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Army pullout from CHT kicks off

2 camps withdrawn; one brigade, 33 more camps to go

STAR REPORT

The government yesterday formally started pulling out temporary army camps from Chittagong Hill Tracts with two camps in Khagrachhari and Rangamati as per its recent decision to implement the CHT Peace Accord 1997.

The camps were located at Manikchhari of Mahalchhari upazila in Khagrachhari and at Ghagra in Rangamati.

On July 29, the government announced to withdraw one brigade troops and 35 temporary security camps from CHT region by this September.

The withdrawal of Manikchhari camp with 40 army personnel started at 11:00am and completed around 5:00pm, reports our

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The first army camp withdraws from Manikchhari in Khagrachhari yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

15 hurt as BCL men fight at DU hall

BCL expels 7; one held

DU CORRESPONDENT

Sporadic clashes between two factions of Bangladesh Chhatra League in Sura Sen Hall of Dhaka University Thursday left at least 15 activists of the factions injured.

Police in a raid of the dormitory afterwards arrested Chhatra League leader Iajib, third year student of International Relation, in connection with keeping four bullets.

The university administration decided to suspend seven students for six months to a year in this connection while the Chhatra League DU unit expelled for life seven students

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Toxic drug makers still out of dragnet

One more death from Rid's paracetamol syrup; no case filed yet against culprits

MAHBUBA ZANNAT

More than two weeks after Rid Pharmaceutical was sealed off one more children died of renal failure in Rangpur yesterday after consumption of its toxic paracetamol syrup raising the death toll to 26.

Our Rangpur correspondent reports: The victim Rani died at home yesterday at around 8:00am, nine days after her renal failure.

Ten-month-old Rani, daughter of Shafiqul Islam of Syedpur under Pirgachha upazila, had been fighting for life since July 26 after she took paracetamol syrup as per the prescription of a village doctor Syedur Rahman.

Her parents had to take her home on August 4 from Rangpur Medical College Hospital since they could not afford to take her to Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical

University in Dhaka, which the doctors suggested.

Locals said village doctor Syedur Rahman had been on the run for three days and the pharmacy at Syedpur Bazar that sold the paracetamol syrup of Rid to Rani's parents on July 26 had remained closed after the death of the kid.

Even though the product was supposed to be withdrawn from all pharmacies across the country as per the government directive, authorities concerned at district level are yet to take any initiative in this regard.

When asked Civil Surgeon of Rangpur Dr Reazul Islam said he directed drug superintendent of Rangpur to withdraw Rid's paracetamol syrup from all pharmacies as per the government direction.

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ORPHANAGE CASE Hearing on August 12

COURT CORRESPONDENT

A Dhaka Court will give its decision on August 12 whether the charges would be taken into cognisance against Opposition Leader and BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia, her son Tarique Rahman and four others in a case filed for embezzlement of Tk 2.10 crore by forming fraudulent Zia Orphanage Trust.

Judge ANM Bashirullah of Metropolitan Sessions Judge's

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TIPAIMUKH DAM

Dhaka won't let Delhi do anything harmful

Says PM as JS team reports to her; asks for tech committee

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said her government will not give consent to anything detrimental to the country's interest in relation to Tipaimukh Dam construction in India.

She made the remark when the parliamentary delegation that had recently visited the proposed dam site met her in the Prime Ministers' Office on Thursday. The delegation led by Awami League (AL) lawmaker Abdur Razaq informed her about the outcome of their visit, submitting a report.

"We will not do or support anything detrimental to the country's interest in relation to Tipaimukh Dam. Our prime task will be to protect the country's interest at any cost," AL lawmaker Abdur Rahman, a delegation mem-

ber, quoted Hasina to The Daily Star.

Directing the authorities concerned to form a high-powered technical committee immediately, the premier said the committee will analyse the data provided by India about the proposed dam, to assess its possible environmental and socioeconomic impacts on Bangladesh.

The committee will also study whether Bangladesh will need further information regarding the matter, she added saying it will be comprised of representatives from the water resources ministry, Joint River Commission (JRC), and Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

She said every environmental aspect of the proposed hydroelectric dam including water

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Shab-e-Barat observed

UNB, Dhaka

Muslims across the country observed the holy Shab-e-Barat -- the night of fortunes -- Thursday night seeking divine blessings for the wellbeing of mankind.

The devotees passed the night offering special prayers, recitation from the Holy Quran, holding milad mahfil, zikr, and other religious rituals to mark the occasion.

They also visited the graveyards of their relatives and Muslim saints and distributed sweets and homemade foods among the poor, their neighbours, friends and relatives.

