

Chained 'drug addicts' rescued, 2 clinics sealed in Khulna

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

A mobile court led by metropolitan magistrate Atiqul Haque yesterday sealed two clinics in Khulna city for treatment of drug addicts as they were being run without government approval.

The clinics are Drishti Clinic at Moilapotaundir and Sneha Clinic at Nirlala.

The mobile court arrested owner of Drishti Clinic and rescued 20 drug addicts who were found tied up with iron chains there. This clinic is situated at.

The mobile court also rescued four drug addicts from Sneha Clinic who were also found chained there. But its owner managed to flee by scaling a boundary wall of the clinic.

The mobile court realised Tk 20,000 fine from Atahar Heart Clinic at Iqbal Nagar as it was run without government approval.

The drug addicts found claimed in the two clinics were handed over to their guardians under supervision of police.

Leader of AL front held with arms in Barisal

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Barisal

Rapid Action Battalion (Rab) yesterday arrested Azizur Rahman Shahin, convenor of Barisal city Sechchasebok League and his associate Md. Hanif Howlader from Rupatali area of the city and recovered a pipe gun from their possession.

Rab members also seized Shahin's motorcycle.

Sources in RAB-8 said, acting on a tip-off, law enforcers cordoned Rupatali grid sub-station area where they were holed up. Sensing, Rab presence, they tried to flee with a motorcycle but were caught after a chase.

RAB sources claimed that Shahin and Hanif were toll collectors and face accusations of terrorizing others.

Prepare CHT voter lists as per peace accord

Political, civil society leaders in hill dists demand

SHANTIMOY CHAKMA and JASHIM MAJUMDER in CHT

Indigenous and Bangali political leaders in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) belonging to different parties have demanded preparation of voter list in the three hill districts according to provisions of the CHT peace accord.

Signed in 1977, the accord provides for enrolment only of permanent residents of the hills in any voter list.

The leaders opposed preparation of voter list by enrolling all eligible voters in CHT.

Sources said the Election Commission (EC) is planning to prepare voter lists in the CHT as per the Constitution, which allows enrolling all eligible voters.

The Daily Star Correspondents in Rangamati and Khagrachari talked to indigenous and Bangali political leaders on the issue. They said preparation of voter list by ignoring the CHT peace accord would be breach of trust with the people of CHT. The CHT peace treaty was signed between the then Awami League government and Parbatya Chattagram Jana

Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) which spearheaded the insurgency.

Some top leaders of PCJSS seeking anonymity said the peace treaty ended three decades of insurgency by ethnic people and established peace in the hills.

They said people in CHT have been demanding full implementation of the peace accord for consolidation of peace and development of the three hill districts but the two governments since signing of the accord did little in that direction.

Preparation of the voter list by avoiding provisions of the peace accord would create a 'fresh source of tension' in the hills, the PCJSS leaders said.

The peace accord provides for preparation of voter list with only Bangali and indigenous people who are permanent residents of Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachari hill districts for holding national and local body elections, they said.

District Awami League secretary Md. Selim Chowdhury said, "We demand full implementation of peace accord. Everything including preparation of electoral roll should be done as per provision of the accord".

He said peace in the hills is becoming fragile day by day as because the peace accord is yet to be implemented fully.

Civil society leader Nirmalendu Tripathi said the peace accord was signed considering CHT as a special region, different from other areas of the country. The Election Commission should not ignore the peace accord, he said.

Dr. Nilukumar Tangchangya, a top leader of PCJSS and member of CHT Regional Council, said, "All people in CHT want proper implementation of CHT peace accord. There are some options in the Constitution also for welfare of ethnic people. So, government should follow it," Nilukumar added.

PCJSS leader Sadhuram Tripura in Bandarban said preparation of voter list by ignoring the peace accord would mean its violation, which will hurt the sentiment of permanent residents and spoil peace in hills.

Secretary of Upajatiya Samajik Forum Sukumar Dewan said the caretaker government should respect the peace accord as it was signed by a former government.

Bandarban district Awami

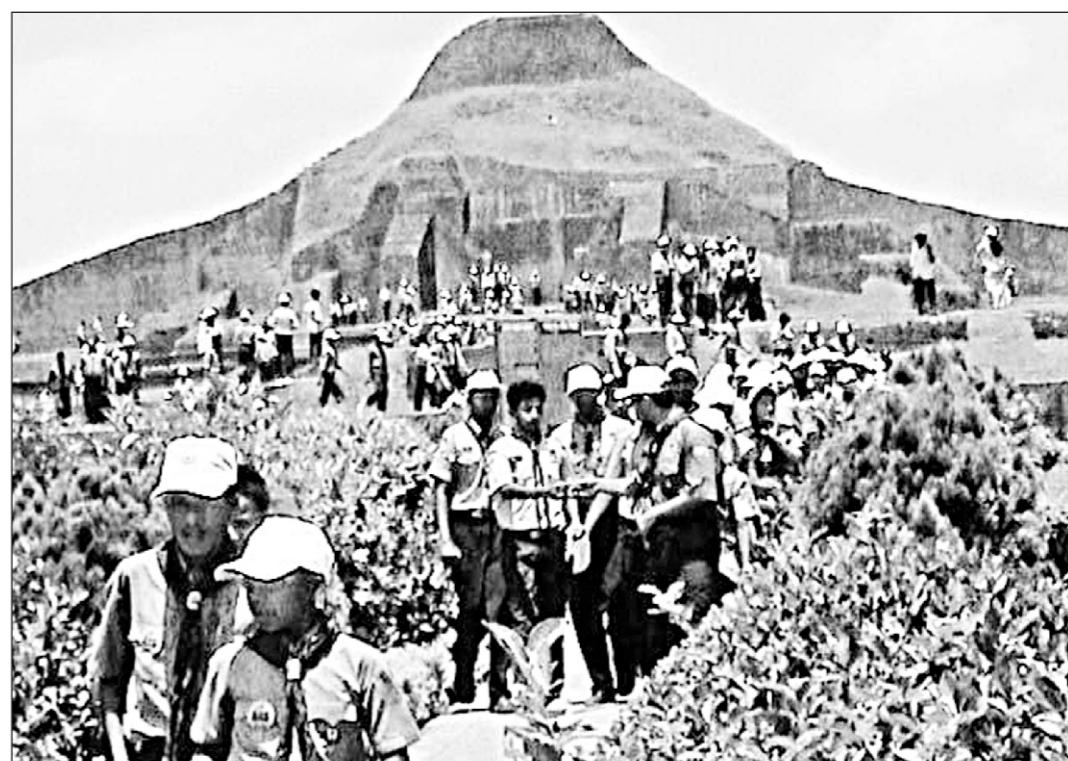
League president Prashannakumar Tangchangya said the caretaker government has taken some steps which have been appreciated by all sections of people.

