

'Implement CHT peace accord to ensure security'

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Academics and security analysts at a seminar yesterday called for speedy implementation of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) peace accord and revision of some of its provisions, which are inconsistent with the constitution, in order to bring an end to the long-

running conflicts and ensure security in the region.

In the previous years, conflicts among different vested groups, insurgency issue, arms and drug smuggling led to numerous incidents of killing, abduction, extortion and irregular detention, they said.

The Awami League govern-

ment tried to partially implement the accord after its signing in 1997, but the BNP government made no efforts to implement it, they added.

The government should have a political will to see the issue from a holistic perspective and act accordingly to revise some of the provisions of the accord and

implement it, the speakers said at the seminar.

Centre for Strategic and Peace Studies (CSPS) organised the seminar on 'Present Situation in CHT: Options in the Context' at Cirdap auditorium in the city.

In his keynote paper, Prof Dr CR Abrar said 91 people were killed, 269 wounded, 1,075 irregularly detained, 293 abducted and Tk 31 lakh was realised in ransom by criminals and vested groups in 2004 and 2005.

Many members of pro-accord Parbattya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) and anti-accord United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) also collect tolls in an organised way from business enterprises and contractors, he said.

The speakers said the issues of voting rights of the Bangali settlers, land disputes and proportion of representation of the Bangalis in the regional council and district councils need to be settled in an amicable way to ensure peaceful atmosphere.

They also suggested reinforcing the police force for the maintenance of law and order.

Brig. Gen. (Retd.) Sakhawat Hossain said withdrawal of the army from the CHT arbitrarily would not solve the problem.

He also blamed the inactivity of the civil administration in the CHT for the slow pace of implementation of the accord.

AL leader Col (Retd) Faruk Khan said his party, if voted to power, would implement the CHT accord fully.

Former IGP Nurul Huda, former general officer in command in CHT Nuruddin Khan, Dr Anwar Hossain, columnist Sadek Khan, Thanchi Upazila Union Parishad Chairman Khamlai Murong, Col. (Retd.) ZRM Ashraf Uddin also spoke at the seminar.

CSPS Chairman Commodore (Retd.) MA Rahman presided over the seminar moderated by its Executive Director Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Ghulam Quader.

SC reopens today

UNB, Dhaka

The Supreme Court reopens today after a two-week vacation on the occasion of Eid-ul-Fitr, court sources said.

