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## PM's intervention to remove 'logjam' in CHT talks sought

**By Staff Correspondent**

The Humanity Protection Forum (HPF), a human rights group in north-eastern India, has said no agreement on Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) will be successful if Bangladesh government fails to resolve the "basic problems" there.

According to a BBC report monitored here last night, president of HPF Mrinal Kanti Chakma, known to have close links with the Parbatyia Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS), in a statement yesterday said PCJSS leaders want intervention of Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina to remove the complexities dogging its talks with the National Committee on Chittagong Hill Tracts (NCCHT).

Mrinal Kanti Chakma, based in Agartala, said PCJSS "rebels" in CHT are "very much annoyed" with the activities of the NCCHT. The NCCHT is trying to "force the rebels to sign an agreement by-passing the most important issues like return of lands to tribals, resettlement of the settlers elsewhere and additional power for the proposed Regional Committee," BBC quoted Mrinal Kanti as saying.

Mrinal said, "not juggling of words but sincerity" is required to bring permanent peace in the CHT. "But the NCCHT lacks that," he claimed. "His organisation has sent a letter to Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina seeking her intervention to remove the logjam in CHT talks", he added.

If there is no discussion on the basic issues, the forthcoming meeting between the NCCHT and the PCJSS on November 26 will not be fruitful at all, he added.

The HPF last week sought intervention of the Indian government to remove the "bottle-necks" standing in the way of an agreement.

But observers believe since the Indian government ignored it, the HPF has now sought the intervention of Sheikh Hasina, the BBC report added.

An official of the Indian Foreign Ministry, when asked said India has a role in resolving the tribal refugee problem because they are currently staying in India. But it has no role in the "Political issues" in CHT since it is an internal matter of Bangladesh, the report said.

When asked, high officials in Bangladesh said they are not aware of any such statement, the BBC report added.

## Loadshedding

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unknown when this plant would become operative.

Besides, a 150 MW unit at Ashuganj remains inoperative for over two months due to a technical problem.

"By December, this situation would slightly improve as the Ghorashal fifth unit and the Ashuganj unit are likely to be operative by then," said a source.

But the demand for power will rise to 2400 MW in next summer from the present 2100 MW, making power supply situation grim, the sources said.

Although gas supply to gas-guzzling power units of the country will improve after the British company Cairn starts gas supply from Sangu well in April, the existing plants will not be able to produce more than 2000 MW power.

"This crisis would ease a little in June next when a new power plant in Ashuganj starts supplying 200 MW to the national grid," said the source.

## 2 garments workers

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wards. Two others were taken to Dhaka Medical College Hospital (DMCH) where doctors declared Mazeda dead, police said.

Gulshan police said they sent the two bodies to the DMCH morgue for autopsy. An unnatural death case was lodged in this regard.

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## Interaction among judges in the region stressed

**By Staff Correspondent**

Former Indian chief justice AM Ahmadi yesterday stressed the need for interaction among the judges of different countries, especially of this region, for better functioning of the judicial administration.

Addressing a seminar on "Experience Sharing on Gender Issues in the Legal System" as the key speaker, Ahmadi observed that the entire judiciary of the region works on a fragmented basis and the judges act individually. "To remove this, judges should be brought to a single platform", he added.

The seminar was jointly organised by Bangladesh Society for the Enforcement of Human Rights (BSSEHR) and Ain-o-Salish Kendra (ASK) at Judicial Administration Training Institute in the city.

Chief Justice of Bangladesh Justice ATM Afzal inaugurated the seminar while former chief justice Badrul Haider Chowdhury presided. Justice of Supreme Court Mainur Reza Chowdhury was the main discussant.

Justice Ahmadi said that the concepts of the gender equality, human rights and the environmental issues are the recent notions developed in the legal systems.

The judges should have a very clear understanding of the new notions developed in the legal arena, he said, adding,

**Our weekly feature 'Down to Earth' could not be published today due to space constraints. Inconvenience to the readers is regretted.**

## Foreign expert

**From Page 1**

sultant would have a key role in approving work schedules, budgets, design and other matters relating to foreign companies.

"The sources claimed that instead of recruiting local experts, the appointment of a foreign consultant to supervise foreign companies may not serve the interest of the country properly. This move has been taken when the government is holding the second round block bidding for oil and gas exploration and expecting to sign several Production Sharing Contracts (PSCs) with foreign companies, one source said.

When PSCs will be signed following completion of the on-going bidding, the Operations Directorate will assign its officials to form Joint Review Committees (JRC) against each PSC. Their presence in the JRCs will ensure the interests of the country, the sources said.

The PCD does not have a General Manager since April and one of its two managers resigned three months ago.

Out of the total five Deputy General Managers in the PCD — the spearhead of the Operation Directorate — one retired early this year. He was not replaced.