When contacted, a high official at Khagrachari district election office said, they would prepare the new voter list according the Article 121 of the Constitution, which says, "There shall be one electoral roll for each constituency for the purposes of elections to parliament, and no special electoral roll shall be prepared so as to classify electors according to religion, race, cast or sex".

PCJSS leaders said Article 17 of Khagrachari Parbataya Zilla Parishad Ain (act) also provides for enrolling only permanent residents in the voter list.

Kayas Mong, a PCJSS leader and Regional Council member from Bandarban said, "We heard about Election Commission (EC) decision. Neither the government nor the Election Commission (EC) talked to us in this regard".

PCJSS central leader and Regional Council Member Rupayan Dewan said, we have right to demand a voter list as per the peace accord.



Scouts from Bangladesh, India and Nepal who took part in 'Jamboree on the Train 07' visited the historic Buddha Bihar at Joypurhat yesterday. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA



Indigenous people presenting a traditional dance to pay tributes to heroes of Santal Revolution at Balubari Santal temple ground in Dinajpur yesterday. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Indigenous people demand separate land commission

Santal revolution day observed

RU CORRESPONDENT

Indigenous people, at a press conference held at Rajshahi Public Library auditorium in Rajshahi yesterday, demanded of the government a separate land commission for them.

Adivasi Unnayan Sangathan (AUS), an NGO, organised the press conference to mark the 152nd anniversary of Santal Hul (revolution).

AUS executive director Bhagabat Tudu read out a written statement on the occasion. He announced a three-day programme for Kakonhat and Rajshahi city.

The programmes included discussion, colourful rally, placing of wreath at the graves of Santal heroes, arrow throwing competition and drama depicting the life and culture of indigenous people.

The first day programme began at Kakonhat Sundurpur

village in Rajshahi yesterday with a vow to establish rights of indigenous people.

AUS will also award 'Sidhu-Kanu Award' after the names of two brothers, Sidhu and Kanu, who spearheaded the Santal Hul. The award giving ceremony will be held at 'Padma Manohar' in Rajshahi city on Monday.

At the press conference, the AUS executive director put forward various demands of indigenous people for an end to persecution on ethnic minorities so that they can ensure their right to practice their religion, language and culture independently.

AUS urged all the indigenous people of northern region to hold the programmes unitedly and peacefully.

Santal rebellion, the first ever uprising against the British colonial rule in 1855 and 1856, was an outburst of year-long neglect to the indigenous community.

One more jute worker dies

STAFF CORRESPONDENT, Khulna

Sultana Kazi, 52, a worker of laid-off state-owned Crescent Jute Mill (CJM) died of stroke Friday night while under treatment in Khulna Medical College Hospital (KMCH).

He was admitted to the hospital on Thursday. The body was sent to Chakhar in Banaripara upazila in Barisal district for burial. He left behind his wife and four daughters.

According to his wife, authorities of Crescent Jute Mill did not pay his arrear wages and other dues amounting over Tk six lakh despite repeated appeals for treatment.

With Sultan Kazi, the number of workers of government jute who died in recent days rose to seven.

BSF abducts one in Satkhira

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Satkhira

Indian Border Security Force (BSF) yesterday abducted a Bangladeshi cattle trader from Ichhamati river at Khanjia in Kaligonj upazila in Satkhira.

The victim is identified as Alamgir Hossain, 25, son of Abul Hossain of Nangla village in Debhata upazila.

Bangladesh Rifles sent a letter to BSF protesting the abduction and asked them to return him.



Export-import through Benapole land port resumed yesterday after two days' closure due to truckers' strike. PHOTO: FOCUS BANGLA

Interns call off strike at DMCH

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

Intern doctors at Dinajpur Medical College Hospital (DMCH) called off their strike yesterday following assurance by authorities to meet their two-point demand.

About 40 interns at DMCH went on strike Wednesday night after one of their colleagues was assaulted by outsiders.

Hospital sources said seven patients died and at least 300 others left the hospital during the strike.

After the strike was withdrawn, DMCH Superintendent and Dinajpur Civil Surgeon Dr. Azizur Rahman filed a case with local police station in connection with the assault of an intern doctor. But none was named as accused. None was arrested.

The intern demands include arrest and punishment of the attackers.

On the night of June 26, relatives of a patient had hot exchange of words with intern doctor Dipankar Chakravarti at the hospital centring examination of the patient.

On the following evening, when Dipankar was going out of the hospital, he was beaten by relatives of the patient, triggering a strike by all interns.