On the occasion, the Islamic Foundation and other religious and socio-cultural organisations held Qurankhwani, milad mahfil

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Devotees offer their final prayers on Shab-e-Barat at Baitul Mukarram Mosque after Fazr prayers early yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

KHALASHPIR COAL MINE PROJECT

Hosaf's sketchy study raises questions

Govt spends \$95,000 for review of study by ex-consultant of Hosaf

SHARIER KHAN

The techno-economic feasibility study for Khalashpir coal mine project by Hosaf Consortium has finally been trashed by a foreign consultant questioning the study's scientific basis, methodology and raising a host of other questions, sources said.

British consultant IMCL in the first of its kind review of a coal mine feasibility

study notes that there are fundamental geological issues regarding the Khalashpir deposit which the company must address before framing realistic and financially viable mining business plans.

The consultant found that Hosaf had done inadequate geological work and had deployed no accredited geologist for the job. Its study offered no detailed outline for environment or resettlement issues, and all these work should be done again

before submitting such a study report.

The IMCL, which used to be represented by Hosaf in Barapukuria coal mine project from the nineties and had worked for Hosaf in the same Khalashpir project a few years back, was appointed a few months ago for such a unique review through a tender floated during the last caretaker government's tenure. Interestingly, the Hydrocarbon Cell of the

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\$160m more WB loan for Padma Bridge

UNB, Dhaka

The World Bank (WB) has pledged another 160 million US dollars for the construction of the proposed Padma Bridge, raising the total loan assistance for the project to 460 million US dollars.

Visiting WB Vice President for South Asia region Isabel Guerrero gave the assurance in a meeting with Communications Minister Syed Abul Hossain at his ministry on Thursday, said a handout.

During the meeting,

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Poor suffer as DMCH slaps fee on visitors

Decision yet to get govt approval

KAILASH SARKAR and SHAHEEN MOLLAH

The Dhaka Medical College Hospital authorities have introduced ticket system against money for the visitors' entry from August 1, much to the sufferings of the poor patients and those attending to them.

Tk 20 has been fixed for visiting a free-bed patient, Tk 30 for a paying-bed patient and Tk 50 for a cabin patient.

A visitor's pass is valid for seven days and the money is not refundable.

The new rule has yet to get approval from the government.

DMCH Director Brig Gen Bazle Quader said the health ministry has verbally approved a written proposal he submitted to that end recently.

Directorate General of Health Services Dr Shah Monir Hossain however said the ministry did not yet receive any such proposal.

Brig Gen Bazle Quader says the ticket system is necessary to control crowding of visitors.

But the reality is the numbers of nurses and ward boys in the hospital are very inadequate, and it means the patients must have relatives or friends as attendants to see to their needs.

In DMCH, there are 600 nurses for three shifts;

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Fire devastates a foam factory in Shyampur in the capital early Thursday. Luckily no one was injured in the incident. (Story on page 16)

PHOTO: STAR

Pak Taliban chief Mehsud 'killed'

Islamabad seeks to verify death

AP, Dera Ismail Khan

Pakistan's Taliban chief Baitullah Mehsud, who led a violent campaign of suicide attacks and assassinations against the Pakistani government, has been killed in a US missile strike, a militant commander and aide to Mehsud said yesterday.

Earlier, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told reporters in Islamabad that intelligence showed Mehsud had been killed in Wednesday's missile strike on his father-in-law's house in Pakistan's lawless tribal area, but authorities would travel to the site to verify his death.

Pakistani and US intelligence officials said the CIA was behind the strike. All spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the matter.

"I confirm that Baitullah Mehsud and his wife died in the American missile attack in South Waziristan," Taliban commander Kafayat Ullah told The Associated Press by telephone. He would not give any further details.

Mehsud's demise would be a major boost to



Baitullah Mehsud

Pakistani and US efforts to eradicate the Taliban and al-Qaeda.

However, Mehsud has deputies who could take his place. Pakistani intelligence officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Taliban commanders were already believed to be meeting in the lawless tribal areas Friday to choose a replacement.

Three Pakistani intelligence officials said the likeliest successor was Mehsud's deputy, Hakim Ullah, a commander known for recruiting and training suicide bombers. Two other prominent possibilities, the officials said, were Azmat Ullah and Waliur Rehman, also close associates of Mehsud.

The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because of the sensitivity of the issue.

Whether a new leader could wreak as much havoc as Mehsud depends largely on how much pressure the Pakistani military continues to put on the network, especially in the lawless tribal area of South Waziristan.

Mehsud has al-Qaeda connections and has been suspected in the killing of former

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