"Instead of spending 10 million dollars for a consultant, the government should immediately recruit talented Bangladeshi manpower. Otherwise, when the foreign companies will start work, Petrobangla will fail to do any monitoring for the country," said a source.

## Endless rhetoric but no real debate

**From Page 1**

the wish of the electorate.

While BNP may feel quite satisfied at the clapping or the full throated slogans that it hears in all the public meetings where these outlandish claims are being made, what it is not realising is that such hyperbolic statements are creating a credibility gap in the minds of all the people who are open minded and want facts before accepting a particular point of view.

What the BNP rhetoric has done to its own cause is reduce its claims to be nothing more than a series of hyperbole, which, any one used to some sort of logic in arguments and facts in statements, finds impossible to take seriously. The most damaging consequence of this flood of rhetoric and irresponsible statements is that no serious public discussion has been possible so far about what the government is doing regarding the Hill Tracts.

It is our view that BNP should immediately stop its unsubstantiated claims and bring the debate to facts, figures, Constitutional provisions, and legal possibilities. It should make public what its previous positions were, how far it is willing to go, what are the danger points beyond which our negotiations should not proceed, what are the pitfalls that we need to avoid, etc. It should immediately stop using the Chittagong Hill Tracts issue as a political football to kick around for maximum short term political gain. BNP under Khaleda Zia governed this country for five years. During that time Col. Oli as the leader of our side, has himself been a part of the same negotiation process. Therefore BNP and its leaders must know how sensitive and important this negotiation is, and how much damage irresponsible and fear-mongering rhetoric can do in such a situation.

While thoroughly rejecting the extremely callous way that BNP has so far treated the present negotiations on Hill Tracts, it is our considered view that the government has been extremely insensitive, to the point of being indifferent, about the need for a greater openness about what is going on in the talks.



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**PHILIPS**



Chiefs of the three services called on Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina at the Armed Forces Division in the city on the Armed Forces Day yesterday. — PID photo

## PM: CHT

**From Page 1**

Hasina said and added that opposition members were also included in the concerned committee.

The Prime Minister said the armed forces are a national institution and the government has taken adequate measures for the development and welfare of the armed forces.

She said the government not only took steps for procuring military hardware and developing the forces but also took steps for enhancing their professional skills.

Hasina announced in the meeting that work on setting up of National Defence College as well as Military Engineering and Medical Colleges will be completed by next year.

Leader of the Opposition Begum Khaleda Zia, BNP leaders Abdur Mannan Bhuiyan and Saifur Rahman, Jatiya Party leaders HM Ershad and Raushan Ershad as well as leaders of other political parties attended the reception at the decorated lawn of Senakunja.

Ministers, senior ruling party leaders, MPs, chiefs of three services, diplomats, high civil and military officials, and elite of the city were present.

As the Prime Minister arrived at Senakunja and ascended on the podium national anthem was played.

Later Hasina exchanged pleasantries with leader of the opposition Khaleda Zia and other guests at the reception.

## Goods train

**derails**

**LALMONIRHAT, Nov 21:** Railway communications between Lalmonirhat and some of its neighbouring districts snapped after a goods train derailed in Gaibandha today, reports UNB.

## 7 killed, 36 injured in road accidents

**By Staff Correspondent**

Seven persons were killed and 36 others injured in three road accidents in Chandpur, Tangail and Gopalganj yesterday.

Of the dead, four were in Chandpur, two in Tangail and one in Gopalganj.

Our Chandpur Correspondent reports: Four people were killed and 30 injured when a Chittagong-bound bus from Chandpur fell into a roadside ditch near Waruk Bazar under Shaharasi thana of Chandpur district in the early hours of yesterday.

The bus with 50 passengers aboard met with the accident when one of its front wheels punctured and fell into the ditch, resulting in deaths of four passengers on the spot.

The dead were identified as Hanufa Khatun, 40, and her son Golam Rasul, 6, Khodeza Begum, 25, and her five-year-old daughter Sonia Begum.

The injured were admitted to hospitals at Chandpur, Hajiganj and Shaharasi.

Our Tangail Correspondent writes: Two persons were killed and six others injured in a road accident at Nagbari on Gopalpur-Porabari road under Tangail district yesterday.

Police said, the accident occurred when a Tangail-bound bus from Porabari hit a tempo from behind at Nagbari at about 11.30 am killing two passengers on the spot and injuring six.

One of the dead was identified as Salfuddin, 48, while identity of other could not be known.

Our Gopalganj Correspondent adds: A 13-year-old boy was killed in a road accident near Gonapara bus stand on Gopalganj-Tungipara road yesterday evening.

The victim Mohammad Moshahid, son of Abdul Gani of village Sankur in Gopalganj Sadar thana was knocked down by a speeding bus. He died on the spot.

Police seized the bus but its driver fled away.

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