Director Air Commodore (ret'd) Lutfur Rahman were special guests at the inaugural ceremony with Deputy Commissioner, Chittagong Shafiqul Islam in the chair.

Seminar on English language
Students' eagerness to learn English has increased in the country but the quality of teaching declined to some extent. It helped English language and literature departments get well established at different private and public universities. The speakers said this at the monthly seminar on literature of Department of English, Premier University seminar, on Tuesday. The participants at the seminar titled, "English literature education: Problems, solution and future" emphasised on updated academic curriculum, appointment of efficient teachers, extended and enriched libraries and improved academic atmosphere in the classrooms to facilitate effective learning of English. Prof Syed Monjurul Islam of Dhaka University, Prof Quazi Mostayeen Billah, Prof Masud Mahmud and Prof Gulam Sarwar of Chittagong University took part in the discussion with Prof Mohit Ul Alam of Premier University in the chair.

Thai Airways tour package announced
Thai Airways International (TAI) announced holiday tour packages in Chittagong-Chiangmai route. Three new packages, namely "Discover Chiangmai", "Chiangmai Medical Check-up" and "Gulf of Chiangmai", aim at attracting travellers in the newly opened air route between the port city of Chittagong and northern Thai city of Chiangmai. The packages will continue till March 31, 2004.

Tea cultivation in CHT for poverty cut
Advisor for Commerce Ministry Barkat Ullah Bulu said projects were taken for small-scale tea cultivation in the hill districts for poverty alleviation and betterment of marginal farmers. He said lands in the Chittagong Hill Tracts are suitable for tea cultivation and the tea cultivation projects will create an employment opportunity for

some five lakh people in the next five years. Bulu said this while he was addressing a motivational meeting of tea producers at Khagrachhari Upazila Council auditorium on Tuesday. He said the projects target an annual production of 193 million kgs of tea in three hill districts to earn Tk. 1300 crore. CHT Development Board Chairman Abdul Wadood Bhuiyan MP and Khagrachhari District Council Chairman Naxmatra Lal Dev Barmon also spoke. Bangladesh Tea Board Chairman Brigadier General MAHM Touhid presided.



Children perform at a function organised by Bangladesh Institute of Theatre Arts on the occasion of World Children's Day at local Regional Public Administration Training Centre in the city.