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45,000 acre hills lands not used as per lease terms

JS body on CHT recommends cancelling lease

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Khagrachhari

A parliamentary body yesterday recommended cancellation of leases of 45,000 acres of land in the three districts of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) as those were not used as per terms of the leases in the last 10 years.

The lands were leased to 1,800 people for rubber plantation, farming and forestry.

The parliamentary standing committee on the CHT affairs ministry made the recommendations at a meeting held at

Khagrachhari District Council. President of the committee Promod Mankin, who chaired the meeting, told journalists later that at least 25 acres of land were given to each lessee for specified purposes. But they violated the terms of the leases and did nothing on those lands.

"We have asked the deputy commissioner of Khagrachhari, Rangamati and Bandarban to submit details of the leases with their recommendations at the next meeting of the committee", he said.

The House body also discussed the

activities of CHT Development Board (CHTDB) and Internal Displaced Affairs Taskforce, and progress of rehabilitation of returnee (from India) refugees.

The meeting was attended by committee members including State Minister for CHT Affairs and lawmaker from Rangamati Dipankar Talukder, CHTDB Chairman and legislator from Bandarban Bir Bahadur Ushei Singa, lawmaker from Khagrachhari Jatindra Lal Tripura and A B M Fazle Karim Chowdhury, Abdur Rahman Bodhi and Athin Rakhain.



Away from the microphones, former Indian president Abdul Kalam and Bangladesh President Zillur Rahman whisper to each other during the first convocation of University of Information Technology and Sciences held at the Bangladesh-China Friendship Conference Centre yesterday.

PHOTO: SK ENAMUL HAQ



Veteran leftist Hena Das passes away

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Eminent leader of women rights and leftist movement Hena Das died at Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU)

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EC moves to enroll expatriates as voters

Decides to ask govt to amend act

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The Election Commission yesterday decided to ask the government to amend the Electoral Rolls Act, in a bid to make way for registering as voters Bangladeshi citizens who are living abroad temporarily or have dual citizenships.

At a meeting yesterday, the EC also formally decided to begin the process of drafting proposals to bring sweeping reforms to the Representation of the People Order (RPO) to make it 'foolproof', meeting sources said.

Earlier the EC had sent a proposal to the immediate past caretaker government for amending the electoral rolls law for registering as voters only those expatriate Bangladeshis

who hold dual citizenships.

But the commission could not proceed with its plan, as the caretaker government did not bring the necessary amendment to the law before the recent parliamentary election.

This time around, the EC will send the proposals to an elected government, requesting it to amend the Electoral Rolls Act to register as voters all expatriate Bangladeshis, the commission sources said.

The details of the procedure for registering expatriate citizens as voters will be chalked out later.

Officials in the EC Secretariat however said Bangladeshi missions abroad must be engaged as voters only those expatriate Bangladeshis

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Talk, settle unsolved issues

President urges Dhaka, Delhi

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

President Zillur Rahman yesterday said the unsolved issues between Bangladesh and India would be resolved through dialogue and negotiations as India is the trusted friend of Bangladesh and next-door neighbour.

"We have fraternal relations with India, tied together by our common historical and cultural heritage... we firmly believe the pending outstanding issues between the two countries would be solved

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India, US agree on defence deal

New Delhi approves sites for 2 US nuclear reactors

AFP, New Delhi

India and the United States agreed yesterday a defence deal expected to boost US arms sales in India, as New Delhi also approved sites for two US nuclear reactors, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton said.

At a joint press conference with Foreign Minister SM Krishna, Clinton said the two sides had agreed an "end-use monitoring" arrangement that would provide safeguards for the sale of sophisticated US weaponry to India.

The agreement "will pave the way for greater defence cooperation" Clinton said, while Krishna said it would help the "procurement of US defence technology to India."

A US official said the arrangement was for a provision to be written into future defence contracts, guaranteeing sensitive equipment will be used for its intended purpose and not transferred to a third party.

It will be welcomed by Lockheed Martin Corp. and Boeing Co., which are both competing with Russian, French and Swedish companies for a massive \$12 billion tender to provide 126 fighter jets to the Indian Air Force.

The press briefing came after a day of official meetings between Clinton and a series of senior Indian leaders including Krishna, Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and ruling Congress Party President Sonia Gandhi.

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PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN

Porters load iron rods in a launch at Sadarghat terminal even though carrying goods by launch is strictly forbidden.

Shab-e-Meraj observed

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Muslims across the country last night observed Shab-e-Meraj, the holy prophet's night journey through the seven heavens.

On the 26th of lunar month of Rajab, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) was carried from the Holy Ka'aba in Makkah to Baitul Muqaddis in Jerusalem on a heavenly transport called Al-Buraq.

Devotees offered nightlong

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Stage set in Panchagarh

Solar eclipse tomorrow morning

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Dinajpur

The scene is set in Panchagarh for the observation of the last total solar eclipse of the century due to take place tomorrow morning.

The Bangladesh Astronomical Society, National Science and Technology Museum with the

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Depression intensifies

UNB, Dhaka

Influenced by a monsoon depression formed over the northwest Bay, low-lying areas of most coastal districts of the country are likely to be inundated by wind-driven surge of height 0.3-0.5 feet above normal astronomical tide during

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Mugging spree in capital

3 shot, 1 stabbed; 1 succumbs to injury

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Unidentified muggers shot and stabbed two men inside a furniture shop at Rokeya Swarani in capital's Kafrul area and snatched away Tk 85,000 yesterday.

Injured Shafiqul Islam, 38, and Mostoba Hashem, 32, were admitted to Dhaka Medical College Hospital.

Meanwhile, a mugger received bullet wounds during a shoot-out between his cohorts and police in Dhalpur area under Jatrabari Police Station around 11:00pm Sunday night.

Another alleged criminal Rafiqul Alam succumbed to his injuries -- incurred by bullet wounds in a gunfight with police

Indian HC on illegal migration

Claims 25,000
Bangladeshis enter India a year

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Indian High Commissioner to Bangladesh Pinak Ranjan Chakravarty yesterday alleged that every year around 25,000 Bangladeshi nationals enter India with visa but do not return.

Such migration of Bangladeshi nationals is a matter of concern for India, said Pinak at a seminar titled India-Bangladesh Economic

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Act quick to stop stone extraction

HC asks govt

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

The High Court (HC) yesterday directed the government to immediately stop the use of excavator machines in stone-quarries at three rivers in Sylhet to protect the natural ecosystem of the rivers, and lives, property and livelihoods of the people living near the rivers.

The three rivers Piai, Dikai and Dhalai flow through Goain Ghat and Companiganj upazilas of the district.

The HC issued a rule upon the government to explain within four weeks why it (government) should not be directed to protect the rivers from mechanised excavation.

The rule also asked the government to explain why it should not be directed to initiate legal measures against such unauthorised and illegal excavating operations and to realise compensation from them for causing damages to the rivers and the people

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CASE WITHDRAWAL Moudud first from BNP to get favour

COURT CORRESPONDENT

The metropolitan public prosecutor (MPP) yesterday for the first time

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Online Poll

Do you think the ruling Awami League is doing the right thing by keeping General Secretary Abdul Jalil aloof from the process of holding its July 24 national council?

Yes (46.7%)
 No (46.4%)
 No Comments (8.9%)

Total votes: 1269

TODAY'S POLL

Do you think the government's decision of withholding the disclosure of Sohel Taj's resignation for more than a month was correct?

Please cast your vote at www.thedailystar.net